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THE DEVELOPMENT OF ETHICS

A HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL STUDY

VOLUME I: FROM SOCRATES TO THE REFORMATION

TERENCE IRWIN

The Development of Ethics

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A Historical and Critical Study

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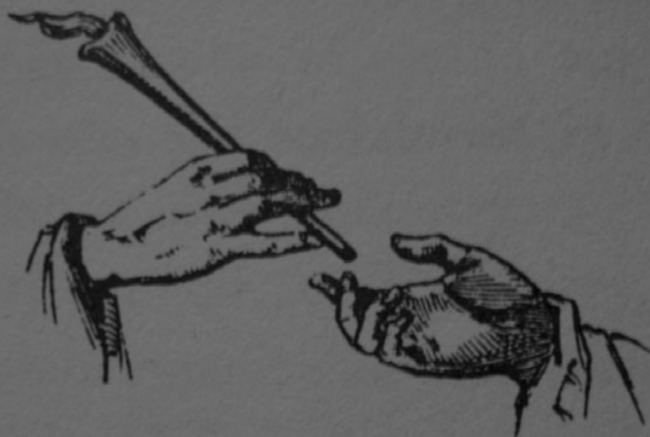

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

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Great Clarendon Street, Oxford OX2 6DP

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford.
It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship,
and education by publishing worldwide in

Oxford New York

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Kuala Lumpur Madrid Melbourne Mexico City Nairobi
New Delhi Shanghai Taipei Toronto

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Argentina Austria Brazil Chile Czech Republic France Greece
Guatemala Hungary Italy Japan Poland Portugal Singapore
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Published in the United States
by Oxford University Press Inc., New York

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First published 2007

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
Data available

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
Data available

Typeset by Laserwords Private Limited, Chennai, India
Printed in Great Britain
on acid-free paper by
Biddles Ltd., King's Lynn, Norfolk

ISBN 978–0–19–824267–3

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

In Memoriam

Henry Ernest Irwin

1915–2006

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PREFACE

This book was originally intended to be a companion to *The Development of Logic*, by William and Martha Kneale, published by Oxford in 1962. I undertook it at the suggestion of Angela Blackburn, who was at that time editor for Philosophy at the Press, and with the encouragement of Sir Anthony Kenny, who was at that time the Delegate to the Press for Philosophy. I was doubtful whether I could match the learning, acuity, clarity, and brevity of Kneale and Kneale, and my doubts have certainly been vindicated. To say nothing of the first three features of Kneale and Kneale, I have not been able to achieve their brevity. On the contrary, the work has expanded to three volumes, and in this respect resembles a Victorian novel.

The three-volume novel has not been universally admired. In *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Miss Prism offers a rather unsuccessful defence:

MISS PRISM. Do not speak slightingly of the three-volume novel, Cecily. I wrote one myself in earlier days.
CECILY. Did you really, Miss Prism? How wonderfully clever you are! I hope it did not end happily? I don't like novels that end happily. They depress me so much.
MISS PRISM. The good ended happily, and the bad unhappily. That is what Fiction means.
CECILY. I suppose so. But it seems very unfair.

According to the incisive literary critic Lady Bracknell, Miss Prism's work was 'a three-volume novel of more than usually revolting sentimentality'. Though Henry James is less direct than Lady Bracknell, he none the less denounces some Victorian novels as 'large, loose, baggy monsters, with their queer elements of the accidental and the arbitrary' (Preface to *The Tragic Muse*).

I have not sought to draw precisely the moral described by Miss Prism, but I have a reasonably optimistic attitude to the history of ethics, and I don't know whether I have avoided revolting sentimentality. Some readers, if they get through the whole book, may well take Henry James's view. But perhaps some reasons can be given to explain why it is looser and baggier than Kneale and Kneale, and may not be free of queer elements of the accidental and the arbitrary.

Kneale and Kneale decided, quite reasonably, to devote most space to logic after 1879, and to treat the previous history relatively briefly. Any similar decision about the history of ethics would be misguided, Even if we supposed that, say, moral philosophy made a great advance in 1874 with Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*, we could hardly understand or evaluate Sidgwick's achievement without a comparison with his predecessors. More important, good reasons can be given for doubting whether Sidgwick in the 19th century, or Kant or Hume in the 18th, or Hobbes in the 17th, made the sort of advance that would justify us in relegating their predecessors to a relatively minor role.

Many people teaching the history of moral philosophy, or teaching moral philosophy from a historical point of view, would probably want to include some 'pre-modern' moralist, usually Aristotle, in their presentation of the area. Alasdair MacIntyre said he wanted to include the Greeks in his *Short History of Ethics* for the sake of undergraduates confined to the 'treadmill' of Hume, Kant, Mill, and Moore (Preface). Fewer people, however, have taken it to be equally important to discuss moral philosophy between Aristotle and Hobbes. I have tried to do something to encourage the closer study of moral philosophy between the 4th century BC and the 17th century AD, This choice has greatly increased the size of the book.

One might well argue, however, that my treatment of this important period is still too short. While I have given some space to Aquinas and to Suarez, the treatment of Augustine, Scotus, and Ockham is quite brief, and many important people (including Neoplatonists, Church Fathers, Abelard, and less well-known mediaeval writers) are omitted. The decision to omit them reflects my aim (explained further in the Introduction) of concentrating on the development of an Aristotelian outlook, but it may have been mistaken. At any rate, I hope this part of the book will encourage some more people to pursue the study of mediaeval moral philosophy far enough to discover how little of it I have covered.

A further reason for the length of this book is my aim of expounding different views fully enough to show what can be said for and against them. This is not meant to be a neutral exposition that refrains from evaluation; I also try to defend, object, or revise, where it seems appropriate. Success in these tasks would demand would need a clear understanding of all the major questions in moral philosophy, not to mention the relevant questions in other areas of philosophy. Readers who understand the questions better than I do will no doubt discover many errors in interpretation and judgment. But perhaps they will be encouraged to improve the account that I offer.

Some parts of this book (e.g., the chapters on Aristotle, Hume, Kant, Mill) cover very familiar ground and express views on questions that many others have discussed in detail. Other parts (e.g., the chapters on Suarez, Cudworth, Balguy, Price) discuss moralists who have received far less attention from moral philosophers writing in English. I have tried, as far as possible, to ignore the familiarity or unfamiliarity of a particular author. I have not refrained from going over familiar issues; nor have I discussed someone at greater length simply because he has attracted more attention from other critics. Readers may well find, therefore, that the discussion of Kant (e.g.) is rather thin, in so far as it overlooks some of the questions, elaborations, and complications that have resulted from later philosophical criticism. This uneven character (as it may seem) of different parts of the book reflects my attempt to allocate space to different people according to their importance in the argument, not according to the degree of attention they have attracted.

Though the three volumes are being published separately, they have been conceived as a single study. The division simply results from the excessive length of the book. The volumes begin at reasonably natural places (the second with Suarez, the third with Kant), but I would not want the reader to attach any particular philosophical significance to these divisions.

One inconvenience for the reader results from the separate publication of the volumes. I have not inserted cross-references to later volumes, in case the sections are re-numbered in the final stages of revision. Instead I have inserted references to the works of later

philosophers. When readers have the later volumes in their hands, they should be able to find some relevant discussion by looking at the chapters that discuss these later works.

The notes and bibliography are intended to give the necessary information reasonably briefly. It seemed to me difficult and unnecessary to try to separate 'original sources' from 'secondary sources' (where ought Sidgwick's *Outlines*, for instance, to be placed?), and so I have gathered them all in a single alphabetical list. Readers who consult the list of abbreviations should be able to cope with the notes and bibliography.

I have been working intermittently on this book since 1990 or so, but it expresses an interest, beginning in the early 1970s, in the history of ethics. I mainly owe this interest to the teaching and advice of Gregory Vlastos, and to some conversations with John Rawls. Hence many of the papers I have published have provided matter, more or less proximate, for the following chapters. I have also learned from many people during this time I have been working on this book. Some of them are the helpful and well-informed people who, on hearing about the project, asked me questions of the form: 'And what are you going to say about X?'. In some cases I had to say 'Who?', and in some cases 'Nothing'. The present length of the book is partly the result of such questions. To many reasonable questions of the same form I would still have to say what Dr Johnson said about an entry in his dictionary: 'Ignorance, madam, pure ignorance.' But in some cases I discovered that X was worth reading and discussing, and moreover that Y, discussed by X, also deserved attention, and so on.

I have received comments from a number of helpful and acute anonymous referees. For Volume 1 in particular, I am pleased to be able to thank Gareth Matthews and Richard Kraut by name. Among those whose work I have learned most from I would include Richard Kraut, John Cooper, Julia Annas, and Alasdair MacIntyre.

In trying to construct some reasonably clear lines of argument, I have been helped considerably by the patient, intelligent, and thoughtful students, both undergraduate and graduate, at Cornell who have heard and discussed some of the main ideas in this book in many courses on the history of ethics. The tenacity of those who have lasted through a whole academic year, and not just one term, has been especially encouraging. Though the book contains too much to squeeze into a 28-week academic year, these students have probably been the readers I have had in mind most often.

Since I have taught in the Sage School of Philosophy at Cornell for quite a few years, I have absorbed—no doubt incompletely—many aspects of the philosophical outlook of my colleagues. If I have any slight grasp of any relevant questions in metaphysics and epistemology, I owe much of it to Richard Boyd and Sydney Shoemaker. My temerarious efforts in the study of mediaeval philosophy were encouraged by the models of scholarship and philosophical imagination provided by Norman Kretzmann and Scott MacDonald. If I have any slight grasp of moral philosophy, I owe much of it to Nicholas Sturgeon. Though he will certainly find that many things I say are false, confused, or superficial, anything that approaches truth or clarity probably results from his influence. I owe so much, in so many ways, to Gail Fine that I will not even try to describe it in detail.

The writing of this book might have taken even longer had I not been able to work on it during several periods of leave, which I owe to Cornell University, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Guggenheim Foundation. In 2004 I was fortunate to spend a

month at the Rockefeller Foundation Study Centre in Bellagio. I spent some of the leave in Oxford, where I found more things to write about by exploring some of the resources of the Bodleian Library, and where I especially learned from discussion with David Charles.

The finishing of a long book written over many years involves a number of indispensable but tedious tasks. Fortunately, I have been helped in these tasks by the careful attention of Yurii Cohen. It would be too much to hope that he has succeeded completely in removing the effects of my errors and oversights, but he has worked hard and diligently in the interests of readers who would like citations and cross-references to be accurate and relevant.

I mentioned that Oxford University Press suggested this book to me. For this reason and for many others, it is a duty and a pleasure to thank the Delegates and officers of this admirable institution that has done so much to advance classical and philosophical learning. In particular, Peter Momtchiloff has been a source of wise advice and patient encouragement over a number of years, to me as to many other philosophers.

The design on the title page is based on Plato, *Republic* 328a. I owe it to William Whewell, who used it in several of his books on ethics, including those on the history of ethics (which I will come to in the later volumes). Since Whewell was not only a considerable moral philosopher, and a leader in the revival of the English universities in the 19th century, but also one of the first people in modern England to take up the systematic study of the history of ethics, including Plato, from a philosophical point of view. He could justly claim to have passed on the torch that had reached him from Plato.

Faculty of Philosophy
University of Oxford
June 2007

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ABBREVIATIONS

This list includes only the most frequently used abbreviations, and those that might puzzle a reader. I have tried to cite primary texts from the sources that will be fairly readily available. Greek and Latin texts appearing in the OCT, BT, Loeb, PG, and PL series are listed with a reference to the relevant series, but without further details.

I have mentioned only a few of the available translations and editions.

Acronyms are normally used for the titles of books, journals, and collections. Short titles are used for articles and essays.

Page references include 'p.' only in cases where it might avoid ambiguity.

A letter after a number (e.g., 'Reid, *EAP* 755 H') usually indicates the relevant edition.

Annotated translations and editions are usually listed under the editor's name.

Ac. = Cicero, *Academica*
ACPQ = *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*
AP = *Ancient Philosophy*
Aquinas, *in EN* (etc.) = Aquinas' commentaries on Aristotle and on Biblical books
Arr. = Epicurus, ed. Arrighetti
Articles, *see* English Articles
AV = Bible (1611)
BCP = *Book of Common Prayer*
BF = Aquinas, Blackfriars edn.
BT = Bibliotheca Teubneriana. Greek and Latin texts. Leipzig: Teubner (later Stuttgart: Teubner and Stuttgart: K. G. Saur
CAG = *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*
CD = Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*
Cic. = Cicero
CSEL = *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*
CUAP = Catholic University of America Press (Washington, DC)
CUP = Cambridge University Press (Cambridge, London, New York)
D or Denz. = Denziger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*
DK = Diels-Kranz, *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*
DL = Diogenes Laertius
EK = *Poseidonius, Fragments*, ed. Edelstein and Kidd
EN = Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea (Nicomachean Ethics)*
F. = Cicero, *De Finibus*
Fat. = Alexander, *De Fato*, or Cicero, *De Fato*
FS = *Franciscan Studies*
G = Kant, *Groundwork*

HUP = Harvard University Press (Cambridge, Mass.)
JHP = *Journal of the History of Philosophy*
JP = *Journal of Philosophy*
KpV = Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*
L = Aquinas, Leonine edn.
Loeb = Loeb Classical Library (Greek and Latin texts with facing English translations, of varying quality). Cambridge, Mass: HUP, and London: Heinemann
LS = Long and Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*
LXX, *see* Bible, Septuaginta
M = Aquinas, Marietti edns.
M = Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos*
Mal. = Aquinas, *De Malo*
NP = Plutarch, *Non posse suaviter vivere secundum Epicurum*
NRSV, *see* Bible. New Revised Standard Version
OCT = Oxford Classical Texts (Scriptorum Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxoniensis). Greek and Latin texts (OUP)
Off. = Cicero, *De Officiis*
OO = *Opera Omnia*, various authors
OO = Scotus, *Opera Omnia*, ed. Wadding
OP = Scotus, *Opera Philosophica*
OSAP = *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*
OT = Ockham, *Opera Theologica*
OUP = Oxford University Press (including Clarendon Press and books published in Oxford, London, and New York)
P = Aquinas, Parma edn.
P = Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrrhoneae Hypotyposes*
PAS = *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*
PBACAP = *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy*
PG = *Patrologiae Graecae Cursus Completus*, ed. Migne. Greek texts of early Christian writers
PHP = Galen, *De Placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*
Phr. = *Phronesis*
PL = *Patrologiae Latinae Cursus Completus*, ed. Migne. Latin texts of early Christian writers
Plu. = Plutarch
PR = *Philosophical Review*
PUP = Princeton University Press (Princeton)
QM = Scotus, *Quaestiones . . . in Metaphysica*
RTAM = *Recherches de théologie ancienne et mediévale*
Sent = *Sententiae* or *Scriptum super Sententiis* (various authors)
SG = Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*
SPAS = *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volumes*
SR = Plutarch, *De Stoicorum Repugnantiis*
SR = *Socraticorum Reliquiae*, ed. Giannantoni
ST = Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*
Stob. = Stobaeus

SVF = *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, ed. von Arnim
Sx = Sextus Empiricus
TD = Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*
TDNT = *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Kittel
U = Usener, *Epicurea*
UCP = University of California Press (Berkeley and Los Angeles)
V = Scotus, *Opera Omnia*, Vatican edn.
Ver = Aquinas, *De Veritate*
VM = Plutarch, *De Virtute Morali*
Vulg., *see* Bible
W = *Duns Scotus on the Will and Morality*, ed. Wolter

1

INTRODUCTION

1. Scope

Different people might easily write quite different books called 'The Development of Ethics' and might make quite different and reasonable decisions about what to include, what to omit, and especially about what to treat more briefly or more fully. If I were to give this book an ampler title, on the pattern of some titles in the 17th and 18th centuries, I might have chosen something like this:

The Development of Ethics
being a selective historical and critical study of
moral philosophy in the Socratic tradition
with special attention to
Aristotelian naturalism
its formation, elaboration, criticism, and defence

The different parts of this title indicate some of the omissions and emphases that determine the scope of this book.

In calling it a critical study I mean that it includes philosophical discussion as well as description and exegesis. In speaking of moral philosophy I mean that I have not tried to write a history of moral practices, or of everything that might be included under ethical thought. I have tried both to write about moral philosophy and to engage in moral philosophy through discussion of its history.

'Moral philosophy' refers to the discipline practised by (among others) Socrates, Chrysippus, Aquinas, Kant, Sidgwick, and Rawls. It is distinct, though not sharply distinct and not always distinct in the same way, from such closely related disciplines as metaphysics, epistemology, and other areas of philosophy; cosmology, theology, religion, and casuistry; natural science, social anthropology, economics, sociology, and cultural and intellectual history. No doubt moral philosophers have conceived their tasks quite differently at different times, but I believe their conceptions are close enough to justify us in speaking of one discipline. This belief needs to be tested by examination of the historical evidence.

The moral philosophers whom I have chosen for extended discussion belong to the Socratic tradition and discuss different aspects of Aristotelian naturalism. I will now try to explain these particular emphases.

2. The Socratic Tradition

To describe the Socratic tradition, I begin with a familiar passage from Aristotle on the method of moral philosophy:

> As in the other cases we must set out the appearances, and first of all go through the puzzles (*aporiai*). In this way we must prove the common beliefs about these ways of being affected—ideally, all the common beliefs, but if not all, most of them, and the most important. For if the objections are solved, and the common beliefs are left, it will be an adequate proof. (*EN* 1145b2–7)[1]

Aristotle places himself in the Socratic tradition by endorsing the critical examination of common moral beliefs in order to identify the puzzles and difficulties they raise. In Plato's early dialogues Socrates raises these puzzles through systematic cross-examination of ordinary beliefs. Plato and Aristotle follow him in trying to find an account of the basic principles of morality that will resolve the puzzles and preserve 'most and the most important' among the common beliefs.

According to this view, the moral philosopher should be responsive to the relevant phenomena, which in this case are the common beliefs and convictions about the evaluation of actions and persons. A reasonable theory will try to explain them, either by giving reasons for believing them to be true, or by explaining why they seem plausible even though they are false. Aristotle does not commit the philosopher to uncritical endorsement of the appearances. He requires us to explore the relevant puzzles, to see the genuine difficulties that they raise, and seeks to solve them by reference to the 'most and the most important' common beliefs; he does not promise to retain all common beliefs, or to follow common views about which are most important.

This procedure involves revision and reconstruction of the common beliefs that we begin from. We find a clear statement of this side of the Socratic procedure in Sidgwick:

> For we conceive it as the aim of a philosopher, as such, to do somewhat more than define and formulate the common moral opinions of mankind. His function is to tell men what they ought to think, rather than what they do think: he is expected to transcend Common Sense in his premises, and is allowed a certain divergence from Common Sense in his conclusions. It is true that the limits of this deviation are firmly, though indefinitely, fixed: the truth of a philosopher's premises will always be tested by the acceptability of his conclusions: if in any important point he be found in flagrant conflict with common opinion, his method is likely to be declared invalid. Still, though he is expected to establish and concatenate at least the main part of the commonly accepted moral rules, he is not necessarily bound to take them as the basis on which his own system is constructed. Rather, we should expect that the history of Moral Philosophy—so far at least as those whom we may call orthodox thinkers are concerned—would be a history of attempts to enunciate, in full breadth and clearness, those primary intuitions of Reason, by the scientific application of which the common moral thought of mankind may be at once systematized and corrected. (*ME* 373–4)

[1] For discussion see §67.

Sidgwick commits himself to a doctrine of 'primary intuitions of reason' that Aristotle does not mention. But the two statements of method are none the less similar enough to suggest a statement of method in moral philosophy.

In identifying the 'most important' among the common beliefs, we may hope to find the basic principles that Sidgwick calls the 'primary intuitions of reason'. The differences between different moral philosophers reflect (among other things) different judgments about which principles are 'most important'—the ones we can justifiably rely on in order to systematize and to correct other appearances. Different philosophers may be expected to appeal to other aspects of their philosophical outlook, as well as to (for instance) their scientific or theological outlook. Because of these different standards for selecting the most important appearances, moral philosophy is necessarily open to the influence of other branches of philosophy, and other sources of relevant knowledge or belief. But that does not entirely dissolve the method of ethics into any other method for acquiring knowledge. For moral philosophy, as Aristotle understands it, is ultimately responsible to the appearances; a theory succeeds only if it resolves the specific puzzles in moral appearances and vindicates the main body of the appearances it discusses.

In discussing the history of moral philosophy, I focus on the philosophers who more or less follow the Socratic pattern of moral argument. I present them as participants in a collective effort to apply this method to the past and present of moral philosophy. Among the views to be criticized, reconciled, or reconstructed, later moralists include the reflexions of their predecessors as well as the moral beliefs of their contemporaries. Aristotle recognizes that Socratic dialectical inquiry has this historical dimension.[2] Sidgwick's statement shows how later moralists treat their predecessors as interlocutors in the Socratic conversation.

But I do not simply intend to describe a collective Socratic inquiry in its historical aspect. I also try to evaluate it, and therefore to take part in it. In this respect I do not draw a sharp distinction between the method of a historian of moral philosophy and the method of a moral philosopher. It is more difficult to engage in a constructive conversation with an interlocutor whose starting point differs widely from one's own than to argue with someone with whom one already has a lot in common. But if one can find common ground with interlocutors who begin from widely different presuppositions, one may have grounds for greater confidence in the conclusions reached from this common ground.

The approach I have just described represents a widespread view of ethics and its history; and so I do not leave many people out by concentrating on those who share this view. But since different people accept it and practise it to different degrees, I say more about those who practise it more, and I say more about the historical and dialectical aspects of their views. For example, I lay special emphasis on the assessments of Greek moral philosophy by Augustine, Aquinas, Hobbes, Kant, Hegel, Sidgwick, Green, and Nietzsche, not because these moralists think of themselves primarily as historians, but because their historical reflexions show us how they participate in the historical side of Socratic dialectic.

[2] Aristotle practises this historical side of dialectical inquiry most explicitly in *Metaphysics* i, iii, in his discussion of the history of metaphysical speculation.

3. Aristotelian Naturalism

The Socratic approach to moral philosophy provides the main methodological theme of this book. Aristotelian naturalism provides the main substantive theme. The two themes are connected; for Aristotle believes that his naturalist theory is the most plausible conclusion from Socratic inquiry.

He defends an account of the human good as happiness (*eudaimonia*), consisting in the fulfilment of human nature, expressed in the various human virtues. His position is teleological, in so far as it seeks the basic guide for action in an ultimate end, eudaemonist, in so far as it identifies the ultimate end with happiness, and naturalist, in so far as it identifies virtue and happiness in a life that fulfils the nature and capacities of rational human nature. This is the position that I describe as 'Aristotelian naturalism', or 'traditional naturalism'. We can follow one significant thread through the history of moral philosophy by considering how far Aristotle is right, and what his successors think about his claims.

In describing Arisotle's position as 'naturalist', and in discussing various attempts to clarify and defend 'naturalism', I am using these terms with the sense I have just given them. I do not rely on the various other senses that they have acquired in the philosophy of recent centuries. Naturalism, as I understand it, does not commit itself to the claims about the definability of moral properties that Moore calls 'naturalist'. Nor does it assert that we should try to understand morality without reference to any immanent or transcendent God or gods. The relation between Aristotelian naturalism and other claims that have been described as 'naturalist' is a reasonable topic for discussion, and I will eventually have something to say about it.

In order to explore reflexion on Aristotelian naturalism, I have given some space to those who examine it in order to improve and to defend it. That is why some parts of mediaeval moral philosophy, especially Aquinas, are more prominent than some readers might expect them to be. Aquinas offers the best statement of the Aristotelian approach to moral philosophy and of Aristotelian naturalism.[3] The best way to examine this approach and this naturalist position is to reflect on Aquinas' version of them. For this reason, my chapters on Aristotle omit some questions that one might expect to see discussed there; I postpone them until I discuss Aquinas and his critics.

Even if Aquinas' position were not a reasonable version of an Aristotelian position, it would deserve attention in its own right. The criticisms that have sometimes been taken to rule it out as a defensible account of morality are ill founded. To justify this claim, I discuss the criticisms, defences, and revisions of Aquinas in later Scholastic views on morality and natural law, and especially in the views of Suarez and his critics.

To explore later expositions and defences of Aristotelian naturalism I also discuss Butler at some length. In some ways he is the central (though not the most important) figure in this whole book, because he offers an explicit defence of traditional naturalism, as he conceives it, and connects it to concerns that are usually regarded as typical of modern moral

[3] I lay less emphasis on the non-Aristotelian, un-Aristotelian, and anti-Aristotelian elements that are present in Aquinas' outlook because of Platonist and Christian influence. This does not mean that I think the Platonist or Christian aspects of Aquinas unimportant; but, for reasons I will try to make clear, I do not think they undermine the basically Aristotelian character of Aquinas' position.

philosophy. We may sometimes find it difficult to connect the topics discussed by Aristotle with those that preoccupy Hume, or Sidgwick, or Rawls, and we may be tempted to regard the preoccupations of the later moralists as typically 'modern'. The relevant connexions are much easier to see if we reflect on later Scholastics and on Butler's continuation of their arguments.

The aim of pursuing the defences of Aristotelian naturalism also explains the prominence of Green and Bradley in the treatment of post-Kantian moral philosophy. In Sidgwick's view, Green is wasting his time in trying to reconcile Aristotle with Kant. If we try to explore the history of reflexion on Aristotelian naturalism, we may be able to see whether Sidgwick's view is right. To clarify some of the issues raised by Sidgwick and Green, I examine both their views of the Greeks and their views of each other.

4. Critics of Aristotelian Naturalism

Aristotle advises us to identify puzzles and difficulties in the views we are exploring and trying to defend. Following his advice, I consider objections to Aristotelian naturalism, and discuss the non-Aristotelian or anti-Aristotelian views that seek to correct the errors and omissions of the Aristotelian outlook. We can compile a reasonably full and instructive case against Aristotle by attending to Epicureans, Cyrenaics, and Sceptics in ancient philosophy, to the Christian views that form an Augustinian and anti-Aristotelian tradition,[4] to the criticisms of Aquinas by Scotus and Ockham, and to the trends in moral philosophy that originate in Hobbes and Hume.

One might describe these criticisms as a series of nails in the coffin of Aristotelian naturalism. According to one view, the criticisms are so cogent that enlightened moralists are right to discard the Aristotelian view in favour of a thoroughly modern approach to ethics. I hope that readers who take this view of the history of ethics will none the less find it useful to consider what I have to say about the debates between Aristotelian naturalism and its critics. But I also hope that readers will hesitate to take this view. I do not think the critics have the best of the argument. Since I do not think they dislodge Aristotelian naturalism, it is all the more important to try to present their position fairly and sympathetically, so that one can see where they have raised legitimate points that a defender of Aristotle ought to concede, where their criticisms rest on misunderstanding, and where Aristotelian naturalism has a reasonable answer to them.

If we are trying to trace this debate, Kant raises some particularly important questions. One might regard Kantian ethics as the biggest nail in the coffin of Aristotelian naturalism. From some points of view, his deontological, autonomist, and constructivist outlook on morality stands in sharp contrast with the teleological, naturalist, and realist outlook of Aristotle. I am not convinced by this interpretation of Kant and of his relation to Aristotle. I am more inclined to argue that Kant's emphasis on rational autonomy is an unintentional defence of traditional naturalism against Hobbesian and Humean critics. Hence I try to see

[4] I speak of 'an' rather 'the' Augustinian tradition, to indicate that I do not think the Augustinian outlook as a whole necessarily opposes Aristotle.

why one might want to put Kant on one side or the other (or on neither) of the dispute about Aristotelian naturalism. Since my view about Kant and Aristotle is quite similar to Green's, I develop my thoughts on Kant partly in the chapters on Kant and partly in the chapter on Green.

Though Aristotelian naturalism provides the main themes of this book, it does not constrain its scope very narrowly; not everything is part of a discussion of the Aristotelian position. Nor have I designed the book as a whole as an extended argument in favour of Aristotelian naturalism. Still, the main idea of exploring questions related to Aristotelian naturalism constrains the scope and scale of the book; it partly explains why many philosophers who might deserve extended discussion in a history of ethics are omitted or treated very briefly. I hope that readers who do not agree about the centrality of Aristotelian naturalism will none the less find something to interest them in this book.

5. Beginning and End

These remarks about the main themes and lines of argument explain why I begin and end where I do. The beginning is fairly easy to explain. A proper discussion of moral thought and practice would have to begin well before Socrates, but a discussion of moral philosophy may reasonably begin with its first moral philosopher (as far as we know).

It is more difficult to decide where to end. One the one hand, omission of the 20th century might give the false impression that it does not continue the debates that I have been describing. On the other hand, the sources are all too plentiful, and it is too soon for us to tell which are more and less important. Readers should not expect, therefore, to find a full discussion of all the issues that have arisen in moral philosophy since Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*; still less should they expect a systematic account of all the sources that discuss these issues.

I have decided to stop with one fairly recent work in moral philosophy that ought (in both the predictive and the normative sense) still to be read in the 22nd century: Rawls's *Theory of Justice*. Apart from its importance in social and political philosophy, Rawls's book contributes significantly to the discussion of Socratic method, Aristotelian naturalism, and the connexions and contrasts between Kantian and idealist ethics. A discussion of these aspects of Rawls, therefore, makes a reasonable conclusion for my discussion.

But even though I have taken 1971 and *A Theory of Justice* for my terminus, I have not stuck to it rigidly. More recent work has thrown so much light on the questions discussed by Sidgwick and his successors that it forms a natural part of the story of moral philosophy from the later 19th century. But the reader should not expect a full account of the past century, and should expect only a few sketches of the past quarter-century.

6. Progress, Optimism, and Pessimism

If we approach the history of ethics from the point of view I have described, what do we learn? Is moral philosophy a rational and progressive discipline? Before we consider this

question directly, it is helpful to distinguish, very roughly, four different approaches to the history of ethics, so that I can describe my view in comparison with them.

(1) According to one extreme non-historical conception of ethics, there is no particular reason, besides convention or convenience or purely doxographical interest, for a historical treatment. If moral theories are defensible by arguments available to anyone who thinks carefully about the subject, and no more appropriate at one time than another, then the history of ethics simply gives us a list of the positions that have been held. While it may be historically interesting to see how one position develops out of, or in reaction to, another, this sort of fact does not tell us anything about the philosophical merits of the position itself.

(2) According to another extreme conception, a moral theory cannot be assessed timelessly, and there are no timelessly appropriate questions that different moral theories try to answer. There are different questions and problems raised by different historical and cultural circumstances, and moral theories cannot intelligibly be assessed except by their success or failure in dealing with these historically-conditioned problems. The moral virtues and principles that may seem to be constant throughout the history of ethics are really products of different backgrounds, circumstances, and traditions; and it is an illusion to think there is one set of problems to be studied or described in a history of ethics.

(3) On a third view, it might seem plausible to speak of the 'evolution' of ethics, suggesting that we can see in the history of ethics a gradual approach to the principles that we have now discovered. On this view, we should be able to distinguish the 'progressive' and 'reactionary' elements in the moral thinking of previous historical periods, and show how they evolved towards the present assured results. The history of science is sometimes written from this point of view.

(4) A fourth view might look for unity rather than evolution in the history of ethics. On this view, deeper examination of the apparently various and conflicting tendencies in ethical theory will reveal some considerable degree of agreement on the main principles; and this degree of agreement will constitute some argument for the principles. This view differs from the first in so far as it does not assume that philosophers are all addressing the same questions, so that we can evaluate their views in the way we would evaluate a debate among our contemporaries. The historian's task is to discover the relatively permanent principles expressed in different intellectual and cultural embodiments.

This sketch of some extreme positions may suggest some appropriate questions. Elements of these positions are present in some influential accounts of the history of ethics. The most successful and satisfactory history of ethics in English is Sidgwick's *Outlines*, which is written from the third point of view, displaying the evolution of moral theory towards utilitarianism. The best-known recent history in English, Alasdair MacIntyre's *Short History*, tends towards the second view; and he takes a similar view in his major works on moral theory, *After Virtue* and *Whose Justice? Which Rationality*?[5] A less extreme version of this view underlies Jerome

[5] See MacIntyre, *AV* 11: 'We all too often still treat the moral philosophers of the past as contributors to a single debate with a relatively unvarying subject-matter, treating Plato and Hume and Mill as contemporaries both of ourselves and of each other. This leads to an abstraction of these writers from the cultural and social milieus in which they lived and thought and so the history of their thought acquires a false independence from the rest of the culture. Kant ceases to be part of the history of Prussia, Hume is no longer a Scotsman. For from the standpoint of moral philosophy as *we* conceive it these characteristics have become irrelevances. Empirical history is one thing, philosophy quite another.'

Schneewind's more recent major work on the history of modern moral philosophy; he often warns us against assuming that the history of ethics consists of a series of efforts to answer the same questions.[6] The fourth view may be found in T. H. Green's discussion of Greek ethics in *Prolegomena*.

I am most inclined to agree with the fourth view. I believe we can usefully trace the discussions I have mentioned through the history of ethics, and that we learn something about the philosophical merits and resources of different positions by considering successive efforts to attack and to defend them, and to combine one position with another.

Reflexion on this history does not necessarily lead to a 'Whig interpretation' (inspired by Macaulay's view on the development of the British constitution). I do not believe that moral philosophy has made continuous progress, or that all discarded theories belong in the dustbin. Historians of philosophy have the opportunity, and perhaps even the obligation, to point out occasions when a particular assumption or line of argument was abandoned for insufficient reasons, even when, or perhaps especially when, those insufficient reasons still influence us. The history of ethics displays more than one example of premature abandonment. Moralists of the 17th and 18th centuries were not always right about which parts of the mediaeval and Aristotelian outlook they should reject. Similarly, 20th century moralists have not always been right about which aspects of Hegelian idealism should be abandoned.

While I do not take an optimistic view about steady progress and improvement, I write from an optimistic point of view in one respect: I assume that if a particular philosophical position is widely criticized or widely dismissed by successors who were aware of it, this is not the result of foolish or uninteresting errors by the successors, but the result of some significant weaknesses in the position itself. For this reason I try to consider sympathetically the explicit and implicit objections that have been raised against different positions, on the assumption that they deserve consideration. This is why I devote some space to criticisms of the Aristotelian position of Aquinas, and, later, to criticisms of Kant and of utilitarianism. I proceed on the assumption that, whether or not the criticisms are strictly accurate, they point to some important issues that can legitimately be raised about these different positions.

In saying that I approach the history of ethics with some degree of optimism, I mean that I assume we can criticize an earlier theory constructively from the point of view of a later theory, and that in many cases a defender of an earlier theory can reasonably be expected to learn something from the criticisms of later theorists. This assumption is to some extent self-vindicating, since it requires us to focus on the aspects of theories that allow communication and mutual criticism, in contrast to those that do not. I have not, for instance, emphasized the deep and obvious differences between the general intellectual

[6] In this book I display some sympathy with what Schneewind calls 'the Socrates story': 'Although we have not reached agreement about the basis of morality, we know the tasks that we moral philosophers should undertake. We are trying to answer the question Socrates raised: how to live. People have always had opinions on the matter, but it is very hard to get an indubitable answer based on an undeniable foundation' (*IA* 535–6). I am also somewhat sympathetic to what he calls the 'single-aim view' of the history of moral philosophy (548). Schneewind introduces the Socrates story and the single-aim view in order to criticize them. I am more inclined to think that each of them alludes to true views about the history of ethics. I do not accept either of them, however, as Schneewind states them, since he includes in them a number of claims that I would reject (e.g., the search for an indubitable answer or an undeniable foundation).

outlook of Aristotle and Aquinas, or of Aquinas and Hobbes, or of Hobbes and Rawls; I do not mean that these difference are unimportant, but I assume that they are not all-important. For I assume that the different theories are mutually comprehensible far enough to allow fruitful criticism and replies.

But this optimistic assumption is not wholly self-vindicating. For when we examine details, we may find that our expectation of constructive mutual criticism is unfulfilled. To fulfil our expectation, we must show that different theories actually allow mutual criticism. Fruitful mutual criticism is what we expect or hope for in dispute and disagreement among contemporary philosophers. An optimistic approach to communication among past philosophers suggests that the same expectation is fulfilled when we turn to them.

To treat past philosophers as though they were contemporaries engaged in a debate would be hopelessly un-historical if we pretended that the task of understanding them is the same as the task of understanding one of our contemporaries or that they should be judged by the standards we apply to our contemporaries. If we are to understand what they are saying, or how it bears on what other people are saying, we have to reflect on what they are trying to say, within the assumptions and options available to them. We ought not to focus on the ways in which they have failed to profit from reflexion on the later theories that were unknown to them. Our task is to look for the best statement we can find of their essential points, and of their bearing on points raised by later philosophers. In speaking of 'best statement' and 'essential points' we have to rely on philosophical judgment. That is why historians of philosophy cannot do without philosophy, if they try to discuss constructive mutual criticism. Nor can they do without specifically historical study, if they try to grasp what philosophers have to say to one another across historical divisions.

This degree of optimism does not imply that the critic is always right, or that a later theory is, all things considered, an improvement over an earlier theory. The history of ethics shows regress as well as progress. But to argue that the history of ethics takes some wrong turnings is not to take the reactionary view that we ought to ignore, as far as we can, the later views and try to stick firmly with the earlier position, as it was originally formulated. Here also I proceed on an optimistic assumption, that criticism usually identifies genuine weakness, or incompleteness in a moral theory, and that the theory needs to be modified and restated so as to take account of later developments. I argue, for instance, that the Aristotelian position and the Kantian position are not mutually antagonistic, and that a proper modification of the Aristotelian position ought to incorporate some of the major Kantian claims.

Some readers may regard this suggestion as a sign of unintelligent syncretism, betraying failure to grasp the basic differences between these different theories. It may seem more sensible to conclude either that it is mere nostalgia to defend Aristotle and Aquinas, or that the Aristotelian and Kantian positions offer us a clear choice that is not to be disguised by eirenic attempts to blur the conflict between them. Philosophers who try eirenic combinations sometimes appear to be well-meaning muddlers.[7] We will want to decide whether this verdict is justified.

[7] It would not be too unfair to summarize Sidgwick's view of Green in *EGSM* in these terms.

7. What this Book is Not

Now that I have tried to give some idea of the point of view underlying this book, it is only fair to warn readers that they will not find in it some things that they might expect in a book with this title.

(1) It is not comprehensive. I do not try to cover every ethical view or every moral philosopher worth discussing. Nor have I tried to give a full picture of the influence of different ethical theories by discussing, or even mentioning, their less well-known exponents. This is intended to be mainly a book about major philosophers and their major works. Sometimes I have something to say about less familiar figures, when they raise some point of special interest; but these references are a small and rather unsystematic selection from the wealth of material that would provide a basis for a comprehensive history.

(2) This is not the sort of history that looks primarily for causal explanations. If I wanted to explain why philosophers accepted or rejected Aristotelian naturalism at different times, I would have to consider intellectual, social, and institutional influences that I generally ignore. The discovery of these influences is a task for an intellectual historian. I have looked for only one sort of causal influence. Appreciation or partial appreciation of the philosophical merits or defects of a particular position may be one causal influence in its acceptance or rejection. We will not be able to recognize this influence unless we can identify philosophical merits or defects; and we cannot identify them without exercising philosophical judgment. A philosophical study of the history of ethics may help us to identify this possible causal influence.

(3) This book is not a 'Cantabrigian' history, in so far as it does not share the approach of some important and illuminating work in intellectual history by members of the University of Cambridge and by authors who have published with Cambridge University Press. Two recent and distinguished Cantabrigian works are *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy* and Schneewind's *The Invention of Autonomy*. Cantabrigian history of philosophy attends to contemporary context, cultural presuppositions, social and institutional influences—all the things I have said I do not emphasize. One motive for writing Cantabrigian history might be the belief that a historical study of the sort I have undertaken is not worthwhile. But a Cantabrigian historian need not believe this. The Cantabrigian approach and my approach are not competitors; they should supplement each other and offer some mutual illumination.[8]

[8] In *MP* xxiv Schneewind defends Cantabrigian history, contrasting it with the view of (e.g.) Prior in *LBE* that moral philosophers are concerned with persistent questions arising out of 'reflexion on ideas that are always involved in morality'. He mentions the Euthyphro Argument as an example. He does not deny the possibility of philosophical history discussing these persistent questions; he agrees that we can reach 'some useful analyses and arguments' by this means. He points out correctly that this sort of philosophical history may miss the different significance that (e.g.) the Euthyphro Argument may have had for philosophers in different periods. One might reply, however, that if we concentrate on the different significance that this argument has for philosophers in different periods, we may miss the persistent philosophical questions that they and we are addressing. Schneewind does not explicitly commit himself to the superiority of Cantabrigian history over the philosophical exploration of persistent philosophical questions (though an incautious reader might get the impression that he prefers Cantabrigian history).

8. Level and Organization

This book is not designed only for those who already know the relevant texts. I hope some will read it who are beginning their study of the history of ethics, or of some of the main historical texts. For this reason expert readers will sometimes find some of the discussion elementary and familiar. But it is not a substitute for reading the texts, and it will not be very useful to readers who want a brief survey. Though I have tried not to presuppose extensive acquaintance with philosophy, some parts of the book are fairly detailed, and may try the patience of less experienced readers. But they should be able to skip the more detailed sections without too much loss.

Though I have found that the book expanded to a greater length than I initially expected, many readers will rightly find some of the discussion superficial, inconclusive, and repetitive. Superficiality and inconclusiveness are no doubt partly the result of my own philosophical limitations, but they are partly the result of efforts to be reasonably brief (surprising as that may seem). Though I have argued for some conclusions and against others, I have not argued fully for firm conclusions on the main issues I have explored. But I hope I have at least suggested some points that are worth considering.

Repetition is perhaps easier to justify, or at least to excuse. I have not gone as far as I could have gone in eliminating repetition, because it seemed to me on reflexion that the repetition is in some ways part of the point of the book. For instance, some questions initially raised about Aristotle return in Aquinas, Kant, Green, and Rawls. But they do not return in exactly the same form. A history ought to make clear both the old and the new elements in successive discussions of continuing themes.

I have tried to stay close enough to the texts to make it clear what I am talking about, so that readers can look up the sources for themselves. I have also provided a fair number of quotations in the footnotes. I began to add these when I was discussing relatively less accessible texts, so that readers could look at a little of the evidence without having to go to a research library. But it would be odd to give the impression that less accessible writers deserve quotation more than better-known writers do; and so I have added passages from more accessible authors as well. Reading these quotations is not a substitute for reading the full text; but I would be pleased if some readers found the quotations interesting enough to encourage them to go to the full text.

References and quotations take up most of the footnotes. I have included some references to secondary literature. But it will be obvious to the expert reader that I have not offered even a systematic selection of relevant references. I have tried to acknowledge the works I have learnt from, but I could certainly have learnt much more if I had read more.

I have eventually preferred a chronological arrangement of the chapters. After trying a more thematic arrangement, I decided that it might create some difficulties for readers trying to find their way around. At least readers who want to find what I have to say about Aristotle or Hume will have some idea of where to look for continuous accounts of each of them—though, as I remarked, they will not find everything about Aristotle (for instance) in the chapters on Aristotle. But though each chapter is generally devoted to just one philosopher, I have not stuck rigidly to this rule. Sometimes I discuss some predecessors or

critics in a chapter that mainly discusses one philosopher (see, e.g. the chapters on Scotus, or Pufendorf, or Mill). And I have included some thematic chapters (e.g., on the Reformation, and on the British moralists) where it seemed appropriate to discuss themes that might be illustrated by a brief treatment of several philosophers.

Though I have followed a chronological order, I have not marked divisions into large or small historical periods. I have not made the division between ancient, mediaeval, and modern prominent in my discussion. Nor have I tried to give any general description of (for instance) the outlook of the Scientific Revolution or the Enlightenment. I am rather doubtful about whether these large historical divisions are very useful for thinking about the history of moral philosophy. If, for instance, we consider the sequence of arguments about natural law that runs from Aquinas to Pufendorf, I do not think it is useful to look for a division between mediaeval and modern contributions to the debate.

This example will illustrate my reluctance to organize the book around periods or large themes. Readers might perhaps have preferred some more historical or thematic structure. But perhaps I have given them some material that deserves to be considered in thinking about the right structure for presenting different aspects of the history of thought. To my mind, the history of moral philosophy is quite continuous, without radical revolutions or shifts in paradigms. But perhaps it would be wiser to confine this claim to the aspects of moral philosophy that I have studied in this book.

2

SOCRATES

9. The Founder of Moral Philosophy?

Ever since moral philosophers have recognized that they practise a distinct philosophical discipline, many have recognized Socrates as its founder. After a brief mention of Pythagoras, Aristotle introduces Socrates; he is the first moralist whom Aristotle discusses systematically.[1] Mill agrees with Aristotle in treating Socrates as his first colleague in moral philosophy.[2]

Even if Socrates is the first moral philosopher, he is not the first person to think seriously and rationally about morality. Even if we ignore the Hebrew Scriptures, or the ethical reflexions of Chinese writers, and confine ourselves to the Greeks, Socrates is not the first to ask questions about morality. On the contrary, his inquiries presuppose a reflective, questioning attitude to morality that was already familiar in some areas of Greek society. The Athenian tragic dramatists and historians not only raise moral and political questions, but also present explicit moral and political debates about the questions they present.

What, then, makes it reasonable to regard Socrates as the founder of a tradition of philosophical reflexion on morality? We can best answer this question by examining the methods and doctrines that Plato treats as distinctive of Socrates.

Socrates does not confine his inquiries to experts in morality; in fact, he is disappointed in his search for experts in this area. He asks whether people who make moral judgments know about morality, and he finds that they do not. Nor does he claim that he has the sort

[1] 'The first who undertook to discuss virtue was Pythagoras, but not correctly; for by deriving the virtues from numbers he did not apply the proper treatment to the virtues, since justice is not a square number. Socrates succeeded him, and spoke better and more fully about these things, but he did not do it correctly either. For he used to make the virtues into sciences, and this is impossible. For the sciences all involve reason, and reason is found in the intellectual part of the soul. And so, in his view, all the virtues turn out to be in the rational part of the soul. The result is that in making the virtues into sciences he does away with the non-rational part of the soul, and thereby does away also with passion and character; so that on this point he has not treated the virtues correctly' (Aristotle, *MM* 1182a15–23). Even if the *MM* is spurious, its view of Socrates is parallel to *EE* 1216b2–10.

[2] 'From the dawn of philosophy, the question concerning the summum bonum, or, what is the same thing, concerning the foundation of morality, has been accounted the main problem in speculative thought, has occupied the most gifted intellects . . . And after more than two thousand years . . . neither thinkers nor mankind at large seem nearer to being unanimous on the subject, than when the youth Socrates listened to the old Protagoras, and asserted (if Plato's dialogue be grounded on a real conversation) the theory of utilitarianism against the popular morality of the so-called sophist.' (Mill, *U*1.§1). See Schneewind on the 'Socrates story' (quoted in §6).

of knowledge that other people lack. He claims to engage in co-operative inquiries directed towards finding moral knowledge.

He takes the mark of moral knowledge to be the ability to say what a virtue is; hence his characteristic question is 'What is it?' He allows that people recognize temperate, brave, and just actions, and he asks what temperance, bravery, and justice are. He takes himself to be asking about the virtues (*aretai*)—states of persons that underlie and explain their brave (etc.) actions. He inquires especially into the virtues that were later called 'cardinal'—wisdom, temperance, bravery, and justice.[3]

Though Socrates does not claim to know the answers to his questions, he believes he can say something about the right sort of answer. In fact, he accepts a series of surprising claims about the virtues. His contemporaries and successors regarded his views as 'paradoxes', contradicting common moral beliefs.[4] They appear paradoxical to modern readers as well as to ancient. In his view, a true account of a virtue should show that all the virtues are really the same virtue, which is knowledge of the good. Knowledge of the good is also knowledge of the 'fine' (*kalon*) and morally right, and knowledge of the agent's own welfare or happiness (*eudaimonia*). Once we know what promotes our own good, we will act on our knowledge. This knowledge of the good, which is also virtue, is sufficient for happiness.

Socrates commits himself to three main paradoxes: (1) Knowledge of what is good for me is sufficient for action. (2) The virtues that promote my good are the moral virtues. (3) These virtues are sufficient for happiness. All of these Socratic paradoxes conflict with the prevalent outlook of modern moral philosophy. Sidgwick mentions the second Socratic paradox as the major division between ancient and modern outlooks. Here Socrates rejects the 'dualism of practical reason', as Sidgwick calls it, because he affirms that the demands of morality cannot conflict with the agent's own good.[5]

As Sidgwick suggests, the reaction of ancient moralists to Socrates' paradoxes is different from the reaction of modern moralists. Plato and Aristotle reject both the first and the third paradox, but still maintain the second. The Epicureans and Stoics are more sympathetic to the Socratic position. The Stoics offer the most elaborate defence of all three paradoxes; but it is not clear that the positions they defend are precisely those of Socrates.

Even these few remarks may suggest that if we understand the reactions of the ancient moralists to Socrates' views, we will understand some of the central elements in their theories. It will help us to understand these reactions if we first try to see what Socrates means by his paradoxical claims, and why he believes them.

What are we to take as sources for Socrates' views? Our main ostensible source consists of the Platonic dialogues in which Socrates is a principal speaker. But ancient readers do not treat all these dialogues as evidence for Socrates' views. Diogenes and Aristippus claim to be followers of Socrates, but they have harsh words for Plato and his doctrines. Aristotle

[3] On the cardinal virtues see §328. In the *Euthd.* Socrates mentions temperance, justice, and bravery as virtues; then he adds wisdom (279b4–c2). Sometimes he mentions piety as a fifth virtue (*Pr.* 329c2–330a2). These are the only virtues that Socrates discusses in the earliest Platonic dialogues, though they are not the only traits generally recognized as virtues by his contemporaries (see *M.* 74a4–6; 79a3–5 (*panta ta toiauta*); 88a6–b1). The tendency to pick out some of the recognized virtues as primary does not begin with Socrates; but earlier sources do not show any clear agreement about which virtues are primary.

[4] See Cicero, *Parad.* 4, quoted at §161n7.

[5] See Sidgwick, *OHE* 197.

attributes some of the doctrines found in the Platonic dialogues to Socrates, and others to Plato. The Stoics criticize Plato, but not Socrates, on some ethical questions.

The division that these readers mark, explicitly or implicitly, between Socrates and Plato can be understood on the assumption that they agree with Aristotle's judgment about which doctrines are Socratic and which are Platonic. He often contrasts Socrates' ethical theory with Plato's. He ascribes a purely cognitive view of virtue to Socrates, but never to Plato.[6] He believes that Plato agrees with him in distinguishing rational from non-rational parts of the soul, and in drawing conclusions for the account of virtue (*EN* 1104b11–13; 1138b5–14). Even if Aristotle were mistaken in his judgment, it would be close enough to the judgment of other ancient readers to deserve our attention. It is reasonable, then, to examine Socrates' ethics by treating Aristotle as a reliable guide to the Socratic elements in the Platonic dialogues.[7]

10. Method

Socrates believes that his inquiries are important for morality. They are not intended simply to satisfy our intellectual curiosity about the character of our moral beliefs. He suggests that if we claim to have the virtues, we ought to be able to answer his questions about them, and that if we do not try to answer his questions, we ought not to count ourselves as virtuous at all. Willingness to try to answer the Socratic questions is a mark of serious concern about one's moral character.[8] Both he and his interlocutors fail morally, therefore, when they cannot say what the virtues are.

Socrates finds that other people are too confident in their ability to answer Socratic questions; Meno assures Socrates that it is easy to say what virtue is (*M.* 71e), and other interlocutors display the same over-confidence. They are right to suppose that they can easily recognize brave or just action types (standing firm in battle, paying one's debts),[9] but they rashly infer that this is all they need to do in order to answer Socrates' questions. Their inference is rash because Socrates is not asking for a description of virtuous actions, but looking for the virtue that underlies them.

Though the interlocutors give the wrong sort of answers to his questions, Socrates does not dismiss their answers completely. He believes his interlocutors have reasonable beliefs that they can revise constructively, so as to approach a better account of virtue. His inquiries do not simply expose the ignorance of the interlocutors, but also make progress.

[6] See especially Aristotle, *MM* 1182a15–26 (quoted above); 1183b8–18; *EE* 1216b3–25; 1229a14–16; 1230a7–10; 1246b32–6.

[7] For good accounts of the evidence on Socrates see Ross, 'Problem'; Vlastos, *SIMP*, chs. 2–3. For Socrates and Hellenistic ethics see Long, 'Socrates'. A brief and forceful statement of a case against ascribing different ethical views to Socrates and Plato is Shorey, 'Ethics'.

[8] 'I will say, as I usually do, to anyone I meet: "My excellent man, you are an Athenian and belong to a city that is the greatest and has the highest reputation for wisdom (*sophia*) and strength. Aren't you ashamed to be taking care to gain as much wealth, reputation, and honour as you can, and while you have no care or concern for wisdom (*phronêsis*) and truth and for the best condition of your soul?" And if any of you disputes this and says he does care, I will not let him go immediately or leave him, but I will question him, test him, and cross-examine him; and if he seems to me not to possess virtue, but to say he does, I will denounce him for giving least weight to the things of greatest value and giving more weight to less valuable things' (*Ap.* 29d–30a).

[9] See *La.* 190e4–6; *Ch.* 159b1–6; *R.* 331c1–8.

Why is Socrates so confident that, even though he and his interlocutors lack knowledge of the virtues, they can improve their moral beliefs by considering and revising their attempted accounts of the virtues? He believes that when we practise Socratic inquiry, our answers to different questions form patterns. When we discover conflicts in our moral beliefs, we systematically prefer to retain a favoured set of beliefs, and we adjust our other beliefs to suit them. Epictetus the Stoic describes this process as the 'articulation' of our preconceptions.[10] We need to articulate our preconceptions so that we apply them consistently and rationally to particular situations, instead of relying on the conflicting judgments that we reach if we do not articulate our preconceptions.

Socrates believes that his method of inquiry is self-confirming; interlocutors who engage in the search for accounts of the virtues tend to agree that this is an appropriate form of inquiry. They agree that it is reasonable to look for an answer to the question 'What is F?', on the assumption that there is some single informative answer that applies to all and only the genuine cases of F, and that allows us to decide whether unfamiliar cases are genuine cases of F (*La*. 190d7–192b8; *Eu*. 5c8–7a3).

One might be surprised that Socrates and his interlocutors persist in this form of inquiry after Socrates has been proved right in his claim that they cannot answer his questions. It is not clear why they should agree that there is a single informative answer, or why they should be disturbed at their failure to find one. Perhaps Socrates overlooks the possibility that some terms should be understood through a series of analogies and connexions that cannot be captured in a single informative formula.[11] Meno suggests that there may be nothing more to an account of virtue than a description of the different types of virtue (*M*. 71e–72a). Why is it so easy for Socrates to convince him that they should still be looking for a single account of the 'one form' (72c) of virtue?

11. What is a Socratic Definition?

To see whether Socrates' expectations are reasonable, it will help to ask what he is looking for in his search for an answer to his 'What is F?' question. He expects a definition of the F to tell us not only what F things all have in common, but also to tell us the one F 'by which' F things are F, or that 'makes' them all F, or 'because of which' they are all F (*Eu*. 6d9–e1; *M*. 72c6–d1). We may call this Socrates' 'explanatory' demand.

The explanatory demand is different from the demand that a definition supply necessary and sufficient conditions. Sometimes Socrates refutes a proposed definition of F by showing that it does not cover all and only the examples of F. But in the *Euthyphro* he distinguishes the explanatory demand from a demand for necessary and sufficient conditions. For he rejects Euthyphro's suggestion that the pious can be defined as what the gods love, even though he concedes that the predicates 'pious' and 'god-beloved' are coextensive. To refute

[10] See Epict. ii 17.7–11, quoted and discussed at §165n28. Long, *ESSGL* offers an extended comparison of Epictetus with Socrates.

[11] Wittgenstein, *BB* 20.

Euthyphro's proposed definition, Socrates argues that the gods do not love the pious because it is god-beloved, and that therefore Euthyphro's proposal fails the explanatory demand (*Eu*. 10d1–11b1).[12]

Socrates and Euthyphro agree that pious things, as such, differ from god-beloved things, as such, because pious things, as such, have something in common beyond the fact that the gods love them. Because they differ in this way, the pious and the god-beloved are entirely different (*pantapasin heteron*, 11a4). The pious has some property, distinct from being god-beloved, because of which it is loved, whereas the god-beloved, as such, has no such property. Socrates alludes to this property by saying that the pious is 'of a sort to be loved' or 'of a character to be loved'; by having this character it is suitable to be loved antecedently to being actually loved.[13]

The dialogue does not explore the consequences of denying the point on which Socrates and Euthyphro agree. If Euthyphro were to answer Socrates by denying that the gods love the pious because it is pious, he would deny that the gods love pious actions for any reason; the fact that they love them makes them appropriate actions, but they do not love them on the basis of their appropriateness. If this account of the pious were extended to other moral properties, it would express a voluntarist account of moral properties, treating them as the products of will and choice rather than independent norms for will and choice. Plato does not explore this voluntarist account of the relation of morality to the divine will, but the *Euthyphro* suggests both what such an account would have to say and why one might be inclined to reject it.

How do we recognize the relevant explanatory difference between the pious and the god-beloved? We might try two possible answers: (1) An appeal to meaning. A correct

[12] His argument is this:

1. The god-beloved is god-beloved because the gods love it, and it is not the case that the gods love the god-beloved because it is god-beloved (10d9–10, e5–7).
2. The gods love the pious because it is pious, and it is not the case that the pious is pious because the gods love it. (10d1–7, e2–3).
3. Hence the pious and the god-beloved are not identical.
4. Hence the pious is not correctly defined as what the gods love.

Two helpful treatments are: Cohen, 'Piety', and Sharvy, 'Analysis'.

Socrates does most to support the first step of the argument. He appeals to simple logical, perhaps even grammatical, considerations (10a1–d12). To support (1) he appeals to a simpler case:

1a. x is being-carried (*pheromenon*) because x is carried (*pheretai*), and it is not the case that x is carried because x is being-carried.

Socrates expresses his point by claiming that the participial form ('being-carried' or 'a being-carried thing') is to be understood through the passive form ('is carried'), and that the converse is not true. His point is easier to grasp in English if we use the passive and active forms:

1b. x is carried because S carries x and it is not the case that S carries x because x is carried.

In (1) Socrates applies the pattern illustrated in (1b) to the case of 'god-beloved' (*theophiles*).

The general claim illustrated in (1) and (1b) is easy to accept. It is plausible to claim that carried or seen things, as such, have no nature in common beyond the fact that someone carries or sees them; what makes them carried or seen is simply the fact that someone carries or sees them. Similarly, then, loved things, as such, have nothing in common beyond the fact that someone loves them.

[13] 'For the one (sc. the god-beloved), because it is loved, is of a sort to be loved (*hoion phileisthai*), but the other (sc. the pious), because it is of a sort to be loved, is loved because of that' (11a4–6).

definition of the pious would say what 'pious' means. But we can see that 'pious' does not mean the same as 'god-beloved'; for it is not self-contradictory (even though it is false) to say that x is pious but the gods do not love x, whereas it is self-contradictory to say that x is god-beloved but the gods do not love x. The proposed definition of the pious as the god-beloved is therefore (we may say) 'logically inadequate', because the denial of the proposed definition is not self-contradictory. (2) An appeal to moral judgment. It would be unacceptable to suppose that the gods could make something pious simply by loving it; if it is to be an appropriate object of their love, it must already be pious. Hence the proposed definition of piety is 'morally inadequate'; to know that an action has the property mentioned in the proposed definition is not thereby to have given sufficient reason for concluding that it is pious.

These two ways of grasping the asymmetry imply two different ways of distinguishing the pious and the god-beloved. According to the logical argument, the god-beloved and the pious are different concepts, because the meanings of the terms are different. This difference in meaning is established by appeal to what is and is not self-contradictory. According to the moral argument, we do not establish difference of properties by appeals to meanings and to analytic truths, but by appeal to the different explanatory roles identified by moral judgments. A definition that is morally adequate might apparently be logically inadequate, since the denial of such a definition might not be self-contradictory. A morally adequate definition of the pious would not analyse the concept 'pious'; it would give an account of the property of piety. Even if the concepts of the pious and the god-beloved were different, it would not follow that they pick out different properties.[14]

Though some of the concepts used in drawing this distinction between logical and moral argument arouse familiar philosophical controversies, the distinction itself is difficult to avoid. A familiar modern meta-ethical illustration concerns the status of an account of rightness as what maximizes utility. We might attack the truth of this account either (a) by arguing that is not self-contradictory to claim that an action is right but does not maximize utility, or (b) by arguing that some actual or possible actions are right whether or not they maximize utility. These different objections are relevant to different sorts of accounts. The first is relevant to a question about the concept 'right', whereas the second is relevant to a question about the property of rightness.[15]

The *Euthyphro* does not make it completely clear whether Socrates is concerned with concepts or with properties. The discussions in other dialogues, however, suggest that he wants a morally adequate definition. He does not simply rely on his interlocutors' judgments about what is or is not self-contradictory; he seems to rely on their moral judgment. He assumes that moral judgments about actions and people rest on rational principles, and that we can do something to articulate these principles. This may not be true about all classification. A greengrocer puts tomatoes with vegetables, rhubarb with fruits, and peanuts with nuts, even though a botanist classifies them differently. To understand the greengrocer's arrangement, we need to refer to facts about our tastes; if our tastes changed

[14] For present purposes, I assume that concepts are, or necessarily correspond to, meanings, and that this is not true of properties.

[15] It is useful to keep this distinction in mind in discussing Moore, *PE*, and Ross, *RG*, who do not attend to it.

so that we treated rhubarb as a vegetable and tomatoes as fruit, we would not be making a mistake. Socrates assumes that our judgments about which actions are brave or just are not like the greengrocer's judgments; they do not rest on taste or convention. They rest on some reasonable criteria that virtuous actions can be shown to meet, if they are really virtuous.

If our judgments rest on reasonable criteria, we can see why Socrates persists in looking for an account of the virtues. His persistence reflects confidence in the capacity of his interlocutors. He assumes that when they make firm, confident, and considered judgments about examples of virtuous action, and these judgments conflict with the definition they have proposed, we should reject the definition and stick to their judgments about examples.[16] If these judgments were merely thoughtless responses such as one might give to an opinion poll, they would not inspire much confidence. But Socrates assumes that they reflect our implicit and partial grasp of the rational standards appropriate for judgments about the virtues.

12. Basic Moral Principles

But even if our judgments tend to display these patterns, and tend to converge on a favoured set of beliefs, we may wonder whether these facts justify us in believing that we have reached the truth, or at least are progressing towards it. To see whether Socrates has any reasonable basis for his confidence, we may consider what conclusions he thinks he reaches, and what grounds they rest on.

Though interlocutors begin with examples of virtuous actions, they soon agree that they should be looking for a state of character that underlies them. They agree with Socrates in calling this state a 'virtue' (*aretê*). '*Aretê*' is the abstract noun corresponding to the adjective '*agathos*' ('good'), and so the assumption that bravery (e.g.) is a virtue makes it an aspect of a person's goodness. But if we try to say in purely behavioural terms what makes a person good in the relevant ways, we face counter-examples. Though some actions are typical and characteristic of a given virtue, they do not exhaust the content of a virtue (*Ch.* 159b7–160d4). Bravery, for instance, is a state of character that is often embodied in standing firm in battle, but may on some occasions be embodied in other types of action; the brave person may withdraw when there is no point in standing firm, or it is more urgent to resist an attack elsewhere (*La.* 191d3–e2).

We understand why it is difficult to find a purely behavioural account of a virtue once we understand our demands on virtuous action. Interlocutors agree with Socrates that all virtuous action is 'fine' (*kalon*), 'good' (*agathon*), and 'beneficial' (*ôphelimon).* If an action is shameful or harmful, it cannot be virtuous, and a state of an agent producing such an action cannot be a virtue (*Ch.* 160e7–11; *La.* 192b9–d9). This is part of Socrates' reason for believing that virtue must be knowledge (since he takes knowledge of the good to be necessary and sufficient for a fine and beneficial state of character). Once we impose this condition, we find it difficult to find simple behavioural rules, or simple cognitive or affective dispositions, that

[16] In using 'considered judgments' I follow Rawls, 'Outline'. His description of these judgments agrees with Socrates' implicit conception.

count as virtuous. We may be tempted to identify bravery with endurance, until we notice that endurance is not always fine and beneficial, but is sometimes shameful and harmful (*La*. 192c–d).

To see whether this is a plausible demand on virtues, we need to see what Socrates and his interlocutors mean by saying that virtues must be fine and beneficial. The earliest Platonic dialogues do not offer us an explicit discussion of the fine. The *Gorgias* suggests that the fine can be understood as being either pleasant or beneficial; roughly speaking, the aesthetic uses of '*kalon*' are taken to involve pleasure, and the moral uses are taken to involve benefit (*Gorg*. 474d–475a). This account, however, does not help much if we have no idea of what sort of pleasure or benefit is relevant (cf. *R*. 505b–d).

Some passages in the dialogues suggest that 'fine', 'good', and 'just' mark the general area of morality. These are the questions that arouse disputes that cannot be settled by accepted methods of measurement (*Eu*. 7c10–d5); and Socrates assumes that living well involves living justly and finely (*Cri*. 48c9–10). When Socrates refuses to consider questions of his own survival, but insists he has overriding reason to obey the god's instruction to engage in philosophy, he says that the only thing to consider is whether he is acting as a good man should, and whether what he is doing is just; he praises Achilles who considered only the fine and just in deciding what to do (*Ap*. 28b3–d6).[17] In this case Socrates suggests that 'just', 'good', and 'fine' would all be apt descriptions of the kind of action that he chooses in preferring to go on philosophizing rather than consider his own safety. He takes the same view of other just actions he has performed at some risk to his safety, in refusing to take part in arresting Leon on the orders of the Thirty, and in objecting to the irregular trial of the generals after the battle at Arginusae (*Ap*. 32a4–33a5). These cases suggest that Socrates' use of 'fine' is quite similar to Aristotle's description of the common conception of the fine, connecting it especially with following impartial standards rather than one's narrow interest; according to this conception, it is especially fine to sacrifice one's own interest for the good of one's friends or one's community.[18]

It is reasonable, then, even if it is controversial, for Socrates and his interlocutors to assume that a virtue must be fine and beneficial. While we may recognize all sorts of virtues (or excellences; *aretai*) that make us good at pursuing different ends, we have a special conception of the virtues of a human being as such (as opposed to an athlete, a carpenter, or a knife). The virtue of a knife is what we reasonably want a knife to be like for cutting. The virtue of a human being is what we reasonably want a human being to be like; since we reasonably want each other to contribute to a common good, the common good and the fine determine the content of the virtues.

Socrates' next condition tries to ensure that all virtues meet the appropriate conditions for being fine and beneficial. He claims that each virtue is identical to the knowledge of good and evil. In this claim he assumes that the fine is included within the good; this is reasonable if he identifies the fine with the common good. He assumes further that the virtues require one and the same body of knowledge about good and evil. He does not admit one body of knowledge about bravery, another about temperance, and so on. If he allowed distinct sciences to belong to different virtues, we might acquire bravery without the other virtues.

[17] Partly quoted at n34 below. [18] For Aristotle's view see §116.

Socrates, however, denies that we can do this, and so he accepts the reciprocity of the virtues (each virtue requires each of the others) and the unity of the virtues (the supposedly distinct virtues constitute one and the same virtue).

He denies that the virtues are separable because he assumes that each of them is fine and beneficial. A supposedly brave action that did not take account of the considerations that belong to (for instance) justice would not be fine and beneficial, and hence would not be brave. A thief or murderer who willingly faces danger in the pursuit of his ends is fearless, but not brave, if bravery is a virtue, an aspect of human goodness. Sometimes Plato expresses this point by saying that if bravery is separate from wisdom, it is not always beneficial (*M.* 88b1–c4; *Euthd.* 281b4–e5). Since Socrates believes that bravery is essentially a virtue, he concludes that virtue is always beneficial, and therefore is not separate from wisdom and the other virtues. If the considerations that belong to all the virtues are relevant in principle to deciding about actions that belong to any one of the virtues, we cannot have any virtue without knowledge of the overall good.

This is Socrates' argument for the reciprocity of the virtues. Though we may initially be surprised that an apparently brave or temperate person cannot have this one virtue without also being just or wise, Socrates' demand fits our belief that the virtues are not merely resources or talents or capacities to be used well or badly, but are themselves aspects of the human goodness that allows us to use other things well. Socrates' successors have good reason for accepting his claims about the reciprocity of the virtues. Though they differ on other questions from Socrates and from one another, Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, and Aquinas all accept his doctrine of reciprocity.[19]

Socrates, however, does not confine himself to the reciprocity of the virtues. He also affirms their identity, claiming that each of the allegedly distinct virtues is really the same knowledge of good and evil. He reaches this conclusion in the *Laches*, and defends it at length in the *Protagoras*.[20] Since he assumes that a brave person acts bravely, his identification of virtue with knowledge implies that knowledge is sufficient for virtuous action. This implication conflicts with the common belief that we can know one action is best and still choose another. Socrates needs some further argument to show that knowledge is sufficient, and not just necessary, for virtue and virtuous action.

These basic principles control Socrates' inquiries in the earliest Platonic dialogues, and help the inquiries make progress. Socrates assumes that a normal and reasonable interlocutor will accept these principles, and will accept or reject claims about the virtues to the extent that they seem to agree or disagree with the principles. Application of these principles, then, helps us to see which of our more specific judgments about the virtues are or are not acceptable.

This degree of progress, however, does not yet take us to the goal Socrates is aiming at—an account of a virtue that would allow us to decide whether a given action is or is not virtuous. To reach his goal, we need to say more specifically what the science of good and evil tells us; what sorts of goods and evils are relevant, and how do we know which actions

[19] See §49, §117, §185, and §325.

[20] See *La.* 199d–e; *Pr.* 349a4–c5; 361b1–3. Vlastos agrees that Socrates identifies all the virtues with knowledge of good and evil, but he denies that Socrates believes all the virtues are the same virtue. See 'Unity', and *SS* ch. 5. For some discussion see Irwin, *PE* §28–9, 59.

are good and evil? We also need to explain why we need nothing more than knowledge; why does virtue not require non-cognitive conditions that make our knowledge effective?

Socrates stimulates further thought among his successors because he does not answer these questions in great detail. While he sketches the form of a theory of the virtues, he does not do much to fill it in; and so he leaves it to his successors to take his suggestions in different directions, resulting in conflicting theories that might all reasonably claim to be Socratic. But he does not leave us completely in the dark about his own views. The Socratic dialogues offer some further suggestions about what his principles imply and about why we should believe them.

13. Knowledge of the Good: Eudaemonism

In some places Socrates explains how he understands the claim that virtue must be beneficial; he takes the relevant benefit to be the good of the virtuous agent. At the end of the *Charmides* he assumes that if Charmides has any reason for cultivating temperance, temperance benefits him, and that if it benefits him, he will be happy (*Ch.* 175d5–176a5).[21] No reason is given for this assumption. We might agree that temperance is a self-regarding virtue, and that Charmides benefits from having well-ordered desires, self-knowledge, and the other aspects of temperance that are mentioned in the dialogue. But it does not seem to be purely self-regarding. Socrates also takes it to include order and moderation in political life, and we might suppose that this is virtuous because it is beneficial to the community. Why assume that it could never require some sacrifice of the individual's interest to the common good?

Socrates makes the grounds of his assumption clearer in the *Euthydemus*. He presents a 'protreptic' discourse (*Euthd.* 278c5–d5) designed to show Cleinias 'that he ought to cultivate wisdom and virtue' (278d2–3). This starting point is different from the one that Socrates usually assumes in his inquiries; in asking what a virtue is, he and his interlocutor assume that it is worth cultivating, but they do not examine their assumption. To show that the assumption is warranted, Socrates asks whether we all want to 'do well' (*Euthd.* 278e3–6), or to 'be happy' (*eudaimonein*, 280b6),[22] and he assumes that the answer is obvious. Since happiness is our ultimate aim, we should look for the sources and means of happiness; these are the different goods.

The assumption that happiness (*eudaimonia*) is the ultimate end for action is not a paradoxical Socratic claim. According to Aristotle's account of common ethical views, we all agree that our ultimate end is happiness.[23] The main ethical question is not about whether we take happiness as the ultimate end, but about how to achieve happiness.[24]

[21] 'Happy' here translates *makarios*, which is usually treated as equivalent to *eudaimôn*, or as referring to a superlative form of *eudaimonia* (such as the gods enjoy; cf. Aristotle, *EE* 1215a10–11; b13).

[22] On the relation between 'doing well' (*eu prattein*) and being happy cf. Aristotle, *EN* 1095a17–20.

[23] 'For practically every person individually and for everyone in common there is a goal that all aim at in whatever they choose and avoid; and this . . . is happiness (*eudaimonia*) and its parts' (Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1360b4–7).

[24] *Eudaimonia* is often taken to include more than a mental state; many Greeks supposed that being rich, prosperous, and successful were ways of being *eudaimôn*, not simply means to a feeling of happiness. For this reason, 'prosperity', 'well-being', and 'welfare' suggest aspects of *eudaimonia* that might be concealed by the rendering 'happiness'. On *eudaimonia* and happiness see Sidgwick, *ME* 92–3f Ackrill, '*Eudaimonia*' 23–4f Kraut, 'Conceptions'; Dybikowski, 'Happiness'.

But however obvious the eudaemonist starting point may seem, it needs some clarification. Some of the many questions that arise about it are these: (1) What makes it obviously correct? Is it just empirically obvious that we want happiness, just as it is obvious that we all want food and physical safety? Or does it reflect some non-empirical necessity? (2) Socrates suggests that happiness is not only an ultimate end, something to be chosen for its own sake, but also the ultimate end, implying that no other ends are equally ultimate. What justifies the second suggestion? (3) Is eudaemonism a claim about the explanation of action, asserting that all action aims at one's own happiness? Or is it a claim about justification, asserting that all rational action aims at one's happiness, or that one ought to take happiness as one's ultimate end?[25] (4) How are we to understand the character of happiness? If we claim to pursue three ends for their own sakes, do we (according to the eudaemonist) pursue an ultimate end, the sum of these three ends, and is this purely aggregative end happiness? Or does Socrates intend happiness to have more structure than this, so that it is not a purely aggregative end? (5) If we are eudaemonists, what kinds of aims or motives do we take to be psychologically impossible or rationally unjustified? We might suppose that some people are capable of disinterested self-sacrifice, so that they prefer other people's interest over their own. People also seem to be capable of disinterested malice, so that they want to harm someone else even if they will gain nothing by it. Are these counter-examples to eudaemonism, so that a eudaemonist must show that they are impossible? Or should we understand eudaemonism so that it allows such actions?

We need not try to answer all these questions on Socrates' behalf. It is worth our while to raise them in order to show how his eudaemonist claims provide his successors—from Plato to Aquinas—with topics for discussion. Aristotle is the first to recognize that Socrates' demand for a definition is relevant to happiness also. 'What is happiness?' is a question that Socrates passes over and that Plato considers only implicitly; but it is Aristotle's first question in the *Ethics*.[26] It is easy to see why Aristotle might suppose that a systematic treatment of the question is overdue.

14. Why Virtue is Necessary for Happiness

Socrates presents a list of commonly-recognized goods that are regarded as means to happiness. He mentions wealth; health, beauty, and other bodily advantages; good birth; positions of power and honour in one's own city; temperance, justice, and bravery; wisdom; and good fortune (*Euthd*. 279a1–c8).[27] Socrates takes all these elements in the list to be generally agreed, except for the virtues and wisdom.

He disagrees, however, with this common list of means to happiness. Common sense is uncertain about whether we really need virtue and wisdom; it is tempting to believe that if we had all the other goods, we would be happy, even if we lacked virtue and wisdom. This is the temptation that underlies Polus' claim in the *Gorgias* that the dissolute, cruel, and ruthless

[25] This division between explanatory (or 'exciting') and justifying reasons is partly derived from Hutcheson, *IMS* 121.
[26] See §69.
[27] Aristotle presents a similar list of goods (*Rhet*. 1360b19–23) that are generally supposed to secure the 'self-sufficiency' (*autarkeia*, 1360b14, 24) and 'security' (*asphaleia*, 1360b15, 28) that are needed for happiness.

tyrant Archelaus who has achieved worldly success has thereby achieved happiness (*Gorg.* 470c4–471d2). We might believe this and still believe that for most people the virtues are the best policy. Socrates, however, denies that Archelaus is happy; the virtues are necessary for everyone, not simply the best bet for most people.

To explain why we need the virtues, Socrates argues that we achieve happiness not by the mere possession of various goods, but only by the correct use of them (*Euthd.* 280b7–d7). Though we may grant that we are better off, other things being equal, with more of the recognized goods than with less, they may still make us worse off if we use them unwisely. We may squander our wealth, or use it to ruin our health; our great power may expose us to greater danger unless we know how to use it. But if we have the wisdom to use it correctly, we are also more resilient if we are unlucky and lose some of the recognized goods. Hence we should recognize wisdom as a necessary condition of happiness.

This step connects Socrates' argument about happiness with his inquiries into the virtues. The search for an account of each virtue leads us to agree that each virtue must be fine and beneficial, and that therefore each must be identified with the same science (*epistêmê*) or craft (*technê*) of goods and evils that ensures the correct co-ordination of all the considerations that seem (before we pursue Socratic inquiry) to belong to different virtues. Since Socrates believes for these reasons that the different virtues are to be identified with the single science of good and evil, he takes his argument about wisdom to show that the virtues are necessary for happiness.

This conclusion is all that Socrates needs to complete his protreptic task of showing that we have reason to cultivate wisdom and virtue. But it does not give us very clear practical advice. If we agree that the mere accumulation of assets does not secure happiness, because foolish people can misuse them, we may agree that wisdom is necessary for happiness, and that since this wisdom is knowledge of good and evil, it is virtue. But agreement on this point does not commit us to Socrates' assumption that the relevant virtues include bravery, temperance, and justice (279b4–c1).[28] How are we to tell that wisdom prescribes these virtues? A wise tyrant might apparently secure his position by sensible and prudent plans that are none the less unjust and cowardly, and that simply arrange for the satisfaction of his dissolute tastes.

To answer this question, we need to say more about the character of happiness. We can see (according to Socrates) that happiness is not to be defined as 'the sum of wealth, health . . . (and a list of other assets)'. We might, then, try to define it as 'the sum of wealth . . . (etc.) in so far as it is guided by wisdom'. But if the relevant sort of wisdom is to be defined as knowledge of what promotes happiness, we are trying to define happiness as 'the sum of wealth . . . (etc.) in so far as it is guided by knowledge of what promotes happiness'. Since the definiens contains an unanalysed mention of happiness, we still have not found a definition.

We would have a more satisfactory account of happiness and of virtue if we could say more about the content of the wisdom that guides us in the use of other goods. Socrates' comments so far suggest that wisdom is a productive science. Just as carpentry allows us to

[28] At this point in the *Euthd.* Socrates simply secures Cleinias' agreement on the point (recognized as disputable) that these recognized virtues are goods. We have to turn to other dialogues to see that Socrates believes they are goods.

use wood, saws, and nails correctly so that we produce a table rather than a jagged mass of wood with protruding nails, wisdom (we might suppose) allows us to use other goods to produce happiness rather than an unstable, chaotic, and precarious way of life.

Socrates, therefore, might try to tell us more about the product of wisdom. If we reflect on our reasons for thinking a successful but foolish person lacks happiness, we may learn how wisdom contributes to happiness. Archelaus' lack of moderation may expose him to danger. Croesus' great wealth made him presumptuous, so that he took the oracle to mean he would destroy someone else's great empire and not his own.[29] These cases may suggest that the wise person is the one who knows how to achieve both worldly success and security, and when to pursue one at the expense of the other.[30] Many Greeks valued the achievements that result from facing danger and taking risks, and for that very reason were sharply aware of the instability that may transform someone from an object of envy and admiration to an object of pity. This recognition of instability and danger suggests that we need wisdom to deal with dangerous situations.

If Socratic wisdom fits this pattern, it is a 'craft of life'.[31] It will help us to identify the way of life that strikes the right balance (to express it roughly) between success, security, and stability. A sensible person recognizes that we cannot pursue any one of these unreservedly without damaging the others, and thereby damaging our well-being. It would be worth our while to find the skills, dispositions, and traits of character that secure the right balance.

Socrates does not disavow this conception of wisdom. Nor, however, does he unequivocally endorse it. To grasp some of the complications in his position, we need to consider some of his further claims in the *Euthydemus* about virtue and happiness.

15. Why is Virtue Sufficient for Happiness?

One of the recognized goods that promote happiness is good fortune (*eutuchia, Euthd.* 279c4–8). Our previous reflexions on the sources and means of happiness make it seem obvious that good fortune should be included; for since happiness requires security and stability, it seems to need favourable external conditions that are not wholly in the agent's control. To begin with, we seem to need the appropriate sort of 'antecedent' good fortune, in the provision of the right sorts of resources—wealth, health, social position. But even if we have these and use them wisely, we also seem to need 'subsequent' good fortune; however talented, industrious, rich, and famous I may be, I cannot eliminate the possibility that some event over which I have no control will ruin me. This argument implies that even if wisdom and virtue are necessary for happiness, they are not sufficient. If we take security to be necessary for happiness, and we see the dangers that attend the actions and achievements that produce happiness, we may readily infer that we need good fortune—understood as favourable external circumstances—if we are to be secure in our enjoyment of the appropriate achievements (Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1360b28–9).

[29] Herodotus, i 53.

[30] On security cf. Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1360a25–9; Epicurus, *KD* 7, 13, 14 = DL x 141, 143; §158–9 below.

[31] For this Stoic expression see §178.

Socrates, however, rejects this conclusion. In his view, good fortune is already secured by wisdom, and does not require favourable external circumstances as well (*Euthd.* 279c9–d9).

Unlike the claims we have considered so far, this claim is not merely controversial, but paradoxical. Some people might deny that happiness requires virtue, understood as the craft of life. But once we notice that we need some wisdom to use external assets correctly, we may come to agree that happiness, as we normally conceive it, needs wisdom and virtue. Still, external circumstances that a wise person cannot completely control seem to affect one's happiness.

It is not clear why Socrates denies that happiness depends on external conditions beyond the control of wisdom. He argues that the wise person has better fortune than the unwise (280a4–5), and that wisdom can never go wrong, but must always succeed (280a7–8), so that wisdom always makes us fortunate (280a6). We might interpret this argument so as to make it sound. Socrates is right to claim that wisdom makes us more successful than the lack of it, so that it always contributes to our good fortune. But if we interpret the argument this way, it does not show that good fortune does not require external circumstances. Even if wisdom always makes us more successful than we would otherwise be, it does not follow that wisdom guarantees complete success in achieving our ends; we may be unlucky, and the success achieved by wisdom may not guarantee complete success. A skilful general may always succeed in finding the most astute strategy and tactics, but an unpredictable thunderstorm in the desert may none the less cause his defeat.

A different way to take this argument departs further from the common conception of happiness. Socrates may be asserting that the only success that should matter to a wise person is the sort that is secured by wisdom. On this view, the skilful general will not care if he loses the battle, as long as it was not his lack of skill that caused the defeat; nor will we care about events in our life that do not reflect a lack of wisdom in planning it. Socrates, therefore, identifies happiness with actions and events that are subject to wisdom, but he does not explain why we ought to revise the common conception of happiness in this way.

To show that external circumstances do not matter for happiness, Socrates claims that wisdom is the only good (281e4–5). He argues that other recognized goods are not goods in themselves without wisdom, but when wisdom uses them they become better than their opposites (281d6–e1). The force of this argument turns on the sense of 'in themselves'.[32] Socrates might mean that health (for instance) is not always good for us when it is separated from wisdom ('in itself'), but becomes good when it is used wisely. Alternatively he might mean that health itself is not good; the only good is the use of health (and other things) by wisdom.

This second interpretation of 'in itself' is needed if this argument is to support Socrates' claim that external circumstances are irrelevant to happiness. For if other recognized goods become good when they are properly used by wisdom, and if some of them depend on external circumstances, external circumstances may determine whether we have or lack certain goods. But if the only good is the wise use of whatever recognized goods we have, external circumstances do not affect happiness.

[32] The two most plausible accounts of this argument and of 'in themselves' (*auta kath'hauta*) are offered by Vlastos, *SIMP* 228–30, 305–6, and Long, 'Hellenistic' 25–9. For further discussion of this passage see §37.

This argument, therefore, offers two conceptions of happiness and two conceptions of the relation of virtue to happiness. If Socrates retains the common conception of happiness, he has a reasonable argument to show that virtue and wisdom are necessary for happiness, but no case to show that they are sufficient for it. If he maintains that they are sufficient for happiness, he needs to reject the common conception of happiness, and to maintain that only what we can control matters to our happiness.

The first of these two views anticipates the Platonic and Aristotelian view of virtue and happiness. The second anticipates the views of the Stoics and Epicureans, who modify common views of happiness in order to show that virtue is sufficient for happiness. Resolution of the obscurities in Socrates' argument reveals some of the major divisions in later Greek moral philosophy.

16. Wisdom and its Product

The conclusion that wisdom is the only good leads Socrates into a further difficulty. Since the product of wisdom has to be good, and we have found that wisdom is the only good, the product of wisdom has to be wisdom itself, and we are no nearer to finding out what this wisdom makes us wise about (292a4–e7). The discussion ends without an explicit solution to this puzzle.

Can we solve this puzzle with Socratic resources? We might plausibly doubt Socrates' claim that the previous argument has shown that wisdom is the only good. The argument has considered only the different goods that promote happiness, and has not considered happiness itself; hence it has shown (at most) that wisdom is the only genuine instrumental good. But we do not expect the product of wisdom to be an instrumental good; we expect it to be the non-instrumental good of happiness. In that case, we have no reason to conclude that the product of wisdom is wisdom itself. Further reflexion on the nature of happiness may still tell us what sort of wisdom is the productive craft that produces happiness. This solution retains the assumption that wisdom is a productive craft.

Alternatively, we might agree that wisdom is the only good, but deny that the conclusion is unsatisfactory. The discussion leaves us puzzled if we insist on treating happiness as a product of wisdom that is distinct from the exercise of wisdom itself, in the way that a chair is distinct from the exercise of the carpenter's craft. But we dissolve this puzzle if we deny that wisdom is a productive craft.[33] For if wisdom is the only good, and happiness is a good, wisdom is identical to happiness. Happiness, therefore, is not some further condition that results from the guidance of our life by wisdom; it simply consists in this guidance by wisdom.

In the *Euthydemus* Socrates does not endorse either of these solutions of the final puzzle about wisdom and happiness. As we saw in reviewing the previous argument, the different interpretations of his position anticipate the views of his successors. The purely instrumental conception of wisdom as a productive craft is part of the Epicurean view of virtue and happiness. The non-productive view is common to Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics. But Plato and Aristotle do not take this view to justify the identification of wisdom with happiness; only the Stoics embrace the identification.

[33] Moreau, *CIP* 188, defends this interpretation of the argument.

17. The Supremacy of Virtue

We have examined part of a protreptic discourse in the *Euthydemus*; Socrates simply sets out some theses about happiness and virtue without his usual cross-examination. We might wonder how seriously he takes these theses, and whether other dialogues offer us any help in resolving the questions of interpretation that arise in the protreptic discourse.

A question about virtue and happiness arises from Socrates' defence of his own moral choices. He argues that when one course of action is required by the fine and the just, one should pay no attention to any considerations on the other side; in particular one should not attend to the danger of imprisonment or death.[34] Socrates claims to have taken this attitude when he was pressed to arrest Leon illegally and to allow the illegal trial of the generals (*Ap*. 32a4–33a5).[35] But he does not say whether the danger of imprisonment and death provides rational considerations against acting justly. Does just action sometimes require us to sacrifice real goods? If Socrates is a eudaemonist, and he believes that wealth, health, and safety are goods that may conflict with virtue, he believes that we are always better off acting virtuously than we would be if we protected these other goods at the expense of the virtues; hence he accepts the supremacy of virtue.

Does he believe, then, that virtue is the supreme good, in the sense just explained, but not the only good? If he believed this, we might expect that in the *Apology* he would acknowledge that virtue costs him something, by imposing a loss of other goods. But he does not concede that virtue costs him anything. Similarly, in the *Crito*, he faces a decision about whether or not to try to avoid the death sentence by escaping from prison. To decide the question, the only considerations he allows are considerations of justice (*Cri*. 48b3–c2). He allows no consideration to compete with the requirements of justice, and so he decides the question about what to do by concentrating on the question about what is just; we might expect that he would tell us to observe the requirements of justice even though we lose other goods.

This is not how he presents his choice, however. In the *Apology* he assures the jury that nothing is bad for a good man (*Ap*. 41c8–d2). Similarly, in the *Crito* he tells Crito that what matters is not living but living well, and that living well, living finely, and living justly, are the same (*Cri*. 48b5–11). If he believes this, he believes that virtue is sufficient for happiness; whatever virtuous people lose, they lose no goods that are necessary for their happiness. Nothing is bad for them because nothing deprives them of happiness, as long as they are virtuous. Socrates, therefore, accepts the more extreme view presented in the *Euthydemus*, that external circumstances do not matter at all for happiness. He believes that virtue is not simply supreme over other goods, but is sufficient by itself for happiness.

Does he also accept the extreme claim that virtue is the only good, because it is the wise use of whatever assets we may have? This conclusion does not follow from the sufficiency of virtue for happiness. We can reach it only if we assume that happiness is comprehensive, because it includes all goods; on that assumption, if virtue is both necessary and sufficient for happiness, virtue is the only good, or else it is sufficient for the presence of all other

[34] 'You are mistaken, sir, if you think that a man who is any use at all ought to take account of the risks of life or death, and ought not to consider only this one thing whenever he acts—whether he is doing just or unjust actions, and the actions of a good man or a bad' (*Ap*. 28b5–9). See Vlastos, *SIMP* 209–10.

[35] See §12 above.

goods. But if happiness is not comprehensive, virtue might be sufficient for happiness even if it does not guarantee the presence of all goods.

Does Socrates believe that happiness is comprehensive? If he did not, it is difficult to see how he could claim that nothing is bad for a good man. If a good man could lose some genuine goods, apparently this would be bad for him, even if it did not deprive him of happiness. If Socrates denies this, he has to claim that the loss of genuine goods is not bad for a good person who remains happy. But it is difficult to see why we should agree that nothing bad happens to me if I lose some good I had and could use well, or fail to gain some good that I could use well. Socrates' claim that nothing is bad for a good man is easier to defend if he believes that virtue is sufficient for happiness and happiness is comprehensive, so that virtue is sufficient for the presence of all genuine goods.

18. Does Happiness give a Reason for being Virtuous?

If Socrates believes that virtue is either supreme in relation to other elements of happiness or sufficient by itself for happiness, he takes a controversial position. But to decide how controversial it is, and what is controversial about it, we should look more closely at what he means. When he claims that virtue is supreme in happiness or sufficient for happiness, does he (1) simply describe the virtuous person's commitment to virtue, or does he (2) give a reason for accepting this commitment?

According to the first view, virtuous people believe that they should give practical priority to virtue, as Socrates does, and their belief that virtue is supreme in happiness (or sufficient for happiness) simply follows from that choice to give it practical priority. Someone is a general because he has been appointed general; we would misunderstand the character of military rank if we tried to explain why someone has been appointed general by the fact that he is a general, as though it were some prior reason-giving fact. Similarly, the supremacy of virtue results from the fact that the virtuous person prefers it, and is not a prior fact that gives reasons for that preference.[36]

According to the second view, the place of virtue in happiness is a reason-giving fact that explains and justifies the virtuous person's preference for virtue. It is similar to being qualified for being a general rather than to being a general. Though someone is a general because of an act of appointment, he is suitable for being a general not because of an act of appointment, but because of features prior to any act of appointment; that is why it is possible to make good and bad appointments to the rank. Similarly, one might say, the virtuous person makes the correct choice in preferring virtue over other real or supposed goods, and facts about happiness explain why this is the correct choice.

Which of these views does Socrates take? Does he regard the relation of virtue to happiness as a prior reason-giving fact or not? The protreptic discourse in the *Euthydemus* takes it for granted that practical reason begins with the desire for happiness; we take different alleged goods seriously to the extent that we take them to contribute to happiness. Here, then, happiness seems to be a source of reasons for being virtuous. But we might argue that this

[36] McDowell, 'Role', defends this view of *eudaimonia* in Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.

is simply protreptic; it is meant to persuade Cleinias to take virtue and wisdom seriously, but not to describe the virtuous person's point of view. Socrates' remarks about happiness in connexion with his own actions are less easy to interpret one way or the other. When he tells Crito that living well is what matters most and that living well, living justly, and living finely are the same, we might take him simply to be reporting his choice to give priority to justice. In that case, he does not intend the claim about happiness to give a reason for believing that one ought never to act unjustly.

This, however, is not the most immediately plausible way to understand Socrates' remarks in the *Crito*. He begins by reminding Crito of their previous agreements about living well and about the relation between living well, finely, and justly. Once these points are agreed, he infers that they ought to restrict their discussion to questions of justice (*Cri.* 48b5–d5). This order would be misleading if the primary fact is Socrates' decision to act justly whatever the cost and if the relation of justice to happiness is simply the effect of his decision. It seems no less misleading for Socrates to assure the jurors that nothing is bad for a good man if he simply means that if we prefer virtue over other supposed goods, it follows that nothing is bad for us. He seems to be assuring them that virtuous people do not lose as much as other people think they lose; but if he means that for those who put virtue first, other losses do not matter, he is not addressing their main concern. If some people care so much about one good that they do not mind the loss of any others, it does not follow that they can suffer no harm; they may simply have warped preferences.

These are good reasons for supposing that Socrates intends his remarks about happiness to give a reason for his preference for virtue. On the other side, one must acknowledge that he does not say what features of happiness and virtue show that virtue is supreme in happiness or sufficient for happiness. His silence is easy to explain if he does not intend his appeal to happiness to justify his preference for virtue. We might expect a justification to argue that happiness has certain properties, and then to argue that virtue, alone or more than anything else, has these same properties. Since Socrates does not offer a justification of this form, we might infer that he does not intend any justifying role for his appeals to happiness.

Socrates' silence on these points helps us to see why Aristotle takes the question 'What is happiness?' to be the first one that a moral theorist should discuss. We will need to ask later whether Aristotle intends the answer to this question to show how facts about happiness are reason-giving facts. But at least he should allow us to be clearer on a question that Socrates raises but does not clearly answer.

19. What Sort of Virtue is Supreme in Happiness?

However we understand them, Socrates' claims about the supremacy or sufficiency of virtue are controversial; for they give practical priority to some state of the agent rather than to external circumstances. In his view, it matters more whether we have the appropriate sorts of beliefs and aims than whether we have the opportunities, assets, and circumstances that most people take to be characteristic of happiness. But we might suppose that this is the only controversial element in his claims. Once we grant that, perhaps it is trivial to claim that virtue is supreme in happiness; for 'virtue' simply refers to whatever knowledge we

need to use external assets wisely. If some internal condition is supreme, it does not seem controversial to add that virtue is supreme.

If this is what Socrates means, he commits himself to a potentially revisionary account of the virtues. If we were to discover that the wisdom needed for happiness requires actions that are quite different from those we normally recognize as brave, temperate, and just, we would have to conclude that we were wrong to believe that these recognized virtues are real virtues.

If Socrates had to accept this conclusion, the consequences of his eudaemonism might conflict with his method of moral investigation. His discussions with interlocutors assume that he and they can agree on genuine examples of virtuous action; it is because temperance (e.g.) is a genuine virtue that we can infer that temperance is knowledge of good and evil. But if it turned out that temperance is not a genuine virtue, we would have reason to distrust the agreements between Socrates and his interlocutors. In that case, should we stick to the implications of eudaemonism, or should we stick to Socratic method? Since Socrates does not consider the possible conflict between his different lines of argument, he does not say which should be preferred in case of conflict.

But he does not even admit all the points that would make the conflict possible. For in claiming that virtue is supreme in happiness, he does not seem to intend the relatively uncontroversial point (in the sense explained above) that knowledge about happiness is supreme in happiness. He intends the far more controversial point that bravery, temperance, and justice are supreme. He does not consider the possibility that a clearer understanding of happiness would show that these recognized cardinal virtues are not real virtues.

To see that Socrates takes the recognized cardinal virtues to be supreme, we need only notice the prominence of justice in his defence of his actions and choices. We have seen that he believes nothing should be considered in opposition to the demands of justice, and that justice requires us to stay at whatever post our superior assigns to us (*Ap*. 28d7–29b7).[37] Socrates does not entirely agree with the common conception of justice; he argues that the mere fact that you have harmed me does not make it just for me to harm you.[38] But the virtue that he calls 'justice' overlaps enough with the recognized virtue to justify him in claiming to be talking about the same virtue. In claiming that justice requires us to keep agreements that have been justly undertaken, Socrates appeals to some common views of justice (*Cri*. 50a2–3), not to some conception of his own that depends on his distinctive views about happiness.

Once we see that Socrates means to defend justice as commonly conceived, we can see what he means in connecting justice to happiness. He suggests to Crito that justice is good for our soul in the way that health is a recognized good for the body. Just as it is not worth living with a body that is ruined by disease, it is not worth living with a soul that is ruined by injustice (*Cri*. 47d7–48a1). If Socrates were using 'justice' and 'virtue' simply to refer to knowledge of good and evil, without any commitment to its prescribing recognized just actions, his claim that it is not worth living with an unjust and vicious soul would be fairly uncontroversial. But this is not the claim he intends; he intends the more controversial claim

[37] Part of the context is quoted in n34 above.

[38] On the interpretation of Socrates' views about retaliation in the *Cri*. see Irwin, *PE* §31.

that it is not worth living if we lack the cardinal virtue of justice, requiring us to keep just agreements, to refrain from wanton injury to other people, to remain at the post where we are placed by a superior, and so on. The virtues that are supreme in happiness, in his view, are the recognized cardinal virtues.

Is he justified in ignoring the possibility that we are radically wrong in believing that the cardinal virtues are really virtues? He would be justified if he did not believe that an appeal to happiness gives reasons to be virtuous. If our view about the content of happiness simply reflects our preference for the cardinal virtues, it cannot undermine this preference. But, as we have seen, Socrates seems to intend claims about happiness to give reasons. Equally, he seems to intend the claim that justice is analogous to health in the soul, and that it is not worth living without justice, to give reasons for being just. If he prefers justice, but does not treat happiness as the rational basis of his preference, he gives Crito his argument in the wrong order.

If, then, he intends facts about happiness to give reasons for being virtuous, Socrates does not seem justified in ignoring the possibility that we are wrong to value the cardinal virtues. To find reason-giving facts, we need to have some account of the content of happiness that does not simply reflect our preference for the cardinal virtues; hence we leave open the logical possibility that our account of happiness will show that we are wrong to prefer the cardinal virtues. To show that this possibility is not realized, we need to give an account of the content of happiness.

20. Integrity and Socratic Virtue

Socrates' silence on these questions does not simply mark a point at which his theory is incomplete. It also marks a practical weakness in his position. He does not, as far as we can see, simply intend to announce to the Athenians that he cares most about justice, and that he will not consider anything that would divert him from this concern. If that were his position, he would display consistency and integrity in acting on his choices, but he would not show that his choices are reasonable. He intends to show, however, that his choices are reasonable, and more reasonable than the choices of someone who chose to save his skin or accumulate wealth and power at the expense of justice; such people might also display consistency, but Socrates believes they have made a mistake, by harming their soul, and hence their prospects of happiness. To show that he is right, he needs to say more about why a plausible conception of happiness supports the cardinal virtues.

We might admit that this is a legitimate question to raise about the argument Socrates offers. For protreptic purposes—we might argue—he treats happiness as a source of reasons, by treating it as an end distinct from virtue and treating virtue as a means to happiness. For these purposes he treats virtue as a productive goal-directed craft, though the *Euthydemus* suggests that this conception of virtue raises difficulties. In his other remarks on virtue and happiness—we might suggest—he does not entirely escape from this productive and teleological conception.

Still, we might argue, this conception of virtue does not capture Socrates' real convictions. According to one view, he really values integrity and consistency above everything, and he does not regard happiness as an external source of reasons.[39] Since Socrates does not claim knowledge about virtue, he does not claim to know any facts that warrant his moral choices and decisions. He discovers that morality is not primarily a matter of knowing facts, but a matter of decision and conviction. The sort of knowledge that he lacks turns out to be irrelevant to morality.

This picture of Socrates makes him appear to be a sort of existentialist who refuses to make moral values responsive to objective facts.[40] But it is not simply a modern picture of Socrates. The Cynics may have understood him in the same way, by taking integrity and consistency to extremes.[41] According to this view, the virtuous person is not the one who has grasped all the relevant reason-giving facts about ends, but the one who sticks consistently to his choice of ends in his choice of actions. Ordinary people fall short of virtue because they are inconsistent, half-hearted, compromising, and vacillating in their choices and decisions.

A case can be made for the selective interpretation and development of Socrates' position that leads to Cynicism. We will be inclined to suppose that this is the authentic Socratic insight if we believe it is misguided to expect an account of happiness to give us reasons for choosing virtue over vice. But since most Greek moralists do not agree with the Cynics on this point, it is worth our while to see what sorts of reasons they can offer by appeal to an account of happiness.

21. The Nature of Happiness: Socratic Hedonism

In the dialogues we have discussed so far, Socrates' inquiries and arguments lead him to controversial claims that he does not defend. He argues that the different virtues are all knowledge of the good, and that virtue is sufficient for happiness, but he does not defend these claims further.

We can now usefully turn to dialogues in which these Socratic claims are defended, and especially to the *Protagoras* and *Gorgias*. It is not clear whether these dialogues present the views of Socrates, or Plato's first attempts to defend Socrates' views. The views they present are closer to those of the Socratic dialogues than to the outlook of the dialogues that match Aristotle's description of Platonic, as opposed to Socratic, doctrines. At any rate, it is appropriate to consider them as defences of the Socratic views we have discussed.

The final puzzle of the *Euthydemus* arose from unsuccessful efforts to say what the product of the knowledge of good and evil would be. We can solve this puzzle if we can give a more determinate account of the content of happiness. The *Protagoras* offers this more

[39] On Socratic integrity see Versenyi, *SH* 168, commenting on Socrates' trial and death: 'Remaining true to himself, on his own by his own effort, he achieves all that a man could ever want: the good life . . . the great man is still supremely self-sufficient. All that really matters depends on him alone.'

[40] As Versenyi's discussion in *SH* suggests, this might be described as an existentialist conception of Socrates.

[41] See §39.

determinate account by defending a hedonist account of the good.[42] This aspect of the dialogue recommends it to Grote and Mill, who take Socrates to anticipate one element of their hedonistic utilitarianism.[43]

Socrates argues for hedonism (*Pr.* 353b–354e) in the course of his argument against incontinence, which is part of his argument for the unity of the virtues. For the moment, we can postpone consideration of these other two arguments and concentrate on his explanation and defence of hedonism. He begins from an assumption that both Protagoras and most people ('the many', 351c3; 352b3) accept, that pleasure is a good in some circumstances, but not in others. Socrates acknowledges that most people reject hedonism, because they believe that in some circumstances one ought not to choose pleasure, but one ought to choose the more painful option. But he defends hedonism by undermining these apparent counter-examples, and showing that they can be explained by the hedonist position that they appear to undermine.

To see what Socrates defends, we need to consider different claims about the relation of the good and the pleasant:

1. Goodness is pleasure, i.e., x's being good consists essentially in x's pleasure (x's being pleasant).
2. One's good is one's happiness (*eudaimonia*), i.e., one's good in one's life as a whole.
3. Happiness is achieved by the predominance[44] of pleasure in one's life as a whole.
4. x's being good on the whole = x's being pleasant = x's yielding pleasure rather than pain on the whole.

The first of these theses may be called generic hedonism, since it allows different specific versions. 'Consists essentially' is meant to indicate that this is a stronger thesis than the mere biconditional claim that something is good if and only if it is pleasant. The specific version of hedonism that Socrates defends depends on his acceptance of the second claim, which is a eudaemonist account of the good for a person. This hedonist eudaemonism explains Socrates' acceptance of the third and fourth theses. The fourth thesis commits him to the claim—initially surprising, but intelligible in the light of his explanation—that sometimes having a tooth extracted (e.g.) is pleasant, even though it causes short-term pain, because it is a means to longer-term pleasure.[45]

Hedonist eudaemonism allows Socrates to explain most people's rejection of generic hedonism. He argues that they reject it because they do not think clearly about the implications of hedonist eudaemonism. Sometimes we say that x is painful and y is pleasant, but x is better than y. Socrates argues that in these cases we do not really believe that the

[42] Critics disagree about the degree to which Plato means to convey his endorsement of hedonism in the *Protagoras*. I generally agree with Gosling and Taylor, *GP* 58–68.

[43] Grote, *POCS* ii 208, suggests that the hedonism of the *Pr.* solves the puzzle in the *Euthd.*: 'Good is the object of the Regal or political intelligence; but what is Good? . . . There is only one dialogue in which the question is answered affirmatively, in clear and unmistakable language, and with considerable development—and that is, the Protagoras: where Sokrates asserts and proves at length, that Good is at the bottom identical with pleasure, and Evil with pain . . . . ' For Mill see n2 above.

[44] The relevant notion of predominance is not precise. A life that was barely more pleasant than painful would scarcely be *eudaimôn*. Socrates seems to assume that pleasure must exceed pain by a large margin, but he does not say how large it must be. In contrast to pleasure (and happiness, as English philosophers sometimes speak of it), happiness is not a quantity that can come in small or large amounts.

[45] This extended use of 'pleasant' and 'painful' is assumed in the argument at 355b–356a.

preferred alternative is less pleasant all things considered, but only that it offers less pleasure in the short term; we believe it is better because it offers more pleasure in the long term. If we take a bitter medicine, or face a danger, we believe the 'painful' course of action will yield more pleasure than pain, and the 'pleasant' course of action will yield more pain than pleasure, given their total effects. Socrates believes he has now refuted the common view that pleasure itself is sometimes good and sometimes bad; he affirms that pleasure itself, rather than good pleasure, is the end. We may say that he maintains 'unqualified hedonism'.[46]

By generalizing his hedonist explanation, Socrates convinces the many that they pursue pleasure as good and avoid pain as evil (354c3–5). In pursuing x rather than y as good we pursue x because we believe that x yields greater overall pleasure than y (354b5–d3). Hence we pursue pleasure as the good and avoid pain as evil. 'Pleasant' and 'good' are two names for the same thing. Socrates does not claim that the two terms are synonymous; his 'What is it?' question does not seek to analyse concepts, but to identify explanatory properties, and in this case he claims that the feature that explains why things are good is their pleasantness, which is the same property as their goodness.[47] This identification reduces good to pleasure; we regard things as good because we suppose they are pleasant, whereas we do not regard things as pleasant because we suppose they are good. Hedonism is not an alternative to eudaemonism; it is an account of the good that eudaemonism takes to be our ultimate end.[48]

Socrates may not be the first to defend hedonist eudaemonism. A similar position may plausibly be ascribed to Democritus, though we do not know who influences whom. Democritus identifies the good with pleasure, and recognizes that some pleasures are not advantageous.[49] He probably uses eudaemonist reflexion on the future effects of these pleasures, as Socrates does, in order to decide which are not advantageous. Like Socrates, he seems to take the eudaemonist assumption to be obviously correct.

22. Hedonism and Socratic Virtue

Socrates can now offer an apparently clear and determinate answer to the question that the *Euthydemus* did not answer: what is the content of the science of good and evil? He argues that it is a 'measuring craft' that accurately counts the overall pleasure and pain resulting from a given action, so that we are not misled into thinking that the pains we suffer now are greater than those we will suffer tomorrow; temporal closeness causes us to exaggerate pains and pleasures just as spatial closeness causes us to think things are bigger than they really are, and so we need a measuring craft to make sure we are not misled by our short-sighted point of view (356c4–357b4).

The science of good and evil does not tell us that we ought to adopt a prudent outlook on our lives, so that we try to maximize the good in our life as a whole. It assumes that

[46] On unqualified hedonism see §29. [47] On concepts and properties see §11 above.

[48] Contrast the views of Aristippus, §30, and Epicurus, §145, who make the pursuit of pleasure motivationally prior to the pursuit of happiness.

[49] For Democritus' views see DK 68 B74, B188, B191; Stob. ii 7.3 = A167. On Democritus' hedonism see Taylor, *ALD* 233, 'Pleasure'; and §32.

we already accept that outlook. The mistake that we make if we lack the measuring craft is not that we become indifferent to our lives as a whole, but that we exaggerate the impact of short-term pleasures and pains. Socrates assumes that we all follow Sidgwick's 'axiom of prudence', according to which 'hereafter *as such* is to be regarded neither less nor more than now'.[50] His description of the measuring craft shows how completely he takes the eudaemonist outlook for granted. He does not consider the possibility of desires that might not respond to beliefs about the good for our lives as a whole.

Socrates' account of the measuring craft helps us to see why wisdom is what we need for the proper use of external resources and circumstances. Even if we have all the resources we could wish, we may still harm ourselves if we do not predict accurately the longer-term effects of different courses of action on our prospects of pleasure and pain. With the help of hedonism, the knowledge of good and evil is no longer obscure and imprecise; it is a determinate and achievable body of knowledge that we can apply for obvious practical benefit.

This comparison with the *Euthydemus* shows us how the theory in the *Protagoras* might reasonably appeal to someone who seeks to defend Socratic claims about the knowledge of good and evil. Plato, therefore, may seriously maintain the hedonism of the *Protagoras* as part of his defence of Socratic ethics. Grote and Mill have a good reason to treat the dialogue as a partial anticipation of utilitarianism. The anticipation is only partial, since (as Grote emphasizes) Socrates does not defend the universalistic hedonism that identifies the good with the maximum pleasure of everyone affected.[51] He introduces hedonism to support eudaemonism, and so he identifies one's own good with one's own maximum pleasure.

The virtues all manifest the measuring craft that discovers one's own maximum overall pleasure. Hence Socrates suggests that the brave person is the one who sees that the immediate pain for him involved in facing danger is outweighed by the long-term pleasure for him resulting from (say) winning the battle. The temperate person will be the one who sees that the pleasure resulting from finishing the bottle of wine now is outweighed by the pain of tomorrow's hangover. Socrates does not say how this analysis might be applied to justice; but we might suggest that the just person sees that the immediate pleasure resulting from breaking this promise to repay what he owes is outweighed by the longer-term pain resulting from other people's distrust.

This sketch of an analysis of the virtues is the basis of Epicurus' moral theory.[52] He agrees with Socrates' strategy for defending hedonism, arguing that opposition to hedonism results from a superficial judgment about comparative pleasures. Once we understand the character and temporal effects of different pleasures and pains, we see that an accurate assessment of pleasures and pains recommends the cardinal virtues to us, and that those who oppose pleasure to morality have simply miscalculated pleasures and pains. Epicurus' ideas in turn are one source of Hobbes's account of the psychological basis of morality.

These later developments of hedonism show that the *Protagoras* introduces a significant and influential element of ethical reflexion. It is not surprising that Plato regards it as a plausible defence of Socrates' claims about happiness and virtue.

[50] See Sidgwick, *ME* 380–1. [51] See Grote, *POCS* ii 309–13. [52] See §157.

23. Objections to Hedonism: The *Gorgias*

Plato not only shows how hedonism might support Socratic ethics, but also argues that Socrates has good reason to reject hedonism. In the *Gorgias* Callicles, Socrates' main opponent, is a hedonist, and Socrates argues against him. This dispute about hedonism arises from a discussion of questions that the *Protagoras* alludes to, but does not discuss, about the relation between justice and the other virtues.

The *Gorgias* discusses the connexion between Socrates' moral views and his way of life. It concentrates especially on a question that earlier dialogues largely pass over, about the connexion between Socrates' eudaemonism and his defence of justice. In the earlier dialogues Socrates assumes that if we correctly grasp our happiness and the means to it, we will decide in favour of justice even if it involves the dangers that it involves for Socrates. He re-affirms this claim in the *Gorgias*, maintaining against Polus that virtue, including justice, is both necessary and sufficient for happiness (*Gorg*. 470c9–e11). Callicles is dissatisfied with Socrates' case for justice, and defends the contrary view that if we understand the nature and sources of our happiness, we will reject other-regarding justice.[53]

Callicles defends this attack on justice by appeal to a hedonist conception of happiness (494b7–495e2). We achieve happiness by maximizing our pleasure, and we increase our pleasure by increasing the strength and urgency of the appetites that we satisfy; hence we achieve happiness by cultivating the largest possible appetites and ensuring that we have the resources to satisfy them. This policy conflicts with justice because the pursuit of the resources we need to satisfy our expanded appetites gives us reason to treat other people unjustly.

As Callicles presents it, the conflict between justice and maximum satisfaction is the result of empirical facts about scarce resources. If these resources were unlimited, we would not need to act unjustly. One might, however, strengthen Callicles' position by assuming that we have appetites that are more directly opposed to justice. If we want to dominate and control others, or to torture or humiliate them, we will act unjustly (in Callicles' view) even if we have all the resources we need.[54] Hence a hedonist conception of happiness implies that we have reason to satisfy these desires at the expense of justice. While a hedonist conception does not require us to form these desires, it requires us to satisfy them if we have them.

Callicles treats hedonism as a version of eudaemonism; he offers a plan for the conduct of one's life as a whole. He points out that the rational conduct of one's life requires some virtues; the superior people need bravery to pursue their maximum satisfaction over time despite short-term dangers or difficulties (491a7–b4). If they have this virtue, they will not be deterred by social disapproval or conventional scruples from carrying out their plan. This is the conception of bravery that belongs to the hedonic measuring craft described in the *Protagoras*; the brave person looks beyond the short-term hazard to the longer-term pleasure.

[53] I speak of 'other-regarding justice' to pick out what Callicles calls 'conventional justice' (justice by *nomos*). For reasons I will not discuss, he takes himself to defend 'natural justice' (justice by *phusis*), which requires the stronger to dominate the weaker; see 482c4–484c3. For simplicity, I will speak of Callicles as opposing justice. On nature and convention see §133.

[54] It is not clear whether Hobbes (e.g., in *L*.17.1) intends to recognize essentially competitive motives of this sort.

But Callicles rejects the hedonist defence of temperance; he denies that a sensible person has any reason to moderate his appetites, as long as he can find the resources to satisfy them.

Socrates argues that Callicles' hedonism is inconsistent with the belief that bravery is a virtue. He observes that in battles the coward gets at least as much pleasure as the brave person gets; and so it seems that bravery is no more effective than cowardice in securing pleasure (497d8–499b3). Hedonism does not justify Callicles in preferring bravery over cowardice.[55]

We might protest that Socrates or Plato is being obtuse (perhaps deliberately) in suggesting that this sort of counter-example could refute the hedonist defence of bravery. It seems to ignore the point that the *Protagoras* underlines in its discussion of the measuring craft. Socrates' example shows that the coward gains more short-term pleasure than the brave person, because he is so relieved when the danger is past. But he gains this short-term pleasure only at the cost of longer-term pain, when the enemy attacks successfully because he deserts his post. Socrates' objection seems to reflect the misleading short-term point of view that the measuring craft corrects.

It is unlikely that Plato simply overlooks this appeal to the measuring craft. Not only does the *Protagoras* emphasize the measurement of short-term and long-term pleasures, but Callicles also relies on it in explaining why the superior person needs bravery; bravery gives us the long-term view that sets aside conventional scruples and other obstacles to our maximizing the satisfaction of our desires.

But this appeal to the measuring craft does not answer Socrates' basic objection. Hedonism does not say that the good consists in the pleasure that we gain from an impartial view of short-term and long-term pleasure; it says that the good consists in maximum pleasure. The *Protagoras* assumes that we maximize pleasure by taking the point of view of the measuring science. But this assumption is not obviously correct, and Callicles' account of the good shows why it may not be correct. He has argued that we increase our pleasure if we increase the craving that is satisfied by the pleasure. The coward seems to embody this principle; for since he does not try to inhibit his fears by thinking of the future pleasures that result from facing danger, he is more sensitive to danger than the brave person would be, and so he gains greater pleasure if the danger has passed. The less we think about future compensations, and the more sensitive we are to present dangers, the greater are the pleasures that come from short-term relief. Maximum pleasure may not result from concentration on longer-term pleasure.

24. Hedonism without Prudence?

Even if these arguments cast doubt on the consistency of Callicles' position, why should they lead him to abandon hedonism? If he cannot consistently both accept hedonism and recognize bravery as a virtue, why should he not retain hedonism and deny that bravery is a virtue?

[55] White, 'Prudence' 142–50, suggests that Callicles' version of hedonism reflects the view that only the present matters in assessment of one's well-being. On the Cyrenaic view see §31.

Socrates' argument suggests that the rejection of bravery would be the rejection of rational planning. If we had the coward's outlook, we would see no point in making plans for the future, and we would make no effort to carry them out in the face of obstacles. We would not be concerned about ourselves as temporally-extended rational agents. But Callicles' initial picture of the superior person presupposes the value of temporally-extended rational agency. He advises us to take control of our own lives, to set our own goals, and not simply to absorb the outlook of the inferior people around us, who are too lazy, cowardly, and scrupulous to execute the plans that express their own rational agency. He does not see, until Socrates points it out to him, that this concern for rational planning conflicts with his hedonist account of the good. Plato does not treat Callicles unfairly, therefore, in presenting him as abandoning hedonism rather than his advocacy of bravery.

This interpretation of the discussion between Callicles and Socrates should make us less surprised that Plato defends hedonism in the *Protagoras* but attacks it in the *Gorgias*.[56] The attack in the *Gorgias* results from closer consideration of the defence in the *Protagoras*. The defence of the measuring craft in the *Protagoras* assumes that concern for rational agency is consistent with hedonism. The *Gorgias* raises doubts about that assumption. To share these doubts, we need not agree with Callicles' view that everyone always maximizes pleasure by maximizing appetites. If some desires and pleasures fit Callicles' pattern, maximizing pleasure conflicts with concern for rational agency.

Perhaps, then, the measuring craft that Callicles should accept attaches less importance to rational agency than the *Protagoras* assumes. Instead of active planning and execution of our rational plans, perhaps we should take a more passive attitude to events and allow ourselves to be moved by the fears and pleasures that brave and temperate people try to restrain or to remove. The appropriate sort of measurement for a hedonist will reject the recognized virtues that the *Protagoras* advocates. Socrates does not discuss this version of hedonist eudaemonism. Though we can see why it does not appeal to Callicles, might it reasonably appeal to someone who lacks his concern for rational agency?

This question leads to a further possible implication of Socrates' objections. The hedonist position we have suggested to cope with the objections to Callicles maintains eudaemonism without concern for rational agency. But is this a reasonable position? Our preference for long-term over short-term benefits is reasonable if we think of ourselves as continuing rational agents who try to carry out our plans and aims in our actions. Since these plans and aims take time, we have a good reason to think about the longer term. But if we entirely abandon any concern for rational agency, have we any reason to take the long-term view characteristic of eudaemonism?

Though Socrates does not pursue this line of argument, it suggests that a hedonist eudaemonist has no easy answer to him. The *Gorgias*, therefore, suggests a conflict between eudaemonism and hedonism. In identifying our good with our happiness, we think of it as a good for a temporally extended rational agent who cares about his life as a whole, and who values rational planning for his life. This sort of agent cares about the security and stability that are recognized features of happiness. The *Protagoras* assumes that eudaemonism

[56] Gosling and Taylor, *GP* 70–5, believe that the argument in the *Gorg.* neither refutes hedonism nor is intended to refute it. Hence they attribute to Socrates a view similar to Epicurean hedonism. See §156.

supports hedonism, but the *Gorgias* casts doubt on that assumption. If we reject the attitude of Callicles' coward, we value rational agency over maximum pleasure; hence we accept a non-hedonist good.

Neither Socrates nor Callicles considers the rejection of eudaemonism. But we might wonder about what sort of theory we could defend if we accepted hedonism without eudaemonism. We can answer that question by considering the Cyrenaic position. Aristippus is a hedonist, but he seems to believe that hedonism conflicts with eudaemonism. He takes the view that Socrates and Callicles do not mention, and defends non-eudaemonist hedonism. The arguments we have discussed help to explain why Aristippus believes that this is a reasonable conclusion for a follower of Socrates to defend.

25. An Adaptive Conception of Happiness

The hedonism of the *Protagoras* offers a more determinate conception of happiness than we find in earlier dialogues, and so allows us to see how Socrates might defend the cardinal virtues as means to happiness. But such a defence seems to raise more difficulties than it solves. We have seen difficulties that arise from the criticism of hedonism in the *Gorgias*. But, even apart from these difficulties, it is not clear how hedonism supports Socrates' claim that virtue is sufficient for happiness. The measuring craft of the *Protagoras* tells us what we should do to improve our prospects for future pleasure; but it does not assure us that if we exercise it we will achieve maximum pleasure regardless of external circumstances.

Perhaps Plato is silent about this question because he thinks it is easy to answer. He might reply that Socrates gains so much pleasure from being just, and would find it so intolerable to act unjustly, that the measuring craft will always tell him to be just. This reply, however, is only an apparent defence of hedonism. If it has to appeal to the special pleasures of the virtuous person, it does not tell us why we have reason to be virtuous; for even if he maximizes the sort of pleasure he cares about, he may not maximize the pleasures that other people care about, and hence consideration of pleasure alone does not justify us in being virtuous. We may believe that the pleasures of the virtuous person are better than other people's; but if we take this view, we concede the point that Socrates urges against hedonism. If the only pleasures that it is good to maximize are good pleasures, we cannot identify the good with the maximization of pleasure; hence we must reject hedonism.

The questions about virtue and happiness are especially relevant to the *Gorgias*, since this dialogue highlights Socrates' conviction that virtue is sufficient for happiness. Even if Plato undermines Callicles' reasons for rejecting that conviction, we may still wonder whether Socrates is right. Do we learn anything about happiness that would convince us that the virtuous person is happy?

Socrates suggests a conception of happiness that opposes Callicles' view. Callicles holds an 'expansive' conception, so that he identifies happiness with maximum satisfaction. Socrates suggests that happiness does not consist in maximization, but in the fit between desire and satisfaction. According to Callicles, the stronger my desire for food, the greater my happiness in satisfying it; but according to Socrates, I am equally happy in satisfying a strong or a mild

desire. If happiness consists in the fit between desire and satisfaction, I have reason to cultivate desires that are easy to satisfy rather than ones that are demanding and difficult to satisfy. This is what Socrates means in suggesting to Callicles that those who lack nothing are the happy people (492d3–4). Though Callicles replies that this conception of happiness implies that stones and corpses are happy (492e5–6), Socrates prefers it to Callicles' expansive conception (492e7–494a5). He holds an 'adaptive' conception of happiness, since it implies that one achieves happiness by adapting one's desires to the means available for fulfilling them.

This conception of happiness may support Socrates' belief that virtue is sufficient for happiness. If we assume that desires are plastic enough to allow us to form or to remove them when the resources are or are not available for satisfying them, and if we assume that virtue is the knowledge of how to match our desires with the available resources, virtuous people will form the desires that they can satisfy, and hence will be happy. This is why Socrates believes that if Callicles recognizes the falsity of his expansive conception of happiness and admits that we need an orderly soul with orderly desires, he is committed to accepting Socrates' view that the virtuous person is happy (506c5–507c7). If the adaptive conception were not assumed, Socrates would have a reason to assert that virtue (understood as psychic order) is necessary for happiness; but the adaptive conception gives him a reason to assert that it is also sufficient.

Though this is a plausible case for ascribing the adaptive conception to Socrates, the *Gorgias* does not develop it at length. None the less, it is worth our while to notice it, since it is another Socratic suggestion with an important afterlife. If we hold an adaptive conception and we fit our desires to the available resources, we can claim to be self-sufficient (*autarkês*) and independent of changes in external conditions. The Cynics give a clear example—even a reductio ad absurdum—of this ideal of self-sufficiency. But it also influences Epicurus, who affirms that virtuous people are happy precisely because they adapt themselves to smaller or larger external resources; they neither refuse to enjoy abundance nor regret scarcity.[57]

26. Is Virtue Identical to Happiness?

If the *Gorgias* relies on an adaptive conception of happiness, it does not commit Plato to the claim that virtue itself is identical to happiness. If the virtuous person differs from other people in knowing how to match desires to opportunities for satisfaction, virtue may still be understood as a productive craft; its product is the satisfaction and self-sufficiency that constitutes happiness.

We might, however, try a different explanation of Socrates' claim that the virtuous person is happy. We might take him to mean that virtue is identical to happiness, so that virtuous people are happy by the very fact that they are virtuous, not because virtue shows them how to fit their desires to available opportunities. We suggested a quasi-existentialist defence of this view: the virtuous person simply chooses his values, but his virtue assures his happiness because he does not count anything as worthwhile in opposition to virtue, and he sticks to this resolution with integrity and consistency. The *Gorgias* may offer a different sort of

[57] See §154.

defence. Socrates replies to Callicles' conception of happiness by defending rational order in the soul; he identifies the virtues with different aspects of this rational order.

One might defend rational order as a means to happiness because it helps us to adapt our desires to opportunities. But Socrates' reply to Callicles suggests a different defence. Callicles' refusal to abandon his claim that bravery is a virtue suggests that he values the rational control of his life; the value of this rational control cannot be explained by its usefulness for maximizing pleasure. One may also doubt whether its value can be explained by its usefulness in adapting desires to opportunities. If we believe that rational control is non-instrumentally good, and if we identify virtue with rational control, we have a reason to believe that virtue is non-instrumentally good.

In the *Gorgias* Plato does not offer this account of the value of virtue. His defence of the sufficiency of virtue seems to rest on an adaptive conception of happiness. But it is useful to notice that the dialogue supplies some elements of a case for attributing non-instrumental value to virtue. Though the Socratic dialogues do not develop such a case, they provide a starting point for the arguments that Plato offers in the *Republic*, and for the arguments that Aristotle and the Stoics develop from Plato.

27. Reason and Desire

We have now explored one of Socrates' controversial claims, his assertion that virtue is sufficient for happiness. We postponed discussion of his other main controversial claim, that knowledge of the good is sufficient for virtue. This claim underlies his assertion that all the virtues are really just one virtue, the knowledge of good and evil. The claim seems paradoxical, however. It seems obvious to us, as Socrates acknowledges, that we can sometimes believe that one action is better, but choose to do something else because we desire the worse action more strongly than the better action.

Socrates does not deny that we may believe that one action is just and still prefer to do what we believe to be unjust, and similarly for the other virtues. But he believes that we act against our beliefs about what is virtuous only because we do not recognize that virtue is in our interest. The virtuous person has knowledge of the good; such knowledge gives us understanding of why particular actions are good for us, and of why virtuous actions are virtuous. Knowledge is sufficient for virtue because knowledge that x is better for me than y is sufficient for me to choose x over y. Socrates believes this because of his eudaemonism; since we aim at our ultimate good, we choose one thing over another in accordance with our beliefs about what promotes our happiness.

In these claims Socrates recognizes the flexibility of human choices and aims. In choosing to take a medicine, we do not choose it because it is aspirin, but because it seems to us to be good for our health (*Gorg.* 467c5–468c8).[58] This belief does not bind us unconditionally to taking aspirin; for if we come to believe that the benefit to our health is relatively slight, and some other drug will benefit us more, we will prefer the other drug, and if we come to believe that in this particular situation health matters less than some other good, we will

[58] Among discussions of this passage see Santas, *S* 223–5; Penner, 'Desire'; McTighe, 'Desire'; Segvic, 'Intellectualism'.

prefer the other good. This is what Socrates means in the *Euthydemus* when he remarks that we do not simply accumulate goods, but use them for ends that we take to promote our ultimate good.

It is relatively easy to understand and to accept Socrates' view that we have desires of this sort. Indeed, we might say that because we have these desires we have a will, and are not simply moved by impulses and appetites. It is more difficult, however, to see why he supposes that this is true of all our desires. The Socratic dialogues do not make it clear why he denies that we have any desires that are unresponsive to beliefs about the good. These unresponsive desires are the source of 'incontinent' actions (as Aristotle describes them). Though Socrates does not use Aristotle's term, he recognizes that other people believe in such actions, in which we are 'overcome' by pleasure, anger, and other non-rational impulses (*Pr.* 352b2–c7). According to Aristotle, Socrates rejects the possibility of incontinence because he thinks it would be 'terrible' if knowledge were present, but one of these other impulses moved us (*EN* 1145b22–7). Why does Socrates not allow that this happens?

We can understand his reasons a little better from the way in which he describes the belief in incontinence. He suggests that if there is incontinence, knowledge does not rule us, but is 'dragged around like a slave' by these different impulses (*Pr.* 352c1–2). This description suggests that Socrates regards incontinent action as a form of compulsion in which it is not up to us to do what we do. This suggestion is relevant when he comes to describe the belief in incontinence more fully. He claims that it is ridiculous to say, as most people do, that someone knowing that bad things are bad none the less does them, when it is open (*exon*) to him not to do them, because he is overcome by pleasures (355a7–b3). Believers in incontinence, then, claim both that we are overcome and that it is up to us not to choose the action we choose.

Socrates may suggest that these different parts of the description of incontinence are inconsistent. If I do something that it is up to me not to do, I do it freely and voluntarily; but I do not do it freely and voluntarily if I am compelled to do it by some force that drags me around. Hence believers in incontinence imply that I both do and do not act voluntarily when I act incontinently.[59] Socrates believes that I act voluntarily only if I act on my belief about what is best; hence, if incontinent action is voluntary, it is action on belief about what is best, contrary to the claim that it involves choice of what I know to be worse.

Socrates does not exploit this suggestion that belief in incontinence involves these contradictory implications about voluntariness. He does not say what has to be true if it is 'open' to the incontinent agent not to choose the incontinent action. Nor does he set out his own views about what it takes to act voluntarily. He simply concludes that we do not 'willingly' (*hekôn*) choose what we believe to be worse (358c6–d4).

His attack on incontinence relies on hedonism. To show that we do not really choose what we believe to be worse, he analyses the description that most people offer of what happens in incontinent choices. He takes them to say that we choose what we believe to be worse because we are overcome by pleasure. He assumes that to be 'overcome' by the pleasure of x is to take x to be pleasanter than y. On this understanding of 'overcome', hedonism is relevant; for if Socrates' version of hedonism is true, believing that x is pleasanter than y is

[59] Cf. §104.

the same as believing that x is better than y. Hence we cannot believe that x is pleasanter than y without believing that x is better than y, and hence we cannot be incontinent.[60]

The weakness in this argument results from Socrates' analysis of 'overcome by pleasure'. Believers in incontinence have no reason to agree that we are overcome by the pleasure of x only if we believe x is pleasanter than y. On the contrary, they will answer that we are often attracted by this immediate pleasure of x so that we form a stronger desire for x even though we recognize that x offers us less overall pleasure than y offers. The truth of hedonism is irrelevant to any argument against this conception of being overcome. Hence Socrates' argument about pleasure does not directly address the main point on which he disagrees with believers in incontinence.

Socrates' views about incontinence imply that non-rational desires—those that are not responsive to beliefs about the overall good—have no role in the explanation of voluntary action. That is why he turns directly from his argument against incontinence to his defence of the unity of the virtues. He explains why, contrary to Protagoras' initial view (351a4–b2), the individual virtues do not require distinct sorts of training and habituation to strengthen or weaken different sorts of non-rational desires. The allegedly non-rational appetites that concern temperance and the allegedly non-rational fears that concern bravery are not in fact non-rational, but they are all responsive to our knowledge of good and evil; hence this knowledge is both necessary and sufficient for each virtue, and we have no ground for treating them as distinct virtues (360d1–361c2).

If, then, we do not accept Socrates' argument against incontinence, we lose his grounds for identifying virtue with knowledge and for believing in the unity of virtue. Since Plato and Aristotle reject his argument against incontinence, they also reject his account of the virtues. But they agree with him in not taking the possibility of incontinence for granted; they do not simply assume that it is perfectly intelligible to say that we are overcome by pleasures or non-rational desires. To explain how incontinence is possible they try to respond to Socrates' doubts about how we can be incontinent without being compelled.

Among Socrates' successors the Stoics come closest to accepting his views on incontinence, just as they come closest to accepting his views on virtue and happiness. They recognize that his views need elaboration and complication in order to answer the objections raised by Plato and Aristotle. But they believe Socrates is basically right in his paradoxical claims. To clarify, explain, and defend Socrates' claims, we need to examine the later history of Greek ethics.

[60] Socrates' argument is discussed by Vlastos, 'Acrasia'; Taylor, *PP*, ad loc; Irwin, *PE* §58.

3

THE CYRENAICS

28. The 'One-Sided' Socratics

Since we have drawn our evidence on Socrates from the early Platonic dialogues, it would be natural to turn from Socrates directly to Plato's middle and late dialogues, where Plato presents the defensible core (as he sees it) of Socratic doctrine. But if we went directly to Plato, we might miss some of the discussion of Socrates that explains the direction of Plato's reflexions. Plato was not the only disciple of Socrates who thought he could expound and defend the Socratic position. His evaluation of Socrates is easier to appreciate if we compare it with other versions of Socratic ethics.

In Plato's lifetime Aristippus, a disciple of Socrates, defended at least some aspects of the hedonist position that came to be known as Cyrenaic. At the same time Antisthenes defended the sufficiency of virtue for happiness, and understood this doctrine to exclude hedonism. His views were taken to extremes by Diogenes the Cynic. Later critics were surprised that moralists with such sharply opposed views could all claim to defend a Socratic position. Augustine comments that the disagreement among Socrates' self-styled disciples reflects some indeterminacy in Socrates' own views about the good.[1]

Some have called the Cyrenaics and Cynics 'the incomplete Socratics',[2] conveying the suggestion that they saw only one side of Socrates, and presumably that Plato and Aristotle saw both sides, and so reached a more accurate picture of him. This suggestion may not be quite fair to the one-sided Socratics. Socrates' views may have been indefinite enough to make each 'incomplete' construal of him a defensible way of tying up some loose ends that Socrates left. We might well think Plato and Aristotle showed better judgment than either the Cyrenaics or the Cynics showed about what is philosophically defensible in Socrates; but it does not follow that the position they reach is historically closer to Socrates.

[1] 'Since the highest good did not appear evidently in Socrates' discussions, where he considered, put forward, and destroyed everything, each of them took from those discussions what he thought fit, and placed the ultimate good wherever it seemed best to him . . . The Socratics differed so much about this end that—though it is scarcely to be believed that the followers of one teacher could do this—some of them, such as Aristippus, said that the highest good is pleasure, while others, such as Antisthenes, said that it is virtue' (Augustine, *CD* viii 3d–e).

[2] Zeller, *PG* ii 1, 232, calls them the 'unvolkommenen Sokratiker' and speaks of their 'one-sided' conception of Socrates' philosophical endeavours (233). Only Plato avoided their one-sidedness by reaching a deeper understanding of the point of Socrates' inquiries (237, 387–8).

We do not know enough about the one-sided Socratics to trace in detail the historical connexions between their views and specific Platonic and Aristotelian texts. We have only unreliable reports of their views, and it is difficult to attribute specific views to the contemporaries of Socrates. Some modern critics believe that the Cyrenaic and Cynic positions really belong to post-Aristotelian ethics, rather than to the lifetime of Socrates and Plato.[3]

These difficulties in the sources do not justify us in ignoring the one-sided Socratics when we try to understand Socrates and Plato. For if these Socratics are contemporaries of Plato, Plato may reflect on their views in forming his own ethical outlook, and especially in making up his mind about Socrates' views. But how can we tell whether the doctrines that our sources ascribe to the Cynics and Cyrenaics are contemporary with Plato or belong only to the history of Hellenistic ethics?

We may be able to throw some light on this question if we examine the later Platonic dialogues with the views of the Socratics in mind. The reasonable suggestion that Plato sometimes discusses views held by his contemporaries has fallen out of favour because it has been taken to unreasonable extremes by interpreters who have seen (for instance) Antisthenes behind almost every line in Plato's later dialogues.[4] While it is hazardous to rely on the dialogues to reconstruct views for which we have rather little external evidence, it is not always implausible. If we find that a view that Plato discusses in a late dialogue reflects an intelligible development of views in the Socratic dialogues, and also fits our other evidence about the Cynics or Cyrenaics, we have some reason to infer that Plato is discussing a view of his Cynic or Cyrenaic contemporaries.

This is not the only possible conclusion; we might prefer to conclude that it is Plato who develops and discusses possible Socratic views, and that the Cynics and Cyrenaics prefer the view that Plato opposes to the one he endorses. On this account, the one-sided Socratic views are later criticisms of Plato, rather than contemporary views that Plato criticizes. But even if this account is correct, we may legitimately compare Plato's views with the one-sided Socratic views; they may throw light on each other, even if we cannot be sure of the historical order. If we can show that the one-sided Socratic views are relevant to issues that Plato discusses in the dialogues, we can at least dismiss the suggestion that these views could not have been formulated in Plato's lifetime.

Some attention to the one-sided Socratics, setting out from the early Platonic dialogues, will help us to answer some questions about the historical reliability of these dialogues. If the Socratic views defended by the one-sided Socratics are intelligible in the light of Plato's early dialogues, we have reason to believe that the early dialogues give us an accurate picture of Socrates' views. The reason is not conclusive; Plato may have misled some of his successors into believing that the early dialogues present Socrates' views, and so they may have mistakenly believed that their own views were expansions of Socrates' views. But we might well doubt whether people who were not shy about criticizing Plato would be so ready to take his word for it about Socrates.

[3] See n7 below. For a helpful account of the one-sided Socratics in the Hellenistic context see Long, 'Legacy'.

[4] Guthrie, *HGP* iii 347n2, comments severely, but not unfairly, on the 'Antisthenes-cult', referring to the excesses of some earlier critics.

A further reason for considering Plato's position with the views of the one-sided Socratics in mind is that we can perhaps see whether Plato's interpretation and modification of Socrates is reasonable, by comparison with the views of these other reflexions on Socrates. It may be helpful to imagine Aristippus, Antisthenes, Diogenes, and Plato reflecting on the views of Socrates, and reaching different conclusions about what Socrates meant, and about what needs to be changed to make a defensible position on a Socratic basis. We can see that these successors of Socrates have different views about which elements of Socrates are the sound Socratic basis, and which need to be abandoned, supplemented, or modified. Then we may be able to see who makes the most reasonable decisions on these questions.

29. Aristippus and the *Protagoras*

The elder Aristippus was a disciple of Socrates who criticized Plato for his departures from Socrates.[5] His doctrine is a version of hedonism; the way of life he advocates seems quite different both from the Cynic exaggeration of Socrates' behaviour and from Socrates' behaviour as we learn of it in Plato and Xenophon. In Xenophon's *Memorabilia* Socrates warns Aristippus not to fall into errors that would separate him from Socrates; especially he warns him to pay less attention to immediate pleasures.[6] Some modern critics are reluctant to ascribe hedonist views to an immediate disciple of Socrates; they believe that Cyrenaic philosophical doctrine was formulated by the second Aristippus, the grandson of the contemporary of Socrates. Moreover, some later Cyrenaics seem to respond directly to Epicurus, and it is not clear how many Cyrenaic views belong to them rather than to Aristippus the Socratic (the grandfather).[7]

We should not be surprised, however, that a disciple of Socrates defends hedonism and identifies the good with pleasure.[8] For Aristippus follows the *Protagoras* in maintaining

[5] On Aristippus as a Socratic see Aristotle, *Rhet*. 1398b30–3: 'When Aristippus heard Plato saying something in a rather authoritative tone (*epangeltikôteron*) (as Aristippus thought), he said to Plato, "Well, but our friend <said> nothing of that sort", meaning Socrates.' It is not clear if 'nothing of that sort' means (a) no view of that sort, so that Aristippus attacks Plato's view, or (b) nothing in that dogmatic tone, so that Aristippus attacks Plato's non-Socratic confidence. In the context (a) makes Aristotle's point better. On Aristippus as a companion of Socrates see also DL ii 60, iii 36.

[6] The most important passage is the long conversation in *Mem*. ii 1, which includes Prodicus' story of the Choice of Heracles (ii 1.21–34). Xenophon's account assumes that Aristippus accepts eudaemonism (see 1.11, 26). But both Socrates' advice and the story of Heracles deal with the importance of postponing immediate gratification for the sake of greater pleasure in the future. Socrates concludes by warning Aristippus to attend to what concerns his future life (34). Xenophon may realize that Aristippus tends to neglect the long-term prudential attitude that is characteristic of the hedonism in the *Protagoras*. Such 'neglect' has a special point if Aristippus accepts Cyrenaic objections to hedonistic prudence. If that is so, then Xenophon might provide some indirect, but early, evidence of Aristippus' anti-eudaemonism.

[7] Critics differ about how many Cyrenaic doctrines belong to Aristippus the Socratic, how many to his daughter Arete, and how many to her son, also called Aristippus, who was 'taught by his mother' (*mêtrodidaktos*). According to one view, Aristippus the Socratic endorsed hedonism as a way of life, but only the later Aristippus provided the philosophical basis. This view rests primarily on the frail support of Eusebius, *PE* xiv 763d–764a (perhaps not derived from Aristocles; on Eusebius' possible sources see Chiesara, *AM* xxviii–xxx). Cf. Mannebach, *ACF* 114–17; Giannantoni, *C*74–115; Guthrie, *HGP* iii 494–7; Giannantoni, *SR* iii 164–9; Tsouna-McKirahan, 'Socratic origins' 377–82.

[8] 'Those who adhered to the views of Aristippus and were called Cyrenaics held the following view: They established two affections (*pathê*), pain and pleasure, taking one of them, pleasure, to be a smooth motion, and the other, pain, to be a rough motion. In their view, one pleasure is not superior to (or "different from"; *diapherein*) from another, nor is one at all pleasanter than another. One affection is welcome, and the other repellent, to all animals. However, the bodily pleasure that they take to be the end (according to Panaetius in his book on the philosophical schools) is not the

unqualified hedonism.[9] Socrates defends this unqualified hedonism by appeal to hedonist eudaemonism.[10] He takes eudaemonism to be obviously true (cf. *Euthd*. 278e3–6; 280b5–6; 282a1–2), and he defends hedonism by arguing that happiness consists in the predominance of pleasure over pain in our life as a whole (*Pr*. 353c9–354e2). When he says that pleasure is the end (*telos*, 354b7), he does not mean that pleasure rather than happiness is the ultimate end. He takes happiness to be the end, and argues that happiness consists in pleasure, not in the pleasure of the moment (*en tô(i) parachrêma*, 353d1), but in pleasure summed over one's whole life.

This eudaemonist defence of unqualified hedonism allows Socrates to draw some of the distinctions that we can draw if we discriminate between good and bad pleasures. He does not accept all pleasures as good on the whole, because some of them have bad future effects. Hence he makes room for the recognized virtues, even though they sometimes require us to forgo short-term pleasures. Virtue is knowledge because we need a science of measuring pleasures and pains for 'the salvation of life' (*sôtêria tou biou*, 356d4–5); 'life' refers to one's life as a whole. The supposedly distinct virtues are all to be identified with this science of measurement.

The *Gorgias* rejects the unqualified hedonism of the *Protagoras*; it distinguishes good from bad pleasures and recommends the pursuit only of good pleasures (*Gorg*. 499c–500a). Plato defends this selective recommendation of pleasure in his later dialogues, and Aristotle agrees with him. The selective view rejects unqualified hedonism, since it does not identify the good with pleasure. The goodness and badness of pleasure does not consist simply in the hedonic consequences of different pleasures; it rests on some prior facts about the goodness and badness of the objects of different pleasures.

30. Hedonism without Eudaemonism

Though Aristippus returns to the unqualified hedonism of the *Protagoras*, he does not return to Socrates' eudaemonist defence of unqualified hedonism. [11] For he affirms that pleasure is the end, but denies that happiness is the end. Happiness, in his view, is a collection of pleasures, and is worth pursuing only for the sake of the momentary pleasures that compose it.[12] He is a hedonist of the present, and so he denies that our ultimate end is pleasure maximized over a whole life.

static pleasure taken in (or "following on", *epi*) the removal of pains—a sort of undisturbed condition (*anochlêsia*), which Epicurus accepts and takes to be the end' (DL ii 87). Epicurus: see §151, on DL x 136.

[9] 'Further, pleasure is a good, even if it comes about from the most unseemly things (according to Hippobotus in his book on the philosophical schools); for even if the action is unthinkable, still the pleasure is choiceworthy because of itself and good' (DL ii 88). Cf. Plato, *Pr*. 351b7-e7.

[10] See §21 on hedonism.

[11] The connexion between Aristippus and the *Protagoras* is stressed by Grote, *POCS* i, 199–201. Grote remarks that Aristippus does not appear to emphasize the importance of practical wisdom in planning for maximum pleasure in one's life as a whole. This silence in Aristippus is intelligible if he has doubts about eudaemonism.

[12] 'Moreover, in their view, the end differs from happiness. For the end is particular pleasure, whereas happiness is a collection made out of particular pleasures, among which are counted together both past and future pleasures. Particular pleasure is choiceworthy because of itself. Happiness, on the other hand, is choiceworthy not because of itself, but because of the particular pleasures. . . . ' (DL ii 87–8). 'The Annicerians <i.e. followers of Anniceris> in the Cyrenaic succession set down no definite end of the whole of life, but claimed that there is a special end for each action—the

Since Aristippus rejects the eudaemonist aspects of Socrates' hedonism, he allows only a reduced role to the measuring science. If we aim at pleasure in our life as a whole, we need some knowledge of the longer-term hedonic effects of different actions, and some knowledge of our future aims and preferences. This sort of knowledge may reasonably be attributed to temperate and brave people. But if our temporal horizon is shorter, and we are only concerned with what will give us most pleasure here and now, foresight of future effects and of our future preferences does not help us as much. That is why Aristippus believes that wisdom does not always do better than folly in securing pleasure, and allows that some virtues are found in foolish people.[13] By this he may mean that temperance and bravery do not always go with the ability to secure short-term pleasures, and so may belong to 'foolish' people who are not very good at securing these pleasures.

We cannot tell whether Aristippus intends his rejection of eudaemonism to reply to the *Protagoras*, or the *Protagoras* defends Socrates against Aristippus. At any rate, it is useful to compare these alternative statements of hedonism. Since the Socratic view that makes happiness the ultimate end is the dominant assumption in Greek ethics, Aristippus' rejection of the eudaemonist assumption is especially worth examining. Does he challenge an assumption that others thoughtlessly take for granted, or does the assumption rest on a reasonable basis that he fails to appreciate?

31. For and against Eudaemonism

Our evidence on Aristippus does not include an argument against eudaemonism. But we can perhaps see why he might reject it if we consider Plato's argument against hedonism in the *Gorgias*. We distinguished a less radical from a more radical objection to hedonist eudaemonism. Socrates' less radical argument claims that a hedonist eudaemonist cannot advocate the virtues, including bravery and temperance, that require active planning, resolution, and execution of our rational plans. His more radical argument suggests that hedonists cannot reasonably be eudaemonists; for if they do not care about rational agency, they cannot explain why we should care about our lives as a whole. Socrates intends this argument to refute hedonism, since he assumes that we will accept eudaemonism.

Aristippus, however, seems to draw the opposite conclusion. He rejects the adaptive strategy for happiness, since it rejects intense pleasures that are more difficult for us to do without. The objection to these pleasures rests on considerations about the future; the intense pleasures cause us greater pain if we cannot enjoy them, and even if we can enjoy

pleasure resulting from the action' (Clement, *Strom*. ii 21, 130.7–8). 'Aristippus welcomed the experience of pleasure (*hêdupatheia*), and said it is the end, and that happiness is founded on it. And he said that it was for a single time only (*monochronos*). Like prodigal people, he thought that neither the memory of past gratifications nor the expectation of future ones was anything to him, but he discerned the good by the single present time alone. He regarded having been gratified and being about to be gratified as nothing to him, on the ground that the one no longer is and the other is not yet and is unclear—just like what happens to self-indulgent people, who suppose that only what is present benefits them' (Athenaeus, xii 544a–b).

[13] 'In their view, it is not true that every wise person has a pleasant life, or that every bad person has a painful life, but it is true only for the most part. It is enough if we bring on even one pleasure at a time with enjoyment. . . . . Some of the virtues are present in foolish people as well <as wise people>' (DL ii 91).

them, we suffer greater disturbance until we can enjoy them again. Aristippus answers this objection by rejecting the eudaemonist assumption that underlies it. Socrates' argument depends on our preferring long-term over short-term satisfaction. It does not refute someone who is indifferent to long-term satisfaction.

Aristippus expresses indifference to long-term satisfaction by asserting that happiness is worth while only because of particular pleasures that compose it, and denies that memory and anticipation of pleasures have any value.[14] He is not concerned about the past or future self that has a whole life to plan for. If we plan for our good in a temporally-extended life, we show that we have some concern for ourselves as temporally-extended beings, and so we might naturally expect to be pleased or displeased by what has happened or will happen to ourselves in the past or the future. Aristippus, however, argues that memory and anticipation do not matter. The only good is the present stimulation of the soul; memory gives us at best a faint trace of past stimulation, and anticipation matters to us only if we care about the future.

In distinguishing pleasure from happiness, and denying that happiness is really the end or the good, Aristippus shows how it is natural to understand *eudaimonia*, and why the identification of pleasure with *eudaimonia* is not to be taken for granted. He thinks of happiness as extending over a temporally-extended life, and describes it as a collection of pleasures, which we want only for the sake of the particular pleasures composing it.

This may seem a rather peculiar claim; for why should we not value the collection of pleasures if we value the individual items in the collection? Aristippus might compare this case with other cases where we might choose a collection even though we value only the individual items, and not the collection as a whole. Perhaps I want to buy a miscellaneous and ill-matched collection of paintings at a sale. Each one of them is valuable to me, because I already have a large gallery of paintings, and each painting in the collection would fit somewhere at widely scattered places in the gallery. But I might say that I attach no value to the collection in itself, as such; what I value is this Rembrandt, this Degas, and so on, as individual paintings, not the collection as a whole. This would be even clearer if I attached no value at all to most of the collection, and I bought it simply because it was the only way to buy the particular Watteau I had always been looking for. If, as Aristippus thinks, I am concerned only about the present, I might accept a happy life if it is the safest way to secure what I want in the present.

The rejection of eudaemonism opposes the predominant view of Aristippus' contemporaries and his successors. Aristotle implies that eudaemonism is generally taken for granted; people generally agree that the final good is to be identified with happiness, which is also to be identified with 'living well' (*eu zên*) and 'doing well' (*eu prattein*) (*EN* 1095a15–20). Aristotle remarks that, in contrast to this point of general agreement, people disagree about what happiness is.

If Aristotle's remark tempts us to suppose that there is no room for disagreement about whether the final good is happiness, then Aristippus should change our minds. For he believes that pleasure is the ultimate good, choiceworthy (*haireton*) for its own sake, and that anything else is choiceworthy for the sake of it; but he denies that this ultimate good is happiness.

[14] See n12 above.

32. Epistemological and Metaphysical Objections to Eudaemonism

If Aristippus claims that we have no reason to care about happiness unless we care about our future, he implies that the ultimate basis of reasons lies in our desires. If this is his objection, he should concede that if we care about our future, we have reason to care about happiness. On this view, it is neither reasonable nor unreasonable to care about our future; the basic desire is the foundation of reasonable and unreasonable choices. We might rely on this aspect of Aristippus' views to understand passages in which he describes a prudent attitude to pleasure.[15]

Some of his remarks, however, suggest that he intends a broader attack on the pursuit of happiness, claiming that people who care about it are misguided. In the *Euthydemus* Socrates takes it for granted that we all pursue happiness. Aristotle follows him in taking the ultimate status of happiness to be a feature of common beliefs. He argues that the good must be complete and self-sufficient; and he infers that since happiness satisfies these criteria, it is the final good (1097a34–b6, b15–21). This argument helps to fix the points where Cyrenaics reject eudaemonism. If the Cyrenaics deny that happiness is the final good, then they must claim either (i) that Aristotle is wrong about the criteria for the good, or (ii) that Aristotle is right about the criteria, but wrong in thinking that happiness meets them, or (iii) that Aristotle is wrong on both counts.

Aristippus accepts the Platonic and Aristotelian belief that the good is complete,[16] but he believes that only pleasure meets this condition.[17] He also maintains that pleasure is self-sufficient, in that nothing can be added to it to make a greater good. Aristotle, following Plato, believes that we can add something to pleasure (1172b26–35). But he forms this belief from the standpoint of 'the many and the wise', who have formed the common beliefs about goodness.

To show that Aristotle is wrong, Aristippus appeals to something more fundamental than common beliefs: our initial 'affections' or 'passions' (*pathê*). Pleasure and pain are introduced because they are passions. He treats the passions as the basis for beliefs about good and evil because they are prior to education and rational belief.[18] Aristotle mentions the hedonist Eudoxus, who believes that this argument from the primitive character of pleasure give us a good reason to believe that pleasure is the good.[19] Philebus relies on a related fact about pleasure, that it is common to all animals (*Phil.* 11b4–6; 60a7–b1). Since pleasure is an aspect of sensory experience (*aisthêsis*; cf. *Tht.* 156b), it belongs to animals and young children; it is our starting point for forming beliefs about good and evil.

[15] See, e.g., Stob. *Ecl.* iii 17.17 = SR 98: 'The one who masters pleasure is not the one who abstains from it, but the one who uses it, but is not carried away (*ekpheromenos*), just as <the one who masters> a ship or a horse is not the one who does not use it, but the one who leads it where he wishes.' Cf. DL ii 69 = SR 87; Tarrant, 'Socratic theories' 124; Tsouna-McKirahan, 'Origins'.

[16] Plato and Aristotle represent the belief that the good is complete as widely shared (even though most people do not see its implications). Aristippus need not be influenced by Plato or Aristotle in particular.

[17] Cf. Clement, *Strom.* ii 21, 178.43 = Usener, *Epicurea* §450 (referring to the Cyrenaics without further attribution).

[18] 'A proof (*pistis*) that pleasure is the end is the fact that we find it akin to us without any decision (*aprohairetôs* . . .*ô(i)keiôsthai*) from our childhood, and that once we get it we seek for nothing in addition, and that we avoid nothing as much as the opposite of pleasure, pain' (DL ii 88).

[19] Aristotle, *EN* 1172b9–25. Cf. 1153b25–32; 1094a1–3 (probably referring to Eudoxus).

Aristotle accepts the primitive, sensory, universal, and undisputed character of pleasure as a reason to believe that it is a good (1172b35–1173a2). But he does not take this to show that pleasure is the good. Aristippus' claim that our initial affections represent pleasure rather than happiness as the good is plausible. Non-rational animals and young children lack (he assumes) a conception of their lives as a whole and are not concerned for their longer-term satisfaction. But Aristotle believes that rational agents pursue happiness as the good once they are mature enough to form a conception of a good for their lives rather than a good for the moment.

Aristippus agrees with Aristotle in believing it is possible to desire something other than pleasure; but he claims that people reject pleasure only because of some perversion (DL ii 89). What sort of perversion or mistake turns us from pleasure to happiness? Aristippus supposes that facts about initial affections show that happiness is not the ultimate end. Why should we agree with this inference from facts about initial affections? Why not agree with Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics that a conception of one's life as an object for rational deliberation and choice is a basic feature of adult rational agency?

Cyrenaics oppose eudaemonism for broader epistemological reasons. They trust exclusively in our affections, and are sceptics about everything else.[20] One aspect of this austere attitude is the Cyrenaics' scepticism about the existence of any external world. Their doubts rest on grounds that are familiar in early modern philosophy, but hard to parallel in Plato and Aristotle. They rely on an argument from conflicting appearances. Protagoras (in Plato's *Theaetetus*) argues that if you find the drink bitter to the taste, and I find it sweet, the drink in itself cannot be either bitter or sweet. Aristippus uses conflicting appearances to argue that we cannot say anything about the properties of the drink; we can only say what our affections are like (see, e.g., Plato, *Tht*. 156a–157c).

Sensory affection, according to the Cyrenaics, underlies our grasp of the end for action, as well as our grasp of reality.[21] Their reason for distrusting any non-sensory claims about the external world applies to practical beliefs as well. As Aristotle admits, once we go beyond pleasure to happiness and non-hedonic goods, we face conflicting appearances. People disagree about which things are goods,[22] and hence about what constitutes happiness. They agree in the name they use for the final good, calling it 'happiness', but they disagree on the content of happiness (*EN* 1095a17–22). But if we are enjoying some pleasure we are in no doubt at the time that this is good.

[20] 'The Cyrenaics say that the criteria are the affections; they alone are grasped, and are undeceiving, whereas none of the things that produce the affections is graspable (grasped? *katalêpton*) or undeceiving. For, they say, it is possible to say without being deceived or refuted that we are being whitened or sweetened; but we cannot affirm whether the thing producing the affection is white or sweet. . . . Hence, if one must speak the truth, only the affection is apparent to us; the external thing that produces the affection perhaps exists, but is not apparent to us' (Sx, *M*190—4). Plutarch discusses Cyrenaic epistemology at *Col*. 1120c–d. He suggests that while the Epicureans reject Cyrenaic scepticism, they really have no escape from it within their own assumptions (1120–1121e).

[21] '. . . It seems that what these people say about ends corresponds to what they say about criteria. For the affections also extend as far as the ends. For some affections are pleasant, some painful, others intermediate, and, in their view, the painful ones are evil and their end is pain, the pleasant ones are good and their undeceiving end is pleasure, and the intermediate ones are neither good nor evil and their end is what is neither good nor evil, an affection intermediate between pleasure and pain. . . . Of all things, then, the affections are criteria and ends, and, they say, we live by following these, relying on obviousness (or 'evidence', *enargeia*) and approval (*eudokêsis*)—on obviousness in relation to the other affections, and on approval in relation to pleasure' (Sx. *M*199–200).

[22] The discussion between Aristippus and Socrates in Xenophon, *Mem*. iii 8.1–7 suggests that Aristippus tries to expose conflicting beliefs about goods. Socrates argues that some of these 'conflicts' are innocuous.

Can we attribute this epistemological reason for preferring hedonism over eudaemonism to Aristippus the Socratic, or does it belong to the later development of the Cyrenaic position? The discussions about the senses and the external world in the *Theaetetus* and about pleasure and the good in the *Philebus* do not introduce the precise epistemological view that we have ascribed to Aristippus. Xenophon refers to his indifference to long-term happiness,[23] but does not mention any defence of it. But the questions raised in the *Philebus* and *Theaetetus* show that an appeal to the affections on epistemological grounds is highly relevant to the arguments in these two dialogues. Hence it would not have been anachronistic or irrelevant for Aristippus the Socratic to have put forward this epistemological claim.

Aristippus has a further reason to argue in this way, in the light of Democritus' views. From the Cyrenaic point of view, Democritus expresses conflicting attitudes to the senses. He denies, as the Cyrenaics do, that the senses give us knowledge of external reality; he appeals to conflicting appearances to show that the senses cannot tell us whether anything external is really hot or cold. But in the area of practice he affirms both hedonism and eudaemonism.[24] He assumes that our sensory affections are misleading in failing to recognize the longer-term good, but he believes they are correct about the character of the good, in identifying the good with pleasure, whereas they are misleading about the character of the external world. But he does not explain why he draws a different conclusion in these two areas.[25]

It would be reasonable for Aristippus to believe that he has reached a more consistent position than Democritus reaches; whereas Democritus applies his sceptical arguments only to theoretical knowledge, Aristippus applies them to practical knowledge as well. Democritus sees no question, just as Socrates in the *Protagoras* sees none, about the consistency of hedonism with eudaemonism. But the *Gorgias* raises just this question. The position that our sources ascribe to the Cyrenaics suggests an argument that Aristippus might plausibly construct in defence of hedonism against the objections of the *Gorgias*. The appeal to our sensory affections exploits one aspect of Democritus' epistemology. Epicurus exploits a different aspect of Democritus, and reaches a different result about hedonism and eudaemonism. But Democritus and Plato show us why Aristippus the Socratic might reasonably have pursued his own defence of hedonism through an appeal to sensory affection.

33. Doubts about the Continuing Self

The argument from sensory affection supports a sceptical conclusion about happiness, showing that once we go beyond our immediate appearances of pleasure and good, we find ourselves unable to resolve conflicting beliefs about happiness. The Cyrenaics would have a further reason for rejecting happiness if they believed that the idea of happiness itself rests on an error. To speak of a person's happiness is to speak of a good that belongs to his life

[23] See *Mem.* ii 1.34 (n6 above).

[24] On Democritus see Socrates §21. Taylor, *ALD* 233, mentions 'a structural parallel between ethics and epistemology, in that each area of thought requires a contrast between immediately apprehended data (immediate pleasure in the practical sphere, perceptual data in the theoretical) and the truth revealed by reflexion, respectively the theses that the good is not immediate pleasure but long-term cheerfulness and that things are in reality not as they appear to the senses but as atomic theory shows them to be.'

[25] Taylor comments on the non-sceptical aspect of Democritus' eudaemonism, at 'Pleasure' 26.

as a whole; to believe in such a good we need to believe that one and the same person persists at all the times at which we consider his good. Do the Cyrenaics believe, on the epistemological basis they allow themselves, in this continuing self? The evidence is not clear, but the question is important enough to deserve some further discussion.

We may consider one argument that influenced some Greek philosophers, and then ask whether the premisses of the argument might be expected to appeal to the Cyrenaics. In an argument ascribed to Epicharmus, a debtor argues that he is not obliged to pay his debt because he has changed from how he was when he promised to pay it, and therefore is not the same person.[26] This argument begins from examples of quantitatively defined subjects—a length, a measure, a number, or a heap. For these subjects it is plausible to say that any 'growth' or 'shrinkage' implies going out of existence, since the subject has its quantitative properties essentially. The inference about the debtor presupposes that persons are also quantitatively defined subjects.[27]

In the *Theaetetus* Plato uses this argument to develop a Protagorean and Heracleitean theory of perception and its objects. According to this theory, all ostensible subjects with a number of qualities are really just heaps (*hathroismata*) of perceptible qualities (*Tht.* 157b8–c2). Since heaps are defined purely quantitatively, they are open to Epicharmus' argument; hence healthy Socrates is not the same person as sick Socrates, because of the change in the previously healthy Socrates (158e–159c).[28]

From the Cyrenaics' point of view, the continuing self is open to doubt. They may agree that I am aware of myself in my particular sensory affections; but the continuing self has to be a heap of these particular episodes of awareness extending into the past and future. Since it is a purely quantitative subject, undergoing change with every new affection, Epicharmus' argument applies, and it cannot be a continuing subject. Aristippus speaks of happiness as a collection (*sustêma*, DL ii 87), and speaks of the 'heaping' (*athroismos*, ii 90) of pleasures that produce happiness. If he thinks of happiness as a collection, not a genuine continuant, it would be reasonable for him to think of the self in the same way.

If Aristippus holds this view about a continuing self, he has a strong reason for claiming that any concern with an extended future for myself rests on illusion and unwarranted belief.[29] When Aristippus speaks of 'empty' belief,[30] he will not, if he sticks to his own epistemological

[26] See Plu. *CN* 1083ab = LS 28A. The reference to the debtor comes from the reports in Plu. *SN* 559a–b (in the course of an argument against a purely quantitative conception of the persistence of an individual human being or a city); *Tranq. An.* 473c–d (discussing the bad effects of forgetfulness).

[27] 'Suppose someone chooses to add a single pebble to a heap ... or to take away one of those already there; do you think the number of pebbles would remain the same? ... Now consider human beings in the same way: One person grows, and another shrinks; they are all in course of change the whole time. But a thing that naturally changes and never remains in the same state must always be different from what has changed. In the same way, you and I were one pair yesterday, are another today, and again will be another tomorrow, and will never remain the same people, according to this argument' (DL iii 11).

[28] Anon. *in Tht.* 70.5–26 = *CPF* iii 454–6 = LS 28B, wrongly ascribes this extreme view to Plato in *Symp.* 207d–208b. A connexion between the Heracleitean theory of change and Cyrenaic scepticism is noticed in Anon. *in Tht.* 65.18–39 = *CPF* iii 442, but it does not refer specifically to questions about continuing subjects. On whether the *Tht.* alludes to the Cyrenaic position see Giannantoni, *Cirenaici* 144–5; Mannebach, *ACF* 114. Tsouna-McKirahan, *ECS* 130-5, denies that the Cyrenaics accept the growing argument. See also Tsouna-McKirahan, 'Exception'.

[29] On pleasures of memory and anticipation see §154.

[30] 'The wise person will neither envy nor fall in love (*eran*) nor fear the gods superstitiously, since all these are a result of empty belief. He will, however, feel pain and fear, since these come about naturally' (DL ii 91).

principles, claim to know that the relevant beliefs are false; he will claim that they have no warrant, since they have no warrant from affections, which are the only source of immediate and irrefutable knowledge.

34. A Conflict between Hedonism and Eudaemonism?

We have found some reason to believe that Aristippus supports his doubts about eudaemonism by appeal to doubts about personal identity. To explain why he might be moved by these doubts, we have explored the implications of his scepticism about anything beyond immediate sensory affections. Our exploration has taken us beyond any direct evidence about the Cyrenaics. Speculations about personal identity, however, are not necessary for our main argument about the significance of Cyrenaic hedonism. Even if we reject all the reasons for believing that the Cyrenaics raise doubts about personal identity, we must admit that they are sceptics about anything beyond the affections, that they appeal to the affections to show that pleasure is good, and that they deny that happiness is the good. The link between their positive claim about pleasure and their negative claim about happiness is their reliance on the affections and senses.

Someone reflecting on Socrates' moral arguments might reasonably find the resort to the senses plausible. Socrates normally relies on what Aristotle calls the 'common beliefs' (*endoxa*). Though he criticizes his interlocutors, he takes some of their beliefs to be reliable, and uses these to modify others. But he does not explain why he takes some beliefs to be more reliable than others. It seems reasonable to ask for an explanation. For the conflicting appearances that support scepticism about external objects seem to raise even more serious questions in ethics. Different people, even within one society, disagree about good and evil; and when we take account of differences between different societies, it seems even more difficult to get beyond the conflicting appearances to any justifiable claims about what is really good or evil.

Both Socrates (in the *Protagoras*) and Aristippus follow the lead of Democritus in believing that an appeal to pleasure allows us to argue at an epistemologically more basic level that is free from the questions raised by conflicting appearances. In the *Protagoras* Socrates supposes that everyone acknowledges pleasure as the ultimate good, and that the anti-hedonist elements of common sense rest on a failure to distinguish short-term from long-term pleasure. He does not say why he takes everyone to agree about pleasure. Aristippus gives a reason that is similar to Democritus' reason; just as we must take the immediate appearances of our sensory affections to be evident, we must take our immediate affections of pleasure and pain to be evident. Socrates is right to suppose that, if we set aside superficial disagreements, we will find that we all treat pleasure as the good; we find this agreement when we focus on the affections that are beyond doubt.

But at this stage Aristippus departs from both Socrates and Democritus. In his view, they are right to turn to pleasure as the right epistemological foundation, but they inconsistently revert to unwarranted common sense by endorsing eudaemonism. Against them he argues that if we accept his argument for hedonism, we cannot be eudaemonists. For hedonism rests on the evident appearances of the affections, which do not recognize happiness as

the end. We cannot, then, use Socrates' argument to show that everyone really accepts hedonism, once they distinguish short-term from long-term pleasure; that is an argument for hedonist eudaemonism, which we cannot defend from the affections.

This argument does not show that hedonism and eudaemonism are incompatible. But if it is cogent, it shows that the most plausible justification of hedonism undermines eudaemonism. Hedonism seems a plausible account of the good that rests on an uncontroversial epistemological basis. But this epistemological basis is too narrow to justify eudaemonism. If we take eudaemonism to be justified, we broaden our epistemological base so as to raise doubts about hedonism.

On this point Aristippus agrees with Plato (in the *Gorgias, Republic*, and *Philebus*) and Aristotle. But they draw a different conclusion, since they prefer eudaemonism over hedonism. Epicurus revives the combination of hedonism and eudaemonism that Socrates defends in the *Protagoras*; we will want to ask whether he has a way out of the Cyrenaic argument to show that one part of his position undermines the other.

4

THE CYNICS

35. Socrates and the Cynics

The Cynic school had a long life, extending well into the Roman Empire. It appears (from the patchy evidence provided by our sources) to have included sharply different attitudes on central moral questions. The early founders of Cynicism, Antisthenes and Diogenes, seem to have denied that pleasure is a good, and to have maintained that virtue is sufficient for happiness.[1] This side of Cynicism helps to explain why the Stoics trace their origins to Cynicism. Zeno the Stoic was a pupil of Crates the Cynic.[2] According to one Stoic, the sage will live like a Cynic; 'for the Cynic life is a short road to virtue'.[3] The Stoic Ariston of Chios shows the continuing appeal of Cynicism for Stoics; he deviates from other Stoics in a markedly Cynic direction.[4] But the aspect of Cynicism that appeals to Stoics is only one side of later Cynicism; other aspects are independent of Stoicism, and even opposed to it.[5]

The most helpful approach to the Cynics begins from their connexion with Socrates. Antisthenes appears in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* and *Symposium*, where he is one of Socrates' closest associates (*Mem.* iii 11.17). He wrote a number of works on different virtues, overlapping in content with Plato's Socratic dialogues.[6] Diogenes takes himself to put Antisthenes' principles into practice better than Antisthenes did.[7] Antisthenes accepts an austere interpretation of Socrates' principles.[8] Diogenes infers that conventional behaviour, ordinary comfort, courtesy, decency, sexual modesty, and so on, are insignificant. Hence we should not put any effort into them, but we should live without them as far as possible. That is why Diogenes is said to have lived in a barrel, masturbated in public, and so on. These

[1] The evidence (collected in *SR* VA 22–6) for treating Antisthenes as the founder of a Cynic 'school' is open to reasonable doubt. But for convenience I will treat both Antisthenes and Diogenes as Cynics. Cf. Tsouna-McKirahan, 'Origins' 369–77.

[2] See DL vi 91, vii 2–5; §161.

[3] DL vii 121. DL attributes this remark to the 2nd-century BC Stoic Apollodorus, not to one of the three major Stoics. But see n26 below and *SR* VA 136 for other references to the remark.

[4] Sx, *M* xi 64–7; DL vii 160 = LS 58 F–G.

[5] Seneca, *Ben.* vii 1.3–2.4 states the opinions of Demetrius the Cynic (cited by Stewart, 'Democritus' 181–4, as evidence of the currency of Democritus' sayings among Cynics). Demetrius agrees with the Stoics (2.2) in claiming that only the honestum is good. He rejects pleasure (with no qualification) as short-lived and beneath human nature. But he also recognizes a kind of pleasure that is free from disturbance and fit for human beings (2.3). Whether this concession to pleasure goes back to the original Cynics or not, it is easily introduced into a position that is generally opposed to pleasure.

[6] See *SR* VA 41–4. [7] Dio Chrys. 8.1–2 = *SR* VB 584. [8] See Xenophon, *Symp.* iv 61–4.

Cynic attitudes have Socratic sources. Socrates was also supposed to be quite indifferent to clothes, shoes, and washing, but he did not go to extremes in denying himself conventional goods and evils other than virtue.

The Cynics as well as the Cyrenaics dispute Plato's claim to uphold the most defensible form of an authentically Socratic position.[9] Our sources report some sharp comments by Plato and Diogenes on each other. Diogenes rejects Plato's theory of purely intelligible forms, and Plato describes Diogenes as 'Socrates gone mad'.[10] Plato may mean that Diogenes accepts some Socratic positions, but takes them to such extremes that the result is incredible, both theoretically and practically. This claim fits the Cynic attitude to Socrates' belief that virtue is sufficient for happiness. The Cynics take Socrates to imply that we have no reason to care about anything except virtue, and hence we have no reason to care about any of the non-moral goods that occupy most people in many aspects of their life.

Plato's attack on Diogenes raises a useful question about Socrates and the Cynics. We might take any of three possible attitudes: (1) Plato is right, because the Cynic outlook is a perversion of Socrates' views. (2) Diogenes is right, because Socrates' views really justify the Cynic outlook. (3) Neither of them is exactly right, but each has a legitimate objection to the other, because Socrates' views are consistent with a Cynic outlook, but do not require it.

If we pursue these questions about the Cynics, we may reasonably hope to understand the basis of the early Cynic position. But even if the questions were irrelevant to the historical understanding of Cynicism, they would still be highly relevant to the philosophical understanding of Socrates and Plato. For a clear statement of the relation between Socrates' views and the presumed views of Antisthenes and Diogenes will help us to see a possible development of Socratic principles that Plato tries hard to avoid. In separating the core of Socratic ethics from its Cynic expression, Plato tries to find an expression that rules out Cynic inferences.

36. Socratic Alternatives to Hedonism: Virtue or Self-Sufficiency?

Socrates' belief that virtue is necessary and sufficient for happiness is compatible both with hedonism and with the rejection of hedonism, and allows virtue to be either instrumentally or non-instrumentally good. The argument in the *Euthydemus* defends the necessity and sufficiency of virtue, but does not commit Socrates to a definite view on the other questions. The *Protagoras* combines the Socratic claim about virtue and happiness with hedonism. It argues that virtue is the measuring craft that allows us to maximize pleasure in our life as a whole, and is therefore necessary and sufficient for happiness. If we look beyond the present and the immediate future, we see that we increase our pleasure by observing the prescriptions of the cardinal virtues. The *Gorgias* raises reasonable doubt about this claim in the *Protagoras*, but what alternative does it offer?

[9] Aristippus on Plato: see §29n5.

[10] For Diogenes' comments on the forms see DL vi 53 = *SR* VB 62. Cf. VA 149, where the same story is attached to Antisthenes. For Antisthenes' comments on Plato see, e.g., DL vi 7. On Diogenes and Socrates see DL vi 54 = *SR* VB 59.

One answer relies on the conception of happiness that Socrates opposes to Callicles' conception. According to Socrates, those who lack nothing are happy, and the best way to achieve this condition is to adapt our desires to the means available for satisfying them; we have called this an 'adaptive' conception of happiness. Socrates implies that hedonism is plausible to the extent that it includes a conception of happiness as the satisfaction of one's desires and preferences, but Calliclean hedonism is mistaken to the extent that it requires the expansion of one's desires so as to maximize one's pleasure. Since happiness consists in satisfaction, not in maximization, and since our desires are plastic, we do not need to pursue the pleasures that involve previous pain, effort, and anxiety; we can achieve satisfaction better by fitting our desires to the available resources.

This reaction to the *Gorgias* recognizes that Socrates' argument raises a reasonable doubt about hedonist eudaemonism. If we favour an adaptive conception of happiness, we retain eudaemonism; for the adaptation of desires to circumstances protects us against the pain and frustration of future loss. The less susceptible we are to attractions that will cause us pain and disturbance if we lose them, the better we protect our future. This is the Cynic view that austerity makes us more adaptable.

These views may incline us to one of the positions discussed and rejected in the *Philebus* (43a–50e), identifying the most desirable state with the absence of both pain and pleasure.[11] Antisthenes denies that pleasure is either an instrumental or an intrinsic good, and claims he would rather go mad than feel pleasure.[12] According to this view, both the hedonism of Callicles and the hedonism of the *Protagoras* interfere with the adaptation of desires to circumstances. It is clear how this objection affects Calliclean hedonism, but Antisthenes might reasonably argue that it affects the *Protagoras* as well. Since pleasure essentially involves some psychic disturbance, and inevitably attracts us to external objects that we may or may not manage to acquire, it interferes with any rational strategy for the adaptation of desires to circumstances. If we adapt our desires to the available resources, we are free of many sources of pain, since pain results from unsatisfied desires; and once we see that happiness requires satisfaction rather than maximization, we will also free ourselves from the pleasure that results from the removal of pain, frustration, or anxiety. Since the pursuit of maximum pleasure is not the only source of pain and pleasure, our concentration on satisfaction may not free us entirely from pain and pleasure; Socrates does not guarantee that we will not suffer pain if someone sticks a knife in us. But pain and pleasure will no longer be the primary elements of good and evil.

This conception of happiness as adaptation and satisfaction still leaves virtue with a purely instrumental role. Instead of arguing that virtue is the science that measures pleasures and pains, Socrates argues that the cardinal virtues are means of restraining and ordering our desires so that we match them to the available resources. This is why he emphasizes temperance among the virtues (*Gorg.* 491d–e). Temperate people have learnt to modify their desires so that they do not exceed the reasonable limits; the adaptive conception fixes these reasonable limits according to the available resources. This conception of happiness gives us no reason for valuing temperance or any other cardinal virtue non-instrumentally.

[11] On anti-hedonism in the *Philebus* see Schofield, '*Duschereis*' (who takes these people to hold Speusippus' views on pleasure, which are different from the Cynic views).

[12] See *SR* VA 119–22.

We may reach a different conclusion about virtue and happiness, however, if we consider Socrates' argument to show that Callicles' position is inconsistent. He does not move Callicles by simply contrasting the hedonist conception of happiness with the adaptive conception; Callicles remarks contemptuously that Socrates' conception implies that rocks and corpses are happy (492e). To show that Callicles cannot consistently be a hedonist and advocate bravery as a virtue, Socrates does not appeal to claims about satisfaction, but argues that Callicles' hedonism conflicts with the value that he attaches to rational agency. Bravery, according to Callicles, is valuable because it allows us to carry out our own plans and aims without the distraction of fear. Socrates argues that in valuing this aspect of bravery Callicles recognizes a non-hedonic good that may conflict with maximization of pleasure.

Socrates does not point out that his adaptive conception of happiness might well appear to be open to the objection that he urges against Callicles' hedonism. Callicles' derisive comment about rocks and corpses points out that we could have satisfied desires without rational agency. If we value rational agency for its own sake, we cannot agree that happiness consists simply in satisfaction of preferences.

If we attend to this aspect of the *Gorgias* we may be inclined to conclude that virtue is not simply a means to happiness, but identical to it. According to this view, we value rational agency not because it leads to satisfaction of desire, but for its own sake. This outlook on happiness may encourage us to accept the position that the *Philebus* opposes to hedonism—the identification of the good with rational intelligence. The *Republic* and the *Philebus* show that this is not the direction Plato takes; but it is an intelligible conclusion from the *Gorgias*.

The imprecise aspects of Socrates' alternative to hedonism may be relevant for understanding the Cynics. One might reasonably infer from the *Gorgias* both that Socrates endorses an adaptive conception of happiness and that he ascribes non-instrumental value to virtue. If we try to expound the outlook of the *Gorgias* and to put it into practice, we may find ourselves formulating an account of happiness that includes these inconsistent elements. This reflexion on Socrates may throw light on the Cynic position.

37. Happiness and Adaptation

In the *Euthydemus* Socrates concludes that alleged goods other than wisdom are not really good, but are 'greater goods' than their opposites if wisdom leads them. The Cynics try to explain the claims in the *Euthydemus* by appeal to the adaptive conception of happiness that Socrates defends in the *Gorgias*. Antisthenes claims to be proud of his 'wealth', even though he lacks what most people would recognize as wealth. He is wealthier than conventionally wealthy people because he has ample resources to satisfy his minimal desires (Xenophon, *Symp*. iv 34–45). Those who are rich in the conventional view are really needy, because they always want more and have too little to satisfy their needs.[13] Antisthenes, however, is used

[13] 'Need' or 'lack' (*endeia*) makes conventionally rich people commit crimes to get more. They are like people who eat and drink more and more and are never filled (iv 36–7). This picture of desire and filling recalls Plato's descriptions in the *Gorg.*, *R*. ix, and the *Phil.*

to the cold, and so does not need warm clothes; he satisfies his inevitable and minimal needs with whatever is available, and so he is not anxious for more.[14] His adaptation of desires to the circumstances is the basis of his virtues of temperance and justice; he lacks the urgent desires that would tempt him to intemperance and injustice.[15] This is why Antisthenes claims that virtue is sufficient for happiness.[16]

Antisthenes' description of the strategy suggested by an adaptive conception of happiness brings Socrates quite close to Diogenes. For it implies that the Cynic who lives in a barrel, wears no clothes, eats and drinks only what he needs to stay alive and active, and does not care what his more conventional neighbours think about him, achieves happiness, as long as he has formed only the desires that can be satisfied in this way of life.

If we identify virtue with the state of character that adapts desires to resources, we have a reason to affirm the Socratic claim that virtue is sufficient for happiness, and we can see why Socrates is right to infer that no supposed 'goods' other than virtue are really good. If we have a million dollars to spare, and we want to buy a house costing this amount, we will (to this extent) achieve satisfaction through adaptation by buying the house. But we have no reason to prefer having enough to buy this house over having enough to buy a tent in circumstances where we only want a tent. Provided that our desires match our resources, at either a high or a low level, we have no reason to prefer the high level of desires and resources over the low level.

Antisthenes' strategy seems reasonable if we accept Socrates' claim that wisdom is the only good (*Euthd*. 281e) and external goods (i.e., those external to wisdom)[17] are not good. But Socrates also says that when external goods are led by wisdom, they are 'greater goods' than their opposites (281d). How is this claim consistent with the claim that wisdom is the only good?

Socrates might answer that wealth (for instance) is a greater good than poverty, but still not a good; it is a greater good only in so far as it is closer to being a genuine good. Though it is preferable to poverty, Socrates may not agree that it is thereby good. What is good is the wise person's use of wealth; though we prefer to have wealth to use, we can still be virtuous by acting wisely in poverty.

This answer, however, raises further questions about Socrates' position. If wealth led by wisdom is a greater good than poverty led by wisdom, a wise person apparently ought to seek wealth rather than poverty. But if in some circumstances a wise person ought to seek wealth rather poverty, does it not follow that, in these circumstances, wealth is better than poverty? If it is better than poverty, is it not good in these circumstances? If it is good in these circumstances, does it not promote the agent's happiness in these circumstances?

One might defend Socrates by questioning some of the steps in this argument; that is how the Stoics maintain that virtue is the only good, while still avoiding the Cynic conclusion that we have no reason to prefer wealth to poverty.[18] Socrates does not make it clear how he

[14] 'If his body ever needs sexual intercourse, he can satisfy it with those women who are available; he tries those whom no one else wants' (iv 38).

[15] 'It is reasonable to expect those who aim at minimal use of resources (*euteleia*) to be more just than others; for those who are most satisfied with what is available (*hois . . . malista ta paronta arkei*) are the least prone to desire what belongs to others' (iv 42).

[16] See DL vi 11, discussed in §35 below.

[17] For convenience I use an Aristotelian term.

[18] See §§161–2.

intends to defend the consistency of his position. But at any rate he does not seem to agree with Diogenes' conclusion. Diogenes believes we have no reason to prefer more external goods to fewer. Socrates disagrees on this point, though he does not clarify the basis of his disagreement.

We might try a defence of Socrates that comes closer to the Cynic position. Perhaps it is easier to adapt our desires to circumstances if we have a reasonable supply of external goods. If we do not have to watch every penny to provide ourselves with a bare minimum of food and shelter, we need not eliminate as many desires as a poorer person would have to eliminate in order to match desires to resources. External goods, then, are preferable, not for those who have already achieved happiness, but for those who are looking for the best way to achieve it. According to this view, Diogenes has no reason to want more external goods than he has. If he has adapted his desires to his circumstances, the fact that adaptation might have been easier for him in less rigorous circumstances is irrelevant. If he has achieved the goal by a more difficult route, it does not matter that he might have taken an easier route.

38. Do the Cynics Improve on Socrates?

The argument so far suggests that Socrates' views on virtue and happiness give no reason to object to Diogenes' way of life as a possible route to happiness. If happiness requires adaptation, we might achieve it either with Diogenes' low level of external goods or with a higher level. We seem to have no reason to prefer one level to the other, if the supply of external goods is reliable. While Socrates, on this view, has no reason to object to the Cynic way of life, he has no more reason to reject a well-adapted life at a higher level of external goods.

These concessions to the Cynics do not make Socrates into a Cynic. For the Cynics do not simply claim to have found one route to happiness; they also defend the stronger conclusion that they have taken the best route. In particular, they claim they are better off than they would have been if they had got rid of fewer external goods and had adapted their desires to the higher level.

We might defend this Cynic claim by appeal to Socrates' assertion that if we are wise, we do not need good fortune in addition to wisdom. According to Socrates, wisdom guarantees us all the good fortune we need (*Euthd.* 280a–b). Diogenes might argue that this is true only if we plan for a minimal level of external goods. If Croesus adapts his desires to his enormous wealth, and lives temperately but without austerity, his adaptation of desires to circumstances is unstable. For (as we know from Herodotus) greater resources are exposed to circumstances that we cannot control, however wise we may be. If we are used to having more, it is harder for us to adapt our desires to having less than it would be if we were used to having less all along.

We might answer, on Socrates' behalf, that this argument for austerity fails to reckon with Socratic moral psychology. Socrates might argue that, contrary to Diogenes' suggestion, a higher level of external goods does not make it more difficult to adapt our desires to circumstances if we lose the external goods we had. A loss of external goods will make it more difficult to adapt ourselves to circumstances only if we remain stubbornly attached

to aims and goals that we can no longer achieve, so that we regret our inability to achieve them. If that is our reaction to misfortune, our desires have not followed our beliefs about the good. But Socrates' argument in the *Protagoras* seeks to show that our desires necessarily follow our beliefs about the good. If this is correct, people who recognize that happiness consists in adaptation will not continue to desire the external goods they cannot have.

But this argument to show that we will not become too dependent on unreliable external goods proves too much for Socrates' purposes. If Socratic psychology is true, and enlightened people do not miss external goods that they lose, why should they bother keeping them in the first place? The most plausible argument for preferring a higher level of external goods claimed that they make adaptation easier; but for enlightened people who see that happiness consists in adaptation, they do not seem to make adaptation easier. If we know that happiness consists in adaptation, we will not regret the loss of external goods.

If, then, we combine strict Socratic psychology with an adaptive conception of happiness, we seem to have no reason to prefer Socrates' preference for a higher level of external goods or to prefer Diogenes' austerity. Neither outlook seems to contribute anything to the adaptation that is needed for happiness.

These implications of Socratic psychology may help to explain Antisthenes' apparent modification of Socrates' claims about virtue and happiness. He is reported as saying that virtue needs 'Socratic strength' added if it is to be sufficient for happiness.[19] He may intend to reject Socrates' assumption that our belief about what is better immediately determines our choice. Perhaps we need some further 'Socratic strength' to reconcile ourselves to a lower level of external goods even when we know it does not harm us.

If this is what Antisthenes means by his reference to Socratic strength, he might seem to support a preference for a higher level of external goods; for they seem to make adaptation easier for people whose desires will not automatically follow their beliefs about the good. But he might draw the opposite conclusion, that we should prefer a lower level of external goods. For even if more external goods make adaptation easier in favourable conditions, they also seem to make it less stable, because we cannot count on favourable conditions. If adaptation is more difficult in less favourable conditions, should we not get used to these conditions from the start, instead of waiting until it is more difficult for us to get used to them?

A similar argument explains why the Cynics are hostile to pleasure. If we think of happiness as adaptation, pleasure seems either dangerous or irrelevant. It is dangerous if we modify Socratic moral psychology enough to allow some degree of irrational attachment. Pleasure is an obvious source of such attachments; if we start to enjoy some unnecessary external good, we may find it more difficult to reconcile ourselves to the loss of it. This is why Antisthenes is not worried that the satisfaction of his minimal needs give him too little pleasure. On the contrary, he would prefer these satisfactions to give him less pleasure, since they seem to him to be 'pleasanter than is expedient' (*hediô tou sumpherontos*) (Xenophon, *Symp*. iv 39).

If pleasure does not cause us to form irrational attachments, it may none the less distract us from our real good. Things appear in a favourable light if we enjoy them, and this

[19] 'Virtue is self-sufficient for happiness, needing nothing added, except for Socratic strength' (DL vi 11).

appearance might mislead us into thinking they are good. But this appearance is no guide to our good, which consists in adaptation of desire. We are better off if we simply ignore pleasure, and get used to avoiding it; once we do that, we will find (following Diogenes' remarks about training) that pleasure and pain do not bother us. We will reach the state of freedom from affection (*apatheia*; cf. *Phil.* 21e2)[20] that makes it no longer necessary for us to concern ourselves about the potentially disruptive effects of pleasure.

Is this an unnecessarily austere attitude to pleasure? One might argue that the adaptation of our desires to circumstances and our awareness of our independence and self-sufficiency will itself be a source of pleasure. This sort of pleasure appears to be inseparable from the Cynic way of life, and might reasonably appear to be an advantage of being a Cynic. It is not surprising, then, that some sources take Diogenes to hold a favourable view of the pleasures that belong to the Cynic life.[21] But one may doubt whether this moderate interpretation of the Cynic attitude to pleasure takes proper account of Antisthenes' main point. Even if we take the right sort of pleasure in the right sorts of objects, it may appear, from Antisthenes' point of view, that this pleasure is still a non-rational attachment, and that it is still potentially dangerous. It may encourage us to prefer pleasure to pain, and so it may burden our lives with a concern that we could do without. The austere attitude ascribed to Antisthenes and Diogenes fits better with their aim of getting rid of all potentially disruptive and disturbing attachments and aims.

If, then, we prefer Cynic austerity over a less rigid attitude towards external goods, we have some reason to question Socrates' moral psychology. But it is not clear how far Diogenes advocates his austere way of life as a pattern for everyone to imitate in detail. He compares himself to a chorus-master who begins with too high a note so that the chorus will be able to hit the right note.[22] Cynic training produces appearances that give our souls 'free movement' for virtuous actions.[23] Perhaps Diogenes' ostentatious contempt for convention gives us the vivid appearance that observance of convention is not necessary for a reasonable and virtuous life. This appearance releases us from our unthinking attachment to convention and allows us to move freely towards the appropriately self-sufficient attitude. Diogenes may have hit too high a note, in so far as he has trampled on convention more than we need to once we have recognized its relative unimportance; but his exaggerations help us to see why external goods do not matter if we are trying to adapt our desires to circumstances. It

[20] See §55. On Aristotle's objections to *apatheia* see §85.

[21] Dio Chr. 8.20–6 represents Diogenes as claiming that we have to struggle against pleasure because it is deceptive, insinuating, and dangerous. Diogenes draws no distinction among pleasures here. On the contrary he suggests that 'it is not possible for anyone who keeps company with pleasure or even tries it out continuously to avoid being completely captured by it' (24). But 6.9–12 remarks that Diogenes got much more pleasure from his simple and inexpensive pursuits than others gain from more costly pursuits (he always enjoyed the change of seasons). Like Epicurus, he enjoyed simple food more than others enjoy costly food (6.12). The Persian king is worse off because of his fears and anxiety about poverty, illness, and death (6.35). But once the fear of death is removed, no further distress remains (6.42). Similarly, a remark ascribed to Diogenes describes *eudaimonia* as true enjoyment (*euphrainesthai*) and freedom from pain, so that reaches tranquillity (*hêsuchia*) and cheerfulness (*hilarotês*) (Stob. v 906.10–17). These passages make it easy to understand why some aspects of Cynicism appealed to Epicureans; see §143n4. Cynic attitudes to pleasure are fully discussed by Goulet-Cazé, *AC* (see, e.g., 45, 73).

[22] DL vi 35 = *SR* VB 266.

[23] In the *askêsis* of the soul the appropriate *phantasiai eulusian pros ta tês aretês erga parechontai* (DL vi 70 = SR VB 291). Cicero, *Fam*. xvi 18.1, uses *eulogia* for loose—i.e., not constipated—bowels; this metaphor is characteristic of Diogenes.

is helpful to practise austerity so that we do not get too attached to external goods that are unnecessary for happiness.

This attitude to external goods helps to explain why the traditional Greek heroes whom the Cynics praise are those who can cope with different circumstances, not those who set out to be ascetics. They praise Odysseus, whom Homer calls a 'man of many devices',[24] because he adapts himself to wealth and poverty, to war and peace, to prosperity and adversity, to Penelope, Circe, and Calypso. Another Cynic hero, Heracles, shows the same sort of adaptability in all the different circumstances required by his various labours.[25] Neither Odyssues nor Heracles tries to get rid of external goods. But each of them copes with sharp reversals of fortune, because (according to the Cynics) he can adapt his desires promptly to the circumstances. If we train ourselves to live Diogenes' life, we will be able to face reversals of fortune as resourcefully as Odysseus and Heracles did.

This understanding of Diogenes' advice makes his outlook seem a reasonable expression of the attitude to virtue and external goods that Socrates defends in the *Euthydemus*. It does not seem completely fair to describe Diogenes as Socrates gone mad. For it does not seem at all mad to defend Diogenes' attitude to external goods from Socratic premisses. If the conclusion is mad, that is a reason for saying that the madness lies in the Socratic premisses, not in Diogenes' inferences from them. If this defence of Diogenes rests on a mistaken account of Socrates' position, the mistake is at any rate not obvious. Though Socrates does not draw Diogenes' conclusions, we may fairly wonder how he could avoid them without giving up some of his claims in the *Euthydemus* and *Gorgias*.

39. Socrates and the Cynics: Is Virtue Identical to Happiness?

So far we have identified the Socratic aspects of the Cynic outlook by attending to Socrates' claims that virtue is sufficient for happiness and that happiness consists in the adaptation of one's desires to the circumstances. We might explain Socrates' views differently, however, by taking him to claim that virtue is identical to happiness, not simply an instrumental means to it. We have seen that Socrates' argument against Callicles seems to presuppose the non-instrumental value of rational agency, and therefore the non-instrumental value of virtue as the embodiment of practical reason. Does this conception of virtue and happiness fit the Cynic position? Diogenes Laertius attributes the view that virtue is the end to the Cynics, and in particular to Antisthenes.[26] But we do not know what remark by Antisthenes underlies this report.

If we believe that virtue is a non-instrumental good, that happiness includes all non-instrumental goods, and that virtue is necessary and sufficient for happiness, we must infer either that virtue is identical to happiness, or that the only components of happiness are

[24] See *Odyssey* i 1 (*andra . . . polutropon*).

[25] The Cynics' treatment of these Greek heroes is discussed by Hoisted, *CHCK*.

[26] This is part of DL's review of the doctrines that the Cynics held in common: 'They also hold that living in accord with virtue is the end, as Antisthenes says in the *Heracles*, similarly to the Stoics, since there is some common ground between these two schools. That is why they have said that Cynicism is a short road to virtue. And that was how Zeno of Citium lived' (DL vi 104).

virtue and whatever other goods virtue infallibly secures. If, for instance, virtue secures pleasure or peace of mind, these may be components of happiness that are in some way distinct from virtue, since non-virtuous people may also achieve them. But this view does not seem to be open to Socrates, since he affirms that wisdom is the only good; if pleasure and peace of mind are distinct from virtue, they cannot be goods, and hence they cannot be elements of happiness. Virtue seems to be the only element of happiness that Socrates can allow, if he takes virtue to be a non-instrumental good.

Though virtue may help us to adapt our desires to the circumstances, the adaptive conception of happiness does not agree completely with the view that virtue is identical to happiness. The cardinal virtues are only one means to secure adaptation of desires. I might have well-adapted desires by nature, because I happen to want very little, even though I do not see that adaptation is the most rational course of action; or my past experience may have reduced my desires to a minimal level. If happiness consists in adaptation, I am as happy if my desires are adapted to circumstances by these routes as I would be if they were adapted by practical reason. If, however, we believe that virtue is identical to happiness, only the adaptation that results from practical reason can belong to a happy life.

In Plato's early dialogues Socrates does not choose between these two accounts of the relation between virtue, happiness, and adaptation. These dialogues do not make it clear that he needs to choose between the two accounts. The *Gorgias* presents claims about adaptation and about virtue without saying how they affect each other. The Cynics do not seem to make the choices any clearer. We might take Diogenes to believe that nothing matters except virtue. From this point of view, he does not care whether his actions are offensive, shocking, bizarre, anti-social, unhealthy, or dangerous. These considerations do not matter to him once he has decided that only virtue matters; if he gave way to them he would be going back on his principles.

If we argue against him by suggesting that a conception of happiness with all these strange implications must have gone wrong somewhere, he might reply that our attempt to argue against his conception of the ultimate end is misguided. Choices (he might say) are reasonable in the light of our ends, but our ends must simply be chosen. Virtue and happiness consist in living with complete integrity in the light of our ultimate commitments.

Here we might find in Diogenes an expression of the 'existentialist' interpretation of Socrates' attitude to virtue. It denies that we can have any reason for pursuing virtue, as Socrates conceives it, rather than the vices opposed to the cardinal virtues. If the only virtue consists in integrity, it may not be very close to common views about the content of the virtues; in fact, it may have no specific content at all. This defence of Socratic integrity raises doubts about the first steps of Socratic moral inquiry. Socrates criticizes common moral beliefs, but he also relies on them to identify the outlines of the different virtues. But if we try Diogenes' defence of the view that virtue is all that matters, we may find ourselves moving away from the virtues as Socrates conceives them.

Cynicism, therefore, captures two distinct elements in Socrates' views about virtue and happiness. We might find Diogenes attractive either because of his adaptation or because of his integrity. From one point of view, he has achieved happiness because he is free from anxiety about unfulfilled desires. From another point of view, he is happy because he achieves what matters most, sticking firmly to his virtuous resolution without being

distracted by unimportant external goods. Neither conception of happiness captures all that Socrates wants to say about the virtues, but each captures one element in Socrates' position.

40. An Objection to Cynicism

This account of Cynicism suggests that its attitude to external goods supports both an adaptive conception of happiness and the identification of virtue with happiness. But the conclusion is open to doubt. For we may reasonably doubt whether we can consistently regard virtue as the only non-instrumental good. The cardinal virtues try to achieve certain specific non-moral results that secure different ranges of external goods. Brave people do not simply try to act fearlessly; they face danger in order to protect themselves or their friends, or to secure safety and peace for their community. Just people do not simply try to restrain their acquisitive desires; they try to make sure that they do what they owe to other people, so that other people get what they deserve. What would be the point of trying to achieve these results if they were not good results? It is not clear why the virtuous person should be so concerned about them and make such efforts to secure them if they are not worth securing.

This argument also suggests that if we regard virtue as a non-instrumental good, we cannot accept an adapative conception of happiness. For the virtues do not infallibly secure the good results that they aim at; they are subject to fortune and to external circumstances. Hence virtuous people are liable to frustrated desires that they could avoid if they cared less about the virtues. Hence virtue is not the most effective way to achieve the adaptation of desires to circumstances.

According to this argument, Diogenes' view that external goods are worthless is incompatible with virtue. Virtuous people might choose to live in a barrel if any higher level of comfort would require, say, inappropriate compromises with unjust rulers. But they could not share his view that the external goods that they give up are worthless, so that he sacrifices nothing that is really worth having. The convictions about value that Diogenes offers to explain his way of life are inconsistent with the virtuous outlook. We should therefore conclude that his convictions express an adaptive conception of happiness that conflicts with belief in the non-instrumental goodness of virtue.

If this is a legitimate criticism of Diogenes, it is a legitimate criticism of Socrates as well. His claim that virtue is the only good is intended to show that he takes virtue seriously; it ought to explain why the Athenians ought to be concerned about virtue before external goods. What better reason could they have than the fact that virtue is the only good? On closer examination, however, the exclusive claim about the goodness of virtue turns out to be incompatible with a genuine commitment to virtue. A genuine commitment to virtue requires us to value the external ends that the virtuous person aims at; we do not seem to value them appropriately if we do not think they are goods and we do not aim at them as elements in happiness.

The existentialist interpretation avoids these objections by denying that the virtues require us to make any serious efforts to achieve specific external results. If virtue simply consists in the unwavering commitment to our ultimate values, whatever they may be, it does not

require us to believe that any particular sort of external result is worth trying to achieve. Instead of believing that the point of virtue consists partly in aiming at these specific results, we might argue that specific types of action are significant only because they develop or display one's unwavering commitment and one's adaptability to circumstances. A labour of Heracles, for instance, might be praised not because it was worthwhile to have the Augean stables clean, but because Heracles' successful performance of this task displayed his strength and adaptability. But this purely athletic conception of virtue does not match the common view that a virtue involves real concern for a specific type of result.[27]

These questions about the goodness of virtue and of external goods are the starting point of Stoic arguments about virtue and the preferred indifferents. These arguments try to maintain and to defend the claim in the *Euthydemus* that virtue is the only good. But the same questions are also relevant to Plato's views on virtue and happiness. Though he does not argue that the belief that virtue is the only good is incompatible with the belief that it is a non-instrumental good, he may recognize the conflict between these beliefs. For in the *Republic* he does not maintain that virtue is purely instrumental to happiness, or that it is the only good, or that it is sufficient for happiness, or that happiness consists in adaptation. Whereas *Republic* i ends with the claim that justice is sufficient for happiness, the rest of the dialogue does not repeat this claim. In the *Philebus* Plato discusses both extreme hedonism and extreme anti-hedonism, and develops a composite conception of the good that rules out both hedonist and adaptive views. Here Plato makes it clear that the sense in which the good is 'sufficient' (*hikanon*) cannot be identified with the sense in which the Cynic claims to be self-sufficient and independent of external circumstances.

In all these cases, then, Plato abandons the Socratic claims that allow a Cynic to argue for Diogenes' attitude to external goods. *Republic* ii considers a situation that might invite a Cynic response; the just person suffers for being just and loses external goods. From the Cynic point of view, what he loses is worthless, and nothing to regret. But the *Republic* does not take this position. Plato argues at length to show that justice is preferable to injustice, even if the just person suffers for being just and the unjust person is well supplied with external goods; but he never suggests that the just person has lost nothing worth having, or that justice by itself makes him happy.

Plato may be aware of the Cynic use of Socrates' arguments. He does not argue that the Cynics have misunderstood Socrates. On the contrary, he implicitly agrees with the Cynics' understanding of him, or at least agrees that it legitimately develops a Socratic line of argument. To avoid the Cynic conclusions, he affirms that virtue is to be chosen for its own sake and refrains from affirming that virtue is sufficient for happiness, or that virtue is the only good. The Cynic arguments make Plato aware of the aspects of Socratic ethics that need to be reconsidered. Plato and Aristotle defend the ethical position that results from taking virtue as seriously as Socrates takes it, but does not offer the opening that Socrates offers to Cynic arguments.

[27] See Adam Smith on the Stoics, §182.

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PLATO

41. Plato's Reflexions on Socrates

Aristotle takes some of the dialogues in which Socrates is the main speaker to express the views of Plato rather than Socrates. If we arrange the dialogues in accordance with his division, we can discern a reasonably plausible order of the dialogues, and a reasonably intelligible development in the views that 'Socrates' (the speaker) maintains in them. Though a detailed defence of these claims raises complicated questions about the Platonic corpus as a whole, we will form a reasonable view of Plato's views on Socratic ethics if we take the *Phaedo, Republic, Symposium, Phaedrus*, and *Philebus* as our main sources of Plato's views.

Plato may not have intended a sharp division between the dialogues that expound Socrates' views and those that develop his own views without any explicit Socratic precedent. The *Protagoras, Gorgias*, and *Meno* might plausibly be taken to mark a transition between exposition of the Socratic position and the introduction of a distinctively Platonic position. If we want to understand Plato's ethical views, we may usefully compare the *Republic* with the Socratic dialogues. The structure and style of the *Republic* encourages this comparison. For Book i is a short dialogue in the manner of the earlier dialogues, designed to introduce the main dialogue, which reflects at length on the themes introduced in Book i. Plato signals that he intends us to think about the issues raised in the Socratic dialogues, by providing us with a short dialogue that recalls some of these issues, but from his later point of view.[1]

We have seen that the one-sided Socratics develop Socrates' views in different directions. The Socratic positions that they consider are recognizable in Plato's early dialogues. If Cynic and Cyrenaic views go back to Plato's contemporaries, we should suppose that he writes the middle and late dialogues against a background of conflicting interpretations and evaluations of Socrates. According to the *Republic*, some identify the good with pleasure, others with intelligence (*R*. 505b). Plato mentions these two candidates again in the *Philebus* (11b–c). These descriptions capture the Cyrenaic and the Cynic attitudes to virtue, pleasure, and happiness. Plato disagrees with both of them. If we suppose that he has these opposed Socratic positions in mind, we may reasonably ask why he takes his views to be preferable to

[1] Some have argued, unconvincingly, that *Republic* i is an independent earlier dialogue, later added to the *Republic*. See Vlastos, *SIMP* 248–51. For further references see Irwin, *PE* 376.

those of Aristippus and Diogenes, and whether he can reasonably claim that they are more genuinely Socratic in spirit.

This debate about Socrates and about ethics in the Socratic spirit introduces later ethical debates. Aristotle agrees with Plato on the main points on which Plato disagrees with the one-sided Socratics. But Plato and Aristotle do not dominate later reflexion on Socrates or later ethical theory. On the contrary, the one-sided Socratics influence the main Hellenistic ethical theories; the Stoics seem to derive more from the Cynics, and the Epicureans from the Cyrenaics, than either school seems to derive from Plato or Aristotle. To see whether the Stoics or Epicureans are right, or both schools are wrong, we should ask why Plato rejects the one-sided positions, and why Aristotle agrees with him.

42. The Scope of Plato's Ethical Thought

Socrates is the first moral philosopher, but Plato is the first philosopher who places moral philosophy within a broader conception of philosophy. Aristotle notices that, whereas Socrates confines himself to ethics, Plato tries to connect Socratic concerns to more general issues in metaphysics and epistemology. These broader philosophical interests make it appropriate to discuss Plato's views in meta-ethics, especially the metaphysics and epistemology of morality, and in moral psychology.

Aristotle tells us that Plato treated the forms, the objects of Socrates' search for definitions, as non-sensible and separated from sensibles. He also makes it clear that Plato disagrees with Socrates in moral psychology; for though he criticizes Socrates for his denial of incontinence and for his general neglect of the role of the non-rational part of the soul in virtue, he never criticizes Plato on this point. We may reasonably follow Aristotle's lead, and explore the significance of these differences between Socrates and Plato.

On Socrates' views about virtue and happiness, we have less explicit guidance from Aristotle. But he offers an important implicit suggestion. In his view, the virtuous person correctly chooses virtue and virtuous action for their own sake, since they are non-instrumental goods. We have seen that Socrates does not express this view about virtue. Plato, however, expresses it clearly in *Republic* ii, where the interlocutors ask Socrates to prove that justice is worth choosing for itself, and not only for its consequences. If we compare Aristotle with the Socratic dialogues, on the one hand, and with the *Republic*, on the other hand, we see that on this point he agrees with Plato against Socrates.

With the help of these suggestions from Aristotle, we can now try to see why Plato departs from Socrates on these points. To understand his disagreements with Socrates, we have to assemble evidence from different dialogues, since Plato does not set it all out in a continuous treatment of ethical problems. His longest treatment of central ethical questions is contained in the *Republic*, but this treatment is not self-contained. We will understand it better if we consider passages from other dialogues that help to explain some of the important moves in the course of the *Republic*. After setting out Plato's main disagreements with Socrates, we will turn (in §57) to a more consecutive discussion of the *Republic*.[2]

[2] I do not intend to rely on any claims about the relative date of the dialogues I will discuss. Though I believe the *Phaedrus* and the *Philebus* are later than the *Republic*, I believe they may properly be used to clarify the *Republic*. They

43. Definitions and Disputes

According to Aristotle, Plato developed his theory of non-sensible, separated forms in response to Socrates' search for definitions in ethics, because he believed that Socratic definitions could not apply to sensible, and hence changeable, things (*Met*. 987a32–b10; 1078b12–1079a4; 1086a37–b11). What difference do these Platonic claims make to Socrates' inquiries into the virtues?

Though Socrates believes his inquiries are important, he also believes they fail. He never offers an account of a virtue that he announces as a correct answer to his question about what the virtue is. He reaches descriptions of the virtues that he apparently takes to be correct, so that, for instance, he regards all the virtues as the knowledge of good and evil; but he does not claim that any of them is a correct definition. Why is Socrates unsuccessful?

To estimate his prospects for success, we need to see what he expects from a definition. One of his conditions is epistemological. In the *Euthyphro* he asks for a 'pattern' or 'standard' (*paradeigma*) for judging that something is or is not an instance of piety. He seems to assume that such an account must eliminate 'disputed terms' (*Eu*. 7c10–d5). If we can describe a virtue only in terms that we cannot apply to particular cases without causing dispute, we have not found a paradigm.

This condition helps to explain why Socrates does not claim to have found definitions when he offers descriptions such as 'bravery is knowledge of what is to be feared and faced with confidence' (*La*. 199d1–2; *Pr*. 360d4–5), or the descriptions in the *Gorgias* of the virtues as types of psychic order (*Gorg*. 506e2–507b8). Further dispute might still arise about what is to be feared, or about what counts as the right order; these disputes would need to be settled by appeal to our judgments about fine, just, and good things, but those are the areas that are subject to dispute.

The *Euthyphro* points out that in some areas we can eliminate disputes about the application of a term by appealing to measurement. The *Protagoras* suggests that this method of eliminating disputes is open to us in ethics. Plato speaks of the 'measuring craft' that settles questions about goodness and badness by estimating present and future pleasures.

Socrates, therefore, seems to aim at reductive definitions of moral properties; they should reduce them to non-moral properties by eliminating the terms that cannot be applied without the use of moral judgments. Without these reductive accounts, proposed definitions offer only what Price later calls 'mere synonymies', defining one moral property only by reference to others, which have to be defined in turn by reference to it. Reductive definitions would reduce moral properties to those that Moore calls 'natural' properties, intending these to be non-evaluative and non-normative.[3]

These divisions of properties and terms (natural v. non-natural, moral v. non-moral, evaluative v. non-evaluative, normative v. non-normative) are not equivalent. But Socrates' remarks are too brief to make it reasonable for us to inquire more precisely into what he has in mind. It is enough for present purposes to notice that he assumes that we need

may express views that Plato has not explicitly formulated, but inarticulately takes for granted in the *Republic*. I have not said much about the ethical discussions in the *Laws*. For a brief discussion of Plato's later ethical views see Irwin, *PE*, chs. 19–20, and for a fuller discussion see Bobonich, *PUR*.

[3] See Price, *RPQM* 141; Moore, *PE* 93.

something more informative than a circle of definitions clarifying one moral property only by reference to others. Many who have sought definitions of moral properties have accepted this assumption. In saying that moral properties are an area of dispute, Socrates suggests that we can resolve moral disputes only by eliminating distinctively moral terms, and that we cannot find a suitable paradigm until we have done this.

44. Why Explanation Requires Non-sensible Forms

This epistemological demand on acceptable definitions already makes it difficult to find definitions of moral properties. But Socrates makes his task even more difficult by insisting that correct definitions must also meet his explanatory condition. In his view, an account of the property F must reveal the property that explains why F things are F. As the *Euthyphro* explains, we might find an account that is extensionally adequate but still fails to reveal the explanatory property; that is why 'the pious is what all the gods love' is not an adequate definition of the pious.

Plato notices that the explanatory demand makes the epistemological demand harder to satisfy. The explanatory demand involves a counterfactual test that appeals to change. If the gods were to love something different, and nothing else changed, it would not follow that what is pious also changes; for we assume that it is something about the pious itself that explains why the gods love it. Hence the account that Socrates rejects seems to meet the epistemological condition, but to fail the explanatory condition. Similarly, we might find an extensionally adequate account (let us suppose) of justice by identifying it with the provisions of Athenian law; such an account would also meet the epistemological condition. But it would not give us an explanatory account. Even if all and only the provisions of Athenian law were just, it would not follow that justice is to be defined as what Athenian law prescribes; for if Athenian law changed, and nothing else changed, it would not follow that what is just would change too. We assume, as we assumed about piety, that facts about just actions (etc.) themselves explain why just laws are just, and so we assume that changes in the law do not by themselves imply changes in what is just. The explanatory condition, therefore, requires us to reject proposed definitions that would be satisfactory if we required only extensional adequacy.

Reflexion on Socrates' explanatory condition, therefore, might reasonably lead us to doubt whether his epistemological condition is reasonable. The most plausible candidates for reductive definitions meeting the epistemological condition do not seem to satisfy the explanatory condition. Plato might reasonably conclude that we cannot expect a definition to satisfy both conditions and that we need to choose between them. Plato decides that the explanatory condition is more fundamental, and that we ought to give up the epistemological demand for a reductive definition that eliminates evaluative terms.

This is why Aristotle believes that Plato develops his account of non-sensible forms in response to Socrates' search for definitions of ethical properties. In the *Phaedo* Plato introduces the 'just itself' and all the other essences that concern Socrates, and claims that they are inaccessible to the senses (*Phd.* 65d4–5, 74a11, 75c10–d3, 76d7–9). A correct account of the forms must provide a satisfactory explanation of why things have the relevant

properties. Being beautiful cannot be the same as being bright coloured, because being bright coloured is not the property that makes things beautiful (100c9–e3). Similarly, the fact that children bury their parents does not make this particular action of these children burying their parents fine; for that fact might equally be found in a shameful action (if, for instance, the children had murdered their parents first).

This explanatory demand helps us to understand Plato's repeated claim that whereas the form of F cannot be both F and not F, sensible Fs are both F and not-F, or (as he also expresses it) change from being F to being not-F. The many beautifuls (justs, equals, and so on) are both beautiful and ugly (*R*. 479a5–b10). In contrast to the F things that are both F and not F, the form of F must be free from this compresence of opposites (*Symp*. 210e5–211a5; cf. *HMa*. 291d1–3). Even if we believe that necessarily the gods love only what is pious, the god-beloved changes from being pious to being impious. If the gods were to love unjust action, and if unjust action is necessarily impious, god-beloved action would be impious; but the pious itself cannot undergo this change from being pious to being impious.

The explanatory role of the forms helps to explain why Plato claims that forms, in contrast to sensibles, are free of change and flux. The form of F must be free of flux, not liable to variation between being F and being not-F, whereas sensible Fs are liable to this variation (*Phd*. 78d–e). Sensible properties such as being what the gods love, or being prescribed by Athenian law, are liable to variation between being pious or just and being impious or unjust. Plato's explanatory demand suggests that the change he has in mind includes counterfactual change as well as actual change. If Athenian laws changed so that they rewarded murder rather than punishing it, and nothing else changed, Athenian laws would become unjust rather than just, but justice would not require us to reward murder. Even if actual Athenian law coincided with the demands of justice, we could not identify justice with the demands of Athenian law; for Athenian law is subject to change from being just to being unjust, whereas justice is not subject to these changes.

45. Appropriate Definitions

If Plato takes his claims about non-sensible and unchanging forms to follow from the acceptance of Socrates' explanatory condition and the rejection of Socrates' epistemological condition for definitions, we would expect him not to reject attempted definitions that fail to reduce moral properties to non-evaluative properties. Moreover, we might expect him to be readier than Socrates is to accept definitions that meet the explanatory but not the epistemological condition.

Our expectations are fulfilled by the progress of the argument in the *Republic*. At the outset Socrates rejects an account of justice as telling the truth and returning what we have received. This property of returning what we have received offers us a reductive definition, since no moral dispute enters into whether we have received something and whether we are returning it. But the property changes from being just to being unjust; it is unjust to return our friend's sword to him if he has gone mad and is threatening to kill himself (*R*. 331c7–9). Plato assumes that necessarily a just person does not inflict undeserved harm on others and that we would be doing this if we gave back our friend's sword in these circumstances.

Thrasymachus' intervention draws our attention to questions about the search for reductive definitions. For Thrasymachus wants 'perspicuous and accurate' (336c6–d4) accounts that eliminate such terms as 'due' or 'appropriate'. If we could satisfy Thrasymachus' demand, we would find accounts that would eliminate disputes by reducing moral to non-evaluative properties. The search for perspicuity and exactness seems to underlie Socrates' search for definitions of moral properties as well.

In *Republic* i Socrates does not comment directly on Thrasymachus' demand, and, since he offers no definition of justice, he does not make it clear whether or not he thinks he ought to satisfy it. But he certainly does not endorse the demand for a perspicuous and accurate account that would satisfy Thrasymachus. He seems to be sympathetic to Simonides' account of justice as 'rendering what is due to each person' (331e3–4). He does not say that this is an adequate account, but he does not rule it out on the ground that it contains a disputed evaluative term ('due').

We can reach a more positive conclusion, however, if we consider Book iv. This marks a sharp contrast with the inconclusive Socratic dialogues, which fail to reach accounts of the cardinal virtues. In Book iv Plato claims to define all of them as conditions of the well-ordered soul. He takes these definitions to satisfy the explanatory condition; he claims that virtuous acts are virtuous because they are appropriately related to good order in the soul. But if he still accepted the epistemological condition, he would not accept these definitions. For they do not eliminate disputed moral terms. Plato's account of justice has the same form as the Simonidean account. Justice involves 'doing one's own', one's proper function, and thereby 'having one's own', what is due to one (433e6–434a1). The explanations of 'doing one's own' and 'having one's own' imply that, like the Simonidean account, Plato's accounts contain moral terms, and so do not satisfy Thrasymachus' demand for perspicuous and accurate accounts.

The same is true of the other virtues that Plato discusses in *Republic* iv. Bravery is described as preservation of right belief under the control of the wisdom in the rational part; temperance is concord between the parts under the control of the wisdom in the rational part. Each of these accounts mentions the rational part and its wisdom, which is its knowledge of the good. Similarly, justice consists in each part doing its own work under the control of the wisdom in the rational part. These accounts would eliminate moral terms only if we could specify knowledge of the good in non-moral terms; and to do this we would need an account of the good in non-moral terms. Plato says nothing to suggest that he can provide such an account; nor does he suggest that he needs such an account in order to give an adequate account of the virtues.

It is not surprising, then, that Plato does not repeat Socrates' acknowledgment of failure in the search for definitions. He believes that he succeeds, not because he believes he can do just what Socrates was trying to do, but because he believes Socrates was trying to do what could not be done. Given that Socrates expected acceptable accounts to be both explanatory and reductive, he was right to think he failed to find accounts of the virtues. But Plato concludes that we should look for explanatory but non-reductive accounts, and he offers such accounts in the *Republic*.

On this point Plato agrees with Price and Moore in rejecting attempts to define moral properties as 'natural' properties (if natural properties are understood as non-normative

properties). But he does not believe moral properties are simple or indefinable. Price and Moore reach this conclusion partly because they believe that a definition must analyse the definiendum into simpler elements. This demand for simplicity is not exactly the same as Socrates' demand for the elimination of disputed evaluative terms, but it has the same effect; for Price believes that if we use further evaluative terms in defining an evaluative property, we are offering a 'mere synonymy' rather than a proper definition. Plato implicitly answers this objection. In his view, an account that captures the appropriate explanatory role of the relevant property meets any reasonable condition on definitions. If we insist on the elimination of disputed terms, we cannot find accounts of moral properties.

With these arguments about non-sensible forms Plato formulates a meta-ethical position to support moral inquiry. Socrates' inquiries depend on meta-ethical presuppositions; Plato makes some of these presuppositions explicit, and tries to identify the metaphysical and epistemological commitments we undertake in looking for the moral properties that explain why things are good, just, fine, and so on. Aristotle correctly attributes this meta-ethical interest to Plato, taking it to be the source of the reflexions that result in the theory of non-sensible forms. While Plato's interest in the metaphysics and epistemology of the forms goes beyond its meta-ethical sources, his meta-ethical interests make him the founder of meta-ethical inquiry, and in particular of a distinctively realist, non-naturalist, non-reductive doctrine of the nature of moral properties.

46. Non-rational Desires

Aristotle mentions the theory of separated forms as a Platonic development of Socratic doctrine; Plato agrees with Socrates about the importance of forms in Socratic inquiry, but differs from Socrates in claiming that the forms are separate from sensibles. In moral psychology Aristotle claims that Plato disagrees more directly with Socrates. Aristotle criticizes Socrates for identifying the virtues with knowledge, and thereby eliminating the non-rational part of the soul, passion, and character (*MM* 1182a15–23); in rejecting a non-rational part of the soul, he makes the virtues 'pointless' (1183b8–18).[4] Aristotle praises Plato for recognizing a non-rational part of the soul (1182a23–6).

Aristotle sees that Socrates' cognitive account of the virtues depends on his rejection of the possibility of incontinence, and, more generally, on his rejection of non-rational human motives; if he did not reject them, he could not reasonably resist Protagoras' suggestion that virtue requires the training of non-rational desires, and so cannot be confined to knowledge (*Pr.* 352a4–c7). If, then, Plato recognizes a non-rational part of the soul, he should reject Socrates' views on incontinence, and should not hold a purely cognitive account of the virtues.

The main discussion of rational and non-rational desires appears in *Republic* iv. Though the *Gorgias* anticipates the discussion of parts, and the reference to these parts in the description of the different virtues (*Gorg.* 493b1–3; 505b), it does not argue as clearly for the partition of the soul. We may reasonably turn to the *Republic*, then, to see how and why Plato disagrees with Socrates.

[4] On the *MM* see §66n3.

It is relatively easy to see how he disagrees with Socrates.[5] He remarks that sometimes we are thirsty, and yet refuse (or 'are unwilling', *ouk ethelein*, 439c2) to drink, because of some reason that inhibits us from drinking (439d1, *ek logismou*). He does not suggest that in such cases our belief that we ought not to drink or that it is better not to drink invariably controls our desire or determines our action. On the contrary, he suggests that our judgment about the good does not control us. He mentions the unfortunate Leontius, whose urge (*epithumia*) to look at corpses moved him to action even though he thought it was bad and shameful (439e6–440a3). Leontius does not provide a direct counter-example to Socrates, since the conflict he suffers involves two of his non-rational parts, the spirited and the appetitive parts. But Plato's comment on this example generalizes the point so that it also applies to a conflict between the rational part and the appetitive part (440a8–b7). He does not take it for granted that the desires of the rational part will always move us to action against the tendency of our non-rational desires.

Since Plato's description of these examples implies that it is possible for an agent to believe that one action is better than another, but to choose the one believed to be worse, he commits himself to rejecting Socrates' claim, defended in the *Protagoras*, that such choices are impossible. That is why he warns us not to assume that all our desires are for goods (438a1–5). The thesis that Plato questions is the Socratic thesis that all desire is for the good; Plato notices cases in which an agent acts on a desire that is not flexible in relation to beliefs about the good.

47. Why a Tripartite Soul?

While these points about the opposition between Plato and Socrates are relatively clear (though not wholly indisputable), it is more difficult to see why Plato disagrees with Socrates. Socrates recognizes cases that we intuitively describe as cases of incontinence; but he argues that this description embodies an error, and that there are no real cases of incontinence. Does Plato simply assert that there are such cases because they are intuitively obvious? That would not be much of an argument against Socrates' claim that the assumptions underlying our intuitive description are false.

If Plato were simply saying that incontinence is possible, despite Socrates' denial, it would be surprising that he takes so long to say it. For he embeds his remarks on incontinence in a division of the soul into three 'parts' or 'kinds'. We might reasonably expect Plato to use this tripartiton to explain how incontinence is possible, rather than simply to assert that it is possible. But to see how it might explain incontinence, we need to see what the tripartition means. Why should we assign different desires to three different parts?

Different mental activities do not require different parts of the soul (cf. 436a8–b3) unless they are contrary to each other; contrary activities require different explanatory principles (cf. *Phd*. 96c–97b, 100c–101c). To find the relevant kind of contrariety between desires Plato distinguishes those that rest on reasoning from those that are simply impulses towards certain satisfactions, and from those that display anger (*R*. 439c9–e4).

[5] Carone, 'Stoic', denies that Plato disagrees with Socrates on these points.

Many readers have been willing to accept Plato's two-way division between rational and non-rational desires, but unwilling to accept his three-way division into three parts, rational, spirited, and appetitive. The spirited (*thumoeides*) part has aroused most suspicion. It strikes many readers as being intrusive and ill-conceived; at first it seems to include only anger, but then it expands to love of honour. Neither of these descriptions seems to yield a class of desires parallel to the rational and non-rational. Some have suggested that Plato simply fabricates this part to provide an intra-psychic parallel to the three classes in the ideal state of the *Republic*.[6]

We may form a more favourable view of Plato's tripartition, however, if we attend more carefully to his description of the different parts. The mark of the rational part is not simply the fact that its desires depend on some sort of reasoning; for instrumental reasoning about how to satisfy hunger or thirst does not make the resulting desire for food or drink a rational desire. Though Plato does not make this point explicit in Book iv, he insists on it in Books viii–ix, in his description of the different kinds of unjust souls corresponding to the deviant constitutions. The oligarchic person engages in frequent and effective instrumental reasoning about how to make money; but in confining the rational part to this role, he subjects it to the desires of the appetitive part (553d1–8). The mere fact that he has engaged in instrumental reasoning does not make the resulting desires into desires of the rational part. The oligarchic person fails a condition for rational desire that Plato has already stated without explanation; we act on desires of the rational part only when the desires are based on a conception of what is good for the whole soul and for each part (442c6–8). This holistic, optimizing attitude belongs to desires that are flexible in relation to our conception of the ultimate good; hence, we may say that they involve eudaemonist rationality, as Socrates conceives it.

This description of the rational part helps us to understand the kind of 'contrariety' that is necessary for a division into parts. Plato does not believe that every sort of conflict between desires creates the relevant sort of contrariety; the desire for food and the desire for sleep may conflict if I am both very hungry and very sleepy, but Plato does not assign them to different parts. We come closer to Plato's idea of contrariety if we think of our forming desires that embody objections to other desires. To form an objection, we need something more than a mere aversion; we also need to have something against the desire we are averse to, so that we criticize it and reject it. We might, then, suggest that contrariety towards a desire requires an evaluative attitude towards it.

If this is what Plato has in mind, his tripartition is intelligible, and his description of the spirited part appears less arbitrary. For he notices that evaluative attitudes to desires are not confined to those that rest on the holistic outlook of optimizing practical reason. We can usefully distinguish criticisms based on some consideration of good and bad from those that are based on global practical reason. This distinction makes room for the distinctive outlook of the spirited part. To be angry and ashamed at our desires and at the actions they move us to, we need not evaluate them from the global perspective; we need only have some conception of good and bad beyond the satisfaction of this or that appetite.

[6] See, e.g., Penner, 'Thought'.

The suggestion that the spirited part embodies an evaluative, but incompletely evaluative, point of view, is illustrated by a remark of Aristotle's. He suggests that the spirited part hears the instructions of reason, but incompletely, like a hasty servant who rushes off to carry out an order before he has heard all of it. When he hears 'Bring me . . .', he does not wait to hear 'a pen', but, completing the instruction wrongly, goes to bring a book (*MM* 1202b12–21; *EN* 1149a25–b1).

We can grasp the same point by a comparison with one of Plato's bipartite divisions. In *Republic* x he discusses perceptual illusions in which (e.g.) the stick still appears bent to me, though I also believe, on the basis of relevant evidence, that it is really straight (*R*. 602c7–603a6). Here he contrasts the immediate visual impression, insensitive to evidence about the context, with the belief based on all the relevant evidence.[7] In this two-way contrast Plato does not mention any intermediate case. But reflexion on his principle of division suggests that he ought to allow the possibility of an intermediate case. For we might revise our initial impressions on the basis of some relevant evidence without considering everything relevant; hence we might form a belief that is sensitive to some evidence and insensitive to other evidence. The spirited part is partially sensitive in this way to evaluative considerations relevant to the acceptance and rejection of desires. Even though Plato sometimes uses a bipartite instead of a tripartite division, the underlying principle of division leaves room for a tripartition.

But even if a tripartition is intelligible, why is it relevant? Why not simply distinguish simple appetites (altogether insensitive to evaluation) from desires that respond (to whatever degree) to evaluation? Plato's tripartition is reasonable if he seeks to isolate a class of desires and motivational states that are partly responsive and partly non-responsive. This class includes many emotions that are relevant to morality. As Plato sees, anger, pride, self-esteem, and pity are not simple impulses. If I am hungry or cold, I feel the same way even if I reflect that I ought not to be hungry (I have just eaten quite enough) or cold. But anger is not quite the same; if I am angry at you for having kicked me, but I come to believe you did not kick me and so you are not an appropriate object of my anger, I will no longer be angry at you, though some other emotion may be left.[8] This does not mean my anger will respond to all the relevant considerations; even if I know this is not a good time to be angry, or that what you did is not important enough to be angry about, I may still be angry.

Recognition of incomplete evaluative outlooks is relevant for understanding both emotions and virtues. The desires of the appetitive part are similar to those in non-rational animals, in so far as they do not respond to considerations of better and worse. But Plato sees that considerations of better and worse are not confined to the global point of view of the rational part. Some of these considerations may be embodied in motives of the spirited part; this embodiment is comparatively rigid, in so far as the desires do not respond to all the relevant rational considerations.

[7] Plato describes them as two cases of belief (*doxazein*), 603a1–2.

[8] Butler explores this general point about emotions in his discussion of resentment in Sermon viii. In viii 5 he distinguishes purely instinctive and non-evaluative 'sudden anger' from anger, including some cases of 'hasty anger', that depends on some evaluation. As I understand Plato, Butler's 'sudden anger' does not belong to the spirited part, but some 'hasty anger' does. Bernard's note ad loc. mentions Hobbes as a source for Butler's distinction, but does not mention Plato. Against Bernard's suggestion that the NT use of '*thumos*' and '*orgê*' matches Butler's distinction see Kittel, *TDNT* iii 168.

The rigidity of spirited motives is relevant to the moral training of people who, in Plato's view, are not capable of guiding their life correctly by the outlook of the rational part. If their rational part is easily confused, and likely to reach the wrong conclusions, it may be better if they are controlled by the more rigid motives of the spirited part; for these motives may be trained to retain sounder views than the rational part would reach on its own account.

The spirited part has this role not only in people—such as the auxiliaries in Plato's state—whose rational part is incapable of guiding correctly, but also in people with an enlightened rational part. For we may recognize on some occasions that our reasoning is likely to be mistaken on other occasions—if, for instance, we have to decide what to do at very short notice in an emergency. In such cases it may be sensible to decide to allow our spirited emotions to guide us in the situation we foresee. If the rational part guides one's life as a whole, it may still decide not to impose its guidance on each particular occasion.

Plato may reasonably claim, therefore, that his tripartition of the soul allows a more complex and more plausible account of motivation than we can construct on the basis of Socrates' views, or on the basis of a simple division between rational and non-rational desires. The spirited part makes it especially clear why someone who shares Socrates' belief in the moral importance of practical reason need not be reluctant to allow desires that are not wholly responsive to practical reason. In the *Protagoras* Socrates suggested that if we recognize such desires, we allow knowledge to be dragged around like a slave. In the *Gorgias* Plato recognizes non-rational desires, but suggests only that they need to be restrained and controlled. In the *Republic* his view is more qualified. Some non-rational desires need to be restrained, but others help us to embody the control of practical reason. On this basis Plato might reasonably claim to be defending Socrates' claim that virtue requires the rule of practical reason, by giving up his over-simplified claims about the relation of reason to desire.

48. Why Parts of the Soul?

We have now seen why Plato has a reasonable argument against the Socratic rejection of non-rational desires, and why his tripartition of desires is not arbitrary, but an important element in his argument. But we have not yet explained why he represents his division as a partition. He does not simply classify desires into these three different types. He also ascribes to each part some of the features of a subject of desires; for some mental conflicts are described as disputes between the parts of the soul, as though these were somewhat similar to disputes between different people. How seriously should we take this aspect of the tripartition?

If Plato treated each part as an agent, he would apparently be duplicating a problem rather than solving it. If we are trying to understand the relations between desires that constitute an agent, we do not seem to make much progress by treating them as relations between agents; for we are presupposing the relations that we are trying to understand. This objection does not apply, however, if each part is a simplified agent that results from abstracting certain elements from an actual agent.[9]

[9] Bobonich, *PUR*, ch. 3, provides an illuminating treatment of the parts of the soul as agents, though he goes further in this direction than I would be inclined to go.

A non-rational part is similar to an agent in so far as it has some conception of itself. Each non-rational part can recognize the 'kinship' of reason to itself (402a3–4); hence it has some conception of itself that it can consider, to see what reason can do for it. In a well-governed soul the different parts agree about which part ought to rule (431d9–e1). Since the rational part rules in the interest of the whole soul and of each part (442c6–8), this is the basis on which each part consents to rule by the rational part. If the non-rational parts recognize that the rational part rules in their interest, they have a conception of themselves and of their interest. If we have a conception of ourselves, we refer to the past and future; we are capable of regret (in the minimal sense of displeasure at something we have done in the past, if, for instance, we have foolishly forgone some pleasure we could have had) and of fear and hope. If the non-rational parts have conceptions of themselves and some concern for themselves, they are capable of these attitudes.

If the appetitive part has desires that rest on this conception of itself, it is sometimes moved by the awareness that x is a more efficient instrumental means than y; considerations of efficiency tell me that one means fits better than another with my various appetitive aims. But we do not always act on these considerations; though we recognize that our future appetites will be satisfied if we do not satisfy this particular appetite now, we may choose to satisfy it none the less. This conflict of preferences, however, does not imply incontinence, since incontinence requires us to recognize the merits of a particular course of action apart from the strength of our desires. The appetitive part lacks a system of values that takes account of something more than the comparative strength of different desires. It lacks Butler's division between power and authority, which ascribes authority to the rational part.[10]

According to Plato, this outlook of the appetitive part is the outlook of a simplified agent who lacks the rational and holistic outlook of the ordinary rational agent. If we believe that the only function for practical reason is instrumental, revealing the means that causally contribute to satisfying non-rational desires for ends, we will believe that Plato's picture of appetitive agency is an accurate account of agency. The outlook that Plato ascribes to the appetitive part is very similar to the account of agency that we derive from the Greek Sceptics and from Hobbes and Hume. According to this account, virtue does not require practical reason to rule over non-rational passion; it simply requires the appropriate passions to be strong enough to dominate the others.

If each part of the soul has some aspects of agency, Plato's partition helps to explain some features of incontinence that provoke Socratic objections. Socrates sees that a single desire by itself does not explain an action; a particular desire makes an action intelligible because the desire itself is intelligible, fitting into some longer-term pattern of choices and actions. Socrates infers that desires make action intelligible because they ultimately aim at the agent's happiness. Plato, however, believes that happiness is not the only long-term aim that allows us to explain particular actions. The non-rational parts of the soul have some of the structure that Socrates attributes to the desires of the rational agent, but only the rational part has the structure that focusses on the agent's happiness. The tripartition of the soul suggests that incontinence is not only possible, but also—within certain limits, and from a restricted point of view—reasonable.

[10] See Butler, *S* ii 14.

It does not make clear, however, how incontinence happens. Does the non-rational part overcome because it is somehow too strong for the rational part? Or is the rational part somehow too lazy, so that it does not assert its position as forcefully as it should? These metaphors of strength, laziness, and forcefulness need further explanation before we can see whether Plato takes non-rational strength or rational deficiency to explain action against reason. Though he does not discuss incontinence fully, some of his remarks in the *Republic* allow us to grasp more clearly the sort of position he endorses.

49. The Tripartite Soul, Virtue, and Vice

So far we have seen how the doctrine of a tripartite soul contributes to the understanding of mental conflict, and hence to a sounder conception of moral education and the moral virtues. Plato has explained why virtue requires the co-operation of the different parts of the soul, under the control of the rational part. The control of the rational part ensures that the ends we choose on the basis of rational deliberation about the good will control our choices and actions.

This description of rational control is not yet a description of virtue. For the virtuous person makes the right choice of ends, but Plato acknowledges that some people's rational deliberation and choice of ends is mistaken. To explain the mistake, he appeals again to his account of the three parts of the soul. Since each of the non-rational parts includes a conception of itself and of its ultimate ends, the agent (the person whose soul includes all three parts) has a choice of different ways to think of himself; he may adopt a non-rational part's conception of itself as his conception of himself. Since each of the non-rational parts has a conception of itself that represents it (the part) as a sort of agent, the agent (the whole person) may think of himself as having only the sort of agency that a part recognizes.

Plato does not believe that people who accept the outlook of a non-rational part are virtuous, even though they are, in one respect, controlled by the rational part. The rational part chooses to accept the conception of one's ends that belongs to a non-rational part, and this choice is effective; to that extent the rational part controls. But since the ends that control the lives of these agents are the ends of a non-rational part, the non-rational part controls them.

Plato describes the different people who make these mistaken choices in his account of the different constitutions resulting from the collapse of the ideal state (*R.* viii–ix). The different individuals whose souls have the structure of the different imperfect constitutions are those who have made the wrong choices about the ends that are worth pursuing. As Plato puts it, each of the individuals has made a different decision about handing over power to one or another part (550b6, 553b–c). These decisions are made by the rational part, taking the point of view of the whole soul, but relying on a false conception of the interests of the whole soul, because it takes the outlook of a non-rational part too seriously. In handing over power to a non-rational part, the rational part abdicates responsibility and control.

This abdication is attractive to the rational part if it accepts the conception of practical reason that underlies the outlook of the non-rational parts. Their impoverished conception involves some degree of scepticism about the competence and scope of practical reason;

the only role they see for it is an instrumental role in finding ways to satisfy non-rational desires. If reason has no non-instrumental role, we cannot rely on it to answer questions about the ends we ought to pursue; we must rely on desires that are independent of reason. The non-rational parts present us with these desires. Hence someone whose rational part is unduly influenced by these views about the functions of the rational part will come to believe that his rational part ought not to be looking for any ends distinct from the ends of the non-rational parts, because it is not competent to find them. It convinces itself that Hume is right about the scope of practical reason.

Someone who sees only an instrumental role for practical reason implicitly denies that Butler's distinction between strength and authority applies to the choice of ends. In Butler's view, reasonable self-love is distinguished from the particular passions in so far as it acts on reasons for doing x that are recognized as distinct from the strength of my desire for doing x.[11] In deciding whether to do x or y, rational self-love does not simply try to register the comparative strength of my desire for x and for y, but considers the comparative merits of the actions themselves. If a strictly instrumental view of practical reason were right, there would be no comparative merits to be considered; hence there would be no basis apart from comparative strength of desires for deciding between one end and another.

We will doubt the strictly instrumental view, if we believe, contrary to Hume, that it is rational to plan for the efficient satisfaction of our desires. If we allow that this is rational, we seem to give practical reason a non-instrumental role. The efficient planner agrees that if I have desires of equal strength for A, B, and C, and if x will get me A and B, whereas y will get me only C at the cost of A and B, then I have reason to choose x over y. Hume denies that this concern for efficiency is rational; that is why he denies that it is contrary to reason to prefer the destruction of the world to the scratching of my finger. But his denial rests on his inadequately-defended view of the scope of practical reason.[12] If we believe, contrary to Hume, that concern for efficiency is rational because it rests on concern for my whole self, we have equally good reason for some discrimination among ends. If at the moment I care equally about A, B, and C, but I realize that any pursuit of C will prevent my getting A and B, whereas pursuit either of A or of B does not interfere with the pursuit of the other, why is it not rational for me to abandon C in favour of A and B? If comparative considerations can induce me to adjust my choice of means, they can also induce me to adjust my choice of ends.

The rational part finds appropriate ways to adjust desires because it has a conception of the interest of the whole soul that is distinct from the satisfaction of the desires of each part. In so far as it has a conception of a self that is independent of current desires and their strength, it has a point of view that allows it to criticize the aims of current desires. A non-rational part relies entirely on considerations that are independent of the considerations appealing to the other parts of the soul, and it gives no weight to the concerns of the other parts. The rational part, however, takes account of these concerns and their comparative merits. The fact that something satisfies our appetites is a point in its favour, whether or not it appeals to our sense of honour and shame; the fact that something appeals to our sense of honour is a point in its favour whether or not this fact is reflected in any of our appetites.

[11] See Butler, *S* ii 13. [12] See Hume, *T* ii 3.3, §6, 416.

A non-rational part relies on considerations that are independent of the considerations appealing to the other parts of the soul, but the rational part takes proper account of these considerations and their comparative weight. The fact that something satisfies our appetites is a point in its favour, whether or not it appeals to our sense of honour and shame; the fact that something appeals to our sense of honour is a point in its favour whether or not this fact is reflected in any of our appetites.A non-rational part relies on considerations that are independent of the considerations appealing to the other parts of the soul, but the rational part takes proper account of these considerations and their comparative weight. The fact that something satisfies our appetites is a point in its favour, whether or not it appeals to our sense of honour and shame; the fact that something appeals to our sense of honour is a point in its favour whether or not this fact is reflected in any of our appetites.A non-rational part relies on considerations that are independent of the considerations appealing to the other parts of the soul, but the rational part takes proper account of these considerations and their comparative weight. The fact that something satisfies our appetites is a point in its favour, whether or not it appeals to our sense of honour and shame; the fact that something appeals to our sense of honour is a point in its favour whether or not this fact is reflected in any of our appetites.

The rational part, therefore, decides by considering the merits of different desires and their objects, from the point of view of the whole soul rather than a part. Once we recognize the one-sided outlook of the non-rational parts, we will see that we cannot adopt such an outlook if we are concerned with the good of the whole soul; even if we do not know what the good of the whole soul consists in, we can see that the non-rational parts are too one-sided to give us any reason for confidence in them. Plato develops these objections to the non-rational parts in order to show why we need to recognize non-instrumental practical reason. He argues that we are better off if we are guided by the rational part, since its outlook is impartial between the aims of the non-rational parts, and comprehensive in its concern for the whole soul.

This conclusion shows why Plato's partition of the soul does not simply reject Socrates' denial of incontinence. We might disagree with Socrates on the existence of non-rational desires and their potential conflict with rational desires, while still accepting his account of rational desires. Socrates says nothing to suggest that practical reason has anything more than an instrumental role in finding means to the satisfaction of a non-rational desire. In his view, the only ultimate end we pursue is happiness; for all he says, we might take our desire for happiness to be non-rational, and might take practical reason to be wholly concerned to find instrumental means to happiness. Plato's partition of the soul implies that the non-rational parts pursue distinct ultimate ends, and that the task of practical reason is to find the correct ultimate ends to pursue. Though neither Socrates nor Plato discusses these different views about practical reason formally and explicitly, it is convenient, and not too inaccurate, to summarize their differences by saying that Plato rejects Socrates' Humean conception in favour of a Butlerian conception.

Plato believes that this account of the rational part of the soul is important not only for moral psychology, but also for an account of the virtues. He believes that a well-ordered soul that is genuinely guided by practical reason will also possess the cardinal virtues, and in particular that it will be just. Contrary to Socrates, he does not affirm the unity of the

virtues, since he does not identify all the cardinal virtues with wisdom. But he affirms their reciprocity. We cannot be genuinely brave unless we are guided by wisdom in the rational part of the soul, and similarly, we cannot have any of the other virtues unless our soul is guided by the rational part, with the other parts in harmony.[13] To see why Plato believes this, we need to look more closely at his conception of the virtues, and in particular at his conception of justice.

50. Why is Justice to be Chosen for Itself?

We found that in the earlier dialogues Socrates takes virtue to be sufficient for happiness, and that he affirms the unity of the virtues; hence he claims that the just person is happy. In *Republic* i he argues for this claim against Thrasymachus, but in Book ii Glaucon and Adeimantus persuade Socrates to re-open the question, because they find the answer to Thrasymachus unsatisfactory. Hence the Socrates of Book i appears to agree with the position of Socrates in the earlier dialogues, and the Socrates of *Republic* ii appears to regard that position as unsatisfactory. Is this appearance correct?

To see what is unsatisfactory about Socrates' previous answer, we need only consider Glaucon's demands on an adequate defence of justice. He expects a defence to show that justice is worth choosing both for its own sake and for its consequences, and he complains that Socrates has not shown that justice is worth choosing for its own sake (357b4–358a3). But even if Socrates answered this demand, he would not have satisfied Glaucon and Adeimantus. For they ask Socrates to prove not only that justice is some sort of non-instrumental good, but also that it is so great a non-instrumental good that the just person, simply by being just, is better off than anyone else, no matter how badly off the just person may be in other ways and no matter how well off anyone else may be in other ways (367a5–e5).

These demands have no parallel in the earlier dialogues or in *Republic* i. In these dialogues Socrates does not defend, and does not even formulate, the claim that justice is to be chosen for its own sake, apart from its consequences. All his claims about virtue are consistent with his believing that virtue is simply a causal means to the non-instrumental good of happiness, not a non-instrumental good in its own right. In describing virtue as the measuring craft that discovers what maximizes pleasure, Plato shows how virtue is instrumental to happiness. Similarly, if he accepts an adaptive conception of happiness, he treats virtue as a means to securing the appropriate match between desires and circumstances. We have found it difficult to decide whether Socrates always assumes this purely instrumental conception of virtue in relation to happiness, but we have found no reason to suppose that he explicitly rejects it. Plato, however, believes it is important to deny that justice is a purely instrumental good.

Glaucon and Adeimantus argue that this is important because it allows us to separate those who are really just from those who are only apparently just. In their view, if we value justice only for its consequences, we are not really just. If we value justice only for its

[13] On the unity and reciprocity of the virtues see §12.

consequences, and we find that we can secure these consequences by appearing just without the disadvantages that result from really being just, we will prefer apparent to real justice. Glaucon infers that if this is our preference we are not really just; for we do not expect a just person to be ready to abandon justice if he could gain equally good or better consequences by being unjust.

Glaucon illustrates his point by the example of Gyges' ring (359c6–360d7).[14] He considers a counterfactual situation in which someone can have all the advantages of appearing just, but also all the advantages of being actually unjust; Gyges gains all the benefits of aggression on other people, without being suspected of being unjust. Glaucon suggests that most people would prefer to be unjust, if they had Gyges' ring, and that therefore they are not really just, because they do not choose justice for its own sake.

Is this a reasonable condition for being just? Plato agrees with Kant in deciding someone's commitment to morality by considering circumstances in which the other motives that usually support one's commitment to morality do not support it; hence Kant considers cases in which honesty is not good for business, and cases in which we lack the sympathetic feelings that normally make us pleased to help other people.[15] Some of Plato's ancient critics agree with some of Kant's modern critics in rejecting this appeal to counterfactual circumstances as a test of genuine commitment to virtue. Carneades argues that in the reversal of fortune imagined by Glaucon it would be absurd to prefer the just person's situation (Cic. *Rep.* iii 27), but this does not show that we should not prefer justice in actual circumstances. As Cicero remarks, some philosophers (probably Epicureans[16]) reject the appeal to Gyges' ring since the example is fictitious, indeed impossible. Cicero replies that this objection is irrelevant,[17] but we might not agree. Why should the fact that we would choose injustice if we could have Gyges' ring show that, as things actually are, we really prefer the unjust person's life?

It is legitimate to object to counterfactual suppositions if the situations they describe are too remote from actual circumstances to allow us to see how our moral principles might apply to them, or if they differ from actual circumstances in exactly the respects that give our moral principles their point. If, for instance, Glaucon were to describe cases in which individuals are absolutely self-sufficient and invulnerable, needing no material goods for their own welfare, he might fairly be accused of removing the circumstances that give justice its point; the fact (if it is a fact) that we would not care about justice in these counterfactual circumstances would not at all show that we are not really just or that we care only about apparent justice.

Glaucon's counterfactual suppositions, however, simply make clearer, by abstraction and exaggeration, a consideration that is clearly relevant to our decisions in actual circumstances. If the only things that matter are the consequences of justice and injustice, then we have

[14] Cf. 612b. On what Plato says about Gyges in 359d1, and on the identity of Gyges, see Adam, *Rep.* i 126–7; Slings, *CNPP* 22–4.

[15] See Kant, *G* 397.

[16] See Holden on *Off.* iii 39.

[17] 'We put them on the rack, so that, if they reply that they would do what was expedient with the prospect of impunity, they admit that they are criminals' (Cic. *Off.* iii 39). See §158. Ambrose, *Off.* iii 30–2, repeats Cicero's story, but then adds (in 33–6) that he will not confine himself to fictions, but will offer actual Scriptural examples. He mentions David's decision to spare Saul's life (*1Kgs.* 16) and John the Baptist's decision to denounce Herod (*Mt.* 14:1–12) as two illustrations of the priority of the honestum over everything else (37; cf. §332).

reason to prefer injustice when it has better consequences. While the story of Gyges describes an unrealistic situation, the sort of opportunity that Gyges takes on a large scale is open to us on a smaller scale in realistic situations. For we all have the opportunity sometimes to commit injustice with impunity; and if we agree that Gyges had good reason to do what he did when the fear of punishment was removed, we must also agree that we have good reason to commit injustice when the fear of punishment is removed. The kinds of opportunities that Gyges exploits are precisely the kinds of opportunities that we expect a just person not to exploit; they are cases where we can commit injustice and get away with it. Hence anyone who thinks Gyges did the right thing in his situation shows an inadequate commitment to justice.

Is Glaucon right to suggest that most people endorse the choice that Gyges made? We might argue that he is wrong, by reminding ourselves of Glaucon's original explanation of justice by appeal to a social contract (*R.* 358b–359b). If we want the benefits of a peaceful and a stable society, it is reasonable for us all to agree to do what justice requires, for the sake of these consequences. But Gyges seems to neglect these benefits in his decision to act unjustly.

An account of justice that emphasizes the benefits of an agreement to observe rules of justice comes close to the views of Epicurus and Hobbes about the basis of morality in the pursuit of security. But Hobbes recognizes that Glaucon raises a reasonable question about this defence of justice. He considers the 'fool' who wonders why he should keep the agreements he has made if he can get away with violating them; though he admits the advantages to him of general observance of the rules of justice, he does not see why he should observe them.[18] The weakness of Hobbes's answer to the fool tends to support Glaucon's assumption that the benefits of agreeing to observe rules of justice do not answer his objections to people who choose justice for the sake of its consequences.

On this point justice seems to differ from the self-regarding virtues. In the case of temperance, we might argue that the 'natural' consequences of intemperate actions—the consequences that result apart from 'artificial' consequences coming from sanctions from other people or from divine rewards or punishments—show that we are better off by being temperate.[19] In the case of justice, however, the natural consequences seem to be good for other people, but not always good for the just agent. Hence an appeal to the consequences of justice seems to make injustice seem more reasonable. If we look at what actually happens, the artificial consequences of justice and injustice do not seem to change our minds; social sanctions can sometimes be avoided, and divine sanctions do not seem to operate uniformly in the present life.

Plato has made a reasonable case, therefore, to show that those who regard justice as a purely instrumental good imply that the life of the astute unjust person is better (358c5–6). The astute unjust person in actual circumstances does not take every opportunity to commit injustice; he takes the opportunities that promise him advantage with no danger of discovery. Most of us have some opportunities of this sort; in so far as we are willing to take them, we show (as Cicero says) that we really prefer to be unjust rather than just.

[18] On Epicurus see §158. On the fool see Hobbes, *L* 15.4.

[19] On natural v. artificial consequences see Foster, 'Mistake'; Mabbott, 'Utilitarian?'. Cf. §204.

51. How is Justice a Non-instrumental Good?

Kant uses a counterfactual argument somewhat similar to Plato's to argue that agents lack a good will and that their actions lack moral worth if they choose to do what duty requires for the sake of its good consequences. He concludes that we have a good will only if we choose 'duty for duty's sake', so that we choose what is morally required precisely because it is morally required and not because of some further aspect of it that is not essential to its being morally required.[20] Plato draws a similar conclusion to Kant's, in so far as he requires a just person to choose justice for the sake of justice. The fact that an action is just is a sufficient reason for the just person to choose it, irrespective of its other properties.

If we agree with Glaucon about what will happen if people choose justice only for the sake of its consequences, we may reasonably agree that it is better to persuade people to choose justice for itself, simply because it is just. A society of people who hold this belief might well be more stable and more cohesive than a society of people who choose justice only for its consequences. It is a further question, however, whether justice really is worth choosing for itself apart from its consequences. If we adapted the views of Critias or Mandeville, we might treat the belief that justice is to be chosen for itself as the outcome of artifice or convention.[21] Plato is sometimes ready to advocate the propagation of useful myths because of their social benefits, even if they are false.[22] If he took that view about justice, he would hold an 'opaque' two-level theory, in which the first-level reason for being just (as it appears to the just person) conflicts with the second-level justification for cultivating justice (from the point of view of the theorist). According to such a view, it is instrumentally beneficial to cultivate the just outlook that regards justice as worthwhile for itself; this is why we will take care to praise just people even though we do not believe they are right about the value of justice (cf. 360d2–7).

In the case of justice, however, Plato is not satisfied with an opaque two-level theory. Glaucon asks Socrates to show that a just person who chooses justice for itself is not deceived, and that therefore justice deserves to be chosen for its own sake. He assumes that if justice deserves to be chosen for itself, it must be a non-instrumental good. Hence Socrates is asked to show that it is a good to be chosen both for its own sake and for its consequences (357b4–358a9; 367c5–e1). Since it is agreed that it is worth choosing for its consequences, Socrates is asked to set these aside and to concentrate on showing that it is good in its own right, apart from its consequences.

What is needed to show that justice is good in its own right? We might expect Plato to claim that justice is good simply in so far as the predicate 'justice' attaches to it, and that no further reason can be given to show what makes it good. For any further reason, we might suppose, would have to introduce some other predicate besides 'justice'; hence it would not show that justice is good in so far as it is justice, and so would not show that it is good in its own right. The only sort of argument that could be given to show that justice is good in its own right, according to this conception, would consist in reminding us, by appeal to

[20] This is an over-simplified statement of Kant's requirement in *G* 400.

[21] This is Critias' explanation of the rise of belief in gods who punish injustice that society does not detect. See Sextus, *M* ix 54. On Mandeville see Kaye in Mandeville, *FB* i, lxiv–lxvi.

[22] Cf. 414b8–415d2 (the 'noble lie'); *Laws* 663d6–664a8.

different examples, that we implicitly treat justice as such a good, apart from predicating anything else of it.

But if this is what Plato meant by claiming that justice is good in its own right, the question that Glaucon and Adeimantus ask Socrates would be surprising. For they do not simply ask him to show that we treat justice as good in itself; they also say something about the property of justice that would make it good in itself. They ask him to show that a just person, by being just, is better off than an unjust person (361c3–d3), and to show that justice in the soul is the greatest good for the soul (366e5–367a4; 367b2–6, c5–e5). In claiming that something is good in itself, we claim that it is good for someone 'who is going to be happy' (358a1–3).

This statement of the question shows that Plato interprets the claim that justice is good in itself, and to be chosen for its own sake, as implying that (1) justice promotes happiness, by making a person happier than he would otherwise be, and that (2) we should prove this by showing that some other predicate than 'justice' belongs to justice. Glaucon and Adeimantus want Socrates to show what justice is; he was side-tracked from this question in his discussion with Thrasymachus (354a12–c3). They want him to answer this question by saying what justice 'does' in the soul (366e5–6; 367b4; e3). The answer to this question tells us what justice is; justice is a state of the soul, and we say what a state or 'power' is by saying what it does (477c1–d6). If we find a Socratic definition of a virtue, we do not simply repeat the predicate that we initially use to describe the definiendum; we find some other predicates that give us an account of the property we seek to define. If, then, a Socratic definition of justice shows that justice is good in its own right, Plato does not suppose that no other predicate can be substituted for 'justice' if we want to show that justice is good in its own right.

From these different remarks we can see what Plato believes is needed for a proof that justice is a non-instrumental good. He seeks to show that it is non-instrumentally good by showing that it benefits the just person and promotes his happiness. We find through a Socratic definition that justice essentially has some further aspect (some further predicate besides 'justice') that shows how it promotes happiness for the agent. The definition does not introduce a further property besides justice, but it introduces a further predicate of the same property.

We may wonder whether this explanation of Plato's position leaves him with a consistent view about what he wants to prove. We are supposed to show that justice is a non-instrumental good, and hence that it remains good even when we abstract from its consequences. But if we try to prove that justice promotes happiness, or that justice makes someone happier, are we not appealing to a consequence of justice? If so, Plato's account of what it is to be good in its own right seems to be an account of something different.

To resolve this apparent conflict in Plato's position, we need to explain how the claim that justice makes us happy does not introduce one of the consequences of justice that he has excluded from consideration. We can explain this if we suppose that 'Justice makes us happier' refers to a non-causal relation, not involving two distinct events or states.[23] If it

[23] More exactly, we might say that it is not an efficient-causal relation. It would be the relation that Aristotle calls 'formal causation'.

means that by being just we are happier, it says what justice is like in its own right, and does not refer to a causal consequence of justice.[24]

If happiness is not a consequence of justice, but justice makes the just person happy, justice must be a constituent of happiness, so that being happy is not separate from being just. By setting out to prove this about justice and happiness in the *Republic*, Plato goes beyond any of Socrates' arguments. We have seen that some of Socrates' remarks about virtue and happiness take the relation to be instrumental, and that his other remarks do not make it clear whether virtue is a means to happiness or identical to it. Plato's reflexions on the character of the just person convince him that we can show why it is worthwhile to be really just if and only if we can show that justice is a constituent of happiness.

52. Is Justice Sufficient for Happiness?

If justice is a non-instrumental good, it must be a constituent of happiness. But if Plato believes this, he does not commit himself to any view about how many constituents happiness has. If justice is the only constituent, justice is identical to happiness. According to this view, justice 'benefits' the just person by making him happy. If Plato takes this view, he remains close to Socrates. Even if, as we have argued, Socrates takes virtue to be instrumental to happiness, he always takes it to be necessary and sufficient for happiness. Plato agrees with him on this point if he takes justice to be identical to happiness.

Whether or not Plato takes justice to be the only constituent of happiness, he takes it to be necessary for happiness, and on this point he agrees with Socrates. To see how far he departs from Socrates, therefore, we need to ask whether he believes that justice is sufficient for happiness. What position does the *Republic* take on this question?

At first sight, the evidence is puzzling. In Book i Socrates states and defends the sufficiency of justice for happiness (353e10–354a9). The just person is better off than the unjust because justice is sufficient for happiness and injustice is sufficient for unhappiness. This was the position of the *Gorgias* (*Gorg.* 507a5–c7). The sufficiency thesis is never rejected in the *Republic*. But it is never repeated. In Books ii–ix Socrates sets out to prove only that the just person is in all circumstances happier than the unjust. This comparative thesis is consistent with the sufficiency thesis, but does not imply it. The comparative thesis is still true if happiness has other constituents besides justice, but justice is more important than the other constituents. We may say that if justice itself makes the just person happier than anyone else, it is the dominant component of happiness.

In Books ii–ix Plato defends the comparative thesis, but never the sufficiency thesis. Nor does he explicitly deny the sufficiency thesis. We might argue, then, that he takes the sufficiency thesis for granted, since it has been stated at the end of Book i, and is never rejected. But a retrospective comment in Book x casts doubt on this argument. Socrates recalls the fact that in Book ii they abstracted from the consequences of justice in order to show that justice itself is the best thing for the soul, and that one ought to act justly

[24] For further discussion of these questions about consequences of justice, and references to different views, see Irwin, *PE* §133.

(*R.* 612a8–b6). Having shown that, they can now legitimately consider what justice leads to if it is followed by its typical consequences in this life and its invariable consequences in the afterlife (612b7–c7). When we add these consequences to justice, we find that justice leads to happiness (621b8–d3).This conclusion does not imply the sufficiency thesis; for it does not imply that justice itself is sufficient for happiness, but only that justice, together with its consequences in this life and the afterlife, results in happiness.

This retrospective comment suggests that Plato does not take himself to have proved the sufficiency thesis in Books ii–ix. On this point the *Republic* differs from the *Gorgias*. The earlier dialogue also ends with a story about the afterlife, which reinforces the conclusion of the main argument of the dialogue, that justice is sufficient for happiness in this life, by showing that it leads to happiness in the afterlife as well. The *Republic*, however, introduces the afterlife to defend a claim that has not been defended in the main argument of the dialogue, that justice leads to happiness. Since Plato draws our attention in Book x to the restricted conclusion (the comparative thesis) that has been defended in the main argument, we may reasonably infer that he intends to defend only this restricted conclusion in the main argument (in Books ii–ix) and does not take himself to have defended the sufficiency thesis as well.

We can support this conclusion if we consider Plato's attitude to external goods in the *Republic*. In the *Euthydemus* Socrates supports the sufficiency thesis by claiming that nothing except wisdom is really good. In the *Gorgias* he supports it by assuming an adaptive conception of happiness.[25] But in the *Republic* he maintains neither of these views. He does not suggest that the external goods that the just person undeservedly loses are not genuine goods, or that they cannot deprive the just person of happiness. Though being just always makes us happier than we would be if we lacked justice and had all these external goods, Plato does not suggest that the loss of external goods is not a genuine harm.

It is unlikely that Plato's failure to say that external goods are not genuine goods is a mere oversight. The belief that they are not genuine goods is one source of the Cynic argument for austerity and rejection of external goods. Though Socrates in the early dialogues does not endorse Cynic austerity, we have seen that it is difficult for him to argue against it, given his claim about virtue and external goods. Plato's claims, however, do not offer any opening for a Cynic argument. If he believes that Socrates' position on external goods makes Cynicism seem too attractive, he has a good reason for sticking to a comparative claim about justice and happiness.

Why does Plato reject Cynic austerity? He might have either of two grounds for rejecting it: (1) He takes happiness to leave out some goods that are worth pursuing, and so he believes that, though justice is sufficient for happiness, external goods are worth pursuing apart from happiness. (2) He takes happiness to comprehend all goods that are worth pursuing, and so takes it to include external goods (as non-dominant components) as well as justice (the dominant component). It is unlikely, however, that he holds the first view. For when he claims that justice is a good that is worth choosing in its own right, he assumes that if it is such a good, it must benefit the just person by contributing to his happiness. This assumption is

[25] On *Euthd.* 281e see §15. On *Gorg.* 492e3–494a5 see §25.

reasonable only if Plato assumes that happiness is comprehensive. Probably, then, he holds the second view about the relation of external goods to happiness.

The *Republic* does not allow us to decide this question conclusively, because Plato does not tell us in any detail what he takes happiness to be, and hence does not tell us whether it is comprehensive. But he fills some of these gaps in the *Republic* with his discussion of the good in the *Philebus*. To understand his position, it will be useful to interrupt our discussion of the *Republic* to examine the relevant part of the *Philebus*. Even though the *Philebus* is a later dialogue than the *Republic*, it helps us to see why someone might reasonably say what Plato says in the *Republic*.

53. Inadequate Conceptions of Happiness

The *Philebus* begins with an instructive examination of two candidates for the ultimate good—pleasure and intelligence (*phronêsis; Phil.* 11b–c; cf. *R.* 505b). These candidates remind us of Cyrenaic and Cynic conceptions of the good, which we have traced to different directions of reflexion on the *Protagoras* and *Gorgias*. In the *Protagoras* Socrates endorses a hedonistic conception of the end. The *Gorgias* seems to reject hedonism, and the *Phaedo* (67–9) seems to speak with contempt about the balancing of pleasures and pains. Dialogues later than the *Phaedo* qualify this apparent hostility to pleasure. In *Republic* ix Plato implies that it is important to show that the just person gains more pleasure than the unjust (*R.* 580d–588a). The *Laws* explains why this is important, by affirming that it is pointless to expect us to act on the arguments for justice if we are not convinced that the just life is the pleasantest.[26]

The *Philebus* enters this debate about the relation of pleasure to the good. It is not clear whether Plato has the Cyrenaic and Cynic positions clearly in mind. He does not, for instance, take explicit notice of Aristippus' rejection of eudaemonism; the *Philebus* takes it for granted that defenders of both candidates for the good try to discover the state of one's soul that will make one's life happy (*Phil.* 11d5–6). But it is still worth asking whether Plato implicitly considers the questions that the one-sided Socratics raise about the good and happiness.

Plato rejects both of the one-sided candidates by appeal to general conditions on the good. These are 'formal' conditions, in so far as partisans of different candidates might fairly be expected to accept them as reasonable conditions for assessing their candidates. Plato does not explain why they are plausible formal conditions; he leaves that task for Aristotle.[27] In his view, the good must be complete (20d1), so that it lacks nothing and needs nothing added (20e5–21a2).[28] As in the *Euthydemus* and the *Gorgias*, Plato assumes that the goodness of actions, states of mind, and people depends on the human good, which is the goodness

[26] See *Laws* 662c5–d5; 733a1–734a8. For discussion of pleasure in the later dialogues see Bobonich, *PUR* 350–73.

[27] See §66.

[28] This abbreviates Plato's four conditions: (1) It is complete (*teleon*, 20d1). (2) It is adequate (*hikanon*, 20d4). (3) It is universally attractive; every agent who knows it pursues it, wants to get it, and cares nothing about anything else unless the agent can achieve this other thing together with goods (20d7–10; cf. *R.* 505d–e). (4) It lacks nothing, needs nothing added (*Phil.* 20e5–21a2). Probably (4) is intended to express, or to follow from, the previous conditions.

of a human life as a whole for the agent who lives it. Hence the discussion of pleasure and intelligence as candidates for being the good examines their claim to constitute the goodness of a good human life.

To show that pleasure is not the good, Socrates asks Protarchus whether the life of pleasure without intelligence is choiceworthy or not (21d3; cf. 22b6). We might be puzzled by this question. For Socrates takes 'intelligence' very broadly, so that it covers self-consciousness, memory, and anticipation, as well as rational reflexion. Surely no sensible hedonist will deny that intelligence, so understood, helps to increase one's pleasure. As Socrates argues in the *Protagoras*, we need rational calculation to find the life that gives us maximum pleasure on the whole; hence, we might suppose, hedonism cannot be supposed to advocate a life of pleasure without intelligence, since a life that maximizes pleasure must also include intelligence as a means to pleasure. We saw earlier that Socrates' assumptions in the *Protagoras* about prudence may go beyond what the Cyrenaic hedonist accepts.[29] But Plato seems to take account of the Cyrenaic view with his broad conception of intelligence. As he conceives it, even Cyrenaics believe that a life of maximum pleasure needs some intelligence. The supposition of a life of pleasure without intelligence does not seem to be relevant to any life that a hedonist would endorse. Perhaps, then, we might take this to be Plato's point: even a hedonist has to recognize some role for intelligence in the best life.[30]

But if this were Plato's point, it would not help him to show that pleasure alone cannot be the good. For if the place of intelligence in the best life were purely instrumental, its presence would not refute the claim that pleasure is the only non-instrumental good. To decide whether pleasure is the good, we ought not to consider a life that wholly lacks intelligence but maximizes pleasure; for we may be unable to conceive such a life. We ought instead to consider a life that maximizes pleasure in abstraction from the means to this pleasure. To make the point clear, we may imagine that the pleasure that actually results from intelligence results from some other process instead. Such an abstraction ought not to leave this life, regarded as pleasure without intelligence, deficient in any non-instrumental goodness. If, then, it lacks some non-instrumental goodness, pleasure is not the only non-instrumental good. Since this abstraction is relevant to the question about whether pleasure alone is the good, we may reasonably assume that this is what Plato intends, and see what we think of his argument on this assumption.

Plato argues that the life of pleasure without intelligence lacks the different forms of rational consciousness that involve the agent's thinking of himself as a rational agent persisting through his different experiences and pleasures. Being pleased is an aspect of a mental event or a state; it may be short-lived, and it has no particular internal structure (it does not consist, e.g., of first aiming at a goal and then achieving it). If we simply think of ourselves in short episodes that are long enough for pleasure and pain, we may overlook some desirable features of our state of mind that become clear only when we think of our whole life, and so think of ourselves as rational agents persisting through time. But if we think that pleasure is the only non-instrumental good, it should not matter whether we think of ourselves in episodes; we do not overlook any non-instrumental good if we think of ourselves that way.

[29] On the Cyrenaics see §29.

[30] See Gosling, *Phil.* 183.

If, then, we consider the form of consciousness that contains maximum pleasure, in abstraction from any means to it, we find that it remains at an elementary level. Since we lack memory, we do not remember that we had pleasure; in lacking belief, we lack the awareness that we are having the enjoyment we are having; in lacking rational calculation we lack the ability to calculate that we will enjoy ourselves in the future. In this condition we would not be living a properly human life, but the life of the most elementary sort of creature that is capable of feeling pleasure; and such a life would not be choiceworthy.[31]

If we have correctly understood Socrates' question, and the abstraction that it involves, we should understand his objection in the same way. He is not saying that a consistent hedonist would live the life of a non-rational animal. He means that the non-instrumental good contained in the hedonist's preferred life could equally be present in a non-rational animal; the fact that I am a rational agent makes no difference to the character of the non-instrumental goodness in my life.

The rational consciousness that concerns Plato is the sort involved in being aware of myself over time; memory, self-consciousness, and rational calculation are different ways I am aware of myself as the same agent in all these experiences. Plato does not speak simply of memory of pleasure in the past. He speaks in first-personal terms, of my remembering that I was previously enjoying myself (21c1). Part of what is good about a life, and part of what is missing in the unmixed life of pleasure, is the awareness of myself as a rational agent in my different experiences. Part of what makes memory and anticipation pleasant to me is my belief that they are mine. That belief is relevant to my enjoyment in so far as it connects these experiences with my concern for myself and my life as a whole.

Plato assumes that our self-concern as rational agents includes concern for ourselves as temporally extended rational consciousness. If hedonism attaches no intrinsic value to the relevant sort of rational consciousness of oneself, including memory and anticipation, it gives the wrong account of happiness. This argument in the *Philebus* develops a point in the *Gorgias* (in the argument with Callicles about bravery), arguing that hedonism conflicts with eudaemonism. If the good for us as rational agents must include rational concern for ourselves as rational agents, it cannot consist only in pleasure.

This is not a decisive argument against hedonism. A consistent hedonist may deny, as Sidgwick does,[32] that rational consciousness has any non-instrumental value. But it is difficult to accept this denial; if we suffer some loss of rational consciousness, we seem to be worse off, whether or not we happen to gain less pleasure as a result. If a hedonist claims that this belief about the non-instrumental value of rational consciousness is simply an intuitive common-sense assumption that does not deserve our confidence, we may reasonably ask

[31] 'But if you were without intellect, memory, knowledge, and true belief, you would necessarily, I imagine, in the first place be ignorant of this very thing, whether you were or were not enjoying yourself, given that you would be empty of all intelligence. . . . And . . . if you had no memory you would necessarily, I imagine, not even remember that you were once enjoying yourself, and no memory at all would remain of the pleasure striking you at the present moment. And again, if you had no true belief, you couldn't believe that you were enjoying yourself when you were; nor yet, if you were deprived of reasoning, could you reason that you would enjoy yourself later on. You would be living the life not of a human being, but of some sort of sea-lung or one of those living creatures of the ocean whose bodies are incased in shells' (21b6–c8).

[32] See Sidgwick, *ME* 395–6.

why the intuitive assumptions underlying hedonism deserve our confidence if they conflict with this other assumption.

This argument suggests a reasonable question about the hedonist eudaemonism of the *Protagoras*. If we ascribe only instrumental value to rational consciousness, we represent the ultimate end as available equally to non-rational agents. At the same time we represent it as an end for the whole of one's life. But why should we care about the whole of our lives unless we conceive ourselves as rational agents who plan, anticipate, and execute our plans? If we conceive ourselves in that way, how can the rational consciousness that belongs to our conception of ourselves have no non-instrumental value? If we are eudaemonists we seem to ascribe to rational consciousness the non-instrumental value that we deny to it in describing the good as simply pleasure.

Could a hedonist answer that the best life consists of pleasure, but only in some pleasures—those taken in forms of rational consciousness? On this view, not all pleasure is part of the good, but none the less the good is altogether constituted by some specific pleasures. But if pleasure taken in rational consciousness presupposes the intrinsic goodness of rational consciousness itself, an argument proving that the good consists in this specific sort of pleasure does not support hedonism. For if the pleasures are essentially tied to their objects, and if they involve the belief that the object is intrinsically good, we cannot be hedonists if we believe that the good life consists in these sorts of pleasures. If we understand the character of pleasures taken in rational consciousness, we have a reason not to be hedonists.

This question about the varieties of pleasure and their relations to their objects is discussed in the rather complicated later stages of the *Philebus*, and it is a central question in Aristotle's analysis of pleasure. Without going into all the complications, we may simply notice that Plato raises the question right at the beginning of the *Philebus*. For Socrates comments at the outset that pleasures vary because they are taken in different objects. He remarks that the temperate and the wise person take pleasure in being temperate and wise (12c8–d4), but he does not say that intemperate and foolish people take pleasure in their intemperance and foolishness. He suggests that the pleasures of the virtuous person depend on their object. We might try to explain this by saying that wise people take pleasure in wisdom because they regard it as non-instrumentally good.[33] If they are genuinely wise people, their belief about its goodness is true. And so, if the pleasure of wise people in their wisdom is part of the good, wisdom must be a non-instrumental good, so that pleasure itself cannot be the only non-instrumental good. A hedonist who restricts the pleasures to be included in the good does not refute Plato's objections to hedonism, but only confirms them.

54. Cyrenaic Hedonism v. Eudaemonism

When Plato argues against the identification of the good with pleasure, what versions of hedonism has he in mind? His argument is directly relevant to the unqualified hedonism of the *Protagoras*, the *Gorgias*, and the Cyrenaics, which refuses to distinguish good from

[33] Aristotle on pleasure; §95.

bad pleasures on any non-quantitative grounds. He recalls the position of the *Protagoras* in saying that Philebus takes 'pleasant' and 'good' to be two names for one thing (60a9–10). Does he also presuppose that the hedonist is a eudaemonist, as Socrates is in the *Protagoras*? In speaking of memory and anticipation, the *Philebus* may seem to presuppose that we are concerned with pleasure over the whole of one's life. This is how Socrates describes the hedonist at the beginning of the dialogue (11d4–12a1). Similarly, he asks Protarchus whether he would welcome living his whole life enjoying the greatest pleasures (21a8–9). And so we might suppose that Plato argues only against hedonist eudaemonism.

In that case, Cyrenaic hedonists may seem to avoid the force of Plato's argument by rejecting eudaemonism. They deny that they are trying to find a good to be achieved over the course of a whole extended life, and so they deny that they attach any value to planning for one's extended life. In their view there is nothing especially rational about thinking of one's life in such a way that one wants one's good to be appropriately spread over it. Since the good is pleasure, not happiness, it is achieved only in the pleasure of the moment, not in a sum of pleasure that is maximized over one's extended life. Hence Cyrenaics cannot be accused of explicitly ascribing purely instrumental value to rational consciousness while implicitly ascribing non-instrumental value to it. We might even say that the Cyrenaics use Plato's argument to show why hedonism has to reject eudaemonism. Socrates in the *Protagoras*, they might argue, relies on a eudaemonist assumption that cannot be defended on purely hedonist grounds; hence he introduces a non-hedonic value into an allegedly hedonist position. Plato's reasons for thinking that concern for temporally-extended agency recognizes a non-hedonic type of goodness show, according to the Cyrenaics, that hedonists ought not to be eudaemonists.

It does not follow, however, that Plato's argument is irrelevant to Cyrenaic non-eudaemonist hedonism. Even though he does not discuss it as a distinct position besides the hedonist eudaemonism he ascribes to Protarchus, some of his argument is relevant to attempts to defend hedonism by rejecting eudaemonism. Socrates tells Protarchus that the life he would lead without intelligence would not be the life of a human being, but the life of a shellfish with the most elementary form of life. As far as non-instrumental good is concerned, a rational conscious being would not differ from anything else capable of pleasure. This objection is not confined to the past and the future. Socrates also objects that the hedonist cannot attach non-instrumental value to our present recognition of our pleasure. Even if we restrict ourselves to the present, we can distinguish our being pleased from our second-order awareness that we are pleased. The hedonist cannot attach any value to consciousness of pleasure beyond the value of pleasure itself. But—Plato implies—we would surely believe we had lost some non-instrumental good if our enjoyment remained just as intense as it was, but we lost our consciousness that we were enjoying ourselves.

Cyrenaics might reply that it is unfair of Plato to exclude the value of consciousness of pleasure from their conception of the end. When they accept hedonism of the moment, they do not mean—they might argue—to exclude consciousness of pleasure. They are free to include this in the consciousness of the moment that they identify with the good.

This would not be a wholly satisfactory reply, for reasons we have already noticed. Plato is right to suggest that if we attach value to consciousness of pleasure, we are attaching value to consciousness and not just to pleasure. Even though pleasure itself is a mode of

consciousness, the further consciousness of pleasure is something beyond pleasure, and introduces a new element of value.

But even if we do not insist on this Platonic rejoinder, Cyrenaics face a further difficult question. Plato suggests that the second-order consciousness includes self-consciousness; it is awareness of myself having a present pleasure. But what is required for awareness of myself? What, in other words, is the self that I am aware of when I attribute an experience of pleasure to it? Plato says something about this question when he suggests that if I lack memory, not only do I not recall my past pleasures, but I will also lack any memory of my pleasure in the present moment (21c2–4). But how can I be conscious of myself enjoying this pleasure if I retain no memory of it from one moment to another? Apparently I need enough memory to recognize this as an episode of pleasure in relation to other episodes of consciousness.

This minimal concession to memory requires further concessions. For the sort of memory that goes with self-consciousness is first-personal memory. I do not simply retain some past mode of consciousness; I ascribe some state of consciousness to one and the same self to whom I also ascribe a past and a future consciousness. It is reasonable of Plato, therefore, to introduce present self-consciousness in connexion with memory and anticipation; we cannot have any of these without the others. In all these cases we treat experiences as belonging to a single self that both unifies present experiences with each other and unifies experiences at different times. Plato discusses this unified self at some length in the *Theaetetus*; but there he just mentions past and future briefly (*Tht*. 186a9–b1). The *Philebus* makes clear some of the practical implications of recognizing the single self.

Once we see the place for the single temporally-extended self even in self-consciousness in the present, we see why it is reasonable for us to attribute non-instrumental value to rational consciousness. Since this rational consciousness in the present requires recognition of the single self present in memory, anticipation, and deliberation, it commits us to concern for the good of a temporally-extended self, and hence to eudaemonism.

Though Plato's argument is brief, it raises an appropriate question about the Cyrenaic attempt to avoid objections to hedonistic eudaemonism by abandoning eudaemonism. Plato's discussion of rational consciousness implies that the Cyrenaic attempt to confine non-instrumental goodness to the pleasure of the moment overlooks the self for whom the pleasure is valuable. When we try to understand the subject of the pleasure, we see that we cannot prevent the nature of the subject from affecting what is non-instrumentally good. For a rational conscious subject, pleasure without rational consciousness cannot be the only non-instrumental good.

55. Why Intelligence is Not the Good

Plato takes the completeness of the good to rule out not only hedonism but also the view that some state of rational consciousness alone is sufficient for happiness, whether or not it has any further effects. Protarchus the hedonist maintains, and Socrates does not deny, that a life of intelligence alone without pleasure would be unacceptable for a human being.[34]

[34] Plato's claim strictly applies to every being that is capable of intelligence (11b9–c2; 22b3–6).

Plato does not expect the agent making the choice between lives to regard herself as a purely rational agent, with none of the desires and feelings resulting from the non-rational aspects of human nature. The complete life for a human being cannot make her 'unaffected' (*apathês*) by the normal feelings and passions of human beings (*Phil.* 21e1–2).[35]

In denying that 'freedom from affection' (*apatheia*) is the human good, Plato rejects a conception that appeals, in different ways, to Socrates, the Cynics, and the Stoics. If we are free from the desires that lead us to look for pleasures that require bodily actions and external resources, we are free of the mental disturbance of desires waiting to be satisfied and from the pain resulting from failure and disappointment. But we also deny ourselves the possibility of successes and satisfactions that are appropriate for human nature. Happiness consists in rational direction and use of an appropriate range of desires and resources; it does not consist in the contraction of the task of rational direction to a point where we can guarantee success in our aims. In rejecting freedom from affection Plato anticipates Aristotle's view not only about virtue, but also about happiness.[36]

We might say that this argument against intelligence as the good emphasizes the non-rational side of human nature, whereas the argument against hedonism emphasized the rational side. This is part of the truth; for Plato agrees that if we had a purely rational nature, such as the gods have, intelligence would be the whole of our good (22c5–6). But Plato might also argue that the inclusion of pleasure is a further argument for the place of rational agency in the good. Attempts to eliminate pleasure contract the scope of rational action, so that practical reason no longer tries to secure the appropriate pleasures and external goods, but simply withdraws from aims and tasks whose outcome is not entirely up to us. Plato rejects this strategy of withdrawal.

His reasons for including pleasure, suitably directed by reason, in the good are relevant to his reasons for denying that virtue is sufficient for happiness. Part of what we value in practical reason is the fact that it is directed towards worthwhile ends beyond it. To give up the pursuit of some pleasures as worthwhile external ends is to remove part of the value that we reasonably ascribe to practical reason.

56. Responses to the *Philebus*

The conclusion of the *Philebus* endorses neither hedonism nor extreme opposition to pleasure. Intelligence is the supreme component of the good, but not the only component. The good also includes different types of pleasures. Pleasures that depend on rational activity and do not depend on bodily needs and disturbances are more important; but ordinary bodily pleasures are not excluded, though Plato does not welcome them with enthusiasm (65e–66a).

The *Philebus*, therefore, both contributes to a debate among Plato's contemporaries and suggests different strategies that might appeal to us if we are not satisfied with its contribution. The hedonist might argue that the position of Philebus has been dismissed too abruptly. The argument against hedonism rests on assumptions about the value of rational

[35] On *apatheia* see §38 and §85.

[36] Cf. *EN* 1104b24–6.

consciousness that a hedonist may have reason to question. Alternatively, a more moderate hedonist might fasten on Plato's selective acceptance of pleasure. Might we find a hedonist argument for choosing Plato's preferred pleasures over those that he rejects? He seems to suggest such an argument by remarking that some pleasures result from severe pain and cause still greater pain by increasing our appetite for them. These are the pleasures that Callicles takes to belong to happiness; but, we might suppose, a more careful hedonist can reject them because they cause us more trouble than they are worth.

But if the hedonist can find something to exploit in the *Philebus*, the extreme opponent of pleasure might also claim support from the dialogue. For even though Plato accepts some pleasures, he seems to suggest that he is conceding something to human weakness, and that for a god the life of intelligence would be the complete good (22c). Pleasure belongs to a life of changeable sensations, and we might suppose that the best form of existence would free us from dependence on the senses. If rational activity is valuable for itself, why should we also want some pleasant sensation added to it? The desire for added pleasure seems to reflect a human limitation that we might hope to escape. Perhaps, then, the lesson to learn from the *Philebus* is that we are best off when we are free of any concern about pleasure and pain because we are absorbed in the best activities. Plato's suggestion that we are even better off if we take pleasure in these activities may appear to be an ill-advised concession to the advocates of pleasure.

If we notice these different arguments about pleasure and the good that might be developed from suggestions in the *Philebus*, we do not imply that the argument of the dialogue is indeterminate or ambiguous. On the contrary, Plato considers both hedonism and extreme opposition to pleasure, and he rejects both positions in favour of the mixed life of intelligence and pleasure. But it would not be surprising if different readers found some parts of his argument more convincing than other parts. Plato defines his position both by reflexion on discussions among his contemporaries and by further thoughts on his own past engagement with pleasure and the good. He also presents a starting point for further defences of the different positions he examines.

57. Why Justice is Insufficient for Happiness

We turned to the *Philebus* in the hope of finding a conception of happiness that might fill a gap in the explicit argument of the *Republic*. Since Plato does not set out, in the main argument of the *Republic*, to prove that justice is sufficient for happiness, we may reasonably ask what conception of happiness he presupposes. The discussion of the good in the *Philebus* suggests an answer to this question, since it insists that the good must be complete; neither pleasure nor intelligence is the good, because we would reasonably prefer a life that contains both elements over a life that contains only one of them. Plato's argument implicitly raises questions about the interpretation of 'complete' and related notions. We will consider these questions more fully in discussing Aristotle's use and explanation of these conditions for the final good. For present purposes, it is enough to notice the relevance of the *Philebus* to the *Republic*. Though the *Philebus* does not directly discuss the role of external goods in happiness, the argument to show that pleasure needs to be added to intelligence might

equally well be used to show that external goods need to be added to justice (and other virtues), if we are to achieve a complete good.

If, then, Plato assumes in the *Republic* that happiness is complete, he has a reason to reject the Socratic claim that justice is sufficient for happiness. For it seems reasonable for a just person to prefer a life that includes both justice and external goods (wealth, honour, safety, etc.) over a life that includes justice without these other goods. Indeed, it is difficult to see why justice should be concerned with keeping promises to pay debts, or making sure that people are not unfairly punished for crimes they did not commit, if money, imprisonment, and so on are not genuine goods and evils, and if they do not contribute to a person's happiness. If Plato denies that the just person is happy on this ground, he rejects Cynic austerity and its Socratic foundation. He sides with Aristotle and with the Peripatetic critics of Stoicism, who reject the Stoic identification of virtue with happiness.

Since Plato neither explicitly rejects the Socratic thesis nor explains why he rejects it, it is not surprising that his ancient readers hold different views about whether he accepts or rejects it. But we may support the anti-Socratic interpretation by noticing that those who are careful to distinguish Socrates from Plato also endorse the anti-Socratic interpretation. Chrysippus agrees with Socrates in accepting the sufficiency thesis, and criticizes Plato for rejecting it.[37] Some of the ancient readers who attribute the sufficiency thesis to the *Republic* fail to distinguish Socratic from Platonic views.[38] Some ancient Platonists, for instance, accept a 'unitarian' account of the Platonic dialogues, and take them all to express Plato's views.[39] If we follow the one-sided Socratics, Aristotle, and Chrysippus, in distinguishing Socratic from Platonic views, we ought also to agree with the ancient readers of the *Republic* who recognize that it does not maintain the sufficiency of justice for happiness. The *Philebus* suggests a good reason for the position of the *Republic*, though we would be unwise to assume that Plato must have had precisely this reason in mind.

If Plato holds a composite conception of happiness as a complete good, containing different parts, his whole position in *Republic* ii is intelligible. The composite conception shows why he believes that if justice is a non-instrumental good it must promote happiness; he believes this because he believes that happiness is complete, and that therefore any non-instrumental good is a component of happiness.[40] In his view, we have been given a good reason for being just if and only if we have been shown how justice promotes our happiness; he does not even consider the suggestion that we have overriding reason to be just even if justice does not promote our happiness. The same composite conception of happiness explains why justice is

[37] On Chrysippus see §161. On the Stoics' concern to distinguish Socratic from Platonic views see Long, 'Socrates' 16–18.

[38] Cicero tries to find the Socratic position in Plato, by appealing to the *Gorgias* and *Menexenus*. He takes it for granted that passages in these dialogues present Plato's views (*TD* v 35–6), even though he elsewhere recognizes a distinction between the Platonic and the historical Socrates (*Rep*. i 16).

[39] Atticus the Platonist takes Plato to hold a view close to the Stoic position, and so contrasts him sharply with Aristotle (Eusebius, *PE* 794c6–d13): he assumes that Plato's acceptance of the comparative thesis commits him to acceptance of the sufficiency thesis. Alcinous claims that in the *Euthydemus* Plato accepts the Stoic thesis that only the fine is good (*Did*. 27 = 180.33–7). He infers that this Stoic thesis expresses Plato's view in the *Republic* as well, and that Plato relies on this thesis to prove that the virtues are choiceworthy for their own sakes (181.5–9). See Dillon, *MP* 251–2, 299; Whittaker, *Alc*. 137n443. Lilla, *CA* 68–72, discusses Clement, *Strom*. iv 52.1–2, which appeals to *R*. 361e (cf. v 108.2). Annas, *PEON*, ch. 2, defends this Platonist view of the *Republic*.

[40] Contrast White, *CPR* 43–5, 80; *ICGE* 189–214.

insufficient for happiness; since justice by itself is not the complete good, happiness includes the external goods that are not infallibly secured by justice. In the light of his composite conception of happiness, Plato claims that justice is the dominant component in happiness. Since he does not explicitly develop a composite conception of happiness in the *Republic*, he does not explain why his formulation of the question about justice and happiness is the right one. But since the composite conception offers us the best way to understand his formulation, we may attribute it to him with reasonable confidence. His position is reasonable if he takes happiness to include a number of parts, including the various external goods whose presence makes just people happier than they would be with justice alone. At any rate, Aristotle sees that we need such a conception in order to defend Plato's claims about justice.[41]

58. Are Plato's Questions Reasonable?

In maintaining that the just person chooses justice for its own sake and demanding a proof that justice is worth choosing for its own sake, Plato begins a long tradition in moral philosophy. Many would agree that those who choose morally virtuous actions simply because of their consequences are missing the point of morality. Kant expresses this view strongly in claiming that only the person who does what is right because it is right has a genuinely good will. Though this demand on moral virtue is not universally accepted and is by no means beyond controversy, and though it demands further explication before we can see what the reasonable controversy is about, it seems to express one widely-shared conviction about morality. We may find it surprising that Socrates does not articulate Plato's demand. Though he expresses an unreserved commitment to morality, we have found that he does not explicitly insist that the moral virtues are non-instrumentally valuable. In insisting that they have this status, Plato goes beyond Socrates' claims. Perhaps he believes that Socrates' actual commitment to morality is better expressed through Plato's formula than through Socrates' apparently instrumental conception. As Adeimantus says, we would expect a non-instrumental defence of justice from someone who takes justice as seriously as Socrates takes it (*R*. 367d5–e1).

But though this aspect of Plato's demand on justice is widely accepted, his support for Socratic eudaemonism is often deplored. Some readers, indeed, assume that since he regards justice as non-instrumentally valuable, he cannot really mean that it is to be chosen only for the sake of one's own happiness. Schopenhauer praises Plato for insisting that virtue is to be praised for its own sake, and so he does not regard Plato as a eudaemonist; he takes him to be an exception to the eudaemonism of ancient ethics.[42] Reid expresses a more usual reaction. He complains that Plato, with the rest of the ancient moralists, reduce morality to self-love, and therefore cannot explain why virtue is to be chosen for its own sake.[43] Prichard states this objection to Plato most strongly, arguing that the *Republic* is not really about moral obligation. The concept of justice introduces morality, according to Prichard, but Plato's question about whether we 'ought' to be just is not about moral obligation, because Plato

[41] Aristotle and Plato on happiness; §66.

[42] 'For Plato, especially in the *Republic*, of which the main tendency is precisely this, expressly teaches that virtue is to be chosen for its own sake alone, even if unhappiness and ignominy should be inevitably associated with it' (*WR* i 524).

[43] See Reid, *EAP* iii 3–4, H 582b586a.

takes 'ought' to refer to one's own happiness.[44] According to the view of Plato's critics, moral requirements and principles ought not to be subordinate to any other principles, whether these other principles refer to the agent's good or to some other valued state of affairs.

Plato might reasonably reject these criticisms. Since he claims that justice is a dominant component of happiness, not merely an instrumental means to it, he might deny that he subordinates morality to other ends in any objectionable sense. One might go further and claim on his behalf that even if we think the moral point of view is independent and supreme, we should accept his version of eudaemonism. To say that morality is identical to, or dominant in, one's happiness is (on this view) simply to assert that the virtuous person values it above everything else.[45] We noticed earlier that this is one way to understand the Cynic conception of the supremacy of virtue.[46]

But if this is a reasonable defence against the charge that Plato subordinates morality to other ends, is eudaemonism still worth defending? For if our conception of happiness is not fixed and determinate independently of justice, we seem to lose one of the main reasons for accepting eudaemonism in the first place. An account of happiness seems to give us some basis both for the definition and for the justification of the moral virtues. We want our definitions to show how the virtues promote happiness, as previously understood, and once we have found the right definitions we will have shown why the virtues, so defined, are worth choosing for rational agents aiming at their happiness, as already defined. If we cannot say what happiness is apart from justice, we cannot appeal to concerns that are recognized as rational by just and non-just agents alike in order to show that the concerns of the just person are rational. But if we cannot use our conception of happiness for these purposes, what is the point of eudaemonism?[47]

It is useful to consider this question in trying to understand eudaemonist positions that try to preserve the justifying force of an appeal to happiness without making morality purely instrumental to non-moral aims. We need to see whether a description of happiness that does not yet incorporate the virtuous person's distinctive conception of its content can be definite enough to offer some reasonable basis for defending the virtuous person's conception. Aristotle and his successors try to set out an appropriate description of happiness; they try to fulfil a task that Plato sets in the *Republic* and the *Philebus*. Plato's raising of these questions supports Grote's judgment that *Republic* ii presents some of the basic questions for ethical theory.[48]

59. What is Psychic Justice?

Though Grote praises Plato for raising the right questions, he is far less impressed by Plato's answers. In his view, Plato entirely fails to show that the other-regarding virtue of justice

[44] See Prichard, *MO* 103–9, 118–19. He concludes that 'any teleological theory of duty can be rejected, even without considering its details, on the ground that it represents the moral "ought" as if it were the non-moral "ought", and so is not a theory of moral obligation at all' (119).

[45] See McDowell, 'Role' 16–20.

[46] On Socrates and the Cynics see §§20, 39.

[47] This is one way to express Sidgwick's criticism of non-hedonist versions of eudaemonism at *ME* 91–3.

[48] Grote, *HG* viii 539: 'Hardly anything in Plato's compositions is more powerful than those discourses. They present in a perspicuous and forcible manner, some of the most serious difficulties with which ethical theory is required to grapple.'

promotes one's happiness.[49] Plato's answer to his question relies on the tripartition of the soul that we have already discussed. His account of the soul allows him to introduce a virtue that he calls 'justice in the soul'. He argues that someone who has this virtue of psychic justice is happier than any who lack it, but, according to many critics, his argument, even if it is successful, is beside the point. For when Glaucon and Adeimantus were asking Socrates to prove that justice promotes happiness, the justice they had in mind was the other-regarding virtue that underlies our obeying the laws, paying debts, and so on. Why should we suppose that the psychic justice that Plato derives from his tripartition of the soul is this other-regarding virtue?

It is useful to approach these criticisms by discussing Plato's position in two stages. First, we may ask why psychic justice is a virtue, and how it is a dominant component of happiness. Secondly, we may turn to the connexion with other-regarding virtue. A clear understanding of what is non-instrumentally good about psychic justice may help us to see why Plato believes it is good for other people as well.

Plato conceives psychic justice as an intra-personal analogue of justice in the state. Justice in the state keeps the different classes performing their own functions, so that they do not cause disorder. Similarly, psychic justice keeps the different parts of the soul in order, so that they do not cause mental conflict and disorder (441d5–e2).

This simple description of psychic justice makes it misleadingly easy to show that it is good for the agent. For we may agree that the avoidance of mental conflict is good for us, no matter what our other values may be; and a simple way to describe psychic order is to say that it consists in the absence of disorder among the parts.[50]

This description, however, is too simple. If it were the whole truth about the role of the rational part, Plato would not have shown why psychic justice is non-instrumentally good. Some degree of psychic order seems to be instrumentally good; but it is not clear why we are better off the more psychic order we have, and it is not clear why we should take this to be a non-instrumental good, let alone a dominant non-instrumental good. We need a fuller description of the role of the rational part, as Plato conceives it.

Plato does not suggest that every soul dominated by a non-rational part is full of conflict and disorder; for we have seen that a non-rational part is capable of some kinds of concern for the future, and of forming future-oriented desires that are strong enough to prevent crippling mental conflict.[51] We do not need to be controlled by the rational part to keep order in the soul. Plato makes this point clear in his description of the deviant souls (Books viii–ix); some of these, at least, are free of crippling conflict, but none of them is controlled by the rational part.

[49] This objection is presented at length by Grote, *POC* iv 102–20. He contrasts other-regarding justice with self-regarding Platonic justice, claiming that the other-regarding sense 'is that which is in more common use; and it is that which Plato assumes provisionally when he puts forward the case of opponents in the speeches of Glaukon and Adeimantus' (103). According to Grote, Plato proves (at most) that self-regarding psychic justice promotes happiness. In commenting on the argument of Book ix Grote objects: 'But when this point is granted, nothing is proved about the just and the unjust man, except in a sense of these terms peculiar to Plato himself' (120). Some of the many further discussions are Prichard, *MO* 106; Sachs, 'Fallacy'; Vlastos, 'Justice'; Kraut, 'Reason'; Annas, *IPR*, ch. 6; Dahl, 'Defence'.

[50] Plato seems to distinguish psychic justice from mere continence (as Aristotle conceives it; see §84); just people do not have to struggle to restrain unruly impulses.

[51] See Hume on prudence and justice, *T* iii 2.7 §5.

In Plato's view, a just soul is controlled by its rational part if and only if the rational part has formed desires resting on wise deliberation about what is good for the whole soul and it uses these desires to guide the whole soul (442c5–d8). Even if someone's non-rational parts accept the instructions of the rational part, it does not follow that he also acts on wise deliberation about what is good for the whole soul. The oligarchic person, for instance, believes that the most important thing in life is making money, makes rational plans for this, and attaches his anger, shame, and pride exclusively to these plans. But Plato denies that such a person acts on a view about what is good for the whole soul; if the rational and the spirited part serve appetite, they do not perform their own functions (cf. 553d1–7).

The outlook of the rational part is wider than that of the other two parts, in so far as it has some conception of their good, and has some conception of them as forming parts of a whole. It incorporates, but also modifies, the outlooks of the two non-rational parts. If we can see all four sides of a building, we can understand the points of view of four observers each of whom can observe only one side; each point of view is misleading by itself, and even the sum of their four points of view is misleading, but we can see how far they are accurate if we understand the whole building of which they observe different parts.[52] The rational part takes this wider point of view on the desires and interests of the non-rational parts, so that it can satisfy their interests better than it would if it simply chose to be guided by their desires (586e7–587a2). This is why each of the virtues requires control by the rational part. Since the rational part takes the appropriate view of the good of the whole soul, it guides the impulses of the non-rational parts in the right direction. In this respect the different virtues might be regarded as aspects of psychic justice, so that we might expect Plato to affirm the unity of the virtues. He does not go as far as Socrates, however. Since distinct courses of training are needed for the different appetites and emotions that underlie bravery and temperance, he treats them as distinct virtues, even though they both consist in having a just and wise soul.

60. How Psychic Justice Fulfils the Human Function

This holistic practical reasoning and the resulting desires of the rational part are instrumentally beneficial, because they grasp the interests of the whole person impartially. But this instrumental function does not explain why it is also non-instrumentally good to be ruled by the rational part. Since Plato believes that any non-instrumental good is a part of happiness, we can see why psychic justice is a non-instrumental good only if we can see how it is a part of happiness. But to see this, we need some grasp of Plato's conception of happiness in the *Republic*.

In trying to answer this question, we have to face one of the gaps in the dialogue. It is unlikely that Socrates could prove to Thrasymachus that justice is a part of happiness if

[52] Murphy, *IPR* 32, comments: '... as Bosanquet said, "the rank of the intelligence comes primarily from its power to represent the whole", and its primary, or perhaps rather ultimate, task is to form a conception of the best life as what will most completely satisfy all the springs of desire in the agent ...'. He refers to Bosanquet, *CPR* 365. The outlook of the rational part might also claim to be more objective; 'As in the theoretical case, we must take up a new, comprehensive viewpoint after stepping back and including our former perspective in what is to be understood. But here the new viewpoint will not be a new set of beliefs, but a new or extended set of values' (Nagel, *VN* 138).

Thrasymachus were right about the composition of happiness. Thrasymachus assumes that it consists in wealth, power, and all the other external goods that one might gain by being a tyrant (cf. 343e7–344c4). When Socrates argues in Book i that justice is sufficient for happiness, he does not mean that it is sufficient for gaining all the goods that Thrasymachus includes in happiness; but he does not offer any alternative conception. The arguments of Glaucon and Adeimantus make it even clearer that Socrates must disagree with Thrasymachus on this point; for it would be absurd to claim that the just person suffering extreme ill-fortune is happier than the unjust person if Thrasymachus had the right conception of happiness. Socrates needs to reform not only our initial conception of justice, but also our initial conception of happiness. But whereas the *Republic* expounds a revised conception of justice at some length, it offers very little to help us grasp Plato's conception of happiness.

He suggests some of his conception, however, in introducing the essential activity or 'function' (*ergon*) of a human being. Socrates appeals to functions in Book i, to clarify his claims about virtues. Given the human function, we can find the virtues; they are the states we need in order to perform our function well (352d8–353d2). The function of the soul is supervising, ruling, deliberating, and living (353d3–10); if justice is the virtue that allows the soul to perform this function well, the just person lives well and is happy. In this argument Socrates assumes that happiness consists in performing one's function well, but he does not explain why he believes this.

In Book iv Plato returns to the human function. He initially speaks of the 'work' or 'function' (*ergon* again) of different individuals and classes in the city. When individuals and classes perform their social function, that promotes the happiness of the whole city (421a8–c6), but it remains to be seen how their function is related to the function that was introduced in Book i. Plato explains the relation by saying that the social function provides an analogy or image of one's own function. Psychic justice is doing 'one's own' (443c–d) both in external actions and in the attitudes and relations of the parts of one's soul, which is truly oneself.[53] Justice is the psychic analogue to the health of the body; health maintains the natural order in the body, by ordering the different parts so that we can perform the normal activities of a human life. Justice maintains the natural order in the soul, so that we can engage in the human function. This is why someone who chooses psychic justice chooses the rule of the human being within him, rather than the rule of the lion (the spirited part) or the many-headed beast (the appetitive part; 589a6–b7).

Though he does not say explicitly that happiness consists in exercising the human function of rational agency, Plato's remarks about justice and the human function suggest that he assumes this conception of happiness. He seems to agree implicitly with Aristotle's claim that happiness consists in a life of rational activity because a human being is essentially a rational agent (*EN* i 7).[54] At the moment we need not try to explore questions about the legitimacy of appeals to the human function, or of arguments from the human function to the human good. It is enough to notice that Plato appeals to the human function to explain how justice is a non-instrumental good. If he is right about the nature of psychic justice, it is a part of happiness, because happiness consists in using practical reason to control the direction of one's life.

[53] On the interpretation of 'doing one's own work' see Irwin, *PE* §158.

[54] On Aristotle's function argument see §74.

We may support this claim about the *Republic* by recalling the argument in the *Philebus* about the character and composition of the good. Socrates advocates a life that includes intelligence for the creatures that are capable of it; he does not say that these creatures are essentially rational, but he does not suggest that his argument would work if rationality were an accidental or unimportant feature of them. In criticizing Protarchus, he suggests that a life of maximum pleasure without reason would not be a life for a human being, but might as well belong to some elementary form of animal existence (*Phil.* 21c6–d1). Those who reject a life guided by reason act against their nature (22b6–8). Plato insists that the good for a human being must be good for a creature with the nature of a human being; and hence it must be a good that consists in the exercise of rational agency. Here again the *Philebus* expresses more clearly a point about happiness that is presupposed, though not so clearly articulated, in the *Republic*.

61. The Philosopher as Ruler: A Conflict between Justice and Happiness?

Thrasymachus, Glaucon, and Adeimantus agree that it is difficult to see how my being just promotes my own good because justice is essentially 'another's good' (*R.* 344c; 367c2–5). Aristotle agrees with this description of justice (*EN* 1130a1–5); in his view, justice completes virtue by directing it to the good of others (*EN* 1129b25–1130a1). Plato and Aristotle disagree with Thrasymachus' assumption that justice is both another's good and a harm to the just agent; but they accept the first part of his assumption, and deny that it supports the second. If, then, Plato is recognizably talking about justice, he ought to show that psychic justice has this other-regarding aspect. But why is it reasonable to expect that someone who is rationally concerned with the good of the whole soul, and who deliberates about which ends to pursue, and values this practical reason as a part of happiness, will also be concerned for the good of others?

If we have grasped the connexion that Plato sees between psychic justice, the human function, and the human good, we can see why he takes psychic justice to be a non-instrumental good. We can also answer some of the reasons for believing that psychic justice is irrelevant to the other-regarding virtue of justice that ought to be Socrates' main concern. Plato mentions some 'commonplace' examples of unjust actions—theft, treachery, neglect of parents, etc.—and claims that the psychically just person would never do any of these (*R.* 442d–443b). We might object that someone without psychic conflict might have a careful premeditated plan to carry out any of these unjust acts and might execute his plan; why would this not be a case of psychic justice leading to an unjust act? Plato might reasonably answer that we have not shown that such a person is psychically just. If he steals because he covets what his neighbour has and wants it for his own gratification, or if he is angry at someone and assaults or kills them to get his own back, he is dominated by a non-rational part of the soul, and hence is not psychically just.

This reply on Plato's behalf is reasonable as far as it goes. Many unjust actions of the sort that concerned Thrasymachus and the others are undertaken because of aims of the non-rational parts, and someone who is really controlled by the rational part will not be

tempted by such actions. The unjust actions considered in Books i–ii might all plausibly be traced to a non-rational motive that we would not endorse if we were controlled by the rational part and exercising the human function. It is not clear, however, that an appeal to an accurate account of psychic justice entirely disposes of objections relying on the other-regarding aspect of justice. Even if the psychically just people avoid most unjust actions, it does not seem obvious that they will have any positive concern for the good of others; but we might reasonably expect this positive concern in a virtue that can properly be called 'another's good'.

This is not simply a question that a critic might devise for Plato. Plato seems to agree that it is a legitimate question. The philosophers who rule the ideal city receive a prolonged and elaborate moral and intellectual training, until they eventually come to know the forms. They need this knowledge in order to find the appropriate goal in the light of which they can order social and individual life; the ideal city needs rulers who have grasped this single goal (519b8–c6). But though the philosophers are qualified to rule the city, a question arises about their desire to rule. Socrates suggests that after their intellectual enlightenment, they will suppose they are living in the Isles of the Blessed. Once they see the possibility of a better life spent in intellectual activity, they will not willingly undertake the task of ruling in the ideal city (519c). But it would be bad for the city if they were allowed to contemplate the forms without interruption; for they are the best qualified to rule, since their knowledge of the forms allows them to understand the shadows and likenesses in the cave (520c–d). If it is necessary, they will embody their conception of the forms in the institutions of the city and the characters of its citizens (500d); and since the interest of the city demands it, it becomes necessary for them to take their part in ruling.

Glaucon is surprised by these remarks of Socrates on the philosophers. He asks whether it is not unjust to demand this of the philosophers, since they are required to have a worse life when it is possible for them to have a better life (519d8–9). Socrates replies that the ideal city is designed for the happiness of all the citizens, not for the exclusive happiness of a single group (519e9–520a4); it is best for the whole city if it is ruled by people who do not regard ruling as a prize to be fought over, and so it is just to expect the philosophers to rule the city as a repayment for their upbringing (520a6–d8). We might suppose that if they are 'compelled' (520a8; e2) to return to government, and if they regard it as 'necessary' rather than 'fine' (540b2–5), they must be giving up happiness. If it promoted their happiness, why would they need to be compelled, and why would they not regard it as fine?[55]

[55] Foster, 'Implications', and White, *ICGE* 203–11, argue that the choice of the philosophers to rule involves a sacrifice of their own happiness. On the other side see Kraut, 'Return'. Foster regards it as the choice of duty over interest: 'It is remarkable because it contains the conception, expressed, to my knowledge, nowhere else in Greek philosophy, of Moral Obligation, or Duty. . . . In the *Republic* all the acts in the life of a Guardian up to the point at which he is bidden to return to the cave are . . . determined as right or wrong according as they are or are not means to his highest good, which is the achievement of the best life. But the command to return to the cave both is and is clearly recognized to be a command to surrender a better life for a worse one. If this act therefore is right, it is right in a different sense from that of conducing to his highest good' (301–2). Foster emphasizes this passage as an exception to the general tendency of Greek ethics because he believes (partly under Hegelian influence; see Hegel, *PR* §184A) that the Greeks in general lack a clear enough conception of the difference between one's own good and the good of the community to formulate any general problem about duty and interest. Foster, however, does not uncritically accept all of Hegel's account of Plato; see *PPPH*, ch. 3. See also White, *ICGE*, ch. 4.

If we suppose that the obligations of justice conflict with the philosopher's happiness, we have to conclude that the initial question about justice and happiness has no simple answer. Philosophers develop their rational desires and aspirations, and by doing this they discover the ultimate good, which consists in the study of universal truths about the ultimate character of reality, revealed in the nature and structure of the forms. This change of focus from everyday concerns to the study of universal truths takes them beyond ordinary temptations to injustice; they will not be interested in the recognized goods that might lead them to want to get the better of their neighbours. In this way, they will avoid the commonplace manifestations of injustice (442e–443b). But they also renounce the normal sources of concern for the welfare of others. In the *Theaetetus* Socrates suggests that the philosopher will take no interest in what happens in the city or in what his neighbours are doing, because he is too absorbed in his study of the forms (*Tht.* 173c6–176a2). If this is Plato's view in the *Republic* too, ruling is a distraction from what is most worthwhile, and some necessity distinct from the rational necessity of pursuing one's ultimate good has to be imposed on the philosopher. Though the rational order of the just soul is non-instrumentally good for the philosopher, and though the philosopher will do actions required by justice and refrain from unjust actions, the other-regarding aspects of justice are not in themselves non-instrumentally good for him.

According to this view, the recognized moral virtues are useful partly for their 'purifying' or 'purgative' role (cf. *Phd.* 69a–e), in so far as they reduce the distracting effect of non-rational desires and so help us to concentrate on the development of the rational part that eventually leads to the grasp of the forms. They are also useful for their instrumental role in holding together the society that the philosophers need to maintain their daily life and to supply their needs. But the higher form of the virtues that belongs to the philosophers lacks any non-instrumental concern for the good of others.

This view of Plato's account of the virtues influences later Platonism in antiquity and beyond.[56] A complete history of moral philosophy might reasonably be expected to give this aspect of Platonism a prominent place. It marks a turn away from the Socratic tradition, in so far as it treats the moral virtues as preliminaries that can in due course be abandoned in favour of some higher way of life. Though they may have a legitimate instrumental role in the contingent circumstances of human life, they have no legitimate claim to capture any ultimate non-instrumental values.

62. The Philosopher as Ruler: No Sacrifice of Happiness?

But before we attribute this Platonist view on justice and happiness to Plato in the *Republic*, we should ask whether he commits himself to it. We may assume too readily that ruling requires the philosopher to give up a non-instrumentally valuable activity for something that is not worth choosing for its own sake as part of his happiness. It is not clear that Plato endorses this suggestion.

[56] Plotinus discusses civic and purifying virtues (referring to the *Phd.*) in *Enn.* i 2.1–3. See Annas, *PEON*, ch. 3; Gerson, *P*199; *AOP* 242–52; Sedley, 'Ideal'; Brittain, 'Attention'. Plotinus is also influenced by the intellectualist conception of happiness that he finds in Aristotle. On Aristotle see §82. On Christianity see §215. On Augustine see §234.

He intends this passage to throw light on his main question about whether it is worth our while to be just. For two aspects of this passage in Book vii recall some of the early moves in Book i: (1) In saying that the philosophers rule unwillingly, Socrates recalls his remark in Book i that in a city of good men rulers would take on their task reluctantly, in contrast to the eagerness of most people now for the spoils of office; they would be reluctant because they would realize that ruling is primarily for the benefit of the ruled (*R*. 347b5–d8). (2) In saying that the philosophers repay the city, Socrates recalls the very first attempted description of justice, as paying back what one has borrowed (331c). He implies that this first description, despite its inadequacy, captured something important about justice. These two recollections of Book i remind us of features of justice that might reasonably suggest that it is another's good.

Plato acknowledges that this is an important feature of justice, and that it seems to create a difficulty for his conception of the philosopher-rulers. They have just souls, in so far as they realize the human function in rational agency. But it seems that they would do this most fully if they continued their reflexions on the forms and did not have to turn back to the vexations of government and administration. Glaucon seems to be right to ask Socrates whether the philosophers are compelled to live a worse life than they would have led had they reflected without interruption on the forms.

But Socrates does not directly answer Glaucon's question about whether the philosophers have a worse life than they would have had if they had not been compelled to govern. He might give either of two answers to this question: (1) The city compels the philosophers to have a less happy life than they would otherwise have, but it does not treat them unjustly. (2) The city does not treat them unjustly and does not compel them to have a less happy life than they would otherwise have. Plato's position is difficult to settle, because it is difficult to see which of these two answers he gives.

In favour of the first answer, we must admit that Socrates directly answers only the question about justice. He argues that the city is asking the philosophers for a fair return for their philosophical upbringing (520a6–d5). He asks Glaucon whether, in the light of this consideration about justice, the philosophers will be unwilling (*ouk ethelêsousin*, 520d7) to take on the task of ruling. Glaucon answers that they will indeed be willing, since they are just people, and the city is requiring just action of them. Socrates reminds Glaucon that the ideal city is not constructed to secure the superior welfare of any one class in the city, but to secure the welfare of the whole city. We might infer that the philosophers have to sacrifice their welfare for the welfare of the whole city.

Socrates does not commit himself to the first answer, however. His comment on the organization of the ideal city shows that the philosopher is expected to care about other things besides her own good; it does not show that she is expected to care about these things for the sake of some ultimate end other than her own good. Moreover, the main strategy of the *Republic* might reasonably lead us to expect the second answer. Plato has set out to show that the just person is happier than anyone else, irrespective of any external advantages or disadvantages. He would raise a serious doubt about his strategy if he had to admit that the happiest person is the philosopher who evades his task of ruling and remains contemplating the forms. But we may suppose he has clearly conceded the most damaging point, when

Glaucon suggests that it is possible (*dunaton*) for the philosophers to lead a better life than the one they are required to lead.

We can perhaps see how to answer these questions if we reconsider Glaucon's remark. He asks 'Will we not treat them unjustly and make them live worse, it being possible (*dunaton*) for them to live better?' (519d8–9). But it is not clear whether 'it being possible . . .' is part of the question or an assertion of Glaucon's. Does he mean 'Given that they could live better, will we make them live worse?' Or does he mean 'Will we make them live worse in circumstances where they could live better?' If we understand him to ask the second question rather than the first, he does not assert that it is possible for the philosophers to live a better life than the life in which they share in ruling. In any case, Socrates does not concede that a better life really is possible for the philosophers, in the specific circumstances of the ideal city. If human beings were self-sufficient, or if government were not needed, perhaps the philosophers would have a better life open to them than the life that involves ruling. But in the actual circumstances—Plato may believe—no life better than the life of ruling is possible, because the life of ruling is the just life.

In that case, the references to compulsion and necessity do not show that the philosophers sacrifice happiness by taking part in government. Compulsion may include rational necessity, so that a course of action is 'necessary' or 'required' in so far as no other course is rationally acceptable; this sort of compulsion does not imply that I am not doing what I think best for the sake of my own happiness. Similarly, the fact that government in itself is necessary rather than fine does not show that the just action of taking part in government is not fine. In contrast to reflexion on the forms, government in itself is only instrumentally valuable; one would not choose it except for its results. But the just action that consists in taking part in government is fine, precisely in so far as it is required by justice. If we interpret Plato in this way, he does not concede that a sacrifice of theoretical study for the sake of a just person's obligations is a sacrifice of happiness.

63. Love, Self-Concern, and Concern for Others

But even if the *Republic* maintains consistently that the person with a just soul is concerned for others, and suffers no loss of happiness thereby, it does not explain why this is so. Plato assumes that the philosophers will recognize a necessity to express and to embody what they have learnt from their study of the forms, so that individuals, laws, and institutions manifest the same rational order (500b7–d9). He regards this as a rational necessity that the philosophers recognize as giving them a good reason to legislate. But he does not describe the basis of this rational necessity.

He suggests a possible basis, however, in saying that the philosophers act out of love (*erôs*) for wisdom and for the forms (485a10–d5; 490a–b; 499c1–2; 501c6). We might treat these brief references to eros simply as strong expressions of the philosophers' attachment to their philosophical activity. But it may be relevant that in other dialogues, especially in the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus*, Plato explains how a desire that he calls 'eros' is an aspect

of rational motivation. It is worth considering a few points from the discussion of eros in the *Symposium*, to see whether they throw any light on the questions that the *Republic* leaves without complete answers.

In the most relevant section of the *Symposium* Diotima, a woman of Mantinea, explains to Socrates that eros, initially understood as a desire for the 'beautiful' or 'fine' (*kalon*), really manifests the general desire for one's own happiness (*Symp*. 204e1–205d9). To explain the connexion between the desire for one's own happiness and the desire for the fine, she discusses rational concern for one's own future, which she compares to the propagation of one person by another. In self-concern for the future I seek to transmit my character and personality to someone who in some ways is different from myself. The persistence of a single person does not require any one component of the person to stay qualitatively the same through a person's lifetime; it requires the appropriate causal and qualitative connexions between different stages.[57] The future self that I have reason to be concerned about must carry on some of the traits that I value; hence, as Plato puts it, I aim at propagation in the 'beautiful' or 'fine' (*kalon*). Since enlightened self-concern belongs to the rational part, it rests on concerns based on our values, and not simply on the strength of our desires. That is why desire for one's own happiness leads to desire for the fine. I aim at my own preservation by aiming at the preservation of what I value in myself.

This analysis of self-concern is also relevant to concern for others because it helps to explain why I might reasonably value states of others besides myself. If I want to propagate states of myself that I value, I may do this by propagating them in others. I sometimes ought to prefer propagation of these traits in others, since I cannot always ensure my own continued existence, and this limitation may prevent me from fully realizing in myself everything that I might value in myself. In these cases the reasons that lead me to care about myself should lead me to prefer propagation of these valuable traits in another person. That is why Diotima mentions poets and legislators among those who have propagated themselves by propagation of the fine (208e5–209e4).[58]

The desire for propagation in the fine explains the philosopher's attachment to the forms as a manifestation of the general desire to propagate what one values. As we come to learn more about what is fine, we change our views about what is worth propagating. When we reach the form, we understand most fully what is really fine and beautiful, and that is what we want to propagate in ourselves and other people (210a4–212a7).[59]

Plato's explanation of the desire to propagate in the fine suggests that we would lack this desire if we were immortal, because we would not need to propagate valuable traits in others as a second-best to maintaining them in ourselves.[60] But this is not always his view. In the *Timaeus* he suggests that immortal agents also aim at propagation. The creator of the ordered world is a 'craftsman' (*dêmiourgos*), a good god who is free from spite; he does not take pleasure in making others worse off, and so he would not make anything worse than

[57] Plato's claims about persistence and self-concern are treated more elaborately in recent discussions of survival and identity, including Parfit, *RP*, ch. 12; Warner, 'Love'; Wolf, 'Self-interest'; Whiting, 'Friends'. See also §33.

[58] This issue is discussed by Price, *LFPA* 33–5.

[59] 212a2–7 is an especially important part of this passage, since it makes clear that the desire to propagate does not disappear once one has recognized the form of beauty. Insight into the form changes one's view about what to propagate.

[60] On questions about immortality see Price, *LFPA* 30–1.

he could make it. Since he wants everything to be as good as possible, he makes an ordered world out of the pre-cosmic disorder (*Tim.* 29d7–30c1).[61] Plato assumes that the god values his own goodness and wants to reproduce it in other things; hence the god aims at the existence of creatures who have something similar to his goodness. Even in an immortal agent, the desire for propagation rests on the desire to express and to extend the traits one values about oneself and to embody them in other things.

These few remarks of Plato's underlie Platonist and Christian doctrines of the overflowing love of God.[62] They also help to explain Plato's claims about the philosophers in the *Republic*. He claims that if some 'necessity' arises, the philosopher will be a good 'craftsman' (*dêmiourgos*) of justice and the other civic virtues (*R.* 500d4–9). We might have supposed, before taking account of the *Symposium*, that the necessity is externally imposed and results simply from the compulsion exercised by the rulers of the Platonic city. But we can now see that this is not the only source of the necessity that moves the philosophers. They are like the god of the *Timaeus* who wants to share his goodness with other things. Whereas the god creates other things to embody his goodness, the philosophers seek to reproduce in their fellow-citizens the states that they value in themselves. Since the states they value in themselves include psychic justice, they want to embody psychic justice in other people as far as possible.

64. Eudaemonism and Concern for Others

We can now say more about why the philosophers do not believe they sacrifice their happiness when they take their turn in ruling. Plato introduces the philosophers as paradigms of just people. If his claims about the philosophers are relevant to his claims about justice and happiness, his account of the motives of the philosopher should also clarify the outlook of a just person more generally. The account of eros in the *Symposium* shows why Plato does not think that the 'necessity' recognized by philosophers is confined to philosophers. The desire for reproduction in the fine is common to every rational agent, since we all care about our own preservation. Not all of us recognize that this rational concern for ourselves makes it reasonable to care about the good of others for their own sake; but we will recognize this if we reflect correctly on the nature of human happiness and the human soul.

Plato's argument in the *Symposium* supports his view about the relation between eudaemonism and morality, or—to express it in his terms—between the rational pursuit of one's own happiness and the aspects of justice that make it appear to be another's good and harmful to the just agent. He does not deny that the apparent facts about justice seem to raise a difficulty for his eudaemonism; in this respect it is quite appropriate, and not at all anachronistic, to say that he is concerned with an apparent conflict between duty and interest. We might suppose that eudaemonism makes it more difficult to explain concern for the good of others, and that we need to introduce some moral principle distinct from the pursuit of one's own happiness to justify the extension of non-instrumental concern beyond oneself. We will take Plato to agree with this view if we suppose that he believes the

[61] Taylor, *CPT* 78, suggests that in Plato's view, 'it is of the very nature of goodness and love to "overflow"'.

[62] See, e.g., Aquinas, *ST* 1a q20 a2 ad1.

philosophers sacrifice their happiness to their duty as rulers.[63] But we have found that this is not his view. He believes that the enlightened rational part of the soul has a holistic and comprehensive outlook that is also temporally comprehensive, and so looks forward to my future interests. An appropriately comprehensive concern for my present and future cannot allow my concerns to be confined to myself; for since I am concerned about the future embodiment of traits that I value in myself, I reasonably seek to propagate these traits in other people. As we learn more about which traits are valuable, we change our views about the traits that should be embodied in other people (*Symp*. 210a–211c).

But even if we agree with Plato's argument from concern for oneself to concern for others, we may doubt whether the concern for others that emerges from his argument is really concern for other people's interest, the sort of concern that is relevant to love and to morality. We recognize one important type of love for persons as non-instrumental concern for the good of others; this is how Aristotle describes the common conception of friendship.[64] But we might wonder whether the Platonic attitude to other persons is appropriately non-instrumental. Plato speaks of the effects of love as 'educating' or 'moulding' (*Phdr*. 252d5–e1) the beloved into the shape that the lover thinks appropriate. What has this to do with the interests of the beloved? If B is moulded into the shape in which B best satisfies A's desire for self-propagation, it seems to be A's interests rather than B's that guide the changes A tries to produce in B.

Plato's eudaemonism helps to explain why Platonic love includes concern for the interests of the other person. Since A is concerned for B as a way of propagating A, and since A cares about A's own interest for A's own sake, A will also care about B for B's own sake, not instrumentally to some further end. For in so far as B propagates A, B deserves the sort of concern that A applies to A. Though A certainly does it all for A's own sake, doing it for B's sake is doing it for A's sake, if B is A's way of propagating A. Just as A cares about the future stages of A as the results of intra-personal propagation, A has the same reason to care about B as the result of inter-personal propagation. For if B really carries on what A regards as valuable about A, then A has good reason to care about B in the same way as A cares about A.

We can make this point a little more concrete by reminding ourselves of the traits that an enlightened agent wants to propagate in others. These traits include the cardinal virtues, which embody the rational control that this agent values for its own sake. Hence we have reason to want to produce the cardinal virtues in other people too. But the cardinal virtues are the dominant element in everyone's good. Hence virtuous agents—those who value the cardinal virtues in themselves—also achieve the good of others.

This is simply an outline of Plato's argument from self-concern to concern for others. If he succeeds, he shows that agents with psychic justice also aim at the good of others, and so he defends his claim that they have the other-regarding virtue of justice that raised the main question of the *Republic*. Plato's claims raise reasonable doubts and questions at many points, but we need not pursue them in detail now, since the relevant issues arise again in later eudaemonist defences of morality.

The most important point in this argument is the strategy that other eudaemonists derive from Plato. He suggests that we find it difficult to connect self-interest with the good of

[63] See Foster, quoted above at n55.

[64] See *Rhet*. 1380b36–1381a1. On Aristotle see §122.

others because we have an incomplete conception of self-interest. Once we understand the scope of self-interest, correctly conceived, we see that it includes the morally appropriate concern for the interests of others. Whether or not Plato sees exactly how these two areas of concern are connected, his strategy is worth examining, because it conflicts with a common understanding of the major questions in ethics.

Philosophers who believe that morality is separate from self-interest and that it is not a simple matter to grasp the relation between the two principles are not raising a purely theoretical question. Nor is it purely a modern question. We can see from the questions of the interlocutors in the *Republic* that they do not find it obvious that a correct account of justice will demonstrate that it is part of the just agent's happiness. The position that Polus took in the *Gorgias*—that justice is finer than injustice though less beneficial to the agent (*Gorg*. 474c4–d2)—seems plausible to Plato's contemporaries and may well seem plausible to us.

Plato points out that the separation of morality from self-interest rests on a specific conception of self-interest. As we will see, Butler and Sidgwick, who sharply separate self-interest from morality, also conceive self-interest narrowly. It is worth asking whether this conception of self-interest is correct, and, if it is not correct, whether that matters for the question about self-interest and morality. Plato might be correct to question the common conception of self-interest, even if he is wrong to suppose that a correct conception resolves the questions about self-interest and morality. We can decide whether he is right or wrong only by further reflexion on the character and composition of happiness, and on the requirements of morality. Aristotle and the Stoics pursue this reflexion in some detail; if we examine their position, we can form some tentative view about the success of the eudaemonist approach to morality.

6

ARISTOTLE: HAPPINESS

65. Interpreting Aristotle

Aristotle's ethics will be prominent not only in these chapters that deal primarily with Aristotle, but also in many later chapters. Indeed, some of the discussion of his views will not be complete until the end of the book. The reasons that justify this constant return to Aristotle will give some idea of his significance.

On some points modern moralists disagree with Aristotle. His conception of an objective human good derived from a foundation in human nature is generally absent from modern moral theories; this is true of theories that in other respects differ as radically as those of Hobbes and Kant. Moreover, modern theories treat morality as the source of reasons and motives that are distinct from those of self-interest.[1] Despite their other disagreements, Butler, Hume, and Kant agree in rejecting the supremacy of reasons based on one's own good, whereas Aristotle seems to regard such reasons as supreme, both psychologically and rationally.

Aristotle provides not only a point of contrast, but also an aspect of continuity in the history of ethics. If we compare him with the modern moralists we have just mentioned, he represents the 'ancient' view. But he is a primary source and inspiration for mediaeval moral philosophy and its successors. Mediaeval philosophers, of whom Aquinas is the best known, interpret and develop Aristotle so as to form a position that justifiably regards itself as Aristotelian, but is no mere paraphrase of Aristotle.

If we neglect the continuity of the Aristotelian tradition, some contrasts between ancient and modern moral philosophy seem obvious. If we recognize the continuity of this tradition, the contrasts blur. This is especially true of some supposedly non-Aristotelian elements in modern moral philosophy. We might be inclined to believe that Aristotle lacks a conception of distinct moral reasons. But it is more difficult to believe this about Aquinas. And if Aquinas believes that his conception is based on Aristotle, we may be less confident that Aristotle differs from modern moral philosophy as sharply as we initially supposed. If we notice how later Aristotelians understand Aristotle, we may be persuaded to interpret him differently from how we would interpret him if we did not take account of these later versions of Aristotelian ethics.

[1] But see §368 on Scotus.

But should we allow these later versions to influence us in the interpretation of Aristotle? Even if Aquinas shows us how one might defend or exploit some aspects of Aristotle, should we not resist any attempt to explain Aristotle himself in the light of later reflexions? One might argue that a proper historical account of Aristotle ought to explain him without any reference to the ways in which later philosophers understand him, so that we have a neutral basis from which we can see who has understood him correctly. On this basis we might try to decide who has defended Aristotle, and who has defended some selected Aristotelian themes.

The task of separating the interpretation of Aristotle from the views of later expositors and defenders is less simple than it may appear. We understand the significance of Aristotle's claims only if we understand what they imply, and how they might be defended or attacked. These are questions for the philosophical critic, and later philosophical criticism may help us to grasp the point of what Aristotle says. Some later critics, therefore, may help us to understand Aristotle better than we would understand him if we ignored later philosophy. Some of Aquinas' main doctrines are not only inspired by Aristotle, but also make clear the implications of Aristotle's views. If this is true, we may reasonably rely on Aquinas in interpreting Aristotle. But he is not the only later critic who defends views about the significance and value of Aristotle; to reach a reasonable view of Aristotle we may need to compare Aquinas' views with the alternatives that other critics offer.[2]

Still, we cannot even argue convincingly that later critics have interpreted Aristotle correctly unless we have some idea of his position that does not already assume that they are correct. We need a preliminary account of Aristotle that helps us to see why his readers might reasonably be puzzled about how to understand and to develop his views. We need to see where Aristotle is inexplicit or silent, so that a critic needs to supply some argument or explanation. To reach a fair estimate of the views of different critics, we should exercise some restraint in our initial interpretation of Aristotle. We should make it clear why it might be reasonable to disagree about what Aristotle means, or about how to elaborate some of his claims to make them fit others.

We would be going too far in this direction, however, if we gave the impression that there is no right answer, that one interpretation cannot be defended as the best way of understanding and explaining Aristotle. To do justice to Aristotle in the history of ethics, we should recognize that answers to some questions of interpretation are not obvious, but can be found.

66. Aristotle's Main Contributions

Aristotle begins where Socrates and Plato left off. He recognizes that he continues the ethical inquiries they began. While he cites poets and sages as sources of moral views, he mentions only Socrates, Plato, Eudoxus, and Speusippus as sources of theoretical views that agree or disagree with his own—about the nature of the good, or pleasure, or virtue, or incontinence, for instance. Many of the topics of the *Ethics* are familiar to readers of the Platonic dialogues.[3]

[2] Other relevant discussions include those by Suarez, Butler, and Green.

[3] In speaking of the '*Ethics*' I refer to the *EN*, which I take to be the latest and best statement of Aristotle's ethical theory. This is the work that influences mediaeval and later moralists. (The role of the different ethical treatises in

In discussing happiness, the virtues, and pleasure Aristotle continues Plato's inquiries. In arguing that virtue promotes happiness, that the best life is also the pleasantest life, and that if we have one virtue we have all the virtues, he defends Plato's conclusions.

Aristotle often argues more fully than Plato argues for central Platonic claims, but this is not always true. Some significant exceptions are these: (1) Though Aristotle is as convinced as Plato is (see ix 4) that virtue always promotes happiness more than vice does, a defence of this claim is not a central element in the *Ethics* as it is in the *Republic*. (2) Though Aristotle relies on the Platonic division of the soul, he does not argue for it as fully as Plato does in *Republic* iv, but tends to take it for granted in, for instance, his doctrine of virtue as a mean and in his explanation of incontinence.[4] (3) Though he mentions (in vi 13) that he accepts the reciprocity of the virtues, he discusses this topic less fully than Plato discusses it in the *Protagoras* and the *Statesman*; he confines himself to answering an objection to it.

We cannot explain Aristotle's comparative brevity on these points by supposing that he takes them to be unimportant; they are central elements of his moral theory. We might conjecture that he treats them briefly because he is relatively satisfied with Plato's treatment of them, and supposes that his audience will know what he means even if he does not expound his views at length.

This might lead us to a further conjecture; perhaps the topics that Aristotle treats at greater length are those on which he is not satisfied with Plato's discussion. If we identify the main features of the *Ethics* that are unfamiliar to a reader of Plato, how do they change or strengthen Plato's position?

In the *Republic* Plato does not explain or defend very fully the conception of happiness presupposed in his claim that justice promotes happiness. In the *Philebus* he has more to say about the nature of the human good; he sets out the general conditions of completeness, sufficiency, and universal attractiveness, and tries to show how these conditions support a life of pleasure combined with intelligence over either version of the unmixed life. He does not undertake the longer task of showing that these general conditions can be used to support a plausible account of the final good, or that this account justifies the virtues, as Plato conceives them.

Aristotle undertakes this task in the *Ethics*. He offers an account of the concept of the highest good, formal criteria[5] for the good, and an argument from these formal criteria to a specific conception of happiness, identified with the highest good. He tries to show that he has found a true account of a human being's happiness, and a true account of the human virtues, and that these true accounts fit together in the right way. According to one reasonable interpretation, he argues that happiness is a composite good, and that the virtues are dominant parts of it.

In *Republic* iv Plato identifies the four major virtues with the well-ordered condition of the tripartite soul. But he does not say much about what actions can be expected from someone

Hellenistic philosophy is not so clear.) I refer only occasionally to the other two ethical works in the Aristotelian corpus, the *EE* and *MM*. Kenny, *APL*, chs. 1–3, Appendix 1, defends a different view of the relation between the ethical treatises. I follow most modern critics in supposing that the three books, *EN* v, vi, and vii, were originally written as part of the *EE*.

[4] See 1102a18–32; 1104b24–6; 1110b10–19; 1149a24–b23. *DA* 432b3–7 also treats the partition of the soul as familiar. The controversy is about the nature of the parts and the relation between them, not about their reality.

[5] On formal criteria see §53; §71 below.

with a well-ordered soul, or why these actions are virtuous actions. A treatise on ethics ought to include a fuller account of the virtues. If this fuller account fits Plato's eudaemonist starting point, it ought to argue that the different virtues can be understood in the light of a correct conception of happiness. Aristotle argues for this claim through his discussion of the virtues of character and intellect.

Aristotle follows Socrates and Plato in supposing that virtuous action is rational because it aims at an appropriate end. But this teleological assumption raises a difficulty. Socrates identifies teleological rationality with the productive rationality of a craft, so that virtues are choiceworthy because of some external end that they causally promote. Plato claims that justice is worth choosing for its own sake and not only for its causal results. He thereby implicitly denies that productive rationality is the only sort of rational goal-direction, but he does not offer a clear alternative. Aristotle, however, distinguishes two sorts of goal-directed actions: production (*poiêsis*) aims at some end other than the production itself, whereas in 'action' or 'activity' (*praxis*) 'good action itself is the end' (1140b7). He claims that some action can be understood teleologically though it is not simply a means to an end that is wholly external to it. His distinction shows how the virtues fit into happiness without having merely instrumental value, and why a virtuous person can both regard happiness as the ultimate end and choose virtuous action for its own sake.

A virtue of character is 'a state that decides' (*hexis prohairetikê*). Aristotle's account of 'decision' or 'election' (*prohairesis*)[6] expands Plato's remarks on the desires of the rational part of the soul. Decision is the product of wish (*boulêsis*) and deliberation. It is a central feature of responsible action and of virtue. In requiring the right decision, Aristotle seeks to describe the rational element in virtue. His description is, at first sight, paradoxical. For he claims that we decide on actions as promoting ends, not as ends themselves, but he also insists that the virtuous person decides on the virtuous action for its own sake. This paradox dissolves, and the coherence of Aristotle's position becomes clear, once we apply the distinction between production and activity to Aristotle's claims about decision. The virtuous person decides on virtuous actions as activities that in themselves, not simply through their consequences, partly achieve the end. A composite conception of happiness helps to explain the role of virtuous actions.

According to Aristotle, the mark of the virtuous person is the choice of virtuous action 'because it is fine (*kalon*)' or 'for the sake of the fine'. Plato often mentions the fine in connexion with virtue, but he does not appeal to it, as Aristotle does, in describing the motives of the virtuous person. Aristotle's contemporaries contrast acting for the sake of the fine with acting for the sake of one's own benefit; to say that virtuous people prefer the fine over the beneficial is to make it clear that they prefer the advantage of others over their own advantage. By insisting on an aspect of virtue that might seem to raise difficulties for his eudaemonism, Aristotle acknowledges that a eudaemonist must explain this aspect of virtue. He believes he can explain it by appeal to his composite conception of happiness.

[6] I have used both 'decision' (perhaps the least unsatisfactory English rendering) and 'election' (to prepare for Aquinas' use of 'electio') to render *prohairesis* and the cognate verb. In any case the rendering 'choice' should be avoided, since it conceals the fact that Aristotle often uses an ordinary Greek word for choice (*hairesis*), but does not suggest that *prohairesis* is identical to *hairesis*.

Justice and the rest of other-regarding morality seem difficult to justify by reference to one's own happiness. The difficulty convinced Thrasymachus that the other-regarding virtues cannot be rationally justified. To answer Thrasymachus, Aristotle does not concentrate on justice, as Plato does, but on friendship. One fifth of the whole *EN* is devoted to the description, analysis, and justification of friendship; the prominence of this virtue in Aristotle is one major point of difference from Plato's treatment of ethics. In showing how friendship is part of happiness, Aristotle explains how regard for others is not merely of instrumental value.

Some of these arguments show why we can consistently choose virtue for its own sake, because it is fine, and because it promotes our happiness. But it is not enough to show that we can take this attitude. We normally suppose, and Aristotle's readers suppose as well, that acceptance of morality is not simply one choice that we are free to make, but a choice that we must make. The 'must' here cannot be the 'must' of physical or psychological compulsion; virtue requires the free preference of morality over other options that are recognized as open. Aristotle relies on some suggestions of Plato's to argue that we must choose the moral virtues because they are uniquely appropriate for us as the kinds of beings that we are; he argues from the needs and characteristics of human nature to the appropriateness of choosing these specific virtues. The virtues constitute the good states of human beings; they make human beings good, and are good for human beings, as the kinds of things they are, just as healthy leaves, roots, and trunks make trees good trees and are good for trees. This goodness of human beings depends on the good of human beings, just as the goodness of trees depends on the good of trees.

The appeal to facts about human nature—whether we take them to be biological, psychological, or metaphysical—appears at crucial points in the argument, and plays a vital theoretical role in ethics, as Aristotle conceives it. This aspect of the *Ethics* has received severe criticism. If we agree with the criticism, then we may reasonably want to see how much of Aristotle's views on ethics can stand without the appeal to nature. If we reject the criticism, the task of eliminating the appeal to nature from Aristotle's position will appear less urgent.

These features of the *Ethics* suggest that Aristotle's argument is more systematic than we might initially suppose. The *Ethics* discusses happiness, virtue, friendship, pleasure, and contemplation in a loose framework that does not often advertise a cumulative argument. The prominence of relatively minor details (for instance, the different aspects of special justice, the minor intellectual virtues, the casuistical questions about friendship) may give the impression that Aristotle cares more about detailed description than about the broader questions of justification that occupy Plato in the *Republic*. This impression, however, is misleading. Aristotle believes that Plato has left him with the task of arguing that virtue and happiness fit together when each is properly understood. If we do not think of happiness as a composite end, and if we do not decide on virtue as a component of happiness, we cannot, in Aristotle's view, defend the eudaemonist position in the way that Plato sketches in the *Republic*. If, however, we understand happiness correctly, we can recognize the impartial and other-regarding aspects of the virtues within a eudaemonist argument.

Aristotle's treatment of virtue and happiness is controversial. The main Hellenistic schools—Cynics, Cyrenaics, Epicureans, and Stoics—accept this estimate of Aristotle's version of eudaemonism. The Cyrenaics reject eudaemonism altogether. The Stoics modify

the Aristotelian conception of happiness to bring happiness closer to virtue; Epicurus rejects the assumption that virtue must be shown to be valuable for its own sake, not purely instrumentally.

The same sorts of doubts about Aristotelian eudaemonism underlie the still more radical criticisms by Christian moralists. Their objections seem to imply that Aristotle is basically misguided in taking one's own happiness and the cultivation of one's own virtue to be morally acceptable aims. These are the objections that Aquinas seeks to answer, by arguing that Aristotle's account of happiness and virtue supports a correct view of the human good and of the place of the moral virtues in it; this view, according to Aquinas, needs to be extended and transformed, but not rejected or abandoned, in the light of the Christian revelation.

67. Method

Near the beginning of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (i 3–4) and the *Eudemian Ethics* (i 6), Aristotle briefly discusses the proper method for moral philosophy. His remarks have influenced many of his successors, even including those who do not accept the rest of his ethical outlook, and they raise some questions about what moral philosophers should try to do and what they might hope to achieve.

He refers to common views about the ultimate good and happiness, and promises to proceed by examining the most widespread and plausible of common views (1095a28–30). By beginning from these views, we begin from what is 'known to us' (1095b2–4).[7] Aristotle sometimes cites common beliefs and the puzzles (*aproriai*) they raise,[8] and in one place he suggests that the aim of his ethical reflexion is to remove puzzles raised by common beliefs (1145b2–7).[9] This procedure is similar to the procedure of 'dialectic', as Aristotle describes it.

Dialectic is Aristotle's version of Socratic argument applied to common beliefs.[10] He tries to find the most plausible objections and puzzles that can be raised from common beliefs and against common beliefs, and looks for a resolution that resolves apparent contradictions and conflicts. By endorsing dialectical method in ethics Aristotle expresses the Socratic conviction that moral philosophy is accessible to those who are honest and persistent enough to inquire into their own basic convictions and the connexions between them. Moral theory, according to this Socratic view, does not require a whole philosophical system or a full understanding of reality as a whole. It is an autonomous discipline, in so far as its basic principles are independent of disputes in natural science and the rest of philosophy.

[7] 'Presumably, then, the starting point we should begin from is what is known to us. . . . the starting point is the that and if this is apparent enough to us, we will not need the why in addition; and if we have this good upbringing, we have the starting points, or can easily acquire them' (1095b3–8).

[8] See, e.g., i 8; 1143b36; 1144b32–4; viii 1; 1168a28–b13; 1169b3–8.

[9] The passage is quoted in §2n1. On puzzles (*aporiai*) cf. *Top*. 145b16–20. Aristotle says he will proceed in this way in the case of incontinence 'as in the other cases', implying that he offers a general statement on method. Since he does not say what 'the other cases' are, we cannot conclude for certain that the statement applies to all his ethical arguments, but such a conclusion is supported by the use of dialectical expressions throughout the *Ethics*. Contrast Annas, *MH* 142n3, claiming that this passage 'is sometimes wrongly elevated to a general strategy in ethics'.

[10] Dialectic is 'a method from which we will be able to syllogize from common beliefs (*endoxa*) about every topic proposed to us, and will say nothing conflicting when we give an account ourselves' (*Top*. 100a18–21).

We need to use a dialectical method in the *Ethics* because we are looking for the basic principles (*archai*) of a discipline.[11] We cannot rely on accepted principles in order to support ethical advice; for our inquiry looks for principles in the light of which we can decide the right basis for giving advice. Since we are 'on the road towards the principles' (1095a30–b1), we have to rely on some appropriate standard for acceptance of a theoretical principle. Aristotle suggests that the appropriate standard is success in finding the 'why' that explains the 'that'. The beliefs 'that' just people do not take bribes, 'that' one ought not to betray other people in danger just to save one's skin, and so on are the appropriate places to start.

What sort of 'why' explains the 'that'? We might think Aristotle's statement of his aim is ambiguous between explanation and justification. We might find an explanation that makes it clear why we hold the moral beliefs we hold. It might show that we are impressed by superficial analogies, that we remain attached to principles that once had socially desirable consequences but have outlived their usefulness, and that we fail to draw the logical implications of some of our beliefs that conflict with others that we also hold tenaciously. The explanation offered by this sort of 'why' would reasonably encourage us to question our moral outlook; the questions might either prompt us to look for something better or leave us in sceptical detachment.

Among ancient philosophers the Sceptics offer this potentially undermining 'why'. The modern philosophers who offer it include Mandeville, Sidgwick, and Mackie.[12] While these philosophers draw different conclusions from their undermining explanations, they agree in believing that a search for the 'why' exposes some error in the moral beliefs that we explain.

A different sort of 'why' might tell us not why we believe what we believe about morality, but why a brave person faces danger in some conditions but not in others, why we ought to keep our promises, and so on. The 'why' is understood as 'Why should we?' rather than 'Why do we?', and the answer we look for will justify the convictions that we began with. On this view, we have not found the 'why' we are looking for until we have found a justification for our initial beliefs.

These two approaches to the 'why' seem to require different treatments of the common beliefs we begin from. If we are looking for a justification, we apparently need to take a critical attitude to them; we will want to see where they seem inconsistent or irrational, and we will want to find some reasonable way of resolving inconsistencies. If we are looking for an explanation without a justification, we have no reason to try to resolve inconsistencies; on the contrary, exposure of them may help us to reveal the conflicting assumptions that underlie our beliefs.

Aristotle's treatment of common beliefs and the puzzles they raise suggests that he expects the 'why' to yield a justification, and not simply an explanation. He does not begin from all commonly-held beliefs indiscriminately, but tries to exclude those that seem simply to reflect particular people's bias in their specific circumstances. He tries to set out from those

[11] 'And it [sc. dialectic] is also useful for <finding> the first things in each science. For we cannot say anything about them from the proper principles of the science in question, since the principles are prior to everything else, but it is necessary to discuss them through the common beliefs on each subject. And this is proper to dialectic alone, or to it more than to anything else; for since it examines, it has a road towards the principles of all disciplines' (*Top*. 101a36–b4).

[12] See Mandeveille, *FB* i 56 (Kaye) = R 270; Sidgwick (n14 below); Mackie, *E*, chs. 1–2.

that are very widely held, or seem to have some argument in their favour.[13] Nor does he simply list the common beliefs; he seeks to 'examine' (*exetazein*) them, using Socrates' term for his cross-examinations of interlocutors. Like Socrates, he examines people's beliefs in order to expose the difficulties and puzzles that they raise. We look for a principle that allows us to resolve the puzzles, and to vindicate either all the common beliefs, or at least the 'most and most important' of them (1145b4–6). The principle that we ought to reach is 'known by nature', and not merely 'known to us'; it tells us how things are in their own right, apart from our beliefs and desires.

Though Aristotle describes his method as a search for justification, we may wonder whether he succeeds.[14] It is easy to suppose that he offers a systematic description of common moral beliefs. It is harder to see how he shows that some beliefs are more 'important' than others, and that these are the ones that should be preserved. We need to consider the standards he relies on in resolving the conflicts he finds in common beliefs, and why he believes these are reasonable standards.

He also gives a different account of his method in the *Ethics*. Instead of speaking of dialectic, he describes ethical inquiry as a sort of 'political science' (*politikê*, 1094b10–11).[15] Political science is a form of practical science, and its method is deliberative. It is the same cognitive state as prudence (*phronêsis*), which deliberates about what promotes happiness as a whole (1141b23–33). Deliberation assumes some end, and then considers what has to be done to secure it (1112b11–16). Once we have identified what we can do here and now to achieve our end, we make an election (*prohairesis*; 1113a9–12).

Aristotle suggests at the beginning of the *Ethics* that he will follow this deliberative method, but not in the usual way. In goal-directed crafts, such as medicine or building, we begin with a conception of the healthy condition we want to produce in the patient, or of the house we want to build; it is not our task to say what health is or a house is. In the *Ethics* Aristotle begins by introducing a final good as the ultimate end, but he does not begin by taking for granted the character and composition of this ultimate end. On the contrary, his first question asks what this final good is (1094a22–6). In this case the deliberative task includes the dialectical inquiry that is needed to find an account of the good; such an account will be the basic principle, and so (as the *Topics* remarks, 101a36–b4[16]) we have to discover it by dialectic.

Ethical inquiry differs from other forms of deliberative inquiry on this point because it lacks the usual basis for fixing a definite conception of the end that is to be realized in action. If we are trying to make bridles, our craft is controlled by the end set by the equestrian craft;

[13] 'Presumably, then, it is rather futile to examine all these beliefs, and it is enough to examine those that are most current or seem to have some argument for them' (1095a28–30). The appropriate common beliefs should be apparent (*phainomena*), 'but apparent not to just anyone, but to people of a certain sort; for it is an indefinitely long task to examine the things that make something apparent to just anyone' (*Top*. 170b6–8).

[14] Sidgwick understands Aristotle's account as a systematic description pointing the way to an undermining explanation of common sense: 'I had to read Aristotle again; and a light seemed to dawn upon me as to the meaning and drift of his procedure—especially in Books ii, iii, iv. of the *Ethics* . . . What he gave us there was the Common Sense Morality of Greece, reduced to consistency by careful comparison: given not as something external to him but as what "we"—he and others—think, ascertained by reflection. And was not this really the Socratic induction, elicited by interrogation?' (*ME* xxi). On Sidgwick's attitude to Aristotle see §115.

[15] The Greek has no noun here. 'Science' (*epistêmê*) or 'capacity' (*dunamis*) has to be supplied from 1094a26.

[16] Quoted in n11 above.

if we are trying to formulate a new pill to relieve headaches, our craft is controlled by the end set by pharmacy and medicine; but in political science we are trying to find the highest end, and so we cannot appeal to any higher end to give us a definite conception of our end. Since we are looking for a basic principle, we need dialectical inquiry.

Aristotle captures this difference between political science and most other sciences by saying that political science is practical rather than productive, because it is concerned with 'action' (*praxis*) and not simply with 'production' or 'making' (*poiêsis*). In Aristotle's strict sense of 'action', an action is itself the end that we aim at, not a mere means to some end external to it (1140b6–7). If we are trying to find the appropriate form of non-instrumental action, we cannot simply consider its causal consequences for the production of some external end; we need to see how it can non-instrumentally realize an end that it partly constitutes. Some of the central questions about Aristotle's ethics turn on our understanding of his claims about non-instrumental realization.

68. The Role of the Final Good

Aristotle takes his first step towards an account of the final good by explaining why it has to be the concern of political science. He begins: 'Every craft and every line of inquiry, and similarly action and decision, seems to aim at some good' (1094a1–2). Crafts and lines of inquiry are examples of productive reasoning, in which we seek some end that is external to the productive process itself. 'Action and decision' are to be contrasted with these productive processes, but Aristotle claims that non-instrumental action is included in his generalization.[17] Whenever one discipline is subordinate to another, the end of the superordinate discipline is more choiceworthy than the end of the subordinate discipline (1094a14–18), and this relation of subordination and superordination among ends applies to action no less than to production. Whenever a number of disciplines are under a single discipline, the single discipline is 'architectonic' in relation to the others.

These remarks introduce Aristotle's concept of an ultimate end to which every other end is subordinate; this is an end that we pursue for its own sake and for the sake of which we pursue everything else.[18] If there is such an end, it is the concern of the 'most controlling and most architectonic' science. If, then, we can conceive a supreme and most architectonic science, we can see that there is a final good, which must be its object.

Aristotle claims that the most architectonic science is political science. In some cases political science decides that a particular discipline is not worth learning at all; in other cases it prescribes the extent to which different disciplines ought to be practised. It regulates the disciplines that it allows to be practised, and this regulation extends even to the disciplines that are concerned with action rather than production (1094a28–b7). Since political science

[17] 'Some ends are activities, others are products beyond the activities' (1094a4–5) distinguishes *praxis* (the first case) from *poiêsis* (the second case).

[18] Some critics have argued that Aristotle commits a fallacy here, arguing from the fact that we do not pursue everything for the sake of some other end to the conclusion that there is just one end that we pursue for its own sake and for the sake of which we pursue everything else. This objection is clearly stated and defended by Ackrill, 'Eudaimonia'. Contrast Kraut, *AHG* 217–20. The objection fails to take seriously the 'if' in 1094a18.

has this regulative task, its end includes the ends of the other sciences, and so this end is the human good (1094a26–b7).

If the end of political science were not all-inclusive, it would be irrational, according to Aristotle, to allow political science ultimate authority in regulating all the other sciences. If there were some end superior to the end of political science, we ought to regulate all our other pursuits by reference to that end. And if there were an end co-ordinate with the end of political science, we could not allow political science the exclusive right to regulate other pursuits.

Aristotle assumes that it is rational to decide about the regulation of different pursuits only if we refer to some end that includes the value resulting from each of them.[19] Some regulative decisions need not refer to the absolutely final good, but should at least refer to a good that is final and all-embracing in relation to the pursuits being regulated. If, for instance, we tried to regulate both the production of leather and the production of swords by reference to purely military needs, we would reach the right level of production of swords, but we would underestimate the appropriate level of production of leather (since we need leather for shoes and for other non-military purposes, but we need swords only for military purposes). In that case we would not have chosen an appropriately inclusive end to regulate the two subordinate ends. The final good is appropriately inclusive in relation to all other ends that we might reasonably pursue.

Aristotle does not simply claim that political science has an all-inclusive end. He also claims that it studies fine and just things (1094b14–15) and that it studies virtue, and how to make citizens good and law-abiding (1102a7–10). This concern falls within the area of the comprehensive other-directed virtue that he calls 'general justice' (cf. 1129b11–27). Aristotle does not simply claim that the characters of citizens may affect the attainment of the final good pursued by politics. This fact about the virtues does not distinguish them from many other things that political science might consider; it seems to have the same reason for concern about the ends of many different subordinate sciences. When Aristotle marks virtue as a special concern of political science, he implies that virtue is especially closely linked to the final good; this link distinguishes virtue from the various other concerns of political science.

It is not trivial, then, to claim that ethics—the study of virtue and character—is a special or primary concern of political science—the science that regulates and organizes subordinate goods to produce the final good. Aristotle assumes the truth of some claim that he has not yet spelt out, about the link between virtue and the final good.

69. The Final Good and Happiness

Aristotle refers both to 'every craft and every line of inquiry' and to 'action and decision' (1094a1–2). He says that each of these seems to aim at some good, and he infers that there is some final good that we pursue for its own sake and for the sake of which we pursue

[19] A different view of subordination and inclusion is defended by Kraut, *AHG* 220–3. I doubt whether he takes sufficient account of the fact that political science embraces sciences concerned with *praxis*.

everything else. And so the argument that applies to crafts and similar disciplines should also apply to the actions and decisions of individuals.

To see why Aristotle believes an ultimate end can be discerned in the choices of individuals, we must understand what he means in claiming that 'action and decision seems to aim at some good'. The combination of action and decision suggests that the claim is not meant to apply to action on non-rational desires, but to pick out the distinctive character of action on a decision (*prohairesis*). If this is the point, then 'aim at some good' is to be taken de dicto, not de re;[20] it is a claim about the intentional object of these different forms of rational thought and action.[21]

Aristotle implies that every decision, expressing a desire for an object as good, thereby expresses a desire for an object as promoting the final good.[22] This feature of action on decision reflects the fact that decision is essentially rational desire, and is therefore subject to the rational teleological regulation that Aristotle describes in his account of political science. Since we accept this teleological regulation, we acknowledge our belief in the existence of a final good. Since—Aristotle assumes—we are correct in all this, there must be a final good; and this, being genuinely good, will be the ultimate end that fully satisfies our desires and aims (in the sense that it will satisfy the description 'good' that we apply to the ultimate end).

If Aristotle believes each of us actually pursues some final good as our ultimate end, he makes a psychological claim about the nature of rational agents, in so far as they act on decision. When he speaks of happiness, he says: 'we all do everything else for the sake of it' (1102a2). [23] He seems to accept three claims: (1) Each rational agent pursues some final good. (2) The final good that each agent pursues is happiness. (3) The happiness that each agent pursues is the agent's own happiness. The second of these claims states a form of eudaemonism, and the third states a form of egoism.

The first claim seems to rest on Aristotle's conception of rational regulation. In his view, each of us conforms to this pattern to some extent; we regulate the pursuit of some goals by referring to their impact on other goals and aims that we take to be more important. To the extent that we do this, we display deliberative rationality.[24]

This thesis about the final good is fairly minimal. What do we add when we add something about happiness?[25] Aristotle understands happiness as living well; it is a property of a life

[20] More exactly, it is a description of the agent's psychological state (perhaps not explicitly stated in the dictum) rather than of the actual object aimed at.

[21] 'The good is what everything aims at' is meant as a remark about rational agents (in Aristotle's case, though apparently not for Eudoxus; see 1172b9). Aristotle does not mean, then, that our wanting something necessarily makes it good.

[22] See §310.

[23] The antecedent of 'it' might be 'happiness' or 'the end'.

[24] This general view makes it easier to understand why, as has been noticed, Aristotle sometimes states his claim about the final good as a normative thesis. In *EE* 1214b6–14 (partly quoted in n31 below) he seems to say first that everyone sets (*thesthai*) some goal of living finely, and then explains that by saying that failure to have one's life ordered with reference to some end is a sign of great foolishness. In speaking of foolishness here, he does not seem to suggest that it is impossible to be so disorganized. But it is easy to see how Aristotle might claim both (i) each of us to some extent recognizes the value of rational regulation of ends; and (ii) many of us do very little of it; and hence (iii) we see the point of doing more of it than we do.

[25] Aristotle does not always sharply distinguish the claims about the final good from claims about happiness, and he takes it to be clear that the final good for human beings is happiness (1095a17–20). Still, he does not take the identity of the final good and happiness to be so trivial that it is not worth arguing for; indeed, he defends the identification at some length, by comparing features of the final good with features of happiness (*EN* i 7).

rather than of a moment in one's existence. In identifying the good with happiness, we introduce some temporal and structural dimensions. Aristotle agrees with Plato's *Philebus* in believing that we should think of the good as the good for a lifetime.[26] A mere reference to rational regulation does not say what we regulate in the light of what. The conception of a final good that I refer to might change from one moment to the next, and it might just reflect the whims that happen to strike me most strongly at the moment. In speaking of a good life, however, we conceive ourselves as having lifetimes, and try to organize their different stages in relation to each other. We also think of each activity as part of the life we live now, in so far as we think of how it affects our other current concerns. These two aspects of thinking about one's life are closely connected; the concerns that extend over one's lifetime explain why one has a reason to take account of aims and concerns that do not happen to be prominent in one's mind at a given moment.

Since an appeal to happiness adds this temporal and structural aspect to the rational regulation that is required by pursuit of a final good, Aristotle's claim that we pursue happiness is more informative than his claim that we pursue a final good. His further claim about happiness is quite plausible. One would have a rather slim basis for rational regulation of desires if one did not refer to one's life as a whole. If I just happen to desire one thing more strongly than another for a short time, why does that give me a reason to pay more attention to what I care more about, given that my preference may change quite soon? But if I regard one preference as especially belonging to me, and if I have some basis for that belief in a conception of myself as something relatively persistent, I have some reason for favouring one preference over another.

This way of explaining the appeal to happiness implies that Aristotle has in mind the happiness of the agent who deliberates with reference to the good and happiness; she is not simply considering someone's good and happiness, but her own.[27] Aristotle is a psychological egoist; he believes that every rational agent aims at his own happiness as the ultimate end. This is still not very clear, though. For we might still hold different views about the exact role that a reference to happiness is supposed to play in an agent's conscious deliberation on different occasions; if it does not play a large role in conscious deliberation, one might wonder exactly what the role of a conception of happiness is supposed to be. To answer this question, Aristotle relies on rational egoism; he thinks that each rational agent has overriding reason to do what best promotes his own happiness.[28]

[26] On the *Philebus* see §53.

[27] Does he mean only that we deliberate with a view to happiness, without saying whose happiness is involved? See Kraut, *AHG* 144–8. Admittedly, he often speaks of acting or choosing for the sake of happiness, without further specification (e.g. end of i 12). Still, some passages suggest that he means the egoist claim: (i) 1140a25. It seems to be characteristic of the wise person to be able to deliberate finely about the things good and beneficial to himself. Here the relevant sort of deliberation is referred to one's own happiness. (ii) ix 8. Aristotle defends the virtuous person against the charge of being a lover of self—not by arguing that he is not a lover of self, but by arguing that the way in which he loves himself does not make him indifferent to the interests of others. If Aristotle did not accept an egoist position here, he would surely reply that it is a misunderstanding to assume that the virtuous person is a lover of self. He argues instead that the proper degree of concern for others involves no sacrifice in one's own interest, once that is properly conceived. (iii) ix 4. In explaining why one has reason to be virtuous rather than vicious, Aristotle remarks that the condition of the vicious person is miserable, and therefore to be avoided, 1166b26. He assumes that the overriding reason for pursuing virtue and avoiding vice is their relation to one's own happiness and unhappiness.

[28] Psychological and rational egoism do not imply ethical egoism, which is often understood as the claim that one's own interests determine the sense of the moral 'ought'. This is the view that the happiness of the individual agent

If a final good plays the same role in individual deliberation as it plays in the deliberation of a political scientist, it should make a difference to our lives. Aristotle claims that it is worth our while to find out what the good is so that we will have a target to aim at (1094a22–6).[29] An account of the final good should distinguish the different parts of the end from the purely instrumental means to it, so that we can find what is worth pursuing for its own sake. [30]

70. The Final Good and the 'Three Lives'

By introducing happiness, Aristotle introduces a reference to a rational agent's life as a whole. To prepare for his own account of the appropriate criteria to be applied to a conception of a good life, he considers various conceptions that have been proposed. His objections to them help to clarify the criteria that he applies.

In reply to those who value the life of pleasure, Aristotle argues that they choose a way of life that is fit only for grazing animals (1095b19–20), not for rational agents. In a later comment on pleasure, he remarks that no one would choose to return to a child's level of thought and a child's pleasures, or accept pleasure from shameful actions (1174a1–4).[31]

We might think it unfair of Aristotle to identify the life of pleasure with the life of gross sensual pleasures (1095b21–2). But we can defend this move in the same way as we can defend Socrates' concentration on such pleasures in his argument with Callicles (*Gorg.* 494b3–495a4). Not every life of pleasure has to be confined to gross pleasures; but if we regard pleasure alone as the feature of a life that makes it desirable and happy, we cannot deny that 'the life of grazing animals' is a happy life. The features of such a life that make it unsuitable for rational agents do not matter if a purely hedonist account of the good is correct.

This brief dismissal of the life of pleasure is not Aristotle's last word on pleasure in the *Ethics*. Books vii and x discuss the nature of pleasure and the value of different types of pleasure. Aristotle believes that true judgments about pleasure imply that the virtuous person's life is also the pleasantest life. But these true judgments about pleasure imply that pleasure is not the only thing that makes a life happy; and so Aristotle's more complex view

determines the content of the moral virtues—or in specific cases the view that bravery, temperance, or justice, for instance, is a virtue, or is the particular virtue it is, because of its contribution to the virtuous agent's own happiness. In the second half of *EN* i 7, Aristotle insists on a very close connexion between happiness and virtue, but not on the sort of connexion that would follow from ethical egoism. He appeals to happiness to justify the moral virtues, but not directly to define their content.

[29] 'Then does not knowledge of this good also carry great weight for <our way of> life, and if we know it, are we not more likely, like archers who have a target to aim at, to hit the right mark? If so, we should try to grasp, in outline at any rate, what the good is, and which is its proper science or capacity.' (1094a22–6).

[30] '. . . we must first define in ourselves, neither rashly nor sluggishly, in which aspect of us living well is found and what things are necessary for it to belong to human beings; for health is not the same as the things needed for health, and so on in many other cases, so that neither is living finely the same as the things without which one cannot live finely. . . . For these are causes of the disputes about being happy, what it is and through what things it comes about; for things that are necessary for being happy are counted by some people as parts of happiness' (*EE* 1214b11–26).

[31] 'No one would choose to live with a child's level of thought throughout his life, even if he took as much pleasure as possible in the sorts of things that please children and enjoyed a child's pleasures, or to enjoy himself in doing one of the most shameful actions, even if he were never going to suffer pain' (1174a1–4) Cf. *EE* 1215b22–7. Aristotle relies here on Socrates' reply to Protarchus (he cites the *Philebus* at 1172b28) to show that pleasure cannot be the good.

about pleasure does not undermine his criticism of a life conducted on the assumption that pleasure alone makes a life happy.[32]

The life of honour depends on our being honoured by other people, and therefore makes us passive, not active, in relation to the most important aspect of our happiness. Against this we intuitively believe that the good is 'something of our own'; it expresses our rational agency, not an essentially passive aspect of us (1095b23–6; cf. 1159a12–33). Plato describes how the lover of honour suffers some misfortune that leads to his humiliation, and then turns to the love of gain (*R.* 553a–c). He illustrates Aristotle's objection that the life of honour leaves us too dependent on external fortunes. A correct account of the good should show that it is less dependent on external conditions than the life of honour turns out to be. We want to show that our own actions, rather than fortune, control our happiness (1100b7).

If we seek independence from external conditions, we may reasonably prefer the life of virtue over the life of honour. Being virtuous is minimally dependent on external conditions. If we follow Socrates in taking virtue to be sufficient for happiness, we can also claim, as Socrates does, that the virtuous person cannot be harmed, and therefore is independent of external conditions. The Cynics agree with Socrates, and may go beyond him. They may claim that virtue is not only sufficient for happiness, but also identical to it.[33]

Aristotle rejects the Socratic and Cynic position; he denies that virtue is identical to happiness by arguing that it is not sufficient for happiness. If we identify happiness with virtue, we must claim that someone can be happy when he is asleep or when he is suffering terrible misfortunes (1095b31–1096a2). Aristotle thinks we will agree that this is an absurd claim because both conditions prevent rational activity; when we are asleep we are inactive, and in terrible misfortunes we are victims of circumstances that 'impede many activities' (1100b29–30). Similarly, in Book vii he dismisses the view of those who think a virtuous person being tortured is happy; the pain we suffer in these conditions prevents the unimpeded activity that is essential to happiness (1153b14–25). Happiness is complete, but honour and virtue are not (1095b31–2), because each of them leaves out some good that belongs to the complete good. No one would call just people on the rack happy 'unless he were defending a philosophical thesis' (1096a1–2), and pursuing consistency without regard for the cost in plausibility.

The treatment of the three lives shows that Aristotle relies on three assumptions about the good: (1) It must involve a life suitable for human beings, as opposed to 'grazing animals'. (2) It must be 'our own', not too dependent on external conditions. (3) It must be complete, including all the major goods. A fuller statement of these assumptions should make clear their connexions. When, for instance, we assess completeness, we should take a complete good to involve suitable activities for a human being.[34] Some view about these activities will tell us how far happiness ought to be independent of external conditions, and how far it must depend on some external conditions. Hence it seems that some better grasp of the first assumption should help us to clarify the other two. Aristotle, therefore, discusses these three assumptions.[35] We ought to see how far his discussion clarifies the assumptions that we have identified in the argument of i 5.

[32] On pleasure see §72 below. [33] On Socrates see §15. On the Cynics see §39.

[34] Cf. the reference to misfortune impeding activities at 1100b29–30, 1153b14–21.

[35] He examines completeness in the first part of *EN* i 7; he turns to independence of external conditions in i 9–11. In between these two discussions he examines the human function (second part of i 7).

71. A Comprehensive Conception of Happiness

Aristotle argues that the final good is to be identified with happiness, because happiness is the ultimate end, and therefore complete and self-sufficient (1097b20–1). He generalizes and explains his criticism of the three lives in i 5, by setting out some formal criteria for the final good, and showing that they are satisfied by happiness.

These criteria, adapted from those in the *Philebus*, are 'formal' in the sense that they do not presuppose conceptions of the good as definite as those embodied in the three lives. They are more general than the three lives, because they are intended to explain why a given life does or does not count as a happy life. If we grasp and examine the concept of a final good, we should be able to see whether his formal criteria are correct.

First (1097a22) Aristotle reverts to the connexion between the ultimate end and the final good. If there is one end of all actions, this will be the good, and if there are several ends, these will be the good. He seems to consider a plurality of equally ultimate ends. Next, he insists that the good must be complete (*teleion*).[36] He infers that if there is one complete thing, this will be the good, and if there are several, the most complete of these will be the good (1097a28).

We may be surprised at this reaction to the possibility of several ends. Instead of saying, as he previously said, that all these complete ends will be the good, he insists that just one of them, the most complete, is the good (1098a17–18, 1099a29–31). He takes happiness to be the unqualifiedly complete end; that is why it is the ultimate end, and therefore the one that we ought to pursue. It embraces all the goods that we have good reason to pursue for their own sakes. If two separate ends F and G both appeared to be unqualifiedly complete, we would (according to Aristotle) pursue both F and G for the sake of some third end H, including F and G; and then H would be the unqualifiedly complete end. The choice of the 'most complete' among several ends is not arbitrary, and does not require us to choose one as opposed to the others; for the most complete end includes the others.

This interpretation of unconditional completeness as implying comprehensiveness is supported by the further claim that happiness is self-sufficient, and is therefore not 'counted together' with other goods.[37] Self-sufficiency (1097b6) is what 'all by itself makes a life choiceworthy and lacking in nothing' (1097b14–15). Aristotle explains that he takes this to require a life that is sufficient not only for the person in question, but also for family, friends, and fellow-citizens. Aristotle does not simply argue that an individual's happiness requires the existence of family etc. as instrumental means. For he insists that what is sufficient for an individual's happiness must be sufficient for these other people's happiness too. The most plausible interpretation of self-sufficiency implies a comprehensive view of happiness. If there are a number of non-instrumental goods, happiness is not only comprehensive, but also composite, including these various goods as its parts (cf. 1129b18).[38]

[36] Ross generally translates '*teleion*' by 'final'. More recent translators (Irwin, Crisp, Broadie, and Rowe) prefer 'complete'. 'Perfect' might also be defended (see Kenny, *APL*, ch. 2, esp. 16–17). These translations might suggest different interpretations.

[37] For different interpretations of this important claim see Kenny, *AE* 204–5; Kraut, *AHG* 269–74; Aquinas at §280n52.

[38] The difference between a comprehensive and a composite conception is important in the discussion of happiness and contemplation. See §82 below.

If Aristotle accepts a comprehensive view of happiness, he can explain why happiness is the final good that is the basis of rational regulation of desires. In referring to happiness, we compare one possible course of action against another with reference to our conception of the appropriately-ordered whole that includes everything that we rightly value for its own sake. This comprehensive end is an appropriate basis for our decision to act in one way rather than another. Since Aristotle's claim that happiness is the final good, and that everyone pursues happiness, turns out to be reasonable if he accepts a comprehensive conception, we have good reason to attribute a comprehensive conception to him.

72. Happiness and Goodness

A comprehensive conception of happiness makes happiness include all non-instrumental goods. Aristotle clearly takes the goodness of non-ultimate goods to be connected to their contribution to their end. In each action and decision the good is the end; and the final good is the ultimate end (1097a16–24). We might attribute to Aristotle the view that the end of each action explains what is good about it, and therefore the ultimate end should explain what is good about all the actions and other goods that are subordinate to it.

The claim that the end of x explains the goodness of x is plausible in the case of instrumental goods. In this case x is good just in so far as x contributes to y, and the goodness of x is derivative from the goodness of y—if there were nothing good about y, x would be no use to us, and x would not be good. In this case we have to assume that the goodness of y is intelligible independently of the goodness of x. The fact that bridles fit on horses would not explain why bridles are good if we put bridles on horses only in order to increase the production of bridles.

If, then, we use this pattern to see how the final good explains the goodness of other things, we must say that its goodness is independently intelligible, and that the other things are good in so far as they are instrumental to it. According to this view, our reasons for wanting happiness are independent of our reasons for wanting other goods, and since they are independent, they provide reasons for wanting the goods that are instrumental to happiness.

If this is how happiness explains the goodness of subordinate goods, we will find what happiness is by finding what sort of thing plays this explanatory role, so that all other goods could be subordinate and instrumental to it. A hedonist theory readily meets this condition; for several reasons might persuade us that pleasure is an intrinsically intelligible end explaining what makes other things good. Aristotle certainly thinks happiness centrally involves pleasure, and he relies on the intuitive belief that a conception of the good leaving out pleasure would be seriously defective. But he does not accept a hedonist conception of happiness. Nor does he accept any other view that claims that all goods other than happiness are good only because of their instrumental contribution to happiness. He recognizes pleasure, honour, and virtue as non-instrumental goods (1097b2–4). If he accepts a comprehensive conception of happiness, he regards these goods as components of happiness.

He does not suppose, therefore, that the final good explains the goodness of other goods by reference to their instrumental contribution.[39] Indeed, the explanation seems to go the other way; the right account of happiness is right only if it includes the right non-instrumental goods. This feature of a comprehensive conception of happiness may provoke doubts about the role of happiness in deliberation and practical reason. If happiness is a compound of goods that are already recognized as non-instrumental goods, how can it be explanatory? This question raises the suspicion that some of Aristotle's basic principles promise us ethical insight, but simply provide unhelpful circles of definition.[40]

To answer this objection, we may consider the goodness we find in parts of organic wholes. A healthy body is healthy because it has the right number of healthy parts in the right relations to each other. One might say that the functioning of each part is good all by itself and non-instrumentally—it is better to have healthy toenails or a healthy heart. Still, it is better to have each of them in a healthy condition in the right relation to other healthy parts.

Hence the goodness of the goods that are non-instrumental but subordinate to happiness does not rest simply on their contribution to happiness, if that would require their goodness to be explained by the goodness of something whose goodness is independent of theirs. In another sense, however, their goodness consists solely in their contribution to happiness; once we see how they contribute to happiness, none of their goodness has been left out. Similarly, even if the good of having healthy toenails is entirely included in the good of having a healthy body, the relation need not be purely instrumental. Even if the goodness of happiness depends on the goodness of its components, reflexion on the nature of happiness may show us that some things are its components and are non-instrumentally good.[41]

We begin, then, with a schematic conception of happiness. As we see what satisfies that schema, we discover that various things are non-instrumentally good because they turn out to be parts of happiness. In particular, the various things that we recognize as virtues of character, and the associated activities, turn out to be parts of happiness. But we also begin with beliefs about non-instrumental goods, and we act on these beliefs, even without an explicit or detailed account of happiness. We learn about the content of happiness by comparing our view of happiness with our beliefs about which things are non-instrumental goods; equally, we justify, understand, and sometimes revise our beliefs about non-instrumental goods in the light of our conception of happiness.

Aristotle raises some of these issues when he contrasts happiness with honour, pleasure, understanding, and every virtue. He says that we choose these non-ultimate goods 'for their own sake—for if nothing came about from them we would choose them; but we also choose them for the sake of happiness, thinking that we will be happy through them' (1097b2–5).[42] He returns to the issue (discussed in i 1–2) about the relation of non-instrumental goods

[39] This claim needs to be reconsidered if we decide that Aristotle identifies happiness with contemplation. See below §82.

[40] Sidgwick objects to Plato and Aristotle on this ground, at *ME* 374–5.

[41] Some helpful developments of these distinctions: Moore, *PE* §§20–2.

[42] This might mean: (a) We choose each of them for its own sake—i.e., not for the sake of happiness—and also for the sake of happiness. I might, for instance, believe that honesty is the best policy (for the sake of happiness) and that I also have a moral reason for being honest (for its own sake, and not for the sake of happiness). (b) We choose each of them for its own sake, and that amounts to choosing them for the sake of happiness—since happiness is simply a

to the ultimate good. He argues that even disciplines concerned with action rather than production are subordinate to an architectonic discipline that co-ordinates and regulates them; in that case the end of the architectonic discipline includes the ends of the subordinate disciplines (1094b6–7). The non-instrumental goods pursued by the subordinate disciplines must, then, be parts of the ultimate good that includes them.

We can now see why choosing non-instrumental goods for the sake of happiness does not amount to choosing them for the sake of some result that comes about from them—some end that is wholly external to them. In choosing them as non-instrumental goods and for the sake of happiness, we choose them as parts of a whole. In this way, we can reconcile a commitment to eudaemonism with the recognition of non-instrumental goods that are related non-instrumentally to the final good.[43]

Aristotle seems to acknowledge here that to form the right conception of happiness we must have some conception of non-instrumental goods. This does not mean that our choice of them for their own sakes is unrelated to their relation to happiness. For I might choose pleasure, say, for its own sake, even if I could not get any of the other parts of happiness. Since I would recognize that pleasure is one component of happiness, I would recognize that one is better than none, and would still choose it. This might be what Aristotle means in saying that we would still choose it even if nothing came about from it; we would still choose it even if we could not get the other parts of happiness that it is related to and interacts with. But we also choose it for the sake of happiness in so far as we choose it as part of a whole, present in a context that makes it even more choiceworthy.

We therefore need some initial reason for choosing certain things for their own sake—a reason that is distinct from their relation to happiness. For if the comprehensive view of happiness is right, we cannot explain the goodness of all goods other than happiness simply by their instrumental relation to happiness. But we still have reason to connect them with happiness. For a general description of the good may give us reasons for thinking that this action rather than that is a part of the good, and therefore to be chosen for its own sake. We begin by choosing certain things for their own sake; and in the light of some more general

collection of things chosen for their own sake. (c) We choose each of them for its own sake, and therefore choose them for the sake of happiness, since happiness is expected to include everything chosen for its own sake.

Against (a) one may argue: (i) If Aristotle holds this view, then the rational person has to deliberate about two things: how to get the things that are goods in themselves, and how to make sure that they promote his happiness. But Aristotle recognizes only one thing to deliberate about; cf. 1140a25. (ii) If the two-part conception of intrinsic goods were correct, then happiness would not include all the goods we have reason to pursue. But Aristotle claims (in i 2) that it does include all of these. Interpretation (b) seeks to reduce choosing x for the sake of happiness to choosing x for its own sake. This reductive view makes it difficult to see why the discovery of what happiness is should be so important, if there is no difference between choosing something for itself and choosing it for the sake of happiness. Interpretation (c) agrees with (b) in denying that choosing these non-instrumental goods for their own sake amounts to choosing them for the sake of something other than happiness, so that happiness counts as something else coming about from them. But it disagrees with (b) in claiming that choosing for the sake of happiness is different from choosing for their own sakes. It suggests that when we choose these goods for their own sakes, we are choosing them as parts of happiness; they are still parts of happiness even if nothing further comes about from them. For discussion of (b) and (c) see Engberg-Pederson, *ATMI*, ch. 1.

[43] Though it is reasonable to speak of parts and whole in describing the relation of non-instrumental goods to happiness, this description (used in the *EE*) is not used in the *EN*. Aristotle might reasonably have thought it too simple to capture the centrality of virtue in happiness. This issue is relevant to a comparison between Aristotle and the Stoics. See §189. Cf. Ackrill, 'Eudaimonia' 195–6; Cooper, *RHGA* 122–7 (both of whom notice Aristotle's reserve in speaking of parts of happiness in the *EN*, though I do not completely agree with their explanations).

description of the good, we come to see that they are indeed choiceworthy for their own sakes.

This raises the question: how do we find the general description of the good that shows us what is choiceworthy about its components? Aristotle offers that in the function argument.

73. Implications of Eudaemonism

We claimed earlier that Aristotle is a psychological egoist, in so far as he claims that every rational agent pursues his own happiness as his ultimate end. We have postponed discussion of his claim until now, so that we can consider it in the light of his comprehensive conception of happiness. This comprehensive conception should make a difference to the content of his egoist thesis and to our views on its plausibility.

Many philosophers do not take psychological egoism seriously, because they are convinced by something like the argument Butler urges against Hobbes.[44] In Butler's view, the claim that we do everything as a means to our own satisfaction does not explain why we find our satisfaction where we do; contrary to the egoist view, our finding satisfaction in getting x presupposes a desire for x itself, which explains why we get the satisfaction in x rather than y.

Aristotle is not open to this objection. Butler's criticism assumes that egoism is being offered as an account of the first-order object of desire, so that my happiness is the only thing I desire for its own sake. But if one takes a comprehensive and composite view of happiness, eudaemonism is a claim about a second-order attitude—about how we think of the relation between first-order objects of desire that we desire for their own sakes. It says that we desire honour, pleasure, understanding etc. for their own sakes, but we also take account of their relation to each other and to the whole that they compose. Whether that is a plausible claim or not, it does not involve the sort of psychological egoism that is easily refutable.

Aristotle also maintains rational egoism; he claims that my own happiness is not only the ultimate object of my desire, but also the ultimate object for rational deliberation, the end that I ought to aim at above all. How far does this rational egoist claim constrain the sort of moral commitment that a rational person can take seriously? Some forms of egoism impose a tight constraint; if every moral virtue must ultimately promote some independently desirable state of myself alone, not every reasonable moral commitment seems to meet that condition.[45]

Nothing we have seen so far suggests that Aristotle takes the eudaemonist requirement to require subordination to states of myself alone. He says that my happiness, if it is self-sufficient, has to be sufficient for friends, family, and fellow-citizens (1097b8–13). He does not mean that the happiness of these other people affects my happiness only in so far as their welfare has some further effect on some state of me. If I have the appropriate sort of relation to them, their welfare is part of mine. In order to defend himself, Aristotle needs to show that my happiness requires me to be in the sort of relation to other people

[44] Butler, *S* i §6–7.

[45] By 'state of myself alone' I mean a state—my having a given height or weight, for instance—that is not essentially constituted in part by a state of something else. In Broad's terms, I am assuming that some moral commitments are neither self-confined nor self-centred. See Broad, 'Egoism', 249–50.

that makes their welfare a part of my own; nothing in his general conception of happiness rules this out. It is natural to treat these relations to others as 'parts' or 'constituents' of the agent's happiness.

If we say this much to show that Aristotle's eudaemonism does not exclude certain things, must we go to the other extreme by making it empty? Sidgwick dismisses the sort of view we have been describing, by saying that it is a form into which any ethical system can be cast without making any essential difference to its content.[46]

To answer Sidgwick, we need to show that some ethical outlooks have to reject Aristotle's eudaemonism, so that it cannot be compatible with every ethical outlook. It would be false if we had reason to reject any systematizing of our ends, along the lines implied by Aristotle's conception of eudaimonia. If our ends cannot be systematized, we cannot spell out the content of happiness in any way that makes it rational to think of our ends in the light of this ultimate end.

Alternatively, even if all our ends and commitments can be partly understood in the light of an ultimate end, Aristotle's eudaemonism might still be false; for perhaps not all our ends can be fully understood in the light of this ultimate end. This may be especially important in the case of moral reasons. Though a commitment to morality may well play a significant role in a life that conforms to a true conception of happiness, perhaps that role does not exhaust its rational force; for we may also have overriding reasons to act on moral considerations even on any possible occasions when they might conflict with eudaemonic considerations. (And this need not be true only of moral reasons.) If Aristotle is to answer this second line of objection, he must show that his eudaemonist constraint gives the appropriate degree of weight to each sort of consideration that it recognizes.

If Aristotle's eudaemonism is not empty, and these are objections that might refute it, we ought not to accept or reject his position before we examine his account of the virtues. His version of egoism is not open to immediate and crushing objections. We ought to see how far it illuminates the relevant questions.

[46] See Sidgwick, *ME* 95.

7

ARISTOTLE: NATURE

74. The Function Argument

So far we have examined the formal features of happiness as Aristotle conceives it. These features tell us the conditions that states and actions have to satisfy in order to provide a plausible conception of happiness. We have learned that happiness has to be comprehensive, because it is complete and self-sufficient, and we have seen why the recognized 'three lives' do not fit these conditions.

Aristotle recognizes that the formal conditions do not tell us what happiness is, and he offers to answer this question by beginning from the human function (or 'work' (*ergon*), 1097b22–5). Things of kind F fulfil their function by doing what is essential to their being Fs. They achieve their good as Fs if they fulfil their function in accordance with the virtue of Fs; for the virtue of Fs is the state that makes Fs good, and thereby causes them to fulfil their function well. A human being's function is activity of the rational soul; hence a human being's good is activity of the rational soul in accordance with complete virtue (1097b22–1098a20).

To see whether Aristotle is entitled to assert this connexion between the human function and the human good, we need to see what he means by 'function', whether he is right to claim that human beings have a function, and whether he correctly identifies the human function.

He asserts a connexion between the function of F and the good of F, in the case of craftsmen, organs, and organisms. He assumes that craftsmen and organs have functions, and he asks whether organisms have them as well (1097b30–3). His answer is Yes. He implies that the three different types of soul—nutritive, sensory, and rational—that he describes in the *De Anima* mark three different functions, which are the different lives of the creatures with different souls. Since human beings have rational souls, he denies that the human function could be the purely nutritive life that human beings share with plants, or the purely sensory life that they share with other animals. The different types of souls are the form and essence of plants, animals, and human beings; they are the actualization of the capacity of the different types of organic body (*DA* 412a27–8). In claiming that the goal-directed processes of nutrition and sense-perception are the essence and form of plants and animals, Aristotle

identifies function with essence;[1] the function of these organisms is the type of activity that constitutes their soul. Since human beings have a soul, they have a function.

Here Aristotle explains what he means by attributing a function to human beings, and on what grounds he attributes it to them. His explanation suggests answers to some objections. Some critics allege that in attributing a function to something we imply that an intelligent designer has designed it for some purpose. In that case, the Function Argument illegitimately assumes a designer. Whether that assumption is true or false, Aristotle has not argued for it, so that (the objector maintains) his conclusion is unjustified. This objection fails because Aristotle's claims do not rely on an assumption about a designer. His claim about the human function relies on his conception of teleological explanation, which does not presuppose designing intelligence or cosmic roles. In his view, the function of an organism is its essence because it explains regularities and variations in its behaviour. We can find the relevant explanations whether or not we assume anything further about design or cosmic roles.[2]

Some have objected to Aristotle's argument from the functions of organs within an organism to the function of the whole organism. According to the objection, he commits a fallacy of composition, arguing that since each part of a human being has a function, referring to the whole, the whole human being must also have a function. This conclusion would be true (according to the objector) only if human beings were also parts of a larger system within which they had a role to play. But whatever Aristotle believes on this point, he does not commit a fallacy of composition. The examples of craftsmen and organs clarify his conception of function, but they are not intended to prove that a human being must have a function. He attributes a function to human beings on the same grounds that support his teleological account of living organisms.

Does he, however, exaggerate the importance of finding a unique function? Even if some specific activity were peculiar to human beings as opposed to other creatures, why would that matter from the ethical point of view? If we could show that combing hair or preparing for nuclear war is peculiar to human beings, we would not have shown that the human good consists in these activities. But such examples do not capture Aristotle's appeal to uniqueness. He has in mind the uniqueness of essence; the human function is unique only because the human kind and the human essence are distinct from other kinds and essences. This sort of unique function is a distinct kind of life, not a unique activity within a life.

This interpretation of uniqueness rests on the connexion between the three lives mentioned in the *Ethics* and the three souls mentioned in the *De Anima*. In Aristotle's account of the soul, the more complex souls include the functions of the simpler types of soul too. The sensory soul that belongs to animals includes the functions that belong to the nutritive soul in plants (*DA* 414b28–32). A dog has a sensory soul that includes nutritive functions; it does not have both a sensory soul and a nutritive soul. If we apply this conception of soul to the different lives identified with functions in the *Ethics*, we should infer that the sensory life ascribed to animals is not a life of sense as opposed to nutrition, but a life in which nutritive activities

[1] Function and essence; *PA* 648a15. Function and definition; *Pol.* 1253a23–5; Bonitz, *IA* 285a8–24.

[2] For some discussion of causation and final causation in Aristotle see Irwin, *AFP*, ch. 5; Meyer, 'Teleology'; Lear, *ADU* 25–42.

are guided and regulated by the senses for the sake of ends belonging to sensory creatures (including pleasure). Similarly, the rational soul includes nutritive and sensory activities; hence the rational life includes them; hence the function of a creature living a rational life includes them. The Function Argument does not show, and is not intended to show, that happiness consists in performing the activity that is most distinctive of human beings in relation to other organisms. It connects a human being's good with the characteristic and distinctive features of a rational agent's life as opposed to the life of other agents.[3]

Once we grasp what Aristotle means by speaking of a unique function, we can see what he means by speaking of a 'life according to reason'. We might suppose he means that the good of human beings consists in the activity of thinking, so that we achieve our good to the extent that we concentrate on thinking to the exclusion of other activities open to us. We might be more inclined to ascribe this conclusion to Aristotle if we look forward to Book x, where—according to one common interpretation—he identifies happiness with purely theoretical thought. But we ought not to derive this conclusion from the Function Argument. The life according to reason is a life, including nutritive and sensory activities, that is guided by reason, not a life that consists, as far as possible, in reasoning. The interpretation of Book x will concern us later. For the moment it is enough to say that the Function Argument does not argue that happiness consists exclusively in thought.

This judgment does not rest exclusively on the connexions between function, life, and soul. It is also confirmed by Aristotle's description of the life that embodies the human function. He says it is a life of the part of the soul that has reason, and that one part of this is the inherently rational part, while another is the part capable of obeying reason (1098a3–5).[4] The latter part is the non-rational part that we train by acquiring the virtues of character (cf. 1102b13–1103a10). Since the rational life includes the appropriate regulation of the potentially obedient part, Aristotle describes it as a life 'in accordance with reason or not without reason' (1098a7–8). In 'not without reason' he includes the non-rational states that listen to reason.

These clarifications of Aristotle's position remove the basis of some objections. But they still do not make it clear whether his claims about function and essence are plausible, or whether they support his claims about happiness. We need to look at these claims more closely.

75. Function, Essence, End, and Explanation

According to Aristotle, a function is a goal-directed motion or state. A motion or state is goal-directed when it has a final cause, or 'end'. A final cause is the real or apparent good whose presence explains the occurrence of the motion or state in question. This is explanatory, not because it is the cause, as we normally conceive it,[5] but because it is the

[3] On function and uniqueness contrast Kraut, *AHG* 312–19; Whiting, 'Function'.

[4] 'The remaining possibility, then, is some sort of life of action of the <part of the soul> that has reason. One <part> of it has reason as obeying reason; the other has it as itself having reason and thinking' (1098a3–5).

[5] The cause, as we normally conceive it, is approximately what Aristotle calls the 'moving' cause (*Phys.* 194b29–32), and what Aristotelian tradition (see Alexander, *Fat.* 166.22–6) calls the 'efficient' cause.

feature of the product that is causally relevant. The function of the hammer is the feature of the hammer that explains why the hammer came into existence as it did and why it has the other properties (shape, size, hardness, etc.) that it has.

This example suggests that an appeal to x's function may answer two questions: (1) A genetic question: Why was x made as it was? (2) A static question: Why is x as it is? The hammering function of a hammer answers both questions, but this does not seem to be true for all functions. In particular, it does not seem to be true of the functions of natural organs and organisms. We may not notice the difference between the two questions; for it is true both that the function of the eyes is to see and that this seeing function explains why the eyes have come into being (if we accept an evolutionary account). However, the seeing function that is genetically relevant (by explaining how the eyes came into being) is not the one that is statically relevant (by explaining what the eyes do); the genetically relevant function is the seeing that had survival value for the ancestors of this organism, whereas the statically relevant function is the seeing that contributes to the survival and flourishing of this organism.

Aristotle's position is most plausible if we take his claims about function to be statically explanatory, whether or not they are genetically explanatory. We may consider a parallel with artifacts. In some cases an artifact made to perform one function may perform another function in a different system. A heavy step from an old building may have fallen at just the place where it is a suitable part of a wall in a new building, and the new building may have been built around it. Alternatively, we might build a house (as Odysseus did) around an especially strong tree; the tree continues to grow and to support the house. In such cases, the genetically relevant function is not the statically explanatory function. The function that explains the current place of the tree trunk in the house is its function of supporting the roof. This is a genuinely explanatory function that implies various counterfactuals; if the trunk were to cease to support the roof, the house would be in danger of collapsing, and some other support would be needed to maintain the house.

These examples suggest how we might understand an organism by reference to its statically explanatory function. The frog's eyes have the function of seeing, because seeing deals with information from the environment in ways that help the frog's survival and maintenance. If the frog lost the use of its eyes, it would be severely harmed, or it would compensate in some way for the role previously performed by the eyes—perhaps it would rely more on its other senses to detect food. The eyes might perform this function, even if this function did not explain how they came into being; even if it is a coincidence (understood historically) that eyes perform this function, they might none the less perform it.[6]

If we understand functions statically, we need to recognize them in two distinct places: (1) We need to attribute some sort of function or activity to the whole organism or system. In attributing this function to the whole system, we describe the healthy or normal functioning that the system maintains. (2) In relation to this function of the whole system, we attribute functions to organs or sub-systems. In saying that the function of the eye is to see, we refer to two things: (i) A property of the system—its acquiring information through sensory

[6] Cummins, 'Functional', points out difficulties that arise for attempted functional explanations of how organs came into being.

contact with certain kinds of properties. (ii) A property of the organ—its behaving so that the organism acquires this information; certain ocular processes cause, or causally contribute to, the information-acquiring states that help to maintain the system as a whole.

If the function of an organ is different from the function of a system, claims about the human function need not commit a fallacy of composition, by inferring a function of the system from a function of an organ. Both functions are functions of something—the system or the organ. But only one function—the function of the organ—is its function within some system. To ascribe a function to the system as a whole is not to ascribe to it some function within a further system.

These claims about function are explanatory. The function we attribute to an organ causally explains how the organism performs one of its functions. This provides a genuine explanation to the extent that the two properties can be independently described and understood. 'The function of the hair is to make us hairy' provides no explanation, since the inference from having hair to being hairy, or from having fingers to being fingered, is too direct and purely logical. But 'the function of the eyes is to see' is more explanatory, if we distinguish the information-bearing aspects of seeing from the aspects of it that are ocular processes.

How many kinds of things are functional systems, if we apply these conditions? Functional systems are compounds that need to be distinguished from other compounds. We might say that a rock is a functional system, because it is hard and cubic and its different parts (physical and logical) maintain its hardness, cubic shape, and petrine nature. However, they do not maintain it through change; if we break off a bit, no part of it tends to restore its cubic shape. A rock that tended to repair itself so as to maintain its shape or size would be a functional system (we might regard it as a kind of plant). Functional systems are different from other compounds in so far as they tend to maintain, repair, and preserve themselves through change. The functions of a system are relatively stable and mutually-supporting features that preserve the system; the functions of the parts of the system explain how the system has these features.

These claims about stability and mutual support make explicit some of what we assume in speaking of the healthy or flourishing state of the organism. These conditions for functions make it clear why nothing has the function of producing cancers or tumours that are harmful to the system. Similarly, nothing has the function of producing a useless hump on someone's back, if this hump is not connected with other aspects of the functioning of the system.

The function of a whole organism is what Aristotle describes as a life. Since he contrasts the human function with nutritive and sensory lives, he claims that some things essentially have kinds of life that make them functional systems. Being alive involves self-maintenance, including the systematic replacement of parts and material for the maintenance of the whole system. Maintenance consists in different activities because it maintains different kinds of lives, and different lives involve different goals pursued by the system, not simply different ways of achieving the same goals. When Aristotle attributes a sensory life to animals, he does not simply refer to the fact that animals seek food and avoid danger by means of their senses; he also means that they seek sensory gratification and pleasure, so that they live a life for the senses, not only a life guided by the senses. If the sensory character of an animal

life were not part of the goal, but simply a means to the goal pursued by a plant, it would not constitute a distinct kind of function for the whole organism.

76. Function and Practical Reason

If Aristotle's claims about functions and organisms are defensible, we must next consider his specific claims about the human function. After ruling out the lives of nutrition and sense, he concludes that the human function consists in life in accordance with reason, and, more precisely, in a life in which the rational part controls the non-rational part.[7]

What does he mean in saying that the good is a life of action (*praktikê*, 1098a3)? If 'action' (*praxis*) is to be given its technical sense here, he refers to actions chosen for their own sakes as ends in themselves (1140b6–7).[8] He has already alluded to this aspect of *praxis* in Book i (1094a3–5, 16–18, b4–7), and has already mentioned that some things are chosen both for their own sakes and for the sake of happiness (1097b2–5). These previous remarks make the point of the Function Argument clearer. Aristotle claims not only that the human function consists in some sort of behaviour guided by reason, but, more precisely, that it consists in the rational choice of actions valued for their own sakes. A life devoted to the pursuit of ends that do not result from rational choice of ends does not fulfil the human function, even if the agent exercises reason in deliberation about instrumental means to those ends.

This aspect of the Function Argument introduces an important aspect of the virtues and of their connexion with happiness. Since the virtuous person chooses certain kinds of actions for their own sakes (1105a28–33), an account of virtue should explain such choices, and an account that shows how virtue is rational should explain how such choice can be rational. From the beginning of the *Ethics* Aristotle takes non-instrumental *praxis* to be essential to happiness. In the Function Argument he claims that the sort of choice made by the virtuous person is a choice that is essential to rational agency; if we do not exercise rational choice in the choice of non-instrumental actions, we realize rational agency incompletely.

The Function Argument should clarify the account of virtue, since a virtue is a state in which one performs one's function well (1106a15–24). Doing the activities of F things well is connected with doing them in such a way as to promote one's good as F (1097b26). Hence a virtue is a state in which one makes the correct rational choice of ends, and chooses correctly the actions that are to be chosen for their own sakes. To say that the rational choice of ends is part of the human function is not to say that every human being does it to the same degree. Nor is it to say that the recognized virtues—bravery, justice, and so on—reflect the only possible, or the best, choice of ends. Aristotle still needs to explain why the recognized virtues of bravery, temperance, and so on, count as virtues according to the criterion imposed by the Function Argument. Still, his reference to a life of action already introduces a non-trivial constraint on an account of virtue; it ought to show how we fulfil the human function in states that express our rational choice of ends, not in those that

[7] 1098a3–5, quoted above n4.

[8] Grant's rendering 'a moral life of the rational part' (*EA* ad loc.) is an over-translation of *praktikê*, but it indicates part of Aristotle's point. On *praxis* v. *poiêsis* see §66.

neglect such choices. We must see whether this suggestion helps us to defend one specific conception of the virtues.

Though Aristotle's claims about the human function leave many ethical questions to be answered, they constitute a non-trivial starting point for an argument about the virtues. He claims that the distinctive function of a human being is the life 'of' the rational part, in the rather strong sense that practical reason is a part or element in the end, not simply a means to it. Moreover, the relevant sort of practical reason is the rational selection and choice of components of the human good.

Is Aristotle right to claim that non-instrumental practical reasoning and action constitute the essential function of a human being? We might be tempted to answer that they are essential from the ethical point of view, simply because they are an essential starting point for Aristotle's inquiry. Since the *Ethics* is about the rational choice of components of the human good, it concerns beings who raise that question. We ought not to be satisfied, however, with this answer. One might want to say that ethical inquiry is important precisely because, in addressing these beings, it addresses beings who are necessarily concerned with the questions that it raises. Hence we need to show that what is essential to human beings from the ethical point of view is also essential from some point of view that is not purely ethical, from which we can see that the concerns of ethics are correct.

Aristotle might reasonably argue that, given the role of practical reason in selecting the human good, it would be misguided to understand human beings as living the same kind of life, organized around the same goals, as other creatures. For the flexibility of a human being's goals in the light of convictions about their goodness transforms the role that they play in the explanation of a human being's actions. Moreover, the fact that human beings actually conceive goals as modifiable in the light of considerations about their lives—understood as temporally extended and capable of being shaped in particular ways—marks a different essence, and a different kind of creature that needs to be explained and understood differently.

The argument about happiness and virtue, therefore, will succeed if it moves in two directions and reaches the same result. Arguing in one direction, we begin from the claim that happiness requires the application of non-instrumental practical reasoning to our lives, and we try to find the virtues that attach the appropriate value to non-instrumental reason. Arguing in the other direction, we begin from the recognized moral virtues and look for the common features that make them moral virtues. If the argument succeeds, we find that the common features of the recognized virtues are exactly the features that we look for in the virtues that attach appropriate value to non-instrumental practical reason. To see whether these two directions of argument reach the same conclusion, we should see whether Aristotle shows that the virtues he recognizes are the sorts of virtues that his account of happiness demands.

77. Aristotelian Naturalism?

This account of the Function Argument attributes a naturalist position to Aristotle. He argues for his account of the human good from premisses about the nature of human beings

as rational animals. This naturalist position is the basis for the naturalism of, among others, the Stoics, Aquinas, and Suarez. It is the position of 'the ancient moralists' that Butler tries to defend in his Sermons.[9] Hume among others rejects it.[10]

Aristotle's claims about function do not simply say that we have natural tendencies. He also attributes to human beings a nature that is not simply the sum of all natural tendencies. To speak of a thing's nature and of what is in accord with its nature is to select among the natural tendencies, since they may not all accord with the nature of the whole.[11] Aristotle's conception of nature connects a thing's nature with its essence, and with the kind that it belongs to. Something's function and nature is connected with its essence; the essence of a natural organism is the whole system in which different parts, processes, and activities have functions that promote the maintenance of the whole. States and processes that are in accord with something's nature as a whole are suitable for the whole system. This holist conception of something's nature implies that not everything natural accords with a thing's nature. We have natural tendencies that need to be restrained because they do not accord with our nature as a whole; if we eat or drink too much, or tire too easily, or exert ourselves too much at the wrong times, we may be acting on natural tendencies, but we are acting against our nature as a whole. We may understand Aristotelian naturalism, therefore, as a holist doctrine, treating human nature as a whole and a system. Though this holist conception is most clearly articulated by Butler, it underlies Aristotle's views about nature and function.

Butler articulates a holist conception in order to contrast it with the view of (among others) Hobbes and Hume, who both accept claims about human nature, and rely on them in their account of the moral virtues. Though they believe many things are natural, they do not believe in a nature that is distinct from a collection of natural tendencies; in Butler's terms, they do not believe in nature as a system. Hence they are not naturalists, or (if we want to put it more precisely) they are not holistic naturalists. Butler's account of nature as a system helps us to grasp more precisely what Aristotle implies in his claims about function. Though he does not use 'nature' (*phusis*) in his statement of the Function Argument, the connexions he sees between function, soul, essence, and nature make it clear that he endorses holistic naturalism.[12]

Some aspects of naturalism are relatively easy to accept. If it simply claims that some judgments about human welfare can be justified by appeal to claims about human nature, it is fairly easy to accept. An appeal to nature might, for instance, support judgments about 'medical' aspects of welfare.[13] Such claims as 'Red wine is good for you' appeal to the facts about human nature that doctors and patients need to take account of. An appeal to these facts implicitly relies on a holist conception of nature. We do not mean that red wine strengthens some natural tendencies; we mean that it strengthens some and weakens others in ways that strengthen the natural system as a whole. From this point of view, even

[9] See Butler, *S*, P 13.

[10] See Hume, *T* iii 1.2 §10. Hume does not believe that all claims about human nature must be excluded from moral philosophy, but he rejects the naturalist position that we have outlined.

[11] On collections v. systems cf. Butler, *S*, P 24.

[12] Annas, 'Versions' and *MH*, ch. 4, discusses Aristotle's appeal to nature, and its development in later Peripatetics. A good example of this development is Alexander, *Mant.* 150.20–159.14, applying Aristotelian naturalism to the Stoic doctrine of conciliation and to justice (following *EN* v 7). Cf. §181.

[13] On 'medical goodness' see Von Wright, *VG* 50–62.

interventions that interfere with strong natural tendencies (such as transfusions of blood or transplantations of organs) may be in accord with nature, according to the holist conception.

Naturalism about the moral virtues goes beyond these relatively uncontroversial judgments about nature and welfare. It claims to derive conclusions about moral virtues from facts about human nature, because it claims that naturalist judgments about welfare go beyond medical aspects of human nature and include a sufficient basis for moral judgments.[14] The Function Argument is Aristotle's first move in an argument that explains the different moral virtues as different ways in which we fulfil our nature as rational agents in a life guided by non-instrumental practical reasoning.

78. A Non-Naturalist Account of the Function Argument

But though the Function Argument presents this naturalist thesis, we may still wonder how seriously to take it. It appears to rely on Aristotle's natural philosophy, including his views on essence, explanation, function, and soul. But we might wonder whether these philosophical views have any place in a dialectical approach to ethical argument. They might seem to go beyond common beliefs, since they rely on philosophical theories that we cannot expect to be familiar to the ordinary moral agent.[15]

These reflexions on Aristotle's method may encourage us to look for a non-naturalist interpretation of the Function Argument.[16] We can see room for such an interpretation if we notice different possible explications of the conclusion of the Function Argument, that we fulfil the human function through activity of the soul in accord with virtue.[17] The anti-naturalist claims that the reference to virtue in this conclusion undermines the naturalist view that we are to form a conception of human nature and to derive claims about the human good and virtue from it. On the contrary, according to the anti-naturalist, Aristotle is simply claiming that the activities belonging to virtue are those that we will count—if we are virtuous—as constituting our happiness. We do not need to show that virtue meets some further condition that makes it constitute happiness. The reference to the human function and to activity in accordance with reason simply shows that the virtuous person regards virtue as happiness.

This anti-naturalist view must assume that happiness is simply the object—whatever it turns out to be—to which we attach supreme value. Virtuous people attach supreme value

[14] A naturalist position may not constitute a complete moral theory. It may leave some moral questions unsettled; for an account of the genuine moral virtues might not settle all urgent and important questions about what these virtues might require in a particular situation. We might turn to casuistry to answer these further questions, as Aristotle does in ix 2–3.

[15] Aristotle himself might be taken to reject any appeal to non-ethical principles to support ethical common beliefs. He insists on the importance of arguing from 'proper principles' (*oikeiai archai*), those proper to each science (see *Prior Analytics* 46a17, and for other references see Irwin, *AFP*, ch. 2, n22; ch. 7, n15). He apologizes for intruding a discussion of the Platonic Form of the Good into the *Ethics*, saying that this metaphysical discussion is not really appropriate (1096b30–5; cf. 1155b8–10). This refusal to go into metaphysics is summarized rather dogmatically in *MM* 1182a27.

[16] See McDowell, 'Role' 16. Cf. Sidgwick's objection about tautology, *ME* 374.

[17] 'And so the human good proves to be activity of the soul in accord with virtue, and indeed with the best and most complete virtue, if there are more virtues than one. Moreover, it must be in a complete life. For one swallow does not make a spring, nor does one day; nor, similarly, does one day or a short time make us blessed and happy' (1098a15–20).

to virtue and so they will count virtue as happiness. That is why one appeals to the function of a human being; if virtuous people care most about a particular sort of activity, they say that this is the only completely fulfilling human life. They do not say this because they can show that virtue satisfied some distinct notion of a completely fulfilling human life. They say it because, given the fact that they care most about virtue, they will take it to constitute a completely fulfilling human life. In claiming that virtuous activity is happiness we do not claim to have proved something further about it beyond what we know already in attaching supreme value to virtue. We simply reaffirm that we attach supreme value to virtue.[18]

If this is the right account of claims about happiness, it is also the right account of claims about the connexion of happiness and human nature. These cannot, therefore, provide grounds for a particular conception of happiness; they simply affirm that attachment to virtue leads to the virtuous person's conception of human nature.[19] The people who care about the Aristotelian virtues identify themselves with their rational part; this identification is a result of, but not a ground for, accepting these virtues.

This anti-naturalist view needs to be considered and examined through a study of the *Ethics* as a whole. At the moment, we can only point out that it underestimates the content of the conclusion of the Function Argument. Aristotle introduces virtue into the conclusion only after he has identified happiness with an activity in accordance with reason, and especially with an activity in which practical reason controls the agent's non-rational desires in rational choice of ends for their own sake. The virtuous activity that constitutes happiness must meet this condition for rational activity. It is not a trivial truth that the virtuous activity normally recognized as such actually meets this condition. To show that it meets this condition we need to understand what sort of rational activity Aristotle has in mind, and then we need to see what sorts of virtues embody it.

For similar reasons, we underestimate the content of Aristotle's claims about happiness if we suppose that happiness is simply the object to which we attach supreme value. In Aristotle's view, virtuous people do not achieve happiness simply because they attach supreme value to virtuous action; they achieve it only in so far as virtuous action actually meets the appropriate conditions for happiness. These conditions include completeness, self-sufficiency, and realization of a human being's practical rationality. These conditions, as Aristotle has stated them so far, are not precise enough to allow an immediate decision about precisely which lives do or do not meet the conditions for happiness. But they are not entirely empty; Aristotle has already appealed to them to show that neither pleasure nor honour nor virtue can by itself constitute happiness.

79. Nature, Happiness, and External Goods

We can confirm this naturalist understanding of the Function Argument if we consider one part of the conclusion that is difficult for an anti-naturalist to explain. Aristotle believes that

[18] See McDowell, 'Role' 18–20.

[19] See Annas, *MH*, chs. 3–4. In her view, 'the appeal to nature is part of an ethical theory; it supports the other parts, but is not itself an appeal outside the theory altogether' (138).

his argument from the human function to an account of happiness implies that virtuous activity alone is not sufficient for happiness; for happiness requires both complete virtue and a complete life, and therefore cannot last for only a short time (1098a16–20). If he believed that there is nothing more to happiness than the supreme object of value for a virtuous person, he would have no reason for adding this condition. If a virtuous person attached supreme value to virtue or virtuous activity, he might achieve this for only a short time, and might not even care that he could not prolong it; but Aristotle believes that this attitude would reveal a basic error about happiness. Nor is the demand for a complete life a mere afterthought that can be easily detached from Aristotle's basic argument about happiness. On the contrary, it is meant to follow from the basic argument; happiness must be the complete good, and a complete good requires a complete life.

The next section of Book i (Chapters 9–11) clarifies the demand for a complete life, by saying more about how one ought to estimate the appropriate length of life. A complete length of time is one in which the agent can achieve 'great and fine things' (1101a13). This is shorter than a complete lifetime, since Aristotle thinks it is possible for people to be happy, to cease to be happy, and to become happy again (1101a8–13), but longer than a few minutes, days, or years. It must be long enough for someone to have carried out some significant plan of living a life according to virtue—to have formed some reasonably long-term projects and to have achieved them. Priam might have succeeded in this, even though things went badly for him after that.

Aristotle introduces this temporal dimension of a complete life because he recognizes a wider role for external conditions that are not in the agent's control. External conditions present the circumstances in which virtuous actions result in happiness. He believes that these circumstances are needed for happiness, and that some features of a life depending on external circumstances can make it better or worse. He already implied this when he rejected Socrates' position that virtue alone is sufficient for happiness (1095b31–1096a2). Hence, given his remarks about the complete life, he is entitled to claim that happiness requires external goods (1099a31).

Though external conditions may make it possible or impossible to achieve happiness, Aristotle does not believe that happiness consists, even in part, in the possession of external advantages. In arguing against the life of honour, he insists that happiness consists in our own activity, not in what other people think of us, or how the world treats us; happiness is 'something of our own, and hard to take away' (1095b25–6). Still, he wants to avoid the strongly counter-intuitive Socratic and Cynic view that virtue alone is sufficient for happiness, and that external goods do not matter at all. Eventually he claims that fortune does not control happiness, but is necessary for happiness, whereas virtuous activities control happiness (1100b8–11).[20] As Socrates claims in the *Euthydemus*, happiness consists not in the possession, but in the right use, of external goods.[21] But Aristotle adds, contrary to Socrates, that we achieve happiness only by the right use of an appropriate level of external goods; if we use external goods well, but have not got enough of them, we are virtuous, but not happy.

[20] '<Doing> well or badly is not in these <fortunes>, though human life needs them added, as we said; rather, activities in accordance with virtue control happiness, and the contrary activities control the contrary' (1100b8–11).

[21] Cf. §14.

We might object that if good fortune is necessary for happiness, it controls whether we are happy or not. If Aristotle's reason for denying that fortune controls happiness is simply that fortune is not sufficient for happiness, this does not distinguish fortune from virtue, since both are necessary but insufficient conditions. Why should virtuous activities control happiness, if they are only one of the necessary conditions for happiness?

Probably Aristotle means that if we assume a level of external goods that can reasonably be assumed, the most important condition—the one that in these conditions determines whether we are happy or not—is virtuous activity. If the roads are not in such a hazardous condition that a driver's skill and care make no difference, we can reasonably say that the driver's skill and care determine safety. Aristotle distinguishes the conditions that can more reasonably be assumed, and take relatively less attention from the individual, from those that demand special attention and planning. If happiness required an extraordinarily high level of external goods, the appropriate level of external goods could not normally be taken for granted; but an extraordinarily high level is not needed (1179a1–13).

The claim that happiness requires external circumstances is not difficult to understand, if Aristotle is a naturalist. According to naturalism, happiness requires the fulfilment of human nature, and therefore requires whatever conditions are necessary for the fulfilment of human nature, whether or not a particular person cares about these conditions or cares about the activities for which these conditions are necessary. The human function requires the exercise of practical reason in a creature who does not consist wholly in practical reason, but also has non-rational desires and bodily needs. Moreover, it requires the exercise of practical reason for a temporally extended being, and so it requires the external conditions that allow us to plan for the success of our aims over time. External circumstances that frustrate our non-rational desires and bodily needs, or that change in ways that make our rational planning futile or doomed to failure, do not allow the fulfilment of human nature, as Aristotle understands it. We ought not to be surprised that the rather abstract and general considerations developed in the Function Argument are closely followed by the detailed and concrete discussion of fortune and external goods. This concrete discussion fits quite intelligibly into the naturalism that we have found in the Function Argument.

80. Naturalism and 'Second Nature'

If we look forward into the rest of the *Ethics*, we can see some features of Aristotle's position that express a commitment to the naturalist doctrine we have described.[22] He does not think of practical reason simply as a means for the discovery of what nature requires.[23] A misleading way to conceive it would be to suppose that the relation of our practical reason to our nature is the same as its relation to the nature of some other species. We certainly use our practical reason instrumentally, to consider what would be good for dogs or horses, given their non-rational nature. But if a dog or a horse acquired the practical reason that we have, it would not use it in the same way as we use it on their behalf. For it would now be

[22] In this section I am describing and answering some points raised by McDowell in 'Naturalism'.

[23] See §76 above.

a rational creature, and practical rationality would be part of its nature. Its deliberative task would therefore be different from our task in deliberating about the needs of dogs or horses.

In the same way, we are not simply non-rational creatures who are also equipped with our own practical reason for finding out what we—in abstraction from our practical reason—need. As Aristotle himself insists, according to our account of the Function Argument, our nature consists partly in practical reasoning about ends. If we deliberate only about natural needs and goods that do not take account of practical reason, we do not deliberate for creatures with our nature.

We might wonder whether Aristotle's doctrine of nature and moral character raises a more serious objection to the sort of naturalism that we have described. In a consideration of moral education, it is reasonable to conceive 'nature' as our starting point, as the various traits, tendencies, and capacities that are formed into a virtuous character if moral education goes well. Aristotle sees that this formation is pervasive; he describes habit as 'like nature' (1152a30–3) that results from a thorough transformation of the nature that we began from.[24]

This observation about habit may seem to raise a difficulty for naturalism. Just as it seems unreasonable to seek a basis for morality in an account of nature that abstracts from practical reason, it seems unreasonable to seek it exclusively in the nature that is simply the starting point for moral development and education. For it is reasonable to suppose that our developed character gives us aims and needs that go beyond the natural tendencies that we began from; the mere fact that these aims and needs do not belong to our initial natural tendencies does not make them less important.[25] If naturalism attends exclusively to the initial natural tendencies, it seems to prefer, for no good reason, the demands of the immature over those of the mature creature. We might infer that if we are to take account of this point, we must stick to a strongly moralized version of naturalism that abandons any claim to seek a basis or justification for ethics outside the outlook of the morally virtuous person.

To see what these observations about development and character do and do not show, we need to separate two conceptions of nature. We may understand it temporally, as including just those traits that moral development begins from. If nature is understood in this way, as 'initial' nature, it is essentially immature. But one might also think of mature people, including the traits that belong to mature people with formed characters,[26] in abstraction from the particular way in which this or that person has matured. It is not essential to me that I have formed precisely the character I have formed. On the contrary, once I reach maturity, I have a certain kind of nature as a rational agent. I would still have this nature if I had a different character, and I share this nature with people who have formed their characters differently. Understood in this way, nature has not been left behind in the mature person with a fully-formed character. Let us call this 'mature nature'.

Mature nature is apparently relevant to ethics. For it seems appropriate to compare two mature agents, one with a virtuous character and one with a vicious character, and to ask

[24] For McDowell's views on second nature see 'Naturalism' 184.

[25] Mill insists on this point in 'Nature'.

[26] Here 'formed' characters should be taken to include those of vicious people and of people who are neither virtuous nor vicious.

which of these characters is appropriate to the agent's nature. We might answer 'Both', on the ground that each person has formed a character, so that both their characters trivially fulfil their natures. Aristotle, however, believes one ought to ask which character fulfils a person's nature, and that it is morally important that the virtuous person's character fulfils it, and the vicious person's does not. In becoming vicious, the vicious person does not transform his nature so that he is no longer harmed by being vicious; on the contrary, vice is bad for him precisely because it is bad for a creature who has the nature that he still has. The nature that is relevant here is his mature nature.[27]

If we understand mature nature in this way, we may still reasonably maintain a holistic version of naturalism that treats facts about nature as an external basis and justification for moral claims. We need not, therefore, retreat from our previous conclusion that Aristotle affirms a version of naturalism in the Function Argument. We can fairly rely on this conclusion in examining the rest of the *Ethics*.

81. The Extent of Naturalism in the *Ethics*

To see how significant naturalism is in the *Ethics* as a whole, we need to form some idea of what we would expect Aristotle to say if he develops a naturalist position, and then ask whether this is what he says. We might expect that the account of the virtues, for instance, would be systematically derived from the account of human nature. We would think about the human function, what it is to carry out the human function well, and therefore we would have a general formula for what a virtue is.

It is not easy to decide whether Aristotle says what a naturalist would expect him to say. He does not explicitly announce his descriptions of the virtues of character as applications or developments of the naturalist claims in the Function Argument. According to some interpreters, he takes for granted the heterogeneous list of virtues accepted by common sense. He offers sketches of these virtues, rather than complete specifications, because he does not tell us what to do in any detail. He does not seem to derive the accounts of the virtues from any theory, let alone a naturalist theory; he simply appears to remind us of the virtues that we already recognize.

A further objection to a naturalist interpretation turns on questions about deliberation and practical reason. Just as we might reasonably expect Aristotle's moral theory to rely on claims about nature, we might also expect such claims to be recognized in the deliberations of the moral agent. If Aristotle relies on substantive claims about human nature, we might expect them to appear somewhere in the deliberation of the political scientist or of the prudent person (the *phronimos*). But the non-naturalist sees no sign of this pattern of deliberation. Indeed, the prudent person does not seem to rely on any especially theoretical or complex basic principles in deliberation.[28]

The *Ethics* is not full of open appeals to principles embodying an account of human nature. If it were, there would be no dispute about whether Aristotle is a naturalist, or about whether naturalism has an important role in his moral theory. But this does not settle the

[27] On vice see §111. [28] See Broadie, cited at §98n55.

question; we must still consider whether he appeals to claims about nature and whether these claims matter for the character of his theory.

In his discussion of self-sufficiency Aristotle explains that happiness must include the good not only of oneself but also of one's parents, children, wife, and in general of friends and fellow-citizens, since a human being is a political animal (1097b11). This is a brief but important remark; for it is used to support a non-obvious claim. Aristotle does not simply mean that we need other people to protect us, supply us with food, keep the streets clean, and so on. He makes the stronger claim that a person's good includes the good of these other people. That claim does not follow from the obvious empirical facts that show that other people are instrumentally necessary for one's good.

In the Function Argument Aristotle remarks that the part of the soul that 'has' reason is divided into the part that obeys reason and that part that has reason within it (1098a4). These two parts reappear later (i 13), and Aristotle assumes that virtue consists in the supremacy of the rational part (i.e., the inherently rational part) and the agreement of the non-rational part with it. This conclusion seems to emerge from the Function Argument, which claims that a human being's good will be found in living well in accordance with reason. This is one starting point for an account of the virtues; they are the different ways in which the non-rational part accepts the guidance of the rational part. Not surprisingly, then, Aristotle mentions function in his account of virtue (1106a15; 1139a15–17 (cf. *EE* 1219a33); 1144a6).[29]

In the account of friendship (1168b28), Aristotle argues that self-love is consistent with concern for others, because we are our rational part. The true lover of self loves this part, and therefore cares about the interests of others. Aristotle relies on a claim about what we essentially are, in order to support a controversial ethical conclusion.

In Book ix (ch. 9) he returns to the completeness and self-sufficiency of happiness. He argues that if happiness is to meet these conditions, it requires friends. He reasserts the political nature of human beings, and says that a human being is naturally suited to live with others (lit. 'of a nature to live together', 1169b16). His most elaborate defence of friendship begins by saying that this is what we find if we consider the question 'more with reference to nature' (1170a13). Facts about human nature also support the claim that justice is not purely a matter of convention and agreement; in Aristotle's view, some aspects of justice are natural, because they correspond to the needs of human nature (1134b30–1135a5). In these claims he makes it clear that the demands of nature are not confined to the satisfaction of basic natural needs; an appeal to nature gives us an account of the best condition because human nature constitutes a system whose tendencies are perfected in the best order. Virtue completes nature not by going beyond it, but by fully achieving it.[30]

Not all of these claims clearly rely on a theory of human nature, and no such theory is developed or defended in detail. But Aristotle seems to make some claims of a broadly psychological and metaphysical character about what human beings are like, and what they essentially are. In accepting this naturalist approach Plato and Aristotle begin a long tradition

[29] In the discussion of incontinence, Aristotle says that his last account is being given 'in accordance with nature' (*phusikôs*; 1147a24). This might just mean 'in accordance with the nature of the subject-matter', i.e., with reference to ethics in particular. But it might also refer specifically to claims about human nature.

[30] See Stobaeus, *Anth*. ii 123.21–124.14, from Arius Didymus' account of Aristotelian ethics. In particular Arius claims at 123.23–5 that moral virtue (*arête*) is more in accordance with nature than bodily excellences (*aretai*) are.

of ethical argument. Their approach has often been rejected and often been defended against objections. The objections and defences will concern us further in later chapters.[31] For the moment we may simply notice that Aristotle claims to derive some non-trivial ethical conclusions from his claims about human nature. We still need to ask how much these naturalist claims matter in the main argument of the *Ethics*.

82. Happiness, Function, and the Theoretical Life

An account of Aristotle's appeals to function and nature in the *Ethics* has to face the questions raised by his final remarks on happiness. In Book x he announces that after his discussion of the virtues and related questions, he will now say what happiness is (1176a30–2). After recalling some of the criteria he relied on in Book i, he declares that happiness consists in theoretical 'study' or 'contemplation' (*theôria*), grasping the ultimate universal truths about the universe (1177a12–18).

He argues for this conclusion by appeal to his earlier formal criteria, and especially by further appeal to the Function Argument. The exercise of theoretical reason in study is the best exercise of human reason; its activities are choiceworthy solely for their own sake, and in them a human being comes closest to the condition of a purely rational being, a god. Contemplation is the highest fulfilment of our nature as rational beings; it is the sort of rational activity that we share with the gods, who are rational beings with no need to apply reason to practice. Aristotle repeats his earlier claim that we are identical to our rational part, but now he uses it to connect our happiness with theoretical study (see esp. 1178a2). He infers that contemplation is the happiest life available to us, in so far as we have the rational intellects we share with gods (1177b26–1178a4).

Some aspects of Aristotle's attitude to theoretical study are not surprising in the light of the earlier books of the *Ethics*. In identifying happiness with the realization of our rational capacities, he leaves a special place for the way of life that realizes them constantly and for their own sake, without the distractions of purely instrumental action. It is intelligible that he represents the ideal as uninterrupted rational activity. In this life the demands of external circumstances do not take us away from the activity that we choose for its own sake.

But how large a role does Aristotle intend for the theoretical life? We might suppose that it constitutes the whole of happiness, and therefore gives Aristotle's answer to a central question in the *Republic*. According to one account of the *Republic*, the philosophers see the prospects of their greatest happiness in a life spent in the uninterrupted contemplation of the forms, and they suffer a loss of happiness by turning away from the life of uninterrupted study to take part in the government of the city (*R*. 519b7–d9).[32] We might take Aristotle to accept the option that Plato (we have argued) rejects, and to affirm that happiness is simply theoretical study. In that case, we suffer a loss of happiness to the extent that we turn away from this pursuit to providing for the necessities of life or even to practising the moral virtues.[33]

[31] On Aristotle's views on nature and justice see §136, 301.

[32] See §61.

[33] A full defence of a purely theoretical and non-comprehensive conception of happiness is offered by Kraut, *AHG*. Helpful later discussions include Kenny, *APL*; Lawrence, 'Ideal'; Charles, 'Well-being'; Scott, 'Well-being'.

If this is Aristotle's view, do we need to reconsider the interpretation of Book i that ascribes a comprehensive conception of happiness to Aristotle? Such a conception is consistent with a purely theoretical account of happiness; for the comprehensive conception says that happiness embraces all non-instrumental goods, and if contemplation is the only non-instrumental good, our comprehensive conception will say that contemplation is the only component of happiness. All other goods, including the virtues and virtuous action, will be instrumental goods that are good because of their causal contribution to contemplation.

This view, however, is difficult to reconcile with Aristotle's claim that virtues and virtuous actions are worth choosing for their own sakes (1097b2–5); the virtuous person decides on virtuous actions for their own sakes (1105a32), and because they are fine, and these attitudes do not treat virtue as a purely instrumental good. If, then, happiness is comprehensive, it must also be composite; for it cannot be comprehensive unless it includes virtuous action as well as theoretical study.

To reconcile these remarks about virtuous action with a comprehensive conception of happiness and a purely theoretical conception of happiness, we might argue that these remarks about virtuous action express the outlook of the morally virtuous person, which we abandon when we recognize that happiness is theoretical study. But Aristotle does not qualify his remarks about virtue by treating them as strictly provisional judgments from an inadequate point of view. Even in contexts where he mentions the importance of theoretical wisdom (1145a6–11), he does not retract his claim that the prudent person, who has the correct conception of the end (1142b31–3; 1144a20–b1), chooses virtuous action for its own sake (1144a13–20).

If, then, we still want to ascribe a purely theoretical conception of happiness to Aristotle, we might admit that he does not abandon his claims about the non-instrumental goodness of virtuous action, and argue instead that he does not regard happiness as comprehensive. In that case, virtues and the corresponding actions will be among the non-instrumental goods that we can choose independently of their contribution to happiness. Happiness is the best good, worth choosing over any possible combination of other non-instrumental goods, but not the whole good that we rationally aim at as our end; we can also aim at other goods on non-eudaemonic grounds, and thereby make our life better than it would be if we had happiness without them.[34]

But this view of happiness is difficult to reconcile with the role that Aristotle ascribes to it in Book i. How, for instance, could we suppose that a self-sufficient life must be sufficient for family, friends, and fellow-citizens, unless we suppose that happiness, by being a self-sufficient good, includes all goods worth choosing for their own sakes? The best single non-comprehensive good does not seem to meet this condition for self-sufficiency. Aristotle claims that we do everything for the sake of happiness (1102a2–3) and that we should decide all our actions with reference to our conception of happiness (*EE* 1214b9), but it is not clear how a non-comprehensive conception would make these claims reasonable. Aristotle does not forget this comprehensive conception in the later books of the *Ethics*; it underlies his account of why friendship is necessary for a happy life (1169b3–8, 1170b14–19).

[34] This general view might support a non-comprehensive interpretation of 1097b16–20. See §71.

For these reasons, it is difficult to reconcile Book i and Book x, if we take Book x to identify happiness with theoretical study. Neither a comprehensive nor a non-comprehensive conception of happiness allows us to fit a theoretical view with Aristotle's other remarks on happiness, virtue, and action. If, then, we are still convinced that Book x identifies happiness with contemplation, it is wiser to conclude that Aristotle's position is inconsistent. But, while this conclusion might be reasonable if we thought Aristotle did not intend to integrate Book x closely with the rest of the *Ethics*, it is unsatisfactory, in the light of his clear references back to earlier books in his statement of the features of happiness that are present in the theoretical life (x 6–7). He seems to have in mind the general theory that he has set out in the previous sections of the *Ethics* and to believe that his previous remarks allow, and even support, his claims about theoretical study.

Similar questions arise about whether we should take the conclusions in Book x to control our interpretation of Aristotle's claims about function and nature. A purely theoretical view of happiness fits a conception of the human function as consisting exclusively in the exercise of reason without any reference to the non-rational part of the soul. A proper understanding of the human essence, on this view, identifies our essence with the divine element in us, and therefore identifies our happiness with the independent and self-sufficient exercise of the activity proper to this divine element. It is difficult to reconcile this conception of the human essence and function with what we find in the rest of the *Ethics*, just as it is difficult to reconcile a purely theoretical conception of happiness with Aristotle's comments on happiness outside Book x. It seems better to attribute inconsistent lines of thought to Aristotle than to impose the purely theoretical view on the *Ethics* as a whole. But, for the reasons given above, it is difficult to explain how Aristotle could have failed to notice the inconsistency, given his obvious intention to integrate the argument of Book x with the earlier books.

Before we conclude that Aristotle is inconsistent, we have some reason to reconsider the claim that Book x holds a purely theoretical view. Some doubts about this claim arise if we examine some of Aristotle's reservations and qualifications about a purely theoretical view. He contrasts the happiest (*eudaimonestatos* 1178a7–8) life of the contemplator with the life of the rest of virtue, which is happiest to the second degree, because its activities are human (1178a9–10). To pursue the rest of virtue we need external resources, and we run the risk of failure in our efforts to change the external world. The contemplator does not depend on external resources in the same way. Still, Aristotle adds, he is a human being and lives together with others, and hence he chooses to realize the virtues, and for this human life he needs external resources.[35] Someone who chooses to realize the virtues also chooses virtuous actions for their own sakes; he does not choose them simply as instrumental means to theoretical study. We cannot choose to realize the virtues without the motivation of the virtuous person who chooses virtuous actions for their own sake. In connecting the choice to realize the virtues with recognition of our human nature Aristotle also connects it with happiness and with the Function Argument; for he argues from our nature to the composition of happiness.

[35] 'In so far as he is a human being, however, and lives together with a number of other human beings, he chooses to do the actions that accord with virtue. Hence he will need these sorts of things [sc. external resources] for living a human life' (1178b5–7).

These remarks about humanity and human nature suggest that Aristotle has not forgotten the interpretation of the human function that underlies the rest of the *Ethics*. He recognizes that as human beings we have non-rational as well as rational parts of our souls, have bodies as well as intellects, and are naturally social creatures. These aspects of our essence imply that theoretical study is not the complete good for human beings as they are, and therefore is not the whole of their happiness. Aristotle, therefore, still accepts a comprehensive and composite conception of happiness. He still affirms that virtues of character and the corresponding actions are elements of happiness for a rational agent. We need not, therefore, suppose that the *Ethics* holds inconsistent views about the character and composition of happiness.

But if this is true, we need not be too surprised that Aristotle makes the remarks about theoretical study that have tempted readers to attribute a purely theoretical conception to him. He praises theoretical study because it fulfils the most thoroughly rational part of our rational nature; it is therefore the best aspect of our happiness, and it would be the whole of our happiness if we were nothing more than our intellects.[36] But since we are something more than our intellects, our happiness consists in more than theoretical study. Aristotle's claims about the value of theoretical study raise further questions about the appropriate combination of study and moral virtue in the best life. He leaves these questions without detailed answers. But he does not suggest that the value of the theoretical aspects of the happy life casts doubt on the conclusions he has already reached about the connexion between human nature and the human good.[37]

[36] On Aquinas' treatment of the contemplative aspect of happiness see §§280–1.

[37] Aristotle's description of the theoretical aspects of happiness certainly encourages the development of a purely theoretical conception. Such a conception is present in Plotinus (see §61; Gerson, *AOP* 252–60) and in some versions of mediaeval Aristotelianism §280n47).

8

ARISTOTLE: VIRTUE

83. The Function Argument and the Virtues

We have noticed that Aristotle's references to the Function Argument mark some of the places in the *Ethics* where he relies on claims about human nature. These references determine the shape of his account of the virtues of character and intellect. The Function Argument concludes that virtue has a central place in happiness, since it identifies happiness with activity of the soul in accordance with virtue. Virtue, in turn, is the state in which something performs its function well, so as to achieve its good. This account of virtue is more informative than it may initially seem. Aristotle claims that the human function is realized in a life of action (*praxis*) of the rational part of the soul, and hence in the rational choice of actions to be valued for their own sakes. The realization of the human function requires harmony between the rational and the non-rational parts, under the control of the rational part.

These claims help to explain each other. For if the non-rational part dominates us, our non-rational desires give us our conception of worthwhile ends, so that we do not exercise our capacity for the rational choice of non-instrumental actions. Since a life in accordance with reason requires the rational choice of ends, control by reason cannot be simply adherence to a rational plan for the fulfilment of our non-rational desires. Control by the rational part must express our rational choice of ends. According to the Function Argument, the different virtues should be forms of control by the rational part in the choice of ends.

The introduction to the account of virtue (*EN* i 13) recalls the Function Argument, since it re-asserts the division of the soul into rational and non-rational parts (cf. 1098a3–5). Aristotle repeats his claim that the non-rational part is capable of agreeing with and obeying reason, and he now says a little more about what is needed for both these parts to live 'in accordance with reason'; the best condition of a person's soul is the one in which the two parts are in harmony, so that the rational part is in control and the non-rational part agrees with it. To distinguish harmony and agreement from mere control, he contrasts the virtuous and the vicious person with the continent and the incontinent person.

He returns again to the Function Argument in his general account of a virtue of character. Every virtue puts its possessor in a good state and causes the possessor to perform its

function well (1106a16).[1] Similarly, we are to think of the intellectual virtues with reference to the agent's function (1139a15).[2] We fulfil our function by acting in accordance with both prudence and virtue of character (1144a6).

At these points in his account of virtue Aristotle recalls the Function Argument. But does he use or explain its conclusion? Does he show that the virtues are ways in which practical reason controls our desires and actions?

84. Virtue, Continence, Incontinence, and Vice

Aristotle uses the division between the rational and the non-rational parts of the soul to mark four conditions of the rational and non-rational parts of soul: (1) Vice: the rational and the non-rational parts agree in pursuing the wrong ends. (2) Incontinence: the rational and the non-rational parts disagree; the rational part pursues the right ends, but the non-rational part pursues the wrong ends, and overcomes the rational part. (3) Continence: the rational and the non-rational parts disagree; the non-rational part pursues the wrong ends, but the rational part pursues the right ends, and overcomes the non-rational part. (4) Virtue: the rational and the non-rational parts agree, under the control of the rational part, in pursuing the right ends.[3]

This fourfold division clarifies an issue that the *Republic* leaves obscure. We might gather from *Republic* iv that Plato identifies virtue with control by reason and vice with lack of control by reason. If vicious people, in Plato's view, suffer from conflict between the rational and the non-rational part, they must apparently be Aristotelian incontinents. But Aristotle answers that not every vicious person suffers conflict between the rational and non-rational parts. In some people the rational part may be so warped that it creates no conflict when they want to do the vicious action. We might suppose (though perhaps incorrectly) that Plato overlooks this possibility; at any rate, he does not draw attention to it explicitly.[4]

Similarly, control is not sufficient for virtue. The virtuous person does not simply control his non-rational part. We do not think someone is really a generous or kind person if he always has to control his stingy or spiteful impulses and always succeeds.[5] It is better to control such impulses than to leave them uncontrolled, but it is better not to have them, or at least not to have them to the degree where they need control. Someone who has to control the non-rational part because it tends to mislead him needs better training until it no longer misleads him.

But though Aristotle's fourfold division is better than the Platonic twofold division, it still needs to be clarified. First, we need to see what is wrong with a continent person. If we reject Socrates' denial of incontinence, we might be inclined to say that in the incontinent

[1] In *EE* 1218b37 this remark about virtue and function appears at the beginning of the Function Argument.

[2] Here Aristotle uses terms, e.g., *beltistê hexis*, reminiscent of the *EE* (to which, probably, this book of the *EN* originally belonged).

[3] In 1102b14–28 only the last three conditions are explicitly distinguished; but Aristotle must intend some description of vice similar to the one above, if he is to make disagreement between the parts a special mark of continence and incontinence.

[4] We have seen that this is an over-simplified account. See §§47–8, 105.

[5] We might suppose—mistakenly—that this claim about continence and virtue conflicts with Kant, *G*397.

person the non-rational desires are simply too strong for the rational desires. But in that case what does the continent person lack? Does he need to strengthen his rational desires, or weaken his non-rational desires? And how is he to do either? Does Aristotle believe that the appropriate training is a non-rational process of altering behaviour and attitudes? Or might the continent person acquire stronger, more effective, rational desires from fuller understanding? Or, if Aristotle has both of these in mind, how are they to be combined?

The description of the virtuous person raises further questions. Aristotle says that the other parts agree with reason (1102b28), not that it agrees with them (though this must also, in some way, be true), and that they obey it, not that it obeys them. He implies that the virtuous person's non-rational desires are not merely weaker than her rational desires, but also agree with them in some way that makes conflict and 'overcoming' unnecessary. How are the non-rational desires trained to reach this condition?

The vicious person also raises questions about agreement between the parts of the soul. He is parallel to the virtuous person in so far as his rational and non-rational parts are in agreement.[6] But other aspects of the vicious person are less clear. We might think of him either (1) as similar to the virtuous person in being controlled by reason, or (2) as contrary to the virtuous person in so far as his reason is controlled by his appetite.

The claim that both the virtuous and the vicious person act on their 'decision' or 'election' (*prohairesis*, e.g. 1150a20, 25; 1151a17) supports the first view. In that case, control by reason, even complete agreement with reason, is not sufficient for virtue. Virtuous and vicious people alike seem to be controlled by reason. If that is Aristotle's view, he cannot claim that a state is a virtue because it fully realizes practical reason; but the account of virtue that rests on the Function Argument seems to imply such a claim. Does Aristotle's conception of the vicious person conflict with the Function Argument?

If Aristotle tries to avoid this conclusion by maintaining that appetite dominates the rational part of the vicious person, can he still draw the right distinctions between vice, continence, and incontinence? The degree of rational control in the vicious person should separate him from the incontinent; and the degree of agreement between rational and non-rational desires should separate him from both the incontinent and the continent person. But how can this be true if appetite controls his rational part?

85. The Doctrine of the Mean

With these preliminary questions in mind, we may turn to Aristotle's explanation of his fourfold division and of his claims about acting in accordance with right reason (1103b31–4). He clarifies his conception of appropriate control by reason through his Doctrine of the Mean. For a normal and natural human emotion such as anger, four possibilities are open: (1) Indulgence, leaving it completely unchecked. (2) Suppression, as far as possible. (3) Control, as far as possible. (4) Harmony and agreement with the rational part. In treating

[6] Even if this is not clear in i 13, other remarks (e.g., 1150b29–1151a20) make it clear that the vicious person does not suffer the conflicts of desire characteristic of the incontinent person, and so is not overcome by strong wayward desires (1150a27–31).

virtue as a mean, Aristotle signals his adherence to the fourth solution, as opposed to any of the other three.

If we are to achieve virtue, we cannot, according to Aristotle, leave our non-rational tendencies without any deliberate intervention. Habituation—deliberate formation by practice—is necessary for reaching virtue (1104a11). Someone with unmodified natural tendencies would not even think about himself and his life as something distinct from momentary impulses.[7] Should we, then, try to eliminate them? Elimination is the aim of the 'insensible' person (cf. 1119a5–11), someone who rejects some or all of his non-rational impulses and desires. Theorists who defend this eliminative attitude define the virtues as kinds of freedom from passion (*apatheia*, 1104b24).[8]

The eliminative attitude might reasonably appeal to someone who generally sympathizes with Socrates' conception of virtue, but rejects the Socratic denial of non-rational desires. This may have been Antisthenes' reaction to Socrates.[9] If we take this attitude to Socrates, we might think the ideal condition for human nature is to get ourselves into the condition that Socrates thinks we are in naturally, where all our desires are responsive to reason. If our desires are not naturally in this state, we must eradicate all those that potentially conflict with reason. This modified Socratic view appeals to the Cynics. It underlies some of the criticism of pleasure in the *Philebus*. It influences the Stoics; they also use 'freedom from passion' as a complimentary description of the virtuous person's condition.[10]

Aristotle answers that virtuous people are free of the wrong kinds of feelings, but retain the right kinds, and hence are not free of passions altogether. His Peripatetic successors defend this position by advocating 'measured passion' (*metriopatheia*), in contrast to the Stoic doctrine of freedom from passion.[11] Why does he reject freedom from passion? Is it only because he thinks it unrealistic? Or does he think it would be undesirable even if it were realistic? Does he think that people without non-rational impulses would do the wrong actions? Or does he think there would be something wrong with such people even apart from their actions? The naturalism of the Function Argument suggests an answer. He regards the Cynic solution as a mistaken approach to the task of practical reason. He accepts the sort of constraint that a naturalist might be expected to accept. The prudent person should find the best life for human nature as it is, rather than trying to remove some aspects of human nature to make them easier to organize.

Aristotle also refuses to identify virtue with self-control. Since feelings and impulses themselves must reach the right degree and aim at the right objects, the virtuous person will not have to control impulses leading him in the wrong direction. His impulses themselves

[7] While this part of Aristotle's position is easy to grasp, a more complex question also arises. He concedes that some suitable tendencies to become virtuous are innate—he calls them 'natural virtue' (1144b3). But he denies that this could be genuine or full virtue. He believes we have to gain full virtue by habituation, practice, and rational understanding. Is this claim a merely empirical truth about virtue? Is Aristotle just saying that in fact we do not find people born with the right sort of feelings and rational understanding? Or is it more like an a priori claim, that the causal origin of the virtuous state of character is essential to it? On this view, a virtue of character must have been formed by the appropriate responses to certain kinds of situations. Such a constraint would be unreasonable if Aristotle were interested only in the behavioural output of a virtue. But it soon becomes fairly clear that this is not all he is concerned about; and so it is not so implausible to consider the claim about the necessity of a certain kind of causal origin.

[8] Aristotle may be referring to Speusippus, or to some Cynics. See §38; §55 on *Phil.*

[9] On Antisthenes see §38.

[10] See *Phil.* 44b–46a. On Stoic *apatheia* see §191.

[11] See Seneca, *Ep.* 116.1, quoted at §191n92.

lead him in the right direction. Does Aristotle object to mere self-control simply because the merely continent person will waste a lot of time, and wear himself out psychologically and perhaps morally? If that were his objection, it would apparently not apply to all continent people; continence would apparently be enough for virtue if it were easy. Perhaps some continent people are quite averse to doing what they do, but find it fairly easy to get themselves to do it. (Sometimes, for instance, we do tedious chores that we are averse to, but do not find very difficult.) Aristotle would have no reason to deny that they are virtuous if his objections are confined to the type of continence that is difficult to maintain.

He does not suggest, however, that continence would be virtue if it were easy to maintain. He identifies virtue with harmony between the rational and the non-rational part, and rejects the other three views of virtue, because of his initial claim that the virtues are not present by nature, but complete human nature (1103a23–6). They complete it because they actualize human capacities; to have a virtue is not simply to have a capacity, but to be determined to realize the capacity in a particular way. In contrast to the virtues, ordinary capacities are capacities for contraries (1106a6–11); to have a virtue is to realize only one of the contraries for which we have the capacity. We have completely realized it only if we have achieved harmony between the parts of the soul.

86. Virtue and Harmony

Aristotle's objections to the identification of virtue with freedom from passion or with self-control do not make it clear what sort of harmony marks the virtuous person. 'Extreme' harmony would be present in someone who, for instance, suffered some wounding insult, but realized that in these circumstances it would be better not to respond, and so had no inclination at all to respond.[12] A more 'moderate' harmony is present in someone who, in these conditions, has some inclination to respond to the insult, but not such a strong one that he needs to control it; once he sees that it would be best not to respond, his desire to respond does not threaten to upset his rational election, as it does in the merely continent person.

Should Aristotle advocate extreme or moderate harmony? Belief in extreme harmony suggests that if a virtuous person has to give up, e.g., some appetitive satisfaction, she does not regard herself as having any reason (even prima facie) to pursue the satisfaction; hence she suffers no loss by giving it up. To attribute such a view to Aristotle seems to assimilate him too closely to the insensible person's view.

Aristotle's account of 'mixed' actions (discussed in 1110a4–b9) supports moderate rather than extreme harmony. If x is a mixed action, and I am right to perform x rather than y, then (1) x is better than y, all things considered, but (2) x is still open to strong objections that cause me to regret doing x rather than y, and (3) the reasons for preferring x are so strong that I am compelled to do x, not because I had no choice, but because no other choice would have been tolerable.[13] In such a case (if, e.g., I have to break some non-trivial promise to

[12] This would be a form of what McDowell calls 'silencing'. At 'Hypothetical' 90–2 he argues that Aristotle needs a doctrine of silencing in order to explain how continence differs from virtue.

[13] I am ignoring some of the perplexing details of Aristotle's analysis. Clauses (2) and (3) seem to be needed to distinguish mixed actions from other actions that I choose only for their results.

A in order to meet B's needs in some grave emergency), I would not be more virtuous if I acted without regret; for the regret may be a sign that I owe apology or compensation. If I did not regret anything about my action, alleging that it was best all things considered, I would be missing some important feature of the situation.

The appropriate control of anger or appetite also seems to require moderate rather than extreme harmony. If the virtuous person had no inclination towards the retaliation that he has to forgo, perhaps he would be failing to recognize the gravity of the insult; his emotional reaction would be the same as if the insult did not matter at all. Surely he should sometimes recognize that the insult matters; even if he realizes it would be wrong to retaliate, he might well think differently about the person who insulted him, and this thought might make it reasonable for him to feel some justified resentment and some degree of desire to retaliate. If he did not feel it, his emotions would not accurately represent the different aspects of value in the situation; they would only represent the value all things considered.[14] But if the virtuous person's state is supposed to complete and fulfil human nature as a whole in its different aspects, his emotions should represent the different aspects of value, in so far as they are valuable for different aspects of a human being. Hence Aristotle seems to advocate moderate rather than extreme harmony.

87. Rationalist v. Anti-rationalist Accounts of Virtue

These features of virtue of character suggest that Aristotle develops the view that we would expect, in the light of the naturalism of the Function Argument; for he suggests that virtue consists in the fulfilment of the human function in rational activity guiding the other elements of human nature. The mark of virtue, on this view, is the full realization of one's capacity to be guided by practical reason.

The naturalist position requires a rationalist conception of virtue: if virtue fulfils the nature of a human being as a rational agent, it must consist essentially (though not exclusively) in practical reason. Hence Aristotle's conception of practical reason must be broad enough to show how the difference between the virtuous person and others is a difference in the development and realization of practical reason. More specifically, practical reason must be competent to select the aims and preferences of the virtuous person over those of the vicious person or the incontinent person or other non-virtuous people; virtuous people's choice of the right ends in their lives must be explained by the excellence of their practical reason. This rationalist view need not make practical reason the sole and sufficient determinant of virtue, independently of all other aspects of human nature; but it implies that practical reason makes the decisive difference—in some way to be explained—between virtue and other states.

Our discussion of 'a life of action (*praxis*) of the rational part' has already ascribed this broad conception of practical reason to Aristotle.[15] We have argued that he takes the distinctively human function to consist not merely in the use of reason, and not merely in the use of reason to select one action over another, but also in the use of reason in *praxis*, in action

[14] Cf. the Stoics on appearances and passions, §192. [15] See §76.

chosen for its own sake. Reason would not have this use unless it were capable of justifying the choice of actions as ends in themselves. With this claim in mind, we expect Aristotle's account of virtue of character to identify a virtue with (perhaps among other things) the appropriate excellence of practical reason selecting ends in themselves. His account of virtue fits the naturalist claims in the Function Argument if and only if he explains how practical reason can fulfil this role.

We must, therefore, consider whether Aristotle has the broad conception of practical reason that we have described, and whether he incorporates it into his account of virtue. And so we must discuss any apparent evidence of an anti-rationalist view of virtue resting on a narrower conception of practical reason.

An anti-rationalist interpretation might begin from Aristotle's claims about the importance of non-rational moral education. He claims (in i 13 and ii 1) that virtue of character (*êthikê aretê*) is the virtue of the non-rational part of the soul, in contrast to the virtue of intellect, which belongs to the rational part. The proper training for the non-rational part is habituation (*ethismos*), which forms the right habits and traits in the well-trained person; and the most prominent aspect of habituation is training in the appropriate pleasures, pains, and other affective reactions.

Correct habituation is crucial for the formation of character (1103b22–5). It is difficult for reasoning and teaching to make any impact if we have not been well brought up in the right habits (1179b23–31);[16] otherwise we will not have the right starting points for formal instruction (1095b4–13). Simply understanding what is good or fine will not move us to do anything about it, because 'thought itself moves nothing' (1138b35). If we are to aim at the right end, we must have acquired virtue of character by habituation. Aristotle may appear to confirm this view in acknowledging that reason and prudence are confined to discovery of the means to this right end (1144a20–2; 1145a4–6; 1178a16–19).[17]

According to this anti-rationalist view, we are virtuous if and only if our feelings and impulses have been trained to take pleasure in the right actions, and we are moved primarily by these sorts of feelings. Our feelings are in harmony with reason in so far as they do not pursue inconsistent aims, or aims that cannot be achieved by any means at our disposal. Distinctively virtuous practical reason has no essential productive role in virtue of character, because we can acquire a virtue without any distinctively virtuous practical reason. Though we need to carry out instrumental reasoning, this is not distinctive of a virtuous person. Similarly, if the successful training of feelings and impulses is sufficient for virtue, a virtue does not even partly consist in any distinctively virtuous practical reason. We need instrumental reasoning to take us from the right aims to the right actions, but this instrumental reasoning is not distinctively virtuous.

Since an anti-rationalist interpretation of Aristotle has been influential,[18] it is worth developing in some detail, to see what sort of insight it may offer into Aristotle's position. It is especially useful to develop this view to contrast with Aquinas' view of Aristotle. Once

[16] Aristotle's remark that it is 'impossible or not easy' (1179b17) to overcome the effects of bad upbringing suggests some uncertainty about how strong a claim he wants to make (unless the 'or' is corrective, with the force of 'or rather').

[17] Similarly, one might offer an anti-rationalist interpretation of the claim that emotion rather than reason is the 'guide' or 'leader' of virtue; see *MM* 1206b17–29.

[18] One might take Aquinas at least to be influenced by an anti-rationalist interpretation, even if one denies (as I do) that he accepts it. See §316. Hutcheson, *IMS* 122, both ascribes it to Aristotle and accepts it on his own account.

we see why some features of Aristotle make an anti-rationalist view intelligible, even if they do not ultimately justify it, we must consider whether Aquinas is right to suppose that they fit into his rationalist conception of Aristotle's position.

88. Anti-rationalism: Virtue and Pleasure

Aristotle takes habituation to be important in moral education because habituation involves training in pleasure and pain; this is relevant to virtue of character, because the 'sign' of virtue is the appropriate pleasure.[19] It is easy to see why habituation matters if it includes our being rewarded for doing the right actions and punished for doing the wrong ones, so that we come to find the right actions pleasant and the wrong ones painful. It is more surprising that Aristotle actually takes the appropriate pleasure and pain to belong to the virtuous state of character, and not merely to the process of training that results in it.

Why should pleasure and pain be so prominent in the account of virtue? Aristotle's claims might surprise us, in the light of his earlier objections (in i 5) to the life of pleasure. If taking pleasure in virtuous actions is sufficient for virtue of character, devoting one's life to the pursuit of pleasure does not seem to be as bad as we might have thought when we read Aristotle's criticism of the life of pleasure.

We might argue that Aristotle's position is consistent because he rejects only the life of misdirected pleasure-seeking, not a life devoted to the appropriate pleasures. The virtuous person has been trained not to take mercenary pleasure in virtuous action; she does not choose just or temperate actions simply because she will be rewarded by other people, and so she would not be equally ready to choose unjust or intemperate actions if they received the same rewards. Her belief that the actions are just and temperate is necessary for her pleasure in them, and she would be ashamed and dismayed if she failed to choose them. If the 'life of pleasure' is the life of the mercenary pleasure-seeker who does not care what he does as long as it brings him the appropriate further rewards, it is not the outlook of the virtuous person.[20]

Still, Aristotle may appear to identify virtue of character with a non-rational condition. For we might come to be attached to virtuous action without forming any rational conception of what is good about it, or of why it deserves to be chosen over the contrary action. We may form a non-mercenary attachment to an activity we enjoy, or to a person whose company we enjoy, without any further rational conviction that this attachment is better than others that we might have formed. Sometimes, indeed, we might not see any reason to believe that this attachment is better than others; even if we come to enjoy Bach more than Beethoven, we may not believe that anyone can prove it is better to listen to Bach. If Aristotle identifies virtue with non-mercenary pleasure in virtuous action, he might conceive it as an attachment of the same kind.

[19] 'But we must take someone's pleasure or pain following on his actions to be a sign of his state. For if someone who abstains from bodily pleasures enjoys the abstinence itself, he is temperate; if he is grieved by it, he is intemperate. Again, if he stands firm against terrifying situations and enjoys it, or at least does not find it painful, he is brave; if he finds it painful, he is cowardly' (1104b3–8).

[20] The mercenary position that Aristotle rejects is similar to the one that Plato calls 'slavish' at *Phd*. 69a6–b3; cf. R. 365c1–7.

This emphasis on pleasure is intelligible if Aristotle is sympathetic to hedonism, and recommends virtue as the source of the greatest pleasure for virtuous people. Sometimes he might be taken to claim that they have been trained to find more pleasure in virtuous action than in any vicious action, so that, from their point of view, vicious action offers no pleasure as great as the pleasures they gain from acting virtuously (1153b9–19).[21] According to this view, the motive of the virtuous person is the same as that of the mercenary pleasure-seeker, to the extent that both aim at maximum pleasure; the virtuous person seems to differ only in pursuing virtuous objects of pleasure. Aristotle seems to recommend virtue to those who seek to maximize pleasure, not to condemn the hedonist outlook altogether. This is Epicurus' attitude to pleasure; the error of mercenary pleasure-seekers is their attempt to maximize pleasure by the wrong means.[22] If Aristotle agrees with Epicurus on this claim about pleasure, his view fits an anti-rationalist interpretation.

89. Anti-rationalism: Limits of Practical Reason

Aristotle describes a virtue as a state that elects (*hexis prohairetikê*, 1106b36), and his analysis of election clarifies the rational aspects of virtue. Election requires both a wish (*boulêsis*) for some end, and deliberation about the means to that end (*ta pros ta telê*, 1112b12), and hence election, like deliberation, is concerned with means to an end. When Aristotle says that thought moves nothing by itself, but contributes to action when it is combined with desire (1139a35–b1), it is reasonable to suppose that he has deliberation in mind. Similarly, we might suppose, the wish for the end is the desire that we acquire from habituation in pleasure and pain, rather than from rational reflexion.

The claim that deliberation is concerned with finding means to ends might be defended as a reasonable restriction on the proper extent of deliberation. Aristotle apparently asks us to identify our desires, and then to reflect on the courses of action that might help us to satisfy them. We rely on our self-knowledge about our desires and on our causal knowledge about the world. We can go wrong either because of errors about the world or because of errors in considering the effect of different states of the world on our desires, or because of errors in specifying the actual content of our desires. If we correct these errors, we improve our deliberation as a method of satisfying our desires.

This account of deliberation supports Aristotle's claim that it presupposes, and cannot produce, a conception of the end to be pursued. The activity that we have described begins from some desire that is clear and definite enough to allow us to look in one direction or another for the causal information that would be relevant to satisfying it. If our desire is not definite enough to allow us to ask the appropriate causal questions, we are not yet in a position to deliberate about satisfying it.

Consideration of these familiar facts may easily persuade us that Aristotle is not only right, but obviously right, to describe deliberation in the way he does. Since deliberation provides

[21] 'Indeed, presumably, if each state has its unimpeded activities, and happiness is the activity—if the activity is unimpeded—of all states or of some one of them, it follows that some unimpeded activity is most choiceworthy. But pleasure is this; and so some type of pleasure might be the best good even if most pleasures turn out to be bad without qualification' (1153b9–14).

[22] See §156.

the most readily understood model of practical reasoning, we may also be inclined to follow Aristotle in his conclusion that practical reason is confined to the discovery of means to ends that are pursued by desire.

Aristotle's description of deliberation also underlies his analysis of prudence. He says that virtue of character lies in the mean determined by the reason by which the prudent person would determine it (1106b36–1107a2). He takes prudence to be a deliberative virtue, and hence to be concerned with what promotes ends, not with the ends themselves. Virtue of character, therefore, makes the end right, and prudence makes the means right (1144a6–9). This restricted role assigned to prudence appears to support the anti-rationalist view of Aristotle's conception of virtue of character. If prudence is not competent to choose one end over another, and therefore does not make the end right, what could make the end right except some non-rational condition? The appropriate non-rational condition appears to be virtue of character, understood as the product of non-rational, non-deliberative habituation that precedes the growth of prudence.[23]

90. Anti-rationalism: Moral Virtue and Responsibility

This question about anti-rationalism leads us into a broader question about the connexion between moral virtue and responsibility. We often suppose that a moral virtue, as opposed to other types of excellence, is a state that we are free to acquire, and that we can be properly held responsible for not acquiring. This seems a plausible condition for moral virtue, even if it is easier to state than to satisfy. But if Aristotle believes that virtues of character are simply the result of a process of habituation in pleasure and pain, how could he suppose we are responsible for them?

Our answer to this question may either undermine or support an anti-rationalist view. Aristotle apparently ought not to hold such a view of virtue of character, if he holds that we are responsible for having or lacking virtues of character. But does he accept this view about virtue? Has he a conception of responsibility at all?

He has something to say about the *hekousion* and the *akousion*. These terms are often translated 'voluntary' and 'involuntary' (following the standard Latin renderings), and these translations suggest a concern with responsibility. But one might prefer the translation of '*hekousion*' and '*akousion*' by 'intentional' and 'unintentional' if one believed that these renderings have fewer anachronistic associations with responsibility.[24] Apart from this specific issue about Aristotle's discussion of the voluntary, some believe that Aristotle is not especially concerned to show that we are responsible for being virtuous or vicious.

If Aristotle has no conception of responsibility, or he is not concerned about our responsibility for being virtuous or vicious, his attitude to the virtues differs sharply from the attitude that we normally take to be characteristic of morality. We often suppose that if something is morally required of us, we are fairly blamed for failing to fulfil the requirement,

[23] Bradley, *ATHG* 239, presents an anti-rationalist account of Aristotle, and so draws a sharp contrast between Aristotle and Aquinas. On Aquinas' treatment of these issues in Aristotle see §316.

[24] Charles, *APA* 61, defends 'intentional' in preference to 'voluntary', but not on the basis of claims about anachronism.

and therefore it is in our power to fulfil it. Kant makes this assumption central in his conception of a moral imperative, but it is accepted in many views of morality, philosophical and non-philosophical, that are not purely Kantian. According to some critics, however, this assumption about responsibility is not part of the Aristotelian conception of virtue. This is one reason for saying that Aristotle's account of the virtues of character is not intended to be an account of the moral virtues.[25]

The issues about responsibility are relevant to the range of the virtues. For some of the virtues, such as magnificence, involve both a level of external assets and an instinctive good taste in dealing with them that do not seem to be things that an agent is responsible for. This is not surprising, if Aristotle is not especially concerned about responsibility.

Hume mentions this point about ancient and modern conceptions of virtue, in his discussion of some 'verbal disputes'.[26] He argues that ancient moralists count self-regarding as well as other-regarding traits, and excellences of intellect as well as of affection, as virtues.[27] He also claims that the distinction between voluntary and involuntary is unimportant. He seems to assume that Cicero's broad conception of the range of the virtues supports the claim that the ancient moralists are indifferent to the voluntary character of virtues. In Hume's view, Christian influence has made the issue about voluntariness seem important.[28]

Hume's claims make it especially important to compare the relevant parts of Aristotle with Aquinas. For Aquinas should be one of these people who warp reasoning from its natural course. He does what Hume accuses Christian moralists of doing, in so far as he connects virtue very closely with will, responsibility, and freedom. But Aquinas represents himself as drawing all the relevant distinctions in Aristotelian terms.

It is not surprising that Hume is an anti-rationalist about virtue; he draws attention to the views of the ancients (as he understands them) to support his own view that questions of responsibility are irrelevant to virtue and vice. Similarly, it is not surprising that Aquinas holds a rationalist view of virtue, and attributes such a view to Aristotle; such a view makes it easier, or apparently easier, to explain why we are responsible for being virtuous or vicious. Since Aquinas supposes that Aristotle wants to explain this connexion between virtue and responsibility, he also supposes that Aristotle has a conception of responsibility.

With the help of Hume, we might expect that if we set out from Aristotle, we can identify where Aquinas is wrong. If Aristotle is not concerned about responsibility, the alien elements added by Aquinas should be those that give a central place to responsibility in an account of the virtues. The most important of these alien elements is Aquinas' appeal to the will; for this is both a primary source of freedom and a primary source of the virtues; a moral virtue is partly constituted by an appropriate condition of one's will. It is easy to see how Aquinas connects virtue with responsibility, and hence with 'morality' as ordinarily conceived. To see whether Hume is right, we should ask whether this connexion is alien to Aristotle's way of understanding the virtues.[29]

[25] See Williams, *ELP* 174–7; 'Voluntary' 27; *SN*, ch. 3. On voluntariness and virtue cf. Butler, *Diss*. 2.

[26] Hume, *IPM*, App. iv. [27] *IPM*, App. iv §10. [28] *IPM*, App. iv §19.

[29] This view that takes Aristotle to be largely free of the characteristic elements of morality appears in Williams (see n25). It shows the influence of Nietzsche. Hume anticipates many of Nietzsche's alleged 'insights'; he attacks emphasis on 'morality' and responsibility without even knowing about Kant, who is a primary target of Nietzsche, MacIntyre, and Williams.

91. Anti-rationalism: The Voluntary

Between the general account of a virtue of character and the description of the particular virtues, the *Ethics* includes a discussion of the voluntary and the involuntary, of election, and of conditions for action and character being up to us. The connexion between virtue, virtuous action, and praise introduces the topic of praiseworthiness and hence—apparently—of responsibility. The objects of praise are the things that we ourselves, rather than necessity or fortune, are 'responsible for' (or 'causes of'; *aitioi*) (*EE* 1223a9–15).

We must decide the extent of praiseworthy action if we are to decide what aspects of happiness are in our power. Aristotle argues that it is important to show that happiness is not a product of fortune, just as in nature and in crafts the best outcome is not a product of fortune; it would conflict with our usual view of the connexion between non-coincidental causation and goodness if we believed that what we do is not the cause of our being happy (*EN* 1099b9–25). If what we do is the cause of our being happy, happiness should be identified with activity in accordance with virtue—and that is why children and animals incapable of the relevant sort of virtuous activity are also incapable of happiness (1099b25–1100a5). Virtue is in our power to an extent that is significant enough to make happiness in our power to a significant extent.[30]

Does this concern with what is in our power show that Aristotle is concerned with responsibility and freedom? We might answer No, on the ground that questions about responsibility involve questions about freedom, and freedom involves the will; for we might argue that we are responsible for our choice and free to choose only in so far as our will is able to choose between different desires, and we are not compelled to follow one or another desire. If we connect freedom with responsibility, we will say that agents are justly held responsible in so far as they have this freedom, depending on a capacity of their will. If, then, Aristotle has no concept of the will, he apparently cannot be concerned with freedom or responsibility, and his remarks about what is in our power or up to us do not express a concern with responsibility.

We might answer this argument by denying the connexion between responsibility, freedom, and will. Alternatively, we might accept this connexion, and consider whether Aristotle has a concept of the will. Since this question is worth considering in any case, we may take it for granted that a concern with responsibility requires a concept of the will, and see whether Aristotle meets this condition for being concerned with responsibility.

In *EN* iii 1, Aristotle suggests that voluntariness consists in acting not by force or because of ignorance, and that therefore an action is voluntary just in case 'the principle is in the agent, knowing the particulars in which the action consists' (1111a22–4). The claim about 'the principle in the agent' is apparently explained by the previous discussion of force, which specifies the only conditions under which Aristotle allows that the principle is outside the agent.

We can see the apparent distance between these conditions for voluntary action and any plausible conditions for responsibility, if we notice that Aristotle's conditions allow voluntary agents to include agents who do not seem to be responsible for their actions. Animals, children, and people acting under psychological compulsion or in conditions of

[30] I add the qualifications to recognize the fact that Aristotle does not conclude in i 9–10 that happiness is entirely in our control.

diminished responsibility, all meet Aristotle's conditions for voluntariness, since they can all act without being forced and in awareness of what they are doing. For the same reasons, the principle of their action seems to be within them.

Not only is this the implication of Aristotle's description of the voluntary; he also notices and insists on this implication. He objects to the suggestion that action on spirit and appetite is involuntary, because this suggestion implies that animals and children act involuntarily, and the implication is evidently false (1111a24–6). His conception of the voluntary here seems quite minimal. A mere proof that virtuous actions and states of character are voluntary, according to this minimal conception, gives us no reason for holding that we are responsible for being virtuous or for acting virtuously.

We might say that Aristotle makes a mistake, because he takes his conditions for voluntariness to be conditions for responsibility. But before we attribute this mistake to him, we ought to ask whether he is really concerned with responsibility. His relatively broad conception of the voluntary may puzzle us if we are thinking about responsibility, but it may puzzle us less if we recall that he identifies a virtue with the result of proper habituation in pleasures, pains, emotions, and other non-rational impulses. The relevant processes of habituation, and the actions resulting from habitual states, meet Aristotle's generous conditions for voluntary action. Whether or not they meet conditions for responsibility may be irrelevant to his specific concerns. Responsibility belongs to rational and free agents who are taken to have a certain kind of control over their impulses and inclinations; but these aspects of responsibility seem to have no place in Aristotle's conception of the voluntary, because they seem to have no place in his conception of virtue.

92. Anti-rationalism and the Weakness of Practical Reason: Incontinence

If Aristotle believes that virtue consists primarily in a condition of the non-rational part of the soul, produced by habituation of non-rational inclinations, he ought also to believe that failures to be virtuous are to be explained by some failure in the non-rational part, and, more specifically, by misdirected or incomplete habituation. If virtue does not consist primarily in the right condition of practical reason, failure of practical reason ought not to be the primary cause of failure to be virtuous. We can see whether Aristotle takes this anti-rationalist view if we examine his views of incontinence and vice.[31]

He takes both incontinence and continence to involve disagreement between the rational and non-rational parts (1102b12–28); incontinents are those who act on appetite rather than election (1111b13–14). On this point he follows the account of incontinence that Plato offers in *Republic* iv, and therefore disagrees with Socrates' denial of the possibility of incontinence. He rejects Socrates' view that only ignorance of what is better and worse underlies apparent incontinence; indeed, he asserts that the Socratic view conflicts with the appearances (1145b27–8).

[31] Aristotle's views on incontinence are puzzling, and the interpretation of them is controversial. Some useful discussions indicating the variety of possible interpretations are Wiggins, 'Weakness'; Charles, *APA*, chs. 3–4; Dahl, *PRAWW*, chs. 9–11; McDowell, 'Issues' 46–9.

Aristotle seems to support his disagreement with Socrates by arguing that the incontinent's practical reasoning is not defective. He has the right election (1152a17), and acts against it (1148a13–17; 1151a5–7 (cf. 1150b29–31); 1151a29–33). He has formed a 'good syllogism', a practical syllogism based on rational wish (*boulêsis*) and deliberation, reaching a conclusion that expresses his election (1147a25–8). This conclusion prohibits the very action that he later does because of incontinence (1147a34). He will act on this conclusion at once if he is able to act and is not hindered (1147a29–31). He can still say the words of the good conclusion when he is acting incontinently (1147a18–24; cf. b9–13).

The hindrance to action comes not from reasoning, but from appetite (1147a33–4; 1111b13–14). He is moved by the conclusion of a 'bad syllogism', based on appetite and perhaps on some deliberation (1142b18–20), focussed on the action prohibited by the conclusion of the good syllogism. Unlike the intemperate person, who 'thinks he ought' to do what he does (1146b22–4; 1151a23–4; 1152a4–6), the incontinent does not think he ought to do what he is doing. This difference results from the difference in their elections. When he is acting incontinently, the incontinent feels pain, because he is doing what he thinks is bad (*EE* 1224b19–21).

Aristotle seems to suggest, then, that the incontinent person makes the right election, but acts against it, because he is moved to act by a non-rational appetite that conflicts with the election he has made. He acts on the appetite because it is stronger than the rational wish that underlies the correct election. The Socratic appeal to ignorance is superfluous, since we can explain incontinence without it, and misguided, since it conflicts with obvious facts about the incontinent person's awareness of what he is doing.

These remarks may suggest that both continence and incontinence are possible for agents whose deliberation and election is entirely correct. Apparently, the incontinent agent has done all the appropriate reasoning and deliberation and come out with the right answer, but none the less prefers to do what he knows to be worse. It is a familiar fact that the rational desire is not always the strongest, because we are attracted by other things besides objects of rational desire. The agent's deliberative reflexion does not seem to explain incontinence.

These features of Aristotle's account of incontinence seem to express an anti-rationalist view of virtue. Aristotle falls short of a strongly and explicitly anti-rationalist view such as Hume's. For Hume insists that incontinent action is not really irrational after all; it is not acting against reason, since it is simply a preference for my foreseen lesser good over my foreseen greater good, and neither this preference nor the opposite preference is either rational or irrational.[32] Aristotle does not say this; he believes that incontinents act against correct reason. But in saying this he seems to mean that they act against reason that is subordinate to correctly habituated desire. The main tendency of his view of incontinence appears to be anti-rationalist.

93. Anti-rationalism: Vice

Aristotle's account of vice may also appear to be anti-rationalist, in so far as it treats vice as a sort of mirror-image of virtue. The vicious person, no less than the virtuous person, has the

[32] Hume, *T* ii 3.3 §6.

rational and the non-rational parts of the soul in agreement; for continent and incontinent people suffer conflict between the parts of the soul, and in this respect differ from both the virtuous and the vicious person (*EN* 1102b13–28). The vicious person is similar to the virtuous in so far as he acts on his election; that is how his attitude to his action differs from the incontinent person's.[33] The vicious person acts 'thinking it right' (*oiomenos dein*, 1152a5–6) to do what he does.

This picture suggests that the two parts of the vicious person's soul agree in accepting the guidance of the rational part. For if the rational part were purely subordinate to the non-rational part, the vicious person's deliberation would not result in elections; an election has to begin from a wish (*boulêsis*), which is a desire of the rational part. The incontinent person sometimes acts incontinently on deliberation, but he still acts on appetite rather than on wish (1111b13–15; 1142b17–20). This agreement within the vicious person's soul explains why he is not subject to the regret and changing of mind that is a mark of the incontinent (1150a21–2; 1150b29–36).

And so the vicious person seems to be exactly similar to the virtuous person in his relation to practical reason and non-rational desire. They equally follow reason. One has good ends and the other has bad ends; but this difference does not imply that one is guided by reason and the other is not. This picture of vice is anti-rationalist because it implies that we cannot identify virtue with control by reason. The vicious person differs from the incontinent in acting on his election. He is guided by practical reason and deliberation, but he rejects the virtuous person's conclusion. If two people are equally guided by practical reason, but come to opposite conclusions, practical reason itself cannot ensure the right conclusions.

Apparently, then, we reach the right conclusions only if we begin from the right starting points, acquired independently of practical reason. We might take this to be the point of Aristotle's remark that deliberation has to begin from some end given as a starting point. If practical reason, identified with deliberation, cannot supply the appropriate starting point, apparently it cannot be the crucial element in virtue. If the vicious person acts on his election, and hence on his rational choice, he must differ from the virtuous person in his non-rational impulses. This is just what we expect if virtue depends primarily on habituation. The vicious person has been habituated badly, and therefore does not grasp the right ends.

These different aspects of Aristotle's position present a case for an anti-rationalist interpretation. But the case rests on a selective treatment of the evidence. If we examine the different elements of the anti-rationalist position in the light of a fuller survey of the evidence, we will be able to see whether the anti-rationalist interpretation gives a satisfactory account of Aristotle's view.

94. Virtue, Election, and Reason

The first difficulty for an anti-rationalist account arises from Aristotle's description of virtue of character. Though he regards it as the product of habituation in pleasures and pains, he also takes it to have a rational component that does not fit an anti-rationalist interpretation.

[33] See 1146b19–24; 1148a4–11; 1150a16–22; 1151a5–10; 1152a5–6.

Someone who simply has well-trained non-rational desires does not satisfy the conditions of i 13, which implies that a person's function is fulfilled by agreement between the rational and the non-rational parts, under the control of the rational part (1102a5–7; b23–8). If Aristotle takes this condition seriously, we would not expect the rational part to be strictly subordinate to the non-rational as it would be if virtue were a state of the non-rational part.

Virtue is a state (*hexis*) rather than a feeling, because virtue is praiseworthy (1105b31), whereas simply having a certain kind of feeling is not praiseworthy. Aristotle seems to suggest that simply having a feeling concentrated on the right object is not sufficient for being praiseworthy. He does not yet tell us what is needed to make a praiseworthy state out of non-praiseworthy feelings.

Virtue of character is a state that elects, consisting in a mean determined by reason, and by the reason by which the prudent person would determine it (1106b36–1107a2). We might take these remarks about reason and the prudent person so that they do not require each virtuous person to have the reason and prudence that determine the mean. Do we perhaps have virtue of character if (like the non-ruling classes in the *Republic*) our emotions are guided by someone else's reason and prudence?

Aristotle's other remarks about the virtuous person rule out this possibility. The virtuous person must elect the virtuous action for its own sake (1105a32; 1144a19); but election rests on wish and deliberation, and correct deliberation is the task of the prudent person (1140a25–31); hence genuine virtue requires prudence, to order non-rational desires by correct reason (1144b21–5). In requiring prudence Aristotle requires the virtuous person to realize fully his capacity for rational determination of his actions and choices. Election of virtuous action for its own sake (1144a19) is necessary for 'full virtue' (*kuria aretê*, 1144b4), and we lack this unless we have prudence.

The fact that Aristotle makes reason and prudence prominent necessary conditions for virtue does not by itself refute an anti-rationalist interpretation. His remarks about prudence may make his position inconsistent, or they may be interpreted so as to fit an anti-rationalist view. But at least they present an anti-rationalist view with an objection that needs to be answered.

95. Pleasure and Reason

Aristotle takes virtue to result from habituation in pleasure and pain, and he regards appropriate pleasure and pain as a sign of having acquired the appropriate state of character. This emphasis on pleasure may appear to support an anti-rationalist interpretation, since it may seem to suggest that he identifies a virtue with a non-rational impulse or reaction. But to see whether this appearance is correct or misleading, we need to consider Aristotle's views on pleasure more closely; for the rational or non-rational character of virtue depends partly on the relation between pleasure and its object.

Aristotle agrees with Plato's suggestion in the *Philebus* that the virtuous person takes pleasure in being virtuous and acting virtuously, whereas the vicious person takes a different type of pleasure.[34] He develops this suggestion by claiming that pleasures differ in kind (or 'in

[34] See Plato, *Phil.* 12c8–d4, discussed in §53.

species', 1175a21–b1). In this claim he rejects the view that pleasure is a uniform sensation to which different kinds of pleasant action are connected only causally and instrumentally; this is the view that Protarchus defends in the *Philebus* (12b–13c). The instrumental conception of the relation between pleasure and its object supports a hedonist view of the good; for if one action is more valuable than another only because of the quantity of pleasure that results from it, the hedonist can plausibly claim that only a larger quantity of pleasure can be more valuable non-instrumentally.

Since Aristotle rejects Protarchus' claims about pleasure and its objects, it is not surprising that he rejects hedonism. He is sympathetic to some of the arguments that Aristippus and Eudoxus use to defend hedonism (*EN* 1172b9–25), but he does not believe that they support hedonism. He believes they are helpful in answering the extreme thesis that pleasure is not a good at all. He agrees with the hedonists in believing that pleasure is a good, but he rejects the stronger claim that pleasure is the good (1172b26–35).[35]

Aristotle objects to Protarchus' instrumental conception of pleasure and its object by pointing out that we do not believe one pleasure can be substituted for another in the ways that should be possible if the instrumental conception were right. According to the instrumental conception, it should not matter to us if we lost our capacity to enjoy athletic activity or playing music, as long as our loss of enjoyment were outweighed by a large enough quantity of pleasure in lying on the beach. But in fact we would think we had lost something valuable if we lost our capacity to enjoy these activities; the substitution of some different pleasures might compensate us to some degree, but it would not compensate us with more of the same thing that we had lost. It would be like compensating us with money for an accident in which we lost the use of our limbs; just as the money would not give us the use of our limbs back, the additional pleasure would not be more of the pleasure that we had lost. Aristotle recognizes this point by remarking that one kind of pleasure cannot be added to another to produce a greater pleasure; on the contrary, one kind tends to reduce the enjoyment we gain from the other kind (1175b1–24).

Our choice of pleasures and our views about compensation reflect the fact that the specific pleasure taken in a particular action essentially depends on our choosing that action for its own sake. Pleasure is a 'supervenient end' (1174b31–3) resulting from an activity that one pursues as an activity (*energeia*) rather than a mere process (*kinêsis*). It is an end because it is a distinct non-instrumental value beyond the activity that is its object; but it is only a supervenient end, because its non-instrumental value depends on the value of the activity on which the pleasure depends (1176a3–29). If someone pursues cruelty or self-indulgence for its own sake, his life is worse in so far as he enjoys those pursuits. If, however, someone values just and generous action for its own sake, his life is better in so far as he takes pleasure in these actions.

But if we take pleasure in just action in its own right, not simply as a means to some further result that yields pleasure, we need the appropriate beliefs about the non-instrumental value of just action. We have to regard just action as 'action' (*praxis*), in Aristotle's technical sense, rather than mere production; hence we have to regard it as containing its own end

[35] In *EN* vii Aristotle seems to argue primarily against extreme hostility to pleasure, such as one finds in the Cynics and in the dour people in Plato, *Phil.* 44b–d. Book x states the objections to hedonism more fully.

(1140b6–7). This rational conviction of the value of an action belongs to 'the life of action of the rational part' that realizes the human function. When we take pleasure on the basis of this conviction, and this conviction is correct, we are taking the virtuous person's pleasure in virtuous action.

Earlier we cited a passage in Book ii where Aristotle identifies a virtue with a state that takes pleasure in the right actions, and we took this passage to support an anti-rationalist account of his views on virtue. We can now see what is wrong with that treatment of the passage. Aristotle makes it clear that the special pleasure of a virtuous person must have a special object; the temperate person is the one who abstains from bodily pleasures and enjoys the abstention itself (1104b3–8). Aristotle means that he abstains from bodily pleasures that would be inappropriate (since the temperate person does not enjoy abstinence from appropriate pleasures). Virtuous people who enjoy this abstention do not enjoy it because it is abstention from bodily pleasures; they enjoy it because it is the right abstention, from the wrong pleasures. To form this enjoyment, they must have come to value rightness, and to reject wrongness, for their own sakes. Their judgment of value underlies the pleasure of the virtuous person. Such a rational appreciation of virtue requires more than feelings of pleasure and pain focussed on the right actions.

Aristotle's treatment of pleasure as a supervenient end helps to identify the pleasures that are results of a rational conviction, and so helps to explain how these pleasures conflict with hedonism. But we may wonder whether he does not go too far in connecting pleasures with evaluative beliefs.[36] How, on his account, are we to understand action simply 'for pleasure' (as we normally understand it)? We seem to do all sorts of things simply because they are enjoyable; our enjoyment does not seem to be a by-product of our convictions about the value of the actions. Aristotle apparently needs to give an account of acting simply for pleasure. He especially needs such an account to explain his description of the vicious person, who acts for the sake of pleasure (1146b22–4; 1150a19–21).[37]

His account of pleasure would be clearer if he distinguished two ways of pursuing something 'for its own sake': (1) We might pursue F for its own sake simply because we pursue it non-instrumentally, without regard for the consequences. (2) We might pursue F in its own right, because it is what it is. In the second case its being F gives us the reason for pursuing F non-instrumentally, but in the first case we might pursue the thing that is F without recognizing any property of it as a reason for pursuing F non-instrumentally. Aristotle does not explicitly distinguish these two ways of pursuing F for its own sake, but the difference between them helps us to clarify (or perhaps to revise) his account of pleasure. While not all pleasure requires a judgment about the value of its object, some pleasures—those we take in F qua F—require such a judgment. Non-instrumental pursuit without an evaluative judgment underlies pursuit of something simply for pleasure. Evaluative judgment underlies the pleasures of the virtuous person.

And so, even if Aristotle were to make the mistake of believing that all pleasure depends on an evaluative belief, the crucial part of his doctrine is secured if some pleasures depend on it. For that is all he needs to support his claim that pleasures differ in kind according to their

[36] A similar question arises about Butler's belief-dependent conception of pleasure in *S* xi 6.
[37] For further discussion of the vicious person see §109 below.

objects, and this is the claim that supports his objections to hedonism and his account of the distinctive pleasure that the virtuous person takes in being virtuous. He faces and answers a question that raises a persistent difficulty for the various hedonist theories of value that have been offered. Epicurus and Mill, in their different ways, try to remove the difficulty that Aristotle raises for hedonism, but they do not clearly succeed.[38]

Aristotle's references to virtue and pleasure, therefore, do not imply neglect of the rational component of virtue; they presuppose some rational evaluation of virtuous actions as good in themselves. We therefore expect Aristotle to describe the basis of this rational evaluation in virtuous people, to make clear the source of their special pleasure. Virtue involves the non-rational aspects of human nature, because we need our non-rational aspects to be brought into a virtuous condition; but virtue itself is primarily a rational condition. Pleasure has its proper place in happiness if it is part of a life that is guided by practical reason. Closer analysis of Aristotle's views on pleasure does not support an anti-rationalist interpretation, but counts against it.

96. Virtue, Election, and Deliberation

Since Aristotle identifies virtue with a state that elects (1106b36), a clearer understanding of his view requires some grasp of his conception of election. Until now, we have attended to his claim that election rests on deliberation about means to ends, and therefore is about means to ends (1111b26–30; 1113b3–4). According to this conception, a virtue must be a state that elects, because it aims at action, and election focusses our desires on specific actions.

But this is not all that Aristotle means in connecting virtue with election. The virtuous person must also elect the virtuous action for its own sake (1105a32; cf. 1144a19). This demand expresses the expectation that the just or generous person will act appropriately without the incentive of some further gain. Glaucon and Adeimantus express this expectation in *Republic* ii, in asking Socrates to show that the just person is happier by pursuing justice without regard to rewards and consequences.[39] Aristotle's demand for election of virtuous action for its own sake implies a rationalist interpretation of Glaucon and Adeimantus' expectation; for not just any choice of an action for its own sake, but only a rational, deliberative choice is the mark of a virtuous person.

Aristotle's demand is puzzling, in the light of his claim that election is only about means to ends. For if we elect something for its own sake, we elect it as an end; but, according to Aristotle, we elect only means. How, then, can the virtuous person elect the virtuous action for its own sake?

One answer leads us back to anti-rationalism. Perhaps Aristotle uses 'elect' loosely here. In that case, we might capture his intention better if we substituted 'choose' for 'elect'. This substitution removes the apparent conflict between the condition for virtue and the other claims about election.

[38] For Epicurus see §156. Mill deals with similar questions in his division between quantity and quality of pleasure in *U*, ch. 2.

[39] See §50.

This answer is unsatisfactory. For Aristotle's description of virtue carefully prepares for his reference to election (ii 4); moreover, this reference to election explains why we need a fuller examination of election (iii 2–3). Since the fuller examination professes to clarify the initial description of virtue, that description ought to refer to the sort of election that is described in the clarification. If we assume a loose use of 'election' in Book ii, we remove an apparent conflict only by introducing a real conflict; for the concept of election that is explained in Book iii will not be—contrary to Aristotle—the concept that was used in Book ii.

A different sort of answer is available, if we accept a comprehensive conception of happiness. For choosing x as a means to y may be a way of choosing x as an end in itself, not as purely instrumental to y. Plato's claims about justice in *Republic* ii suggest this treatment of means; they are coherent claims if and only if Plato conceives justice as a component of happiness, not a purely instrumental means to it.[40] According to this conception, justice is a component of happiness just in so far as it is a non-instrumental good that is a necessary part of the best life. In that case the claim that we choose justice for its own sake does not conflict with the claim that we choose it for the sake of happiness; on the contrary, each claim partly explains the other.

In examining *EN* i, and especially the completeness of happiness, we have seen that Aristotle needs to appeal to the same relation between non-instrumental goods and happiness. The composite conception of happiness explains how happiness can embrace the different forms of *praxis*, non-instrumental action chosen for its own sake. The same composite conception fits Aristotle's claims about election and deliberation, if we understand 'contributing to ends' or 'for the sake of ends' so that it includes components of the ends, and not only instrumental means to them.[41]

Hence the same understanding of ends and what promotes them explains both Aristotle's claims about happiness and his claims about election and virtue. The fact that it explains these two aspects of Aristotle's theory that would otherwise be perplexing is a reason for believing that it is the right interpretation of both aspects.[42]

Aristotle's claims about deliberation and election do not conflict, therefore, with his claim that the virtuous person elects virtuous action for its own sake. Deliberation is not about ends, in so far as it must begin with some end in view; the means that deliberation finds to promote that first end is an end in itself, if deliberation finds that it is a component of the first end. Moral deliberation begins with some conception of happiness, and deliberates until we find the states of character that are components of happiness. If we deliberate correctly, we find the moral virtues, and we elect these for their own sakes.

[40] See §52.

[41] These phrases give different ways of rendering Aristotle's phrase *pros to telos*, lit. 'towards the end', equivalent to 'for the sake of (*heneka*) the end'.

[42] This solution is developed by Aquinas. See, e.g., §251, 273. It is also widely accepted (without reference to Aquinas) in modern discussions of Aristotle, beginning (in English) from Greenwood, *EN VI* 46–9. See also Ackrill, 'Eudaimonia'; Wiggins, 'Deliberation'; Sorabji, 'Role'; Cooper, *RHGA*, ch. 1. Some problems and further issues are discussed by Charles, 'Ontology'. Some doubts about the conclusions I draw from this account of deliberation are expressed by McDowell, 'Issues' 30–6. This conception of means is also relevant to Mill's discussion of parts of happiness in *U*, ch. 4, and to Moore's criticism of Aristotle in *PE*, ch. 3.

97. Wish and Will

We must still clarify the aspect of an election that introduces a 'wish' (*boulêsis*). We might initially suppose that if we desire an end and we deliberate about the means to it, we elect the action that appears to be a means to the end. But this is not enough for an election, since Aristotle distinguishes wish from spirit and appetite, which are also desires for ends. We might, then, understand wish as desire that is not formed under the stimulus of some immediate pain, need, or provocation of the sort that produces the desires of appetite and spirit.[43] This sort of desire can be trained to conform to reason, in so far as it can more easily be trained to focus on more remote objects and is less tied to immediate satisfactions. Still, it belongs, as the other desires do, to the desiring part, which is inherently non-rational, though it is capable of following reason (cf. 1102b13–1103a2).

If this is the right account of Aristotle's view of wish, Aquinas is wrong to impose a rationalist interpretation, introducing a sort of desire that is peculiar to the rational part of the soul and distinct from non-rational desire.[44] An anti-rationalist view denies that the relation of different desires to reason constitutes an essential difference between them.

But the anti-rationalist view does not account for all of Aristotle's claims.[45] For wish is not simply a desire for an end; it is also a rational desire aiming at the good (*Rhet.* 1369a2–7). Aristotle assumes that to be moved in accordance with reason, we must be moved in accordance with wish (*DA* 433a22–5). He describes incontinence as the overcoming of wish by non-rational desire (434a11–14).[46] In a virtuous person, therefore, the desire for an end that underlies an election and the resulting virtuous action must be a rational desire. Aristotle suggests that the primary object of wish is happiness (*EN* 1111b26–30);[47] hence the virtuous person's election is based on a wish for one's own happiness, and deliberation about how to achieve it. This deliberation gives us the ends that are characteristic of the virtuous person.

This claim faces a difficulty in the role that Aristotle assigns to election. For he distinguishes election from wish, and he claims that when we act on a specific rational desire for some achievable object here and now we act on an election rather than a wish.[48] But if election fits into the threefold classification of desire, it must be wish, in the sense of 'wish' that makes wish co-ordinate with spirit and appetite. When Aristotle compares wish with election, he has already excluded the two non-rational forms of desire (1111b10–19), and so assumes that election is a form of wish. When he says that election is not to be identified with wish,

[43] Hence *boulêsis* is called a 'desire without pain' (*Top*. 146a36–b6). 'Velle' and 'voluntas' capture the non-urgent aspect of '*boulesthai*' and '*boulêsis*' quite well in Latin. See §240.

[44] 'For the scholastics, the will is precisely a rational desire, in the sense that it is an activity of the rational soul, which possesses in itself a desiring faculty distinct from the irrational desiring faculty—an idea totally foreign to Aristotle' (Gauthier, *EN* ii 194).

[45] This is clear, though not completely explicit in iii 2. Aristotle discusses *epithumia, thumos*, and then introduces *boulêsis* as the desire of rational part.

[46] In 434a12 I read *tên boulêsin*.

[47] He does not say this is the only possible ultimate object of wish, but he does not suggest anything else.

[48] Hence some are inclined to identify the will with *prohairesis* rather than *boulêsis*. See Ross, *Ar.* 199–200.

he adds that it none the less appears close to it (1111b19–20). The close connexion between election and wish suggests that they are both desires belonging to the rational part.[49]

Aristotle's remarks about election may help us to see whether wish is an essentially rational desire. If acting on wish is simply acting on a desire that has been affected by some sort of reasoning, any action resulting from deliberation should be action on wish. But Aristotle denies this. For we do not form an election simply by deliberating about how to satisfy a non-rational desire; the deliberation of an incontinent person about how to satisfy his appetites does not result in an election, and so does not arise from wish.[50] Action on wish is rational in some sense that goes beyond simply acting on deliberation about a non-rational desire; and so a wish must be rational in some sense that goes beyond simply being influenced by deliberation. Aristotle's claims about the connexion between election and wish tend to support Aquinas' view that Aristotle recognizes an essentially rational form of desire; and so Aquinas is justified in supposing that Aristotle recognizes the will.[51]

Aristotle's description of incontinence implies that the rational part of the soul has its own desires. As we have seen, he distinguishes a part of the soul that 'has reason fully and within itself' (1103a2) from a part that is 'non-rational, but shares in a way in reason' (1102b13–14). This second part does not include all desires.[52] For he takes incontinence to result from conflict between the rational and the non-rational parts. In the incontinent person something fights against and resists reason (1102b17–18), so that 'the impulses of incontinent people go in contrary directions' (1102b21). One of these contrary impulses belongs to the non-rational part that is capable of obeying reason but fails to obey reason in the incontinent person. The other impulse belongs to the part that is rational in its own right. In recognizing an impulse proper to the rational part, Aristotle seems to recognize essentially rational desire.

Similarly, he claims that election is contrary to appetite, whereas appetite is not contrary to appetite (1111b15–16), and that incontinent people act on appetite, but not on election (1111b13–14), even though they make the correct election (1151a5–7). In the incontinent person, then, appetite conflicts with election, which is a desire based on wish. Since the incontinent person suffers a conflict between the rational and the non-rational part, wish belongs to the rational part.

If Aristotle held an anti-rationalist view, he would raise far-reaching difficulties for his theory of virtue. An anti-rationalist view must apparently say that we form wishes by forming desires that are attached to objects that we believe to be good. First, (we might suppose) we pursue things that seem to offer pleasure or reward rather than pain or punishment,

[49] Aspasius emphasizes the connexion between *boulêsis* and *prohairesis*: '*Boulêsis* appears close to *prohairesis*, since, first of all, it is in the rational part of the soul, where what most controls *prohairesis* (or "the most important part of *prohairesis*" (*to kuriôtaton tês prohaireseôs*)) is, and, second, because it is a part of *prohairesis*. For whenever intellect after having deliberated approves and chooses, *boulêsis*, being a desire, goes forward with it. And in fact we are in the habit of treating *boulesthai* and *prohaireisthai* as signifying the same thing. For instead of saying "I elect to farm my land" we say "I wish (volo) to farm my land", and we say "he has a good will (voluntas)", that is to say a good *prohairesis*' (68.27–32). The translation of the last sentence relies on Felicianus' Latin version (the Greek text has a lacuna).

[50] On the incontinent's deliberation see 1142b17–20. On his failure to act on *prohairesis* see 1111b13–14. On *prohairesis* and *boulêsis* see 1113a21 (where *kata tên boulêsin* should probably be read); 1113b3–5.

[51] Alexander argues that wish requires judgment and deliberation, because it is a rational desire. It is not itself an exercise of reason, but it follows on the appropriate exercise of reason, and specifically on deliberation (*DA* 74.6–13). Alexander is cited and unjustly criticized by Gauthier, 'St Maxime' 58.

[52] See Heliodorus, 24.40; Aspasius, 35.22; 36.2; Eustratius, 118.33–5. On *boulêsis* cf. Eustratius, 116.11–12.

but gradually we are habituated to pursue things that seem to be good rather than bad. Such a desire, however, may still be non-rational. If we have been correctly trained, we will be pleased with the thought that an action is good and fine; in fact this is how the temperate or brave person's non-rational desires react to the appropriate information. But these non-rational reactions do not count, in Aristotle's view, as expressions of wish and election. For while he agrees that we ought to form non-rational desires for things we believe to be good (1111a29–31), he does not suggest that every such desire is a wish. An anti-rationalist view seems to oversimplify Aristotle's conception of the different sorts of desires that are present in a well-trained person.

The anti-rationalist view might be defended by appeal to the last part of *EN* i 13, where Aristotle uses his division of parts of the soul to mark the division between virtues of character and virtues of intellect (1103a3–10). The virtues of intellect clearly belong to the rational part, and do not essentially consist in well-ordered desires; well-ordered desires belong to the virtues of character. Does this not imply that all well-ordered desires, including those belonging to the will, belong to the non-rational part?[53]

We ought not to draw this conclusion; for Aristotle neither says nor implies that the virtues of character belong exclusively to the non-rational part. He believes that none of them is exclusively a virtue of the rational part, since all of them essentially include some appropriate training of non-rational desires (those belonging to spirit and appetite). But to say this is consistent with saying that the virtues of character belong to the rational part in so far as they include the right election.

98. Prudence and Deliberation

Our explanation of wish and election rests on the assumption that we can deliberate about the components of happiness, and that the desire we reach as a result of this deliberation is a wish. In the light of this conception of happiness and deliberation, we can understand Aristotle's claim that the virtuous person elects virtuous action, but elects it for its own sake; his claim is intelligible in the light of his earlier claim that we choose virtues both for their own sake and for the sake of happiness. The same account of deliberation also helps to explain the role of deliberation in prudence. If we assume that every 'means' to an end (i.e., everything that 'promotes' or 'contributes to'[54] an end) is a purely instrumental means to it, Aristotle's views about prudence appear to be inconsistent; but if we avoid that assumption, they form a coherent conception of prudence.

Prudence has a wide scope. It deliberates about what contributes to living well as a whole (1140a28). It begins with nothing more specific than 'living well as a whole', and so it has to find the different things that promote living well. These include (according to Aristotle) the virtues that are components of happiness.[55] In so far as prudent people carry out this deliberation, they do the sort of thing that Aristotle announces as the task of political science (said to be the same state as prudence, 1141b23).[56]

[53] This seems to be the view of Aquinas, *in EN* §243, though it conflicts with his other views. See §257.

[54] See above n42.

[55] This is part of the 'grand end' interpretation criticized by Broadie at *EA* 198–202, and discussed by Kraut, 'Defence'.

[56] On the extent of deliberation see §322.

The task Aristotle sets himself in the *Ethics* is the task, at a very general level, that he assigns to prudence in Book vi. The *Ethics* begins with only some general views about *eudaimonia*, and without any definite or fixed specification of its components. The initial conception of happiness is not so vague that it allows just anything to count as a component of happiness. The formal conditions of i 7 rule out some mistaken accounts of the composition of happiness, including the accounts presupposed by the different ways of life rejected in i 5. But we cannot immediately derive the components of happiness from the formal conditions, even when they are supplemented by the Function Argument. To see the implications of Aristotle's conditions for happiness is to discover the components of happiness; and this discovery results from the deliberation that goes on in the treatise as a whole. These features of the *Ethics* clarify the role of deliberation and its capacity to discover intrinsic goods that are components of the end.

Aristotle's view of deliberation explains why deliberation is the characteristic function of prudence, and is concerned with what contributes to the end, but none the less prudence is a correct grasp of the end (1142b32–3).[57] Aristotle does not imply that some non-deliberative aspect of prudence is needed to grasp the end, or that we cannot grasp the end through deliberation. On the contrary, we would expect good deliberation about the components of happiness to reach a correct grasp of the end. Aristotle's remarks about deliberation and about the relation of prudence to the end support each other.

These remarks also help to explain why the role of virtue is to get the right end, and the role of prudence is to find the things contributing to the end (1145a5). Aristotle does not mean that prudence has no role in getting the right end; for the virtue that is said to grasp the right end is the 'complete' or 'full' (*kuria*) virtue that includes prudence. In saying that the function of prudence is to find what contributes to the end, Aristotle does not describe a task separate from the task of virtue. On the contrary, he means that the deliberative function of prudence reaches the right end that the virtuous person grasps.

If, then, we grasp Aristotle's views on deliberation and ends, we see that his position is consistent. It is also plausible, if we believe that he correctly describes his task in the *Ethics* as deliberation about the components of the end, and that his deliberative argument shows that the virtues he recognizes are components of happiness.

If practical reason and deliberation fulfil these tasks, they support one choice of ultimate ends rather than another. In claiming that the virtues of character include prudence, carrying out these deliberative functions, Aristotle shows how the virtues embody the subordination of non-rational desires to practical reason. To act in accordance with the virtues is to engage in 'a life of action of the rational part', since the virtues rest on the deliberation that identifies certain things as actions (*praxeis*) that have their ends within themselves.

Aristotle, therefore, presents the theory of virtue that his naturalism requires. His version of naturalism identifies the human function with a life of action of the rational part, and therefore requires a naturalist account of virtue to be a rationalist account. The Function Argument guides his account of the virtues and his claims about the relation of the virtues to prudence.

He does not take the non-rational components of the virtues to be irrelevant or unimportant. On the contrary, we have seen how his claims about the importance of non-rational

[57] A less probable translation makes prudence grasp the means to the end.

impulses, pleasures, and pains show how one might develop a strongly anti-rationalist account of the virtues of character and of the formation of ends. But Aristotle does not hold an anti-rationalist account; it would undermine the central role of the Function Argument in the *Ethics*. Non-rational elements are prominent in the account of virtue; for if virtue fulfils human nature, it fulfils the non-rational elements of human nature too.[58] But Aristotle's naturalism places the human function in a life guided by practical reason; hence the fulfilment of the non-rational elements of human nature includes their agreement with, and subordination to, practical reason.

It is not immediately evident that naturalism implies rationalism about virtue; it leaves open the possibility of a non-Aristotelian account of the human function that would not make virtue the excellence of practical reason. It is rather difficult, however, to make such a view convincing. For if we conceive human nature as a system rather than a collection, it is difficult to identify the relevant sort of system without saying that it is guided by practical reason; and if we seek to identify virtue with what is required by the system, it is most plausible to identify it with some sort of guidance by practical reason. This connexion between nature, reason, and virtue is characteristic not only of Aristotle, but of other naturalists as well—the Stoics, Aquinas, Suarez, and Butler. It is not accidental that Hume rejects both naturalism and rationalism. Though some philosophers try to maintain naturalism without rationalism, as Hutcheson does, or rationalism without naturalism, as (e.g.) Scotus, Clarke, and Price do, their attempts to defend one of the Aristotelian claims without the other result in a less defensible position.[59]

99. Virtue, Reason, and Responsibility

We have traced some of the details that fill in the outline sketched in the Function Argument. The different virtues of character are different ways in which the non-rational and rational parts of the soul agree, under the guidance of the rational part. Aristotle describes the guidance of the rational part further in identifying a virtue of character with a state that elects. Since election rests on deliberation about the composition of the ultimate end, not simply about instrumental means to it, the virtuous person's election results from a distinctive conception of what is non-instrumentally valuable. Control by the rational part, therefore, includes acceptance of a distinctive set of ends grasped by practical reason.

Even if the naturalism of the Function Argument requires this rationalist conception of virtue, is this conception at all plausible? Why should we prefer Aristotle's rationalist view over an anti-rationalist view that, as we have seen, we might construct from Aristotelian material? Even if Aristotle himself does not hold an anti-rationalist conception of virtue as primarily or exclusively a good condition of our emotions and other non-rational impulses, this anti-rationalist conception might be better than the conception he accepts.

Some of the further questions raised by this question may be explored by returning to the connexions between Aristotle's account of virtue and his views on responsibility. We have

[58] Hence Aquinas marks three aspects of natural law, corresponding to three elements of human nature. See *ST* 1–2 q94 a2, discussed at §311.

[59] See §368.

seen how certain aspects of these views seem to support an anti-rationalist view, and even suggest that he is not concerned with responsibility at all. We have also seen that Aristotle's views on the range of 'voluntary' or 'intentional' (*hekousion*) action do not suggest any connexion with the will or with freedom. For voluntary agents include non-rational animals and children, though we would normally attribute neither wills nor free action to them.

This broad scope of voluntary action, however, raises a further difficulty about the *Ethics*. It is not immediately clear why Aristotle thinks human beings are the only ethical agents. Ethics is about the virtues of character (*êthos*) that are acquired by habituation (*ethismos*); but non-rational animals can have their actions and desires modified by training that involves rewards and deprivations, and hence they seem capable of habituation and of forming a good or bad character.[60]

Aristotle suggests that non-rational agents are not ethical agents, because virtue and vice are objects of praise and blame; since only voluntary actions are open to praise or blame, only agents who act voluntarily are ethical agents. But this answer raises further puzzles. For, as he sees, the definition of voluntary action implies that non-rational animals act voluntarily (1111a24–6); and so they should apparently be open to praise and blame. It may seem plausible in any case to claim that we can praise or blame animals and children; for we train and habituate them, by communicating our pleasure and pain in their action. They still seem to be ethical agents.[61]

This conclusion presupposes that communication of pleasure and pain is praise and blame, and that an agent influenced by such communication is legitimately praised and blamed. We might reject the presuppositions. Perhaps such an agent does not really deserve praise and blame, and perhaps the positive and negative reinforcement we offer are not genuine praise and blame. Aristotle might reasonably argue that normal adult human beings are properly praised and blamed for their actions, and that animals are not; though we try to modify the behaviour of animals, we do not praise or blame them in the same way.

If Aristotle relies on this argument, he may believe that rational agents are morally responsible, and that genuine praise recognizes a responsible action. On this view, non-rational animals are incapable of responsibility, and so are not candidates for praise or blame, and hence are incapable of virtue or vice. But if Aristotle accepts this answer, he owes some account of responsibility that is distinct from his account of voluntariness; for mere voluntariness does not mark the right distinctions.

To see why non-rational agents are not responsible for their actions, we may consider cases where even rational agents acting on their desires seem not to be responsible for their actions. In cases of madness, or overpowering compulsive desires, we might argue that the agents are not responsible for what they do, and hence are not open to blame for it, because they cannot help acting on these desires. Even though they would act otherwise if they had different desires, or if they had the same desire with a different degree of strength, they are incapable (on this occasion) both of getting rid of this desire and of altering its strength. Hence, if the desire is strong enough to cause them to act on it, despite any rational desires and beliefs they have or might form, they are incapable of refraining from the action, and hence are not

[60] A similar question arises about the discussion of habituation, in the context of a general account of potentialities (*Met*. 1046a36–b13).

[61] Cf. Sorabji, *AMHM* 108–10.

responsible for it. If this is the condition of non-rational agents, and the condition of rational agents when they are not responsible for the actions caused by their desires, responsibility is not merely causation by desire; responsible agents must also somehow control their desires.

100. Voluntary Action in Rational Agents

To see whether Aristotle recognizes these points about responsibility, we should consider some initially puzzling features of his conditions for voluntariness. In forced action the principle (or origin; *archê*) of the movement is external, the agent himself contributes nothing (1110a2), and the 'action' is always painful; what we enjoy cannot be forced (1110b11–13). The cause is external in so far as the agent does not contribute; the agent's failure to feel pain is a contribution, in so far as she endorses, or acquiesces in, what she does (even though her choice or acquiescence is not causally necessary for it). If you push me into my enemy and I am pleased, the cause of my behaviour is not external and I contribute something, even if your push would have had the same result whatever I thought or felt; for if what I do with pleasure is unforced, it cannot have an external cause to which I contribute nothing. The behaviour has an internal cause, and I contribute to it, even though my contribution is unnecessary for the result; such behaviour is not involuntary.

Aristotle draws a related distinction in his discussion of ignorance. He argues that if I act because of ignorance, and do not regret my action, I have acted non-voluntarily, but not involuntarily; involuntary action requires regret as well as ignorance (1110b18–24; 1111a19–21). The causal process leading to the action is the same, but the attitude of the agent separates the genuinely involuntary actions from the others.

These features of Aristotle's description are intelligible if he is concerned with the relation of rational agency to the action. Though my pleasure and pain may make no actual difference to what happens, they indicate my attitude to the action, and so reveal my character (1104b3–11) and the election that has formed it. If I appear to be forced to break a promise, but am pleased by the result of this apparent force, I show that my character and election are defective. I show the same thing about myself if I act because of ignorance but without regret. Even if I would have avoided striking you so hard if I had known the blow would disable you, my pleasure at the result of the action I did because of ignorance shows a flaw in my character.

Why should Aristotle want our judgments about praiseworthiness and blameworthiness to focus on this aspect of the agent? He would be unjustified if my pleasure, pain, and regret were simply a further non-voluntary aspect of the action. But we have seen that he takes our pleasure and pain to follow our convictions about what is non-instrumentally valuable. Since our rational judgments of non-instrumental value determine the character of our wishes and elections, they form our character; hence our pleasure and pain reflects our character, and hence our elections, and hence the conception of the good that underlies our elections. This aspect of the agent is a distinctive feature of rational agency—the agent's conception of his good and the states of character he has formed to shape his whole life in a particular way. Distinctions that initially seem anomalous turn out to be reasonable in the light of Aristotle's view of pleasure, judgment, and rational agency.

The same concern with rational agency may underlie the claim that voluntary action is 'up to' the agent, and the principle must be 'in' the agent (1110a17–18; 1111a22–4; 1113b20–1). Aristotle takes these two conditions to be equivalent; the action is up to the agent, in so far as the principle of his doing it is in himself. The principle is strictly 'in us' only in so far as it is in our rational agency; otherwise it will only be incidentally in us, since one of our non-essential features will be the principle.[62]

Emphasis on rational agency goes too far, however, if it implies that we are responsible only for the actions that result from our election and deliberation. Since Aristotle accepts the Platonic division of desires, he recognizes that many actions result from passions that do not express an agent's deliberation and election about the good. The Doctrine of the Mean implies that such actions are part of the subject-matter of virtue and vice; the training that produces a virtue forms the tendency to have the right passions and to act correctly on them.

If actions on passion were voluntary simply because they are caused by states of the agent, as opposed to external forces, voluntariness would not explain praiseworthiness. For this causal origin is also present in non-rational animals; reference to it does not explain why non-rational animals are not praiseworthy and cannot develop virtues of character. Aristotle cannot simply cite the internal causal principle to justify his claim that we are responsible for action on passions.

Rational agency may influence one's action in different ways. Even if I act without deliberation and premeditation on a sudden impulse, the principle may still be in my character and election; for the presence or strength of my desire may result from the character and elections I have formed. I may have deliberately cultivated this sort of impulse, or I may have failed to do what I could reasonably be expected to do to prevent its growth. If my voluntary actions are related in this way to my election and character, their principle is in me in the relevant sense, and I am responsible for them (cf. 1113b30–1114a9).

If, then, we praise and blame agents for their actions in relation to their deliberation and election about the good, we reasonably confine praise and ascription of responsibility to rational agents. That sort of praise is not appropriate to non-rational agents, since they do not form a conception of their good; they do not conceive themselves as temporally extended agents with a possible good, and they do not modify their particular desires to fit that conception. Similarly, if virtue requires the formation of the right conception of one's good, Aristotle is right to believe that it requires the right election, and therefore is confined to agents capable of election.

This defence of Aristotle requires some reconsideration of the account of action that seemed to follow from his acceptance of the Platonic division of desires. The division seemed to imply that some of our actions are the product of passion without rational desire. Aristotle, however, seems to regard actions on passion, or many of them, as voluntary, and therefore praiseworthy or blameworthy. If that is so, they are connected to election and deliberation. Aristotle, however, does not explain exactly how this connexion is to be understood. If his account of action is to fit his views about the source and extent of responsibility, it needs to be expanded.[63]

[62] On Alexander's treatment of 'in us' and 'up to us' see §172.

[63] Aristotle's account of action on passion is obscure partly because he lacks anything that corresponds to the Stoic concept of assent, or to Aquinas' concept of consent. See §167, §§252–3.

101. Rational Agency and Character

Aristotle applies these claims about rational agency both to responsibility for action and to responsibility for character.[64] In iii 5 he appeals to the process of acquisition of the virtues to show that we are responsible for becoming virtuous or vicious. We might suppose that he traces responsibility back to some original condition of freedom. But this attempt to ground responsibility would raise a further difficulty. Why should we suppose that young children are the ones who are primarily responsible for their future character, given that they do not know about the effects of their present actions?

But Aristotle is not open to this objection, since he does not appeal to the choices made by young children. He suggests that someone who does not acknowledge the connexion between repeated actions and the formation of a state fails to pay attention to elementary and readily accessible facts about what happens to people (1114a9–13). This suggestion does not fit children, since these facts are not accessible to them. They are accessible, however, to adults, and we expect normal adults to pay attention to them, since 'they are in control of paying attention' (1114a3). Aristotle argues that it is foolish and irrational to go around committing injustice if we do not wish to be unjust, or to say (even truly) that we are committing injustice but do not wish to be unjust; for we know very well that repeated acts of injustice will tend to make us form the very outlook that we say we do not wish to have. Someone who none the less goes on recklessly committing injustice, or not thinking about whether his action is unjust, has only himself to blame. This remark is appropriate if and only if it is aimed at someone mature enough to understand these things, for whom it is not already too late to form his character to some degree in the right direction.

This argument allows us to correct an impression that we might have formed when we considered Aristotle's introduction to virtue of character. He claims that this virtue, in contrast to virtue of intellect, is acquired by habituation rather than teaching. We might infer that it is acquired by the non-rational training in pleasure and pain that children might receive; this is the sort of training that he seems to have in mind in Book ii. This view of habituation, however, is too narrow to be Aristotle's view. A virtue of character, the product of habituation, is a 'full virtue' (*kuria aretê*), including prudence and the election that elects the virtuous action for its own sake and for the sake of the fine (1144a13–20; b14–17). Since election results from deliberation, and the prudent person must deliberate about what promotes living well as a whole, the virtuous person's election must result from deliberation. These intellectual and deliberative processes must be included in habituation, since habituation is the process by which we acquire a virtue of character, and these intellectual and deliberative processes are needed for acquisition of such a virtue.[65]

Habituation, therefore, includes the acquisition and the exercise of the relevant deliberative capacities. Though Aristotle's description of the early stages of habituation emphasizes—not surprisingly—children's training in pleasure and pain, he does not take this training to be all

[64] On Alexander's discussion of responsibility for character see §172.

[65] On Aquinas' account of habituation see §285.

that is needed for virtue of character.[66] At the later stages of habituation, it is up to agents to elect different kinds of actions.

Our goals and values are up to us. For the ways in which we elect to habituate ourselves, and the sorts of situations we seek out, also tend to affect what we value; and, as Aristotle points out to the person who does injustice without wishing to be unjust, we can consciously set out to change our conception of the end by these methods. Our conception of the good is not fixed; we may have reasons for altering it when we see some of its consequences and compare them with other things we value. In any given situation where we deliberate and elect, we must take something for granted, because all deliberation starts from some conception of an end. But no specific conception of the end is always outside deliberation.

We can now understand Aristotle's reply to sceptics about responsibility for character. His opponent maintains that the ignorance and inattention normally regarded as culpable actually result from one's appearance of the good; since we cannot control this appearance, we cannot be held responsible for the results of acting on it (1114a31–1114b1). Aristotle replies that if we are in some way responsible for our state, then we are also in some way responsible for the appearance of the good (1114b1–3); our conception of the good is not fixed and uncontrollable.

This may seem a poor reply. For how, we might ask, can we be responsible for our state of character? The opponent argues that our conception of the good controls our state of character, but we are not responsible for our conception of our good. Aristotle does not seem to answer this argument by simply asserting that we are responsible for our state; for how could we be responsible for it except by forming it in accordance with our appearance of the good, which the opponent claims we are not responsible for?[67]

Aristotle's reply avoids this objection, however, because the conception of the good that forms our state of character is different from the one that results from the formation of the state. He argues that since we can alter the later conception in the light of the earlier one, the later one is in our control. Perhaps if we trace back later conceptions of the good to earlier ones, we eventually come to something that was not in our control; but this fact does not imply that none of the later conceptions is in our control. We cannot rely on deliberation to alter our whole conception of the good at one go; for unless we hold some elements of our conception of the good fixed, deliberation is impossible. Our whole conception of our good is not open to us to change all at once; but still our conception is under our control.[68]

[66] I do not mean to concede that being trained to take pleasure and pain in the right things is a non-rational process either. Quite the reverse is true, as we have seen, given Aristotle's conception of pleasure.

[67] For Epicurus' answer see §146. For the Stoic answer see §173.

[68] Aristotle now seems to offer two possibilities in competition with the opponent's position, not just one. The first is the one he has already endorsed; the character of the end is not given by nature, but something is also left to the agents themselves (1114b17). The other possibility is that the end is natural, but 'because the excellent person does the other things voluntarily, virtue is voluntary' (1114b18–19). In the second case as well as the first something comes about because of ourselves, and in the second case it comes about 'in the actions, even if not in the end' (1114b20–1). Aristotle accepts the first possibility (reasserted in 1114b22–4); but what is the second possibility, and why does it secure the result that virtue and vice are voluntary? The supposition he rejects says that we are not at all in control of our conception of what is good; this lack of control extends to our judgments about what is good in particular situations. A more moderate view claims that some conception of the end is fixed, but it is indeterminate enough to leave room for deliberation about what promotes it. If 'what promotes the end' includes constituents (see above n42), Aristotle is justified in claiming that virtuous and vicious people differ about the actions promoting their common end.

102. Moral Responsibility and Morality

Though Aristotle's remarks about the voluntary and its relation to action and character are brief and schematic, they express a conception of moral responsibility. He is concerned with the fair attribution of praise and blame for actions and states of character. He takes voluntariness to be the basis of praise and blame. He traces the voluntary character of actions and characters to the practical reason and election that form an agent's actions and reactions. Agents are responsible, and open to praise and blame, to the extent that they are rational agents.

Since the virtues of character are praiseworthy states, not simply states that we prefer to see present in ourselves and others, they express rational agency. A virtuous person acts on the right election; the right election results from the right wish and the right deliberation. The right wish—the rational desire for the end—may be the starting point of deliberation, but also (if it is for a more determinate end) the product of deliberation about the components of a less determinate end. This contribution of practical reason is the source of responsibility, and the basis for praise and blame.

It is not surprising that some readers deny that Aristotle is especially concerned with moral responsibility. For if we emphasize the role of habituation, pleasure, pain, and emotion in the virtues, and if we separate these from Aristotle's claims about practical reason, we will find it difficult to connect his account of the virtues with any reasonable view of moral responsibility. In that case, we may be more inclined to say that he identifies the voluntary simply with what is caused by some mental state of the agent, irrespective of how that state comes about. We have seen that such an account of the voluntary, as Aristotle conceives it, is not wholly implausible; if we attribute such an account to him, we will have some reason to deny that his claims about the voluntary are claims about moral responsibility.

This, however, is not the most plausible account of his claims about the voluntary; nor is the anti-rationalist account the most plausible account of his claims about virtue. When we lay the proper emphasis on the role of practical reason both in the account of the virtues and in the account of the voluntary, we can fairly speak of moral responsibility in Aristotle's moral theory.

103. Questions about Incontinence and Responsibility

Aristotle's conception of election, deliberation, and prudence helps to explain why he assigns a large role to practical reason in the formation and expression of a virtue of character. We have seen how the same features of practical reason explain his claims about responsibility for action and character. But does this rationalist account of virtue and of responsibility account for the difference between good and bad character? If the same practical reason is present not only in virtuous people, but also in the flawed characters of continent, incontinent, and vicious people, correct practical reason does not distinguish a good from a bad character. In that case, it is difficult to see how, on Aristotle's account, we can be responsible for these faulty states of character.

Aristotle denies, however, that the same condition of practical reason is present in virtuous and non-virtuous people. He claims that prudence is confined to virtuous people

(1144a36–b1), that prudence grasps the correct end (1142b33), and that the correct end appears only to the virtuous person (1144a34). The fulfilment of practical reason is distinctive of the virtuous person, so that the virtuous character differs from the others in the character of its practical reason.

This claim raises a question about incontinence. For Aristotle appears to accept a broadly Platonic account of incontinence, taking it to reflect disordered desires rather than false beliefs. In that case, his claim that prudence is confined to virtuous people might be an uninteresting verbal point, that we do not call it 'prudence' unless it is present in a virtuous person. More important, it will be difficult to see how he could regard us as responsible for acting incontinently. If he is concerned about responsibility, we need to see whether his views about incontinence allow him to claim that we are responsible for acting incontinently.

Aristotle appears to accept an anti-rationalist account of incontinence in so far as he rejects Socrates' explanation of incontinence by appeal to ignorance. To see that the appearance of anti-rationalism is misleading, we should consider the places where Aristotle shows some sympathy with some of Socrates' claims about incontinence. At the outset, he mentions Socrates' protest against the popular view that knowledge is liable to be dragged about like a slave (1145b23–4; Plato, *Pr.* 352b3–c2). Socrates probably means to challenge not only the view that knowledge can be overcome, but also the view that in these cases human agents are simply the victims of powerful psychological forces beyond their rational control. His rejection of incontinence is partly a protest against the view that it amounts to psychological compulsion.[69]

Aristotle distinguishes Socrates' protest—that it is shocking if knowledge is dragged about by non-rational desires (1145b23)—from Socrates' solution, which denies the possibility of incontinence (1145b25). In his own solution he claims to have removed Socrates' grounds for protest (1147b16). He implies that the Platonic account of incontinence does not adequately answer Socrates, but that his account shows how incontinence is different from psychological compulsion.

His answer emerges from his arguments to show that we are responsible for the actions that we do as a result of non-rational desires. He rejects the claim of those who say that pleasant and fine things force us to act because they are external and necessitate us.[70] Normal rational agents are responsible for voluntarily doing x rather than y, if they ought to do x rather than y and are justly praised for doing x (or blamed for doing y). Since praise or blame is also appropriate for action on non-rational desires, this action must be voluntary. Non-rational desires are human, and open to praise and blame, in so far as we affect their influence on us by making ourselves an easy prey to them.

Aristotle takes incontinent action to be voluntary (1152a15–16) and blameworthy (1148a2–4; b4–6). But he does not explain why it is different from the compulsive actions of insane people. Indeed, he actually claims that incontinents are similar to drunk and insane people (1147a10–18). The similarity cannot be too close, since madness implies that one is

[69] See §27.

[70] 'It is ludicrous to hold external things responsible rather than oneself, being an easy prey for such things, and ludicrous to hold oneself responsible for fine actions while holding pleasant things responsible for shameful actions' (1110b13–15).

not responsible for one's action. Even if incontinents are in some respect like insane people in not knowing what they are doing, their ignorance cannot make the action involuntary.

Aristotle suggests the relevant difference. In remarking that some desires are bestial rather than human, and hence are beyond virtue and vice, he observes that we do not ascribe temperance or intemperance to non-rational animals except metaphorically: 'For they have neither election nor rational calculation, but are outside <rational> nature, as insane human beings are' (1149b36–1150a1). The comparison with madness suggests that insane people are temporarily 'outside' the rational nature that includes rational calculation and election. If the incontinent's actions, as opposed to the insane person's, are open to assessment for virtue and vice, and open to praise and blame, he is not outside the influence of rational calculation and deliberation.

104. Incontinence, Ignorance, and Deliberation

The connexion between incontinence and deliberative error helps to explain why Aristotle claims that the incontinent person acts incontinently because of his ignorance, so that in a way Socrates is right. Socrates is wrong to deny that non-rational desires cause the relevant ignorance, but he is right, according to Aristotle, to claim that incontinence requires ignorance.

Some of Aristotle's comments on the cognitive effects of non-rational desires show why such desires may be a source of ignorance. Most people, he says, are deceived about the real good because pleasure appears good to them when it is not (1113a33–b2). The deception destroys a correct grasp of the good, so that someone loses his awareness of it, or never becomes aware of it at all (1140b11–20; 1144a31–6). Appetite—a desire for pleasure—differs from 'spirit' (*thumos*) because it creates this deceptive appearance by gradual insinuation (1149b4–18). The insinuations of appetite may master someone far enough to persuade him that he should pursue certain pleasures without limit; but incontinence precludes this total domination by appetite (1151a20–7).

If incontinents are partly persuaded by the claims of pleasure, we can understand Aristotle's answer to the claim that they are less open to rational persuasion than intemperate people are. The claim seems plausible, because intemperate people pursue pleasure on the basis of their election and rational preference, and hence seem to be open to the influence of reason, whereas incontinents illustrate the proverb 'If water chokes you, what will you wash it down with?' Since they are already persuaded that what they are doing is wrong, but they do it anyway, attempts to convince them otherwise may seem to be irrelevant to their condition (1146a31–b2).

Aristotle disagrees. Incontinents are more open to persuasion than intemperate people are, because incontinents retain the right principle, which intemperate people lack (1151a5–26). If the presence of the right principle is a basis for effective persuasion of incontinents, some change in their rational outlook on their action will change their action. In that case, some defect in their present rational outlook causes their incontinent action. Aristotle claims both that only the virtuous person has the right principle and that the incontinent has the right principle. If these claims are consistent, the incontinent has the right principle in some respects but lacks it in other respects. What are the relevant respects?

Since the principle that the virtuous person grasps refers to 'the end and the best' (1144a32–3), it rests on a true conception of happiness. I form this by considering myself and my life as a whole, since the final good has to be something whole and complete. Myself and my life as a whole include both the different stages of my life, and my different capacities, desires, and aims. For the prudent person deliberating about what contributes to 'living well as a whole' (1140a25–8), particular stages of life and temporary concerns or enthusiasms do not dominate practical reasoning. Other people, however, oscillate between different conceptions of the good according to what they feel most in need of at a particular time (1095a22–6). The virtuous person thinks about his life as a whole from the appropriate point of view, and so achieves a degree of unity and concord that both the incontinent and the vicious person lack (1166b6–26).

To reach the right election from a true conception of the good we rely on deliberation. Aristotle explains 'good deliberation' (*euboulia*), by describing the sort of correctness (*orthotês*) that it embodies. This correctness is not mere success in finding means to ends; it reaches a good result (1142b17–22), and proceeds by the appropriate steps (1142b22–7). Only the prudent person practises this good deliberation. An election, therefore, may be right or wrong in different ways. It may succeed or fail in identifying the right action to do in these specific circumstances. But even if it succeeds in this task, it may not choose the right action for the right reasons. To act for the right reasons is to know when it would be appropriate to act differently. I give a charitable gift, for instance, for the right reasons only if I still would give it even if it were not going to be widely known; I face this danger for the right reasons only if I would not face it if no appropriate cause were at stake. To know what election, and therefore what deliberation, people act on, we have to consider what influences their choice, not simply what they explicitly have in mind on this particular occasion. To understand their deliberation is to understand the Kantian 'maxim' of their action.[71]

The incontinent has a faulty conception of the good, because he is too influenced by desires that are especially strong at a particular time, and hence fails to think appropriately about his life as a whole. The primary and central type of incontinence involves the appetites that are characteristic of temperance and intemperance, because these appetites are especially urgent and especially liable to interfere with one's practical reason (1146b18–22).[72] The faults in his conception of the good infect his deliberation and his election, even though his election is in one respect correct.

His reasoning is partly false, even if he has not actually included any false steps in his explicit reflexion on this occasion. For he is wrong about what sorts of deviations from actual circumstances would require a different conclusion. In particular he does not see that even if his appetite for x were stronger, he ought to refrain from x; and so when his appetite is stronger, he changes his mind about whether to refrain from x. This change of mind betrays an error in his conception of happiness. In thinking about his final good, he does not steadily recognize the importance of thinking about his life as a whole, and so he does not admit that it would be a mistake to do what he feels like doing at the moment.

A correct account of incontinence, therefore, requires both the Socratic appeal to ignorance and the Platonic appeal to non-rational desires. Non-rational desires provide objects whose

[71] Cf. Kant, *G*421n. [72] On the scope of incontinence and intemperance see §119.

attractions persuade the incontinent to form a mistaken conception of happiness and to deliberate incorrectly; these mistakes in practical reason are responsible for his incontinent action.

We can now understand where the continent person is similar to the incontinent. Though he chooses virtuous actions and performs them, he is reluctant to choose actions that the virtuous person chooses promptly and readily. We are reluctant to choose an action that we take to involve some major cost to us. The continent person mistakenly believes that virtuous actions are costly because he exaggerates the importance of the appetitive satisfaction that conflicts with virtuous action. He is right to believe that his action has some cost, but—like the incontinent person—he exaggerates the importance of this or that appetite because he does not focus steadily on its real importance in his life as a whole.

For this reason, Aristotle is justified in claiming that only the virtuous person has prudence and that the right end appears to no one else. These are not merely verbal points. Neither the incontinent nor the continent person has the specific grasp of the ultimate end that the prudent person has, and neither of them deliberates altogether correctly. Their defects result from an error in practical reason.

Continent and incontinent people, so understood, are responsible for their errors. A responsible agent differs from a non-responsible agent in having the capacity for rational desire, deliberation, and election; and he is responsible for his actions in so far as he affects them by election or failure to elect. If the incontinent fails to act on his election, but does not act compulsively, his condition must result from some culpable and corrigible lack of the right rational awareness. If he is responsible for his actions, the source of the incontinent action is not an overwhelming and compulsive desire, but some blameworthy error that is corrigible by rational deliberation.

The errors in the deliberation of the continent and the incontinent person explain why their deviation from virtue is blameworthy, in so far as it is derived from practical reason. The cognitive aspects of Aristotle's account of incontinence are initially surprising; but if we connect them both with his account of virtue and with his account of the voluntary, his position is coherent.

105. Vice, Reason, and Appetite

The naturalist and rationalist approach to virtue, practical reason, responsibility, and incontinence should also explain the difference between virtue and vice. Human nature is fulfiled, in Aristotle's view, by the complete development of practical reason about ends in the guidance of human life. But if the vicious person were guided by fully-developed practical reason about ends, he would live a 'life of action of the rational part' no less than the virtuous person does, and so he would fulfil the human function no less than the virtuous person does. A naturalist account of vice, therefore, ought to refute this claim about the equality of virtue and vice in relation to the human function.

Aristotle's conception of the vicious person treats intemperance as the paradigmatic vice.[73] His remarks about the difference between the incontinent and the vicious person in Book vii

[73] On intemperance see further §119.

are concerned with the special vice of intemperance. In Book ix he generalizes these claims to vicious people in general. In vicious people non-rational appetite dominates rational desire. They suffer from the internal conflict and self-hatred that is normally ascribed to incontinents (1166b6–13). They live in accordance with their passions, and gratify the non-rational part of the soul (1168b19–21; 1169a3–6). Only the virtuous person is free, or nearly free, of regret (1166a27–9; 1166b22–5). The vicious person seems to be similar to young people, who live in accordance with their passions, and so are not appropriate students of moral philosophy, and similar to the immature people who resemble the young on this point (1095a6–8). Virtue is rationally preferable to vice, because it is control by reason rather than by passion.[74]

The vicious person acts on his election, which expresses his wish, and hence his conception of happiness.[75] He acts, then, on his conception of happiness and his view about what is best overall. But he is not controlled by the rational part in the same way, or to the same degree, as the virtuous person. We may say that the non-rational part exercises local control if on a particular occasion its desires move us contrary to our rational aims, but it exercises global control to the extent that its desires are the basis of our aims. Incontinence involves local control by non-rational desires, and failure of local control by rational desires. But if we form our rational desires simply by considering ways to satisfy our non-rational desires, we display complete local control by a rational part that is subject to the global control of the non-rational part.[76] This is the condition of the vicious person. His rational outlook, not only his non-rational desire, is perverted.

To explain this perversion, we may appeal to Aristotle's demand for the virtuous person to elect the virtuous action for its own sake (1105a31–2). To satisfy this demand, the virtuous person must have found by deliberation that virtuous action is choiceworthy for its own sake. Aristotle emphasizes and amplifies this demand by insisting that the virtuous person must elect virtuous action 'because it is fine' (*kalon*). Good fighters who are moved by anger have not achieved the mean, because they do not fight 'because of the fine (*kalon*) or as reason <prescribes>, but because of passion' (1117a7–9). To achieve the mean in actions and passions is to act and to be affected 'as one ought' (*hôs dei*). To act as one ought is to act 'for the sake of the fine' (1120a23–9; 1121a1–4). Acting for the sake of the fine is a common feature of the virtues (1121b5–6).[77] Virtuous people have in mind the properties that make an action fine and virtuous, and they take these as a sufficient reason, apart from any further efficient-causal results, for choosing the action. In brief, the virtuous person elects virtuous action on principle.

The vicious person, however, does not elect vicious actions for their own sake and because they are fine. The fact that avoiding danger involves betraying a worthwhile cause because of unjustified fear is what makes it vicious, but this is not the feature that makes it appealing to a vicious person. He does not choose the vicious action on principle. Similarly, he does not avoid virtuous action because it violates his principles, but only because it interferes with his ends or does not promote them. This feature of the virtuous person's election distinguishes it from the vicious person's election, and is meant to justify Aristotle's claim that the vicious person is really controlled by non-rational desire, and not by practical reason. To understand

[74] I have discussed this further in *AFP* §203.
[75] In this claim about *prohairesis* and *boulêsis* I follow Anscombe, 'Thought'. Contrast Charles, *APA* 151.
[76] Plato distinguishes the two kinds of control in *R.* viii–ix. See §49.
[77] On the fine see §116.

this claim, we must look more closely at the connexion he sees between pursuit of the fine and control by reason.

106. Self-Love, Reason, and the Fine

In his discussion of self-love, Aristotle rejects one intuitive way of distinguishing virtue from vice. He notices that we might readily accuse the vicious person of loving himself too much, and praise the virtuous person for limiting self-love in favour of concern for others.[78] In his view, however, both virtuous and vicious people act out of self-love. The difference between them is that only the virtuous person loves himself as he really is. To love ourselves as we really are, we must gratify the most important or most controlling (*kuriôtaton*) part of ourselves. Aristotle compares this with the government of a city, which has the authority to act on behalf of the whole city and in that way represents the whole city. In claiming that this is what we really are, Aristotle denies that our choices constitute our identity. He claims that the virtuous person grasps a fact about our identity and the vicious person fails to grasp it.

To defend this claim, Aristotle argues that our essentially rational character is not manifested only in the choices of the virtuous person. We must presuppose it in understanding human action in general.[79] Continent action expresses 'our' plans and incontinent action frustrates them. Similarly, when we act on reason, our action is voluntary to a higher degree than when we act on non-rational desires. A plausible conception of the voluntary requires acknowledgment of the primacy of reason in the agent.[80] These distinctions between continence and incontinence and between voluntary and involuntary do not matter only to the virtuous person. We all seek to avoid incontinence and to be praised or blamed for our voluntary actions. Hence we all implicitly recognize ourselves as essentially rational.

These claims of Aristotle's embody a version of naturalism. They are 'ethical' claims in so far as they are concerned with human action and our understanding of it. But they do not seem to belong to ethics any more than to psychology or natural philosophy. They are not ethical claims specifically connected with goodness and badness in actions and characters. Since they are evaluative claims, we might reasonably take Aristotle to maintain a holistic version of naturalism.[81] He defends the claims of the Function Argument. The type of reason that he introduced there was the type that belongs to 'a life of action of the rational part'. Here, similarly, the reason with which he identifies a person must be practical reason, since that is the aspect of reason that is relevant to incontinence and to voluntary action.[82]

Aristotle repeats that those who love themselves in this way will also pursue the moral virtues. Vicious people pursue 'contested' goods, because they have the wrong conception of

[78] '. . . for those who like themselves most are criticized and denounced as self-lovers, as though this were something shameful. Indeed, the base person seems to go to every length for his own sake, and all the more the more vicious he is; hence he is accused, for instance, of doing nothing away from himself. The decent person, on the contrary, acts for what is fine, all the more the better he is, and for his friend's sake, disregarding what is his own' (1168a29–35).

[79] 'Similarly, someone is called continent or incontinent because his understanding is or is not the master, on the assumption that this is what each person is. Moreover, his own voluntary actions seem above all to be those involving reason. Clearly, then, this, or this above all, is what each person is, and the decent person likes this most of all' (1168b34–1169a2).

[80] Aquinas comments on this passage at *in EN* §1871, quoted at §244.

[81] See §80.

[82] See also 1166a16, and cf. with 1178a2.

themselves, and therefore have the wrong sort of self-love. Virtuous people have the correct conception of themselves as rational agents, so that they have the right sort of self-love, causing them to pursue the fine.[83] Concern for the fine results in the actions characteristic of the different moral virtues, because it systematically and non-coincidentally promotes the common good.[84]

Aristotle takes 'desiring the fine' to imply that what the virtuous person desires is in fact fine, not merely that the virtuous person's desire is guided by a conception of the fine. The vicious person is not guided even by a mistaken conception of the fine. He desires only what seems advantageous, not what is in fact advantageous for him. But he is not guided simply by a conception of advantage; the advantageous is instrumentally valuable for some external end (as Aristotle says about *poiêsis*), and so it must depend on some end that he desires for its own sake. Aristotle insists that the vicious person does not conceive this end as fine. We live in accordance with reason if and only if we aim at the fine.

107. How is the Fine Connected with Reason?

Aristotle's claims about the connexion between reason and the fine, and between passion and advantage, may well puzzle us. We might, indeed, expect the reverse connexion. A brave action, for instance, often seems to require a fearless and self-sacrificing outlook indifferent to rational calculation. In the *Rhetoric* Aristotle acknowledges that this view of fine action is part of the common conception of the virtues.[85] We might suppose that he has the same aspect of the fine in mind when he connects it especially with bravery and with a sense of shame (1116a27–9). But this is not how he explains pursuit of the fine. In his view, it rests on the belief that there is something valuable about this action (for instance) apart from the fact that it appeals to us, or appears to be a means to something that appeals to us.[86]

This claim about desire for the fine exploits a familiar feature of desire for the good. Both Plato and Aristotle distinguish desires of the rational part from desires of the appetitive part by claiming that a rational desire is 'good-dependent', because it attaches itself to this or that specific object only on the assumption that the object is good all things considered. But desires may depend on beliefs about the good even if they depend on a conception of the good that simply identifies the good with the satisfaction of good-independent desires. This is not what Aristotle has in mind. He imposes a stronger condition by insisting that the relevant desires are thoroughly good-dependent; even the ultimate ends that form our conception of the good are based on a conviction about value that is prior to desire. At no

[83] 'That is why he most of all is a self-lover, but a different kind from the self-lover who is reproached. He differs from him as much as the life guided by reason differs from the life guided by feelings, and as much as the desire for what is fine differs from the desire for what seems advantageous' (1169a3–6).

[84] 'Those who are unusually eager to do fine actions are welcomed and praised by everyone. And when everyone strains to achieve what is fine and concentrates on the finest actions, everything that is right will be done for the common good, and each person individually will receive the greatest of goods, since that is the character of virtue' (1169a6–11).

[85] Cf. *Rhet*. 1390a15–17; 1358b38–1359a5; Plato, *Phdr*. 238b7–c4; Irwin, *PE* §208. On the connexion between the fine and spirited desire see Cooper, 'Reason' 276–9.

[86] Aristotle appears to say that what is fine is the primary object of rational desire (*boulêsis*), and that the conviction that something is fine is logically prior to our having a desire (*orexis*) for it; we have a desire for it because it seems fine, but it is false that it seems fine because we have a desire for it (*Met*. 1072a25–30).

point in forming our conception of the good do we take for granted some object of desire that simply appeals to us independently of any prior conviction of its value.

Aristotle suggests that rational desire for the fine is thoroughly good-dependent in this way. The demand to choose virtuous action because it is fine is more stringent than the demand to pursue it non-instrumentally. For we might have an attachment to virtuous action that is both non-instrumental and non-rational; we stick to it even when we gain no further instrumental benefit from it, but we do not stick to it because we have some rational conviction about what makes it worth sticking to in these circumstances. The virtuous person's choices rest on convictions about the good that have formed her views about the goals that are worth choosing. She attaches intrinsic value to the rational choice of ends, and to the pursuit of those ends that she pursues as a result of rational choice.

A simple way to express this attitude is to say that we believe that our basic practical principles and values have something to be said for them beyond the fact that we happen to have them.[87] On this basis we might distinguish values from mere preferences. My preference for F is a mere preference if I have no objection to having my preference for F replaced by a preference for G, provided that I could satisfy my preference for G at least as much as I satisfy my current preference for F. But my preference for F expresses my values (principles) if it is false that equal satisfaction of my preference for G would by itself make the replacement unobjectionable to me.

In Aristotle's view, the vicious person pursues 'contested' goods, trying to benefit himself at other people's expense by 'over-reaching' them, simply because these goods satisfy his preferences.[88] He fails, therefore, to act on the kind of self-love that Aristotle has described. He denies or overlooks the possibility of the full application of practical reason to his choice of ends, and in this way fails to value himself as a rational agent. The vicious person regards advantage as the only concern of practical reason, since he believes that his inclinations are beyond rational criticism, so that practical reason can only serve his inclinations. The virtuous person, by contrast, believes that discovery of the fine is a proper function of practical reason. Aristotle contrasts those who form an end on the basis of inclination from those who form an end on the basis of judgments about its value.

This difference between virtuous and vicious people does not imply that the vicious person lacks a conception of virtues or of fine action. He can see, for instance, that it is good for him, given his inclinations, to cultivate some aspects of bravery and temperance (as Aristotle understands them) so that he can execute his longer-term aims. He can also regard some actions and traits of personality as fine, because they are admirable in their own right apart from their effects; perhaps, for instance, he takes this view of someone who displays his power and wealth in magnificent actions (as the vicious person conceives them). But even if he recognizes fine actions, he does not take the virtuous person's attitude to them, because he does not elect actions because they are fine. To elect is to choose on the basis of one's conception of happiness; to elect something because it is fine is to choose it for itself because of its value apart from one's own inclinations. The virtuous person conceives

[87] Taylor's conception of 'strong evaluation' suggests this distinction. See 'Agency'.

[88] On contested (lit. 'fought-over') goods see 1168b21; Plato, *R.* 586a1–b5; Cic. *Off.* i 51–2; iii 42; §182n42; §404. On over-reaching (*pleonexia*) see 1129b8–10; Plato, *R.* 349b–350c; 586b1. On Green's conception of a non-competitive good see *PE* §245.

happiness as constituted by actions chosen for their value apart from inclination, but this is not the vicious person's conception of happiness.[89]

108. Vice and Pleasure

If we have grasped Aristotle's basic division between virtuous and vicious people, we ought to be able to explain remarks about vice that would otherwise be difficult to explain. Some of these remarks attribute a special preoccupation with pleasure to the vicious person. He believes it is always right to pursue the available pleasure (1146b22–4),[90] and he pursues excesses of pleasure 'because of election, because of themselves and because of nothing else resulting from them' (1150a19–21).

These descriptions of the vicious election recall the first of the three lives that are presented as unsuccessful candidates for happiness. Aristotle suggests that those who devote themselves to pleasure choose the life of grazing animals, because they devote themselves to unrestrained physical gratification (1095b19–20). He has often been criticized for maintaining this connexion between the pursuit of pleasure, a purely animal existence, and gross physical gratification; some believe that in maintaining this connexion he contradicts his own more careful discussion of pleasure in Books vii and x. The same questions arise about his comments on vice. Even the vice of intemperance does not seem the same as a tendency to unrestrained gratification. This tendency seems an even less plausible mark of vice in general.

Aristotle's claim rests on the contrast between guidance by reason and guidance by the passions. The vicious person prefers one action over another simply because it appeals to him, not because of some further conviction about its value. One way to express this attitude to our actions is to say that we do them simply for the pleasure of it. Aristotle expresses this fact by saying that the vicious person thinks he should always pursue the pleasant thing that is available. He probably does not mean that the vicious person is in principle less likely than other people to forgo immediate pleasure for some strategic reason. On the contrary, we might expect a vicious person to think more strategically, in some ways, than a virtuous person, since he is free of the moral constraints that limit the virtuous person's strategic efficiency. Aristotle probably means that the vicious person settles his ends by consulting his preferences and inclinations, and does not try to educate his preferences and inclinations by consideration of what is worth pursuing.

109. The Vicious Person's Regret

The way in which vicious people form their elections on the basis of inclination may also help to explain Aristotle's surprising claim that they are especially prone to psychic conflict, and in particular to regret (1166a29).[91]

[89] Cf. Sherman, *FC* 113–17.

[90] Aristotle's phrase 'the pleasant thing at hand' (*to paron hêdu*, 1146b23) might refer to what is temporally present, but more probably it means 'available' or 'open'. On vice and pleasure see §95 above.

[91] I will use 'regret' simply to represent *metameleia*, without implying that this is always the most appropriate English rendering.

This feature is meant to show that because vicious people are controlled by the non-rational part, they lack the appropriate sort of self-love. But Aristotle's claim is difficult to accept. He distinguishes the harmony in the vicious person from the conflict in the incontinent person. Why, then, does he claim that the vicious person suffers conflict and regret after all?

Virtuous people suffer the regret that simply involves wishing that something different had happened. Since they care about external goods, they sometimes have reason to wish that things had turned out better than they actually did. Similarly, they have reason to regret their actions, to the extent of wishing that they had, for instance, known enough to do something different. Indeed, we might say that in so far as they care more than vicious people care about the good of other people, they must have more potential occasions for regret.

A different sort of regret often results from blaming oneself for what one did or decided to do. This is the regret that results from believing I ought to have known something I did not know, or that I ought to have decided differently in the light of what I did know; it is often called 'remorse', as opposed to mere regret.[92] In Aristotle's view, virtuous people are free of remorse. They have nothing to blame or to reproach themselves for, and they are not prone to blame themselves falsely (cf. 1128b16–31). Any genuine occasion for blame would also be a mark of incomplete virtue.

Does the vicious person differ on this point? If he is really vicious, he does not care that what he did was vicious. Why, then, would he blame himself, or feel ashamed of himself, for having done it? Why does Aristotle expect that vicious people will hate themselves, and, in extreme cases, hate and flee life (1166b12–13)?

Perhaps Aristotle notices that vicious people do not do their best to follow a particular standard, whereas virtuous people do their best to identify and to carry out the brave or just course of action. Since they cannot be just while also being grossly lazy or negligent in the pursuit of justice, virtuous people have no occasion to blame themselves for negligence or laziness in the pursuit of justice. Vice, by contrast, does not involve doing one's best to avoid being virtuous, or doing one's best to pursue the vicious course of action; hence vice is consistent with being careless or inattentive or lazy in choosing one's actions in the light of one's conception of the good, and a vicious person might well blame himself for this. But since not all vicious people need be like this, they do not all seem to be subject to the regret that includes remorse and self-reproach.

Aristotle has a better case if he relies on the fact that the vicious person cares about his ends only in so far as they fulfil his inclinations. He has a basis for regret that the virtuous person lacks, because the virtuous person has a distinctive reason for not regretting his past choice. The virtuous person attaches value to acting on a non-strategic conviction about what is fine and good, apart from its usefulness in fulfilling his inclinations; and so he will not regret having acted on that conviction. On the contrary, he will be satisfied with himself, since he has done what he rationally cares most about doing. The vicious person lacks this reason for self-satisfaction; for he does not care about acting on any non-strategic conviction. The fact that he has acted on such a conviction is not a source of satisfaction; hence he has no retrospective satisfaction opposing his dissatisfaction at how things turned out. The frustration of his inclinations is an unopposed reason for regret about his past actions. The

[92] See Williams, 'Luck' 30–2. His view about the relevant distinctions is more sceptical than mine.

vicious person, then, lacks a particular basis for self-satisfaction[93] (or, as Aristotle puts it, self-love) that is available to the virtuous person. Aristotle is right to say that the vicious person is subject to regret that the virtuous person avoids.

This is not a sufficient reason for preferring to be a virtuous person, if the basis of his self-satisfaction is not appropriate. When we say that someone is 'self-satisfied' in a bad sense, we mean that they are more satisfied than they have any reason to be. If I am wrongly self-satisfied with being F, I may be wrong either because I am not F, or because being F is not good enough to justify my satisfaction in it. If the virtuous person is wrong to be satisfied with having acted on his non-strategic conviction, he deludes himself in taking this satisfaction to outweigh the failures he has suffered from a strategic point of view. Aristotle needs to explain why the virtuous person is right to attach such importance to acting on his non-strategic convictions.

110. The Instability of the Vicious Person

The character of the vicious person's regret suggests that his attitude to himself and to his future differs from the attitude of the virtuous person. He conceives himself as nothing more than a sequence of appetites and satisfactions, and he takes his good to depend on what he happens to want at a particular time. He exercises practical reason by finding measures that seem to secure his future satisfaction, but this concern for his future depends on the persistence of the same desires and appetites. He has no further reason to be concerned about a future self that (for all he knows) may have changed quite significantly.

The virtuous person, by contrast, forms his state of character on principle. He asks what sort of person he ought to be, and how he should conceive himself as a rational agent with an extended life. The recognition of an extended life is necessary for having a conception of one's happiness; and so it is not peculiar to the virtuous person. But the view that one ought to be a certain sort of person, or that some aspects of oneself deserve to be developed more than others, is an evaluative judgment that the vicious person does not make. Such a judgment implies that the actual desires and aims that strike us are not beyond criticism or evaluation.

This difference between the vicious and the virtuous person results from different forms of reflexion about the self. We may attend either to the aims it actually has or to the ways it is capable of forming and organizing its aims. The vicious person attends more to the first aspect of the self (the actual aims), and regards the second as primarily a way to satisfy the first. The virtuous person attends more to the second aspect of the self (the way it forms aims), and regards the first as raw material to be organized by the second. Aristotle recognizes these different forms of reflexion in claiming that the vicious person prefers the animal, non-human, non-rational outlook to the outlook of practical reason. This claim would be false if it denied that the vicious person can have a perfectly rational, coherent plan for his life; but it is true if it refers to the sort of self whose aims are to be satisfied.

[93] My non-pejorative use of 'self-satisfaction' is partly derived from Green, *PE* §154.

These different attitudes to the self and to self-concern imply a different basis for the sort of self-concern that protects the present self against future circumstances, and the future self against present circumstances. Sometimes I ensure now that I will carry out my present plan even though I will be averse to it in the future; I do this when I 'burn my bridges' and prevent myself now from acting later on my later fears, or when I now throw away the key to the cupboard containing the whisky I will want later on. Sometimes, however, I ensure now that I will be able to carry out my future aim, even though I do not feel like it at present. I do this when I get a tooth filled, or I reluctantly try to re-learn French before visiting France. Both a virtuous person and a vicious person may display these forms of self-concern, but not for the same reasons.

The virtuous person tries to satisfy her present and her future desires because they pursue goals that embody non-strategic convictions. She has a reason to make it easier to satisfy these desires and more difficult to satisfy any impulses that might conflict with these non-strategic convictions. The vicious person, however, is not moved by non-strategic convictions; she regards her future desires as the results of future impulses, just as her present desires result from past and present impulses. A vicious person has no reason to protect the present self against the future self, or the future self against the present. Hence she cannot justify the forms of self-concern that the virtuous person can justify. She may happen to prefer the future without decaying teeth over the nearer future without a painful filling, or the future that includes the frustration of a future desire for the whisky over the future that includes the satisfaction of that desire. But she has no reason for this self-concern.[94]

This point about self-concern corresponds to our earlier point about regret. The virtuous person has a basis for self-satisfaction in looking back at past choices. The same basis for self-satisfaction guides her attitude to her future self, since she regards the future self as the product of rational non-strategic convictions. The vicious person has no reason for satisfaction in either her past elections or in the future self that will be formed by present elections, or in the present self that both looks back on the past and decides about the future.

Vicious people, therefore, lack an important aspect of self-love, and are liable to self-hatred. Since they form rational plans, they are capable of disapproving of themselves when they violate them, but, since the rational plans are themselves unstable devices for satisfying changing inclinations, they are liable to frustration. If A and B have some friendly attitudes to each other, A may find it useful to borrow money from B without repaying it, even driving B to destitution. Once A sees what has happened to B, A may be angry at himself for what he has done to B. Since A's rational plans simply follow the comparative strength of A's inclinations at different times, nothing about A's character protects A from choosing actions that he will later hate himself for having chosen. A's self-hatred is the sort of hatred that we direct at an opponent who has frustrated our current aims.

These features of vicious people result from their refusal to form their rational elections by consideration of what is fine; hence, Aristotle is entitled to treat these features as essential to vice. He need not rely on the assumption (true or false) that vicious people always have some residual respect for morality that is the source of their disapproval of themselves. On

[94] Cf. Hume's discussion of prudence, *T* iii 2.7 §5.

the contrary, the less their respect for the outlook guided by considerations of the fine, the more liable they are to self-hatred.

111. Vice, Reason, and Nature

Has Aristotle found sufficient conditions for vice? Could not someone have the attitude to non-strategic convictions that Aristotle attributes to the vicious person, while still doing the actions expected of a virtuous person? Aristotle assumes that if we confine ourselves to purely strategic aims, we will tend to violate the demands of the virtues; but need this be so? Might we not find, because of temperament or upbringing, that we care about prudence, altruism, and justice, so that we face dangers, keep our promises, control our appetites, do one good turn in return for another, perform spontaneous acts of beneficence, and so on? If we have the appropriate sentiments, we will also want to be free from the regret that would result from violating the standards embodied in these sentiments. Hence, if we have the appropriate sentiments, we will be able to 'bear our own survey', as Hume puts it.[95]

This objection to Aristotle expresses the sentimentalist view of virtue that we find in Hobbes, Hutcheson, and Hume. In their view, no judgments about the non-strategic value of our ends are needed for virtue. If virtuous and vicious people have the same sort of commitment to their ends, our rational convictions do not make us virtuous rather than vicious. If our impulses and inclinations had been different, then we would have turned out vicious rather than virtuous. But why, we may ask, should this sort of contingency be found unwelcome?

In support of Aristotle, we may reply that we do not take a sentimentalist attitude to our basic values. We suppose that something can be said in their favour beyond the fact that we have them; and we do not take our aversion to losing them as a mere fact about our aversion, but as a fact about the actual badness of losing them. These attitudes to our values may be mistaken. But to the extent that a Hobbesian or Humean outlook implies that we are wrong, it challenges an important element in our conception of ourselves and our ends; if that is so, then we may fairly ask whether the arguments supporting such an outlook are cogent enough to discredit this element in our conception of ourselves.

Aristotle's account of vice, therefore, supports his account of virtue and incontinence. Virtue expresses the correct election that embodies the harmony of the rational and non-rational parts under the local and global control of the rational part. Vice expresses the incorrect election that embodies the agreement of the rational and non-rational parts under the local control of the rational part, but the global control of the non-rational part. Aristotle has defended his claim that virtue differs from vice in its degree of connexion to practical reason. By doing so, he has shown that the Function Argument gives the right account of virtue of character. We might have supposed that a plausible conception of virtue, continence, incontinence, and vice conflicts with Aristotle's initial claim that the virtues of character are different ways of guiding our action in accordance with practical reason; we might even have supposed that Aristotle's views about these different conditions support an

[95] See Hume, *T* iii 3.6 §6.

anti-rationalist view that would conflict with the Function Argument, as we have understood it. But the more closely we examine those aspects of Aristotle's theory that seem to require an anti-rationalist account, the more clearly we can see that he defends a rationalist account. On this point he follows the lead that he gives in the Function Argument. In claiming that the virtues complete human nature, he claims that they complete the nature of human beings as rational agents.

9

ARISTOTLE: VIRTUE AND MORALITY

112. Why Virtues?

Aristotle formulates an account of the virtues, conceived as states of character; he does not seek primarily to find an account of the different types of actions that a virtuous person chooses. Why does he speak of virtues rather than actions? His preference for virtues indicates that he is in some sense a 'virtue theorist'; but in what sense is this true? Different claims about the priority of virtues over actions need to be considered.

To assert ontological priority for virtue over right action is to claim that the rightness of actions depends on their being produced by virtues, so that (1) an action is right only if it is done by a virtuous agent, and (2) the agent's being virtuous explains the act's being right, and the reverse is not true.

Aristotle rejects the first claim; for he recognizes that an action can be temperate, just, brave, etc., without being done by a person with the relevant virtues. But does he accept the second claim? The most plausible support for it is his remark that actions are just (etc.) when they are such as the just person would do (1105b5). It is not clear, however, that this remark is meant to say what an action's being just consists in. In the case of many virtues, Aristotle seems to avoid any such constitutive or explanatory claim; he often describes the sort of action that is virtuous without reference to the state of the virtuous agent. Perhaps different things need to be said about different virtues; the same account of virtues and actions may not be appropriate for bravery, temperance, justice, generosity, magnificence, and wit. But it is difficult to attribute the claim about ontological priority to Aristotle; to this extent, he does not seem to be a virtue theorist.

If we deny that virtues are ontologically prior to right actions, we might still maintain that they are epistemically prior, because no one but a virtuous person can tell what sort of action is virtuous, and therefore we cannot say what sorts of actions are virtuous except by saying what a virtuous person is like and adding that virtuous actions are those a virtuous person will choose. Some of Aristotle's remarks might suggest a belief in this epistemic priority of virtue. He holds that things are good if they seem so to a virtuous person, so that

the virtuous person is the measure of what is good and bad (1176a15; 1113a29).[1] Moreover, he insists that we cannot lay down fixed and exceptionless rules that always allow us to identify virtuous actions in particular situations; we have to be content with things that are usually true (1094b19; 1103b34; 1164b27). Sometimes we cannot give a general definition that will tell us what to do in particular situations; and the discrimination has to depend on perception (1109b20; 1126a31). This is why the prudent person needs perception (1142a23). We might rely on these remarks to support the conclusion that, according to Aristotle, we cannot identify right actions apart from the judgment of the prudent person.

This interpretation, however, raises further questions about the virtuous person's judgments. How does she judge that an action is virtuous, if she has no antecedent conception of what makes an action brave, just, generous, and so on, but must simply rely on her own judgment that this or that action is brave (etc.)? The doctrine of the prudent person as measure does not imply the strong epistemic thesis. It simply says that the virtuous person's judgments are reliably right, not that we cannot find out what is right without asking a virtuous person. Moreover, the extent of indeterminacy that Aristotle allows is consistent with being able to say quite a lot, without reference to virtuous people, about which actions are virtuous.[2] We have no good reason to believe that Aristotle maintains the epistemic priority of virtue.[3]

One might instead assert practical priority, claiming that we are more likely to do the right actions if we cultivate the virtues than if we attempt directly to do the right actions. This sort of argument is familiar from discussions of indirect utilitarianism.[4] According to this view, we will conform best to our ultimate criterion of the right if we act without explicit consideration of utility, but we rely on rules whose justification refers to utility. We might say something similar about the virtues. Instead of asking ourselves, for instance, what the right way to face danger is, we are better off if we try to cultivate in ourselves an appropriate mixture of fear, confidence, and appreciation of the relative values involved. If we have formed this state, we will be better able to act well than we would be if we had to deliberate de novo on each occasion about what would promote the common good. Aristotle gives an example of this line of argument, in his treatment of sudden dangers (1117a17); it applies more generally to the deliberation of the virtuous person.

He probably accepts practical priority for the virtues. Not every action by a virtuous person exercising a virtue needs to result immediately from the thought 'This is a fine thing to do' or 'This will promote the common good'. The appropriate thought may be 'This gift will benefit this person' or 'This pleasure is all right, but that one is bad'. These more specific descriptions will often trigger actions; Aristotle's accounts of the particular virtues

[1] These passages might also be used in support of an ontological claim (depending on how we understand 'measure'). One might (but need not) take Cooper to maintain such a claim at 'Reason' 276n.

[2] See further Irwin, 'Inexact'.

[3] Hursthouse, *OVE*, contains a careful discussion of the specific commitments of a virtue theory. She rejects (80) one claim about epistemic priority (see Hudson, *HCM* 42–3)—the claim that we can tell what action is just only by knowing what the just person is like). But she affirms explanatory priority of virtuous states to virtuous to action: 'The theoretical distinction between the two [sc. virtue ethics and deontology] is that the familiar rules, and their applications in particular cases, are given entirely different backings. According to deontology, I must not tell this lie because, applying the (correct) rule 'Do not lie' to this case, I find that lying is prohibited. According to virtue ethics, I must not tell this lie because it would be dishonest to do so, and dishonesty is a vice' (39). I doubt whether Aristotle is committed to this claim about explanatory priority.

[4] See esp. Berkeley, 'Obedience'.

suggest some of the specific descriptions. Virtuous people do not recite all the features of a given action that make it the right one for promoting the common good.[5] They are moved by the appropriate descriptions in some systematic way that they recognize and value as promoting the common good.

We will accept some priority in justification if we take virtuous actions to be justified primarily as the product of virtues, and do not take virtues to be justified primarily as the source of virtuous actions. But this claim about priority seems to be open to objection. If we have no independent reason to care about the actions resulting from the virtues, but we claim that the virtues are organized for the production of these actions, what reason have we to value the virtues? Critics of the Stoics often raise this objection.[6]

Aristotle does not accept the claim about priority in justification in its unqualified form, but he accepts a qualified version. He believes that the value of achieving the common good contributes to explaining why the virtuous person wants to promote it, but the value of trying to achieve it is not exhausted by the instrumental value of the tendency of virtue to achieve it.

To support this claim, Aristotle argues: (1) The appropriate form of rational activity fulfils the agent's function and so promotes the agent's own happiness. (2) Active concern for the common good is this appropriate form of rational activity. (3) Having this active concern for the common good is having the virtues of character. (4) Hence having the virtues of character promotes the agent's happiness.

This argument refers to active concern for the common good—trying to promote it. It does not refer simply to success in promoting the common good. If Aristotle can establish the premisses of this argument, he can defend concern for the common good on eudaemonist grounds. This is not simply an instrumental justification of virtue and virtuous action for their results.

113. The Content of the Virtues

Aristotle's theory of the virtues answers some questions in moral psychology, explaining the connexions between virtue, reason, desire, pleasure, and responsibility. An answer to these questions, however, is only a part of what we might reasonably expect. We also expect an answer to normative questions, about what a virtuous person will do in different types of situations. But readers have disagreed sharply about Aristotle's success in answering these normative questions. Some of these disagreements are better discussed in later chapters, when we come to consider the ways in which different theorists either develop his position (as they understand it) or turn in a different direction. But it will be helpful if we introduce some of the disagreements in this chapter, so that we can identify the features of Aristotle's account that have raised controversies of interpretation and of philosophical assessment.

Some critics have suggested that the Doctrine of the Mean is Aristotle's attempt to take us from general claims about virtue of character to specific claims about how many virtues there are, and about the types of actions they require. This suggestion about the mean has

[5] Some relevant questions are discussed by Williams, 'Acting', and Hursthouse, 'Reasons'.

[6] See esp. Cic. *F* iv 68–9; cf. §187.

some support in Aristotle; for he presents the different virtues as different mean states, to be contrasted with the extreme states that are the different vices. Since the mean is understood in quantitative terms, we might try to make it a practical guide by understanding it as a counsel of moderation: when we can define extremes, we should aim at somewhere in the middle.

This interpretation of the mean partly explains why early modern moralists, in the course of questioning the broadly Aristotelian outlook of mediaeval moral philosophy, attack the Doctrine of the Mean, and seek to offer a better answer to the questions to which they think the Aristotelian doctrine gives false answers. Hobbes, Grotius, and Pufendorf, for instance,[7] offer their own views as rivals to an Aristotelian account that identifies the different virtues with different forms of moderation. It is easy for them to show that the Aristotelian doctrine, as they understand it, fails in its task. It does not seem to fit every virtue (since not every virtue seems to be a form of moderation), and it does not seem to give the right practical advice (since the moderate reaction does not always seem to be the right one).

What we have already said about the mean shows that such objections rest on misinterpretation. Aristotle introduces the mean to show that virtue requires neither the complete indulgence nor the complete suppression of the non-rational part of the soul, and that it requires more than control by the rational part (which is continence, not virtue). But he does not suggest that a moderate display of emotion is always the right answer, or that, in considering what to do in specific situations, it is normally helpful to look for the moderate solution.

But if we reject this attempt to derive specific practical advice from the Doctrine of the Mean, and we offer no alternative, we leave a large gap in Aristotle's position. He offers fairly detailed descriptions of specific virtues and of the actions that can be expected from them. How are these descriptions to be defended, and does Aristotle's general theory of virtue make them easier to defend? If we cannot answer these questions, we make it difficult to see any connexion between the specific virtues and the views on happiness and virtue that we have considered so far.

Our discussion of Aristotle so far leads us to expect two things from his account of the virtues: (1) It ought to develop naturalism into a systematic theory of the virtues. Given Aristotle's account of human nature and the human function, we ought to see that certain specific states of character rather than others turn out to be virtues appropriate to human nature. Such an account will show that naturalist claims are not empty or trivial. (2) It ought to develop naturalism into a systematic theory of morality. Naturalist claims ought to vindicate the moral virtues as appropriate for human nature.

If naturalism met the first expectation but not the second, it would answer the accusation of emptiness and triviality, but it would be a theory of the human good that raises doubts about the rational claims of morality on us. This is not Aristotle's intention. Hence he needs to satisfy both expectations. Moreover, he must satisfy them systematically. If it were simply a coincidence that the virtues recognized by naturalism include the moral virtues, but naturalism gives us no good reason to expect this, it would fall short of a rational explanation and defence of morality. The systematic theory of the virtues should show that the virtues are moral virtues.[8]

[7] See Hobbes, *L* 15.40; Grotius, *JBP* Pref. §43–5; Pufendorf, *JNG* i 2.

[8] Among those who have incorporated Aristotle, as they understand him, into their own position, we will consider especially Aquinas and T. H. Green, and so we will not say much about their positions here.

114. Are the Virtues of Character Moral Virtues?

This may appear to be an unreasonable expectation to impose on Aristotle. Should we assume that the virtues of character, as he conceives them, are moral virtues, or that he has any explicit or implicit conception of morality? Some critics have argued that Aristotle has no concept of morality, and that it is a mistake to attribute any beliefs about moral virtues to him. Some have argued that it is also hopeless to look for anything like moral virtues in the Aristotelian virtues of character.

To see whether or not it is worth our while to look for moral beliefs or moral virtues in Aristotle, we should consider what we ought to be looking for. What should convince us that Aristotle has some conception of morality, or that the virtues he recognizes are moral virtues? Among the marks of morality many would include these features:[9]

1. Impartiality—morality does not look at actions from the point of view of the agent, but from the point of view of the interests of everyone affected.
2. Concern for others—it gives some non-derivative weight to acting for the interests of others besides the agent. Someone who is moved only by concern for his own welfare, or by a purely aesthetic concern (to preserve all the works of art in the world, for instance) is probably not moved by moral considerations. If I think of other people without regard to their welfare, I probably do not think of them as objects of moral concern.[10]
3. Responsibility—morally right actions and moral goodness are a source of legitimate praise, and failure to do them is a source of legitimate blame; people are legitimately held responsible for acting or failing to act morally.
4. Importance—morality matters. We perhaps ought not to insist that any recognizable moral view must treat moral principles as the ones that matter most; but unless a set of principles counts for quite a lot with someone, we might be reluctant to say that they are moral principles for that agent.[11]

Some critics doubt whether these conditions are sufficient for a conception of morality; some argue that we should also include a belief in distinctively moral obligations.[12]

[9] Frankena, 'Concept' 156, suggests that a moral outlook includes 'judgments, rules, principles, ideals, etc., which . . . concern the relations of one individual . . . to others, . . . involve or call for a consideration of the effects of his actions on others (not necessarily all others), not from the point of view of his own interests or aesthetic enjoyments, but from their own point of view'. Warnock, *OM* 26, explains the scope of morality through its object: ' . . . the "general object" of morality, appreciation of which may enable us to *understand* the basis of moral evaluation, is to contribute to betterment—or non-deterioration—of the human predicament, primarily and essentially by seeking to countervail "limited sympathies" and their potentially most damaging effects. It is the proper business of morality, and the generic object of moral evaluation . . . to expand our sympathies, or, better, to reduce the liability to damage inherent in their natural tendency to be narrowly restricted'.

[10] On questions about the scope of 'moral' see Foot, 'Beliefs'.

[11] Cf. Hare, *FR* 169.

[12] On moral obligation see Anscombe, 'Modern'. Williams also suggests that morality essentially includes moral obligation. He describes morality as 'a peculiar development of the ethical . . . It peculiarly emphasizes certain ethical notions rather than others, developing in particular a special notion of obligation, and it has some peculiar presuppositions' (*ELP* 6). It is not easy, however, to list the features of morality, as Williams understands them, or to distinguish them from the special features of the Kantian view, which he says is only one 'representation' of morality (174). But he seems to recognize these conditions: (1) Characteristically moral obligation is concerned with action that 'must be in the agent's power' (175). (2) Moral obligations 'cannot conflict, ultimately, really, or at the end of the line' (176). (3) They are inescapable in the sense that 'the fact that a given agent would prefer not to be in this system or bound by its rules will not

Alternatively we might object that these conditions are too stringent; they may not seem necessary for an intuitive conception of morality that can be used to determine whether Aristotle recognizes moral virtues. If we insist on all these conditions, we may appear to presuppose the truth of a Kantian conception of morality; but it does not seem very surprising to discover that Aristotle has no conception of morality, if that means only that he is not a Kantian. One might also doubt whether Hume has a conception of the moral, if we apply Kantian criteria; for his idea of 'personal merit' includes both voluntary and non-voluntary traits, provided that they are useful or agreeable to the agent or to others. He argues that we should not make voluntariness a test for moral virtues.[13]

But even if the conception of morality that we have sketched includes some Kantian elements, this may not matter. For if we show that Aristotle has a conception of morality, measured by this standard, we will also have done something to show that it is not a specifically Kantian, or specifically modern, or specifically Christian, conception. We can remove the suspicion that we are introducing an irrelevant standard by showing that it is also Aristotle's standard.[14]

Even if an intuitive conception of morality has these components, they may not co-exist easily; in fact they may sometimes appear to conflict. We might wonder, then, why we ought to recognize one set of virtues (and so on) that meet all these conditions, rather than distinct sets of virtues meeting one or another condition. But we ought at least to try to understand the presence of these components in our intuitive concept. Whether or not these are exactly the right conditions to impose, it is worth asking whether a theorist recognizes such principles or virtues; for it makes a difference whether or not a person or a society recognizes that such principles have a special status. We will understand Aristotle's position on these aspects of the virtues if we examine the relevant aspects of his views on responsibility and on the good of others, and see how these views affect his claims about the virtues.

We have already examined Aristotle's views on responsibility, and seen why we ought to ascribe to him a conception of moral responsibility. On this point, his concern with virtues of character is a concern with morality. But Aristotle's eudaemonism suggests to some critics that he is not concerned with morality.[15] Since the virtues are to be understood by reference to the agent's happiness, an account of the virtues focusses on the agent, not on other people or on people impartially.

Is this a reasonable criticism of Aristotle? We ought to recall that his appeal to happiness does not offer a wholly non-evaluative starting point from which evaluative conclusions are to be inferred; his naturalism does not try to derive the normative from the non-normative.

excuse him; nor will blaming him be based on a misunderstanding. Blame is the characteristic reaction of the morality system' (177). Though Williams warns that 'morality is not one determinate set of ethical thoughts' (174), these three conditions give some idea of what he means when he claims that the Greeks 'had certainly not arrived at the distinctive preoccupations of the system *morality*, with its emphasis on a very special notion of obligation. (In this . . . they were very fortunate)' (32). Just as the Greeks were fortunate to have avoided morality, 'we would be better off without it' (174). Everson discusses Anscombe and Williams helpfully in 'Introduction'.

[13] On Hume see §90 above.

[14] Annas also speaks of an 'intuitive' understanding of morality (*MH* 452), which she describes in some detail (120–31). Her description is less Kantian than mine. She argues plausibly that ancient theories of the virtues do some of the work that we might expect an account of morality to do.

[15] Prichard, *MO* 13, finds Aristotle's *Ethics* disappointing because it discusses happiness rather than morality. See §80.

Nor does it necessarily claim to derive the whole content of morality from a purely non-moral foundation. Aristotle claims to connect three sorts of judgments that are not obviously connected: judgments about human nature, judgments about welfare, and judgments about morality. In Aristotle's view, these three types of judgments should constitute a systematic theory that connects morality and happiness to the fulfilment of natural capacities. We may legitimately use moral judgments and judgments about welfare to expand or to clarify our conception of human nature. But since judgments about nature and about welfare do not simply reflect our moral judgments, but also include content that does not depend on moral judgments, it is a non-trivial and worthwhile task to show that the three types of judgments support one another.[16]

115. Is Aristotle an Unsystematic Theorist?

Before we consider whether Aristotle offers any account of morality, we ought to consider some reasons for doubting whether he even intends to offer the naturalist theory we have outlined. Sidgwick argues that Aristotle's treatment of the virtues is theoretically unambitious, because it is simply a detailed and impartial description of common sense. Aristotle does not argue systematically from features of happiness to a theoretical account of the virtues, but simply consults the accepted views of his contemporaries, without trying to reconstruct, revise, or justify them.[17] Aristotle's general attitude to the virtues is a form of 'aesthetic intuitionism'; it does not take the virtues to exemplify some general principle that vindicates the relevant actions and traits of character, but it presents them simply as objects of immediate quasi-aesthetic admiration.[18] The appeal to the fine manifests this aesthetic intuitionism; the virtuous person is expected to see the beauty and appropriateness in this sort of action, without relying on any further reason. Ethical theory, as Aristotle conceives it, has no further argument to show that the virtuous person sees the right things.[19]

[16] On the ambitions of a naturalist and eudaemonist theory see §§77, 81.

[17] The attitude that Sidgwick attributes to Aristotle is similar to the attitude that he attributes to the common sense of his own time: 'Liberality appears to require an external abundance in the gift even more than a self-sacrificing disposition. It seems therefore to be possible only to the rich: and, as I have hinted, in the admiration commonly accorded it there seems to be mingled an element rather aesthetic than moral. For we are all apt to admire power, and we recognize the latent power of wealth gracefully exhibited in a certain degree of careless profusion when the object is to give happiness to others. Indeed the vulgar admire the same carelessness as manifested even in selfish luxury' (*ME* 324–5). ' . . . the restriction of the sphere of courage to danger in war, and of that of temperance to certain bodily pleasures, as well as the want of distinction between selfish and benevolent expenditure in describing liberality, illustrate the fragmentariness and superficiality of treatment to which mere analysis of the common usage of ethical terms is always liable to lead' (*OHE* 64).

[18] According to Sidgwick's view of aesthetic intuitionism, 'We can give only a general account of the virtue—a description, not a definition—and leave it to trained insight to find in any particular circumstances the act that will best realize it' (*ME* 228). In describing bravery Aristotle 'is merely following closely and impartially the lines of Common Sense, of the ethico-aesthetic sentiment of his society' (*GSM* 91), and 'simply conceives the brave man as realizing moral beauty in his act' (92).

[19] Sidgwick recognizes that a historian might suggest utilitarian features of bravery that would explain its tendency to excite this sort of quasi-aesthetic admiration; but he insists that the historian's explanation is no part of the outlook that is being explained. 'Aristotle sees that the sphere of the virtue of courage (*andreia*), as recognized by the common sense of Greece, is restricted to dangers in war: and we can now explain this limitation by a reference to the utilitarian importance of this kind of courage, at a period of history when the individual's happiness was bound up more completely than it now

Sidgwick claims to find this attitude to the virtues in Aristotle's character-sketches, and especially in his sketches of those traits of character that do not strike us as obvious candidates for being moral virtues. These Aristotelian virtues include generosity and magnificence, the virtues concerned with money and other material resources.[20] Aristotle does not distinguish self-regarding from benevolent expenditures, but simply admires the wealth and power that are displayed in conspicuous consumption, regulated by conventional good taste, but without any necessary reference to a common good.[21] He fails to penetrate below the surface of common beliefs to their ethical basis, and he fails to see that the appropriate critical principles may lead both to a more systematic account of common sense and to criticism and revision of it.

But if we agree that Aristotle records common sense from the standpoint of aesthetic intuitionism, we might conclude that (contrary to Sidgwick) there is nothing wrong with this; for we may believe that aesthetic intuitionism gives the best account of our grasp of ultimate moral principles. Later intuitionists argue that it is misguided to look for any more basic principles underlying the different judgments that define the different virtues.[22]

Alternatively, we might endorse Aristotle's approach (as Sidgwick describes it) on the ground that we ought not to look for ultimate principles at all. A particularist holds that particular judgments are not to be justified by appeal to more general principles, even to those that are grasped intuitively, because particular judgments are basic. Aristotle's non-theoretical sketches of the virtues remind us of the sort of person who makes the correct particular judgments that belong to the different virtues.[23]

We would have a related, but distinct, reason for agreeing with Sidgwick's version of Aristotle, if we accepted some degree of cultural and historical relativism about the virtues. When we try to specify general principles about the virtues, we try to give precise guidance for the specific situations that a specific agent meets in a specific set of cultural, historical, and social circumstances; perhaps it is simply an illusion to suppose that a general theory of virtue

is with the welfare of his state, while the very existence of the latter was more frequently imperilled by hostile invasions: but this explanation lies quite beyond the range of Aristotle's own reflection . . . The admiration felt by early man for beauties or excellences of character seems to have been as direct and unreflective as his admiration of any other beauty' (*ME* 456). Common sense, in Sidgwick's description, displays some degree of 'unconscious utilitarianism' (*GSM* 90; *ME* 453–7), and utilitarian considerations might explain some of Aristotle's judgments, but these considerations are no part of Aristotle's own view.

[20] 'And an examination of these would show very clearly how simply Aristotle is following the ethico-aesthetic—or even purely aesthetic—sentiment of admiration for certain qualities in the conduct of a Greek gentleman, and how far he is from conceiving self-devotion to a social end as essential to the notion of virtue. For example, his account of liberality is startling to a modern reader from its want of distinction between self-regarding and benevolent expenditure. Compare also his account of *megalopsuchia*' (*GSM* 96–7).

[21] Sidgwick sums up his commendation and criticism of Aristotle in this general verdict: 'There is enough just and close analytical observation contained in this famous account of virtues and vices to give it a permanent interest over and above its historical value; but it does not seem to be based on any serious attempt to consider human conduct exhaustively, and exhibit the patterns of goodness appropriate to the different parts, functions, and relations . . .' (*OHE* 63–4; quotation continued in n17 above). From Sidgwick's point of view, this is a defect in Aristotle's position. Sidgwick seeks to show that his own theory passes the test that Aristotle fails.

[22] Hence Price speaks of 'heads of virtue', *RPQM* 165. Ross, *RG* 34–5, agrees with him.

[23] This point is derived from McDowell, 'Rational aspects', 93 and n7: 'Aristotle's scepticism about universal truths in ethics implies that the content of this general conception [sc. of what doing well is] cannot be definitively written down, in a shape suitable for deduction of particular practical conclusions. No doubt it can be gestured at, perhaps by way of reminder to people who share it (cf. 1095b4–6), by listing virtues and giving character sketches of their possessors, as Aristotle of course does in Books III–V.' See also McDowell, 'Issues' 29; Irwin, 'Inexact'.

could both provide detailed enough instructions to be a useful practical guide and be derived simply from very general principles about human nature and rational agency. To supply the necessary content for his theory of the virtues, Aristotle introduces the recognized virtues that are historically familiar to him; and similarly, we might argue, other philosophers are equally justified in introducing the virtues that are familiar to them.[24]

Perhaps, then, all we can reasonably expect of moral philosophy is the articulation of the views of a particular society or culture. The philosopher may introduce general principles, but these principles lack the sort of non-historical content that would make them a basis for criticizing one or another historical embodiment of the virtues. On this view, Aristotle's treatment of the virtues will remind us that moral theories are historically conditioned, and that it is foolish to look for a non-historical point of view from which we can try to criticize the Aristotelian conception of the virtues in contrast to some other conception.[25]

These different claims about the virtues offer different defences of Aristotle on the assumption that Sidgwick describes his account of the virtues correctly. But does Sidgwick's description fit Aristotle's account?

116. Virtue and the Fine[26]

To see whether Aristotle has a systematic naturalist theory of the virtues, we should ask what his different virtues have in common. In his view, their common aim is the fine (*kalon*), since it is characteristic of the virtuous person to choose virtuous action 'because it is fine' or 'for the sake of the fine'.[27] '*Kalon*' might also be translated by 'beautiful'; and so this claim about the virtuous person might be taken, as Sidgwick suggests, to show that Aristotle is an aesthetic intuitionist. According to this view, acting for the sake of the fine is achieved in an immediate, non-deliberative, disinterested response to the perceived appropriateness of an action.

We have good reason, however, to deny that when Aristotle connects the virtues with the fine, he primarily has aesthetic beauty in mind. We have already noticed that he connects pursuit of the fine with living in accordance with reason rather than passion (1169a5–6).[28] We treat our actions and aims as fine when we regard them as having some value independent of our inclination towards them.

This rational concern for the fine goes beyond any narrow and exclusive concern for one's own interest (*Rhet.* 1358b38; 1389a32–5; 1389b35; *EN* 1104b31; 1169a6); when everyone concentrates on fine action, their action promotes the common good (1169a6–11). This fine

[24] See MacIntyre, *AV*, ch. 12.

[25] One might draw this conclusion (perhaps with some over-simplification) from MacIntyre, *AV*, ch. 5. His position in *WJWR* is more complex.

[26] On the fine cf. Rogers, '*Kalon*'; Cooper, 'Reason'; Lear, *HLHG*, ch. 6. 116.

[27] See 1116b3; 1116b31; 1117a8; 1117b9; 1119a18 (the fine is connected with acting 'as one ought' and 'as correct reason says', two aspects of the Doctrine of the Mean); 1120a11 (connected with benefiting another); 1120a23 (actions are fine and for the sake of the fine); 1122b6 (the virtuous person spends for the sake of the fine; for this is a common feature of the virtues); 1123a25 (acting for the sake of the fine contrasted with acting to display one's wealth); 1126b29 (the fine is the standard for social interaction); 1127a28 (telling the truth about oneself is fine and praiseworthy).

[28] See §106 above.

action expresses the virtues, because actions display great virtue in so far as they especially benefit others (*Rhet.* 1366b3–4;[29] *EN* 1120a11; 1121a27–30; 1123a31–2). Fine action is both intrinsically good and praiseworthy (*EE* 1248b17–25; cf. *EN* 1101b31–2; 1155a28–31; *Rhet.* 1366a33–6), and actions displaying great virtue especially deserve praise (*Rhet.* 1367b28). Since these actions are praiseworthy, they are voluntary (*EN* 1109b31; *EE* 1223a9–15).

Aristotle does not say as much about the fine as we might expect him to, given its importance in his account of the virtues; some of his successors see its importance, and try to describe it more fully.[30] But he says enough to show that fine actions are not simply beautiful or admirable from just any point of view. As Sidgwick remarks, we (or Aristotle's readers) might admire grand gestures and pointless extravagance as signs of great wealth or power; or we might be impressed by great physical strength or endurance. But this sort of admiration is not a ground for counting something as fine. A fine action must be praiseworthy, not simply admirable, and so it must be voluntary; and it must aim at the common good, not simply the benefit of the agent.

Aristotle intends, therefore, some systematic connexion between virtue, the fine, and the common good of a particular community. Fineness may be an appropriate object of some sort of aesthetic admiration in moral contexts; but if the aesthetic admiration is essentially a response to the promotion of the common good, the promotion of the common good must be an essential characteristic of fine actions (states of character, etc.) in moral contexts.

These features of fine actions do not show that by 'fine' Aristotle means 'promoting the common good'. It is difficult to show that he thinks 'fine' has different senses in aesthetic and in moral contexts. The most plausible account of the sense of the term would probably be 'admirable', in the sense of 'deserving admiration'. Promotion of the common good is what constitutes fineness in moral contexts. It would therefore have a claim to supply a Socratic definition of what the fine is, or (to use Ross's terms) it would be the fine-making characteristic, but not an account of the concept of the fine.[31]

In claiming that the rational pursuit of the fine involves concern for a common good, Aristotle implies that if we live in accordance with reason, we are concerned for a common good. This is why the connexion between virtue and the fine answers the objection that self-love always conflicts with concern for the good of others. For virtuous people's self-love is directed to themselves as lovers of the fine, and when everyone competes to do what is finest, that is beneficial to the common interest (*EN* 1169a6).

These claims suggest that Aristotle intends—whether or not he carries out his intention—to give a systematic account of the virtues of character, and that the system in the account refers essentially to their concern for the fine.[32] For this aspect of the virtues makes it true that the virtuous person fulfils the human function of living a life of action guided by reason.

[29] Green calls attention to this passage, at *PE* §248.

[30] See §§180, 332.

[31] On Socratic definition see §11. For Ross's distinction see *RG* 9–10.

[32] Moore, *PE* §106, criticizes Aristotle on the ground that he does not consistently take action for the sake of the fine to be necessary for virtue. Moore does not offer convincing evidence. Part of his case relies on the questionable rendering of '*hexis*' as 'habit'.

117. Justice, the Common Good, and Concern for the Fine

Aristotle's claims about the fine are not the only ground for connecting the virtues of character in general with the good of others besides the agent. For he also claims that virtue as a whole is the same as general justice (1129b25). General justice is not co-ordinate with each of the specific virtues. Rather, it is in some way identical to virtue as a whole; special justice is an expression of general justice, but so is each of the other virtues. General justice is the complete exercise of complete virtue (1129b30–1), and complete virtue in relation to another person (1129b27). General justice and complete virtue are the same state of character, but 'their being is not the same' (1130a12). General justice prescribes the actions that are prescribed by the right laws, and these are the actions that promote and maintain happiness and its parts for the political community (1129b17–19). Hence those who believe that virtue conflicts with one's own happiness point to general justice. Thrasymachus' claim that justice is another's good (Plato, *R.* 343c3) seems to be true for a virtue that is defined by its reference to the benefit of another (*EN* 1130a3–5; 1134b2–6); the question raised in the *Republic* should arise especially about general justice, as Aristotle conceives it.

Aristotle believes that Thrasymachus' question arises not only about general justice, but also about bravery, temperance, and the other virtues. For in claiming that general justice is the same state of character as complete virtue, he implies that if we have the other virtues, we also have the concern for the common good that is characteristic of justice. General justice is not a further state of character that a person with the other virtues needs in order to be completely virtuous; if it were, it would be a part of virtue, which Aristotle denies (1130a8–10). It is already present in the other virtues. Hence it is not a distinct virtue in the way in which temperance and bravery are distinct virtues; it is a characteristic of the person who has all the other virtues. He explains this point in arguing that general justice completes virtue because we show that we have virtue by using it in our relations to others; many people can manage to behave virtuously in what concerns themselves, but fail in their relations to others (1129b31–1130a1). Concern for the common good and the happiness of the community follows from the other virtues of character.

General justice does not simply follow from the other virtues as a whole. It also follows from each of the other virtues. This implication rests on Aristotle's belief in the reciprocity of the virtues. Though he rejects the Socratic belief in the unity of the virtues, he agrees with Plato's view in the *Republic* that the virtues are inseparable.[33] He argues: each virtue requires prudence; if we have prudence, we have all the virtues; and hence if we have one virtue we have all the virtues (1144b32–1145a2). Each virtue requires prudence to grasp the right end as a result of deliberation about what promotes happiness; hence none of the virtues is separable from prudence. But the right end is apparent only to the virtuous person, because anyone else is liable to be warped by misguided pleasure (1144a29–36). Temperance preserves prudence because it prevents our judgment from being warped by the attraction of pleasures that we tend to value more than we would if we considered their value without inappropriate bias (1140b11–20). Each of the virtues, therefore, requires each of the others.

[33] On the unity and reciprocity of the virtues see §12 (Socrates); §§49 and §59 (Plato); §185 (Stoics); §325 (Aquinas); §375 (Scotus).

We might be dissatisfied with this argument. Why should we not say instead that each virtue requires only the element of prudence that grasps the end proper to this virtue? And why not say that this element of prudence needs only the sort of virtue that prevents a misguided judgment about this proper end? Aristotle rejects this division of prudence into specific elements of prudence concerned with the specific ends proper to the different virtues. If prudence were divided in this way, we might find that the different specific prudences corresponding to the different virtues gave us contradictory advice, so that the requirements of bravery and justice, for instance, might conflict. But Aristotle rejects the possibility of such conflict (*MM* 1199b36–1200a11). Similarly, he denies that we can go too far in cultivating any one of the virtues, in the same way as we can go too far in the pursuit of wealth or honour or some other external good. All goods are liable to misuse, except for virtue (*Rhet*. 1355b4–5). Each of the virtues aims at the right use of other goods, and aims at the mean; but the right use and the mean preclude any excess in relation to the demands of prudence (*MM* 1200a12–34).

These replies to the suggestion that virtues might conflict reveal an assumption implicit in Aristotle's claims about the mean. He does not suppose that the mean is fixed by reference to the demands of just one virtue, isolated from the others. We cannot find the mean appropriate to temperance by reflexion on a limited area of concerns that are somehow proprietary to temperance in contrast to the other virtues. He believes that each virtue has to respond to the concerns of the other virtues; that is why each virtue requires the whole of the unified body of knowledge that belongs to prudence. Since prudence grasps the contents of happiness, it prescribes the actions for each virtue in the light of the demands of happiness as a whole.

The doctrine of the reciprocity of the virtues helps to explain why each virtue has to respond to the demands of justice. If we have any of the virtues of character, we have general justice; and so whatever is responsible for the presence of general justice in a virtuous person must be present in each of the virtues. But this would still be true even if general justice were a part of virtue as a whole, as temperance is. Since Aristotle denies that general justice is a part of virtue, he intends a closer connexion between the demands of bravery and general justice than between the demands of bravery and temperance. How does his account of the virtues of character make it reasonable to expect this especially close connexion between a specific virtue and general justice?

Aristotle can answer this question if he appeals to the virtuous person's concern with the fine. This motive is necessary for each of the virtues; and if pursuit of the fine promotes the common good, this motive ensures that general justice is already present in virtue of character. The virtuous person finds the mean for each virtue by finding what is fine, and so by finding what promotes the common good; the action meeting these conditions is also just. Being fine and being just are still two distinct properties of an action. To claim that an action is just is to claim that it promotes happiness for the political community. To claim that it is fine is to claim that it is intrinsically good and praiseworthy. The basis for both these claims is the claim that the action promotes the common good. When Aristotle says that fine and just things are the subject-matter of political science (*EN* 1094b14), he assumes a connexion that he explains in his other remarks about fineness and justice.

118. The Fine and the Virtues of Character: Bravery

Even if Aristotle accepts this connexion between the virtues, the fine, the common good, and general justice, does the connexion guide his account of the virtues of character? Though he is relatively inexplicit about this aspect of these virtues, he is not totally silent. His general claims about the fine help to explain claims that would otherwise be puzzling.

Aristotle insists that bravery is displayed primarily in the danger of death in war (1115a25–9), because this danger is both the greatest danger (because it is the danger of death) and the finest danger (since it concerns death in war). This restriction of the scope of the virtue departs significantly from common sense. For common sense (both our own and the Greeks') might assume that people can be brave if they face danger fearlessly in a private feud or a daring crime. The bank robber may face dangers as great as those that soldiers face in war. But Aristotle denies that bank robbers are brave, because the danger they face is not fine. They do not face the danger for the sake of a common good, and therefore they do not act virtuously.

Aristotle does not interpret the common good in strictly utilitarian terms. It may be useful for a state if some citizens cheerfully sacrifice themselves for the good of others; but Aristotle does not think this sort of self-sacrifice is necessarily appropriate for the brave person. For he notices that some people may face death because of foolish optimism (1115b28), others because of foolish fearlessness (1115b24), others because of shame (1116a18), others because of indifference to their lives. He remarks that the last people will often make the best professional soldiers (1117b17–20).

None of these motives, useful though they may be, is characteristic of bravery. Brave people are less tractable and less useful in some cases, because they need to be convinced that they are sacrificing themselves for some worthwhile cause; but once they are convinced, they are ready in some circumstances to face hopeless odds that would daunt the professional soldier (1116b15–23). The brave person's discriminating attitude marks the difference between concern for the common good and a tendency to be useful to a community.

Even among people who have roughly the right sort of motive Aristotle's discriminations conflict with common sense. He does not even agree that the average citizen-soldier fighting for his city is necessarily brave; if citizens are moved exclusively by thoughts of honour, shame, and punishment, they are not brave (1116a17–20). These restrictions show that Aristotle insists on the right sort of rational concern for the common good for its own sake in a genuinely virtuous person. If we understand concern for the fine in this way, we can explain why he distinguishes genuine bravery from the different attitudes that might be confused with it. If we do not connect concern for the fine with concern for the common good, we will find it difficult to discern the principle behind his distinctions.

119. The Fine and the Virtues: Temperance

Temperance raises more difficult questions for an account of the fine that emphasizes the common good. While it is fairly plausible to suggest that bravery involves some concern with the good of others, temperance seems more obviously self-regarding. Indeed temperance

may well seem to be so clearly self-regarding that it is not a genuinely moral virtue at all.[34] But Aristotle claims that temperate people, no less than people with the other virtues, are guided by their view of the fine when they restrain or indulge particular appetites (1119a11–20). If our account of the fine is right, we ought to find that temperate people regulate their pursuit of bodily pleasures by reference to the common good. Do Aristotle's remarks on temperance suggest that he has this sort of regulation in mind?

Though he takes temperance to be concerned with the pleasures of touch and taste, he does not include all these pleasures (cf. 1118b4–8). He picks out the pleasures associated with appetites for food, drink, and sex, because he assumes that the people who pursue them without restraint are especially bestial and slavish (1118b1–4, 10–11). The intemperate person is slavish in so far as he is wholly occupied with the pursuit of these particular satisfactions and thinks of everything else as simply a means to promoting these satisfactions. This feature of intemperance matches Aristotle's general conception of vice.[35] The slavish person is not wholly irrational, since he conforms to some instrumental conditions for rationality, but this is the only kind of guidance by reason that he accepts.[36] He takes a purely mercenary attitude to rational deliberation and attaches no intrinsic value to the exercise of his capacities as a rational agent; that is why he has no concern for the fine.

Does Aristotle believe that the intemperate person's indifference to the fine includes indifference to the common good? He displays indifference to the common good because his efforts to satisfy his appetites lead him to ignore the good of others. That is why the intemperate person is prone to wanton aggression (*hubris*, 1129b21). Wantonly aggressive people pursue their ends by physical assaults, including sexual assaults (1148b30). More generally, they try to humiliate other people for their own pleasure or gain (1115a22; 1124a26–b6; 1149b20–2). Intemperance makes someone especially prone to extravagance, and susceptible to flatterers (1121a30–b10). Its characteristic desires tend to dominate a person and to make him indifferent to his distinctively rational characteristics, and therefore tend to make him indifferent to the claims of other people.

These features of the intemperate person fit Aristotle's description of the vicious person who is indifferent to the common good. The intemperate person will be aggressive in the pursuit of the 'contested' goods that people normally fight over (1168b15–19). He is dominated by the sort of self-love that is directed to the non-rational part of the soul (1168b19–21); this is the type of self-love that conflicts with pursuit of the virtues and the common good. The more intemperate we are, the more likely we are to have desires that conflict with other people's desires, and the less likely we are to co-operate with others (1167b9–16).

Temperance, therefore, as Aristotle conceives it, is not a purely self-regarding virtue, and its concern for the fine is not a purely self-regarding concern. When he claims that temperate

[34] On self-regarding virtues see §313. For Butler's view see *Diss*. 6: 'It should seem, that a due concern about our own interest or happiness, and a reasonable endeavour to secure and promote it, which is, I think, very much the meaning of the word prudence in our language; it should seem that this is virtue, and the contrary behaviour faulty and blameable; since, in the calmest way of reflection, we approve of the first, and condemn the other conduct, both in ourselves and others'.

[35] On intemperance as the paradigmatic vice see §105.

[36] It is not easy to state conditions for instrumental rationality. It raise some difficulties for Hume in *T* ii 3.3 and for Kant in *G*, ch. 2.

people are concerned for the fine, he means that they regulate the appetites that especially encourage disregard for the interests of others because they encourage concern for one's own gratification without regard to oneself or to others. The appropriate regulation of these appetites does not consist simply in preventing them from harming oneself. Aristotle believes that we have reached the mean that constitutes temperance only if we have adjusted our own appetites and pleasures to the interests of others as well as ourselves. In this virtue as well as in bravery, aiming at the fine includes concern for the common good.

We may miss this aspect of Aristotle's view of temperance if we disagree with his psychological claim that the particular appetites he mentions are the ones that particularly tend to dominate an agent and to make him indifferent to his rational capacities. In that case we might be less inclined to believe that intemperance is a paradigmatic vice. But a disagreement on this point should not conceal the point of his concern with these appetites. He believes that their special urgency, and their tendency to encourage indifference to one's rational capacities, also explain the particular importance of incontinence, as he understands it. In his view, incontinence, properly speaking, is confined to the appetites that are the concern of temperance. Because temperance restrains these appetites that corrupt one's practical reason (1144a29–b1), it has a special role in preserving prudence (1140b11–20). It preserves the rational concern for the fine, and thereby preserves concern for the common good.

120. The Fine and the Virtues: Generosity and Magnificence

If we were trying to show that Aristotle is not primarily concerned with virtues that we normally regard as moral, and that his attitude to the fine reflects aesthetic appreciation rather than moral evaluation, we might plausibly cite the virtues of generosity, magnificence, and magnanimity. These may well appear to reflect cultural ideals of good taste and good form, rather than any specifically moral concern. None the less, Aristotle maintains that generous and magnificent people act for the sake of the fine, as all virtuous people do (1122b6–7). If concern for the fine in these virtues is confined to these aesthetic and cultural ideals, we need to modify our claim that concern for the fine includes concern for the common good. We need to look more closely, therefore, to see whether the details of Aristotle's account support the claims about the fine that we have defended in considering bravery and temperance. For these purposes, we may confine ourselves to magnificence, since it seems more plausible in this case that the virtue consists mainly in good taste, apart from any moral aims or concerns.

Closer study shows that magnificent people regulate their expenditure by reference to the common good. They avoid ostentation even in private expenses, such as building themselves houses (1123a6–10); for they do not want private houses to be more imposing than public buildings, for instance. They avoid the errors of the ostentatious person who performs his public services in ways that display his wealth but do not benefit the common good (1123a20–7). They are moved by consideration of the common good, and they take account of it even in private expenses, if these affect the common good. (1122b19–23; 1123a1–5).[37]

[37] This sort of excellence is found in 'the sorts of expenses called honourable, . . .—and in expenses that provoke a good competition for honour, for the common good . . . .' (1122b19–22). ' . . . in expenses that concern the whole city, or

It would be exaggerated to claim that all the actions characteristic of the magnificent person result from a desire to promote the common good. The Aristotelian virtue includes expenditures on oneself and on one's friends that do not affect the common good; promotion of the common good is not necessary for them to be fine and admirable. But even these actions that do not aim at a common good are regulated by the virtuous person's concern for a common good. A gift to his friend, for instance, will be attractive because it is a source of gratitude and honour; but he will also give it for the friend's own sake, and he cares especially about the gratitude and honour coming from his friend because he cares about his friend for the friend's own sake. If the generous person really cares about the common good of himself and his friend, it is reasonable for him to be unconcerned about any sharp distinction between his own good and the good of the other.[38] Similarly, concern for the common good of the larger community restrains him from ostentatious expenditure that would provoke a pointless competition in displays of wealth. This, then, is another virtue that guides an agent's choices and actions in just the way that we ought to expect if we are right about Aristotle's conception of the fine.

121. The Fine and the Virtues: Magnanimity

Interpreters often cite Aristotle's account of magnanimity to show that his conception of virtue is difficult to reconcile with our conception of a moral virtue.[39] Sometimes his attitude seems to be more aesthetic than moral, in so far as he seems to admire the grand scale of magnanimous action (1123b6–8), and refers to morally insignificant details of how the magnanimous person walks and speaks (1125a12–16). Moreover, the magnanimous person seems rather devoted to himself; his self-assertive and disdainful pride seems to mark a sharp contrast with Christian virtue and, more generally, with a conception of morality that emphasizes concern for others.

But exclusive attention to these features of Aristotle's picture is misleading; it ignores the fact that the magnanimous person is concerned with the fine and the common good. He recognizes the priority of virtue and the fine in his attitude to external goods. He cares about honour, but only for virtuous actions; and since he cares most about acting virtuously, he does not think honour, or any other external good, is very important (1124a12–17). The greatest reward that other people can give him is the greatest honour, but he knows that he deserves this only if he knows that virtue deserves the greatest honour. He knows this only if he also knows that virtue is the greatest of the goods that compose happiness, greater

the people in it with a reputation for worth—the receiving of foreign guests and sending them off, gifts and exchanges of gifts. For the magnificent person spends on the common good, not on himself...' (1123a1–5).

[38] Sidgwick acknowledges the relevance of friendship in these contexts: 'One defect in Aristotle's account of virtue which strikes a modern reader is that benevolence is not recognized, except obscurely in the imperfect form of liberality. This deficiency, however, is to some extent supplied by a separate discussion on the relations of kind affection which bind men together' (*OHE* 66). The imperfection of liberality is presumably the lack of distinction between types of expenditure that Sidgwick has commented on; and friendship is what supplies the deficiency to some extent.

[39] 'The traits by which Aristotle characterizes in detail this flower of noble life are all the more interesting from their discrepancy with the Christian ideal' (*OHE* 63). In speaking of the Christian ideal Sidgwick no doubt includes humility, which he describes with something less than enthusiasm (*ME* 334–6). See also Aquinas on magnanimity and humility, §331.

than honour or any other external good. If virtue were not the greatest good, it would not deserve the greatest honour. He believes that he deserves honour because he believes in the supreme value of virtue; hence he does not believe that the rewards of vice are great enough to justify vicious action. For the same reasons he cares more about the honours he receives from the right people and for the right reasons. Magnanimity requires the right outlook on external goods, and on 'every sort of good and ill fortune' (1124a14), and hence on honour. It is guided by belief in the supremacy of virtue over honour and therefore over all other external goods (1124a16–20).

We reveal our view of the relative value of virtue and other goods by our reaction to dangers that threaten us with the loss of these other goods. Aristotle argues that virtue is dominant over all external goods; though happiness is vulnerable to fortune, virtue is not.[40] Happy people can lose their happiness, but retain their virtue, and therefore will remain happier than they would be if they had retained the other goods without virtue. The virtue we need for facing these vicissitudes of fortune is magnanimity (1100b32–3), because it relies on a correct estimate of the supreme value of virtue. The magnanimous person takes a 'moderate' (*metrios*) attitude to all external goods, so that he is neither overjoyed by good fortune nor excessively grieved by misfortune (1124a15–16); he is therefore calm in the face of misfortune (1100b31–2, *eukolôs*).

On this point Aristotle endorses Socrates' firmness in the face of the danger of death. But he rejects Socrates' view that virtue is the only real good. Hence he also rejects the Stoic treatment of magnanimity that assumes the Stoic identification of virtue with happiness.[41] A magnanimous person believes that if extra goods of fortune are added to a happy person's life, they make it happier, both because they themselves adorn it and because his use of them is fine and virtuous (1100b26–8). He recognizes that the external goods are desirable adornments, and he uses them properly to become more virtuous. He does not compromise the supremacy of virtue; Aristotle insists that 'in reality only the good person is honourable' (1124a25). Though the magnanimous person sees no reason to sacrifice or compromise his virtue for the sake of external goods, he welcomes them none the less.

In deciding whether to risk his life and fortune, he is guided by the common good. He values his life and does not throw it away cheaply; but he is ready to sacrifice it for the common good, in some worthwhile cause (1124b6–9, 23–6). He does not guide his life by reference to another person, with the crucial exception of a friend (1124b31–1125a2). His concern for the fine is regulated, as the magnificent person's is, by consideration of the common good.

In these and other ways, the characteristics of magnanimity should dispel the initial impression that Aristotle is not really describing a moral virtue. Study of his sketch of magnanimity in the context of his other remarks about virtue and external goods should lead us to quite the opposite conclusion. The magnanimous person embodies the attitude to external goods that affirms the primacy of virtue and concern for the fine. He rejects the common view that the virtuous person's concern for the fine and the common good involves some sacrifice of happiness; though he recognizes that this concern may involve the loss of some significant components of happiness, he maintains that it always secures the dominant component of happiness.

[40] See §79. [41] See DL vii 92–3, quoted at §185n67.

122. How can Friendship Justify Morality?

This discussion of some of the individual virtues of character has confirmed our account of Aristotle's conception of the fine and of the characteristics that make actions fine. His general claims about the fine and about the connexion between general justice and virtue of character should lead us to expect that his discussion of individual virtues will explain how they express concern for a common good. We have considered some of the virtues that might seem to falsify such an expectation, either because they seem purely self-regarding or because they do not seem to be concerned with moral questions at all. Examination of Aristotle's account shows that he recognizes the importance of the common good not only in his general remarks about the fine, but also in his more detailed remarks about the actions that manifest the different virtues. These detailed remarks make it easier to understand why he believes that general justice is included in the other virtues of character; for each of them includes the concern for the fine and the common good that is required by general justice.

If we have understood how Aristotle's account of the virtues fits into his account of happiness, and carries out the line of argument anticipated in the Function Argument, we can see how he fits some states of character into his eudaemonist framework. He offers a systematic naturalist theory that is also a systematic moral theory. Each virtue of character represents 'the life of action of the rational part'. It includes agreement between the rational and the non-rational part under the guidance of the rational part; it aims at the fine and the common good; and it co-ordinates this aim with the appropriate sort of interest in external goods. The virtuous person decides on the virtuous action for its own sake.[42] The feature of the action that makes it virtuous also makes it choiceworthy for its own sake to the virtuous person. The relevant feature is the fineness of the action. Since actions are fine in so far as they promote the common good, the virtuous person aims at the promotion of the common good, and chooses actions for that reason.

Aristotle's conception of the virtues of character, therefore, matches a reasonable conception of morality. Not only do his virtues cover the area of morality, given their concern with the fine, but they also reflect Aristotle's concept of morality. His views about the fine, and about its connexion with praise and responsibility, show that he does not simply describe virtues that we might classify as moral, but also regards them as essentially moral virtues.

Since Aristotle regards the virtues of character as moral virtues, he faces a question that arises for Plato in the *Republic*: why should someone who is rationally concerned with his own interest concern himself with the interests of others in the ways required by the moral virtues? His answer to this question will determine how much he thinks morality matters, and therefore will determine how far his views on morality overlap with the intuitive views we began with.

This question would not arise if Aristotle had no conception of distinctively moral virtues; we can readily see how his conception of happiness might justify such virtues as bravery

[42] By this he does not simply mean that there is some description of the virtuous action under which it is choiceworthy for its own sake. The action of wearing part of the tread off my shoe might be choiceworthy for its own sake in so far as it coincides with going for a walk; but in that case it would not be true that I choose wearing down my shoe, as such, for its own sake.

and temperance, if they were purely self-regarding. We find it more difficult to see how he can justify other-regarding virtues. Since the virtues of character are defined with reference to the common good, not the agent's good, he is not entitled to assume without argument that they will promote the agent's own good.

The references to a common good, to general justice, and to a community suggest that we should attend to Aristotle's account of friendship, since this is the virtue appropriate to communities, and itself includes the perfection of justice (1155a22–8; 1159b25–1160a8). Aristotle certainly agrees that the happy life must include friendship; and we might expect his defence of friendship to supply a defence of justice and of the moral component of the virtues.

To justify a moral virtue and its associated actions we must show that they are choiceworthy for their own sake, and not as a mere instrumental means. For Aristotle insists quite reasonably that the virtuous person chooses virtue and virtuous action for their own sake and because they are fine; their fineness is not a sign of instrumental benefit, but itself a sufficient reason for choosing them. If virtue is to be justified by reference to happiness, it must be itself a component of happiness, not merely advantageous as a means to it.

Justice raises a difficulty for this demand, since it is the virtue appropriate to a political community aiming at mutual advantage (1160a8–14). Political friendship (i.e., the friendship of fellow-citizens), therefore, is friendship for advantage, not the sort of friendship that includes concern for the other person for his own sake. It is advantageous to cultivate friendship for advantage, and to do what benefits the political community is to our mutual advantage. To this extent Aristotle might defend the practice of general justice and the other moral virtues. But such a defence does not show that they are to be chosen for their own sakes; it is not clear why I should value for its own sake an action or a state of character maintaining a community that rests on advantage.

This problem exposes a general problem about the relation between justice and friendship for advantage. If I have made a bargain with you, and the time comes to keep it, the claims of friendship for advantage justify me in considering my own advantage, and in choosing my action for its advantageous consequences to me. But if I am also a just person, I keep the bargain because it is a just action to be chosen for its own sake. The appeal to friendship for advantage seems to offer no support for the just person's attitude. Our attempt to find a defence of justice by appeal to the common good of a political community maintained by political friendship seems to have led us only to an instrumental concern with justice.

123. Friendship and Concern for Others

Aristotle, however, recognizes three main types of friendship. One aims at pleasure, one at advantage. The third involves goodwill to the other in his own right, and concern for the other for the other's own sake. His views about the best type of friendship may help to justify the sort of concern that Aristotle needs to justify in his defence of justice. He agrees with Thrasymachus' view that justice is 'another's good' (1130a3–5), but he does not agree that it is harmful to the just person. He believes that Thrasymachus is wrong, because concern for the good of others for their own sake is appropriate for human nature. He defends this

claim by arguing that such concern belongs to the best kind of friendship. The fact that the friend is 'another self' (*allos autos*) explains this concern for her good, by showing how I have reason to regard her good as part of my own. If we can understand the basis for concern in this case, we can perhaps see how it can be extended to other cases.

To see what kind of concern Aristotle has in mind, we may distinguish some different possibilities: (1) In unselfish concern A wants to do x for B, simply because B wants x done or because it would be better for B, not because A gains any further benefit from doing x. A shows this concern for B if A moves to one side to avoid walking over B's gouty toes, when A has nothing else to gain by doing this. This is the unselfish sentiment whose reality Butler and Hume (e.g.) defend against the psychological egoism of Hobbes.[43] (2) In other-directed concern, A wants to do x for B for B's own sake, not for A's sake. Aristotle describes this attitude as 'goodwill' (*eunoia*). (3) In intrinsic concern, A wants to do x for B because of B in B's own right, because of who B is.

Aristotle's account of friendship does not discuss unselfish concern, but considers other-directed and intrinsic concern. In his view, other-directed concern requires intrinsic concern, and is therefore confined to the best type of friendship. Other-directed concern for a person is concern for him because he is the person he is. Aristotle explains 'the person he is' as 'the sort of person he is' and 'the sort of character he has'. He infers that love of the other person for his own sake is love of him for the character he has. But only the virtuous person loves another person for his character; and the only person he loves for his character is another virtuous person. Hence the friendship between virtuous people embodies other-directed concern (1156b7–12). Such concern is absent from other friendships; for non-virtuous people care about a friend not for himself (i.e., what he essentially is), but for some coincidental property of him, and therefore do not care about him for his own sake.[44]

We might reasonably doubt some of Aristotle's claims. First, why should 'for his own sake' be understood with the emphasis on 'his own' so that it means 'for the sake of his essence'? Could we not have properly other-directed concern if we simply counted the other person's own desire for some good as providing a reason in itself, apart from any self-confined concern of mine, for trying to get that good for him?

This sort of concern, however, does not imply concern for the interests and welfare of the other. For our interests are determined, according to Aristotle, by our nature, and not simply by actual or counterfactual desires. No one could reasonably choose, in one's own interest, to revert to the mentality of a child, even if all one's childish desires were satisfied (1174a1–4); hence the satisfaction of my desires may not achieve my welfare.[45] If, then,

[43] See, e.g., Hume, *IPM* v. 39: 'Let us suppose such a person ever so selfish; let private interest have ingrossed ever so much his attention; yet in instances, where that is not concerned, he must unavoidably feel *some* propensity to the good of mankind, and make it an object of choice, if every thing else be equal. Would any man, who is walking along, tread as willingly on another's gouty toes, whom he has no quarrel with, as on the hard flint and pavement?'

[44] '<Friends for advantage love the other> not in accordance with himself, but in so far as they will get some good from him. Similarly also for those who love because of pleasure; for they like a witty person not because he is the sort of person he is, but because he is pleasant to themselves' (1156a10–16). At first, Aristotle appears to accept the common belief (*phasi*) that friendship involves other-direction and active goodwill (1155b31–4). If this common belief applied to all three types of friendship, they should all involve active goodwill (1156a3–5). But Aristotle insists that goodwill is not found in the lower friendships (1167a10–14). Cooper, 'Forms', argues that all three types involve goodwill and other-directed concern.

[45] A similar argument is offered by Mill in *U*, ch. 2.

concern for the other for her own sake requires concern for her welfare, it cannot consist wholly in my willingness to do something for her because she wants it.

Aristotle now has a reason to deny that non-virtuous people can be concerned about a friend for his own sake. These people are friends for advantage and pleasure. They may be willing to do what a friend wants, simply because she wants it, and not because of any further benefit to themselves; but they do this only because they look on the friend as a source of pleasure or advantage. They do not rely on any conception of the friend herself and of her welfare, as distinct from her desires; hence their concern for her is not guided by any concern for her welfare.

If, then, we are concerned for the other as the person he is, we must try to satisfy or develop the desires that promote his good; we will count some desires for less because they are transitory, or express relatively superficial aspects of himself, or rest on mistaken views about his good. Concern for the other for his own sake must be concern for the other as the particular rational agent that she is.

124. The Friend as Another Self

If this claim about friendship is to help us identify the attitudes and actions proper to friends, we need to find some more content for 'concern for the other as the particular rational agent that she is'. Aristotle seeks to clarify this sort of concern by saying that in the best type of friendship the friend is 'another self' (or 'another oneself'). Aristotle argues in *EN* ix 4 that the features of complete friendship correspond to the good person's attitude to himself. We cannot see what is really good for others if we lack the right conception of the others as they are; we lack this conception unless we have the right conception of ourselves, and value ourselves appropriately. Hence the appropriate form of self-love is needed for the appropriate form of love for others.[46]

Aristotle needs to show that the conditions for the friend's being another self are uniquely satisfied by the best type of friendship. Treatment of a person as another self includes two apparently contradictory aspects: (1) Treating the person as someone else. (2) Treating the person as myself. To show that the two aspects are consistent, Aristotle needs to explain what each of them involves.

His claim that the friend is 'another self' might be better expressed by saying that the friend is another 'oneself'. Aristotle does not mean simply that the friend is a self, in the sense of 'self' in which we take 'a self' to be roughly equivalent to 'a person'. Both friends and non-friends are other selves in this minimal sense. Aristotle intends the more controversial claim that for Heracles his friend is another Heracles.[47] To treat a friend as another myself, I have to treat him as somehow being another me, not simply as another person. How are we to do this?

According to Aristotle, friendship consists in 'living together' or 'sharing one's life' (*suzên*), since this is rational activity, and therefore suitable for rational agents.[48] But simply to

[46] For Aquinas' view see §336. [47] See *MM* 1213a10–13; *EE* 1245a29–35.

[48] 'The excellent person is related to his friend in the same way as he is related to himself, since a friend is another self; and therefore, just as his own being is choiceworthy for him, the friend's being is choiceworthy for him in the same

say that friends share rational activity is still too imprecise; for apparently people who are friends simply for pleasure or advantage might pursue mathematics, or crosswords, together without treating each other as other selves. The thought, reasoning, and conversation characteristic of friends must include practical reasoning, since this defines the distinctively human form of living together.[49]

But not all forms of co-operation in practical reasoning and thinking involve friendship, let alone the friendship that treats the friend as another self. I might consult another person for advice without being at all concerned about her for her own sake. When I consult another, I decide what weight to give his advice, according to my views of his competence and goodwill and the relation of his views to my own ends. I can treat my own practical reasoning in this way, to some degree; for I might distrust my competence in some areas. But I cannot take this attitude to all my ends; at some point I must rely on some of my own ends in order to evaluate other ends and other aspects of my outlook. Hence there must be some ends that belong to me, and not simply to some agent, or part of an agent, whom I consult.

In treating my ends as my own, I treat them as significant for me in their own right, not simply as a source of advice that I consider in so far as it fits my own ends. This does not mean that I seek to satisfy all my desires and aims equally; for I have to frustrate some if they conflict too severely with others. But I do not reject any aim simply on the ground that it is not instrumental to my other ends. If I took that attitude to some of my aims and desires, I would be treating them as though they were someone else's ends. In treating them as my own ends, as opposed to someone else's ends, I think of them as worthy of consideration in their own right.

We can now see how one person can regard another person as 'another self', in Aristotle's special sense, and we can distinguish this relation from relations that might be confused with it. I do not regard you as another self if I do not distinguish you from myself; for in that case I would not regard you as another. Moreover, I cannot regard you as another self if I regard you as nothing more than a part of myself; for in that case, I would not regard you as a self. To treat you as another self, I must regard your ends as I regard my own, and hence as worthy of consideration in their own right. I do not simply consult you for advice about

or a similar way. We agreed that someone's own being is choiceworthy because he perceives that he is good, and this sort of perception is pleasant in itself. He must, then, perceive his friend's being <together with his own>, and he will do this if they live together and share rational discourse (*logos*) and thought. For in the case of human beings, living together seems to consist in this sharing of rational discourse and thought, and not, as in the case of grazing animals, in sharing the same pasture' (1170b5–14). '. . . what friends find most choiceworthy is living together. For friendship is community, and we are related to our friend as we are related to ourselves. Hence, since the perception of our own being is choiceworthy, so is the perception of our friend's being. Perception is active when we live with him; hence, not surprisingly, this is what we seek. Whatever someone <regards as> his being, or the end for which he chooses to be alive, that is the activity he wishes to pursue in his friend's company. Hence some friends drink together, others play dice, while others do gymnastics and go hunting, or do philosophy. They spend their days together on whichever pursuit in life they like most; for since they want to live with their friends, they share the actions in which they find their common life' (1171b32–1172a8).

[49] 'It is evident why a human being is more of a political animal than is any bee or any gregarious animal; for nature, we say, does nothing pointlessly, and a human being is the only animal with rational discourse. . . . rational discourse is for making clear what is expedient or harmful, and hence what is just or unjust. For this is distinctive of human beings in contrast to the other animals, that they are the only ones with a perception of good and evil, and of just and unjust, and so on; and it is community in these that produces a household and a city' (*Pol.* 1253a8–18).

what I should do. Your ends belong to you, but since you are another self, I value them non-instrumentally, whether or not they promote my other ends. If I take this view of your ends in relation to mine, I act for your sake as well as for my own sake.

A person's thought and deliberation belong to him in so far as they are connected through wish, deliberation, and election, expressing his conception of his ultimate good. His actions belong to him in so far as they result from his wish, deliberation, and election. If one treats another as one treats oneself, the other person's reasoning and thinking have the same role as one's own in producing one's action. The two selves share the same goals and the same conception of the ultimate good, in so far as each wants the other person's good as part of his own good. They co-operate in deliberation, decision, and action; and the thoughts and actions of each provide reasons for the future thoughts and actions of the other.

If friends are other selves, each must care about the good of the other for the other's own sake, just as he cares about his own good for his own sake. Hence Aristotle's claims about the other self are true of the best type of friendship. Since the distinctive feature of my concern for myself is its non-instrumental character, I treat another as another self only by expressing the same non-instrumental concern for the other. I treat the other's ends as mine, but not simply as a subset of my ends. Subsets of my ends do not necessarily deserve consideration as constituting all the ends of a whole self, but the ends of the other person constitute the ends of the other whole self as well as being my ends.

125. Why Other Selves?

Now that we have understood what is implied by treating the friend as another self, we can consider why one's own happiness requires friends whom one treats in this way. Why should we prefer a life including such friends over a life that does not include them?

Admittedly, if I already have friends of this sort, my happiness includes theirs; for since my happiness requires the fulfilment of my ends, and their ends are among my ends, my happiness requires the fulfilment of their ends among my ends. But once we recognize this, we may doubt whether it is better to have such friends than to lack them. Having friends seems to make it more difficult to secure my happiness, since it now becomes hostage to the happiness of other people whose aims, actions, and welfare I control even less than I control my own. Would I not be better off if I could conceive my happiness as including only my own self-centred ends that do not ascribe non-instrumental value to the good of others? This question expresses a preference for a certain kind of 'self-sufficiency' that reduces my dependence on conditions that I do not control.[50]

Aristotle's naturalist conception of one's good rejects this appeal to self-sufficiency. One's good is not measured by the fulfilment of one's desires. In claiming that happiness requires the fulfilment of one's nature, he does not mean that one naturally has certain desires that are fulfiled by friendship, or that one naturally has needs that cannot be satisfied without the instrumental contribution of friendship. If this were his view, friendship would no longer

[50] See Socrates on the adaptive conception of happiness at §25. For Epicurus' view see §§151–4. This conception of self-sufficiency (as a property of a person) has to be distinguished from the conception of self-sufficiency (as a property of a good) that Aristotle imposes on an account of happiness. See §71.

be good for us if we could get rid of the specific desires that it satisfies, or if we could find something else to make the same instrumental contribution to the satisfaction of our needs.

But this is not his view. He denies that we achieve our happiness by fitting our desires to the opportunities available for fulfilment; such an attitude is incompatible with his treatment of the virtues concerned with external goods. Happiness requires the fulfilment of an agent's capacities, some of which require external goods; that is why virtue is not sufficient for happiness. Even though friends make us more dependent—in one respect—on external conditions, we need them for our happiness.

To appreciate the role that Aristotle attributes to friends who are other selves, we should compare the activity characteristic of this type of friendship with the activity that fulfils the human function. His account of 'living together' tries to establish the relevant connexion. He relies on his claim that the human function consists in a life of action guided by the rational part of the soul. His discussion of self-love and of the virtues of character (in ix 8) shows that such a life includes the pursuit of the fine, not merely of the pleasant and the expedient. If our practical reasoning did not include reasoning about the fine, it would be confined to instrumental reasoning about means to satisfy the ends presented to us by non-rational desires; and so one distinctive capacity of rational agents would not be realized. Since the central activity of friendship is practical reasoning about what is good and fine non-instrumentally, it fulfils the human function; for this is the type of activity that Aristotle takes to be characteristic of human nature.

Virtuous people enjoy the awareness of their own activity, and find the same enjoyment in a friend's activity, which requires the sharing of life and activity.[51] A friend is a further source of the sorts of actions that we enjoy and value when they are our own actions. What we find pleasant and valuable in our own actions is the causal relation of our deliberation and choice to them. We enjoy our friend's actions in the same way, because we have the same sort of causal relation to them. The other self extends our characteristically rational activities.

This conclusion, however, does not yet justify Aristotle's claims about friendship. For pursuit of the fine does not require friendship. Admittedly, it is extended by friendship, since we can deliberate more about the fine if we share the deliberation with friends. But a mere increase in quantity of deliberation does not show that shared deliberation fulfils the human function more than solitary deliberation would. Nor need 'solitary' deliberation be completely cut off from other people; it could still use other people as advisers or critics, without giving non-instrumental status to their ends. What is distinctively valuable about the rational activity made possible by friendship?

Different aspects of friendship suggest that its distinctive extension of practical reason is not merely quantitative, but actually helps to create a life that is guided by practical reason. Co-operation with a friend who is another self allows us to undertake projects of greater complexity than we could undertake otherwise; and so it develops and exercises practical reason more fully. We are not confined to projects that we could carry out from our own resources, or to those that will be mutually advantageous to oneself and to one's friend for

[51] Arguments for friendship based on self-knowledge are offered at *MM* 1213a10–27; *EE* 1245a29–37; *EN* 1169b30–1170a4. Cooper, 'Friendship and good', gives them a central place in Aristotle's argument. I do not believe they are as important as arguments from shared deliberation.

advantage. In extending co-operation, friendship makes more aspects of our lives subject to practical reason, and so makes our lives more completely controlled by practical reason.

This reference to completeness helps to explain why the contribution of friendship is not merely quantitative. We might have thought that I could have my life guided by practical reason to the highest possible degree without friendship, and that friendship would simply add more activities that I could guide by practical reason. In that case friendship would be simply one of the 'adornments' of a happy life that, in Aristotle's view, may make a person happier, but are not needed for happiness itself (1100b26).[52] This is not the role that Aristotle has in mind for friendship. It does not simply add areas of rational control, but it is necessary if my life is to be fully guided by practical reason.

The argument relies on the role of external goods in happiness. In Aristotle's view, many aspects of my welfare are subject to fortune and external conditions, because some genuine goods cannot be controlled by my unaided practical reason. Co-operation makes some of these goods subject to our joint practical reason and action. If, for instance, I have friends who care about me for my own sake, I need not rely entirely on chance or on mutual advantage to find financial aid if I have bad luck. The service provided by a friend is good for me not simply because it provides me with something I want, but also because it allows me to count on having the material resources I need, and therefore allows me to make rational plans for aspects of my life that would otherwise be more subject to chance.

This contribution of friendship is not merely additive. If we form moderately complex aims to satisfy the normal needs of human beings, we expose our welfare to external circumstances. We all have reason, therefore, to seek ways of foreseeing and controlling external circumstances so that they do not frustrate our aims. For this purpose we need the help of other people anyhow. But if we have the help of friends whom we treat as other selves, many aspects of our lives become reliable and stable in circumstances that would otherwise expose us to the effects of changes in the balance of mutual advantage. As Aristotle remarks, concern for friends for their own sake is more stable than concern for them on the basis of advantage or pleasure (1156b11–12).

This benefit that we gain from the best type of friendship is not altogether absent in the inferior friendships. Each type of friendship involves some degree of co-operation and makes some aspects of our lives less subject to chance. The outlook of the best type of friendship, however, affects more of our lives and transforms our aims in ways that promote the realization of our rational capacities.

The role of friendship in transforming our aims results from co-operation in thought and reasoning, and specifically in practical reasoning and deliberation. I identify the appropriate ends to pursue by reflexion on the ends that seem worth choosing for their own sakes, and on my ability to achieve them. If we treat friends as other selves, we give their ends and their reflexion the same status as we give our own.

To see why this makes a significant difference to our deliberation, we need to make explicit a point that Aristotle does not emphasize. If the good for a human being consists in the fulfilment of one's capacities as a rational agent, any realistic plan for achieving this good must demand some specialization and limitation. Human capacities, and even the capacities

[52] See above §121.

of a particular human being, include many more than a single individual can fulfil; if we are to fulfil some to a reasonably high level, we have to forgo others. Not everyone can be a great poet, a great athlete, a great musician, and so on; and even an individual who could be any one of these may not be capable of being all at once. Different people may have different views about the extent to which it is reasonable to achieve some of these aims at the expense of others.

If we know that other people achieve aspects of the human good that we do not achieve, we may admire their achievements and find pleasure in them. But their achievements do not affect us as our own achievements do. The actions of friends, however, give us the sort of pleasure that we gain from those actions of ours that we value for their own sakes as parts of our good. For the actions of our friends result from aims and deliberation to which we give the status that we give to our own aims and deliberation, since we treat friends as other selves.

To understand the particular value of the actions of our friends, we need to recall that they are not simply parts of ourselves. If Arthur is a dedicated poet, and Bill is a dedicated athlete, and Arthur and Bill are friends, it does not follow that Arthur combines within himself the outlook and aims of a poet and an athlete as parts of a single self. These two outlooks may not be capable of co-existing within a single self. Part of the value of a friendship lies in the fact that we can care about the activities of another as our own activities, even though we recognize that they cannot be combined with our own activities as parts of a single life.

The sharing of aims and deliberation in friendship does not simply affect the sorts of achievements in which I take the pleasure that I take in my own; it also affects the aims that I seek to fulfil. If I recognize A, B, and C as my ends, I pursue each of them differently from the way I would pursue it if it were my only end. If, for instance, some restraint in pursuing A makes it easier to pursue B, or if pursuing first C and then A is easier and more efficient than pursuing first A and then C, I will modify my pursuit of A. If my friend has further aims that I consider in their own right, they should also modify my deliberation about the extent to which, and the circumstances in which, I should pursue my own ends. The total end I will pursue will be different from the one I would pursue if I were just considering my own ends.

This effect of friendship would not matter very much if friends pursued exactly the same goals, in the same proportion; in that case, they would simply have to make room for each other.[53] But it matters more if friends have good reason to pursue different goals. Their different goals alter each one's deliberation about her own good and the ways to achieve it. If we can rely on friendship of this sort, valuable pursuits that we cannot adopt as our own individual pursuits none-the-less matter to us in the same way as our individual pursuits matter to us. Friends achieve this result more readily if they are different in some ways; recognition of this familiar feature of friendships would be a welcome addition to Aristotle's theory.[54]

[53] As Aristotle points out in discussing fine action at 1169a32–4.

[54] Marx and Engels, *GI* 53 (Part 1, section on 'Private property and communism') argue that the limitation of one's pursuits to only a part of what human nature is capable of is a severe harm to a person. In their view, this is a feature of pre-communist modes of production and social life, but in full communist society each person will be able to realize all the forms of human achievement to a level that is currently unimaginable. They do not try to make this plausible in any

Differences between friends are not prominent in Aristotle's theory, because he emphasizes the fact that, in the best type of friendship, each of the friends is virtuous, so that in this respect the friends must be similar. This degree of similarity is necessary for each of them to count the aims of the other as worth considering on the same terms as his own aims. If a virtuous person cannot trust the aims and deliberation of a friend to be virtuous, she cannot have a friendship of the best type, and cannot treat the other person as another self. Since this degree of mutual trust about aims and deliberation is necessary for the best kind of friendship and for the relevant sort of common deliberation, it is reasonable for Aristotle to emphasize this respect of similarity between the aims of virtuous people. But this emphasis does not require him to overlook the aspects of difference between friends.

Sometimes Aristotle recognizes the significance of differences between virtuous people. In the *Ethics* he mentions the different contributions of husband and wife to common aims (1162a19–27). In the *Politics* his account of the composition of a city insists that the essential features of a city presuppose differences between citizens. While citizens have to be, in the appropriate respects, equal and similar in virtue, they must also be different, if they are to achieve the appropriate sorts of common aims. Plato makes the citizens of his ideal city so similar that he is in danger of destroying the distinctive structure and aims of a city altogether.[55] Contrary to Plato's view, a complete and self-sufficient life requires a community including fellow-citizens who contribute different elements to a common good. Since an individual citizen develops only some of the capacities whose development promotes his good, he cannot have a complete and self-sufficient life if everyone else develops exactly the same capacities (*Pol.* 1261b10–15; 1263b29–35). We lack self-sufficiency if we lack a complete and self-sufficient good that needs nothing added (*EN* 1169b3–8; 1170b17–19).[56]

Friendship contributes to this complete good, because it allows us to achieve goods for ourselves that we cannot achieve without the co-operation that belongs to other selves in the best kind of friendship. Other people have different opportunities, different ends, and different points of view in deliberation. When we treat these as belonging to other selves whom we count in our deliberation as we count ourselves, we more completely fulfil our own capacities as rational agents living a life of action of the rational part. Attention to these aspects of friendship and to their connexion with the Function Argument shows how Aristotle's description and defence of friendship supports the naturalist position that underlies the *Ethics*.

126. The Extension of Friendship

This defence of friendship answers one question about the role of morality in Aristotle's account of the virtues, but leaves us with other questions. For it refers to the best type

detail. If they are right, the argument for Aristotelian friendship from individual limitations does not apply to all possible forms of society.

[55] See the objections to the *Republic* in *Pol.* 1261a10–b9; 1264b15–25; 1329a21–6. For present purposes we need not consider the accuracy or fairness of Aristotle's criticisms. Plato recognizes part of Aristotle's main point at *R.* 369b5–7, but applies it only to lack of self-sufficiency in instrumental means.

[56] See n50 above on self-sufficiency.

of friendship, involving a few completely virtuous people who know each other well and share the central activities of their lives. Such a relation is too restricted to defend the non-instrumental concern for justice that Aristotle requires. Since he insists that the best type of friendship must be restricted to a few rather unusual people (*EN* ix 10), he cannot treat it as the basis for relations between fellow-citizens following principles of justice.

Still, complete friendship is relevant to the question about justice. For some features of complete friendship are present in other relations to a sufficient degree to justify the sort of intrinsic concern that Aristotle assumes. The crucial features are those that make a friend another self. The non-instrumental concern that results from regarding someone as another self is capable of extension beyond complete friendship.

We can already see the possibility of such extension in Aristotle's discussion of friendship within families. The child counts as his parent's 'other self' because of their family connexion (*EN* 1161b27–9). Hence, the parent is intrinsically concerned with the child's welfare, not simply with the parent's own pleasure or advantage (1159a28–33; 1166a2–6). Parents and children who are bound by such ties are not always virtuous people. The child is the parent's other self because he is scarcely separate from the parent, and for this reason the parent finds the child's actions very closely related to the parent's thoughts and deliberations. He is crucially different from a virtuous friend; for he does not co-operate in deliberation and practical reason. He has goals in common with the parent only because at this stage, he has no developed aims and goals that are independent of the parent's. He is perhaps more like an extension of the parent than a genuinely other self.

Still, some of the reasons that justify complete friendship between rational agents who are capable of independent and co-operative deliberation will also justify familial friendship. A parent extends himself and the scope of his practical reason in a fairly clear and intelligible way through his relation to his child; and for this reason his natural attachment to the child provides an element of his own good. Though this friendship does not provide a model for complete friendship, it shares the other-directed concern that extends the agent's goals.

Some of the features of complete friendship are also present in the nameless virtue of character that is similar to friendship except in so far as it lacks the affective elements of friendship (1126b20–5)—we may call it 'friendliness'. The friendship that this virtue resembles is the best kind; for the friendly person does what is expected of a virtuous friend. His attitude to others does not rest on consideration of his own pleasure or advantage; hence it seems to involve concern for the other person for the other person's own sake.

Though Aristotle does not explain why the friendly person takes his characteristic attitude, we can perhaps explain it by reference to complete friendship. A fellow-citizen may not be virtuous, and therefore cannot be expected to be another self as much as one virtuous person is for another. Nor does the virtuous person share his life with every fellow-citizen to the extent he shares it with a virtuous friend. But the fellow-citizen may still have some aims with which a virtuous person can reasonably identify his own. If the extent that the other is virtuous enough to share similar aims with a virtuous person, the virtuous person can extend his practical reason in the same way as with a virtuous friend.

Here we can see some grounds for the sort of concern that might underlie the virtue of justice, as Aristotle conceives it. A rational person has good reason to form a community with others whose good concerns him for the sake of the others themselves. The shared

life of rational thought in such a community consists in deliberation about aspects of the common good. If we are concerned about other people in this way, we regard them to some extent as other selves, and so we identify our aims and interests with theirs in co-operative deliberation and action. To the extent that we care about the interests of the community and of its members for their own sakes, we also have reason to value justice and just action for their own sake, since these express our concern for the community and its members.

127. Different Aspects of Friendship in the Political Community

Does Aristotle's account of friendship between citizens recognize the points we have noticed? We might think it does not. When he discusses the friendship of citizens, he treats it as a type of friendship for advantage.[57] He contrasts the friendship of fellow-citizens with the best kind of friendship, by remarking that we can have the first kind of friendship, but not the second, with many people (1171a17–20).

If the point of political friendship is instrumental benefit, it does not concern itself with any non-instrumental goods achieved by the city. Aristotle, however, believes that the city achieves some non-instrumental good, and that political theorists who overlook this misunderstand the essential features of the city.[58] No doubt political activity promotes the common advantage of the citizens; but this is not all the goodness that Aristotle attaches to it. The value of political friendship does not explain the non-instrumental goodness of political activity.

Human beings show that they are naturally political in so far as they form communities apart from the pursuit of mutual aid. These communities display friendship.[59] But not all kinds of friendship are relevant to the special end of the city; we can live together, and form friendships, by forming families, societies, and other groups smaller than a city (*Pol.* 1280b36–9). The ends achieved by these smaller groups cannot be the end characteristic of a city.[60] The end of the city is the life that includes sharing in deliberation and choice about the beneficial and the just.

[57] 'The friendship of citizens is constituted according to the useful most of all. For they seem to come together because the individual is not self-sufficient, since they would have come together anyhow for the sake of living together' (*EE* 1242a6–9) '<The city> seems to have come together originally and to remain in being for the sake of advantage; for legislators also aim at this, and say that what is for the common advantage is just' (*EN* 1160a11–14). On political friendship see Cooper, 'Political animals'.

[58] '. . . a human being is a naturally political animal. That is why, even when they have no need of mutual help, they desire none the less to live together; at the same time common advantage draws them together, to the extent that it contributes something to living finely for each person. Living finely, then, more than anything else, is the goal of a city, both for all the citizens in common and for each separately.' (*Pol.* 1278b19–26).

[59] 'Evidently, then, a city is not a community for living in the same place, for preventing the unjust treatment of one member by another, and for exchange; all these are necessary conditions for a city, but their presence does not make a city. Rather, the city is a community for living well for both households and families, aiming at a complete and self-sufficient life, but this requires them to live in the same place, and to intermarry. That is why kinship-groups, brotherhoods, cult-communities, and pastimes in a shared life have developed in cities; that is the product of friendship, since the election to spend our lives together is friendship' (*Pol.* 1280b29–39).

[60] '. . . a city is a community of families and villages in a complete and self-sufficient life; and this, as we say, is living happily and finely. Hence we must take the political community to be for the sake of fine actions, and not for the sake of living together' (*Pol.* 1281a1–4).

These claims about the city help to explain how it achieves the ends of complete friendship, even though the friendship of the citizens is not complete friendship. Cooperative ruling is part of a citizen's good, because it includes deliberation about the fine and good, and hence about the ends worth pursuing. If we regard another person's views about the fine and good as worth considering in their own right, we regard that other person as being—to that extent—another self, and we are concerned about him for his own sake. Once we see the point of complete friendship, we also see why the distinctive activities of the city are non-instrumentally good. Aristotle claims that political activity is a non-instrumental good; he does not explicitly mark the connexion with complete friendship. But if we recognize the connexion, we can see that the attitudes characteristic of complete friendship also explain why political activity is a non-instrumental good.

Here also Aristotle's position is more plausible if we insist more strongly than he does on the incompleteness of individuals and the importance of difference between friends. Once we see that other selves—those whom we care about for their own sakes—promote our happiness partly by being different from us and in allowing us to achieve elements of our welfare that we could not otherwise achieve, we can also see why the extension of this concern to others who are not virtuous friends is also reasonable. The provisions of justice suit human nature because they rest on the concern for others that also underlies friendship; they secure a complete life for rational agents. This is why Aristotle claims that justice is based on nature, and not purely on law and convention. Though he does not appeal explicitly to 'natural law', as principles that can be derived from the understanding of human nature, his argument depends on the appeal to nature that also supports a doctrine of natural law.[61]

Aristotle's naturalism makes an important difference to his argument. In claiming that friendship fulfils human nature, he claims that its goodness is non-instrumental, and is not wholly dependent on our desires or on our natural weakness or vulnerability. It is required by our rational agency, and especially by the rational agency that deliberates about non-instrumental goodness and chooses actions for their non-instrumental goodness. The rational appropriateness of friendship does not depend on its providing goods that we might acquire without friendship. It is because we are naturally social creatures that friendship is good for us (*EN* 1169b16–19).

128. Friendship and Morality

Friendship, as Aristotle conceives it, is difficult for us to classify. It is less subjective—less dependent on private preference and taste—than the friendship that most of us recognize. But it is also less impartial—less separated from the aims of the particular agent—than the morality that most of us recognize. This is probably not a difference between Aristotle's views and modern views of morality. For he does not suggest that concern for others should be confined to friends (even the extended group in a city), or that most people think it should be confined. He remarks that in some circumstances we recognize that all human

[61] On natural law and natural justice see §§135, 197, 199, 312.

beings have something in common and have some degree of friendship for one another (1155a21–2[62]), but this remark makes no noticeable difference to his theory of friendship. The ethical relation that he describes seems too 'moralistic' (as we might say) for friendship, as many people conceive it, and too restrictive for morality.

To support the objection that Aristotle's conception of friendship is insufficiently subjective and too moralistic, we might argue that he does not explain the aspects of friendship that involve choice, individuality, and even chance. If we are friends with another person, we are friends with that particular person, and not simply with an instance of virtuous character who happens to live near us or work in the same place. We do not suppose we have equal reason to become friends with anyone else of equal or superior virtue who happens to turn up. Even if we acknowledge that other people might equally deserve our friendship, we do not infer that we ought to form friendships with all the deserving people we encounter. Aristotle himself seems to allow this; he does not seem to think that all equally deserving people ought to be friends. Can he account for the important way in which friendship seems to concentrate on particular people?

To defend Aristotle, we need to see why loving the other person for his character as a virtuous person is not the same as loving him simply as one virtuous person among many. If a particular virtuous person has a particular way of being a virtuous person, a friend who loves that aspect of him does not simply love him as some virtuous person or other. Moreover, an Aristotelian theory must acknowledge that different virtuous people have different ways of being virtuous. For a virtuous person's life is demanding enough to prescribe many actions that a single person cannot do if he chooses to do other virtuous actions. We have already emphasized—partly to correct Aristotle—the importance of differences between virtuous people. This correction helps to make other aspects of his position more intelligible.

A virtuous person therefore chooses for himself a particular way of being a virtuous person, and will recognize that other people will choose different ways. If love for a particular way of being a virtuous person is part of friendship for another virtuous person, it is clear why time and familiarity are required, and why the same friendship is not necessarily demanded for another equally virtuous person. It takes far more time to know the way in which this particular person is virtuous than it takes to recognize him as a virtuous person. If friendship requires this more difficult knowledge, a virtuous person has reason to limit it to a rather small subset of the virtuous people he knows.

But if we are convinced by this argument, and agree that Aristotle can explain why complete friendship, as he understands it, is limited to relatively few virtuous people, we might still object that his view is excessively moralized, and also moralized in the wrong way. For not only familiar views about friendship, but also familiar views about morality seem to conflict with Aristotle's assumption that if I am a virtuous person and you are to be a friend about whom I care for your own sake, you must yourself be a virtuous person. His assumption seems to conflict with the common view that we both can and should care about non-virtuous people for their own sakes. But it also seems to conflict with his own argument (as we have understood it) for the extension of non-instrumental concern to non-virtuous people through the extension of friendship.

[62] Barbeyrac notices this passage in his comment on Grotius, *JBP*, Pref. §6.

To see how much room Aristotle allows for the extension of friendship, we should distinguish three things that the virtuous person has reason to care about for their own sake: (1) the particular way this other virtuous person is virtuous; (2) the other person's virtuous character; (3) the aspects of the other person's character that allow me to esteem him and to see how his aims match mine in a way that allows co-operation.

In the virtuous friend we recognize all three features; that is what makes the friendship complete. In other people we do not recognize all three features, but we may still recognize features that make some aspects of complete friendship appropriate: (a) In another virtuous person whom we do not know well enough to count as a friend, we cannot recognize the first feature, but we still recognize the second, and, therefore, the third. (b) In a non-virtuous person we cannot recognize the first and second features, but we can still recognize the third feature, and therefore recognize a basis for non-instrumental concern and co-operation. For recognition of this person as another self may, in the right circumstances, allow the extension of my own concerns that allows me to achieve a self-sufficient good. Hence, some elements of Aristotelian non-instrumental friendship are reasonably extended to non-virtuous people.[63]

Still, an Aristotelian explanation of this extended friendship must assume that such friendship depends on some degree of admiration, esteem, and liking for the other person, not simply on the recognition of a moral claim he has on me. We may suppose that Aristotle has missed an essential element of morality, and that the concern characteristic of friendship cannot possibly be the basis for the sort of concern that is characteristic of morality. For, we may argue, moral concern is concern for others for their own sake that is based simply on what we owe to others; from this point of view, it does not matter whether we have any of these 'Aristotelian' attitudes.

On closer inspection, however, it is more difficult to maintain that morality requires only the sort of respect or concern for others that consists in recognizing that we owe them something, without any of the Aristotelian attitudes. To believe that no features of another person deserve admiration or esteem in their own right, we would have to believe that he displays no trace of the Aristotelian virtues in his thoughts or actions. But is difficult to see how such an agent could be an ordinary rational agent to whom we could recognize moral obligations. We might argue that failure to accord some appropriate admiration and esteem to other people in general is unfair and insulting.

If such complaints are justified, Aristotelian attitudes may be necessary for the proper sort of concern for others, not an optional extra to be added to the basic moral requirement of respect. Though his conception of friendship may seem to sit awkwardly between our views on friendship and on generalized concern for others, it may in fact show us something inadequate in our own conceptions. Mere subjective liking for another may not lead us to a concern for the real good of the other; mere generalized respect for another person may not embody the proper sort of concern for him.

But even if the extension of co-operative concern to a wide range of other people is morally desirable, we might suspect that it is self-defeating. If Aristotelian other-directed concern, involving co-operation, is extended to all the cases of concern for others that we might think important, the relevant notion of co-operation may seem useless. We can perhaps see

[63] Brink, 'Rational egoism', explores some relevant questions.

how a friend or a fellow-citizen co-operates with me so that we share a common good; but how could such an argument apply to everyone about whom I am morally obliged to be concerned for his own sake?

The Aristotelian argument requires us to believe that the other selves for whom I am concerned for their own sake also extend myself, so that I can take, to some degree, the same sort of interest in their aims that I take in my own. It is comparatively easy to suppose this for people with whom I have some relation of friendship or co-operation apart from my benefiting them; it is harder to suppose it about someone else who simply has a claim on my concern. But Aristotle's explanation applies even here. To regard another as deserving concern for his own sake is to regard him as being to some degree another self; and I have reason to do this in so far as I have reason to want to achieve my good through the actions of others as well as through my own. By taking the appropriate attitude and acting for the other person's benefit, I allow my good to be achieved by my rational deliberation and decision, in another's actions as well as in my own.

The conclusion we have drawn from Aristotle's views on friendship is paradoxical, but perhaps useful. It is natural to assume that the attitudes underlying Aristotelian friendship are suitable for the special and exclusive relations that Aristotle describes, but unsuitable for understanding any more general moral concern for others. This assumption, however, is not justified. Once we distinguish the different attitudes that underlie Aristotelian friendship, we find that some of them are appropriately extended to other people in general, not simply to the restricted range of people that Aristotle has in mind.

129. Aristotelian and other Conceptions of Morality

We have now seen why it is reasonable to ascribe to Aristotle some conception of moral virtues, and why he regards them as components of a rational agent's good. A rational agent has reason to value virtuous action for its own sake, because it is fine, and as an expression of general justice; in all these ways it contributes to his own happiness, which includes the happiness of family, friends, and fellow-citizens. Having seen this we can see what is surprising or controversial in Aristotle's conception of morality, and what we might learn about morality from examining his conception of it.

The course of the argument may revive some of the initial doubts about whether Aristotle is talking about morality at all. For even extended friendship and concern for others is still self-referential;[64] it depends on the relation of other people and their aims to my own. Morality, however, may seem to require concern for other people just because they are other people, irrespective of their relation to me. For moral principles as often understood, prescribe the proper treatment of a person as a person, not because he stands in some particular relation to me. If we take morality to imply a detached, impartial view of the interests of the people involved, we may separate its demands from those of family, friends, or community. We may even think that confining it to persons is still too narrow, and that the proper focus of moral concern is interests, desires, and possibilities of pleasure and

[64] Cf. Broad, 'Egoism', cited at §73n46.

pain, whether these happen to belong to a person or to some other sentient subject, and irrespective of how the interests are distributed between different subjects.

The more we are inclined to associate morality with impartiality, impersonality, and detachment, the more surprised we will be by Aristotle's treatment of it. For while he takes seriously the requirements of justice and fairness, he tries to derive them from self-regarding and self-centred concerns; the close connexion between friendship, the common good, and justice shows his preferred direction of argument and justification.

This is not merely a theoretical difference from other ways of thinking about morality; it also affects the moral principles that Aristotle accepts and emphasizes. Duties are owed to other people as friends and fellow-citizens sharing goals and interests with the agent, not simply as other people. Non-members of a community have no clear moral claims on me. The human beings or nearly-human beings who cannot be fellow-members of a community are legitimately treated as natural slaves and used as instruments for my benefit rather than theirs.

Seeing these apparent implications, we may infer that Aristotle must have approached the understanding of morality from the wrong direction. If his efforts to understand it from the self-regarding direction fail, should we examine it from the strictly impartial and detached point of view?

Such a response may be an unwise concession to Bentham or Kant against Aristotle. We are entitled to reject Aristotle's approach only if we are convinced that appeals to friendship, community, and co-operation fail to justify moral principles with a wider scope than Aristotle recognizes. We should not assume that the conclusions that he draws are the conclusions that his principles justify. On the contrary, our discussion of his claims about other selves has shown how he gives a reason for the extension of non-instrumental concern far beyond the complete friendship in which he primarily recognizes such concern. If the appropriate recognition of other selves eventually allows concern for non-virtuous people for whom some degree of esteem and admiration is appropriate, Aristotelian non-instrumental concern extends to the people who seem appropriate from the moral point of view.

But even if Aristotle extends other-directed concern so that it has the right range, it will not be the same degree of concern. As we pass from the best type of friendship to a lesser degree of identification with the goals and aims of the other person, the extent of our concern for the other decreases. The most general form of concern will still be concern for the other for his own sake, but it will involve a less complete identification of my interest with the interest of the other. Hence other sorts of attachment impose differential concern for others. This approach to the interests of others is not egoistic, in the sense of placing one's self-confined interests above the interests of others. But it is egocentric, since one decides what one owes to others partly by their degree of connexion with oneself. Such an approach rejects the completely impartial outlook of both Kantian and utilitarian principles.

This egocentric aspect of Aristotle's view does not necessarily indicate an error in it; indeed, it may be a theoretical advantage.[65] For it explains why we might recognize a more stringent requirement corresponding to our closer connexion with some people than with

[65] See Broad's comments on common-sense morality, 'Features' 43–57, against Moore.

others. Direct utilitarians have to reject any such requirement.[66] Indirect utilitarians may try to justify it up to a point; but we may doubt whether the indirect utilitarian reasons that can be found are the reasons that actually seem to us to justify such differential moral weight. Aristotle's account allows us to predict the differential weight and to explain it simply, and to follow it without apology or excuse.

Aristotle's approach works outwards from the agent's self-regarding concerns, in contrast to a Kantian concentration on persons and a utilitarian concentration on interests. But these approaches do not exclude each other, unless each one is taken to be the basis of morality, to which other points of view are subordinate. If we regard the three approaches as genuine aspects of morality, we must face possible conflicts between their requirements. But the fact that different moral principles require incompatible actions should not necessarily persuade us of the falsity of any of the principles.

Aristotle, therefore, may not have found the whole truth about morality; some aspects of morality may be better defended from an impartial standpoint, as opposed to his egocentric standpoint, beginning from the aims and goals of a particular person. Morality may be the product of two distinct but partly convergent outlooks. Both an Aristotelian and an impartial line of argument may explain some things about morality and conflict with some other things we believe about it. Morality might be less rationally compelling if we could not look on most of it from these two points of view—just as it might be less compelling if both deontological and teleological accounts of it could not plausibly explain the moral phenomena. Even if some moral beliefs leave us strongly disinclined to believe the consequences of Aristotle's view, that is not in itself a sufficient reason for rejecting his view.

We probably cannot decide unequivocally that Aristotle's conception of morality does or does not match ours; for we probably lack any pre-theoretical conception of morality that is definite enough either to agree or to disagree with Aristotle, or with Bentham or Kant. Rather, our beliefs about morality include some that Aristotle may plausibly claim to explain, as well as others that do not fit his account. Aristotle's conception of morality is not inaccessibly remote from ours. His explanation of morality may advance our understanding of it.

[66] Cf. Godwin's discussion in *EPJ* ii. 2.

10

THE SCEPTICS

130. Scepticism in the History of Greek Ethics

Our most extensive evidence on Sceptical argument about ethics comes from Sextus Empiricus, writing in the second century AD.[1] Sextus describes his outlook as 'Pyrrhonian', referring to Pyrrhon, who lived around 360 to 270 BC, and hence was a contemporary of Aristotle, Zeno, and Epicurus. The Pyrrhonian outlook was revived by Aenesidemus in the first century BC, who is cited by Sextus. It is difficult, therefore, to say how much of Sextus' 'Pyrrhonian' position is derived from Pyrrhon himself, how much from Aenesidemus, and how much from elsewhere.

Despite these historical difficulties, it is reasonable to discuss Scepticism between Aristotle and the Epicureans and Stoics. Even if the specific Sceptical arguments in Sextus were formulated long after the lifetime of Aristotle, it is useful to see how they emerge naturally from arguments and claims in Plato and Aristotle. Moreover, both the Epicureans and the Stoics regard their views as offering replies to Sceptical objections. Though we do not know which Sceptical objections might be earlier or later than particular Epicurean or Stoic doctrines, it is helpful (and probably often accurate historically) to survey some Sceptical doubts before examining attempts to answer them.

Sextus' ethical arguments often apply to ethics some of the argumentative techniques that rest on his general epistemological assumptions. A discussion of these assumptions and their status within the Sceptical outlook would take us too far away from moral philosophy. But a sketch will give some idea of influential Sceptical ideas that raise questions about the prospects of constructive moral philosophy and about the outlook that replaces it for a Sceptic.

These aspects of Scepticism are relevant not only to ancient moral philosophy, but also to modern moral philosophy after the rediscovery of Sextus in the 16th century. Hobbes and Hume show the influence of the Sceptical outlook, and Hume's scepticism deserves comparison with Sextus. Some of Sextus' arguments also anticipate arguments in modern philosophy against moral objectivity.[2]

[1] I use 'Sceptical' with the initial capital to refer to the school (or movement) in ancient philosophy, and 'sceptical' to refer more broadly to a philosophical position that embraces (e.g.) the scepticism of Hume.

[2] See Mackie, *E*, chs. 1–2; Annas, 'Values'; n35 below.

131. The Sceptic as an Investigator

Sextus says that the origin of Scepticism is the hope of tranquillity; able people were disturbed by the variation in things and were puzzled about what they should assent to, and so they inquired into what is true in things and what is false, on the assumption that a decision on this point would lead them to tranquillity (*P* i 12). This variation in 'things' is variation in what people say about them and in how they appear; this is the variation that leads us to be puzzled about what we should assent to.

Sceptics are 'investigators' (*skeptikoi*) because they investigate this variation in things. The Sceptical method systematically opposes the appearances, and the result of its investigation is the tranquillity that 'able people' are looking for when they are trying to decide between opposing appearances. But the Sceptics do not reach tranquillity by deciding. They discover that they cannot decide, because opposing appearances seem equally credible; and so they suspend judgment, believing none of the opposing appearances that puzzled them. Their suspension of judgment leads to tranquillity.[3]

Sextus suggests that the ultimate ends of the Sceptic and the non-Sceptical investigator[4] are the same, since they both want to achieve tranquillity. But their more intermediate ends are different. The Sceptic was once a non-Sceptical investigator. His intermediate end used to be a decision about the truth and falsity of the opposing appearances, because he assumed that this decision would secure tranquillity. But he did not get what he expected. He could not reach any decision, and so could not achieve the intermediate end that was to lead him to tranquillity. But he none the less achieved tranquillity; it was an unexpected result of the suspension of judgment that followed his failure to reach a decision (*P* i 26–7).

Does the Sceptic who has achieved tranquillity on one question and proceeds to investigate other questions do this with the aim of achieving tranquillity? We might answer No. Since he did not achieve tranquillity by aiming at it, but only as an incidental result of his failure to achieve the supposed means to it, we might suppose that he no longer takes it as his end. But it is difficult to see how he can avoid it. If he still wants tranquillity and sees that it results from the suspension of judgment, he will form a desire to achieve suspension of judgment. The non-Sceptical inquirer feared this result, but the Sceptic aims at it.

But is Sextus right to claim that the non-Sceptical inquirer seeks tranquillity (*ataraxia*, *P* i 25)? He might say that without some disturbance (*tarachê*) we cannot begin an inquiry, since we have no motive to start. In that case it is true that we want to end the particular disturbance that raises the question for this inquiry. But we do not simply want to end it; we want to end it appropriately, by answering our question. Sextus seems to suggest that we will equally have achieved our end if we answer our question and if we no longer want

[3] 'The Sceptical ability is the ability to oppose things appearing to things thought in any way at all. From this ability we proceed through the equipollence in the opposed objects and arguments, and arrive, first, at suspension of judgment, and, after that, at freedom from disturbance . . . . By "things appearing" we now understand those things that appear to the senses . . . . By "equipollence" we mean equality in credibility and the lack of it, so that neither of the conflicting arguments stands out as more credible than the other. "Suspension of judgment" is the repose of thought, because of which we neither deny nor affirm something' (*P* i 8–10).

[4] I will also call the non-Sceptic a 'dogmatist', following Sextus' use of '*dogmatikos*' for one who holds beliefs (*doxai, dogmata*). In saying this, I pass over some controversy about the relation between *dogma, doxa*, and belief. See esp. Barnes, 'Beliefs'.

to ask it, since in either case we will have removed the original disturbance. Whereas we want absence of disturbance achieved by a particular route (by answering our question), he supposes we want absence of disturbance, whatever the route.[5]

Sextus is mistaken, then, if he means to suggest that the non-Sceptical inquirer and the Sceptical inquirer have the same ultimate aim, or that the Sceptic has coincidentally achieved the very end that the non-Sceptical inquirer failed to achieve. Sextus conveys the mistaken suggestion by comparing the inquirer with Apelles the painter, who despaired of achieving a particular effect in his painting, and then accidentally achieved it when he threw the sponge at the canvas in frustration (*P* i 28–9). According to Sextus, the inquirer achieves tranquillity in the same way, by giving up his original search for the truth.

The comparison with Apelles is misleading. Apelles (we may grant) achieved exactly what he was aiming at, though without trying to (at this last stage). But the inquirer who gives up seeking the truth does not achieve his original aim, which was to remove disturbance by the route of answering his initial question; since the route was part of his aim, he achieves his aim if and only if he removes his disturbance by that route. If we set out to travel by the coastal route from Sorrento to Amalfi, we do not achieve our aim if we fall asleep in Sorrento and are taken by helicopter to Amalfi, even though we reach Amalfi.

Sextus' assumption deserves attention because it seems to insinuate an unwarranted claim about tranquillity. If he were right to say that the non-sceptical inquirer aims at mere tranquillity (i.e., tranquillity irrespective of the route to it), he would not have to convince people who are not yet Sceptics that they have a reason to take an interest in Scepticism; for they would recognize such a reason as soon as they learned that Sceptics promise tranquillity. But if non-Sceptics do not aim at mere tranquillity, why should they care if the Sceptic achieves it?

The ultimate end the Sceptic achieves, therefore, does not seem to be an end that everyone else already aims at. On the contrary; we might reasonably find the Sceptics' position unattractive, if they achieve mere tranquillity with no further concern for finding the truth. But perhaps this does not matter to Sextus' argument. Perhaps he is not recommending his way of life by mentioning its ultimate end of tranquillity. He may simply point out that if we follow the stages of inquiry, we will find ourselves in the Sceptics' tranquil state, whether or not we would have thought it the most desirable state before we became Sceptics.[6]

The description of inquiry raises a further question. Does Sextus describe a procedure that we—Sceptics or non-sceptics—might pursue with the hope of achieving tranquillity? Or does he describe a procedure that all committed inquirers must pursue if they want to find out the truth? In the first case, non-sceptics who are not interested in mere tranquillity might reasonably ask why they should pursue this procedure. In the second case, however, their attitude to mere tranquillity does not matter; whatever they think about it, the systematic pursuit of inquiry leads them to suspension of judgment, and, fortunately, suspension leads to tranquillity.

[5] Cf. Striker, 'Ataraxia' 185–6 (on the Stoics).

[6] Timon suggested that Pyrrhon's Sceptical position was the way to tranquillity, and therefore to happiness. See Eusebius, *PE* xiv 18.2–4 = LS 1F; Striker, 'Ataraxia' 189; Bett, *PAL* 106–10.

A decision between these two views of inquiry depends on how far Sceptical inquiry is similar to or different from ordinary inquiry, as practised by someone who is not yet a Sceptic. Sometimes Sextus speaks as though any fair-minded inquirer who consistently follows appropriate standards of proof and argument, measured by a non-sceptical standard of appropriateness, will find that an equally strong case can be made for contradictory positions, and that therefore suspension of judgment is the only rational response. Sometimes, however, he speaks as though he presents any arguments, however good or bad they may appear to a non-sceptic, that will tend to shake our initial convictions and incline us towards suspension of judgment (*P* iii 280–1). The Sceptic does this out of 'love of humanity' (280), to help other people towards tranquillity. We reach tranquillity more easily, in his view, if we simply accumulate as many arguments as we need to induce us to form the appearance that contradictory positions are equipollent, and so to suspend judgment.

This attitude is different from the non-sceptic's; for the non-sceptic is concerned with the strength of the arguments that lead to the appearance of equipollence. Even if I find myself confronted with arguments that I cannot decide between, they may not appear equipollent; I may decide that some of them are probably misleading, and that I should examine them again. And even if they appear equipollent, I will not necessarily suspend judgment; for I may question some of the premisses of the arguments that have brought me to my present state.

This non-sceptical approach will not save us from suspension of judgment, however, if we find no rational alternative to the admission of equipollence. The difference between Sextus' approach and the non-sceptical approach does not matter, if Sextus has enough arguments that will seem plausible to the non-sceptic, and if the principles on which we might re-examine the arguments leading to the appearance of equipollence are themselves open to challenges leading to the appearance of equipollence. Though Sextus does not consider a possible way out for the non-sceptic who re-examines the premisses leading to equipollence, this possible way out may itself be closed by Sceptical argument. We need to consider Sextus' arguments and possible replies to them, to see whether the non-sceptic has any way out.

132. Socrates as a Source of Scepticism

Sextus discusses arguments and strategies that he derives from earlier philosophers. It is worth mentioning some of these earlier sources, to show that the questions that concern the Sceptic arise in non-sceptical Greek moralists.

Sextus attributes the use of conflicting appearances to support a sceptical or nihilist position to Democritus, who argues that if honey appears sweet to some and bitter to others, it is neither sweet nor bitter (*P* ii 63; i 213). Moral beliefs seem to allow a similar argument from conflicting appearances. Socrates' contemporaries were well aware of apparent conflicts in moral beliefs between different societies.[7] But conflict could scarcely be confined to conflict between societies; even within one society individuals seemed to hold conflicting beliefs.

[7] See, e.g., Herodotus iii 38. Herodotus does not draw a nihilist or sceptical or relativist conclusion.

This argument from conflicting appearances to scepticism or nihilism might appear to gain powerful support from Socrates. Even in areas of apparent consensus Socrates points out that people do not agree as much as they might suppose they do. Not only do Socrates' interlocutors disagree with him, but they also find that they disagree with each other. Polus and Callicles might not have noticed that they disagree about the fine and the good, and about the relation between justice and self-interest; discussion with Socrates reveals their disagreement. Similarly, Nicias and Laches discover that they disagree about bravery in ways that they might not previously have noticed.

Socrates' practice of examining others by asking them questions that he does not answer himself helps to explain why one tradition in ancient Scepticism traced its origins to him. In the third century BC Arcesilaus took the Academy in a Sceptical direction that it retained until the first century.[8] The character of Socratic argument helps to explain why the Academy founded by Plato turned towards Scepticism. One might claim to be faithful to Socrates, and therefore to the Socratic spirit in Plato, by pursuing cross-examination and refutation, exposing conflicts but claiming no knowledge of one's own.

Plato notices that these aspects of Socrates might be exploited for sceptical purposes. Someone who has absorbed conventional beliefs but then undergoes Socratic cross-examination may find that his initial beliefs waver in the face of apparently plausible objections that he cannot immediately answer.[9] Plato believes that this is an unwelcome result of Socratic examination in many people. He does not consider the possibility that our loss of confidence in our initial beliefs may be confined to the theoretical level, with no practical effect. On the contrary, he assumes that if we believe nothing is really just or fine any more than its opposite, we will not be concerned to do what we previously thought just or fine. He believes that if we listen to this side of Socratic argument, we will both become sceptics and cease to care about justice.

If this is the result of scepticism, what are we to say about Socrates himself? If he has no answer to the questions he asks, but differs from his interlocutors only in recognizing the extent of his ignorance, might we not also expect him to be less concerned about the conventional moral beliefs that he has undermined? Socrates professes unwavering concern for justice and the rest of the virtues. But might we not decide that he is being inconsistent, or at least irresolute in failing to pursue his arguments to their logical conclusion? Someone who took this view of Socrates might admire his praise of virtue, but regret his failure to give a positive account of what it is or why it is worth our while.[10]

According to Plato, the view of Socrates that leads us to scepticism is one-sided, just as the Cynic and Cyrenaic views are. It does not reflect a true estimate of philosophical argument; it is a slander on philosophy. In his view, Socratic argument, properly understood, leads us to the conclusion of the *Republic*, that some actions are really just, and that it is always better

[8] On Arcesilaus as a Socratic and Sceptic see Cic. *F* ii 2 = LS 68J; Sx. *P* i 232–4 = LS 68I.

[9] '. . . You know that some beliefs about just and fine things were taught us in childhood, and we've been brought up under them as parents, obeying and honouring them . . . . Now suppose . . . some questioner comes and asks what the fine is, and in answer he says what he has heard from the legislator, and then the argument refutes him in many and various ways, until it drives him into believing that nothing is fine any more than it is shameful, or just and good any more than the reverse, and so on for all the things he most honoured. Do you think he will still honour and obey them as before?' (Plato, *R.* 538c–e).

[10] This reaction is similar to the one described at Plato[?], *Clitopho* 410b–d.

for us to be just than to be unjust. But the elaborate structure of the *Republic* shows that Plato does not think it is an easy matter to establish the positive side of Socratic doctrine. The relatively simple arguments of Book i do not convince Glaucon and Adeimantus that Socrates has answered Thrasymachus (*R*. 357a; 358b). Plato needs the account of the individual soul and the ideal state before he thinks he has an adequate answer.

133. Protagoras and Plato

The destructive effect of scepticism on ordinary moral beliefs also concerns Protagoras, whose answer is worth comparing with Plato's.[11] He solves the problem of conflicting appearances by answering that both the conflicting views are true. For the person who feels hot the wind is hot, and for the one who feels cold the wind is cold.[12] Similarly, for those to whom murder appears unjust it is unjust and for those to whom it appears just it is just.[13]

It is difficult to decide what Protagoras means by this claim. Some possible views are these: (1) Justice (say) is relational; nothing is just non-relationally, but what is just is just for particular people in particular circumstances, and what is just for some people in their circumstances may be unjust for different people in different circumstances. (2) Justice is simply a product of different people's opinions. Just as I am in pain if I feel pain, so also (on this view) it is just for Athenians to avoid murder and incest if they think it is just. (3) It is not absolutely true that murder is unjust; it is only relatively true, relatively to those who think it is unjust. (4) It is not true that murder is unjust; it is only true in the view of those who think it is unjust.

These different views might all be called 'relativist', but the use of this term may encourage us to confuse them. The first view does not support Protagoras' view about appearances; the mere fact that different medicines are good for people in different conditions does make it true that what each person thinks is healthy is healthy for him. Both Plato and Aristotle argue against the inference from variation to the rejection of objective goodness and rightness (*Tht*. 177d; *EN* 1094b14–19). The other three views, however, all reject objective facts about justice, and offer ways of understanding moral claims that avoid Sceptical suspension of judgment.

If any of these is the right way to understand moral claims, facts about conflicting appearances may lead us to accept equipollence; to this extent Sextus is right to suggest that Protagoras' introduction of relativity is similar to Sceptical argument (*P* i 216–17; *M* vii 60, 64). But Protagoras implies that acceptance of equipollence need not lead us to suspension of judgment. For even though we recognize that there is nothing to choose, objectively

[11] I will suppose for present purposes that the positions I attribute to Protagoras on the basis of Plato's *Theaetetus* belong to the historical Protagoras.

[12] 'He [sc. Protagoras] says, doesn't he, that a human being is the measure of all things—of things that are, how they are, and of things that are not, how they are not? I suppose you've read that? . . . Sometimes, when the same wind is blowing, one of us shivers, the other does not, or one shivers a bit, the other a lot . . . . Are we to say that the wind in itself is cold or not cold? Or are we to agree with Protagoras that it is cold for the one who shivers, and not for the other?' (Plato, *Tht*. 152a–b).

[13] '. . . the things that have seemed good to a city and that it has laid down, are just for the city that has laid them down, for as long as they remain laid down' (*Tht*. 177d).

speaking, between Athenian and Persian judgments about justice, we may none the less continue to affirm Athenian or Persian judgments, if we are Athenians or Persians.

Protagoras' view (understood in one of these three ways) anticipates later attempts to preempt an argument for scepticism by rejecting objectivity and restricting our epistemological claims so that they are not threatened by sceptical argument. If Protagoras is right, Sextus is wrong to suppose that objectivism and Scepticism are the only options worth considering. We need not suspend judgment simply because objectivism is refuted.

Whereas Plato suggests that one-sided Socratic criticism leads to the practical rejection of just actions, he does not raise this objection to the Protagorean position. He distinguishes Protagoras' position from the view of those who agree with him in saying that ordinary morality is simply a matter of convention (*nomos*) and therefore not to be taken seriously (cf. *Laws* 889e–890a). Protagoras does not suggest that if moral properties do not belong to nature (*phusis; Laws* 889d7), we should reject morality. He denies that we are committed to the objectivist conception of moral properties that is refuted by the discovery that they are not natural.

Still, Plato argues that Protagoras' position does not allow us to engage in our ordinary moral practices. In Protagoras' view, as long as we continue to make ordinary judgments about justice, without believing that they are true of any objective reality, we will continue to uphold ordinary morality; hence he rejects the criticisms of those who allege that the Protagorean position supports immorality in practice. Plato answers that upholding ordinary morality consists in more than simply repeating conventional moral judgments. We also suppose it is possible to improve moral judgments by reflexion and argument, and we suppose that some people are better than others at advising us. We try to improve our judgments, not simply to seem to ourselves to improve them. Therefore we must assume that some things are really better than others, whether or not they appear to be, and that we can discover enough about them to modify our initial moral judgments (*Tht.* 177d–179b).

Just as Protagoras' argument anticipates later attempts to avoid scepticism, so also Plato's reply anticipates later objections to these attempts. He argues that Protagoras needs to explain not only how he can affirm ordinary moral judgments, but also how he can treat them in the way we treat them when we claim to discover reasons for changing our mind for the better. Plato's argument assumes that we accept objective judgments about goodness as a basis for reforming our judgments about justice.

134. Aristotle and Conflicting Appearances

Aristotle's approach to common beliefs shows how parts of his method might be used to support Scepticism and how he intends to avoid any sceptical conclusion. In his view, we ought to set out the appearances, and go through the puzzles; this is the only way to look for an adequate solution (*Met.* 995a24–b4). We reach a puzzle (*aporia*) when we seem to have equally cogent arguments for two incompatible conclusions; Aristotle compares this condition to being bound and being unable to make further progress. He seeks a solution that will allow us to make progress.

The condition that Aristotle describes as puzzlement is similar to the condition that Sextus describes as the recognition of equipollence. If we find equally cogent arguments for two incompatible conclusions, we have to regard them as equipollent, so that we have no reason to go for one rather than the other. Sextus suggests that the next step is suspension of judgment, on which tranquillity follows coincidentally. We might indeed be tempted to react sceptically to the elaborate list of puzzles about being that Aristotle presents in *Metaphysics* iii. But Aristotle argues that this is the wrong reaction. We should suspend judgment only if our appearance of equipollence is supported by further inquiry. We need to re-examine the conclusions to see if they are really incompatible; we need to re-examine the premisses to see if they remain plausible once we see that they seem to lead to the puzzle; and we need to re-examine the arguments, to see whether they really lead us cogently from plausible premisses to unacceptable conclusions. Aristotle believes that a re-examination leads us to a resolution of the puzzles and a re-affirmation of the appearances, or at least of 'most and the most important' of them (*EN* 1145b4–6).

We might reply that Aristotle's belief is merely groundless optimism. The further premisses that we might rely on in re-examining the routes to each side of our puzzle may themselves be open to the doubts arising from conflicting appearances. If the Sceptics repeat their questions at each stage, how can we ever start the constructive re-examination that Aristotle recommends?

In Aristotle's view, however, the fact that we have reached a conclusion that seems absurd, in the light of the beliefs that seem most plausible, is a good reason for supposing that our argument has gone wrong. If we conclude that virtue is identical to happiness, despite our firm conviction that virtue does not secure all the goods we need for happiness, we have reason to reject our conclusion and to look for the mistake in our argument (cf. 1095b30–1096a2). Similarly, if we conclude that pleasure is not a good at all, we cast doubt on the credibility of our whole argument (cf. 1172b35–1173a2).

By defending an anti-sceptical position on these grounds, Aristotle invites a further Sceptical objection. Why should we give a special status to these convictions that we use to cast doubt on conclusions that grossly violate the appearances? The later Sceptic Agrippa presents this objection as a trilemma: either our privileged convictions rest on no argument, or they rest on further argument, which is either infinitely regressive or circular, and in any of these cases they do not deserve their privileged position (Sx *P* i 164–9, 178–9; DL ix 88–9).

This Sceptical argument raises basic questions in epistemology that bear on moral epistemology. The trilemma is pertinent to Aristotle, since he rejects infinite regress and circular argument as means of demonstration (*APo* i 3), so that he seems to be left only with an appeal to some sort of non-inferential justification for the premisses of demonstration.[14] If he argued in the same way about dialectical argument in ethics, he would demand rather a lot for the premisses of cogent ethical arguments.

If we do not suppose that Aristotle is always a foundationalist, relying on non-inferentially justified basic principles, we may suppose that he appeals to some considerations of coherence. Perhaps he holds that we may legitimately appeal to convictions that have a central role in our ethical convictions as a whole, and that we may rely on them to decide

[14] Cf. Irwin, *AFP*, ch. 6; Barnes, *TS*, ch. 4.

which of our other convictions are most plausible, and therefore rely on them to resolve the puzzles that we can generate from the appearances. This defence fits the argument Aristotle offers in the *Ethics*, where he avoids any foundationalist appeal to principles that are non-inferentially justified.

This defence against Agrippa raises a question about the legitimacy of resorting to coherence. If we are already convinced that circular argument is illegitimate, we will disallow Aristotle's defence that appeals to coherence. But should we have already made up our mind against all circular argument? If we do, we will rule out some apparently reasonable arguments that rely on considerations of coherence. This is a holist argument for holism; it argues from coherence that we ought to allow arguments from coherence and therefore ought to take a non-Sceptical attitude.[15]

If Sextus (or Agrippa) were himself a foundationalist, or could presume that all his opponents are foundationalists, he might reasonably reject the holist argument for holism. But his opponents are not all foundationalists; even if we are wrong about Aristotle, the Stoics appeal to the coherence of their whole system as a reason for believing it. And if the Sceptic is a foundationalist himself, does he not take a dogmatic position that is inconsistent with his Scepticism? If he refrains from affirming it, but simply says it is how things appear to him, his opponents have no reason to share his appearance.

These points take us beyond anything that Aristotle says in the *Ethics*. But they suggest that his approach to ethics both invites Sceptical treatment, and at the same time suggests answers to some Sceptical arguments. Aristotle's approach to puzzles about common beliefs shows that the process leading from recognition of conflict to suspension of judgment is not inevitable. He has good reason to deny that a non-sceptic is rationally committed to the steps that lead a Sceptic to suspension of judgment. We have a good reason, therefore, to treat the Sceptical description of inquiry as a description of an activity that we will pursue only if we have already accepted some of the most questionable aspects of Scepticism. We have no reason to share the Sceptic's aim of achieving mere tranquillity.

135. Aristotle on Nature and Convention

One of Aristotle's replies to a Sceptical objection is similar to Plato's reply to Protagoras. Plato argues that Protagoras' rejection of objective justice cannot plausibly be extended to objective goodness, since we need objective goodness to explain our efforts to improve our views on justice. Aristotle also appeals to goodness to cast doubt on claims about justice. He notices that variations in fine and just things lead people to believe that nothing is fine and just by nature. He answers that good things also vary; in some circumstances goods such as bravery and wealth can cause some harm (*EN* 1094b14–19). Aristotle assumes that this sort of variation gives us no reason to conclude that nothing is good by nature and that all goods are merely matters of convention.

This brief reply to a Protagorean argument relies on a strategy that Aristotle often relies on in his claims about goods. Whatever is really good for us is good for us as having the

[15] For present purposes I am not distinguishing holism from appeals to coherence. Nor am I giving a precise account of the relevant sort of coherence.

nature we have; that is why we need to find the function of human beings in order to find the human good. All genuine goods are good 'by nature'; their nature makes them good for us given our nature.[16]

We might reply to this claim about natural goods by arguing that the goods recognized by Aristotle are not good for everyone in all circumstances. Medicines are good for some and bad for others; even virtue benefits some and harms others. How, then, can their nature and ours make them good? Aristotle replies by denying that natural goods are always good or good for everyone. They are good only for the right sort of person in the right circumstances. Hence we do not show that wealth is not a good if we find that it harms some people in some circumstances; these are the people who do not know how to use it. Similarly, a good diet for a healthy person is not good for sick people (cf. 1129b1–6; 1173b22–5).[17] To be good is not to be good irrespective of the person or the circumstances, or in every respect. Virtue is the most unrestricted good, because it is good for everyone in all circumstances. But it is not good in every respect; if unjust people persecute the just person, justice causes some harm to the just person, though it is still good for him on the whole.

Aristotle's treatment of variation in goods helps him to explain natural justice. He recognizes that some requirements of justice are based on law or convention (*nomos, sunthêkê*, 1134b18–24). If particular states pass different laws about weights or measures, or about the prescribed form of sacrifice, justice requires the keeping of these different laws, and hence requires different things in different places. But Aristotle denies that all requirements of justice depend on laws in this way (1134b24–1135a5). There is one naturally just constitution, which suits the right sort of people in the right circumstances, though it would not suit every society in all circumstances. In the *Politics* Aristotle describes the types of society and the types of situations that would make it unwise and unjust, in those circumstances, to adopt the constitution he thinks is naturally just. This variation in justice does not threaten the belief in natural justice.

But if Aristotle admits all this, does he make the idea of natural justice practically irrelevant for most people in most circumstances? This conclusion does not follow. Even if we cannot adopt a just constitution overnight, we should prefer changes that bring us closer to suitable conditions for the just constitution over changes that take us further away from these conditions. Similarly, an unhealthy or unjust person should prefer changes that bring him closer to being healthy or just, so that he can benefit from things that are naturally good for human beings.

One might still dispute Aristotle's claim to be able to identify natural goods, if one doubts his claim to be able to give an account of the relevant aspects of human nature. But his claims are reasonable. We can see why health is closer to our natural condition than illness, and we can see why we fulfil human nature by rational activity more than we do by being forced into mindless and exhausting labour. The relevant conception of nature and the natural needs to be explained further; Butler tries to explain it by distinguishing the respect in which illness and health are equally natural from the respect in which health is more natural than illness.[18]

[16] On Aristotle's appeals to nature see §81. On later appeals to natural law see §§197, 199, 301.
[17] Some of these questions about unqualified and natural goods are discussed at *Top*. 115b11–35.
[18] See Butler, *S* P24.

Aristotle's claims about nature, therefore, do not collapse in the face of arguments about variation. He not only suggests some points on which Sceptical arguments might fasten, but also indicates how one might answer these arguments.

136. Arguments against Objective Goodness

The views of Plato and Aristotle on natural goodness help us to evaluate the arguments that Sextus offers against objectivity in ethics. He tries to induce the appearance of equipollence by pointing out conflicting appearances about questions of conduct (*P* i 145). If he succeeds, we cannot say what property a given subject has in its nature, but only what property it appears to have in relation to a given way of life, or practice, or law (163). This is one of the 'tropes' (or 'modes') of argument that lead us to suspend judgment about 'the nature of external subjects' (163).

The oppositions that Sextus mentions are too various to show that we can say nothing about the nature of external subjects. In some of the cases he mentions, we might say that one of the opposing views is mistaken; for instance, the Taurians might be wrong to sacrifice strangers to Artemis (149). In some cases each of two 'conflicting' practices might be equally acceptable because it is sanctioned by custom; perhaps it would be reasonable for Ethiopians to tattoo their children, but unreasonable for Greek parents to tattoo their children in violation of Greek customs (148). In some cases different circumstances might make different actions reasonable; perhaps Heracles should not normally have occupied himself in spinning wool, but was right to do it in the house of Omphale (157). If any of these explanations works for any of Sextus' examples, that example does not serve its purpose. Hence, before we are convinced by his overall argument, we need to be confident that enough of his examples resist any of these explanations.

Not every case of variation shows that we cannot say anything about the real nature of a thing, as opposed to its appearances. If (as Heracleitus remarks) sea-water is good for fishes but bad for human beings, we learn something about the nature of sea-water, because we learn something about its real effects on different kinds of creatures; we do not learn only about how sea-water appears. The fact that we learn about a relational rather than a non-relational property of something does not show that we learn about an apparent rather than a real property. We might suspect that Sextus confuses (or is confused by) the use of 'in its own right' (*kath'hauto*) to refer to non-relational ('intrinsic') properties versus relational properties, and its use to refer to objective ('as it is in itself') versus non-objective properties. If we take goodness to be relational, we do not thereby accept relativism or deny objective goodness.

Sextus might protest that some of the attempted explanations of variety beg the question. Can we fairly dismiss the opposition between Taurian approval of human sacrifice and Greek disapproval of it by saying that the Taurians are wrong? If we agree with the Greeks, no doubt we will think the Taurians are wrong, but the Taurians are equally convinced that they are right. If we appeal to the more general principle that innocent human beings who do not threaten anyone's life ought not to be deliberately killed, not everyone accepts that principle. If we say that the right people, or the people who ought to be trusted, accept it,

Sextus will ask how we are to identify these people. At some point we must refuse to answer the further question, or go on to infinity, or argue in a circle. In other words, we are forced into Agrippa's trilemma.

But if this is the right way to continue the conversation between Sceptics and their opponents after the point where Sextus stops, conflicting appearances do not give him a decisive argument for equipollence. We have to accept equipollence only if we reject the other explanations of the conflicts or apparent conflicts between appearances. We will reject the other explanations only if we subject them to Agrippa's trilemma. But the trilemma defeats the explanations only if all the options it offers are unacceptable. We have seen that Sextus does not give dogmatists a good reason, from their point of view, to reject all the options offered by the trilemma. If Sextus does not appeal to the trilemma, but to his more specific claims about conflicting appearances of goodness, his arguments do not defeat competing explanations of variation. Hence his arguments seem to fail, whether we take them to be specifically about ethics or to rely on the resort to Agrippa's trilemma.

137. Natural Goodness

This conclusion on Sextus' arguments from conflicting appearances helps us to evaluate his arguments to show that nothing is by nature good or bad (*P* iii 179; *M* xi 69).[19] It is easy to see why these arguments are so prominent in his case for Scepticism, given the importance of natural goodness in Plato and Aristotle (not to mention their successors). The reply to Protagoras in the *Theaetetus* and the defence of natural justice in the *Ethics* answer doubts about the objectivity of justice by arguing from the objectivity of goodness, relying on claims about natural suitability and appropriateness. A defence of Scepticism should show, therefore, that the assumptions about nature and goodness are subject to doubts that lead to the appearance of equipollence.

Sextus' objections assume that if something is good by nature it ought to be good for everyone (*M* xi 69). Fire is by nature hot, and therefore heats everything, whereas snow is cold by nature and therefore cools everything; similarly, then (he argues), natural goods should be good for everyone. This argument rests on too few examples. A certain kind of poison may be lethal, even if it is possible to prevent its being lethal in a particular case by taking small amounts of it in advance. Even if we need to qualify the claim that this poison is lethal, we need not concede that it only appears lethal.

Not only do Sextus' examples fail to prove his general point, but the general point is controversial in any case, since some of his opponents reject it. Aristotle insists that not all natural goods are good for everyone; bad people are better off without some natural goods, until they become better, and so become able to benefit from the natural goods. In Aristotle's view, many natural goods only benefit people in the right state and in the right circumstances.

One might wonder why Sextus overlooks this Aristotelian reply to his generalization about natural goods. His attitude is intelligible, however, if we recall his treatment of

[19] These arguments, and possible differences between *P* and *M*, are discussed by Bett, *AE*, e.g. at 97–105.

conflicting appearances. If we defend Aristotle by saying that natural goods are good only for well-disposed people in favourable conditions, the Sceptic might reasonably ask us how we tell which people are well-disposed or what conditions are favourable. Any principle we offer will be subject to further Sceptical questions, forcing us into Agrippa's trilemma.

A similar point explains another surprising feature of Sextus' treatment. He assumes not only that natural goods must be good for everyone, but also that they must appear good to everyone. First he says that a natural good must move everyone alike who is in a natural state, but then he repeats the demand without the mention of a natural state.[20] A natural good would move everyone only if everyone desired it; hence Sextus assumes that if something is a natural good, everyone desires it. But the believer in natural goods can apparently reply that even if natural goods were to benefit everyone, some people would be blind to this fact because they do not understand enough about goods.

The Sceptic's next move asks who is to distinguish the people who do not recognize their own good from those who recognize it (cf. Ar. *Met*. 1009b2–11; 1011a3–11). Aristotle does not take this sort of doubt seriously; he answers that we have to recognize some things without a demonstration (1011a11–13). To disallow the Aristotelian answer, the Sceptic needs to claim—or rather, to take the dogmatist to believe—that all the horns of Agrippa's trilemma are unacceptable.

The Sceptical discussion of natural goods, therefore, does not seem to deploy powerful arguments against dogmatists. Believers in natural goods can reasonably point out that the Sceptic misinterprets them in claiming that natural goods must be good for everyone and that everyone must desire them and believe them to be good. The Sceptical reply to this charge of misinterpretation takes us from particular questions about ethics to the more general epistemological issues raised by Agrippa's trilemma. Though Agrippa's trilemma appears to the Sceptic to provide a powerful argument against the dogmatists, we have no reason to agree.

138. Sceptical Tranquillity

But even if we reject Sextus' particular arguments against dogmatism in ethics, we might still be attracted to the Sceptical position by the claim that tranquillity results from suspension of judgment. This may appear to be a welcome result, because the dogmatist also wants to be rid of disturbance. Sextus argues at length that the Sceptic will be more tranquil than the dogmatist, because he will be free of the anxieties that result from the conviction that some things are really good and bad (*M* xi 141–61; *P* iii 235–8). If dogmatists are aiming at tranquillity, and they find that the Sceptics have got there first, they seem to have an ethical reason to favour the Sceptical strategy for achieving tranquillity; hence they seem to have a reason to suspend judgment, and hence to focus on the considerations that induce the appearance of equipollence.

Sextus does not claim that Sceptics are completely free of disturbance. They are liable to desires and passions that do not depend on the belief that something is good or bad.

[20] At *P* iii 179 Sextus first has *homoiôs pantas kinei tous kata phusin, hôs phasin, echontas*, but then simply has *pantas kinei hôs agathon*.

Whatever we think about pain, and whether or not we claim (as Cynics and Stoics claim) that it is not bad, we will want to be rid of the sensation that arises if a knife is stuck into our leg. Similarly, we will want the continuation of the pleasant sensation that arises, whether we want it to or not, when we satisfy our hunger (*M* xi 149).

Dogmatists are subject to these passions no less than Sceptics are, but they are also subject to the further disturbances that result from the conviction that things are really good or bad. These convictions about value make us concerned about things that we have no natural and inevitable desire for; any such concern involves a deliberate effort to get the relevant good, and deliberate effort involves some initial disturbance when we recognize that we have not yet got this good. Moreover, convictions about good and bad involve us in further disturbance even about inevitable pains and pleasures. If we believe that it is bad to be cut, we make an effort to avoid it, and our effort involves disturbance beyond what we suffer if we are cut; similarly, if it happens to us, we think we ought to have avoided it and ought to avoid it in future, and so we suffer a further disturbance beyond our inevitable suffering (*M* xi 158–60).

In contrast to the dogmatist, the Sceptic is tranquil because he has freed himself from beliefs by suspending judgment. He does not try to remove his disturbances by finding out the truth. He still suffers the natural and inevitable passions that do not depend on beliefs about value. Hence the end he achieves is 'tranquillity in things that accord with belief and moderate passion in things that are compelled' (*P* i 25). He achieves complete freedom from the disturbance that results from belief, since he gives up belief. He cannot achieve complete freedom from the disturbance that results from passions, because some of this disturbance is inevitable and independent of belief; but since he achieves freedom from the dogmatists' disturbance and adds no new disturbance of his own, his passions are less disturbing than the dogmatist's passions (*P* i 29–30). He thereby achieves 'the most complete (*teleiotatên*) happiness' (*M* xi 160–1).

Is Sextus right to claim that the Sceptic's suspension of judgment will result in tranquillity? Might we not wonder whether we have done the right thing in suspending judgment and so be anxious to find out? If Sextus' claim is an empirical prediction, it seems to be open to question. If we found ourselves unable to make up our minds between apparently equipollent positions, and we felt ourselves becoming indifferent to the question, as Sextus suggests we will, might we not resist this tendency?

Some answers to these questions depend on the questions we originally asked about Sextus' conception of inquiry. If we agree with him that tranquillity is the ultimate end, because tranquillity is happiness, and we take our inquiry into the truth to be a means to tranquillity, perhaps we will become tranquil and remain in our tranquil state once we have suspended judgment, if we still believe that tranquillity is the ultimate end.

This conception of the Sceptic's method rests on the dogmatic conviction that tranquillity is the ultimate end. Sextus, however, claims that the principles that the Sceptic relies on to reach his conclusion do not remain with him as settled beliefs; they are like the laxative that eliminates itself with everything else (*P* i 206; cf. ii 188). If we eliminate the conviction that tranquillity is happiness, why should we not be anxious about whether we have done the right thing by becoming tranquil? The Sceptic seems to achieve tranquillity only if he

maintains a dogmatic conviction about happiness; but that conviction seems to be a source of anxiety.

Sextus might deny that this is a serious difficulty. In putting forward tranquillity as the ultimate end, he might claim to be agreeing with other philosophers.[21] If he is right, and no one will question the assumption that tranquillity is happiness, it will not occur to anyone to be anxious about whether it is correct. To show that others agree with him, Sextus might cite passages in which some Stoics identify happiness with a 'good flow of life' (*eurhoia biou*).[22] This good flow might be identified with tranquillity. Similarly, the conception of happiness as tranquillity seems to agree with Epicurus' conception of happiness, and in general with an adaptive conception.

But these similarities with the views of dogmatic philosophers do not justify Sextus in taking it to be beyond controversy that tranquillity is the ultimate end. While the Stoics believe that the virtuous person achieves the ultimate end, and is thereby tranquil, they do not infer that tranquillity simpliciter is the ultimate end. The tranquillity that they value is not mere tranquillity, but the tranquillity of the virtuous person. Sextus' mistake in separating tranquillity from the preferred route to it is similar to his mistake in representing tranquillity as the goal of inquiry into the truth.

It is more difficult to distinguish the Epicurean conception of happiness from Sextus' view of tranquillity as the end. Sextus and Epicurus agree that we have basic bodily needs that need to be met and that a tolerable life has to include satisfaction of these needs. Epicurus, however, has a more positive attitude to this satisfaction. He regards the pleasure that results from it as a contribution to happiness, whereas Sextus speaks of it simply as 'relief' (*M* xi 149). Sextus can hardly go as far as Epicurus on this point; for if he were to regard pleasure as a part or the whole of happiness, he would apparently have to regard pleasure as a good, contrary to his argument for suspending judgment about goods (xi 73–4). Epicurus' non-sceptical position also helps him to accumulate greater pleasures; memory and anticipation of conversations with friends (for instance) increases his present pleasure because he believes that these were and will be good aspects of his life. Since Sextus denies himself these pleasures by abandoning belief in goods, he cannot claim Epicurus' support for his assumptions about happiness.

Epicurus also suggests a counter-example to Sextus' view that abandonment of belief will reduce anxiety. The Sceptic suspends judgment on the question of whether death is an evil, but Epicurus suggests (according to Lucretius) that this suspension does not ensure freedom from anxiety. The underlying fear of being dead, even in someone who denies that we survive death, causes us to pursue honour, wealth, power, and other unsatisfying goals, to distract us from our fear of death. Though we may not find this example plausible, it suggests that Sextus is wrong to suppose that fears that are not based on beliefs or on bodily needs cannot cause us severe anxiety and disturbance. If irrational fears persist, we need to find some way to deal with them. Epicurus suggests that we have to take deliberate steps to strengthen our conviction that the fears are irrational and to train ourselves to take pleasures based on rational beliefs. If he is right on this point, Sextus is wrong to suggest that abandonment of belief reduces anxiety and that the formation of belief increases it.

[21] See Bett, *AE* 144–5.

[22] See §182; Striker, 'Tranquillity' 185–6.

This comparison with Epicurus suggests that the Epicurean and the Sceptical claims about tranquillity are only superficially similar. Sextus cannot appeal to the agreement of philosophers to support his belief (or assumption, or appearance) that tranquillity is happiness. Hence he gives us no reason to agree that the Sceptic who achieves tranquillity and moderate passion thereby achieves the most complete happiness (*M* xi 160–1).

Apart from these questions about the disputed character of Sextus' conception of happiness, we might wonder whether he can consistently claim both that he suspends judgment and that he puts forward tranquillity and moderate passion as the end. His position is inconsistent only if he puts forward a belief that tranquillity is good. If it simply appears to him to be good, or to be the end, he can consistently put forward the appearance without committing himself to any belief. On this view, he does not offer a dogmatist a reason for taking tranquillity to be the end; he simply records how things appear to him after he has suspended judgment about goods and abandoned any belief about them.

But why should we predict that the same thing will happen to us as happened to Sextus, so that if we suspend judgment and thereby achieve tranquillity, tranquillity will appear to us to be the end? Perhaps he means that if we lack any conviction about goods, we will have no reason-based desire to change our tranquil state for any other, and hence no motive for forming a negative view of it; therefore we will have a favourable appearance of it. A state we do not want to change for anything else, he might argue, is the one that appears to us as the ultimate end.

In this way, then, we might understand Sextus' remarks about the end so that they do not conflict with his rejection of beliefs about the nature of happiness, along with other beliefs. Aenesidemus is reported to have argued against any dogmatic account of the ultimate end.[23] Sextus can consistently endorse such arguments while recording the appearance that a Sceptic will acquire about happiness and the ultimate end.

But though this position is consistent, it might reasonably turn a dogmatist against Scepticism. If tranquillity appears to the Sceptic to be the whole of happiness, but we believe that happiness is more than tranquillity, we have a reason for wanting to avoid the Sceptic's predicament. If we find the arguments for equipollence irresistible, we may find that we have to suspend judgment, and share the Sceptic's appearance about the end; but if we reject the appearance about the end, we have a reason to avoid the appearance of equipollence if we can. No doubt it is better to be undisturbed than to suffer from painful and pointless anxiety; but the dogmatist has no reason to agree that these are the only possibilities to be considered.

139. Actions without Beliefs?

Sextus has an answer to some of these dogmatic objections if he can show that the Sceptic's life is more attractive than the dogmatist allows. If he is right about this, the Sceptic may not miss much by holding the false—as the dogmatist supposes—appearance that tranquillity is the whole of happiness. Dogmatists argue that the Sceptic who lives by his appearances

[23] See Photius, *Bibl.* 170b31–5 = LS 72L(7).

will be both inactive and inconsistent. (1) He will be inactive (they claim) because he will neither choose nor avoid anything. (2) He will be inconsistent, because if a tyrant orders him to do something wrong, he will either refuse to do it and suffer death or agree to do it to avoid torture; in either case he will choose and avoid, contrary to his lacking any belief that something is to be chosen or avoided (*M* xi 162–4).

These two criticisms may appear inconsistent. Do the dogmatists not admit that (contrary to their first criticism) the Sceptic is active, if they believe that he will do something in response to the tyrant? But they are more consistent than they initially appear. They suggest that the Sceptic will do nothing unless external circumstances force him to; when they force him to act, they reveal that he has some convictions, despite his normal lethargy and lack of commitment. Sometimes he cannot be simply inactive and like a vegetable, because circumstances require him to choose; and then he shows that he has some convictions after all.

These criticisms rely on the 'inaction' (*apraxia*) argument that both Stoics and Epicureans use to show that the Sceptic is incapable of action if he has no beliefs. The Stoics argue that since the Sceptic refuses to assent to any appearances, and since action is impossible without assent, the Sceptic makes action impossible; they assume, therefore, that every action presupposes assent.[24]

In Sextus' view, the Stoics misunderstand the Sceptic's point in saying that he refuses assent and therefore refuses to form beliefs. He does not refuse assent altogether; for he assents to the passions that are necessitated by appearance (*P* i 13). But what does Sextus mean by this? The Stoics believe that assent matters because it is up to us; it is our own contribution, not simply an automatic result of the appearances, and it makes our actions voluntary in so far as they depend on our assent. Sextus, however, does not think of assent as being up to us; it is simply a reaction to appearances (i 19), not dependent on our will or on our other beliefs or reasoning. All we assent to, or more precisely 'concede' (*sunchôrein*, i 20), or 'yield' to (i 193), is that things appear a certain way to us.[25] We yield or concede only in a negative sense, so that if we have an appearance of being warmed we do not say that we believe we are not being warmed or that we are being cooled (i 13). The Sceptic argues that this sort of concession to appearances is sufficient for action. If we adhere to the appearances, we can live a life without belief, following nature, the passions, the customary laws and practices, and the various crafts (i 23–4).

When Sextus claims that he acts on appearances, but not on beliefs, does he draw a tenable distinction? We can see what he means if we recall that the Stoics take assent to be rational in so far as it responds to our conception of the evidence. It is directed to the truth,

[24] See Plu. *Col.* 1122a–d: 'Suspension of judgment about everything was not shaken even by those who worked hard and drew out their treatises and arguments against it. Finally these people brought out the 'inaction' argument like a Gorgon from the Stoa against it, and then stopped .... For action needs two things, the appearance of the suitable, and impulse towards what has appeared suitable, neither of which conflicts with suspension; for the argument for suspension removes us from belief, not from impulse or from appearance. And so whenever something suitable appears, we have no need of belief to be moved and carried off towards it; impulse comes at once, being a movement and carrying off of the soul ....' Cf. Cic. *Ac.* ii 37–9: '... since this is the greatest difference between an animal and something inanimate, that an animal does something—for an animal doing nothing cannot even be thought of—either we must deny sense to it or we must attribute the assent that is in our power to it .... Therefore, whoever removes either appearance or assent removes all action from life.'

[25] On Stoic views about yielding to appearances see §167.

in so far as we recognize that further evidence bearing on the truth of the appearance would be a ground for changing our assent. If we assent rashly (without having stopped to think) or we yield weakly (to a strongly suggestive appearance), we do not consider the evidence as we should, but we recognize that it is relevant. The Sceptics are right to claim that some appearances are non-doxastic in so far as they are not responsive to consideration of the evidence. Plausible examples are easiest to find among sensory appearances. The stick still looks bent in water even when I firmly believe it is straight. In a less purely sensory case, a snake may look dangerous even when I know it is harmless. If these are the appearances that the Sceptic yields to, Sextus is right to claim that they do not require belief in their truth.[26]

Our contrast between the Stoics and the Sceptics on assent might suggest that the Stoics think action is impossible without the sort of rational assent and reason-based belief that the Sceptic avoids. But this suggestion would not be quite correct. For the Stoic also believes that action is possible without assent. The Sceptic's account of appearance and action fits the Stoic account of the action of non-rational animals and pre-rational children.[27]

Then do the Stoics simply misunderstand the Sceptic when they object that he cannot act without assent and belief? Their objection may be clearer if we distinguish 'action' as goal-directed movement, such as non-rational agents are capable of, from 'action' understood as a peculiar feature of rational agents. Aristotle understands 'action' (*praxis*) in this narrower sense, and the Stoics agree with him.[28] When they say that the Sceptic will be inactive, they do not mean that he will be immobile, or that he will lack goal-directed behaviour. They mean that his goal-directed behaviour will not be rational action.

We might wonder whether this way of understanding the Stoics' point about inaction does not make it uninteresting. It simply seems to repeat the point that the Sceptic abandons rational belief; for rational action differs from other goal-directed behaviour in being based on rational belief. If the Sceptics are told they abandon rational action, they might agree, but answer that this is no objection to them; for rational action depends on the sort of belief that they have found to be groundless.

The Stoics' objection may have more force, however. If some part of the Sceptic's life turns out to depend on the rational beliefs that he says he gives up, his lack of belief excludes even the kind of life that he professes to lead. If, however, he revises his account of the life he leads to match his abandonment of belief, that life may seem less attractive than it seemed when he included elements that have turned out to presuppose rational belief. In that case, we may find that his appearance of tranquillity being the ultimate end results in

[26] This is a controversial claim about the Sceptic's lack of belief. See the papers in Burnyeat and Frede, *OS*; Fine, 'Dogmata'.

[27] See §§166–7. Plutarch attacks the Stoics for pretending in their controversy with the Academic Sceptics that action requires assent, while acknowledging elsewhere that we can act without assent. See, *SR* 1l057a: 'And indeed in the contests with the Academics most of the argument of Chrysippus himself and of Antipater is about what? It is about their claim that someone does not act or have impulse without assent and that those are talking fiction and empty assumptions who claim that when the right appearance has occurred we at once are impelled without having yielded or assented. But again Chrysippus says that both the god and the sage produce false appearances, wanting us not to assent or yield, but only to act and be impelled towards what appears, but we, being base, assent to such appearances because of weakness.'

[28] See *EN* 1139a18–20. Alexander, *Fat*. 34, 205.28, represents the Stoics as distinguishing *energein* from *prattein*, which is confined to rational animals (*ta men tôn zô(i)ôn energêsei monon, ta de praxei ta logika*; cf. 206.5, *tois praktikois te kai logikois zô(i)ois*). According to Seneca, *Ep*. 113.18, no rational animal acts except on the basis of assent.

an unattractive life. To see whether this criticism from the Stoic point of view is plausible, we need to look more closely at the sort of life the Sceptic professes to lead.

140. What kind of Life can we live without Beliefs?

The critics object that the Sceptic cannot really live without beliefs, because he must act on a belief when someone compels him to act in a dangerous situation. If the tyrant threatens him with death unless he gives false evidence against an innocent person, will he not act on his belief about which course of action seems better (*M* xi 164)?[29] This case is relevant to the Sceptic's account of his way of life, because it does not seem plausible to explain his action as simply a natural or involuntary response to his natural passions. Aristotle insists that some actions that people choose to do are so bad that no plea of compulsion could excuse us; we might concede that fear compelled someone to hand over his money to a thief, but we would not allow that fear compelled him to kill his mother (*EN* 1110a26–9). In such cases we believe the agent has a choice and that he is responsible for how he chooses.

If we treat Sextus' example as one of these cases, we can see why the dogmatists find his account unsatisfactory. Even if (the objector argues) we concede that the Sceptic can sometimes act on how things appear to him without belief, he cannot explain his action in these critical cases by mere appearance. Since we suppose he is responsible for an important choice that he makes, we also suppose that he acts on some conviction about which action is better. If Scepticism were correct about responding to natural needs, we might suppose that the Sceptic would simply be moved by his natural fear of death, rather than by the purely conventional badness of causing the death of an innocent person. Hence we might expect that the Sceptic would explain his choice by the unconvincing plea of compulsion. But the objector protests that (following Aristotle) we would never accept such a plea in these cases.

Sextus answers this objection (xi 166) by considering the suggestion that a Sceptic always chooses the 'easier' option, which in this case would be the betrayal of an innocent person. We might infer this from the immediate context, in which Sextus suggests that the Sceptic is bothered only by the pains that arise inevitably from nature, and not by any additional belief that he undergoes anything that is really bad (xi 155–9). The natural aversion to death makes the threat of immediate death painful to him, and we might doubt whether the alleged badness of betraying an innocent person could affect him as strongly.

To show that the Sceptic's attitude is more complex than this, Sextus reminds us that his outlook indicates to him a life in accordance with law and custom as well as his natural needs (*P* i 17). The Sceptics' fourfold way of life without belief (*adoxastôs*) includes not only (1) nature and (2) passion, but also (3) law and custom, and (4) the crafts (*P* i 23–4; cf. *M* ix 49). Sextus is right to expand the Sceptic's life in this way; for he mentions natural needs not because he thinks they are really more important than others simply by being natural, but only because he thinks they make a strong impression on us. Hence anything that creates a strong impression makes some difference to the Sceptic's way of life.

[29] On the historical basis of Sextus' example see Bett, *AE* 175–6.

Sextus is right to argue that laws, customs, and the practice of a craft can create strong impressions that move us to action. Once I have put my hand on a hot stove, I do not need to be taught not to do it again; the appearance of a hot stove near my hand results in a further appearance of painfulness that causes me to move it away. I need more teaching or habituation to train me not to steal, but if the teaching is successful it will create an aversion to stealing. When I grow up, become a Sceptic, and abandon my beliefs, I abandon my belief that it is wrong to steal; but if my training has succeeded, I retain the appearance of its being wrong and the resulting aversion to stealing. Similarly, if I have been well trained in a craft, I will not even think of using a saw or a drill in the wrong way. Even if I cease to believe there are right and wrong ways to use these tools, it will still appear right to use them one way and I will keep on using them in this way.

This is a plausible case for the Sceptic's claim that we can act on moral principles without believing them. We are familiar with people who feel so guilty about doing something that they have been taught is wrong that, even if they think there is nothing wrong with it, they (as we say) 'cannot bring themselves' to do it; and even if they do it, they still have some of the feelings of disapproval that they would have had if they had believed it was wrong. The Sceptic suggests that this strong appearance of right and wrong underlies his moral outlook and practices, without any belief about right and wrong.

How seriously should we take Sextus' claim that in living by appearances without belief, the Sceptic follows everyday life (*P* i 23)?[30] If we consider the account of upbringing and training that results in the Sceptic's adherence without belief to accepted norms, we might suppose that this would also be a plausible account of ordinary people's outlook. Most of us (one might argue) do not stop to think about whether we ought to use a knife to spread butter on our bread rather than wipe the bread across the butter, or whether to brake when we come to a red light, or whether to pay for the newspaper we have bought rather than run out of the shop. We do these things because we have been trained to do them; whether the training was difficult or easy, once we have been trained to do them we do not give them a second thought. In this respect, as Aristotle pointed out, habit is like nature (*EN* 1152a30–3). The dogmatist's suggestion that before we choose to pay for the newspaper we need rational assent to the proposition that it is good to pay for it seems extravagant; it sounds more like a description of a philosopher deciding whether to pay for his newspaper. Deliberation and assent seem unnecessary, and even dangerous. If we really stopped to think about whether to pay for the newspaper, some people might decide, correctly or incorrectly, that it is better to go out without paying. If we tried to conform to the dogmatist's description of us, the results would be unwelcome.

This defence of the Sceptic's conception of ordinary life goes beyond the claim that it is empirically possible for there to be some strange people who act without belief. It defends the Sceptics by saying that acting without belief is perfectly familiar to us, because we do it all the time. The strange people are not the ones who live without beliefs, but the ones whose thoughts and actions fit the dogmatists' description.

[30] Cf. ii 102, 246. Bett, *AE* 175, adds further references and discussions. He probably takes Sextus' claim less seriously than it deserves to be taken (in 'it is not clear to me that he loses anything significant by giving it up').

141. Scepticism, Belief, and Deliberation: Sextus, Hobbes, and Hume

Our defence of Sextus' claim that the Sceptic lives an ordinary life introduces us to an important adaptation of Scepticism for a non-sceptical purpose. If Sextus' description of a life without belief describes the life of ordinary people, we may wonder whether the Sceptic has not conceded too much to the dogmatist. Verbally, the Sceptic differs from ordinary people, because ordinary people say 'I think it's going to rain', and explain their action by saying 'I thought it would be wrong'. Sextus concedes that the dogmatists are right in taking these remarks to express belief and assent, as the dogmatists understand them. That is why he says the Sceptic lives without belief. But why should he not disagree with the dogmatists at an earlier stage, and deny that belief involves rational assent? Why not simply say that belief is nothing more than the Sceptic allows himself—a strong appearance resulting from the senses, passions, upbringing, or training?

This is approximately Hume's account of belief.[31] In his view, the difference between simply entertaining a proposition and believing it consists in the degree of vividness with which you entertain it; it is an introspectible property of the idea itself. Contrary to Stoic claims about assent, belief does not involve responsiveness to evidence or reasons. It is very similar, therefore, to the sort of appearance that the Sceptic yields to when he has given up belief. Hume follows Hobbes in using Sceptical attempts to replace dogmatic notions of belief, desire, and choice as the basis for an analysis of these mental states. Whereas Sextus rejects belief, Hobbes and Hume accept it, but they analyse it in terms that fit Sextus' substitute for it. Though their account of mental states connected with belief and action appears to be non-Sceptical, it really agrees with the Sceptics' main point.[32]

Once we grasp the similarity between Hume's account of belief and Sextus' account of appearance, we can estimate how far Hume disagrees with Sextus about the effects of Sceptical argument. According to Sextus, Sceptical argument causes us to give up our beliefs and to live without belief. According to Hume, however, sceptical argument refutes our beliefs by showing that they are false,[33] but it cannot permanently cause us to give them up. Since we cannot live without belief, we have to discard our sceptical doubts when we have to live, though we admit that sceptical argument has shown that our beliefs are unjustified.[34]

[31] 'We may here take this occasion to observe a very remarkable error, which being frequently inculcated in the schools, has become a kind of established maxim . . . This error consists in the vulgar division of the acts of the understanding, into conception, judgment, and reasoning . . . This act of the mind [sc. judgment] has never yet been explained by any philosopher; and therefore I am at liberty to propose my hypothesis concerning it; which is that it is only a strong and steady conception of any idea, and such as approaches in some measure to an immediate impression' (Hume, *T* i 3.7 §5n).

[32] For Hobbes's view see *L* 6.53.

[33] 'Accordingly we find that all the conclusions which the vulgar form on this head are directly contrary to those which are confirmed by philosophy. For philosophy informs us that every thing which appears to the mind is nothing but a perception and is interrupted, and dependent on the mind; whereas the vulgar confound perceptions and objects, and attribute a distinct continued existence to the very things they feel or see' (*T* i 4.2 §14).

[34] 'But a Pyrrhonian cannot expect, that his philosophy will have any constant influence on the mind: or if it had, that its influence would be beneficial to society. On the contrary, he must acknowledge, if he will acknowledge anything, that all human life must perish were his principles universally and steadily to prevail . . . . It is true; so fatal an event is very little to be dreaded. Nature is always too strong for principle' (*IHU* 12 §23). 'Most fortunately it happens, that since

These reactions to scepticism might lead us to suppose that Hume believes that scepticism leads to inaction. He accepts the dogmatists' view that, contrary to Sextus, we cannot live without belief. But the difference from Sextus is smaller than it seems. For the belief that Hume takes to be necessary for action is belief as he understands it, which is simply the Sceptic's vivid appearance. Hume supposes that in living by appearances we live as ordinary people live. He argues that the attempt to find a rational basis for moral beliefs is a philosophical undertaking whose failure makes no difference to the ordinary way we hold our beliefs. Just as our belief that the sun will rise tomorrow is undisturbed even when we see that it lacks rational justification, our moral sentiments are unaffected even when we see that they lack rational foundation.

Once we see this basic agreement in substance between Sextus and Hume on appearance, belief, and action, we may reasonably question an initially attractive and apparently significant contrast that some critics have drawn between ancient Scepticism and modern scepticism, in Humean and other varieties. Ancient Scepticism seems to have a practical aim, since it expects that we will live without belief, abandoning any moral beliefs (as well as other beliefs) that we might have previously formed. Modern scepticism, however, seems to be purely theoretical, and insulated from any practical effects on 'first-order' moral beliefs and practices.[35]

The formulation of this contrast is itself obscure, since the notion of the 'first-order' is often taken for granted without adequate explanation.[36] But even if we grant that we roughly understand the contrast, it does not seem completely appropriate. Sextus claims to live an everyday life because he lives by appearances; hence he does not behave differently from ordinary people. Hume claims not to disturb moral practice because he believes it involves living by appearances rather than rational convictions. If we believe Sextus undermines practice because ordinary people live by rational conviction, we must say the same about Humean scepticism. If, however, we accept Hume's reasons for saying he does not disturb moral practice, we must grant that Sextus does not disturb it either. The practical implications of each form of scepticism seem equally large or small. Hume argues that Sextus ought not to have agreed with the dogmatists about the nature of belief; hence he defends Sextus' claim that the Sceptic does not disturb ordinary life, and so he defends the substance of the Sceptical position without the appearance of paradox.

142. Do we Need Beliefs?

Now that we have tried to give a sympathetic defence and expansion of Sextus' claim that the Sceptic lives an everyday life, we may return to the question that was raised about

reason is incapable of dispelling these clouds, nature herself suffices to that purpose, and cures me of this philosophical melancholy and delirium . . .' (*T* i 4.7 §9).

[35] See Burnyeat, 'Can the sceptic?' (on living without belief); 'Time and place' 111–23 (attributing the origin of 'insulation' of theoretical questions from ordinary life to Kant); Annas, 'Values' 216–19; *LS* i 460. For a more plausible comparison between ancient and modern scepticism see Price, *RPQM* 53–6.

[36] Mackie, *E* 19, mentions 'the well-known and generally recognized difference between first and second order questions'. Both Burnyeat and Annas refer to him. But it is difficult to explain this distinction satisfactorily, and even more difficult to align it with the distinction between views that do, and views that do not, have practical effects.

the tyrant threatening us with death unless we do something wrong. Sextus answers that the Sceptic may well (*tuchon*) refuse to do the wrong action even if he pays with his life.[37] Nothing about the Sceptic's way of life excludes the possibility that his aversion from acting wrongly will be strong enough to move him to accept death in order to avoid the wrong action. If Aristotle is right about habituation, ordinary moral training and social pressure may result in its appearing 'unthinkable' to the Sceptic to act wrongly in such a case.

Sextus does not say that the Sceptic will make the morally right choice in this situation, but only that he may make it. He may equally choose to preserve his life at the price of acting wrongly, if his aversion to death is stronger than his aversion to wrong action. What he will choose depends especially on his own history and social environment. From Hume's point of view, this is simply a fact that has to be faced; we cannot form moral convictions that are immune to these sorts of influences, but we can try to make sure that they result from the sorts of influences that we approve of.

Does this show that Sextus' description of stronger and weaker appearances captures the moral outlook of everyday life? To see what he might be missing, we may refer to Kant's treatment of a rather similar example (*KpV* 30).[38] Kant contrasts a case where the cost of satisfying our lust is death with a case where the cost of doing what we believe to be right is death. In the first case our choice depends on which desire is stronger, but in the second it depends on what choice we think is better. In the second case (as Butler puts it), we act on the basis of authority, on the merits of different courses of action, and not simply on the basis of strength. Butler believes that 'nothing can be reduced to a greater absurdity' than the denial of any difference between strength and authority.[39]

Sextus accepts the view that Butler criticizes as absurd. What is absurd about it? To see Butler's point, we may ask what determines the strength of one or the other of the Sceptic's appearances. It is fairly easy to see the differences between the two situations that Kant describes. In one of them we simply recognize desires of different strength. In the other the strength of our desire depends on our view of the merits of the proposed course of action; reflexion on these merits changes the strength of our desire. If further reflexion convinced us that there is nothing wrong with what the tyrant is pressing us to do, we might decide to do it, even if we still found it repugnant. Our view about the merits of the action affects both how strongly we want to do it, and what it would take to change our mind about doing it. While there may be cases in which we cannot bring ourselves to do something even after we have convinced ourselves that nothing is wrong with it, most cases in which we refuse to do something wrong are not like this.

Ordinary life, therefore, contains rational resources for altering the strength of our appearances and impulses. If Sextus is right about how the Sceptic lives, he lacks these resources. Therefore the Sceptic does not live an ordinary life. The Stoics are entitled to object that the Sceptic rules out action, if action is understood as the type of goal-directed

[37] 'When he is being compelled by a tyrant to do something forbidden, it may happen that because of a preconception in accordance with ancestral laws and with customs he will choose the one and avoid the other; and he will certainly bear the discomfort more easily in comparison with the dogmatist, because he holds no belief in addition to this <discomfort>, as the dogmatist does' (*M* xi 166).

[38] See Kant, *KpV* 30. [39] See Butler, *S* ii 17.

movement that is characteristic of a rational agent. A life without these resources for determining the strength of our impulses and desires would not be a human life. The fact that the Sceptic lacks these resources is a reason for thinking that something has gone wrong for us if we find ourselves living a life without belief, and hence it is a reason for thinking that something must have gone wrong with the arguments that lead to suspension of judgment.

11

EPICURUS

143. Epicurus' Aims

Epicurus' theoretical and practical aims seem impressively unified. He defends the atomism of Democritus, and argues that Democritean hedonism fits this general view of the world. On the one hand, the empiricist epistemology that supports atomism also supports hedonism. On the other hand, the atomist view of the world, with its denial of life after death, secures peace of mind and freedom from anxiety, and so ought to be adopted on hedonist grounds.

Closer inspection, however, shows that some of Epicurus' leading aims are not derived from Democritus, and that some questions can be raised about whether they fit his defence of atomism. Democritus defends atomism by taking a sceptical attitude to the capacity of the senses to tell us about an external world. The Cyrenaics agree with this scepticism about the senses, but deny that rational argument independent of the senses can justify a non-sceptical conclusion; hence they remain sceptics. Epicurus believes that reliance on the senses justifies a non-sceptical conclusion about the external world and acceptance of the atomic theory; we do not need to abandon empiricism for rationalism in order to accept atomism.

Equally he believes that hedonism supports eudaemonism and the recognized virtues. He defends the hedonism of Democritus, and rejects the anti-hedonist arguments of two lines in the Socratic tradition—the Platonic-Aristotelian and the Cynic. In accepting hedonism he agrees with Aristippus. But he departs from the Cyrenaic solution in rejecting the aspects of Aristippean hedonism that lead to a way of life far different from the recognized moral virtues.[1] He denies the Cyrenaic view that a defence of hedonism conflicts with ordinary beliefs about the value of happiness and the rationality of the moral virtues.

His position is closer, therefore, to the hedonism of Socrates in the *Protagoras* than to Cyrenaic hedonism. Aristippus could be said to take Socratic hedonism seriously and to reject Socrates' defence of common morality. Both Plato and the Cynics agree with Aristippus, in so far as they think hedonism and the moral virtues are incompatible. Epicurus challenges this point on which his opponents all agree; here he may be a more authentic Socratic than

[1] On Epicurus and the Cyrenaics see U 450–3, Arr. 127–9 (referring to a work of Aristippus on Plato).

the others.[2] Both in epistemology and in ethics, therefore, he rejects the conclusions that the Cyrenaics draw from their initial reliance on the senses.

This defence of the senses and of hedonism suggests a possible line of criticism. Plutarch attacks Colotes the Epicurean for attacking Cyrenaic doctrines to which the Epicureans are also committed.[3] Though Epicurus thinks he can accept the veracity of the senses without having to fall into Cyrenaic sceptical extremes, he concedes the crucial points (according to Plutarch) to the Cyrenaics. Though Plutarch is not on the whole a fair or discerning critic, this particular criticism raises worthwhile questions about Epicurean epistemology, and about the basis of Epicurean moral theory.

Though Epicurus is primarily a hedonist, some of his ethical principles try to absorb plausible views that some people take to conflict with hedonism. Both the Cyrenaics and the Cynics reject the hedonism of the *Protagoras*, on grounds that emerge from the criticisms in the *Gorgias*. Whereas the Cyrenaics formulate a more extreme version of hedonism, the Cynics reject hedonism in favour of an adaptive conception of happiness. Epicurus attacks the Cynics as 'enemies of Greece'.[4] In contrast to Stoic sympathy towards Cynicism, he insists that the sage will not act like a Cynic (DL x 119). None the less his ethical position agrees on some central points with the Cynics against the Cyrenaics. He agrees with their view that happiness depends on adapting one's desires to circumstances rather than in the accumulation of the most intense sensations of pleasure. Epicurean sages, no less than Cynic sages, are independent of external conditions and can find their happiness in conditions that are in their power.

Epicurus was not the only one to try to combine Cynic self-sufficiency with hedonism. Though Antisthenes rejected pleasure altogether, one might deny that Cynicism requires such hostility to pleasure. It would not be unreasonable to interpret the Cynic as enjoying a way of life that leaves him content with what he has and free of disturbance and anxiety about external goods. This combination of Cynicism and hedonism appealed to later Cynics, and may have influenced their interpretation of Democritus. Epicurus' partial sympathy with Cynicism, therefore, is not as surprising as it might seem if we considered only the opposition between the Cyrenaics and Cynics.[5]

Epicurus' sympathy with Cynic freedom and self-sufficiency helps to explain the urgency of his concern with freedom and determinism. This concern is connected to, though not the same as, the Cynic attitude. Epicurus puts forward his ethical views to show that it is in our power to do something about the direction of our lives. We do not have to live with all the anxieties that (in his view) result from our basic anxiety about death, but it is up to us to change our direction and our attitude by accepting the Epicurean outlook. For this reason it is important to show that our actions are really in our power, and that arguments for the version of determinism that excludes freedom ('hard' determinism)[6] are unsound.

[2] The only explicit reference to Socrates in Epicurus is Arr. 10.2 (p. 164). Other evidence: Plu. *Col.* 1086e = U 237; 1118cd = U 314; Cic. *Br.* 292 = U 231. On Epicurean attitudes to Socrates cf. Cic. *ND* i 93; Obbink, *PP* i 379–80.

[3] 'The arguments that Colotes finds welcome and agreeable in the writings of Epicurus he neither understands nor recognizes when he finds them put forward by other people' (*Col.* 1121a).

[4] DL x 8. The reference to the Cynics, however, depends on an emendation.

[5] On Cynicism and pleasure see §36. On the Cynic interpretation of Democritus see Stewart, 'Cynics', esp. 185. He traces the absorption of hedonism into Cynicism to Bion of Borysthenes, on whom see Kindstrand, *BB* 58–70 (who argues that the early Cynics are not opponents of pleasure).

[6] See §147 below.

This outline of Epicurus' aims suggests a question. The Cyrenaics raise some serious difficulties for the hedonist eudaemonism that both Democritus and Socrates (in the *Protagoras*) accept. Epicurus' revival of hedonist eudaemonism has been historically influential; later hedonists have defended something closer to his version of hedonism than to the Cyrenaic version. But does he give good reasons for a hedonist to reject the Cyrenaic doubts about eudaemonism?[7]

144. Hedonism

Epicurus defends his hedonism in two ways: (1) He thinks his empiricist epistemology guarantees that pleasure is the end.[8] (2) But he also claims to prove his point by dialectical argument from ordinary beliefs.[9] First, Epicurus appeals to the evidence of the senses, to show that the pursuit of pleasure as the end is natural and inevitable. Then he recognizes that not everyone is a hedonist, and he offers to explain how the errors of non-hedonists might arise, 'so that you may see clearly the origin of this mistake of people who reject pleasure and praise pain' (Cic. *F* i 32). Rather than relying simply on the senses, Epicurus claims that a 'preconception' about pleasure underlies our beliefs about the good.[10]

Our view on the plausibility of Epicurus' hedonist position depends on what we think of these two lines of argument. Even if they are both reasonable, it is a further question whether they are arguments for the same conclusion.

The epistemological argument for hedonism expresses Epicurus' view that our sensations of pleasure are the analogue to sensory perceptions, which he takes to be invariably true (DL x 146–7). While Epicurus agrees with Aristotle in pursuing ethical inquiry, and other sorts of inquiry, from 'appearances', he has a different view of what the relevant appearances are. Those that Aristotle appeals to include common beliefs and reflective judgments, not simply the immediate impressions of the senses. But Epicurus believes, for anti-sceptical epistemological reasons (DL x 146), that immediate impressions are the only appropriate source of evidence.

Hence he agrees with Aristippus' view that sensations (or 'affections', *pathê*) are immediate and irrefutable. But he thinks he can maintain this while avoiding Cyrenaic scepticism about the existence of external objects. According to the Cyrenaics, the senses give us conflicting appearances about, for instance, the shape of a stick, since they make it look bent when we see it under water and straight when we see it out of water. We might suppose that we have to reject one of these appearances as false; if the stick is straight, the appearance of its being bent seems to be false. Epicurus disagrees. He argues that the stick sometimes emits atoms that make a bent shape (when it is in water) and sometimes emits atoms that make a straight shape. We need not reject the appearance of the bent stick, if we avoid the rash

[7] Long, 'Legacy' 633 , comments on Cyrenaic and Epicurean hedonism: '. . . Epicurus' version won out, as it deserved to do. By the middle of the third century BC Cyrenaic philosophy was obsolete.'

[8] On the sensory basis of Epicurus' claims about pleasure see Gosling and Taylor, *GP* 347–8.

[9] The difference between the two lines of argument appears in Cic. *F* i 30–42.

[10] Cic. *F* i 31 'quasi naturalem atque insitam . . . notionem' refers to a preconception (*prolêpsis*). Cf. DL x 33; LS i 88–9. On Stoic appeals to preconceptions see §165.

prediction that the stick will usually appear bent. Both the bent and the straight appearances are correct; but we need to distinguish the relatively permanent features of external objects from those that they take on in particular situations (Sx. *M* vii 208–9).[11]

Just as we follow the senses as guides to reality, so also we should follow our sensory affections as guides to the good.[12] Animals and children show us the natural tendency of our affections, before they are overlaid by misguided conventional beliefs about good and evil.[13] If we attend to our affections, we recognize pleasure as the primary good, since it is the basis of all our natural conceptions of goodness, and as the ultimate good, since we aim at it in all our actions.[14]

In beliefs about the external world Epicurus argues that we do not reject our appearance of the bent stick, but we rely on our appearance of the straight stick in our predictions about how the stick will appear in the future; we do not reject the senses, but avoid rash inferences from sensory appearances. Similarly, we do not reject our sensory appearance that every pleasure is good, but neither do we rashly infer that every pleasure is to be chosen. Nor do we choose on the basis of something other than pleasure. We choose those actions that reliably offer pleasure over time, just as we rely on the sensory appearances that reliably inform us about the appearance of the stick over time. Our selective attitude towards pleasures does not conflict with hedonism; on the contrary, it follows from our initial appearance that pleasure is the good.[15] If we look for what is reliably pleasant over time, we see that we need the 'measuring science' of the *Protagoras*.[16]

145. Epicurean Eudaemonism v. Cyrenaic Hedonism

In these claims about pleasure and the good Epicurus both accepts the Cyrenaic starting point in sensory affections and argues that, without going beyond these affections, we can justify a selective attitude to pains and pleasures. This selective attitude aims at achieving greater pleasure than pain over time; it puts forward happiness over one's life, rather than immediate pleasure, as the ultimate good. Does Epicurus give a good reason for disagreeing with the Cyrenaics on this point?

It is helpful to consider his parallel argument about the senses and external objects, which claims to overcome Cyrenaic scepticism about objects. According to Epicurus, we can justify complete confidence in the senses if we accept the atomic theory and its account

[11] On Epicurus' views on the criterion, and on pleasure as a criterion see Gosling and Taylor, *GP* 397–407.

[12] For Stoic criticism of this conception of desire and pleasure see §166.

[13] 'He employs as proof of pleasure's being the end the fact that animals as soon as they are born delight in pleasure but repel (or 'collide with') trouble, naturally and apart from reason. Hence we avoid pain purely affectively (*autopathôs*)' (DL x 137). On appeals to pre-rational experience by Epicureans and others see Brunschwig, 'Cradle'.

[14] 'Hence we call pleasure the origin and goal (*archên kai telos*) of living blessedly. For we know this as our first and congenital good; from this all our choice and aversion has its origin, and we refer to this, discriminating every good by using affection as the standard' (DL x 128–9).

[15] 'And since this [sc. pleasure] is the first and connatural good, because of this we also do not choose every pleasure, but sometimes we pass over many pleasures, whenever the discomfort that follows from them is more; and we take many pains to be greater than pleasures, whenever greater pleasure follows for us after we have withstood the pains for a long time' (DL x 129).

[16] 'But by commensuration and by looking at things advantageous and disadvantageous it is appropriate to discriminate all these things' (DL x 130). Cf. Eusebius, *PE* xiv 21 (769a); Seneca, *De otio* 7.3 (both at U 442).

of perception; for the theory tells us that the stick produces a bent atomic configuration when it is in water and a straight one when it is out of water. Since it is usually out of water, we think it is straight, because it usually produces a straight atomic configuration. This atomic explanation helps us to see why our appearance of the stick as bent is true, as far as it goes.

This explanation does not answer Cyrenaic scepticism. For the Cyrenaics argue that, on the basis of sensory affection alone, we cannot justifiably believe in external objects. Epicurus does not show how his atomic theory could be accepted on the evidential basis that the Cyrenaics accept. To believe in objects composed of atoms emitting atomic configurations from their surfaces, we cannot appeal simply to the evidence of our sensory affections.

Epicurus' hedonist eudaemonism vindicates our sensory appearance of every pleasure being good. This appearance is correct, since every pleasure in its own right is good. Contrary to Plato and Aristotle, no pleasure is bad in its own right by being taken in an inappropriate object.[17] In deciding to forgo some pleasures, we do not rely on some end other than pleasure; we consider only what will produce most pleasure on the whole.

This eudaemonism does not answer the Cyrenaic appeal to sensory affections. For Epicurus does not explain why the fact that our affections endorse pleasure justifies us in treating maximum long-term pleasure as the end. The eudaemonist outlook does not seem to rest on affections.

Epicurus exposes this difficulty by appealing, as the Cyrenaics do, to the affections of non-rational animals and of children. These are appropriate witnesses because they give us access to our affections before reasoning and conventional beliefs are superimposed on them. We may grant, for present purposes, that these creatures pursue pleasure as good.[18] But they do not agree with Epicurus in postponing pleasure and accepting pain for the sake of greater long-term pleasure. The capacity to look ahead and to measure pleasures against pains seems to result from some degree of maturity and rationality that non-rational animals and children do not display.

Should Epicurus abandon the appeal to animals and children and the claim that he rests his account of the ultimate good on an appeal to sensory affections? Perhaps the appeal to the senses is a survival of Cyrenaic doctrine that he ought to have abandoned together with the Cyrenaic conception of the end. Would he not be better off if he frankly claimed to rely on reason rather than simply on primitive sensory affections? He might claim that the belief that pleasure is happiness is a basic preconception in our ethical outlook. No doubt it is based on experiences of pleasure as good, but it explains and supports these experiences in the light of a rational eudaemonist principle that goes beyond sensory affections.

This further departure from the Cyrenaics would have several benefits for Epicurus, but it would also have a severe cost. Since he relies on sensory affections to show that pleasure is the only good, he accepts Cyrenaic epistemological assumptions. But if we once agree that rational reflexion on our affections in the light of our life as a whole is needed to support hedonist eudaemonism, why not argue that the same rational reflexion reveals further goods besides pleasure? If Epicurus goes beyond the Cyrenaic epistemological basis, he leaves himself open to this Platonic and Aristotelian argument. Cicero has a good reason,

[17] Cf. Plato, *Phil.* 12c6–13b5; Aristotle, *EN* 1173b20–31.

[18] For Stoic views on animals and children see §166.

therefore, to conclude that the Cyrenaics draw out the consequences of hedonism more consistently than Epicurus does.[19]

But even if we reject Epicurus' attempt to defend hedonist eudaemonism by appeal to sensory affections, we may still believe his position is defensible on a different epistemological basis. He might argue for hedonism as an account of happiness by appeal to ordinary convictions—Aristotelian common beliefs—about good and evil. Platonic and Aristotelian arguments convince the Cyrenaics that common ethical beliefs rule out hedonism; that is why they look for an epistemological basis independent of common beliefs. Epicurus might try to show that the Cyrenaics concede a point too easily to Plato and Aristotle, and that enlightened hedonist principles explain common beliefs. This is Mill's, as opposed to Bentham's, defence of hedonism.[20]

This approach to Epicurus deserves discussion. It certainly captures some of his arguments about pleasure and good. Moreover, even if it does not wholly capture Epicurus' position, it may be a plausible defence of some of his ethical views, freed from the epistemological basis on which he rests them.

146. Why Freedom Matters

Epicurus' emphasis on happiness, in opposition to the Cyrenaic emphasis on immediate pleasure, expresses a broader aim of his ethical theory. It is intended to give us a prescription for intervening in our lives and modifying them by deliberate action so that we do not drift along with conventional views about goods, and so deprive ourselves of happiness. Epicurus agrees with the Cynics in claiming that it is up to us to live as we choose and that we can affect our lives by deliberate decision and action.

As far as we know, the Cynics do not concern themselves with the metaphysical implications of these claims, since they do not concern themselves with the non-ethical aspects of philosophy. But Aristotle points out some of the implications of our assumptions about agency and freedom; they presuppose that, as he puts it, it is up to us whether we have vicious or virtuous characters. In *EN* iii 5 Aristotle defends this claim.[21] But his defence may seem unsatisfactory. He may be taken to argue that we are responsible for our state of character because we are responsible for the actions that form it. But our actions depend on our appearance of the good; and does that not depend on our character? If we say that it does not depend on our character, but on how we were before we had formed a state of character, we seem to go back to our childhood, when we seem to be less, rather than more, in control of our lives than when we are adults.

If, then, we can trace our actions and characters back to our childhood, we can surely trace them back further to the external influences of heredity and environment, and so to

[19] 'He [sc. Epicurus] supports most strongly what nature itself, as he says, lays down and approves, namely pleasure and pain. To these he refers everything we pursue and everything we avoid. But though Aristippus and the Cyrenaics defend this better and more openly (liberius), still I judge them to be such that nothing appears more unworthy of a human being' (Cic. *F* i 23). 'For who is worthy of the name of human being who would want to spend one whole day in this sort of pleasure? The Cyrenaics, indeed, do not shrink from this; your friends [sc. the Epicureans] act more respectably, but perhaps the Cyrenaics act more consistently' (Cic. *F* ii 114).

[20] See Mill, *U*, ch. 2. [21] See §91.

causes external to ourselves and our choices. If these external influences determine all our later states and actions, how can our actions be in our control?

This helps to explain why Epicurus believes that determinism excludes freedom and responsibility for our character and action; he says it would be better to believe in the gods of popular mythology than to believe in the 'fate' accepted by philosophers (DL × 134), since determinism leaves us without hope of free action to shape our lives. In speaking of the philosophers who hold a doctrine of fate Epicurus probably has Stoic determinism in mind. But his opponents are not confined to the Stoics. The early atomists accept a determinist version of atomism, holding that everything happens by necessity.[22] Just as Epicurus tries to answer Democritus' sceptical attitude to the senses without rejecting atomism, he tries to show that atomism does not require determinism.

147. Why we should Reject Compatibilism

These objections to the doctrine of fate assume that determinism is necessarily hard determinism, because the incompatibilist is right to claim that determinism excludes responsibility. Aristotle does not discuss incompatibilism. Nor does Epicurus explain why he believes it. But we can gather his reasons from his emphasis on necessity and on the past. Aristotle believes that an action is up to us in so far as the origin (or 'principle', *archê*) is in us, or we ourselves are the origin. But if determinism is true, how can the origin be in us?

To show that determinism excludes an origin in us, Epicurus assumes that the origin of my action is the earliest event whose occurrence is sufficient for my action. If we express this kind of sufficiency as a Philonic truth-functional conditional, so that if the origin happens, my action happens, the relation of sufficiency is transitive; if an earlier event is sufficient for a later event, it is also sufficient for all the events for which the later event is sufficient.[23] Now if determinism is true, we can trace a series of sufficient conditions back in time from my action to the event sufficient for it, to the event sufficient for that event, and so on, until we reach the distant past. In one of the Stoics' examples, the action of felling the oak on Mount Pelion is sufficient, in a deterministic universe, for Medea's killing of her children.[24] But if a sufficient condition for my action occurs in the distant past, that is also where we must find the origin of my action. Hence the origin of my action is outside me, and Aristotle is wrong to claim that the origin of my action is in me.

The same reasoning from determinism helps to explain why Aristotle is wrong, in a deterministic universe, to claim that what I do is up to me and in my power. Epicurus assumes that if an action is up to me to do, it is possible for me to do it and not to do it. But if external causes are sufficient for my action, they necessitate the action. Hence it is necessary, given the past external causes, that I do what I do, and hence it is not possible for me not to do it. Since it is not up to me, I am not responsible for it.

[22] 'Leucippus says that everything happens by necessity, and that necessity is the same as fate. For he says in *On Mind*: 'Nothing happens at random, but everything happens for a reason and by necessity'. (Stob. i 72.11–14 = DK 67 B 2).

[23] On conditionals see, e.g., Sx. *M* viii 112–17; Mates, *SL* 42–51.

[24] See §169.

148. Why we should Reject Determinism

Epicurus believes that this argument refutes the 'soft determinist' position of the Stoics (the combination of determinism and compatibilism). But it does not refute hard determinism (determinism plus incompatiblism, implying the denial of freedom). He is convinced, however, that we should abandon determinism, in order to maintain freedom.

He rejects determinism not only because it conflicts with his ethical views, but also because he believes that it is self-undermining even apart from ethics. He considers an opponent who says we do nothing by our own agency, because the causes of our actions are in the distant past. Epicurus now applies this thesis to our beliefs. If we ourselves are not the causes of our beliefs, but the causes are in the distant past, we do not hold our beliefs for any reasons; for to hold beliefs for reasons is to be caused to hold them by these reasons. Nor can we ever even have good reasons for believing anything; for good reasons are considerations that could cause us to believe, but there are no such things if the causes of our actions are in the distant past. If, then, someone's belief that all our actions have causes in the distant past is true, he does not hold it for a good reason and there is no good reason to hold it.[25]

If the causal claim about reasons is true, this argument shows that if we denied that our mental states and our recognition of reasons really cause our actions, our denial would undermine its own credibility (though not necessarily its truth). Moreover, Epicurus is right to suppose that our beliefs about responsibility rely on the belief that we ourselves, through our recognition of reasons guiding our choices, cause our actions. If we denied that, we would imply not only that we are never responsible, but also that we never believe things for a reason. Epicurus may be right to suggest that Democritus had denied, on the basis of determinism, that we cause our actions and beliefs, and had thereby undermined his argument.[26]

Epicurus supposes that all determinists deny, whether they recognize it or not, that we cause our own actions, because they claim that actions have sufficient conditions in the distant past. Hence he believes that his argument about self-undermining applies to determinism.

The doctrine of causation that he relies on is open to question. His assumption that the origin of an action is its earliest sufficient condition supports both his argument for incompatibilism and his argument to show that determinism undermines itself. But a compatibilist has no reason to accept this assumption. Aristotle does not accept it; his

[25] 'We rebuke, oppose, and reform one another on the assumption that we have the cause in ourselves also, not merely in our initial constitution and in the random necessity of things that surround and enter us. For suppose that someone were to claim that rebuking and being rebuked themselves have the very same random necessity of whatever happens to be present to oneself at a time. . . . still, he would be leaving intact this very behaviour that, in our own case, produces the preconception of the cause. . . . And even if he goes on to infinity saying that this action of his is in turn necessitated, always appealing to arguments, he does not draw the further conclusion [??] that he still leaves in himself the cause of having argued correctly, and in his opponent the cause of having argued incorrectly. . . .' (*On nature* = Arr. 34.27 − 30 = LS 20 C.2–12) This argument is preserved in a fragmentary condition, and the text depends on conjecture (it is especially uncertain at ?? above).

[26] 'The first men to give a satisfactory account of causes were not only much greater than their predecessors, but also many times greater than their successors. And yet—even though in many things they had relieved us from great evils—they overlooked themselves <in looking for causes>, so as to make necessity and the random the causes of everything. Indeed, the account expounding this view collapsed, when the great man [sc. Democritus] overlooked the conflict between his actions and his belief' (*On Nature* = Arr. 34.30 = LS 20 C.13–14)

claim that each of his 'four causes' is an origin would be false if he accepted it.[27] Nor do the Stoics accept it; they argue against it by presenting a fuller account of causes and their mutual relations.[28] If we reject Epicurus' assumption, we should reject both his argument for incompatibilism and his argument to show that determinism undermines itself.

149. Epicurus' Indeterminism

Since Epicurus has argued against compatibilism and determinism, and accepts freedom and responsibility, he endorses indeterminism.[29] He secures the falsity of determinism by arguing that our atoms swerve indeterministically, and that therefore our choice and action are undetermined. Since the swerve breaks the deterministic sequence, the origin of my action is in me and nowhere else. The process of thought and deliberation leading to choice is indeterministic; previous events, including my previous choices, are not sufficient conditions for my choices.[30]

We might well wonder whether Epicurus' cure is worse than the disease. The introduction of uncaused changes seems to imply that my character and my previous choices have no regular and reliable casual connexions to my current deliberation and choice. But we seem to appeal to such connexions in any plausible claims about responsibility and the appropriateness of praise or blame.[31]

This is a reasonable objection to Epicurus' solution, but it does not answer the main point of his argument. Even if the atomic swerve is not the best way to secure indeterminism, we have to accept some version of indeterminism if we both believe in freedom and agree with his arguments against compatibilism and determinism.[32] Alexander defends an indeterminist account of Aristotle without appeal to any swerve; he accepts Epicurean arguments against determinism, believing that Aristotle's arguments against the compatibility of universal necessity and responsibility also demonstrate the incompatibility of determinism with

[27] See *Physics* ii 3. [28] See §169.

[29] This combination of indeterminism and belief in freedom is often called 'libertarianism'—misleadingly, since compatibilists may also believe in liberty.

[30] The atomic swerve is not mentioned in the extant works of Epicurus. The clearest evidence comes from Lucretius and Cicero: '... what is the source of this free will for living things all over the earth? What is the source, I ask, of this will wrested from fate, this will through which we move forward wherever our pleasure leads each one of us, and, similarly, through which we swerve in our motions, neither at a fixed time nor at a fixed place, but just where our mind has carried us? For certainly a person's own will gives him a start for this movement, ... But that the mind itself has no internal necessity in all it does, and is not forced, like a passive victim, to bear and undergo—this results from the tiny swerve of the elements, at no fixed place and at no fixed time' (Lucr. ii 256–93) 'Epicurus thinks that the necessity of fate is avoided by the swerve of an atom ... He is forced to concede, by the facts themselves if not by his words, that this swerve happens without a cause. ... Epicurus introduced this line of reasoning because he was afraid that if an atom always moved by natural and necessary weight, nothing would be free for us, since the mind would be moved in such a way that it would be compelled by the motion of atoms' (Cic. *Fat.* 22–3). The sources do not make it clear how often in a person's lifetime a swerve is supposed to happen, or exactly when it happens in the sequence of events that results in a voluntary action. See LS i 110–12; Furley, *TSGA* 232–6.

[31] See Hume, *IHU* 8 §§26–8.

[32] 'Carneades spoke more acutely, in teaching that the Epicureans could defend their view without this imaginary swerve. For since Epicurus taught that there could be some voluntary movement of the mind, it would have been better to defend that than to introduce the swerve, especially given that they cannot find a cause for it' (Cic. *Fat.* 23).

responsibility. This is the point of contention between the Stoic defence of compatibilism and Alexander's indeterminist defence of Aristotle.[33]

150. Indeterminism and Epicurus' Ethical Theory

If Epicurus' version of indeterminism is reasonable, he has removed an objection to his conviction that our choices and actions are up to us, and that we can change our character and outlook by deliberate action. But the truth of indeterminism does not vindicate his conviction. If indeterminism is true, it does not follow that we are free; freedom requires not only the absence of determination, but also the right kind of relation to our actions. What is the source of Epicurus' conviction that we are free?

He might argue that the senses guarantee our freedom, so that it has the same support as our conviction that pleasure is the good. Perhaps Lucretius appeals to our experience of not being compelled when we make up our minds and act.[34] But this is a frail support for a doctrine of freedom; since a determinist has no difficulty in accounting for this experience, it could be present in a world that, according to Epicurus, allows no freedom.

Epicurus would be on stronger ground if he treated our conviction about freedom as a preconception that does not simply report sensory experience.[35] It is a presupposition of our ethical outlook, both on ourselves and on others, for reasons that Aristotle points out in his discussion of the voluntary. But if Epicurus rests his conviction about freedom on our ethical outlook, his argument seems to be dialectical, appealing to basic common beliefs and trying to vindicate them. If this is his method of argument about freedom, why should it not be his method of argument about the good? In his claims about freedom, as in his claims about pleasure and happiness, he seems to argue from a more Aristotelian basis than he acknowledges.

151. Types of Pleasure

This general point about Epicurus' method prepares us for his dispute with the Cyrenaics about the type of pleasure that is the ultimate good. Aristippus understands pleasure as a psychic change and movement. Epicurus recognizes this 'kinetic' pleasure, but he also recognizes 'static' (or 'katastematic') as well as 'kinetic' pleasures; he includes tranquillity and freedom from pain under static pleasures (DL x 136). If I have a kinetic pleasure at a particular time, something must have changed from my previous condition, but I can have a static pleasure for a long period without any changes or distinguishable episodes of pleasure.[36]

Epicurus distinguishes these two types of pleasure in order to assert the value of static pleasures. He does not deny that kinetic pleasures are goods, but he believes that other hedonists exaggerate their goodness, and ignore or underestimate the goodness of static pleasures.

[33] On Alexander see §172. [34] See Lucr. ii 251–83. [35] See the reference to a preconception in n10 above.

[36] On the appropriate rendering of '*katastêmatikê*' see Gosling and Taylor, *GP* 373–4; Cooper, 'Pleasure' 512 (who argue that katastematic pleasures are pleasures of the organism in its proper condition (*katastêma*)). For discussion of the difference between kinetic and katastematic pleasures see Gosling and Taylor, *GP*, ch. 19; LS i 123–4.

Since we have natural and necessary appetites (*epithumiai*) (DL × 127), and failure to satisfy them with kinetic pleasure causes pain and disturbance, the pleasure that removes this pain is a good. A prudent person recognizes that these necessary desires can be satisfied without great effort and anxiety, because we can train ourselves to form modest demands (DL × 130, 145).

We also have natural desires that are unnecessary—e.g., for variation in food and drink beyond what we need to remove hunger and thirst.[37] Epicurus recognizes that some of this variation in pleasure is desirable in a life that fulfils necessary appetites (× 144). If we go beyond moderate variation, and put great effort into satisfying unnecessary but natural desires, we follow 'empty belief' (× 149). Desires that are neither natural nor necessary are entirely the product of empty belief; we believe we need something that corresponds not at all to our natural needs, but is simply the product of conventional and mistaken views about goods. These desires include the desire for honour and reputation.[38]

Epicurus believes it is useful to distinguish these types of desires and the corresponding pleasures, in order to show that a hedonist need not pursue Calliclean pleasures, which result in ever-expanding appetites and demand ever-expanding resources (Lucr. vi 9–34). With appropriate training we can make our natural and necessary desires moderate and easy to satisfy.[39] Since we need not suffer pain from restraint of non-necessary natural desires, we will keep them to a moderate level. Since we recognize that we can achieve freedom from pain and an appropriate level of kinetic pleasure without non-necessary non-natural desires, we will suppress these desires altogether.

Is this a good reply to Callicles? In response to Socrates' adaptive conception of happiness, Callicles says it is the condition of a corpse or a rock (Plato, *Gorg*. 492e3–6). The Cyrenaics complain in similar terms of Epicurus' conception of happiness.[40] Epicurus believes that this reaction is a mistake, but how can he show that is a mistake, or explain why we make it?

152. Fear of Death as the Source of Excessive Desires

Epicurus suggests that if we accept a more demanding conception of happiness than the one he defends, we are victims of anxiety about death and our post-mortem existence. In his view, the most impious belief we can hold about the gods is the belief that they punish the wicked and reward the good (DL × 123–4). This belief makes us fear death, and the fear of death disturbs us so that we are unreasonably attached to demanding desires and pleasures. We have to learn 'the limits of life' in order to see that it is easy to achieve happiness (× 146). Unless we know that we do not exist after death, we cannot enjoy pleasures unmixed with pain,[41] since they will always be mixed with anxiety about death.

[37] 'Epicurus has assigned a common limit to pleasures, namely the removal of everything painful. In his view, nature has increased the pleasant to the point where it removes the painful, but nature allows pleasure no further increase in size; pleasure simply admits of some non-necessary variations once it reaches a point of no distress' (Plu. *NP* 1088c). Cf. DL × 149 + scholion.

[38] Cf. Cic. *F* i 45.

[39] 'The one who well knows the limits of life knows that what removes the pain resulting from need (*endeia*) and makes the whole of life complete is easily provided, so that he does not need in addition things acquired in competition' (× 146). Cf. 130–1.

[40] Clement, *Strom*. ii 21, 130.7–8. See §36. On Callicles cf. §25.

[41] × 143 *akeraious*. Bailey ad loc. appositely cites Lucr. iii 39–40.

We might wonder why the fear of death should make any difference. Even if we fear it, can we not agree with Epicurus' defence of an adaptive conception of happiness, and train ourselves to have moderate desires that are easily satisfied without bringing severe pains to follow? This advice seems to be unaffected by fear or fearlessness towards death.

Perhaps Epicurus means that if we took his advice about adaptation, but still feared death, we would achieve only partial tranquillity. For even if our non-necessary appetites did not bother us, the fear of death would still bother us. To distract ourselves from the fear of death, we occupy ourselves with non-necessary appetites and aims.

Lucretius develops this argument at greater length. He mentions three cases where we can see that the fear of death is the basic motive of our actions: (1) Some people say that they do not believe in life after death, and that they fear illness and disgrace more than death. But even if they are exiled in disgrace for terrible crimes, they stay alive, and even sacrifice to the gods (Lucr. iii 41–58). (2) We fear a bad reputation and a life of poverty because they seem to threaten us with death (iii 65–7); fear of death causes us to go to all lengths to avoid these alleged evils, so that we compete for honours and power, and shrink from no crimes to achieve our ends (59–86). (3) We try to distract ourselves from a weight that lies on our minds by frantic activity, as though that would relieve our minds (1053–75).

The third of these cases is especially relevant because, as Lucretius remarks, the pursuits that result from our fear of death are not directly related to life and death. Lucretius' claim is intelligible in the first and second cases, where the actions he considers might be understood as ways of protecting ourselves against premature death (in the second case) or against whatever awaits us after death (in the first case). But in the third case Lucretius suggests that because we do not know the cause of the weight on our minds (pondus inesse animo, 1054), we try to relieve it with ineffective remedies. We try to escape ourselves and we hate ourselves,[42] because we do not know what is the matter with us. Even though we form and act on unnecessary appetites, they do not remove the weight on our minds, because they cannot remove our underlying fear of death (DL × 142).

Though Lucretius' suggestions about our hidden motives and lack of self-understanding are intriguing, they do not seem wholly convincing. Even if we did not fear death in itself, we might still fear having our lives made worse; if we fear that, we may take the defensive measures that Epicurus regards as unnecessary. Conversely, even if we cannot wholly remove the fear of death, it is not clear why it should obsess us to the degree that Lucretius assumes. Why should we not be able to control this fear, just as we control other fears? Epicurus believes that if we have moderate desires, we can face fortune without excessive fear; why should we not also face death in this spirit?

153. Does Epicurus Show that Death is Not an Evil?

But if, despite these doubts, we agree with Epicurus' claims about the far-reaching effects of the fear of death, we may reasonably ask how he proposes to remove it. He believes that we fear death because we fear the possibility of pain after death. We cannot suffer pain,

[42] 'hoc se quisque modo fugit . . . ingratis haeret et odit', 1068–9.

however, if we do not exist. Hence Epicurus suggests that the remedy for fear of death is the conviction that we do not exist after death.[43]

We might argue that this belief will not always remove the irrational fear of death. Lucretius admits that we are sometimes moved by fear of death to hate our present condition, and that this hatred sometimes causes us to kill ourselves, even though we bring on ourselves the condition that we originally feared (Lucr. iii 79–82). But he believes that if we attend constantly to the proofs of the Epicurean position, we can accustom ourselves to dismissing our fear of death, so that we eventually get rid of it.

Epicurus' cure for our fear of death succeeds only if he is right about what we fear in death. In his view, we fear death because of the evils that may follow it, so that if we do not exist after death, we have nothing to fear about death. But why should we agree that this is the only thing we fear about death? Why should we not believe that it is bad for us (in some cases at least) to have our life ended, and so fear the cessation of our life? Lucretius answers that we do not think it is bad for us that we did not exist in the past before we were born, and that therefore we ought not to think it is bad for us that we will not exist in the future after our death (Lucr. iii 972–7). Something can be bad for us only at a time when we exist to suffer the badness (iii 861–3).

These Epicurean arguments do not seem cogent if we are not already hedonists. The past and the future will seem different to us if we care about our plans and intentions; for since these are directed to the future and are frustrated if our future life is cut short, our future non-existence seems worse than our past non-existence. Similarly, if we care about fulfilling our plans and intentions, and not only about the pleasant experience that results from fulfilling them, we will believe we are harmed by whatever prevents their fulfilment, whether or not we will be conscious of the prevention.

If Epicurus relieves us from the fear of death only if we accept his hedonism, what does that show about his ethical theory? On the one hand, we might say that this counts in favour of his ethical theory, if it relieves us from the fear of death; we ought, therefore, to become hedonists. On the other hand, we might regard this as an objection to his theory, if it implies that death is not bad; for surely (we might reply) death is manifestly bad, and a theory that denies this has gone wrong somewhere. This objection suggests that Epicurean hedonism cannot be defended on dialectical grounds; it seems not to capture some fairly clear common beliefs about good and evil, in the special case of death.

Perhaps Epicurus' argument would seem more plausible if we agreed with him about the pervasive and crippling character of the fear of death, and we agreed that the only way to get rid of this fear is to believe that death is not an evil. But he seems to exaggerate the disease in order to promote his cure. It is not obvious that the fear of death has all the effects he ascribes to it. Nor is it clear that we can get rid of the pervasive fear only by coming to believe that death is not an evil. Could we not regard it as evil, and therefore fear it to some degree, but keep our fear in proper proportion, so that it does not ruin our lives?

This alternative to Epicurean denial of the badness of death might seem rather complacent if our beliefs about life after death conflicted sharply with our moral convictions about how to live our present life. If we had good reason to believe that unjust, cruel, and selfish people

[43] On Epicurus' arguments on death see Furley, 'Nothing to us?'; Mitsis, 'Duration'.

will be rewarded in the afterlife and that virtuous people will be punished, we would face a conflict between morality and self-interest. Mill claims that in the face of such a conflict, he would choose morality and face eternal punishment for it.[44] But Epicurus does not believe that we face this conflict if we believe in an afterlife. Though Lucretius argues that religion can encourage us to act badly (Lucr. i 80–101), he does not claim that if we believed in life after death, we would have reason to prefer vice to virtue in general. On the contrary, he suggests that, if we thought about it, we would see that the gods could not really command the evil actions that people do in the name of religion (such actions as Agamemnon's sacrifice of Iphigeneia). Reflexion of this sort will tend to reduce any appearance of conflict between our moral views and our beliefs about what the gods reward and punish.

154. Kinetic Pleasure v. Freedom from Pain

Let us now put aside Epicurus' particular concern about the fear of death, and return to his argument against Calliclean pleasures. Even if the fear of death does not move us to distract ourselves with kinetic pleasures, we might none the less suppose that the Cyrenaics are right to reject the sacrifice of kinetic pleasure that results from Epicurus' moderate attitude. How can he show that they are wrong on hedonistic grounds?

To understand his answer, we have to see why he takes static pleasure to be preferable to kinetic pleasure. He argues that if we satisfy our natural and necessary appetites, and limit our natural and unnecessary ones, we will achieve tranquillity, which is our ultimate end.[45] The true principle that pleasure is the ultimate end does not imply that Calliclean pleasure is the ultimate end; it implies that tranquillity is the end.[46]

Why should we agree that tranquillity is our ultimate end? Epicurus seems to argue that we pursue kinetic pleasure as a result of the appetite and pain that we remove by the pleasure, and in order to remove that appetite and pain. If, then, we could be free of the appetite and pain, and were conscious of this freedom, we would already have reached the state that we try to reach through our pursuit of kinetic pleasure. Moreover, we are better off if we are free of appetite and pain in the first place than if we remove them through kinetic pleasure; for in the first case we never suffer the pain that we suffer in the second case; we have the positive state of freedom from pain without having to go through pain and appetite to reach it.

In this argument Epicurus introduces an adaptive conception of happiness that he shares with Socrates (in the *Gorgias*). Unlike some Cynics, he does not advocate deliberate austerity;

[44] See Mill, *ESWHP*, ch. 7 = *CW* ix 103.

[45] 'For the unwavering study of these things [sc. the types of appetites] knows how to refer all choice and avoidance to the health of the soul and to the tranquillity of the soul, since this is the end of living blessedly. For this is what we do everything for the sake of—so that we will suffer neither pain nor disturbance. And once we reach this, all the soul's buffeting is over, since the animal has nowhere to go, as though it still lacked anything, and nothing further that it seeks to fill up the good of the soul and the body. For the time we have need of pleasure is when we are in pain through the absence of pleasure; but when we are no longer in pain we no longer lack [or 'need', *deometha*] pleasure' (DL x 128).

[46] 'Whenever we say, therefore, that pleasure is the end, we do not mean the pleasures of the prodigal or the pleasures of gratification, as some suppose through ignorance and because they disagree with us or misunderstand us, but <we mean> the absence of pain in the body and of disturbance in the soul' (DL x 131).

he does not suggest that we ought to reject the pleasures that result from greater material resources. On the contrary, he argues that if we fit our desires to the circumstances, we can enjoy greater resources and still avoid disappointment if we find ourselves with smaller resources.[47] In all circumstances we have desires that are adapted so as to ensure their satisfaction.

How are we to explain this use of an adaptive claim about happiness? How, in particular, is it related to Epicurus' hedonism? According to one view, the adaptive conception is subordinate to hedonism; Epicurus recommends the adaptive strategy because it is the best way to secure maximum pleasure. In that case the measuring science that compares quantities of pleasure tells us that we secure more pleasure through the adaptive strategy and the static pleasures that we gain from it. The quantity of kinetic pleasures we gain is comparatively small, since we avoid getting attached to any pleasures that are expensive in external resources; but (on this view) the quantity of static pleasure is great enough to make our life pleasanter than it would be if we pursued kinetic pleasures more vigorously.

An alternative view makes hedonism subordinate to an adaptive conception. Pleasure is worth pursuing because we have natural appetites that are satisfied by pleasures that remove our pains. The goodness of the pleasure, however, consists not in the fact that it is pleasure, but in the fact that it satisfies our desires. The satisfaction of desire is the ultimate good, and the adaptive strategy secures that. It also secures a moderate quantity of pleasure, but that reflects the fact that our desires aim at pleasure, not an essential element of the good.

The first view, making adaptation and satisfaction subordinate to hedonism, is closer to Epicurus' doctrine. He introduces his claims about self-sufficiency in order to show why pleasure is the ultimate good, on the assumption that the Epicurean's self-sufficient life can be defended on hedonist grounds. But this view runs into some difficulties that make it reasonable to consider the second view.

How can Epicurus show that static pleasures, combined with moderate kinetic pleasures, yield greater pleasure than we would gain from greater attention to kinetic pleasures? A defender of Callicles might reply that though 'expensive' kinetic pleasures involve more pain, anxiety, and possible frustration, they are worth it. Epicurus might claim that this defence overlooks the fact that the pleasure of eating, say, is valuable only because it removes the pain of hunger. If we are simply trying to get rid of the pain, we would be better off if we had no pain to begin with. But the Calliclean might reject this view, arguing that the pleasant sensation is valuable in its own right, apart from the fact that it replaces the pain of hunger. That is why we have good reason to pursue greater pleasures even at the cost of more pains. Eating salted nuts to get more pleasure from drinking beer is the pattern of rational choice, according to this Calliclean view.

Cicero's discussion of Epicurus on these questions is rather unsympathetic and sometimes obtuse, but it points to a reasonable objection. Cicero suggests that Epicurus believes that

[47] 'And we count self-sufficiency (*autarkeia*) a great good, not so that, whatever happens, we may use only a few things, but so that if we do not have many, we may use few, being genuinely persuaded that those who need luxury least have the pleasantest gratification from it, and that whatever is natural is easily provided and only whatever is empty is hard to provide' (DL x 130; cf. parallels in U 490).

the absence of pain is a kind of pleasure, in the strong sense that the state of being free of pain is, in its own right, a state of pleasure (Cic. *F* ii 13–20). Probably Cicero is wrong about this. Epicurus does not mean that the state of tranquillity and freedom from pain is, as such, a state of feeling pleasure. In speaking of static pleasure he refers to the pleasure we take in being free of pain and anxiety. He is right to claim that this state is a distinct sort of pleasure beside kinetic pleasure. But if we reject Cicero's criticism, and we recognize that this is the sort of pleasure Epicurus has in mind, it is still not clear why we should prefer it, on hedonist grounds, to kinetic pleasure.

Might we say that some people are simply more like Callicles and others are more like Epicurus, and that the decision depends on whether we enjoy thrills more than we are averse to risk? Epicurus does not seem to discuss the Callicleans fairly. He attacks them on the ground that their expensive pleasures cannot free us from the fear of death (DL × 142). But if we grant that, and we take care to convince ourselves that we have no life after death, why should we not pursue Calliclean pleasures without anxiety about life after death? Perhaps Epicurus believes that he need not bother about this case, because people indulge in such pleasures only to distract themselves from the fear of death (as Lucretius suggests). But it is not clear why this should be the only reason for pursuing Calliclean pleasures. It would not be reasonable for him to tell the Callicleans that they will shorten their lives; for he has argued that we have no reason to regard death as bad, and hence no reason to wish our lives could be prolonged.

Epicurus describes the life of tranquillity in more detail to show that it does not require us to abandon kinetic pleasure altogether and does not leave us in the condition of a corpse. He insists that he can form no conception of the good without the kinetic pleasures of the senses (DL × 6; Cic. *TD* iii 41–2; U 67–8). He assumes, then, that the demands of nature in normal conditions will be enough to ensure that we have more than minimal natural appetites and that we will have the resources to satisfy them. In this condition we will not increase our pleasure, since we have already achieved tranquillity, but we will maintain it by varying our kinetic pleasures (DL × 144; Plu. *NP* 1088c).

To show that this life increases our quantity of pleasure, Epicurus appeals to his eudaemonism. We have to count not only the pleasures and pains that arise from our immediate bodily condition, but also those that arise from memory and anticipation.[48] On this point he differs from the Cyrenaics, who regard the belief that I suffered in the past and will suffer in the future as the product of empty belief.[49] Since Epicurus counts the pleasures and pains that result from the clear sense of my continuity in the past and the future, he argues that the tranquil life increases their quantity. If I remember myself having fairly uninterrupted past pleasures, and, because of my tranquil and undemanding attitude, can look forward to similar pleasures, I increase my present pleasure. Since I aim at pleasure in my life as a whole, my moderate accumulation of pleasure at different times makes a large total that I can increase by pleasures of memory and anticipation.

Epicurus' reflexions on his final illness rely on this tendency of pleasures to multiply through memory. In his letter to Idomeneus, he calls the last day of his life a 'blessed' day, because, despite the severity of his present pain, his recollection of past conversations with

[48] '. . . only the present buffets the flesh, but past, present, and future buffet the soul' (DL × 137). [49] See §33.

Idomeneus produces pleasure to outweigh the pain.[50] The pleasures of the mind recollecting or anticipating are capable of altering the hedonic balance produced by ordinary bodily pleasures (Cic. *F* i 55). According to his opponents, he compiled lists of past kinetic pleasures to keep in his memory.[51]

On this point the Epicureans are better off than the Cyrenaics. If any pleasures of memory and anticipation depend on my thinking of myself as the subject of the past and future pleasures, the Cyrenaics do not attach any value to them, since they depend on an empty belief in my identity through time.[52] Since they are doubtful about the continuing self, they will forgo the pleasures that depend on a firm conviction such as Epicurus' conviction that he is the same person who had the pleasant conversations with Idomeneus.

But the pleasures that the Epicureans gain from their conviction about the continuing self come with a cost. For Epicureans seem to be worse off than the Cyrenaics are in suffering pains of memory and anticipation (Cic. *F* i 57). The Cyrenaics believe that the anticipation of future evils makes them less severe when they actually come, whereas Epicurus believes that anticipation makes them worse (Cic. *TD* iii 29–33). This is why Epicureans need moderate desires that create no anxiety about their future satisfaction. Cyrenaics, however, believe that if they are unconcerned about their (supposed) future states, they can enjoy their more extravagant present pleasures without unwelcome anxiety.

This comparison of the Epicurean and Cyrenaic outlook makes it difficult to see how a Cyrenaic or a Calliclean is mistaken in calculation of quantity of pleasure. Perhaps some people simply prefer the ups and downs of Calliclean pleasures to the more even tenor of the Epicurean life. If Epicurus had to concede that the choice between his outlook and the Calliclean outlook depends on different people's basic preferences, he would still be free to prescribe Epicurean discipline for himself and like-minded people. But he would be wrong to suppose that the Calliclean outlook must rest on a mistake. If the choice between ways of life depends on one's basic preferences, the good turns out to be satisfaction of one's ultimate preferences, whatever they might be.

155. Is Epicurus a Hedonist?

If these are reasonable objections to a hedonist defence of Epicurus' preference for static pleasure and a moderate degree of kinetic pleasure, it is worth considering the non-hedonist alternative. Epicurus sometimes seems to support this alternative; for he claims that the ultimate end is bodily health and psychic tranquillity, and that we do everything for the sake of these (DL x 128). When we are free of pain, we no longer need pleasure.[53] By this Epicurus might mean either (i) that when we are free of pain, this is itself a source of pleasure and we need no more pleasure in addition, or (ii) that when we are free of pain, pleasure no

[50] The pains of his present state could not be exceeded (*huperbolên ouk apoleiponta tou en heautois megethous*). But the enjoyment in his soul of past discussions with friends outweighed (lit., 'was set up against', *antiparetatteto*) these, so as to make this a blessed (*makarian*) day (DL x 22 = LS 24D).

[51] Plu. *NP* 1089a-c = U 431, 436; Cic. *F* ii 106. [52] See §33.

[53] 'For the time when we need (*chreian echomen*) pleasure is whenever we suffer pain from pleasure not being present; but whenever we do not suffer pain, we no longer need (*deometha*) pleasure' (x 128). Cf. Seneca, *Ep.* 66.45 = U 434.

longer matters to us. The second claim suggests that tranquillity rather than pleasure is the ultimate end.

This is a perplexing point in Epicurus' argument, because immediately after he has said that when we are free of pain we no longer enjoy pleasure, he affirms that this is why (*dia touto*, × 128–9) we say that pleasure is the origin and goal. This connexion of thought supports a hedonist interpretation of his remark about freedom from pain, but leaves us puzzled about why he has just said that tranquillity, rather than pleasure, is the ultimate end. It is reasonable, even if incorrect, of Cicero to suggest that Epicurus fails to distinguish absence of pain from pleasure. We may want to distinguish tranquillity from the pleasure taken in tranquillity, but it is not clear that Epicurus always distinguishes them.

The juxtaposition of Epicurus' claims about tranquillity with his claims about pleasure raises a further question about the epistemological basis of these claims. Since he appeals to our pre-rational experience of pleasure to show that pleasure is the end, and since he takes concern for pleasure to underlie concern for tranquillity, he implies that pre-rational experience of pleasure supports the pursuit of tranquillity. Cicero justly criticizes this claim (*F* ii 31–2). Just as eudaemonism goes beyond any hedonist doctrine that could be supported by appeal to sensory affection, the preference for static pleasure and for tranquillity seems to go beyond Epicurus' professed epistemological basis.

But if we consider adaptation and tranquillity as accounts of the ultimate end, independent of any hedonist basis, how plausible does Epicurus make them seem? The Calliclean and Cyrenaic criticism that he has described the condition of a corpse is inaccurate, since Epicurean happiness requires consciousness; but it suggests a criticism that a non-hedonist might offer. Epicurus' conception does not discriminate among the satisfied desires of different people. Those whose desires are minimal, or childish, or cruel, are all equally happy as long as their desires are equally satisfied. We might adapt one of Aristotle's objections to hedonism, and say that we would not reasonably want to return to the condition of a child on condition that our childish desires would all be fulfilled (*EN* 1174a1–4).

Epicurus, therefore, does not seem to hold a stable position between Cyrenaic hedonism and non-hedonist eudaemonism. His hedonist defence of tranquillity as the highest good does not show how tranquillity offers a larger quantity of pleasure. If he defends tranquillity on non-hedonist grounds, by appeal to an adaptive conception of happiness, he leaves room for the consideration of further non-hedonic values. If we go beyond hedonism to adaptation, why not go further and accept the Platonic and Aristotelian identification of happiness with a non-hedonic good?

156. Hedonism and Good Pleasures

Epicurus has an answer to this question if he defends his version of hedonism or his adaptive conception of happiness by dialectical argument in comparison with common beliefs. Plato and Aristotle believe that (i) if virtue is non-instrumentally valuable, hedonism is false; and since they affirm that (ii) virtue is non-instrumentally good, they conclude that (iii) hedonism is false. Epicurus agrees with their first claim, but rejects their conclusion; hence he rejects

their second claim, and denies that virtues are non-instrumentally good.[54] Hence he denies that the fine is a good distinct from the pleasant.[55] He suggests that what is fine is what receives praise, that the praise is a source of pleasure and that this resulting pleasure is what makes fine things good.[56]

Epicurus attacks those, including Aristotle, who claim that the virtues and the fine are goods in themselves independently of whether or not they are sources of pleasure (cf. *EN* 1174a3–7). Aristotle's claim about the virtues is counterfactual; he agrees with Epicurus in believing that virtue and virtuous action are sources of pleasure, but he also believes they are good apart from their hedonic value. He therefore disagrees with Epicurus about how virtue and virtuous action are 'sources' of pleasure. Since, in Aristotle's view, they are non-instrumental goods in their own right apart from the pleasure they produce, they are 'sources' of pleasure by being objects of their special pleasure in their own right. To find this special pleasure in the virtues, we have to believe they are good apart from their pleasure. Since Epicurus does not believe they are good apart from their pleasure, he cannot regard them as objects of pleasure in their own right; they are sources of pleasure in a purely causal sense, by producing results that are pleasant in themselves or instrumental to such results.

Epicurus seeks to explain the Aristotelian belief about virtue as an 'empty' belief, based on a mistaken inference from a true premiss. Common sense and the Peripatetics are right to believe that the pleasures of profligate and self-indulgent people are not the good, and that other things besides these pleasures are valuable. From this true premiss we may mistakenly infer that we must recognize non-hedonic non-instrumental value, and that we must attribute such value to the virtues. Epicurus agrees with common sense in rejecting the Cyrenaic and Calliclean conceptions of pleasure and the good, but he gives a hedonist defence of his agreement. In his view the static pleasures of contentment are more important than the kinetic pleasures that simply provide variation.

Epicurus' view of the end shows (in his view) that ordinary virtuous actions and virtues are effective strategies for gaining Epicurean pleasures. To estimate the balance of pleasure and pains that produces contentment, we need wisdom; and this wisdom prescribes the other virtues (DL × 132; Cic. *F* i 46–54). Epicurus accepts a hedonist argument to reconcile the hedonism of Plato's *Protagoras* with the critique of Calliclean hedonism in the *Gorgias*.[57]

Hence he agrees with Socrates' criticism of Callicles, but he believes that it affects only Cyrenaic hedonism. Similarly, he agrees with the criticism of Calliclean pleasures in the *Philebus*, provided it is also restricted to Cyrenaic hedonism.

He therefore develops Aristotle's defence of pleasure. In Aristotle's view, people think pleasure is bad because of the inferior kinds of pleasures that they are used to (*EN*

[54] '... and this is the nature of the good, if you apply your mind to it correctly, and then stand firm, and do not walk around idly (*kenôs peripatê(i)*) chattering about the good' (Plu. *NP* 1091b = U 423). It is a plausible guess that (as the Loeb edition suggests) *peripatê(i)* refers to the Peripatetics. '... they <the Epicureans> shout that the good is found in the belly, that would not buy the virtues all in a lump at the price of a penny with a hole in it, if all pleasure was entirely expelled from them' (Plu. *Col.* 1108c = U 512). See further Cic. *TD* iii 41–3; Seneca, *Ep.* 85.18 = U 508; LS 21 O, P.

[55] 'I spit on the fine and on those who idly (*kenôs*) admire it, whenever it produces no pleasure' (Athen. *Deipn.* 547a = U 512).

[56] Cic. *F* ii 48–50; *Acad.* ii 140; Epict. ii 22.21.

[57] This reconciling strategy is defended, e.g., by Gosling and Taylor, *GP* 70–5. See §24.

1153b33–1154a1). But since not all pleasures have the effects of Calliclean pleasures, the best life, as Aristotle affirms, is the pleasantest life (1153b9–14).[58] This defence of pleasure supports Epicurus' view that opponents of hedonism have attacked it unfairly with arguments that apply only to Calliclean hedonism. Once we identify the sort of pleasure that constitutes the end, we see that Epicurean hedonism can freely accept Socrates' criticisms of Callicles, and can agree with Socrates' choice of pleasures on strictly hedonistic grounds (referring to the static pleasure of contentment and tranquillity).

The same argument explains how hedonism can accommodate the conception of the good that Socrates in the *Gorgias* puts forward as an alternative to hedonism—the adaptive conception of happiness. In saying that the happy person is self-sufficient and lacks nothing, Epicurus recalls Socrates' suggestion to Callicles (492e). Whereas Socrates seemed to reject hedonism by appeal to an adaptive conception of happiness, Epicurus suggests that Epicurean hedonism—emphasizing the static above the kinetic pleasures—fits an adaptive conception.

To say that hedonism 'fits' an adaptive conception is not to say which claim about happiness is prior to which. In Epicurus' official view hedonism should come first; we should be able to see that nature and immediate sensations support Epicurean over Cyrenaic hedonism. Once we find that, the fit between Epicurean hedonism and the adaptive conception of happiness should be part of Epicurus' dialectical argument showing how his view of happiness explains some common beliefs, but not a necessary part of his argument to show that pleasure is the good. In fact it is hard to accept Epicurus' official view; we seem to have no reason to prefer Epicurean over Cyrenaic views of what natural impulses show us (indeed, as we suggested, the Cyrenaics seem to have a strong case here) unless we independently accept some claim about self-sufficiency as a plausible constraint on any account of the good. But if Epicurus uses that sort of argument, he relies more on dialectical argument than he officially claims to; and if he relies on this common belief about self-sufficiency, he is open to dialectical challenge that might question his interpretation of this common belief or adduce other common beliefs. His attempt to justify the virtues by appeal to Epicurean hedonism raises quite difficult questions about the form of his ethical argument.

We have already seen why it is difficult to defend Epicurus' discriminations among pleasures on hedonist grounds. Aristotle believes that we need some independent non-hedonist conception of goodness to identify the good pleasures, and that therefore his defence of good pleasures is not a defence of hedonism. Epicurus' case against Aristotle depends on the success of his argument to show that Calliclean hedonists are wrong about the quantity of pleasure they can expect; but that argument is open to question.

157. A Defence of Virtue?

If we agree with Epicurus in accepting the form of hedonism that fits into an adaptive conception of happiness, does he make a case for the recognized cardinal virtues? If pleasure

[58] Epicurus may have noticed that much of the discussion of pleasure in *EN* vii could be used in defence of Epicurean hedonism. See §88; Rist, *Ep.* 101. *EN* x is much less suitable for this purpose, either because Aristotle has changed his mind or because he is showing his hand more clearly.

is a good, it is reasonable to expect that a hedonist case for the virtues will succeed to some degree; for, as Plato and Aristotle believe, part of the point of the virtues is to protect and to secure other goods. It is plausible, therefore, to claim, as Epicurus does, that temperate people secure pleasures and reduce their anxiety by their temperate actions. It is more difficult to believe, however, that brave actions reflect the most sensible strategy for maximizing one's own pleasure. Even if some of them can be defended as means to securing longer-term pleasure, this explanation does not seem to cover brave action as a whole.

Epicurus would also be right to claim that we value the virtues partly for their instrumental benefit in securing pleasures, and that we would think less of them if they did not secure benefits that we already value apart from our concern with virtue (Cic. *F* i 42). But it is more difficult to see how this is the whole of the value that we attach to the virtues. Virtuous people do fine actions just because they are fine; they attach value to this sort of action without reference to its further instrumental benefits. We might follow Aristotle in accepting this conviction, without saying that virtue is the only non-instrumental good.

Epicurus does not even try to accommodate this feature of common beliefs about virtue. He tries to explain away this belief as the product of a reasonable desire for stable commitment to virtuous action, together with the empty belief that we cannot secure such a commitment if we attach only instrumental value to virtue and virtuous action. Epicurean hedonism seeks to show how we can secure a stable commitment without recognizing any non-hedonic non-instrumental value. But it simply ignores the aspects of common belief that reject a purely instrumental status for virtue. Cicero quite reasonably endorses the Stoics' criticism of Epicurus on this point.[59]

Is it reasonable for Epicurus simply to dismiss all aspects of common sense that attach non-instrumental value to virtue? The answer depends partly on his method. If he argues dialectically, as Aristotle does, his failure to capture this element of common sense raises a reasonable doubt about his account of virtue. If, however, he relies on sensory affections to give a non-dialectical basis for hedonism, he has a reason to discount non-hedonist aspects of common sense. Dialectical argument, on this view, tends to confirm conclusions reached by appeal to Epicurean epistemology, and to remove objections that might be derived from common sense, but he does not need it to prove his basic principles. Hence he gives a reason for accepting the hedonist aspects of common sense and using them in dialectical argument, while discarding non-hedonist errors.

This defence of Epicurus, however, reminds us of the weakness of his argument from sensory affections to his version of hedonism. If we stick to his ostensible epistemological

[59] 'You will be ashamed of the picture that Cleanthes used to draw so aptly in his lectures. He would instruct his audience to imagine a painting representing pleasure decked as a queen . . . The virtues would attend her, as servants who would do nothing, and recognize no duty, except to serve pleasure. They would simply warn her in a whisper . . . to avoid any thoughtless action that might offend public opinion, or anything that might lead to pain. . . . But Epicurus, you will tell me, . . . says that anyone who does not live finely cannot live pleasantly. As if I cared what Epicurus says or denies! I ask this: What is it consistent for someone who places the highest good in pleasure to say? . . . Epicurus himself says that the life of gratification is not to be criticized, if these people are not complete fools—that is to say, if they have neither longings nor fears. . . . And so, once you Epicureans direct everything by reference to pleasure, you cannot uphold or retain virtue. For a man must not be thought good and just if he refrains from doing injustice for fear of anything bad <for himself>. . . . As long as he <avoids injustice because he> is afraid, he is not just, and assuredly, as soon as he ceases to be afraid, he will not be just . . . In this way you Epicureans undoubtedly teach the pretence of justice instead of true and stable justice' (Cic. *F* ii 69–71). Cf. §180.

starting point, it is difficult to see why we should prefer Epicurean over Cyrenaic hedonism. We have dialectical reasons for preferring Epicurean hedonism; but we seem to have equally strong dialectical reasons for preferring a non-hedonist account of goodness to a hedonist account. If, then, Epicurus needs to go beyond his epistemological basis in order to defend his version of hedonism, he seems to leave himself open to dialectical arguments against his position on the virtues. His total position will seem plausible to us only if we waver inconsistently between the epistemology that supports Cyrenaic hedonism and the dialectical method that answers the Cyrenaics through arguments that cast doubt on Epicurean hedonism as well.

158. Justice and its Consequences: Epicurus v. Plato

The difficulties in the Epicurean account of the virtues are conspicuous in the virtues to which Plato and Aristotle, respectively, devote most attention—justice and friendship. These create a special difficulty for Epicurus, since both Plato and Aristotle attach some importance to the motives and aims of the person who has each of these virtues. Plato contrasts the genuinely just person with the person who has a mere 'façade' of justice; the genuinely just person values justice for its own sake, even when the consequences are dangerous. Aristotle attributes the same attitude to the just person, and to the virtuous person generally, since such a person does the virtuous action for its own sake and because it is fine. The best type of friendship, in Aristotle's view, involves concern for the friend for the friend's own sake, not purely for the sake of pleasure or advantage. These other-directed virtues therefore present a special challenge to Epicurus.

In his view, Plato's attitude to justice reflects an 'empty belief' that can safely be rejected on Epicurean grounds. Epicurus endorses the account of justice that Glaucon and Adeimantus propose. Justice is simply the result of an agreement to avoid mutual aggression, 'to prevent people harming each other or being harmed by each other' (DL x 150).[60] Lucretius suggests that these agreements developed gradually when people wanted the assurance of non-aggression (Lucr. v 1019–20). Such agreements are reasonable for Epicurean hedonists, since they want to remove the anxiety and disturbance that might result if they cannot be assured of non-aggression. Since they value security more than they value the extra kinetic pleasures that they might gain by aggression, they will prefer a stable agreement over an unstable situation in which they have more opportunities for aggression. On this point Epicurus is better off than Hobbes, who does not accept the Epicurean aim of self-sufficiency and adaptation.[61]

An Epicurean who joins such an agreement has good reasons to observe rules of justice when observance is necessary for the stability of society; for Epicurean prudence looks ahead to the longer term, and it cares less for short-term opportunities for kinetic pleasure than for longer-term assurance of tranquillity. Hence Lucretius suggests that most people willingly stick to their agreements about non-aggression (v 1024–5), and some Epicureans claim that

[60] Cf. Cic. *F* i 50–3, 59–61; LS 22.

[61] For one source of failure to adapt ourselves to circumstances see, e.g., Hobbes, *L*18.20.

if everyone were always aware of the utility of different actions, no one would need to be compelled by laws and sanctions.[62]

This defence of justice, however, does not seem to answer free riders. Some unjust actions that are open to me would apparently benefit me without any threat to the stability of the whole system that depends on general observance of rules of justice; why should I not choose these actions, on Epicurus' principles? He answers that if I consider my good from an Epicurean point of view, I will see that these unjust actions do not really benefit me. If I attach the appropriate weight to tranquillity, I will be relatively indifferent to the increased kinetic pleasure I might gain by injustice, and I will try to avoid the loss of tranquillity that I will suffer from the fear of punishment (DL × 151).[63] Epicurean hedonism suggests that the fears and anxieties suffered by the unjust person make injustice unappealing from the hedonic point of view. To be moved by this argument we must accept Epicurus' view that the pains and pleasures of anticipation are more important than they will seem if we take a Cyrenaic attitude to them.

The Epicurean attitude to kinetic pleasure and tranquillity helps to answer an objection to this defence of justice. We might argue that Epicurus is too pessimistic. Often we can be reasonably confident of escaping punishment for unjust action; why should we not prefer it in such cases? Epicurus might reasonably answer that, since tranquillity is much more important than a gain in kinetic pleasure, any increase of anxiety resulting from fear of punishment is so much worse than the loss of a prospect of kinetic pleasure that we are justified in insuring ourselves even against an improbable catastrophic loss. People who commit injustice to secure power or wealth for themselves are doubly mistaken; they suffer anxiety about being caught, and if they succeed their wealth and power causes them further anxiety (Lucr. v 1113–35).

These arguments against injustice do not wholly remove the case for selective unjust action. Epicureans do not reduce their desires to the absolute minimum that makes more than minimal kinetic pleasure uninteresting to them. As Epicurus says, self-sufficiency and adaptation do not require us to make do with little if we can have more without danger. If a reasonable estimate of probabilities makes it very improbable that we will suffer for our unjust action, an Epicurean who is not subject to unreasonable fears has a reason to act unjustly on some occasions.

Epicurus' view provokes the question that Plato raises with Gyges' ring. Plato removes the fear of punishment, and maintains that this is the situation in which we should ask whether someone is genuinely just. Epicurus agrees with the ancient critics who believe Plato applies an inappropriate standard in looking for the just person.[64] Plato's demand appeals to an absurdly unrealistic case; he would not be interested in such a case unless he held the empty belief that justice is worth choosing for its own sake apart from its consequences. Since this is an empty belief, it is not surprising that when we remove the reasons for being just that are derived from its consequences, we have no reason left.

[62] Porphyry, *Abst.* i 8.4 = LS 22M (4).

[63] Epicurus might argue that, even if discovery of our injustice is not very probable, the cost is so severe that we ought to be especially averse to this risk. This may be one aspect of Hobbes's reply to the 'fool' at *L*15.5.

[64] Cic. *Off.* iii 39, quoted at §50.

The Epicurean reply to Plato brings us back to the question we raised earlier about Epicurus' treatment of the belief that virtue is to be valued for itself. Justice is the hardest virtue for him to deal with, since it seems easiest in this case to see that someone who does not value virtue for itself will not act as we expect a virtuous person to act. If Epicurus admits that he would commit injustice if he had Gyges' ring, he admits that he would commit injustice in any case where he had reasonable assurance that he could avoid punishment for advantageous unjust action. If there are more of these cases than Epicurus allows, the Epicurean violates the standards that common sense imposes on a just person, even if common sense does not explicitly require a just person to choose justice for its own sake. Since Epicurus' assessment of the comparative benefits of just and unjust action may reasonably appear to exaggerate the disadvantages of unjust action for an Epicurean, he does not show that the Epicurean acts as a just person acts.

If this is a fair objection, Cicero has some reason to assert that those who exclude virtue from the final good cannot give an acceptable account of the virtues, and cannot themselves consistently acquire or practise the virtues (Cic. *Off.* i 5).[65] The charge that those who would choose injustice if they had Gyges' ring really have only a 'façade' of justice (Plato, *R.* 365c4) is a reasonable objection to Epicurus.

159. The Value of Friendship: Epicurus and Aristotle

Epicurus is more conciliatory towards common beliefs on friendship than on justice. According to Aristotle, the best kind of friend seeks the good of the other for the other's own sake, and in this way differs from friends for pleasure or advantage. We might expect Epicurus to reject the best type of Aristotelian friendship as the product of empty belief that something other than one's own pleasure is non-instrumentally good. This is his view of Plato's belief in the non-instrumental goodness of justice. A parallel view of friendship might try to show that the behaviour that Aristotle takes to be peculiar to the best kind of friendship can be found in friendships for advantage and pleasure, as long as we have an Epicurean conception of advantage and pleasure. But Epicurus' view does not seem to be quite so simple.

The difference between friendship and justice is intelligible if we consider the different character of actions in the two virtues. Plato argues that most people do not believe that just actions are worth choosing for their own sakes. Epicurus believes that this view is correct; justice is desirable only because of the instrumental benefits of the system that just behaviour supports. Something similar might be true of Aristotle's friendships for advantage, which might be treated as forms of alliance.[66] But in the case of friendships for pleasure we seem to enjoy the company of our friends apart from any further advantage. Epicurus reasonably wants to capture this difference within his theory.

He gives a high place to friendship, placing it first among the provisions made by wisdom for a happy life (DL x 148; Cic. *F* i 65). Friendship gives us some greater security in life, and so frees us from anxiety more effectively than we free ourselves by securing wealth and

[65] Quoted at §162. [66] Lucretius speaks of 'amicities', v 1019.

power (Cic. *F* ii 82). But it is also a source of pleasure in itself; indeed, it is pleasanter to benefit others than to receive benefits oneself (Plu. *NP* 1097a = U 544), and for the sake of one's friend one will even undergo severe pains (Plu. *Col.* 1111b = U 546). Since acts of friendship give us pleasure by themselves, apart from their further benefits, Epicurus regards friendship as a virtue because of itself rather than its consequences.[67]

These claims about friendship combine some features of Aristotelian friendship for advantage and friendship for pleasure. Epicurus suggests that like-minded friends who share the Epicurean outlook are both sources of mutual support and sources of pleasure, since they have formed the sort of outlook that we find congenial. Hence Epicurus recalls with pleasure the conversations with his friend (DL × 22).

Apparently, Epicurus' views were criticized for failing to allow the best kind of Aristotelian friendship, which requires us to love the other for the other's own sake. Since different Epicureans answered this criticism in different ways, Epicurus' views were probably not completely clear, since none of the defenders is accused of contradicting any of his explicit remarks. Cicero mentions three Epicurean accounts of friendship (*F* i 65–70; ii 78–84); each of them shows a possible defence of Epicurus' views.

The first view denies that in Epicurean friendship we come to care about the good of the other for the other's own sake. To form this concern we would have to believe that the good of the other is non-instrumentally good. But since that would be a non-instrumental good other than pleasure, it is not open to a consistent Epicurean. The Epicurean enjoys the company of his friend because it yields pleasures that he values independently of caring about the interests of the friend. This view, then, admits that Epicurus cannot accept the best kind of Aristotelian friendship, but argues that this is no loss. In valuing concern for the other for the other's own sake, we are victims of empty belief, because we do not recognize the essential aspects of friendship on a hedonist basis (*F* i 66). To gain the security that we value in friendship, we must love our friends equally with ourselves.[68] That is why we are pleased by the pleasures of our friends, just as we are by our own, and suffer in their sufferings. But this equality does not imply that we are concerned non-instrumentally for our friends.[69]

The second defence of Epicurean friendship seems to differ from the first by arguing that we initially care about friends for the sake of the instrumental benefits we gain from them, but then we come to care about them for their own sakes.[70] These Epicureans mention other examples where we initially care about something instrumentally, but then come to care about it for its own sake, even when it yields no further pleasure; we come to enjoy being in places where we have previously found pleasure or benefit, after we become attached to them in their own right (*F* i 69).[71]

[67] 'All friendship is a virtue (*aretê*) because of itself, and it has its origin from benefit' (*Sent. Vat.* 23 = Arr. 6.23). Some editors emend *aretê* to *hairetê*, 'choiceworthy' (see Arr. pp. 558–9, appealing to Stob. *Ecl.* ii 120.15–20); if we emend, we will prefer 'but' over 'and' in the second clause. The emended text gives Epicurus the second Epicurean view (Cic. *F* i 69; see below). But the emendation is unnecessary (see LS ii on 22 F).

[68] '. . . nisi aeque amicos et nosmet ipsos diligamus' (*F* i 67).

[69] One might argue against this conclusion by maintaining that (i) if we love ourselves non-instrumentally and our friends only instrumentally, we love our friends less than we love ourselves, and (ii) we love ourselves non-instrumentally. But both of these premisses are open to doubt on Epicurean grounds. Epicurus on friendship is discussed by Mitsis, *EET*, ch. 3.

[70] '. . . ipsi amici propter se ipsos amentur' (*F* i 69).

[71] For wider doubts about whether Epicurus is a psychological hedonist see Cooper, 'Pleasure' 485–94.

The third defence traces friendship to an agreement between wise people to love their friends as much as they love themselves.[72] This defence agrees with the first against the second in taking equal love to be sufficient for friendship without non-instrumental concern. But it disagrees with the first defence in taking this equal love to be the result of an agreement, rather than the result of interactions that initially have no such aim. Both the other defences stress the difference between the initial aims of a friendship and the further aims that grow as a result of mutual interaction. Whereas the third defence treats friendship as similar to justice, in resting on agreement, the other two argue, more plausibly, that the motives characteristic of friendship grow from different motives. These defences use the resources available to an Epicurean to construct a more credible account of friendship.

The second defence differs from the other two in so far as it accepts the Aristotelian demand for non-instrumental concern. The examples that Cicero mentions show why non-instrumental concern is compatible with hedonism. The previous association between a place or an activity or a person and instrumental benefit leading to pleasure causes us to form a non-instrumental preference. This is how Mill explains the outlook of a miser who comes to care about money for its own sake, or the music-lover who comes to care about music for its own sake after having cared about it only for the sake of instrumental benefits.[73]

But if this is what the Epicureans mean, the non-instrumental concern seems to rest on 'empty belief'. We might explain the conviction that virtue is a non-instrumental good in the same way, as a product of our habitual association of the virtues with the production of pleasure. But Epicurus does not infer that virtue is a non-instrumental good; on the contrary, he rejects that view on hedonist grounds. Should an Epicurean not take the same view about friendship? It is not clear why non-instrumental concern is any more rational in the case of friendship than it would be in the case of virtue.

We might answer this objection by denying that Epicurean friendship (according to the second defence) treats non-instrumental concern as simply the product of mental association between friendship and the means to pleasure. We might say that the early stages of friendship allow us to recognize that friends and their interests are non-instrumental goods. The pleasure that we take in friendship, on this view, rests partly on the non-instrumental value that we attach to the interests of our friends and to the activities characteristic of the best kind of friendship.

This explanation shows why non-instrumental concern need not result from empty belief. It is rather similar to the Stoic explanation of the growth of non-instrumental concern for practical reason as a result of the instrumental use of practical reason.[74] But the result recognizes a type of value that does not fit a hedonist theory of value. In that case Epicurus cannot consistently maintain hedonism and accept the second defence of friendship as including non-instrumental concern for the other.

On the whole, the first defence of friendship is probably the best way to explain Epicurus' position. In contrast to the third defence, it marks the difference between justice and friendship. Just actions do not lead directly to pleasure, but are only instrumental to further results that lead to pleasure, whereas friendship is pleasant because of the activities of

[72] 'foedus esse quoddam . . . ut ne minus amicos quam se ipsos diligant' (*F* i 70).

[73] Mill, *U*, ch. 4.

[74] See §179.

friendship themselves. In contrast to the second defence, the first does not expose Epicurus to the charge of endorsing empty beliefs about friendship while rejecting them about the cardinal virtues.

None of these Epicurean defences of friendship shows that Epicurus can meet reasonable Aristotelian standards for friendship. As Cicero points out, Epicurus assumes that friends contribute more to our security, tranquillity, and pleasure than we could gain through pursuing external resources without much regard for friendship (*F* ii 84–5). We might dispute his assumption by remarking that friendships involve us in efforts on behalf of our friends, and expose us to pains, dangers, and disappointments when things go wrong for our friends. Epicurus and Lucretius mock those who seek political power to gain security; they argue that the increase in anxiety makes the pursuit of security futile. But can we not say the same about friendship? If we want to avoid anxiety and disappointment, we might modify our desires in accordance with Epicurus' advice about self-sufficiency; we will enjoy the company of others when we can have it at no serious cost to ourselves, but avoid the attachments that threaten us with disappointment. This would be the outlook of fair-weather friendship.

We might well agree with Epicurus if he were to reply that the pleasures resulting from friendship outweigh the security that we gain from the fair-weather friendship that avoids the normal commitments of friendship. But our agreement with this reply rests on a non-hedonist conviction that friendship is worthwhile, and that therefore its pleasures make up for the resulting insecurity. Epicurean hedonism seems to reverse the appropriate relation between the value of friendship and the pleasures resulting from it.

160. Difficulties in Epicureanism

The discussion of Epicurean defences of friendship illustrates and reinforces a point that we have noticed at other points in Epicurus' position. His convictions about goods seem to outrun the theory of goodness that ought to support them. In so far as he is a hedonist, and supports hedonism by appeal to immediate experience, he does not give good reasons for preferring Epicurean over Cyrenaic hedonism. His defence of the Socratic hedonist eudaemonism of the *Protagoras*, relies on his version of hedonism, which is difficult to defend on purely hedonistic grounds. His defence of an adaptive conception of happiness does not answer Aristotelian objections; to show that he is right to ignore those objections, he should show more convincingly than he does that they rest on empty belief. Though he wants to defend the recognized virtues, he does not show that Epicurean hedonism justifies the common belief that they involve choosing virtuous and fine action for its own sake. To be justified in rejecting that common belief, he needs to have convinced us of a hedonist position; but then he has to rely on those arguments from immediate experience that we have found to be a weak link in his general theory.

Aristotle's arguments against a hedonistic theory of the good suggest that hedonism conflicts with two aspects of his outlook: (1) his conception of human nature, and of the connexion between human nature and the human good; (2) his conception of reasonable methods of ethical argument, appealing to reflective common beliefs. Epicurus tries to

answer these Aristotelian objections. He seeks a firm epistemological basis for hedonism, in order to overcome common beliefs that count against hedonism. But his epistemological basis is not convincing in its own right; and even if it were convincing, it would not support the version of hedonism that is needed for Epicurus' ethical argument.

Not everything worth considering in his ethical outlook depends on his theory of the good. His views about pleasure, freedom, virtue, and friendship include reasonable elements that do not depend on his hedonism. But without his hedonism they do not constitute a coherent ethical theory.

12

STOICISM: ACTION, PASSION, AND REASON

161. The Stoics and their Predecessors

Stoicism is the most ambitious and comprehensive of the philosophical outlooks normally described as 'Hellenistic' (also including Epicureans, Cyrenaics, and Pyrrhonian and Academic Sceptics). 'Hellenistic' has been used by modern historians to refer to the Greek world (the areas influenced by Greek language and culture) between the death of Alexander (323 BC) and the principate of Augustus (from 31 BC). Some modern writers have held that Greek philosophy in this period reflects the characteristics of the Hellenistic 'age', in contrast to the classical 'age' of Plato and Aristotle. This attempt to link philosophers closely with the outlook of an 'age' is especially characteristic of Hegel's approach to the history of moral and political philosophy.[1]

Characteristics of the Hellenistic age have sometimes appeared to explain some of the distinctive features of Stoic ethics. The (supposed) decline of the Greek city, and the growth of larger units of government, tended (according to this view) to turn an individual's effort away from political and social life to the cultivation of inner freedom and virtue that depends on ourselves, not on unstable external conditions. In this respect Hellenistic ethics appears to be more individualistic and less social than the ethics of Plato and Aristotle.

The historical claims underlying this story about the interaction of politics, society, culture, and philosophy are worth discussing.[2] We need not discuss them here, however, since they do not contribute much to the understanding of Stoic moral philosophy. The Stoic doctrines that might be taken as responses to remote government, individual insecurity, and other aspects of the Hellenistic age, are all intelligible responses to the views of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Indeed, the most 'individualistic' of the Stoic views are intelligible developments of Socratic ethics, and are therefore perfectly intelligible against the background of the classical Greek states. Hegel deals with this aspect of Socrates by declaring (absurdly) that

[1] See Hegel's comment on Plato's *Republic* at *Hist.* ii 96 Haldane & Simson = Suhrkamp ed xix 111.

[2] For a concise statement of historical reasons for doubting that the 'Hellenistic age' marks any radical discontinuity in social and political outlooks see Jones, 'Age'.

Athenian democracy was in decline in Socrates' time.[3] We are better advised to try to see where the Stoics enter the arguments that their predecessors have begun. They respond quite reasonably to some of the difficulties that arise for Plato and Aristotle.

This generalization might need some modification to fit the development of Stoicism in the five centuries from Zeno (born in 334 BC, twelve years before the death of Aristotle) to Marcus Aurelius (died in AD 180). The three major Stoics, Zeno, Cleanthes, and Chrysippus, lived during the Hellenistic period. No complete work by any of them has survived; we have to gather their views from fragments and paraphrases (often found in hostile critics, such as Galen and Plutarch). The fullest discussions of Stoic ethics come from Cicero, Seneca, and Epictetus, who lived under the later Roman Republic and earlier Empire. A complete study of Stoic ethics would need to discuss possible differences between the major Stoic sources, but for our purposes we can set aside such questions. Even if the position we are describing was not completely worked out in the three major Stoics, it is impressively coherent, and deserves study as a whole.

The Stoics agree with the Epicureans in defending some aspects of Socrates' position against Plato and Aristotle. In doing so, they follow the one-sided Socratic schools. The Cyrenaics defend Socratic hedonism. Since they agree with Plato and Aristotle that hedonism conflicts with eudaemonism, they abandon eudaemonism. This defence of Socratic hedonism raises doubts about whether the Socratic virtues are worth cultivating. Epicurus tries to support the virtues by defending the eudaemonist hedonism of the *Protagoras* against Platonic and Aristotelian criticisms. The Stoics agree with the position of the Cynics, who defend the sufficiency of virtue for happiness. Following the Cynics, they advocate inflexible integrity in complete indifference to any gain or loss of external goods. In their view, the Peripatetics fail to meet these standards for an adequate defence of virtue.[4]

This Cynic influence on Stoicism begins with Zeno, who was a pupil of Crates the Cynic, and is still present in Seneca, who sometimes presents Cynic doctrines sympathetically.[5] But the Stoics differ from the Cynics about why virtue is sufficient for happiness. The one-sided Socratics, following Socrates, generally combine the sufficiency thesis with instrumentalism; they regard virtue as a purely instrumental means to happiness, and take happiness to be wholly external to virtue.[6] Plato and Aristotle criticize this instrumentalist doctrine, arguing that virtue is to be chosen for its own sake, as a part of happiness. The Stoics accept the objections to instrumentalism, but they do not draw Plato's and Aristotle's conclusion. They notice that Socrates' claim that virtue is sufficient for happiness need not be defended, as Socrates and the Cynics defend it, by treating virtue as an infallible instrumental means to happiness. They prefer to defend it by arguing that virtue is identical to happiness, and hence its sole component. In their view, all the recognized non-moral, external goods and evils are neither good nor bad, but simply indifferent, since they neither promote nor impede happiness.

[3] See Hegel, *PR* §138. [4] See Sen. *Ep*. 92.19–20. [5] See Sen. *Ben*. vii 1–2, discussed at §35n5.

[6] We have seen, however, that it is not always clear whether Socrates and the Cynics maintain this purely instrumental conception of virtue. It may be more accurate to say that they do not clearly reject instrumentalism than to say that they affirm it. See §39.

This revision—or, as the Stoics may suppose, interpretation—of Socrates retains a central Socratic paradox.[7] According to Aristotle, the claim that virtue is sufficient for happiness is so implausible that no one would maintain it except as a philosophical exercise.[8] Plato and Aristotle regard external, non-moral goods (health, physical safety, freedom from pain, etc.) as components of happiness that are not infallibly secured by virtue. Hence they believe virtue is insufficient for happiness. The Stoics recognize that they disagree with Plato and Aristotle on this point.[9]

Though the Stoics reject the Platonic and Aristotelian view, they try to explain why it might seem plausible. All external 'goods' and 'evils' are really indifferent, and hence virtue is the whole of happiness. Still, even though health is not good and illness is not bad, we have good reason to try to be healthy rather than ill. That is why health is a 'preferred' indifferent, and illness is a 'non-preferred' indifferent.

162. Eudaemonism

However paradoxical the Stoics' position may appear, it avoids the extreme paradox (in the view of most Greek moralists) of rejecting eudaemonism. The Cyrenaics agree with Plato and Aristotle that hedonism is inconsistent with eudaemonism; to defend hedonism against Plato and Aristotle they abandon eudaemonism. An extreme position opposite to Cyrenaic non-eudaemonist hedonism would be an 'extreme moralist' claim that virtue is the only thing that matters, without reference to happiness. Cynic opponents of the Cyrenaics, however, do not seem to adopt extreme moralism. Their defence of virtue as the only thing that matters depends on an adaptive conception of happiness and on their claim that virtue secures the appropriate adaptation. This asymmetry between the Cyrenaic treatment of pleasure and the Cynic treatment of virtue suggests that it is more plausible to regard pleasure as an independently intelligible object of desire than to regard virtue this way; the Cynics do not take virtue to matter independently of happiness. Hence extreme moralism,

[7] Cicero comments: 'Since these <Stoic views> are amazing, and contrary to the opinions of everyone (and the Stoics themselves call them *paradoxa*), I wanted to try to see whether they could be brought into the light ... And I wrote all the more readily in so far as these views that they call *paradoxa* seem to me to be Socratic to the highest degree and by a long way the truest' (Cic. *Parad.* 4). On the Socratic paradoxes see §9. On the Stoics and Socrates cf. Cic. *Ac.* ii 136; *TD* iii 10; Long, 'Socrates'; Striker, 'Socrates'.

[8] See *EN* 1095b30–1096a2; 1153b14–25; §70.

[9] In Chrysippus' view, Plato does away with justice and any other genuine virtue because he recognizes such things as health as goods (Plu. *SR* 1040d). Chrysippus probably has the *Republic* in mind (cf. 1040a–b). Plutarch is a Platonist, and often criticizes the Stoics for misunderstanding the philosophers they discuss. But in this case, he raises no objection to Chrysippus' interpretation of Plato; he criticizes him not for misinterpreting Plato, but for disagreeing with the Platonic and Aristotelian doctrine. We have no evidence to suggest that Chrysippus attacks Socrates for the mistake that he attributes to Plato. On the contrary, the Stoics recognize, as Cicero does (*Parad.* 4), the Socratic origin of their views on virtue and happiness. In contrast to Chrysippus, however, some other Stoics try to identify the Platonic view with the Stoic view, and therefore with the Socratic view. Antipater the Stoic wrote a work in three books asserting that according to Plato only the fine is good, and that therefore virtue is self-sufficient for happiness (Clement, *Strom.* v 97.6 = *SVF* iii, Antip. 56). If he thought it necessary to write a whole treatise on this question, other Stoics probably disagreed with his interpretation of Plato.

opposite to non-eudaemonist hedonism, is only a logical possibility within Hellenistic ethics; no one actually tries it.[10]

The Stoics recognize an ultimate end for rational action, and they follow Aristotle in identifying the end with happiness.[11] They also agree with Aristotle in taking happiness to include all and only genuine goods; for they take their claim that 'only the fine is good' to be equivalent to the claim that virtue is self-sufficient for happiness (*Cic. F.* iii 26–9). If happiness included other things besides goods, the proof that virtue is the only good would not show that it is sufficient by itself for happiness.

Later moral philosophy disagrees with the Stoics on this point, and offers different options. On the one hand, Scotus affirms non-eudaemonist moralism against the eudaemonism (as he understands it) of Aristotle and Aquinas. On the other hand, Hobbes and his successors follow the Cyrenaics in rejecting eudaemonism (though without drawing all the Cyrenaic conclusions). Most of Hobbes's opponents defend extreme moralism rather than eudaemonism. These modern moralists, such as Price and Reid, who defend the non-instrumental and overriding value of morality are often explicitly sympathetic to Stoicism, but they separate their defence of morality from Stoic eudaemonism.[12]

This difference between the Stoics and their modern defenders may provoke us to ask how much eudaemonism matters in the Stoics' position. Is their acceptance of eudaemonism merely a verbal concession to their predecessors, or to common ways of speaking? Or does it make a difference to the substance of their moral theory, and especially to their conception of the value of the moral virtues? An answer to these questions will help us to decide whether later moralists depart significantly from their predecessors in trying to defend virtue without reference to happiness.

The Stoics affirm that their eudaemonism is necessary for a correct appreciation of the non-instrumental value of the virtues, and therefore necessary for having the virtues. We have the virtues only if we see the connexion between virtue and happiness; for if we take happiness not to include virtue, and so measure it by our own advantage, we cannot consistently cultivate the virtues.[13] Individual Epicureans, for instance, may be virtuous people, but, if they are, their outlook is inconsistent with the implications of their theory (Cic. *F.* ii 80). Since their conception of the final good leaves out the right (*expers honestatis,* Cic. *F.* ii 35), it demotes the virtues to a purely instrumental status that the virtuous person rejects.[14]

[10] On the Cynics see §39.

[11] They define the end as 'that for the sake of which all things are done appropriately, while it is done for the sake of nothing' (Stob. ii 46.5–7 = *SVF* iii 2; cf. ii 76.21–3). 'They say that the end is being happy, for the sake of which all things are done, while it is done, but for the sake of nothing' (Stob. ii 77.16–17 = LS 63A). They distinguish happiness (*eudaimonia*), which is the 'goal' (*skopos*), from 'being happy' (*eudaimonein*), which is the act of achieving the goal (ii 77.23–7 = LS 63A).

[12] See Price, *RPQM* 257; Reid, *EAP* 586a H.

[13] 'But some schools distort every duty (officium) by the ends of goods and evils that they present. For anyone who introduces the supreme good in such a way that it has no connexion with virtue, and measures it by his own advantages, and not by the right (honestum), this person, if he is consistent with himself and is not sometimes overcome by goodness of nature, could not cultivate either friendship or justice or generosity; and certainly he cannot possibly be brave if he judges pain the highest evil, or temperate if he takes pleasure to be the highest good' (*Off.* i 5).

[14] I will normally use 'right' to render *honestum* and 'fine' (as before) to render *kalon*. This is awkward, since Cicero uses the Latin term to render the Greek. But it is not wholly misleading, since the Latin terms lack the aesthetic character of the Greek. Latin allows a distinction between the beautiful (pulchrum) and the right (honestum) that marks two

The Stoics assert that we have reason to value virtue and virtuous action as non-instrumentally good if and only if we regard them as a part of happiness. They do not endorse the extreme moralist view that the requirements of moral virtue and of rightness require agents to act against their happiness or to act without regard to their happiness. They believe that we have reason to value virtue and virtuous action appropriately if and only if we have reason to regard them as non-instrumentally good. But (from the eudaemonist point of view) we have reason to value virtue and virtuous action as non-instrumentally good if and only if we regard them as a part of happiness. Hence (the Stoics conclude) we have reason to value them appropriately if and only if we regard them as a part of happiness.

This eudaemonist argument conflicts with different moralist claims. A non-eudaemonist argues that we have sufficient reason to pursue virtue above all other goods or advantages even if it conflicts with our happiness or it does not affect it either way. This non-eudaemonist view is defended by, for instance, Scotus, Butler, and Kant; it claims only that happiness is not needed for a sufficient justification of virtue. It does not claim that happiness is irrelevant, or that it cannot provide any reason; on the contrary, both Butler and Kant believe that an appeal to happiness provides an important further defence of morality.

In contrast to this non-eudaemonist view, a rigorist form of moralism is anti-eudaemonist, claiming that we value virtue appropriately only if we do not regard it as a part of, or a means to, our happiness. This rigorism may be traced back to Augustine's objections to self-love. It is explicit and prominent in the French Quietists and in Mandeville. Schopenhauer and Prichard are later defenders of rigorism.[15] These strongly anti-eudaemonist moralists defend the position that the Stoics denounce as incompatible with the morally virtuous outlook.

Both the Stoics and their opponents defend their position as the only one that allows the correct estimate of the value of the moral virtues. To see whether this is a significant dispute, and what can be said on either side of it, we ought to try to understand the Stoic position, and especially its eudaemonist elements.

163. Reactions to Stoic Ethics

The different aspects of Stoicism that we have surveyed help to explain why estimates of it have been so various. Its influence has been continuous from the Church Fathers, to Aquinas (who knows it from Patristic sources), and to modern moralists. But different people have attended to different elements of the Stoic view. Some of the disagreements about Stoicism already appear in Cicero's comments, and they have affected interpretation and criticism of the Stoic position ever since.

Some critics attack the apparently extravagant character of the Stoic conclusions. Since all reputed goods and evils except virtue and vice are indifferents, the Stoic sage apparently

aspects of the Greek term. A translation that might cover all the uses of *honestum* and *pulchrum* would be 'admirable'. See further §332.

[15] See Mandeville, *FB* i 56 (Kaye) = R 270; Schopenhauer, *WR* i 524; Prichard, *MO* 13.

sees no reason to be strongly concerned about anything other than virtue and vice.[16] This reaction results from one-sided attention to the points on which the Stoics seem to agree with the Cynic interpretation of Socrates. To show that this reaction is misguided, the Stoics need to show that they depart far enough from Cynics to avoid the least credible aspects of the Cynic position.[17]

Other critics, however, argue that the Stoics agree with Aristotle on the substantive issues. Cicero suggests that when we see the Stoic 'paradoxes' from close range, they no longer seem so paradoxical (Cic. *F* iv 74). The Academic Carneades claims that the Stoics' disagreements with Aristotle are merely verbal.[18] These critics attend to the Stoic doctrine of preferred indifferents, claiming that it concedes the substance of what Aristotle claims about the importance of external goods.

The choice facing the Stoics is parallel, in some ways, to the choice facing Epicurus. When Epicurus follows the Cyrenaics in accepting the hedonist aspects of Socratic ethics, he seems to be open to the objections that Plato and Aristotle raise against hedonism. In answering these objections, he seems to be in danger of abandoning the features of his position that distinguish it from Aristotle's position. Similarly, when the Stoics follow the Cynics in accepting the side of Socratic ethics that treats virtue as the only good, they seem to be open to the objections that Plato and Aristotle raise against this Socratic thesis. Their answers to these objections may seem to concede to Aristotle the essential points on which the Stoics claim to disagree with him, and hence may seem to make the Stoic position only verbally different from the Aristotelian.

To fix this question more precisely, we should notice that the claim about 'verbal difference' is ambiguous, and may refer to either of two quite different claims about the Stoics: (1) The difference between Aristotle and the Stoics would be purely verbal in a sense that would make it trivial, if for every Stoic claim about (say) preferred indifferents we could substitute an Aristotelian claim about external goods, and reach a theoretically equivalent conclusion. (2) But if the Stoics agree with the Aristotelians about 'substance' in the sense of agreeing about what a virtuous person ought to do on every particular occasion, it does not follow that any further differences between the two positions are trivial or unimportant. We need moral theory to explain and to justify virtuous action, and not only to tell us what to do. If the Stoics give better reasons for the same actions, their effort is worth while.

It is relatively easy to argue that the Stoics agree with Peripatetics about actions, and that in this sense they agree in 'substance'. But it would be a mistake to infer, as some ancient critics perhaps infer, that the disagreement with Aristotelians is unimportant; for the difference in theory may be important. We need to keep these different possibilities in mind when we compare the Stoic with the Peripatetic position.

[16] Cicero contrasts this inhuman and absurd obsession with moral virtue with the warmer and more appealing attitude of the Peripatetics (*Pro Murena* 61–3).

[17] This interpretation of Stoic indifference to non-moral considerations underlies the criticisms in Sorabji, *AMHM* 140; Nussbaum, *TD* 360–3, 416–17; Adam Smith, §182 below.

[18] 'Carneades never ceased to contend that in all of this inquiry under the head of goods and evils, the Stoics' dispute with the Peripatetics was about names, not about facts' (*Cic. F.* iii 41). For other remarks about the purely verbal character of Stoic disagreements with Aristotle see *F.* iv 20, 72; v 22.

164. Stoic Strategies

The Stoics' reasons for preferring their revision of the Socratic position over the Platonic and Aristotelian revisions will be clearer if we understand their methods of ethical argument and their views about the place of ethics within their philosophical system. They emphasize the coherence and connexion in their philosophy as a whole (Cic. *F.* iii 73–4). Different Stoics teach ethics in different ways that express different aspects of the system. Chrysippus believes that the three parts of philosophy should be taught in the order: logic, ethics, physics (i.e., natural philosophy), culminating in theology.[19] Zeno, by contrast, is reported to have favoured the order: logic, physics, ethics.[20]

This suggestion of disagreement or inconsistency may be misleading. Chrysippus intends the study of physics and theology to be relevant to ethics; Zeus and the 'common nature' of the universe are the starting point for ethical doctrines.[21] Hence Chrysippus seems to agree with Zeno in deriving ethics from natural philosophy. But different orders of exposition reflect different types of priority. As Aristotle recognizes, what is prior 'to us', in our learning, may be posterior 'by nature', in the structure of a completed science. Aristotle relies on this division to mark out the distinct roles of dialectical argument (relying on common beliefs) and demonstrative argument (relying on scientific principles already established). The Stoics might reasonably rely on a similar distinction.[22]

Moreover, some ethical claims might be prior to physics and theology and some might be derived from physical or theological premisses. The Stoics believe that the universe is governed by a divine providential intelligence, aiming at the good of the whole and of each part. To find some reason for believing this, we need some account of the good of each part of the universe, including ourselves. If we assumed that the good is sensual pleasure or freedom from pain, we would expect a providential order of the universe to maximize our pleasure or to minimize our pain. Before we know what to expect from a providential order, we need some conception of our good.

Some part of ethics, then, seems to precede arguments to show that a providential intelligence governs the world. This does not mean that our initial ethical convictions cannot be revised in the light of our understanding of the world and of our place in it. The Stoics believe that in promoting the good of the whole we promote our own good;[23]

[19] 'Chrysippus: "... I believe there are three parts of the philosopher's subject of study ... One part is logical, one ethical, one physical. Of these logic must be put first, then ethics, then physics. And the last part of physics is the account of the gods; hence the transmission of that is called "initiation"." ' (Plu. *SR* 1035a = SVF ii 42 = LS 26C).

[20] For different orders cf. DL vii 40 = *SVF* ii 41; Sx. *M* vii 22–3; *PH* ii 13.

[21] 'For hear what he says about these things in the third book *On the Gods*: "For we can find no other origin (*archê*) or genesis of justice than the one proceeding from Zeus and common nature. For from here everything of this kind must have its origin if we are going to say anything about goods and evils." And again he says in his *Natural Postulates*: "For there is no other and no more appropriate approach to the account of goods and evils, or to the virtues, or to happiness, than the one that proceeds from common nature and the government of the world order." The account of nature, then, turns out to be at the same time before and behind ethics, according to Chrysippus' (Plu. *SR* 1035c–d).

[22] See Aristotle, *EN* 1095b2–4: see §67. This division in Stoic arguments is suggested by the title of a work by Chrysippus, 'On the fact that the ancients accepted dialectic together with demonstrations' (DL vii 201, one of three ethical works by Chrysippus on dialectic). See Brunschwig, 'Title'; Cooper, 'Moral duty' 440.

[23] 'Always remember what is your own, and what belongs to another; and you will not be disturbed. Chrysippus therefore said well, "So long as future things are uncertain, I always cling to whatever is more adapted to gaining the things in accord with nature; for God himself has made me disposed to elect (*eklektikon*) such things. But if I knew that it

perhaps we have to take the point of view of cosmic providence before we can see that the good of the whole is our good.

It is reasonable, then, for the Stoics to argue in both directions between natural philosophy and ethics. It is worth our while to see what conclusions they defend apart from theology. This is useful both because it allows us to grasp the ethical basis of Stoic theology and because it allows us to see how they argue with their predecessors, apart from any appeal to specifically Stoic doctrines in natural philosophy and theology.

165. Preconceptions

The Stoics recognize that they need some non-theological ethical principles, and some form of ethical argument to support these principles. Just after quoting Chrysippus' remarks about the derivation of ethics from Zeus and universal nature, Plutarch quotes his claim that he relies on human life and on ethical 'preconceptions'. These are basic in our ethical thinking because they are the principles and standards[24] in the light of which we assess our other ethical beliefs.[25] Plutarch believes that this appeal to human life and to preconceptions conflicts with the paradoxical aspects of the Stoic view. But the Stoics disagree; they believe that the apparent paradoxes of their position result from their adherence to preconceptions.

Sometimes, then, Stoic views seem to violate common sense, and the contrary view may seem persuasive because it avoids the apparent paradoxes of Stoicism.[26] But the Stoics answer that their views are really closer to common sense, properly understood, than rival theories are. If some other beliefs conflict with preconceptions, we ought, in the Stoic view, to give up the other beliefs rather than the preconceptions.

In Epictetus' view, we must both understand the preconceptions and align our other views with them.[27] Different people's assent to the same preconceptions does not prevent

was fated for me to be sick, I would even move toward it; for the foot also, if it had intelligence, would move to go into the mud." ' (Epict. ii 6.9–10 = LS 58J. It is not clear where the quotation from Chrysippus ends). Epictetus denies that acting for the good of the whole involves self-sacrifice. See ii 5.24–6.

[24] Preconceptions are *kanones*. See Epict. i 28.28, quoted in n26. They are the equivalent of standard weights that we use to settle how heavy things are, instead of relying haphazardly on our appearances (i 28.28–30).

[25] 'Chrysippus says that the account of goods and evils that he introduces and approves keeps closest to life, and especially to the inborn preconceptions (*prolêpseis*). For he has said this in the third book of his *Protreptics*. But in the first book he says that this account draws a human being away from all other things <apart from virtue>, as being nothing to us and contributing nothing to happiness' (Plu. *SR* 1041e). The *prolêpsis* of a craft or a profession is its fundamental assumption or conception; see Epict. iv 8.6, 10.

[26] 'If the persuasiveness of things makes some things appear to be good, when they are not good, let us seek to bring reinforcements at that point. If habit oppresses us, we should try to assemble reinforcements against that. . . . You hear uninstructed people (*idiôtai*) say: "That poor man! He is dead. His father or mother perished. He was cut off by an untimely death and in a foreign land." Listen to the contrary arguments. Drag yourself away from the common ways of speaking. Oppose to one habit the contrary habit. . . . Against the persuasiveness of things we ought to have evident preconceptions, cleaned and polished, and ready to hand' (Epict. i 27.2–6). ' "And so when women are carried off, when children are made captives, and when the men are killed, are these not evils?" . . . Let us come to the standards (*kanones*); bring forward the preconceptions' (i 28.26–8). Continued in n31.

[27] 'Preconceptions are common to all human beings; and preconception does not conflict with preconception. For which of us does not assume that the good is beneficial and choiceworthy, and that we must seek and pursue it in every circumstance? Which of us does not assume that the just is fine and fitting? Whence then comes the conflict? In the application of preconceptions to particular realities when one says "He has acted finely, he is brave", while another

disagreement; but with careful attention to our agreed preconceptions we will eventually reach agreement.[28] We assume at the outset that the preconceptions are consistent. If we do not assume this about our preconceptions as a whole, or at least (as Aristotle says) about 'the most and most important' of them, we have no further basis for deciding which ethical beliefs we should accept or reject, and hence we implicitly challenge all our ethical beliefs.[29]

These are insufficient reasons for asserting that our preconceptions are consistent. For the Sceptics argue that we should acknowledge conflicts among our most basic ethical beliefs, and should therefore draw a Sceptical conclusion.[30] The Stoics cannot reasonably ignore or dismiss this Sceptical alternative by assuming that preconceptions must be consistent. But they may fairly assume at the outset that they are consistent, so that we can see whether this assumption allows us to understand our ethical beliefs as a coherent and plausible position. If they can be aligned with our preconceptions so that the result is coherent and plausible, we have answered the Sceptical claims about conflicts.

Epictetus warns us that our preconceptions will seem to us to conflict, if we confuse the real content of preconceptions with the hasty conventional assumptions that we rely on in applying preconceptions to particular situations. But if we do not follow hasty conventional assumptions, and we apply preconceptions systematically, we find, in Epictetus' view, that their application to specific types of situations undermines our thoughtless conventional assumptions.

We may hastily suppose, for instance, that it would be cowardly to refrain from retaliating against criticism by another person, even if we know we have deserved it. A traditional Greek view holds that a real man retaliates for injury, whether or not it is deserved. But we will reject this view, once we recall that cowardice involves acting out of inappropriate fear, that honesty requires us to accept justified criticism, and that acting out of honesty is not acting out of inappropriate fear. Similarly, we ought not to believe that only a coward refuses a challenge to a duel. If a duel is a foolish way of settling a quarrel, refusal of a challenge does not betray cowardice, since it rests on appropriate moral considerations.

Many Platonic and Aristotelian ethical arguments rely on beliefs that the Stoics call preconceptions. In the Socratic dialogues, the preconceptions are our general assumptions about the virtues. Since Laches agrees with Socrates that bravery is always fine, he reconsiders

says "Not at all; he's crazy". Hence people's conflict with one other arises' (i 22.1–4 = LS 40S). 'What, then, is it to be educated? It consists in learning to apply the natural preconceptions to the particular beings conformably to nature' (i 22.9 = LS 40S). 'Let him not be a fool. Let him learn, as Socrates would say, "what is each of the things that are"; and let him not apply his preconceptions at random to each of the particular beings. For this is the cause of all evils to men—not to be able to apply the common preconceptions to the particular things' (iv 1.41–2).

[28] 'What misleads most people is what misleads Theopompus the rhetorician, who actually attacks Plato for wanting to define each thing. What does he say? "Did none of us speak of good or just before you [sc. Plato]? Or when we did not grasp what each of these is, did we utter the sounds insignificantly and emptily?" Who tells you, Theopompus, that we did not have natural conceptions and preconceptions of each of these? But we cannot fit our preconceptions to the corresponding beings if we have not articulated them and examined this very thing—what sort of being is to be assigned to each of them. . . . Which of us does not talk about good and evil and beneficial and harmful? For which of us does not have a preconception of each of these? Then you have an articulated and complete preconception? Prove it. . . . Apply it well to particular beings . . . ' (ii 17.5–11).

[29] See Aristotle, *EN* 1145b2–7 (quoted at §67); 1172b35–1173a2. Sidgwick considers this sort of challenge in the concluding chapter of *ME*.

[30] See §136.

his view that senseless endurance is brave; he recognizes that it is shameful and not fine, and so he infers that it is not after all brave (Plato, *La.* 193d1–8).

More controversial appeals to preconceptions introduce distinctively Stoic doctrines. We suppose that a just person who is suddenly impoverished because of his just action has suffered some genuine harm, and is really worse off. The Stoics argue, however, that we will no longer suppose this, once we apply all our preconceptions to the situation, and once we interpret each of them so that it is consistent with all the others. In this case we must recognize that (1) we always ought to be just, no matter what it costs us; (2) just actions sometimes lead to impoverishment; (3) we never lose any genuine good by doing what we ought to do. The third step in this argument is the most difficult to accept.[31]

The Stoic doctrine of preconceptions suggests the standards that are relevant for evaluating ethical arguments. In the Stoic view, non-Stoic views have to violate principles that we can recognize as basic in our ethical reflexion. If the Stoic view is the only one that avoids conflict with these principles, we ought to accept it, however paradoxical it may initially appear. We have to apply our preconceptions to reject or to modify the appearance that previously invited thoughtless assent. To avoid this thoughtless assent, we have to 'exercise' by reminding ourselves of the relevant preconceptions, so that appearances do not drag us off or sweep us away by their immediate appeal (their 'sharpness').[32] Agamemnon and Achilles and other tragic characters made mistakes because they simply 'followed their appearances' by assenting without proper reflexion (i 28.31). We can avoid their mistakes if we are ready for the misleading suggestions that we may receive from appearances; we must remind ourselves that the situations that appear bad are not really bad.[33]

To understand how we can criticize appearances in the light of our preconceptions, we need to look more closely at Stoic accounts of mind and action. Socrates does not try to explain why his elenctic approach to common-sense moral views is difficult to accept, or why his resolution of the puzzles in common sense is the right one. Even Plato and Aristotle do not make it completely clear why common beliefs, on the one hand, are wrong enough to need dialectical examination, but, on the other hand, are near enough to the truth to provide reasonable starting points for this examination. The Stoics try to explain these points.

Their explanation begins from facts about nature. In their view, an examination of human nature and mental development should lead us to expect that our moral beliefs will be subject to error and distortion; that is why we do not immediately believe Stoic claims about

[31] An example of this form of argument appears in Epictetus' remarks on death: 'When death appears an evil, we ought to have at hand the argument that it is appropriate to avoid evil things, and death is a necessary thing <and therefore cannot be avoided>. For what am I do to? Where I am to go to escape it?' (Epict. i 27.7–8, continuing quotation in n26 above).

[32] 'As we exercise against sophistical questions, so we should exercise ourselves daily against appearances; for they also propose questions to us. "So-and-so's son is dead." Answer: Not chosen (*aprohaireton*); not evil. "He was in pain at this." A matter for choice (*prohairetikon*); evil. "He has endured it nobly." A matter for choice; good. And if we habituate ourselves this way, we will progress. For we will never assent to anything unless we have a grasping (*katalêptikê*) appearance of it' (Epict. iii 8.1–4). We learn to say 'Wait for me a minute, appearance; let me see what you are, and about what; let me put you to the test' (ii 18.24).

[33] (Continued from n31 above.) 'Where we intend to judge of weights, we do not judge at random . . . But in things that depend on the primary and sole cause of success (*katorthoun*; see §184) or failure, of good flow or bad flow, of being unfortunate or fortunate, there only we act randomly and rashly. Nowhere is there anything like scales, nowhere anything like a standard, but something has appeared and at once I act on it. . . . What are people who follow every appearance called? "They are called madmen." ' (i 28.28–33).

virtue and happiness. But they also try to show that the development of practical reason makes it possible for us to form rational preconceptions and to use them for the constructive criticism of our moral beliefs.

166. Nature, Conciliation, and Appearances

The Stoics argue that the pursuit of natural advantages[34] (health, physical security, social relations, family life, and so on) is a reasonable result of our natural development. On the other hand, this same natural development also shows us why these objectives[35] are not genuine goods, and why virtue is really the only good. This argument from natural development relies on the Stoic account of 'conciliation' (*oikeiôsis*).[36]

The Stoics begin with a creature's initial impulse towards its own preservation and its own good.[37] The creature is conciliated to its environment, and so detects things that are good for it. But this conciliation would not benefit creatures unless they were also conciliated to themselves, and so loved themselves and their preservation.[38] Their systematically goal-directed activities manifest self-love.[39] An animal does not occasionally adopt means to particular ends; it displays some broad overall system and consistency in attitudes to the environment.[40] Self-love regulates and co-ordinates a creature's desires as a whole.[41]

This gives us a preliminary idea of the good. A creature's welfare consists in the co-ordinated achievement of the primary impulses that are directed towards the fulfilment of our natural needs.[42] Animals and human beings act for their own good through their cognitive access to the world. This access comes through the senses and the resulting

[34] I translate *ta prôta kata phusin* (lit. the 'primary things in accordance with nature') by 'natural advantages'.

[35] 'Objective' is the Stoic term; see §178.

[36] See DL vii 85 = LS 56A, *Cic. F.* iii 16–20; Striker, 'Role'; Engberg-Pederson, 'Discovering'. We might also render *oikeiôsis* by 'appropriation', 'endearment', or 'adaptation'.

[37] 'The nature of all things has generated us, and has placed in us, and planted at once in those very first principles by which we were born, a love and endearment to ourselves, so much that nothing at all would be dearer and weightier to us than ourselves. And she thought that this would be the foundation for maintaining the perpetuity of human beings, if each one of us, as soon as he is delivered into the light, first of all acquired a sense and affection of those things which by the earlier philosophers were called "the first things according to nature" [Gellius quotes in Greek], so that of course he would delight in all the things suitable for his body and would avoid all the unsuitable things' (Aulus Gellius, *NA* xii 5.7, continued in §180n28).

[38] 'As soon as a creature is born it is conciliated to itself and commended towards conserving itself and towards loving its state and those things that conserve its state' (Cic. *F* iii 16).

[39] 'It is not surprising that they are born with that without which they would be born pointlessly. This is the first piece of equipment that nature placed in them for their preservation—their conciliation and attachment to themselves. They could not have been preserved unless they wanted it' (Sen. *Ep.* 121.24).

[40] 'There must be something to which other things are to be referred. I seek pleasure. For whom? For myself. So I take care for myself. I avoid pain. On whose behalf? On my own. Hence I take care for myself. If I do everything because of my care for myself, my care for myself comes before everything' (Sen. *Ep.* 121.17).

[41] 'We were asking whether all animals had some sense (sensus) of their constitution. It is clearest of all that they have from the way they move their limbs suitably and nimbly just as though they had been trained for it. . . . Nature is more easily understood (intelligitur) than explained (enarratur); and so the child does not know (novit) what a constitution is, but knows his own constitution. What an animal is he does not know (nescit); but he senses that he is an animal' (Sen. *Ep.* 121.5–11).

[42] 'For nature which has given us the soul has also given us the body, and has conciliated us to the completion (*teleiotês*) and the sorts of provisions needful for each of them. And so someone deprived of the completion according to nature of the one of these would not live according to nature either . . . ' (Alex. *Mant.* 163.14–17)

'appearances' (*phantasiai*); through them things appear a certain way to us, and when we have a suitable appearance, it results in an impulse (*hormê*) to get something. The Stoics do not claim that a young animal has an explicit conception of itself and a desire directed on the self defined by that conception. Seneca insists that some sort of non-explicit knowledge is all that is ascribed. The creature's behaviour justifies us in ascribing mental states to it with the content 'This is good for me' or something like that; for it acts in ways we would expect creatures with such a belief to act.

The Stoics believe they have said enough to undermine a hedonist conception of the final good. To explain action and the development of rational choice we must assume, in the Stoic view, that we desire natural goods for ourselves for their own sake. Pleasure is only a supervenient end, resulting from the experience following our achievement of the natural goods (Cic. *F.* iii 17). We must assume a desire for our self-preservation if the process is to begin.

A hedonist might answer that a creature acquires a desire for pleasure after some early experience of it. We might find that a creature is inert, needs to be moved by others, or moves at random until its first experience of pleasure, after which it concentrates on pleasure as its end. But the Stoics could fairly reply that this is not what we find. From the start we find fairly organized and consistent behaviour, best explained on the assumption that the creature desires its own good and acts on its beliefs about it; and its own good will consist in the satisfaction of its natural impulses. As Cicero remarks, no one would be indifferent between being sound in limb and being maimed, even if it made no difference to efficiency (*F.* iii 17). Apparently, pleasure is not all we care about; our behaviour would be inexplicable if we did not care about the natural goods for their own sake.

Epicurus is wrong, therefore, in the Stoic view, to suppose that the study of natural development supports a hedonist account of the good. His position reflects the influence of Cyrenaic anti-eudaemonism. If we focus narrowly on our experience in a particular situation, we may reasonably argue that in achieving the satisfaction of our natural desires we achieve pleasure, and that we find this pleasure attractive to us on future occasions also. If, then, we thought of our desires and satisfactions as a sequence of episodes linked only by memory and anticipation, we might be attracted by the hedonist position.[43] If the Cyrenaics are right in their objections to a continuing self, an agent is simply a sequence of episodes of pleasure or pain, linked by memory and anticipation. In the Stoic view, however, the Cyrenaic and Epicurean description of pleasure and desire leaves out the aspects of agency that are captured by the doctrine of conciliation.

Stoic claims about conciliation attend to the system and pattern in desires. Even before agents are guided by explicit preconceptions, their desires are more than a collection of impulses aimed at unconnected satisfactions. They are linked by a common concern for the agent as a whole, conceived as a continuing self. Though the Stoics agree that agents without explicit reason have no explicit conception of themselves as continuing agents, a non-explicit conception of themselves explains the system and co-ordination in their desires. Once we see this system, we cannot suppose that the pleasure of satisfying particular desires is all that they care about for its own sake.

[43] See §154; Brunschwig, 'Cradle'.

At an early stage, human beings are like other animals; their appearances include an attractive element, so that if something appears pleasant (etc.), it thereby excites impulse and produces action. Later, however, we acquire the capacity to assent to our appearances and to dissent from them. Our appearances do not change their character; the things that appeared pleasant still appear pleasant, and are therefore still attractive, but we no longer follow them without question. We do not follow them until we assent.

Assent is not simply a further appearance directed to the initial appearance. If we formed a tendency to accept or to welcome some appearances and to reject others, we would have what Hume calls a 'lively idea'.[44] But this is not what the Stoics identify with assent. They argue that whereas appearance is passive, and depends on the environment, assent is active (Sx. *M* vii 237).[45] Appearance is involuntary, and assent is voluntary and depends on our judgment (*krisis*) (viii 397).[46] Assent implies 'conviction' or 'persuasion' (*peisma*), which the Sceptic avoids (viii 159).[47]

Since assent is rational, it applies the distinctive rationality of human agents to action. Epictetus claims that human beings fulfil their nature by exercising their rationality,[48] and they exercise this rationality in their assents and dissents.

167. Passions as Assents

Though our capacity to assent includes the capacity to reflect on our appearances and to criticize them, its first exercises do not lead us far from our appearances. When we begin to assent, we are used to having appearances that have moved us to action by themselves. These same appearances are still strongly suggestive, and we tend to assent to them.[49] This sort of assent 'yields' to appearances (Plu. *SR* 1056f = LS 41E; 1057a = LS 53S), and results in an 'affection' or 'passion' (*pathos*). A passion is an 'immediate' or 'fresh' assent that consists in yielding to an appearance that some natural advantage or disadvantage is good or evil.[50] In immediate assents we yield to our first appearances of how things are. Sometimes we yield immediately because the appearance comes on us suddenly and without preparation.[51]

[44] See Hume's account of belief, *T* i 3.7 §5.

[45] Hence proof is the product of thought (*dianoia*) and assent, which are rational (*logika*) (Sx. *M* viii 301).

[46] Cicero draws the same contrast: Zeno contrasts the receptivity of appearance with the assent of the mind 'which he wants to be up to us and voluntary' (in nobis positam et voluntariam) (*Ac.* i 40 = LS 40B). Assent is 'in our power' (in nostra potestate sita) (ii 37 = LS 40O).

[47] On Sceptical assent see §139.

[48] 'God needed other animals using their appearances, but needed us understanding our use of them. And so for other animals it is enough to eat, drink, rest, copulate and the other things that fulfil what belongs to them. But for us, to whom God has also given the power of understanding, these things are no longer enough; if we do not act the right way, the orderly way, in the way that follows the nature and constitution of each, we will not achieve our end' (Epict. i 6.13–15 = LS 63E).

[49] On suggestive appearances see Long, 'Psychology', 579.

[50] 'All impulses are assents, but some are practical and include the moving part (of the soul). . . . They say that a passion is an impulse that is excessive and disobedient to choosing reason, or a non-rational movement of the soul contrary to nature. All passions belong to the leading part of the soul' (Stob. ii 88.1–10 = LS 33I and 65A). On Sceptical claims about yielding to appearances see §139.

[51] Hence Poseidonius advises preparation. See Galen, *PHP* iv 7.6–8 = 282.1–14; we should imagine the situations in advance (*proanaplattein, protupoun*).

At other times we may yield immediately because we have not questioned the truth of the suggestion made by the appearance.[52]

In saying that we yield to appearances, the Stoics seek to explain and to correct the common assumption that the passions are ways of being affected rather than ways of acting. They do not accept this assumption, since they identify a passion with an immediate assent, and all assent is active. Neither animals nor young children have passions,[53] because they act on appearance alone, whereas rational agents act on appearance only after assenting to it. When we act on passion, we act on minimal assent, since we fail to interfere with or to question the suggestion that the appearance makes.

By insisting that passion involves assent, the Stoics implicitly deny that we can act on our passions against all our beliefs.[54] If we seem to act against our beliefs, we really have wavering or oscillating beliefs; though we act against some of our beliefs, we act on other beliefs.[55] Similarly, passions cannot persist without the relevant beliefs about good and bad.[56] The passions that the Stoics identify with immediate assents include anger, fear, lust, and all the others that Plato and Aristotle ascribe to the non-rational parts of the soul.

When the Stoics say that a passion is a mistaken belief that a natural advantage is good, they mean that we assent to the appearance as offering us a real good. But they do not simply mean that we regard the apparent good as good some things considered. When we act on assent to an appearance, we act on the outlook that Plato and Aristotle ascribe to the rational part of the soul; we take the apparent good to be good all things considered. Plato is right to see some non-rational element in the passions, but wrong about where he puts it. The non-rational element lies in the appearance, but not in the belief and desire on which we act; for between the appearance and the action comes assent to the contemplated action as best overall. Plato distinguishes the rational part from the other two parts of the soul by attributing desires and beliefs about the overall good to the rational part, but not to the other two parts. The Stoics argue that passions belong to the rational part because they all assent to the action as good overall.

None the less, the Stoics recognize a way in which passions conflict with reason[57] even though they depend essentially on false evaluative (and therefore, in one sense, rational) beliefs. We may form a belief irrationally, on insufficient evidence, or without adding up the evidence correctly. And once we have formed it, we may stick to it irrationally, because we are wrongly unimpressed by counter-evidence. The fact that a passion is unreasonable in this way does not mean that the underlying belief is wholly non-rational, or that it is immune

[52] At Galen, *PHP* iv 7.12–17 = 284.3–17 = LS 65O, an immediate opinion seems to be formed as a result of some immediate stimulus or occasion. This seems to be what Poseidonius assumes when he asks Chrysippus to explain why the temporal closeness of the occasion for the belief should matter (Galen, *PHP* iv 7.6 = 282.5). Cicero, however, argues that the passion goes away as a result of further reflexion on the situation (*TD* iii 74). If we retain the impressions, thoughts, and attitudes that led to the passion, the relevant belief remains immediate.

[53] See Cic. *TD* iv 31; Galen, *PHP* iv 5.3–4 = 260.8–13; v 1.10 = 294.17–20; Origen, *in Matt.* iii 92 = SVF iii 477.

[54] I use 'belief' broadly, to cover both true and false assents (and so more broadly than the Stoics use '*doxa*').

[55] '. . . passion is not something other than reason, nor is there dispute and conflict between the two; rather the single reason turns in both directions, escaping our notice by the suddenness and speed of the change. . . . In fact appetites, anger, fear and all such things are inferior beliefs and judgments, not coming to be in some one part of the soul, but inclinations, yieldings, assents and impulses of the whole leading part . . . ' (Plu. *VM* 446f–447a = LS 65G) Cf. Galen, *PHP* iv 4.6–7 = 252.1–5 = SVF iii 462.

[56] Cf. Epict. i 28.6–9 (on Medea); ii 26.4.

[57] Cic. *Off.* i 136; *TD* iv 31; Galen, *PHP* iv 2.19–27 = 242.12–244.9 = *SVF* iii 462.

to rational persuasion. For we may still change the belief when we come to realize that our reason for holding it is less good than our reason for accepting the counter-evidence. We think we follow our passions against our rational assent, because we do not realize that our belief that (say) we ought always to avenge insults is very tenacious. It is so tenacious that even when we think we have persuaded ourselves out of it, we are not really persuaded, but still revert to our old view if we are insulted. Where common sense thinks it sees a conflict between rational assent and passion, the Stoics see wavering and vacillation between two conflicting rational assents resting on conflicting beliefs about what is best.

In his discussion of the passions Chrysippus examines the features of the passions that have led some people to recognize a non-rational part, and he tries to show how the Stoic position accounts for these features. Some sources quote passages in which he seems to recognize the non-rational character of (for instance) anger, and our tendency to persist in it even when we recognize that we ought not to.[58] Galen even claims that another Stoic, Poseidonius, returned to the Platonic position, and criticized the other Stoics for ignoring the non-rational part.[59]

Critics find the Stoic position puzzling and inconsistent because it is not purely Socratic. Chrysippus believes that he can both recognize the apparently non-rational character of passions and still maintain his analysis of them as assents. In his view, the non-rational aspect of the passion is present in the appearance that underlies it. The suggestiveness of the appearance—the feature of it that makes it easy for us to yield to it in our assent—is a product of our experience, and (in many cases) of our upbringing and our interaction with other people. Plato and Aristotle are right, therefore, to say that passions are sometimes difficult to resist, but they are wrong about what resistance involves, and about what happens when we fail to resist them. We have to resist, and we sometimes fail to resist, the powerful suggestiveness of the underlying appearance; in failing to resist it, we are too

[58] 'Chrysippus himself agrees not once or twice but very often that some other power than the rational power in the souls of men is responsible for passions.... Whatever things men do wrongly, he refers some to depraved judgment, others to slackness and weakness of soul; similarly, in the things they do correctly, correct judgment leads the way, with good tension in the soul. But in such cases judgment is the work of the rational power of the soul; similarly, good tension is vigour and virtue of another power besides the rational, a power which Chrysippus himself names tension.... In these remarks he is showing clearly what sort of thing a passion is' (Galen, *PHP* iv 6.1–3 = 270.10–24). 'That is why these people say, when the actual things force them, that not every judgment is a passion, but only the one that arouses a violent and excessive impulse—they are conceding that what judges and what is affected in us are different things, just as the mover and the moved are. And when Chrysippus himself in many places defines endurance and continence as states that follow choosing reason, he is clearly being compelled by the actual things to concede that the thing following in us is different from the thing which it follows when it obeys and fights when it does not obey' (Plu. *VM* 449c). '... Chrysippus evidently contradicts himself... when he is writing about the definition of the things to do with affection. He says it is a non-rational movement contrary to nature, and an excessive impulse. Then he explains "non-rational" by saying that it is what has been said without reason and judgment. And for an example of excessive impulse he cites people running hard. Now both these points conflict with the view that affections are judgments. We will recognize this more clearly by transcribing his own statements: "We must first of all be aware that the rational animal is by nature a follower of reason, an agent according to reason as its leader. Often, however, it is moved in a different way too from some things to some things, when it is pushed further in disobedience to reason.... For this irrational (part) must be taken to be disobedient to reason and turned away from reason." ' (Galen, *PHP* iv 2.8–12 = 240.11–24).

[59] 'But in the places where [Chrysippus] refutes himself and at the same time conflicts with the things appearing clearly, in these I think someone would be ashamed and would turn in a better direction. This is what Poseidonius did, since he was ashamed to agree with the clearly false doctrine of the other Stoics' (Galen, *PHP* v 1.10 = 294.13–17). In 'at the same time...' Galen alludes to Aristotle, *EN* 1145b28. See also *PHP* v 6.33 = 332.18–22. Probably Galen is wrong about Poseidonius. See Kidd, 'Poseidonius'; Cooper, 'Poseidonius'.

easily persuaded that things are as they appear to be. Passion affects us not by overriding our assent, but by forming it on the wrong basis.

In the light of this view of the passions, the Stoics explain the apparent phenomena of incontinence. In their view, the allegedly incontinent action in these cases is action on assent, since it is a voluntary action; and if it is an action on assent, the agent judges that the action is best, all things considered. Rational assent wavers and vacillates, but it is not overcome by non-rational desires. This description of incontinence seems to differ sharply from Aristotle's conception of incontinence as failure to follow my rational judgment of what is better on the whole. But Aristotle concedes a point to the Stoics; for he does not think it is possible to know that x is rationally preferable to y and, at the same time as one knows this, to choose and to do y rather than x. Incontinent people, in his view, lose their grasp of the true principles whenever they act incontinently. (*EN* 1147b9–17). In admitting that ignorance must be part of any explanation of incontinence, Aristotle seems to accept the central Stoic claim.

168. How can we Correct our Assents?

This outline of the Stoic account of the passions helps to clarify the ethical task we face when we become capable of practical reasoning. The task is parallel to the task that faces us in assenting to or dissenting from our perceptual appearances. Assent to the appearance of my hand in front of me in ordinary circumstances rests on the belief that all the evidence available to me favours the truth of the appearance. If I assent unwisely to an appearance, I am hasty or careless in assuming that the weight of evidence favours its truth.

In these cases, my assent to the appearance rests on a judgment about its relation to my other beliefs about available evidence. The same is true in assents to appearances about good and evil. Even impulsive people assent when they yield to their appearances; their outlook and values influence the sorts of appearances that they will give way to, even though they do not usually attend explicitly or reflectively to the relevant considerations. The mere fact that the appearance suggests that revenge (for instance) is good does not explain why we seek revenge; for not all agents who have appearances suggesting this also yield to the appearance. Whether or not we yield to the appearance also depends on our more general and reflective values; if they permit us to yield to this sort of appearance, then we yield to it, and otherwise we do not yield to it.

Since we have strongly suggestive appearances, we need to take deliberate steps to resist their suggestions; even if the suggestions are sometimes correct, we should not simply take it for granted that the balance of rational considerations favours assenting to them.

169. Questions about Responsibility

The Stoics' doctrine of the passions helps to explain why they claim that assent is the distinctive element in human action. We can understand their claim still better if we grasp the role of assent in their account of responsibility. They agree with Aristotle in believing that it is up to us to be virtuous or vicious, and in believing that virtuous actions 'control' (*kuriai*)

happiness. Indeed they go further than Aristotle goes in claiming that happiness is in our power. Their views are coherent only if the state or activity that they identify with virtue and with happiness is one that, according to their theory of responsibility, we are responsible for.

The Stoics believe that they can satisfy this demand for coherence in their theory of action and moral theory. For they believe that, once we understand the role of assent in relation to appearance, we grasp the distinctive feature of rational agency that underlies both responsibility and virtue. Once we see what makes us rational agents, we can see what makes us responsible agents, and how we can become virtuous and happy. This attempt to explain virtue and happiness by appeal to a conception of agency is implicit in Aristotle. The Stoics offer a more explicit and systematic argument from reason to responsibility and to virtue. Their clarification and modification of Aristotle's position suggest some of the further clarifications and developments that result in Aquinas' defence of an Aristotelian position.[60]

The Stoics differ from Aristotle in presenting an elaborate theory of moral responsibility that fits into the rest of their philosophical system. Their theory embraces compatibilism and soft determinism.[61] They accept causal determinism for reasons connected with their natural philosophy and natural theology; determinism is part of their doctrine of fate (or 'destiny', *heimarmenê*).[62]

Stoic determinism convinces some ancient critics that the Stoics are committed to the rejection of human freedom, since they affirm that all events, including all human actions, are made inevitable by events in the distant past. The Stoics, however, deny that they are committed to a hard determinist conclusion that rejects freedom. To show that freedom is compatible with Stoic determinism, they defend a division between different types of causes, and then argue that the causal role they assign to assent is exactly the role that is needed for freedom and responsibility.

Their division of causes rests on broader claims about causation and explanation, not simply on claims about responsibility. Stoic determinism does not imply that the real cause of an event is found in the distant past.[63] The distant past includes an 'antecedent' cause of every effect, but it does not include the principal cause. Similarly, it provides necessary conditions for an event. But neither the antecedent cause nor the necessary conditions are the 'principal' cause.[64] Oedipus would not have killed Laius unless Laius had fathered

[60] On Aquinas see §270. [61] See §148.

[62] 'They say that this world-order is one. It includes in it all the things that are. It is governed by living, rational and understanding nature, so that it has the eternal organization of things that are proceeding in a certain series and order.... And so nothing comes to be in the universe in such a way that something else does not in any case follow on it, bound to it as to its cause. Nor again can any of the things following be separated from the things preceding so as not to follow one of them as being bound to it. Rather, on everything that comes to be something else follows, depending on it as on its cause by necessity; and everything that happens has something before it, on which it depends as on its cause. For nothing in the universe either is or comes to be without a cause, because nothing in it is loosed and separated from all the things that have come before.... They say that something's coming to be without a cause is similar to something's coming to be from nothing, and similarly impossible' (Alex. *Fat.* 2, 191.30–192.15 = LS 55N) For detailed discussion see Bobzien, *DFSP*, ch. 1.

[63] '... the cause should not be understood so that whatever is antecedent to anything is the cause of it, but only what precedes something productively. My going down into the Campus was not the cause of my playing tennis, nor was Hecuba the cause of death for the Trojans because she bore Alexander, nor Tyndareus for Agamemnon because he begot Clytaemnestra. For by these standards a well-dressed traveller will also be said to be the cause for the robber of being robbed by him' (Cic. *Fat.* 34). On the Stoics' 'swarm' of causes cf. Alex. *Fat.* 192.17–28 = LS 55N. Cf. LS 55 J–M.

[64] 'Among causes some are originative, some containing, some cooperative, some sine qua non. The originative are those that first provide a starting-point, for something to come to be, as beauty provides a starting-point for desire in

Oedipus, and he would not have killed him with a brick unless the brick had been hard enough to crush Laius' skull. Neither of these, however, is the cause of Oedipus' killing Laius; Laius' fathering Oedipus is an antecedent cause, and the facts about the brick and Laius' skull are necessary conditions.[65]

The Stoic conception of the principal cause relies on an intuitive sense of the difference between 'the cause' and the various causal 'factors' or 'determinants' of an event. The Stoics take it for granted that 'the' cause is appropriately explanatory, so that even if F causally determines G, it does not follow that F is the cause of G. Events in the distant past are not the cause of my present intentional action, since its causes in the distant past are antecedent but not principal causes. Though an antecedent cause may make an event inevitable, it does not explain why it happens. To explain an event, we must connect the antecedent causes with the cause that more directly explains the event; this cause is the principal cause. Being a principal cause is a non-transitive relation, whereas being an antecedent cause is transitive.

The Stoics assume that we need to explain an event's having a specific property in specific circumstances. Different people might reach different conclusions about 'the' cause of an accident, if they try to explain different things. If we drive inattentively on an unusually bad patch of road, and we have an accident, it might be true both that we would not have had an accident if we had been more careful, and that we would not have had it if the road had been in better condition. We may identify the relevant properties by contrast with the circumstances that are being taken for granted. Our inattention can be blamed for our accident, given that we ought to notice bad patches on a road. The bad condition of the road can be blamed, given that roads ought to be good enough to accommodate occasional inattentiveness in drivers. Two different explananda correspond to the different conditions that we might reasonably take for granted, and so we may find two different principal causes for the different properties to be explained.

170. Assent as Principal Cause

The Stoics connect these claims about causation with their claims about assent by claiming that the principal cause of a rational agent's action is the agent's assent. The existence of an external object is a necessary condition, and the appearance caused by the object is an antecedent cause; but neither of these is the principal cause. Without assuming any break

intemperate people. For when it is seen it produces a desiring condition, but not necessarily. Containing causes are those that are synonymously called self-complete, since they are productive of the effect self-sufficiently through themselves. All the causes in order are to be shown in the case of a learner. For the father is the originative cause of the learning, the teacher the containing, the nature of the learner the cooperative, and time has the account of the things sine qua non. A cause so called primarily is what is productive, of something actively' (Clement, *Strom.* viii 9.25.1–5 = SVF ii 345).

[65] 'Chrysippus . . . both rejected necessity and wanted nothing to happen without previous causes; and so he distinguishes kinds of causes, so that he can both escape necessity and hold on to fate. "For", he says, "among causes some are perfect and principal, others auxiliary and proximate. Hence we say that all things happen by fate by antecedent causes, but do not want this to be understood as perfect and principal causes, but auxiliary and proximate causes." . . . He says: "Someone who has pushed a roller gives it an origin of motion, but he has not given it the capacity to roll. So also something seen when it confronts us will indeed imprint and, so to speak, seal its character in the mind; but our assent will be in our power, and, as we said about the roller, once it is struck from outside for the rest it will be moved by its own force and nature." ' (Cic. *Fat.* 41–3 = LS 62C). See Bobzien, *DFSP*, ch. 6.

in causal determination, we can identify the principal cause of an action with the agent's assent, not with the antecedent conditions of the assent.[66]

We might object that sometimes the appearance rather than the assent may be the principal cause. Iago, for instance, plots against Othello on the mere suspicion that Othello has slept with Iago's wife.[67] He expects correctly that Othello will turn against Desdemona on the mere accusation of infidelity, without further reflexion, if the accuser is someone he trusts.[68] Iago has only to create the appearance of honesty in himself and unfaithfulness in Desdemona. Since Othello's assent can be taken for granted, what explains his action is the appearance.

The Stoics disagree. Iago and Othello are similar to Agamemnon and Achilles, whom Epictetus cites as examples of people who give way too easily to their appearances.[69] In both cases, the Stoics argue that the principal cause, the one that makes the crucial difference in the relevant circumstances, is the agent's assent. Iago begins with the assumption that Othello is of a free and open nature; he is not like Iago in being especially prone to jealousy on the basis of the slightest suspicion. Since Iago is especially prone to jealousy, he knows how to create the circumstances that will arouse jealousy; but what arouses jealousy in Othello is his readiness to trust Iago. Iago's reference to Othello's 'free and open nature' refers, in the Stoic view, to Othello's tendency to assent to some things rather than others. Iago's schemes work on Othello and would not work on someone less naive and trusting (towards Iago) than Othello.

The Stoic claim that assent is the principal cause is defensible, if we are careful to say what it is the principal cause of. To say simply that it is the principal cause of 'the action' is not precise enough. It is the principal cause of Othello's action because Othello's assent explains why he acts on an appearance that someone else might have had without acting on it. Othello has made what the Stoics call a weak and rash assent to the appearance; he has failed to resist the suggestion made by the appearance in cases where someone else would have resisted it.

171. Fate v. Necessity

The Stoics argue that, since the agent's assent is the principal cause, not everything happens by fate in such a way as to remove responsibility. Antecedent causes do not make my action necessary, and hence the doctrine of fate does not import the type of necessity that is inconsistent with responsibility.[70]

Chrysippus is not entitled to say this, if 'making necessary' means something like 'leaving no alternative causally possible'. For if determinism is true, then an earlier event on a causal

[66] '. . . every animal qua animal when it is moved is moved with the movement according to impulse, the movement coming to be from fate through the animal. . . . But these movements come to be through impulse and assent, while the movements of other things come to be some because of heaviness, some because of heat, and some according to some other <cause>. . . ; hence we say that this movement is up to animals' (Alex. *Fat.* 13, 182.6–18 = *SVF* ii 979).

[67] 'I hate the Moor; | and it is thought abroad that 'twixt my sheets | h'as done my office. I know not if 't be true; | but I, for mere suspicion in that kind, | will do as if for surety' (*Othello* i 3.380).

[68] 'The Moor is of a free and open nature | that thinks men honest that but seem to be so; and will as tenderly be led by th' nose | as asses are' (i 3.393).

[69] Epict. i 28.31. See §165 above.

[70] Some of Cicero's remarks in *Fat.* 43 = LS 62C might mislead us into supposing that the Stoics introduce an element of indeterminism here.

chain, however long, guarantees the later event and leaves no alternative possible, given the past and the laws of nature. Chrysippus understands 'making necessary' differently; he believes that the necessity that excludes freedom is the sort of necessity that is independent of our rational choices. In his view, the Stoics are not committed to this kind of necessity.[71]

Origen discusses this question in order to answer Celsus' charge that Judas was not responsible for betraying Jesus. Since the fact that it was true in the distant past that Judas would betray Jesus implies that Judas would betray Jesus, did this fact about the distant past make it inevitable that Judas would betray Jesus, in such a way that Judas could do nothing about it? Celsus answers Yes, and infers that Judas is not responsible for betraying Jesus.[72]

The Stoics, however, argue that it is a mistake to argue from 'this event in the distant past implied that Judas would betray Jesus' to the conclusion 'this event in the distant past all by itself resulted in Judas' betrayal of Jesus'. The betrayal of Jesus results only if many other things, including Judas' decision to betray Jesus, intervene. Since Judas' decision is a necessary part of the sequence resulting in the betrayal of Jesus, Judas cannot plead that the betrayal was inevitable no matter what he decided, and hence he cannot escape responsibility.[73] His decision to betray Jesus was 'confatal' with the betrayal of Jesus.[74]

This is a good answer to a fatalist argument that relies simply on past truth. The Stoics believe that an incompatibilist makes a mistake similar to the one that a fatalist makes. In their view, the incompatibilist is right to argue that we cannot be responsible for our actions if the past and the laws of nature determine our actions irrespective of what we choose. The incompatibilist overlooks the fact, however, that the past events determine my actions only because they lead to the assent and choice that is the principal cause of my action. Since my assent plays a crucial causal role in the production of my action, it is reasonable to hold me responsible for the action.

[71] Augustine says the Stoics distinguished types of causes in order to avoid allowing the necessitation that excludes responsibility: 'For if in our case we mean by "necessity" the sort that is not in our power but achieves what it is capable of even if we will it not to happen (etiam si nolimus), such as the necessity of dying, then it is clear that our wills, by which we live either rightly or wrongly, are not subject to that sort of necessity. For we do many things which we would not do if we did not will to do them. Among these belongs first of will willing itself. For it happens if we will it to happen, and if we do not will it, it does not happen; for we would not will if we did not will to will. If on the other hand we mean by 'necessity' the sort according to which we say it is necessary for something to be or to come to be a certain way, I see no reason why we should be afraid that that sort will take away the freedom of our will from us' (*CD* v 10a). Augustine argues that we need to reject only the first kind of necessity, the sort that is independent of our wills, if we are to be free of the necessity that threatens responsibility.

[72] This argument is derived from the argument for fatalism that Aristotle rejects in his discussion of the 'sea battle'. See *De Int.* 19a22–b1.

[73] [Celsus on Jesus' prophecy that Judas would betray him.] 'If he foretold these things, being a god, then in any case what he foretold had to come to be. A god, then, so perverted his own disciples and prophets, with whom he ate and drank, that they became unholy and impious . . . [Origen replies] Celsus thinks that something predicted by some sort of foreknowledge happens because of this—because it was predicted. We do not concede this. . . . We deny that the one foreknowing removes what is capable of coming to be and of not coming to be . . . From Jesus' having foretold correctly the things about his future betrayer or his denier <Peter> it does not follow that he came to be the cause of impious and unholy actions' (Origen, *Cels*. ii 20). Cf. Augustine §10.

[74] 'These philosophers . . . argue: "If it is fate for you to recover from this illness, you will recover whether you bring a doctor or you do not. Similarly, if it is fate for you not to recover from this illness, you will not recover, whether you bring a doctor or you do not. But one or the other is fate; hence there is no point in bringing a doctor." This sort of argument is rightly called lazy and inactive, because by the same principle all action is removed from life. . . . Chrysippus attacks this argument: . . . If it is fated "Oedipus will be born to Laius", it cannot be said "whether Laius has been with a woman or not". Here the thing is complex and confatal—for that is what he calls it because it is fated thus both that Laius will lie with a woman and that by her he will beget Oedipus. . . . ' (Cic. *Fat.* 28–30 = LS 55S, 70G).

172. Incompatibilist Objections

We may find this a superficial answer to the incompatibilist's objections.[75] The Stoics seem to suggest that if the causal chain has to pass through our choices and assents, we are responsible for the actions. But Alexander argues that this suggestion does not satisfy plausible Aristotelian conditions for responsibility, because no determinist position satisfies these conditions. In defending incompatibilism and indeterminism, Alexander agrees with Epicurus.[76]

Alexander appeals to two Aristotelian conditions for responsibility: (1) When we deliberate, we believe we can do either of two possible actions, and if we are responsible for our action, our belief must be true. Responsibility presupposes, then, that it is 'up to us' to do what we do as opposed to something else. (2) When we are responsible for our action, we ourselves are the 'principles' or 'origins' (*archai*), the origins are in us, and we are in control (*kurioi*) of the actions.[77]

In Alexander's view, these claims must be understood in an indeterminist sense.[78] The Stoics violate Aristotle's first condition, which requires alternatives that are up to us; for, in their view, an unbroken chain of sufficient conditions leads from events that happened thousands of years ago all the way to my action. Hence past events make my action inevitable; hence it cannot be up to me to act differently. The Stoics also violate Aristotle's second condition, which requires the origin to be in us. For the Stoic doctrine of causes and fate implies that our reasoning, deliberation, and rational assent have external causes, so that (Alexander infers) we ourselves are not the origins of our actions, and so nothing is up to us (Alex. *Fat.* 14, 185.7–21; *Mant.* 173.10–21).

The Stoics accept the Aristotelian conditions, but reject Alexander's interpretation. They accept the demand for alternatives and for internal origins within Stoic determinism. They believe that actions in accordance with our impulses have our assents as their principal causes. Hence they come about 'by fate through the animal' (Alex. *Fat.* 13, 182.12 = LS 62G), and this makes them up to us.

This Stoic claim, according to Alexander, overlooks a difference between human agents and other principal causes. Something does not become responsible for its motions simply because it is their principal cause; fire is not responsible for moving upwards. Other subjects besides human agents are only causally responsible, whereas we are also morally responsible,

[75] Cf. §225. [76] See §149. [77] On these conditions in Aristotle see §100.

[78] '... the voluntary and the up to us are not the same. For what comes to be from an unforced assent is voluntary; but up to us is what comes to be with assent that is according to reason and judgment. Hence if something is up to us it is voluntary, but not everything voluntary is up to us. For non-rational animals too do voluntarily what they do according to the impulse and assent in them; but it is peculiar to a human being that some of the things coming to be from him are up to him. For his being rational is this—his having in him reason that is judge and discoverer of the appearances that fall on him and in general of things to be done and not to be done. Hence the other animals, which yield to appearances alone have in these the causes of their assents and impulses to action. But a human being has reason as a judge of appearances falling on him from outside about things to be done. He uses this reason to examine each appearance, to see not only whether it appears to be such as it appears, but also whether it is. If he finds by investigation according to reason that its being is different from its appearance, he does not give way to it simply because it appears such, but because it is not also such, he objects to it.... Being rational is nothing else than this, being an origin of actions. ... And if we have from nature the freedom to do something after deliberation, it is clear we would have the freedom also to do something else through deliberation, and do not in any case (i.e. necessarily) do what we do after deliberation if we do deliberate' (Alex. *Fat.* 14, 183.26–185.7). See also §101 (Aristotle); §265 (Aquinas); §§369–70 (Scotus).

being open to praise and blame. Since principal causation implies nothing more than causal responsibility, it cannot justify praise and blame. And so even if an action results from assent and impulse, it does not follow that it is up to us. The Stoics may have given an adequate account of the voluntary (183.24–6); but voluntary action is not necessarily up to us.[79] What is up to us is 'what comes about with the assent in accordance with reason and judgment' (183.28–9), and this is peculiar to human beings (cf. *Mant.* 172.25–173.3).

Alexander claims that the Stoics eliminate real responsibility. Critics of the Stoics do not simply want to find some use for the phrase 'up to us', but also want to prove the reality of what the name signifies, namely sovereignty (*to autexousion*) over our actions (*Fat.* 14 = 182.22–4). The earliest attested uses of this term '*autexousion*' are political, referring to a ruler who is not subject to any other ruler. Hence Philo sometimes combines it with 'having full powers' (*autokratôr*), and often applies it to the absolute sovereignty of God.[80] The corresponding abstract noun '*autexousiotês*' is rendered in later Latin sources by 'liberum arbitrium'.[81] In using the term to refer to what he thinks the Stoics cannot allow, Alexander makes it clear that he wants to safeguard the agent's independence of external circumstances; hence he combines 'sovereign' with 'free' (*eleutheron*), another term whose political use is attested earlier than its metaphysical use (*Fat.* 18 = 188.20–1).[82] In using these two political terms Alexander does not take himself to be introducing a different concept from Aristotle's concept of what is up to us; he takes himself to identify more precisely the property of human actions that this concept introduces.

Alexander assumes that I am free and sovereign over my action only if my reason is also in my control. But any determinist history of the formation of my desires seems to assign control to something other than my reason, and hence to something other than me. He assumes that I control my actions only if my reasons and rational deliberation control them. But this control, in his view, also implies that I control whatever controls my reasons and deliberation. If we are determinists, and we look for the origins that have determined our current desires and assents, we must go back to our upbringing, early training, and other things that are all out of our control. If an unbroken causal history leads back to causes that never were in our control and are not in our control, we do not seem to control our actions now. Our assents and desires have causes that are in our control only if the causal sequence is broken at the right place.

[79] Alexander implies that the Stoics attribute assent to all animals. For justified doubts about whether he represents them accurately see Sharples, *Fat.*, in Alex. pp. 144–6.

[80] At Philo, *Leg. Alleg.* iii 73., *autexousios dunasteia* is ascribed to God. Hence Moses addresses the *autexousion tou theou kratos*—appropriately rendered by the Loeb translation as 'absolute sovereignty' (*Plant.* 46). God governs the world by an *autexousios* and *autokratôr basileia* (*Heres* 301). In comparison with God, the real being (*to on*), none of the other gods is *autexousios* (*Ebr.* 43). In contrast to God, the sun and moon are not *autexousia*, but passively moved (*Cherub.* 88). Among human beings, the delusion of being more than human arises from the possession of wealth followed by *autexousios hegemonia* (*Cain* 115). If we are enlightened and led away from the body and the senses, we no longer imagine we gain knowledge through a mind (*gnômê*) that is *autokratôr* and *autexousios* (*Heres* 85). The connexion between 'being in one's own power' and freedom is marked in Diodorus Siculus xiv 105.4, where prisoners of war are released *autexousioi*.

[81] 'Liberum arbitrium' is used with a sense similar to that of '*autexousios*' and '*autokratôr*', meaning 'with full powers'. For its political and legal uses see *OLD* s.v. arbitrium, 4d.

[82] Epictetus uses 'sovereign' and 'free' together at ii 2.3 (things that are *epi* you are *autexousia kai phusei eleuthera*); iv 1.56 (Do you think *eleutheria* is *autexousion* and *autonomon*?); 62; 68; 100 (what God has given me of my own and *autexousion* is *ta prohairetika*). On liberum arbitrium see §265. Bobzien, *DFSP*, ch. 7, discusses Epictetus and earlier Stoics on freedom (with a brief remark on *autexousiotês*, 335–6).

Hence Alexander thinks a satisfactory account of responsibility, involving the claim that our actions are up to us and in our control, must be indeterminist. He follows Aristotle in believing that if something is up to us, the origin must be in us, and that in so far as we are rational we are origins of actions (*Fat.* 184.15–16; *Mant.* 173.6–10). Then he infers that if there is any external cause of our reasoning, deliberation, and rational assent, we ourselves are not the origins of our actions, and hence nothing is up to us (*Fat.* 185.7–21; *Mant.* 173.10–21). But if the result of deliberation is not causally determined, something of which we ourselves are the origin is the cause of our action. Alexander rejects the assumption that if we prefer x over y in one situation and y over x in another, there must have been some causally significant difference in the two cases; the fact is just that we faced the same choice in the same circumstances on two occasions, chose one way on one occasion and the other way on another, and there is no further causal explanation of our choice (*Fat.* 185.21–186.3).

Alexander's objections to the Stoics rest on the assumption that my freedom depends on my capacity to choose between alternatives; that is why he infers both that freedom is peculiar to rational agents, and that it requires indeterminism. But we need not accept both inferences. Perhaps freedom consists in acting in the light of recognition of reasons for doing x rather than y. Hence it requires rational choice, based on the recognition of reasons for alternative courses of action, and hence it is not open to non-rational agents. This appeal to rational choice between alternatives allows a compatibilist account of responsibility.[83] The Stoics can reasonably argue that they have shown how human choices are free.

173. Assent as the Basis for Responsibility

The Stoics reject Alexander's charge that in accepting determinism they preclude responsibility. They rest their case against him on the claim that our assent is the principal cause of our actions. Why does this causal role matter so much for responsibility?

The mere fact that we are the principal causes of something does not make us morally responsible for it, since, as Alexander remarks, plants, animals, and other non-responsible agents can also be principal causes. The Stoics, however, argue that since assent is the principal cause, we are morally responsible. Since the general evaluative outlook that causes assent is itself open to alteration by deliberation and reflexion, it is appropriate to praise and blame agents who act on assent.

This link between assent and responsibility depends on the rational character of assent and of praise and blame. The Stoics believe that our assent is open to influence by rational evaluation, and that praise and blame are forms of rational evaluation, pointing out reasons for and against an action that are appropriately taken into account by an agent who considers whether to assent to an appearance that suggests doing the action.

If praise and blame were not concerned with reasons, but were simply expressions of favourable and aversive reactions, or if assent were not influenced by reasons, but only by causal processes immune to reasons, the Stoics would lose the basis for their claim that actions caused by assents are proper objects of praise and blame. Since, however, they are

[83] See Meyer, 'Responsibility' 234–40.

right to believe that praise, blame, reasons, and assent are connected in the ways they claim, they have a good case for believing we are justly held responsible for the actions we assent to. Hence they also have a good reason for claiming that the conditions that Alexander interprets in an indeterminist sense—'up to us', 'in our power', and so on—are properly interpreted so as to refer to the controlling role of assent and reason.

Aristotle's account of responsibility is closer to the Stoic position than to Alexander's.[84] While he affirms the conditions that Alexander interprets in an indeterminist sense, he does not interpret them in this sense. He argues that rational agents are rightly held responsible for their voluntary actions because these are actions of agents who are capable of rational deliberation and election. The Stoics go further, and insist that we are responsible for those actions that actually express—either by reflexion on appearances or by simply going along with them—the outlook that is embodied in the agent's elections (as Aristotle understands them).[85] This further element in the Stoic position modifies and develops Aristotle, but it does not depart sharply from his position.

Later expositors of Aristotle's position are right, therefore, to mention assent. When Aspasius explains Aristotle's remark that belief precedes election, he takes him to mean that reason must assent to something as choiceworthy, and after that desire follows, so that an election results (Asp. *in EN* 70.14–20). Alexander places what is up to us in rational assent that comes about through deliberation (*Fat*. 184.10–15); this is a sufficient basis for responsibility because the agent is responsible (*aitios*) for his assent (186.10–12). Deliberation is relevant to election and to something's being up to us, because it is the basis for rational assent, which does not simply give way to the initial appearance (Alex. *Quaest*. iii 13, 107.6–19); hence deliberation and the resultant rational assent justify us in claiming that an action is up to us (*DA* 73.7–13).[86] When Alexander introduces this element of the Stoic position into his account of Aristotle, he supports the conclusion that rationality, rather than (as he supposes) indeterminism, is essential to free and responsible agency.

174. Passions, Assent, and Responsibility

Once we grasp the connexion between assent and responsibility, we may look more sympathetically on an initially surprising feature of the Stoic doctrine of the passions. We might be surprised that the Stoics insist that passions are assents. But they defend their position by pointing out that we can be praised and blamed for having particular passions and for acting on them (Cic. *TD* iv 31). We could not fairly be praised and blamed if our passions were outside our rational control, and so not determined by our rational assent (which the Stoics take to be crucial for control and responsibility).[87] But if we accept a non-Stoic view of the passions, we must (in the Stoic view) regard passions as compulsive states; and then we cannot explain why they are not outside the area of responsible action (as bodily diseases often are).

[84] See §100. [85] In emphasizing actual influence the Stoics come close to Aquinas' position (§255).

[86] This introduction of the Stoic doctrine of assent into an Aristotelian account of what is up to us is discussed by Gauthier, 'St Maxime' 69.

[87] See Cic. *TD* iv 14: passions come about 'iudicio et opinione' and are 'in nostra potestate'. Cf. Epict. i 11.33.

The Stoics' argument is this: (1) Action on passions is voluntary; that is why we are responsible for it. (2) If it is voluntary, it requires assent. (3) We assent to an action as being best all things considered. (4) But passions do not rest on a true judgment that an action is best all things considered. (5) Hence acting on passion is acting on a false assent to an action as best all things considered. In the fourth claim the Stoics acknowledge the intuitive division between passions and correct rational judgment, and so acknowledge that there is something non-rational or irrational about the passions. In (2) and (3) they state conditions for responsibility, and in (1) claim that these conditions must apply to action on passions. In the light of (1)–(3), we cannot claim that the passions belong to a non-rational part of the soul that moves us to action independently of rational assent; for if we claimed this, we would thereby be claiming that we are not responsible for action on passions. We cannot claim, therefore, that non-rational movements and appearances are themselves sufficient for passions. That is why the Stoics conclude that the passions, strictly speaking, consist in assents; since they cannot consist in true and reflective assents, they must consist in false and hasty assents.

This part of the Stoic argument raises a question for Aristotle. He apparently accepts the first two premisses. His attitude to the third is less clear. The Stoics suppose that the assent must be assent to the appearance that a course of action is good. In Aristotle's account of action, this assent is a constituent of rational desire and election, in contrast to action on non-rational desire. If he believes that we are responsible for action on passions, and not only for action on rational desire, then he has a reason to reject (3). In that case, however, he needs some alternative explanation of our responsibility for such actions; we have found that it is difficult to find any explanation that does not appeal to the connexion between responsibility and rational desire and election. If we affirm such a connexion, it is difficult to resist (3), and then it is difficult to resist the rest of the Stoic argument.

The Stoics have good reasons, then, for taking the Aristotelian view to be inadequate, since it fails to explain a crucial aspect of our responsibility for acting on passions. We should not assume, however, that the Stoic solution is the best. For the Stoics must not only explain why we are responsible for acting on passions; they must also explain why passions influence in the ways they do. These two demands on the Stoic theory seem to lead in opposite directions. For we tend to assume that the influence of the passions is incompatible with their simply resting on beliefs about the good. When we focus on this feature of the passions, the Aristotelian view becomes more attractive. The Stoics seek to show that they can incorporate the attractive aspects of their opponents' view while still maintaining our responsibility for acting on passions.

175. Action and Practical Reason

We have now seen why the Stoics' doctrine of assent affects their account of passion and action, and their defence of human freedom. Their treatment of assent is relevant to our initial questions about their method in moral inquiry, because assent is the result of rational reflexion on appearances, and this rational reflexion is the basis of the moral inquiry that leads to moral virtue. We may express this point briefly by saying that the practical reason underlying moral responsibility is the practical reason underlying virtue.

This brief statement, however, may appear to be unhelpful. If the Stoics are right about passions, some degree of rational reflexion on appearances is necessary for passions and for responsible human action; but why should we believe that this reflexion is at all similar to the reflexion that underlies virtue? And why does the fact that morally responsible agents engage in some rational reflexion give them reason to become virtuous?

These questions help us to see why the Stoics believe that their account of responsibility supports their account of virtue. In their view, if we engage in the minimal practical reason that is necessary for responsibility, we have a good reason (whether or not we see it) to engage in the further practical reason that is sufficient for virtue. To see whether this claim is correct, we need a fuller description of both kinds of practical reason, to see whether they are connected in ways that support the Stoic case.

What sort of reasoning underlies the assents needed for action and responsibility? The Stoic account of the passions suggests that a limited form of reasoning might be sufficient. If I assent to or dissent from one appearance, I may be guided by beliefs that are dominated by other appearances. I may, for instance, be angry at you, and so believe that I ought to retaliate for your insult, because of the further appearance that one ought always to retaliate against insults, or that you are a dangerous enemy. My capacity for reasoned assent, then, allows me to bring other appearances to bear on my attitude to this appearance.

But if this is the only way I can evaluate my appearances, the Stoics seem to face a question about responsibility. For, in their view, appearances are passive and not (in general) up to me, whereas assent is active; the active character of assent explains why it is voluntary and why I am responsible for actions on assent. If, however, assents all depend on further appearances, it is difficult to see how they could be the basis of responsibility. If my assent is determined by the strongest and most vivid appearance, an appeal to assent does not show that I am anything other than a passive subject of appearances. Even Sceptics can manage the sort of assent that is determined by the most vivid appearance, since it simply involves yielding to appearances.

The Stoics have a reasonable answer to this objection if they do not believe that assent is determined by the strongest or most vivid appearance. Their arguments against the Sceptics show that they believe assent is not determined by appearances.[88] In assenting to a perceptual appearance, we are capable of some rational response to evidence and reasons, whether or not they correspond to our most vivid appearance. Similarly, in assenting to an appearance that something is good, we are capable of considering the merits of the appearance and of other appearances apart from their strength and vividness.

This part of the Stoic conception of rational assent reaffirms the Platonic and Aristotelian conception of rational desire that is based on reasoning about the good and not simply about the satisfaction of non-rational desires. This is the rational desire that justifies the claim that we are responsible agents and that our actions are up to us; 'us' refers especially to us as capable of assent based on practical reasoning and not just on appearances. Given this conception of assent, Sceptics who put their Scepticism into practice would be incapable of assent, and therefore of rational action.

[88] On the 'inaction' argument see §139.

In the light of this understanding of the Stoics' views on assent, we can avoid a mistaken interpretation of some of their claims about passions. They claim that a passion is a 'yielding' or a 'weak' assent to an appearance, as though we simply gave way to a stronger force. If this were a correct account of the relevant sort of yielding, the difference between the Stoics and the Sceptics on assent would disappear. But it is not what the Stoics mean by 'yielding'. When we yield, we go along with a suggestion made by an appearance, because we judge, without adequate reflexion, that it is best to go along with it. We go wrong by failing to reflect appropriately; but we retain the capacity for such reflexion.

How, then, can we engage in the sort of practical reflexion that allows us to reach the right estimate of our appearances? Is it even appropriate to speak of a right or wrong estimate of them? To find a Stoic answer to these questions, we need to return to the doctrine of preconceptions. For in the Stoics' view, we all apply these imperfectly to the evaluation of appearances; if we applied them thoroughly, we would reach the virtues.

13

STOICISM: VIRTUE AND HAPPINESS

176. Practical Reason and Preconceptions

According to the Stoics, human beings are first guided by appearance and impulse, but later by assent. Though this assent includes some capacity to evaluate and to criticize appearances, the capacity is actualized only by degrees. At first we accept or reject appearances without systematic reflexion, but later we acquire reason as a 'craftsman of impulse', so that we modify and shape our impulses and actions more systematically and do not go along with appearances so readily.[1]

Once we start to examine our appearances, we introduce preconceptions. For in considering whether or not to accept an appearance, we evaluate it by some standard, and preconceptions supply the most general standards (*kanones*) by which we evaluate claims about goodness and badness.[2] They do not begin from nothing. We are already well stocked with appearances of good and bad, and disposed to accept them. But we also rely on standards that justify us in sometimes rejecting our appearances. What are these standards?

According to the Stoics, practical reason gives us a different view of ourselves. Our earliest interactions with the world manifest conciliation and self-love. But when we acquire practical reason, we change our conception of the self to be loved. For we now recognize ourselves as extending through different desires at a time and over time.[3] Seneca compares

[1] 'Since reason has been given to rational creatures as a more complete form of leadership, living in accordance with reason turns out correctly to be in accordance with nature for them; for reason is added later <to the initial impulses> as a craftsman of impulse' (DL vii 86 = LS 57A). On the translation see LS ii 344; Striker, 'Role' 288n11 (whom I follow).

[2] See Epict. i 28.28, quoted in §165.

[3] 'The most important difference between human beings and beasts is this: Beasts, in so far as they are moved by sense, conciliate themselves only to what is at hand and present, since they are aware of very little of the past and future. A human being, on the other hand, shares in reason, through which he traces consequences, sees the causes of things, notices the mutual relations of effects and causes, compares similarities, and combines and connects future with present things; and so he easily sees the course of his whole life, and prepares the things necessary for living that life' (Cic. *Off.* i 11). 'For human beings, though they differ from beasts in many other ways, yet they differ most in this one thing—that they have reason given them by nature, and a sharp and active mind, carrying on many things at the same time; . . . for it sees the causes and consequences of things, transfers similarities, combines separated things, combines future things with present, and embraces the whole condition of the life that follows' (Cic. *F.* ii 45). Reid quotes the first passage in *EAP* ii 2, H581a.

a human life to a series of concentric circles—the largest extending from birth to death and smaller ones covering youth and childhood.[4]

This picture of a life as a series of circles suggests that we recognize ourselves as temporally extended both forwards and backwards. If we draw a circle with the present as its centre, the conception that includes the projected later stages of our life must also include the earlier stages. We gradually come to conceive of ourselves as having a wider temporal extent, and we include the earlier stages that had a narrower horizon. Two stages belong to the same person in so far as at least one of them has a conception of a life that includes the conception of the other stage as a part of it.[5]

We need not understand this idea of a total life in purely temporal terms. Practical reason may also be applied not only to different times in my life but also to different aspects of myself. I may unwisely focus on the short term, or unwisely postpone shorter-term benefit for the sake of assuring my future; the first error is wastefulness, and the second is timidity or miserliness. Equally, I may unwisely focus on some aspects of my welfare, or the development of some of my capacities, that are especially vivid to me. If I am so absorbed in a particular pursuit that I forget about other things that deserve my attention at least as much, I fail to consider myself as a whole. If I reflect rationally on my life, I extend my circle of concern to everything that deserves my concern, beyond the things that happen to catch my attention now. A rational agent with an appropriately articulated conception of herself thinks of her different concerns as belonging to a circle that includes all of them in systematic connexion.

Practical reason gives us a wider view not only of different times in our lives, but also of different aspects of ourselves. A rational agent forms an extended conception of herself in so far as she thinks of different concerns as belonging to a circle that includes all of them in a systematic connexion to each other.

177. Practical Reason, Consistency, and Agreement

This extended conception of ourselves and our lives changes our estimate of appearances. Since I now care about myself as a single person in the extended past, present, and extended future, I take a new attitude to the natural advantages that are the objects of my impulses and passions; I consider their impact on my life and goals as a whole, not just on the parts of my life that are vivid to me now. Reason becomes a craftsman of impulse by helping me to organize my desires and plans so that I secure as many of the natural advantages as I can. The Stoics express this point in describing the ultimate end as 'living in agreement' (*homologoumenôs*). Their description suggests a minimal demand of practical reason for consistency.

[4] 'Our whole life is composed of parts and has larger circles enclosing smaller. There is one that embraces and bounds all; this extends from our day of birth to our last day. There is another that marks off the years of youth. There is another that includes the whole of childhood in its scope. Then there is a year in itself including all the times that are multiplied to compose our life' (Sen. *Ep*. 12.6).

[5] For further development of this appeal to concentric circles see Hierocles in Stob. iv 671.4–673.18 = LS 57G. See Inwood, 'Hierocles'; §194 below.

If the Stoics have mere consistency in mind, they do not seem to have given an account of the good. One might suppose that there could be many different consistent and incompatible plans. But the Stoics do not refer to mere consistency; for they do not agree that all consistent plans equally achieve an agent's good. In their view, the good is not just living consistently, but living in agreement with nature. Our initial impulses give us a natural preference for health over sickness, for relief of hunger over starvation, and so on. The task of practical reason is not simply to devise some internally consistent plan that prevents these impulses from undermining each other. When the Stoics speak of agreement 'with nature', they seem to intend the addition simply to explain what they mean by 'agreement', rather than to impose a further condition.[6]

Agreement with nature is not simply agreement with the different impulses that a particular person has acquired with a particular degree of strength. In forming a conception of myself, I also think of myself as having a nature. In destroying my health because of some short-term impulse, I harm myself, even if I do not care much about this harm at the moment. One of the preconceptions that I use in evaluating particular impulses is my conception of the various needs and capacities that constitute my nature. If I were to confine my practical reasoning to the satisfaction of my actual desires, I would have failed to bring within my circle of concern those parts of me that are not currently vivid to me. When the Stoics introduce agreement with nature, they reject a subjective conception of one's good.

178. The Use and the Value of Practical Reason

This sketch of our preconceptions about ourselves, our nature, and our good suggests the outline of an account of virtue. We might expect the Stoics to claim that virtues are those capacities or states of character and intellect that contribute to the achievement of the natural goods. Virtuous people seem to be those who are skilled in co-ordinating their desires so as to achieve consistency with nature.

This account of virtue is not completely wrong about the Stoic position. Virtue is, among other things, the 'craft of the whole of life'.[7] The Stoics take the end to be 'living with understanding of the things that come about by nature, choosing those that are in accord with nature and rejecting the contrary things'.[8] Virtue is the craft that allows us to live with this understanding. If this formula is understood as the Stoics understand it, it captures their position. But in order to grasp their distinctive understanding of it, we may usefully begin with an initially plausible view that falls short of what they intend. According to this initially plausible view, happiness consists in achieving the natural advantages, and virtue is to be valued as a means to achieving happiness.

Natural growth and the complexity of the natural goods stimulate practical reason. Creatures who wanted very few things or lived in an odd world might never face a choice between getting more of A at the cost of sacrificing B and getting more of B at the cost of C.

[6] For different Stoic formulae explaining the kind of 'agreement' that is intended see Stob. ii 75.11–76.15 = LS 63B (cf. *SVF* iii 12); DL vii 87–9.

[7] See Philo, *Leg. Alleg.* i 57–8 = SVF iii 202. Cf. Sx. *M* xi 170; Striker, 'Antipater'.

[8] Cic. *F.* ii 34. Cf. iii 31 = LS 64A; iv 14.

But since we face these choices, we both exercise and recognize the capacity to decide these questions by practical reason; and so we recognize its instrumental value.

In learning the best way to pursue natural advantages, we learn to perform 'appropriate' action (*kathêkon*, officium).[9] The action is appropriate for the situation, for the nature of the agent, and for the epistemic situation in which the agent decides what to do. Hence appropriate action is 'consequentiality (*to akolouthon*) in life, which, having been done,[10] has a reasonable defence' (Stob. ii 85.13–15 = LS 59B; cf. DL vii 107 = LS 59C). Cicero says it is 'approvable' (probabile), 'in such a way that an account (ratio) can be given of it' (Cic. *F*. iii 58 = LS 59E). 'Consequentiality' refers to what follows from, and is suitable to, the nature of the subject. The definition of appropriate action applies to plants as well as animals and human beings; but in rational creatures it is 'consequentiality in way of life'.[11] A rational creature's way of life, as opposed to a plant's or animal's life, involves rational choice; and so appropriate action finds what is suitable for one choice in the light of the other choices that the agent makes if he chooses in accordance with his nature.

The appeal to a 'reasonable defence' suggests that the standard of appropriateness we should apply depends on the agent's epistemic situation. We can give a reasonable defence of an action even if it turned out to have bad results, as long as we could not reasonably be expected to foresee them, and the action was reasonable in the light of what we could reasonably have been expected to foresee. We need not show that we were certain, or in a position to be certain, about the results of our action, but only that we had good reason to act as we did, in the light of what we knew and reasonably believed at the time.

In saying that an appropriate action 'has' a reasonable defence, the Stoics do not mean that an action is appropriate only if the agent herself gives a reasonable defence of it; they mean that a reasonable defence is available. Though a plant cannot give a reasonable defence of turning towards the sun, its turning is appropriate. Similarly, appropriate human actions may be done for all sorts of reasons, or purely by accident; appropriateness implies only that the right sort of defence is available.

To capture the relation between virtue and the result it seeks to achieve, the Stoics distinguish 'stochastic' (i.e., 'aiming') from non-stochastic crafts.[12] Their distinction rests on a division between the end (*finis, telos*) and the objective (*propositum, prokeimenon*) of an action or craft. The end is the faultless exercise of the craft, whereas the objective is the external result that this faultless exercise tries to achieve. In a non-stochastic craft, such as arithmetic, the achievement of the end of the craft, which is the faultless exercise of the craft, is sufficient for achieving the objective. If we add or subtract, but get the wrong answer, we must have made a mistake in the exercise of the craft and failed to achieve its end. But in a stochastic craft faultless exercise does not necessarily secure the objective. The end of the

[9] On Zeno's explanation of the term *kathêkon* see DL vii 108 = LS 59C; Cooper, 'Moral duty' 436n. 'Incumbent' might capture Zeno's explanation; it justifies the later translation of 'officium' by 'duty'.

[10] This participial clause probably means 'if it were done'. The Stoics do not suggest that it has to have been done before we can consider whether it has a reasonable defence.

[11] When the formula is applied to human beings, *bios* (Stob. ii 85.18) is substituted for *zôê*, used in the general formula that applies also to plants and animals (ii 85.14).

[12] This is not a purely Stoic division; Alexander endorses it at *in Top*. 32.20–34.5 (cf. n82 below); *Quaest*. 61.1–28 = *SVF* iii 19. He uses 'function', *ergon*, where the Stoics use 'end', and 'end', where the Stoics use 'objective'. Here he follows Aristotle's usage. Aristotle agrees with the Stoics that external success should not be the aim of someone practising the stochastic crafts of rhetoric, dialectic, and medicine (*Rhet*. 1355b10–14; *Top*. 101b5–10).

archer is doing all he can to shoot straight at the target; the objective is hitting the target. The craft is stochastic because we can achieve the end without achieving the objective. Even if our exercise of the craft is faultless, we may still miss the target; perhaps the wind blew it over or someone moved it (Cic. *F.* iii 22 = LS 64F).[13]

This difference between end and objective is reflected in the deliberations of an expert in a craft. Though we might at first suppose that the expert ought to be guided simply by beliefs about how to achieve the objective of the craft, this is not straightforwardly true. It is not the doctor's task to think about everything that might go wrong between his competent treatment and the external success; the patient might not be receptive to treatment, or might be hit by a falling tree on the way home from the hospital. Nor should the dialectician think about how to persuade someone who will not listen to rational argument. If craftsmen tried to adapt their practice to fit all possible external hazards, they would guess wrongly and come out worse than they would have if they had just aimed at the appropriate exercise of skill in the craft.[14]

A virtue is similar to a stochastic craft, in so far as it has an objective (achieving the natural advantages) and an end (doing all we can to achieve the natural advantages), and achieving the end is not sufficient for achieving the objective. Virtuous action, therefore, is not sufficient for achieving the life according to nature, which includes the natural advantages.

The Stoics are right to compare virtue with a stochastic craft to this extent. Justice in a state requires laws that protect people against arbitrary arrest, because freedom from arbitrary arrest is valuable for agents with the aims and natural limitations of human beings. Normally we do not undertake a craft unless we value the product; the features of the product determine what counts as skill in the craft (Cic. *F.* v 16 = LS 64E). The expert's deliberation requires thought about the objective of the craft; this thought about the objective forms our conception of the end, which is the action that constitutes the best exercise of the craft.

This account suggests four conclusions: (1) The content of the virtues is determined by the natural advantages that they try to secure. (2) Happiness consists in securing the natural advantages. (3) Virtue is not identical to happiness. (4) Virtue is to be valued for the sake of happiness, but not for its own sake. The Stoics accept the first of these conclusions, but reject the other three. Many ancient critics believe that the resulting position is inconsistent. To see why the Stoics believe it is both consistent and reasonable, we must return to their views about practical reason and the natural advantages.

179. The Non-instrumental Value of Practical Reason

The Stoics reject a purely instrumental conception of virtue on the ground that it conflicts with our preconception that virtue is to be valued for its own sake. But how do we know that we have this preconception, and how do we know it is consistent with the preconceptions that seem to underlie our views about virtue and the natural advantages?

[13] On ends and objectives see Striker 'Antipater'; Irwin, 'Conceptions' 228–34; Taylor, 'Hellenistic' 237–9; Inwood, 'Goal' 550–2; Annas, *MH* 400–5.

[14] These examples are derived from Aristotle (cited in n12 above).

The Stoics appeal to their account of conciliation and the growth of practical reason, to show that the description we have given so far is incomplete. Since we need practical reason to discover the appropriate actions in different situations, we recognize the instrumental value of practical reason by using it to find appropriate actions. But when we are acquainted with practical reason, and we recognize its role in guiding our choices, we see that it is also non-instrumentally valuable. According to Cicero's comparison, our friend Smith introduces us to Jones, but, once we know Jones better, we admire and value Jones more than Smith (Cic. *F.* iii 23). Natural impulses introduce us and 'commend' us to reason; but once we have recognized it, we value it more than we value the natural goods. At first we value it as an instrumental means to the natural goods, but once we attend to it, we see that it is to be valued for itself.[15]

In this case as in others, I discover that I value x for itself by finding that I prefer x and y together over y without x. If I valued x only as a means to y, I would be satisfied if I got y by means of z rather than x (if z is an equally efficient means to y). But we do not treat all means as purely instrumental. Even if I walk in order to get to work (not simply for the sake of walking), I still might not be equally satisfied if I could get to work in some other equally efficient way. If I would not prefer this equally efficient alternative, I value walking for itself. The Stoics suggest that something analogous is true about practical reason.[16] Even if practical reasoning must always be partly instrumental, its value is not purely instrumental. I prefer to achieve my objectives by rational planning, rather than to achieve them by some other equally efficient means; hence I do not value practical reason simply as an instrumental means; hence I attach non-instrumental value to it.

Once we have discovered practical reason, we discover that the value we attach to it is not purely instrumental. Even if some method other than practical reason were equally efficient in securing our other objectives, we would not give up practical reasoning; for we take our practical reasoning to be essential to ourselves.[17] It would be irrational for me to give up the exercise of reason for the sake of some specific objective. For the value of the objective is its value for me, and as I become self-conscious I become aware of myself as an essentially rational agent. If I ceased to be a rational agent, I would cease to exist, and any objective I would have gained by doing so would no longer be valuable for me, but only for the non-rational agent who would replace me.[18]

Discovery of the non-instrumental value of practical reason is part of self-discovery through conciliation. After the piecemeal exercise of practical reason, I remember my past plans, how they succeeded and failed, and I plan for the future. I become aware of myself as something more than a collection of impulses; I regard myself as a temporally extended rational planner. When I notice this I come to value my preservation as a rational planner more than I value the satisfaction of the particular impulses. I come to prefer 'order and

[15] This passage is discussed by Striker, 'Following' 8–10; Annas, 'Prudence'; Frede, 'Good'.

[16] The analogy with walking is not complete. For while we might go for a walk with no further purpose, practical reason seems to depend on our having some further purpose that we want to achieve; as the Stoics say, practical reason needs some material to work on.

[17] Kant argues that reason is less efficient than other means for achieving satisfaction of our other desires would be. See *G* 395. Hence he thinks the supposition I have mentioned is not merely counterfactual. His main argument is not weakened, however, if the supposition is false, as long as the counterfactual claim is true.

[18] For similar ideas in Butler see *S* ii 17.

concord' (Cic. *F.* iii 21 = LS 59D) in action over the natural goods that are the result of successful action.

We can now understand better the Stoic description of the end as 'living with understanding of the things that come about by nature, choosing those that are in accord with nature and rejecting the contrary things'.[19] We might have understood this as a description of how to achieve the end, so that the end, strictly speaking, would be the possession or enjoyment of the natural advantages rather than the activity of choosing them. But now we see that the Stoics intend to refer precisely to the activity of rational choosing. They see non-instrumental value in the practical reason that is exercised in choosing the appropriate natural advantages, not only in the successful results of our choice.

180. The Non-instrumental Value of Virtue

The Stoics believe that once we recognize the non-instrumental value of practical reason, we can also understand why and how virtue is a non-instrumental good. They reject Epicurus' view that virtue is purely instrumental to an external end; and so their explanation of the way in which virtue is a craft takes account of this Aristotelian objection to Epicurus. [20] If one treats virtue as a generalized craft directed at the natural goods, one grasps part of the character of virtue. But, according to the Stoics, this parallel leaves out the crucial feature of virtue. Unlike productive crafts, such as medicine and carpentry, it has a non-instrumentally good end that is not outside its own exercise, but is internal to it (Cic. *F.* iii 24 = LS 64H).

If we recognize an internal end for the craft of virtue, we can see that virtuous action is worth choosing for its own sake. In recognizing this feature of virtuous action, the Stoics appeal to widespread agreement on the non-instrumental value of actions that are taken to be virtuous (iii 37–8). They do not take this to be a controversial feature of their position; hence they do not suppose that one has to accept the whole Stoic outlook before one can attribute non-instrumental goodness to virtue. Human beings and animals alike sacrifice themselves even at enormous cost to themselves; and we admire these actions as virtuous and fine (*kala*, honesta).[21]

Since the Stoics are eudaemonists, they believe that if virtue has non-instrumental value, the final good includes virtue as a component. If we take the final good to be unconnected with virtue, and so measure it by our own advantage, and not by fineness, we cannot

[19] Cic. *F.* ii 34. See above §178.

[20] See Cic. *F.* ii 69–71, quoted at §157. Cf. Augustine's use of this criterion for virtue, §229.

[21] See Sx. *M* xi 99; Bett, *AE* ad loc. Cic. *F.* ii 109–10 suggests that the Stoics do not take the behaviour of animals to imply that animals pursue the fine; they take it to indicate the animal origins of human pursuit of the fine. Cf. DL vii 127 = LS 61I: 'And they say that virtue is choiceworthy for itself. For we are ashamed at what we do badly, as if knowing that only the fine is good'. Cic. *Leg.* i 40: 'If a penalty, and not nature, were needed to keep people from injustice, what anxiety would disturb the wicked if the fear of punishment were removed? But in fact none of them has ever been so brazen that he has not either denied that he committed the crime or else fabricated some ground of just grievance, seeking a defence for his crime in some right (*ius*) of nature.' Cic. *Leg.* i 48: 'Right (ius) and everything fine (honestum) are to be sought for themselves. Indeed all good men love fairness (*aequitas*) itself and right itself, and it does not belong to a good man to go astray in loving what is not to be loved for its own sake. Hence right is to be sought and cultivated for itself. If right, then justice too; if this, then all the rest of the virtues too are to be cultivated for themselves.'

consistently cultivate friendship, justice, generosity, or bravery.[22] Any conception of the final good that leaves out fineness demotes the virtues to a purely instrumental status that conflicts with the outlook of the virtuous person (Cic. *F.* ii 35).

This objection presupposes that each of the virtues includes some conviction about the value of the actions it prescribes. The just person, for instance, not only does just actions, but does them for their own sake, in the conviction that they are worth doing simply because they are just, and not because of some further causal result. This is why Cyrenaic and Epicurean conceptions of the end leave out fineness (expertes honestatis, ii 35). If the fine is 'something that is itself to be desired, by its own character (sua vi) and for itself', the Epicureans are wrong (ii 44).

These Stoic claims about virtue have Platonic and Aristotelian sources. Latin sources use *honestum* to render the Greek *kalon*, often rendered 'noble' or 'fine'.[23] Much of what the Stoics say about the right has parallels in Aristotle's claims about the virtues and the fine. We have seen that Aristotle offers no systematic account of the fine, but says enough to show that he takes it to be the central and distinctive concern of the virtuous person. In later Peripatetic writers the fine is more prominent, though they do not offer the detailed account that Aristotle lacks.

Only one passage in the Aristotelian Corpus describes the fine as the end (*telos*) of virtue (*MM* 1190a28), though one might reasonably claim that other passages imply that it has this status. But Aspasius (*in EN* 81.23; 82.34; 117.30) and Alexander *(Mant.* 155.12–13) treat this as a standard formula for the relation of the fine to virtue. They introduce remarks on the fine into contexts where they are perfectly appropriate, but have no precise precedent in Aristotle. The fine is prominent, for instance, in Alexander's argument for the reciprocity of the virtues (*Mant.* 154.30–155.13). He takes the best kind of friendship to be friendship for the fine, whereas Aristotle calls it friendship for virtue (*in Top.* 271.25–6).[24] He argues that one ought to choose pleasure for the sake of the fine, not the other way round (*Dub. et Sol.* 151.19–152.33).[25] Aspasius emphasizes the connexion between the fineness and the praiseworthiness of virtue (*in EN* 32.11; cf. *EN* 1101b31–2). In explaining how vice corrupts ethical principles, he suggests that it prevents us from recognizing that happiness consists in fine actions (*in EN* 136.19–23). Aristotle does not mention this particular effect of corruption (*EN* 1151a15); Aspasius probably mentions it because of his conviction that the fine is the goal of virtue. Similarly, when he considers how pain impedes the virtuous person's actions, he emphasizes that it impedes fine actions (*in En* 150.15), though Aristotle does not say this in so many words (*EN* 1153b9–12).

Whether or not these remarks on the fine reflect Stoic influence, they suggest correctly that Stoics and Peripatetics agree about the place of the fine in an account of virtue. Latin writers are right to choose 'honestum' (honourable) to translate '*kalon*'. They recognize that the fine is a proper object of praise, as opposed to liking, pleasure, or admiration, and it makes people praiseworthy (DL vii 100; Cic. *F.* iii 27 = LS 60N). Latin writers as

[22] See Cic. *Off.* i 5, quoted at §162. The reference to hedonism suggests that Cicero has Epicureans especially in mind. He distinguishes questions about their personal character from questions about the implications of their theory (*F.* ii 80).

[23] Frede, 'Good', discusses the Stoic concept of the honestum, denying that it is a concept of moral goodness.

[24] See also *in Top.* 95.3–5; 148.25–149.2 (on *to deon* and *to kalon*).

[25] Some of the works cited may not be genuine works of Alexander.

well as Greek see a connexion between the fine and the beautiful. We recognize the fine through our conception of beauty, loveliness, fittingness or appropriateness (convenientia), constancy, and order (Cic. *Off.* i 14).[26] We grasp the fine by analogy with beauty, recognizing due proportion (*summetria*) of parts and whole in both cases (Stob. ii 63.1–5). But we do not appreciate the fine in exactly the way we appreciate the beautiful; Latin writers mark the difference by using 'honestum' rather than 'pulchrum' (beautiful) to render '*kalon*'.

The honestum is an object of praise because it deserves praise in its own right, whether or not it is actually praised (Cic. *Off.* i 14).[27] It draws us by its own character, not by its satisfaction of some prior desire of ours (Stob. ii 100.21–2). It involves acting for reasons that are not confined to oneself and one's own benefit; this is why concern for the honestum is contrasted with concern for one's own advantage (*commodum*: Cic. *Off.* i 5). Honestum action is appropriate for a human being because human beings are rational and because they are social, finding their good in the good of the smaller and larger communities they belong to; hence action is honestum in so far as it is the sort of action that results from rational concern for the common good.

The honestum is recognized by reason, the special capacity of human beings that makes one capable of surveying the whole of one's life.[28] This same reason encourages us to cultivate the intellectual and social virtues, so that the four cardinal virtues can be recognized as the different forms of rightness (Cic. *F.* ii 45–8). They are different forms of rightness because all the virtues and the corresponding actions are praiseworthy in their own right, whether or not they are actually praised (ii 49).

For these reasons it is appropriate to translate 'honestum' and '*kalon*' by 'right'. The Stoics agree with Aristotle, and with even more emphasis, in using these terms for the area of morality. The different virtues correspond to different aspects of the right, because they involve recognizing actions as worthwhile for their own sakes, and not simply because their causal consequences satisfy some previous desire. The virtuous person acknowledges

[26] 'And it is no small force of nature and reason that only this animal [sc. the human being] is aware of what order is, what is suitable, what is appropriate in actions and words. Hence no other animal is aware of beauty, loveliness, and suitability (*convenientia*) of parts, in the things we are aware of by sight. Nature and reason, extending this similarity from the eyes to the mind find that beauty, constancy, and order are far more to be maintained in deliberations and actions. They are careful to do nothing in an improper or unmanly way, and in all thoughts and actions to do and think nothing to gratify appetite (*libidinose*). The rightness that we are inquiring about is made and achieved from these things; even if it is not admired, it is none the less right, and, as we truly assert, it is praiseworthy by its nature even if no one praises it' (Cic. *Off.* i 14).

[27] Cf. Cic. *F.* ii 45: 'By honestum, then, I understand whatever is such that, with all advantage removed, without any rewards or fruits, can be rightly praised through itself. . . . <The best people> do very many things for this one reason—because it is appropriate, correct, and honestum—even though they see no reward following from it.' Holden ad *Off.* i 14 quotes from Berkeley, *Alciphron* 3.3: 'Doubtless there is a beauty of the mind, a charm in virtue, a symmetry and proportion in the moral world. This moral beauty was known to the ancients by the name of honestum or *to kalon*.' In this dialogue Berkeley expresses doubts about appeals to the honestum.

[28] 'Afterwards through the stages of growth with age reason was born from its seeds, and also consideration in employing deliberation, the awareness of genuine fineness (honestas) and usefulness, and a more subtle and considered discrimination between suitable and unsuitable things. And in this way the worthiness of what is fine and fitting glistened and shone above everything else . . . And nothing else was counted really and without qualification good except the fine, and nothing bad except what was shameful. All the other things—the things which were in the middle and were neither fine nor shameful—it was decided that these were neither good nor bad. But productions and relations were distinguished each by its aspects—these are what the philosophers call the preferred and non-preferred things. Therefore pleasure and pain too, as far as concerns the end itself of living well and blessedly, were left in the things in the middle, and judged to be neither among the goods nor among the evils' (Aulus Gellius, *NA* xii 5.7 (continues §166n37)).

reasons that rest on the value of the actions themselves, not simply on the fact that these actions match his previous desires.

The Stoics believe that the common belief that virtue is non-instrumentally good supports their account of virtue and practical reason. This common belief is an apparent preconception. We will justifiably regard it as a genuine preconception if a reasonable interpretation of it and of other apparent preconceptions produces a consistent result. The Stoics argue for consistency by claiming that our preconception about practical reason supports our preconception about virtue. Hence they connect practical reason, recognition of the right, and the pursuit of the cardinal virtues (Cic. *F.* ii 45–7; *Off.* i 11–17). We recognize that the exercise of practical reason is to be valued for its own sake, not purely instrumentally. But we also believe that the virtues and their exercise are to be valued for their own sake. This belief about the virtues is reasonable because the virtues are manifestations of practical reason.

181. Virtue as the Only Good

The Stoic position so far might seem attractive to a Platonist or an Aristotelian. Indeed, some Peripatetics see that the Stoic claims about conciliation help to explain the Aristotelian views about nature that underlie the function argument.[29] These considerations might persuade us that virtue is a non-instrumental good and a necessary condition for happiness. The Stoic account of the fine makes it clear what Aristotle commits himself to in claiming that the virtuous person acts for the sake of the fine.

We can now try to understand the more surprising and less Aristotelian claim that the good is 'living with understanding of the things that come about by nature, choosing those that are in accord with nature . . .'.[30] The Stoics also describe the end as 'acting reasonably in the selection of things according to nature', and 'living one's life completing all the appropriate actions' (DL vii 88 = LS 59J).[31] These are plausible descriptions of the virtuous life, and the Stoics have good grounds for saying that this is a non-instrumental good. The references to reasonable selection and to appropriate action indicate that virtuous choice is an exercise of practical reason, and choiceworthy for its own sake on that ground. But it is surprising that the Stoics treat these as descriptions not only of virtue, but also of happiness, because they identify virtue with happiness.

According to the Stoics, however, the identity of virtue with happiness does not depend on some new argument distinct from the arguments from conciliation and from preconceptions. They believe that these arguments, correctly understood, prove that virtue is the only good, the only thing worth choosing (*haireton, expetendum*, Cic. *F.* iii 21 = LS 59D) for its own sake, and that the other supposed goods—the natural advantages—are neither good nor bad, but indifferent (iii 22 = LS 59D).[32] The Stoics express the same doctrine about virtue and

[29] On non-Stoic appeals to conciliation see Annas, 'Hellenistic'; §77n12.

[30] Cic. *F.* ii 34. See above §178.

[31] These accounts of the end are offered by Diogenes and Archedemus. Antipater holds a similar view. See Stob. ii 76.9–15; Clement, Strom. ii 129.1–3; Plu. *CN* 1072d = *SVF* iii (Antip.) 58–9.

[32] Cf. Stob. ii 46.5–10 = *SVF* iii 2; 16–19 = *SVF* iii 16 (quoted below n45).

happiness by claiming that 'only the fine is good'. Since they believe that happiness includes all goods, their claim that virtue is the only good implies that virtue is identical to happiness. Hence they believe that virtue is sufficient for happiness, and so endorse the Socratic and Cynic thesis that Aristotle takes to be indefensible.

They insist that the different recognized virtues are possible only for someone who thinks virtue sufficient for happiness. If we care about any other goods as parts of happiness, we will be tempted to sacrifice virtuous action to these other goods, and so we will not be committed unreservedly to virtuous action as virtuous people are. The good requires living in agreement with nature; virtuous people do this because they live in agreement with reason, which they have naturally come to value most. They are happy and fortunate; nothing impedes or prevents them; they need nothing (iii 25 = LS 64H).

The Stoics argue that everything good must be praiseworthy, and that only the fine is praiseworthy.[33] Critics object that the argument simply begs the question against those who recognize honour, wealth, and so on as goods (iv 48–9). The Stoics might answer that for someone who takes virtue seriously not every sort of wealth or honour will be part of his good; he will reject what he might gain by theft or fraud, and stick to praiseworthy and honestly earned wealth and honour. But all we can infer from these considerations is that only virtue and the goods that it produces are praiseworthy. This is less restrictive than the Stoics' conclusion.

A second argument maintains that our life is happy if and only if we can be proud of it, and that this is true only if we live finely (iii 28). In the Stoics' view, if we have been virtuous, we can be proud of our lives, because we will not have failed to do anything we ought to have done that it was fully in our power to do. The argument is persuasive if we agree that pride is properly directed to our own achievements, and that only what is in our control is our own achievement.

A further argument relies on the same attitude to events that are not our own achievements. According to the Stoics, the brave person despises all the accidents that can happen to human beings, so that only what is shameful is bad.[34] They assume, questionably, that if we are

[33] The arguments mentioned in this paragraph and the next two are taken from the series of syllogistic arguments for the sufficiency of virtue that are reported in Cic. *F.* iii 27 = LS 60N; iv 50; Plu. *SR* 1039c = *SVF* iii 29: 'In his book On The Fine Chrysippus tries to demonstrate that only the fine is good, and uses arguments such as these: "The good is chosen, the chosen is approved, the approved is praised; the praised is fine." Again: "The good is gratifying, the gratifying is impressive, the impressive is fine." ' Cf. also Cic. *TD* v 43; 45 = *SVF* iii 37. On the intended force of these arguments see Schofield, 'Syllogisms'.

[34] See Aulus Gellius, *NA* xviii 1.4–8 = *SVF* iii 56: [A discussion between a Stoic and a Peripatetic.] 'And there the Stoic thought that a man could gain a happy life by virtue of mind alone, and the deepest wretchedness by vice alone, even though virtue lacked and vice had all the other goods, which they called bodily and external. Against this the Peripatetic agreed that the wretched life comes about by vices of the mind and by evildoing alone. Still he insisted that virtue alone was not at all sufficient to complete all the elements of a happy life; for bodily non-deformity and health, attractive appearance, personal wealth, good reputation and all the other goods of the body and of fortune seemed necessary to achieve a happy life fully. The Stoic protested here, and was surprised that the Peripatetic treated these two things, virtue and vice, differently. For virtue and vice are two contraries; the wretched and the happy life are also equally contraries. Why does he [sc. the opponent] not retain in both the force and nature of a contrary, when he regards vice alone as sufficient to produce wretchedness of life, but does not regard virtue alone as sufficient to produce a happy life? The Stoic said that this above all was conflicting and inconsistent for someone who acknowledged that a happy life could by no means be produced if virtue alone was missing, but then denied that when virtue alone is present a happy life comes to be. He granted and accorded honour to virtue when it was missing, but withheld the same honour when virtue was present and seeking it.' Cf. Sen. *Ep.* 85.2 = *SVF* iii 58.

rightly proud and pleased with our achievements in our life, we are happy, and the fact that other things might go badly is irrelevant to our happiness.

Similarly, we may question the Stoics' use of arguments from the *Euthydemus*. They contrast virtue with external goods by pointing out that external goods can be misused, whereas virtue cannot, and that external goods are sometimes harmful, whereas virtue always benefits us (DL vii 103 = LS 58A).[35] These differences between virtue and other goods justify us in giving virtue a different place in relation to happiness, so that, as Aristotle claims, it is a dominant good. But the Stoics do not seem justified in inferring that alleged goods other than virtue are not goods at all because they sometimes harm us. If they simply mean that these other goods are not goods 'without reservation' or 'unconditionally' (as Kant puts it),[36] they seem to repeat Peripatetic doctrine in paradoxical terms. But if they agree with Socrates' argument in the *Euthydemus*, they seem to accept a purely adaptive conception of happiness, as he does. Such a conception seems to conflict with their arguments to show that the natural advantages and the life according to nature are legitimate objects of pursuit.

This objection brings us to the main difficulty in the Stoic position. For while it appeals to preconceptions, it seems to violate preconceptions that are at least as clear. As the Stoics agree, we begin by treating natural advantages as goods. When we discover practical reason, we discover that they are not the only goods, and that practical reason is an overriding good. But we seem to have no good reason to abandon our previous belief that the natural advantages are also goods. If our belief in the goodness of some natural advantages is a firm preconception, the Stoics violate their own method.

In reply to this objection, they argue that the preconceptions really support their apparently counter-intuitive claim. They rely on the preconception that happiness is the ultimate end; then they argue that natural advantages are not part of the ultimate end, and so they infer that natural advantages cannot be part of happiness.

But why should we agree that these natural advantages are not parts of the ultimate good? The Stoics admit that we pursue some of them for their own sakes, and they recognize that this pursuit is the natural and reasonable result of conciliation. It is difficult to see, then, why we should exclude them from the ultimate end.[37]

182. Indifferents

The Stoics believe that this objection rests on a misunderstanding of their estimate of natural advantages, and in particular on a misunderstanding of their claim that these natural advantages are neither good nor bad, but indifferent. Some critics allege that this Stoic claim supports extreme moralism, and agrees with the Cynics that moral virtue is the only thing deserving rational concern.

This extreme moralism has been one of the attractive features of Stoicism to some later readers. It expresses a 'stoical' indifference to anything that happens to us that is not within

[35] On the *Euthydemus* cf. §14. [36] See Kant, *G* 393.

[37] This is the gist of the criticism that Cicero presents in *F.* iv.

our control. If we can convince ourselves that none of these things matters, we can train ourselves not to be concerned about them, and to face them with resolution. We might easily believe that we find this attitude expressed in the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius.[38] The same attitude appeals to Justus Lipsius in the turbulent conditions of Northern Europe in the sixteenth century. His book *On Constancy* offers Stoic indifference as a cure for the anxiety and turmoil that he suffers from his involvement in the wars in the Netherlands. If he can convince himself that these external events do not matter, he will no longer be disturbed by them.[39] This is why the Stoic doctrine of indifferents leads to Stoic 'freedom from passion' (*apatheia*); once we see that externals do not matter, they no longer arouse disturbing emotions in us. Once we recognize that non-moral 'goods' and 'evils' are not really good and evil, but indifferent, we also lose our concern about them.

We will need to consider this interpretation of Stoic freedom from passion later.[40] First, we need to see whether this 'stoical' attitude rests on a correct understanding of the doctrine of indifferents. What we have already said about the Stoics' view of natural advantages should make it seem surprising if they claim that such things do not matter; for virtuous people seem to occupy themselves in trying to get them. It seems unreasonable to deny that we have reason to be concerned about non-moral goods; would we not be foolish to choose fewer of them, other things being equal, if we could have had more?[41]

We can reconcile the virtuous person's efforts to secure indifferents with lack of concern for them if we suppose that the virtuous person regards the pursuit of indifferents as a sort of game. In other crafts and skills the productive process does not always aim primarily at the existence of the product. Sometimes it is simply the occasion for a display of skill; an accomplished cook might cook an absurdly elaborate and inedible dish simply to display cooking skill. In games of skill, the moves are simply a means to the exercise of skill; the point is to devise a game that requires the display of certain kinds of skill (e.g., by making it artificially difficult to do some things). Perhaps the Stoics take this attitude to life. If so, natural advantages are unimportant in themselves, but virtuous people take an interest in them because they provide an opportunity for the display of practical reasoning. Adam Smith ascribes this attitude to the Stoics.[42]

[38] See Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* ii 11.2–4 (see Farquharson ad loc.); v 20.

[39] Lipsius sets out his generally careful and sympathetic exposition of Stoicism in *MSP*. He discusses the passions in iii 7. After setting out the Stoic doctrine, he cites the objections of Lactantius and Augustine, and endorses the position that he takes to be favoured by Scripture and the Fathers, defending the moderation rather than the elimination of passions (159–60). In *De Constantia* Lipsius relies on Stoic views most explicitly in i 7, where he speaks of 'false goods and evils' as 'those which are not in us but around us, and which do not properly benefit or harm this inner human being, that is to say the mind. And so I will not call them good or bad in fact and in their character (re et ratione); I will admit that they are goods by opinion, and by a sort of common sense of the masses.' Lipsius' views are discussed by Kraye in Schmitt and Skinner, *CHRP* 370–2; Cooper, 'Lipsius'.

[40] See §191.

[41] Cf. Alex. *in Top*. 211.9–14, quoted below in n51.

[42] 'Human life the Stoics appear to have considered as a game of great skill; in which, however, there was a mixture of chance, or of what is vulgarly considered to be chance. In such games the stake is commonly a trifle, and the whole pleasure of the game arises from playing well, from playing fairly, and playing skillfully. If notwithstanding all his skill, however, the good player should, by the influence of chance, happen to lose, the loss ought to be a matter, rather of merriment, than of serious sorrow.... Human life, with all the advantages which can possibly attend it, ought, according to the Stoics, to be regarded but as a mere two-penny stake; a matter by far too insignificant to merit any anxious concern. Our only anxious concern ought to be, not about the stake, but about the proper method of playing' (Smith, *TMS* vii 2.1.24, 278–9). For the Stoic use of a comparison with games see Cic. *Off.* iii 42; §404. Striker, 'Antipater', develops the comparison. Cf. §40 on the athletic conception of virtue.

This interpretation of the Stoics might lead us to suppose that they basically conceive happiness as a kind of feeling of self-satisfaction and contentment, and that they care about virtue primarily as a means to this sort of contentment. According to this view, they would agree with the Epicureans about the character of the end, and disagree about the means to achieving it. We might support such an interpretation by appealing to their description of the end as 'good flow'.[43] On this basis Adam Smith ascribes an adaptive conception of happiness to the Stoics.[44]

While this view of happiness and the indifferents might allow us to ascribe a consistent view to the Stoics, the resulting view would not be very attractive. If virtue is happiness, and therefore is the only end of our appropriate actions,[45] virtuous people make an appropriate attempt to protect a child from danger for the sake of their own virtue. They do not aim at the child's safety, but at the exercise of their virtue in the attempt. This view may well seem both repellent and self-defeating. It seems repellent if Stoic sages are supposed to care only about their own character rather than the needs of other people. It seems self-defeating if we cannot explain why it is a virtuous action to protect someone from danger and a vicious action to expose them to needless danger; why should we discriminate between the two actions unless safety is something we ought to aim at and danger is something we ought to avoid?

In a game of skill this question does not arise; for it is to some extent arbitrary what moves are allowed, and we might change the rules if we think the game is too easy, or too difficult, or too dull for the spectators. But if we think of appropriate actions as arbitrarily chosen means for the display of virtue, we seem to violate our preconceptions. It does not seem arbitrary that virtuous people display their practical reason and their fearlessness in defending their community rather than in a daring bank robbery. Whatever we might display in actions that do not aim at the appropriate natural advantages for the appropriate people, it does not seem to be a virtue.

183. Preferred Indifferents

The Stoics believe that if we take them to advocate inappropriate detachment from natural advantages, we misunderstand their doctrine of indifferents. They recognize different sorts of indifferents (Cic. *F.* iii 50 = LS 58I; DL vii 104–6).[46] Pure indifferents give us no reason from any point of view to prefer them. But the natural advantages that are the initial objects of a creature's desire are not pure indifferents. Both they and their contraries are indifferent in relation to happiness, since they are neither parts of happiness nor instrumental means

[43] See Stob. ii 77.20–1 = LS 63A: 'Zeno defined happiness in this way: "Happiness is good flow (*eurhoia*) of life." ' See also Epict. i 4, 1, 3; Sen. *Ep.* 85.2; Irwin, 'Conceptions' 225; Striker, 'Tranquillity', 185–6.

[44] See Smith, *TMS* iii 3.26–31.

[45] See Stob. ii 46.5–10 = *SVF* iii 2: 'The Stoics say, by way of a definition: "The end is that for the sake of which everything is done appropriately, while it itself is done for the sake of nothing." They also define it this way: "That for the sake of which other things are, while it itself is for the sake of nothing." And again: "That towards which all the things done appropriately in our life have their reference, while it itself has reference to nothing." ' Stob. ii 77.16–19 = *SVF* iii 16 = LS 63A: 'They say that the end is being happy, (*eudaimonein*), for the sake of which everything is done, while it itself is done, but for the sake of nothing. This is found in living according to virtue; in living consistently; and further, this being the same thing, in living according to nature.'

[46] I do not discuss Ariston's views on indifferents (see Cic. *F.* iii 50 = LS 58I; DL vii 160 = LS 31N).

to it. Hence none of them is 'chosen' (*haireton*); for only goods—and hence only virtue and what promotes it—are properly 'chosen'.[47] But they are not indifferent in every respect.

The natural advantages are 'preferred' (or 'promoted', *proêgmena*) indifferents, and their contraries are non-preferred (Cic. *F.* iii 51–2), because we have reason to prefer the first and to reject the second.[48] We have reason to prefer the natural advantages because they promote a life in accord with nature; though they are indifferent towards happiness, they are not indifferent towards life in accord with nature.[49]

Since natural advantages are to be preferred, they also have value. Though they are not objects of choice (in the strict sense that applies only to goods), they are objects of appropriate selection; hence they have either non-instrumental or instrumental selective value. We have reason to select health rather than illness, when these are the options we face, and this is a complete description of the practically relevant features of the situation.[50] They are not choiceworthy, because we are not justified in choosing them without qualification; this unqualified choice, in all situations and irrespective of the price to be paid in natural disadvantages, is reasonable only for virtue.

This clarification of the Stoic claims about indifferents suggests that the Stoics believe preferred and non-preferred indifferents matter, and that the virtuous person has good reason to be concerned about them. Whatever the point of the doctrine of indifferents may be, it is not intended to detach us from concern for indifferents; if the Stoics had intended to do that, they would not have attributed non-instrumental value to some preferred indifferents, and they would not have said that they contribute to the life in accord with nature.

But if this is all true, what is the point of calling these natural advantages indifferents? If some indifferents are to be preferred, and have selective value, a life that includes these indifferents together with virtue seems to be preferable to a life that includes virtue without these indifferents. If such a life is preferable, it seems to be a happier life. How, then, can the Stoics claim that virtue is the whole of happiness?[51]

[47] On choiceworthiness and other types of value see Stob. ii 83.10–84.3 = *SVF* iii 124 = LS 58D; DL vii 105 = *SVF* iii 126 = LS 58B.

[48] 'Of things that are they say some are goods, some evils, some neither. Goods are the virtues—prudence, justice, bravery, temperance and the rest. Evils are the opposites—folly, injustice and the rest. Neither goods nor evils are those things which neither benefit nor harm—such as life, health, pleasure, beauty, strength, wealth, good reputation, good birth—and the opposites of these—death, sickness, trouble, ugliness, weakness, poverty, bad reputation, low birth and things like them, . . . Of indifferents some are called preferred, others non-preferred. Preferred are those that have value, non-preferred those that have disvalue. They call value, first, a contribution to the consistent life—every good is such a contribution; second, some capacity or use which is an intermediary contributor towards the life according to nature, which is like speaking of the contribution to the life according to nature made by wealth or health . . . Of preferred things some are preferred because of themselves, some because of other things, others both because of themselves and because of other things. Because of themselves, natural gifts, progress [sc. towards virtue] and the like. Because of other things, wealth, good birth and the like; both because of themselves and because of other things, strength, keen senses, bodily soundness—because of themselves because they are according to nature, and because of other things because they provide many useful results.. . . Further, of appropriate things some are always appropriate, others not always. Living according to nature is always appropriate; questioning and answering and walking and the like are not always' (DL vii 101–9 = *SVF* iii 117 = LS 58A–C. Cf. Sx. *M* xi 59–63).

[49] Stob. ii 79.18–80.13; 83.10–84.2 = LS 58C–D.

[50] For different views on whether any indifferents have non-instrumental value see LS i, 357–9 (whom I agree with); Lesses, 'Virtue' 110–17; Frede, 'Good' 92 ('. . . the desire for them in a rational person can only be the desire for them as mere means to the good').

[51] Alex. *in Top*. 211.9–14 = *SVF* iii 62, states an Aristotelian objection: 'Thus it would be shown that each of the things called preferred indifferents by the later philosophers is choiceworthy and good. For when each of them is added to virtue

184. Crafts, Ends, and Objectives

These difficulties arise from the Stoics' claim that happiness does not embrace all objects of rational preference. In refusing to extend happiness this far, they reject Aristotle's belief that happiness is comprehensive. To see why they reject it, we need to return to their division between stochastic and non-stochastic crafts.[52] In all stochastic crafts the proper concern of the expert in a stochastic craft is the internal end rather than the external objective, but the character of the end differs from one stochastic craft to another. In many crafts the end is not valued for its own sake; though we can distinguish the end of medicine from the objective, we have no reason to care about the proper exercise of the craft except in so far as we take it to be the best means towards the objective of curing people. In the case of virtue, however, the Stoics believe that the end has non-instrumental value. We have already seen the grounds for this belief, in the Stoic account of development and conciliation. When we are introduced to practical reason through its instrumental use, we come to recognize that it is valuable for itself, so that the end, as well as the objective, of appropriate rational action has non-instrumental value (Cic. *F.* iii 23–4 = LS 64H).

The Stoic view of virtue as a stochastic craft might appear to disagree with Aristotle. In treating virtue as a craft the Stoics seem to return to a Socratic position, and to reject Aristotle's separation of craft from virtue. According to Aristotle, craft involves productive reason aiming at 'production' (*poiêsis*) that has an end distinct from it; prudence, on the contrary, involves purely practical reason, aiming at 'action' (*praxis*) that has an internal end. For prudence 'acting well' (*eupraxia*) is the end; the wise person sees that the value of the activity does not depend on any end beyond the activity itself (*EN* 1140b6). Since the Stoics seem to treat virtue as a stochastic craft, they seem to treat it as productive.

But the Stoics agree with Aristotle in believing that virtuous action is its own end. Though virtue is a stochastic craft, the objective that it pursues is not its end; the end, as Aristotle believes, is virtuous action itself. Virtuous action is the realization of practical reason, and it consists in doing what we reasonably can to secure the natural advantages. Aristotle believes that virtue has these two features. The Stoics signal their agreement with him by interpreting the analogy between virtue and craft so as to allow for these features.

Their conception of the internal end is clear in their description of the distinctive features of the virtuous person's action. Since they call this action a 'success' (*katorthôma*),[53] we might suppose that virtuous people succeed more often than other people do in, say, relieving suffering, or defending their community from danger. But this is not the sort of success that the Stoics have in mind. Chrysippus contrasts the sage with a non-sage who does all the appropriate actions that the sage does, but not for the sage's reasons. He insists that this non-sage is not yet virtuous. Someone progressing towards virtue might perform all

it makes the whole more choiceworthy for the virtuous person. For a life in accordance with virtue is more choiceworthy if it comes with health and affluence and good reputation. For choiceworthy things and things to be avoided are judged by the choice and avoidance of the virtuous person.'

[52] See §178 above.

[53] A *katorthôma* is 'an appropriate action (*kathêkon*) having all the measures, or . . . a complete appropriate action' (Stob. ii 93.14–16 = LS 59K; cf. 85.18–86.4 = LS 59B).

the appropriate actions, but would not be virtuous without having done them for the right reason.[54]

Virtuous people do the appropriate action for the right reason, because of its appropriateness. Their action is successful, and not merely appropriate, because the relevant success consists in acting for the right reason.[55] Virtuous people do the appropriate actions for the right reason, not simply on some particular occasions, but from a fixed and firm state of character.[56] They act reasonably, exercising right reason in choosing appropriate actions because they are appropriate and suitable for human nature.[57]

On these points the Stoics agree with Aristotle's claim that the virtuous person acts justly, temperately, and so on, by choosing the virtuous action for its own sake. In requiring virtuous people to act 'in accordance with correct reason' (Stob. ii 96.22 = LS 59M) the Stoics recall an Aristotelian formula for virtue (*EN* 1103b31–4; 1144b21–30). They also recall Aristotle's use of adverbs (acting justly, temperately, etc.) to mark the distinctive feature of the virtuous character. Aristotle contrasts acting justly with simply doing just actions (1105a28–b9). Similarly, the Stoics contrast a complete appropriate action with an incomplete one by saying that the complete appropriate action is performed in the right way; if, for instance, returning a deposit is an appropriate action, returning it justly is a successful action (Cic. *F.* iii 59 = LS 59F).

If appropriate action implied success in getting a preferred indifferent (its objective), sages would not take it as their end; for we cannot expect that our efforts to gain preferred indifferents will always succeed, and we ought not even to think directly about external success when we make our choices.[58] But in saying that, the Stoics make it clear why sages take appropriate action as their end. We can give a reasonable defence of an action even if it turned out to have bad results, as long as we can show that we could not reasonably be expected to foresee them, and that the action was reasonable in the light of what we could reasonably be expected to foresee. Since virtuous people value practical reason for its own sake, and regard the exercise of practical reason in acting reasonably (*eulogistein*)[59] as the end of virtuous action, their distinctive success consists in their achievement of the relevant end, not in achievement of the objective that determines the character of the end.

185. The Connexion of the Virtues

These views about the end of virtuous action help to explain the Stoics' careful treatment of questions about the unity and reciprocity of the virtues. We might have expected their

[54] 'Chrysippus: "The one who is progressing to the limit performs all appropriate things and omits none." But he says that this man's life is not yet happy; happiness supervenes on it when these intermediate actions acquire firmness and tenacity and get some peculiar fixity' (Stob. v 906.19–907.5 = LS 59I).

[55] 'The Stoics think that all the works (of a craft) are common, and belong to all; they are distinguished by coming to be from a craftsman's disposition or a non-craftsman's. For the work of a virtuous person is not to care for parents and to honour them in other ways; his work is to do this from prudence. . . . Hence the one who has a craft of living is the one whose peculiar work is to act from the best disposition in each of his actions' (Sx. *M* xi 200).

[56] Cf. Plu. *VM* 3, 441c = SVF i 202 = LS 61B; Sen. *Ep.* 95.57.

[57] See the accounts of the good offered by Diogenes and Archedemus (DL vii 88 = LS 59J, quoted at §181 above). These equally apply to virtue.

[58] See the references to Aristotle in n12 above (on stochastic crafts).

[59] See §178 above.

return to Socratic moral psychology and their rejection of non-rational parts of the soul to result in Socrates' belief in the unity of the virtues. Plato and Aristotle reject the Socratic view because they take different conditions of the non-rational parts of the soul to differentiate the virtues.[60] Some ancient critics believe that the Stoics ought to take the same position if they are consistent. According to Plutarch, Ariston holds a view close to Socrates' belief in the unity of the virtues, since he suggests that the virtues differ merely in their subject-matter, and therefore in a purely relational property; if x is to the left of y, it does not follow that x and y differ in any other respect than this, and Ariston suggests that the fact that we use different names for virtue in different fields of operation does not indicate anything more than a purely relational difference between the supposed 'virtues'.[61]

Chrysippus disagrees with Ariston; he intends the difference between the virtues to be more than purely relational. He suggests that the difference is one of those differences in relational properties that reflect an internal difference between the subjects of the relational properties.[62] It is less clear, however, what he thinks the difference is; his opponents suggest that he attributes so much unity to the virtues that he has no basis for recognizing the right sort of difference.[63] He insists that they all have the same objects of study.[64] In each virtuous action the virtuous person will apply the same knowledge, and her action will have all the virtues properly predicated of it; by paying her debt because this is the right thing to do she will have performed a successful action (*katorthôma*) in which she acts bravely, temperately, justly and wisely, and will herself be brave and so on.[65]

According to Chrysippus, the virtues differ in their different subject-matters (*kephalaia*).[66] Each includes a distinct function in relation to a distinct range of passions. The definitions of the different virtues suggest that each has a different natural passion to deal with, and hence a different type of appearance to which the virtuous person must refuse her assent.[67] In the

[60] See §12 (Socrates); §49 (Plato); §117 (Aristotle).

[61] 'Ariston of Chios . . . made virtue one in essence, and called it health, but in relations many different virtues. It is as though we wanted to call sight lightvision when it grasps light things, darkvision when it grasps dark things, or something else of this sort. For virtue too when it examines what is to be done and not done is called prudence; when it orders appetite and defines the moderate and the opportune in pleasures it is called temperance; when it is engaged in associations and agreements with others it is called justice' (Plu. *VM* 440e–441a).

[62] On the Stoic doctrine of relations and qualities see Simp. *in Catg*. 165.32–166.29, partly in LS 29C.

[63] Galen, *PHP* vii.1.9–10 = 430.11–12 = SVF iii 259: 'We have also recalled the works of Poseidonius in which he praises the old account, while he refutes the mistakes of Chrysippus about the affections of the soul and the difference of the virtues. For just as the affections of the soul are removed, if it has only the rational part and there is no emotional and no appetitive part, so also all the virtues are removed except prudence. But if we were to give a full account here of Chrysippus' four books On The Difference of The Virtues and were to examine them and the things he has said in one other book That The Virtues are Qualifications, rebutting the argument of Ariston—that would take not one or two books, but three or four.'

[64] 'They say that the virtues mutually follow each other, and whoever has one has all; for their objects of study (*theôrêmata*) are common, as Chrysippus says in On The Virtues i' (DL vii 125).

[65] Plu. *SR* 1041a–b: 'In the Demonstrations on Justice Chrysippus says explicitly that every right action is a lawful action and a just action; an action done in accordance with continence or endurance or prudence or bravery is a right action; hence it is also a just action. How then does he not allow justice to those to whom he allows prudence and bravery and continence, when all their right actions in the virtues just mentioned are thereby just actions too?'

[66] DL vii 126: 'Each of the virtues is concentrated (*kephalaiousthai*) on some peculiar subject (*kephalaion*) of its own—bravery about what is to be withstood, prudence about what is to be done and avoided and neither; similarly the others too are concerned with their proper subjects' Cf. Stob. ii 63.6–11 = LS 63D.

[67] DL vii 92–3 gives accounts of the different virtues: 'Prudence is the knowledge of good things and evil and neither. Bravery is the knowledge of what is to be chosen and avoided and neither. . . . Magnanimity is the knowledge or state making someone superior to the things that happen to good and bad people alike. Continence is a disposition never

Stoic view, an action in accordance with one virtue is also in accordance with all the other virtues, but the virtuous person is not always exercising his bravery or temperance. If I pay a debt I do a brave action and act bravely, since bravery, if it is a genuine virtue, requires me to do all the right actions; but I do not exercise bravery in this action, since I do not rely on my special ability to resist dangerous situations by withholding assent to appearances that might lead me to believe I face some genuine evil.[68]

To show that a virtuous person's action must always accord with all the virtues, the Stoics distinguish primary and secondary subject-matters.[69] While each virtue has its own primary subject-matter, its secondary subject-matter extends to all the other virtues. That is why sages act justly every time they act temperately. To see what the Stoics mean by taking every virtue to be somehow present in every virtuous action, we may return to their claim that virtuous people's action is 'complete' appropriate action that achieves 'all the measures', and that they choose the reasonable action because it is reasonable. The Stoics follow Aristotle in believing that a bank robber who carries out a dangerous raid without fear or hesitation is not really doing a brave action, whereas a soldier who did the same (from one point of view) type of action in a just war would be doing a brave action. The brave person faces the danger because it is required by a just cause; if the cause were not just, the brave person would recognize this and would not face the danger. Similarly, virtuous people perform other virtuous actions on the assumption that they are required or permitted by the other virtues. Their performance of a virtuous and successful action is marked by the counterfactuals that are true of them, so that they would act differently if their allegedly brave action were prohibited by justice, and so on.

If this is what the Stoics mean, their opponents are mistaken in claiming that they have an inconsistent view of the difference and connexion of the virtues. The differences explain why different aspects of a virtuous person's training are immediately relevant on different occasions, so that different thoughts, plans, and temptations belong to brave action and to temperate action. The connexion is justified by the role of all the virtues in fixing the considerations that require or permit the actions that correspond to the individual virtues. Though the underlying moral psychology of the Stoic doctrine of virtues differs sharply from Aristotle's doctrine of rational and non-rational desires, the Stoic explanation of difference and connexion is close to Aristotle's implicit view. The degree of agreement with Aristotle reflects a broader agreement in concern with the virtuous person's reasons. The Stoics

overcome in what is according to correct reason, or a state invincible by pleasures. Endurance is the knowledge or the state of what is to be persevered in, not persevered in, or neither.' On passion and assent see Aulus Gellius, *NA* xix 1.18, quoted at n102 below.

[68] I use 'exercise' rather unnaturally to represent Chrysippus' technical use of *chrêsthai*, corresponding to *andrizesthai, deilainein* etc. See Plu. *SR* 1046e: '. . . in Ethical Inquiries vi Chrysippus says that the decent man is not always acting bravely (*andrizesthai*) nor the base always acting in a cowardly way . . . And he says it is plausible that the base man is not always acting intemperately either. If, then, acting bravely is such as exercising bravery and acting cowardly is such as exercising cowardice, the Stoics say conflicting things, when they say both that whoever has virtues or vices acts according to them all at once, and that the decent man is not always acting bravely, and the base man not always acting cowardly.'

[69] 'For the subject matters of prudence are, primarily, to study and do what is to be done, but according to the secondary account, to study also what should be assigned, and what should be chosen and what should be endured, in order to do unwaveringly what is to be done' (Stob. ii 63.11–15 = LS 61D). The passage continues with parallel accounts of the primary and secondary subject-matters of the other cardinal virtues.

agree with Aristotle in believing that the virtuous person essentially acts for the appropriate reasons; they express this doctrine in claiming that virtuous action, as such, is the end of virtue.

186. Concern for Preferred Indifferents

Now that we have traced these points of agreement with Aristotle's conception of the virtuous person's outlook, we can consider whether the Stoics' doctrine of indifferents marks a crucial disagreement with Aristotle. Once we understand how virtuous action is the internal end of virtue and how preferred indifferents are its external objective, should we take the Stoics to mean that indifferents do not matter? Do they, as Adam Smith suggests, regard life as simply an opportunity to display virtue in actions that do not matter in their own right? If they held this view, their conception of the virtuous person's outlook would differ sharply from Aristotle's conception.

But Smith's view does not fit Stoic explanations of our reasons for trying to achieve preferred indifferents. According to Seneca, some Aristotelian external goods provide a wide field for several virtues, whereas poverty leaves room only for endurance; others add enjoyment to life. Sages prefer both sorts of advantages as non-instrumentally valuable.[70] Preferred indifferents that do not hinder virtue deserve our concern because they are in accord with nature, not because they are good.[71] The only genuine good in the pursuit of preferred indifferents is the exercise of good judgment in selecting them, but this is not the only reason for trying to get them.

For these reasons, the fact that Stoic sages regard external goods and evils as indifferent does not mean that they regard them as unimportant. If Smith's view were correct, sages would not care whether they had achieved preferred indifferents or not, as long as they had sufficient scope for practical reasoning; hence they would have no reason to try to improve their level of preferred indifferents, or to try to resist any reduction in preferred indifferents. This, however, is not the attitude of the sage. A sage tries to raise the level of preferred indifferents, as long as this is consistent with the demands of virtue, and tries to avoid a major loss of preferred indifferents, within the constraints imposed by virtue.

This is the attitude we ought to expect, given that the preferred indifferents contribute to the life in accord with nature. Virtue does not require us to abandon the pursuit of this life; nor does it insist that being virtuous is all there is to living in accord with nature. The Stoics do not dismiss as unimportant the aspects of human nature that require preferred indifferents for their fulfilment. To criticize them for dismissing these aspects of human nature is to misunderstand the significance of their doctrine that virtue is the ultimate end and the only good.[72]

[70] 'Indeed, which of our sages—I mean, of our school, for whom the only good is virtue—will deny that these things we call indifferents also have some value in themselves and that some are preferable to others?' (Sen. *VB* 22.4) Seneca marks Aristotle's division between external goods that provide resources (*chorêgia*) for virtuous actions and those that 'adorn' (*sunepikosmein*) a virtuous life (*EN* 1099a31–3; 1100b8–11; 26–8).

[71] ' "Won't you seek them?" Of course I'll seek them. Not because they are good, but because they are in accord with nature, and because they will be taken by me with good judgment. "Then what will be good in them?" Only this, that they are chosen well' (Sen. *Ep*. 92.11 = LS 64J).

[72] This misunderstanding underlies the criticism of Stoicism in Cic. *F*. iv 28.

The Stoics' doctrine of suicide illustrates their view of the importance of preferred indifferents. They believe that external conditions can deteriorate far enough to justify a sage in committing suicide.[73] Since sages remain virtuous, they remain happy. Their reason for committing suicide cannot be that they have lost, or are about to lose, necessary conditions for being happy. Their decision to commit suicide is influenced by the actual or threatened loss of preferred indifferents for themselves or for people they care about.

This doctrine that happy people will commit suicide because of external conditions that present no threat to their happiness strikes opponents of Stoicism as bizarre. Plutarch finds it strange that Chrysippus believes we ought to decide whether to remain alive not by considering goods and evils, but by considering the indifferents that are in accord with or contrary to nature.[74] But Chrysippus' view is not so strange, once we understand the status that the Stoics assign to indifferents. For the fact that sages are happy does not mean that they have everything that they have good reason to try to achieve; it does not even mean that they have a life that a rational person ought to continue. The Stoics' doctrine of suicide is an extreme example of the importance that they attach to preferred indifferents. This aspect of the doctrine ought not to surprise us, if we have understood the difference between the end and the objective, and the value that they ascribe to the objective.

187. The Selective Value of Virtue and the Preferred Indifferents

If this is what the Stoics mean, they should agree that though virtuous action is the end of virtue, the achievement of the end plus the objective has greater value than the achievement of the end without the objective. But do they believe this? The views that they maintain might well appear to be inconsistent. They claim: (1) Virtue has selective value. (2) Preferred indifferents have selective value. (3) Virtue is not sufficient for getting the preferred indifferents, since the 'success' of a virtuous action consists in its complete appropriateness (perfectum officium), not in the external success of achieving the objective of getting preferred indifferents (Cic. *F.* iii 59 = LS 59F). (4) Virtue together with preferred indifferents has no greater selective value than virtue alone (iii 45; cf. iv 29 = LS 64K; v 71; 90). (5) Virtue with preferred indifferents is preferable to virtue alone (iii 44).

It is not clear how the fourth of these claims is consistent with the first three. The first three seem to follow from the Stoic conception of the indifferents, but then the fourth seems to revert to a more extreme view. According to the Stoics, the value of preferred indifferents 'must be obscured and destroyed and must perish because of the brilliance and greatness of virtue'. That is why virtue plus health has no more selective value than virtue alone.

It is difficult to understand the Stoic view. Some examples suggest that the value of preferred indifferents is trivial in comparison with that of virtue. But this assessment is open

[73] 'A sage will make his own reasonable departure from life, for the sake of his country or his friends, or if he falls into excessively severe pain or suffers mutilation or contracts an incurable disease' (DL vii 130 = LS 66H).

[74] Plu. *SR* 1042d–e = *SVF* iii 759. Cf. *CN* 1063c–f; Alex. *Mant.* 168.1–20 = *SVF* iii 764; Annas, *MH* 408–9; Cooper, 'Suicide'.

to objection. Even if health and freedom from pain are less important than virtue, they still seem to be important; the Stoic view that they are natural advantages needed for a life in accord with nature seems to imply that they are important (cf. iv 31–3). The Stoics acknowledge this in their fifth claim. Hence it is difficult to see how the fourth claim is consistent with the fifth.

The Stoic position seems contradictory because it seems rational to select the condition that we agree is preferable, and hence this condition seems to have greater selective value. But the Stoics have an answer, if they rely on their conception of successful action as complete appropriate action. Since virtuous people act successfully, they always make appropriate and reasonable attempts to secure preferred indifferents. We can never face a choice, therefore, between a fully virtuous action (i.e., an action done virtuously, as the virtuous person does it) and an action that tries to secure the appropriate preferred indifferents; for the virtuous course of action necessarily tries to secure appropriate preferred indifferents. Any considerations that might favour our securing these specific preferred indifferents must already be properly counted in the virtuous choice; for this virtuous choice already incorporates the rational selection of preferred indifferents.

We can now understand why the Stoics claim that virtue alone has the same selective value as virtue plus preferred indifferents. For purposes of selection the two states of affairs are equivalent; for in selecting the fully virtuous action we necessarily select the appropriate preferred indifferents, and hence we could never select virtuous action that does not aim at preferred indifferents. Hence, from the forward-looking point of view of the agent selecting, any selection of virtuous action is necessarily a selection of appropriate preferred indifferents, and so includes the selective value of this latter selection.

But though this is true from the forward-looking, deliberative point of view of the selector, it does not follow that the virtuous action secures the preferred indifferents it selects. From the retrospective point of view, the successful outcome of the reasonable effort to secure preferred indifferents is preferable to the reasonable but unsuccessful effort. But this difference between the outcomes is not a difference in selection; the virtuous person always selects the successful outcome, though he cannot guarantee it.

Stoic claims about the selective value of virtue alone and virtue plus preferred indifferents are reasonable in the light of the Stoic account of virtue. The key to understanding is the account of virtue as reasonable selection of preferred indifferents. Properly understood, this account implies that virtuous people are rationally concerned to achieve preferred indifferents, not that they take them to be unimportant.

188. Why Virtue is Praiseworthy

The Stoics intend their division between the end and the objective of virtue to distinguish what virtuous people think about from what they hope to achieve; this is the parallel between virtues and stochastic crafts. They also intend it to distinguish the aspect of virtuous action that is up to us and praiseworthy from the aspect that is not wholly up to us and is a matter for congratulation rather than praise. Since they believe that virtue and virtuous action are

up to us, they need to show that they consist in our assents, rather than in conditions that do not depend on our assent and therefore are not up to us.[75]

Their position faces objections drawn from different types of external conditions. Sometimes virtuous action seems so easy, because of favourable external conditions, that it is trivial, and therefore reflects no credit on us. According to the Stoics, virtuous action is admirable, praiseworthy, and impressive.[76] But not all the actions of a virtuous person are impressive or praiseworthy; temperate abstention from seducing an unattractive woman is unimpressive, but the Stoics must regard it as no less praiseworthy than an act of heroic virtue. Chrysippus admits that we ought not to praise trivial examples of virtuous action.[77]

A Stoic can answer this difficulty by distinguishing the virtuous action as such from its objective results. There is nothing praiseworthy in resisting something that no one would find tempting, and nothing brave in resisting a pain that needs no resisting. The mere fact that someone had done these trivial things would not make her praiseworthy. But a virtuous person does these things because she is virtuous; as Chrysippus says, they are coincidental results of virtue.[78] Even when no effort is required to achieve the appropriate objective, the virtuous person assents to resisting pain, or danger, or sensual pleasure, on all the appropriate occasions; this assent explains the trivially easy virtuous actions. Since she is not being praised for the trivially easy action, but for the assent that extends to all appropriate occasions, she is to be praised no less for the right assent when she does trivially easy actions than when the appropriate action is more difficult.

It does not follow that no important distinctions can be drawn between different virtuous and vicious actions. If one is virtuous, it is preferable to exercise virtue in actions that promote the objective of living in accord with nature; and if one is vicious, it is preferable if one's vicious actions do not seriously impede this objective. Hence we have good reason to encourage some virtuous actions more vigorously than others; but that does not make them more praiseworthy.

This difference between the assent and the preferable results explains what the Stoics mean in claiming that all successes and all errors are equal (DL vii 120).[79] he virtuous person assents to the appropriate, rationally defensible action, because it is rationally defensible. Since successful action (*katorthôma*) consists in this sort of assent based on these sorts of reasons, all such actions are equally successful actions; and since error is failure to assent correctly, it is displayed equally in all actions that result from such failure. In so far as human beings act on the reasons characteristic of virtue, their virtuous actions are no less

[75] 'The fine is up to us. What is up to us we get through ourselves. What we get through ourselves comes about by the agency of nothing else. Hence the fine comes about for us by the agency of nothing else; and if by the agency of nothing else, then not by the agency of the gods either' (Alex. *Quaest*. 26.22–5 = *SVF* iii 32).

[76] See Plu. *SR* 1039c, quoted in n77.

[77] 'These latter statements conflict with the first. For either every good is praiseworthy, and then temperately abstaining from the old woman would be praiseworthy; or this is not praiseworthy, and then it will not be true that every good is impressive or gratifying, but the statement is undermined' (Plu. *SR* 1039c). 'Chrysippus says, in the treatise on Zeus: "While actions according to the virtues are proper (*oikeia*) to us, the preferred things are among such things as bravely stretching out one's finger, temperately abstaining from an ugly and moribund old woman, and hearing without rash assent that three is exactly four. One who sets out to praise and eulogize people through such examples displays a kind of frigidity . . . And further we are repelled by praise of such examples of the coincidental results of virtue, such as abstaining from a moribund old woman, and undergoing a fleabite with endurance." Who else is needed, then, as the accuser of Chrysippus' own doctrines?' (1038f–1039a; cf. *CN* 1061a).

[78] For 'coincidental results', *sumbainonta*, see Plu. *SR* 1039a, quoted in n77.

[79] Cf. *SVF* iii 524–32.

impressive than those of gods (Plu. *SR* 1038c; *CN* 1076a–b); a virtuous human being is no less completely virtuous than a god (Stob. ii 98.14–15).

These Stoic claims about assent also offer an answer to another sort of objection derived from external conditions. Sometimes these conditions seem not too easy, but too difficult. As Aristotle says, it is impossible or difficult to do fine actions without external resources (*EN* 1099a31–b6). Alexander uses Aristotle's claim to attack the Stoic claim that happiness is up to us. He argues that if virtue is concerned with the selection of things according to nature, as the Stoics think, then such things (wealth, health etc.) are necessary to provide virtue with its material (Alex. *Mant*. 160.1–8). But a craft, say flute-playing, cannot control the supply of flutes, but depends on their supply for its proper activities. Now virtue is a craft; and since external goods[80] are needed as its material for virtuous action, virtue cannot supply them for itself, and virtuous action depends on them. Indeed the sage sometimes takes himself to be justified in committing suicide when the supply of external goods is too small (160.27–9).

In Alexander's view, each craft has two sorts of exercise—its exercise in preferable and in non-preferable conditions (160.31–161.1); a craft, for instance, exercises itself both in playing good flutes and in playing bad flutes. In that case, 'just as in the other crafts the end is in the exercises about wished-for things and in preferable conditions,[81] the same will be true in the case of virtue, if it is a craft' (161.1–3). While recognizing that virtue is exercised in bad external conditions, Alexander suggests that this is not really the proper exercise of virtue, because it achieves its end only in preferable conditions. Since the end of virtuous action is happiness, as the Stoics agree, virtue turns out to be insufficient for happiness, by being insufficient for the achievement of its end.

The Stoics believe they can answer this sort of objection by attending to the virtuous person's assent, since this determines the praiseworthy aspect of a virtuous action. Admittedly, we have good reason to prefer the virtuous action that takes advantage of favourable circumstances and ample resources to achieve the preferable results. Sages take all reasonable steps to find the preferable circumstances for their actions, since the results of virtuous actions in these circumstances are themselves preferable. But, in the Stoic view, these preferable aspects of virtuous action do not make it more or less fine and praiseworthy.

Alexander is right to claim that since virtue is the craft of selecting correctly among externals, external goods and evils provide its material. But the Stoics argue that virtue is not the craft of selecting among a reasonably plentiful supply of external goods; it is the craft of selecting among any external goods and evils that may be present. Since we can rely on the presence of some external goods and evils while we are alive, there is no reason to suppose that the virtuous person will go short of material. The end that virtuous people aim at is acting reasonably in the pursuit of preferred indifferents. They achieve this aim even in less preferable conditions. They certainly prefer to exercise virtue in favourable conditions, but that makes no difference to whether they achieve their end. Alexander overlooks the grounds for the Stoic division between the end and the objective of virtuous action.

[80] I use Aristotle's term. The Stoics do not accept this description of them, but that does not matter for present purposes.

[81] Read *prohêgoumenois* for *prohêgoumenais*, 161.2.

The Stoics might reasonably claim that their division between end and objective removes a difficulty that faces Aristotle. For Aristotle agrees with them in believing that acting virtuously is praiseworthy, fine, and up to us. If, as Alexander suggests, our action is less fine in adverse circumstances, it seems to be less praiseworthy, and hence acting virtuously does not seem to be up to us. Aristotle rejects this conclusion; he maintains that virtuous people remain virtuous in misfortune, because they make the finest use of the materials available to them, as skilled craftsmen do (*EN* 1100b35–1101a6). We might argue that the praiseworthy and fine aspect of virtuous action is unaffected by external conditions. The Stoics, therefore, might claim to defend Aristotle's basic position.

189. Why should Virtue be Identified with Happiness?

We have explored the Stoics' division between goods and indifferents, and the related division between ends and objectives, in order to explain their claim that virtue is identical to happiness. We have found that the two Stoic divisions are reasonable, and that they help the Stoics to defend their view that virtuous action is the end of virtue, and that virtue is praiseworthy. But we may still not be convinced that these divisions make it any more plausible to claim that happiness consists only of virtue. Indeed, we might argue, as Alexander does, that the division between ends and objectives makes it clear that the Stoics are wrong to identify virtue with happiness. We should regard virtue as a stochastic craft of which virtuous action is the end, and happiness is the objective.[82]

The Stoics, however, maintain that happiness is the end, not the objective, of virtue. In saying that happiness is the end of virtue, they agree verbally with Aristotle; but once they distinguish the end from the objective, they are not entitled to assume without argument that Aristotle treats happiness as the end rather than the objective of virtue. Alexander suggests that Aristotle's position, expressed in Stoic terms, makes happiness the objective, because it includes preferred indifferents that are not in our control. Can the Stoics fairly claim that Aristotle, despite what he sometimes says, really ought to agree with them?

We might try to express Aristotle's view by saying, as he sometimes says, that happiness has parts, and that virtue is one of these parts or components.[83] He believes that virtue is an especially important component of happiness, to be preferred, as Plato believes, over any collection of external goods. Hence we must apparently be able to assess the comparative value of virtue and the other components of happiness. Such an assessment requires the point of view of an assessor.

But how do we capture the point of view of the assessor? If a rational agent assesses truly, the relevant point of view must be that of the self for whom these different goods are supposed to be good. In the Stoic view, however, virtue is not simply one of the goods to be weighed by the self. It also defines the point of view from which we should weigh,

[82] 'But in the case of stochastic crafts, it is no longer true that the end is up to the craftsman, just as neither is being happy up to virtuous people, if it is not true that only the fine is good' (*in Top*. 34.3–5). In the last sentence I read *to kalon agathon*, following Striker, 'Antipater' 314n. I use Stoic terms (and hence use 'objective' rather than 'end') to express the distinction that Alexander draws; see n12 above.

[83] See *EE* 1214b24–7. Cf. §72n44.

because it is essential to the self that weighs correctly. We ought not, then, to think of virtue as though something other than it assigned it its place in the compound that is happiness. Plato notices this point in the *Philebus*. He begins by treating intelligence (*phronêsis*) as an element in the mixture; we try to decide how much it should count in comparison with pleasure. But then he points out that this picture is misleading. Intelligence is 'the cause of the mixture' (23d7–8), because intelligence decides how much intelligence and how much pleasure should go in the mixture.

This claim may be implicit in the Stoics' description of the growth of virtue (Cic. *F*. iii 21 = LS 59D). Virtue is the rational planning that assigns different things a place in our life; hence it is 'the cause of the mixture', and not simply one of the elements that are assigned a place in the mixture. To treat it as simply a component of the good is to assume that something else assigns it its place. When we speak of different things as good or bad for me, we presuppose a conception of me as the being for whom the different things are good or bad. Aristotle himself expresses this point in claiming that the human good must be good for something with the nature of a human being, as explained by the Function Argument. If my being virtuous somehow defines me, other things cannot be good for me unless I am virtuous; if I were to cease to be virtuous, these other things would not still be good for me.

How could my being virtuous and my being myself be so closely connected? The Stoics rely on their claim that virtue is the exercise of practical reason, and on the connexion between one's conception of oneself and one's conception of oneself as a rational agent. In explaining why I care about my interests over time, and exactly what I care about in being concerned about myself over time, we have to include the fact that I care about carrying out my plans because they are my rational plans.[84] Though we may initially value rational planning for the sake of the results we achieve by it, we also come to value for its own sake the achieving of these results by rational planning (Cic. *F*. iii 23); we are not indifferent to the means by which these results come about. The fact that we actually care about the execution of our plans makes it intelligible that we care about our future in the way we do. Hence concern for rational agency for its own sake is essential to the self for whom other things are preferable. Hence we cannot compare virtue with other goods to see how good each of them is: virtue carries out the comparison, since it is essential to the self for whom these other goods are good.

The Stoics might reasonably be dissatisfied, therefore, with a conception of virtue and happiness that treats virtue simply as a component of happiness. In thinking about components, we think about things that have different weights or degrees of importance in happiness. But we must weigh or assess degrees by reference to some standard. Virtue itself is the standard by which other things have to be weighed, because it is essential to the self for whom different things must be good, and is not one of the goods to be weighed. Its status in happiness cannot be the status of a mere component.

This argument about the special status of virtue is not alien to Aristotle. Perhaps it is implicit in Aristotle's account of self-love; virtuous people love themselves as virtuous because they recognize their rational agency as themselves. Doubts about whether virtue is a component of happiness may also be Aristotelian; for the *EN* does not speak as explicitly of

[84] Cf. Epicurus in §154.

parts of happiness as the other ethical works do.[85] From the Stoic point of view, the reasons for denying that virtue is a part of happiness are also reasons for affirming that virtue is identical to happiness.

We might reject this Stoic conclusion. However inappropriate it may be to regard virtue as simply a part of happiness, we must apparently recognize that some external goods (as Aristotle describes them) or preferred indifferents (as the Stoics describe them) are worth selecting for themselves, and have more than merely instrumental value. Must we not, then, allow that they are parts of happiness, given the comprehensive character of happiness?

190. Two Roles of Aristotelian Happiness

The Stoics believe that they can answer this defence of Aristotle by appealing to their division between ends and objectives, and by showing how it clarifies some of Aristotle's own claims about happiness.

Aristotle regards happiness as an end that we aim at; part of the point of thinking about it is to change our aims. He believes that the discovery of what the good is should strongly influence our way of life, so that we will be like archers with a target to aim at (*EN* 1094a22–4). An explicit and correct conception of happiness will improve our practical reasoning, by giving it the appropriate principle (1144a32). Happiness is the ultimate object of wish that provides the starting point for deliberation (1111b28). Practical reasoning begins from a desire for doing well, and doing well is the end (1139b3–4); hence prudence is the correct apprehension of this end (1142b32). Aristotle believes that happiness is an end that we can explicitly conceive, and that our explicit conception of it guides our deliberation and decision.

Our conception of happiness also gives us a measure of success, since it shows us whether someone has had the sort of life that it is reasonable to hope for. This role of happiness is most obvious in Aristotle's remarks on good fortune. One's initial circumstances constrain the possible results of rational deliberation, and further external circumstances affect the actual results of our particular deliberation. If I do not inherit wealth, I cannot deliberate about how I am to use my inherited wealth wisely; and if I invest money wisely to raise further funds for famine relief, but the stock market unexpectedly crashes, my wise project fails. To see whether we have achieved happiness, we consider the actual results of our deliberations and actions. Aristotle therefore denies that virtuous action is sufficient for happiness, on the ground that it does not infallibly achieve the valuable external results that are sought in virtuous action. That is why Alexander takes him to reject the Stoic thesis that virtue is self-sufficient for happiness.[86]

From the Stoic point of view, the different roles of happiness in Aristotle, as an end to aim at and as a measure of success, betray some confusion. For Aristotle also recognizes the legitimacy of marking the Stoic division between end and objective. We saw that he recognizes it in the case of crafts.[87] He does not mention an analogous division in the case of virtue and happiness, but he relies implicitly on such a division when he considers the

[85] See n71 above. [86] See §188 above. [87] See n12 above.

relation of virtue to its external results. He often claims that virtuous people act 'because an action is fine', or 'for the sake of the fine',[88] but he also believes that they act for the sake of their happiness.

These two uses of 'for the sake of' correspond to the end and the objective. Reflexion about happiness tells us that the good of others plays an essential role in it, and that therefore we have sufficient reason to act for the benefit of others who are suitably related to us, without any further thought about our own good. Brave or just people, for instance, do not stop to think about whether facing this danger now or keeping this promise now is part of their happiness. It would be a bad thing—just as it is in the stochastic crafts—if they did stop to think about this. Aristotle sees that an objective—happiness, as Aristotle understands it—regulates our aims, but is not itself an aim in particular actions. Our conception of the external advantages achieved by bravery helps to explain why we regard bravery, rather than cowardice, as a virtue to be chosen for its own sake; but we do not focus on these external advantages in deciding to act bravely.

The Stoics use this point to support their view of happiness. The sort of life that Aristotle regards as happy is subject to misfortunes; and so when we deliberate about what to do, we ought not to be thinking about all the ways in which things might go wrong, since we may not be able to take any systematic or beneficial account of these factors anyhow. It is better to follow the conception of the practical aim—virtuous action—that has been formed in the light of the various elements of the preferable way of life (which Aristotle identifies with happiness), and in the light of a reasonable strategy for getting them. Aristotle seems to admit that the conception of the end that actually guides virtuous people is their conception of fine action. Since our conception of happiness is our conception of the end that guides our action, he ought to identify happiness with fine action. Aristotle, therefore, ought to conclude that virtuous action is the ultimate end, and is therefore to be identified with happiness.

The Stoic conception of action and explanation clarifies Aristotle's claims about the end of action, and thereby suggests that his position is inconsistent. He believes that our conception of the end of an action is the proximate efficient cause of that action. Since happiness is the end of action, and the proximate efficient cause of virtuous people's actions is their conception of fine and virtuous action, happiness should be fine and virtuous action. But Aristotle rejects this conclusion, since he maintains that happiness includes external goods. According to the Stoics, Aristotle's conception of happiness conflicts with the role of happiness as an end. Since Aristotle agrees with the Stoic conception of happiness as an end, he needs to reconsider his overall view of happiness.[89]

If this is the right way to connect Aristotelian with Stoic views, the Stoics are right to claim that Aristotle ought to endorse their distinction between end and objective, and that he ought to agree that the virtuous person's end is the fine. It is a further question whether happiness ought to be counted as the end or as the objective. The Stoics can give an Aristotelian quite a good reason for deciding to reform Aristotle's own usage, and to confine the use of 'happiness' to the end. Aristotle agrees that an explicit conception of happiness should be the starting point for our deliberation and choice; to assign this role to happiness

[88] See §116.

[89] On the different roles of Aristotle's conception of happiness see also Aquinas, §281.

is to treat it as the internal end, rather than the external objective. But Aristotle also seems to admit that the conception of the end that actually guides virtuous people is their conception of fine action; and so he ought to identify happiness with fine action. Aristotle, therefore, ought to conclude that virtuous action is identical to happiness.

According to the Stoics, it would be a mistake to reject this conclusion on the assumption that it gives too little weight to the preferred indifferents. In setting out the Stoic and the Aristotelian positions, it is difficult to avoid giving the impression that virtuous action for the sake of the fine is different from virtuous action for the sake of preferred indifferents (when one has a correct conception of them). But any such impression is misleading, for the reasons we have seen in discussing the definition of successful action and its implications for the doctrine of selective value.[90] For the Stoics argue that in taking virtue as my end, I am not neglecting preferred indifferents; my end is doing all I reasonably can to secure them. Virtuous people do not, in the Stoic view, give up some reasonable opportunity that Aristotle advises them to take for pursuing preferred indifferents.

Our comparison of Stoic and Aristotle claims about the role of happiness supports the Stoics' claim to argue from preconceptions about virtue and goods. This claim may seem absurd, since the Stoics' doctrine seems to fly in the face of firm convictions that natural advantages are goods and that they contribute to our happiness. This is why Aristotle dismisses the identification of virtue with happiness as a paradox that only a philosopher would maintain in order to avoid refutation. The Stoics reply to this Aristotelian objection. They argue that our preconceptions support the claims that are needed for their position: the division between ends and objectives, the view that the virtuous person's end is fine action, and the treatment of happiness as the virtuous person's end, not his objective. Each of these claims is Aristotelian, but their combination supports the Stoic view that virtue and virtuous action are the virtuous person's end, and that therefore virtue is identical to happiness.

We might reject this conclusion, if we took it to imply that nothing except virtue matters; for we might argue that such an implication reveals the conflict between Stoicism and our firm preconceptions. But the Stoics argue that their doctrine of indifferents does not imply that indifferents do not matter. They accept the ordinary view that practical reason has the task of finding the best way to secure preferred indifferents, and that a rational person ought to try hard to secure them. Once we understand how the Stoics distinguish goods (components of happiness, the end of virtue) from preferred indifferents (components of the life in accord with nature, the objective of virtue), we will not be surprised that the Stoics tell us to try hard to secure indifferents that are not parts of happiness. The conflict between this doctrine and our preconceptions is merely apparent and superficial; on closer inspection, we see that the Stoic doctrines take account of the substance of our preconceptions.

In some ways, therefore, the Stoic doctrine that virtue is identical to happiness is, as some ancient critics suggest, less radical and important than it may initially seem. For it does not imply the restriction of one's rational concerns to one's own state of character, or complete indifference to the outcome of one's actions in the world. Aristotle rejects

[90] See §187 above.

the identification of virtue with happiness because it overlooks the rational significance of external goods for a virtuous person. The Stoics may reasonably reply that their doctrine is not open to this objection. Their division between end and objective, together with their definition of successful action, shows that virtuous people take every reasonable step to secure preferred indifferents and attribute the appropriate selective value to them. Everything that Aristotle wants to claim about the importance of rational concern for external goods is captured within the Stoic doctrine of virtue, happiness, and preferred indifferents.

Should we then infer that the Stoic doctrine is only verbally different from the Aristotelian doctrine? The Stoics have good reason to reject this inference. Their doctrine seeks to mark a clear division between the end that I ought to have in mind as a guide to my deliberation, and the objective that I ought to have in mind in forming my end, but not as a guide to deliberation. The virtues are states of character formed by reflexion on suitable objectives, but the virtuous person is not moved primarily by direct reflexion on the objectives of virtuous action.

But though it is unfair to describe the Stoic doctrine as only verbally different from Aristotle, this description reminds us that the Stoics believe their main point can be conveyed without claiming that natural advantages are only indifferents and not goods.[91] Chrysippus believes that if one recognizes the different role of virtue and of preferred indifferents, one grasps the essential point of Stoic doctrine even if one follows Aristotle in treating preferred indifferents as external goods. If we follow Aristotle here, we reduce even further the appearance of conflict between Stoic doctrine and our preconceptions about goods. In conceding this point to Aristotle and to common sense, Chrysippus shows that he wants us to draw the Stoic distinctions whether or not we express them in Stoic terms.

This clarification suggests a similar clarification of Chrysippus' claims about virtue and happiness. If we speak of preferred indifferents as goods, we can also say that happiness includes more than virtue (since the Stoics agree that happiness includes all goods). But we can avoid anti-Stoic interpretations of this remark if we agree with the Stoic view that virtuous actions and praiseworthy goods are the internal end of virtue, and we treat happiness as the external objective. Chrysippus' clarification suggests that the main points the Stoics want to convey are the difference between praiseworthy and preferred objects of rational concern, and the virtuous person's immediate preoccupation with the praiseworthy rather than the preferred objects. On these points the Stoics do not repeat Aristotle; they take themselves to clarify and correct his position. But their conclusions are not alien to Aristotle's main doctrines about virtue and happiness.

[91] 'And in On Goods i he in a way concedes and allows anyone who wants to call the preferred things goods and the opposites of them evils, in these words: "If someone wants in accordance with such distinctions to call one of them good and the other evil, being directed to these things [sc. the significates of 'preferred things' and 'non-preferred things'], and does not go astray at random, it is to be accepted. For he will not be astray about the significates, and for the rest he aims at common practice in use of names." And so here he combines and unites the preferred with the good. But elsewhere on the contrary he says that none of these at all is anything to us, but reason pulls us back and turns us away from all these sorts of things' (Plu. *SR* 1048a = LS 58H). Chrysippus envisages someone who grants the distinction that the Stoics draw between goods and preferred indifferents, but still chooses to call preferred indifferents goods. I follow the interpretation of Cherniss, ad loc., rather than that of LS 58H (defended in vol. ii ad loc.).

191. Freedom from Passion

This account of the Stoic doctrine of happiness and virtue removes some possible sources of misunderstanding. The Stoics speak of natural advantages as indifferents, but they believe that these indifferents are proper objects of rational concern and effort. The point of Stoic doctrine is not to advise detachment from the concerns that occupy other people. While the Stoics agree with Plato and Aristotle in believing that we have good reason to prefer the virtues over the accumulation of external goods without the virtues, they do not imply that external goods are unimportant.

This conclusion, however, seems to conflict with yet another apparently paradoxical Stoic doctrine, that the sage has no passions, but is 'unaffected' or 'passionless' (*apathês*). The Stoics defend this doctrine in opposition to the Peripatetic doctrine of 'moderate affection' (*metriopatheia*), arguing that the Peripatetic position rests on a confused analysis of passions. Since a passion is an immediate assent to an indifferent as good or evil, the sage who knows that no indifferent is good or evil, gets rid of passions and does not merely control or temper them.[92]

This explanation of the sage's freedom from passion seems to revive an earlier objection. If sages regard natural advantages and disadvantages as indifferent, how can they take them seriously? For if they do not fear the prospect of losing them, are not grieved by having lost them, are not angry about the deliberate infliction of pain on innocent victims, and so on, are they not detached from the concerns that occupy people who regard these indifferents as good and evil?[93]

Some readers have praised the Stoics for this detachment from indifferents. Stoics detach themselves from ordinary concerns by deciding that they do not matter. They assure us that how the world affects us depends on how we choose to think about it; in this sense all good and evil depends on our conception, or, as one might interpret Hamlet, 'there's nothing good or bad but thinking makes it so'.[94] If we decide to detach ourselves from the supposed goods and evils that are not in our power, we save ourselves from effort that is exposed to failure. We also save ourselves from the emotional effects of engagement and failure. This

[92] 'It has often been asked whether it is better to have moderate passions or no passions. We Stoics expel them, whereas the Peripatetics temper them. I do not see how any moderate condition of a disease could be healthy or useful. Don't be afraid; I am not depriving you of anything that you do not want to be denied to you' (Sen. *Ep*. 116.1; cf. 85.3). Simpl. *in Epict. Ench*. 23.54–24.2, suggests that one ought to regard *metriopatheia* as simply a step on the way to *apatheia*.

[93] 'In this area there are no precepts of philosophers. For they were deceived by a false appearance of virtue and removed kindness (or "pity", pietas) from human beings. In trying to cure vices they increased them. And while these same people often agree that participation in human society is to be continued, they altogether separate themselves from society by the rigour of their inhuman virtue' (Lactantius, *Div. Inst*. vi 10.11–12 = *SVF* iii 450; for the context of this passage see §228.) 'The Stoics, therefore, are mad; they do not moderate <passions>, but cut them off, and in a way want to castrate a human being of things that are implanted by nature' (*Div. Inst*. vi 15.3). This charge against the Stoics is discussed further by Knuuttila, *EAMP* 68–71.

[94] *pan hupolêpsis*, Marc. Aur. ii 15; xii 8, 22, 26; Farquharson, i 294 (on ii 15) cites 'Hamlet' ii 2.247–8. According to Jenkins, *H* 467–8, 'This common reflexion was probably given currency by Montaigne's essay "That the taste of goods or evils doth greatly depend on the opinion we have of them".' See Montaigne, i 14, which begins with a reference to Epict. *Ench*. 5: 'Les hommes (dit une sentence Grecque ancienne) sont tourmentez par les opinions qu'ils ont des choses, non par les choses mesmes'. The following discussion does not entirely endorse this sentiment; see esp. §16–17 on Poseidonius' gout. Montaigne suggests that in this case the Stoic solution is merely verbal and that our senses assure us that pain is a genuine evil.

neo-Stoic conclusion casts freedom from passion in a good light.[95] If, however, we think that society and community with others depends on shared concern for results, and on shared emotions evoked by success and failure, we may well believe that the doctrine of freedom from passion is a Stoic error.

But before we accept either the neo-Stoic or the anti-Stoic conclusion, we should ask what the Stoics mean by claiming that the sage is free of passion. We should take account of the Stoic claim that the sage not only is free of affections but also has 'good affections' (*eupatheiai*).The Stoics apply the names of some apparent passions to the sage who is free from passion. They deny him pleasure, fear, and appetite, but allow him joy, caution, and wish.[96] The sage entirely lacks the uncompromising tendency, based on anger, to insist that a criminal should be punished more than he deserves. He assents to nothing that conflicts with a rationally-justified judgment about preferred indifferents, and so he has no anger. The good affective states are the reasonable reactions to situations that provoke passions in other people.

In what ways are these reasonable reactions in the sage similar to or different from passions in other people? Seneca argues that freedom from passion (*apatheia*) does not make sages indifferent to the losses that provoke passions in other people. If they were completely indifferent and unconcerned, seeing no reason to prefer being healthy over being ill, they would be Cynics. But since they prefer to have some of the things that they sometimes lose, they are not unconcerned, even though they are free from passions (Sen. *Ep*. 9.2–5).[97]

Does this defence answer the charge that the sage is detached? If sages make the appropriate rational judgments about preferred indifferents, and act on these judgments, they can reasonably claim to be concerned. But is their concern not wholly unemotional? We are inclined to say that there is more to a passion than a mistaken judgment about good and evil. But since (we may believe) the Stoics do not recognize this in their cognitive account of passions, the sort of concern that they ascribe to the sage fails to capture the normal human emotions that characteristically go with concern and effort.

To see what exactly the Stoics lack, we should recall their account of passions. They identify passions with assents, but not with every sort of assent; passions also require the immediate ('fresh') assent that consists in yielding to a suggestive appearance. Sages lack passions, because a passion has several elements and anyone who lacks any of these elements lacks a passion, just as anyone who lacks any of the elements of wisdom is a fool.[98] But, just as some fools may have some important elements of wisdom, someone who is free of passion may have some important elements of a passion.

The element of a passion that may persist in someone who has eliminated the mistaken assent is the suggestive appearance that encourages the assent. The Stoics do not expect to

[95] See Lipsius, n39 above.

[96] 'And they say that there are three ways of being well affected—joy, caution, and wish. Joy is opposed to pleasure, being reasonable elation. Caution is opposed to fear, being reasonable avoidance; for the sage will not fear at all, but will be cautious. And wish is opposed to appetite, being reasonable desire. . . . And they say that the sage is also unaffected, because he is not carried away. But another sort of unaffected person is the bad person, where "unaffected" is equivalent to "insensitive" and "relentless" ' (DL vii 17).

[97] 'The sage is self-sufficient, not in the sense that he wants (vult) to be without a friend, but in the sense that he can do without him. And when I say "can", I mean that he bears it with his mind undisturbed (aequo animo)' (Sen. *Ep*. 9.5).

[98] On this 'all or nothing' attitude see Brunschwig, 'Conjunctive'.

eliminate the appearances that, if we assented to them, would result in passions.[99] They do not suggest that appearances are totally plastic,[100] or that we can expect them to conform completely to correct assents. Though we eliminate passions, because we can eliminate the weak and rash assents, we do not eliminate the appearances that make the suggestions that we tend to assent to.[101]

Epictetus acknowledges the persistence of suggestive and potentially misleading appearances in the sage. These appearances explain why sages go pale if they are in danger of shipwreck; at first they affect sages in the way that appearances affect non-rational animals.[102] Sages, however, do not react to these appearances as fools react; fools assent thoughtlessly to the appearance of good or evil, whereas sages do not assent without the appropriate examination of the appearance. Poseidonius' gout made him groan; but still he insisted that it was not bad. Though sages may be moved to tears by an affecting scene in a play, they do not believe that impoverishment and bereavement, however affecting, are bad.[103]

In Epictetus' view, we need to bring reason to bear to stop the outbreak of misguided desire. If we do not do this, then the next time we get the corresponding appearance, we will be aroused more quickly to the desire (Epict. ii 18.8–9). How well we have brought reason to bear will be clear the next time a disturbing appearance arises (ii 16.20).[104] Sages react to some preferred indifferents with a suggestive appearance that may urge them towards

[99] 'But since the newly born human being is provided with these first types of awareness (sensus) of pain and pleasure, before the growth of judgment and reason, and indeed is conciliated to pleasure by nature, but separated and alienated from pain as though from some dangerous enemy—this is why reason, added later, can hardly pluck up by the roots and extinguish these affections, that are thoroughly implanted in him from the first. He is always struggling with them, represses them when they leap up, tramples on them, and forces them to submit to him and obey him. And so you have seen the philosopher, relying on the reason of his decision, struggling with the violence of desires and the leaping of pain, giving way not at all, conceding nothing, nor, as many people in pain do, screaming, lamenting, calling himself wretched and unhappy—but allowing only sharp gasping and deep groans, signs and indications of someone who is not overcome or conquered by pain, but is struggling to overcome and conquer it' (Aulus Gellius, *NA* xii 5.7).

[100] They are plastic to some degree. Increased understanding modifies the character of our appearances, not simply our tendency to assent to them; the expert's appearances are different from the ordinary person's. See DL vii 51 = LS 39A: 'Moreover some appearances are rational, some non-rational. The rational are those of rational animals, the non-rational those of non-rational animals. The rational ones are thoughts; the non-rational have no name [i.e. no special name of their own]. And some are expert (*technikai*), some non-expert. For we must admit that a picture is looked at in one way by an expert, and in another way by a non-expert' Cf. Cic. *Ac.* ii 20; Epict. ii 18.23–4.

[101] Sen. *Ep.* 71.27: 'I do not remove the sage from among human beings, nor do I exclude feelings of distress (dolores) from him as from some rock that is incapable of any awareness (sensus)'. The sage differs from other people because he has unshaken opinions. 'The sage will tremble and be distressed and grow pale; for these are all modes of awareness belonging to the body (corporis sensus). Then where is the calamity, where is the genuine evil? Clearly it happens if these things pervert his mind (animus)' (29). This aspect of Seneca's view is discussed by Inwood, 'Dualism' 177.

[102] '. . . not because any belief in any evil has been accepted, but because of some rapid and unpremeditated movements that outrun ("praevertentibus"; perhaps "anticipate" or "forestall") the function of mind and reason. Soon, however, that sage does not endorse—that is to say, does not assent to, and does not add his belief to, such appearances (phantasias), namely these frightening impressions (visa), but he rejects and repudiates them, and nothing in these appearances seems (videtur) to him to be something to be feared (metuendum)' (Aulus Gellius, *NA* xix 1.17–18 = Epict. fr. 9).

[103] '. . . the fool supposes things to be really as harsh and severe as they appeared to him to be when his mind was first struck, and once he has received them, also endorses them with his assent and adds his belief to them, as though they were rightly to be feared. . . . The sage, however, while he is changed in complexion and facial expression for a short time and to a limited degree, does not assent, but at once holds on to the strength of his opinion' (Aulus Gellius, *NA* xix 1.19–20 = Epict. fr. 9). Cf. Sen. *De Ira* i 3.3–8; ii 3.1 = LS 65X; 4.1; Cic. *TD* ii 61 (Poseidonius' gout); iii 61, 72.

[104] Epictetus asks: 'When you meet an attractive woman, do you resist the appearance? If your neighbour comes into money, aren't you bitten by envy?' (Epict. iii 2.8). We have some control over the character of our appearances; if we realize it would be bad to pursue the pleasure suggested by a particular appearance, then we can avoid imagining (*anazôgraphein*) the actual enjoyment of the pleasure (ii 18.16, 25).

assent. They do not have to struggle against passions (since they have eliminated them), but they have to make some effort to avoid the mental disturbance that may result from suggestive appearances.

192. Appearances without Passions

If the sage's appearances include so many elements of passions, and if the sage attends selectively to their suggestions, how might we expect the sage to react to ordinary human concerns? The Stoics seem to take an austere attitude to most people's emotions. Epictetus advises us to think of the death of a child or friend as though it were the breaking of a pot or a jug. We might take him to be advising us to cultivate a careless attitude, treating the death of a child or friend as a trivial matter, not worth taking seriously. Stoics do not seem to value the immediate and suggestive appearance that, in ordinary people, precedes grief.

This conclusion, however, may rest on a misunderstanding of Epictetus' advice. He does not imply that the death of a child or friend really matters no more than the breaking of a pot. He advises us to use this thought to dislodge us from our previous attachment to external goods.[105] He assumes that we need to counter a tendency in our appearances to go too far, and that we can do this by taking account of features of the situation that a particular appearance tends to neglect. The appearances that underlie passions tend to draw our attention to only one of the practically relevant aspects of a situation. Sometimes they draw our attention to the most relevant feature, but sometimes they mislead us by diverting attention from equally relevant or more relevant features. Epictetus wants us to recall features that we tend to overlook because of the appearance that underlies the passion. The comparison between the loss of a child and the loss of a cup reminds us of our conviction that good and ill fortune are no part of happiness, since they are no part of virtue. If we keep this in mind, we will not confuse cases in which we lose a preferred indifferent with cases in which life is not worth living because we are really deprived of happiness.

But if we counteract our appearances in this way, we do not claim that no preferred indifferent matters at all. We are right to have the appearance of having lost something highly preferable if a child or a friend dies, and we are right to have a more strongly suggestive and disturbing appearance in this case than if we had lost a cup. Sages have appearances that make them vividly aware of preferred and non-preferred indifferents. But this aspect of passions is separable from mistaken assent to the appearance suggesting that something good or evil is involved; that is why sages have no passions, even though they have suggestive appearances.

If the Stoics believed that the appearances appropriate to the loss of a friend or child are the same as those appropriate to the loss of a cup, critics might reasonably claim that they violate our preconceptions. But they do not believe this. They lack emotions only in so far as they do not assent to any appearance that natural advantages are good.[106] Since they

[105] Epictetus recommends the training (*askêsis*, iii 24.84) that can be used to prevent the attachment to external goods from becoming misguided.

[106] Contrast Striker, 'Following' 68–71.

maintain that natural advantages contribute to the life in accordance with nature, they care about acquiring them. They share the responses of other people, in so far as they focus sharply and vividly on the preferred and non-preferred aspects of indifferents.

Does the sage's lack of passion prevent sympathy with other people? If you are a Stoic sage and you see me suffering, you will not suppose that anything bad is happening to me, and so you will see no reason for the sympathy or compassion that would follow the belief that I have suffered a real harm. Moreover, since you are not subject to passions yourself, my suffering will not move you to any passion in response. In this respect, therefore, the sage is incapable of sympathy. But Stoics might reasonably argue that passion is not essential to the ethically significant aspects of sympathy, and that sages recognize these aspects through their vivid appearances of preferred and non-preferred indifferents. They recognize that we are liable to suffer significant non-preferred indifferents, and they have vivid and insistent appearances of these sufferings in other people. These appearances give them a good reason for doing something to relieve the sufferings of others.[107]

Does a Stoic sage lack some essential element of virtue by lacking passions? It is difficult to defend this charge on an Aristotelian basis. For Aristotle agrees that a virtuous person should have been trained to realize that the loss of external goods is not an occasion for despair, and that a blow to one's reputation does not threaten the most important aspects of one's happiness. Virtuous people should not retain other people's irrational and excessive reactions to external successes and failures. Their reactions should be proportionate to the value of the situations they react to, and these reactions should never threaten our recognition of the supreme value of virtue. These are the proportionate reactions that the Stoics try to describe more clearly; though sages have no passions, they might claim to react in the ways that Aristotle recommends.

193. Is the Sage really Free of Passion?

We might wonder whether this defence of the Stoics proves too much. Once we see that their views about virtue, happiness, and the indifferents do not imply that natural advantages are unimportant, or that virtue is the only thing we should be concerned about, we may be inclined to sympathize with critics who believe that Stoics and Peripatetics differ only verbally. Similarly, once we see that their views about freedom from passion do not eliminate suggestive appearances about value, we may be inclined to conclude that Stoic sages really have passions and that their freedom from passion differs only verbally from Peripatetic moderated passion.[108]

The Stoics admit that suggestive appearances can move us to some reaction even without any intervening assent. But, in their view, these appearances are not emotions, but preliminaries to them; a passion requires something further than a momentary inclination towards the action suggested by an appearance, and anything more than a momentary inclination requires assent. The sage lacks the crucial assent.

[107] The sage should not be passionless (*apathês*) like a rock, but should 'observe natural and acquired relations' in acknowledging duties (*kathêkonta*) (Epict. iii 2.4 = LS 56C).

[108] This view that the Stoics attribute emotions to the sage is Augustine's view in *CD* ix 4. See §220.

The Stoics do not suggest that we ought to try to remove all the suggestive elements in our appearances. The appearance that it is bad for us to be impoverished is not completely wrong, because impoverishment is in fact a non-preferred indifferent, and it is normally reasonable for us to try to avoid it.[109] Perhaps our best method for detecting preferred and non-preferred indifferents essentially involves selective and critical reliance on suggestive appearances. It would be a mistake to suppress the suggestion that it is bad to be tortured or impoverished, if this is the best way to turn our attention to these non-preferred indifferents.

We may be doubtful about this defence of the Stoic position because it relies on the claim that assent is essential for passion, and this claim is one of the most controversial elements of the Stoic doctrine of passions. If we doubt whether passions include assent, we may believe that the other features of passions, as the Stoics conceive them, are sufficient by themselves for passions. Even if we agree with the Stoics' separation of goods from preferred indifferents, we may still doubt their claims about the passions.

The Stoics' account of passions rests partly on the plausible claim that action on passion is responsible action. They assume, reasonably, that an account of passions ought to make it clear how we can be responsible for acting on our passions. They make this clear by taking assent to be necessary for a passion, so that our responsibility for acting on passion follows from the Stoic doctrine of responsibility. If we want to reject the Stoic account of passions, we need to show either that we are not responsible for acting on passion, or that the Stoics are wrong to connect responsibility with assent, or that we can connect passions with assent and responsibility without making assent part of a passion. Since Augustine and Aquinas contribute to this debate by modifying the Stoic position in different places, we can postpone further discussion until we come to their accounts of the passions.

194. The Extent of Friendship

Now that we have surveyed some aspects of the Stoics' doctrine of happiness, virtue, and the preferred indifferents, we may consider some of their views on the other-regarding virtues. These views are original and important in their own right; they also show how the Stoics try to distinguish those elements of human life that constitute the aim of rational action from those that constitute its preferred objective. Some of the apparently conflicting aspects of Stoic social and political morality are intelligible in the light of their doctrines about virtue and happiness.

The Stoics identify two lives: (1) The life in which the appropriate intrinsic value is attached to the exercise of practical reason in relation to the rest of human nature. (2) The life in which the moral virtues are given the appropriate place. The Stoics think these apparently distinct lives are united by the concept of the fine (honestum). In examining the growth of reason, we find that we come to value it for its own sake. Virtuous people value virtuous action for its own sake, as something fine. The Stoics suggest that each of these

[109] This argument for the cognitive usefulness of appearances is still easier to defend if the sage simply has the appearance that he is suffering a non-preferred indifferent. For this appearance is true, and he would be quite mistaken if he did not take it into account in his deliberation.

outlooks commits us to the other; the virtues are to be valued for their own sake because they are exercises or expressions of practical reason.

This claim is relatively plausible for self-regarding virtues. But an obvious question arises about the virtues that essentially require concern for others. Aristotelian friendship seems to justify only limited concern for others. Do the Stoics go further?

Aristotle does not argue that the extent of concern for others ought to be limited. He recognizes natural friendship and conciliation between all human beings (*EN* 1155a16–21).[110] He makes a similar remark in discussing the ways in which friendship with a slave is and is not possible.[111] He claims that in so far as we share humanity with other human beings, we actually are friends to them; common humanity is not simply the basis for possible friendship, but implies some form of actual friendship.

How does Aristotle explain this friendship, and what does he think it involves? He compares it with the relation of justice that actually holds between all human beings in so far as they are capable of sharing in law and agreement. The capacity for sharing in law and agreement means that relations of justice are actual, not merely possible. Perhaps Aristotle means that since it is possible to make a just or an unjust law and agreement between human beings, facts about justice are antecedent to any law; for if justice were the product of law and agreement, the law and agreement themselves could not be assessed as just and unjust.

Perhaps one might explain friendship in the same way. As we have seen, Aristotle allows some elements of complete friendship between virtuous people to be extended beyond one's complete friends to fellow-citizens whom one recognizes as sufficiently virtuous to share in common deliberation in which each person counts as 'another self' whose interests matter for their own sake. If he can show that we recognize some degree of virtue in every other person, because each person is a rational agent, he can reasonably argue that we must already have some relation of friendship to every other person, and that every other person counts as 'another self' for us.

But even if this is a legitimate inference from some of Aristotle's remarks about friendship, Aristotle gives us no help with it. He does not try to show that his quite careful and detailed account of the different types of friendship and of the moral basis of friendship makes it reasonable to recognize friendship for humanity.

The Stoics differ from Aristotle on this point. For they claim that all human beings form a community that gives them obligations to one another. We might assume that this cosmopolitan outlook rests on a moral foundation that emphasizes impartial concern for human welfare, as opposed to the egocentric (in the sense we have explained) Aristotelian outlook.[112]

[110] See §128.

[111] 'In so far as he is a slave, then, there is no friendship with him. But there is friendship with him in so far as he is a human being. For every human being seems to have some relation of justice with everyone who is capable of community in law and agreement; hence <every human being seems> also <to have> friendship <with every human being>, to the extent that <every human being> is a human being' (*EN* 1161b5–8).

[112] Barbeyrac, 'Morality' 66, believes that Aristotle misses the central elements of morality: 'Thus this vast genius of nature, this philosopher, for whom such numbers have so great a veneration; proves to be grossly ignorant of, and without any scruple treads under foot, one of the most evident principles of the law of nature'. Cf. Tuck, *NRT* 174–7. To illustrate his charge, Barbeyrac especially condemns Aristotle's willingness to permit abortion in some circumstances (*Politics* 1335b19–26). Among recent writers Donagan, *TM* 4, argues that Aristotle has no clear conception of morality: 'The Stoics, rather than Aristotle or Plato, are to be credited with forming the first reasonably clear conception of

Closer examination of the Stoics, however, casts doubt on this assumption. Their starting-point is no less egocentric than Aristotle's, and at several points they rely on Aristotle's conception of friendship. The fact that they can use Aristotelian principles to support concern for the interests of humanity in general shows that the Aristotelian principles are more flexible than we might have supposed. In our attempts to see how far Aristotelian concern for other selves can reasonably be extended, we have begun the line of argument that the Stoics pursue in some detail.[113]

The main Stoic argument relies on a parallel between two roles of practical reason: (i) concern for my own life as a whole, and (ii) concern for the good of others as well as myself. This parallel is introduced by Plato in the *Symposium*,[114] and is present also in Aristotle. The two roles are parallel, because both exercises of practical reason extend its scope beyond my immediate concerns and interests. In one case, I see that my good belongs to different stages of myself. In the other case, it see that it also belongs to people other than myself. In both cases I extend my conception of my good, and in doing so I adapt more of my life to practical reason.

The Stoics express this idea of the extension of practical reason through their suggestive metaphor of expanding circles. We have seen how they use this metaphor to capture our conception of our own life as a series of circles of expanding concern. They use the same picture of expanding circles to explain our relation to other people. Hence Hierocles introduces the circles into his account of conciliation (*oikeiôsis*).[115] He describes an agent's relation to other people by assuming several 'circles'. The first of these circles includes one's body; others include one's immediate and extended family, one's fellow-citizens, and eventually the whole human race. Hierocles suggests that we belong to these circles whether we are virtuous or vicious, but that if we are virtuous we draw people in the more remote circles into closer circles (Stob. iv 671.7–673.11 = LS 57G).

This metaphor of expanding circles has a different significance in relation to other people from its significance in relation to a single person. In recognizing expanding circles in my own life, I recognize that different actions and experiences at different times are all states of one and the same person—myself; the common centre of all the circles expresses the fact that the owner of all the experiences and the agent of all the actions is one and the same person. But when the circles include different people, rather than different states of the same person, their common centre does not indicate that they are really all states of the same person.

The significance of the metaphor is clear, however, when Hierocles says it is a mark of virtue to draw people into closer circles. Incorporation of a person in a circle is similar to incorporation of one person's states in the circles of that person, in so far as it marks a type of concern. When only one person is involved, that person cares for a future state as his own, because he recognizes that it is his own. When a second person is involved, A's inclusion of

morality. . . . Obviously there is a strong moral element in Aristotle's theory of ethical virtue; but he did not succeed in distinguishing moral virtue as such, the virtue of a man as a man, from political virtue, the virtue of a citizen of a good city.' Donagan's claim is not easily reconciled with Aristotle, *Politics* iii 4; since Aristotle argues that a good person must be a citizen of a good city, he must distinguish the two concepts.

[113] Stoic arguments for extension of concern are discussed, and taken to be inconsistent, by McCabe, 'Extend'.

[114] See §§63–4.

[115] On conciliation see above §179.

B in a circle around A marks the fact that A has some of the concern for B that A has for A. Whatever I incorporate in a circle is something that I care about in the way I care about myself.

In their description of circles, therefore, the Stoics adapt Aristotle's idea of the friend as another self, another person whom I care about in the way I care about myself. The Stoics pursue this idea further than Aristotle does. Eventually, the virtuous person's circles of concern include the whole human race. Just as longer-term self-concern expands the scope of my practical reason, so does concern for others, and for a larger number of others in different relations to me.

195. Expanding Circles of Friendship

The Stoics treat these concentric circles dynamically, not just statically. The mark of a virtuous person is to move people from more distant circles into closer circles, so that a virtuous person shows the sort of concern for more distant people that other people show for people closer to them. But how is this inward movement to be understood?

Two different interpretations, with different moral implications, might be defended: (1) If I am a virtuous person, I eventually fit the whole human race into the inmost circle, the one that initially contains only myself. The metaphor of circles expresses claims about the moral equality of everyone, and about the universal 'point of view of the cosmos' that Stoic sages take on their actions.[116] (2) If I am virtuous, I bring people closer to me than a non-virtuous person brings them to himself, but I still maintain a distinction between circles; I do not put everyone into the same circle. The plurality of circles recognizes the differences between moral concern for different people.

The second interpretation is more plausible. The point of the expanding circles is probably not that we eventually treat everyone the same way. The point is that people who would be outside our circles of concern move into them, so that we recognize some community with them. The Stoic sources do not suggest that the virtuous person recognizes just the same obligations to everyone. They suggest that the people who are more distant for non-virtuous people become closer for the virtuous person.

This second interpretation, recognizing different degrees of closeness corresponding to different circles, fits Cicero's claim that we have different obligations to people in different sorts of relations with us. Our duties (officia) to human beings in general do not involve self-sacrifice; they involve benefits to others without harm to ourselves. Cicero illustrates these benefits by the example of one person lighting another person's lamp without losing any of his own light.[117] He mentions ties of race, city, family, ties with other virtuous people,

[116] See Annas, *MH* 268–70.

[117] 'Now the things that belong to all human beings in common seem to be of the sort laid down by Ennius . . . : "A human being who kindly shows the way to someone who is lost is as one who lights another's lamp by his own, so that his own shines no less for him when he has lit the light for the other." This example suffices for him to teach us that, if there is some help we can give without loss to ourselves, we ought to give it even to a stranger' (Cic. *Off.* i 51).

and so on, as sources of different duties. He does not say that all have to be objects of equal concern.[118]

196. The Characteristics of Friendship

We have suggested that Stoic claims about expanding circles of concern exploit Aristotle's view that friendship involves the recognition of people as 'other selves', and that the Stoics go beyond Aristotle in claiming that everyone else ought to be recognized as another self. But their attempt to expand Aristotelian friendship may appear misguided, once we consider the sorts of relations that Aristotle takes to be characteristic of friendship. His argument seems to presuppose continuing interaction between friends. He describes their characteristic activity as the sharing of 'reasoning and thought'. They engage in shared deliberation, argument, reflexion, and so on. Friendship is an element of one's good partly because one can engage in this co-operative practical reasoning.

The interactive aspects of friendship help to explain why Aristotle does not normally extend it to all humanity. Fellow-citizens (in the sort of state that Aristotle has in mind) interact in ways that make friendship intelligible. Moreover, we interact with other people whom we happen to encounter; Aristotle mentions meetings between travellers (*EN* 1155a21). But if friendship involves interaction and co-operation, we cannot be friends of people with whom we do not interact.

We can better understand the issues that these aspects of friendship raise for the Stoic position if we consider a related Aristotelian objection. The importance that the Stoics attach to community and to extended concern appears to conflict with the Stoic view that happiness and virtue are identical. From Aristotle's point of view, we might argue as follows: (1) Happiness requires virtue, because happiness is the fulfilment of rational nature. (2) The fulfilment of rational nature requires the extension of practical reason to concern for others. (3) This extension of practical reason requires community with others. (4) Hence happiness requires community with others. (5) Community with others requires interaction. (6) The relevant interaction is not entirely up to me. (7) Hence happiness is not entirely up to me.

The Stoics accept the first four steps of this argument; that is why they argue for expanding circles of concern. But they seem to overlook (5) and (6). If happiness requires interaction, and not simply an action of the virtuous person, it does not depend wholly on the virtuous person; hence it does not seem to consist wholly in virtue and virtuous activities. But the claim that the relevant sort of community requires interaction appears plausible; for practical

[118] 'But perhaps we should examine more thoroughly what are the natural principles of human fellowship and community (societatis). First is something that is seen in the fellowship of the entire human race. For the bonding consists of reason and speech, which conciliate human beings to one another through teaching, learning, communicating, discussing, and judging, and unite them in a kind of natural community. . . . Now there are a great many degrees of community (societas) among human beings. To proceed beyond the limitless (infinita) community, there is the closer one of belonging to the same people, tribe, and tongue, by which human beings are very closely tied together. A closer tie still binds citizens of the same city (civitas) . . . But there is an even closer tie within a family. Starting from that boundless (immensa) community of the human race, we end with something small and narrow . . . But of all the bonds of fellowship, there is none nobler, none more powerful than when good men of congenial character are joined in intimate friendship; for really, if we discover in another that moral goodness (honestum) on which I dwell so much, it attracts us and makes us friends to the one in whose character it seems to dwell.' (Cic. *Off.* i 50–5).

reason is expanded and developed further when other people contribute to my practical reasoning than when I reason without the co-operative contribution of others. Hence step (2) seems to support step (5). Since the Stoics agree that happiness requires the fulfilment of rational nature, they must apparently recognize the value of interaction. Hence the reasons that justify their claim that happiness includes virtue also seem to justify the Aristotelian claim that happiness includes more than virtue, and in particular that it includes more than what is up to me.

197. Stoic Political Theory

To see how the Stoics deal with these Aristotelian objections about virtue, happiness, and friendship, it is useful to take a wider view of the Stoic position. In particular, some features of the Stoics' political theory reveal some of their distinctive arguments about community. Some peculiarities of the Stoics' doctrine of friendship are connected to their apparently conflicting claims about the state. The sources seem to present inconsistent fragments of political views; but closer inspection suggests the consistent moral claims that underlie them.[119]

We can distinguish these different attitudes to states and political institutions in Stoic sources: (1) Some Stoics criticize existing states, and propose radical alternatives. Zeno advocates an ideal state that goes even further than Plato's in abandoning the institutions of existing societies.[120] (2) Some Stoics suggest that existing states are not only flawed, but are not even genuine states at all, because the only genuine state would have to consist of virtuous people.[121] (3) Sometimes the Stoics do not seem to be concerned with the institutions of a state, as ordinarily understood, but only with the community that already exists among all virtuous people, in so far as they accept a common law by following common rational principles. (4) Sometimes the Stoics appear to be less interested in ideal states than in understanding existing states as part of a single worldwide community of rational agents, not only of virtuous agents.[122] These different claims seem to suggest that

[119] Schofield, *SIC* and 'Social', contain helpful discussions of questions in Stoic political theory.

[120] '. . . [Zeno] declares at the beginning of his *Republic* that ordinary education is useless. Secondly, he says that all those who are not virtuous are one another's opponents, at war, slaves, foreigners, to one another . . . Again, in the *Republic* he sets up virtuous people alone as citizens, friends, kin, and free, so that, in the Stoic view, parents and children are adversaries, since they are not wise. He is said to lay down in the *Republic* that women are to be held in common, and (at line 200) that people should build neither temples nor courthouses nor gymnasia in the cities' (DL vii 32–3 = LS 67B). Schofield *SIC*, ch. 1, discusses Chrysippus' objections to Zeno's radical proposals.

[121] 'They say a city is a mass of human beings who dwell in the same place, that is governed by law. It is clear thereby that this predicate is proper to none of the so-called cities that are foolish and lawless . . . For just as the one who lacks the rational part is not a human being either, so also what is not law-abiding is not a city; and if it is foolish and disorderly, it could not be law-abiding' (Dio Chrys. 36.20).

[122] 'Let us grasp in our minds two commonwealths. One is great and truly common, including both gods and human beings, in which we do not look at this or that corner of the earth, but we measure the boundaries of our city together with the path of the sun. The other is the one we have been enrolled in by the circumstances of our birth. This is the commonwealth of the Athenians or the Carthaginians, or of some other city that belongs to some specific human beings, but not to all human beings' (Sen. *De Otio* 4.1 = LS 67K, discussed in Schofield, *SIC*, ch. 4.) 'What is there—never mind in human beings, but in all of heaven and earth—more divine than reason? And when this has grown and been perfected, it is rightly called prudence. Since, then, nothing is better than reason, and since it is in human beings and in gods, the first community of human beings and gods is in reason. Now those who share reason also have right reason in common;

Stoic political theory is about different subjects, and indeed that it is not a single body of theory at all, but a series of different observations that lead in different directions.

Zeno's *Republic* disagrees with Plato, and with existing societies, and proposes an alternative ideal state with unconventional institutions. Probably Zeno argues that many of the institutions that people take for granted as essential for a just city and a decent way of life are really indifferent, and need to be examined to see whether they are preferred indifferents that achieve the appropriate results in specific circumstances. He and Chrysippus perhaps suggest that a city of virtuous people would not need the institutions found in actual states. Here, then, they understand 'a community of virtuous people' as a specific group of people forming something like a Greek *polis*.

But the Stoics also seem to think of a different sort of community of virtuous people. They believe that virtuous people everywhere form a community, whether or not they are gathered together in a political community that actually shares the sorts of causal interactions that belong to the ordinary institutions of government. In this sense, we can live in the community of virtuous people even if we are in Norway and all the other virtuous people are in New Zealand, and we do not know of their existence. From the Stoic point of view, one might argue that the community of virtuous people is a more significant community than the one constituted by the particular political community we are born into; and so virtuous people will treat one another as fellow-citizens, however distant (in ordinary terms) they may be from one another.[123]

However, the Stoics also recognize a world community, a cosmopolis that is not restricted to virtuous people. It is similar to the community of the virtuous in so far as it does not include any institutions of government that produce the normal sort of causal interactions and influences among citizens. In the Stoics' view, this sort of community has one law. The rational principles followed by human beings and God constitute the natural law, a universally valid guide for individual and social life. This universal community is not (or not simply) an ideal for a worldwide community that might replace existing states. The Stoics speak of it as already existing in the present world.

Does the claim that a universal community already exists depend on Stoic theological assumptions? We might take the Stoics to mean that a single community must have a single ruler, and that the Stoic God is the ruler. If the world were exactly as it is, but the Stoics were wrong to say that it is ruled by a single divine intelligence, would they have to abandon their claim about its being a single community of rational agents?

This question takes us back to the issues about Aristotelian friendship. When we see how the Stoics interpret and develop some Aristotelian claims, we can see what they mean in recognizing a community of the wise, and a community of rational agents.

and since right reason is law, we must suppose that we human beings and the gods are made a community by law' (Cic. *Leg*. i 23). 'True law is correct reason agreeing with nature, diffused through everyone, constant, everlasting. It calls to duty by commanding, and deters from wrongdoing by forbidding. It neither commands good people in vain nor moves bad people either by commanding or by forbidding. . . . And God will be the one common master and commander of all—God, who has found and promulgated the law and is its judge. Anyone who does not obey it flees from himself and shuns the nature of a human being, and by this very fact pays the greatest penalties, even if he escapes the other things commonly accounted punishments' (Lactantius, *Div. Inst*. vi 8.6–9 = Cic. *Rep*. iii 33 = LS 67S). See §206 (Christianity); §284 (Aquinas).

[123] On the community of reason see Schofield, *SIC* 72.

198. The Community of Sages

The Stoics' view of the relevant types of community is intelligible in the light of Aristotle's views on friendship between virtuous people. Aristotle says virtuous people share reason and thought (*logos* and *dianoia*); and these are the connexions that the Stoics describe in explaining friendship among sages. In their view, Aristotle picks the right features of friendship, but unduly restricts the types of friendship in which these features can be found.

One relation that the Stoics exploit appears in Aristotle's discussion of goodwill (*eunoia*). According to Aristotle, goodwill involves concern for the other person for the other's own sake, but it does not involve the interaction that is characteristic of friendship (*EN* ix 5). Aristotle suggests that this goodwill is the starting point of friendship, but it is 'inactive friendship' (1167a10–14). Goodwill for another virtuous person expresses a common point of view. In recognizing another virtuous person, we recognize another person who cares about virtuous action for its own sake, and wants his actions and life to be subject to practical reason. And so we recognize such people as ones with whom we already share a common point of view, and therefore as ones with whom we can share common deliberation, if the appropriate interaction becomes possible.

According to the Stoics, Aristotle's claims about goodwill explain how the Stoic sage has friendship with all other sages. If Zeno is a sage, friendship with other sages is open to him, even if he does not know whether there are any other sages, where they exist, or who any individual sage is. Zeno is a friend to any other sages there might be, whether or not he knows that there are any. When Zeno recognizes the possibility of another sage, he treats this other sage as another self; he regards the interests of the other as mattering in the way in which Zeno's own interests matter to him.

From Aristotle's point of view, we might reply that Zeno's attempt to include all other sages in his circle of concern is an idle exercise unless he interacts appropriately with a specific sage. Let us suppose there is a sage in China whom Zeno has never heard of—call him Confucius. We might say that though Zeno and Confucius would be concerned about each other if they met, they have merely potential concern if they do not meet. That is the point of saying that they have inactive friendship, until they know they have mutual goodwill and can do something about it.

The Stoics might reply, however, that the appropriate sort of interaction does not require the mutual knowledge that Zeno and Confucius lack. If Jane bequeaths all her money to her fourth grandson, even though at her death she has only three grandsons, she does something for her fourth grandson, even though she does not know who he is. Similarly, the mere fact that Zeno and Confucius do not know each other does not mean that their outlooks do not affect each other. Each may be influenced by the point of view of the other, without knowing who the other is.

To see how this might be true, we need to consider what is involved in being a sage. In the Stoics' view, the sage is perfectly free of any distortion of the rational outlook by the influence of appearances. Though the sage has got rid of passions, he still has the appearances

that distort our judgment unless we are vigilant, as Epictetus says, in examining them.[124] But how do we avoid this distorting influence?

In some cases, Zeno's judgment may be in danger of being distorted because he is forming his views in Athens, or among the people he knows best, or because he is thinking about his particular situation as a slave or a slave-owner. To find the point of view of a sage, he needs to separate himself from the distorting influences of these specific features of his own situation. He might do this if he takes the point of view of a sage like Confucius, who lacks the appearances that encourage Zeno to draw one conclusion rather than another. But Confucius' point of view is a source of good advice for Zeno only if Zeno thinks of Confucius without the particular biases of Confucius' environment.

Would it be an idle ceremony for Zeno to think of Confucius in this way, without knowing whether there is any such person? The mere fact that he cannot ask Confucius what he thinks does not mean that it is a waste of time to ask himself what Confucius would think. He can still helpfully try to take Confucius' point of view. Unless we think of someone who does not face the distorting influences of our local situation, we will find it difficult to avoid these influences.

We might consider some Stoic reflexions on political institutions in this light. Zeno and Chrysippus reach apparently bizarre conclusions because they consider the point and use of different institutions and practices without reference to the fact that these are familiar. From the point of view of a sage who is not immersed in the customs and traditions of the Greek world, the current institutions may well seem unnecessary or harmful. It does not follow that the fact that we are used to these institutions is irrelevant in making actual political recommendations. But clarity about the value of the institutions requires us to grasp the point of view of the sage who reflects on them in abstraction from what we happen to be used to.[125]

This appeal to the point of view of another sage is relevant to the Aristotelian objection that Stoic friendship between sages is inactive because it does not involve interaction. From the Stoic point of view, this friendship involves a certain sort of mutual influence. Each one of Zeno and Confucius is influenced, in forming his own views, by the views of another sage who is removed from his own particular environment. Hence each of them attends to the point of view of the other in trying to form his own point of view. The outlooks of two virtuous people influence each other even if neither is aware of the existence of the other.

It is too simple, therefore, to object that Stoic friendship does not include interaction, and therefore falls short of genuine friendship. Since the Stoic sage relies on points of view other than his own in forming his own point of view, it would be a mistake to argue that reference to the other sage's point of view is idle. Hence the reason that an Aristotelian might give for believing that friendship between sages is mere goodwill is not a good reason. Even though the mutual influence of two points of view is not the same as causal interaction between two people, it is not the same as mutual goodwill. The point of view that each sage recognizes in the other also makes a difference to thought and deliberation.

[124] See §165.

[125] Cicero comments on Cynic and Stoic attitudes to social conventions at *Off.* i 128–9, 148.

199. The Community of Human Beings

If we have some ground for believing that Stoic sages have friendship with one another, can we extend the same sort of argument to explain why the Stoics recognize not only a community of sages, but also a community of all rational agents? In their view, the sage regards himself as part of this community. That is why he is *philanthrôpos*, a lover of humanity.[126] He is a friend to all human beings, not only to sages. But it is not only the sage who has this friendship towards other people in general. The Stoics also claim that all rational agents have it towards one another; that is what makes them a community bound by friendship.

To see how such friendship is possible, we need to rely on the feature that all rational agents share with sages. Sages take the point of view of practical reason, freed from the distorting influence of appearances. Other people do not manage this with the same degree of success, but, if they are rational agents, they do some of it. To recognize the common law of reason is to recognize a community of interest with other rational agents to the extent that they are reliable contributors to common rational deliberation. To be a sage is to be open to the point of view of another sage, in the sense we have explained. To be a rational agent is to be, to some degree, responsive to the views of other rational agents, as such.

If this is a correct account of the Stoic position, the friendship of all rational agents for one another is not only consistent with the mutual friendship of sages, but required by it. Sages are friends because they are complete rational agents, steadily moved by the outlook of reason rather than the distorting influences of appearance and passion. They differ from other human beings in fully achieving what other people partly achieve. Other people agree with the sage in taking the point of view of reason; they therefore listen to the views of other rational agents as participants in their deliberation. This is why a sage loves humanity and takes pleasure in the sight of many other human beings.[127]

In this case also, the Stoics can satisfy Aristotle's demand for mutual influence even among people who do not know of each other's existence. If I try to deliberate from the point of view of a rational agent who is free of the distorting influences of my environment, I have to take that person's point of view, and I have to be influenced by it. Even if I do not actually encounter any such person, I learn about that person's views and respond to them.

The Stoics speak of a common natural law that everyone recognizes and that no one can violate without 'fleeing from himself and shunning the nature of a human being' (Cic. *Rep.* iii 33 = LS 67S).[128] They assume that rational agents are capable of engaging in common deliberation with other rational agents so that they reach a common point of view. From this common point of view they find the principles that ought to guide their individual and collective behaviour.

[126] On *philanthrôpia* cf. Epict. iii 24.64–6 (Diogenes showed his *philanthrôpia* by treating the whole earth as his native country (patris)); iv 8.30–2 (Cynic *philanthrôpia* shown by willingness to share the Cynic attitude to virtue and happiness); iv 4.27; Clem. *Strom.* ii 41.6. On the wider use of this term see *TDNT* ix 108–12.

[127] 'For what is a pleasanter sight to a lover of humanity than many human beings? . . . ''But their noise is too much for me.'' No doubt your hearing is impeded. Then what is that to you? Is your ability to make use of appearances impeded?' (Epict. iv 4.27–8).

[128] Quoted in full at n122 above.

This assumption of a common point of view, however, faces some difficulties. Suppose that Zeno and Confucius are deliberating as sages do, and are both responsive to the other's point of view. They agree that one virtue is bravery and that a brave person fights for his city. This is how it seems to Zeno when he recognizes that Confucius also thinks it right to fight for one's city. But this agreement implies that it may be right for one brave person to fight for Athens against Sparta, and for another to fight for Sparta against Athens. Given this mutual antagonism, how can they have a common point of view?

One might say that the only possible common point of view among brave people would be respect for the other person's bravery. One might respect the other person in this way, while still making strenuous efforts to kill him; that seems to be the attitude of Greeks and Trojans in the *Iliad*.

We might reach this conclusion for various reasons: (1) We might believe that competition is the right way to settle this dispute between states, so that on this point the two brave people take a common point of view. This would be similar to the view that it is all right for us to compete for the same job, or to play on two opposed teams. Hence this example would not constitute an objection to the view that in recognizing other virtuous people we recognize common purposes that we share with them. (2) Instead we might argue that considerations of what is fair or right do not apply to such cases, so that there is no answer to a question about how the disputes that lead to conflict ought to be settled.

This second answer is similar to the Hobbesian view, and would be an objection to the suggestion that recognition of virtue in another person marks a possibility for common deliberation. Hence the Stoics need to argue that the first answer is correct—that virtuous people can find a rationally acceptable answer by common deliberation about how to deal with dispute or conflict.

200. Limitations of Stoic Friendship

We have examined these Stoic views of friendship in order to see how Stoics might answer the Aristotelian objection that the recognition of friendship as a good compromises the Stoic position that virtue is sufficient for happiness. According to this objection, friendship and community require the existence of suitable other people; and since their existence is not up to me, not all the elements of the good are in my control, and not all are guaranteed by virtue. Without these other people I can have only goodwill, but no proper friendship.

We now see that this Aristotelian objection is too simple. Stoic sages are capable of a certain kind of friendship, going beyond mere goodwill and involving mutual influence, with other sages, whether or not these sages exist or are known to one another. Moreover, all rational beings have this friendship, to some degree, with other rational beings. This sort of friendship gives the Stoics an answer to the Aristotelian objection.

Still, the very fact that this sort of friendship is worthwhile gives a reason for thinking it is even better to have actual friends whose point of view we can learn about from what they tell us and not simply from our own reasoning. If Zeno tries to take the point of view of Confucius, free from the distorting influences of Zeno's own environment, he may not succeed completely. If he knows an actual Chinese sage, he may do better, since he no

longer relies entirely on his own reason to find the point of view of the sage. Even if a sage is not subject to this error, he may appropriately welcome the agreement of another actual sage, to confirm the correctness of his judgment. If anyone is prone to error in trying to discover the views of the sage, he has reason to welcome the help of other people who are willing to make the same effort to discover these views. The Stoic explanation of friendship suggests an Aristotelian comment: even if other actual people are not needed for friendship, they seem to be needed for the best operation of friendship. Hence they seem to be needed for human beings to achieve their complete good.

If this is true of friendship, it is also relevant to arguments between Stoics and Aristotelians on virtuous action 'in preferable conditions'. Alexander argues that each craft has two sorts of exercise—its exercise in preferable and in non-preferable conditions (*Mant.* 160.31–161.1); a craft, for instance, exercises itself both in playing good flutes and in playing bad flutes. While recognizing Aristotle's point that virtue is exercised in bad external conditions, Alexander suggests that this is not really the proper exercise of virtue, and that the proper exercise requires preferable conditions.[129]

If Alexander's remark about the end of the virtues takes the end to be fully virtuous action (i.e., the Stoic use of 'end'), neither the Stoics or Aristotle ought to agree with him. On the contrary; in so far as the virtuous person acts in accordance with right reason for its own sake, he does this just as well in bad conditions. If Alexander means 'end' in a broader sense, corresponding to the Stoic 'objective', he is right to say that the virtuous person prefers virtuous action in good conditions. The Stoics agree with this, but their agreement does not threaten their claim about virtue. They need not agree that it is less properly virtuous action even in bad conditions.

But perhaps more can be said on Alexander's behalf. The Stoics claim that 'action' is an appropriate aim for the virtuous person, because action is up to us; since we can get that completely right, the best actions are up to us and do not depend on external circumstances; hence the complete fulfilment of human nature in action is up to us. This argument, however, neglects the ways in which the best kind of action is not up to us. If we find the best action by learning from experience, and this experience requires favourable circumstances, the best actions are not entirely up to us.

This conclusion bears on the previous discussion about the fulfilment and extension of practical reason, in friendship and expanding circles. If the best rational action requires interaction, the Stoics may be wrong to claim that rational agency is wholly up to me. They may still be right to claim that some aspect of rational agency is up to me and is more valuable than anything else.

We might, therefore, sympathize with the criticism that is developed in *De Finibus* iv (esp. 34–48) against the Stoics.[130] The critic argues that the Stoics assume that happiness is the fulfilment of rational human nature; that is why they identify happiness with rational agency and virtue. But since the fulfilment of rational nature requires more than virtue, the Stoics should admit that if happiness includes virtue, it includes more than virtue. In particular, community with others seems to be necessary for the full development of practical reason;

[129] 'Just as in the other crafts the end is in the exercises about wished-for things and in preferable conditions (*en prohêgoumenois*), the same will be true in the case of virtue, if it is a craft' (*Mant.* 161.1–3).

[130] Augustine endorses this criticism; see §227.

and if the Stoics believe that practical reason is at least part of happiness, they should agree that its full development is necessary for happiness.

To agree with this criticism is not to reject the Stoic claim that virtue matters more than any combination of external goods. Aristotle also accepts that claim. The Stoics have made it clearer why virtue matters more than external goods; they argue that it completes the practical reason that is essential to the agent for whom external goods are good. But this point about virtue does not justify the conclusion that virtue is the whole of happiness. If we are at all sympathetic to Aristotle's function argument, apparently we must take happiness to include more than virtue.

201. Estimate of the Stoic Position

To see what is especially significant and especially difficult to believe in the Stoic view of friendship, we may contrast it with a sentimentalist and a Kantian account of the proper extent of concern for other people.

According to a sentimentalist outlook (accepted by Hutcheson, Hume, and Adam Smith), the extent to which we are capable of sympathy defines the extent of concern. Hence we do not need community (societas), as the Stoics conceive it. But sympathy has the disadvantage that it seems to be variable in ways that seem rationally irrelevant. Some people find sympathy easier than others do, and we find it easier to direct to some people than to others. But the proper extent of concern for others does not seem to vary along these dimensions. One might believe that sympathy ought to be formed in appropriate ways by principles that are independent of it. Hence sympathy does not seem a sufficient basis of concern for others.

Against this position, Kant argues that rational agents deserve respect from others, irrespective of anyone's sympathies. This view has an advantage over the sentimentalist appeal to sympathy, since it helps to explain why a certain sort of sympathy is appropriate, instead of inverting the order. But it also has a possible disadvantage, since it might not appear to explain why concern for others might require positive action. Can we not show respect for someone or something by leaving them alone and refraining from harming them in certain ways?

The Stoics agree with neither of these views. They treat the other not as simply an object of sympathy or of respect, but as a certain kind of participant; that is why they lay such emphasis on community. This view may seem implausible if we assume that concern for others simply involves duties of aid. For we might say that we have this duty whether or not we have had or are going to have any co-operative relations with this person, or we even think of them as suitable for co-operative relations. However, attention to duties of aid may give us an inadequate conception of the character of obligations to others. Obligations to others often involve the recognition of someone as worth taking account of, and as worth listening to. Simply regarding the other as someone without opinions or convictions would be failing in some basic obligation. The Stoic emphasis on community clarifies the relevant aspect of concern for others. The claim that human beings form a societas is neither a commonplace nor a mere aspiration; it involves a disputable but reasonable ethical claim about the status of other people.

14

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY AND MORAL PHILOSOPHY

202. Christian Influences

From the beginning Christian theologians have explored some of the connexions, contrasts, and oppositions between their Christian outlook and the principles of moral philosophy. Though Christianity is not primarily a system of morality, and though its moral principles are not all peculiarly Christian, it expresses a distinct point of view about morality.[1] Conversely, moral philosophers have tried to examine the moral claims of Christianity from the standpoint of a moral theory that does not set out from specifically Christian premisses. Sometimes philosophers have used moral philosophy as a source of arguments against Christian belief. An early opponent who uses moral philosophy for this purpose is Origen's Platonist opponent Celsus; he claims that Christians have misunderstood and corrupted the doctrine of the Greek philosophers in this area as in others.[2] But in some cases—including Clement, Origen, and Augustine—the Christian theologian and the moral philosopher have been the same person arguing in two different directions from different premisses. This attempt to use moral philosophy and Christian theology to support each other is pursued in most detail by Aquinas.

Since these interactions and mutual influences begin with comparisons between Christianity and Greek moral systems, it will be useful to begin with some apparent implications of Christian belief, to see where we might expect to see points of conflict or influence. The influence of Christian belief is neither uniform nor straightforward; nor does it always lead a moral philosopher in one definite direction. On the contrary; Christian belief is not a source of uniformity, but a source of new directions and options in moral philosophy.

Different reasons can be given for the variety of Christian influences on moral philosophy: (1) First of all, the different Greek moral systems were not formulated in detailed and

[1] 'But the mere ethical teaching, however important, is the least important, because the least distinctive part of Christianity' (Lightfoot, *SPEP* 328).

[2] See Origen, *Cels*. vi 15–16. Celsus also claims that the Christians are unoriginal in their moral doctrine (i 4; they have nothing *kainon* or *semnon* to offer). Origen replies that divine justice presupposes the common awareness of morality (alluding to *Rm*. 2:15 in *hin'anapologêtos pas anthrôpos eiê*).

authoritative prescriptions; they left room for developments and interpretations leading in different directions. This is true even of Stoicism; though later Stoics worked out the moral implications of Stoicism in some detail, they did not formulate an authoritative body of orthodox Stoic teaching that would have resisted further external influence. (2) The same is true of Christian belief. When Christians came to acknowledge the authority of the Law, the Prophets, and some of the Wisdom literature of the Jews, together with the Gospels, Epistles, and other books of the New Testament, they accepted the widely different attitudes to moral questions expressed in these different parts of the Scriptures (not to mention further differences within these different parts). (3) Christian belief is connected to ethics in several different ways, both in its fundamental principles and in its more detailed applications. On the one hand, Christian doctrines of the nature of God, human nature, sin, grace, salvation, and the Incarnation, all rest on ethical assumptions that might be supported or contested on the basis of philosophical views on goodness, justice, virtue, freedom, and responsibility. On the other hand, the rather specific moral precepts of the Jewish law, the Gospels, the letters of Paul, and other early Christian pastoral writings, make relatively precise moral demands that interact with a different side of Greek moral systems.

It is not to be assumed, then, that the various aspects of Christian influence are even consistent, let alone uniform; for one ought not to assume without argument that the various moral implications of different aspects of Christianity are consistent. An examination of the relations between Christian belief and moral philosophy might show whether the total Christian position on moral questions is consistent, and how far it is defensible from the point of view of moral philosophy.

Even Christians do not always affirm the consistency of the views that can be derived from the canonical Christian Scriptures.[3] Marcion, for instance, rejected the Jewish element in Christian ethics as mere legalism, antagonistic to an essentially Christian outlook, and he treated St Paul's opposition between law and gospel as the basic Christian insight. Though Marcion was declared a heretic, his attitude was simply an extreme version of the view that the Christian outlook is basically incompatible with the acceptance of morality as a body of laws or rules that we can reasonably be expected to observe.[4] Those who have rejected this opposition between Jewish law and Christian gospel have none the less disagreed about the attitude that a Christian ought to take to Greek moral systems.

Three different approaches may be distinguished: (1) Against Celsus' critique of Christianity, Origen argues that Christian morality is not only consistent with moral philosophy, as understood by the Greek philosophers, but actually brings out the best in it. He argues that we can see, from the point of view of Greek moral philosophy itself, the moral excellence of the Christian moral outlook, so that this is actually a point in favour of Christianity,

[3] I use 'canonical' so as to include both the NT, as accepted by all Christian confessions and the OT as accepted by Roman and Orthodox authorities. This OT includes the 'Deuterocanonical' books contained in LXX and Vulg., but eventually rejected from the Jewish canon (which was fixed in the late first cent. AD). The Christian OT, as set out in 382 (Denz. §179), and affirmed in 397 (Denz. §186), included the Deuterocanonical books. Protestant sources refer to them as the 'Apocrypha'. According to the English Articles, the Church reads them 'for example of life and instruction of manners' (Art. 6). Some of these books are important sources for moral philosophy. On the formation of the Jewish canon see Anderson, 'Canonical' 132–59. On Christian views of the OT canon see Sparks, 'Jerome' 532–4.

[4] Tertullian attacks Marcion at length in *Marc*. See n105 below.

judged from a philosophical point of view.[5] This approach is developed most fully and convincingly by Aquinas. (2) Some argue that Christianity presents a moral outlook that conflicts fundamentally with the Greek outlook. From this point of view, the Greek outlook rests on assumptions about the world and about human beings that are shown to be clearly false in the light of the Christian revelation. Christian believers must replace the Greek systems with a quite different system resting on the authority of revelation and divine commands. To the Greeks the Christian system is bound to be foolishness,[6] and Christians are mistaken if they try to argue the Greeks out of their belief. Since Christianity reveals the truth about God and about human beings, it reveals the truth about morality; and just as God is different from what natural reason takes him to be, morality is different from what natural reason takes it to be. (3) Some argue that Christianity neither fulfils nor destroys Greek morality, because it does not take a moral position. Christianity displays the pointlessness of trying to satisfy God with our moral goodness; we can never succeed, and Christianity tells us we can achieve salvation without moral virtue. On this view, Christianity tells us about our relations with God, not about how to get on with other people. It is still important to get on with other people, and we need moral reflexion to tell us how to do it; but this is a separate area from religion. Theology does not prescribe the principles of medicine or agriculture, and we have no more reason to expect it to prescribe the principles of ethics. From this point of view, both of the previous approaches to Christianity and ethics rest on the same false assumption, that Christianity has ethical implications that make it either a fulfilment of Greek ethics or a challenge to it.

Our choice among these positions does not depend on whether we are Christian believers or not. We might take the first, harmonizing, position without inferring that Christianity is true, and we might take one of the other positions without inferring that Christianity is false. The second position is accepted, to some degree, by Scotus and Ockham, and by Calvin; it strongly influences post-Reformation Christian moral thinking.[7] It also influences Nietzsche, who uses it to contrast 'Greek' with 'Jewish' attitudes.[8] The third position is at least a powerful tendency in Luther's thinking. None of the three positions should be treated, without further argument, as the position that is clearly demanded by Christian belief.

We have stated each of these positions in rather extreme terms. Several more moderate positions are available if we believe that one of the extreme positions is true about some aspects of Christianity and one of the others is true about other aspects of it. We might, for instance, claim that some Christian precepts (including, say, the Decalogue) are part of ordinary rational morality, other precepts are specifically Christian moral demands, and still others are part of the Christian way of life, but no part of morality. A moderate position of this sort faces its own difficulties about consistency. We may wonder, for instance, what the relation between these different areas is supposed to be; how are we to avoid conflict between them?

Our discussion of these questions will not focus primarily on 'Christian morality', if that is taken to consist of a set of moral principles or precepts that are either distinctively or characteristically Christian. We will primarily consider Christian views about morality.

[5] See Origen, n2 above.

[6] See *1 Cor.* 1:23. Justin, *Ap.* 1.13, alluding to this passage, denies that Christian belief is irrational or foolish.

[7] See §312nn64–5 (Leo xiii).

[8] See Nietzsche, *GM* 17.

We will see that NT writers express or assume controversial and challenging views about the basic principles and aims of morality, and about the extent to which they can be treated as guides to action.[9]

203. Questions for Moral Theory

The Jewish and Christian Scriptures are not treatises on moral philosophy; moreover, most of them are not informed by any systematic theoretical position.[10] But they raise questions for moral philosophy. A survey of these questions should clarify one major influence on the reflexions of moral philosophers, whether or not they consciously reflect on Jewish or Christian doctrines. This chapter is not an essay in Biblical scholarship, or on moral theology or Christian ethics.[11] It does not try to describe questions that the Biblical writers intend to ask, but only tries to sketch some questions that arise for philosophical reflexion on the Biblical doctrines.

In the eighteenth year of Josiah king of Judah, the high priest Hilkiah said to Shaphan the secretary, 'I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord' (*2Kg.* 22:8).[12] Shaphan read the book to the king, and 'when the king heard the words of the book of the law, he tore his clothes . . . "for great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because our ancestors did not obey the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us"' (22:11, 13). The book is generally supposed to have been *Deuteronomy*, which contains the code of law delivered by Moses.[13]

Moses claims that this code is in some way complete and comprehensive.[14] The laws apply to all aspects of life, both to the service of God and to social life. They carry the promise of rewards for disobedience and of punishment for disobedience. But the Hebrews are not to observe these laws simply because of their sanctions, or out of fear or loyalty towards God. They ought also to see that the laws deserve to be kept for their inherent wisdom; even non-Israelites are expected to recognize the excellence of the laws of Israel.[15]

But it is difficult to see how the code meets these expectations. It is not arranged in any explicit order. It does not represent any of its provisions as any more important than any others. Nor does it explicitly divide them into religious, moral, ceremonial, social, or economic, though we might recognize provisions dealing with these different areas of life. Nor does it suggest that some provisions are more general, and others are more

[9] For this purpose I will not consider possible differences between different NT writers. I will also treat all the NT letters ostensibly by Paul as authentic.

[10] A possible exception is *Wisdom*. The non-canonical *4 Maccabees* (included in LXX, but not in Vulg.; see Charlesworth, *OTP* ii 531–2) is based on a Stoic conception of the cardinal virtues. See also §328n18.

[11] The scope of moral theology and Christian ethics is discussed by Kirk, *SPMT*, ch. 1.

[12] Biblical quotations are usually taken from NRSV, sometimes slightly modified. The Greek text of the NT may be found in *GNT*.

[13] On the date of *Deuteronomy* and its relation to the reforms of Josiah see Weinfeld, *Deut. 1–11*, 65, 81.

[14] 'You must neither add anything to what I command you nor take away anything from it, but keep the commandments of the Lord your God with which I am charging you' (*Dt.* 4:2).

[15] 'Keep them and do them; for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people." For what other great nation has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is whenever we call to him? And what other great nation has statutes and ordinances as just as this entire law that I am setting before you today?' (*Dt.* 4:6–8).

specific applications of them that might be more appropriate for some times and places than for others. Nor does it distinguish the absolutely compulsory from the desirable but non-compulsory. It has the outward form of a list of instructions, all of which are equally obligatory. Unlike the 'prefaces' in Plato's code of law in the *Laws*, the Deuteronomic code contains no full explanations or justifications of its different provisions. It does not defend the initial claim that a fair-minded outsider can recognize the wisdom and justice of these laws.

The code begins with the Decalogue (*Dt.* 5:6–21), a set of somewhat more general instructions. These instructions differ from specific laws in that they carry no stated penalty. In some cases (for instance, the prohibition on murder) they need interpretation before they could be the subject-matter of laws; something more needs to be said before we know what sort of killing is prohibited.[16] Hence we might suppose that the Decalogue contains the principles that underlie the more detailed instructions that follow.[17] After the Decalogue Moses gives a still more general command: 'The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might' (6: 4). Perhaps this is a general principle that is expressed in what follows.

The Decalogue, however, does not seem to be designed as the complete moral basis for the Deuteronomic code. Moses does not argue that all his detailed instructions fall under the provisions of the Decalogue, and it would be difficult to argue for this claim. On the one hand, many laws seem to be mere instructions, for which a reason is neither given nor easily found: these include the prohibition on eating anything in the water that lacks fins and scales (14:10), on ploughing with an ox and an ass (22:10), and on wearing clothes made of a mixture of linen and wool (22:11). On the other hand, some laws seem to rely on a moral basis distinct from the Decalogue. Neither the provisions for humane treatment of slaves and servants nor the requirement to leave some of one's crop to be gleaned by the alien, the orphan, and the widow (24:19–21) seem to be explained by the Decalogue, since nothing in the Decalogue explicitly prohibits cruelty or ungenerosity.[18] Other parts of the Decalogue do not seem suitable for a code of laws carrying sanctions; it is difficult to see how the prohibition of coveting could be made a matter for legal prohibition and punishment at all.[19]

But though the Deuteronomic code is not explicitly derived from any moral principles, Moses suggests what some of the relevant principles might be. He appeals to past experience: 'You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt' (10:19). Slave-owners are to provide generously for freed slaves because the Hebrews were once slaves and were freed.[20] Moses does not say why the Hebrews should remember their condition in Egypt, but he seems to rely on some appeal to sympathy. When the Hebrews recall that they have been slaves, they are not moved by self-interest in their treatment of their own

[16] On the commandment against murder see Aquinas, *ST* 1-2 q100 a8 ad 3; §314n77.

[17] References to the Decalogue elsewhere in the OT; *Hos.* 4:2; *Ps.* 50:7,18–19; 81:10–11. Philo, *Dec.* i 154, claims that the Ten Commandments are summaries (*kephalaia*) of the provisions of the various special laws. Josephus' account of the Decalogue does not suggest that it has this role; see *Ant. Jud.* iii 91–2.

[18] Weinfeld, *Dt. 1–11* 250, argues that 'there is no justification for the claim that the Decalogue constitutes the epitome of Israelite morality'. He points, in particular, to the omission of the requirements of love for one's neighbour and for the stranger.

[19] On the tenth commandment see Weinfeld, *Dt. 1–11* 317. Philo, *Dec.* i 142–53, treats it as applying to excessive *epithumia* in general.

[20] 'Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you; for this reason I lay this command upon you today' (15:15; cf. 5:15; *Ex.* 22:21–7; *Lv.* 19:33–4).

slaves, but they recall what it is like to be a slave. This recollection is intended to result in a more generous attitude to their own slaves. The formulation of the commandment to keep the sabbath requires this generous attitude.[21]

Even the command to acknowledge and love God is not left without a reason. Before giving the first commandment, God says: 'I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery' (5:6; cf. 6:21; 26:5–10). God appeals to a principle of reciprocity. Gratitude for past benefits, and not merely hope of future rewards and fear of future punishments, seems to be the primary motive for obeying God.

Are the provisions of the code the right ones to follow simply because God prescribes them, or can any other reason be given to show why any of them is better than another possible provision? Though Moses suggests that other nations will recognize the justice and wisdom of these laws, he does not say how they are to identify the features of a law that make it just and wise. Hence it is not clear how we are to show that other nations ought to admire these laws.

The lack of explicit justification in the Deuteronomic code, in contrast with Plato's *Laws,* helps to explain some elements of Jewish and Christian moral reflexion. If we try to understand why some actions are allowed and others prohibited by the code, or we wonder whether something should be added to or taken away from the code, we recognize that an unordered list of undifferentiated commands is inadequate, and we look for some rational order in them. We see, for instance, that not all the laws are equally important and not all have the same purpose; hence we might distinguish the moral from the ceremonial, or the more important from the less important, or the compulsory from the desirable. To mark these distinctions, we need to rely on principles that the code does not explicitly contain.

204. The Difference between the Moral and the Ceremonial Law

These distinctions between different elements of the law appear especially in the prophetic books. Different writers try to separate the principal from the subordinate requirements of the law. Sometimes they distinguish outward observance from the appropriate spirit of reverence towards God, and they insist that the observance is worthless without the spirit.[22] The Psalmist claims not only to observe the law, but also to love it, to admire its wisdom, and to delight in it whole-heartedly.[23] His attitude is discriminating, in so far as he takes reverence and delight in the law to matter more than simple observance in one's behaviour. But this attitude is directed equally towards all the laws, and he gives no reason for believing that any of them are wise and just. Perhaps he alludes to a reason when he mentions that

[21] Driver, *Dt.* 85, comments: 'The philanthropic motive assigned for the observance of the sabbath is in accordance with the spirit which prevails elsewhere in *Dt.*'. On the 'humanitarian' aspects of Deuteronomy see also Weinfeld, *Dt. 1–11* 21. Driver and Weinfeld cite 10:19; 12:12; 14:20–1, 29; 15:12–18 (contrast *Ex.* 21:1–11); 16:11,14; 24:17–20.

[22] 'For you have no delight in sacrifice; if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased. The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, you will not despise' (*Ps.* 51:16–17).

[23] See esp. the whole of *Ps.* 119 (e.g., vv. 14–16: 'I delight in the way of your decrees as much as in all riches. . . . I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word'). Cf. *Ps.* 19:9–11, quoted in n114 below.

God the lawgiver is also God the creator, but he does not say how these two aspects of God give a reason for finding justice in the law.[24]

Elsewhere, however, the appropriate attitude to the law includes some capacity to discriminate. God condemns those who commit theft and adultery while they recite the words of the law.[25] The Psalmist implies that the violation of these commands is more serious than the violation of commands about animal sacrifices would be. Prophets and Psalmists often suggest that the appropriate spirit for the faithful observer of the law is also the spirit that puts the moral requirements above the ceremonial requirements.[26] This discriminating attitude to the Mosaic law has no justification in the explicit provisions of the law itself. *Deuteronomy* does not distinguish moral from ceremonial commands, and therefore does not suggest that the moral commands are more important, still less that the ceremonial commands are unimportant. What explains the discrimination?

It would not be enough to say that the breach of the moral requirements results in harm to society. For, from the point of view of *Deuteronomy*, the same is true of any breach of the ceremonial requirements. God threatens to punish Israel for idolatry, sabbath-breaking, and eating unclean foods, no less than for oppression of the poor or slaves, or for toleration of theft or murder. To distinguish the moral from the ceremonial, we need to say that the harm resulting from violations of the moral parts of the law results even apart from divine punishments. These laws that benefit individuals and society by their observance (and not simply because of divine favour resulting from their observance) are especially prominent in prayers for the welfare of society. Hence the Psalmist asks God to give the king justice.[27]

The moral law is not always sharply distinguished from other aspects of the law. When the historical books mention the different kings who did not do 'what was right in the sight of the Lord', they refer equally to religious, ceremonial, and moral observances and violations. The successors of Solomon both perform the wrong sorts of sacrifices and oppress the people.[28] Ahab and Jezebel, for instance, both encourage the priests of Baal and have Naboth murdered for refusing to sell his ancestral vineyard.[29]

Still, some division between the moral and the ceremonial is fairly clear, though not completely sharp. Injustice, fraud, and theft appear regularly in the list of grave offences

[24] 'Your hands have made me and fashioned me; give me understanding that I may learn your commandments' (*Ps*. 119:73). *Ps*. 19 suggests the same connexion between God as creator and God as wise legislator: 'The heavens are telling the glory of God (v.1) . . . The law of the Lord is perfect . . .' (v.7). Cf. *Is*. 45:19: 'I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, ''Seek me in chaos''. I the Lord speak the truth. I declare what is right.'

[25] 'But to the wicked God says: ''What right have you to recite my statutes, or take my covenant on your lips? For you hate discipline, and cast my words behind you. You make friends with a thief when you see one, and you keep company with adulterers.'' ' (*Ps*. 50:16–18).

[26] 'With what shall I come before the Lord . . . ? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings . . . ? He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?' (*Mic*. 6:6–8).

[27] 'May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice. May the mountains yield prosperity for the people, and the hills in righteousness. May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the needy, and crush the oppressor' (*Ps*. 72:2–4; cf. vv. 12–14).

[28] Sacrifices: see *1 Kgs*. 13:1–3. Oppression: 'Now, whereas my father laid on you a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke. My father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions' (*1 Kgs*. 12:11).

[29] Naboth: *1 Kg*. 21.

that are contrasted with failure to fulfil the laws about sacrifice.[30] But it is not clear what these grave offences have in common, or why they are grave. Ezekiel's summary account of a righteous person requires generosity and justice, and abstention from idolatry, from adultery, and from approaching a woman during her menstrual period (*Ezk*. 18:6).[31] The insertion of this one ritual offence suggests that the distinction between the moral and the ceremonial is implicitly recognized, but not completely clear.

No OT book appeals explicitly to a principle of reciprocity in order to explain a law. But we have found an implicit appeal to such a principle in the defence of laws about freeing slaves. The story of Uriah the Hittite appeals to reciprocity as a more general principle (*2Sam*. 11:2–12:23). After David has seduced Bathsheba, and arranged for Uriah to be killed in battle, the prophet Nathan tells David the story of the poor man with his one ewe lamb that the rich man took away from him. When David condemns the rich man, Nathan tells him that his condemnation of the rich man applies to himself as well.[32] David can now see how what he has done is similar in the relevant ways to the action of the rich man who 'had no pity', because he did not consider the situation of the poor man who had only the one ewe lamb. David recognizes, when his own interests and desires are not involved, that the rich man acted unjustly, because he did not consider what he would reasonably have wanted if he had been in the situation of the poor man. He admits that this parallel applies to himself, since he did not consider what he would reasonably have wanted in the situation of Uriah.

In this case the appeal to the point of view of the victim does not involve past experience, as the appeal to slavery in Egypt did. It involves an appeal to an impartial judgment between the benefits and harms of the agent and the victim, and what it would be reasonable to want if the circumstances were reversed. From this point of view, David admits that he violated the command against murder by killing Uriah.[33] He might have answered that he did not actually kill Uriah, but simply arranged to have him placed in a dangerous position where he might have been placed anyhow; in this way he might claim to have avoided any violation of the commandment prohibiting murder. But when he thinks about his action from an impartial point of view, and so recognizes what he was really trying to do, he sees that this defence fails.

Reflexion on these breaches of the law suggests that they are wrong because, apart from any command, they inflict a harm on another person that one would reasonably want not to suffer oneself if one were in the position of the other. We are required to do for others what we would reasonably want for ourselves in their position. In considering what we owe to another, we are required to consider the other's interests and our own impartially, by considering what we would reasonably want, and using that as a guide to action that may benefit the other at our own expense.

[30] See *Am*. 5:10–11: 'They hate the one who reproves in the gate, and they abhor the one who speaks the truth. Therefore, because you trample on the poor . . . you have built houses of hewn stone, but you shall not live in them . . .'. Cf. 2:6–8; 4:1; 5:21–4; 8:4–6. Cf. the description of the just person in *Ps*. 15.

[31] This prohibition is not repeated in the similar summaries in 18:10–17.

[32] 'Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man. He said to Nathan, "As the Lord lives, the man who has done this deserves to die; he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity." Nathan said to David, "You are the man!" ' (*2Sam*. 12:5–7).

[33] 'You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites' (12:9).

This reasoning helps to distinguish the moral from the ceremonial law. The command to offer sacrifices does not allow a similar justification by appeal to what one can defend from an impartial point of view. The moral demand for an impartial point of view is summed up in one commandment, not included in the Decalogue. In Leviticus, a series of moral prohibitions is followed by the requirement to love one's neighbour as oneself, which is immediately followed by a prohibition on allowing different species of animals to inter-breed.[34]

This juxtaposition of a moral with a ritual command might be taken to show that the code does not distinguish commands of these two types.[35] The command to love our neighbour is not explained; nor is it given any special status in the code. It appears neither in *Deuteronomy* nor in *Exodus*, and even *Leviticus* does not say that it underlies any of the other laws. Still, its position at the end of a series of moral commands and before a series of ceremonial commands may be significant. The author may indicate some recognition of the appropriateness of this command as a summary of the moral commands, and of its inappropriateness as a summary of the ceremonial commands about mixing animals, crops, or fields. Love of one's neighbour as oneself does not seem to explain, apart from a divine command, why one should not weave linen with wool.

Even this brief consideration of OT attitudes to the law should warn us against unqualified acceptance of a tempting generalization. It is tempting to say that the OT attitude to morality is legal and theocentric, covering morality only as a part, not sharply distinguished from other parts, of a way of life that consists essentially in the observance of divine commands and prohibitions with no further rational basis. This generalization fits the outward form of the Deuteronomic code accurately enough; it gives us reason not to find in the code any clear division between the moral and the ceremonial. But if we restrict ourselves to this generalization based on the Deuteronomic code, we overlook the implicit distinction that is drawn both in the code itself and in the comments of other OT writers. The view that principles for right relations between people are accessible to natural reason and can be justified by appeal to an impartial consideration of interests is certainly not the OT view of morality, but it is a theme in the OT; without it, the ways in which the different obligations of the law are distinguished become unintelligible. An attempt to understand morality on the basis of natural reason, apart from divine revelation, is not alien to the OT; on the contrary, some features of the OT require us to make this attempt.[36]

OT views on morality are not exhausted by the comments on the divine law and its different provisions. A large part of the OT consists of the 'sapiential' books, in particular *Proverbs*, *Ecclesiastes*, *Wisdom*, and *Sirach*.[37] These books advocate wisdom in the conduct of one's individual life; many passages make no essential reference to God or to the divine law. Advice

[34] 'You shall not hate in your heart anyone of your kin; you shall reprove your neighbour, or you will incur guilt yourself. You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself: I am the Lord. You shall keep my statutes. You shall not let your animals breed with a different kind; you shall not sow your fields with two kinds of seed; nor shall you put on a garment made of two different materials' (*Lv*. 19:17–19).

[35] Sanderson comments on this. See *Obl*. 4.16.

[36] See Barr, *BFNT* 100: 'The law itself, then, in its content has numerous suggestions that point towards operations akin to those of natural law or natural theology'. Cf. Barton, *EOT*, esp. ch. 4. Philo, *Dec*. i 132, explains how the violation of the commandment forbidding murder is also a violation of the laws of nature.

[37] On the sapiential books see Scott, *PE* Intro., esp. xix–xxv.

to avoid laziness, dissipation, flattery, indebtedness, difficult wives, false friends, prostitutes, compromising situations, risky loans, and so on, is justified by the prospect of bad future consequences in the present life. The consequences can be seen if we consider the actions and their effects on us and on other people, without any assumptions about God's disapproval.

Advice to avoid immorality that does not seem directly harmful, from this narrow prudential point of view, is sometimes justified by the threat of divine punishment inflicted on the wrongdoer in this life. The predominant tone of the sapiential books implies that the wise person will be just, merciful, and God-fearing because that will be a more effective means of securing the very same benefits that the grasping, avaricious, treacherous, and cruel person tries to gain by his actions. In the case of the self-regarding virtues, the effects of actions themselves bring desirable 'natural consequences'. But in the case of other-regarding virtues, it is not so clear that our actions have the natural consequences we would like; they are bad for us only because God attaches unwelcome 'artificial consequences' through the sanctions of rewards and punishments. These assumptions are as prominent in the sapiential books as in many of the Psalms. They are the assumptions that Glaucon and Adeimantus in *Republic* ii condemn as the common, but mistaken, conception of why it is worth our while to be just.[38] Plato could easily have found numerous passages in the OT to illustrate the attitude he condemns.

This attitude raises a question: If justice and mercy do not seem to pay, and if the God-fearing suffer misfortunes, what point is there in being just? It is not only Plato who raises this question. The author of *Job* raises it at length and does not explicitly answer it. The author of *Ecclesiastes* raises the same question. He does not always assume that wickedness will meet divine punishment; he recognizes that the wicked flourish and the just suffer in this life, and he does not believe in an afterlife to redress the balance. He concludes that there is no answer (*Eccl.* 8:10–9:2), that the whole course of the world is 'vanity', and the best thing is to enjoy our brief life.[39]

The sapiential books usually do not express this degree of doubt about divine justice; they assume that God rewards some actions and punishes others. They do not usually say why God rewards and punishes this or that particular action. Lazy workers and those who give short weight are condemned, but the reason for the condemnation is not clear.[40] Sometimes, however, the writers suggest that the wise person's actions benefit others as well.[41] They

[38] See Plato, §50.

[39] 'Everything that confronts them is vanity, since the same fate comes to all, to the righteous and the wicked, to the good and the evil, to the clean and the unclean, to those who sacrifice and those who do not sacrifice . . . The living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing; they have no more reward, and even the memory of them is lost . . . Go, eat your bread with enjoyment, and drink your wine with a merry heart, for God has long ago approved what you do' (*Eccl.* 9:1–7). Clement, *Strom.* v 14, 90.2, suggests that Epicurus derived his belief that the universe is without purpose (*automaton*) from a misunderstanding of the remark in *Eccl.* that all is vanity (*mataiotês*). Though some connexion between *Eccl.* and Greek thought has sometimes been suggested, the suggestion has no firm basis. See Rankin, *IB* v 14–15; Scott, *PE* 196–7.

[40] 'Like vinegar to the teeth, and smoke to the eyes, so are the lazy to their employers' (*Pr.* 10:26). 'A false balance is an abomination to the Lord, but an accurate weight is his delight' (11:1). *Lv.* 19.35–6 and *Dt.* 25.13–16 also appeal directly to God to explain the prohibition on false weights. Perhaps a social ground is given for the prohibition on bribes at *Dt.* 16:19–20: 'You must not pervert justice; you must not show partiality; and you must not take bribes, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and subverts the cause of those who are in the right. Justice, and only justice, you shall follow, that you may live and occupy the land that the Lord your God is giving you.'

[41] 'When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices, and when the wicked perish there is jubilation. By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked' (*Pr.* 11:10–11).

take it for granted that God does not reward and punish arbitrarily, but rewards those actions that would benefit the community whether or not he rewarded them. But the fact that certain actions benefit the community is not offered as a reason for pursuing them. The rather narrow range of consequences normally taken to constitute reasons for acting one way or another is an obvious weakness, from the moral point of view, in the outlook that underlies this prudential advice.

But the authors of the sapiential books have more to say about the basis of their instructions. Some aspects of wisdom consist in self-confined calculating prudence about one's own life, but the wise person also shares to some degree in the wisdom that guides God in the creation of the universe, the course of history, and the ordering of human society. God's justice is equally shown in the natural universe and in divine provisions for relations between human beings.[42] Wise people do not simply plan for their own lives with a view to their own wealth, reputation, and security; they also do their part in the wise and just ordering of relations between human beings, and thereby share in God's justice and mercy.

Sometimes the authors suggest that participation in this wisdom is not simply a means to further material benefits but a good to be chosen for its own sake.[43] *Job* concludes with an affirmation of God's wisdom in creation, implying that there is more to human wisdom than the narrow prudence by which Job's interlocutors have measured both divine and human morality (*Job* 42:1–6). Earlier, the book praises wisdom; it suggests that human wisdom consists in acceptance of the divine wisdom that is concerned with the good of creation and of human society (28:25–38).

In these places the sapiential books offer more than practical advice to secure material benefits. Someone who argues that observance of the moral requirements of the law is good for an individual apart from material consequences for the individual's self-confined interest argues against the usual tendency of the sapiential books, and of the OT as a whole. But such an argument can also legitimately claim support in the OT. If we are concerned to discover the significance of the OT for later moral theory, we need to recognize the different conclusions that can intelligibly be derived from it. It is not unreasonable for Clement to find a parallel in the OT for the Stoic view that virtue is to be chosen for its own sake and is sufficient for happiness.[44]

205. Law and Gospel

These different features of the moral outlook of the OT help to explain some of the assumptions that the NT does not question, and some of the questions that NT writers take to be worth raising.

[42] Solomon prays: 'O God of my ancestors and Lord of mercy, who have made all things by your word, and by your wisdom have formed humankind to have dominion over the creatures you have made, and rule the world in holiness and righteousness, and pronounce judgment in uprightness of soul . . .' (*Wis.* 9:1–3).

[43] 'If riches are a desirable possession in life, what is richer than wisdom, the active cause of all things? . . . And if anyone loves righteousness, her labours are virtues; for she teaches self-control and prudence, justice and courage; nothing in life is more profitable for mortals than these' (*Wis.* 8:5–7).

[44] See Clement, *Strom.* v 14, 96.5: 'The barbarian [sc. Jewish] philosophy knows that only the fine is good and that virtue is self-sufficient for happiness . . .'. Clement quotes *Dt.* 30:20, which is not the best passage to support his point.

No NT writer challenges the view that the requirements of morality are divine laws, attended with rewards and punishments, and that the hope of reward is an appropriate reason for observing them. On the contrary, emphasis on reward becomes all the more confident. Job's doubts about the advice of the sapiential writers rest on the assumption that the present life is the only one that need be considered. The doctrine of immortality gives an answer to Job's worries; Dives and Lazarus face the reversal of their fortunes in the next life (*Lk*. 6:20–5; 16:25). Paul insists that if the doctrine of immortality is false, Christians 'are of all people most to be pitied' (*1Cor*. 15:19).

Different NT writers suggest, however, that this is not a sufficient account of the reasons to keep the moral law. Jesus suggests that the goodness and perfection of God should be a model for a human moral outlook, just because of its goodness and perfection.[45] He rejects the attitude of those who turn to him in the hope of divine rewards, and reminds them that they have already learned what is good through the moral law.[46] The moral law has a special status among the commandments. When Jesus is asked which of the commandments is greatest, he picks out the requirement to love God and to love one's neighbour as oneself. His interlocutors recognize that his choice of these two commandments distinguishes the moral from the ceremonial law.[47]

These aspects of the teaching of Jesus might suggest that he simply distinguishes the moral from the ceremonial law and urges more constant observance of the moral law; that is why he criticizes those who make a parade of their ritual observances and neglect the moral aspects of the law.[48] He claims he has not come to abolish the law and the prophets, but to fulfil them (*Mt*. 5:17–20), and he includes the ceremonial commands among the binding commands of the law. But he agrees with the prophets who give priority to the moral over the ceremonial commands. Hence, when he tells the disciples that their justice has to exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, we might take him to enjoin observance of the moral law.[49]

206. Natural Law

How do we identify the moral law and distinguish it from other aspects of the Mosaic law? Some passages in the OT suggest that at least some parts of the law are not the exclusive

[45] 'You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy". But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. . . . Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect' (*Mt*. 5:43–8).

[46] '. . . a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: 'You shall not murder . . .' " ' (*Mk*. 10:17–19).

[47] 'Then the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher; . . . this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifice." When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." ' (*Mk*. 12:32–4).

[48] See *Mt*. 23:23: 'Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith'. Davies and Allison, *Mt*. ad loc, quote Jewish sources that distinguish more and less important elements in the law. Cf. *Mt*. 15:1–20.

[49] See *Mt*. 5:20. 'Justice', *dikaiosunê*, corresponds to 'righteousness' in most English versions. I have preferred 'justice', partly because it appropriately recalls Plato's and Aristotle's broad use of '*dikaiosunê*' (see §§59, 117), and partly to display the connexion with 'justify' (*dikaioun* and cognates); see n87 below.

possession of the Jews; foreigners are supposed to be able to recognize the wisdom of the Jewish laws. Philo finds support for this universal access to the law in the story of Abraham, who was faithful and just without the guidance of a written law. Abraham fulfilled the requirements of the law 'not having been taught by written words, but by unwritten nature, having been eager to follow them by healthy and uncorrupted impulses' (*Abr.* 275). Philo concludes: 'According to some, he was law-abiding (*nomimos*). But in fact, as our account showed, he was [a] law himself, and an unwritten statute' (276).

Philo's use of this phrase 'a law himself' for the virtuous person recalls similar phrases in Aristotle. The *Politics* mentions the 'god among human beings' who has to be allowed to rule monarchically because he cannot reasonably be restrained by laws that are meant to regulate equals; these superior people 'are themselves [a] law' (*Pol.* 1284a23). A more helpful parallel appears in the discussion of the virtue connected with wit. The appropriately cultivated person knows where to draw the line between innocent jokes and the sort of abuse (*loidorein*) that is prohibited by the law; and so he is 'a sort of law to himself' (*EN* 1128a32).

In speaking of Abraham as being his own law and as relying on nature, Philo implies that the moral law is accessible to everyone by nature. Though he does not use the phrase 'natural law', the phrase captures his claim about Abraham. St Paul uses similar terms to describe the capacity of the Gentiles to grasp the moral law. He says they are 'law to themselves' without the guidance of the Mosaic law.[50] They grasp the requirements of morality without external legislation because their conscience guides them.[51] Their own judgment of their actions either endorses or condemns the actions, and Paul implies that it reaches the right conclusion often enough for some of them to observe the moral law.

Paul goes beyond both Aristotle's and Philo's use of the conception of a law to oneself. They both use it to refer to virtuous people, in contrast to people who are not laws to themselves; virtuous people differ from the rest in not needing external law. St Paul, by contrast, seems to take Gentiles indiscriminately, and not only those who regularly observe the law, to be a law to themselves. Their self-condemnation as well as their self-approval indicates the operation of their internal law.[52]

Paul's references to nature and to law encourage Christian writers to incorporate the Stoic conception of natural law. Lactantius uses Cicero to summarize the Stoic view.[53] He affirms that the natural law described by the Stoics is also the moral law set out in the Scriptures.[54]

[50] 'For whenever Gentiles, those who have not law, by nature do the things belonging to the law, these, not having law, are law to themselves, <since> they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience co-witnessing, and their reasonings among one another accusing or else excusing' (*Rm.* 2:14–15). On the distinction between 'law' and 'the law' see Sanday and Headlam, *R*58. They paraphrase part of the passage: 'For whenever any of them instinctively put in practice the precepts of the Law, their own moral sense supplies them with the law they need' (54).

[51] This passage from Romans is used in the account of conscience in *Gaudium et Spes* (in Alberigo et al., *Decreta*), §16: 'In the depths of conscience a human being discovers a law that he does not give to himself, but that he is required to obey, and whose voice, always calling him to love and to do the good and to avoid the evil, sounds in the ears of his heart where it is needed: Do this, avoid that. For a human being has a law written in his heart by God, obedience to which is his dignity and according to which he will be judged (cf. *Rm.* 2:14–16). Conscience is the most secret core and sanctuary of a human being, in which he is alone with God, whose voice echoes in his depths. . . . In a wonderful manner conscience reveals the law that is fulfilled by love of God and of one's neighbour.'

[52] On different interpretations of this passage see §232.

[53] Lactantius, *Div. Inst.* vi 8.6–9 = Cic. *Rep.* iii 33, quoted at §178n12.

[54] 'Who that is acquainted with the mystery of God could so significantly expound the law of God, as a man far removed from the knowledge of the truth has set forth that law? But I consider that they who speak true things

Through the Scriptures we can discern the content of the natural law more fully than pagan philosophers could ever discern it, but the philosophers and the Scriptures rely on the same basic principles.

Though the NT writers never try to show in detail how the moral law of the OT expresses the basic principles of the natural law, as the Stoics conceive it, they assume that their views about the vices to be condemned and the virtues to be praised correspond with enlightened pagan views. When Paul lists the vices found in the contemporary world and tells Christians to avoid them, the vices are familiar.[55] If Christians replace these vices with the appropriate virtues, they will both deserve and receive the praise and commendation of their non-Christian neighbours.[56] That is why the Roman authorities will generally (though not invariably) recognize that they are good citizens.[57]

And so when Paul follows Jesus in taking the command to love one's neighbour as a summary of the law in relation to other people, he also takes it to sum up the requirements of the natural law.[58] The Christian gospel sets out clearly the moral principles that Christians share with Jews and pagans, and (in Paul's view) traces their practical consequences.

207. Perfectionism

This description of the moral doctrine of the NT is not false, but it is incomplete. While it is legitimate to emphasize the connexions that the NT writers see between Christian morality and the principles of pagan morality, it would be one-sided to overlook the aspects of Christian moral doctrine that do not fit so easily into an account of Christian morality as a forceful presentation of the requirements of natural law. That 'purely rational' account of Christian morality (as we may describe it) is popular among 18th-century rationalists.[59]

We have already noticed some elements of Christian morality that do not seem to fit the purely rational account. Though Jesus appeals to moral principles that his hearers already accept, he seems to go beyond them to some rather questionable extremes. He commends those who do not simply do what most people would regard as fulfilling their moral obligations, but also 'hunger and thirst for justice' (*Mt.* 5:6). When he contrasts the provisions of the old law with his instructions ('You have heard that it was said . . . But I say to you . . .'), he urges people to go beyond the standard interpretation of the moral law.

unconsciously are to be so regarded as though they divined under the influence of some spirit. But if he had also known or explained what precepts constituted the law itself as well as he saw the force and purport of the divine law, he would not have discharged the office of a philosopher, but of a prophet. And because he was unable to do this, we must do it, to whom the law itself has been delivered by the one great master and ruler of all, God' (*Div. Inst.* vi 8.10–12). On the sequel see §228 below.

[55] See, e.g., *Rm.* 1:29–32; *Gal.* 5:19–21.

[56] See, e.g., *Phil.* 4:5: 'Let your *epieikes* be known to everyone'. This term is rendered by 'gentleness', 'forbearance', and 'moderation' in different English versions. (Vulg. has 'modestia'.) Cf. *2Cor.* 10:1; *1Pet.* 2:18. The contrast between *epieikeia* and misguidedly rigid concern for justice in *EN* v 10 suggests a suitable sense for the NT passages. Sometimes *epieikeia* is connected with *philanthrôpia* (see *TDNT* ii 589–90).

[57] *1Pet.* 3:13–14: 'Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? But even if you do suffer for your justice (*dia dikaiosunên*), you are blessed.' Cf. *Rm.* 13:3–4.

[58] See *Rm.* 13:8–10, quoted below at n73.

[59] The rationalist position is defended by Clarke and Balguy; see, e.g., Clarke, *Disc.* Prop. x, 675 H. Waterland attacks their view in 'Remarks'.

Whereas most people take the command to love one's neighbour to allow limited concern, confined to those who are close to us or connected to us in some way, he demands love of one's enemies and persecutors.[60]

We might take Jesus to be asserting that the command to love one's neighbour is an adequate summary of the law, but inadequate to express the moral ideal that he recommends. When he demands justice that 'exceeds the justice of the scribes and Pharisees' (*Mt.* 5:20), he might be taken to expose the ethical inadequacy of the old moral law. But this does not seem to be his view. When he is asked for an interpretation of the command to love one's neighbour, he tells the parable of the Good Samaritan.[61] Though this does not say directly how 'neighbour' is to be understood in the command, it suggests that the command requires us to treat everyone we encounter who needs our help as a 'neighbour'. When Jesus claims to describe a more complete form of justice than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, he does not take himself to be criticizing the moral law, but to be criticizing them for not grasping its full implications.

But how is this criticism to be justified? If we take Christians to be advocating a more complete observance of the moral law and recognized virtues, we can fairly ask whether the outlook they advocate really expresses the aims of a genuinely virtuous person. We might be inclined to answer that Christian moral precepts seem to display unreasonable extremism, even fanaticism; the contrast between Christian and Aristotelian precepts seems rather sharp, and does not seem to tell in favour of the Christian precepts. Jesus forbids not only murder, but even insulting words; not only adultery, but even looking lustfully on a woman. He tells us to give to whoever asks us, and not to withhold our cloak if someone takes our coat.[62] When the rich young man who claims to have kept the commandments asks Jesus where he still falls short, Jesus tells him that he needs to sell all he has and give it to the poor.[63] In the face of such advice one might not blame the young man for going away grieving. The instructions do not seem to give a plausible interpretation of the demands of the virtues.

We might object that Christian precepts seem to insist on the demands of one virtue in isolation, and thereby seem to forget that the demands of each virtue are partly regulated by the demands of other virtues and of the goods promoted by the virtues. Selling all we have and giving it to the poor may fulfil the demands of benevolence to these particular people, but it may evidently leave us less well equipped to fulfil the demands of other virtues that require the good use of our material resources.

[60] See *Mt.* 5:43–8, quoted at n45 above.

[61] See *Lk.* 10:25 : 'Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher", he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself." And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live." But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?" '

[62] *Mt.* 5:21–42.

[63] *Mt.* 19:16–22: 'Then someone came to him and said, "Teacher, what good deed must I do, to have eternal life?" And he said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments." He said to him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, "You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness, Honour your father and mother: also, You shall love your neighbor as yourself." The young man said to him, "I have kept all these; what do I still lack?" Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." When the young man heard this word, he went away grieving, for he had many possessions.'

Christian moralists who consider these precepts of Christian ethics soon recognize that they cannot be treated as practical instructions that might be expected to replace the Decalogue.[64] But if that is not their point, what is their point?

208. The Moral Law and the Consciousness of Sin

The apparently extreme demands of Christian moral precepts help to explain another way in which Jesus goes beyond a simple emphasis on the observance of the moral law. In his view, a clear awareness of the requirements of the law ought to result in an equally clear awareness of our failure to keep the law. He contrasts the Pharisee who regards himself as a scrupulous observer of the moral and the ceremonial law with the tax-collector who admits that he is a sinner, and he commends the attitude of the self-confessed sinner over the self-righteous keeper of the law.[65]

When Jesus says that the tax-collector rather than the Pharisee went home 'justified' (*dedikaiômenos*), he anticipates a central theme in St Paul's account of the Christian moral outlook. According to Paul, Gentiles and Jews alike have violated the demands of the moral law. The Gentiles have turned away from their natural knowledge of God and the moral law, and have turned to lust, greed, and conflict (*Rm.* 1:18–32). The Jews have an advantage, since the details of the moral law have been revealed to them.[66] But they have not used this advantage properly; they have turned away from God through sin, no less than the Gentiles have.[67]

The role of the moral law—either the less specific natural law known to everyone or the more specific instructions of the Mosaic Law—is to make us aware of our failure to meet its moral demands. The explicit divine commands in the Mosaic law make it possible to count up sins in detail, and they transform sins into transgressions.[68] The more clearly we grasp the demands of the law, the more clearly we recognize our failure to satisfy them.

How can Paul defend this apparently pessimistic view of the effects of our awareness of the moral law? His pessimism might be easier to understand if he were referring to all the details of the Mosaic law, which, according to one count, amounted to 613 distinct commands. But though the Pharisee may have these commands in mind (since he mentions his regular

[64] Clement, *Quis* 11–19, explains Jesus' advice to the rich man to sell all he has as advice to get rid of disruptive passions and desires.

[65] 'He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were just and regarded others with contempt: "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted." ' (*Lk.* 18:9–14).

[66] 'Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision? Much in every way. To begin with, the Jews are entrusted with the oracles of God' (*Rm.* 3:1–2).

[67] 'Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all; for we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under the power of sin . . . For "no human being will be justified in his [sc. God's] sight" by deeds prescribed by the law, for through the law comes the knowledge [or 'recognition', *epignôsis*] of sin' (*Rm.* 3:9–20).

[68] '. . . sin was indeed in the world before the law was given, but sin is not reckoned [or 'counted up', *ellogeitai*] when there is no law' (*Rm.* 5:13). 'For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation (*parabasis*)' (4:15).

fasting), Paul is not referring to them. Once we distinguish the moral from the ceremonial law, we can subtract quite a few from the 613 commands. Paul has in mind our failure to observe the moral commands. But if this is what he refers to, we might think his verdict is prejudiced. The Decalogue is not easy to observe for everyone all the time, but one might doubt whether it is so difficult that we should all be constantly oppressed by our failure to observe it.

Paul's pessimism is easier to understand if we take the demands of the law to include not only the provisions of the Decalogue, but also the various perfectionist demands that Jesus imposes on his disciples and on some who incautiously consult him on moral questions. If the law demands the perfection of those who love their enemies, turn the other cheek, comply with every request, and give all they have to the poor, we might well agree that we sin by falling short of these demands of the law. In the light of these demands, we should endorse the response of the tax-collector rather than the Pharisee.

But if Paul relies on Jesus' perfectionist interpretation of the law, has he not weakened his case? We will identify ourselves with the tax-collector only if we accept the perfectionist demands; but we might regard these as a fanatical exaggeration of morality, and if we reject the exaggeration, we may look sceptically at Paul's claim that sin is inescapable for all of us all the time. He seems to exaggerate the disease in order to commend his cure, but we might think a more moderate cure is more appropriate for a more realistic assessment of the disease.

If we are to understand Jesus' apparent perfectionism better, we need to pay less attention to his specific precepts. Though he tells the rich young man to sell all he has and give it to the poor, he does not give this advice or instruction to everyone. The tax-collector Zacchaeus does not even give up his occupation, but he promises to make generous restitution for previous dishonesty and to give half of his possessions to the poor.[69] If he defrauded taxpayers, he violated the command against stealing, but in the scale of his restitution and in the promise to give away half of his possessions, he went beyond any requirement that could plausibly be derived from the Mosaic law.

The extreme and exaggerated elements in Jesus' moral teaching seem to convey the same point that Zacchaeus conveys in his promise. Jesus warns against the understanding of the moral law as a set of instructions specifying duties that can be fulfilled by particular actions. A civil code of law that threatens punishment ought to be confined to such instructions; for we reasonably want to be in a position to know whether we are liable to punishment, and we want to know what to do in order to avoid it. If the instructions were too imprecise for us to know what to do to fulfil them, or if they were infinitely demanding, so that we could never know whether we had done enough, they would be interfering and oppressive. Jesus implies that the moral law is different from a civil code in this respect. He fulfils the law (*Mt.* 5:17) by insisting that it requires a degree of perfection that goes beyond behavioural conformity. A code that requires behavioural conformity is a reasonable concession to human limitations, but it does not capture the point of the moral law.[70]

[69] 'Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I pay back four times as much." Then Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost." ' (*Lk.* 19:8–10).

[70] 'He said to them, "It was because you were so hard-hearted that Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another,

As Jesus understands the moral law, its point is to prescribe the love of one's neighbour as oneself, without the restrictions that human limitations impose on this attitude. The normal understanding of the love of one's neighbour includes some allowance for ordinary attitudes that restrict the degree of concern that can reasonably be expected. We are allowed to hate our enemies provided that we show some consideration for those who are more closely connected with us. We are allowed to take an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, provided that we go no further than this in taking revenge. But the point of these commands, as Jesus understands it, is not the positive command both to love one's neighbour and to hate one's enemy, but the positive command to love one's neighbour on the assumption that we inevitably hate our enemies. We would be better off if we lacked the motives that—as things are—make it reasonable to restrict the scope of the command to love one's neighbour to those who are not our enemies.

St Paul accepts the same perfectionist understanding of the point of the moral law. The tenth commandment of the Decalogue is different from the others in so far as it prohibits desires rather than actions.[71] In explaining his inability to keep the law, Paul takes this commandment rather than the other nine for his example, suggesting that the commandment itself gives an opportunity to sin.[72] To support his case, he interprets the commandment quite broadly. The commandment prohibits inappropriate desire for anything that belongs to one's neighbour, understanding this as a desire to harm one's neighbour. I covet my neighbour's car by wanting to steal his battered Ford, but I do not—apparently—violate the commandment if I want a battered Ford, or if I want a new Lexus in order to humiliate him when I park it next to his battered Ford. A moderate and realistic interpretation of the commandment might say: Given that you desire honour, wealth, status, and superiority, don't take this desire so far that you try to steal from your neighbour. Paul, however, assumes a more extreme and perfectionist understanding of the commandment, taking it to prohibit all 'coveting', and hence all inappropriate desire.

The contrast between the moderate and the extreme interpretation of the commandment makes it easier to see why Paul supposes that the law gives sin its opportunity. The moderate interpretation takes it for granted that we have inappropriate desires for wealth and domination, and simply tells us not to go as far as attempts to dispossess our neighbour. But if this is all the commandment says, it permits the inappropriate desires that might encourage us to steal from our neighbour. But if the point of the commandment is to prescribe proper consideration for our neighbour, ought it not to prohibit the more general desire (say) to get the better of my neighbour, and to prohibit the inappropriate desires that make his possessions seem attractive to us? This argument supports the extreme interpretation that takes the commandment to prohibit all coveting.

commits adultery." The disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry." ' (*Mt.* 19:8–10).

[71] 'Neither shall you covet your neighbour's wife. Neither shall you desire your neighbour's house . . . or anything that belongs to your neighbour' (*Dt.* 5:21).

[72] 'What then should we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet, if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." But sin, seizing an opportunity in the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness' (*Rm.* 7:7–8).

Paul accepts the extreme interpretation when he introduces the command to love one's neighbour. He follows Jesus in treating this command as a summary of the law.[73] But he agrees with Jesus (on the Good Samaritan) in taking love of one's neighbour to extend to everyone. We fulfil law by loving 'another' (*ton heteron*), not simply by loving our neighbour and hating our enemy. If we claim that the commandments are summed up in the commandment to love one's neighbour, we might mean (1) that all it takes to love our neighbour, in the relevant sense, is to avoid murder, adultery, etc., or (2) that the fulfilment of the commandments involves nothing less than the universal love of other people. Paul clearly intends the second claim. Love does no evil to another; it does not simply refrain from the different types of action prohibited by the Decalogue (on the moderate interpretation), but avoids all the evils that are not explicitly prohibited. And so when Paul says that love fulfils the law, he does not mean that it simply observes the law by avoiding explicitly prohibited behaviour. He means that it achieves the real aim of the law, according to the perfectionist interpretation.

If Paul is right in his claims about the point of the law, it is more reasonable for him to claim that no one keeps the law, and that the law brings the consciousness of sin. If we see that the law aims at mitigating the bad effects of misguided desires, but leaves the desires unmodified, anyone who agrees with the aim of the law should also agree that it would be better to modify the desires that make the prohibitions of the law necessary. Hence it is reasonable to claim, as Jesus and Paul both claim, that the right interpretation of the demands of the law is the perfectionist interpretation.

At this point, however, one might protest that different parts of Paul's perfectionism are in conflict. For he admits that if we take seriously the perfectionist aspect of the moral law, we have to recognize our incapacity to keep the law, and our incapacity to deal with our tendencies to rebel against the law. This recognition creates an acute sense of sin. Might we not argue that if perfectionism has this result, it cannot after all be the right way to look at the moral law? One might suppose it would be better to keep one's aspirations realistic than to be a perfectionist who is oppressed, and perhaps paralysed, by a sense of one's imperfection? If the sense of sin is self-inflicted, would we not be better off without it?

Jesus answers this objection by commending the tax-collector who asked God to be merciful to him as a sinner. According to Jesus, this man went home 'justified' (or 'vindicated').[74] This claim states briefly what Paul argues at length. If we recognize the demands of the moral law, and our inability to keep them, our conclusion need not be a paralysing and hopeless sense of sin; God through Christ provides the remedy for the condition that we recognize through reflexion on the law.[75]

[73] 'Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled law. For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." Love does not do evil (*kakon*) to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of law' (*Rm.* 13:8–10).

[74] See n65 above.

[75] 'Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!' (*Rm.* 7:24–5). Interpreters dispute about whether this passage refers to experience before or after justification and regeneration. Sanday and Headlam, *R*186, suggest that it might refer to either: '. . . whether the moment described is before or after the embracing of Christianity, in any case abstraction is made of all that is Christian. Law and the soul are brought face to face with each other, and there is nothing between them.' Cf. §222.

209. Justification

To explain how Paul understands the solution to the problem that he raises in his discussion of the demands of the law, we need to confront one of the most difficult and controversial areas of his theology. He takes up Jesus' claim that the tax-collector who prayed for God's mercy on him went home 'justified'. According to Paul, we are saved by the grace of God through faith in Christ for good works, so that we can fulfil the aims of morality that we would otherwise be unable to fulfil.[76] In 'by grace' Paul refers to God as the primary agent; God does not respond to our success in keeping the moral law. In 'through faith' he refers to the means; faith is the response elicited by God's unearned favour.

The understanding of God's unearned favour relies on our understanding of the point of the moral law. Morality aims at love of God and one's neighbour, free from the limits imposed by human aims and impulses that conflict with appropriate concern for oneself and one's neighbour. God has taken the lead in showing such love towards us without restriction or limitation.[77] The particular manifestation of divine love that is meant to elicit the response of faith and moral goodness is the life and death of Christ. He is mentioned as an 'atoning sacrifice' (or 'expiation', *hilasmos*) for human sin. The death and resurrection of Jesus are the means of securing justification by faith, because they express God's grace towards sinners.[78]

In speaking of Christ as a sacrifice, Paul represents him as a victim of human sin who also takes on himself the punishment that would otherwise fall on human beings for their sins. This conception of the atonement makes it a process of substitution and propitiation; God is angry at sin, but when an innocent person takes on the punishment that is due to the guilty, God's anger is removed because someone has suffered, and so he allows the guilty to go unpunished. If this is the moral basis of atonement for sin, it may reflect credit on Jesus for accepting the role of a substitute to be sacrificed, but it may appear to raise questions about the God who is willing to allow the suffering of an innocent person as a necessary but acceptable substitute for the suffering of the guilty. If God is willing not to punish the guilty, why should he insist on the suffering of an innocent person as a substitute?

These questions about the atonement have provided ample material both for critics of Christianity and for Christian theologians trying to explain and to defend the doctrine. Without going into these controversies, we may notice some aspects of the atonement that suggest something different from the propitiation of an angry God through innocent suffering. Jesus manifests the unrestricted love of one's neighbour that is the aim of the moral law. Since he was completely human, he had the motives that in other people create conflicts with the aims of morality; that was why the devil tested him by appealing to his

[76] 'For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, for us to walk in them' (*Eph*. 2:8–10).

[77] 'In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, if God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another' (*1Jn*. 4:10–11).

[78] '. . . they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith' (*Rm*. 3:24–5). 'Through faith' should probably be construed with 'justified'. NRSV renders 'effective through faith', RSV 'to be received by faith'.

hunger, his desire to show his divine power, and his desire to rule human societies.[79] The various inducements offered by the devil do not turn Jesus away from the love and service of God. Nor should we suppose that he suffers severe conflict, as a continent person would.[80] Facing the necessity of having to suffer, he finds it painful, but he does not want to avoid it if it is appropriate.[81] He was tested in the way human beings are, but without sinning.[82]

The writer of *Hebrews* implies that the exemplary aspects of Christ are closely connected with his sacrificial aspects.[83] He was able to do what a human being ought to do, but other human beings fail to do, since he kept his will and action firmly directed towards the love of his neighbour. For this reason he was even willing to be put to death for crimes of which he was innocent, rather than withdraw from his primary purpose. In these respects he serves as an example, in so far as we can focus on the life of Jesus to assure us that the perfection demanded by the moral law is possible for human beings.

This exemplary role of Christ's human nature and human life captures one element of the Christian claim that he is a suitable sacrifice to take away the sins of the people (*Jn*. 1:29; *Heb*. 2:17). But the suggestion that he is simply an ideal who might inspire imitation falls short of NT views about the effectiveness of his life. John claims that Christ does not simply give an example, but also gives us the power to imitate the example.[84] Divine grace gives us the desire and the ability to follow Christ, by freeing us from domination by the motives that interfere with the will to love our neighbour as ourselves. That is why Paul calls on Christians to share in Christ's resurrection by living appropriately.[85] This is a realistic demand because we do not rely on our own abilities to carry it out, but we can rely on divine help through the presence of God in the Holy Spirit.[86] The life and death of Christ are effective because God does not leave us to our own efforts in putting them into practice.

Paul speaks of this process of release from sin as 'justification'. The tax-collector who confessed his failure to keep the law was 'justified', and Paul claims that God justifies us by his grace. But what exactly Paul means by 'justify' is not completely clear. He claims that Abraham was justified by his faith, because his faith 'was counted for him as justice'

[79] See *Lk*. 4:1–13. The fact that Jesus is said to be hungry (v.2) makes it clear that he has the different desires that the devil appeals to. After these three tests, the devil departs only temporarily (v.13), showing that Jesus still has desires that would make different sins attractive to him.

[80] On continence v. virtue see Aristotle, §84. The English versions that render '*peirazesthai*' by 'tempted' rather than 'tested' may give the misleading impression that Jesus displays continence (if we take 'tempted' in the modern sense). The testing of (e.g.) *Mk*. 8:11 does not refer to anything that Jesus found 'tempting'.

[81] ' "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will, but yours, be done" (*Lk*. 22:42). Cf. *Jn*. 12:27–8: ' "Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name." '

[82] 'Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. For because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested' (*Heb*. 2:17–18). 'For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin' (4:15).

[83] For these two aspects see *BCP* Easter 2: 'Almighty God, who hast given thine only Son to be unto us both a sacrifice for sin, and also an example of godly life . . .'.

[84] 'But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God . . .' (*Jn*. 1:12).

[85] 'If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth' (*Col*. 3:1–2). 'So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus' (*Rm*. 6:11).

[86] '. . . if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God' (*Rm*. 8:13–14).

(*Rm.* 4:3). 'Count as' might be understood to mean that if F is counted as G, F is G, or to mean that F is not G, but is being treated as a substitute for G. If a piece of paper with the appropriate design and signature and issued by the proper authority counts as a 50 euro note, it is a 50 euro note. But if a pound note counts as a pound weight of gold, it is not a pound of gold, but is being used as a substitute. In the case of Abraham, Paul seems to have the first use of 'counted as' in mind, since he also refers to Abraham's 'justice of faith' (*Rm.* 4:11); his faith in God was justice in itself and the source of his further justice.

Similarly, then, when Paul speaks of us as being justified by faith, he does not seem to mean simply that if we have the relevant faith, we are treated as just when we are not just. Admittedly, we are in one respect treated as just when we are not; if God forgives us our sins, God allows us to proceed as though we had not sinned, and in this respect treats us as if we were just. But Paul also claims that the death of Christ secures 'justification (*dikaiôsis*) of life' (5:18) and that it will make many people just (5:19). Justification and justice 'of life' can hardly refer simply to being forgiven; they seem to refer to a way of life that manifests justice.[87] He does not seem to restrict justification to a declaration of forgiveness or acquittal.

210. Moral Implications

These few aspects of the Christian account of sin and release from sin help to explain why the NT attitude to morality seems both highly pessimistic and unrealistically optimistic. On the one hand, it emphasizes the inescapable presence of sin and the universal failure to satisfy the demands of the moral law. On the other hand, it argues that divine grace and the resulting faith produce justice; once we are no longer under law but under grace, sin has lost its domination over us (*Rm.* 6:14). Belief in the life, work, and person of Jesus is supposed to produce a reform of character and action, leading us away from the outlook of the flesh towards the outlook of the spirit (*Rm.* 8:1–11).

We have found some reason to accept the perfectionist interpretation of the moral law, as Jesus and Paul understand it. They are justified in claiming that the explicit provisions of the law fall short of its spirit; the spirit aims at the removal of the barriers to love of one's neighbour that are assumed in the behavioural precepts of the law. But if Paul believes that grace and faith release us from the domination of sin, should he not claim that Christians will be able to fulfil the moral law perfectly?

The NT writers do not expose themselves to easy refutation by predicting that believing Christians are entirely free of the sin that prevents us from achieving the aims of morality. Different writers recognize in different ways the inescapable fact that Christians are still subject to sin.[88] And so they need to explain what difference it makes that Christians have been regenerated by divine grace through faith in Christ.

[87] '. . . those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of justice <will> reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. . . . one man's act of justice (*dikaiôma*) leads to justification (*dikaiôsis*) and life for all. . . . by one man's obedience many will be made just . . . so that . . . grace also might reign through justice to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord' (*Rm.* 5:17–21). English versions may introduce confusion by using both 'righteousness' and 'justification' for '*dikaiosunê*'. Some contentious questions about the sense of 'justification' are discussed briefly by Sanday and Headlam, *R* 28–31, 147–53. See also §351–2, 419.

[88] See, e.g., *Heb.* 10:19–31; *1Jn.* 2:1–2; 5:16–21.

A simple answer would be that, for the justified, sin no longer matters, since it has already been forgiven and they are no longer under law, but under grace. According to this view, we have no reason to be concerned about avoiding sin. Paul sees that this antinomian answer may seem attractive, and so he argues vigorously against it.[89] In his view, justification matters not because sin no longer matters, but because we can avoid sin more than we could have avoided it otherwise. Christians have been freed from sin and enslaved to justice (*Rm.* 6:18); they are dead to sin (6:11); and they are no longer under law, but under grace (6:14). Even if we have been freed from sin, it is still open to us to sin, but because we have been freed from sin, we ought not to subject ourselves to it (6:12). Contrary to the antinomian answer, justifying grace and faith open a new opportunity, by making it open to us to avoid sin in some way in which it was not previously open.

In Paul's view, we have this new opportunity because faith in Christ allows us to share in the love of Christ.[90] Without his example and his inspiration, we would have no basis for believing that we can fulfil the spirit of the moral law; but the life of Jesus shows us how a human being can be guided by love of one's neighbour without being subject to the restrictions that separate the explicit provisions of the moral law from its spirit. We can therefore rely on hope, which does not let us down, because it has a firm basis in the example of Christ. The example 'inspires' us not only in the ordinary sense in which an admirable person serves as an inspiration, but also in so far as God the Holy Spirit actually moves us to act on the example of Christ.[91] Someone else might wish it were possible to act in the spirit of appropriate love for one's neighbour, but without reference to Christ this remains a mere wish; that is why those who are without God are also without hope.[92] If we have the realistic hope that rests on belief in the example of Christ, we can reject the persistent tendencies that have caused us to act against the spirit of the moral law.[93]

Paul argues, therefore, that recognition and acceptance of the love of God make it realistic to aim at goals that might otherwise be dismissed as products of merely wishful thinking. He describes these goals by repeating the familiar commandment to love one's neighbour as oneself, which is simply a summary of the moral law (*Rm.* 13:8–10; *Gal.* 5:13–14). In this respect Christian freedom does not release Christians from the demands of the old law, but reasserts them in their demanding perfectionist form. The perfectionist version of the law is the one that leads us to acute awareness of sin, and therefore would lead us to despair if we had no Christian faith and hope. But because we have Christian faith and hope, the demands of the moral law are realistic. Though we do not always satisfy them, we can reasonably

[89] 'What then shall we say? Are we to continue in sin in order that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it?' (*Rm.* 6:1) Cf. §420n112.

[90] 'Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God' (*Eph.* 5:1–2).

[91] '. . . hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us . . . . God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us' (*Rm.* 5:5–8).

[92] '. . . you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. . . . He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, so making peace . . .' (*Eph.* 2:12–15).

[93] 'Put off the old man (*anthrôpon*) who belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new man, created after the likeness of God in true justice and holiness' (*Eph.* 4:22–4).

be guided by them and try to approach them, instead of regarding them as a distant ideal. Paul urges the Colossians to seek the things that are above; he does not say they will grasp them at once, but he argues that they can reasonably aim at them.[94] Christians can form the outlook of the 'spirit', guided by the Holy Spirit, so that they take a new attitude towards the provisions of the law. They can now grasp the demand for perfection embodied in the moral law, and they can do something about fulfilling it.[95]

Paul's ethical instructions try to identify some of the practical implications of the realistic pursuit of Christian perfection. One might suppose that they would require him to take literally the extreme demands that Jesus contrasts with the demands of the old law. But he does not draw this conclusion. He does not urge Christians to refrain from anger or lustful thoughts, or to give away all their possessions. He recommends marriage as a remedy for lust, on the assumption that people will feel lust (*1Cor.* 7:8–9). He tells us to be angry without sinning, and not to let the sun go down on our anger, on the assumption that we are sometimes right to be angry.[96] He instructs us to give generously for the relief of people in need, on the assumption that we will still have something left to give to others and to maintain ourselves (*1Cor.* 16:1–2). He does not approve of reliance on other people's generosity if we can avoid it; those unwilling to work should not be allowed to take advantage of other people's work (*2Th.* 3:10).

In arguing that the Christian has new resources for discerning moral ideals and for acting on them, Paul commits himself to claims that can be assessed from the point of view of moral theory. It is not up to him to decide what counts as justice, greed, dishonesty, or generosity. In claiming that the Christian avoids sin and practises righteousness, Paul places the Christian in a comparison with the moral practices and outlooks of non-Christians, and claims that Christians more completely fulfil the aims that non-Christians themselves recognize as morally admirable.

211. The Christian Conception of Morality

From these few elements of the NT we can extract some claims about morality that underlie Christian doctrines about sin and justification. In one way Christians add nothing to the moral law; for they recognize the love of God and one's neighbour as an adequate summary of the demands of the moral law as a whole, and they take these two great commandments to indicate the relative importance of different provisions of the law. The law that is summarized in these two great commandments is the Mosaic law, but not only the Mosaic law; for the natural law that is also accessible to the Gentiles can also be summed up in the two great commandments. The Gentiles do not know as much as the Jews know by divine revelation about what the moral law requires; but they can recognize enough moral requirements to be open to judgment for their just or unjust actions (*Rm.* 2:6–13). In this

[94] *Col.* 3:1–2, quoted above n85.

[95] 'Do not be assimilated to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect' (*Rm.* 12:2).

[96] 'Be angry (*orgizesthe*) and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your angry mood (*parorgismos*), and do not make room for the devil' (*Eph.* 4:26–7). The point may be obscured if we do not distinguish *orgê* from *parorgismos*.

respect Christians have nothing to add; they try to follow the same moral law that Jews and Gentiles also follow, and therefore their actions and outlook are open to evaluation by the moral outlook that is common to Jews and Gentiles, Christians and non-Christians.

In another respect, however, Christians have something to add. For they argue that neither Jews nor Gentiles recognize what the moral law requires. Though they agree that the commandment to love one's neighbour summarizes the social aspects of the law (as opposed to those that directly concern one's relation to God), they do not see what this commandment commits them to. If they did, they would agree that it involves the appropriate direction of our aims and motives to the love of our neighbour, and the removal of the aims and motives that interfere with the spirit of the moral law. But our clear awareness of these perfectionist demands of the moral law makes us aware of our incapacity to meet them.

At this point no specifically Christian theological claims have been introduced. We do not have to be Christians in order to accept the demand for perfection; we simply need to think seriously and systematically about the spirit underlying the moral law. Nor do we need to be Christians in order to recognize our incapacity to fulfil the demand for perfection; we simply need to notice the aims and tendencies in us that make it unrealistic to expect full compliance with the law. Jesus takes the actual character of contemporary formulations of the law to support his case. Recognizing our 'hardness of heart', we do not expect compliance with the spirit of the law, but we frame particular regulations so that they do not demand more than people can be realistically expected to manage. This realistic policy is not necessarily mistaken, but if we take it to express the aim of the law, we are mistaken. Since we admit that these human limitations are regrettable from a moral point of view, we acknowledge that the spirit of the moral law demands more than the realistic formulations of it.

We might agree with the Christian distinction between the explicit formulations of the law and the demands that express the spirit of the law, but should we also agree in acknowledging our inability to fulfil the spirit of the law? Greek moral philosophers agree that the spirit of morality cannot be captured in the sorts of behavioural regulations that Jesus attributes to the old law (in what 'you have heard said').[97] That is why they take the good person to have virtues of character, not simply to behave in the ways expected. The virtuous person does the right actions because they are right; that motive is central both to the Aristotelian and to the Stoic account of the virtues. Might we not say that the Greek moralists recognize the demand to conform to the spirit of the moral law but avoid the pessimistic Christian conclusion about our incapacity to fulfil it?

In defence of Christian perfectionism one might notice that the Greek moralists do not give a very clear account of the relation between the demands of morality and human limitations. Aristotle perhaps approaches the question in his separation of human from divine and heroic virtue (*EN* 1145a18–30), and in his remark that human virtues have to take account of human nature and its limitations (1115b7–11). But it is not clear how he fixes the limits of human nature. Perhaps we would no longer be human beings if we lost certain kinds of imperfections, and we would not need to acquire virtues of character. But other limitations may simply reflect what can be realistically expected of people as they are.

[97] See *Mt.* 5:21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43. See above §207.

The Stoics have more to say than Aristotle about our tendency to fall short of the ideal presented to us by the virtues; for they admit that the sage who completely embodies the virtues is difficult to find. Chrysippus did not think he was a sage, and different Stoics claimed that there had been none, one, or two sages.[98] But the Stoics do not explain why most of us fail to be sages. Is it because most of us do not learn quickly enough to learn everything that a sage has to learn, or because what the sage knows is too difficult for most of us to grasp, or because we do not want to do what a sage has to do?

The Stoics do not discuss this question in detail, but if they discussed it, they would give some possible support to Christian pessimism about our capacity to follow the moral law from our own resources. Though the Stoics hold a cognitive conception of the passions, this does not commit them to the over-simple claim that as soon as we accept the outlook of morality, we will follow it. For they recognize that acceptance of the virtuous outlook may be insecure; we are still subject to the influence of the passions, and they still produce appearances that encourage us to violate the principles we have accepted. If we are not sages, we are still liable to oscillate in our beliefs, and hence to act inconsistently. The Stoics do not draw the pessimistic Christian conclusion from their recognition of this oscillation; Epictetus urges us to train ourselves to avoid the misleading influence of appearances, but does not suggest that we will fail in this task.[99] St Paul might reasonably agree with Epictetus' account of the temptations that we face from misleading appearances; he simply adds that we are misled if we think that we simply need to learn more or to try harder in order to free ourselves from their influence. Whereas Epictetus simply warns us not to underestimate the difficulty of the task, NT writers warn us that we deceive ourselves if we hold out the prospect of complete success as a result of our unaided efforts.[100]

The point of Christian pessimism, however, is not to reject the perfectionist aspects of Greek moral systems. On the contrary, the perfectionist aspects support the Christian doctrines of justification and sanctification. The moral law presents us with an ideal that we recognize, and so it encourages us to wish we could achieve it. This is an unrealistic wish, however, unless we accept the Christian account of how we can fulfil it. Though we cannot fulfil it without the help of God, we can fulfil it with the help of divine grace, moving us to believe in the sinless life of Christ, and to accept the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in following the example of Christ.

It would be a mistake to infer that the Christian outlook is simply a means to keeping the moral law. If we tried to accept it for that reason, we would defeat our own ends; for it has the appropriate moral effects only if we accept it as true in its own right. But if the Christians are right, they can claim some support in the moral outlook that enlightened moral philosophy endorses. For Greek moral philosophy claims to identify the ideal of perfection that is incompletely grasped in ordinary moral agency. According to the Christian critic, this ideal confronts us with our incapacity to realize it from our own resources; hence

[98] See Sx *M* ix 133; Plu. *SR* 1048e; *CN* 1076b; Eusebius, *PE* vi 8.12–16. [99] On Epictetus see §191.

[100] 'If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all injustice. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us' (*1Jn* 1:8–10; cf. §223n57). 'For I delight in the law of God, in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?' (*Rm*. 7:22–4).

we have to acknowledge, from the moral point of view, that the Christian outlook rests on a reasonable diagnosis of our condition. Moreover, Christians claim that divine grace and justifying faith result in a degree of progress towards the moral ideal that we could not otherwise achieve; hence we have to acknowledge that this Christian goal is morally legitimate.

According to the Christian analysis, therefore, the moral law points beyond itself. Though some elements of morality are useful for regulating human interactions in mutually beneficial ways, the perfectionist elements prescribe a way of life that transforms our goals and aspirations for individual and social life. Instead of simply wanting to prevent various offences against our neighbour, we seek to love our neighbour as ourselves. Once we aim at this end, we look for the resources to fulfil it. Once we recognize that our natural resources cannot fulfil it, we cannot reasonably refuse a hearing to Christian views about how to achieve the aims of morality.

The Christian analysis of morality invites three possible replies: (1) Christians are right to assert that the perfectionist elements in Greek and Jewish moral systems support the Christian analysis. We should therefore reject these perfectionist elements in favour of a more modest and realistic conception of morality. (2) We should retain the perfectionist elements of morality, but reject Christian pessimism about our capacity to achieve them from our own resources; we should prefer the Stoic over the Christian treatment of perfection. (3) We should accept perfectionism and Christian pessimism, but reject Christian optimism, since it rests on unacceptable theological views. We should simply learn to live with our limited ability to realize the ideals that morality presents to us. We may find it easier to do this if we notice that Christians have to do it as well, since they do not claim (if they have any sense) that grace and faith ensure moral perfection.

Since each of these replies to the Christian analysis is worth considering, and since all of them face some objections, the Christian analysis raises some difficult and persistent questions about central elements in the moral outlook. On these points Christian theory about morality—its claims about the nature and implications of moral ideals—are even more important than claims about the specific requirements of morality.

212. Moral Psychology

We have argued that the Christian conception of morality and its relation to human imperfection does not rest on claims about the moral law or about the moral virtues that would appear alien to Greek moral philosophy. We can either confirm or undermine this argument if we compare Christian views, explicit or implicit, with some of the basic claims and assumptions of Greek theorists, as we have described them so far.

We may find it most difficult to find any place in Christianity for the moral psychology that underlies Greek moral systems. We have found that Socrates' successors do not wholly reject Socrates' claim that happiness and virtue depend on knowledge, and that failure to achieve either happiness or virtue is to be explained by ignorance of one's own good. While Platonic and Peripatetic moralists insist on the reality of a non-rational part of the soul, they do not reject the basic Socratic presuppositions. Aristotle's' account of incontinence shows

how the Socratic appeal to ignorance of the good co-exists with the Platonic tripartition. That is why the modified Socratic position of the Stoics can answer the objections that Plato and Aristotle raised against the initial Socratic position.

We might suppose that Christians reject this Socratic presupposition, since they recognize a basic human tendency to sin that remains in us whatever we know about the good. St Paul affirms that even if I know the good, I still find myself choosing the evil. To suppose that the source of error is simply ignorance of the good is to underestimate the pervasive character of sin in human choice. Augustine enthusiastically insists on the pervasiveness and inevitability of sin, and so he might reasonably be expected to reject the assumptions that underlie Socratic moral psychology.

In fact, a strongly non-Socratic approach to moral error can be found in the Greek tradition, even though it does not become part of one of the dominant moral systems. We might interpret Plato's belief in a non-rational part of the soul as the recognition of a source of motivation that is not only independent of beliefs about the good, but also unresponsive to them. Such a doctrine of non-rational desire is easy to connect with the claim in the *Timaeus* that matter is the source of a 'wandering cause' that is the source of evil.[101] In the *Timaeus* Plato does not make the non-rational part wholly unresponsive to the rational part; on both the psychological and the cosmological level reason persuades necessity. It would be easy, however, to suppose that the *Timaeus* supports a more radical dualism than Plato affirms, between the material, bodily, and non-rational on the one side and the immaterial, psychic, and rational on the other side. This radical dualism is more strongly affirmed in later Platonism.[102]

We might well expect such a doctrine to be a suitable way to express Christian convictions about the inevitability of sin. And we might suppose that St Paul's frequent contrast between 'flesh' and 'spirit' expresses a radical dualist doctrine. Such a doctrine treats a human being as a combination of two distinct quasi-personal agents that are moved by sharply distinct motives, and have no basis for agreement on shared principles to guide their action. Some passages in Plato's *Republic* might be taken to support such a view. Though we have found reasons to doubt this interpretation of the *Republic*, it might appear to express a version of Platonic dualism that fits Pauline dualism. When Paul claims that the flesh and the spirit have conflicting desires, we might take him to maintain a basically anti-Socratic psychological and metaphysical dualism.[103]

The Christian theologian cannot go too far in this direction, however. If the inevitable urge to sin were inherent in matter and in the body, then it would be part of God's creation, and its presence would conflict with the claim that what God created was good. Since Platonism does not accept a doctrine of creation from nothing, it does not face this difficulty. But

[101] On the wandering cause see *Tim.* 47e3–48b3. Some disputes about Plato's views on this question are discussed by Cherniss, 'Sources'. Plotinus' view is discussed by Gerson, *P* 191–8.

[102] The anti-Socratic elements of Plato's doctrine of the non-rational soul are especially emphasized in Galen's *PHP*, where Galen uses Poseidonius' criticisms of Chrysippus to maintain the antagonism of the non-rational part to the influence of reason. See esp. *PHP* v 316.21–322.26 (De L) = F169 EK, with Kidd's comment ad loc in EK ii 615. Alcinous, *Did.* 32.1–4, also highlights the opposition between a Platonic and a Stoic view of the passions.

[103] 'For the flesh lusts (*epithmei*) against the spirit—and the spirit is against the flesh, since these are opposed to each other—in order that you not do the things you will (*thelête*)' (*Gal.* 5:17). The translation is difficult because of ambiguous syntax. On Augustine's use of this passage see §227n76. On Melanchthon's use see §418.

since it treats the world as the work of a good and benevolent Demiurge, who has imposed reason and goodness on unordered matter, it does not accept an account of flesh and matter that that would trace it to the influence of a cosmic force competing with the benevolent Demiurge. That is why Plotinus rejects the cosmological dualism of the Gnostics.[104]

From the Christian point of view, radical Platonic dualism about non-rational desire makes it too easy to sympathize with a version of cosmological dualism that gained considerable support among Christians. Marcionite, Gnostic, and Manichean doctrines used the opposition between flesh and spirit to support the view that some elements in the cosmos are independent of and hostile to the benevolent God. Marcion claimed Paul's support for his claims.[105] But if Paul does not treat the opposition of flesh to spirit as a conflict between two antagonistic agents, he does not accept a dualist conception of motivation. His claims provide no basis for a strongly dualist conception. Flesh and spirit are not two distinct agents. The outlook of the flesh is our outlook when we reject the spirit of the moral law in favour of the various aims that seem to us (rightly or wrongly) to conflict with it. The outlook of the spirit is our outlook when we are guided by the Holy Spirit so that we guide our action in accordance with the aims of the moral law. Paul does not prescribe an ascetic outlook for Christian believers in general. He does not treat the motives that sometimes oppose the moral law as being fundamentally opposed to it. We can harmonize them with the demands of love for our neighbour if we interpret those demands appropriately and form the realistic hope of fulfilling them.

The Christian doctrine of sin, therefore, does not rely on a conception of motivation and mental conflict that is sharply separated from the outlook of the Greek philosophers. While Paul certainly does not endorse the modified Socratic attitude of the Stoics, his views can readily be expressed within their conception of will and passion. If we use the resources that the Stoics allow themselves in their discussion of the attractive and potentially deceptive character of appearances, we can explain what Paul means by speaking of the persistent influence of the flesh.

This conclusion is a subject of dispute in later Christian reflexion. Augustine explains Pauline moral psychology by reference to Stoic doctrine, as he understands it. Aquinas explains Paul through his Aristotelian moral psychology. But Augustine and Aquinas do not differ as much as this contrast might suggest, since Augustine's interpretation of the Stoic view tends to assimilate it to an Aristotelian view, and Aquinas' interpretation of Aristotle is in turn influenced by Augustine's version of Stoicism. Some of the Reformers reject Aquinas' explanations as un-Biblical and as serious distortions of the doctrine of the NT.[106] We will need to discuss some of these disputes later; but for the moment we have found no reason to suppose that the ancient moralists lack the means to express Christian doctrine within their moral psychology.

[104] See Plotinus, *Enn.* ii 9. In ii 9.6.24–8 he accuses the Gnostics of misunderstanding Plato, and in ii 9.16 he argues that the genuine Platonist will admire, rather than denigrate, the created world. On Augustine's view see §228.

[105] According to Tertullian, *Marc.* i 19, 'Marcion's distinctive and principal work is the separation of the law and the gospel'. In iii 14–17 Tertullian argues against Marcion's view by urging that the ethical doctrine of Jesus does not contradict the OT. Origen defends the same position in *Princ.* ii 5, on the just and the good (where he rejects any opposition between the justice and the goodness (benevolence) of God).

[106] See Melanchthon, discussed in §418.

213. Free Will

Our discussion of NT views on motivation has so far left aside questions about freedom and responsibility. Christian views on these questions have provoked some dispute. On the one hand, we might suppose that the Christian doctrines of predestination and divine grace either deny free will or make it irrelevant to the relations of God and humanity. On the other hand, we might take Christian views on reward and punishment to require a more definite conception of the will and its freedom than we can find in the Greek moralists.

Our discussion of the Greek moralists has found that the Stoic conception of freedom and responsibility captures the Aristotelian conception as well, and that Alexander is mistaken in arguing that Aristotle either affirms or is committed to an indeterminist account of freedom. Alexander agrees with Epicurus in holding an indeterminist account. If we are considering whether Christian doctrines either allow or require belief in human freedom, we may well be disposed to give different answers if we hold compatibilist or incompatibilist views. Epicurus rejects determinism on the ground that it commits us to a doctrine of predetermination and fate that rules out human freedom. If Christians believe in divine predestination, they clearly violate Epicurus' conditions for freedom; but if we believe a compatibilist account of freedom is viable, we will not take it to be obvious that a belief in predestination excludes freedom; we will want to know more about the implications of the doctrine of predestination.

Some of the apparently conflicting elements in the Christian position are already present in the OT. Many passages insist on the power of God over human societies and human history and on the incapacity of human beings to resist the divine will; this seems to be the doctrine that Epicurus rejects. This conception of divine power is briefly expressed in the description of God as the potter and human beings as the clay formed according to the divine design; human beings seem to have no more power to resist God's will than the power that clay has to resist the potter.[107] While it would be inappropriate to treat such remarks as precise statements of an articulated doctrine of predestination, they show that such a doctrine might reasonably claim to express central aspects in the outlook of the OT.

On the other side, however, Sirach seems to affirm human freedom, by claiming that God left us in the power of our own choice.[108] This claim about freedom is intended to answer those who claim that God's power leaves us no choice about what we do, and in particular gives us no choice about whether we observe or violate the requirements of the law. The judicial side of the OT rejects any attempt to throw responsibility for sin on to God. Admittedly, some passages assert that God visits the merits and the sins of the fathers on the children (e.g., *Ex.* 20:5); they might be taken to assert that the fate of the children is fixed by the behaviour of their fathers, however good or bad the children might be. This

[107] 'Woe to those . . . who say, "Who sees us? Who knows us?" . . . Shall the potter be regarded as the clay; that the thing made should say of its maker, "He did not make me"; or the thing formed say of him who formed it, "He has no understanding"?' (*Is.* 29:15–16). 'Woe to him who strives with his Maker, an earthen vessel with the potter! Does the clay say to him who fashions it, "What are you making"? or "Your work has no handles"?' (*Is.* 45:9)

[108] 'The Lord . . . created humankind in the beginning, and left them in the power of their own free choice (*diabouliou*; Vulg. consilii). If you choose (*thelêis*), you can keep the commandments, and to act faithfully is a matter of your own choice. . . . He has not commanded anyone to be wicked, and he has not given anyone permission to sin' (*Sir.* 15:13–21). Aquinas cites parts of this passage several times (e.g. *ST* 1a q22 a2 obj4; ad4; q83 a1 sc).

would be the counterpart to the hereditary curse lying on Orestes or Oedipus. But Ezekiel rejects any conception of divine punishment that would remove individual responsibility; he insists that each one will be punished for his own sin, and that if anyone turns away from sin, he will not be punished.[109]

The OT writers do not explain how this affirmation of individual responsibility is to be reconciled with divine power exercised in divine predestination. They do not seem to regard it as a restriction of divine power, as though God's designs did not include any provision for particular human beings to act one way or another. Nor do they suggest (or deny) that human beings are individually responsible only if their actions are undetermined and are not the result of God's predestination. But at any rate they make it clear that human beings are held individually responsible for their actions, and that this is the basis of praise and blame.

A prominent element in Pauline Christianity reaffirms the sovereignty of God as the potter moulding his clay, and so it might reasonably raise doubts about the reality or importance of free will.[110] God's predestination chooses some people for condemnation and others for salvation irrespective of their merits. All of us are incapable of avoiding sin, because of the sin of Adam (*Rm.* 5:12–19). Nor can we avoid sin through our own choice, independently of divine grace; for only the grace of God enables some people to turn to God in faith. This exercise of God's grace is not a response to our success in keeping the moral law; it is God's free gift, and not a response to human merits.[111] Even if believers have a different moral outlook from that of unbelievers, and even if they do better than unbelievers in following the demands of morality, this is itself the effect of divine grace; it is not their unaided achievement.

We might respond to these Pauline doctrines by concluding that Paul affirms the unreality or the irrelevance of free will. The role that he assigns to divine grace may appear to eliminate responsibility for goodness and badness altogether. Even if we do not go this far, and we claim that some things are, in some intelligible sense, in our power, this seems not to matter for what ultimately happens to us; for the ultimate cause is God's grace and predestination, not our own merits or demerits.[112]

Paul recognizes that this is a natural and initially plausible reaction to his views about sin and salvation. But he insists that it is a mistaken reaction. He believes, as Jewish writers believe, that God demands moral goodness, and that God will reward the just and punish the wicked in accordance with their choice. This judicial role for God is pointless, as Paul recognizes, if we do not hold that individuals are responsible for acting well or badly and that this responsibility makes it fair to reward or punish them. The fact that Gentiles have some natural knowledge of God is important from this judicial point of view; it explains why they are without excuse in behaving immorally (*Rm.* 1:20). Since the Gentiles can grasp the

[109] 'What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge"? As I live, says the Lord God, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sins shall die. If a man is righteous and does what is lawful and right . . . he shall surely live, says the Lord God' (*Ezk.* 18:2–9).

[110] 'You will say to me then, "Why does he [sc. God] still find fault? For who can resist his will?" But who are you, a man, to answer back to God? Will what is moulded say to its moulder, "Why have you made me thus?" Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for beauty and another for menial use?' (*Rm.* 9:19–21).

[111] 'For no human being will be justified in his sight by works of the law, since through the law comes knowledge of sin' (*Rm.* 3:20).

[112] Cf. §225.

moral law without the revelation of the Mosaic law, they can also be fairly rewarded and punished for their observance or violation of the moral law, in so far as they are aware of it (*Rm.* 2:6–13). These retributive attitudes do not apply only outside the Christian gospel, as though grace, faith, and justification made them irrelevant. On the contrary, Paul tells Christians that God punishes violations of the moral law, no matter who is guilty of them (*Eph.* 5:6). Whatever it means for Christians to be free of subjection to the law, it does not mean that the moral law no longer applies to them or that they are not responsible for observing it.

These judicial aspects of Christianity recall Ezekiel's and Sirach's insistence on individual responsibility. If we take them seriously, we may be inclined to criticize Greek ethics not for giving too large a role to human effort and responsibility, but for giving it too small a role. If we explain error by ignorance, we may seem to provide too weak a basis for claims about responsibility, since ignorance normally removes responsibility for the action done on the basis of the ignorance. The sort of responsibility that could affect salvation or condemnation must apparently be responsibility of the clearest and most robust type; and this seems to be the deliberate and free choice of evil in full knowledge of its evil character. This seems to be the sort of freedom that Eve and Adam had when they deliberately disobeyed God's instructions. The indeterminist position developed by Alexander seems more suitable than Stoic compatibilism for capturing the sort of freedom that could support theological claims about Adam's sin or about the basis of rewards and punishments.

These different possible attitudes to questions about responsibility may themselves point to a basic contradiction within the Christian position. If it turns out that predestination and grace undermine any robust type of fundamental human responsibility, whereas claims about sin, reward, and punishment require this fundamental responsibility, then different aspects of the Christian position undermine each other. But we will not draw this conclusion if we take a compatibilist position seriously. Though compatibilism alone does not ensure that the Christian position is coherent or plausible, it at least suggests a possible argument for coherence. If we can identify the connexion between our mental states and our actions that make us responsible for our actions, and we can show that the Pauline doctrine of predestination and election allows this connexion, we can show how Paul's view is coherent. Moreover, once we have found the relevant connexion, we may be able to show that an indeterminist doctrine of responsibility also fits the doctrine of predestination.[113]

These Christian views on predestination and responsibility make it difficult to accept Epicurus' claim that divine providence, as the Stoics conceive it, does not allow responsibility. But Epicurus' view is by no means typical of Greek philosophers' views on these questions. We have seen that other views are either sympathetic to compatibilism (Aristotle) or explicitly compatibilist (the Stoics). These views suggest ways of understanding the Christian doctrine. Since NT writers assume, but do not argue in any detail, that divine predestination and election allow, and even ensure, human freedom, they seem to need the theories of the Greek moralists to explain how their position might be interpreted and defended.

[113] This topic is treated by Scotus, Ockham, Molina, and Suarez.

214. Eudaemonism

Aristotelian and Stoic doctrines of will and responsibility are closely connected with eudaemonism; for both Aristotle and the Stoics suppose that will and rational desire essentially aim at happiness, and that we act freely to the extent that we are guided or regulated by this overriding aim. Similarly, they accept eudaemonism as a basic principle for the understanding and justification of the virtues. Even though virtues are directly connected to the fine rather than to the good of the agent, they deserve the attention of a rational agent in so far as they can be shown to promote her good. Both Aristotle and the Stoics defend the virtues from a eudaemonist point of view, by explaining the virtues by reference to the common good and by arguing that sharing in the common good is essential to one's own good.

One aspect of Christianity fits naturally into Greek eudaemonism, since it claims to describe the way to salvation. Christian moral principles are partly derived from the Mosaic law, which often appeals to the effects of observance or violation on one's own happiness. 'Do this, and you will live' is a frequent comment on different commandments, and Jesus echoes it (*Lk*. 10:28). He agrees with the Psalmist that there is great reward in the keeping of the law (*Ps*. 19:11).

What is the nature of the reward? In so far as a general reason is given for observing the demands of the Law, they are represented as commands of God, on the assumption that this is a sufficient reason for obedience. But it is not clear why it should be a sufficient reason. Different reasons for obeying divine commands might be given: (1) We might say that morality prescribes what is good for individuals and communities, and that God, being good and wise, knows what promotes these goods and commands us to do what promotes them, so that we have good reason to observe his commands. (2) We might claim that God's commandments constitute moral rightness and that we ought to do what he commands just because he commands it. (3) We might claim that God's commandments come with punishments and rewards and that these sanctions give us our reason for obeying them. Since these sanctions are more powerful than anything we could lose by obeying God's commands, we have an overriding reason to obey.

Among these reasons the third is the least complicated; it makes the observance of moral requirements purely instrumental to some goal desired for non-moral reasons. This way of explaining the status of morality provokes the objection that Christian attitudes to morality are purely instrumental in the way condemned by Plato in *Republic* ii, and that they do not allow us to care about morality for its own sake. Neither the first nor the second reason is open to this objection. The first reason allows an appeal to divine commands to be integrated smoothly into a eudaemonist account of the basis of morality. The second rejects the eudaemonist framework, since it claims that we have a sufficient reason for obeying divine commands quite apart from any connexion with our own good or with the good of others. This is the sort of reason that Scotus has in mind in speaking of the love of God as the basis of morality.

The sorts of reasons that are available depend to some extent on the scope of the law. In the OT the moral law is only sometimes distinguished from the ceremonial; and if we think

of ritual and ceremony as part of the law, we can hardly give the first reason for observing it. But to the extent that the OT writers distinguish the moral law, they also recognize to some degree that it is worth keeping for its own sake; hence the Psalmist distinguishes its inherent desirability from the reward that it promises.[114] For reasons we have already seen, the Christian outlook endorses this attitude to the moral law. While no NT writer ever rejects concern for eternal happiness as a suitable reason for keeping the moral law, the NT does not suggest that this is the only reason for keeping it.

Do we find the second attitude among Biblical writers? Do they treat the fact that God has commanded an action as constituting its rightness? They certainly praise obedience to divine commands, but it is not clear that any of them gives this account of the rightness of commands. In a way, this conclusion is unhelpful, since they do not raise the philosophical question at all. But it is more helpful to notice that such an account of rightness does not even seem to be strongly suggested by Biblical views, and does not seem to be what Biblical writers have in mind. In saying that what God commands is right, they do not seem to mean that the right is whatever an authoritative ruler says it is, and that God is the most authoritative ruler. They also imply, and sometimes assert, that God has a claim on our obedience because of God's moral characteristics, which are recognizable apart from the acceptance of God's commands. Hence the Decalogue begins with the reminder that God has brought Israel out of Egypt, and deserves Israel's obedience for that reason (*Dt*. 5:6–7). This is partly an appeal to gratitude, but partly also an appeal to God's demonstrated goodness; the Israelites are expected to believe not only that they owe God something for past services, but also that God has proved the sort of goodness that provides some distinct reason for accepting a moral authority. Abraham argues that since God must always do right, God could not possibly allow the innocent to be destroyed with the guilty (*Gn*. 18:23–32).

Neither OT nor NT writers, then, give us any reason to suppose that Jewish or Christian conceptions of morality as divine law introduce some account of the basis of morality that stands outside Greek eudaemonism. The outlook of Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics allows us to explain the role of divine law in morality and practical reason. This is not to say that Greek eudaemonism is the only outlook on morality that fits Christian claims; emphasis on God's unconditional demands might be taken to support rejection of eudaemonism, for the reasons given by Scotus. Christian claims about morality are open to different theoretical analyses, including the analysis offered by the Greek moralists. We have no grounds for claiming that the moral outlook of Christianity introduces elements that cannot be understood within the theories of the Greek moralists.[115]

215. The Virtues

The major Greek moral systems recognize, broadly speaking, the same virtues and agree to a considerable extent about their content. Even the Stoics, who hold a sharply different

[114] '. . . the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, . . . sweeter far than honey . . . . By them also is your servant enlightened, and in keeping them there is great reward' (*Ps*. 19:9–11).

[115] Here I am trying to cast doubt on (e.g.) Sidgwick's over-emphasis on the juridical aspects of Christian morality, in *OHE* 110–11. This over-emphasis leads Sidgwick to treat Christianity as the primary historical source of what he calls a 'jural' conception of ethics (*ME* 2).

conception of the ultimate end from Aristotle's, defend the traditional virtues; what they require of the temperate person is recognizably connected with what Plato requires of the temperate person. Though the Stoics do not agree with the Aristotelian doctrine of the mean that allows the virtuous person to retain anger, sexual desire, hatred, and fear to an appropriate degree, they recognize an appropriate analogue to the moderated passions of the Aristotelian virtues; we reasonably expect the Stoic sage to be moved by the virtues to act in the ways in which Aristotle's virtuous person acts.

This broad agreement about the nature and content of the virtues implies some respect for the ordinary concerns of social life. The virtues are not intended to withdraw us from society; they are intended to develop traits that will seem useful and attractive (with qualifications) to ordinary people who have not accepted an Aristotelian or a Stoic conception of the final good. Admittedly, this general correspondence with ordinary aims and aspirations does not extend to every detail; an important part of ethical theory is the criticism of some ordinary aims and the conception of goodness and badness that underlies them. Still, it remains true that theorists expect ordinary people to admire an adherent of a moral theory, once they understand what he is really aiming at. Even Plato supposes that when ordinary people understand the philosopher, and are free of popular prejudices about him, they will admire rather than despise him.

This is not the only strand in Greek theories about the virtues, however. A different strand, with its origins in the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*, is more strongly other-worldly, regarding true virtues as ways of eliminating our concern for ordinary goods and aims. These virtues belong to the philosopher who tries to escape from the world, and ultimately from imprisonment in the body. If he succeeds in his aims, he does not even know the way to the market-place or to the civic centre (Plato, *Tht.* 173c6–e1). Though Aristotle does not connect this ideal of escape with psycho-physical dualism, he certainly seems to accept the ideal itself to a considerable degree; his approval of theoretical contemplation may easily seem to threaten his approval of the recognized moral virtues as aspects of the good. Whatever Plato and Aristotle themselves believe on this question, the anti-social and other-worldly tendency in their position is developed to an extreme degree in later Platonism; according to Plotinus, true virtue frees us from concerns that attach us to the body and to the material world, and turns us to the proper concerns of the soul.[116]

This 'extremist' side of Greek ethics seems to be close to the Christian position. Christians are told not to be disturbed if the world hates them, since they live by different standards and are guided by different aims. Since they are devoted to the life in Christ, they are unconcerned with the normal aims of social life. As Paul says, 'While we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord' (*2Cor.* 5:6). Our good cannot be achieved until after the resurrection; 'for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal' (*2Cor.* 4:18). Since the citizenship of Christians is in heaven (*Phil.* 3:20),[117] they may well be expected to withdraw from the concerns of ordinary life in society. From this point of view, the ascetic and monastic tendencies in early Christianity are not surprising.[118]

[116] For Plato's views see §61n57.

[117] The *politeuma* of Christians is the state in which they have their citizenship; cf. Philo, *Conf.* 78 (the wise are temporary dwellers on earth, whose *patris* is heaven).

[118] Kirk, *VG* 85–94, 174–234, discusses the growth of rigorist and monastic outlooks in Christianity.

Attitudes to marriage and slavery are designed to minimize disturbance and distraction so that the Christian can focus on what really matters.

If we concentrate on this side of the Christian ideal, Christianity seems to be hostile to morality. Even if Christians are not prone to injustice, intemperance, and cowardice, because they do not care about the temporal goods to be gained by these vices, they do not seem to have the contrasting virtues; for these seem to require some favourable attitude to the temporal goods that they safeguard. Naturally, Christians claim to have eliminated the vices that result from excessive attention to temporal goods; but apparently they ought to recognize that they advocate the elimination of the virtues as well.

This attitude to the recognized virtues suggests that the Christian way of life does not embody a moral outlook, but transcends the moral point of view altogether. It leaves behind the moral concern for other people's welfare in the present life. Ordinary moral rules and practices turn out either to depend on a misguided attachment to worldly goods or to serve as first steps on the path to detachment from the world. We might understand some of Jesus' injunctions in this light. When he tells us to give to those who ask and to turn the other cheek, we might understand these instructions as intended to convey the spirit of love for our neighbour as ourselves; in that case we might want to interpret them so that we do not give everything away thoughtlessly, and so that we do not encourage people to put up with injuries that ought to be prevented or punished. But if we understand these as instructions for detaching ourselves from worldly concerns, we might interpret them more literally; if giving to those who ask leaves us with nothing more to use for other people's material benefit, that does not matter if we are simply trying to get rid of such concerns.

This strongly ascetic attitude to ordinary morality may lead us to the life of the Desert Fathers. But since that is hardly a life to suit everyone, a more moderate version of the same detached attitude to ordinary morality might contrast the attitude of the Christian qua Christian with the attitude of the Christian qua human being and citizen. Perhaps the Christian is not concerned, qua Christian, with morality except for its purifying function in detaching us from worldly concerns. But since many Christians cannot pursue complete detachment, they can detach their Christian concerns from their concerns as citizens and members of society. This moderately other-worldly attitude distinguishes the Christian from the 'secular' aspects of life and does not reject the morality needed to maintain secular society, though it does not take it very seriously either. Christian detachment, according to the moderate view, does not drive us into the desert, but allows us to pursue spiritual detachment while we still retain the ordinary moral concerns of citizens to the right degree. This outlook might claim to render to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God (*Lk*. 20:20–6).

Either the extreme or the moderate version of Christian detachment implies some reserve towards the moral virtues; they cannot themselves be elements in the human good, even though they may help us towards it. This attitude of reserve agrees with the Platonist conception of the moral virtues as 'purgative', as first steps towards a way of life that no longer treats them as major parts of the good. Such reserve, however, does not fit the moralistic side of Christianity any more than it fits the moralistic side of Greek moral theories. Since the NT writers insist on love of one's neighbour as a necessary

result of, and even an essential element in, love of God, they do not endorse Christian detachment.[119]

Since love of one's neighbour as oneself includes the whole law, it also includes the different moral virtues; for these incorporate the requirements of properly-directed love of oneself and others.[120] Both OT and NT writers agree with Greek moralists in taking virtues to require the appropriate aims and motives, and not just the appropriate behaviour. While Christian faith and hope give a distinct reason for trying to act on the moral virtues, and a distinct basis for considering one's prospect of success, the virtues that they approve of include the cardinal virtues recognized by the Greek moralists.

This conclusion also serves to sum up our survey of Christian views about morality. We have found that, while Christian writers express controversial views about morality, these views do not require a moral theory outside the range of theories defended by the Greek moralists. We have therefore found some reason to believe that any moral philosophers who try to express Christian views within a Platonic, Aristotelian, or Stoic theory are not evidently wasting their time. Only closer examination will show whether this apparently reasonable aim of expressing Christian views within Greek moral theory is really reasonable. Definite views on each side of this question are defended by Aquinas, who describes the Christian virtues within an explicitly Aristotelian framework, and by Scotus, Ockham, and Luther, who take Christian doctrine to require the decisive rejection of an Aristotelian framework. All of these Christian moralists claim support for their incompatible views from Augustine. This is not wholly surprising, since we have noticed elements in Christianity that might be developed into a more radical critique of the moral outlook. We will see how Augustine develops some of these elements, but also maintains the moralistic side of Christianity.

[119] 'We love, because he first loved us. Those who say, ''I love God'', and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen cannot love God whom they have not seen' (*1Jn.* 4:19–20).

[120] On the relation between self-love and love of others see §416.

15

AUGUSTINE

216. The Rejection of Greek Ethics?

In the *City of God* Augustine claims that Christians and pagans form two societies identified by their different shared objects of love. As St Paul says, the citizenship of Christians is in heaven and not on earth.[1] In the city of God the love of God prevails, and in the earthly city the love of self prevails (*CD* xiv 13f, 28a).[2] The Christian community distinguishes itself from the pagan world by its different aims and goals. Since the difference of aims is sharp enough to constitute two distinct societies, the ethical outlook of one society might appear to be sharply opposed to the ethical outlook of the other.

Augustine shows both why we might take the two outlooks to be radically opposed and why we might reasonably suppose they can be reconciled. One clear and important strand in his thought presents a sharp antagonism between the Christian and the Greek outlook. But it would be one-sided to attend only to this strand and to ignore the views that place Augustine firmly in the Greek tradition.

Augustine's work influences mediaeval ethics in complex ways. One might divide mediaeval philosophers into 'Augustinians' and 'Aristotelians' and ascribe Platonism in metaphysics and epistemology and voluntarism in ethics to the Augustinians.[3] But this is not how all the mediaeval philosophers look at it. Aquinas, for instance, denies any conflict between Augustinian and Aristotelian views; he often argues that Augustine's views agree with Aquinas' Aristotelian position.[4] On the other side, Scotus quotes Augustine at crucial places to defend departures from Aquinas' Aristotelian position.[5]

Questions about the real or alleged opposition between Augustine and Aristotelian Scholasticism are not confined to mediaeval philosophy. They also affect disputes about the conflict between Christianity and Aristotelianism. The Reformers appeal freely to Augustine, to show that Aristotelian Scholasticism distorts the Christian position. The Jansenists appeal to Augustine for a similar purpose.[6] Some of the conflicts between the 'Augustinians' and

[1] *Phil.* 3:20. See §215.

[2] Quoted and discussed at §226 below. References to book and chapter alone refer to *CD* (including the letters that Welldon uses for sections within chapters).

[3] Some disputes about mediaeval 'Aristotelian' and 'Augustinian' views are summarized by Kent, *VW* 10–18.

[4] On Aquinas see §240. [5] On Scotus see §§365–6. [6] See §417.

the 'Aristotelians' involve theological issues outside moral philosophy; but some of them involve issues in moral philosophy and moral psychology as well. If these later Augustinian views are right, Aquinas distorts Augustine by selective exposition.

It is not surprising that Augustine can be quoted, quite fairly, on both sides of the issues in dispute between Aquinas and his contemporaries and successors; for his own position on these issues is not straightforward. It is easy to discover tensions, even apparent conflicts, in Augustine's position. Do they simply reflect his haste, or his carelessness, or his tendency to conduct controversy in rather extreme and unqualified terms? Or do they reflect a deeper conflict in his position? If they reflect a deeper conflict, is this a conflict in Augustine's attempt to explain the Christian position, or a conflict in the position itself?

217. The Importance of the Will: Rejection of Psychological Dualism

An apparently distinctive feature of Augustine's moral psychology, in comparison with the moral psychology underlying Greek ethics, is his conception of the will and its role in mental activity. The general tendency of Greek moral philosophy is rationalist and eudaemonist; the Greek moralists understand action as the product of rational desire aiming at one's own happiness, and influenced in various ways by non-rational passions. Though Platonic, Aristotelian, and Stoic theories differ about the nature of the passions and their relation to reason, they broadly agree about the character of rational desire and its relation to action. Aristotle expresses this point of agreement in saying that my rational part, pursuing my happiness, is myself (*EN* 1168b34–1169a3). Augustine's emphasis on the primacy of the will may appear to mark a point of disagreement with this aspect of Greek rationalist moral psychology.

Augustine's conception of the will, like many of his philosophical views, is influenced by theological controversy and by his understanding of the Scriptures. He agrees with Sirach's claim that God left human beings 'in the power of their own choice'.[7] But the paradigm of human free choice does not seem to fit Greek rationalism. For apparently God clearly offered the greater good to Adam and Eve, and they deliberately rejected it for a known lesser good. It seems, then, that they must have freely chosen to reject the greater good. We might give the same account of sin in ordinary people under the law or (sometimes) under grace. St Paul suggests that we recognize what the law requires of us and recognize that it is good, but reject it none the less. Since rejection belongs to the will, the will seems to reject the apparently greater good.

Adam and Eve, therefore, seem to suggest a strongly voluntarist conception of the will, so that it is free to act against the greater good presented by reason. But a different conception seems to underlie some of St Paul's views about the sources of sin. He appeals to the opposition between flesh and spirit; and part of Augustine's conception of the will results from his efforts to understand this opposition. St Paul seems to say that the flesh is the source of sin, and that it coerces us into sinful behaviour despite the reluctance of our spiritual side.

[7] *Sir.* 15:13. See §213n108.

The flesh seems to be connected with the body and with non-rational desires and passions, whereas the spirit seems to be the source of rational choice.

This dualistic view seems especially clear in Paul's description of the impotence of human efforts to follow the moral law; though we want (in some way) to follow the law, we cannot.[8] Here our will seems to belong to the spirit and our inability to follow it seems to come from the flesh. A quasi-Platonic account of Paul's division takes the flesh and the spirit to correspond to the rational and the non-rational parts of the soul, and explains the conflict between flesh and spirit as a trial of strength between the two parts. The side that is overcome is compelled, not persuaded, so that we do not act freely and responsibly.[9] According to this view, the voluntarist account of Adam and Eve gives us the wrong account of sin; the struggle between flesh and spirit leaves no room for free choice by the will.

This interpretation of St Paul relies on a quasi-Platonic account of choice. But Augustine is wary of any such account, since it may appear to support Manichean dualism.[10] As part of their general view of the universe as the scene of a struggle between good and evil, the Manicheans treat will and motivation as a trial of strength between opposing forces. They treat the conflict between rational and irrational motives as a conflict between forces that recognize no common considerations and that are not themselves subject to the choice of the will. Augustine acknowledges that Platonists reject Manichean cosmic dualism, but, in his view, they do not entirely free themselves from Manichean error; for they believe that the body is the source of sin by being the source of non-rational desire (*CD* xiv 5b). Augustine believes that the Platonist view, like the Manichean view, makes us subject to mental influences and tendencies that move us to action independently of our will.

Augustine rejects the quasi-Platonic and Manichean view, because it introduces two antagonistic wills.[11] This view eliminates the single deliberating agent, and substitutes a conflict whose outcome is independent of our choice. Though Augustine also sometimes recognizes two 'wills', he does not have two Manichean wills in mind. He simply refers to two tendencies of the will; he refuses to take the extra step of allowing that these are the expressions of two opposed minds or (we might say) personalities that simply conflict, without having anything to say to each other. He insists that 'it was I who was willing and I who was unwilling; I was I' (*Conf.* viii 22).[12]

Augustine has a good reason to attack the quasi-Platonic and Manichean view, since it is not an implausible interpretation of St Paul's view of the nature of sin. If such an interpretation of Paul were correct, then, Augustine believes, the Pauline view would

[8] 'I do not do what I will to do (non enim quod volo, hoc ago), but what I do is what I hate. If, however, what I do is what I do not will to do, I consent (consentio) to the law, since it is good. As it is, however, it is not I who do that action, but the sin that lives in me. For I know that nothing good lives in me—that is to say in my flesh. For willing (velle) is available (adiacet) to me, but I do not find a way to carry out the good. [In the previous sentence Vulg. departs a little from the best Greek text.] For what I do is not the good that I will, but what I do is the evil that I will not to do. But if I do what I will not to do, it is not I who carry it out, but the sin that lives in me' (*Rm.* 7:15–20 Vulg.). Paul presents the same picture in *Gal.* 5:17, quoted below at n76.

[9] This is not a genuinely Platonic account, for reasons discussed in §49.

[10] On dualism and Christianity see §212.

[11] 'Let them perish from before your face, O God, just as all empty talkers and misleaders of the mind perish, those who, when they notice two wills in deliberation, have asserted that they are two natures of two minds, one good and the other bad' (*Conf.* viii 22).

[12] . . . ego eram qui volebam, ego qui nolebam. Ego ego eram.

completely undermine unified agency, rational control, and responsibility for sin. He needs to show that the Pauline view does not force these Manichean conclusions on us.

He seeks, therefore, an account of will, passion, and action that avoids both the radical voluntarist account of Adam and Eve and the radical dualism that exploits the Pauline division between flesh and spirit. Radical voluntarism does not seem to explain the influence of non-rational motivation creating the conflict between flesh and spirit. But recognition of that conflict should not, in his view, dissolve the will into conflicting forces that make free choice and responsibility unintelligible. His discussions of the will try to satisfy these criteria for an adequate account.

218. The Will and Other Mental States

As the attack on Manichean dualism suggests, Augustine believes that a unified agent needs a single will. He takes a single will to be necessary not only for unified agency, but also for a unified self, as cognitive subject as well as agent. The will orders and directs not only our desires, but also our perceptions, memories, and beliefs, in the direction it has chosen. Since the will has this dominant role, its primary affection or 'love' directs the agent's desire.[13]

Augustine's conception of will is derived from Aristotle's conception of *boulêsis*, taken over by the Stoics; the Greek term is rendered in Cicero and Seneca by 'voluntas'.[14] According to the Aristotelian and Stoic conception, *boulêsis* is essentially rational desire, focussed on the final good. But we might suppose that this rationalist conception of *boulêsis* conflicts with Augustine's conception of the will as the source of the unity of agency.

To overcome Manichean psychological dualism, we might claim on Augustine's behalf that the same will is involved in the choices of the flesh and of the spirit, in so far as we 'identify' ourselves with each sort of choice.[15] I identify myself with a choice in so far as I acknowledge it as my own, and not simply as the result of some force distinct from me. Drug addicts who struggle against their addiction are unwilling addicts who do not identify themselves with their desires for the drugs, whereas 'willing addicts' identify themselves with the desires, whether or not they can do anything about them. The mark of identification, we might suppose, is the second-order desire that endorses the first-order desire; if I want to want the drug, I identify myself with the want, and my want to want it constitutes my will. But if I am to identify myself with a choice I must have some distinct conception of the self. This conception cannot necessarily include the choice I identify myself with; if it did, no act of identification would be possible. Nor can it necessarily exclude that choice, for the same reason. But, according to Augustine, I can identify myself either with the aims of rational

[13] 'Just as the will connects the sense to the body <being perceived>, so also it connects the memory to the sense, and the eye of the thinker's mind to the memory. But what combines and connects these things itself also disconnects and separates them—and this is the will' (*Trin.* xi 15; cf. ix 12). 'On the Holy Spirit, I have shown nothing that appears similar to it in this likeness [aenigmate; cf. *1Cor.* 13:12] except for our will, or love or liking, which is a stronger form of will, since our will, which is present in us by nature, has different affections corresponding to how different things are present to it or confront it to which we are attracted or from which we are repelled' (*Trin.* xv 41).

[14] On Cicero's and Seneca's treatment of voluntas see Gauthier, *EN* i.1, 256–8. He rather unjustly accuses them of confusion, but correctly remarks that they do not depart from the Stoic analysis of action. Cf. §240n20 (on Aquinas).

[15] This line of argument is explored by Frankfurt, 'Freedom', 16–19; Taylor, 'Agency' 15–18; Nagel, *VN* 118, 122–3.

desire or with those of non-rational desire; hence my conception of myself as what chooses and identifies itself with something cannot be a conception of myself either as necessarily guided by rational desire or as necessarily guided by non-rational desire.

If, then, my conception of myself is a conception of something other than rational and non-rational desire, my freedom to choose does not appear to be a property either of rational or of non-rational desire. If we grant that we can identify ourselves with either rational or non-rational desire, we must have some capacity to choose between them, and this capacity cannot be either inherently rational or inherently non-rational. If we did not allow that we have this capacity to choose, we would have to say that the predominance of reason or passion depends simply on whether reason or passion is stronger. In that case I would be entirely passive, and would not be making a choice that identifies myself with one choice or the other. I seem to choose how to act and what sort of person to be, by my acts of identification and endorsement, and this 'I' who chooses is not simply the intersection of psychic forces.

These reflexions on Augustine's claims about the will suggest a conception of will (voluntas) and of freewill (liberum arbitirum) that fits neither the Aristotelian nor the Stoic view of choice.[16] Aristotle does not recognize the self and its power of choice (arbitrium) as a further thing besides the rational and the non-rational parts. The Stoics give assent a more central role than Aristotle gives it, but in doing this they do not abandon rationalism; on the contrary, they assume that we assent in the light of our conception of the good, and so they reaffirm Socratic rationalism even more strongly. Augustine, however, appears to recognize the self that chooses as something apart from rational desire and passion, and therefore identifies the self especially with the will. We might take him to deny that we all desire the good and that we go in the right or the wrong direction by having true or false beliefs about what promotes our good. Simply recognizing the greater good is insufficient (he may suppose) for acting on it; we must also choose it, and this choice depends on an act of the will that is not bound to choose the apparently greater good. Our consciousness of our will is inseparable from consciousness of ourselves, and we attribute an action to ourselves precisely in so far as we attribute it to our will.[17]

On these grounds, we might plausibly attribute to Augustine a belief in the will as expressed in acts of identification through second-order desire and endorsement. We act freely in so far as we guide our actions by these acts of identification and are not moved by

[16] I use 'freewill' (one word) to render 'liberum arbitrium'. On arbitrium see §235n3.

[17] 'For there is nothing that I am aware of so securely and intimately as that I have a will and that by it I am moved towards enjoying something. For I cannot at all find anything to call my own if the will, by which I want and do not want, is not mine. And so to whom must it be attributed, if I do something evil through the will, if not to myself? For since the good God made me, and I do nothing good except through the will, it is clear enough that it was given to me for this purpose rather <than for doing evil>. For unless the movement by which the will is turned in this or that direction were voluntary and placed in our power, a human being would neither be praiseworthy when he turns the hinge of the will towards higher things, nor blameworthy when he turns it towards lower things' (*Lib. Arb.* iii 3). 'And I was making an effort to grasp what I was being told, that the free judgment of the will is the cause of our bad actions. . . . What was raising me towards your light was the fact that I knew that I had a will as well as I knew that I was alive. And so, when I wanted or did not want something, I was most certain that it was no one other than myself who wanted or did not want, and I was recognizing more and more that that was where the cause of my sin lay. On the other hand, I saw that what I did against my will was something that happened to me rather than something I did . . .' (*Conf.* vii 5).

desires that we refuse to endorse. If the second-order acts of identification are at a higher order than rational and non-rational desires and do not necessarily endorse either sort of desire, they seem to be neither rational nor non-rational. This aspect of Augustine inspires mediaeval voluntarists. They believe they have Augustinian grounds for denying that we are necessarily moved by our beliefs about the greater good and by the rational desire that aims at this greater good.

If Augustine holds a voluntarist conception of the will, he faces further questions. How are we to understand the acts of self-identification? If they are simply second-order desires, we might wonder why the mere fact of being second-order should ensure identification of oneself with the action. If I am simply aware of a first-order desire, without any further desire, I am aware that I have this desire, and in this sense I identify the desire as mine. Why should we need anything more than self-awareness and self-ascription of desire?

We might protest that self-identification requires more than the mere awareness of a desire as mine. I identify myself with a desire—we might say—if I acknowledge it as authentically mine, so that it proceeds from my basic values and aims rather than from coercion by some alien force. If I repudiate a desire that I am aware of, I treat it as alien to myself. Second-order desire marks endorsement, and second-order aversion marks repudiation.

But if this is our reason for invoking second-order attitudes, they do not seem to do the work they are intended for. If I can regard some of my first-order desires as alien and unwelcome, why can I not take the same view of some of my desires of a higher order? It is not clear how a desire avoids being perverse and alien simply by being higher-order. One might answer that the mere fact of being higher-order is not the crucial fact about the desire that expresses my identification of myself with an action. Perhaps I identify myself with an action or a desire in so far as I recognize it as expressing my basic values; for this purpose my basic values reflect my rational choices about my life as a whole rather than urges—either transitory or persistent—that conflict with these choices. According to this view, the will that expresses my identification of myself with a desire is an essentially rational will that results from rational reflexion on my particular aims and desires in relation to my other concerns.

But this conclusion about the essentially rational character of the will seems to bring us back to the Aristotelian or Stoic view that Augustine appears to reject. Since we seem to be capable of endorsing either rational or non-rational desires, and therefore capable of identifying ourselves with either type of desire, the will that endorses them apparently cannot be either rational or non-rational. Our inquiry into the conditions for identification of oneself with one's desires seems to have led us to inconsistent results, since it seems to imply that the will is both essentially rational and not essentially rational.

We can resolve this inconsistency if we can show either (1) that the relevant sort of identification is possible even if the will is neither rational nor non-rational, or (2) that an essentially rational will can endorse non-rational desires. The first is the voluntarist solution, and the second the intellectualist. If we look a little more closely at Augustine, we may be able to see whether he favours one or the other of these solutions, or he remains undecided between them, or the texts do not allow us to settle the question.[18]

[18] On the use of 'voluntarism' and 'intellectualism' see §269.

219. Will and Passion: Stoics v. Peripatetics

To see whether Augustine accepts a voluntarist or an intellectualist conception of the will, it may be useful to consider his views about the relation between the will and the passions. Since he defends his claims about the will by comparison and contrast with Peripatetic and Stoic views, we can perhaps see where he thinks he improves on these views by relying on his conception of the will. In particular we may hope to see how he understands the relation between the will and practical reason aiming at the good. For Aristotle claims that the passions, in contrast to the will, are not focussed on the overall good. The Stoics disagree with him, in so far as they deny the existence of any desires in rational agents that are not focussed on overall good; the passions are misguided rational desires. If Augustine chooses the Aristotelian or the Stoic side in this dispute, he agrees that the will is focussed on the overall good. But if he rejects both sides, he may also reject the point they agree on, about the necessary connexion between the will and the good.

He distinguishes the Platonic and Aristotelian view, recognizing the passions as a distinct source of non-rational motivation still present in a virtuous person, from the Stoic view, which denies that the sage is subject to passions.[19] He neither completely endorses nor completely rejects either of these views, as he understands them.[20] But he rejects the Stoics' formulation of their position; for they represent it as an alternative to the Peripatetic position, whereas in fact, according to Augustine, it is simply the Peripatetic position expressed in different words.

The Stoics recognize that there are non-rational, involuntary appearances, but insist that it is up to us to be moved or unmoved by them.[21] In their view, the involuntary appearance is not the passion itself; for a genuine passion requires assent. They agree with Aristotle in believing that a passion is sufficient for action; but since, in their view, action requires assent, a passion must include assent. Since assent to an action treats it as being best all things considered, passions must include the belief that their object is best all things considered, and so, contrary to Aristotle, they cannot be independent of such a belief.

According to Augustine, this is a purely verbal difference between the Stoics and the Aristotelians. The Stoics recognize that we are subject to non-rational appearances and movements that we cannot control on a particular occasion; but these are precisely the sorts of movements that the Peripatetics identify with passions; and so the Stoics agree

[19] 'There are two views held by philosophers about these movements of the mind that the Greeks call *pathê*. Some Latin writers call them "disturbances", as Cicero does; some call them "affections" or "affects"; others call them "passions", as Apuleius does, following the Greek more closely. Some philosophers say that these disturbances or affections or passions come upon even the sage, but are controlled and subjected to reason, so that the supremacy of the mind imposes laws on them in some way, by which they are kept to the necessary limit. This is the opinion of the Platonists and Aristotelians . . . But others, such as the Stoics, do not agree that passions of this sort come upon the sage at all' (*CD* ix 4a). See also viii 17a.

[20] On Augustine's treatment of the passions see Kent, *VW* 206–12; Sorabji, *EPM* 378–84; Colish, *ST* ii 207–37; Knuuttila, *EAMP* 152–72.

[21] 'The Stoics' view was that as far as appearances of the mind, which they call phantasiai, are concerned, it is not in our power whether or when they will occur to the mind . . . but it does not follow that a belief that there is something bad will arise in the mind, or that the mind will accept (adprobare) them and consent (consentiri) to them' (*CD* ix 4f). Augustine uses 'adprobare' and 'consentiri' to represent the Stoic 'assent', *sunkatathesis*. Cf. *Acad*. i 11; iii 26; iii 30–6; Gauthier, *EN* i 259–60 (who alleges that Cicero and Augustine misunderstand the Stoics).

with the Peripatetics in recognizing the existence of such states.[22] Augustine illustrates his point by quoting a passage from Epictetus, with alterations that convey his evaluation of the Stoic position. According to Epictetus, the appearances 'run ahead' of reason and assent; the fool consents to the passions and the sage refuses assent.[23] But in Augustine's version of the passage, the passions run ahead of reason by declaring that some state of affairs is good or bad. By making the Stoics recognize passions prior to assent, Augustine makes it clear that he takes Stoic appearances to be only verbally different from Aristotelian passions.[24]

This account of the Stoic position is disputable. The Stoics believe that an appearance without assent is not a genuine passion, because, we are responsible—in their view, as in Aristotle's—for acting on passion and we can be responsible—in the Stoic view—only for what depends on assent. They might fairly point out that Aristotle has no clear account of why we are responsible for acting on passions, and they argue that he cannot give a clear account without endorsing the Stoic view of the passions.[25] This dispute about the nature of the passions is apparently not a verbal dispute. It is a dispute about the states that are sufficient for voluntary and responsible action.

220. Augustine's Objections to the Stoics on Passions

If Augustine claims that the Stoic position differs only verbally from the Peripatetic, he should not say that the Peripatetics are right in their attitude to the passions and that the Stoics are wrong; if the difference is purely verbal, each position is substantively either right or wrong on all the same issues. Surprisingly, however, he criticizes the Stoics for errors that he does not attribute to the Peripatetics.

Augustine argues that a Christian should not simply condemn someone for being angry or distressed or afraid, but should first ask why they have these passions, recognizing that it may be right to have them (*CD* ix 5a). The Stoics are wrong to reject 'pity' or 'compassion'

[22] 'It seems to me, therefore, that in this question also, about whether the passions of the mind come to the sage, or he is wholly removed from them, the Stoics raise a controversy about words rather than things' (*CD* ix 4c).

[23] The passage from Epictetus is a passage preserved by Aulus Gellius. 'Aulus Gellius says that he read in this book that the Stoics' view was that as far as appearances of the mind, which they call phantasiai, are concerned, it is not in our power whether or when they will occur to the mind. When they come from alarming and formidable things, they necessarily move the mind even of the sage, so that for a little he trembles with fear, or is depressed by sadness, these passions running ahead of the work of reason and self-control; but it does not follow that a belief that there is something bad will arise in the mind, or that the mind will accept (adprobare) them and consent (consentiri) to them. For this consent is, they believe, in our power, and there is this difference between the mind of the sage and that of the fool, that the fool's mind yields to these same passions and fits the consent of the intellect to them, whereas the mind of the sage, though it necessarily undergoes them, yet retains with unshaken intellect a true and steady belief (sententia) about the things that it ought rationally to seek or avoid' (*CD* ix 4f–g). The passage from Gellius is quoted at §191n102.

[24] 'If this is true, there is no difference, or next to none, between the opinion of the Stoics and that of the other philosophers regarding passions and disturbances of the mind; for both sides defend the mind and reason of the sage from mastery by passions. And perhaps the Stoics say that they do not come upon the sage because the passions in no way cloud by any error or undermine by any lapse the wisdom that makes him a sage. But they occur in the mind of the sage, without damage to his wisdom; they occur because of those things that they call advantages or disadvantages, though they refuse to call them goods or evils. For certainly if that philosopher had thought nothing of those things which he thought he was about to lose by shipwreck—life and bodily safety—he would not have been so terrified by his danger as to be betrayed by the witness of his pallor' (ix 4h–i).

[25] On passion and responsibility cf. §100 (Aristotle), §169 (Stoics).

(misericordia) as a vice.[26] Seneca recognizes 'clemency' as a virtue (*Clem*. i 3), but wrongly separates it from pity, taking pity to include the wrong sort of assent. Since Augustine rejects the Stoic criticism of pity, he believes that clemency, as Seneca understands it, falls short of the affective attitude that is morally required and praiseworthy in some circumstances.

But this criticism does not seem to affect the Stoics' real view, as Augustine understands it. For he also claims that, according to Epictetus, a passion such as pity is acceptable, provided that it does not interfere with the agent's virtue (*CD* ix 5c). In the Stoic view, this state that Augustine calls a passion is really just an appearance preliminary to a passion. When Seneca praises clemency and rejects the passion of pity, he means that our appearance ought not to move us to thoughtless assent, which is included in the passion of pity. When Augustine claims to disagree with Seneca, he does not really disagree with Seneca's claim; for he does not claim that a passion moves us to action without assent.[27]

It is puzzling, then, that he criticizes the Stoics' attempt to eliminate passions. According to Augustine, the evils of human life are proper matters for sorrow, and someone who professes to consider them without sorrow (dolor) is all the more miserable to the extent that he has even lost human feeling when he thinks he has reached happiness (xix 7e). Augustine seems to have the Stoics in mind when he criticizes those who forbid sorrow at the death of a friend; since this sorrow is the natural result of genuine friendship, people who forbid this sorrow to us implicitly forbid friendship to us as well (xix 8c).

These objections are puzzling because they do not seem to affect the Stoic position, as Augustine expounds it. The Stoics recognize non-rational appearances preliminary to passions; a sage has such states, which Augustine identifies with passions. In that case, the Stoics do not eliminate the states that Augustine describes as sorrow at the evils of life or the death of a friend. Augustine could fairly object to the Stoics' view if he could show that we ought not only to have these appearances but also to act on them without assent; but he makes no such claim.

We might suppose that Augustine rejects the Stoic belief in the sage's freedom from passion, because he claims that passions are inevitable in our present life. Passions did not belong to human life before the Fall (xiv 10), and will not belong to the blessed in the afterlife (xiv 9l), but they are a permanent feature of our present condition. But he implies that he does not disagree substantively with the Stoics on this point; for he repeats that when they advocate the elimination of passions, they are not disagreeing substantively with those who take the elimination of passions to be impossible or undesirable (xiv 8a–b). Freedom from passion, as the Stoics conceive it, does not imply freedom from the appearances that are preliminary to passions; but since these appearances count, for Augustine, as passions, the Stoics agree in substance with his belief in the inevitability of passions.

Augustine clarifies his dispute with the Stoics by distinguishing two ways of being without passions. He explains that 'freedom from passion' might refer (a) to a life without passions 'that occur contrary to reason and disturb the mind', or (b) to a life in which passions cannot occur to the mind at all (xiv 9l–m). Though the first sort of freedom from passions would

[26] See Seneca, *Clem*. ii 5; Cicero, *TD* iii 20–1.

[27] See also Aquinas, *ST* 1–2 q59 a1 obj3, ad3, discussing this chapter.

be desirable, we cannot realistically expect it in our present sinful condition. The second sort would be undesirable; to live without fear and sorrow would be to lack the appropriate reactions to the circumstances of human life.

In rejecting the second sort of freedom from passion Augustine does not disagree in principle with the Stoics. For he does not argue that we should act on the sort of state that the Stoics call a passion—a rash and foolish assent based on a non-rational appearance. Instead he points out that the non-rational appearance is appropriate and useful if it is directed to the right objects and we use it to guide us in the right direction. Since the Stoics agree that appearances can point out preferred and non-preferred indifferents to us, they have no reason to reject Augustine's claim about the value of appearances.

221. Will and Passions

This defence of Augustine's claim that the Stoics disagree only verbally with him depends on his identifying a passion with a non-rational state that precedes any assent. But he does not always seem to take this view of the passions. Sometimes he seems to see a much closer connexion between the passions and the will, suggesting that the character of the will determines whether our passions are good or bad; when the will is good, the passions themselves are expressions of the good will.[28]

Augustine believes that virtues include rightly-ordered passions; here he agrees with the Peripatetics, as Aquinas sees.[29] If we identify the passion with the non-rational appearance, the Stoics have no reason to disagree with this claim. But Augustine goes further, and claims that the passions are not only subject to the will, but actually are different expressions of the will;[30] the various tendencies of the will constitute our different affections.[31]

His argument seems to require an unexpected point of agreement with the Stoics; he seems to assume that we have a genuine passion only if we have assented to an appearance. Earlier, however, he tries to reconcile the Stoic with the Peripatetic view and his own view by claiming that 'pre-passions' (as the Stoics understand them) are really passions;[32] this claim is true only if passions precede assent.

[28] 'The character of a human being's will makes a difference. For if the will is misdirected, then because of this someone will have misdirected movements [i.e. passions]; if, on the other hand, the will is correct, these movements will be not only not blameworthy, but actually praiseworthy. For the will is in all of them; indeed all of them are nothing other than forms of will (voluntates). For what are appetite and joy except the will in consenting to the things we want? And what are fear and sadness except the will dissenting from the things we do not want? . . . And in general, as a human being's will is attracted or repelled, in accordance with the variety of things that are pursued or avoided, it is changed and turned into one or another sort of affection' (*CD* xiv 6a). [The citizens of the city of God still have affections.] 'And because their love is correct, they have all these affections correctly directed' (xiv 9a).

[29] *ST* 1–2 q59 a2 sc, citing *CD* xiv 6a.

[30] He cannot say that every tendency of the will in every rational agent is an affection; for he recognizes that God (ix 5d), Adam and Eve before the Fall (xiv 10), and the blessed in the afterlife (xiv 9) have wills without passions. The suggestion that different states of the will invariably involve different passions is an over-statement.

[31] Augustine uses 'adfectio' here for 'passion', not 'passio' or 'perturbatio'; he would surely not defend his claim if either of these other two terms were substituted. Scotus cites this passage in support of his claim that virtues are in the will as opposed to the passions, contrary to Aquinas' view that the passions are the subject of the moral virtues (*3Sent.* d33 q1 sch. = OO vii 2, 698 §4 = W 324). Cf. §372. The unclarity in Augustine's position explains how he can be cited in support of these two opposed positions about virtue and passion.

[32] On appearances and 'pre-passions' cf. §167.

In claiming that the will is present in all the passions Augustine seems to agree that passions require assent. This is the Stoic view. Augustine, then, seems to accept the Stoic view, as the Stoics themselves formulate it; he seems to reject the Peripatetic view, maintained by him elsewhere, that passion precedes assent.

How important is this conflict in Augustine's presentation of his view of the passions in relation to the Stoic view? We might suppose that his acceptance of the Stoic position is an over-statement. Perhaps he fails to distinguish two claims about the role of passions in action: (1) Passions move us to action because they include assent. (2) They move us to action in so far as we assent to them. The first claim connects passion and motivation by making assent internal to a passion; the second explains it by making assent a further condition for action. 'Move us to action' has to be understood differently in the two claims. The first claim explains how a passion can be (in Stoic terms) a principal cause, in so far as it includes assent. The second claim makes it only a contributing or 'antecedent' cause, in so far as it still requires a further act of consent by the will.

Does it matter which of these two views we take? We might, as Augustine suggests, make many of the same claims within either view; but it is important to be clear about which view we prefer, if we are to say what is good or bad about the passions. Most of what Augustine has to say, especially in his account of the inevitability and appropriateness of passions in this life, fits better with the second view. The attitudes that he takes to be inevitable and appropriate seem to be more like appearances than like assents (as the Stoics understand them). And so we probably ought to take the second view of the passions to be his considered view. Aquinas decides that this is the right way to understand the relation of will to passion; he reaches this conclusion by attention to Aristotle rather than to Augustine, but he might reasonably defend it by appeal to Augustine.[33]

222. Platonists and Peripatetics on Passions

These remarks about the Stoics suggest that Augustine agrees with the Stoic view that motivation by passion requires assent. He generally seems to identify passions with the appearances that the Stoics regard as preliminary to passions; and this is why he believes that the Stoics really believe in passions, as Plato and Aristotle understand them. This description of the issues implies that Augustine takes the Platonic and Peripatetic view to identify passions with something prior to assent (as the Stoics understand it).

He now faces a question: does the Platonic and Aristotelian view hold that passions can move us to action without assent?[34] Though it is reasonable to attribute this view to both Plato and Aristotle, it seems to raise serious difficulties about responsibility for acting on passions. For if passions can move us without assent, they can apparently compel us to act irrespective of our rational judgment about whether or not we ought to act in this way. If they can compel us, how can we be responsible for acting on them? If we are not responsible for acting on them, it seems to be a purely natural fact, not subject to our will, that we act on passions. This conclusion agrees with the quasi-Platonist interpretation of St Paul on flesh and spirit.[35]

[33] See §246. [34] See §100. [35] See n9 above; §212.

Augustine rejects this interpretation of Paul. He believes it supports a Manichean conception of sin as compulsion by an alien force. In reply to the Manicheans he insists that sin presupposes will and freedom.[36] The Manicheans misunderstand Paul's claims about flesh and spirit. They are wrong because Paul's remarks about flesh do not mean that the body is the source of all sin; 'it is not corruptible flesh that made the soul sinful, but the sinful soul that made the flesh corruptible' (*CD* xiv 3d).[37] We are guided by the 'flesh' in so far as we are guided by a merely human outlook in which our will is turned in the wrong direction. Hence Paul even says that he is carnal despite having received the grace of God, because he partly takes the point of view of the flesh, not the point of view of the Spirit.[38] But when we are guided by the flesh, we do not lose our freedom to reject its guidance.[39]

The source of our freedom is the will, which determines our action by its judgment about what promotes our happiness. Augustine assumes that we always seek happiness. Sin consists in falsehood (mendacium) because it results from the false belief that something that really will not contribute to happiness will contribute to it.[40] We sin not because we are compelled independently of our rational judgment and assent, but because we assent mistakenly to a course of action that does not contribute to our happiness.

Though Augustine's account of the place of the passions in sin relies on a Peripatetic rather than a Stoic conception of the passions, it does not abandon the Stoic view that we act on passions only by assenting. It differs from the Stoic view only in making the assent external to the passion. Augustine rejects the Stoic view of the passions, but retains the Stoic view that we act freely and responsibly in so far as we assent. Our assent depends on our belief about what promotes our happiness, and hence it presupposes the basic desire for happiness. Though Augustine insists on the potentially misleading influence of the passions, he does not suggest that they mislead us by moving us independently of the will. When we examine his critique of Stoic views on the passions, and the alternative that he offers, we find that he departs from the Stoics far less than we might have supposed from his initial objections.

[36] 'Therefore sin is the will to retain or to acquire what justice forbids, and from which one is free to abstain. But if one is not free, it is not will' (*De duab. anim.* 15; cf. *Retrac.* i 15.4). 'And therefore whatever these souls do, if they do it by nature and not by will, that is to say, if they lack the free movement of the mind both towards doing and towards not doing; if, finally no capacity of abstaining from their action is allowed them, we cannot accept sin in them' (*De duab. anim.* 17). Augustine's views are discussed by Wetzel, *ALV* 90–5.

[37] This passage refers in the first instance to original sin, but more generally to the relation of the will to non-rational appetites.

[38] *Ep. Pel.* i 17. Cf. *Retrac.* i 23.1; *Iul.* iii 62.

[39] 'But one must take care not to suppose that in these words the free arbitration of the will (liberum voluntatis arbitrium) is taken away from us . . . For then he is overcome by sin, while he tries to live justly by his own power, without the help of the liberating grace of God. But he has it in his freewill to believe in the liberator and to accept grace' (*Prop. Rm.* 44). As Augustine explains in *Retrac.* i 23.1, he changes his view about the exegesis of this passage in *Rm.* 7 (cf. §208n75). In *Prop.* (and in *Lib. Arb.* ii 51) he takes it to apply to someone who is not yet under grace. In his later work he takes it to apply also to someone under grace; see *Iul.* ii 13; iii 62. But he does not abandon his view about the presence of freewill at both stages. In *Lib. Arb.* iii 53 Augustine argues that even if we cannot avoid particular actions that are prompted by passion despite our better judgment, we are none the less responsible for failure to seek the help of God to overcome these passions. See §233 below.

[40] 'Sin does not come about except by that will by which we will that it may go well for us or will that it may not go badly for us. Hence there is falsehood in the fact that, when we act so that it may go well for us, this results in it going badly for us, or when we act so that it may be better for us, this results in its going worse for us' (*CD* xiv 4c).

223. The Primacy of the Will

These claims introduce Augustine's eudaemonism, and apply it to the understanding of sin. In his view, the will is not free to pursue something other than happiness, and the source of error and sin is a false belief about the sources of happiness. These claims are Stoic and Socratic. In rejecting the unwelcome form of dualism that he attributes to the Platonists, Augustine accepts the intellectualist side of the Stoic account of motivation. Hence he concludes that the will, rather than any external influence or internal force, is the cause of the mind's being subject to sin.[41]

This role of the will explains our susceptibility to sin in the different conditions of our passions. Augustine distinguishes four conditions of humanity: before the law, under the law, under grace, and in peace (*Prop. Rm.* 13–18). Adam was not influenced by his passions, since he had no passions. He was free not to sin, and his sin resulted simply from his will, because he chose to exercise his freedom badly.[42] His nature as a created being did not make his fall inevitable. We are worse off than Adam was, because we have perverse passions and we often give way to them. We therefore have less freewill than Adam had.[43] Still, we are not compelled to sin independently of our will and our rational judgment. In our condition after the fall of Adam and under the law, we are not free from sin, but we are capable of refusing consent to sinful passions, even though we do not always resist them successfully.[44] When we are under grace, we are no longer subject to sin in the same way; we have not yet lost the desires that lead us towards sin, but grace helps us not to be overcome by them.[45]

What does Augustine mean in suggesting that when we are under law, and before we are under grace, we are overcome by sin? He refers, as he often does, to St Paul's remark that sin causes me to do the evil that I do not want to do.[46] Does he claim, then, on Paul's behalf, that our sin is not the product of our freewill, but simply the inevitable result of our corrupt desires? He makes it clear that this is not what he means. Sin consists in the consent by the will; if we were compelled by misguided passions independent of our will, the result of this compulsion would not be sin. Even under law, therefore, only erroneous consent,

[41] 'Nothing else makes the mind a companion of appetite than its own will and freewill' (*Lib. Arb.* i 21). '[It is agreed that] nothing makes the mind a slave to lust except the mind's own will' (iii 2).

[42] 'A good will, then, is the work of God, since man was made by God with a good will. On the other hand, the first bad <act of> will, since it preceded all evil works in man, was a declining towards his own works from the work of God, rather than any <positive> work. And that is why someone's works are bad: it is because they are according to oneself, and not according to God' (*CD* xiv 11c). Cf. xiii 14b; xii 8a.

[43] 'Freewill was perfectly present in the first man, but in us before grace there is no freewill so that we do not sin, but only so that we are unwilling to sin' (*Prop. Rm.* 13–18). '[God does this] so that the heavenly city, in exile on earth, may learn not to be confident in the freedom of its own judgment, but may hope to call on the name of the Lord God. For the will in <its> nature was made good by the good God, but it was made changeable by the unchangeable God, since it was made from nothing. And so the will can turn from good to do evil, which comes about by free judgment, and can turn from evil to do good, which does not come about without divine help. By this free judgment of the will, then, as the human race advanced and grew, a mixture and a sort of combination of the two cities came about as a result of association in wickedness' (*CD* xv 21f–22a).

[44] 'Under the law, we fight, but we are overcome; for we admit that the things we do are bad, and in admitting that they are bad, we certainly are unwilling to do them, but because grace has not yet come, we are overcome' (*Prop. Rm.* 13–18).

[45] 'Though some desires of the flesh, as long as we are in this life, fight against our spirit and lead it towards sin, still the spirit, not consenting to these desires, since it is fixed in grace and the charity of God, ceases to sin. For we sin not in the depraved desire itself, but in our consent' (*Prop. Rm.* 13–18).

[46] See above n39.

not corrupt desire, is responsible for sin; Paul does not deny the free judgment of the will (*Prop. Rm.* 60). We are capable of correcting our consent so that we turn to faith in God. For God does not choose one person rather than another on the basis of good works, but on the basis of faith, which rests on consent, and therefore is up to us.[47] The will consents or refuses, and is not coerced by non-rational desires.

In ascribing this role to consent, Augustine affirms that an incontinent agent must acknowledge his incontinent action as his own; that is why he is responsible for it.[48] We may hate our actions, but if we consent to the misguided desire to do them, they are still our actions, and we cannot claim that we are not the ones who do them. Incontinence consists in wrong consent, just as continence consists in withholding it.[49]

How does Augustine reconcile the primacy of the will with the inevitability of sin?[50] Sin is inevitable because we inherit the nature corrupted by the Fall, and so we have desires and passions against our will (*CD* xiv 15e). The corruption of our non-rational nature, however, does not corrupt the will so far that we become unable to refuse consent to these non-rational desires.[51] Still, sin is inevitable, and it is mere arrogance to pretend that we can avoid it in this life.[52] But how can this be inevitable, if consent by the will is necessary for sin, and the will is not coerced?

Augustine assumes that our wills are limited by our limited insight and understanding. The Fall of Adam and Eve makes us more susceptible to the influence of our passions; for whether we choose it or not, some things appear in an especially vivid favourable light. In this sense they may be irresistibly attractive to us—not because they compel us irrespective of what appears good and bad to us, but because they appear good to us as long as we do not reflect appropriately on their degrees of goodness and badness in specific circumstances.

[47] 'That we believe, comes from us. That we do good works, comes from him who gives the Holy Spirit to those who believe in him' (*Prop. Rm.* 60). In *Retrac.* i 23.2 Augustine corrects himself: '. . . I would certainly not have said that if I had then known that faith itself is found among the gifts of God that are given 'in the same Spirit'. Both, therefore, are our own because of the judgment of the will, and yet both are given through 'the Spirit of faith' and charity . . . Both belong to God, because he himself prepares our will; and both belong to us, because they do not come about unless we are willing.' The effect of this correction is not to diminish the place of freewill, but to extend it; for Augustine affirms that something can be both the gift of God and the effect of freewill.

[48] 'Someone is much deceived, however, who while consenting to the lust of his flesh, and deciding to do what it desires and determining to do it, supposes he ought still to say 'It is not I that do it', even if he hates <himself> because he consents. For two things are true of him at once: he himself hates, because he has recognized that it is bad, and he himself does it, because he determines to do it. . . . The one, therefore, who says 'It is now not I who do it, but the sin that dwells in me', if he simply has the lust, he speaks the truth; but he does not speak the truth if he decides by the consent of his heart and also carries it through by the service provided by his body' (*De nupt. et concup.* i 31). 'What is the 'turning aside of the heart' but consent? For whoever in his heart has not consented with any turning aside of the heart to the suggestions that strike him from whatever appearances there may be, has not yet spoken. But if he has consented, he has already spoken in his heart, even if he has not made the sound with his mouth. Even if he has not done the action with his hand or any part whatever of his body, he has done what he has already determined by his thought that he ought to do' (*Cont.* 3). The first passage just quoted shows that Augustine does not interpret *Rm.* 7 as a description of incontinent action. On Aquinas' discussion see §254.

[49] See *Ep.* 98.1: 'One is not held liable to punishment by the sin of another without one's consent'. The context is a discussion of original sin. Cf. *Secund. Man.* 13.

[50] The development of a doctrine of original sin is traced by Williams, *IFOS*, chs. 4–5. See esp. 307–10 (on misinterpretation of *Rm.* 5:11); 368–72 (an unsympathetic judgment on Augustine's views about the freedom of fallen humanity).

[51] This claim needs qualification in the light of *Lib. Arb.* iii 52, discussed in n40 above.

[52] 'If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us' (*CD* xiv 9l, from *1Jn* 1:8). Cf. xxii 23d.; §211n100.

Our will is freer when it is not subject to the misleading attraction of the goods presented by the passions.[53] Still, it is free to refuse to consent to them even in our present condition. Augustine's acceptance of Stoic claims about the necessity of consent for voluntary and responsible action makes his attitude to freedom and sin consistent and defensible.[54]

224. The Will and the Good: Eudaemonism and Intellectualism

We have found that Augustine agrees with the Stoics in affirming the necessity of consent for freedom and responsibility. This affirmation is part of his reason for asserting the primacy of the will. The Stoics also assert that consent is consent to something's being good; they still maintain the Socratic claim that we are not free to reject the apparently greater good. Augustine also seems to agree with the Stoics in affirming this intellectualist view of choice and action. We suggested earlier that voluntarists might be correct in claiming Augustine's support for a conception of the will that is distinct from rational and non-rational desire, as Aristotle conceives them. But we have now found reasons for questioning this suggestion; if Augustine's claims about the will really agree with Stoic claims about consent, he does not seem to depart from Stoic intellectualism at all. His position sounds different from the Stoics' position, in so far as he attributes assent to the will rather than to reason, both in ordinary cognition and in action (*Acad*. i 11; iii 26, 30–6). But he apparently intends no significant doctrinal difference. Sometimes he speaks of the mind consenting to appearances (*CD* ix 4f-g (mens, animus), 5c), as though this is just the same thing as the will consenting (xiv 6a). He does not commit himself to any claims about the will that are inconsistent with the Stoic view of assent.[55]

Stoic intellectualism includes eudaemonism, claiming that the good we pursue is our own final good, happiness. Augustine accepts eudaemonism as well. He assumes that we always seek happiness; 'For everyone wills to be happy even by living in such a way that one cannot achieve happiness' (xiv 4c). We turn towards God because we recognize him as the source of our own highest good, not because we turn from our own happiness to some other good (xix 4a). The basic question about our lives is the question about how to achieve happiness.[56] Christians do not disagree with others on this point;[57] they disagree only in claiming that happiness depends on God.[58] This eudaemonist assumption seems to underlie Augustine's

[53] See xiv 11f; xxii 30f–h.

[54] Different elements in Augustine's doctrine of freedom are discussed by Burnaby, *AD* 226–34; Te Selle, *AT* 290–3; Wetzel, *ALV* 198–206.

[55] Greek Stoic sources do not speak of *boulêsis* being involved in assent. But it is natural to speak this way in Latin. For the Stoics believe that assent is *hekousion*, which is rendered into Latin as 'voluntarium', and hence easily associated with voluntas.

[56] 'Should you hesitate to say that you are ignorant of these things, given that if someone asks you what you know, you can answer that you know how a human being can be blessed even without these things? . . . For the one who asks how he is to achieve a blessed life, certainly asks nothing else than where the ultimate good is, that is to say, where the highest human good is placed, not by worthless or rash opinion, but by certain and unshaken truth' (*Ep*. 118.13). Cf. Burnaby, *AD* 45.

[57] 'For to desire a blessed life, to will it, to yearn for it, long for it, pursue it—I think this is common to all human beings. . . . For the good person is good for this very reason, to become blessed. And the bad person would not be bad unless he hoped that he could be blessed from being bad' (*Serm*. 150.4).

[58] See *Serm*. 150, just quoted; *Ep*. 118.15 (quoted below n131); *BV* 11 (on the importance of stability, leading to the identification of the highest good with God); *En. in Ps*. 32.2.18; *Mor. Eccl*. 9–10; *83 Qq*. 35; *Trin*. xiii 7: 'But it is remarkable

account of sin.[59] We do not fall into sin because we pursue our own happiness as opposed to some other ultimate end that we ought to pursue instead.

Augustine uses his eudaemonist conception of the will even to explain the apparently unpromising case of the sin of Adam and Eve. We might be inclined to suppose that Satan induced them to reject the obviously greater apparent good, but this is not how Augustine understands the Fall. It results from the bad use of free will (xiii 14b), but not from deliberate rejection of the greater apparent good. Adam and Eve wanted to exercise the freedom of their wills by rejecting subordination to God; that is why the punishment of their sin is our lack of freedom in relation to our own non-rational desires (xiii 13b). We show the same misguided love of freedom in our refusal to be equal with others and subordinate to God; we struggle against others and against God so that we can dominate others and free ourselves of domination by God (xix 121).[60]

This attempt to trace sin, both Adam and Eve's sin and our sin, to arrogance and self-assertion does not conflict with eudaemonism. If we value our freedom, we aim to increase it. We may easily suppose that we increase our freedom by reducing our subordination, and that we reduce our subordination by refusing to obey any superior. That is why disobedience was especially appealing to Adam and Eve. They were mistaken; but their particular mistake would not have appealed to them if they had not been rational agents pursuing their overall good.

We have no reason, therefore, to attribute voluntarism to Augustine. He emphasizes the role of the will in free and responsible action because he believes that non-rational desires can move us to free action only with our consent; he does not claim that the will moves us independently of the greater apparent good. He accepts Stoic intellectualism and avoids voluntarism.

225. Freewill and Determination

These claims about the will in relation to passions and to desire for the good clarify some of Augustine's views about conditions for freedom and responsibility. He places freedom in the consent of the will, and identifies the will with an unforced movement of the mind.[61] The will is free in relation to the passions in so far as it is capable of consenting or not consenting to the actions suggested by the passions. The will is not similarly free in relation to the apparent good, but Augustine does not suggest that this lack of freedom involves any lack of the freedom relevant to responsibility.

when all share one will to achieve and to retain blessedness, whence arises such a great difference and variation of wills about blessedness itself; it is not because anyone does not want blessedness, but it is because not all know it'. Cf. Burnaby, *AD* 47.

[59] See xiv 4c, quoted above, n44. [60] Quoted at §233 below.

[61] 'For our will is best known to us; for I would not even know that I willed if I did not know what the will itself is. Hence it is defined in this way: the will is the movement of the soul, with nothing forcing it, towards not losing something or towards getting something' (*Duab. Anim.* 14). Augustine continues by arguing against the Manichean view that we have two wills. In *Retrac.* i 15.3, he comments on this remark about forcing: 'For if one would not have done a thing if one had refused to do it, one was not forced to do it. And whoever sins in knowledge, if he can without sin resist the one who is <trying to> force him to sin, but does not resist, he sins of his own will, since the one who can resist is not forced to give way.'

These arguments for freedom, however, may seem not to recognize the most serious difficulty. Alexander and Epicurus argue that freedom is incompatible with determinism, because complete causal determination implies the absence of the type of possibility that is necessary for freedom. The question about determinism arises in an especially acute form for Augustine, since some strong form of determinism seems not only to be compatible with Christian theology, but actually to be required by it. Even if we show that the Fall and sin can be explained without the assumption of psychological compulsion coming from outside the will, we have not yet taken account of the Christian view that all of this is part of God's predestination. Critics of Christianity believe that belief in predestination undermines freedom. Celsus presents this charge clearly and effectively. Origen answers it by appeal to Stoic doctrines, especially the Stoic refutation of the 'Lazy Argument' (Origen, *Cels.* ii 20).[62]

The question about freewill and determination is especially acute for Augustine, because the role he attributes to God rules out some of the easier answers to the question. He does not believe that God simply foreknows how we will act on the basis of our own undetermined choices; that is the error he attributes to Pelagius. God chooses to create us as descendants of Adam prone to sin, and God chooses to save us from sin by the intervention of divine grace. The primary and decisive causal agent in what happens to us seems to be God; how, then, can we claim that what we do is really up to us in a way that makes us, rather than God, responsible for it? St Paul recognizes that people will ask this question about his position.[63] Since Augustine agrees with Paul's position, he has to defend it against questions about responsibility.

Augustine offers a compatibilist defence (*CD* v 9). He argues that divine foreknowledge does not take away acting on our will. God's foreknowledge still allows us 'to do by our will whatever we recognize and know not to be done by us except by our willing' (v 9g).[64] Since God creates and foreknows the whole order of causes, he creates and foreknows our actions resulting from will, just as he creates and foreknows the actions of animals that result from their impulses (v 9g, l, o).

Against this defence of compatibilism Alexander argues that we do not ensure responsibility by proving that our decisions and choices have some causal role parallel to the causal role of desires and impulses in non-rational animals; for responsibility (so Alexander claims) requires the special causal role that makes us the origins of our actions, in such a way that nothing external to us makes them necessary and inevitable.[65] Augustine's claim that our wills are part of the created order does not seem to show that they have the appropriate sort of causal role.

To answer this objection, Augustine distinguishes different types of necessity and asks which type excludes freedom.[66] In one case an event is necessary because it will happen

[62] On the Lazy Argument cf. §171.

[63] 'So it depends not upon man's will or exertion, but upon God's mercy' (*Rm.* 9:16). For the following verses see §213n110.

[64] In 'except by our willing' Augustine relies (as he does in *Retrac.*, as quoted above, n47) on the principle that if we do x and would have not done x unless we had willed to do x, we are not forced to do x, and we do x freely.

[65] See §172.

[66] In v 9–10 Augustine seems to attribute freedom to the will and to its judgment (arbitrium) indifferently. Hence he speaks of 'liberam voluntatem' (9c), 'libertas voluntatis' (10b), 'arbitrium voluntatis' (9d, e, i), 'liberum arbitrium' (10c), and 'liberum voluntatis arbitrium' (9e).

whether we will it to happen or not to happen. Our will, however, is not wholly subject to such necessity, since we do many things that we would not do if we did not will to do them; a clear example of this is willing itself, which we cannot do without willing (v 10a-b). If, however, necessity is simply taken to be the fact that something must happen one way or another, this is no threat to the freedom of our will (v 10b). God is also subject to some necessity of this sort, since God cannot die and cannot err; but this sort of necessity does not cancel God's freedom.

In Augustine's view, therefore, the vital question about freedom is the one that he has already answered in his account of the will and the passions. Once he shows that the will has a causal role independent of, though not uninfluenced by, the suggestions made by the passions, he takes himself to have shown all that is needed in order to vindicate claims about responsibility. The fact that this causal role of the will is itself the product of antecedent causes is irrelevant, in his view, to the claims about freedom that matter for responsibility.

Since Augustine holds this compatibilist view about freedom, it is not surprising that he takes his views about grace and predestination to be consistent with freedom and responsibility for sin. He claims that while we are able to sin from our own resources, we are unable to achieve virtue without the grace of God (xv 21e; xv 6e). But since we achieve virtue through our will, we do it freely with the help of divine grace.

226. Pagan Morality and Natural Law

Augustine's treatment of the will and its freedom follows the eudaemonist outlook of Greek ethics, in so far as he takes a rational agent's will to aim at the agent's own happiness as the ultimate end. The ultimate end determines the direction of our love, which marks the overriding tendency of our will (*Trin.* xv 41); virtue is the proper direction or 'order' of love (*CD* xv 22d). The direction of love determines not only the character of an individual, but also the character of a society. Augustine defines a people (populus) as 'an association of rational beings united by a common agreement on the things it loves' (diligit) (xix 24a); and the character of a particular society is to be assessed by examining its objects of love.

Does Augustine's agreement with Greek ethics go any further than this general claim about happiness? Does he believe that Greek ethics is anywhere near the truth in its account of the constitution of happiness? We might suppose he does not believe this, if we attend to his description of the two 'cities' or societies that are separated by their different beliefs about the good. These two cities are opposed, because in the earthly city the love of self prevails (praecessit), whereas in the heavenly city the love of God prevails (xiv 13f).[67] Christians ought to abandon the outlook of the earthly city and form the outlook of the heavenly city. Since one's conception of happiness determines the direction of one's love, we can direct our love rightly only if we form the right conception of happiness. The outlook of the heavenly city, therefore, exposes the errors in the conception of happiness that underlies the earthly city.

[67] '. . . two loves have made two cities; the earthly city is the product of love of self going as far as contempt for God, and the heavenly city is the product of the love of God going as far as contempt for self' (xiv 28a). In 'going as far as' (usque ad) Augustine does not reject the love of self, and he does not urge contempt for self. He makes a claim about what is primary and secondary. Cf. Scotus on sin and self-love, §365.

To see what Augustine means in advising Christians to abandon the outlook of the earthly city, we need to consider his attitude to pagan morality and pagan moral theory. His contrast between the two societies with their different objects of love suggests that he turns away from the pagan outlook to a distinctively Christian point of view that rests on principles sharply opposed to pagan principles. But closer examination of his position suggests a less sharp opposition between the pagan and the Christian outlook.

Augustine has to explain the remarks by St Paul that some readers take to imply acceptance of a Stoic conception of natural law. Paul argues that Gentiles who lack the Mosaic law are nevertheless a law to themselves. We might take this to mean that they are aware of basic moral principles, and that their conscientious recognition of them guides their evaluation of their actions. Some Christian writers, however, do not believe that Paul could be allowing the Gentiles to fulfil any of the demands of the law without revelation. In their view, such a suggestion would conflict with Paul's doctrine of our absolute dependence on divine grace to free us from sin. To forestall any suggestion that Paul refers to the natural law, Ambrosiaster claims that the 'Gentiles' Paul refers to are only Gentile Christians.[68]

This interpretation of Paul sometimes attracts Augustine.[69] In his fullest discussion of this passage in *Romans* (*S et L* 43–9) he mentions Ambrosiaster's view. But he also mentions the interpretation that takes Paul to ascribe awareness of a natural law to the Gentiles; 'what was imprinted on their hearts through the image of God when they were created has not been entirely destroyed' (*S et L* 48).[70] He does not endorse either interpretation in preference to the other.[71] Elsewhere he accepts a natural law that allows everyone access to some natural understanding of morality.[72] On this point he does not entirely separate the Christian moral outlook from the pagan. We should not interpret the division between the two cities so as to ignore the common moral outlook that Christians share with pagans.

To see how much this common moral outlook contains, we may ask how far Augustine disagrees with pagan conceptions of happiness. In particular, what conception of happiness is embodied in the earthly city in which self-love prevails? Augustine might intend different answers: (1) It is the 'ordinary' pagan conception of happiness as consisting primarily in external goods; Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics all reject this conception, and attribute a primary place in happiness to virtue. (2) It is the 'philosophical' pagan conception of happiness, as presented by the philosophers who attribute a primary place to virtue. (3) It is

[68] On Ambrosiaster (i.e., pseudo-Ambrose) see Quasten, *P* iv 180–9. On *Rm.* 2 see *CSEL* 81.1, pp. 75–6. At 76.5 he says that, according to Paul, the 'work of the law' is faith. But he still recognizes the natural law, taking it to be the source of the Golden Rule (note on 5:12 = 166.6–10). He mentions examples in *Genesis* and *Exodus* of moral attitudes that did not rest on any written law. Some other Patristic references to natural law are cited by Crowe, *CPNL* 57–62 (including parallels for the connexion with the Golden Rule).

[69] At *Iul.* iv 25 Augustine mentions only Ambrosiaster's view. But the second view would also fit Augustine's objection to Julian's claim that the pagans have genuine virtues.

[70] For further quotation see n127 below.

[71] On *Romans* and natural law see Chrysostom, *Rm.* 5 (on 2:14): 'When he says "by nature", he means 'by the reasonings from nature" '; (on 2:16): 'For conscience and reason suffice in place of the law. By this he showed . . . that God made human beings self-sufficient (*autarkês*), so as to be able to choose virtue and to avoid vice'. Cf. §301 (Aquinas); §412 (Reformers). Among commentaries on *Rm.* Cranfield ad loc. follows Ambrosiaster (and Augustine's first interpretation), whereas Moo and Byrne follow Augustine's second interpretation. The relation of Paul's views to Stoicism is explored inconclusively by Martens, 'Stoic'. Cf. Crowe, *CPNL* 52–7.

[72] See *Ep.* 106.15; *Ps.* 57.1; 118.4.

both the ordinary and the philosophical conception. Which of these conceptions defines the aim of the earthly city?

227. The Character of Happiness

Augustine agrees with the general view that happiness must be complete (cf. xi 13a). He takes this to imply, however, that happiness must also be permanent; contrary to Aristotle, he does not allow that we have achieved happiness if we are in a state that we are in danger of losing (*BV* 11). This demand for permanence leads Augustine to favour the Stoics against the Peripatetics; for the Stoics place happiness in a good that we can retain throughout our lives, by identifying it with virtue (*BV* 25).[73]

Augustine, however, rejects the Stoics' explanation of the permanence of happiness; for he rejects their view that external, non-moral goods and evils are indifferent, and so not parts of happiness. Since the Stoics would prefer to live in favourable rather than adverse conditions, even if they would tolerate adverse conditions, they should allow that happiness includes favourable conditions (*Trin.* xiii 10). Hence their rejection of external goods must be only verbal; on this topic, as on questions about the passions, they agree with other people more than their terminology would suggest. Varro is right to argue that a human being consists of both soul and body, and not of soul without body, and that therefore the primary natural advantages (prima naturae) must be included in the human good (*CD* xix 3a–d).[74] Still, the Stoics are right to insist on the primacy of virtue, since this is needed for the right use of all other goods.[75]

Given these characteristics of happiness, it is not open to us in this life. If virtue is insufficient for happiness, and happiness includes goods that are vulnerable to external circumstances, our life lacks the stability and permanent goodness that, as the Stoics agree, is necessary for happiness (xix 4a–g). The Stoics themselves implicitly recognize the instability of human life, since they recognize that things can go badly enough to make it reasonable to put an end to our lives by suicide (xix 4n–p).

The Stoics are more seriously wrong about the place of virtue in happiness. Virtue would secure happiness only if it eliminated vice, but the virtues we are capable of in this life do not eliminate vice. To have impulses or inclinations that we do not consent to is still to have a vice (xix 4i).[76] Even though prudence teaches us not to consent to bad inclinations, and even though temperance causes us not to consent to them, these virtues cannot remove the evil of having these bad inclinations.[77] Since Augustine believes, contrary to the Stoics, that

[73] Cf. Wetzel, *ALV* 57.

[74] For this argument against the Stoics see Cic. *F.* iv 36–9; §183.

[75] xix 3e: 'For among all goods of body or soul, virtue puts none ahead of itself. For it makes good use both of itself and of the other goods that make a human being happy.'

[76] Augustine appeals to *Gal.* 5:17 Vulg: 'For the flesh has appetites against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, for these oppose each other, so that you do not do what you will'. For a different rendering see §212n103. Augustine supplies 'has appetites' (concupiscit) with 'the spirit' (Vulg., like the Greek, has no verb). He interprets *Rm.* 7 in the same way; see n8 above.

[77] 'For <prudence> itself teaches that it is bad to consent to sinning and good not to consent to lust for sinning. But that bad thing that prudence teaches us not to consent to and that temperance makes us not consent to, neither prudence nor temperance removes from this life' (xix 4l).

the presence of all the virtues we are capable of reaching in this life still leaves us with vice, he does not agree that virtue is sufficient for happiness.

Augustine does not mean that the goods in which moralists have placed happiness are not worth having. He simply argues that we cannot reasonably expect to attain them in this life. Indeed, he argues that the pursuit of them exposes us to further evils. Concern for the good of others leads to social life; this is part of the human good, but it brings further evils with it. Societies need laws, and therefore need magistrates to apply laws, but these magistrates have to decide in ignorance of people's real motives. Societies conflict, and wars break out; whether just or unjust, these are sources of further misery, and the Stoics who refuse to lament the conditions of human life lack appropriate sympathy for our situation (xix 5–8).[78]

The Christian attitude avoids these errors of pagan philosophy. Christians do not deny the evils of the present life, and do not affirm that they have achieved happiness simply by accepting Christianity. They recognize that the degree of happiness obtainable in the present life is imperfect; they achieve happiness only in hope, by recognizing that they can attain it fully only in the afterlife (xix 4y–z).

Though Augustine criticizes pagan conceptions of happiness, he also relies on criteria for happiness defended by pagan philosophers. On the one hand, the Stoics show that happiness must be stable and permanent. On the other hand, the Peripatetics show that happiness must include more than virtue. These philosophical arguments show that we cannot be happy in this life. Pagan philosophers, unwilling to conclude that happiness is unattainable, modify some of the initial assumptions about happiness, so that happiness is less permanent than we might have hoped, or else includes only virtue and excludes much of what we value.

From Augustine's point of view, the pagan philosophers are correct in believing that happiness is attainable, but their belief is vindicated only if we recognize that the present life is not the only one to be considered. Christian belief not only criticizes pagan views, but also justifies them better than the pagan conception of the world can justify them. An examination of Greek ethics shows that some of the distinctive claims of Stoic ethics (that happiness is stable and permanent) and Peripatetic ethics (that it includes more than virtue) are reasonable and difficult to abandon. But since these claims appear to conflict, Greek moralists abandon one or the other. We find that the claims are consistent if we do not confine ourselves to the present life. Greek ethics as a whole appears reasonable and consistent only in the light of a Christian view of this life and the afterlife. The Christian view that in this life we can achieve happiness only in hope conflicts with the views of Greek moralists about the conditions in which we can achieve happiness; but it reconciles all the plausible claims about happiness that they cannot reconcile.

Even if Augustine were wrong to claim that we can hope for complete happiness in an after-life, he might still be right to claim that happiness is unattainable in this life. But if he is right in this latter claim, we still need not abandon the pursuit of happiness as a compound of external goods appropriately directed by virtue; for even if happiness is not completely attainable, our position is not so hopeless (for all Augustine has shown) that we have no reason to try to come closer to happiness. Still, Augustine suggests that in some circumstances despair would turn out to be justified from a purely pagan perspective, but

[78] This criticism of the Stoics revives the questions discussed in §220 above.

unjustified from a Christian perspective.[79] If the Christian perspective is correct, it gives us some reason for confidence in pursuing the aims that we would otherwise have to pursue in an attitude of doubt about the prospects of success.[80]

Pagan moral philosophy does not seem to be the outlook of the earthly city, as Augustine understands it. For the moralists agree with many of his objections to the earthly city; they also believe that the pursuit of the ordinary pagan conception of happiness leads to conflict, competition, unstable and intermittent peace, and the other evils that Augustine mentions in the earthly city. It would be more difficult for him to show that an earthly city guided by philosophical pagan views of happiness would be subject to the same evils to the same extent.

Perhaps, however, Augustine takes the difference between the two conceptions of the good to be relatively unimportant for his critique of the earthly city. Even if the philosophical conception is superior, and even if it would remove some or most of the evils of the earthly city if it were practised, he has reasons for saying that it cannot be practised.[81] Even if everyone were to accept the philosophical pagan conception, it would not secure their happiness, and so they would suffer the evils that result from adverse external conditions. More important, they could not even attain virtue, as they conceive it; since they would still be subject to sin, they would be subject to the results of sin that disturb the peace of the earthly city. This part of his argument rests on objections to the pagan conception of virtue. We should now consider these objections.

228. Pagan Virtue

We have found that Augustine's attitude to pagan philosophical views of happiness is critical, but also constructive. This may not appear to be his attitude towards pagan conceptions of virtue. He has become notorious for his claim that the so-called virtues of pagans are not genuine virtues at all, but just 'glittering sins' (splendida peccata).[82] This phrase does not appear in Augustine; it may be an invention of Bayle's *Dictionary*.[83] Leibniz rejects Bayle's view, which he also takes to be Augustine's.[84] But even if Bayle's phrase is not Augustine's, does it none the less capture Augustine's view? He believes that without faith

[79] Cf. Kant's discussion of the possibility of realizing the highest good, *KpV* 130.

[80] Self-love and eudaemonism: see Burnaby, *AD* 116–26, 255–6; O'Donovan, *PSLSA*, ch. 6.

[81] This criticism reflects the distinction between compliance utility and acceptance utility. Cf. Brandt's discussion of viability at *TGR* 212–14.

[82] Mausbach, *EHA* ii 259, suggests that the tag was constructed from *Iul*. iv 20 and *Retr*. i 3.2.

[83] 'Please notice carefully that in speaking of the good morals of some atheists, I have not attributed any real virtues to them. Their sobriety, their chastity, their probity, their contempt for riches, their zeal for the public good, their inclination to be helpful to their neighbour were not the effect of the love of God and tended neither to honour nor to glorify him. They themselves were the source and end of all this. Self-love was the basis, the boundaries, and the cause of it. These were only glittering sins, *splendida peccata*, as St Augustine has said of all the fine actions of the pagans' (Bayle, *Dict*. 401 (Clarification I)).

[84] '. . . our vices doubtless exceed our virtues, and this is the effect of original sin. It is nevertheless true that also on that point men in general exaggerate things, and that even some theologians disparage man so much that they wrong the providence of the Author of mankind. That is why I am not in favour of those who thought to do great honour to our religion by saying that the virtues of the pagans were only *splendida peccata*, splendid vices (vices éclatantes). It is a sally of St Augustine's which has no foundation in holy Scripture, and which offends reason' (Leibniz, *Theod*. §259).

and true religion there can be no true virtues, and so he infers that all alleged virtues without true religion are really vices.[85] He therefore seems to repudiate all pagan conceptions of virtue.[86]

Lactantius anticipates some aspects of Augustine's criticism of the pagan outlook. In his view, the pagans' awareness of the natural law did not make them completely virtuous.[87] He gives two reasons: (1) They did not know the content of the natural law, but simply identified their local laws and customs with the requirements of justice (*Div. Inst.* vi 9.2–7). (2) Even if they did know the content of the law, all their good actions were futile (supervacua et inania, 9.8). Hence all their justice was like a body without a head (9.9). These empty virtues leave pagans with nothing to congratulate themselves on (9.17). In this passage Lactantius does not go as far as to deny that the pagans could acquire virtues; he says only that they are futile, not that they are not virtues. But he also argues that without the hope of immortality they are irrational; if we have only this life to consider, we are foolish to bear the burdens imposed by the virtues and to forgo the pleasures that they forbid (9.18–23). It is not clear that this attitude to the moral outlook is consistent with Lactantius' description of the natural sociability of human beings (vi 10).[88]

Augustine's criticism of pagan virtue elaborates some of Lactantius' objections, but also qualifies them. His views remain a topic of discussion and controversy, both in moral philosophy and in the theology of sin and justification. Peter Lombard's reference to Augustine's views about the sinfulness of pagans makes them a recurrent topic of discussion.[89] Aquinas argues against the 'Augustinian' position, arguing that Augustine does not hold it and that Christian moral philosophy and theology do not require it.[90] But in the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, and in later disputes between the Jansenists and the Jesuits, some theologians argue both that Augustine accepts the 'Augustinian' attacks on pagan virtues and that the attack is correct.[91]

His position on pagan virtue should show us whether he repudiates the main tradition of Greek moral philosophy by rejecting its conception of virtue, and, more generally, whether he allows the possibility of a common conception of morality that pagans and Christians can share. The 'Augustinian' attitude to pagan virtue supports the Christian tendency to maintain that non-Christian morality is so irredeemably entangled with the errors of non-Christians that it must be rejected with all the rest of these errors. According to this view, non-Christian morality rests on pagan errors; it is a point of division between Christians and pagans, not a point of agreement.

[85] 'For though some people regard virtues as genuine and right (verae atque honestae) when they are directed towards themselves and are not sought for the sake of anything else, even then they are swollen (inflatae) and arrogant (superbae), and therefore are not to be judged virtues, but vices. For just as what makes the flesh live is not from the flesh but above the flesh, so also what makes a human being live happily is not from a human being but above him' (*CD* xix 25b). Augustine relies on St Paul's remark that 'everything that is not from faith is sin' (*Rm.* 14:23).

[86] See Kent, *VW* 25–8. She endorses Bayle's account: 'Hence the famous claim that all the virtues of pagan Rome, because they were not directed to the Christian God, were merely "splendid vices"—an expression Augustine himself never used but that does capture his viewpoint with reasonable accuracy' (25–6).

[87] Lactantius on natural law; see §§197, 206.

[88] Here he condemns the Stoics for their lack of human feeling; see §191n93.

[89] Lombard, *2Sent.* d41 c1–2, asks 'whether every aim and action of unbelievers is bad'. For discussion see Lottin, *EM*, ch. 2.

[90] See §356. [91] See §417.

This general attitude to the idea of a common morality is not specifically Christian. One might compare the Marxian or Marxist analysis of morality as the product of presuppositions peculiar to pre-communist society. According to this analysis, capitalism might be perfectly just, and the revolutionary will reject justice along with the rest of capitalism; the revolutionary ideal is a non-moral ideal.[92] This attitude to morality agrees with the 'Augustinian' attack on pagan virtue in its rejection of a common, neutral morality.

We might draw a less extreme conclusion from 'Augustinian' rejection of a common morality. Perhaps we should reject the idea of a common conception of moral virtue, but accept common moral behaviour. Even if Augustine shows that one's conception of moral virtue cannot be separated from one's views about God and the world, people with these different conceptions of virtue still need to live with one another, and need to agree on ways to avoid mutual destruction. Even if we have different conceptions of the virtue of justice, we can agree that we all benefit from certain just actions. The common core of morality is not a set of virtues, but a set of patterns of behaviour, whatever their underlying motives may be.[93]

Augustine offers some support for this idea of a purely behavioural core of morality. After he denounces pagan virtues (xix 25b), he reminds the members of the city of God that they have to deal with the members of the earthly city (xix 26). The earthly city aims at earthly peace, and Christians have an interest in the maintenance of earthly peace, even though they are simply resident aliens in the earthly city. Hence they have an interest in maintaining good order and generally useful behaviour, without any concern for the motives of the people who conform to the appropriate patterns of behaviour. Plato suggests in some places that we have reason to cultivate popular or civic virtues in order to regulate everyday life, but the most important virtues are those that purify us from concern with the body and concentrate our attention on more important things.[94] Augustine knows of this Platonic doctrine from Plotinus' elaboration of it, and we might suppose that his claims about earthly peace express a similar view about the purely instrumental role of ordinary moral virtues. His claims about earthly peace might suggest an application of his views about virtue to questions about the social function of morality. We should ask whether such an application embodies his most considered views about pagan virtue.

229. The Direction of the Will

To understand Augustine's objections to pagan virtue, we must understand two claims: (1) S has a virtue only if S has the right aims and motives. (2) Pagans necessarily lack real virtues, in so far as they lack the right aims and motives.[95]

[92] This account of Marx's attitude to morality is defended by Wood, *KM*, chs. 9–10. It may be a one-sided account of Marx, just as the analogous account would be, at best, a one-sided account of Augustine.

[93] One might take these reflexions to underlie Strawson's 'Social morality' and Rawls's view in *PL* 12–13. Perhaps Christian and pagan moral philosophy are two different forms of 'comprehensive moral philosophy' (as Rawls calls it), but they have no moral philosophy, and hence no conception of moral virtue in common, even if they agree on some points about how we should encourage people to behave.

[94] On Plato and Plotinus see §61.

[95] Augustine applies his objections to 'pagan virtue' not only to atheists, or polytheists, or deists, but also to Manicheans and Pelagians, who reject Catholic doctrines about (for instance) creation, sin, grace, good works, and the Incarnation. For many purposes finer distinctions must be drawn. See Wang, *SAVP*, ch. 3.

The first claim reflects Augustine's view that a virtue is primarily a condition of the will, and especially an expression of the direction of one's love.[96] If the will correctly aims at the right ultimate end, and the expressions of will towards the means are rightly connected with it, the agent is virtuous.[97] Virtue is precisely the good use of freewill.[98] This demand on virtue agrees with Platonists, Aristotelians, and Stoics. Moralists of these schools, in contrast to the Epicureans, all believe that virtuous people differ from other people in their conception of the ultimate end, not simply in their views about how to get it. If we are merely disposed to do the appropriate actions for the sake of some genuine good, we have not yet acquired a virtue.

We might reasonably agree with Augustine and with the other ancient moralists who believe that correct behaviour is insufficient for a virtue. We might even agree that virtue requires the choice of the right action for the right reason, looking to the very fact that makes the action right. This demand might be understood, as Kant understands it, non-teleologically, so that it does not refer to any connexion between virtuous action and one's ultimate end. But since Augustine is a eudaemonist, he believes that the right choice of virtue and virtuous action requires direction towards the right ultimate end. This teleological criterion supports his argument to show that pagan virtues cannot be genuine virtues.

Augustine follows Greek moralists in connecting the teleological criterion with the doctrine of the reciprocity of the virtues. He treats this as a philosophers' doctrine, without Scriptural authority, but he takes it to impose a reasonable demand on an account of the virtues.[99] Since genuine bravery is regulated by prudence, we cannot say that Bill and Ben are equally brave, but Ben is more prudent than Bill.[100] Agreeing with Aristotle, Augustine argues that prudence has a special role in making each virtue respect the requirements of the other virtues.[101] Bravery itself must be prudent and just because the demands of prudence

[96] 'And so it seems to me that a short and true definition of virtue is: the [correct] direction of love' (*CD* xv 22d) 'And so a correct will is good love, and a misdirected will is bad love' (xiv 7e).

[97] 'For the acts of will are correct and all connected to each other if that <act of> will to which they are all referred is good. If, however, it is bad, they are all bad. And so the connected series of correct acts of will is a road taken by those rising to blessedness, proceeding, one might say, by firm steps; but the entanglement of bad and misdirected acts of will is a bond that will bind whoever acts in this way, so that he will be thrown out into outer darkness' (*Trin*. xi 10).

[98] 'Among intermediate goods is found the free judgment of the will, because we can make a bad as well [as a good] use of it. However, its character is such that we cannot live correctly without it. For its good use is virtue, which is to be placed among the great goods, those which no one can use badly' (*Retrac*. i 9.6). At *ST* 1–2 q55 a1 obj2, Aquinas attributes Augustine's description of virtue as the good use of freewill to *Lib. Arb*. ii. The words do not actually appear there, but they summarize ii 51. See §284.

[99] *Ep*. 167 separates RV from the Stoic doctrine of the equality of sins and the alleged consequence that there are no degrees of virtue.

[100] 'For if you say that these people are equal in bravery, but that one excels in prudence, it follows that this one's bravery is less prudent; but thereby they are not equal in bravery either, since that one's bravery is more prudent' (*Trin*. vi 6). Cf. *Ep*. 167.5, 7. Aquinas discusses Augustine in *Virt. Card*. ad12, quoting the passage from *Trin*.

[101] 'But has he who has one virtue all virtues? And has he no virtues who lacks one? . . . As to the inseparable co-existence of the virtues, this is a doctrine as to which, if indeed I remember rightly what, indeed, I have almost forgotten (though perhaps I am mistaken), all philosophers who affirm that virtues are essential to the right conduct of life are agreed. . . . Those who maintain that whoever has one virtue has all, and that whoever lacks one lacks all, reason correctly from the fact that prudence cannot be cowardly, nor unjust, nor intemperate; for if it were any of these, it would no longer be prudence. Moreover, if it is prudence only when it is brave, and just, and temperate, then certainly wherever it exists it must have the other virtues along with it. Similarly, bravery cannot be imprudent or intemperate or unjust; temperance must necessarily be prudent, brave, and just; and justice does not exist unless it is prudent, brave, and temperate' (*Ep*. 167.4–5).

and of the other virtues are demands of bravery itself, not external demands that inhibit or reject the demands of bravery.[102]

If every virtue is subject to the demands of prudence, and prudence aims at the right end for all the virtues, acceptance of RV commits us to acceptance of the teleological criterion. Augustine affirms the criterion in his own version of RV, which unifies the four cardinal virtues in the love of God.[103] His reliance on this criterion is amply justified by central doctrines of the Greek moralists.

230. Pagan Virtues and Misdirected Will

The teleological criterion is especially prominent in Augustine's reply to a Pelagian critic, Julian of Eclanum.[104] Julian cites the virtues of the pagans as an objection to Augustine's doctrines about the effects of original sin and the role of grace, faith, and good works. He speaks as though the right actions were sufficient for virtue, and hence he neglects the teleological criterion.[105] Once we apply it, we see that virtuous actions (i.e., the actions proper to a virtue, those that a virtuous person would do) proceed from a virtue only if they are directed to the right end.[106]

In Augustine's view, pagans cannot act from appropriate motives. To attribute the correct motives to a pagan is to ignore Christ's teaching that a bad tree cannot bring forth good fruit. Julian might reply (as Augustine notices) that someone might be a good tree in so far as he is a human being and a bad tree in so far as he is an unbeliever. Augustine counters that, since pagans must clearly be bad trees, Julian is forced to say that they are bad trees bearing good fruit, contrary to the Gospel.[107]

[102] Walsh, 'Buridan' 455, argues that Augustine doubts RV. But in *Ep*. 167 Augustine agrees with the unanimous view of the philosophers (as he describes it) about RV. He does not dispute RV, but disputes the claim that all vices are equal. In the passage omitted from the previous quotation he says: 'If this [sc. RV] is true, the view of the apostles is confirmed. But what I want is to have the view explained, not confirmed, since of itself it stands firmer in our esteem than all the authority of philosophers could make it. And even if what has just been said concerning virtues and vices were true, it would not follow that all sins are thereby equal.' In §10 he repeats that RV lacks divine authority, and therefore should not be cited to confirm Scripture. In §14 he accepts RV, rejects the equality of sins, and argues that different people have virtues in them to different degrees. See Lottin, *PM* iii, ch. 13.

[103] 'If virtue leads us towards a happy life, I would hold virtue to be nothing else than the highest love of God. For what is called virtue in four parts is so called, as far as I understand it, from the varied effect of love itself' (*Mor. Eccl.* i 25; cf. *Retrac*. i 7.3).

[104] Augustine worked on *CD* from 413 to 426. He wrote *Iul. c*.421. See Quasten, *P* iv 363, 389. To simplify matters, I assume that Julian held the views that Augustine attributes to him.

[105] 'You know, therefore, that virtues are to be distinguished from vices not by the duties, but by the ends. Now a duty is what is to be done, but the end is that because of which the duty is to be done. When, therefore, a person does something in which he does not seem to sin, if he does not do it because of what he ought, he is convicted of sin' (*Iul.* iv 21).

[106] '. . . the prudence of misers, by which they work out various sorts of gain, is no true virtue; nor the justice of misers, by which they scorn what belongs to other people, from fear of severe punishment; nor the temperance of misers, by which they restrain desire for excess pleasures, whenever they are expensive; nor the bravery of misers, by which, as Horace says, "they travel over seas, over mountains, through fire, to escape poverty" ' (*Iul.* iv 19). Quoted by Aquinas, *ST* 2-2 q23 a7. See §356n72.

[107] 'I ask you whether he does these good works well or evilly. If he does them in an evil way, though they are good, you cannot deny that he who does anything in an evil way sins, regardless of what he does. But since you do not wish him to sin when he does these things, you will surely say that he does good and he does it well. Therefore, a bad tree brings forth good fruit, and, according to the truth, this cannot happen . . . Will you answer that he is a good tree, not in

Julian might suggest that a pagan may have a good will if (for instance) he has a merciful will. Augustine answers that it is not always a good thing to be merciful, so that being merciful is not itself sufficient for virtue. Even if it is a good work to act out of natural compassion in itself, it is still a good that the pagan misuses because he acts unbelievingly.[108] If, therefore, we apply the teleological criterion, understood as Augustine seems to understand it here, pagans seem to lack genuine virtue.[109]

The reply to Julian and its attack on pagan virtue have often been cited in support of an extreme view, that any alleged virtue in a pagan is really not virtuous, but sinful, because it is directed to a bad end.[110] To see whether Augustine is really committed to this extreme view, we should examine the teleological criterion more closely. It assumes that the presence or absence of the right conception of the end of a virtuous action (in someone who does the actions of a virtuous person) determines the presence or absence of the relevant virtue. That is why someone who applies virtuous actions to a bad end must, to that extent, lack a virtue. In that case, someone who applies virtuous actions to a good end must, to that extent, have a virtue.

This way of expressing the teleological criterion shows that it would be too simple to conclude that S lacks virtue altogether if S directs virtuous action to a bad end. For perhaps S directs virtuous action both to a good end and to a bad end, so that S has both a virtue and a vice. The question 'Does S act for a good or a bad end?' is too simple, since more than one end may be relevant to whether S is virtuous, or vicious, or both.

If the teleological criterion simply requires us to aim at some genuine good, it is neither plausible nor Augustinian. For (to go back to his examples) misers may aim at genuine goods, and to that extent aim at good ends, in so far as they aim at harmony with their neighbours, or control of their own appetites; none the less they lack virtue because they subordinate these good ends to their own miserliness.

To see what is wrong with the miser and with the end of his alleged prudence and temperance, we need to recognize that he has the wrong conception of the relation of these virtues and their characteristic actions to the ultimate end. He takes these virtues and virtuous actions to be merely instrumental to his own material security and independence (let us say), which are 'external goods', not necessarily secured by virtuous action. If he were a virtuous person, he would recognize that virtue dominates external goods in the ultimate end; for the sake of one's happiness one ought always to prefer the virtues over all combinations of external goods. The miser does not see that the virtues dominate. Let us say that he fails to grasp the morally correct end, or that he lacks the morally correct conception of the ultimate end.

so far as he is unbelieving, but in so far as he is a human being? . . . Therefore, there would be no bad tree of which it is said that it cannot bear good fruits. . . . It is not, therefore, in so far as he is a human being, which is the work of God, but as being of bad will, that he is a bad tree and cannot produce good fruits. Consider, then, whether you have the nerve to say that an unbelieving will is a good will' (*Iul*. iv 30).

[108] 'And he does this good thing badly, if he does it unfaithfully; now whoever does something badly, thereby sins' (*Iul*. iv 31).

[109] A pseudo-Augustinian gloss on St Paul seems to sum up his view: 'A gloss of Augustine commenting on *Rm*. 14:23, "All that is not from faith is sin", says: "The whole life of an unbeliever is sin: and nothing is good without the highest good." ' (Aquinas, *ST* 1–2 q63 a2 obj1; *De Virt*. a9 obj2). Cf. *Ioann*. 45.2–3.

[110] For comments by the Reformers see §417. McGrath, *ID* 33, attributes this extreme view to Augustine: 'The *virtutes impiorum* are *iustae* in terms of their *officium*, but have no value in obtaining felicity'.

The morally correct conception of the ultimate end is not the same as the unqualifiedly correct conception. For conceptions of the ultimate end may be correct and incorrect to different degrees. We can see this easily if we begin from a rather crude idea of the structure of the ultimate end. If happiness consists of just three components, A, B, and C, S may do a brave action for the sake of A, which S correctly regards as a component of the ultimate end. However, S may still have a defective conception of the ultimate end; for S may suppose that it consists only of A, or that it includes D as well as the three genuine components, and so on. S is not like Augustine's miser, who chooses virtuous action for a mistaken end, but S is still open to criticism for an erroneous conception of the ultimate end.

A teleological criterion for virtue, therefore, might be made more precise in either of two ways: (1) A moderately strict criterion: S has a virtue if and only if S acts on the morally correct conception of the ultimate end. (2) An extremely strict criterion: S has a virtue if and only if S's virtuous action is guided by a wholly correct conception of the ultimate end.

Augustine needs to show that his demands on virtue are reasonable. He does not suppose that he simply stipulates necessary conditions for a virtue; he believes his favoured necessary conditions are independently plausible. In appealing to some teleological criterion, he relies on an independently plausible condition for a virtue (at least, within the assumptions shared by most ancient moralists). Does he intend the extremely strict interpretation of the plausible teleological criterion?

The extremely strict criterion gives a clear reason for denying that pagans have any virtues; for their conception of the ultimate end is seriously mistaken. But this criterion does not express a reasonable demand on a virtue; we do not seem to rely on it in our normal judgments about virtues. If S's just actions are regulated by the appropriate non-instrumental concern for justice and for the other aspects of morality, we might reasonably regard S as a just person, even if S erroneously believes that some parts of happiness consist in foolish amusements, or S has bad taste in music or painting or architecture.[111] These errors apparently need not affect the correctness of S's estimate of the nature and value of justice, and hence they need not affect S's being just.

The possibility of a morally correct, but not wholly correct, conception of the ultimate end emerges from Aristotle's contrast between the virtues of character and of intellect.[112] Virtues of character require some virtue of intellect, since they require prudence; but they do not require all the virtues of intellect. Aristotle does not suggest that someone with all the moral virtues must also have a true conception of the contemplative, non-moral component of happiness. He contrasts the life that includes contemplation with the 'life in accordance with the other <sort of> virtue' which is happiest only to a secondary degree (*EN* 1178a9).

Aristotle accepts Augustine's teleological criterion, since he agrees that a virtuous person must not only do the right action but also do it for the right end. He expresses this criterion by saying that the virtuous person must decide on the virtuous action for its own sake

[111] This example might not seem so plausible to Aristotle. For, in his view, magnificence (*megaloprepeia*) is a moral virtue, and a magnificent person is expected to show good taste both in commissioning new buildings for the city and in commissioning a new house for himself (*EN* 1123a6–10). I believe it would still be possible to find examples (apart from the one I develop about moral virtue and *theôria* below) that would make the relevant point for Aristotle.

[112] This possibility does not emerge clearly from the Stoic position, which identifies moral virtue with happiness.

(1105a32), and because it is fine (1120a23–4; 1122b6–7). Since virtuous people (like everyone else) act for the sake of their own happiness, they satisfy Aristotle's demand because they regard virtue and virtuous action as dominant components of happiness. Their conception of the ultimate end is correct to this extent, and Aristotle takes this degree of correctness to imply virtue of character.

The difference between the moderately strict and the extremely strict criterion matters, if the ultimate end is a compound of logically distinct components. But an Augustinian might reject this conception of the end. Perhaps the only correct conception of the ultimate end is the conception derived from true piety, and we either grasp this conception or entirely lack it.[113] No room will be left, therefore, for any partially correct conception of the ultimate end; nothing could satisfy the moderately strict criterion without satisfying the extremely strict one. Is Augustine committed to this answer?

231. The Aim of Pagan Virtue

To explore his understanding of the teleological criterion, we should consider how it applies to Greek conceptions of virtue and happiness. Different philosophical schools agree that the virtues are to be chosen for their own sake and for the sake of happiness; hence they attribute non-instrumental value to the virtues. Moreover, they do not regard the virtues as minor non-instrumental goods, and hence as relatively trivial aspects of happiness. On the contrary, they agree that the virtues dominate external goods. Beyond these points of agreement, different schools disagree.[114] The Stoics believe that virtue and happiness are identical, so that they take virtue to be the sole component of happiness. The Peripatetics believe that virtue is only one aspect of happiness, and that happiness includes other states and activities too.

Augustine attacks all these pagan views (*CD* xix 4), but he does not attack all their claims about virtue and happiness. He denies that virtue, as the Stoics conceive it, is possible in this life, and he argues that, even if it were possible, it would not ensure our happiness.[115] He also rejects the Peripatetic view that we can be happy in this life. Truly virtuous people need true piety, in order to recognize that they cannot achieve happiness in this life (4x). Still, he does not deny that virtue is superior to all external goods, and deserves to be chosen for its own sake. He recognizes that virtue claims (vindicet, 4h) this status, and he seems to agree with this claim; for he affirms that nothing is better or more useful in a human being.[116] He approves not only of the specific virtues that the philosophers recognize (as opposed to the philosophers' views about what the virtues are like and how we can achieve them in this life), but also of their view that the virtues should express themselves in social life that seeks co-operation with others rather than domination over them.[117] Though the

[113] One might derive this conclusion from the disjunction 'aut cupiditate aut caritate' in *Trin.* ix 13. See §417n62.

[114] I will not discuss Augustine's comments on Plato and Platonism in ethics, since I do not want an argument for the partial correctness of pagan conceptions of the ultimate end to rest on the theistic character of a given view.

[115] 'Therefore, those who admit that these things are bad, such as the Peripatetics, and the Old Academy, whose sect Varro defends, speak more acceptably' (xix 4q).

[116] '. . . the virtues themselves, than which certainly nothing better and more useful is found in a human being <in our life> here . . .' (xix 4u).

[117] xix 5 begins: '<These pagan philosophers> want the life of the sage to be social, and on this point we approve of their position more fully'.

earthly peace that is the aim of philosophical virtue is inferior to heavenly peace, it is worth pursuing.[118]

Does Augustine believe that the philosophers are partly right in their views about non-instrumental goods, especially in their belief that virtue is a non-instrumental good that deserves to be chosen for its own sake? If he agrees with them on these points, he must also agree that their conception of the ultimate end is partly correct, since they take these goods to be parts of it. If, then, they act on this moral outlook, they act for the sake of a morally correct, and hence partly correct, conception of the ultimate end.

Augustine discusses the Stoic attack on the Epicurean view that the virtues are instruments of pleasure. He argues that we still hold an instrumental view of virtue if we simply modify the Epicurean position by making virtue instrumental to the praise of other people or to one's own self-satisfaction.[119] His argument appeals to the conviction that virtue is to be valued for its own sake, and not simply as a means to some further end, whether pleasure or self-approval. If this is his own conviction, he agrees with the Peripatetic and Stoic moralists.

Augustine's denunciation of pagan virtue, however, raises difficulties. He mentions people who take a virtue to be genuine and right if it is directed towards itself and is not sought for the sake of anything else (xix 25b).[120] Their alleged virtues are swollen and arrogant, and so must be judged vices rather than virtues. Does he mean that virtues are not to be chosen for their own sake at all, but only for God's sake?

He rejects the view that we ought to love the virtues entirely for their own sake, and hence not at all for the sake of happiness. If we did that, we would—contrary to our intention—cease to love the virtues, since we would no longer love that for the sake of which we love them.[121] But Augustine does not suggest that this self-defeating attitude to the virtues results from loving them for their own sake. Pagans are right to believe that the virtues are to be chosen for their own sake. They violate their own standards, if they turn out to value virtuous action simply for the sake of human approval.[122]

If this is Augustine's view about the non-instrumental value of virtue, he agrees that the pagan moral philosophers have a partly correct conception of the ultimate end. It matters, therefore, whether we accept the moderately strict or the extremely strict teleological criterion for virtue. If the pagan moralists act on their conception of virtue and are judged by the moderately strict criterion, they have both virtues and vices. But on the extremely strict criterion they have vices and no virtues.

[118] 'However, even this people <alienated from God> loves a kind of peace of its own that is not to be disapproved of' (xix 26a).

[119] v 20. Cf. Cic. *F.* ii 69. [120] Quoted in §228 above.

[121] See *Trin.* xiii 11: 'Unless perhaps the virtues, which we love in this way for the sake of happiness alone, dare to persuade us in such a way that we do not love happiness itself. If they do this, we even cease to love them, whenever we do not love that because of which alone we loved them.' Cf. Aquinas, *ST* 2-2 q123 a7 obj2. (Aquinas has a slightly different text.)

[122] This claim about loving virtue for its own sake raises some difficult questions about Augustine's various views. If (i) we look at it in the light of the distinction between enjoyment (fruitio) and use (usus) that Augustine explores in *Doctr. Chr.* i, (ii) we suppose (relying on, e.g., i 40) that human beings are to be used not enjoyed, and (iii) we suppose that use is a purely instrumental attitude, then Augustine is committed to a purely instrumental attitude to the virtues. But these suppositions about fruitio and usus are questionable, and it is not clear, in any case, that Augustine adheres to this distinction in other works. See O'Donovan, *PSLSA* 24–9; 'Usus'; Burnaby, *AD* 104–10.

The moderately strict criterion is preferable to the extremely strict criterion. If Augustine relies on it, he does not appeal directly to his own theological and moral outlook, but examines pagan moral philosophy by a standard that pagan philosophers accept; hence his critique deserves their attention for philosophical reasons. If he accepts the moderate criterion, he ought to agree that pagans who act on the moral outlook of the Greek moralists have virtues, even though they also have vices, in so far as they are arrogant.

232. Are Pagan Virtues Genuine Virtues?

Does Augustine recognize that he is committed to this conclusion about pagan virtue? He does not explore the implications of the fact that pagan moralists take the virtues to be non-instrumental goods. But some of his remarks are more favourable than we might expect from his sweeping attacks on pagan virtue.

In a letter written a few years earlier than the *City of God* and *Against Julian*, he argues that the Christian faith encourages the growth of virtues that turn us towards the city of God; then he considers the attitude of the Christian towards the earthly city. He argues that the Romans displayed 'civil virtues' that maintained their community.[123] Faith adds to these civil virtues, but does not reject them.

In writing against Julian, Augustine suggests that the Romans who displayed these civil virtues really served demons or human glory.[124] This suggestion does not contradict Augustine's favourable judgment in the letter. In answering Julian, Augustine emphasizes the pagan and sinful attitude of the Romans with civic virtues. But this does not require him to deny that the virtuous Romans had a morally correct conception of the end of virtue. This morally correct conception of the end does not disappear when it is combined with incorrect views of the supernatural ultimate end.

We might try to explain these passages through a simple application of Augustine's distinction between action (officium) and end (finis). Perhaps Augustine means that the Romans did the right actions, but for the wrong end, so that their virtue is purely behavioural. This is the conception of 'civil' or 'political' virtue that some later moralists have in mind when they allow pagans nothing more than civil virtue.[125]

This simple division between action and end does not capture the complexity of the pagan conception of virtue, as Augustine understands it. The Stoic and Peripatetic attitude to virtue manifests a morally correct conception of the ultimate end, as well as the right

[123] '. . . so that, as long as we are exiled from there [sc. the heavenly city], we may bear with those, if we cannot correct them, who, with vices unpunished, want the preservation of the commonwealth that the first Romans established and increased by their virtues; though they did not have true piety towards the true God, which was able to lead them to the eternal city by saving religion, even so they maintained an uprightness proper to them, which was able to suffice for the establishing, increasing, and maintaining of the earthly city. For in this way God showed, in the Roman empire of such great wealth and fame, the power of civil virtues, even without the true religion, so that it might be understood that, with this true religion added, human beings are made citizens of another city, whose ruler is true, whose light is charity, and whose measure is eternity' (*Ep*. 138.17, written in 412).

[124] '. . . these people, who showed Babylonian love for the earthly homeland, and by civic virtue, not true <virtue> but similar to true <virtue>, served demons or human glory—Fabricii, Reguli, Fabii, Scipiones, Camilli, and the others of the same sort' (*Iul*. iv 26).

[125] Lottin, *EM* 77, 83–8. The *Augsburg Confession* (Art. 18) speaks of 'civilis iustitia', citing pseudo-Augustine. See §418.

action. Hence the virtue that can be ascribed to these pagans cannot be purely behavioural. Epicureans can behave correctly, but Augustine believes that they differ from Stoics and Peripatetics in their capacity for virtues. Since virtues are marked by the morally correct conception of the ultimate end, as well as the correct action, pagans who follow Stoic or Peripatetic views have virtues.

Augustine's views about the moral condition of pagans take account of St Paul's claim that Gentiles fulfil the demands of the law (*Rm*. 2:14–16; *S et L* 43–8).[126] He allows that 'Gentiles' may refer to pagans whom we praise for their actions, even though they act for the wrong end.[127] 'Praising them for their actions' does not seem to imply the mere recognition that they behave correctly; Augustine also seems to suggest that pagans also have some grasp of morality that goes beyond mere behavioural conformity. He confirms this suggestion in his approval of the love that human beings can manifest to one another in the relations of families, friends, and fellow-citizens. He approves not only of correct behaviour to others, but also of its underlying motive.[128]

These points on which Augustine agrees with pagan virtue make it reasonable for him to allow it a partially correct conception of the ultimate end. We are closer to happiness if we have the right aims and find them frustrated than if we have the wrong aims and fulfil them. Someone who aims at living according to the virtues for their own sake has one important element in happiness, since having the right aims is itself a part of happiness.[129] A pagan who has the moral virtues aims to live in accord with them, and has the morally correct conception of the ultimate end. To this extent, therefore, someone with the pagan virtues has genuine virtues.[130]

This discussion of Augustine's views on the pagan moralists suggests that a simple division between the right action and the right end is too simple. He needs to say that the pagan virtues embody a conception of the end that is morally correct—since the elements of happiness that it recognizes are genuine elements of it—but also incorrect—since it fails to recognize other genuine elements of happiness.

[126] See §226 above.

[127] '. . . some of <their> actions—though they are those of impious people who do not truly and justly worship the true God—we not only cannot blame, but even deservedly and correctly praise, since they have been done, so far as we read or know or hear, according to the rule of justice; though if we discuss with what end these actions are done, we scarcely find any that deserve the praise and defence appropriate to justice. Still, since God's image has not been so completely erased in the human soul by the stain of earthly affections, as to have left remaining there not even the merest outlines, from which it can justly be said that even in this very impiety of life it certainly does or understands some things belonging to the law (facere aliqua legis vel sapere) . . .' (*S et L* 48).

[128] 'Have lawful charity therefore. It is human, but, as I said, lawful. Moreover, it is not lawful only in such a way that it is allowed, but lawful in such a way that if it is lacking, <the lack> is blamed. Let it be lawful for you to love your spouses, love your sons, to love your friends, to love your fellow citizens with human charity' (*Serm*. 349.2). This passage is discussed by Wang, *SAVP* 47. Pius VI quotes this passage and *S et L* 48, in his condemnation of the Synod of Pistoia; Denz. §2624, also discussed by Wang. See §417n62.

[129] 'And someone already has one good, and a considerable good, namely that very good will itself, if he desires to rejoice in the goods that human nature is capable of, and not in any bad action or acquisition, and pursues such goods as can be present even in this wretched life with a prudent, temperate, brave, and just mind, and achieves them as far as he is able . . .' (*Trin*. xiii 9).

[130] My discussion of pagan virtues is indebted to Wang's discussion (*SAVP* 45–57) of the 'vertus décevantes'. I doubt, however, whether he is right to explain them as belonging to a will that aims at particular good ends, without directing them to any ultimate end. This explanation does not seem to fit Augustine's eudaemonism; nor does Wang cite any specific evidence to show that Augustine recognizes the possibility of aiming at particular goods without an ultimate good. (The passage I cited from *Trin*. xiii 11 (in n121 above) suggests that he denies any such possibility).

If Augustine should recognize these virtuous aspects of the pagan virtues as well as the sinful aspects that result from pagan ignorance of the true character of the good, he should also explain, qualify, or supplement his claim that pagan virtues are really vices. It is consistent to claim that pagan virtues are virtues and that they are vices; some features of them make them virtues and other features make them vices. The two claims are consistent because virtues are good states or conditions or actualizations of some capacity or tendency; pagan virtues are good states of one capacity, but bad states of another.

233. Pagan Arrogance

One might, however, argue that this solution works only if the pagan conception makes an error of omission rather than commission. But Augustine has in mind an error of commission as well as omission. He charges that pagan virtue not only lacks the right conception of the end, but also includes a mistaken conception of the end, because it expresses arrogance (superbia).

In Augustine's view, 'no one without true piety, that is, without the true worship of God, can have true virtue, and it is not true virtue when it serves human glory' (*CD* v 19f). Those who advocate the choice of virtue for its own sake without reference to God really choose it for the sake of human glory, because they choose it for the sake of their own self-approval. In doing this they display arrogance. Two mistakes are characteristic of the arrogant person: (1) He attributes to himself what in fact he achieves only in dependence on God. (2) He fails to recognize the shortcomings in his own achievements (v 19g). This is why Augustine believes we would be arrogant if we were to claim to be free of passions in this life (xiv 9l, r).

The same arrogance that produced the sin of Adam and Eve against God encourages us to believe in our own unaided success; that is why arrogance is the beginning of all sin (xiv 13a). Lifting up one's heart to oneself rather than to God is the sort of arrogance that eventually abases us, since it turns us away from God (xiv 13d–e). In turning towards God, we recognize that we are subject to sin and conflict in this present life, but that we can call on the help of God to reduce the power of misguided desires and aims (xxii 23a).[131]

It is useful, though over-simplified, to distinguish arrogance towards God from arrogance towards other human beings. Arrogance towards God causes us to deny our dependence on God, and so to exaggerate our own importance and our own achievements in relation to God. Arrogance towards other people causes us to compete with them, to care more about our own interests than about theirs, and to compare ourselves favourably with them without justification. Neither Romulus nor Remus could tolerate anything less than domination over the other. Cain envied Abel's goodness, but Abel did not envy Cain, and did not seek domination over Cain (xv 5a–d). Arrogance '. . . perversely imitates God. For it

[131] 'Give me someone who sees quickly that the mind is not happy by its own good, when it is happy—otherwise it would never be unhappy. . . . For when the mind takes pleasure in itself as if in its own good, it is arrogant. But when it recognizes that it is changeable, . . . and notices that wisdom is unchangeable, it must at the same time notice that wisdom is above its own [sc. the mind's] nature . . . Thus ceasing and subsiding from boasting and from conceit in itself, it tries to adhere to God' (*Ep*. 118.15).

hates equality with one's fellows under God, but it wants to impose on one's fellows one's own domination in place of God' (xix 12l).

In this passage Augustine argues that arrogance towards God results in arrogance towards other human beings. Arrogance towards God, as he conceives it, is not a purely theological error; it has moral consequences for one's relations with other people. None the less, the two aspects of arrogance need to be distinguished. For, even if all those who refuse to acknowledge their dependence on God are arrogant, they may be arrogant to different degrees, and some moral outlooks may encourage arrogance towards other people more than other outlooks encourage it. If our moral outlook encourages us to compete against other people, and to pursue our own interests at their expense, and if it also encourages us to praise and esteem the winners in such competitions, Augustine is right to charge that the (alleged) virtues recognized by such a moral outlook are themselves both effects and causes of arrogance.

Some pagan conceptions of virtue might well be open to such objections. One might plausibly argue that, for instance, the Homeric conception of the virtues encourages the attitudes that Augustine attributes to Romulus, Remus, and Cain. But these objections do not apply to the Aristotelian and Stoic conceptions of virtue. If those who accept these conceptions of virtue are arrogant, that is not the fault of these conceptions of virtue. Augustine observes that virtuous people are pleased, and not disappointed, by the presence of goodness in others as well as in themselves.[132] Aristotle also expects this outlook in virtuous people; they do not regard virtue as a good to fight over, but give their friend the opportunity to do a fine action instead of trying to do it themselves (*EN* 1169a6–11, 31–4). Augustine has no quarrel with Aristotle on this point.

If, then, pagans actually acquire the states of character that Aristotle and the Stoics count as virtues, they will not be more arrogant towards other people than they would otherwise have been. On the contrary, they will have acquired the non-competitive attitude that Augustine opposes to the arrogant person's desire for domination over others. The virtuous person pursues virtue and virtuous action for their own sake; he does not subordinate them to his own desire for recognition by others or by himself. Augustine, therefore, has no good reason to maintain that the pagan virtues, as opposed to other aspects of the pagan outlook, are a special source or manifestation of arrogance. No arrogance is inherent in the pursuit of the virtues recognized by pagan moralists, or in action from the motives that they teach us to value. These virtues do not teach us to treat human glory as a dominant, or even prominent, part of the ultimate end of our actions.

To say this is not to reject Augustine's charge that pagans manifest arrogance in their virtuous actions. That charge is justified, if we manifest arrogance by failure to acknowledge the specific forms of dependence on God that Augustine describes. As we have seen, Christian moralists do not disagree with Stoic moralists (for instance) about the demands of the moral law; they accept, and indeed insist on, the perfectionist aspects of Stoicism. They criticize the pagan moralists for not explaining our failure to achieve the perfection demanded by morality. The Stoics implicitly acknowledge this failure, by admitting the rarity of the sage,

[132] 'Indeed, someone who refuses to have this possession in common will not have it at all, and he will find that he possesses a fuller measure of it the more fully he is able to love the one who shares it with him' (xv 5d).

but they still speak as though we could achieve the virtues if we attended to Stoic advice. Hence they still regard virtue as our own unaided achievement; and if they think they have achieved it, they deceive themselves (as St John puts it).[133] This sort of arrogance is pervasive in the life of pagans, because they do not admit their incapacity to achieve their own moral ideals; they think of their virtuous actions and states of character in the arrogant way in which they think of all their achievements.

These arguments do not show that pagan virtues are really vices. Though virtues that belong to pagans are necessarily virtues of arrogant people, they do not aim at the distinctive ends of arrogant people; they aim at praiseworthy ends that are equally appropriate ends for anyone who lacks arrogance. The connexion between arrogance and pagan virtues does not imply that pagan virtues themselves are special manifestations of arrogance.

From Augustine's theological point of view, pagans are indeed open to objection for being pagan, since they lack the relevant beliefs about grace and sin. But they are not open to objection for their realization or partial realization of the pagan conceptions of the virtues. We can therefore recognize and accept his views about the nature and extent of arrogance in the pagan outlook without retracting our previous account of pagan virtue. When we take proper account of the effects of arrogance in the pagan outlook, we must still agree that the pagan virtues embody a partly correct conception of the ultimate end of human life.

234. Self-Love, Arrogance, and the Earthly City

Augustine's objections to arrogance explain how virtue involves the right direction of the will. Our will is wrongly directed if it is directed towards ourselves, and rightly directed if it is directed towards God; this is why self-love underlies the earthly city and the love of God underlies the heavenly city. The self-love of the earthly city is the source of its conflicts, because our arrogance refuses to accept others as our equals (*CD* xv 5b; xix 12l). We are free of these conflicts only when we abandon self-love for the love of God.

In drawing this contrast, however, we may easily exaggerate the extent of Augustine's opposition to pagan virtue. He does not suggest that self-love is to be rejected altogether; he only rejects the self-love that goes as far as contempt of God. This form of self-love asserts the agent's own independence and self-sufficiency in relation to virtue. The love of God involves contempt of self only to the extent that it is required by the love of God; it does not require the contempt of self altogether. We would show complete contempt of self, for instance, if we became indifferent to our own happiness, or if we did not care about achieving the degree of virtue that is possible for us. The love of God requires only the contempt of self that recognizes our own inability to achieve virtue completely, and recognizes our need of the help of God to achieve the degree of virtue that we achieve.[134]

[133] See *1Jn*. 1:8–10, quoted at §211n100.

[134] 'For it is not possible for one who loves God not to love himself; on the contrary, the only one who knows how to love himself is the one who loves God. If the one who loves himself adequately is the one who acts diligently to enjoy the highest and true good, and if this is nothing other than God, who can delay in loving himself if he is a lover of God? And should there be no bond of love between human beings themselves? On the contrary, there should be such a bond

Augustine does not want us to dismiss his moral claims as Christian dogma that is irrelevant to pagan moral philosophy. He claims that his critique of pagan virtue appeals to standards that pagan moralists themselves must accept. A pagan moralist has to explain why people seem to fail in their attempts to live up to the standards set by pagan virtues. Augustine suggests that this pervasive failure is best understood by reference to an unavoidable tendency to sin, and that the more anxious we are about observing the standards of pagan virtues, the more we encourage the tendency to sin that undermines the virtues; this is Paul's analysis of the effects of acknowledging the moral law.

If we were to agree with Augustine on these psychological facts, without accepting his theological explanation, we would be in a similar position to the one we would be in if we accepted his claims about the prevalence of evil in the world without accepting his views about the prospects of happiness in an afterlife. In both cases we would have to follow the way of life that seems rationally preferable to us, but in the face of severe doubts about our prospects of success. These doubts are removed in the light of Augustine's claim that God co-operating with us can do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. If Augustine is right, it is realistic for us to hope for a higher degree of conformity to the virtues than we could expect if we trusted in our own resources and neglected the help of God. Though his claims about the prevalence of sin might initially appear pessimistic, he actually avoids the pessimism that, in his view, results from recognizing the psychological facts without their theological explanation.

Augustine does not believe, then, that he undermines the practice of the virtues, as pagan moralists understand them; he seeks to remove the obstacles imposed by human sin, and especially by human arrogance, to the practice of the virtues. The cardinal virtues recognized by pagan moralists require the regulation of passions by rational desire focussed on one's own good and the good of others, especially the good of the society whose good is part of one's own good. Augustine agrees with this conception of the virtues, and claims that we are in a better position to practise them if we recognize our dependence on God for our growth in virtue, and the insufficiency of the goods of this world for our complete happiness.

The good of a human society, judged from a purely human point of view, is 'earthly peace'. Compared with the 'heavenly peace' sought by the city of God, it is incomplete and unstable. But a Christian does not lose interest in earthly peace in the light of heavenly peace. When Paul claims that the sufferings of the present do not match future glory (*Rm.* 8:18), he might be taken to advocate indifference to the worldly goods that make sense of ordinary human virtues. Augustine, however, does not take Paul this way; he claims, against the Stoics, that external goods are really part of the human good, and that they are worth pursuing, though they are secondary to the complete happiness of the afterlife.

This is why Augustine agrees with Jeremiah's call to pray for the peace of Babylon, 'because in her peace is your peace' (*CD* xix 26b). The heavenly city uses the peace of the earthly city because it is necessary for this mortal life (xix 17d), and because it is a way towards heavenly peace (xix 17f). Earthly peace is a solace for the misery of our present condition, in contrast to the joy of happiness that we receive only through heavenly peace

of love that no more certain path to the love of God should be believed possible than charity of a human being towards a human being' (*Mor. Eccl.* 48). 'You love yourself appropriately (salubriter) if you love God more than yourself' (49). See Burnaby, *AD* 90.

(xix 27a). But it is a necessary consolation, because it helps to achieve the human good, so far as it can be achieved in present conditions.

Why does Augustine not take the more radical line that might seem attractive from a Christian point of view, of declaring the good of earthly societies to be irrelevant for those who have their eyes firmly fixed on preparation for the afterlife? This radical attitude is one source of the Christian monasticism that abandons the struggles of ordinary human communities for a more direct pursuit of a supernatural end.[135] Augustine does not take this line, because he does not regard pagan moral philosophy as completely misguided from a Christian point of view. He believes that pagan moral philosophy has identified genuine elements of the human good; since Christianity does not abandon the pursuit of the human good, it retains the appropriate goals of a virtuous life.

When we first confront Augustine's apparently sharp contrasts between the false happiness pursued by pagans and the true happiness pursued by Christians, between the false virtues of pagans and the true virtues that depend on true piety, and between the earthly city and the heavenly city, we may well infer that he intends the Christian outlook to replace pagan morality with a different morality, or to abandon morality altogether for a non-moral goal. The fact that this inference is easy and natural explains why Augustine has been used by Christian writers who have gone in one of these directions, and why a non-Christian reader might find in him a damaging attack on the foundations of Greek pagan moral theory. These inferences, however, do not do justice to Augustine's argument as a whole. If we do not focus exclusively on the sharp contrasts he draws, but attend to the details of his criticism of the pagan outlook, we find that his attack is less radical than it initially appears. He belongs to the tradition in Christian moral thinking that seeks to strengthen and to complete, not to destroy, the outlook of non-theological moral theory.

[135] The relation of Augustine to world-renouncing Christian monasticism is explored by Kirk, *VG*, chs. 5–6, esp. 242–57, 330–46.

16

AQUINAS: WILL

235. Aims

Aquinas has at least three aims in his moral philosophy: (1) He tries to say what Aristotle means, and what an Aristotelian conception of morality commits us to. (2) He tries to show that this conception of morality is defensible on philosophical grounds. (3) He seeks to show that it also satisfies the theological and moral demands of Christian doctrine.[1]

The third aim explains why his fullest treatment of ethics appears in the *Summa Theologiae*. Aquinas also expounds Aristotle's *Ethics* in his commentary, but there he mainly restricts himself to exposition of Aristotle's theory.[2] In the *Summa*, however, he raises wider questions about Aristotelian ethics, and so he discusses many issues that Aristotle does not discuss, and does not even formulate. Questions about, for instance, the relation of the virtues to divine grace and original sin arise only within a specific theological framework. But Aquinas discusses them with reference to an Aristotelian moral theory. He begins his discussion of the infused moral virtues from his Aristotelian conception of a moral virtue. His discussion of divine grace and human freewill relies on an Aristotelian conception of freedom and of the will.[3]

Aquinas' success or failure in his third aim is historically important, since his successors also try to connect moral philosophy with Christian theology. Some object to Aquinas' position by claiming that it is not adequate for the expression of Christian doctrines about human agency, the human good, and their relation to the will of God. Others believe that Christian faith conflicts with and supersedes the outlook of non-theological moral philosophy; a defence of this belief also requires some account of the outlook of moral philosophy.

[1] On these aims cf. §357.

[2] The commentary on the *Ethics* is discussed by Jaffa, *TA*; Gauthier, in Aquinas, *SLE* 235–57; Bourke, '*Ethics*'; and most fully by Doig, *APCE*, who argues for its philosophical (as opposed to theological) character.

[3] 'Freewill' renders 'liberum arbitrium'. This rendering may be misleading, since the Latin does not immediately suggest, as the English does, that the problem primarily concerns the freedom of the will (voluntas). I will render 'arbitrium' by 'choice'. 'Judgment' would perhaps come closest to Aquinas' conception of arbitrium (hence he associates arbitrium with iudicium, and appeals to the use of 'arbitrium' for a verdict (cf. English 'arbitrate'). But his conception rests on his theory of liberum arbitrium, not simply on the ordinary concept of arbitrium; hence a less precise translation is preferable. See §§218, §267.

Aquinas' third aim is also philosophically important. If Christian doctrines rested on conceptions of freedom, responsibility, or merit that are unintelligible or repugnant from the point of view of moral theory, that would be a serious objection to them. If they are both intelligible and morally plausible, they are not open to this objection. The task of showing that Aquinas succeeds in his third aim is too complex for us to attempt in this account of his moral philosophy; but we will find some reasons for believing that his strategy is more plausible than it has sometimes seemed to critics.[4]

Even if Aquinas fails in his third aim, he may succeed in either or both of his first two aims. He does not explicitly separate the different parts of his theory that seek to carry out these different aims. But it is reasonable for us to try to separate them, if we want to see which parts of his position we might accept or reject, and on what grounds.

Aquinas' aims assume some distinction between moral philosophy and moral theology. He does not devote a specific section of the *Summa* to moral philosophy; the work as a whole belongs to moral theology. But he distinguishes arguments and considerations that are proper to moral philosophy; they appeal to human reason and argument, not to the authorities cited by the Christian theologian. Moral philosophy deals with human beings as having freewill and control over their actions; hence a denial that human beings are free would be 'destructive of all moral philosophy and political activity' (*SG* ii 60 §1374; *in Periherm*. i 14 = P xviii 33b), not only of the Christian faith (*Mal*. q6 a1). Considerations about what is excessive or defective, useful or right are the concern of moral philosophy, as distinct from theology (*2Sent*. d24 q2 a2 = P vi 599a).[5] The moral philosopher studies sin as a violation of reason, whereas the theologian studies it as a violation of the divine law.[6]

In looking for moral philosophy in the *Summa*, we are looking for arguments and claims that are defended or defensible without reference to the distinctive sources of Christian dogma. These arguments and claims in Aquinas present us with a system of moral philosophy.

236. Interpretations of Aristotle

Aquinas tries to present an account of ethics that is also the best interpretation of Aristotle. But what sort of interpretation does he offer?

Two familiar ways of conceiving someone's relation to a historical predecessor do not fit Aquinas' aims in the *Summa*: (1) The expositor or commentator, in a narrow sense, is engaged in Aristotelian exegesis. This is Aquinas' aim in his commentaries on Aristotle;

[4] For some discussion of Aquinas' third aim see §343. Sidgwick presents a negative view: '[Aquinas'] effort was, indeed, foredoomed to failure, since it attempted the impossible task of framing a coherent system out of the heterogeneous data furnished by Scripture, the Fathers, the Church, and "the Philosopher"; and whatever philosophic quality is to be found in the work of Thomas belongs to it in spite of, not in consequence of, its method' (*OHE* 148).

[5] On the difference between moral philosophy and theology cf. *2Sent*. d40 q1 a5 = P vi 750a; *3Sent*. d23 q2 a4 qla 2 obj3, ad3 = P vii 251b, 252b. Some critics deny that Aquinas is really engaged in moral philosophy in the *Summa*. See Bradley, *ATHG*, ch. 1; Jordan, 'Ideals'.

[6] See 1-2 q71 a6 ad5: 'The theologian considers sin chiefly in so far as it is an offence against God. But the moral philosopher considers it chiefly in so far as it is contrary to reason'. Aquinas' position is discussed by Vasquez, *Disp*. 97 c.3, p. 658; Suarez, *Leg*. ii 6.17.

he seeks, as other commentators do, to explain particular passages by reference to other passages, and especially by spelling out compressed or inexplicit arguments and claims with the help of resources that Aristotle provides.[7] (2) 'Neo-Aristotelian' theorists incorporate Aristotelian insights in a theory that examines different questions from those that concern Aristotle. If, for instance, we try to show how an Aristotelian account of the virtues offers a reasonable option distinct from Kantian and utilitarian conceptions of morality, we approach Aristotle with a different philosophical agenda. Different 'neo-' theories may incorporate more or less Aristotle. Though the earlier model may be a genuine and deep source of inspiration for the later work, the aims and spirit of the later work are different.[8]

To understand and to evaluate Aquinas' use of Aristotle, it is useful to introduce a further option: (3) One might be a 'defender' of Aristotle without being either simply an expositor or simply a neo-Aristotelian theorist. To defend Aristotle without embedding one's defence in a neo-Aristotelian theory is to notice a difficulty or question that Aristotle raises, and to answer it with something that is available to Aristotle, but not actually formulated or used by him.

This conception of a defender rests on assumptions about what is 'available' to Aristotle. Perhaps a defence is available to Aristotle if he might reasonably be expected to think of it had he persistently pursued questions that a contemporary might have asked him. An expositor may find that Aristotle does not take up a particular question or that he leaves a loose end. Here a defender may point out that Aristotle could have taken up this question and answered it, though perhaps not without some modification of other things he says. We may then come to see that his position is more defensible, given what Aristotle himself takes to be important, if he goes in one direction than if he goes in another.

This division between expositors, defenders, and neo-theorists does not exclude the possibility of one person's pursuing all three approaches. But it may suggest some of the right questions to ask about Aquinas. While he sometimes speaks as an expositor of Aristotle, and sometimes as a neo-Aristotelian theorist, some important questions concern his success or failure as a defender of Aristotle.[9] A defence does not fail simply because it relies on claims or arguments that Aristotle does not make. But it fails if it clearly relies on claims or arguments that basically change the character of Aristotle's theory for reasons that he could not reasonably be expected to accept, given his basic outlook. To decide whether a defence succeeds or fails requires some philosophical judgment on whether a particular claim is 'basic' in Aristotle's position. Hence we cannot decide on purely historical grounds whether Aquinas' theory is basically Aristotelian or distorts Aristotle, if 'purely historical' grounds exclude philosophical evaluation.[10]

[7] On Aquinas' approach to Aristotle see Chenu, *UST* 153n57. On Aquinas' concern with the intention of the author being discussed he cites *ST* 1a q79 a7 ad1; 1-2 q50 a1 (where Aquinas argues about the intention of Aristotle by appealing both to the immediate context and to what he says in another work). On the purpose of philosophy see *in DC* i, lect. 22: 'The study of philosophy does not aim at knowledge of what people have thought, but at knowledge of how the truth of things is'. See also Doig, *APCE* xii–xiv. Cf. Scotus' comment on Aristotle, §357n2.

[8] Contrasting examples of neo-Aristotelian views may be found in McDowell, *MVR* and Foot, *NG*.

[9] On approaches to authorities see Chenu, *UST* 144–55.

[10] Contrast Kent's remarks on a 'historical reading of the *Ethics*', *VW* 74, and on 'distortions' of Aristotle, 93.

237. The Form of Aquinas' Argument

To defend Aristotle, Aquinas derives his ethical theory from conditions on rational agency. His theory seems to be reductive, because of two claims: (1) The facts that vindicate Aquinas' account of freedom, happiness, and the virtues are facts that, in his view, we must already recognize if we are to understand rational agents and their actions. (2) But the facts that we recognize in understanding rational agents do not seem to be facts that we must already recognize as facts about freedom, happiness, and the virtues.

Only the second claim affirms the priority that we need for a reduction. If we affirm the first and deny the second, we claim that knowledge of morality and knowledge of rational agency are inter-dependent, but not that the knowledge of rational agency is prior. But Aquinas does not affirm the second claim as clearly as he affirms the first. Does acceptance of his claims about rational agency depend on any of his moral theory? Must we, for instance, already agree that rational agents are free, or that they pursue happiness, if we are to accept his account of rational agency?

To see whether Aquinas either intends to offer a reductive argument or actually offers one, we should try to set out his position in the order that a reductive argument would demand. We should not rely on any claims about freedom or morality in explaining or defending his claims about rational agency. If these constraints prevent us from attributing an intelligible or coherent position to Aquinas, we will have some reason to suppose that he does not intend to present a reductive argument, but intends simply to demonstrate the coherence of claims about rational agents and about freedom and morality.

If we accept a cogent reductive argument, we can defend a true account of morality without appeal to any further facts than those facts about rational agency that we must already recognize independently of morality. This reductive claim is both ontological and epistemological. It says that if the facts about rational agency are fixed, then the facts about morality are fixed too. It also says that once we recognize the facts about rational agency, we have sufficient reason for accepting a particular moral theory too. It does not follow, however, that once we recognize the facts about rational agency, we also recognize that we have sufficient reason for accepting the moral theory. Aquinas tries to show us that we have this sufficient reason.

Aquinas seeks an account that unifies the aspects of moral theory that concern prudence, universal conscience (synderesis), natural law, and the ultimate good. We might resist this unifying tendency; these aspects of moral theory might be derived from more than one source of moral principles. It is not obvious, for instance, that the moral requirements imposed by natural law are just the ones that can be reached by reflexion on what one needs for one's own happiness. We might even suppose that if we attempt to reduce the one set of requirements to the other, we lose some essential moral content; the impersonal, objective requirements of natural law may appear to be different from the advice that self-interested agents might give themselves. Similarly, it is not obvious that the principles grasped by conscience are just the ones that the prudent person relies on in deliberation about happiness.

Aquinas, however, argues that all these apparently different sources of moral principles are really the same, and that they all rely on just the same basic facts about rational

agency.[11] His claims about agency affect the details as well as the general aims of his moral theory.

238. Aquinas and Naturalism

The claim that moral principles express truths about rational agency may appear to fit a Kantian theory better than it fits an Aristotelian theory. Kant (according to some readers) appeals to a priori truths about the abstract form of practical reason and rational agency, in abstraction from facts about actual human beings, whereas Aristotle recognizes the relevance of psychological and social facts of the sort that Kant rejects as 'mere' anthropology. Aristotle (on this view) is a naturalist and Kant rejects naturalism. If our description of Aquinas is right, he seems more Kantian than Aristotelian.

This contrast, however, between Kant and Aristotle is misleading. For it suggests that appeals to human nature must rely on contingent and empirical facts about human nature (since they do not apply to all possible rational agents, but rest on empirical information about particular human beings).[12] Our account of Aristotle's naturalism should have cast some doubt on any such understanding of naturalism.[13] Aristotle does not rely only on contingent empirical facts about human beings; his account of the human function and of the division of the soul is not a generalization about human beings, but an account of the essence of a human being as a rational animal. Aquinas' position, therefore, might be Aristotelian and naturalist even if it describes facts that Kant believes are known a priori.

But if Aquinas' argument is reductive in the sense that we suggested, it opposes Kant's view that, apart from our moral beliefs, we have no reason to attribute freedom to human beings. Sometimes Kant recognizes a self-sufficient point of view of 'nature', which leaves us no room for the recognition of freedom, responsibility, or good and bad wills. Since freedom rests on morality, which is outside nature, the point of view of nature cannot be the only point of view that grasps reality.[14]

This Kantian position conflicts not only with a reductive version of Aquinas' position, but also with the version that asserts coherence and mutual support between truths about rational agency and truths about morality. We might say that, for Aquinas, the moral point of view stays within the point of view of nature, because it introduces no non-natural claims about causation and freedom. Alternatively, we might say that he denies the possibility of a point of view of nature that excludes freedom. From one point of view, Aquinas demands less for morality than Kant demands. From another point of view, he demands more for nature than Kant demands.

The main disagreement concerns the non-moral understanding of human beings. In Kant's view, we can achieve this understanding from the point of view of nature, which does not require us to understand human beings as free agents. But in Aquinas' view, the understanding of human action as part of nature requires the recognition of human freedom.

[11] See §309.

[12] This way of stating the issue reflects a Kantian (and controversial) view about the connexion between the empirical and the contingent.

[13] See §§75–6.

[14] On the opposition of freedom and nature see, e.g., Kant, *KrV* A547/B575.

He believes that reasons, action, and freedom have a place in our understanding of the natural world, and therefore have a place in morality.

Claims about agency are especially important in this dispute. Aquinas does not seem to believe that we must already take the point of view of morality, as distinct from the causal and explanatory attitude, in order to see that human beings are free agents. He believes that a complete account of human beings as natural objects requires us to recognize that they are free, and that they pursue a good that consists in their perfection. Even if he is right, he may not yet have found a sufficient basis for an account of morality; but he has a more plausible basis than he would have if he confined himself to the natural point of view, as Kant understands it.

This dispute about the division between nature and freedom is one major point of contrast between the Aristotelian and the Kantian approach to morality. Some believe it is not a dispute mainly about morality; perhaps the Aristotelian approach rests on a view of the world that may have been tenable for Aristotle and Aquinas, but is no longer tenable in the light of modern science. If, for instance, the Aristotelian approach rests on aspects of Aristotelian teleology that later science has refuted, anyone who rejects the Aristotelian world view must accept Kant's view about what is included in nature.[15]

This account of part of the dispute between an Aristotelian and a Kantian position raises a question about Aquinas: do his claims about rational agency rest on assumptions that are scientifically incredible? If they do not, then either the incredible claims enter with the transition from rational agency to morality, or else his position cannot be dismissed as scientifically incredible. If we cannot dismiss it on this ground, we should compare it with the Kantian position on philosophical grounds.

239. The Structure of Aquinas' Ethical Theory

In the Prima Secundae, Aquinas begins his discussion of ethics with the ultimate end. Unlike Aristotle, he gives a reason for beginning here. His treatment of ethics examines human beings in so far as they are made in the image of God, and thereby are the source of their own actions, because they have freewill and power over their actions.[16] The ultimate end comes first because it is the goal of free action, and the basis for understanding it. The next two sections of the Prima Secundae depart from Aristotle's order of exposition, to examine human actions and passions. Since happiness is about distinctively human actions, as opposed to other sorts of actions done by human beings, we need an account of human actions in order to understand the actions that achieve happiness. The moral virtues are primarily concerned with human actions. Since happiness, being the good proper to a human being, involves properly human actions, the actions characteristic of the virtues are especially relevant to happiness.[17] But the virtues are concerned not only with the distinctively human

[15] See Darwall, *BMIO* 7–8; Korsgaard, *SN* 3–5, 21–3.

[16] 'Since, as Damascene says, a human being is said to be made in the image of God, in so far as by 'image' is meant something with understanding, free by its judgment (arbitrium) and with power in itself', . . . it remains for us to consider God's image, i.e. a human being, in so far as he also is the source (principium) of his actions, as having freewill and power over his own actions' (*ST* 1–2 Prol.). On Damascene cf. 1a q93 a9; *Ver.* q24 a2 sc1.

[17] 'And since happiness is the good proper to a human being, those acts that are properly human are more closely connected to happiness than those that are common to a human being and other animals. First, then, we must consider

and rational actions, but also with actions on passion, which human beings share with other animals; hence a discussion of passions introduces the account of the virtues. Aquinas treats the passions after the will because the will affects the passions; though we share passions with non-rational animals (1-2 q6 intr.), the passions do not move us to action in the same way as they move non-rational animals.

Aquinas' claims about virtue and happiness imply that the virtues result from the exercise of freewill (1-2 q55 a1 ad2). Happiness is the ultimate end for free rational agents who are self-movers and who control their actions; and so if the moral virtues promote happiness, they exercise the freewill of rational agents. Since the moral virtues require the right relation between the rational and the non-rational desires of a rational agent, we can exercise our freewill so as to reach the right relation between rational and non-rational desires; for if the virtues were not in our control, they would not be primary elements of happiness, which primarily consists in actions that are in our control.

Aquinas' claims about virtue assume that rational desires can control and modify non-rational desires. If it were not up to us, to some significant degree, to have non-rational desires of the right intensity for the right objects, it would not be up to us to have the virtues, and the virtues would not be primary elements of happiness. Hence the right account of the relation between the passions and the will is a pre-condition for the right account of the virtues, and for the right account of the sources of sin.

This discussion of action and passion comes between the treatment of the ultimate end (Book i of Aristotle's *Ethics*) and the treatment of states and virtues (Book ii of the *Ethics*). Aquinas' predecessors do not follow exactly this order, but reflexion on Aristotle supports it. Aristotle introduces a discussion of the voluntary between the general account of the virtues and the description of the particular virtues (*EN* iii 1–5), and in the account of the virtues, he refers briefly to the division between passion and rational desire, and to the distinctive features of states of character (ii 5). Aquinas clarifies Aristotle's position by setting out these aspects of his theory of action before the account of the virtues.[18]

The central element in this argument is Aquinas' account of the will. Once we understand the nature of the will and its relation to intellect and to passion, we also understand the source of freedom, the basis of ethics, and the foundation of virtue. For a rational agent essentially has a will that necessarily pursues an ultimate end and acts on deliberation about what promotes that end. Deliberation influences action both directly, by causing action on rational desire, and indirectly, by interacting with the passions. The nature of will and of deliberation explain why rational agents are free and responsible, why they necessarily pursue their own happiness, and why they need virtues, both moral and intellectual, to

those acts that are proper to a human being, and secondly, those that are common to a human being and the other animals and are called passions' (1-2 q6 intr.).

[18] Jordan, 'Ideals', discusses the structure and organization of *ST*, including 1–2. He remarks that the order Aquinas chooses is not Aristotle's, but he does not discuss reasons that might persuade a reader of Aristotle that Aristotle might have chosen a better order. At 87–9 he discusses the treatment of the ultimate end and of theory of action.

achieve this happiness. The relation of the will to passions explains why we act freely even when we do not act directly on will and deliberation, and why virtues require the perfection of the passions as well as the will.

240. Augustine and Aristotle

This focus on the will has no explicit precedent in Aristotle. It seems to reflect the influence of Christian moralists, and especially Augustine. Aquinas begins from Augustine's claim that the will is that by which we sin and live rightly, and so cannot be attached unchangeably either to good or to evil (1a q82 a2 sc; *Ver.* q22 a6 sc1, quoting Augustine, *Retract.* i 9).[19] He proceeds to defend Augustine's philosophical and theological claims about the will and its relation to freedom, virtue, sin, and grace.

To defend Augustine, however, Aquinas has to interpret him carefully. He often cites Augustine in the questions on the ultimate end and on human action, so that he can fix the right interpretation through a discussion of the different philosophical issues. In many of the objections that begin his questions, Aquinas cites Augustine in order to examine the apparent difficulties that arise from an Augustinian point of view. He also cites him as the authority in the 'sed contra' that follows the objections; sometimes cites him both in the objections and in the 'sed contra'. A simple comparison of citations might lead us to the hasty conclusion that Augustine contradicts himself. To refute this hasty conclusion, Aquinas' replies often return to the passages from Augustine that were quoted in the objections, to show that a reasonable interpretation makes Augustine consistent both with himself and with Aquinas.[20]

But though Aquinas constantly keeps Augustine in mind, and though he agrees with Augustine's emphasis on the will, he does not begin from a distinctively Augustinian account of the will. In speaking of 'will' (voluntas) he simply uses the standard Latin translation of '*boulêsis*', Aristotle's term for rational desire,[21] and in speaking of the 'voluntary' (voluntarium) he refers to Aristotle's division between the voluntary (*hekousion*) and the involuntary (*akousion*). He does not force Aristotle into an Augustinian framework. On the

[19] Cf. *Mal.* q3 a3 sc1–2. He also agrees with Augustine's claim that unless something is voluntary it cannot be a sin (*Ver.* q22 a6 sc2, quoting Augustine, *VR* 14; *Retract.* i 13). He begins his discussion of virtue with Augustine's claim that virtue is the good use of freewill (1-2 q55 a1 ad2); the rest of his discussion seeks to clarify Augustine's claim, and so to fix the sense in which it is true.

[20] In the treatises on the last end and on human action Augustine is cited in the initial objections: q4 a3; a7; q6 a8; q9a1; a2; a5; a6; q10 a4; q12 a4. He is cited in the 'sed contra' at q1 a3; a6; a7; q2 a7; a8; q3 a1; a5; q6 a4; q11 a1. He is cited in the objections and the 'sed contra' at q1 a8; q4 a1; q15 a4; q16 a1; a2. He is cited in the objections, 'sed contra', and replies at q5 a8; q11 a2; a3 (also corpus); a4; q12 a1; q16 a3; q17 a9. He is cited both in the objections and in the replies at q9 a5; q12 a3; a4; q15 a1; q17 a5; a9. He is cited in the corpus of the article at q4 a8; q5 a3, and in both objections and corpus at q1 a5; q3 a4 (also in replies).

[21] The translation is justified by the correspondence of the non-technical uses of 'velle' and 'voluntas' in Ciceronian Latin with '*boulesthai*' and '*boulêsis*' in Greek. (In *TD* iv 12 Cicero translates the Stoic term found in (e.g.) DL vii 116.) Cf. §218n14. *Boulêsis* is prominent in Damascene's account of thought and action (under the influence of Maximus the Confessor; see Gauthier, *EN* i 262–5; 'Maxime' 52–7). Aquinas uses Damascene's remarks on *thelêsis* and *boulêsis* to clarify the relation of will to freewill. See 1a q83 a4 obj1, sc; 3a q18 a3 obj1; Damasc. *EF* 36.55.

contrary, he sets out from an Aristotelian position, as he conceives it, and seeks to show that Augustine's claims are all defensible within an Aristotelian framework.[22]

Following Aristotle, he distinguishes will, as rational desire (*boulêsis*), from non-rational desire (*epithumia* and *thumos*). Since will is essentially rational desire, it realizes a capacity distinct from non-rational sensory desire (*Ver.* q22 a4); the different ways in which we grasp the objects of rational and non-rational desires mark two capacities (1a q80 a2).[23] This rationalist conception of *boulêsis* rests on solid Aristotelian support.[24]

241. Rational Agency, Voluntary Action, and Freedom

Aquinas believes that if we recognize the will, as Aristotle conceives it, we can grasp the connexions between some basic claims in Aristotelian ethics. We believe that we are rational agents with the capacity for practical reasoning and deliberation, that we act voluntarily, and that we have freewill. Aquinas recognizes that the questions 'Do we act voluntarily?' (1-2 q6 a1) and 'Do we have freewill?' (1a q83 a1) may appear to be separate;[25] he sees that his conditions for rational agency, Aristotle's conditions for voluntary agency, and the conditions for freewill may appear to mark three different features of rational agents. But he believes that we act voluntarily and we have freewill just in so far as we have wills and are capable of practical reasoning and deliberation. A correct account of the will and the passions justifies us (in his view) in claiming that we act voluntarily and have freewill. Rational agents with wills control their actions, whereas non-rational agents are moved by their desires without the intervention of will, and therefore do not control their actions. Hence rational agents act voluntarily, according to Aristotle's criteria, and have freewill. Aquinas, therefore, defends a reduction of the voluntary and of freewill to the exercise of will in rational choice.[26]

His reductive argument might be questioned. On the one hand, his conditions seem too strict to cover all voluntary action, as Aristotle conceives it; for Aristotle seems to recognize voluntary actions that do not express rational agency. On the other hand, they seem too broad to pick out free actions; for it seems possible for rational agents to lack freewill. Aquinas can answer these objections if he can appeal to criteria for voluntariness and freedom that he and his opponents accept, and can show that his conditions satisfy these criteria. Freewill presents him with the more difficult task; for it is more difficult to find mutually acceptable criteria. Many of Aquinas' contemporaries and successors argue that his Aristotelian principles do not support an appropriately robust conception of freedom. To decide whether these critics are right or wrong, we need to examine his account of the will.

[22] Some of Aquinas' reflexions on Augustine can be found in the various passages cited in Augustine; see, e.g., §221.

[23] He recognizes that in Aristotle's list of the different types of capacities of the soul, desire is mentioned without distinction (*Ver.* q22 a4 obj 4), but he appeals to Aristotle's division in *DA* 432b5 between *boulêsis* and the other desires (*in DA* iii 14 §§802–3; 1a q82 a5 sc; q87 a4; *Ver.* q22 a4 sc1).

[24] On the suggestion that Aquinas' interpretation is anachronistic see §97.

[25] See §260n1.

[26] Reduction: see §237.

242. Will and Properly Human Actions

Will is essentially rational desire,[27] because it is determined by free judgment,[28] in contrast to sensory desire, which operates without free judgment.[29] Since human beings have essentially rational desires, they have reflective control over their choices, and so they are not purely passive in relation to their desires. We exercise free judgment and reflective control because rational desire conceives its object 'in accordance with some universal character (ratio), as when it desires something because it is good' (1a 80 a2 ad2).

To have a will and to act on it is not only to pursue some end, but also to move or guide oneself towards an end, rather than simply tending towards an end.[30] Human beings do this in so far as they perform 'human actions', properly so called. These belong to human beings as such, who differ from irrational creatures by controlling their own actions (suorum actuum dominus, 1-2 q1 a1) through will and reason; actions proceeding 'from deliberated will' are properly human actions. 'Actions of a human being' that are not properly human actions include unconscious movements and reflexes (tapping one's feet, stroking one's beard).[31]

This division between properly human actions and actions of human beings does not mention human actions on passion. Non-rational animals act, as Aquinas agrees, on their sensory desires, their passions; in doing so, they seem to act for the sake of an end (q1 a2). Human beings also seem to act on passions, not always on deliberated will; and when we act on passions, we act for the sake of an end. But Aquinas seems to exclude these from properly human actions; his treatment of the nature of human action distinguishes properly human actions from the actions common to human and other animals, which are actions on passion.[32]

[27] Voluntas nominat rationalem appetitum, 1-2 q6 a2 ad1. Cf. 1a q81 a1; q87 a4; 1-2, q6 introd.; q8 a1.

[28] Will is 'a desire following the apprehension by the one who desires in accordance with free judgment. And of this sort is rational or intellectual desire, which is called the will' (1-2 q26 a1). Cf. 1a q82 a5; q87 a4; 1-2, q6 introd.; q8 a1. I use 'desire' for 'appetitus', which Aquinas uses to translate '*orexis*'. This may cause confusion, since some philosophers distinguish will from desire. Moreover, Aquinas also ascribes appetitus to non-conscious beings; cf. 1a q80 a1 on natural appetitus. But it is difficult to find a rendering that will convey this wide scope of appetitus. 'Appetite' seems even less suitable than 'desire', except on etymological grounds. I use 'appetite' to translate '*epithumia*' (for which Aquinas uses 'concupiscentia').

[29] '[Sensory appetite] follows apprehension by the one who desires, but from necessity, not from free judgment. And of this sort is sensory desire in beasts; in human beings, however, it has some share in freedom, to the extent that it obeys reason' (1-2 q26 a1).

[30] 'Nevertheless it must be observed that a thing tends to an end, by its action or movement, in two ways: in one way, as moving itself towards the end, as a human being does; in another way, as moved by another towards the end, ... Therefore those things that have reason, move themselves to an end, because they control their actions through freewill, which is a capacity of will and reason' (1-2 q1 a2). The relevant conception of control (dominium) is helpfully discussed, with special reference to *Ver.* q24 a2, by Gallagher, 'Will' 564–9.

[31] 'Actions of this sort are not properly human actions; since they do not proceed from deliberation of reason, which is the proper principle of human acts. Therefore they have indeed an imagined end, but not one presented through reason' (1-2 q1 a1 ad3). Reflex actions are done 'without the attention of the intellect' (*SG* iii 2 §1876). On human actions cf. *2Sent.* d25 q1 a3 sol = P vi 615b.

[32] 'Now among human acts some are proper to human beings, while others are common to human beings and other animals. And since happiness is the proper good of human beings, the acts that are properly human are more closely related to happiness than the acts that are common to human beings and other animals ... which <acts> are called passions of the soul' (1-2 q6 intr.).

He does not really intend, however, to exclude actions on passion from properly human actions. Properly human actions are voluntary, since they proceed from the will (voluntas);[33] but actions on passion are voluntary if they are appropriately related to the will (1-2 q6 a6–7; q10 a3). Hence actions on passion are included, through their relation to the will, among the properly human actions, and therefore among those that are directed towards an ultimate end. The discussion of voluntary action shows how this is possible.

A grasp of properly human actions, therefore, requires some grasp of Aquinas' views on the passions. Though the Prima Secundae discusses human action before the passions, the account of action presupposes a conception of the passions; the order of discussion in the First Part, where the passions come before the will, is in some ways more helpful. It will be useful, therefore, to introduce Aquinas' views about non-rational agency and about the passions before we go further with his account of properly human action; for he intends his view of human action to be flexible enough to include both deliberately willed action and action on passion that is suitably related to the will.

243. Rational v. Non-rational Agents

Aquinas' description of the will and action explains his claim that rational agents are self-directing in some way that distinguishes them from non-rational agents. The relevant features of rational agents are easier to grasp if we compare rational agents with non-rational agents who lack these features.

Non-rational agents lack the concept of an end, and 'therefore they cannot direct anything towards an end' (1-2 q1 a2). They cannot aim at an end, because they do not 'consider that through their movement they can achieve an end, which is proper to one who aims' (q12 a5 ad3). They lack the perfect knowledge of an end, which consists not only in apprehending the thing that is an end, but also in a grasp (cognitio) of the character (ratio) of the end and of the relation of the means to the end (q6 a2).

Non-rational animals do not reach satisfaction (fruitio) in the achievement of an end, because satisfaction demands a perfect cognitive grasp of the end, and such a grasp requires a grasp of the 'universal character of end and good' (q11 a2), including a grasp of the relation between a particular good and the final good (cf. q11 a2 ad2). This cognitive grasp distinguishes will from sensory desire. Rational agents 'are inclined to good with the cognition by which they grasp the character itself of good' (1a q59 a1).[34] This is why they do not have their inclination determined for them from outside, but determine it for themselves (*Ver.* q22 a4).

Why is this not true of a non-rational agent? A dog may stop eating or drinking if its attention is distracted; is it not capable, then, of being inclined towards something

[33] 'And since the acts properly called human are the voluntary acts, from the fact that will is rational desire, which is proper to human beings, we must consider acts in so far as they are voluntary' (1-2 q6 intr.).

[34] Non-rational agents 'are inclined towards good with some sort of cognition (cognitio)—not in such a way that they grasp (cognoscere) the character itself of the good, but they grasp some sort of particular good, as the sense does that grasps sweet, white, and so on' (1a q59 a1).

different? Rational agents may also stop what they are doing if they imagine something unappealing; if I am eating oysters and they suddenly seem slimy and disgusting, I may stop eating them. But surely non-rational agents can change their preferences in this way too.

Aquinas might reply that, in the case just described, I do not direct my action towards the object of desire. In directing my action towards an end, I endorse the action as a means to an end that I value in relation to my other ends. But if I find oysters slimy and disgusting, I may not believe they are bad to eat; despite my aversion, I might decide that they are good to eat, and direct my action towards eating them (if, for instance, I believe there is nothing wrong with them and there is no other suitable food available). An aversion does not necessarily change the evaluation that directs our action towards an object.

Aquinas marks this contrast between rational and non-rational agency by distinguishing determination to a particular good from determination to a universal good. Since the object of the will is the universal good, creatures that lack reason cannot have a will because they cannot grasp a universal good, but are determined to some particular good (1-2 q1 a2 ad3).[35] This is why they lack election.

For similar reasons rational agents pursue a universal good, and are not necessarily determined to any particular good: 'because the good is of many sorts (multiplex), the will is not necessarily determined to one thing' (1a q82 a2 ad1; 1-2 q10 a2). The will tends towards the universal good grasped by reason, whereas sensory desire tends only towards a particular good grasped by the sensory power (1a q80 a2 ad2; 1-2 q19 a3).[36]

Aquinas claims that since rational agents conceive and pursue a universal good, they differ from non-rational agents in so far as they grasp the concept of an end, and they direct and move themselves towards an end instead of being directed and moved towards it. The contrast between activity and passivity helps to explain how the will differs from a passion in rational agents, and how rational agents are agents to a higher degree than non-rational agents are. But what is the connexion between pursuit of an ultimate end and active agency?

We can see some connexion if we consider how recognition of an end as an end might differ from simply being moved towards an end. Perhaps I could recognize bread as bread, and notice that sometimes I find myself wanting to eat bread. This might still, in Aquinas' view, fall short of recognizing eating bread as an end of mine; to recognize it as an end (we might argue) I have to recognize it as something desirable, something I find worth pursuing. In saying that I find it worth pursuing, I might also remark that I do not find it desirable to eat bread in all circumstances; to say when I find it desirable, I have to relate it to the other things I find worth pursuing. To relate it to these other things, I have to have a conception of some more universal good—something that makes eating bread desirable on the occasions when it is desirable.

[35] '. . . sensory desire is determined to some one particular thing in accordance with the direction of nature, whereas the will is determined to some one common thing, the good in accordance with the direction of nature, but is in an undetermined condition in relation to particular goods' (1-2 q13 a2).

[36] It is possible for a non-rational passion to be directed against something universal, but not possible for it to be directed against something qua universal (1-2 q29 a6). A sheep, for instance, may hate wolves universally, in so far as everything that looks like a wolf will excite the same reaction; but it does not follow that the sheep has picked out the class of wolves and formed a view about it.

If Aquinas accepts some argument such as this, he can explain why 'grasping the concept of an end' in the intended sense requires grasp of a universal good, and why it implies self-direction. I direct my own action, instead of simply being moved by features of external objects, in so far as I assess my initial value judgments about external objects in the light of my other value judgments. My action is determined not simply by whether I find this or that object attractive, but also by the broader evaluative judgments that constitute myself. Since rational agents guide their actions by a conception of the end that recognizes what is worthwhile in one or another action and end, Aquinas believes that directing one's own action, knowing the end, and presenting the end to oneself, all involve one another and all involve a grasp of some universal good.

Non-rational agents, therefore, lack control over their actions, and so are not self-movers. Though they act for an end,[37] they do not act for an ultimate end, since they do not move themselves, but are moved by something else. Human beings are self-movers because they have control (dominium)[38] over their actions, by having freewill, which is a 'capacity of will and reason' (q1 a2).[39]

Non-rational agents lack control of their actions because they are naturally determined to follow the desire that naturally arises in them from sense-perception and their natural constitution. Hence they are moved by a natural instinct, but they do not direct their movement towards an end (q12 a5).[40] Their inclination is not in their own power.[41] They lack consent because they lack the capacity of a rational creature to apply or not to apply its desire to one or another object (q15 a2); consent is an active rather than a passive determination of desire (q15 a2 ad1). They lack election because they are not in a position to elect one thing among a number of possible objects of election.

Sensory desire, therefore, 'is determined to some one particular thing in accordance with the direction of nature', whereas the rational will is determined to the ultimate end, but not to the particular goods that it elects.[42] Non-rational agents act on their judgment (iudicium)

[37] Even non-conscious natural objects (ea quae omnino cognitione carent, q1 a2), act for an end.

[38] Cf. 1a q29 a1.

[39] Quoted from Lombard, *2Sent.* d24 c3: 'And it is called "free" with reference to the will, which can be turned in either direction. But it is called "arbitrium" with reference to reason, to which that capacity or ability belongs, and to which it also belongs to discriminate between good and evil.'

[40] 'For an animal on the sight of something pleasant is unable not to have an appetite (concupiscere) for it, because those animals do not have mastery over their inclination, so that they do not act, but rather are acted on (non agunt, sed aguntur), as Damascene says' (*Ver.* q22 a4). See Damasc. *EF* 36 Kotter (= ii 22): 'In non-rational animals impulse (*hormê*) towards action immediately follows *orexis*, because their *orexis* is non-rational. That is why the desire of non-rational things is neither called *thelêsis* nor *boulêsis*; for *thelêsis* is a rational and free (*autexousios*) natural desire. But in the case of human beings, since they are rational, the natural desire is led rather than leading; for a human being is moved freely (*autexousiôs*) and with reason, since the cognitive and the vital capacities are joined together in him. And so he desires freely, wills (*bouletai*) freely, freely inquires and examines, freely deliberates, freely judges, freely is disposed (*diatithetai*), freely decides, freely has an impulse, and freely acts, in the case of things that are according to nature' (lines 86–94 Kotter). In c.41 (= ii 27) Damascene argues that the difference between being led by nature and leading it lies in whether or not we can oppose (*antilegein*) a natural desire. Our capacity to oppose it is the basis of our being subject to praise and blame.

[41] '[A rational nature] has the inclination itself in its power, so that it is not necessary for it to be inclined towards an apprehended object of desire (appetibile), but it is able to be inclined or not to be inclined. And so the inclination itself is not determined for him by something else, but by [the rational nature] itself' (*Ver.* q22 a4). Cf. *Ver.* q24 a2 sc 2; Damasc. *EF* 41 Kotter (= ii 27), lines 15–22 (which uses *agousin* and *agontai*; 'lead' and 'are led' are the right renderings, so that the Latin is inexact). This passage is widely used, for different purposes. Ockham, *OT* i 501 (quoted in §388), uses it in support of indeterminism.

[42] 'Now the difference between sensory desire and will is that . . . sensory desire is determined to some one particular thing, in accordance with the direction of nature, whereas will, while being determined to one common thing, namely

about what is to be done, but their judgment is determined to one thing. They do not 'judge from their own judgment',[43] and so they do not have complete freedom, but only a conditioned freedom (*Ver.* q24 a2 = M 438b). Hence we can say that they act 'of their own accord',[44] but not from free election (*Ver.* q24 a2 ad1).

244. The Passivity of the Passions

This contrast between rational agents, moved to action by will and reason, and non-rational agents who have no will, but are moved simply by their sensory desires, reflects the nature of the passions; for they explain the goal-directed movements of animals, without reference to reason and universal goodness. By understanding how passions explain actions, we can understand the difference from explanations that introduce will.[45]

An account of the passions is also relevant to human agency because human beings are rational, but not purely rational. They are moved by other impulses that do not belong to the will. Since we act on passions, we act as non-rational animals do. But since we are rational agents, passions in us are open to influences that non-rational agents lack.[46]

Passions include the states of the soul that Plato and Aristotle attribute to its two non-rational parts. Aquinas takes both of these parts to belong to sensory desire, in contrast to intellectual desire, which he identifies with the will.[47] The difference between sensory desire and will corresponds to the difference between sensory and intellectual cognition.[48] Both types of desire tend towards particular external things, but intellectual desire 'is moved towards them in accordance with some universal character' (1a q80 a2 ad2). Sensory desires are based simply on sensory cognition of an object as apparently attractive, not on the further recognition of it as embodying some universal character, which would (in Aquinas' view) require the pursuit of an ultimate good.[49]

We might doubt whether the passions are in themselves non-rational, by pointing out that we regularly attribute states that seem like passions, such as love and joy, to the will or to purely rational beings (God and the angels; cf. 1a q20 a1 ad1).[50] Aquinas answers that in these beings love, joy, and so on are not passions. The names of some passions also refer to purely rational states that resemble specific passions. 'Love', for instance, refers not

the good, in accordance with the direction of nature, is undetermined in relation to particular goods. And for that reason it belongs properly to the will to elect, not to sensory desire, which is the only desire in non-rational animals. And that is why election does not fit non-rational animals' (1-2 q13 a2).

[43] One might translate this phrase 'about their own judgment' (iudicare de suo iudicio). See MacDonald, 'Libertarian'.

[44] Or 'on their own initiative' (sua sponte); cf. *in EN* §435.

[45] Jordan, 'Ideals' 89, discusses the prominence of the passions in *ST* 1–2, in comparison with Aquinas' predecessors. At 88n32 he appeals to *in EN* iv 17 (§882) to support the claim that Aquinas thinks Aristotle relegated a treatment of passions to the *Rhetoric*; in fact Aquinas makes this claim only about some passions.

[46] Knuuttila, *EAMP*, ch. 3, discusses Aquinas and his predecessors on emotions. See also Ockham, *OT* ix 186–8.

[47] On sensory v. intellectual desire see 1a q80 a2; q81 a2; 1-2 q22 a3.

[48] 1a q80 a2: 'Because what is grasped through intellect is of another kind than what is grasped through sense, it follows that intellectual desire is of another kind than sensory desire'.

[49] The passions are non-rational by involving passivity and suffering. A subject does not have a passion, in the proper sense, simply by being receptive; if it is to be passive, it must also be changed by what it receives (1-2 q22 a1). Passions, therefore, do not belong to the rational part of the soul, or to the will in its own right (q22 a3). King, 'Passions', esp. 102–10, discusses the passivity of the passions.

[50] For Augustine's view on these apparent passions see §221.

only to the passion of love, but also to intellectual love. This rational state differs from a passion because it is not necessarily attracted by its object, but pursues it in accordance with the 'free judgment' (liberum iudicium) of the will.[51] Similarly, the will's pursuit of the final good is necessary, but not a passion; the will has an 'inclination' (1a q82 a1), and inclination belongs to all desire (1a q81 a1), not only to passions. A subject moved by passions is not merely inclined, but also 'drawn' or 'attracted' towards the object (q22 a1–2).

How is this distinction between inclination and passive attraction to be marked?[52] In some cases, if a subject is attracted to a given object, it withdraws from what is suitable to itself in order to pursue the object; that is why illness seems to be more of a 'passion' (i.e., suffering, undergoing) than health is (q22 a1). If something interacts with external objects in the normal way appropriate for a healthy organism, we are less inclined to say it is passive or that things are happening to it; but if it has to be restored to health by external intervention, we are more inclined to treat this as a passion. We suppose that x is passive in relation to y to the extent that x's interaction with y is determined by features of x and y that are largely independent of the other features of x that constitute the tendency of x itself.[53]

This basis for distinguishing x's passivity from x's activity depends on how much we attribute to x itself.[54] In some cases, no doubt, the distinction is arbitrary, or depends on the context. We speak of plants turning towards the sun, but perhaps we might equally speak of them being drawn towards the sun. But if something has a relatively definite nature and characteristics, and especially if these are teleologically understood, the distinction between activity and passivity is fairly clear and useful. We say that an aeroplane's speed is 500 knots if it travels at 500 knots in normal winds. If it meets very strong headwinds or tailwinds, we might say it is being held back or pushed along. In saying this we do not mean that in normal conditions the wind does not contribute to the aeroplane's speed; we mean that the normal contribution is the one that makes relatively little difference to what the aeroplane itself does as a result of its design.[55]

This notion of passivity clarifies the character of the passions. Their operation is not necessarily harmful to their subject, but they operate relatively independently of the nature and tendencies of the whole subject. The passions of hunger and thirst, for instance, are natural, and are often good for the creatures that have them, but they operate relatively independently of a creature's whole nature. Whether a horse drinks or not depends on whether it is thirsty; sometimes one has to drag it to the water when it needs a drink, and

[51] 1-2 q26 a1–2; cf. q27 a1; q30 a1; q31 a3.

[52] Aquinas' specific reason depends on the claim that passion and passivity require a material subject, and hence require a change in the body; this cannot apply to the rational will, since its action does not involve a bodily change (q22 a3). This is not a good reason. Aquinas seems to be committed to the claim that if we discover that intellectual operations involve bodily changes, we thereby discover that they are also passions, and hence that the will is also a passion. It soon becomes clear, however, that Aquinas' reasons for distinguishing the will from passions do not depend on physiological speculations.

[53] Aquinas discusses different types of passivity at *ST* 1a q79 a2. Cf. Reid's discussion of active power and its connexion to will at *EAP*, H 523a.

[54] Cf. Luther's claims about activity and passivity; see §418.

[55] On the passivity of emotions see D'Arcy in BF xix, pp. xxii–xxiii; Peters, 'Passivity' 120–2; Mace, 'Passivity' 140–1; De Sousa, *RE* 10–12, 41–3, 318–19.

sometimes one has to stop it drinking when it needs to stop. In each case the operation of thirst depends primarily on facts about the horse at the time and about how the water looks to it. Since the operation of thirst depends on these relatively 'local' facts about the horse and the environment at a particular time, it seems more like something happening to the horse than like something it does.[56]

This account of the passivity of the passions supports Aquinas' claims that the passions are different from the will and that we are not passive in acting on the will. The will does not operate against, or independently of, ourselves; it pursues the ultimate end, and our conception of the end expresses ourselves. In being moved by our wills, and hence by our conception of the final good, we ourselves are in control of our actions.[57]

Aquinas believes, therefore, that the passions are passive and non-rational because they are independent of the agent's conception of the good, and therefore operate relatively independently of the agent herself. He takes pursuit of a final good to be characteristic of properly human actions.

245. The Passions and Sensory Desire

This contrast with pursuit of the good explains a further feature of the passions. Aquinas connects them with sensory desire, which responds to particulars, in contrast to intellectual desire, which seeks things 'in accordance with some universal character' (1a q80 a2 ad2). This claim may puzzle us, since the passions clearly seem to respond to a universal character. We are angry about a particular action not simply as this particular action, but as an insult or a slight; we are afraid of a noise not as the particular noise it is, but as a sign of danger. Since Aquinas recognizes these intentional aspects of the different passions, he should acknowledge that in one sense they respond to a 'universal character'. When he denies that they respond to a universal character, he means that they respond to 'particular goods' in contrast to the universal good pursued by the will (1a q82 a5; 1-2 q1 a2 ad3).[58]

The relation of passions to particular goods supports Aquinas' claim that the primary passion is love, because it is the impulse towards good (q26 a1; q27 a1). A partial love, directed towards particular objects regarded as good, is the basis of the passions of the appetitive (concupiscent) part, and these in turn are the basis of the passions of the spirited (irascible) part. Moreover the primary object of love (as a passion of the appetitive part) is one's own good, so that the desire for the good that is the object of one's love is a manifestation of self-love (q27 a3, amans proprie amat seipsum).

[56] On aspects of passivity cf. Spinoza, *Ethics* 4p33.

[57] On the will and the self cf. *in EN*, §1871: 'He [sc. Aristotle] observes that what human beings do through reason they seem to have done themselves most of all, and these seem <most of all> to have been done voluntarily. But as for the things a human being does through concupiscence or anger, he almost does not [L; M reads 'because he does not'] seem to have done them himself by his own will, but because he is led by an external motion. And thus it is evident that a human being is especially what accords with intellect and reason. Hence he especially loves himself when he loves intellect and reason.'

[58] Cf. 1a q82 a5; 59 a4 (the object of will is bonum secundum communem rationem boni). The object of a passion is '. . . a sensible good . . . taken without qualification' (1-2 q23 a1, a2). The object of the will is what is good without qualification (*Ver.* q25 a1 = M 469b; a3 = M 473b), in contrast to particular goods. Cf. *in DA* iii 14 (§804).

The two non-rational parts agree with the rational part, therefore, in so far as they have some good as their object; for sensory desire as a whole is concerned with good 'in so far as it is pleasant from the point of view of sense and suitable to nature' (1a q82 a5).[59] To this extent the aims of the sensory desire seem to be commensurable with, and responsive to, the aims of the will. But they differ from the aims of the will, since sensory desires rest only on an apprehension of good 'under a determinate character of good' (*in DA* iii 14 (§804)).[60]

Sensory desire is moved by the estimative capacity (aestimativa virtus), so that when a sheep takes a wolf to be an enemy, it is afraid (1a q78 a4).[61] This capacity requires imagination and memory; for the information it conveys (that the wolf is an enemy) is not immediately available to the senses.[62] In a human being the estimative capacity is the cognitive capacity, or 'particular reason', which in turn is moved by universal reason (1a q81 a3; *Ver.* q18 a7 ad7).

Each passion attends exclusively to its proper goods; it is indifferent to good all things considered. The choices made by the will, however, rest on some comparison between the goodness of different objects. Non-rational animals do not judge freely, because they do not judge from comparison (collatio), whereas rational agents rely on comparison (1a q83 a1).[63] Similarly, since our passions follow our sensory judgment, they do not rely on comparison or inquiry, but follow an immediate (subitum) judgment (1-2 q45 a4; q17 a7c, ad1).[64] If a passion could generalize from the apparent goodness of its proper object to goodness in general, it would have to grasp the feature of its object that makes it worth pursuing, apart from any antecedent desire. But to grasp this feature, we need to recognize the merits of the object in its own right. Since intellect recognizes this feature, the will rather than the passions responds to it.

Will and passion are distinguished by the contrast between particular and universal concern; Aquinas identifies this contrast both with the contrast between local and global concern and with the contrast between passive attraction and active inclination. To understand the common element in these contrasts, we must examine more closely the relation that Aquinas sees between the passions and the intellectual desire for the good. Since human agents have both wills and passions, they have some of the features of rational and of non-rational agents. But these two types of agency do not simply co-exist in human beings. They also influence each other, and their mutual influence determines the character of human agency.

[59] This description of the passions and their objects may indicate some difference between Aquinas' conception and the Platonic and Aristotelian conception of the non-rational parts of the soul. Aquinas accepts the Platonic and Aristotelian division (1a q81 a2), but he does not seem to distinguish the objects of the non-rational parts as sharply as Plato and Aristotle do. In his view, the irascible part is concerned with the gratification of appetite (concupiscentia); its distinctive feature is its concern with this gratification in so far as it involves some difficulty (arduum) that has to be overcome (1a q81 a2).

[60] Aquinas implies that the sensory desire itself conceives its object as good. For in saying that the will 'looks at' (respicere) the good 'under the common character of good' (sub communi ratione boni, 1a q82 a5), he contrasts this with the way that the sensory desire 'looks at' its object. The 'common character of good' gives an intentional description of the will (as 'looks at' would itself suggest), and Aquinas must also intend an intentional description of sensory desire.

[61] See 1a q78 a4; q81 a3. Cf. 3a Supp. q92 a2. Price, *P* 139–42, speaks of 'perceptual acceptance'.

[62] See *2Sent* d24 q2 a1 sol. = P vi 597b; *Ver.* q25 a2. Presumably a perception is associated with some awareness of the wolf inflicting pain or of the nest providing security—though Aquinas does not say that this has to come from actual experience of this association.

[63] See §245 above on comparison.

[64] Cf. *in DA* iii 16 (§§842–3).

246. Criticism of the Stoics on the Passions

The differences between the passions and the will show why the passions do not simply express one's will. According to Aquinas, the Stoics claim that every passion is bad, because they do not distinguish rational from non-rational desires. They recognize that the passions conflict with correct rational judgments, but they do not see that this is true because passions rest on non-rational desires. Instead, they claim that the passions are mistaken rational judgments that rest on incorrect reasoning and false belief about the good (1-2 q24 a2). The Stoics therefore believe that all passions are bad, and that the presence of any passion makes an action worse (q24 a3; cf. 2-2 q123 a10). Aquinas rejects each part of the Stoic position, and defends the Peripatetic position against Cicero's criticism.[65]

Aquinas agrees with Augustine's judgment that the dispute between Stoics and Peripatetics is largely verbal.[66] This judgment is partly correct. When the Stoics claim that passions are all bad, and the Peripatetics claim that some passions are good, the two sides do not directly contradict each other; they have different conceptions of a passion, and if the Peripatetics had accepted the Stoic conception, they would have agreed that the passions are all bad. In this respect the disagreement is verbal. However, the whole dispute between Peripatetics and Stoics is not merely verbal. In particular, their disagreement about the nature of a passion is not merely verbal, since it introduces some large questions about the relation of passions to will and reason.

Aquinas is right to say that the Stoics do not believe in non-rational desires; they believe that sensory cognition results in desire only when rational cognition intervenes. But this Stoic claim is not the crucial point of difference between the Stoic position and his own. The Stoics recognize non-rational motions resulting in appearances; Augustine argues that these appearances are really passions, and Aquinas agrees with him.[67] The Stoics, however, do not regard these as passions; even if they conceded that they are non-rational desires belonging to a non-rational part of the soul, they would still deny that they are genuine passions.

In answer to the Stoics, Aquinas claims that the passions cannot be reduced to erroneous rational assent. Though he endorses Augustine's claim that 'One's passions are bad if one's love is bad; good, if it is good', he does not endorse Augustine's identification of the passions with the different expressions of will that embody a person's love.[68] Moral goodness belongs to passions that are subject to reason and rightly formed or guided or permitted by it (q24 a1 ad3). When we are moved to action by the passions, the will also contributes to our action;

[65] See also 2-2 q158 a1 ad1; *Mal.* q12 a1. [66] See §219.

[67] See *Ver.* q26 a8 ad2; Aug. *CD* ix 4f; §221. Aquinas is sometimes sympathetic to the Stoic conception of a 'pre-passion' (propassio). See 3a q15 a4; a6 ad1; a7 ad1. He distinguishes sadness 'in accordance with a complete passion' (secundum passionem perfectam) from sadness 'in accordance with a pre-passion', and attributes only the latter to Christ. By 'complete passion' he seems to mean the sort of passion that is capable of carrying away reason by securing consent: 'sometimes in us <ordinary human beings> movements of this sort do not stop in sensory desire, but draw reason <with them>'. Christ did not have this sort of passion. In using 'pre-passion', Aquinas gives the misleading impression that he agrees with the Stoics in regarding such a state as only a precursor of a genuine passion; but his explanation counteracts this impression.

[68] 1-2 q24 a1 sc; q59 a2 sc; *Mal.* q10 a1 ad10; Aug., *CD* xiv 6a. See §220.

they do not move us to action by themselves, but are 'subject to the command of reason and the will' (1-2 q24 a1).

Aquinas, therefore, retains the Platonic-Aristotelian view that passions are non-rational in their own right (secundum se consideratae, q24 a1). Here his position is intuitively more plausible than the Stoic position. But it includes a counter-intuitive element that is absent from the Stoic position. Passions sometimes seem to be sufficient by themselves to move us to action. If we are afraid of a barking dog, we may avoid it without further reflexion, but we may still regard ourselves as responsible for acting as we do. It is initially plausible to attribute this view of the passions to Aristotle. [69] The Stoics also believe, but for non-Aristotelian reasons, that passions move us by themselves, since they take passions to include assent.

Aquinas believes, however, that the passions do not characteristically move us to action by themselves; they require the co-operation of will, which essentially pursues the final good. He has to explain, then, why the will, aiming at the final good, sometimes endorses the passions, which do not aim at the final good. We will understand his view better if we first consider more fully the implications of his claim that the will pursues the universal good.

247. Will and the Ultimate Good

Rational agents have wills, essentially rational desires, in so far as they desire something because it is good, and hence desire in accord with some universal character.[70] They pursue particular goods not simply because they are attracted to a specific sort of object, but also because they take the object to have some valued property that gives a reason for pursuing it.[71] Aquinas captures this aspect of a rational desire in 'because it is good'; in acting on rational desire we assume that an object is good. This desire is rational because it proceeds by free judgment, not natural judgment, and by rational comparison, not natural instinct.[72] Comparison is connected with free judgment, because free agents are capable of choosing different things in a particular situation, and so they need some means of comparing the different possibilities.

This comparison is the task of deliberative inquiry (1-2 q13 a1 ad1). If we form the desire for x as a result of deliberation, we form a desire for x as better than y, as a result of deliberation that shows why x rather than y deserves to be chosen. Deliberative and

[69] See §167.

[70] 'Intellectual desire, though it tends towards individual things outside the soul, tends towards them in accordance with some universal character (ratio), as when it desires something because it is good' (1a q80 a2 ad2). Aristotle takes rational desire to be directed to the good, and he denies such a desire to non-rational agents because they lack the apprehension of the universal (*EN* 1147b3–5). See Irwin, *AFP* §169.

[71] See Aristotle, *EN* 1111b16–18, with Aquinas, *in EN* §441.

[72] 'But a human being acts from judgment, because by his apprehensive power he judges that something should be avoided or sought. But because this judgment, in the case of some particular act, is not from a natural instinct, but from some act of comparison in the reason, therefore he acts from free judgment and retains the power of being inclined to various things' (1a q83 a1).

non-deliberative desires are different kinds of desire because a deliberative desire is liable to change in circumstances that would not necessarily affect a non-deliberative desire. This is one difference between the will and the passions.[73]

This deliberation guiding the choice of a rational agent refers different options to an ultimate end. This ultimate end is the 'universal good', contrasted with the particular non-ultimate goods that we decide to pursue as a result of deliberation, for the sake of the ultimate good (1a q82 a2). The ultimate good is universal or 'common'—the one good that we aim at in pursuing the different goods we choose.[74] The common good that guides deliberation is a final good that provides a basis for selecting what seems best overall (all things considered).

248. The Influence of the Ultimate End

These features of the ultimate end are relevant to actions that result from explicit comparison and deliberation. But since not all of our actions come about in this way, we may suppose that we do not pursue the final good in all our actions. Aquinas answers this doubt by arguing that the influence of the ultimate end extends to actions that do not rest directly on deliberation.

Our conception of an end directs us and limits our commitment to means. It exercises this influence even on actions that do not explicitly refer to it. Even if we do not think about the ultimate end (q1 a6 obj3), we may act for its sake. Travellers on a journey from London to Glasgow try to go from Preston to Carlisle because of their decision to go to Glasgow. They may only be thinking now about how to get from Preston to Carlisle, not about how to get to Glasgow; but they would not be thinking now about getting to Carlisle if they had not decided to go to Glasgow. Their aim is directed ultimately towards the ultimate end, but immediately towards some more proximate end.[75] The reference to the ultimate end

[73] See §245 above.

[74] '. . . since voluntary actions receive their species from the end, . . . they must receive their genus from the ultimate end, which is common, just as natural things are placed in a genus in accordance with a common formal character. Since, then, all things that can be desired by the will, in so far as they are such, belong to one genus, it is necessary for the ultimate end to be one. And this is especially so because in every genus there is one first principle, and the ultimate end has the character of a first principle . . . ' (1-2 q1 a5).

The Marietti edn. comments on the claim that the ultimate end is common: 'Sive universalis non quidem in sensu stricto seu *in praedicando*, sed large *in causando* (causalitate finali)'. The argument from pursuit of a common good to pursuit of a final good is not completely clear. Aquinas suggests that since (a) acts of will get their character (species) from the end they aim at, and (b) all acts of will constitute a single genus, it follows that (c) they must have a single ultimate end to give them their common character. His conclusion, however, does not follow. The common character of all acts of will is simply the fact that they aim at some good or other—as Aquinas puts it, that they aim at the good in general. This does not show that they have to aim at a single final good.

[75] 'One need not always be thinking of the ultimate end, whenever one desires or does something: for the power (virtus) of the first aim (intentio), which has a view to the ultimate end, remains in any desire at all of anything, even if one is not actually thinking of the ultimate end. In this way it is not necessary for anyone who is walking along a road to be thinking of the end at every step' (1-2 q1 a6 ad3).' . . . though aiming always aims at an end, it need not always aim at the ultimate end' (q12 a2). Cf. *SG* iii 138, §3126: 'The preceding will remains in power (virtute) in the whole execution of the action, and makes the action praiseworthy, even when the agent will not be thinking, while he carries out the action, about the purpose of the will because of which be began the action'. Cf. §361

explains why they are in Preston, why they are trying to reach Carlisle, and why they would in some circumstances not try to reach Carlisle (if, for instance, they learned that they could not reach Glasgow from Carlisle).

Since the ultimate end directs and limits our actions even when we are not reflecting on it, Aquinas is right to say that we act for the sake of it. We select a proximate end in the light of reflexion on an ultimate end, and continue to pursue the proximate end without further reflexion on the ultimate end. Hence the power (virtus) of the first aim remains in our pursuit of more proximate ends.

This 'virtual' aiming also fits cases in which we have not reflected on an ultimate end in order to select this proximate end, but none the less our conception of an ultimate end guides our pursuit of this proximate end. Sometimes my conception of an ultimate end permits (say) my walking, so that if it had explicitly prohibited my walking, I would not have walked without hesitation. Alternatively, it may regulate my walking, so that if I reflect on my ultimate end, and come to believe that it rules out my walking, I will recognize that as a reason not to walk.

If my ultimate end permits or regulates, the claim that I will my particular actions for the sake of a single ultimate end becomes more plausible. A desire or action is subordinate to my desire for the final good—whether or not it originates in my conception of the final good—if my conception of the final good permits it or regulates it.

If the will controls action permissively or regulatively, and if it controls in the light of an ultimate good, Aquinas is justified in claiming that an account of rational agency leads us into a discussion of the ultimate good. He follows Aristotle in beginning his systematic treatment of ethics with an account of the ultimate end of human action, which he identifies with happiness. If he is right so far, he vindicates one aspect of Aristotle's eudaemonist attitude to practical reason and morality.

Aristotle believes that the pursuit of happiness as ultimate end is the basis of morality for all rational agents, but he does not say much about why he believes that all rational agents pursue an ultimate end and that this end is happiness. He leaves unsettled some questions about the status of happiness. Even if we agreed with Aristotle that we all pursue happiness, we might take this to be a contingent and alterable psychological fact; it might be parallel to a natural tendency to selfishness or short-sightedness that we seek to correct through morality. This interpretation of Aristotle should be rejected, but he does not argue fully against it. Aquinas believes that the pursuit of an ultimate end is neither a baseless assumption of Aristotle's nor a merely contingent feature of human beings, but a necessary feature of rational agency and of the will. If he is right, an ethical theory suitable for rational and free agents must begin from the ultimate end.

The *Summa* places the discussion of the ultimate end at the beginning of the Prima Secundae, after the discussion of will and freewill in the First Part, and before the treatment of the voluntary, action, and passion, in the Prima Secundae. In Aquinas' view, it is essential to rational desire, and hence essential to will, that it pursues an ultimate end. Reference to an ultimate end is necessary for the deliberation and rational comparison of options that Aquinas takes to be necessary for the will.[76]

[76] Cf. Reid on rational principles, *EAP* H 545a.

These claims about the ultimate end help to explain how human beings are free and responsible. Freedom depends on deliberation and rational comparison, and these require deliberation in the light of an ultimate end. Our pursuit of an ultimate end is necessary for freedom, not a restriction on freedom. It is distinctive of rational agents that they pursue an ultimate end, because this pursuit embodies their capacity for moving and directing themselves.

17

AQUINAS: ACTION

249. Will and Action

Now that we have discussed the differences between will and passion, we can see how they help to explain properly human action. In so far as we are rational agents with wills, we pursue an ultimate end. But we are not purely rational agents, since we also have passions that do not wholly depend on our rational wills. Hence, any plausible account of will and action must explain how will and passion are related in moving us to action. Aquinas has assumed that passions are not the source of our ultimate ends. This assumption is controversial, since it seems reasonable to believe that the ends we pursue are influenced by our specific passions and their relative strength. How can Aquinas take account of this apparently reasonable belief within his general views about the will and the ultimate end?

If Aquinas describes the relation of will and passion to action, he commits himself to a position on questions about freedom and responsibility. At first sight, he seems likely to commit himself to the denial of freedom. His account of rational agency suggests that rational agents necessarily execute their conception of the ultimate end in their actions. But many suppose that free agents cannot be necessitated in this way. In opposition to such doubts, Aquinas argues that his views about the will and the ultimate end vindicate belief in human freedom. We will be able to appreciate his argument most easily if we discuss his account of will and action before turning to his views about freedom. His account of action does not presuppose (in Aquinas' view) any specific conception about freedom, but it allows us to derive a plausible account of freedom.

250. Aiming at Ends

If we act on will, we form a conception of a universal good and an ultimate end, and we are guided by it in acting as we do. Other capacities besides will are involved in being guided by the ultimate end; Aquinas discusses them in his analysis of human action (*ST* 1-2 q6–17). Will requires the capacity for rational comparison with reference to a universal good, and the capacity for deliberation that investigates ways of achieving the ultimate good. Through

these capacities we act on 'deliberated will' (1-2 q1 a1 ad3),[1] so as to perform properly human acts. Aquinas describes the relation between these different capacities in the causation of action. Whether or not they are all exercised in temporally distinct stages on the way to a given action, they mark different features of rational agency.[2]

But since actions on passion also seem to be properly human acts, in contrast to the thoughtless scratching of one's beard, we may wonder how they are related to Aquinas' account of properly human acts. At first sight, his account is too elaborate to cover actions on passion. But they do not require an entirely different account; his account of rational action explains how they are properly human actions.

Rational agency, in contrast to animal agency, requires rational comparison. If we necessarily willed the ultimate end as having some highly determinate content specifying a particular action, we would not be rational agents, since we would not act on rational comparison of different possible objects of pursuit. Rational agents guide themselves towards an end by acting on rational comparison that leads to election of appropriate subordinate ends.[3] On this basis Aquinas distinguishes 'natural' from 'elective' love; elective love results from deliberation about goods chosen for the sake of the ultimate end.[4]

This deliberation begins from our aiming at (intendere) an end, not simply from wishing it. To wish for an end is only to recognize that we would prefer getting something over failing to get it, or that we would be pleased if we could get it; this sort of wish is simply a 'velleity'.[5] We might have several such preferences, but to begin deliberation we must set out to satisfy one rather than another of them. We direct ourselves towards getting an end; 'for we are said to aim at health not simply because we will it, but because we will to reach it through something else' (q12 a1 ad4). 'Through something else' refers to means, but not to any particular means; we can aim at an end without having determined the means, which are the concern of election (q12 a4 ad3). By 'directing' (ordinare) ourselves towards trying to attain the end (q12 a1 ad1), we differ from non-rational agents.[6]

Aiming and self-direction involve rational selection, which presupposes a relatively specific conception of the end to be achieved. If I am to do anything towards achieving the ultimate end I aim at, I have to form some view about its composition, so that I can find the means to the components.[7] This conception equips me to aim at one or another non-ultimate end (q12 a2).

[1] See §242.

[2] They are different features making up a complete exercise of the will in action. But the earlier ones can exist without the later on a particular occasion. See Donagan, 'Action', esp. 654; Finnis, *Aq.* 62–71; Bradley, *ATHG* 342.

[3] See *Ver.* q22 a7, quoted in §273.

[4] '... the will tends naturally to its ultimate end; for every human being naturally wills happiness. And from this natural will all other wills are caused, since whatever a human being wills he wills because of the end. Therefore the love (dilectio) of the good that a human being naturally wills as an end is natural love; but the love derived from this, which is of a good that is loved because of the end, is elective love' (1a q60 a2).

[5] aliquis vellet illud, si esset possibile, q13 a5 ad1.

[6] '... to aim (intendere) is to tend (tendere) towards something; and this belongs to the mover and to the moved. ... non-rational animals also aim at an end, to the extent that they are moved to something by natural instinct. But in another way aiming at an end belongs to the mover, in so far as he directs the movement of himself or another towards an end. This belongs only to reason. That is why non-rational animals do not aim at an end in this way, which is aiming properly and principally ...' (1-2 q12 a5).

[7] '... the acquiring of wine and clothing is included in wealth, as in something common to both, so that nothing prevents someone who aims at wealth from aiming at both the other things at the same time' (1-2 q12 a3 ad2).

In contrast to rational agents, non-rational animals lack 'consideration' of their action and their end.[8] Consideration is part of directing myself towards an end through some specific means, and it limits my commitment to a given means. If I pursue y as a means to x, that attitude controls my pursuit of y, in different ways: (1) I will no longer pursue y if I do not believe it promotes x. (2) I will no longer pursue y if, even though I see that y promotes x, I also see that it would be bad to keep on pursuing x in this situation. (3) If, however, I also pursue y for the sake of z, which is more important than x, I will keep on pursuing y as long as it achieves z, provided that it does not interfere with anything more important than z.

Hence Aquinas believes that if we direct our action towards an end, we are also in control of our actions. Rational agents aim at an end in directing themselves actively, not in being directed passively.[9] I direct my action towards an end in so far as I limit my inclination towards this action by my estimate of the end that it is directed to. To do this, I must also be able to estimate the value of this end;[10] hence I must have some idea of what makes it an end for me and of what is good about it. This is why rational agents must present the end to themselves.[11]

251. Deliberation

Since the mental states leading from will to action include aiming, they also include deliberation. Aiming, as opposed to merely wishing, requires us to look for means to our end. Election presupposes our having found means, and deliberation connects aiming with electing by finding means. Rational agents are active rather than passive in so far as they have wills rather than simply passions. Their having wills makes them active by giving them control of their actions through deliberation.[12] Since rational agents can choose between opposites through this deliberation, their doing one of the opposites rather than the other is in their control.

The extent of our control, therefore, depends on how many questions are open to deliberation and election. Aquinas agrees with Aristotle in believing that deliberation is confined to means to ends, but some 'means' are also ends reached by deliberation (q14 a2). An end aimed at on one occasion may be an object of deliberation with reference to a further

[8] 'Non-rational animals are moved towards an end, not as though they considered that they can reach the end by their movement, which is proper to one who aims, but by their appetite for an end they are moved towards the end by natural instinct, as though moved by something else, as are the other things that are moved naturally' (1-2 q12 a5 ad3).

[9] '. . . it is proper to a rational nature to tend towards an end as leading or guiding itself towards the end; it is proper, on the other hand, to a non-rational nature to tend towards an end as led or guided by another' (1-2 q1 a2). '. . . directing towards an end is characteristic of what leads itself towards an end. Being directed towards an end, on the other hand, is characteristic of what is led by another towards an end' (1–2 a1 a2 ad2).

[10] '. . . for the will, which is desire for a previously-grasped end tends towards something only under the character of the good, which is its object' (*SG* iii 16 §1988).

[11] Rational agents move themselves 'by reference to the end, which they present (praestituunt) to themselves. And this does not happen without reason and intellect, whose function it is to grasp the proportion of the end and of what is towards the end, and to direct the one towards the other' (1a q18 a3).

[12] 'A human being is master of his action as a result of the fact that he has deliberation (deliberationem) about his actions. For from the fact that deliberating reason is related to opposites it results that the will is capable <of going> in both directions' (1-2 q6 a2 ad2).

end on another occasion (q14 a2).[13] Deliberation in the light of an end includes questions about what an end consists in.[14] If we control our actions and our ends, we are capable of effective deliberation about the ends that we take to constitute the ultimate end.

This description might suggest that control of one's ends and actions requires deliberation. But this is not exactly Aquinas' view. We need deliberation when there is some room for doubt, and therefore some need for inquiry, about the options open to us; and so we do not deliberate if there is no room for doubt or inquiry (q14 a4). But the angels elect without doubt and deliberation.[15] Election requires reasoned judgment that is based on, and responsive to, our conception of the universal good. Deliberation is necessary if we need it to form a reasoned judgment; but election requires only the reasoned judgment.[16] This judgment in non-deliberative rational agents is counterfactually deliberative; if there were doubt about the desirability of the option chosen, they would settle the question by deliberation. This capacity for deliberation is needed to ensure that agents do not choose this option simply because they are incapable of considering any grounds for doubt about it. Responsiveness of rational judgments to considerations of the good often, but not always, requires deliberation.

252. Consent and Election

Between deliberation and election Aquinas introduces consent. If we form a conception of something as desirable, we still may not be moved to act on our conception. Before we can act, we have to engage our capacities to move ourselves; and this 'engaging' or 'application' of our motive capacities is what Aquinas calls consent.[17] Non-rational animals cannot apply their motive capacities, and therefore cannot consent. A stick can move a stone, but only the agent who has it in his power to move the stick can actually apply the stick to moving the stone. Since non-rational animals do not have their desiderative motion in their power, they cannot apply their desire to action (q15 a2). They do not have their desiderative motion in their power, because they do not control it. Control involves application and consent.

By introducing consent into his account of action Aquinas draws on the Stoic view that rational human action depends on assent rather than simple appearance. Augustine takes over this Stoic analysis. Nemesius and Damascene combine it with the Aristotelian analysis, and Aquinas follows.[18] Stoic assent, however, seems to lack two features of Aristotelian

[13] Moreover, if there is doubt about an end, it is not sufficiently determined to be taken as an end for deliberation; 'hence as long as it is taken to be doubtful, it is not taken to be an end' (1-2 q14 a2 ad1). Something that might be proposed as an end is open to deliberation in the light of some further end (see q14 a2 ad2).

[14] For constituents cf. q12 a3 ad2 (continentur sub); *Ver.* q22 a7 on merit (quoted in §273).

[15] 'As a human being's estimation in speculative matters differs from an angel's in this, that the latter is without inquiry, whereas the former proceeds through inquiry, so it is in practical matters. Hence in the angels there is election, but not with the inquiring deliberation of counsel, but by the instant (subitam)acceptance of truth' (1a q59 a3 ad1).

[16] 'Election presupposes deliberation on account of its judgment or decision (iudicii vel sententiae). And so when the judgment or decision is evident without inquiry, the inquiry of deliberation is not needed' (1-2 q14 a4 ad1). See also 3a q18 a4, esp. ad2 (on the will of Christ and of the blessed): 'And so if something is judged as to be done without previous doubt and inquiry, this is enough for election'. On freewill and uncertainty see §266.

[17] ipsa applicatio appetitivae virtutis, 1-2 q15 a1. On consent and sin see q74 a8.

[18] See Lottin, *PM* i 422f–3; Wittmann, *ETA* 153. Aquinas distinguishes consent from assent, claiming that assent is to a proposition, whereas consent is to an action (1-2 q15 a1 ad3). In q15 a3 obj3, sc, Aquinas takes Damascene's use of

election: (1) Aristotle believes that election essentially involves preference for one alternative over another.[19] He does not simply mean that in choosing one thing we forgo other things; he means that when we elect we act on a view about the merits of one course of action as opposed to another. (2) Hence election rests on examination of the comparative merits of different courses of action, and so rests on deliberation.

According to the Stoics, assent need not result from rational reflexion and consideration of alternatives. A clear and striking apprehensive appearance 'all but grabs us by the hair and draws us into assent' (Sx *M* vii 257). If we are uncritical and too easily impressed by appearances, we may 'yield' to them without proper reflexion. Assent seems to be present in many situations where we do not consider alternatives. But Aquinas treats consent as the result of deliberation, and he agrees with Aristotle's view that deliberation guides our action in accordance with our will by resulting in an election. Hence he treats consent as a preliminary to election. Consent recognizes something as satisfactory; from this preliminary recognition election picks out one of the satisfactory things as better than another. If we recognize only one thing as satisfactory, the same action is both consent and election; in this case they differ only in definition (ratione tantum). If we recognize several things as satisfactory, we elect one over the others.[20]

In the case where only one option seems satisfactory, Aquinas suggests that we elect this option through deliberation that shows it is better than unsatisfactory courses of action. Perhaps he means that the unsatisfactory options would not secure our end at all or would be such costly means of securing our end that it would be more reasonable to give up our end than to secure it by these means; the satisfactory options, then, make it reasonable to keep pursuing our current end in our current circumstances. If this is what Aquinas means, he is justified in saying that we elect the course of action that we find satisfactory.

But is this the only case he needs to consider? Might we not find one means satisfactory and consent to it without having compared it either with unsatisfactory options or with other satisfactory options? Can we not consent and act with less consideration than Aquinas has in mind? And can we not pick x over y without any conviction that x is better, once we have consented to both x and y as satisfactory? It does not seem obvious that whenever we consent to or endorse a course of action and act on our consent, we must have deliberated about it and judged that it is best all things considered. The separation of consent from election seems reasonable and helpful precisely because it leaves open such possibilities; if we allow them, not every action requires a comparative judgment. If Aquinas takes action to require both consent and election, he does not exploit the degree of flexibility that his

'sententia' (i.e., *gnômê*) to refer to consent. See Damasc. *EF* 36, 77–80. Augustine speaks of 'assent' or 'consent' as the mark of free action; *CD* ix 4f; *Nupt.* i 31. Cf. §223. On the Stoics see §170.

[19] See *EN* 1112a15–17; *EE* 1226b5–9. Cf. Nemesius, *NH* 101.8–14.

[20] 'Election includes something that consent has not, namely, a certain relation to something to which something else is preferred: and therefore after consent there still remains an election. For it may happen that by aid of deliberation several means have been found conducive to the end, and through each of these being approved, consent has been given to each: but after approving of many, we have given our preference to one by choosing it. But if we approve of only one, consent and election do not differ in reality, but only in definition (ratione tantum). And so we call it consent in so far as we approve of doing that thing, but election in so far as we prefer it to those that we do not approve of' (1-2 q15 a3 ad3).

notion of consent would allow. But some of his discussion of different types of action is more plausible if consent and action sometimes happen without election.[21]

253. The Influence of the Passions on the Will

So far Aquinas has analysed human actions that proceed from will to deliberation and election; these are the actions that make human beings rational agents. But they are not the only actions that need to be analysed. He treats rational desire as the basis of some, but not all, properly human actions, since he believes that actions on passion are properly human actions if they are appropriately related to the will. Passions differ from will in so far as they attend to particular goods, and not to the universal good that is the object of rational desire. If we act out of fear, for instance, the analysis of action on will cannot be applied without modification to our action. The analysis needs to be modified in order to include actions on passion among properly human actions.

The passions affect our action because they include appearances of particular goods, and thereby influence us to form judgments about the goodness of a situation. If I am angry, I judge that there is something good about getting my own back on you. Since this judgment may be completely thoughtless, and may not rest on any consideration of other features of the situation beyond the offence and the opportunity of revenge, it is an immediate (as Aquinas says, 'sudden') reaction; since it does not rest on any thought of overall goodness, it does not engage the will.[22] Hence Aquinas often speaks of 'sudden motions' that are contrary to someone's will.[23]

Sometimes one of these sudden motions moves us to action 'beyond the command of reason, even though it could have (potuisset) been impeded by reason if reason had foreseen' (q17 a7). In such cases the passions move us contrary to reason (1a q81 a3 ad2). Even when the motions of passion are not sudden, passion sometimes compels us in such a way that reason is impotent to resist and is 'totally bound', as in cases of drunkenness and madness. In these cases we necessarily follow the tendency of the passion and act involuntarily.[24]

Not all binding, however, takes away voluntariness. Sometimes passion influences the will by appealing to it, and not by coercing it so as to make it incapable of resisting. Our will follows our conception of the overall good, which rests on our comparative estimate of various specific goods. Passions influence this comparative estimate by bringing particular goods to our attention and presenting them in a favourable light that alters our estimate of how good they are.

[21] See below §255.

[22] In these cases the sensory faculty '. . . does not compare or inquire into the particular circumstances of the situation, but has a sudden judgment' (1-2 q45 a4). Cf. 1-2 q77 a6; cf. 2–2 q125 a4; 143 a1.

[23] Sudden motions: cf. *2Sent* d24 q3 a5 = P vi 607b; *ST* 1-2 q74 a10 (a motion of infidelity preceding deliberation constitutes only a venial sin); *2Sent* d28 q1 a2 = P vi 643b; *ST* 1-2 q17 a7c; ad1; q88 a2 (sudden motion without deliberation makes only a venial sin); a5; q89 a3; 2-2 q13 a2 ad3 (blasphemy by sudden motion, if one does not consider the blasphemous meaning of the words); q55 a8 ad3 (sudden motion of anger); q156 a4. See Seneca in §166; Knuuttila, *EAMP* 178–95; Sorabji, *EPM*, chs. 22–4. On comparison as characteristic of will see 1a q83 a1.

[24] Binding: 1-2 q10 a3; q77 a7; q80 a3; 2–2 q150 a4 ad3. *Mal.* q3 a3 ad9 (Ligato autem usu rationis, nihil imputatur homini ad peccatum, sicut nec bestiae); q3 a4; *in Ioan.* xi 7 = P x 503a.

Appetite, therefore, 'inclines' the will towards the object of the appetite (1-2 q6 a7; cf. 1a q81 a1 ad3). The will no longer wills what it previously willed, but now wills what it previously rejected (1-2 q6 a7 ad2).[25] In such cases the passions attract our attention to particular goods, and so 'cloud' reason.[26] But reason is not completely submerged by passion; the free judgment of reason remains to some extent, so that the will does not necessarily follow the tendency of the passion.[27]

In these cases of clouding without complete binding, the passions affect the will in either of two ways: (1) They distract us, in so far as a passion strengthens the motion of the sensory appetite, and diverts our attention to it, so that 'the proper motion of rational desire, which is the will, slackens or entirely gives out' (q77 a1). (2) The appearance presented by the passion tends to affect our imagination and judgment, so that we judge the object of the passion more favourably than we otherwise would. But these cases of clouded reason do not prevent the proper use of reason (q77 a7); we are still capable of closing out (excludere) the passion, by turning to other thoughts, or of preventing it from achieving its aim.[28]

According to this analysis, passion does not interrupt the normal sequence of aiming, deliberation, consent, and election. Its role is indirect, since it may incline or warp our judgment at different stages so as to influence our aiming or our deliberation; different ends or means may seem more plausible candidates for our attention because passions put them in a different light.

254. The Influence of the Will on the Passions

This description of the influence of the passions may suggest that they are 'subject to the command of reason and the will' (1-2 q24 a1) only in so far as we can avoid or resist their distorting influence on our deliberation and choice. But this is not all that Aquinas has in mind; he believes that the will not only can avoid following the passions, but also can influence them. In describing the different kinds of influence that the will exercises he clarifies his conception of the passions.

If the passions were not interested in the objects that interest the will, or if they never recognized the authority of the will,[29] the will could effectively change, inhibit, or order the course of the passions only by force. It might exercise force in restraint, as when someone locks the whisky in the cupboard and gives someone else the key; in this case, he does not lose his desire for the whisky, but simply finds he cannot satisfy it. It might also exercise force by arousing stronger passions to overcome the deviant passion; the fear of pain from punishment or the hope of pleasure from reward might overcome anger or fear of immediate danger.

[25] Aquinas accepts this analysis of incontinence (cf. q77 a2). See §§289–90.

[26] Clouding reason: 1-2 q10 a3 ad2; cf. q24 a3 ad3; *Mal.* q3 a11 = M 514b; q16 a2 obj5; *in Iob* xii 2 = P xiv 53b. On 'submerging' (absorbere) cf. 2-2 q46 a3; q53 a6; q123 a8.

[27] '. . . but sometimes, though reason is clouded by passion, still some of reason remains free. And in accordance with this someone is able to drive back the passion totally or at any rate to keep himself from following the passion' (q10 a3 ad2).

[28] Resisting passion: q10 a3; q77 a7–8; q80 a3; 2–2 q155 a3 ad3; q156 a1; q175 a2 ad2.

[29] On authority see Butler, *S* ii 14.

But this is not the only sort of influence that Aquinas allows the will. He often endorses Aristotle's claim that the rational part exercises political, not despotic, rule over the non-rational parts (1a q81 a3 ad2).[30] In political rule the subjects have their own will in some matters (1-2 q56 a4 ad3). The political metaphor suggests that in human beings passions arise independently of the will, but do not normally dominate it; 'human beings who act from passion are capable of not following the passion' (q15 a2 ad3; q26 a1; q42 a4). Aquinas appeals to a remark of St Paul's: 'For it is not the good that I will that I do, but it is the evil that I hate that I do' (*Rm.* 7.19; q10 a3). Aquinas suggests that St Paul uses 'do' to refer to appetite (concupiscere). Though we cannot avoid the appetite, we can still avoid consenting to it.[31] The appetitive part is not wholly subject to reason, but it is still under our control, through the consent or refusal of reason and will, in contrast to the situation of mad people, in whom reason is wholly submerged by passion. Unless the passions wholly bind reason, they are subject to reason and obey it (1-2 q24 a1; q42 a4).

The political metaphor suggests that the passions recognize the authority of reason. Aquinas implies that the passions respond to the considerations that guide the will. Anger, for instance, may make it difficult to form and to attend to the judgment of reason, but its end is not wholly unresponsive to reason. In so far as the passion pursues a particular good, it pursues it as being good for the agent. If we discover that a particular good is not good on the whole for the agent, the passion changes. Similarly, the will can excite a passion by concentrating our attention on a particular good to which we are especially responsive.[32]

This connexion between the passions and the pursuit of the good still leaves a basic difference between Aquinas' position and the Socratic and Stoic position. The Socratic view asserts that the value judgment belonging to a particular passion is the judgment that this or that is better on the whole; fear of a particular danger is the judgment that it is better on the whole to avoid the danger. If, then, we avoid the danger when it is better on the whole to face it, we must have made a false judgment about what is better on the whole. Plato and Aristotle reject his view, and Aquinas agrees with them. If we act on the judgment that x is good, we may not judge that x is best on the whole. If we notice that there is something to be said for x, that may move us to try to get x; we may not stop to think about what might be said against x. Our pursuit of the universal good lies in the background, explaining why we would prefer y over x if we stopped to think that y is on the whole better than x; but we do not refer every judgment about a particular good to our conception of the universal

[30] Cf. 1-2 q17 a7; q56 a4 ad3; q58 a2.

[31] 'Although the will cannot prevent the movement of appetite from rising up, about which the Apostle says "The evil that I hate, I do"—in other words, "I desire", none the less the will is capable of not willing to have the appetite, or of not consenting to the appetite. And in this way it does not necessarily follow the movement of appetite' (1-2 q10 a3 ad1). For this exegesis cf. q17 a7 obj1 (Glossa); 1a q83 a1 ad1. Aquinas defends it at length, *in Rom.* vii 3 = P xiii 70b–71a. He considers two interpretations, one applying to a person under sin, and one applying to a person under grace. The explanation of 'agere' as 'concupiscere' belongs to the second interpretation: 'when he [sc. Paul] says "I do", we should understand incomplete action, which consists only in sensory desire, not reaching as far as consent of reason'. Augustine accepts this interpretation at *Nupt.* 31; *in Ioann.* 41.12. For Augustine's various views Luther, *Rom.* ad loc., cites, *Ep. Pel.* i 17; *Iul.* ii 13–14; iii 62: *Prop. Rom.* 44; *Retr.* i 23.1.

[32] ... universal reason commands sensory desire, which is divided into appetitive and spirited, and this desire obeys it. ... for by applying certain universal considerations, anger or fear or the like may be moderated or aggravated' (1a q81 a3).

good.[33] In this case we may say that the content of our value judgment about the particular good does not include any judgment about the universal good, but we are sensitive to the universal good.

According to this pattern, a passion inclines us to value judgments that we would not otherwise have formed (1-2 q9 a2). Under its influence we form particular value judgments ('it would be good to retaliate for this insult') whose generalizations ('it is good to retaliate for insults') we would not accept if we considered them (q9 a2 ad2). When we are influenced by passions, we do not judge on the basis that we would normally endorse. A passion makes some particular course of action appear more attractive than it would appear otherwise.

This description does justice to the common view that something about the passions is non-rational. The Stoics suppose that we can do justice to this common view only to a limited extent, by treating passions as false rational judgments about overall good. Aquinas argues that passions neither are nor contain judgments about overall good; they contain value judgments that are not based on judgments about overall good, and hence they may conflict with our view of overall good. Passions are neither completely independent of, nor contrary to, the all-things-considered judgment of reason. If a known alcoholic asks me urgently for a bottle of whisky, I may give it to him, out of a generous or compassionate impulse. I do not form the judgment that it is best, all things considered, to give it to him; and to this extent the Stoics are wrong to say that acting on passions is acting on a false belief about the good. If, however, I could make it clear to myself that I am really harming him by doing what he wants, I would (in Aquinas' view) change my mind about giving it to him; to that extent my generous impulse is not independent of my views about what is best all things considered.

This view may seem to underestimate the independence of the passions from rational considerations. Since passions seem to persist even if we are sure we ought not to follow them, they cannot be altogether responsive to the will. Aquinas could concede this point in some cases without damage to his overall view that they express judgments about goodness. For a passion may respond to some significant good that still matters, even when we discover that it is not the overriding good in this situation. It is often reasonable to regret what has happened, to be afraid about what one knows is the best thing to do, and so on. The passions are consistent with our judgments of overall good, because they are directed towards the particular goods that we still take seriously.[34]

Aquinas, therefore, neither reduces the passions to erroneous judgments about the universal good nor makes them so independent of the universal good that they are outside the control of the will. He admits that sometimes the passions move us in a direction that the will is powerless to prevent; but he denies that this is normally the effect of the passions. Since they present their objects as particular goods, they are sensitive to considerations of goodness presented by reason and will.

[33] Similarly, Ross, *RG* 19, describes a prima-facie duty as a characteristic that would make an action a 'duty proper' if it were the only morally significant character of the action.

[34] This reply covers some cases of stubborn passions that persist despite our rational convictions. But it does not seem to cover all of them. The most difficult cases for Aquinas to explain seem to be cases of incontinence; see §295.

255. Action without Deliberation?

We might agree with Aquinas' account of the role of the passions as far as it goes, but still criticize it for being incomplete. No doubt passions may be relevant to deliberation and election in the ways he describes. But they also seem to be sources of human actions without deliberation and election. Non-rational animals act on their passions without deliberation and election. Some of our actions seem to be similar to theirs; fear, anger, and pleasure, seem to move us without our stopping to think. But these actions are properly human actions (q1 a1);[35] they are self-conscious, and above the level of mere reflexes, but without deliberation and will. The 'immediacy' of passions cannot be confined to 'sudden judgments' that reason and will respond to; they seem to move us to action without reason. Do they not therefore move us without will?

Aquinas agrees that passions sometimes move us in this way, when they entirely submerge reason, as in madness. But this concession does not deal with all apparent cases of acting on passion without deliberation. If we eat when we are hungry, or speak sharply because we are angry, we do not seem to be overcome by passion or incapable of deliberating; we simply have not deliberated. Aquinas believes that in such cases the passions are subject to the will because they depend on our consent (q10 a3 ad1).

To see what he means by this, we have to return to our earlier questions about consent. If we cannot act on consent without also having deliberated and elected, Aquinas seems to have too rigid a conception of action that is subject to the will. To require deliberation on each occasion is to ignore the contrast between impulsive, non-reflective actions and actions that result from reflexion and deliberation. Can he, then, consistently allow consent without deliberation?

We may answer this question by going back to his discussion of the ultimate end.[36] He argues that our conception of an end may permit or regulate our actions even if we do not think of it on each occasion. If the will permits and regulates, we can act on passions without deliberation.[37] If the action was wrong, the will made an error by omission; the error depends on a cause or occasion of omission that is subject to the will.[38] What I do now without an election on this occasion results from previous election, if I have elected to allow myself to be affected by certain sorts of desires, or if I have declined the opportunity to avoid them.[39]

If we can consent by our failure to dissent, we can consent to an action that we recognize as conflicting with our conception of our ultimate end. We may consent to a sinful action

[35] On reflexes see §242. [36] See §248.

[37] '. . . Something is said to be voluntary directly or indirectly; directly, if the will tends towards it; indirectly, if the will was able (potuit) to prohibit it, but does not prohibit (prohibet) it' (q77 a7). In 'was able . . . does not prohibit' Aquinas implies that it need not be true at the time (as in the case of drunkenness) that the will can any longer prohibit it. Cf. the pilot who might cause an accident by steering badly or by leaving the steering to someone incompetent; q6 a3; q71 a5. On negative consent cf. q15 a4 ad3: 'The higher reason is said to consent not only because it always moves to act, according to the eternal reasons; but also because it fails to dissent according to those same reasons'.

[38] See q71 a5. On ignorance as a cause of sin cf. q76.

[39] Odysseus tied to the mast has elected to be affected by passions that he could have avoided. He has also elected to prevent himself from acting on them.

even if our ultimate moral principles do not approve it; for we consent if they fail to prevent the sinful action (q74 a7 ad2). Hence my will, through my conception of my ultimate end, influences actions that conflict with my conception of the ultimate end. In such cases, our consent reveals an implicit conflict in my conception of the ultimate end. Even though I may have a correct positive account of its elements, I do not recognize that this positive account requires me to rule out certain actions that I consent to. My failure to recognize all the implications of my conception of the ultimate end makes it intelligible that I allow actions that, if I thought about them more carefully, I would not allow.[40]

Aquinas' views on regulation and permission also suggest that we act on passion if we simply consent to the passion by non-intervention. Non-intervention need not result from a deliberate choice not to intervene; we may simply be too hasty or too lazy to think about whether we ought to intervene. Such haste or laziness partly depends on our will, just as the later stages of a journey are dependent on the elections that we made at earlier stages; for our previous deliberation and choice affect our later tendency to stop and think or to proceed without thinking.

These features of Aquinas' account show that it is more flexible in its treatment of action on passion than we might at first suppose. We would be wrong to confine the role of passions to their influence on our judgments in a standard action on deliberation and election. They can also move us without deliberation, through consent that consists in failure to dissent when we could dissent. Even in such actions they depend on the will.

Aquinas sticks to his initial description of the will as essentially rational desire aiming at a universal good. This description underlies his argument that the will necessarily aims at an ultimate good, which it pursues as a result of deliberative inquiry. The role of the ultimate good and deliberation separates the will from the passions, which are not directed towards the final good in the same way. Since the will has a regulative and permissive role in relation to passions, its influence extends beyond the actions that directly involve it.

The claim that we have a will, so understood, is reasonable. Aquinas' claims about the universal good, the final good, aiming, and deliberation, emphasize the structural and holistic character of rational desire. He points out that our rational desire for one object depends on the connexion of this desire with other desires that fit together in some fairly systematic structure. It is also reasonable to argue that passions differ from rational desires in lacking this systematic connexion with the rest of one's aims.

Aquinas argues that these features of rational agency also allow us to understand issues about freedom and about morality that might initially appear quite distinct from the questions about agency. In seeing how he applies his claims about agency to these other issues, we will also understand these claims better.

256. The Inter-dependence of Will and Practical Reason

This analysis of action is intended to explain how will moves us to action and how our action is essentially rational. Aquinas believes that he has found the right role for reason, will, and

[40] This conflict is the basis of Aquinas' account of incontinence. See §296.

desire, in contrast to more extreme views that fail to do justice to these different aspects of action. It is sometimes difficult, however, to see what is at stake in the decision between Aquinas' view and the extreme views, and hence it is sometimes difficult to see whether his different formulations of his own position amount to a consistent or plausible position.

It may be useful to distinguish two questions, and to introduce some terms to express them: (1) Is the will determined by the greater good as presented by reason? To answer Yes is to be an intellectualist. To answer No is to be a voluntarist.[41] (2) Is the will determined by the strongest passion, as an animal's choice is determined? To answer No is to be a rationalist. To answer Yes is to be an anti-rationalist.[42]

Aquinas rejects the extreme intellectualist view that reason is the primary cause of rational action, so that will is simply an intermediary cause that is ultimately explained by reference to reason. He also rejects the extreme voluntarist view that will is the primary cause of rational action and reason is only a secondary cause, so that the role of reason is subordinate to the role of will. Against these two extreme views Aquinas argues that action proceeds primarily from the will, but the will is rational desire, and is therefore essentially guided by our intellectual conception of the greatest good. A voluntarist rejects this account of action, but still agrees with Aquinas in accepting rationalism about the relation of will to passion. We will eventually need to ask whether this combination of voluntarism and rationalism is coherent or plausible; but if we do not recognize the difference between intellectualism and rationalism, we cannot even see the questions that need to be asked.

One dispute between intellectualists and voluntarists depends on claims about logical and explanatory priority. An extreme intellectualist view claims that we can explain action through a conception of practical reason that is logically independent of will; will and rational desire enter only as intermediate causes that are wholly explained by practical reason. According to this view, the basic explanation refers to our cognitive grasp of facts about the good, independently of any desire directed towards them. An extreme voluntarist view, by contrast, claims that we begin from an account of will that is not essentially formed by practical reason; facts about the good and practical reason become relevant only because of some prior and independent facts about will. If this is the right way to describe the two extreme positions, we may try to understand Aquinas' position as a denial of the claims about priority that define the two extremes.

Aquinas emphasizes the distinction between the cognitive and the motive aspects of a rational agent (1a q20 a1 ad1; q76 a1; *in DA* §824). These two aspects display different 'directions of fit' (to use a later term); the intellect tries to conform itself to reality, whereas the will goes outside itself to make reality conform to it.[43] The will moves the body because it is a form of desire, but the intellect does not move the body except through desire, 'whose motion presupposes the action of the intellect' (1a q76 a1). Reason is not the primary cause,

[41] On the use of 'voluntarism' by historians see Bonansea, 'Voluntarism' 95n.

[42] For further discussion of these positions see §§389–91.

[43] ' . . . cognition comes about through the fact that the thing cognized is in the cognizer. Hence his intellect extends itself to what is outside it, in accordance with the fact that what is essentially outside it is suitable (natum) for being in some way in it. Will, by contrast, extends itself to what is outside it in accordance with the fact that by a certain sort of tendency (inclinatio) it aims (tendit) in some way at an external thing. Now it belongs to one capacity to have something external within itself, and to another capacity to aim itself at an external thing' (1a q59 a2). On direction of fit see Anscombe, *Intention* 56–7; Smith, *MP* 111–25.

because intellect and will are two distinct capacities (*Ver.* q22 a10; *ST* 1a q80 a1; q82 a3) and both are needed to explain action. Knowledge by itself simply gives us a capacity to act as we choose (1-2 q56 a3), whereas willing causes us to do a particular sort of action. Knowing our good and how to achieve it would not be connected with our action if our desire did not fix on our good. Aquinas agrees with Aristotle's claim that thought by itself moves nothing, and that in order to initiate motion it must be 'thought for the sake of some end' (*EN* 1139a35–6). Aristotle believes that this goal-directed thought initiating action requires the presence of desire. Similarly, Aquinas asserts that our cognitive capacity does not move us without desire as intermediary.[44]

257. How is the Will Rational?

To show that he does not simply identify the will with practical reason, Aquinas argues that the desiring capacity—both sensory desire and will—participates in reason, but is not rational through its essence (1-2 q58 a2).[45] We might naturally take him to mean that it is not essential to an act of will to follow reason. This is the sense in which the passions participate in reason but are not essentially rational; they sometimes agree with reason, and sometimes do not, so that it is not essential to them to be guided by reason.

But this is not what Aquinas means in saying that the will is rational only by participation. If he meant that the will is not essentially rational, but may (like the passions) follow or not follow reason, he would embrace the extreme voluntarist position that will is definable independently of reason. But he rejects extreme voluntarism. He does not believe the will can be non-rational; while there are non-rational forms of desire, there are no non-rational

[44] Vis cognitiva non movet nisi mediante appetitiva, 1a q20 a1 ad1.

[45] Aquinas believes that his view of the will as rational by participation agrees with Aristotle's view in *EN* i 13; see *in EN* §§240–1. In Aristotle, the parts that are 'obedient' to reason seem to be the non-rational desires, whereas *boulêsis* seems to belong to the rational part—as Aquinas himself notices elsewhere (1a q82 a1 obj2). Aquinas assumes, however, that all desire belongs to the non-rational part that 'participates in a way in reason' (*EN* 1102b13–14). Aquinas often appeals to this passage in support of his claim that the will is rational by participation (*ST* 1-2 q56 a6 ad2; q59 a4 ad2; a61 a2c, ad2; 2-2 q58 a4 ad3). In *EN* i 7 Aristotle marks a similar division between the two parts of the soul that 'have reason'. One of these actually has reason within it, while the other is 'obedient to' or 'persuadable by' (*epipeithes*, persuasibile) reason (*EN* 1098a4–5). Here also Aquinas supposes that the 'persuadable' part is meant to include the will as well as sensory desire. Indeed Aquinas concludes from this passage that happiness is taken to consist more principally in the contemplative than in the active life (*in EN* §126).

This explanation, however, does not work. First Aquinas claims that 'the appetitive (concupiscibilis) power, and every desiring power, including the irascible power and the will, participate in some way in reason' (§240). But at once he seems to contradict this claim. After remarking that the intellect is not subject to the actions of any bodily power, he says that the same is true of the will, 'which is in reason, as is said in *De Anima* iii' (§241). Having said this, however, he reverts to his first view, saying that one part of the soul, including both sensory desire and the will, is non-rational in its own right, but rational by participation (§242). It is difficult to see how the will can both be in the rational part and be non-rational in its own right.

Aquinas' attempt to understand the non-rational part as including the will is especially difficult to reconcile with his account of Aristotle's remarks on incontinence. For he sees that Aristotle means to attribute a correct decision to the rational part of both the continent and the incontinent person, and that the non-rational part 'obstructs reason, that is to say, impedes it in carrying out its election' (§237); the obstructing element is sensory desire. Now Aquinas recognizes that election is an act of the will (§486; 1a q83 a3; 1-2 q13 a1), and so he must agree that the incontinent person's sensory desire obstructs his will. If this is true, then one of the conflicting parts of the soul must include the will and the other must include sensory desire; hence Aristotle must take the rational part to include the will, and therefore to include rational desires. Aquinas should have concluded that i 13 includes the will in the rational part.

forms of will. Since the will depends on intellect, there is no will independent of reason. If we have a will, the intellect moves the will by presenting the object of will, and thereby 'directing' (ordinare) the will.[46]

'Rational by participation', therefore, does not mean 'not essentially rational'. It would be better expressed by 'derivatively rational'. The will is derivatively rational, because its rationality depends on something else that is non-derivatively rational; it presupposes the operation of intellect and reason, and is not identical to it.[47] It depends on rational beliefs and judgments, which are themselves rational 'through their essence' ('per essentiam', 1-2 q61 a2). Though Aquinas' terms might mislead the unwary reader into inferring that the will is not essentially rational, his explanation of the terms rejects this inference.

In treating the will as derivatively rational because of its relation to reason, Aquinas takes intellect to be prior to will and independent of it in one respect; it does not need to be moved by the will, whereas the will needs to be moved by the apprehensive capacity (1a q82 a4 ad3). If each capacity had to be moved by the other, the claim that either of them explains action would result in an infinite regress. To avoid a regress, Aquinas claims that the intellect initiates the motions of the will through 'command', which is an act of reason presupposing an act of will.[48] Commanding is essentially an act of reason because it involves directing someone towards something to be done, by 'intimating or declaring'. Reason intimates or declares either (1) 'absolutely' through a verb in the indicative mood (as in the gerundive 'This is to be done by you') or (2) 'by moving' B to do x, through a verb in the imperative mood (as in 'Do this').[49]

An indicative intimation intimates 'absolutely' because it simply intimates. Imperative intimation goes beyond simple intimation, since it intimates by moving. 'By moving', cannot mean 'by actually setting in motion', since not all imperative intimations are obeyed, and those that are not obeyed do not set anyone in motion. An imperative intimation is a 'setting in motion' in the conative sense, an explicit attempt by A to move B to do x. In this sense, pushing against a rock that (as I discover) I cannot actually move is also a 'setting in motion'. This all belongs to reason, because it is a function of reason to reach and to formulate the

[46] 'Now it is evident that, in a sense, reason precedes the will and directs its act: that is to say, in so far as the will aims at its object in accordance with the directing of reason, by the fact that the power of apprehending presents the power of desiring with its object. And so the act by which the will aims at something proposed to it as good, through being directed towards the end by reason, is materially an act of will, but formally an act of reason' (1-2 q13 a1).

[47] See discussion of Scotus' use of Aquinas' formula, §359.

[48] In *SG* iii 10 §1945 Aquinas first speaks of the power of moving one's limbs 'to execute the command of the will (imperium voluntatis)', and then of this same motive power as executing the command of reason (imperium rationis).

[49] 'Command is an act of reason, but with an act of will presupposed. . . . Now command is essentially indeed an act of reason: for the commander directs (ordinare) the one commanded to do something, by intimating or declaring; and to direct thus by intimating or declaring is an act of reason. But reason can intimate or declare something in two ways. First, absolutely: and this intimation is expressed by a verb in the indicative mood, as when one person says to another: "This is to be done (faciendum) by you." Sometimes, however, the reason intimates something to someone by moving him to it; and this intimation is expressed by a verb in the imperative mood, as when it is said to someone: "Do this". Now the first mover, among the powers of the soul, to the doing of an act is the will . . . Since therefore the second mover does not move, except in the power of the first mover, it follows that this very fact that reason moves by commanding belongs to it from the power of the will. Hence the remaining possibility is that command is an act of reason, with an act of the will presupposed, in the power of which <act of will> reason, by its command, moves <us> to the execution of the act' (1-2 q17 a1). The role of will in command is explained more fully in *4Sent.* d15 q4 a1 sol. 1 ad3 = P vii 736b–737a; *Quodl.* ix q5 a2 = P ix 596b. Both passages maintain that command and prayer are none the less properly acts of reason. Cf. Bradley, *ATHG* 352–3. Cajetan ad 1-2 q17 a1 = L vi 119 defends the intellectualist view of imperium, arguing that it follows from acceptance of the claim that prudence is 'prescriptive' (praeceptiva). He attacks Scotus for ascribing imperium to will.

conclusion that is the content of the command. Aquinas does not suggest that deliberation simply causes our desire to pass from the end through the prediction that this action will promote the end.[50] We recognize that the action deserves to be done, and our recognition moves our will. In this respect, intellect commands acts of the will (q17 a5).

But intellect does not command all acts of the will, since it presupposes an act of will. We would not deliberate, and hence we would not reach a conclusion that could be the content of a command, unless we had wills that aimed at the good. The simple recognition that something deserves to be done would make no systematic difference to our action unless we had wills—forms of desire that respond to what deserves to be done. If we could recognize what is worth doing, but we had no wills, our recognition that it is worthwhile to learn to play the violin would not affect us in itself; it would affect us only if we already had some non-rational preference for playing the violin or for some end to which it seems to be a means. In commanding ourselves to learn to play the violin because it is worthwhile, we presuppose that this is a consideration that matters to us. Hence intellect moves the will as final cause, whereas the will moves the intellect as efficient cause (1a q82 a4). What intellect commands as worthwhile becomes an end for us to pursue, because we have wills that respond to what seems worthwhile. Intellect 'by itself' moves nothing, since it has no mechanism for moving the body independently of the will. Any role that we can attribute to the intellect in initiating action is a role that requires the operation of the will.

This account avoids an infinite regress because the presupposed act of will does not require a further act of intellect. Nothing further commands us to attend to what seems to deserve our attention, since commands presuppose an initial disposition to attend to it. This initial disposition is a state of will. It does not require a prior command; indeed such a prior command would be futile without the appropriate state of will. But it does not make Aquinas a voluntarist; for the initial disposition is not logically independent of reason. We cannot define will without reference to practical intellect.

258. The Influence of Will on Intellect

This relation between will and intellect affects the ways in which the will may influence the results of the operation of intellect. The 'active' function of the will is prominent in interpretations that minimize the extent of Aquinas' intellectualism.[51] He points out that our deliberation is influenced not only by the end that we want to achieve, but also by whether we choose to deliberate, how much we choose to deliberate, and what we choose to consider in our deliberation.[52] Since these choices depend on the will, some operations of intellect depend on will. Though the exercise of will in election depends on intellect, the will does not depend wholly on intellect. It also depends on the initial contribution of will in controlling the focus and the character of our deliberation.

[50] This predictive view is developed by Hobbes and Hume.

[51] See Lottin, *PM* i 276–80; iii 2, 652–7. His interpretation underlies Hisette's claim, *Enquête* 245, accepted by Wippel, '1277' 256–7. See §358.

[52] Cf. Aquinas' comments on the exercise of other capacities: 'One can not-will on this occasion to think about happiness, because the acts themselves of intellect and will as well [as exercises of other capacities] are particular' (*Mal.* q6 = M 560a).

These considerations exclude a version of intellectualism that claims that the intellect, operating wholly independently of the will, determines the will. But they do not imply that the will ever operates wholly independently of the intellect. Let us consider the operations of will that influence our deliberation when we choose what to deliberate about, whether to reconsider the results of our deliberation, and so on. Aquinas would take these operations of will to support a voluntarist account of the will if he believed that they proceed independently of our conception of the good. But we have no reason to attribute this belief to him. If I decide it would be a waste of my time to deliberate elaborately about whether to wear a grey shirt or a blue shirt, and so conclude my deliberation quickly, that may be because I think it does not matter much which shirt I wear, or because I notice that I need to go out in two minutes. My will influences my deliberation, but it is itself influenced by my views about what would be better; and so even the influencing will depends on the intellect.

Sometimes these operations of the will explain why we do not act on our initial conception of what is better. Our preferences and interests may cause us to reason badly, so that we do not always discover what contributes best to the ultimate good, even when this discovery is open to us. Moreover, we are sometimes so hasty or biased that we do not stop to think about the ultimate good. We even reject particular goods that initially appear to promote the ultimate good; for we may attend to the aspects that make them undesirable rather than to those that make them desirable (1-2 q13 a6). Since only the ultimate good has no such aspects, every subordinate good can be rejected by an agent who focuses on its undesirable aspects. If we attend to the bad aspects of something that initially appeared to promote the ultimate good, we may not desire or choose this object. We may attend unreasonably to the good aspects of a bad object or to the bad aspects of a good one, and so we do not act on the best reasons that we initially recognize. Hence the will fails, in one respect, to follow reason, so that it is not necessarily determined by reason.

But the role of the will in focussing our attention and controlling our deliberation does not always distort the operations of intellect. It is often legitimate, and even indispensable. Since subordinate goods and evils have many good and bad aspects corresponding to different elements of the ultimate good and the means to them, we could not deliberate efficiently or effectively at all if we did not focus on some questions rather than others, and we did not form some views about how long it is worth our while to deliberate on different questions. These views cannot all be subject to deliberation on each occasion; if they were, we could never get started.[53] But they are not immune to deliberation on all occasions; I may discover, when I think about it, that sometimes I miss opportunities by fussing for too long on minor questions, and that at other times I make mistakes because I take the wrong things for granted in deliberation.

These examples suggest what Aquinas means in saying that will influences intellect. He does not hold a voluntarist conception of this role of will; for he does not claim that in this role the will is free to choose independently of the apparent good. Hence he does not suggest that I might will not to deliberate now even if it seems good to deliberate and nothing seems

[53] On the threat of a regress see *Mal.* q6 = M 559b. Aquinas argues that to explain the first movement of the will, we need to appeal to an external mover, God; he does not say that the will initiates the movement itself.

to me to count against taking time to deliberate.[54] In his view, 'human beings determine themselves through reason to will this or that, which is really good or apparently good' (1-2 q9 a6 ad3).[55] If the acts of will that determine the operations of intellect did not themselves depend on the apparent good, how could Aquinas claim that they are acts of will? Why would they belong to the will rather than to some other desire? If he recognized acts of will that are independent of the apparent good, his position would be inconsistent; but he does not recognize them. On the contrary, he claims that, whereas the will moves the intellect to its exercise, it moves other things in this or that way because of how the good appears to it.[56]

The will moves the intellect as efficient cause whereas the intellect moves the will as formal and final cause.[57] The intellect has a causal role because it presents to the will the end that explains the will's willing a particular action (bodily or mental) for the sake of the end; and in presenting this end it also gives the will the relevant form (being the will to achieve this end). These different causal roles express the fact that our will moves us in a particular direction only because it aims at a particular end as good, and depends on the intellect to present it to us as good.

Aquinas' position, therefore, is moderate rather than extreme intellectualism, but it is a form of intellectualism rather than a combination of intellectualism and voluntarism. It avoids the extreme intellectualist claim that intellect independent of will determines will and action, but it also avoids the voluntarist claim that will independent of intellect determines intellect and action. We necessarily desire what we apprehend as promoting the ultimate good; if we fail to choose something that at first seemed to promote the ultimate good, we have changed our mind about whether it really promotes the ultimate good.[58] We act rationally in so far as intellect constrains the operation of the will. In Aquinas' view, we cannot firmly believe that x rather than y promotes the good, and then—while still clearly understanding and firmly believing this—will y rather than x. This intellectual constraint on the will applies no less to the acts of will that influence deliberation than to those that result from deliberation.

[54] This claim needs to be restricted to willing. We are also influenced by passions, but their influence is not relevant to deciding whether Aquinas concedes something to voluntarism.

[55] Lottin, *PM* iii 2, 65, Hisette, *Enquête* 244, and Wippel, '1277', 256n66–7, all try to restrict this remark to the final practical judgment, which depends on the influence of the will. But it is arbitrary to suppose that it does not also apply to the acts of will that influence deliberation.

[56] 'The motion of the subject itself is from some agent. And since every agent acts for an end, ... the principle (or origin; principium) of this motion is from the end. ... Now good in common, which has the character of an end, is the object of the will. Consequently, in this respect, the will moves the other capacities of the soul to their acts ... On the other hand, the object moves by determining the act, in the way a formal principle does ... Now the first formal principle is the universal being and truth, which is the object of the intellect. And therefore by this kind of motion the intellect moves the will, as presenting its object to it' (1-2 q9 a1).

[57] 1-2 q9 a1 ad3; *Ver.* q22 a12 = M (1b).

[58] '... if some object that is universally good and good in accordance with every consideration is put forward for the will, the will necessarily aims at it, if it wills anything. But if some object that is not good in accordance with every consideration is put forward for the will, it will not necessarily be carried towards it. And since a lack of any good whatever has the character of not-good, it follows that only the good that is perfect and lacking in nothing is the sort of good that the will cannot fail to will; and this good is happiness. But the other goods, namely particular goods, in so far as they lack some good, can be taken as not good, and in accordance with this consideration they can be rejected or approved by the will ...' (*ST* 1-2 q10 a2). '... It is quite possible that, if any two things are put forward as equal in accordance with one consideration, still a condition about one of them may be considered through which it is superior, so that the will is turned more towards it than towards the other' (q13 a6 ad3). On changing attention and voluntarism see §362.

259. Will, Reason, and Desire

The significance of Aquinas' view about the roles of will, intellect, and desire may be clearer if we consider later disputes between rationalism and anti-rationalism (or 'sentimentalism') about whether 'reason' or 'passion' moves us to action.[59] These disputes are clearer if we recall our earlier division between intellectualism and rationalism, since modern disputes tends to run the two positions together.

Aquinas agrees with Aristotle in rejecting the extreme intellectualist position, later maintained by Clarke, that thought without desire motivates.[60] That is why Hutcheson claims that Aristotle and the Scholastics support his anti-rationalism.[61] He assumes that their rejection of extreme intellectualism about intellect and will implies the rejection of rationalism about will and passion. In his view, reason moves us only in so far as it presents means to some independently-desired end; the fact that we desire a certain sort of object explains why other objects are worth choosing.

Aquinas, however, implicitly rejects this argument from the rejection of extreme intellectualism to the rejection of rationalism, because he rejects the anti-rationalist view of reasons. Contrary to Hutcheson and Hume, he believes in external reasons—reasons whose goodness or badness does not consist simply in their relation to other desires of the agent.[62] Internal reasons are internal to, because they depend on, the actual desires of the agent; agents have the relevant reasons ultimately because they have the relevant desires. If I want to go to a film, I have an internal reason to buy a ticket, but I have no reason to buy a ticket apart from my desire to go to the film, and I have no reason (we may assume) to want to go to the film rather than to amuse myself in some other way that is equally available to me. External reasons consist in facts that are not connected to agents' desires in this way. To have an external reason is to have a good reason for choosing x over y whose goodness does not consist simply in the fact that x will do more than y will do for some further end. Aquinas takes these external reasons to be the basis of 'intellectual love' (1-2 q26 a1–2) that is not based simply on the prior desires of the agent. He believes that will is essentially rational, because it is essentially moved by intellectual love and by external reasons; the relevant reasons are derived from the independent merits of a proposed action, apart from one's antecedent preferences.

Belief in external reasons constrains one's account of the ultimate good. Aquinas claims that rational agents choose by 'rational comparison' of particular goods. One might suppose that we rationally compare particular goods if we consider the strength of our preference for each of them, and choose among them in accordance with the strength of our preference. But if we choose among ends in accordance with external reasons, the rational comparison of ends considers more than the comparative strength of our desire for them. We consider the merits of our various preferences, and we correct our preferences as a result of reflexion on their merits.

If, then, Aquinas' belief in external reasons supports rationalism against anti-rationalism, and if his claims about will and intellect support intellectualism against voluntarism, is it

[59] See §391. [60] See Aristotle, *DA* 433a22–3; *EN* 1139a35–6; Aquinas, *in DA* §824–5; *in EN* §1135.

[61] See Hutcheson, *IMS* 122.

[62] On internal v. external reasons see §§336–7; Williams, 'Internal'; McDowell, 'External'; Taylor, 'Agency'.

misleading of him to reject extreme intellectualism? Though he says that desire as well as intellect is needed for action, does he empty this claim of content when he adds his views about intellectual love and external reasons? He might answer that he differs from extreme intellectualism in insisting that external reasons move us only in so far as they tell us about goods. To say that things are good is not simply to say that there are external reasons for pursuing them; it also implies that the external reasons fit together in the teleological structure that embodies the ultimate good.

This teleological structure implies that a given external reason is not a reason that we can immediately see in its own right; it must also fit into an appropriate structure of ends. In this respect Clarke's extreme intellectualism fits his foundationalist and intuitionist epistemology. In rejecting this position and insisting on a basic desire for the ultimate good, Aquinas implies that we can grasp external reasons only in relation to each other and to their common end. He is therefore a rationalist about will and passion, since he does not believe that the rational merits of a given action are determined by an antecedent desire with some determinate content. He believes that our desires are directed towards action on the recognition of the rational merits of a course of action.

18

AQUINAS: FREEDOM

260. Voluntary Action and the Will

Aquinas believes that his conception of the will and the passions and of their relations allows us to understand the distinction (i) between voluntary and involuntary actions, and (ii) between free and unfree actions. According to Aquinas, these are really one distinction that depends on the presence or absence of the appropriate relation between will and action. It is not obvious, however, that they are really one distinction. We may begin with Aquinas' treatment of the voluntary, and then consider why he believes that this also provides an adequate treatment of questions about freewill.[1]

Aquinas regards the will as the source of the actions that Aristotle counts as voluntary (*hekousion*).[2] According to Aquinas, Aristotle attributes to *boulêsis* the properties that belong to the will (voluntas). If Aquinas is right about this, 'voluntas' is a good translation of '*boulêsis*', and 'voluntarium' is a good translation of '*hekousion*'. If a voluntary action is a product of the will, it is also a product of deliberation and election. Voluntary actions are the proper objects of praise and blame (*ST* 1-2 q6 a2 obj3), because the complete form of voluntariness makes praise and blame appropriate.[3] Our capacity to deliberate gives us control over our actions, and so allows us to modify our actions in response to praise and blame.

Non-rational agents lack the complete form of voluntary action, since they are not open to praise and blame (q6 a2).[4] The complete form of the voluntary requires the complete knowledge of the end and the relation of means to end.[5] If we have this grasp of the end and

[1] In some of his discussions of will and freewill, the voluntary has no distinct place in the argument. In *2Sent* d24–5 he discusses questions about the will in the course of a discussion of freewill. The discussions in *Ver.* qq22–4 and in *ST* 1a begin with a discussion of the will and proceed to discuss freewill, but they do not discuss the voluntary separately. *ST* 1a treats the will in q82; a2 touches on questions about the voluntary, without actually using 'voluntarium'. *ST* 1–2, however, treats many of the same questions by discussing issues about the voluntary.

[2] I use 'voluntary' to translate '*hekousion*', without meaning to beg any question in favour of Aquinas' view. For Aristotle's views on the voluntary see §100.

[3] '<Praise and blame> follow on a voluntary action that is in accordance with the complete form (perfecta ratio) of the voluntary, the sort that is not found in non-rational animals' (q6 a2 ad3).

[4] These agents act 'of their own accord' without being capable of the sort of voluntary action that depends on the will (1-2 q6 a2; *in EN* §427; *Ver.* q24 a2 ad1). See §243.

[5] '. . . not only does one grasp the thing that is the end, but one also grasps the character (ratio) of the end and how the thing directed to the end is related to the end' (q6 a2).

the means, we can deliberate about the means, and as a result of deliberation we can pursue or refrain from pursuing the end.[6]

These conditions for voluntary action may appear to be too restrictive to capture Aristotle's view. Aristotle allows voluntary action in two cases where Aquinas apparently cannot allow it: (1) Aristotle allows that non-rational agents, including non-human animals and young children, act voluntarily. Aquinas, however, argues that since they lack deliberation, election, and will, they do not act voluntarily; they act voluntarily only to a lower degree (q6 a2).[7] (2) Aristotle believes that actions on non-rational desire are normally voluntary, and therefore open to praise and blame. Aquinas' conditions for voluntary action appear to make it more difficult to treat such actions as voluntary, since they do not appear to result from will and deliberation.

These two cases may seem to stand or fall together. If we must recognize voluntary action without deliberation in human beings, must we recognize it in non-rational agents? If the inability of animals to deliberate does not disqualify them, are they voluntary agents? Aquinas cannot reasonably deny that actions on non-rational desires are voluntary; for he agrees with Aristotle that they are open to praise and blame. How can they be voluntary, according to Aquinas' criterion?

261. How Action on Passions is Voluntary

Aquinas' answer relies on his analysis of the passions, and especially on his views about the relation of will to passion. In formulating these views, he confronts a Stoic objection to a Peripatetic account of the passions. According to the Stoics, the Peripatetics take passions to be independent of a judgment that an action is best all things considered, and so cannot explain why action on passion is voluntary and responsible.[8]

If the Stoics are right on this point, Augustine cannot be right in claiming that the non-rational motion itself is the passion. If he were right, we would not be responsible for acting on our passions, because they would be entirely separate from rational assent. Augustine's account of our responsibility for acting on passions suggests that, contrary to his criticism of the Stoics, they require assent.[9]

Augustine's answer to the Stoics raises a question for Aquinas. If voluntary action depends on the will, it seems to depend on rational assent. But if passions are independent of rational assent, they apparently cannot be sources of voluntary action. If they are sources of voluntary action, must he agree with the Stoics that they are forms of rational assent?

He appeals to Aristotle's remark that we are not praised or blamed for simply having passions, but only for being in a good or bad state in relation to passions.[10] If we are

[6] 'for from the fact that deliberating reason is related to contraries, the will is capable of going in both directions' (q6 a2 ad2).

[7] This claim about a lower degree of voluntariness also applies to children. But it needs to be modified, as Aquinas realizes, to account for the gradual acquisition of reason, and hence of free choice, in children. See 1a q99 a1; q101 a2; 3a q80 a9 ad3.

[8] Their argument is set out at §167. [9] See §221.

[10] *EN* 1105b31–1106a2; 1-2 q24 a1 ad3; q59 a1 sc; *in EN* §§300–1. The Latin version oddly translates *aprohairetôs, EN* 1106a3, by 'non sponte'. Aquinas reasonably understands this as meaning '<non> ex arbitrio rationis', *in EN* §301.

responsible for what we do, we cannot be acting on the passion alone, but the passion must be appropriately controlled by reason. The relevant form of control by reason is consent given by the will (q10 a3 ad1), which makes action on a passion voluntary.

If consent requires deliberation and election on each occasion when we act, the resulting picture of voluntary action on passions is implausible, since we often act on passion without deliberation, and we seem to act voluntarily in some of these cases. We have seen, however, that Aquinas does not commit himself to the implausible picture; he does not require actual deliberation on every occasion of consent. He allows a permissive and regulative role for our conception of the end, and therefore for the will, in actions that are not the direct result of deliberation and election.[11]

The indirect role for the will allows consent to permitted actions, not only to those that we elect as a direct result of deliberation. Actions are voluntary in so far as we consent to them (1-2 q15 a4 ad2), and reason consents either by actually initiating the movement or by not dissenting (q15 a4 ad3).[12] The permitted actions from which reason does not dissent are indirectly rather than directly voluntary (q77 a7). This role of the will shows how action on passions is voluntary, and therefore how passion can be a cause of sin. Since all sins are voluntary, they must proceed in some way from the will, and so must be suitably connected with election; but they need not all be directly elected.

The permissive operation of will and election supports Aquinas' account of how we are responsible for acting on passions, as Aristotle claims (*EN* 1111a29–31).[13] Aristotle remarks that instead of holding pleasant or fine things responsible for our actions, we should regard ourselves as the causes, as being 'an easy prey' to such things (1110b13–14). Aquinas explains Aristotle by appealing to the capacity of the will to accept or reject the suggestions of passion.[14] According to Aristotle, we may be responsible for falling ill, by 'living incontinently and not following the advice of the doctors'; in that case he is voluntarily ill (1114a15–16). Similarly, as Aquinas puts it, the agent's will is engaged in becoming vicious.[15] Aquinas' appeal to consent clarifies Aristotle's position. We are open to praise and blame for actions that are direct or indirect products of will and deliberation. If the error results from a deliberative failure of the agent, and if the agent can correct this failure, praise and blame are appropriate.

If Aquinas is right about the relations between the passions and the will, action on passion is normally voluntary. If he supposed that when we act on passion, we form a judgment about what is good overall and see that this agrees with the prompting of the passion, his position would be difficult to defend. But since he has a more flexible view about the different

[11] See §§248 and §255. [12] Quoted at §255.

[13] 'For no matter how much anger or appetite grows, a human being does not rush into action, unless the consent of rational desire is added. Further, the first claim seems inappropriate in the same way, namely someone's saying that goods that one ought to desire in accordance with passion as well <as rational desire> are not voluntary. For reason leads us through will to desire those things that we ought to' (*in EN* §428).

[14] '. . . it is ridiculous . . . not to accuse oneself on the ground that one makes oneself an easy prey, that is to say, permits oneself to be overcome by pleasant objects of this sort. For our will is not moved of necessity by such objects of desire, but it is capable of attaching itself to them and of not attaching itself to them' (*in EN* §403).

[15] Aristotle adds that a person for whom vice has become habitual cannot immediately become virtuous simply by willing to. Aquinas does not take him to mean that vice becomes altogether beyond the agent's control: '. . . after they have become such [sc. unjust and incontinent], it is no longer in their power, that is to say, to cease immediately from being unjust or incontinent, but for this a great deal of effort and practice is needed' (*in EN* §513).

ways in which the will endorses or permits, voluntary action on passion does not require an unrealistic degree of rational intervention. He has a reasonable defence, therefore, of his claim that voluntary action proceeds from the will.[16]

262. The Will as the Source of Virtue and Vice

Aquinas' conception of the voluntary implies that if we regard an action as voluntary, and hence as open to praise and blame, we must trace it to the will. Among the sources of rational action—the object apprehended, the apprehension of it, the will, and the motive power that executes the commands of reason—only the will is the proper source of virtue and vice. If the other sources were present without will, we would have no reason to praise or to blame (*SG* iii 10 §§1945–6).

This conclusion, however, raises a difficulty. If a morally bad and vicious action results from the will, it results from some defect of the will. This defect cannot be natural or merely accidental, since such defects cannot be the source of moral badness. But if the defect is itself a voluntary defect, it appears to be a moral error (peccatum); and then we must ask what makes it a moral error; if we must cite some further voluntary defect that is a moral error, we face an infinite regress.

The solution, in Aquinas' view, is to identify a defect in the will that is voluntary, but not a moral error (*SG* iii 10 §1947b). To identify the relevant defect Aquinas describes the proper and 'perfect', non-defective operation of the will. Just as the proper function of sensory desire is to be moved by sensory apprehension, the proper function of will is to be moved by reason itself (10 §1948). Since reason moves by presenting an end as good, and since it can present many goods and ends, the proper function of will is to be moved by the good that is proper to the agent; in that case, a morally good action follows. A morally bad action results when the will breaks out towards action (in actionem prorumpit) either (i) on an apprehension belonging to sense, or (ii) on an apprehension of reason presenting some good different from one's proper good (10 §1949).

The first of these two errors involves a misdirected attitude towards reason.[17] As a result of a 'sudden' apprehension of sense,[18] the will turns towards some good that is pleasing to sense. As a result of reasoning that arrives at some good that is not good now, or not good in the relevant way, the will turns towards it as though towards its proper good. Here we have the sort of error by the will that explains morally bad action.[19] Aquinas distinguishes (a) the 'turning' that consists in the will's looking favourably on a good that is pleasing to sense, from (b) the sort of 'turning' that consists in the willing that produces command and

[16] The defence is not complete. On incontinence see §§295–6.

[17] Cf. 1-2 q75 a1: 'a will lacking the direction of correct reason and divine law, aiming at some changeable good, causes the act of sin in its own right, but causes the misdirection of the act coincidentally and apart from its aim'. See §289.

[18] On suddenness see §253 above.

[19] 'Now this defect of direction is voluntary; for it is in the power of the will to will and not to will. It is likewise in its power for reason actually to consider or to cease from considering, or to consider this or that. Still this defect is not a moral evil: for, if reason considers nothing, or considers a good of any sort, that is not yet a sin (peccatum) until the will turns (tendat) towards some wrong (indebitum) end, which is then an act of will' (*SG* iii 10 §1950). This passage is discussed further at §297.

action. Only the second sort of turning is a moral error. Since we explain the second sort of turning by reference to the first, we avoid an infinite regress of explanation.

The first sort of turning consists in considering x to the exclusion of y.[20] There is nothing wrong with considering a particular sensory pleasure, if we also notice that we have decisive reasons to avoid it here and now. Similarly, it is legitimate to notice that our deliberation has identified x as having something to be said for it, if we also notice that further deliberation reveals decisive reasons for avoiding it. Since neither of these sorts of consideration involves error, the erroneous consideration that Aquinas intends is one-sided consideration of something other than one's proper good as revealed by practical reason. The consideration may be one-sided either by ignoring deliberation altogether, in favour of the 'sudden' apprehension of sense, or by unreasonably halting one's recognition of the results of deliberation.

This one-sided consideration is an act of the will. According to Aquinas, it does not lead us into an infinite regress, because it is not a moral error, though it is a mistake. It is necessary for a moral error, because we cannot choose the wrong option without prior consideration of the option.[21] But it is not the moral error. We have made no moral error until we come to an act of will directed towards action. Hence our appeal to one-sided consideration does not invoke a moral error to explain moral error; but since we appeal to an act of will, we explain how moral error is voluntary.

Aquinas clarifies his point with an analogy. If a piece of wood ought to be cut straight by using a ruler, but a carpenter fails to use the ruler, the faulty cutting is caused by the non-use of the appropriate standard. Similarly, if we choose an action without reference to the appropriate standard, the rule of reason and the divine law, this non-use 'is presupposed in the will before the misdirected election' (*Mal.* q1 a3 = M 455b). For this non-use of the rule 'we need not seek any cause, because for this the freedom of the will itself is sufficient, the freedom through which it is capable of acting and not acting' (q1 a3 = M 455b). In saying that we need not seek any cause, Aquinas does not mean that the non-use of the rule has no cause; for he goes on to say that the capacity of the will to act and not to act is sufficient. He means that we need not seek any further cause beyond the freedom of the will.

The will's failure to consider the right things is not yet a moral error. The moral error enters when we proceed to will and to act on the basis of one-sided consideration.[22] But it is not clear that this distinction helps Aquinas to avoid an infinite regress. Even if the error of one-sided consideration is not a moral error, it needs to be explained. Any attempted explanation seems to face the difficulties he has previously mentioned (*SG* iii 10 §1946). Neither the object apprehended nor the apprehensive capacity is the source of moral error;

[20] Hence he says that when we sin from passion, passion diverts reason from the actual consideration of the correct end (*2Sent* d7 q1 a2 = P vi 447a, referring to Aristotle, *EN* vii).

[21] '... no one is bound to do something except through the fact that he considers that this is to be done; that is why people, in common speech, seem to understand conscience as some actual consideration by reason' (*2Sent* d24 q2 a4 = P vi 601b).

[22] 'And this fact itself of not attending actually to such a rule considered in itself is not evil, either fault (culpa) or penalty (poena), because the mind is not required to, and is not able to, attend actually to this sort of rule always; but it receives the character of fault first of all from this, that without actual consideration of the rule it proceeds to an election of this sort, just as a craftsman does not err (peccat) in the fact that he does not always hold the measure, but from the fact that he proceeds to cut without holding the measure; and similarly the fault (culpa) of the will is not in the fact that it does not attend actually to the rule of reason or divine law, but from the fact that it proceeds to elect without holding the rule or measure of this sort' (*Mal.* q1 a3 = M 455b).

but if either of them is the source of one-sided consideration, then one-sided consideration does not seem to be voluntary, and so seems not to be the source of moral error. But if the source of one-sided consideration is a further act of will, the same questions can apparently be raised about the cause of this further act of will, and then we seem to be forced into an infinite regress.

Aquinas answers that one-sided consideration is a defect of will and that it is voluntary, not because it was caused by a previous act of will, but because it is in the power of the will whether reason considers it or not (iii 10 §1950). This claim about power distinguishes the voluntariness of one-sided consideration from the voluntariness of moral error. Moral error is voluntary because it is caused by one-sided consideration, which is an act of the will; but this act of the will is voluntary because it is within the power of the will.

To see why something's being in the power of the will is relevant to voluntariness, we should recall that the will is essentially rational desire aiming at the ultimate good as conceived by reason. It is sensitive to the results of rational reflexion about what promotes this ultimate good, and hence sensitive to beliefs about the comparative value of different actions. If one-sided consideration is within the power of the will, it is not simply an unavoidable psychological fact that we pursue the goods presented by sensory apprehension or by incomplete deliberation; if it were unavoidable, we would not be open to praise and blame because of it.[23] One-sided consideration is in the power of the will because such consideration is affected by rational reflexion; for if we see that we are wrong to exclude considerations that deserve to be considered, we will change our minds about what should be considered, and we will make our consideration less one-sided.

Why does this flexibility of our will to rational reflexion ensure that the error of one-sided consideration is voluntary? Aquinas relies on the connexion of voluntariness with the appropriateness of praise and blame. Praise and blame involve the presentation of considerations that deserve to be considered; the agents have considered them (in the case of praise) or failed to consider them (in the case of blame). Since the will is sensitive to these considerations, actions that are in the power of the will are proper objects of praise and blame, and therefore are voluntary.

Aquinas does not represent one-sided consideration as an act of the will that is independent of reason. If it were independent of reason, it would not be an act of the will; for will is desire that is essentially guided by reason. The condition of our will that makes us prone to one-sided attention results from our beliefs about the good and our reasoning about what promotes it. The voluntariness of the acts of a will in this condition does not depend on whether these acts have come about through voluntary acts of will. It depends on their being acts of a will that is responsive to praise and blame. Aquinas' claims about voluntary action and voluntary states of will do not rely ultimately on an appeal to a series of voluntary acts; he sees that such a series threatens him with an infinite regress. His claims rely ultimately on the rational character of the will.

[23] 'If, then, it were true that the will would of necessity accept the impression of some pleasing thing attracting it, just as a natural body of necessity accepts the impression of the thing acting on it, then it would be altogether the same in the will as it is in natural things. It is not so, however, because, however much the external sensible thing attracts, it is still in the power of the will to receive or not to accept it. Hence the cause of the evil that occurs from what accepts it is not the pleasant thing that initiates motion, but more the will itself' (*Mal.* q1 a3 = M 455a).

263. The Connexion between Voluntariness and Freewill

Aquinas' account of the will and of voluntary action is Aristotelian in so far as it develops and elaborates Aristotle's views about the ultimate end, deliberation, and election. It might appear to ignore the most important questions about freewill. Even if we were persuaded of the truth of hard determinism, and so believed that no one is free, we might believe that actions caused by mental states of agents must be distinguished from other events that happen to these agents. We might, then, have some use for Aristotle's conception of the voluntary, even if we denied freewill. Hence a proof that agents act voluntarily does not show that they have genuine freewill.

This attempt to separate the voluntary from freewill overlooks one important claim that Aristotle and Aquinas accept—that voluntariness justifies praise and blame. An adequate account of freewill ought to justify praise and blame. If, for instance, we affirmed hard determinism, but conceded that our lack of freewill does not prevent us from being open to justified praise and blame, we would not really deny the reality of freewill. In deciding what counts as the presence or absence of freewill, we should rely on our views about conditions that would or would not support justified praise and blame.

Does this approach make it too easy to prove that we have freewill? One might object that even a hard determinist can find room for praise and blame. Since our favourable and unfavourable reactions to people may influence their future behaviour, can we not justify praise and blame whatever we conclude about the metaphysical facts? But attempts to influence them need not treat them as responsible for their actions. Hence we cannot decide questions about conditions for responsibility simply by looking at conditions for praise and blame.

This objection fails, because the practices that are held to be consistent with hard determinism are not sufficient to justify praise and blame. Reactions or manipulations that try to alter future behaviour do not constitute praise and blame; we may recognize that someone is not justly open to praise or blame for what they have done, even though it would be useful to react favourably or unfavourably. In regarding someone as deserving praise and blame, we make a retrospective judgment relying on what they have done and the mental states in which they have done it. If I accidentally prevent a robbery by driving past a lonely house just as the robbers are about to begin work, it might be useful to reward me for what I did, since that might encourage me or others to do the same sort of thing; but I would not deserve any praise if the good result of my action was entirely accidental. Similarly, if I take every reasonable precaution to keep my bull fenced in, but he gets out, it may be reasonable to fine me, since the fine may encourage me or others to be even more careful about keeping bulls; but I would not deserve any blame if the bad result was entirely accidental. The conditions in which it is useful to impose rewards or sanctions are different from those in which we deserve praise or blame. The conditions for deserving praise and blame—not simply conditions in which rewards or sanctions may be useful—are relevant to finding an adequate account of responsibility.

In assuming that we can reasonably make judgments about when, and on what basis, people deserve praise and blame, we rely on specific moral judgments. If these judgments are mistaken, the pursuit of conditions for freewill is misguided. If retrospective praise and

blame, focussing on what people have done and the mental states in which they have done it, is morally misguided, nothing justifies them; hence we cannot be free and responsible.

This does not mean, however, that judgments about responsibility rest on an insecure basis. For many retrospective moral judgments about desert, praise, and blame are not particularly insecure. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine giving them up; those who have questioned them have usually been moved by the apparent difficulty of finding any metaphysical basis for them, not by their inherent implausibility. It is reasonable, then, to rely, as Aristotle does, on judgments about praise and blame. If, for instance, we want to know whether a capacity for opposites is necessary for freewill, we should ask whether it would be fair to praise or blame agents for their actions if they lacked such a capacity. Since Aquinas presents his account of the voluntary as an account of the basis of justified praise and blame, he believes that if we are voluntary agents, we also have freewill. Hence he argues that voluntary agency, as he understands it, meets the reasonable conditions that people have in mind when they raise questions about freewill.

264. Objections to an Aristotelian Account of Freewill

To see why the Aristotelian account of the voluntary, as we have understood it, apparently cannot give sufficient conditions for freewill, we may begin with an aspect of freewill that Aristotle implicitly recognizes. In his view, if we are responsible for an action, it is up to us to do and not to do that action.[24] But an account of voluntary actions that relies simply, as Aquinas does, on their relation to will and deliberation, does not seem to incorporate this requirement. Alexander believes that if an action is up to us, or in our power, we must act freely (*autoexousiôs*); he infers that not all voluntary action is free action.[25] Freewill should remove necessity from our choices and actions.[26]

Freewill involves some sort of alternative possibilities. The will desires the ultimate end from necessity, but it does not pursue other objects of desire from necessity (1a q82 a1–2); if we did pursue everything from necessity, in the relevant sense, we would not have freewill. We are in control of our doing x or not-x in so far as we are not determined to either one of x or not-x; if we were determined to one outcome, we would not have freewill.[27]

Aquinas supposes that the question about freewill is about whether I freely choose to do this or that particular action. My freedom in making the choice depends on whether I freely make the judgment underlying the choice (1a q83 a2 obj1). If freewill is a potentiality, it must be identified with the potentiality that ensures freedom in our judgments (ad1).[28]

This aspect of freewill appears to support an incompatibilist claim about freedom and causal determinism. The truth of causal determinism seems to imply that we are necessitated

[24] See §§100, 172.

[25] In the Latin versions of Nemesius and Damascene, 'liberum arbitrium' is used to translate *autexousiotês* and cognates. On the Greek term see §172.

[26] Freedom to go wrong: voluntary agents, in quorum potestate est subducere se ab ordinatione divini intellectus; in quo malum culpae consistit (1a q17 a1).

[27] See 1-2 q10 a1 ad3; *Pot.* q3 a13; *Mal.* q3 a3 ad5.

[28] In 1a q83 a4 obj1 Aquinas infers from Damasc. *EF* 36.124–31 that Damascene identifies *boulêsis* with liberum arbitrium.

to do whatever we do. But (the incompatibilist argues) if we are necessitated, it is not up to us to do otherwise, and hence we do not act freely. If Aquinas agrees, he cannot say that free action consists simply in action suitably connected to will and deliberation; he must also claim that such action is causally undetermined.

265. Will as the Source of Freewill

To show that freewill is the same as will, Aquinas considers reasons for believing they are different.[29] He recognizes that some people have taken Damascene's distinction between *thelêsis* and *boulêsis* to divide will from free choice (1a q83 a4 obj1).[30] If, as Aquinas believes, will is determined by one's conception of the ultimate end, one might infer that, for this very reason, will cannot be identified with freewill, which must include some undetermined element distinct from the will. Freewill, therefore, stands (on this view) above other intellectual and motive capacities, and must be distinct from them all (*2Sent* d24 q1 a3 obj5 = P vi 595a).

Aquinas argues that, on the contrary, freewill is found in the will. His account of the will meets two reasonable conditions for an account of freewill: (1) It shows how freewill is, as we normally suppose, essentially connected with the basis for responsibility; for Aquinas believes that justified claims about responsibility and about praise and blame must appeal to control, direct or indirect, by the will. (2) It shows why freewill requires the capacity for opposites; for will gives us the capacity for rational choice between different courses of action. As Aquinas explains the nature of will, it frees us from determination to some particular course of action, and therefore gives us the sort of choice between opposites that is required for freedom.

He therefore defends a reductive account of freewill.[31] In his view, questions about freewill can be reduced to questions about will, and his account of the will shows that we

[29] See 1a q83 a4; 3a q18 a3–4; *2Sent* d24 q1 a3 = P vi 595b (on whether freewill is a different capacity from will and reason); *Ver.* q24 a6.

[30] Lottin, *PM* i 403, attributes this interpretation of Damascene to Alexander of Hales. For Damascene's views on *thelêsis* see *EF* 36.51–3: '*Thelêsis* is an innate capacity in the soul, desiring what is according to [its] nature, and containing all the things that belong essentially to [its] nature'. The substance aims at its own full being (ontotês). Hence natural *thelêma* is defined: '. . .*thelêma* is a rational and vital orexis directed only towards natural things and so *thelêsis* is this very natural and rational desire, a simple capacity. For the desire of non-rational things, since it is not rational, is not called *thelêsis*. *Boulêsis* is a particular sort of (*poia*) natural *thelêsis*, in other words a rational and vital *orexis* for some thing (*pragma*). For there is present in the human soul a capacity for desiring rationally. And so when this natural desire is naturally moved towards some thing (*pragma*), it is called *boulêsis*; for *boulêsis* is rational desiring and aiming at (*ephesis*) some thing' (56–64). The difference between *boulêsis* and *thelêsis* seems to be that *boulêsis* fixes on some determinate object (*pragma*; 'un objet determiné', Lottin, *PM* i 396). In 36.65–70 Damascene mentions various determinate objects that we might have a *boulêsis* for—e.g. to fornicate or to act temperately or to fall asleep. The same distinction is drawn more fully in 124–31, where *thelêsis* is said to be the simple capacity for *thelein*, and *boulêsis* is *thelêsis* about something (*peri ti*). The division between *boulêsis* and *bouleusis*, 71–7, mostly follows Aristotle. Aquinas discusses Damascene on *boulêsis* and *thelêsis* at 3a q18 a3.

[31] Damasc. *EF* 38.38–40 implies that *hekousion* is wider than *prohairesis*, because children and non-rational animals act *hekousiôs*. In 40.1–8 he argues that *to autexousion* and *to eph'hêmin* (which are identified) involve deliberation, and at 41.1 he claims that *to autexousion* requires *to logikon*. But he also believes that everything *hekousion* is up to us, 40.3–5. In 41.15 he argues that non-rational animals are not *autexousia*, because they are non-rational and cannot oppose their natural impulses. It is not clear how this is to be reconciled with the initial claim that non-rational animals act *hekousiôs*. Damascene seems to need Aquinas' distinction between two grades of voluntariness. In 36.86–94, Damascene closely connects being rational and being *autexousios*. Here he follows Maximus Confessor, *PG* 91.17d–20a, except that he introduces *autexousios* where Maximus has *kat'exousian*. On Maximus see Gauthier, 'Maxime' 56–7.

have freewill.[32] Will incorporates the essential conditions of freedom, because it includes free judgment. The relevant freedom in judgment consists in rationality, because we are free of the domination of passions in so far as we can act on our judgment of the merits of an action, in contrast to the strength of our desire to do it.[33] Since human beings have essentially rational desires, they are not simply passive in relation to their desires; rational desire gives us the reflective control that is missing in accounts of choice that omit the will.

Reflective control introduces freedom because it allows the consideration of alternatives that is characteristic of rational agents. Inanimate things are 'inclined' to various results (or, we might say, have tendencies for different things), but nothing within them initiates the motion towards those things. Non-rational animals have something within them that inclines them towards an object, but they do not control this inclination. Rational animals control it, so that they are not necessarily inclined to the object of desire, but are capable of being inclined or not inclined towards the object of desire.

At this point Aquinas recognizes the connexion between freewill and judgment (iudicium); in fact he explains 'freewill' or 'free arbitration' (liberum arbitrium) as consisting in 'free judgment' (liberum iudicium) (1a q59 a3). Both rational and non-rational agents act on the basis of judgment, but animals do not act on the basis of free judgment.[34] In a human being the relevant judgment results 'from some comparison of reason', and so is free. Rational comparison gives us freedom because it allows us to decide between different options; 'a human being has freewill from the very fact that a human being is rational' (1a q83 a1). Since human beings can deliberate about their actions, they are in control of their actions. Since deliberating reason is capable of going in both directions, the will is capable of going in both directions (1-2 q6 a2 ad2).

This capacity of a rational agent is connected with rational apprehension of the end and the means.[35] Because reason can form different conceptions of the good through its apprehension of end and means, the will can be moved freely towards different things. Hence the 'root' of freedom is the will, in so far as the will is the subject of the relevant type of freedom. But since the will is the subject of freedom in so far as it is rational, reason is the cause of freedom.[36] Philosophers concerned about freewill have been concerned, in Aquinas' view, with just those features of rational agency that he captures in his account of the will.

[32] *Ver.* q24 a6 sc1, refers to Damasc. *EF* 58.61: *autoexousiotês de ouden heteron estin ei mê hê thelêsis*. Cf. 41.11–22 on *autoexousiotês* and reason. Damascene agrees with Nemesius, *NH* 40 §317, who says that the things that are *kuriôs eph'hêmin* are 'all the things belonging to the soul and the things we deliberate about' (where the second conjunct seems to specify the range of things up to us, judging by the examples that Nemesius gives in §318).

[33] '[Will is] a desire following the apprehension by the one who desires in accordance with free judgment. And of this sort is rational or intellectual desire, which is called the will' (1-2 q26 a1). '[Sensory desire] follows apprehension by the one who desires, but from necessity, not from free judgment. And of this sort is sensory desire in beasts; in human beings, however, it has some share in freedom, to the extent that it obeys reason' (1-2 q26 a1).

[34] Quaedam vero agunt quodam arbitrio, sed non libero, sicut animalia irrationalia; . . . sed hoc iudicium non est sibi liberum (1a q59 a3). On arbitrium and iudicium in Aquinas' predecessors see Lottin, *PM* i 116–23.

[35] 'But the fact that something determines for itself its inclination towards an end cannot come about unless it knows the end and the relation of the end to things that are towards the end; and this is confined to reason. And so this sort of desire that is not determined by necessity from something else follows the apprehension of reason; hence rational desire, which is called will, is a different capacity from sensory desire' (*Ver.* q22 a4).

[36] 'The root of freedom is the will, as subject; but the root as cause is reason. For the reason why the will can freely be moved towards different things is that reason can have different conceptions of good. And that is why philosophers define freewill as free judgment from reason, taking reason to be the cause of freedom' (1-2 q17 a1 ad2).

Previous writers on freewill agree that it is connected with free choice. Aquinas claims to have found a place for free choice within his account of the will, through his description of election as the outcome of will and deliberation. Therefore he identifies the exercise of freewill with election, which he takes to be an exercise of will. Electing is different from merely willing, but it does not require any further capacity beyond willing and deliberating (*2Sent* d24 q1 a3 sol. = P 595b). Willing and electing are different states of the same capacity (d24 q1 a3 ad4 = P 596a).

Our having freewill, therefore, does not follow immediately from the fact that reason moves us in so far as it grasps an ultimate end;[37] for our pursuit of the ultimate end is not open to freewill, since we have no alternative to it. The intellectual activity that implies freewill is deliberation about different options, resulting in the election of one of the options.[38] Freewill is 'that by which <rational creatures> deliberate and elect' (consiliantur et eligunt, 1a q22 a2 ad4); it is the will in so far as it is exercised in election.[39] Different conceptions of the good express human freedom to the extent that they rest on deliberation and election. Hence free will belongs to will because of a specific feature of will—its capacity to choose on the basis of deliberation and election.[40]

266. Freewill as Absence of Necessitation

This claim about election shows how Aquinas acknowledges the generally-recognized connexion between freewill and choice between alternatives. But has he shown that this choice is free choice? When we speak of freewill, we normally contrast freedom with necessity, and so we assume that an exercise of freewill cannot have been necessitated. Aquinas seeks to incorporate this aspect of freedom in his position. Though we necessarily will the indeterminate ultimate end, it is still left to us to deliberate about what we think it consists in, and therefore we are not necessitated to choose the particular action that we eventually elect.

This absence of necessitation does not consist simply in the absence of external compulsion. Non-rational animals are not externally compelled, but still lack freewill. Rational agents consider and compare different options; hence we control which one we choose.[41] A non-rational agent may be determined by some state of itself to do x rather than not-x as a means to y, but it does not control whether to do x or not-x. It is in our control only in so far as we have some capacity for comparing x with not-x; this capacity belongs to a deliberating agent.[42]

[37] On the ultimate end see 1-2 q3 a4 ad3; 2–2 q4 a7.

[38] See 1-2 q6 a2 ad2, quoted above §260. On election, free choice, means, and ends see also 1a q60 a2; q62 a8 ad2; 1-2 q109 a2 ad1.

[39] Unde etiam eiusdem potentiae est velle et eligere. Et propter hoc voluntas et liberum arbitrium non sunt duae potentiae, sed una (1a q83 a4). See also 1a q83 a3 sed c: Liberum autem arbitrium est secundum quod eligimus.

[40] *Ver.* q24 a6: Unde liberum arbitrium est ipsa voluntas. Nominat autem eam non absolute, sed in ordine ad aliquem actum eius, qui est eligere. Cf. *ST* 1a q59 a3; 2–2 q24 a1 ad 3; *SG* iii 155 §3282.

[41] Cf. 1a q83 a4 obj1 on Damascene: voluntas quae est circa aliquid quasi unius per comparationem ad alterum. See also q83 a1: a sheep judges by natural judgment, but not free judgment, quia non ex collatione, sed ex naturali instinctu hoc iudicat.

[42] Cf. *in Met.* ix 4 §820. See Scotus §369 on his use of this capacity for opposites.

Hence Aquinas often distinguishes the respect in which the will is moved necessarily from the respect in which it is not. It is moved naturally and necessarily towards the ultimate end, but is not moved necessarily towards the particular goods it pursues (1a q82 a1–2; 1-2 q10 a1–2; *Ver.* q22 a5–6). We necessarily pursue whatever appears good from every point of view, so that there is no aspect of it that we could focus on to conclude that it is not worth pursuing. Only the ultimate end, correctly understood, is of this sort; and this is part of what Aquinas means in calling it the 'universal' and 'perfect' good. Other things can be regarded as not being good from some point of view, and so we do not pursue them necessarily (*Mal.* q6 = M 559b).[43]

These remarks might suggest that the uncertainty of the goodness of non-final goods gives us freewill in relation to them. If there were no room for reasonable doubt about their goodness, would we lose our freedom in the choice of them? Aquinas confronts a related question about uncertainty in his discussion of deliberation and election. He argues that uncertainty, inquiry, and deliberation are not necessary for election.[44] Since he allows election without uncertainty, and since he takes election to imply freewill, he also allows freewill without uncertainty.

He therefore claims that God and the angels have freedom, even though they do not need to inquire and they do not face uncertainty. God does not will necessarily everything that he wills. God wills his goodness necessarily, and he wills some other things because of his goodness, but these things are not necessary for his goodness, and he does not will them necessarily.[45] This is why God has freewill.[46] Angels do not choose what they do through deliberation, since their mode of knowledge does not need inquiry; and so their freedom does not rest on deliberation (1a q59 a3 ad1). In these cases where there is no uncertainty and no inquiry, Aquinas argues that nonetheless 'wherever there is intellect, there is freewill'.[47] Freedom rests on the fact that our choice of one good over another is determined by our judgment about its greater goodness; in human agents this judgment about goodness results from deliberation.

267. Freewill as Rational Agency

Aquinas claims to have shown that our choice is not necessitated, given his account of choice. He intends his analysis of rational agency to explain his account of freedom. His view is not that we have freewill despite our lacking freedom in relation to the ultimate end. On the contrary, we have freewill precisely because we are not free not to pursue an ultimate

[43] Cf. §276. [44] See §251.

[45] 'God wills things other than from himself in so far as they are directed towards his own goodness as their end. Now we do not necessarily will things that are towards an end in willing an end, unless they are such that without them the end cannot be . . . Hence, since the goodness of God is perfect, and can be without other things, . . . his willing things other than himself is not absolutely necessary' (1a q19 a3). Ockham is not satisfied by Aquinas' explanation of how God acts freely in so far as he acts through intellect; see §396.

[46] 'We have freewill in respect of those things that we do not will necessarily, or by natural instinct. For our willing to be happy does not belong to freewill, but to natural instinct. Hence other animals also that are moved towards something by natural instinct are not said to be moved by freewill. Since, therefore, God of necessity wills his own goodness, but other things not of necessity, . . . he has freewill in respect of those things that he does not will of necessity' (1a q19 a10).

[47] '. . . only the agent that has intellect is capable of acting by free judgment, in so far as it recognizes the universal character of the good, from which it is capable of judging that this or that is good' (1a q59 a3).

end. The free judgment of rational agents belongs to deliberation about what promotes the overall good; without that there would be no genuine election.

Free choice requires election because non-rational desire is 'determined to one object', whereas rational desire is not. Hence creatures with only non-rational desire lack election (1-2 q13 a2) and freewill (*Ver.* q24 a2). They are free in relation to external circumstances, but not in relation to their desires, since the relative strength of their desires determines their action. Rational agents are free in relation to their desires, since they can alter the relative strength of their desires.[48]

If we did not pursue a final good, we would have no basis for evaluating one object of desire in comparison to another; when we compare one object of desire in the light of what matters most to us, we rely on our conception of our final good, as Aquinas understands it. If we did not choose between different desires on this basis, nothing more than strength of desires would be involved, and so we would not be free in relation to our desires.

It is essential, therefore, to the rationality and freedom of rational agents that the will necessarily pursues an ultimate end and freely chooses the means to it.[49] In so far as the will necessarily pursues an ultimate end, it is not free; its freedom consists in our capacity for deliberation and election directed to means towards this ultimate end. We act rationally in so far as we regulate our actions and choices by some deliberate and reflective view of their connexion with the ultimate end; this feature of rational action distinguishes it from the action of non-rational animals, who lack the conception of an ultimate end and so cannot regulate their actions by it. Since we choose in the light of reflexion and deliberation, our will is free and we are in control (domini) of our own actions; for our practical reason, rather than the influence of external stimuli or some natural disposition, determines what we choose.

268. Freedom and External Reasons

Aquinas' argument about freedom and non-necessitation concludes that freewill consists in practical reason. Will differs from mere inclination, or appetite, or impulse, or caprice, because we do not just find ourselves desiring things and acting on our desires; we also consider whether we have some good reason for acting on this desire rather than that one, and we stop to think about the merits of the case before going in one or another direction. Our will differs from the impulses of non-rational animals, because they cannot do anything about their desires, whereas it is up to us to choose whether or not to act on this or that desire.

These aspects of the will identify the feature of us that supports claims about freedom. We are free to do something about our actions and desires because we can examine possible courses of action on their merits, and guide our action by the results of this examination. We are free because we are determined by the comparative merits of different courses of action, and are not dominated by one or another impulse.

[48] The human intellect directs itself to some things, and in doing so, presents ends to itself; still, pursuit of the ultimate end is presented to us by nature, so that we cannot not will the ultimate end. The ultimate end corresponds to the first principles that our intellect cannot reject. We have a lower grade of life than God has, in so far as we receive our ultimate end from something external to us (1a q18 a3).

[49] 1a q60 a2; 1a q82 a1–2; 1-2 q10 a1–2.

This intellectualist view of freedom and the will goes naturally with a belief in external reasons. While the two beliefs are logically independent, acceptance of one makes it easier to accept the other. If rational and free agents are determined by consideration of the merits of the case, and not simply by their desires, there must be some merits for them to consider. If there were nothing for us to be right about, what we had the best reason to do would just depend on what we happened to want. Our acting on reasons would ultimately rest on the sort of motivation (determination by desires that are independent of the merits of the case) that we want to contrast with acting on reason (acting on the merits of the case). The scope for action that responds to the merits of the case would be strictly limited, so that our freedom would also be strictly limited.

If, then, an intellectualist view of freedom is correct, but there are no external reasons, we are free only in the choice of means to ends. In the light of our degree of preference for certain ends, we can be objectively right or wrong about the courses of action that will achieve them most effectively; but we cannot be right or wrong about the merits of the ends we pursue, and so our freedom cannot extend to the choice of them. If, however, we are free in the choice of ends, we must recognize external reasons; we must be able to appeal to some reason, apart from the strength of our desire, for pursuing one end over another. A free agent acts on consideration of the merits of pursuing different ends.

Aquinas believes we are free in the choice of ends, and so he believes that our choice rests on external reasons. Though we are not free to refrain from pursuing some conception or another of an ultimate end, we are free to criticize and revise the preferences that form our determinate conception of an ultimate end. We are free in relation to ends because we can choose them in accordance with standards of goodness that are external to our desiring and valuing.

Aquinas needs to show, then, that we have the relevant capacity for rational choice about conceptions of the final good. If he is to show that freedom, as he understands it, extends to ultimate ends, he has to defend a belief in external reasons. We still need to see what he has to say on this point. We may appropriately return to this question when we discuss his views on the nature of the ultimate end and its role in the practical reasoning that leads to the formation of the moral virtues.[50]

269. The Place of Will and Intellect in Freedom

Aquinas' account of the source of freewill supports an intellectualist account of freedom.[51] He believes that the capacity of reason to move the will explains how the will is free.[52] Freedom is the capacity to be moved by the merits of a course of action, not simply by one's desires. If our assessment of the comparative merits of two courses of action did not move us, but some further preference or desire were needed, we would not be free. For unless that further desire were open to determination by comparative merits, we would act simply on inclination and not on rational assessment, and so we would not be free after all. Hence

[50] See §320.
[51] 'S. Thomas, ut omnes norunt, defendit quemdam Intellectualismum moderatum', Marietti ed. ad 1-2 q15 (p. 592).
[52] The 'root' of freedom is the will, but reason is the cause of this freedom, q17 a1 ad3.

determination of the will by the intellect is not only compatible with freedom, but necessary for it.

This conclusion may appear to be a threat to freewill. We may suppose that if the will is determined by intellect, we must lack freewill; for though the choice of our will is not necessitated by any cause external to ourselves, it is none the less necessitated by a cause external to the will. If the intellect is a necessitating cause external to the will, do we not lack the sort of freedom that is an appropriate basis for praise and blame? The intellectualist doctrine seems to support Socrates and the Stoics, because it reduces virtue to knowledge and vice to ignorance. If this reductive view were correct, then, apparently, vicious people would appropriately be pitied for their ignorance, not blamed for their errors. Aquinas rejects Socratic intellectualism, and hence rejects the reduction of vice to ignorance. His voluntarist opponents, however, argue that he has not really escaped from the basic Socratic error.[53]

Sometimes Aquinas denies that he holds the intellectualist position that his opponents attribute to him; he implies that their objections would in some way be reasonable if they really applied to his position. Sometimes, however, he argues that these objections apply to his position, but are not reasonable, since they misconceive the sort of freedom that is needed for freewill.

He answers critics by arguing that his version of intellectualism distinguishes blameworthy error from non-blameworthy ignorance. It is open to us to distort our conception of what is best all things considered; sometimes we focus on a few aspects of a situation, under the influence of a passion, and sometimes we refrain from thinking seriously about what is best overall.[54] But it is not open to us to act against our conception of what is best once we have it steadily in mind. We are free not because we can act against our conception of the good, but because we are capable of rational choice based on deliberation about the good.

Aquinas therefore rejects the voluntarist defence that makes the will free to choose contrary to the conclusions reached by intellect. In his view, our ascribing rationality to the will (in the sense just explained) maintains the freedom that is necessary for freewill. To see whether he is right, we should compare his view with voluntarist objections. Comparison will be easier after we have considered Scotus' and Ockham's objections to Aquinas' view of freewill.

270. Freedom, Necessity, and Determination

Aquinas believes that by connecting freedom with the rational comparison of alternatives he has resolved disputes about freewill. If the rational comparison of alternatives is the source of freewill, we have an intelligible basis for praise and blame. Praise and blame are reasonable in so far as they respond to our basis for choosing the action we actually did over others that we considered or could reasonably be expected to have considered. Aquinas argues that agents who meet his conditions for having wills are appropriately praised and blamed, since they have the appropriate basis for the consideration of alternatives; and so he concludes that they have freewill.

[53] On the use of 'voluntarism' by historians see Bonansea, 'Voluntarism' 83n. See §365.

[54] See n19 above.

This reference to consideration of alternatives applies also to those agents who elect without needing to consider alternatives. As we have seen, Aquinas does not take actual uncertainty or doubt to be necessary for election or for freewill.[55] God and the angels do not consider alternatives when they act freely. Still, their choice is not limited by inability to consider any alternatives that ought to be considered. They choose the action they choose as a result of thought that appropriately weighs any different options that they need to weigh; the fact that no weighing is necessary does not make it any less true that their thought is capable of weighing. Since no inability to weigh causes them to act as they do without deliberation, they act freely.[56] This is Aquinas' answer to voluntarist critics who claim that we cannot have freewill unless the will is free to reject the conclusions of the intellect.

This dispute between Aquinas and the opponents of his intellectualism may suggest a more basic objection.[57] His treatment of freewill may appear to be superficial because he does not ask whether or not our actions are causally determined. Incompatibilists suppose that if causation is necessitation, and unbroken chains of causally sufficient conditions underlie all our choices and actions, we lack freewill. But Aquinas' conditions for freewill could be satisfied even if all our choices and actions were causally necessitated. Does he therefore overlook the most serious objection to the reality of freewill?

Aquinas agrees with some of the intuitions underlying incompatibilism. He believes that some sort of necessity is a threat to freewill. When he affirms that human beings have freewill, he implies that we are not determined to a choice of one of the alternatives in front of us; he implies that if we were determined in the relevant way we would not have freewill (1-2 q83 a1). Similarly, his discussion of the will in 1–2 includes an argument to show that external movers do not move the will by necessity (q10 a4).[58] He believes that his account of the will secures the kind of freedom that belongs to freewill; the will is not determined to one choice, except in the case of the ultimate end. Its choice of non-ultimate goods is 'not determined', in the respect that it is not determined independently of our reasoning; it rests on the consideration of alternatives.

Aquinas does not suggest that choice is undetermined in the relevant respect only if it is not deterministically caused.[59] He does not argue that if our choice between alternatives were deterministically caused, we would not have freewill. His treatment of the issues about determination and necessitation suggests that he does not take causal determinism by itself to exclude freewill.[60]

Similarly, he does not believe that external causation excludes freewill; for the control implied by freewill does not require the agent to be the ultimate first cause (1a q83 a1 ad3; 1-2 q9 a6). The fact that God is the ultimate first cause does not exclude human freewill. God is the first cause of voluntary actions, but they would not be voluntary if the will were merely an instrument of God's causality (cf. 1a q19 a8). When the Holy Spirit moves the

[55] See §266 above.

[56] Similarly, the blessed have become incapable of sinning, but have not lost any freedom or goodness in their action; *SG* iii 138 §3120; iv 92.

[57] On the relation between voluntarism and incompatibilism see §371.

[58] Further treatments of necessity: *Ver.* q24 a1–2; *Mal.* q6 = M 559b; *SG* iii 85. See also §344.

[59] He believes that the will of rational agents is immaterial, and so cannot be determined by external physical causes (1-2 q9 a5); but his immaterialism is not necessary for his defence of freewill.

[60] For further discussion of rationalism and compatibilism see §367.

will to voluntary action, it moves us in such a way that the will freely chooses its actions; otherwise the Holy Spirit would be moving us as merely passive subjects (2-2 q23 a2). If external causes do not remove the operation of the appropriate causal sequence that includes rational comparison leading to election, they do not remove freewill.[61]

Though the discussion of God's causal influence on our actions does not affirm determinism, it does not rest on incompatibilist assumptions either. Aquinas' claim that our wills are the causes of our actions, and that we are responsible for our actions in so far as our wills produce them, requires us to distinguish causes from other causal influences and from standing or normal conditions. It does not require us to recognize an indeterminist sequence.

Aquinas' position is not explicitly compatibilist, since it does not directly address the issue about determinism and freedom. The questions about what he calls 'determination to one thing' are not about causal determinism, as it is understood in debates between Stoics and Epicureans and in later debates about determinism and necessitation. But though he does not explicitly formulate the issue, his position is implicitly compatibilist, because he presents sufficient conditions for freedom that do not require the falsity of causal determinism.[62]

Aquinas is an implicit compatibilist rather than a soft determinist. He does not affirm causal determinism, and the aspects of his position that commit him to implicit compatibilism do not commit him to implicit determinism. Reasons that he might offer for rejecting determinism do not affect his compatibilism about freedom, if they do not affect his account of the sufficient conditions for freedom.

In the passages we have discussed, Aquinas does not directly answer questions about determinism. But his treatment of the first cause and secondary causes shows that his defence of freewill does not rely on the rejection of determinism. His defence supports his attempted reconciliation of human freewill with the Christian doctrines of original sin and divine grace. Further discussion will be appropriate when we come to his views on these questions.[63]

Our discussion of Aquinas on freewill has included considerable repetition of questions discussed earlier, in our account of his views on the will, happiness, the passions, deliberation, and election. This repetition has tried to make clear the main point of his account of freewill. In his view, we can understand the nature of freewill, and why we have it, once we have a correct account of the will and rational agency; we simply need to see how those features bear on the questions about freewill. Freewill raises no further questions besides those that we have already answered in understanding rational agency. On this point Aquinas develops and applies the reductive strategy that we have attributed to him.[64]

[61] On external determination cf. §371n84.

[62] Some believe his account of free judgment involves indeterminism. See Kretzmann, 'Goodness'; MacDonald, 'Libertarian'; Stump, *Aq.*, ch. 9. Contrast Pasnau, *TAHN* 214–33. Cf. §371.

[63] See §§347–9.

[64] See §265 above on Aquinas' reductive strategy.

19

AQUINAS: THE ULTIMATE END

271. Why Must the Will Pursue the Ultimate Good?

The claim that a rational will must pursue an ultimate good supports Aquinas' whole argument about action and ethics. Will differs from passion because it is guided by rational comparison of goods, which compares them with reference to an ultimate end. This rational comparison is also the basis of freedom, since it gives us control over our desires and actions. But we might doubt whether the appropriate rational comparison of goods requires reference to an ultimate end. If we compare the merits of different options by considering the features that make each option worth choosing, do we introduce a final good?

To desire something as good, as opposed to simply finding it attractive, is to desire it for reasons that respond to our beliefs about other goods. In bringing these beliefs to bear on our present situation, we compare possible objects of choice by reference to our general views about goods. These general views express a conception of the relative importance of different goods. In the light of this conception we make the relatively systematic comparative estimates and practical judgments about the overall good that are characteristic of rational agents.

Rational agents normally follow some fairly stable pattern in making comparative judgments. Normally they do not prefer A+B to C+D and then immediately prefer C+D over A+B, if nothing is relevantly different on the two occasions. But do they pursue just one ultimate end? Apparently we can evaluate some of our actions by seeing how they affect our end A, and other actions by seeing how they affect our end B, without any comparison of A with B. Perhaps we have no view about the relative importance of A and B, and hence no view about what to do if we think one action will promote A, but impede B, and the alternative will impede A, but promote B.[1] In such a case both A and B are ultimate ends, but neither A nor B is the ultimate end. If our choices and values display this pattern, should we not reject Aquinas' claim that we pursue just one ultimate end?

[1] This situation would be like a chart showing the chain of command for an army in which different instructions tell us to do whatever two different commanders say, but their instructions may conflict. Perhaps, for instance, the chart says 'When you have to decide whether to use nuclear weapons, follow the orders of A', but it also says 'When you are considering an attack that will cause many civilian casualties, follow the orders of B'. Since some situations will meet both descriptions, we may get conflicting instructions, with no way to resolve them.

He might fairly reply that we find it rationally unsatisfactory to pursue two ultimate ends that offer us no answers to important practical questions. If we must choose between pursuing A and pursuing B, but we have no idea of the comparative value of A and B, we are dissatisfied with our conception of comparative values. Our dissatisfaction supports Aquinas' claim about the one ultimate end; for we would not be dissatisfied if we did not want some rational estimate of the comparative value of our ends. Our dissatisfaction presupposes that all our ends ought to be co-ordinated, and that none ought to be insulated from comparison with others; hence we already value the co-ordination of all our ends, and we pursue a single co-ordinated system. This is the system that Aquinas describes as a single ultimate end.

Aquinas' claim that the will necessarily takes the ultimate end as its object is not simply a statement of psychological necessity; it is not comparable, for instance, to the claim that we tend to prefer the interests of people we know well, or tend to prefer what will happen in a month over what will happen in ten years. Nor, on the other hand, is it logically necessary that every conceivable agent with desires, or even every conceivable agent capable of deliberation about the satisfaction of its desires, pursues an ultimate end. Aquinas' description of an ultimate end offers a partial definition of a will. If we could show that an agent's desires were not arranged and modified in the light of some conception of an ultimate end, we would thereby have shown that the agent is not rational and has no will. Aquinas' claim that human beings have wills, therefore, does not follow from the mere fact that we have desires, or even from the fact that we are capable of influencing them in some ways by deliberation. In claiming that we have wills, he claims that our desire and deliberation have the structure that relies on a comprehensive ultimate end.

272. The Final Good and the Natural Law

Aquinas follows Aristotle by introducing the ultimate end at the beginning of his discussion of ethics in the Prima Secundae (*ST* 1-2 qq1–5). He makes its significance clearer by returning to it in his treatise on law (beginning at q90). In his treatment of natural law he claims that the first precept is the principle that good is to be done and pursued and evil avoided (q94 a2). This is the practical parallel to the Principle of Non-Contradiction, which is the ultimate principle underlying all theoretical reasoning.[2] Both ultimate principles are present by nature in rational agents. Just as the intellect cannot fail to accept PNC, we cannot fail to will the ultimate end.[3] The principle of voluntary movements is the 'good in common' and the ultimate end, which corresponds to the first principles of demonstration in theoretical cases.[4] All rational action, therefore, depends on the desire for the ultimate end, which is

[2] 'Just as being is the first thing that falls under apprehension without qualification, so good is the first thing that falls under the apprehension of practical reason, which is directed towards action; for every agent acts for the sake of an end, which has the character of good' (1-2 q94 a2).

[3] 'But although our intellect activates itself towards some things, nonetheless others are presented to it by nature, as first principles are, about which it cannot be in any other state, and the ultimate end, which it cannot not will' (1a q18 a3).

[4] '. . . it is necessary that the principle in whatever things are appropriate (conveniunt) to a thing is natural. This appears evidently in the case of intellect: for the principles of intellectual cognition are naturally grasped (nota). And similarly the principle of voluntary movements must be something naturally willed. Now this is the good in common, at which the will aims naturally, as each power aims at its object; and again it is the last end, which has the position among objects of desire that first principles of demonstration have among objects of understanding . . .' (1-2 q10 a1).

the basic principle that belongs to us through natural law (q91 a2 ad2). Since the natural law is a rational principle, it is guided by the first principle of practical reason, which directs us towards the ultimate end.[5] Necessary acceptance of PNC makes someone a rational subject of belief and knowledge; necessary pursuit of the ultimate good makes someone a rational agent.

The reference to the ultimate end explains why natural law prescribes that good is to be done.[6] Aquinas does not intend a definitional equivalence, saying that 'good' is to be defined as 'what is to be done'.[7] In saying that what is to be done is good, he means that whatever is to be done must be related to the ultimate good. In rational agents, acting for the sake of good involves acting for the sake of an ultimate good that embodies the rational structure in one's aims. Aquinas' account of happiness articulates this structure.

Since the pursuit of this good is the first principle of natural law, subordinate principles should describe a system of ends that embodies the rational structure of the ultimate good.[8] Aquinas does not intend merely the very weak claim that whatever is prescribed by the natural law is good in some respect. He means that natural law prescribes actions that promote the final good of human beings. If the final good is the basis for all the laws of nature, it must extend over all practical concerns that could be questions for practical reason.

273. Subordinate Ends

These claims about the natural law and subordinate ends introduce a further element in Aquinas' view of the status of the ultimate end. We have seen so far why he thinks we pursue only one ultimate end. But we might agree with him on this point without yet agreeing that the ultimate end must be comprehensive, applying to all areas of life and choice. His remarks on the natural law imply that the ultimate end is comprehensive; why does he believe this?

We will deny that the ultimate end is comprehensive if we deny that all our practical principles are subordinate to it. Aquinas' argument, as we have considered it so far, shows us that we recognize an ultimate end to the extent that we think one aim should be adjusted in the light of our other aims. It is reasonable to take this attitude to some aims; but might we not reasonably hold some aims or principles to be exempt from adjustment in the light of our other aims? If there are such aims or principles, apparently they are not covered by Aquinas' argument to show that our aims are subordinate to the ultimate end. Even if whatever we

[5] '. . . law belongs to whatever is a principle of human acts, because it is a rule and measure. Now just as reason is a principle of human acts, so also in reason itself there is something that is a principle in relation to all the other things. Hence it is necessary that law belongs principally and most of all to this principle. Now the first principle in matters of action, which practical reason is about, is the ultimate end. Now the ultimate end of human life is happiness or blessedness, as stated above. Hence it is necessary that the law regards most of all the direction (ordo) that leads towards happiness' (1-2 q90 a2).

[6] 'And thus the first principle in practical reason is the one founded on the character of good, which [sc. character] is that good is what all things desire (appetunt). This, then, is the first precept of the law, that good is to be done and pursued, and evil is to be avoided' (1-2 q94 a2).

[7] Contrast Grisez, 'Principle' 353–8.

[8] 'And on this precept all the other precepts of natural law are founded, so that all those things to be done (or avoided) that practical reason naturally apprehends to be goods for human beings belong to the precepts of natural law' (1-2 q94 a2).

will for the sake of an ultimate end is willed for the sake of one and the same ultimate end, we might still insist that many of our aims stand outside this framework of aims directed towards an ultimate end, so that they do not fit into a teleological structure at all.

Aquinas considers this objection when he argues that we aim at a single ultimate end in everything that we will (q1 a6). He allows that amusements, for instance, do not appear to be directed towards any further end; we choose them simply for their own sake, and we recognize that we gain nothing from them beyond the amusing activity itself (q1 a6 obj1). But these are not the only activities that seem to be outside a teleological structure. Other things that we value for their own sakes, apart from any further benefit that we gain from them, seem to raise the same difficulty. One might take this view of moral principles.[9]

To answer this objection, Aquinas clarifies his claim that we will ends for the sake of an ultimate end. We might falsely suppose that if there is an ultimate end, and we pursue all other things for its sake, then we do not pursue these other things for their own sakes.[10] Aquinas, however, recognizes deliberation resulting in election of constituent ends. If we aim at wealth, we may also aim at the acquisition of wine and clothes, because 'they are contained under wealth, as under some one common thing' (q12 a3 ad2). 'Contained' indicates the relation of constituent to constituted. It is reasonable to elect one such end over another in so far as it is a more significant element in the ultimate end that contains it.[11] Goods pursued for their own sakes may be pursued for the sake of some more ultimate good that includes them.[12]

People who allegedly pursue several ultimate ends, therefore, really pursue one ultimate end.[13] In choosing something for the sake of an end, we need not be ordering it towards some external end (q1 a6 ad1); we may include it in a complete good (q1 a6 ad2).[14] In saying that these constituent goods are 'directed towards' (ordinare ad) the end, Aquinas implies that the relation of means to end need not be a purely causal relation in which the end is external to the means, but may also be the relation between a whole and a part or between an indeterminate end and a determinate end that specifies it.[15]

This explanation makes it plausible to claim that we pursue non-instrumental goods for the sake of an ultimate good. The claim would not be plausible if the final good were wholly external to these non-instrumental goods. Since, however, direction towards an ultimate end includes the relation of parts to a whole as well as the relation of instrumental means to an external end, subordination to an ultimate end does not make the subordinate good purely instrumental. If amusements, for instance, are directed towards the ultimate end,

[9] For Scotus' view see §363.

[10] Aristotle answers this objection by arguing that we pursue some goods both for their own sakes and for the sake of happiness. See §72.

[11] '. . . wherever there are found a number of ends, there can be election between these, in so far as they are directed to a more ultimate end' (q13 a3 ad2).

[12] See also §320.

[13] '. . . all those many things were being taken to have the character of one perfect good composed of them (ex his constituti), by those who were placing (ponebant) the ultimate end in them' (q1 a5 ad1).

[14] The 'et similiter' beginning ad2 suggests that 'comprehenditur' is meant to indicate the same relation that was suggested (in ad1) in saying that the ultimate end is not an external end.

[15] See also *Mal.* q6 = M 559a: under the highest good 'comprehenduntur omnes fines'. Cf. *Ver.* q22 a7: We do not gain merit from aiming at happiness in general—for that is a necessary desire for 'se esse completum in bonitate'. But we gain merit from aiming at a conception of happiness: 'Sed in quo ista completio consistit . . . non est ei determinatum a natura'.

they need not be directed to some end that is wholly external to them; they are directed to the good of the agent himself, just in so far as they are amusements or recreations (1-2 q1 a6 ad1; 2-2 q168 a2 ad3). These subordinate goods are included (comprehenditur, a6 ad2) within the ultimate good, and the ultimate good is composed (constitutum, a5 ad1) of them. The subordination of goods pursued for their own sakes to the ultimate good is not subordination to an external end, but the subordination of part to whole.[16] Aquinas' eudaemonism, therefore, does not make subordinate goods purely instrumental to the final good.

This conclusion shows only that a reference to the final good is harmless, not that it is reasonable. To show why it is also reasonable, Aquinas appeals to the general principle that whatever we desire we desire as being good (sub ratione boni). He argues that we must regard any good as either the perfect good or as tending towards the perfect good; 'for a beginning of everything is invariably directed towards its completion (consummatio)' (a6).

This claim is trivial if it means simply that in willing to do x, we will to complete our doing of x, to carry out x completely. But it is not trivial, if it implies direction towards a complete end. To defend the non-trivial claim, Aquinas assumes that our direction of an action towards a specific end is conditional. If, for instance, we recognize that an amusement interferes with something more important, we see a reason for restricting the amusement. We must have already recognized that the value of the amusement is connected with the value of other things that we pursue for their own sake. We try to adjust the pursuit of these different ends to each other because we take them all to contribute to some ultimate and comprehensive good.

Rational agents accept an ordered plurality of ends, and want the satisfaction of their desires to correspond to the comparative value they attach to each end. If, then, they pursue x for its own sake, they do not pursue x unconditionally, irrespective of its relation to anything else; they want their pursuit of x to be suitably adjusted to the pursuit of other things they value for their own sake. To adjust one end to others is to recognize the structure of an ultimate end embracing them all; hence the rational pursuit of any one particular end for its own sake requires its subordination to an ultimate end.[17]

It is easiest to agree with Aquinas in cases where the non-ultimate good has finite value, so that on some occasions we are better off not pursuing it; reference to the ultimate end prevents excessive pursuit of any one subordinate good. But he does not confine himself to these cases. Even if we cannot pursue a specific good to excess (if, e.g., moral virtue or contemplation or the knowledge of God is of this sort), the ultimate end is relevant. For rational agents think of each good they pursue in the light of other goods with different roles in their overall conception of what is worth choosing and pursuing. This overall conception may show that some component has unrestricted or infinite value in relation to the others. In that case the point of referring to the ultimate end is not to restrict one's pursuit of a particular good, but to explain and justify one's pursuit of it, by showing how it fits one's total conception.[18]

[16] This point is also relevant to prudence and deliberation; see §320.

[17] Aquinas discusses the all-embracing character of happiness further in *4Sent* d49 q1 a3 sol. 4 = P vii 1193ab, and briefly in *SG* i 101 §839 (unusquisque in beatitudinem suam ordinat quicquid vult). On Scotus and Cajetan see §361.

[18] Kant opposes this teleological assumption; see, e.g., *KpV* 74.

We can now see the possible place of the moral virtues in a person's good, and the relation of Aquinas' view of the ultimate end to his general schema. His claim about the relation of morality to the ultimate end does not reduce morality to a merely instrumental or external role. We can choose virtue for its own sake as the object of our more immediate aim, even though we aim at the ultimate good (2-2 q123 a7; in *EN* §§549–50).

The example of amusements suggests another objection to the eudaemonist position. We might say that actions done for the sake of amusement are not done for any ulterior end. Though we might choose them as parts of happiness if we stopped to think about them, we do not actually stop to think about their relation to other actions and aims, but we simply do them on the spur of the moment, without rational deliberation. To answer this objection, we must appeal to Aquinas' description of the influence of the will; he attributes a permissive role to the will, so that the will often remains in the background, until an occasion for deliberation arises.[19] If our conception of the final good has this permissive role, and if it influences our views about amusements when we deliberate about them, the claim that the final good is pervasive avoids an unrealistic conception of impulsive actions.

274. Aiming at Perfection

So far we have spoken without distinction of the ultimate good and of happiness. Does Aquinas intend any distinction? In the *EN* Aristotle takes it to be clear and generally agreed, but not trivial, that happiness is the final good. Aquinas' position is similar. Though sometimes he speaks indifferently of the ultimate good and of happiness,[20] he normally suggests that we add something in speaking of happiness. When he introduces happiness in Part I, he identifies it with 'the ultimate perfection of a rational or intellectual nature' (1a q62 a1). Since happiness is the perfection of a rational nature, it must itself be a perfect, complete, and comprehensive good, a 'state perfected by the collection of all goods' (q26 a1 ad1).[21] Perfection is the only thing that meets the conditions for being the ultimate end, and all rational agents desire their perfection as the ultimate end.[22]

He maintains that our aiming at perfection is the basis of (1) our willing only one ultimate end, and of (2) our willing everything we will for the sake of the one ultimate end (1-2 q1 a5–6). Both claims depend on Aquinas' views about the completeness of the final good; he sees that this is the crucial feature of the final good described by Aristotle.

He maintains that we have only one ultimate end because everything seeks its perfection, and therefore seeks an end that fulfils its desire.[23] Perfection clarifies completeness and

[19] On this permissive role for the ultimate end see §248.

[20] At 1-2 q1 intro, happiness is introduced simply with 'ponitur'. At q1 a7 sc, Aquinas cites Augustine, who says everyone agrees in seeking 'ultimum finem, qui est beatitudo'. At q2 intro, Aquinas takes it for granted that the discussion has been about beatitudo.

[21] Cf. 1-2 q3 a2 ad2; a3 ad2; q4 a7 ad2; *Mal.* q6 = M 559b.

[22] 'Hence both an angel and a human being naturally desire their good and their perfection. And this is loving oneself' (1a q60 a3).

[23] 'Since everything seeks (appetit) its perfection, what someone seeks as ultimate end is what he seeks as a good that is perfect and that completes himself.... It is necessary, therefore, that the ultimate end should so fulfil the whole of a human being's desire (appetitus) that nothing is left to be desired outside it. And this would not be possible if anything external to it were needed for his perfection' (1-2 q1 a5).

finality, and explains why these are rationally desirable features of one's end. The desire[24] for perfection is the desire for one's actualization.[25] This is common to all living creatures, since they are organized for the specific vital activities that constitute their actuality and end, specified by their form.[26] The life that constitutes the healthy state of a creature is the one that actualizes its natural capacities. This connexion between the good, completeness, and perfection commits Aquinas to a naturalist account of the good, resting on an essentialist claim about human beings. He identifies the good not simply with the systematic satisfaction of one's desires, but with the systematic application of rational activity to one's life, because this activity is the essential activity of a human being.[27]

The general claim about seeking perfection is intelligible and reasonable, if it is taken to apply to the natural organization of creatures. But we might be more doubtful, if it is also meant as a claim about the desires of rational creatures. Is it plausible to claim that, whatever we actually desire, the ultimate end for the sake of which we desire it is our self-actualization?

One aspect of perfection is familiar. When Aquinas says that the ultimate end must 'so fulfill the whole of a human being's desire that nothing is left to be desired outside it' (q1 a5), he implies that perfection includes comprehensiveness.[28] Since rational comparison of different specific ends refers to an ultimate end, this ultimate end has to include all the specific ends that can be rationally compared; for if it neglected any of these ends, we could not rationally compare the neglected ends with other ends, and so we could not will them. If, then, comprehensiveness simply includes all our specific ends, it follows from the concept of an ultimate end.

The reference to one's own perfection, however, appears to make the ultimate end self-referential. This is not an obvious feature of mere comprehensiveness. My desire to have some co-ordinated compound of the various ends I pursue does not seem to be a desire for some state of myself, whereas the desire for my own perfection seems to be a desire directed to a state of myself. What entitles Aquinas to this further claim about the ultimate end?

275. Intellectual Love

Why is a comprehensive end not necessarily a suitable ultimate end? We have seen that Aquinas denies that all reasons are 'internal' to preferences by being derived from what I

[24] This 'desire' might more accurately be called a 'tendency', appetitus. On the difference between appetitus and desire see §242n28.

[25] 'The character of good consists in this, that something is desirable. Hence the Philosopher says 'Good is what all things desire'. Now it is clear that a thing is desirable only in so far as it is perfect; for all desire their own perfection. But everything is perfect so far as it is actual. Therefore it is clear that a thing is good in so far as it is a being; for being is the actuality of each thing' (1a q5 a1; cf. q6 a1). On the connexions between goodness, perfection, and being see MacDonald, 'Relation'; Kretzmann and Stump, 'Being'.

[26] See 1-2 q55 a1: 'The perfection of each thing is considered especially in the direction (ordo) towards its end. But the end of a capacity is the actuality.' Cf. 1a q4 a1; q5 a5; q19 a3 obj 2; ad2; 1-2 q3 a2; 2-2 q184 a1; *SG* i 39 §840; ii 41 §1171; iii 64 §2394; *4Sent* d7 q1 a1 sol.1 = P vii 583a.

[27] '... Some activities are naturally appropriate (convenientes) to a human being, which are correct in themselves, and not merely as being laid down by law' (*SG* iii 129 §3011). This chapter is quoted more fully in §307n39.

[28] Cf. Aristotle, *Met.* 1021b12; Aquinas, *in Met.* §1034. Cajetan ad a5 (L vi 13–14) explains Aquinas' argument in ad1 and ad2.

need to fulfil these preferences.[29] If we act on preference-based reasons, and we prefer an end that systematically arranges and orders all our preferences according to their strength, we have a reason for pursuing a comprehensive end. Perhaps I want a comprehensive plan that directs all my desires and actions towards collecting Rembrandts, which is the only thing I care about for itself. More realistically, we might have a number of ends that we pursue for their own sakes, and we might give reasons, based on the strength of our preferences for each end, for sacrificing one for the sake of another. But we may not be able to give any further reason for caring about these ends, or for caring about them in this order. In that case, we can give a reason for pursuing A rather than B, because A results in C and B results in D, and we prefer C over D; but we can give no further reason for preferring C over D.

If all our reasons are based on preferences, we may have a comprehensive ultimate end, but we cannot have a reason for having this comprehensive end resting on these preferences. For if all our reasons are based on preferences, we have exhausted our reasons in stating the ultimate preferences that determine our comprehensive end. When we confront alternatives to our total preferences, we must agree that we have no reason to prefer our preferences over the alternatives, or vice versa. This attitude to our ultimate preferences and alternatives to them fits our view of some of our ends. In some cases we regard our particular ends as a brute fact, a matter of taste, temperament, environment, and so on, and we recognize that we would not be worse off if we exchanged these ends for others, provided that our taste, temperament, and so on were adjusted to suit. Though I may prefer playing a violin to playing a trumpet, I need not think I would have suffered some major loss if I came to prefer the trumpet.

But this does not seem to be our view of all our ultimate ends. We normally assume that they cannot all be replaced without loss. I might be content to have my preference for one instrument replaced by my preference for another, but I would think myself worse off if my preference for music were replaced by a preference for gambling, even if I could afford to gamble, and even if I did not miss playing music; indeed, I might believe I would be even worse off if I did not regret the change. Similarly, though I might find that my concern for other people—family, colleagues, friends—imposes some irksome demands on me, I believe I would lose something significant if I no longer cared about these other people, and that I would lose even more if I did not regret my failure to care about them. If we treat our ends in this way, so that we believe we can assess them on their merits, not simply by their relation to our other desires and preferences, we assume that not all our reasons are based on preferences. We treat some of them as 'external' to our preferences, because they depend on the merits of different ends, and these merits are not exhausted by the relations of these ends to our desires and preferences.

Aquinas recognizes this feature of ends and reasons, in his treatment of intellectual love. He distinguishes sensory love, belonging to the non-rational parts of the soul, from intellectual love, belonging to the will.[30] Following Plato and Aristotle, he believes that a distinct type of desire belongs to each part of the tripartite soul. Following Augustine—also influenced by Plato—he treats love as the primary source of one's pursuit of different ends,

[29] For more explanation of internal and external reasons see §259.

[30] On intellectual love see §§259, 336.

and hence as the primary passion.[31] But he does not infer that a non-rational passion underlies all our pursuit of ends; for intellectual love is not a passion, but belongs to intellectual desire.[32] This sort of love belongs to God and the angels, who have no passions.[33] It rests on a prior grasp by intellect,[34] which grasps its object 'under the common character of good', not simply as an object of some prior inclination.[35]

This intellectual love gives us the freedom that non-rational creatures lack.[36] If we are guided by intellectual love in the pursuit of ends that we take to constitute the ultimate end, we recognize something good about them apart from our having some prior inclination towards them. Prior inclination belongs to the non-rational forms of love, but intellectual love is guided by the features of the object itself, not by their relation to some desire of ours.

The difference between intellectual and sensory love clarifies Aquinas' claim that we have a natural desire for the good. This may sound similar to the claim that we have a natural desire for sensory gratification or for revenge (objects of the non-rational parts). But this is not what he means. The desires of the non-rational parts aim at things that we recognize as actual objects of our desires (or means to achieving these objects). The desire of the rational part is directed to things whose properties merit their being desired, not to things that are already desired.

If we act on intellectual love, we recognize the merits of our end; we 'present' the end to ourselves, and thereby see the end as good (1a q18 a3).[37] Regarding an end as good involves some explicit belief or implicit assumption about its relation to other ends, and about their importance. If I thought that this action would achieve some less important end but impede some more important end, I would change my mind about whether I ought to do it or not; and so the end I present to myself on particular occasions is open to being influenced by my views about the relative importance of my different ends. If I were not open to this influence, there would be something lacking in my rational agency. But my conception of the importance of different ends cannot simply represent their contribution to the fulfilment of my preferences. If my reasons for choosing my ends were simply based on preferences, my ends would not be objects of intellectual love.

The doctrine of intellectual love shows, therefore, that Aquinas recognizes external reasons for preferring one set of ends to another. When we bring them under an ultimate end, we are not just guided by our preferences, and we do not treat the ultimate end as

[31] On Augustine see §218.

[32] See 1-2 q4 a3 obj3, ad3; q26 a1; a2; q28 a6 ad1. Cf. *3Sent* d26 q2 a1 ad1 = P vii 284b.

[33] '. . . in an intellectual nature we find a natural inclination in accordance with the will; in the sensory nature, in accordance with sensory desire . . . Therefore, since an angel is an intellectual nature, there must be a natural love in his will' (1a q60 a1). Cf. q20 a1; *Div. Nom.* 4.12 = P xv 320.

[34] '. . . although in God the will and the intellect are the same, still, since it belongs to the character of love that it proceeds only from a conception in the intellect, the procession of love is different in direction (ordo) from the procession of the Word in God' (1a q27 a3 ad3).

[35] 'But the will regards good under the common character of good, and therefore in the will, which is intellectual desire, no <further> desiring powers are distinguished . . .' (1a q82 a5).

[36] 'In this way it is clear, therefore, that on this point natural and voluntary desire differ: Natural inclination is a desire from an external principle, and for that reason lacks freedom, because what is free is what is cause of itself; but the inclination of the voluntary is a desire by the will of the agent himself, and that is why the will has freedom. . . . And hence it is that all the other powers of the soul, apart from will, are forced by their objects; for all the other powers have a natural desire only in respect of their object, whereas the will has, in addition to natural inclination, a further inclination of which the willing agent himself is the cause. And the same is to be said about love . . .' (*3Sent* d27 q1 a2 = P vii 294b).

[37] Quoted in §267.

simply an ordered collection of objects of our basic preferences. We also treat it as including external reasons in support of our basic preferences.

276. Reasons and Perfection

We introduced Aquinas' views on intellectual love in order to explain why he describes the ultimate end as perfection. But we may wonder whether these views do not cast doubt on his position. When he says we aim at our own perfection, he suggests that we are guided by a concern for states of ourselves rather than for the value of the ends we pursue. Is this a misleading account of ends that are objects of intellectual love? If intellectual love forms my aim of curing cancer, I believe that cancer being cured is good in its own right, apart from my preferring or pursuing it. Hence my primary aim is that cancer be cured. I regard my achievement of this particular aim as a perfection of myself; but it does not follow that my primary concern is with my own perfection. On the contrary, my concern for my perfection seems to be subordinate to my aim of curing cancer.

This description of the aims guided by intellectual love leaves out a self-referential aspect. My concern is guided by convictions about the value of outcomes—e.g., cancer being eliminated; but it may not be solely guided by them. I have external reasons not only for preferring specific results, but also for trying to contribute to them in the right way. In that case, I do not aim simply at the cure for cancer being discovered; I aim to discover the cure for cancer through my scientific investigation, not simply to be somewhere on the causal chain that results in the cure for cancer.

We can see the significance of my causal contribution by contrast with causal chains that include me, but do not make the discovery of the cure for cancer my achievement: (1) I might know (by reading in an infallible Book of Life) that some trivial error of mine (e.g., forgetting to wash my hands before conducting an experiment) will result in discovery of the cure for cancer. In that case I will be pleased that I am going to make this trivial error, but I will not treat the result as an achievement of mine. (2) I might know that if I ruthlessly torture innocent people, the cure for cancer will be discovered. In that case I will not want to undertake this course of action; my aim of my discovering (or taking part with others in discovering) the cure for cancer does not require willingness to pursue the discovery by these immoral means. I need not always be attending to my role in what I bring about; such constant attention might be justly criticized as inappropriate self-absorption, even self-indulgence. But complete indifference to my role would be indifference to myself as an agent.[38]

Since it is reasonable for me to aim at my achieving, or partly achieving, the cure for cancer in the right way, the objects of intellectual love are sometimes self-referential. In the second case just described, my choice of means reveals a reasonable preference for one state of myself over another. If I reasonably prefer one state of myself over another, Aquinas is right to say that I care about my own perfection. We can now see that the introduction

[38] One might say that such indifference would involve 'one thought too few', in contrast to Williams' cases of (allegedly) 'one thought too many'. See Williams's, 'Persons' 18, and (at more length) 'Acting'.

of perfection adds two further features to the final good beyond mere comprehensiveness: (i) Intellectual love and external reasons, and (ii) rational concern for one's role in securing rationally preferable results.

Aquinas' claims about perfection do not, therefore, make us unreasonably self-absorbed. Concern for our own perfection does not make us indifferent to the value of external conditions, actions, and states of affairs in their own right. It implies that we are also concerned about our own relation to, and causal influence on, these external states of affairs. The self-referential aspects of Aquinas' claims about perfection make clear our concern with actions as well as results.

When we are guided by external reasons and by intellectual love, our attitude to our ends is partly, though not entirely, self-referential. We sometimes say that we would be impoverished, or diminished, if we lacked certain aims. In saying this we imply that we lose something that is valuable apart from satisfying our desires. If its value depended on our desire, we would not have lost anything if we changed our desires and satisfied our new ones as much as we satisfied our old ones. We recognize value in ourselves as rational agents distinct from particular desires and aims. As Kant puts it, we regard ourselves as objective ends imposing a limit on the pursuit of subjective ends.[39]

Aquinas, is right, then, to speak of perfection. Rational agents prefer the more complete to the less complete satisfaction of their desires, as long as the degree of satisfaction is proportionate to the value they attribute to the fulfilment of each desire. If they thought their plan for fulfilling their desires left out a rationally significant aspect of themselves, they would not accept their plan. This pursuit of perfection goes beyond mere comprehensiveness. The pursuit of mere comprehensiveness involves planning in the light of my aims as they are; even though it involves adjusting one aim to another, it does not require any further criticism. The pursuit of perfection, however, requires the further evaluation of my ultimate aims to see whether they match a correct conception of myself and what is rationally most significant about me. Agents who pursue comprehensiveness because they pursue their perfection must raise questions that agents who pursue mere comprehensiveness do not raise.[40]

277. Is the Pursuit of Perfection Necessary?

According to Aquinas, therefore, the ultimate end is happiness, understood as the perfection of the agent rather than simply the satisfaction of the agent's desires. This understanding of happiness raises a difficulty for his claim that a rational agent with a will necessarily pursues happiness. We have explained this claim by considering Aquinas' arguments to show that a rational agent necessarily pursues an ultimate end. We initially explained his conception of an ultimate end by treating it as a comprehensive end, but we saw that mere comprehensiveness falls short of his claims about perfection. Once we add the claims about perfection to Aquinas' conception of the ultimate end, does it remain plausible to claim that every rational agent necessarily pursues this sort of ultimate end?[41]

[39] See Kant, *G* 430–1. [40] See §333.

[41] On the importance of perfection see Cajetan's defence of Aquinas against Scotus, §361.

To show that the pursuit of perfection is not an optional extra to be added to rational agency, Aquinas must appeal to the connexion between pursuing perfection and seeing one's end as good. To see the end as good is to see it as an object of intellectual love. To regard one's ends as beyond criticism is to deny that any rational grounds might influence one in favour of them or against them. But to regard one's ends as objects of the will is to regard them as rationally desirable in their own right. If, then, we think of ourselves as agents regarding our ends as objects of the will, we must regard them as rationally desirable, and hence as objects of intellectual love, defensible on some ground apart from the fact that we happen to desire them.[42] Since the pursuit of perfection involves the appraisal of ends to see whether they are defensible on grounds apart from being desired, Aquinas has a reason for taking it to be essential to agents whose choice of ends expresses their will.

A demand for the pursuit of perfection may appear to exaggerate the conditions for being a rational agent. It is easy to agree with the assumption that we are rational agents with wills, if that simply means that we are 'minimal' rational agents: some of our desires express our will, by being based on reason. Aquinas' claim about perfection, however, applies to us only if we are 'maximal' rational agents, expressing our will in our desires for ends. Even if we agree that we are minimal rational agents, it is less clear that we are maximal rational agents. In fact—we might object—we are not maximal rational agents, if maximal rational agency requires us to apply some standard of perfection to criticize and evaluate our ends.

Aquinas might reply that we regard ourselves as maximal rational agents not because we apply a standard of perfection, but because we recognize it as applicable. When we look for reasons for our desires, we acknowledge the relevance of external reasons and intellectual love. We do not suppose that our own or other people's ends are beyond criticism and evaluation; indeed we care about them because we suppose there is something more to be said for them than that we merely desire them. In applying critical standards to ourselves and to others, and in accepting or rejecting the criticisms of others, we acknowledge standards of perfection. The demand for perfection, therefore, is derived from the basic fact that the will aims at the good as such. If this feature of the will implies that we desire goods that are good independently of our desiring them, so that our desiring them does not constitute their goodness, our conception of the ultimate end appeals to a standard of perfection beyond mere comprehensiveness.

278. The Place of Happiness in Aquinas' Argument

Aquinas tries to show that his account of the will illuminates our views on happiness. We might have supposed that it is an open question whether rational agents pursue happiness, or some other end, so that questions about happiness are left open by answers to questions about rational agency. Aquinas argues that, despite appearances, his answer to questions about rational agency settles questions about happiness too.

To show this, he appeals to the finality and comprehensiveness of happiness, as it is normally understood. We normally take it to be an end not pursued for the sake of any

[42] Some of Aquinas' claims about intellectual love are captured in Taylor's conception of 'strong evaluation', in 'Agency'.

further end, and to include all non-instrumental goods that are worth pursuing. But these features must be features of the ultimate good that is the primary object of rational will; for if the will did not aim at such an end, we could not deliberate appropriately about action. A rational agent must choose an action in the light of some view about how the good to be achieved by the action interacts with the other goods that are worth pursuing. If our view were less comprehensive than this, we would be leaving out some consideration that might matter in deciding what to do, and so we would not be exercising practical reason appropriately.

This argument explains how the pursuit of happiness follows from rational willing, as Aquinas understands it, provided we confine ourselves to the comprehensive character of happiness. It is not so obvious why happiness, understood as perfection, is the uniquely suitable object of a will. To connect perfection with willing, he must rely on his claim that rational agency includes intellectual love, which rests on reasons that are distinct from the satisfaction of desires.

If Aquinas is right on these points, happiness fits into the reductive task of the *Summa*. We do not need some further reason for pursuing happiness, once we understand that happiness is simply the ultimate end that we have reason to pursue as the ultimate object of the will.

279. Criteria for Happiness

We have now examined Aquinas' derivation of eudaemonism from basic features of rational action. He argues that agents who have wills necessarily act on external reasons and intellectual love, and therefore pursue an ultimate end that achieves their perfection. This argument brings him to the starting point of Aristotle's *Ethics*, the pursuit of happiness as the ultimate end. Aquinas defends Aristotle by showing that this is a legitimate starting-point for ethics. He also corrects Aristotle, or removes a possible misunderstanding, by showing that the pursuit of happiness is not a mere assumption, or a more or less plausible empirical claim, but a necessary feature of rational agency.

Aristotle acknowledges that if we agree that we all pursue a final good, we still have not settled the content of the good. But he does not think that the admission of a final good is completely empty. He sets out some formal criteria for the good, arguing that any acceptable conception must show that the good is complete and self-sufficient. This is the point at which he argues that happiness is to be identified with the final good. These formal criteria underlie his argument to show that happiness requires the fulfilment of the human function.

Aquinas relies on his views about perfection to interpret Aristotle's function argument.[43] A thing's good consists in its perfection; its form is the first perfection, and the actualization

[43] Aquinas recognizes Aristotle's different questions about the ultimate good. (The stages of his argument are discussed by MacDonald, 'Ultimate'.) He begins 1-2 q1 with goal-directed action, and then considers the concept of a final good. In a4 he introduces the ultimate end, and in a5–7 he clarifies some of the formal conditions. These formal conditions are used in q2 to eliminate various candidates for happiness; Aquinas perhaps sees that Aristotle implicitly does this in *EN* i 4. Having shown that different candidates fail the formal criteria, Aquinas now answers the question 'What is happiness?', and in q3 he sets out his own candidates that meet the formal criteria to the appropriate degree. He supports Aristotle's claim that happiness belongs to human lives, not to the lives of non-rational animals or of children (*EN* 1099b32–1100a4). Since happiness is the perfection of a rational or intellectual nature (1a q62 a1), it has the properties that belong to an end of rational willing.

(operatio) is the second perfection. Hence Aquinas understands Aristotle's claims about the 'function' or 'work' (*ergon*, opus) of human beings as claims about their proper actualization (operatio; *in EN* §119–21).[44] Something's happiness consists in the perfection of its own proper activity (operatio).[45] In a rational agent, the proper activity is the use of practical reason in the specific way that Aquinas has described. Since rational agency involves action based on intellectual love and external reasons, this is the kind of action in which the fulfilment of the human function consists.

If his arguments succeed, Aquinas shows that Aristotle's formal criteria restrict the sort of end that can be the object of a rational will. Our conception of the end is the basis for claims about the moral virtues, their relation to the good of others, the place of pleasure in the good life, and so on. Aquinas does not appeal to these claims in arguing for his conception of the end; he relies on more general claims about reasons and rational wills. Hence the formal criteria for happiness do not rest on specifically moral beliefs about the sorts of states and activities that are plausible candidates for happiness. If we can defend the formal criteria without reference to the specific moral disputes that we might expect them to resolve, we can legitimately appeal to them in resolving these disputes. This does not mean that the content of morality is to be derived entirely from a non-moral starting point. We may need to rely on some moral considerations and assumptions to defend the formal criteria; but, if Aquinas is right, these are not the specific moral beliefs that are in dispute when we discuss candidates for happiness.

280. How is Happiness Self-Sufficient?

Aquinas' treatment of the criteria for happiness suggests some answers to apparent difficulties in Aristotle. The most serious question arises from the two apparently incompatible conceptions of happiness that Aristotle seems to endorse. In *EN* i he seems to imply that the moral virtues and the actions expressing them constitute happiness (at least partly), but in Book x he argues—according to one interpretation—that happiness consists exclusively in theoretical contemplation.[46]

This question about Aristotle raises further questions for Christian readers. Some might be tempted to suppose that Aristotle identifies happiness straightforwardly with contemplation.

[44] Aquinas recognizes a virtue 'in all things, in so far as they have proper activities (operationes) in which they are perfected for acting well from their proper virtue' (*3Sent* d34 q1 a1 = P vii 381a). Other passages recalling Aristotle's claims about function: *3Sent* d33 q2 a4 = P vii 364a; d35 q1 a2 = P vii 403a; *4Sent* d49 q1 a2 sol.2 = P vii 1188b; *SG* iii 44 §2216; iii 129 §3011.

[45] '. . . happiness is the highest perfection of a human being. Now each thing is perfect in so far as it is in actuality; for potentiality without actuality is imperfect. Happiness, therefore, must consist in a human being's ultimate actuality. But it is evident that activity (operatio) is the ultimate actuality of the agent (operans) . . . And hence it is that in other things also a given thing is said to be "for the sake of its activity". It is necessary, therefore, for human happiness to be activity' (1-2 q3 a2). The quotation is from Aristotle, *De Caelo* 286a7–8; cf. *Virt. Comm* q1 a1 = M 708b. Aquinas explains this passage through his own views about perfection: 'Everything that has a proper activity is because of the activity. For any given thing seeks (appetit) its own perfection as its own end, and the activity is the ultimate perfection of the thing' (*in De Caelo* ii 4 = P xix 87b).

[46] See §82: The theses condemned by the Bishop of Paris in 1277 (see §358) included allegedly Aristotelian views endorsing strict intellectualism. See Prop. 144 in Piché, *CP* 122): quod omne bonum. quod homini possibile est, consistit in virtutibus intellectualibus. See Wieland, 'Reception' 663; 'Happiness' 682. On Averroism see Bradley, *ATHG* 404–23; Gauthier, *EN* i 132; 'Commentaires' 230–93.

A Christian reader might understand contemplation as contemplation of God, and so might infer that Aristotle's account of happiness endorses the monastic life. But this would be too easy; whereas Aristotle's account of contemplation excludes the moral virtues, a Christian conception of the knowledge of God includes the love of God, and the love of God requires concern for the moral virtues; hence a strictly intellectualist Aristotelian conception of happiness seems to conflict with Christianity.[47]

Further examination of Aristotelian contemplation seems to raise a more serious conflict with Christian views on the good. In Aristotle's view, contemplation brings us as close to divinity as we can come, but is not especially theological; the proper objects of contemplation are laws about planets or mathematical figures, not about a transcendent God. One might infer that we can achieve our good by our own efforts, without reference to the transcendent God known through the Christian revelation. Anyone who drew this conclusion from Aristotle would be in conflict with Christian theology and ethics. Hence orthodox Christians might take this conflict to justify the rejection of Aristotelian eudaemonism.

Alternatively, if we suppose that Aristotle identifies happiness, wholly or partly, with the exercise of the moral virtues, we introduce another possible conflict with Christian doctrine. For these moral virtues are purely human virtues that can be achieved in this life, in activities that are in the power of any rational person, without any knowledge of God or of God's action on us. Aristotelian ethics seems to offer a purely natural route to the human good, in opposition to the Christian view that divine grace is needed for the grade of moral virtue that achieves happiness.

These objections to Aristotle are consistent with the acceptance of Aristotelian eudaemonism; but a Christian moralist might also doubt whether eudaemonism fits the Christian understanding of morality. If the moral virtues embody requirements of the divine law, we might suppose that they require our obedience unconditionally, whether or not they promote our happiness. Eudaemonism, on this view, appears to imply an inappropriate conception of the Christian virtues and of the outlook they prescribe.

At first sight, Aquinas' claims about happiness do not seem to resolve these questions. On the contrary, they seem to result in the conflict that readers have alleged in Aristotle. On the one hand, he argues, by appeal to the formal criteria and their relation to his account of the will, that the ultimate end is comprehensive, including all the goods that a rational agent pursues for their own sakes. On the other hand, he describes an ultimate good that has only one component. The vision of God is a simple and uniform state of infinite value. Has Aquinas therefore abandoned his comprehensive conception?

His answer to this objection depends on a qualification in his claim that complete happiness is the vision of God. He believes that this complete happiness can be achieved only in the afterlife, when we gain all the features of happiness that we cannot achieve in this life. In this life we can achieve only incomplete happiness, which includes the moral virtues; their

[47] See §373: Anselm argues that a genuine concern for moral rightness in itself requires us to transcend our natural desire for happiness (*De Casu Diaboli* 12–14; see §363).

goodness is not completely absorbed in the imperfect vision of God that we achieve in this life. Hence Aristotle is right, in Aquinas' view, to make the moral virtues parts of the happiness we can achieve in this life.

Complete happiness differs from incomplete in its stability. If happiness is a suitable end for the whole life of a rational agent, it should be stable; if it were liable to be destroyed by circumstances entirely outside our control, it would not be a reasonable aim for all our actions. On these grounds (cf. 1-2 q2 a3 ad3) Aquinas argues that the ultimate good cannot consist in wealth or honour or other external goods. But he also infers that happiness cannot be achieved in this life (q5 a3), because the vicissitudes of human life make its goods transitory rather than stable, and human imperfections make even the best activities imperfect.[48]

But even if the goods that we can achieve were stable, they would not constitute the complete good. The will is directed to the universal good, not at any particular good (q2 a7). Hence no good of the soul can be the ultimate good, and no created good can fully satisfy the human will (q2 a8). These are particular and 'participated' goods.[49] Every good other than the final good itself lacks some good from some point of view; this is why deliberation is needed for us to choose it.[50]

In these claims about particular goods, Aquinas does not mean that everyone who chooses them will in fact be dissatisfied with the result in some way. He believes that even the best combination of goods that we can select in this life leaves us with some rational basis for dissatisfaction. Even the goods that we choose as a result of correct deliberation require, in the circumstances of human life, the renunciation of other genuine goods. Hence none of these particular goods can completely satisfy the will. Only the vision of God himself can fully satisfy us (q3 a1, 8).

Hence, neither the life of contemplation nor the life of moral virtue, nor the mixed life of contemplation and moral virtue, meets Aristotle's formal criteria, if we restrict ourselves to this life. Aristotle (according to Aquinas) draws this conclusion from his formal criteria; he recognizes perfect and imperfect types of happiness, and believes that perfect happiness cannot be achieved in this life. The degree of happiness we achieve in this life does not satisfy the formal criteria, and therefore it falls short of perfect happiness. The formal criteria, therefore, answer two different questions: (1) Sometimes they help to specify general principles that perfect happiness must satisfy; this is what is meant if we claim that happiness is complete and stable and fully satisfies desire. The happiness we achieve in this life fails these conditions. (2) Sometimes they help to specify the happiness attainable in this life, which is the closest we can come to satisfying them.

Is Aquinas right to claim that Aristotle recognizes that the happiness of this life is incomplete? To support his view of Aristotle, he discusses the claim that happiness is complete because it is self-sufficient, and therefore 'lacking in nothing'. He believes Aristotle accepts two interpretations of this claim about happiness: (1) A maximal interpretation: What is complete cannot have anything added, because it is already incapable of improvement.

[48] See *SG* iii 48 §2248: 'Everything that is moved towards an end desires naturally to be stable and at rest in it. . . . But in this life there is no assured (certa) stability.' In his support Aquinas cites Aristotle, *EN* 1100b4–7. Cf. Aug. *CD* ix 15a ('all human beings, as long as they are mortal, are necessarily also miserable'), cited by Wieland, 'Happiness' 673.

[49] 1a q103 a2; q105 a4; q106 a2; 1-2 q9 a6.

[50] On deliberation see §267.

(2) A moderate interpretation: It needs nothing added (though it could have things added), because it is good enough already, though it is capable of improvement. The maximal interpretation, taking the good to include every good, applies to God as the 'total good' (in *EN* §115). The moderate interpretation applies to the happiness that can be acquired in this life.[51]

The happiness that Aristotle describes in the *Ethics* satisfies the moderate interpretation of 'lacks nothing'. It needs nothing added because it includes all that we can reasonably ask for in our circumstances. Since it includes both contemplation and moral virtue, it fulfils human nature as a whole, as far as this is possible in present circumstances, and it achieves the degree of stability that we can reasonably ask for. Hence we ought not to be disturbed that it does not include more, even though we recognize that it does not satisfy the maximal condition for lacking nothing.

281. Two Grades of Happiness

In proposing these two interpretations of self-sufficiency Aquinas raises a difficult question about Aristotle's position. Sometimes Aristotle seems to intend the maximal interpretation. He argues, for instance, that virtue is insufficient for happiness because a virtuous person's life could be made better (*EN* 1095b31–1096a2). One might suppose that if something can be added to a given candidate for happiness, that candidate fails (1170b17–19).

Sometimes, however, Aristotle seems to reject a maximal interpretation. For he believes that happiness can be achieved in the ordinary course of human life, and that it is both capable of being made better by addition of external goods and capable of being lost because of misfortune (1100b22–30). If the maximal interpretation were right, the fact that some candidate for happiness can be either improved or lost would disqualify the candidate, as Aquinas also recognizes (*in EN* i 16 §194). Since Aristotle does not take the very strict view about who can be called happy, he seems not to accept the maximal interpretation of 'complete'.

Aquinas also believes a moderate interpretation is needed to justify Aristotle's claim that in this life happiness is an activity (operatio, *energeia*) (1-2 q3 a2).[52] One might object (obj4) that in a happy person's life activities often get interrupted; since the person can be called happy even during the interruption, how can happiness be activity? Aquinas replies (ad4) that interruption does not show that happiness is not an activity; it simply shows that the happiness we can get in this life is imperfect.

Both the maximal and the moderate interpretation are needed (according to Aquinas) to explain Aristotle's remarks on happiness and stability. Aristotle acknowledges that a person's

[51] '. . . in itself it contains everything that is necessary in itself, but not everything that can come to a human being. Hence it can be made better by something else being added. But the desire of a human being does not remain agitated (inquietum), because desire regulated by reason, as the desire of a happy person must be, has no disturbance about the things that are not necessary, even though they are possible to obtain. This then is what he says is appropriate to happiness most of all, that even not counted together with other things it is choiceworthy' (*in EN* i 9 §116). 'Even' in the last clause renders the translatio recens (P xxi 19b, not in L). Kenny, ' Aristotelian happiness', esp. 18, discusses Aquinas' account of self-sufficiency.

[52] On operatio see §279 above.

happiness is not completely stable, but can be lost through misfortune. And so he says that since the future is unclear to us, but we think of happiness as an end that is altogether complete in every way, we should count such people as happy 'as human beings'—happy to the extent that human beings can be happy (*EN* 1101a19). In 'altogether complete in every way' Aristotle refers to a maximal condition for lacking nothing. If we apply this condition, we cannot regard human beings as happy. Hence his qualification 'as human beings' indicates some restriction of the claim that we can be happy, once we insist that happiness must be 'altogether complete in every way'. Aquinas infers that Aristotle is speaking of human, and therefore imperfect, happiness, not of perfect happiness.[53] Aristotle recognizes that the happiness he thinks is possible has the imperfections that belong to this life.

Aquinas agrees, therefore, that the life Aristotle has described is complete in so far as it has all that can reasonably be expected, within the changeable circumstances of human life. But something can be added to make such happiness better; for Aristotle admits that the instability of such happiness is a defect in it. And so Aquinas infers that Aristotle thinks the happiness obtainable in this life does not meet the maximal conditions for happiness, and therefore is not perfect happiness (see *in EN* §§201–2).[54]

The division between imperfect and perfect happiness not only clarifies Aristotle, but also makes a practical difference. Aquinas helps us to separate what it is reasonable to aim at from what it is reasonable to prefer. The sort of happiness that Aristotle calls human is the sort that is reasonable to aim at in the ordinary circumstances of human life. In the light of this end we can reasonably decide what to do, what virtues to cultivate, and so on. Given the conditions of human life, we ought not to expect the perfect happiness that is altogether untouched by external circumstances, altogether permanent, and so on.[55] We ought not to try to escape the ups and downs of human life by denying that external goods are needed for happiness (1-2 q4 a7; cf. 2–2 q186 a3 ad4). In this context the moderate conditions for happiness are the appropriate guide to action. The maximal conditions might mislead us; if we were to insist on the maximum possible stability and intellectual activity, we might prefer a life of contemplation, which would not fulfil human nature in the circumstances of this life.

Once we understand that we ought to plan for the circumstances of this life, we see why we ought to agree with Aristotle's view that happiness includes the exercise of the moral

[53] 'We do not deny, . . . that some participation in blessedness can be present in this life, in so far as a human being is perfected in the goods of theoretical reason principally, and of practical reason secondarily. And this is the happiness that the Philosopher decides about in the book of the Ethics, while neither asserting nor denying another happiness that is after this life' (*4Sent*. d49 q1 a1 sol.4 = P vii 1186). Similarly, *SG* iii 48 §2254, distinguishes the 'ratio perfecta' of happiness from the participation that is possible in this life. On strictly human happiness see Bradley, *ATHG* 400.

[54] The Latin version of *EN* 1101a7–8 takes 'He will not be happy if he falls into the fortunes of Priam' to mean 'Since he is happy, he will not fall into the fortunes of Priam' ('Neque utique beatus Priami in fortunis incidet', *in EN* §122). The correct interpretation is probably 'If he remains happy, he will not fall into the fortunes of Priam', allowing—contrary to Aquinas—that someone who is happy now can cease to be happy and fall into the fortunes of Priam. Aquinas therefore assumes that external ill-fortune does not take away happiness. All that can take away happiness is the sort of misfortune that would impede the operation of virtue totally, by causing insanity; and that would be the end of a life of virtue (§197), so that it would not really violate the principle that happiness cannot be lost in one's life. This sort of happiness that can be taken away by insanity is imperfect happiness. If Aquinas had interpreted Aristotle correctly here, he would have had an even stronger case for his view that we must take Aristotle to be speaking of imperfect happiness. See also 1-2 q5 a4 on loss of virtue.

[55] Reflexion on the Stoics' distinction between *telos* and *prokeimenon* also suggests a division between the end that it is reasonable to aim at and the one that it is reasonable to hope for. See §178. Aquinas' two grades of happiness recognize these different roles for a conception of happiness.

virtues, even though they may make some aspects of life more unstable than they would otherwise be. Happiness, therefore, requires external goods (1-2 q4 a7) and the activities that express a human being's social nature (q4 a8). Imperfect happiness fulfils a human being's natural tendency to live in society, just as perfect happiness fulfils our tendency to find out the truth about God (q94 a2). The happiness attainable in this life can be lost, though it is not totally removed as long as virtue remains intact.[56]

282. The Complete Good

But though we should rely on the moderate conditions for happiness in thinking about this life, we should not ignore the maximal conditions. Aristotle and Aquinas agree that these conditions for happiness describe a life that would be preferable for us if we could achieve it without ceasing to be the people we are; but Aquinas takes a different view about their practical significance. From Aristotle's point of view, this sort of life is an unattainable ideal, since it presupposes the absence of unalterable features of human life; but it gives us some idea of what we might try to approach in certain respects.[57] But according to Aquinas, we can satisfy the maximal conditions for happiness in the next life (q3 a8). The vision of the divine essence can be completely achieved, not in this life, but in the next.

This complete happiness is supernatural. Aquinas claims that it is both good for a human being and beyond what a human being is naturally capable of and suited for.[58] But are these two features compatible? We might think they are not compatible within Aquinas' position, since he follows Aristotle in identifying the human good with the realization of human capacities. To defend himself, he needs to distinguish (i) an idealized conception of human nature that we could use to find what is good for a human being, and (ii) a conception in the light of which we can see what a human being is now capable of.

To clarify this distinction, we might consider the relation of physical health to human capacities and the human good. It would probably be better for us, being the sorts of creatures we are, to be free of illness, but this human good is beyond our current human capacity. A completely healthy existence would affect the relative importance of some goods, but it would fulfil human nature rather than changing it into the nature of some other creature. This idealized human being would still be a human being. Moreover, historical changes in human limitations suggest that some idealizations of this sort are reasonable. In certain ways, many human beings are less exposed to such external misfortunes as starvation, enslavement, physical violence, and illness than most human beings once were. The needs of human beings have therefore changed in some respects; we may not need the resources for protecting ourselves individually from physical violence that individuals once needed. But in some important ways these changes have not changed the human good; it was always good for human beings to be free of the threat of physical violence, even though it was once not realistic for them to expect lives that would normally be free of the threat. The

[56] 'Still, external changes cannot take such happiness away altogether, because the activity of virtue still remains, as long as a human being bears the adversities themselves in a praiseworthy way' (1-2 q5 a4).

[57] See §82. [58] See 2-2 q2 a3.

removal of this significant limitation of the human condition does not make us into some other creature, nor change the basic character of our good.

It is difficult, therefore, to maintain that mortality or physical vulnerability, for instance, are necessary conditions for any recognizably human good. Hence it is reasonable of Aquinas to describe a good that is still the human good even though it presupposes the absence of unavoidable limitations in our present existence. The vision of God is the complete good for a human being, even though it lacks those aspects of the imperfect good that reflect some of the contingent, and in his view temporary, limits of embodied human beings.

In arguing that the vision of God is the complete good, Aquinas accepts a part of Aristotle's argument to show that the final good includes contemplation. The vision of God is the final good because it uniquely satisfies our desire for a universal good (q2 a7). A rational will that pursues the universal good must also pursue a complete and final good.[59] But when the goods available in a human life are measured against the standard of universality and completeness, they all fail. None of them can completely satisfy the will, because even the largest practically available set of them excludes some other genuine goods. The vision of God, however, once we completely attain it, leaves no attainable good outside it. This is why Aquinas thinks the vision of God is the ultimate end for human beings; the desire for happiness includes in a way the desire for the knowledge of God.[60]

This account of complete happiness does not conflict with the view that happiness should fulfil human nature as a whole; for the vision of God completely fulfils our nature in the afterlife. The formal criteria for happiness support a comprehensive conception that makes happiness include all non-instrumental goods; but they do not tell us how many non-instrumental goods there are. Hence the formal criteria leave open the identification of happiness with a single good.

We might identify happiness with a single good if we claimed that there is only one non-instrumental good. But it is difficult to see how Aquinas could claim this about the vision of God, any more than Aristotle could claim it about theoretical study. Following Aristotle, Aquinas also recognizes moral virtues and virtuous actions as non-instrumental goods. Since we can achieve these goods without achieving the vision of God, they are distinct non-instrumental goods.

But he has a more plausible way to reconcile the comprehensive conception of happiness with the view that happiness has only one component. If some one activity realizes the different aspects of goodness that we pursue in many different kinds of activities, we can realize the same aspects of goodness either by pursuing many activities or by pursuing this one activity. We do not identify this one good with happiness simply because it is the single best good; we must also show that it realizes the aspects of goodness in other non-instrumental goods. In this case we can say that the final good is comprehensive, not because it includes all the non-instrumentally good activities, but because it includes

[59] See 1-2 q1 a5, discussed at §247.

[60] 'God is the happiness of a human being. For a human being naturally desires happiness; and what a human being naturally desires, he naturally cognizes (cognoscitur ab eodem). But this is not cognizing God without qualification, just as cognizing the one who is coming is not cognizing Peter, even though Peter is the one who is coming. For many suppose that the perfect good of a human being, which is happiness, is wealth, some that it is pleasures, and others that it is something else' (1a q2 a1 ad1). We all desire God implicitly, not explicitly; *Ver.* q22 a2.

all the aspects of goodness found in these activities. We do not necessarily abandon a comprehensive conception of happiness if we argue that in some circumstances only one activity is necessary for us to achieve happiness.

Aristotle goes some way in this direction, by arguing that the different features we seek in happiness belong most of all to theoretical study (*EN* x 7). He does not, however, take this line of argument to show that theoretical study is the whole of happiness. He argues that it is the one activity that best exemplifies the various features of happiness, but he does not argue that it completely exemplifies them; he does not argue, therefore, that theoretical study completely satisfies the conditions for the complete good. But Aquinas uses this argument to show that the vision of God is the complete good, and therefore the only component of happiness.

But if he relies on this argument, he seems to invite an objection that arises for Aristotle if he identifies happiness with contemplation. Aristotle also claims that his conception of happiness gives us a sufficient reason for practising the moral virtues for their own sakes. If this claim is justified, it is not enough to show that the moral virtues are non-instrumentally good, if the respects in which they are good are completely absorbed in contemplation; he should also show that in human life we have a good reason to pursue their goodness through the practice of the virtues themselves. If Aquinas believes that the vision of God absorbs all the goodness that is found in the various non-instrumental goods, does he not make the practice of the moral virtues superfluous from the point of view of happiness?

Aquinas is open to this objection if he argues that the vision of God, like Aristotelian contemplation, is so much better than any other single good that in our present life we should devote ourselves to it, even to the exclusion of everything else. But he does not argue this way. He believes that contemplative activity is the best activity (1-2 q3 a5), but he does not infer that contemplation of God constitutes complete happiness in this life. The vision of God in the next life differs from contemplation in this life in not requiring the renunciation of other forms of goodness. Aristotle sees that greater devotion to contemplation in the circumstances of human life requires renunciation of other goods and their goodness; moral action, which is the good of practical intellect, is not derivative from, or included in, the good of contemplation. Aquinas agrees with him on this point, and therefore he does not advocate the maximum pursuit of contemplation in this life.

The vision of God in the next life, however, is not simply one among a number of goods; it includes the goodness of other goods. One need not renounce other sorts of goodness, therefore, in order to devote oneself more fully to the vision of God in the next life, since one achieves all these other forms of goodness in the vision of their source (q4 a7 ad2). The completeness and stability of perfect happiness makes it unattainable for us in this life; but the vision of God in the next life satisfies the conditions that cannot be satisfied in this life. If the vision of the divine essence is possible and it has the properties that Aquinas says it has, it meets Aristotle's conditions for happiness. Aristotle's conditions for the most desirable end are only imperfectly satisfied by the most desirable practical end for human life under present human circumstances; but the vision of the divine essence fulfils Aristotle's demands on the final good.[61]

[61] On the place of contemplation in Aquinas' view of the ultimate end see Grisez, 'Natural law' 27–36; MacDonald, 'Reply'.

Hence Aquinas concludes that the perfect happiness of the next life will consist wholly in contemplation, whereas the imperfect happiness of this life consists 'primarily and principally' in contemplation, but secondarily in the actions of the practical intellect directing human actions and passions (q3 a5).[62] A purely contemplative conception of happiness in this life would violate the demand for completeness, since contemplation in this life, as opposed to the vision of God in the next life, is not our complete good.

283. The Pursuit of the Two Grades of Happiness

Aquinas explores these different claims of the contemplative life and the life including moral virtue, in his discussion of the religious orders and other conditions within the Church. To understand his comparative judgments, we must see what options he compares. If the only options are (1) a contemplative life that does not include the moral virtues as components, but only needs them as necessary conditions, and (2) an active life that has no primary role for contemplation, then the contemplative life wins (2-2 q180 a2–3; q182 a1). But if the options include (3) a contemplative life that also includes the activity of moral virtue as a component, this third life wins. Hence the condition of a bishop is more perfect than the condition of a member of a religious order, because a bishop contemplates both for his own sake and for the sake of others (q184 a7 ad1–3). A life that includes both contemplation and the transmission of its results to others is better than the one that consists in contemplation alone (q188 a6).

Aquinas relies on two features of his interpretation of Aristotle: (1) Contemplation is the supreme element in human happiness, and so a purely contemplative life is better than a life of moral virtue without contemplation. (2) Neither of these lives constitutes human happiness, and the life that combines both elements is superior to each of these lives. In following these two threads from Aristotle, Aquinas tries to reconcile the legitimate claims of each type of life, without granting that either of them by itself is sufficient for human happiness.[63]

These views about happiness confirm that the moral virtues are parts of happiness. If Aquinas simply identified happiness with contemplation of God, he would face the problem

[62] 'Therefore ultimate and perfect blessedness, which we look for in the future life, all principally [Leonine omits 'principally'] consists in contemplation. But imperfect happiness, such as can be had here, consists first and principally in contemplation, but secondarily in an operation of the practical intellect directing human actions and passions, as stated in the Ethics' (1-2 q3 a5). Aquinas' reference to Aristotle shows that he interprets *EN* 1178a9; b3–7, as referring to two aspects of a single life rather than to two different lives. This is not so clear, however, at *in EN* x 11 §2097, 'felicitas maxime consistit in operatione contemplativa' or at x 12 §2110, [the contemplator is] 'maxime felix, quantum homo in hac vita felix esse potest'. Aquinas' use of 'maxime' in these passages might suggest that contemplation is the best part of happiness in this life, not all of it. §2111 represents Aristotle as having said that perfect happiness is 'primarily and principally' in accordance with the theoretical intellect, but also introduces a 'secondary happiness' that consists in the activity of the moral virtues. Neither of these seems to correspond exactly to the imperfect happiness of this life consisting in both contemplation and the moral virtues. At i 10, §126, Aquinas argues (by appeal to the function argument) that happiness consists 'more principally' in the contemplative than in the active life. Perhaps he recognizes that Aristotle does not actually mention a mixed life; still, he thinks a mixed life is the sort of life that Aristotle has in mind for happiness in this life. On this point the *ST* seems to interpret Aristotle more freely than *in EN* does. Further discussion of Aquinas on Aristotle on happiness: see Bradley, *ATHG* 394–5.

[63] A different assessment of Aquinas' treatment of Aristotle in relation to Aquinas' own views about the two lives is offered by Kenny, 'Aristotelian happiness' 25–7.

that Aristotle would face if he accepted a purely contemplative conception of happiness. But he does not claim that renunciation of the practical for the purely contemplative life achieves happiness in this life. For in this life we act through an animal body, and attend to the needs that arise for ourselves and others because we have animal bodies. In the next life the vision of God will belong to the soul alone or to the soul united with a spiritual rather than an animal body.[64] In the circumstances of our present life we ought not to ignore the needs and interests that arise from an animal body.[65]

Aquinas therefore has a systematic reason to regard the moral virtues as more than mere instruments to happiness, even though they are no part of the perfect happiness that is available to us in the next life. To reject the moral virtues would be to deny that our happiness is connected with our nature as human beings who have bodies and passions; to deny this would be to claim that reflexion on our human nature misleads us about the sources of our happiness and of the virtues that achieve it.

Such a negative conclusion about reflexion on our nature would conflict with Aquinas' belief in the agreement of the natural law with the eternal, divine law. In his view, our knowledge of our nature in our present life makes us aware of our capacities and needs, and of the sources of our welfare. Our welfare consists in the development and expression of the rational aspect of our nature directing the other aspects. Since the moral virtues embody that direction by reason, they help us to achieve happiness. The connexion between the divine law, the natural law, and knowledge of our nature gives Aquinas, no less than a non-theological moralist, a legitimate concern with the moral virtues and with their role in the happiness that is attainable in this life.

Aristotle believes that happiness is up to us to a significant degree. The Stoics find his answer on this point unsatisfactory.[66] The same question arises for Aquinas. For if he takes Aristotle's account of happiness to describe the imperfect happiness attainable in human life, and if he identifies complete happiness with the vision of God in the afterlife, he needs to say how far each grade of happiness is up to us.

Aquinas recognizes that happiness must be something that a human being can achieve; but he denies that it must be possible to achieve it entirely through one's own action. He draws a parallel with other necessary goods; though human beings are not naturally equipped with clothing and shelter, they have the means to make up this deficiency. Similarly, though they are not equipped to reach the vision of God by themselves,[67] they have freewill, allowing them to be turned to God; and so to this extent perfect happiness is open to a human being (1-2 q5 a5 ad1).

The division between perfect and imperfect happiness makes it clearer how far happiness is up to us. Imperfect happiness does not require complete stability of fortune. Virtue is the most stable element in imperfect happiness; we cannot wholly lose this type of happiness unless we decline from virtue to vice (q5 a4). This type of happiness, therefore, is up to us.

[64] vel erit in anima sine corpore; vel erit in anima corpori unita non iam animali, sed spirituali (1-2 q4 a7). 'Vel . . . vel' indicates alternative possibilities about what the subject of the vision of God is, not about whether we do or do not have spiritual bodies. Cf Suppl. q79 a1.

[65] Aquinas rejects the Stoic view that the only good is the honestum and the only evil the inhonestum. In his view, the honestum is the principal human good and the inhonestum the principal evil, because they belong to reason (3a q15 a6 ad 2).

[66] See §189.

[67] See 1a q12 a4; q62 a1; q62 a2 ad3 on turning to God.

Perfect happiness, on the other hand, must be completely stable; and this is open to us only by a further operation of God's grace. This further operation of grace has to be examined carefully to see how far it allows our turning to God to be up to us. Here, then, Aquinas relies on the coherence of his doctrine of free choice and its consistency with the role he ascribes to divine grace.

Aquinas' view of happiness combines three prominent aspects of his moral theory: (1) his reflexions on Aristotle; (2) his aim of presenting ethics as part of a systematic theory of rational agency; (3) his Christian theology. He argues that Aristotle's conception of happiness as a complete good identifies the necessary ultimate end for a rational and free will. Moreover, this demand for completeness supports the distinctively Christian claim that happiness consists in the vision of God in the afterlife. Aquinas identifies perfect happiness with the vision of God, but he also treats the happiness of this life as a worthwhile aim, while acknowledging its instability. He presents moral virtue, not as a rival to contemplation, but as a necessary partner. He therefore claims to vindicate the Aristotelian moral virtues.

20

AQUINAS: MORAL VIRTUE

284. Virtue and Freewill

According to Aquinas' account of the will, rational agents necessarily pursue happiness as their ultimate end. If a correct account of the will vindicates the role that eudaemonist ethical theory attributes to happiness, it should explain why happiness requires the cultivation of the virtues. Virtuous and vicious agents differ in so far as they make different choices about how to pursue the ultimate end.

The virtues are important because we have freewill. Aquinas claims that the pursuit of an ultimate end is essential for human freedom; he is right only if this ultimate end has the right characteristics. If our awareness of it included an exhaustive grasp of its contents and of the means to it, and if this grasp were independent of rational reflexion and deliberation, our actions would not express freedom of choice and we would not be in control of our actions (*ST* 1a q82 a2). We are in control of our actions by pursuing means to an ultimate end, because both our grasp of the content of the end and the choice of instrumental means to it are open to practical reason, and (in human beings) to deliberation.[1] We necessarily pursue happiness in so far as we necessarily pursue some end that we think is complete and achieves our own completion, leaving no good outside it. But we do not thereby have a clear conception of what constitutes this end or of how to achieve it. To form the correct conception of happiness, and to execute this conception, we need the moral virtues; for 'the proper ends of the virtues are directed towards happiness as towards the ultimate end' (1-2 q13 a3 ad1).

The will necessarily pursues happiness because happiness (the complete and comprehensive end) necessarily seems good to any rational agent, from whatever point of view it is considered. This is not true of the components of happiness, however. We pursue virtue, or wealth, or honour, only because we look at them in a certain way that is not necessary; our view of these constituents is alterable by rational reflexion and deliberation.

[1] The claim about freedom does not mean that the content of the final good must be uncertain to every sort of free agent. See §§251 and 267 on God and the angels. Their certainty about the content of the final good does not threaten their freedom, because their grasp is not independent of their awareness of the rational merits of what they grasp. According to Scotus, Aquinas' attribution of necessity to willing the ultimate end is a threat to freedom. See §362 and Cajetan's discussion in §361.

Both virtuous and vicious agents act on freewill. Aquinas agrees with Augustine that an act of virtue is the 'good use of freewill' (q55 a1 ad2); he infers that virtue is the state that is directed towards this good use of freewill. Both our rational pursuit of the ultimate end and our natural non-rational inclinations are beyond our control, but we still have free choice in being virtuous or vicious. Our non-rational inclinations do not incline us irresistibly, but are subject to the will, since we can still elect one of a number of options (1a q83 a1 ad5; 1-2 q13 a6). Hence our character is up to our free choice.

The distinctive features of virtuous or vicious people must, therefore, be accessible to free choice, and so to deliberation. A state of the non-rational parts that is independent of the will cannot determine the end for deliberation. If it did, correct aiming at the end would not be a matter for deliberation, and so could not express freewill. Aquinas' account of the will, freedom, and happiness, as we have traced it so far, makes room for virtues as expressions of freewill. Rational agents share a schematic conception of the end. Deliberation must consider the different ends that constitute the ultimate end. These are questions to which virtuous and vicious people give different answers that explain their different choices.

These features of the will and of freedom explain why the virtues involve practical reason and deliberation. Aquinas also appeals to his conception of the will to explain why the virtues involve more than rational desire. Once we understand the nature of the passions and the will, we can see how the passions may agree or disagree with the will, and how the will may guide or neglect the passions. The right form of agreement and guidance depends on the moral virtues.

285. Will and the Formation of Character

If Aquinas' conception of the moral virtues fits his claims about the will and freedom, the will, rather than some non-rational condition independent of us, must make us virtuous or vicious. We have rational capacities for contraries, as Aristotle describes them, because we can choose between contrary courses of action that are equally within our power.[2] Aristotle says that desire or election 'controls' (*kurion*) the particular way in which a rational capacity is exercised (*Met*. 1048a9–11). This controlling election is the function of the will, as Aquinas conceives it. The will itself is not a capacity for contraries, but our having a will gives us this capacity. It would not be open to us to do a given action or its contrary unless we could deliberate on the merits of these contraries and could choose the one that appears better.[3]

To form states of character that exercise rational capacities in one particular direction, we need habituation (*ethismos*; assuetudo, 1-2 q63 a2; *in EN* ii 1, §247). Sometimes one might suppose that Aristotle identifies habituation with the sort of habit-forming training that a child might undergo, so that it precedes the sort of instruction that presupposes

[2] 'The rational capacities, which are proper to a human being, are not fixed (determinatae) on one <actualization>, but are related in no fixed way to many <actualizations>; but they are fixed on particular actualizations through states (habitus)' (q55 a1; cf. q49 a4). If we render 'habitus' by 'habit', we suggest misleadingly that a habitus is a mere tendency or custom (I may be in the habit of taking a particular route home, but this is not my habitus). See Kenny in BF xxii, pp. xxi–xxii (who favours 'disposition').

[3] For Scotus' interpretation of the claim about our capacity for contraries, see §369.

will, deliberation, and election. It is easy to suppose this, if one notices that Aristotle takes habituation to begin with the training of children (*EN* 1104b11–13; *in EN* ii 3, §268). But Aristotle does not intend purely non-rational training. For he believes that a virtue of character acquired by habituation includes the correct election, which requires prudence. If correct habituation did not ensure correct election, the virtue acquired by habituation would not include correct election. Hence habituation must be partly a rational process that, at some stages, presupposes will and election.[4]

Aquinas grasps the rational aspects of Aristotelian habituation; that is why he maintains that a state is formed by will rather than passion. Though it begins with non-rational training, the formative activities that he discusses are rational. They mould our non-rational tendencies, and form the sensory parts of the soul into a state, in so far as they 'operate at the command of reason', and so 'can be directed towards different <ends>' (1-2 q50 a3). The will can form a state, because a state is a capacity of reason and so can be directed in different ways towards action (q50 a5). It must be directed to some determinate goal, since our natural tendency towards the ultimate end is not directed to a sufficiently determinate end for us to achieve our ultimate end (q50 a5 ad1).

The actions that form states of character are rational actions proceeding from the will: '. . . the states of the moral virtues are caused in the desiring capacities, in so far as they are moved by reason' (q51 a2). A state is formed in so far as reason succeeds in 'overcoming' (supervincere) the desiring capacity. But it cannot do this in just one action, since a particular action is concerned with determinate circumstances and features of a situation (q51 a3). To 'overcome' desire by forming the right state, we need to generalize correctly, 'so that desire moves towards the same thing in most cases, in the way that nature does' (q51 a3).

'Overcoming' desire takes time because one's desires already have specific tendencies derived from passions; we modify, but we do not abolish, these tendencies, and this process takes time. We learn to recognize brave or generous actions in different conditions, so that we gradually learn which tendencies should be encouraged or restrained. In general, 'the states of the desiring part are caused by the fact that reason naturally moves the desiring part' (q53 a1). In the case of the virtues, the relevant state 'can be caused from human actions, in so far as such actions proceed from reason' (q63 a2).

Since habituation results from reason operating on desire, non-rational animals cannot form states. They can be trained, and to this extent they can be said to have states. But they lack the sort of state that is relevant to the virtues, because they do not control their actions, either in forming or in actualizing a state.[5] Control over one's actions is the mark of a rational agent, since such an agent can deliberate about what to do in the light of a conception of the ultimate end.

Since the appropriate state of character requires the proper exercise of the will in action, it requires the right aiming (intentio) and deliberation, leading to the right election. Hence Aristotle defines a moral virtue as a 'state that elects' (*hexis prohairetikê*). This definition may appear too narrow for the range of actions that he recognizes as characteristic of virtue. Though actions on the right election are an important subset of the virtuous actions

[4] See §101.

[5] 'They lack the characteristic of a state as far as concerns the exercise of the will, because they do not have control over exercising or not exercising, which seems to belong to what is characteristic of a state' (q50 a3 ad2).

characteristic of the virtuous person, they are not the only ones. Aristotle assumes that many voluntary actions are produced by the non-rational parts of the soul apart from election, and that the virtuous person performs these actions, and not only actions on election, in a characteristic and distinctive way. The feelings and immediate reactions that the virtuous person has without election are, as Aristotle insists, important signs of the virtuous character.

According to Aquinas, election belongs to all fully voluntary actions. We act virtuously in so far as we act on election, through the proper direction of the will by reason in the use of one's natural capacities. But he seems to allow voluntary actions that do not meet his strictest conditions, if they result from consent without election.[6] His claims about directly and indirectly voluntary actions allow the actions characteristic of virtues to include actions that are not the direct result of deliberation. His views about the sources of voluntary action influence his analysis of virtue and vice and of conditions related to them.

286. Reason, Passion, and Virtue

These features of Aquinas' position prepare us for an account of the virtues as expressions of the will that also include an important role for the passions as the source of indirectly voluntary actions that depend on the consent of the will. By introducing the virtues after the discussion of passions and states (1-2 q55), he follows Aristotle, who describes the virtues of character as states that regulate the passions in the ways that achieve the appropriate mean conditions. This emphasis on the passions distinguishes Aristotle's account from the Socratic and Stoic conception of the virtues as purely cognitive states. If Aquinas' account of the relations between the passions and the will is correct, it should explain how the passions are relevant to virtues that are elective states.

Aristotle's emphasis on the passions might seem to lead towards a strongly anti-Socratic view that makes non-rational desire the dominant element in virtue. According to this view, virtue is primarily a good condition of the passions; these form the right desires, and these desires are the basis for correct practical reasoning. Practical reason can be used well or badly, but it cannot regulate itself or turn itself in the right direction. It is turned in the right direction in so far as it agrees with well-trained desires.[7]

Aquinas is sympathetic to one aspect of this view. He believes that freedom is a property of the will, which is rational 'by participation'.[8] Since the virtues exercise our freedom, they belong to will, and not simply to intellect. But though he rejects an extreme intellectualist view, he does not make passions prior to the will in moral virtue.[9] If the direction of the will depended on the direction of the passions, and the direction of the passions did not depend on the will, we would not be free to direct either our passions or our will correctly, and so we would not be free to be virtuous or vicious.

Aquinas places freewill in the ability of the will to pursue one or another end through rational comparison resulting from deliberation. The virtues, then, include will, rational comparison, and deliberation, which belong to freewill. An extreme anti-rationalist picture

[6] See §252. [7] This anti-rationalist account of Aristotle is discussed in §89.
[8] See §257. [9] On intellectualism, voluntarism, rationalism, and sentimentalism see §259.

of virtue, subordinating will and deliberation to passions, would destroy his cumulative argument about ethics. An extreme intellectualist picture, implying that virtue is simply a matter of knowledge and that vice is simply the product of non-culpable ignorance, would be equally damaging. He needs an account of virtue that fits his broader theoretical claims about freedom, reason, and the will.

287. The Passions as Subjects of Virtues

Since the passions both influence the will and are influenced by it, correct deliberation and choice requires the co-operation of the passions. Aquinas claims that some moral virtues are virtues of the non-rational parts, and not simply virtues that involve them; this is what he means by saying that the non-rational parts are the 'subjects' of these virtues (1-2 q56 a4 sc).[10] He does not simply mean that a virtue requires passions to be trained or modified in some way. Bravery and temperance, for instance, involve bodily training, but they are not bodily virtues in the way that health and strength are, nor is the body the subject of these virtues. If the passions are subjects of moral virtues, they cannot merely provide suitable material or support.[11]

The passions are important because the actions characteristic of the virtues include the whole range of 'human acts'. These include not only actions that are the direct product of election, but also the actions that we control (domini).[12] These include actions resulting from passions, since passion does not prevent consent and election.[13] But since passions impede the use of reason in particular actions, purely intellectual virtues do not ensure right action.[14] A passion may make something appear so attractive that it is difficult to refuse one's consent to it; in such cases reason is 'clouded', though not made ineffective.

This feature of the passions helps to explain why they are subjects, and not simply necessary conditions, of moral virtues. Parts of the body have no distinct principle of action that is capable of opposing reason, and so moral virtue does not belong to them; but since the passions have their own principles, they need their distinct perfections to prevent these

[10] 'Temperance, however, in so far as it is a human virtue, is about appetites for sensory pleasures, which belong to the appetitive power. . . . And for that reason temperance, in so far as it is a human virtue, is in the appetitive part . . . But temperance is spoken of in <the angels> in so far as they display their will under control (moderate) in accordance with the standard (regula) of the divine will' (1a q59 a4 ad3).

[11] Aquinas' doctrine is examined by Graff, *SPGV* esp. ii 64–73.

[12] See *Virt.* a4 = M 717b: 'Whatever action, therefore, is in a human being's control is a proper action of virtue; not, however, those actions that are not in a human being's control. . . . Therefore, in whatever is the source (principium) of action of the sort that is in a human being's control, there we can place human virtue.'

[13] To explain how these actions are in our control, he often quotes Aristotle's remark that reason exercises a political rather than a despotic rule over the non-rational parts of the soul (1a q81 a3 ad2). Cf. *Virt.* a4 = M 717b: 'just as kings and rulers of states are in control of free people who have the right and ability of rebellion in relation to some precepts of the king or ruler'. On the political metaphor see §254.

[14] '. . . the desiring capacity obeys reason, not altogether at its nod, but with some contradiction. That is why the Philosopher says that "reason commands the desiring capacity by a political power", the sort by which someone is set over free subjects who have a certain right (ius) of contradiction. . . . And so for a human being to act well it is necessary not only for reason to be well disposed through a state of intellectual virtue, but also for the desiring capacity to be well disposed through a state of moral virtue' (1-2 q58 a2). I omit the cases in which a passion entirely takes away the use of reason. See §253.

principles from opposing reason.[15] Even if my arm or my leg does not move when I want it to, it does not impede me by presenting the attractions of not moving it. But if I am lazy, it appears pleasant to stay where I am, or irksome to move. These are principles that can oppose reason, and so I need to secure the co-operation of my passions. This is part of Aquinas' reason for treating the passions as subjects of virtue.

He recognizes, however, that his claim about the passions is open to question. One might argue that since sin does not consist in the having of a passion, virtue cannot consist in this either (*Virt.* a4 obj1). Aquinas grants the claim about sin, but maintains that the non-rational parts are subjects of virtues.[16] Both sin and virtue essentially consist in reason's 'moving or consenting'[17] in right or wrong action, but the passions are relevant in so far as they influence the will towards right or wrong action. Virtue belongs to them only in so far as they obey reason (1-2 q55 a4 ad3).[18] They do not have 'the character of good or bad' in themselves, but belong to virtue only in so far as they conform to reason, and hence to election.[19] This is why Aristotle defines a virtue as a state concerned with election.[20]

288. Means, Ends, and the Virtues

To support his claim that the passions are subjects of moral virtues, Aquinas points out, following Aristotle, that moral virtue makes the end correct and prudence makes the means correct. He considers the argument that since the principal expression of moral virtue is election, which does not belong to the non-rational parts, moral virtue does not belong to them either (1-2 q56 a4 obj4). He rejects this argument, on the ground that correct election requires both correct aiming at the end and correct grasp of the means to it. Since correct aiming in relation to the passions belongs to the good arrangement of the non-rational parts, correct election partly proceeds from them too; hence moral virtue belongs to them, while prudence, concerned with the means to ends, belongs to reason.[21]

As Aquinas understands Aristotle, the practical intellect operates through the intellectual virtue of prudence. Since prudence is concerned with means to ends, it does not prescribe the ends for moral virtue.[22] It presupposes the moral virtues, which turn us towards the

[15] *Virt.* a4: '. . . but in the lower desire, which is capable of rebelling against reason, something is necessary by which it follows without rebellion the action that reason commands'.

[16] At 2-2 q155 a4 Aquinas argues that the passions, rather than the will, are the subject of temperance, because they have been improved so as to be subject to reason (ipse appetitus sensitivus est subiectus rationi). If we treated the will as the subject of temperance, we would be assimilating temperance to continence.

[17] *Virt.* a4 ad1: ratione movente vel consentiente.

[18] For Scotus' criticism of Aquinas see §372.

[19] '. . . the movement of virtue has its principle in reason and its terminus in desire, in so far as it is moved by reason' (1-2 q59 a1).

[20] When Augustine appears to identify some passions, such as pity, with virtues, Aquinas argues that he must be taken to mean that the tendency to pity in accordance with reason is virtuous (q59 a1 ad3), Cf. §289.

[21] 'In election there are two things, namely, aiming at the end, which belongs to moral virtue, and the preferential choice (praeacceptio) of what is towards the end, which belongs to prudence. Now the fact that people have the right aim towards the end with reference to the passions of the soul results from the good disposition of the spirited and appetitive parts. And for that reason the moral virtues that are about the passions are in the spirited and appetitive parts, but prudence is in reason' (q56 a4 ad4).

[22] See 1a q22 a1 ad3; q23 a4; q113 a1 ad2; 1-2 q57 a5; 2–2 q47 a6; q56 a1.

right ends (q58 a5); hence there can be no prudence without the moral virtues. If a purely intellectual virtue could provide a first principle for moral virtue, apparently the practical intellect itself would be a source of motivation, contrary to Aquinas' assertion that the will is irreducible to practical intellect. Just as the correct use of intellect requires the will directed to the right end, so also prudence requires the moral virtues directed to the right end, if the deliberation of the prudent person is to guide virtuous actions.

In the light of this assumption that practical reason depends on will, Aquinas defends Aristotle's claim that moral virtue is concerned with ends, and prudence with means to ends (*EN* 1144a6–9, 20–2; 1145a5–6; 1178a16–19).[23] Since Aquinas resists the assimilation of will to reason, he might appear to make the passions dominant in directing the will. If he were to accept this view, it would be reasonable for him to take the moral virtues to belong primarily to the non-rational parts.

He cannot, however, consistently accept this argument for treating the passions as the subject of moral virtues; it conflicts with his rationalist position about will and reason, and takes him too far in the direction of sentimentalism, making desire prior to reason.[24] Though he rejects the extreme intellectualist view that reason moves us without will, Aquinas does not agree that the will gets the right aim from passions that are independent of will; for if the passions were the source of the right aim, we would not be free to choose one or another end. Since we are free to choose ends, deliberation cannot have the narrow scope that we would assume if we thought that passions direct the will. Aquinas' claims about happiness and subordinate ends imply that we can deliberate about how to specify a schematic conception of an end; deliberation is not confined to cases in which we already have a definite conception of the end given to us through desires independent of will.

It is puzzling, then, that Aquinas argues from the role of moral virtue in setting ends to the claim that the passions are the subject of the moral virtues. If his claims about passion and virtue are consistent with his general view of the will and deliberation, he cannot claim that the passions are the subjects of moral virtue because they give us the correct ends.[25]

289. The Positive Contribution of the Passions

Since the passions tend to move us on the basis of considerations that also appeal to the will, Aquinas infers that they must have a distinct positive role in the virtues. He rejects the Stoic view that the passions are always bad, and that moral virtue requires their elimination (1-2 q24 a2–3; q59 a2–3). Passions are constituents of a virtue in so far as they are subject to reason and moved by reason (q56 a4).[26]

These relations to reason do not simply require the passions to be regulated by reason. Aquinas also believes that virtuous human beings are better off with well-trained passions

[23] Aquinas quotes *EN* 1144a6–9 at 2–2 q47 a6 sc. In Aquinas' terms, virtue has the correct intentio towards the end. See *in EN* vi 10 §1273 (cf. §1269). On intentio as aiming at the end rather than the means see 1-2 q12 a4.

[24] See §259.

[25] Cf. Bradley, *ATHG* 239.

[26] See esp. *Ver.* q26 a7; *Mal.* q3 a11; q12 a1.

than they would be if they were guided simply by practical reason and had no passions to interfere with it. Augustine is right, therefore, to argue that in a person with a good will it is better to have the right passions than to have no passions (*CD* xiv 6a).

Aquinas discusses two contributions of the passions (1-2 q24 a3). First, reason is capable of regulating passions, and it produces a better good the more things it regulates. If the passions guide reason, they 'cloud' it, and to that extent make actions worse by obscuring the appropriate grounds for action.[27] Secondly, passions improve actions when they are guided by reason.[28] They give greater intensity to our motives to act virtuously (cf. q30 a1 ad1), and we may reasonably elect to have a certain kind of passion in order to act more eagerly, with the co-operation of the sensory appetite.[29]

The passions contribute most directly to virtue through this second function. A passion absorbs some of one's attention, and turns it away from other things that may appear to be as good as or better than the object of the passion; and it encourages a more favourable view of the object of the passion than one would otherwise take. This absorption of attention may sometimes distract us inappropriately, but it may also sometimes improve us. We need to form a state that predisposes us to react in a specific way to specific circumstances, instead of relying on our deliberative capacities to work out the right answer on each occasion by 'radical' deliberation, setting out from the ultimate end.[30]

We can avoid any need for radical deliberation on each occasion if we have formed passions that are constituents or results of virtuous states, in so far as they are subject to the will.[31] This is why mercy (misericordia) may be a virtue; the passion of mercy is not a virtue, but if mercy proceeds from an elective state it acquires the character of a virtue (2-2 q30 a3 ad4). Similarly, we may regard repentance (poenitentia) either as an elective state that produces the right regret on the right occasions, or as the regret that results from such a state; in the first case it is a virtue, and in the second it is the actualization of a virtue (3a q85 a1; cf. q84 a9). But if we regard shame (verecundia) simply as a passion, and not as the result of an elective state, we do not count it as a virtue (2-2 q144 a1 ad1).

This connexion between will and passion explains why we can act virtuously even when we act 'suddenly', without deliberation. Aquinas mentions two sorts of sudden action: (1) One sort results from the immediate response of a passion without the intervention of the will; this is a 'sudden motion' that falls short of consent. (2) A second sort of sudden action results from the antecedent tendency of our state (ex inclinatione habitus). Aquinas illustrates this from Aristotle's example of people acting bravely in sudden emergencies, because such action proceeds from their state of character. The state has been formed by previous deliberation, so that new deliberation is not needed in an emergency when one

[27] '. . . for it is more praiseworthy if one does an act of charity from a judgment of reason than if one does it solely from the passion of pity' (q24 a3 ad1). Aquinas' use of 'ex *sola* passione' makes his point clear. His position is similar to Kant's in *G* 398–400.

[28] '. . . by way of election, namely when someone by a judgment of reason elects to be affected by a passion in order to act more promptly, having sensory desire co-operating. And in this way a passion of the soul adds to the goodness of an action' (1-2 q24 a3 ad1).

[29] For this function cf. 1-2 q77 a6 ad2; 2–2 q2 a10; *Ver.* q24 a12; *Virt.* a1 sc2.

[30] The formation of such a state is relevant to Herman's discussion of a 'deliberative field', in *PMJ* 193–5 (e.g.), and to Wiggins' remarks on 'salience', 'Deliberation' 230–4.

[31] '. . . virtue cannot be present except in those acts that proceed out of the command of will, even though they are also acts of the sensory parts' (*2Sent* d24 q3 a2 ad3 = P vi 604b).

needs to act at once.[32] A state has been completely formed only when it includes this capacity for immediate action.[33]

In the second case of sudden action, Aquinas agrees that, as in the first case, no deliberation immediately precedes the action, but he still regards the action as being elected, because previous deliberation has determined the end to be pursued in such situations. Hence, when something apparently suitable to the end appears in such situations, we choose it without further deliberation; but our choice is still an election, because it is the result of our having formed an end by previous deliberation.

Radical deliberation on each occasion is foolish, not only because it takes too long and is so complicated that we may easily make mistakes, but also because fear, inclination, self-interest, and so on sometimes distort our view. When we form a state of character, we cultivate passions that tend to counteract the distorting effects of other passions and lead us to attend to the right features of different situations. We need correct attention to generalize correctly. According to the parable of the Good Samaritan, the requirement to love one's neighbour applies to cases where another person is alien to us in obvious ways; we need to attend to the fact that this is another person needing help, not to his being alien.

Well-trained passions not only help us to avoid distortion, but also turn us in the right direction. When we reflect at leisure, outside a situation where we need to make an immediate decision, we may notice that in some situations this or that feature deserves our attention. But if we leave it to our rational judgment to work this out by a scrutiny of the situation whenever we need to make an immediate decision, we may be, at the least, inefficient, since we may take an unreasonably long time to survey all the conceivably relevant aspects of the situation. Even if we take all the time we need, we may still act badly, since it is not always easy to see, when we are in a situation, the features that become clearer to us from a more detached point of view. We are better off with a passion trained to focus on the right features.

The passions do not merely remind us of what we have previously recognized as relevant. They may also bring to our attention an aspect of the situation that we had not thought was relevant, or had even dismissed as irrelevant. We might, for instance, have decided that we ought to punish a child for some misdeed, and that her distress at being punished is irrelevant. But once we actually see how distressed she is, we may wonder whether the punishment that we thought was fair is unnecessarily severe. A soldier might have no doubt that the war he is fighting is just even if it harms innocent civilians, but when he sees the

[32] 'For the activity is more from the state to the extent that it is less from premeditation. For things evident in advance, i.e., known in advance, someone will elect in advance from reason and thought without <the appropriate> state, but sudden actions are in accordance with one's state. But this is not to be understood as saying that the activity in accordance with a state of virtue can be altogether without deliberation, since virtue is an elective state, but that the one who has the state has the end in his election determined; so that whenever something arises as suitable to that end, it is at once elected, unless it is hindered by some attention and further deliberation' (*Ver.* q24 a12 = M 461a). Aquinas alludes to Aristotle on emergencies, *EN* 1117a17–22; see §86.

[33] 'For unless a rational capacity tends through a state in some way to one <actualization>, it will always be required, whenever it is necessary to act, for some inquiry about the action to precede; this is clear about someone who wants to consider, not yet having the state of scientific knowledge, and about someone who wants to act in accordance with virtue, lacking the state of virtue. Hence the Philosopher says . . . that sudden actions are from one's state' (*Virt.* a1 = M 709a). In the last sentence Aquinas cites *EN* v 3, which (in his capitulation) begins at 1129b11. I do not know what he has in mind, unless he is taking some of the actions listed in this chapter to be 'sudden'.

extent of the suffering it causes, he may wonder whether it is really worth it. In some such cases, our passions may cause us to reconsider the ends we aim at, and in this respect may form our conception of the end.

We should not always have second thoughts whenever our passions revolt against the action that we have elected. If I decide I was wrong in a dispute with you, and ought to apologize to you, perhaps I still ought to do it even if I still dislike you and your reaction to the apology is ungracious. To explain the difference between this case and the cases where passions ought to change our mind, we need to estimate how reliable passions are in various situations. Our tendency to sympathize with other people's suffering is—in some people—a desirable tendency that has been formed in the right ways. Our tendency to find our enemies and opponents disagreeable may not be as desirable. The passions that we justifiably rely on in forming second thoughts about our elections are passions that have been formed by our states of character, and hence by our elections.

We sometimes benefit, then, from passions that cause us to attend to some aspects of a situation and to ignore others. Though these passions are not infallible, we may be better off if we sometimes follow them than if we always ignore them. The virtues turn the passions in a beneficial direction. The right passions prepare us to avoid evils and to pursue goods (q59 a3), and so prepare us for virtuous actions (2-2 q123 a9–10). If we have the appropriate passion, the situation appears good or bad in a particular way, in advance of rational reflexion about it, since the passions make us aware of different particular goods. It is often unwise to wait for rational reflexion to examine all the relevant features of a situation. If a well-trained passion helps us to focus on the right features without reflexion, we are better off.

If passions are directed towards certain particular goods, and are normally subject to the will, it is sometimes reasonable to develop a tendency to focus on certain particular goods. An account of the virtues, therefore, should identify both the rational desires we should develop, and the tendencies to selective attention that we should form in the light of our rational desires. In Aquinas' view, the non-rational tendency to focus on some features of situations is often the best way for practical reason to apply itself to particular situations (cf. 2-2 q123 a9–10).

The positive role of well-trained passions helps to explain why our having the right aim towards the end results from (contingit ex) the good state of the non-rational parts (q56 a4 ad4).[34] We saw earlier that this claim might be taken to express a strongly anti-rationalist account of our choice of ends, implying that the passions, as opposed to will and deliberation, form our conception of ends. Such an account would raise grave difficulties for Aquinas, given his other views about the role of will and deliberation.

His remarks about the benefits of well-trained passions, however, do not conflict with his rationalist views on reason and will. Deliberation and practical reason discover the right

[34] '. . . In order to be in a correct state about particular principles of things that can be done, which are ends, it is necessary for a human being to be perfected through certain states in accordance with which it comes to be in a certain way connatural to a human being to judge correctly about an end. And this comes about through moral virtue; for the virtuous person judges correctly about the end of virtue, because "such as a person is, so the end appears to him", as it is said in *Ethics* iii. And thereby, in order to have correct reason about things that can be done, which is prudence, it is necessary for a human being to have moral virtue' (1-2 q58 a5). Cajetan comments (L vi 377b, quoted by M 257b): 'Prudence is not in reason without qualification, but as directed towards desire, and it depends essentially on desire, from which depends the precept, its actualization, and from which varies the appearance of the end, its principle'.

conception of the end by finding the constituents of happiness. This role of deliberation allows an important role to the passions in maintaining and expressing our grasp of the right end. Since the passions absorb our attention, and so turn it in a good or bad direction, they make it easier or harder to attend to the right ends. If we are to attend to the right ends, we need well-trained passions to help us and to remove potential hindrances. None the less, practical reason discovers the right ends. The passions do not discover ends, but they help us to retain our grasp of the ends we have discovered. To make sure that passions do this on the right occasions, we should form them in the light of our rational conception of the good. Hence they must be subject to reason.

If we look back at the passage where Aquinas says that the passions determine the right ends (q56 a4 ad4),[35] we might say that Aquinas overstates the role of the passions, and that we can see the overstatement if we compare this passage with his other remarks about prudence and the role of the passions. Alternatively, we might try to interpret this passage so that it fits his other remarks. We ought not to treat the passage, straightforwardly interpreted, as an accurate statement of his general position about the role of passions in fixing the right ends.

290. Will, Passion, and Virtue

Aquinas has a good case, therefore, for his claim that passions are not merely instrumental to the virtues. Since they have their own awareness of good and evil that constitutes a distinct source of goal-directed action, they need to be perfected in their own right, and not simply subjected to rational desire. They belong to virtues only in so far as they accord with reason (1-2 q56 a4 ad1). They must, therefore, be subject to a good will; for we need a good will if any other tendency or ability or state is to be correctly formed and guided.[36] The non-rational parts are perfected by moral virtue, which consists in the right relation to the rational part. The rational part itself is perfected not by moral virtue, but by prudence, which is distinct, though inseparable, from the moral virtues (q56 a2 ad3).

Aquinas claims that the passions are the only subjects of some moral virtues, assuming that if passions are the subject of a given virtue, the will cannot also be a subject of it. But why should he not say instead that both will and passions are subjects of each virtue? Just as the passions are perfected by being brought into agreement with a rightly-ordered will, so also the will is rightly ordered by deliberating correctly about what promotes happiness. The will and the passions together seem to constitute the state of character that disposes us to the right election.

Aquinas, however, does not allow the will to be either the subject or a subject of all the moral virtues. It is the subject only of some moral virtues—those that turn us to concern

[35] Quoted in n21.

[36] 'The subject of a state that is called a virtue without qualification cannot be anything other than the will or another capacity to the extent that it is moved by the will. The reason for this is that the will moves all the other capacities that are in any way rational, to their actualizations, as has been said above [i.e., q9 a1; q17 a1, 5; 1a q82 a4]; and for this reason whatever a human being does well in actualization comes about from the fact that the human being has a good will' (1-2 q56 a3).

for other people or to the love of God (1-2 q56 a6; *Virt.* a5). The will is necessary for the self-regarding virtues, but it does not need to be perfected, since it already seeks one's own good; we simply need to make the non-rational desires agree with what the will already seeks. We do not need to perfect the will, since the object of the will is a good that is proportionate to the will. The other-regarding virtues, however, require the will to be trained, so that it seeks an object that is not proportionate to it. Aquinas seems to mean that the will is the subject of other-regarding virtue because we need to be trained to see why we should benefit others besides ourselves; presumably he thinks such training should proceed through deliberation that results in the recognition of the good in benefiting others.

But this training in good deliberation seems to be needed for all virtues, not only for other-regarding virtue. If we are not trained to deliberate correctly, we may falsely believe that we should not restrain or modify our sensory appetites. To correct false belief resting on bad deliberation or failure to deliberate, we must learn to deliberate correctly, so that we turn our will in the direction that makes us brave or temperate. Aquinas does not give a good reason for making the will the subject of the other-regarding virtues alone. His claims about the role of the will suggest that both the will and the passions are subjects of moral virtue, because the virtues express both a good will and well-directed passions. He is justified in saying that the non-rational parts themselves have the moral virtues, and are not simply instruments of the will. But he regularly claims that the non-rational parts are subjects of virtue in so far as they follow reason. We do justice to this claim if we insist that the virtues include a good will. The place of the will in Aquinas' account of freedom demands an equally prominent place for it in his account of moral virtue; he does not emphasize the prominence of the will as much as he should.[37]

This puzzling feature of his discussion of the moral virtues is all the more puzzling in the light of his treatment of sin. He insists that the will is the subject of mortal sin, because mortal sin requires us to aim at the wrong end. Though passions may contribute to the formation of the wrong aim, the wrong aim requires the engagement of the will.[38] This is an equally good reason for insisting that the will is a subject of moral virtue.

291. Moral and Intellectual Virtues

Aquinas' doctrine of the directive role of the will in the moral virtues influences his discussion of the intellectual virtues, and especially his departures from Aristotle. If intellectual virtues belong purely to the understanding, and if their objects are higher than those of the moral virtues, they threaten the directive role of the will. Aquinas believes that we achieve happiness in so far as correct reason forms the will and the will directs our passions and actions so as to form and to act on virtuous states of character. But if the goods achieved by the intellectual virtues are superior, why not pursue them even when they conflict with the moral virtues? Aristotle implicitly raises this problem, since he claims that theoretical reason is superior to practical reason. Aquinas believes that the truth in this claim does not threaten the directive role of the moral virtues, and therefore of the will.

[37] For Scotus' criticism see §372. [38] See §298.

His initial description of a virtue implies that the intellectual virtues do not meet all the necessary conditions for being virtues. Virtue involves the right use of the free will directing the agent's rational capacities in the right direction. We may, however, have and exercise the intellectual virtues without using them correctly. How, then, can the Aristotelian intellectual virtues really be virtues?

Aquinas distinguishes unqualified (simpliciter) from qualified (secundum quid) virtues, and argues that the intellectual virtues are only qualified virtues (1-2 q56 a3; cf. *Virt.* a7). The primary subject of virtue is the will, in so far as the will is necessary for the rational capacities to be correctly used in every respect. If we have an intellectual virtue, we have a well-developed state of intellect, and so we have used our rational capacities well. But if we have a misguided will, we do not use our intellectual virtues correctly. They are mere rational capacities in relation to the will that is free to use them one way or the other (*Virt.* a7).

Moral virtue, therefore, regulates intellectual virtue. If an intellectual virtue itself is no more than a capacity, and if the use of the capacity requires the will, the right use of the intellectual virtues requires the rightly-ordered will. Since the right ordering of the will requires moral virtue, the right use of the intellectual virtues requires the moral virtues. This right use of the intellectual virtues confers merit on their exercise (1-2 q57 a1).

Aquinas has no Aristotelian authority for his claim; he cites only Gregory the Great. Aristotle maintains that prudence has some supervisory role in relation to theoretical wisdom, but it is not superior; it simply seeks to facilitate theoretical wisdom (*EN* 1145a6–11), as a steward would.[39] This comparison does not acknowledge that we have to decide whether and in what circumstances to exercise theoretical wisdom, if other pursuits also claim our attention. Apparently we need some supervisory virtue, just as we need a supervisory discipline to regulate the occasions and circumstances for the worship of the gods (as Aristotle remarks, 1145a10–11). Aquinas seems to have this supervisory function in mind. His suggestion that charity is an appropriate directing principle introduces a Christian element, but the directive role of moral virtue is Aristotelian.

Aristotle ought to accept Aquinas' observation that the intellectual virtues would leave open the possibility of misuse, if they could (contrary to fact) be present without the moral virtues.[40] Even if we plan our lives entirely for the exercise of the intellectual virtues, we need something more if we are to exercise them in the right way. Someone with a totally disordered will could not focus on the most worthwhile intellectual pursuits, but would be distracted by entertaining but worthless diversions, and so on. If we could somehow automatically focus on the best exercise of the intellectual virtues—the contemplation of necessary truths—we would not need the moral virtues to prevent our being diverted into trivial intellectual pursuits. But we would still need the directive functions of the moral virtues. For someone who has the ability and the overriding desire to contemplate may still fail to turn his attention and his efforts in the right direction; he may be easily distracted

[39] See Aristotle, *MM* 1198b9–20. Aquinas' comment on *EN* 1145a6–11 recognizes the superiority of theoretical wisdom in a way that allows a supervisory role for prudence. He says that prudence does not prescribe to wisdom 'the way in which it ought to judge about divine things' (*in EN* vi 11 §1290).

[40] This is a counterfactual supposition, since prudence is one of the intellectual virtues, and it cannot be present without the moral virtues.

by the more ordinary needs of daily life. Alternatively, he may be so careless about them that they eventually demand too much of his attention. For all these reasons we need a well-directed will besides the intellectual virtues (2-2 q180 a2).

Aquinas seems to recognize a further role for the moral virtues in turning contemplative activity in a morally acceptable direction. The choice of occasions for contemplation should be regulated by charity, which includes love of our neighbour as well as love of God (q184 a7 ad3).[41] Aristotle has a reason to agree with this if he attaches some independent value to the moral virtues and their exercise. Since we have good reason to believe that Aristotle attaches independent value to the moral virtues, Aquinas argues for an Aristotelian conclusion.

And so, while the doctrine of the regulative role of the moral virtues is not Aristotle's doctrine, it is not un-Aristotelian either. The regulative role of the moral virtues is derived from the regulative role of the good will. This role has different but related effects on the passions and on the intellectual virtues. In the case of the passions, guidance by the good will turns our passions towards the right objects. In the case of the intellectual virtues, the good will does not alter the objects, but it modifies the occasions for the exercise of the virtues. The directive and regulative aspects of the free will control Aquinas' account of the virtues.[42]

292. Vice and Sin

If Aquinas has given an adequate account of the relation between will and passion in virtue, it should help him to explain deviations from virtue. The deviations recognized by Aristotle are incontinence and vice. Aquinas recognizes these too; the most prominent deviation that he discusses, however, is sin, which does not receive a distinct treatment in Aristotle.

Sin is not essentially an offence against God. From the theological point of view, Aquinas endorses Augustine's account of sin as a violation of the eternal law. From the point of view of moral philosophy, however, a sin is an error contrary to reason.[43] Whereas vice is the state contrary to virtue, a sin is simply the bad act that is contrary to the act of virtue. It is a 'misdirected act' (actus inordinatus), in contrast to the 'act of virtue', which is 'a directed and required (debitus) act'. Sin 'is opposed to virtue in respect of that <end> towards which virtue is directed' (q71 a1).

The task of explaining error, and especially sin, is a test for Aquinas' account of the will, and in particular for its rationalist elements. If virtue depends on grasping the right principles through deliberation, sinful and vicious people do not grasp the right principles,

[41] 'As Gregory says, "Let a leader be foremost in action, and more uplifted than others by contemplation," because it belongs to them to contemplate, not only for their own sakes, but also for the purpose of instructing others. Hence he says . . . that the words "They will declare the memory . . . of your sweetness" apply to perfect men returning after their contemplation' (2-2 q184 a7 ad3). See also §§282–3.

[42] Aquinas' claims about acquired and infused virtues seem to give him a further reason for recognizing some possibility of the 'misuse' of virtue. See §354.

[43] 'The theologian considers sin especially in so far as it is an offence against God, but the moral philosopher considers it in so far as it is contrary to reason. Hence Augustine defines sin with reference to its being "contrary to the eternal law," more fittingly than with reference to its being contrary to reason, especially since we are ruled through the eternal law in many things that surpass human reason, as we are in things that belong to faith.' (1-2 q71 a6 ad5).

or do not see their application to a particular case. The role of the passions in sin should not compromise the connexion between deliberation, will, freedom, and responsibility. Hence Aquinas should not explain sin through the sentimentalist claim that the bad passions are simply too strong (or the good ones too weak).

But if we reject sentimentalism, we still might not be convinced by a rationalist explanation of sin and vice. Why (we might ask) is sin so bad if it is nothing more than ignorance? If virtuous and vicious people pursue the same end, and the vicious are simply mistaken about the means to it, do they not deserve pity rather than blame? Their choice of vice rather than virtue seems to be the result of ignorance, not an exercise of freewill. To make vice voluntary, on this view, we must suppose that a free agent can have a conception of the ultimate good and the means to it, and still knowingly refuse to take these means. This is a voluntarist conception of the source of vice.[44]

To answer this objection to his doctrine of the will, Aquinas might argue that he does not reduce sin to ignorance. Alternatively, he might agree that he reduces it to ignorance, but argue that sin is culpable ignorance, and therefore is the grave evil that we intuitively take it to be.

293. Virtue v. Continence

In trying to explain sin and vice, Aquinas has less help from Aristotle than he has in his account of the virtues. Aristotle's description of deviations from virtue is brief and incomplete. Some of the gaps that he leaves raise questions that Aquinas tries to answer.

Actions may embody virtue or fall short of it to different degrees, but Aristotle mentions only some of the differences. Not every virtuous (just, temperate, etc.) action is an 'act of virtue' that is produced by virtue. Aristotle claims that only an agent who acts from a virtuous state acts justly, as opposed to simply doing a just action. Among the actions that are virtuous without being done virtuously, some are done because of ignorance or coercion (as when people are threatened with death if they run from the enemy; cf. *EN* 1116a29–b3); these deserve no praise. Others, however, are done for a reason that does not express virtue in the agent, but is still a ground for praise. Those who do brave actions out of love of honour deserve praise, though they have citizen bravery rather than genuine bravery (1116a17–29). We might explain this by saying that they care about being honoured for bravery. They will not do just anything for the sake of being honoured, and they are not indifferent about whether bravery or cowardice is honoured; they act on the true conviction that bravery is honourable, and so their actions deserve praise. But since they lack the virtuous person's conviction that brave actions are worth doing even without honour, they do not act bravely.

What ought we to say, then, about the person who, unlike the previous people, acts from the virtuous person's motive, but only intermittently, and who therefore lacks the constancy of virtue? Aristotle suggests that electing the virtuous action for its own sake and electing from a firm and stable state are two conditions for being a virtuous person (1105a31–3). Could someone satisfy only the first condition? Does Aristotle believe that the incontinent

[44] Cf. Scotus' view, §361.

is such a person? One might infer this from his remark that incontinents have the right election.

But if stability is the only difference between the incontinent and the virtuous person, apparently the continent person ought to be virtuous. For it seems quite possible (for all Aristotle says) for some people to be continent and stable. Do they not have a firm and stable state that causes them to elect the virtuous action for its own sake? The same question can be raised about Aquinas' explanation of Aristotle's conditions. In his view, firmness requires constancy within oneself, and stability requires immunity to external hazards.[45]

Perhaps Aristotle believes that continence is not a firm and stable state. Even if some people manage to act correctly despite their wayward appetites, they are always, he might suppose, in danger of lapsing into incontinence, and so they do not reliably produce the right actions even if they have a good record. Perhaps Aristotle assumes that if we act continently often enough, we will turn into virtuous people because the appetites that we overcome will gradually weaken. This seems a rather arbitrary assumption, however. Even if our wayward desires weaken because they are repeatedly denied satisfaction, we might have a persistent feeling of regret and reluctance about having to forgo their satisfaction, even in cases where we ought not to regret forgoing it. Surely someone who always managed to restrain his greedy or cruel or angry impulses, but always resented having to do it, would not have an appetitive part in harmony with the rational part? Aristotle, then, ought to deny that repeated acts of continence manifest virtue.

Stable continence falls short of virtue because continent and incontinent people lack the right election. Aristotle insists that the right election requires a virtuous state of character (1139a33–5; 1144a20–2), and that the right end appears only to the virtuous person (1144a29–b1; 1145a4–6). The virtuous person differs from the continent and the incontinent not simply in stability, but also in the election each of them makes at a particular time; neither the continent nor the incontinent person is capable of the virtuous person's election.[46] This election comes from 'good deliberation' (*euboulia*), which requires the correct grasp of the end and true deliberation from it. The identity of a particular election is determined not only by the particular action (paying a debt, helping the victim of an accident) but also by the deliberation that produces it, which includes the reason for which one elects it now, and would or would not elect it in different circumstances.

This conception of the identity of an election allows Aristotle to notice differences between elections that may from some points of view appear the same. Both the brave person and the imperfectly brave person may elect to face this particular moderate danger because bravery requires them to face it. The imperfectly brave person, however, is not convinced that it

[45] 'The third condition is in accordance with the character of a state—namely, that someone acts firmly, i.e. constantly as far as he himself is concerned, and immovably, i.e., disturbed by nothing external on a particular occasion, because he has the virtuous election and acts in accordance with it' (*in EN* ii 4 §283).

[46] We might take this claim to embody a non-standard use of 'election'. In some cases (we might say) Aristotle uses it to refer to something that happens on a particular occasion, but in other cases he identifies an agent's election with his general and fixed outlook or attitude. In the first sense of 'election', the incontinent, the continent, and the virtuous person all make the same election, and Aristotle is right to say that the incontinent has the right election. In the second sense, only the virtuous person has the right election, since the other agents lack the appropriately fixed attitude. More probably, Aristotle has the same sense of 'election' in mind throughout, and he always refers to a choice made at a particular time.

would be best to stand firm even in greater danger; his reasoning is different from the brave person's because the counterfactuals he accepts are different. The virtuous person accepts the right conclusion for all and only the right reasons, whereas the imperfectly virtuous people accept it for some of the right and some of the wrong reasons.

These features of deliberation suggest how the virtuous differ from imperfect people. Aquinas examines degrees of imperfection at some length, especially in his distinctions between sin and vice.

294. The Sources of Sin

Since a sin is a blameworthy action, Aquinas looks for the causes of actions that warrant blame without proceeding from vice. In each case he wants to show that when ignorance plays a causal role in sin, it is not the ignorance itself that is the source of the sinfulness of the action; the sinfulness results from some mistaken choice or failure to choose, and so belongs to the will.

Since Aquinas supposes that normal people have the resources to reach the right conclusions about action, he has to show why they fail to use these resources. The three different causes he mentions are ignorance, passion, and 'deliberate fault' (certa malitia).[47] In each case he affirms the primacy of the will as the source of responsibility, and therefore the crucial contributor to the sin.

In his discussion of ignorance Aquinas seeks to separate the excusing ignorance of particular facts from the ignorance that results from negligence or deliberate error. Sin does not result if the agent cannot overcome the ignorance, or it concerns something that he cannot reasonably be expected (tenetur) to know (1-2 q76 a2). Ignorance is a source of sin if we can reasonably be expected to know the specific thing we are ignorant of, and we have failed to acquire the relevant knowledge either by deliberate refusal or by negligence (q74 a5; q76 a3).

These comments about ignorance suggest that an appeal to ignorance cannot be the complete explanation of sin. For Aquinas suggests that blameworthy ignorance must be traced back to a cause that is distinct from ignorance—either to deliberate failure or to negligence.[48] To understand the cause of these failures we must consider the condition of the will or the passions that underlies them.

This analysis connects sin with virtue and vice, and, still more fundamentally, with the will and rational agency. Aquinas would face a serious difficulty if reasonable views about the nature and sources of moral errors could not be shown to fit his views about the will and its relation to reason and passion. His rationalist and eudaemonist conception of the will invites objections from two different directions: (1) We suppose that passions can be the source both of errors and of right actions. Aquinas has to explain how this can be so, given that he regards the passions as subject to the will, and takes the consent of the will

[47] Fearon in BF xxv renders 'certa malitia' by 'resolute malice'. q78 a1 obj1 explains 'ex certa malitia' by 'ex industria' = 'on purpose'. *Mal.* q3 a12 identifies 'ex malitia' with 'ex certa scientia'.

[48] See §262.

to be necessary for voluntary action. (2) We do not suppose, however, that error can be attributed exclusively to the passions, or that the difference between right and wrong action can be simply identified with the difference between guidance by passion and guidance by will and reason. For we suppose that we can make a deliberate and knowing choice of the wrong action, not under the influence of any passion.

Aquinas answers the first objection through his account of sin resulting from passion. He answers the second through his account of sin resulting from deliberate fault. In both cases he argues that the source of the error lies in a mistake by the will. Either the temporary influence of a passion attracts the will to an object that we would normally reject, or we make a mistake about the constituents of the good, even when we are not under the immediate influence of passion. Aquinas' view of the will explains not only what a virtue is and how we acquire virtue, but also how we fail to acquire it and how we lapse from it.

295. Passion and Sin: The Problem of Incontinence[49]

Sometimes the condition of the will that underlies blameworthy ignorance is the result of passion. Aquinas needs to explain this claim so that it fits his views about will and responsibility. He does not argue, for instance, that the passions cause sin by compelling us to follow them. Since sins are voluntary, the will is their primary subject; the other subjects of sin are powers that can be moved or restrained by the will (q74 a2–3). This claim about the will suggests that (as we have noticed) a parallel account of the subject of virtue would be more plausible than the account Aquinas actually offers.[50]

The will can be moved by the passions indirectly (q77 a1 ad2). Sometimes they distract us. Sometimes they attract us by presenting something that looks good, even though further examination would show that it is not good on the whole (q77 a1). If our will were entirely overcome by the passions, so that we could not use reason at all to guide our actions, we would not be responsible for our actions and there would be no sin (unless we were responsible for allowing the passions to overcome us) (q77 a7; 2–2 q150 a4). Though passion may diminish the sin (q77 a6), it does not remove it, as long as the will has the appropriate causal role. The passions cannot be the subject of mortal sin; for mortal sin requires us to aim at the wrong end, which is proper to the will (1-2 q74 a4).[51] The passions contribute to sin by presenting something attractive that invites the will to consent.

We might suppose, however, that incontinence is voluntary and blameworthy action in which we act on passion against a settled judgment of practical reason. Aquinas can accept this description only if it is suitably qualified. If the incontinent action is, as he believes, voluntary, it must depend on the consent of the will. But how can the will consent to something other than the apparently greater good? Aquinas answers these questions by defending a modified Socratic account of incontinence (1-2 q77 a2; 2–2 q155 a3; 156 a1). Misdirected passion misleads our reason and will, so that we do not recognize the

[49] Saarinen, *WWMT* 118–31, examines Aquinas' views in their historical context.

[50] On the subject of virtue see §287.

[51] On mortal sin see §299n80.

overall badness of what we are doing. Incontinents, therefore, elect badly, because appetite influences them to change their election.[52]

Both the continent and the incontinent person lack the correct desire for the end (1-2 q58 a3 ad2; a5). Continent people grasp the end correctly, since their rational part works correctly.[53] But (as we saw in discussing Aristotle) not every sort of correct grasp of the end ensures the right sort of desire for the end. Continent people lack the right desire for the end, because their sensory desire is defective.[54] They face the demands of reason reluctantly, because their reason is somewhat clouded by the attractiveness of the goals presented by non-rational desires. Since they value the objects of their non-rational desires more than they should, they lack the right desire for the end, even though they desire (in one way) the right end. Similarly, incontinent people lack the right principles because of disordered non-rational desires (q58 a5).

This account might lead us to attribute to Aquinas a more sentimentalist view than he intends. He does not mean that in order to grasp ends correctly, we must add non-rational desire to rational desire. Nor does he suppose that non-rational desire forces us to abandon our plans; if it did, incontinent actions would not be voluntary. He suggests that the incontinent person knows the right universal principle, but the principle is corrupted in a particular case by some passion.

When the principle is corrupted, incontinents still do what they believe to be good, but sensory appetite (concupiscentia) affects beliefs about what is good; the object of appetite 'seems to be good, even though it is contrary to the universal judgment of reason' (q58 a5). Their appetite hinders them from considering the facts that would lead them to draw the appropriate conclusion in the particular case.[55] Since the resulting incontinent action is voluntary, the hindrance caused by passion does not make reason entirely ineffective. The

[52] 'In the one who does something through appetite, as the incontinent does, the previous will by which he was repudiating what he has the appetite for does not remain, but it [or 'he'?] is changed towards willing what he was previously repudiating. Accordingly, . . . what is done through appetite is in no way involuntary. For the incontinent in relation to appetite acts counter to what he was previously proposing, but not counter to what he now wills . . . . (1-2 q6 a7 ad2). 'If appetite were to destroy knowledge altogether, as happens with those who become mad because of appetite, it would follow that appetite would take away the voluntary. . . . But sometimes in actions done through appetite knowledge is not completely destroyed, because the capacity to know is not destroyed entirely, but only the actual consideration in some particular possible act. Nevertheless, this itself is voluntary, in as much as what is in the capacity of the will is said to be voluntary, such as not acting, and not willing, and similarly not considering; for the will can resist the passion . . .' (ad3). 'Again, similarly, reason has the same state in both, since both the continent and the incontinent have correct reason, and each of them, while outside passion, elects on purpose not to follow his illicit appetites. But the first difference between them is found in their election, because the continent person, though he undergoes strong pleasures and appetites, elects not to follow them, because of reason, whereas the incontinent person elects to follow them, the contradiction of reason not hindering (non obstante contradictione rationis). Hence continence must reside in that power of the soul, whose act is election, and that power is the will . . .' (2-2 q155 a3). '. . . these passions, however strong they may be, are not the sufficient cause of incontinence, but only the occasion, since, so long as the use of reason remains, a human being can always resist his passions. . . . The cause of incontinence in itself belongs to the soul, which does not resist a passion by reason' (2-2 q156 a1). At *in EN* §439 (quia non immanet propriae [L; proprie, M] electioni propter concupiscentiam) Aquinas adds his own gloss to what Aristotle says, to show that Aristotle need not be denying that the incontinent acts on election.

[53] He attributes 'perfectio rationalis partis' to the continent; cf. 'quantumcumque rationalis pars sit perfecta' (q58 a3 ad2).

[54] . . . si appetitus sensitivus, quem movet rationalis pars, non sit perfectus (q58 a3 ad2).

[55] Cf. q77 a2: non considerat in particulari id quod scit in universali, inquantum passio impedit talem considerationem. See §250 on consideration.

incontinent's passion 'binds' reason (q77 a2 ad4), but this type of binding does not exclude consent and election.[56]

Aquinas is committed, therefore, to some elements of a Socratic account of incontinence. Incontinents, as he conceives them, do not know perfectly well that what they do is worse, all things considered, than some other available action. Many critics have argued that Socrates' denial of this knowledge to the incontinent person 'conflicts with the appearances'.[57] Many of these critics have added that the Aristotelian version of the Socratic position—knowledge in general, but ignorance in the particular case—retains the least credible aspect of the Socratic position. The same question arises about Aquinas' solution. If, however, he had agreed that incontinent people know that what they do is the worse option, he would have to concede either that they act contrary to the consent of the will, or that their will consents to what they know to be worse. The first concession implies that incontinents are not responsible for incontinent actions. The second concession undermines Aquinas' conception of the will and of the basis of human freedom.[58]

296. How Incontinence is Based on Consent

He defends his view of incontinence by arguing that since incontinent action is voluntary, it results from mistaken election.[59] But he does not mean that (for instance) the incontinent person temporarily believes that it is best, all things considered, to seduce his neighbour's wife, or to get himself drunk. If someone sins as a result of passion, '<his> purpose tends towards a good end, even though this purpose is interrupted for the moment because of passion' (q78 a4). He retains the correct end, but temporarily fails to pursue it, without electing the incontinent action as the best overall. His reason is 'bound', but this is the kind of binding that does not take away the use of reason, and therefore does not make our action involuntary.[60] Since incontinents act voluntarily, their action is explained by their

[56] On the two kinds of binding see §253.

[57] In commenting on this passage (*EN* 1145b27–31) Aquinas says: 'For we see clearly that some people do what they know to be bad. And if it is true that they sin because of ignorance that arises in them while they are in a passion—appetite or anger, say—it is best to inquire what sort of ignorance this is.' By adding to Aristotle, Aquinas alludes to his own view of Aristotle's solution.

[58] On this point about freedom Scotus rejects Aquinas' view; see §§360–1.

[59] Since vicious people also act on mistaken election, we might suppose that incontinents are temporarily vicious, differing from vicious people only because the mistaken election does not last as long. This supposition is explored by Kent, 'Transitory'.

[60] See *2Sent* d39 q3 a2 ad5 = P vi 741b: A defect in the conclusion of a practical syllogism arises 'from the force of passions that submerge and (as it were) bind the judgment of reason in a particular case, so that it does not actually consider this nor its opposite, but the will follows the pleasant thing that sense proposes'. Passion absorbs reason in considering some particular, so that the incontinent 'when he comes to this particular, since the state of correct reason has been bound through appetite, the person cannot advance to actual correct consideration about particulars' (*3Sent* d31 q1 a1 = P vii 333a, punctuation altered). Cf. *3Sent* d17 q1 a4 sc2. This is a temporary binding by passion (cf. *Iob* vii 4 = P xiv 33a) that does not take away voluntariness and sin (*Iob* xii 2 = P xiv 54a). Cf. *SG* iii 108 §2834. Extreme pleasure binds reason in a way or impedes it, just as in drunk people who have the use of reason bound or impeded (1-2 q33 a3; cf. q34 a1 ad1; *Mal.* q3 a8 = M 509a). People who are partly drunk get angry, tamquam habentes iudicium rationis, sed impeditum (1-2 q46 a4 ad3). Aquinas seems to distinguish the binding of people who are asleep or insane or drunk from the binding that is present in incontinents (though he is not completely clear about this; cf. *Mal.* q3 a9 = M 511b). In cases of voluntary error, it is up to us to prevent the binding of reason by passion (*Mal.* q3 a10, ad1, 2). Sometimes the

will and election, but not in the ordinary way. When we sin from passion, we sin 'electing (eligens), but not from election'. We elect to follow the mistaken suggestion of the passion in a direction that we would not take if the passion had not suggested it to us.[61]

Aquinas perhaps means to contrast two judgments: (1) It is best all things considered to do what my passion tells me (and it tells me to do x). (2) Doing x is best all things considered here and now (and my passion tells me to do x). When we sin from passion, we make the first sort of judgment, but not the second. The passion—my desire for revenge, for instance—does not alter my conception of the good so that I really think it better to take revenge even at the cost of all the resulting evils. But revenge is attractive enough to make me think it is all right to listen to my passion on this occasion rather than to follow my conception of the good. If I choose to ignore the content of my conception of the good, my choice reflects my views about my ultimate end and about when it is necessary or desirable to act on deliberation about the good. Such choices confirm Aquinas' distinction between actions that we do 'electing' and those we do 'from election'. What the incontinent elects as best is not seducing the wife of one's neighbour, but following the suggestion of the passion. He allows himself to be persuaded that it is best to follow his passion here and now, because he attends more to the attractiveness of the object of the passion than to the demands of his conception of the good.

Incontinents are not to be blamed simply for listening to a current passion; for that may sometimes be a sensible thing to do. It is wise to attend to our passions if they help us to identify what matters when we try to deliberate.[62] They may do this even when they conflict with our initial rational judgment; if, for instance, we are vividly aware of the suffering inflicted by our (as we supposed) just punishment, we may have a good reason to follow our current reaction, and to think again about whether the punishment is really just.

Incontinents are mistaken because they listen to the wrong sort of passion. We attend to our reluctance to inflict severe suffering because we assume that such reluctance is generally appropriate; but we would be wrong to attend to our dislike of the person to whom we think we owe an apology. The incontinent person is at fault for his willingness to follow a passion

passion binds the reason in such a way that it causes an election; here it cannot be the source of involuntary action (*Mal.* q3 a12 ad12 = M 516b). Aquinas introduces binding in his account of Aristotle on incontinence. See *in EN* vii 3 §1347; 6 §1394; 10 §1460.

[61] In these cases 'the election is the first principle of sinning, given that it is caused from passion; and for that reason such a person is not said to sin from election, though he sins electing' (*Mal.* q3 a12 ad11). The passion 'causes the election in so far as it binds reason for the moment' (*Mal.* q3 a12 ad12). 'It is one thing to sin electing and another to sin from election. For one who sins from passion, sins electing but not from election, because election is not in him the first principle of his sin, but he is induced from passion to elect what he would not elect if he were outside the passion' (1-2 q78 a4 ad3). 'Now in the intemperate person the will turns towards sin from its own election, which proceeds from a state acquired through habituation, whereas in the incontinent the will turns towards sin from some passion' (2-2 q156 a3). 'Now in both the incontinent and the intemperate person, ignorance arises from desire being turned towards something, either through passion, as in the incontinent, or through a state [of character], as in the intemperate person. Nevertheless greater ignorance is caused in this way in the intemperate than in the incontinent. In one respect as regards duration, since in the incontinent this ignorance lasts only while the passion lasts . . . In another respect the ignorance of the intemperate person is greater as regards what he does not know. For the ignorance of the incontinent person concerns some particular object of election, in so far as he thinks that this is now to be elected; but the intemperate person is ignorant about the end itself, inasmuch as he judges this thing good, to follow his appetites without restraint. Hence the Philosopher says that "the incontinent is better than the intemperate person, because the best principle is preserved in him", namely the right estimate of the end' (2-2 q156 a3 ad1). See also §255 on indirectly voluntary actions.

[62] See above §289.

without examination; he complacently assumes that it is all right to follow this passion, even though it inclines him to do what he thinks is worse on the basis of his deliberation. His assumption is made easier by the immediate attractiveness of an action suggested by a passion.[63]

We can now see how the incontinent's judgment is temporarily warped by passion, even though he has also formed a judgment that opposes the suggestion of his passions. We can see something similar in other cases where we elect a procedure rather than an action. If I decide to do whatever you decide on, I may still think it best to follow this procedure, even if I also deliberate directly about the action on my own account and think it would be better not to do it. This apparent conflict of judgments corresponds, in Aquinas' view, to the condition of the incontinent.

His account of action suggests an alternative or supplement to this claim that the incontinent acts 'electing but not from election'. The passions are sources of voluntary action in so far as the will consents to them.[64] Since Aquinas thinks consent differs from election in requiring only the judgment that a proposed action is satisfactory (placet) rather than the judgment that it is best, we might suggest that the incontinent judges only that it is all right to do what passion suggests, even though he also judges that it would be best all things considered not to get drunk now.

We can also understand this attitude by considering inter-personal cases. If a child asks a parent for another sweet, the parent may judge that it is better overall not to give the sweet, but none the less suppose it is all right to give way to the child's demand, if the child is being a nuisance. Further reflexion might convince the parent that it would be better not to give way, but to put up with the nuisance, and she may even be aware of this, but at the moment she may be so fed up with the child's complaints that she thinks it is all right to give way to them.[65]

We might take this role of consent to show that we need not assume an election whenever we choose one action over another. Alternatively, we might say that it gives the minimal conditions in which we elect one action over another; we elect x over y provided that we consent to x when our passions suggest doing x. This role for consent explains how the will of the incontinent person is engaged, even if he does not view his action as the best available in the circumstances.

Aquinas' account of consent suggests yet a further possible role for the will. We have taken consent to require the judgment that the action consented to is satisfactory or acceptable. But he does not always require consent to include this positive judgment. Sometimes he suggests that we can consent to x simply by failing to dissent from x when we have the opportunity. This 'tacit' or 'negative' consent may fit the role of the will in incontinent action. Even if the incontinent person does not judge it to be best, or even satisfactory, to follow his appetite, perhaps his will is capable of intervening to prevent the incontinent action, but consents negatively by non-intervention.

[63] On the relation between this distinction and Green's claims about the will see Green, *PE* §147.

[64] 'Sometimes, however, the passion is not great enough to take away the use of reason altogether; and then reason can shut out the passion, by turning to other thoughts, or it can prevent it from having its effect, because one's limbs are not applied to action except by the consent of reason, as stated above. And so such a passion does not excuse from sin altogether' (1-2 q77 a7).

[65] On prematurely ceasing deliberation see §262.

Negative consent should not include every failure to intervene in a choice. Failure to intervene might be explained in various ways—inattention, psychological compulsion, indifference to overall good. None of these explanations fits Aquinas' view of negative consent. In the incontinent's negative consent, non-intervention results from some deliberative failure. Incontinents (in Aquinas' view) have failed to make clear to themselves why it is bad to follow the policy of acquiescence in the suggestions made by appetites in these circumstances. He still appeals to ignorance; incontinents would not act as they do if they had clearly seen what is wrong with the policy that they follow.

This account explains why common sense is right to believe that incontinents know that what they are doing is wrong; for Aquinas agrees that they can act against an explicit judgment that what they are doing is worse all things considered. This judgment comes from their deliberation focussed directly on the action. Common sense, however, does not distinguish this judgment from a judgment on whether it is all right to go along with the passions on this occasion. In Aquinas' view, incontinents consent to going along with the passions; their consent comes from deliberation about the procedure rather than the action. The difference between these two questions for deliberation shows why common sense might be right about the incontinent's attitude to one question, without considering the other question. Aquinas alters and expands Aristotle's account to allow a more credible analysis of the incontinent person's choice.

297. Deliberate Fault

Sin through deliberate fault seems to be similar to sin through passion in so far as it results from 'disorder' or 'misdirection' (inordinatio, 1-2 q78 a1) that leads to the choice of a lesser good over a greater. If one's consent leads to sin, the good that the will consents to is the lesser good, so that the will is disordered. Aquinas' description of sin through deliberate fault suggests that the passions play some role in presenting the lesser good that the disordered will pursues. But if we sin through deliberate fault, our pursuit of a lesser good is not simply the result of an occurrent passion that diverts us from our normal way of comparing different goods; the movement towards sin is proper to the will.[66] In this case we cannot plead the excuse of a misdirected passion misleading us on a particular occasion (ad horam). We have a mistaken conception of the composition of the end, and we follow this conception even when we are not being influenced by a passion. Sinners from deliberate fault may still value the higher goods, but they value lower goods more than they should, and they are prepared to risk a loss of higher goods to keep the lower goods (q78 a1).[67]

Intellectual error is part of this sin, but not its cause. Our intellectual error would be the cause if we reflected on the components of happiness and reached the wrong answer—if, for instance, we concluded that fornication is not a sin (*Mal.* q2 a3 ad9). Deliberate fault,

[66] 'A sin from deliberate fault is more serious than a sin from passion, for three reasons. First, because, as sin consists chiefly in will, to the extent that the movement of sin is more proper to the will, to that extent, other things being equal, a sin is more serious. Now when one sins from deliberate fault, the movement of sin is more proper to the will, which is moved towards evil from itself . . . ' (1-2 q78 a4).

[67] See §319.

however, results from a misdirected affection for something that warps our conception of the good.[68] The judgment of intellect is warped by our antecedent and unquestioned preferences.[69] We deliberate on the right occasions, but we stop when we have reached a good that ought not to stop our deliberation; we ought to look for reasons that might tell against pursuing this immediately attractive good, but we do not bother to look for them. We stop when our misguided affection makes it sufficiently attractive to us to persuade us that no further deliberation is needed (*SG* iii 10 §1950).[70]

Different roles of passion and consent divide venial (i.e., pardonable) from mortal sins.[71] Sudden motions of the passions may be undesirable, but they are simply venial sins, because they include no consent.[72] Consent to the object of a passion makes a sin mortal (1-2 q77 a8). Deliberation and consent determine whether we have turned away from the right conception of the ultimate end.[73] Some sins are mortal in their genus, because no one could undertake them without having a warped conception of the ultimate good; still, simply thinking of them is not a mortal sin. If we also elect them, we sin mortally.[74] In suggesting that the choice of immoral action involves a false conception of the end, Aquinas implies that the right conception of the ultimate end requires recognition of the non-instrumental value of morally virtuous action; that is why the virtuous person and the sinner do not disagree simply about the choice of means to an end.

The division between venial and mortal sin, as Aquinas conceives it, does not imply that all mortal sins are sins from deliberate fault. Sins resulting from passion may also be mortal, since they result in voluntary action when the will consents to them. In sins from passion and in sins from deliberate fault, deliberation is prematurely halted and diverted. In sins from passion this is because of the suddenness of the passion. In sins from deliberate fault, deliberation stops too soon because it is warped even when we are not subject to a sudden passion. In both cases, we do not complete deliberation as we should.

298. Sin and Vice

Aquinas believes that sin from deliberate fault is compatible with the absence of vice. The misdirection of the will involved in deliberate fault may be intermittent or partial, so that it does not turn the will completely in the wrong direction (q78 a3). In the vicious person 'the will is inclined towards sinning from its own election, which proceeds from a state acquired through habituation' (2-2 q156 a3). The first clause does not distinguish vice from deliberate fault; the distinction lies in the second clause, mentioning a state acquired through repetition and habituation.

Is the difference between deliberate fault and vice just a matter of frequency? Could a non-vicious person's sin from deliberate fault be just as bad as a vicious person's, and involve

[68] 'When someone has a misdirected affection for something, the judgment of intellect is impeded in a particular object of election because of misdirected affection. And thus the defect (vitium) is not in cognition but in affection. And that is why one who sins in this way is not said to sin out of ignorance, but in ignorance, as is said in *Ethics* III' (*Mal*. q2 a3 ad9).

[69] Cf. Aristotle on vice, §84. On intemperance see Bradley, *ATHG* 279–81.

[70] See §248.

[71] See 1-2 q72 a5–6; q74 a9; q77 a8; q87 a5; q88 a1.

[72] See 1-2 q74 a10; q77 a8; q89 a3.

[73] See q88 a2; q89 a4 (angels do not deliberate); 2-2 q33 a2 ad3; q44 a4.

[74] See 2-2 q35 a3; q36 a3, ad1; q37 a1; q38 a1.

an equally corrupt will, so that it would fail to be vicious simply because it was not habitual? Or must the non-vicious person's election be less corrupt than the vicious person's?

Mere frequency does not mark the right division.[75] If someone's election at a particular time is so bad that it is committed to all the actual and counterfactual choices of a vicious person, for the vicious person's reasons, then the agent has turned so far in the vicious direction that he seems to have become vicious. If he is capable of returning to the virtuous person's outlook, virtue and vice are not as permanent as Aristotle takes them to be. Even if the agent does not change his state of character in these cases, the distinction between a sinful condition and a vicious state is not very important, since they may both include the same misdirection of the will.

It is more plausible to claim that sin from deliberate fault involves a misdirected election that is different from the incontinent person's election, but still not as bad as the vicious person's. The relevant differences may not be obvious if we think of an election too narrowly as a choice of a single action. From this point of view, someone who sins from deliberate fault seems quite similar to the vicious person. Suppose, for instance, that a public official takes a bribe to allow a firm to pollute the water supply. He recognizes that he violates the responsibilities of his office and damages the health of his fellow-citizens, but definitely decides that he is willing to take the bribe under these conditions. Someone who is willing to do this shows himself to be different from an incontinent person (who gives way to a sudden temptation), and different from a person with misguided affections (who turns a blind eye to the pollution to protect the reputation of his daughter, who has stolen from the firm).

Still, his election is different from the vicious person's. For an election is the product of deliberation, and different sequences of deliberation result in different elections, even if the elections settle on the same action.[76] An agent's deliberation represents the reasons that weigh with him, and the value he attaches to the pursuit of different ends. Someone could form the wrong election about this particular action, by mistakenly thinking that in these circumstances the gain from taking the bribe is great enough to justify an unjust action; but he need not believe, as the vicious person does, that considerations of justice count for little or nothing in comparison with the rewards of injustice. His threshold for preferring the gains of an unjust action is lower than it should be, but not as low as it would be in a genuinely unjust person.

This description of the non-vicious person who sins from deliberate fault helps to explain why this sort of sin does not completely destroy the virtue that is opposed to it. Even if someone reaches the wrong conclusion on a particular occasion, he may not act for all the wrong reasons that move a vicious person, and may not share the vicious person's indifference to the right reasons. The error that leads the official to think it is all right to take a bribe on this occasion does not by itself show that he would, say, be indifferent if his subordinates failed to do their jobs properly; he need not have lost all the attitudes characteristic of a just person. He is inconsistent in defending his own wrongdoing while trying to prevent wrongdoing by others; this inconsistency distinguishes him from the thoroughly unjust person. Sinning from deliberate fault does not require the whole state

[75] Arpaly, *UV* 93–8, discusses relevant questions about frequency and stability.

[76] On deliberation and election see Aristotle's discussion of good deliberation in *EN* vi 9, and the next note.

and outlook of the vicious person; if we deliberate wrongly on a particular occasion, or on a specific type of occasion, we still may not reject all the patterns of deliberation that are characteristic of the virtuous person.

299. Sin and Virtue

For these reasons, we might agree with Aquinas in suggesting that sin, even beyond continence and incontinence, is consistent with the absence of vice. This is a plausible addition to Aristotle, suggesting how we ought to conceive some of the conditions intermediate between virtue and vice. It is more surprising that Aquinas takes all the types of sins he distinguishes, including sin from deliberate fault, to be compatible with the presence of virtue. If he is right about this, not everyone who commits sin is in a condition between virtue and vice; some may be virtuous.

Aquinas argues that sin is compatible with acquired virtues because virtues are states that do not necessarily produce their appropriate effects in the appropriate circumstances. Instead 'a man uses it [sc. the state] when he wills' (1-2 q71 a4). Aquinas, agreeing with a comment by Averroes, seems to be treating virtues as though they conformed to the principle that Aristotle lays down for rational capacities, that they can be used in opposite ways. A vicious person who sins need not always sin from deliberate fault, but sometimes may simply be swayed by passion, and sometimes may even do a virtuous action, 'because his reason is not completely corrupted through the bad state, but some of it remains undamaged' (1-2 q78 a2). Similarly, we may suppose, our will may be correctly directed far enough to form a virtuous state, but still be imperfect enough to elect not to exercise that state on a particular occasion.

This parallel between virtue and vice is difficult to reconcile with Aristotle's and Aquinas' conception of the moral virtues. Aristotle does not treat the virtues as a mere set of capacities that are so detached from one's will that one can still decide whether to exercise them or not. On the contrary, the virtues constitute a determinate way of using one's rational capacities. Aquinas brings out this feature of the virtues even more clearly than Aristotle does, in so far as he approves the description of virtuous action as 'the good use of freewill' (q55 a1 ad2) and of the virtues as the states that produce this good use. In describing virtues as states, Aquinas says correctly that they direct our rational capacities to the right actualizations (q55 a1); this is why we need states as well as capacities (cf. q49 a4). Aquinas' claim about virtue and sin seems to reduce virtue to one of the rational capacities that it was supposed to direct towards the right actualization, as though some further virtue were needed to ensure the right use of the virtue.

We might be especially doubtful about his suggestion that we decide whether or not to exercise our virtue. We can understand the claim that we decide whether or not to exercise our medical knowledge or our knowledge of French. We consider whether this is the right occasion, and we might be right or wrong in our estimate of the occasion. We might also decide to use our knowledge well or badly. But these are the points on which Aristotle contrasts a craft with a virtue. Aquinas seems to revert to the view that virtues can be used well or badly.

Against these objections, we might defend Aquinas' position as a realistic conception of virtue. If a virtue is a relatively permanent condition, it may persist despite a relatively isolated error; for a single error does not necessarily destroy the accumulated tendencies and dispositions that have been built up in a virtuous person's character. Perhaps the virtuous person ought to be allowed to lapse occasionally without being demoted to an intermediate position between virtue and vice.

This claim seems defensible independently of Aquinas' suggestion that we can decide whether or not to exercise our virtue. The most plausible way to explain occasional lapses is to say not that we decide not to exercise our virtue in this case, but that we fail to think about this case in the way a virtuous person would, and in the way in which we normally think about such cases. In thinking this way, we do not show our decision about how to use the virtue we have; we betray the fact that we lack the complete virtue, though we have enough of the virtue to make us brave (for instance), rather than vicious or intermediate between virtue and vice.

This way of understanding virtue is not Aristotle's way, but we might defend it by appeal to Aristotle. The virtuous person's election requires good deliberation, which requires not only the correct conclusion, but the conclusion resulting from the right reasoning (*EN* 1142b22–4).[77] Correct reasoning requires a grasp of the right reasons for the action, and hence of the changes in circumstances that would or would not require a different action. Someone who faces danger for the right reasons knows that she still ought to face it if she were offered a bribe to avoid it, but ought not to face it out of mere bravado if nothing worthwhile would be gained by facing it. In this respect, the demand for acting on the right reasons captures the sort of commitment that Kant captures in his account of the good will.[78]

Most people do not completely meet these demands. Many of us are willing to face a moderate degree of danger, enough to keep us from cowardice in ordinary circumstances, but we would not necessarily be willing to face the special dangers that many Germans during the Third Reich might have had to face in order to protect their Jewish neighbours from harm. Still, even though we lack the degree of commitment that the complete virtue demands, we might not agree that we all entirely lack the virtue of bravery.

This reflexion on ordinary human limitations supports Aquinas' view that a specific virtue does not prevent some of the sins contrary to the virtue. To be free of these limitations is to have a 'heroic' virtue.[79] Such a virtue is a gift of the Holy Spirit, not an achievement of our unaided effort. In denying that acquired virtues exclude the sins opposed to them, Aquinas fits his treatment of the Aristotelian virtues into his theological outlook. But his claims are independently plausible. If we recognize the 'normal' circumstances in which we expect someone's commitment to a virtue to be firm and stable, we can allow a virtue to someone who has this sort of stable commitment, without ruling out the possibility of lapses.

[77] Aquinas, *in EN* vi 8 §1230, takes Aristotle to be speaking of finding the right end but pursuing it through the wrong means (malam viam: L text); this is a misunderstanding of *ho men dei* (quod oportet) and *di'hou* (per quod) in the text. Hence he illustrates the point with an example of someone who steals to help a poor man. §1231 tries to explain away the oddity of treating the end as the conclusion and the means as the middle term. Contrast the explanation offered in Irwin, *EN*, on vi 9.5. Aquinas agrees with Albert, *SE* vi 14 §560.

[78] See Kant, *G* 398–400.

[79] See 1-2 q54 a3; q68 a2; 2–2 q159 a2 ad1; 3a q7 a2 ad2.

Though Aquinas allows virtue to co-exist with sin, he does not allow virtues to exist without one another. On this point he accepts the reciprocity of the virtues.[80] Since the loss of any one virtue expels prudence, and prudence is required for any of the virtues, the loss of any one virtue expels all the others 'as far as concerns the complete and formal being of virtue'. All that remains in that case is 'tendencies (inclinationes) towards acts of the virtues, acts which do not have the character (ratio) of virtue' (1-2 q73 a1 ad2).[81]

Perhaps Aquinas' belief in the fallibility of virtue would be more plausible if he did not connect it so closely with his claim that frequency of failure separates sin from vice. An 'isolated' error does not convict an agent of vice, but 'isolation' may not be simply a matter of frequency. If someone has acted fairly and justly in cases where he has had little temptation to act unfairly, but he sins from deliberate fault on the few occasions on which he gains something by unfairness, we might reasonably conclude that he is unjust. Even though he has lapsed on only a few occasions, these are occasions that normally face a just person and are of the sort that the virtue is designed to cope with.

By contrast, if someone acts justly in the situations that normally provide a test of someone's commitment to justice, but lapses when he faces some unusual temptation, or he is unprepared, has his attention distracted, or is in some other condition making it more than normally difficult to act justly, we might conclude that he is still just, though he has the bad luck to be in one of these conditions more often than most people are. The second person's lapses are more isolated from his character than the first person's lapses are, even though they may be more frequent.

Aquinas may be wrong, then, to focus on frequency and rarity of lapses as the basis for distinguishing sin from vice. He ought to focus on actions that do or do not tend to destroy the state of character that a virtuous agent has built up. Frequency is often a rough guide to such actions, but, as we can see if we consider some cases, it is not the right basis for drawing the relevant distinctions.

300. The General Tendency of Aquinas' View of Virtue

Aquinas' discussion of sin and vice is a test case for his claims about the will and virtue. This is one of the most obscure areas of Aristotle's discussion; Aquinas tries to clarify Aristotle by appeal to aspects of the will that he emphasizes more strongly than Aristotle does. In particular he relies on his account of the relations between the passions and the will. He does not remove all the obscurities in Aristotle, partly because his conception of consent and election is obscure on some points. Still, a reasonable interpretation of his remarks on consent explains sin and vice also. In examining vice as well as virtue, Aquinas demonstrates the explanatory power of his account of agency.

[80] 'One act even of mortal sin does not remove the state of acquired virtue. But if the acts are multiplied so much that the contrary state is produced, then the state of <the> acquired virtue is expelled. And when this <one> virtue has been expelled, prudence is expelled; for when a human being acts against any one of the virtues, he acts against prudence' (q73 a1 ad2).

[81] On the reciprocity of the virtues see §325.

His account of moral virtue emphasizes the aspect of Aristotle's account that connects virtue with correct election.[82] Aquinas has not only Aristotle's reasons, but also some reasons of his own, for emphasizing this feature of the virtues. The virtues are states that express freewill, and human beings have freewill in so far as they deliberate and elect; hence the virtues embody a distinct form of deliberation and election. Aquinas' claims about action and freedom agree with Aristotle's claim that correct election is the mark of moral virtue.

Aquinas, no less than Aristotle, has to explain why the moral virtues are essentially forms of correct deliberation and election, if they are so closely connected with the passions. The passions do not move us to free action without the consent of the will; they are elements of moral virtues in so far as they are subject to the consent of the will. To decide whether Aquinas makes Aristotle's position better or worse, we need to decide whether his views about consent capture the ways in which passions contribute to the goodness or badness of actions and characters.

While these views on the will and on election determine Aquinas' general theory of the moral virtues, he does not always seem to follow them. We have seen why it is difficult to reconcile his views on the importance of the will and correct election with his claim that the passions, as opposed to the will, are the subjects of some moral virtues. He would follow his general theory more consistently if he allowed both will and passion to be the subject of each virtue that involves the regulation of passion. This view that allows two subjects seems to fit better than Aquinas' actual view fits with the specific remarks he makes about the virtues and passions.

The claim that virtue consists in correct deliberation and election requires a credible account of the relevant sort of deliberation. Aquinas seeks this account through his discussion of prudence, which opens further questions about his view of practical reason.

[82] See §111.

21

AQUINAS: NATURAL LAW

301. Questions Raised by Natural Law

Our discussion of the moral virtues has led us to some questions about Aquinas' conception of practical reason. But before we can examine these questions, we need to consider an aspect of his moral theory that may appear to lead him in a different direction.

So far we have presented his approach to morality as a teleological theory; it begins from an account of the rational will aiming at the ultimate end and deliberating about the actions that achieve it. This deliberation results in the formation of the will and the passions in specific states of character aiming at the ultimate end.

But Aquinas also treats morality as a set of principles specifying the requirements of natural law.[1] He finds an Aristotelian source for his doctrine of natural law. Aristotle divides natural from legal justice; according to Aquinas, natural justice is embodied in the principles of natural law.[2] Jurists tend to speak of natural right (ius) only when they refer to the nature common to human beings and other animals. When they refer to a human being's nature as human 'in so far as he discerns wrong (turpe) and right (honestum) in accordance with reason', they speak of the right (ius) of nations; but Aquinas insists that both aspects of a human being's nature are included under natural justice (*in EN* v 12 §1019). The principles that he mentions here are those he normally includes under natural law; they are universally valid and (in a way to be further explained) universally known (*ST* 1-2 q94 a4).

Mediaeval discussion of natural law is derived from Stoic sources. Christian writers use Stoic claims to interpret St Paul's remarks on the Gentiles who are a 'law to themselves'.[3] Their discussion of natural law develops independently of any reference to Aristotle. Aquinas, however, combines it with his exposition of Aristotelian ethics. He implies that questions

[1] 'Just as the human soul has a natural state by which it comes to know the principles of theoretical sciences, a state we call understanding of principles, so also it has a natural state that possesses the first principles of matters of action, principles which are natural principles of natural right (ius). And this state belongs to universal conscience (synderesim)' (*Ver.* q16 a1). On the relation of ius and lex see 2-2 q57 a1 ad2. Cf. Suarez, *Leg.* i 2.4.

[2] '. . . in practical matters there are some principles naturally known, indemonstrable principles of a sort and <principles> close (propinqua) to these, such as that evil is to be avoided, no one is to be unjustly injured, theft is not to be committed, and so on' (*in EN* v 12 §1018).

[3] On *Rm.* 2:14 and earlier discussions see §§206 and §232. On discussions of natural law before Aquinas see Lottin, *PM* ii, ch. 3.

about natural law belong to an inquiry into natural justice. He connects St Paul's claims with his own doctrine of conscience and practical reason.[4] On the strength of St Paul's description of the Gentiles, Aquinas argues that conscience makes us aware of a natural law.[5]

This conception of morality as consisting in principles of a universal natural law may seem to conflict with the self-centred eudaemonism of a teleological conception of the virtues. Prescription independent of our desires seems to conflict with the dependence of the virtues on our desire for happiness. If this is Aquinas' view of natural law, his moral theory includes important non-teleological elements. If natural law is independent of eudaemonist practical reason, Aquinas recognizes an independent source of moral principles, and so raises questions about conflict and priority.

We will see, however, that Aquinas does not intend his doctrine of natural law to introduce any conflict with the eudaemonist aspects of his claims about the virtues. On the contrary, it both relies on and supports his general account of the will and of rational action. It will be useful to discuss his view of natural law before turning to his account of practical reason and of the morally right.

302. Questions about Law

Aquinas' claims about natural law depend on his general treatment of law. The Treatise on Law follows the Treatise on Vices and Sins, because law is one of God's means for leading us back from sin to God. Aquinas describes how sin obscures and distorts our grasp of moral

[4] 'He commends in them [sc. the Gentiles] the observance of the law, when he says "they do naturally the things contained in the law", that is to say, the things that the law commands, namely as far as concerns moral precepts, which are from the dictate of natural reason, just as it is also said about Job that he was just, upright and God-fearing, and avoiding evil. . . . "naturally" can be taken to mean "through the natural law showing them what is to be done", according to that passage "Many say: 'Who will show us good things?'. Imprinted [upon us is the light of your countenance, O Lord]", which is the light of natural reason, in which is the image of God. . . . He shows their worthiness, namely in the fact that, while not having a law of this particular sort, they are a law to themselves, namely to the extent that they carry out the duty of the law bearing on themselves, by instructing themselves and leading themselves towards good, because, as the Philosopher says, "law is discourse that has compulsion, proceeding from a certain sort of prudence and understanding". [*EN* 1180a21; contrast the translation at *in EN* x 14 §1505.] And that is why it is said that "law is not laid down for a just person" [*1Tim.* 1:9]—that is to say, he is not compelled by external law—"but" it is laid down "for unjust people", who need to be compelled externally. And this is the highest degree of worthiness (dignitas) in human beings, namely that they are led not by others but by themselves towards good' (*in Rom.* ii 3). On *1Tim.* 1:9 cf. *SG* iii 128 §3008.

In the passage omitted here Aquinas discusses Augustine's first interpretation (Ambrosiaster's) of the passage in *Romans*. See §226. He says: 'But as to his saying "naturally", a question arises. For it seems to support the Pelagians, who said that a human being by his natural [abilities] can observe all the precepts of the law. Hence "naturally" should be explained as meaning "through nature reformed by grace". For he is speaking of Gentiles converted to faith, who by the help of the grace of Christ had begun to observe the moral [precepts] of the law.' Augustine's first interpretation does not commit Paul to claims about natural law. But most of Aquinas' exposition relies on the second interpretation he offers (a development of Augustine's second interpretation), which takes Paul to attribute some awareness of morality to everyone.

At 'Imprinted . . .' Aquinas quotes the first word of *Psalms* 4:7. His Vulg. Psalter, reading 'imprinted' (signatum), follows LXX (*esêmeiôthê*). The same verse is quoted by Augustine in *S et L*. Sanderson, *DOC* 4.12, notes that he will avoid reliance on this verse, since other people's use of it rests on a defective translation.

[5] He quotes the Gloss on the passage in *Romans*: 'Though they [sc. the Gentiles] have not got the written law, still they have the natural law, by which anyone understands and is conscious to himself (sibi conscius est) what is good and what is evil' (1-2 q91 a2 sc). He also quotes the passage at 1-2 q109 a4 obj1; *Virt*. a8 obj3; *Ver*. q11 a2 obj5; q17 a1 sc2. He alludes to it at 1a q79 a13; *Quodl*. q3 a26 = P ix 504b. On the highest degree of dignitas, which consists in following the law without coercion, see *SG* iii 128 §3008: '[They] are a law to themselves, since they have charity, which inclines them in place of a law and makes them act generously (liberaliter)'.

principles, especially when we face particular situations and choices to which the principles are relevant.[6] To overcome these effects of sin, God instructs us through law and helps us through grace,[7] and among the laws that God has given to instruct us is the natural law.

Aquinas discusses the necessary conditions for a law and the way in which natural law satisfies them. His discussion is cautious, and not entirely unambiguous. It results in considerable dispute among later Scholastics who discuss the relation of morality to natural law and the way in which natural law is law.

At this point in the *Summa*, we have learnt about moral virtues and the principles of practical reason. When Aquinas tells us that these are the content of a natural law, we might take him in either of two ways: (a) An inflationary view: These are not only principles of practical reason, but also precepts of a natural law; because they are precepts of a law, they have some practical significance that they would not have otherwise. (b) A deflationary view: By being principles of practical reason they count as precepts of a natural law; on the correct understanding of law, that is all it takes for them to be a sort of law. Their being a law adds nothing to the practical significance they already have as principles of practical reason.

These two views of natural law correspond to two ways of connecting morality and law. (1) We might regard law as a social institution, involving a recognized legislator issuing orders demanding compliance, and we might try to understand morality as consisting of the orders issued by some legislator. In that case we assimilate moral principles to our prior understanding of law and legal principles. (2) We might begin from our understanding of moral principles, and try to form a conception of law that allows us to understand moral principles as a sort of law. In that case, we assimilate some laws to our prior understanding of moral principles.

If Aquinas uses the first direction of argument, he takes morality to consist essentially and fundamentally in the requirements of some law, and therefore may reasonably be called a 'natural law moralist'. Some 17th-century moralists, and especially Cumberland, Locke, and Pufendorf, are natural law moralists in this sense. We might suppose that Aquinas agrees with them in making legal obligations and demands fundamental in morality. If that is his view, he departs from an Aristotelian view of morality.[8]

If, however, Aquinas uses the second direction of argument, he does not conclude that morality is fundamentally law. His identification of morality with one kind of law clarifies the nature of one kind of law by reference to morality; it does not explain morality by reference to law.

His initial remarks might reasonably suggest that he holds an inflationary view, and that his account of morality as law rests on an antecedent understanding of law. In his view, law is a rule[9] that involves commands, moves agents to action, imposes obligation, and requires publication.[10] If these features of law essentially involve legislation and a legislator, natural

[6] See §313 below.

[7] 'For the external principle moving us towards the good is God, who both instructs us through law and helps us through grace' (1-2 q90 pref.) Jordan, 'Scientia' 90, discusses the position of the Treatise on Law in *ST* 1–2. See also Westberg, *RPR* 229–30.

[8] This is the conclusion of Anscombe, 'Modern'.

[9] 1-2 q90 a1: 'Law is some sort of (quaedam) rule and measure of acts, in accordance with which someone is led towards acting or is restrained from acting; for law (lex) is spoken of from binding (ligare), because it binds (obligat) one to acting'.

[10] q90 a4: 'A law is imposed on others by way of a rule and measure. Now a rule or measure is imposed by being applied to those who ought to be regulated and measured by it. Hence, in order for a law to acquire the power of obliging that is proper to a law, it is necessary that it be applied to the human beings who ought (debent) to be regulated by it.

law essentially involves legislation and a legislator. To see whether he takes these features to imply legislation, we need to consider the components of his account of a law.

303. Law and Obligation

The specific way in which law moves to action is 'obliging' or 'binding' to action (q90 a1).[11] When Aquinas speaks of our being 'bound' or 'obliged' he often seems to have in mind some specific act of binding. In this sense he speaks of an obligation resulting from a promise (2-2 q88 a1), including the vows made at one's baptism or in entering into some specific condition of life.[12] In all these cases obligation seems to presuppose an act of obliging. If, then, natural law necessarily obliges, it should involve some specific act of obliging by God and our awareness of it as coming from this source.[13]

In contrast to this narrow use of 'oblige', Aquinas uses 'ought' (debere) and 'duty' (debitum) in cases where they do not seem to rest on any act of obliging. A duty or something due (debitum) implies a 'need' or 'exigence' (1a q21 a1 ad3). Aquinas distinguishes what is due morally from what is due legally. When something is due legally, it involves constraint by a law; this is what he normally calls 'obligation'. What is due morally is demanded by moral rightness; it does not result from anyone's act of imposing an obligation.[14] A moral duty results from 'the appropriateness of the thing' (convenientia rei) (1-2 q60 a3).[15]

Aquinas does not identify a duty of justice with a duty that we are obliged (obligari) to perform; he identifies it with a duty that we can reasonably be compelled by law to perform, so that when we are compelled by law, we are obliged. Hence he tends to use 'due' or

Such application is made by its being brought to their notice by the publication itself. Therefore publication is necessary for the law to obtain its power.'

[11] Something that is moved by natural necessity cannot be bound; fire, for instance, is not bound to move upwards (*Ver.* q17 a3 c). Conscience binds us only in so far as it gives us knowledge of a law made by a superior, and specifically of a divine law (*Ver.* q17 a3 c = M 332b). 'A human being does not make a law for himself, but through the act of his cognition, by which he recognizes (cognoscit) a law made by another, he is bound to fulfilling the law' (q17 a3 ad1). Similarly, the discussion of the question whether a mistaken conscience obliges (1-2 q19 a5) seems to assume that conscience presents its demand as a command of God (esp. ad2). See also *2Sent.* d39 q3 a3 ad3; *Ver.* q17 a4, esp. ad2.

[12] See 2-2 q185 a5; Supp. q43 a2; q61 a3.

[13] Suarez relies on this inference in order to suggest that Aquinas agrees with him in taking natural law to involve a divine command. See, e.g., *Leg.* ii 6.10.

[14] 'The legal due is that which one is constrained by law (lege adstringitur) to render; and this due is chiefly the concern of justice, which is the principal virtue. On the other hand, the moral due is what someone owes (debet) out of the rightness (honestas) of virtue: and since a due implies necessity, this kind of due has two degrees. For one due is so necessary that without it rightness in morality (honestas morum) cannot be maintained; and this has more of the character of due. . . . There is another due that is necessary in the sense that it conduces to greater rightness, although without it rightness may be maintained. This due is the concern of generosity, affability or friendship, or the like, all of which . . . have little of the character of the due' (2-2 q80 a1).

[15] Sometimes Aquinas distinguishes legal from moral justice, in accordance with (respectively) 'a rule of a determining law' and 'a rule of reason' that involves something due (2-2 q58 a11). Within the morally due, we must also distinguish what is strictly required (tamquam necessarium) and 'prescribed' (praeceptum) from what is better and 'mandated' (mandatum) (1-2 q99 a5; cf. 2-2 q23 a3 ad1). In the second case of the morally due, what is due is due 'not out of a necessity of justice, but because of a certain moral equity, as in the case of benefits received in return for nothing' (2-2 q31 a3 ad3). In the case of what is due by justice, 'someone may be bound (obligari potest) by a fixed contract', but in the second case something is due out of friendship, 'and to this due civil obligation does not apply' (q78 a2 ad2). In the case of the legally due, someone can be compelled by law, whereas the morally due is due 'out of some sort of moral goodness (honestate)' (q102 a2; cf. q117 a5 ad1; q118 a3 ad2). Moral goodness is relevant even when nothing is due as a matter of justice (q106 a1 ad2; a4 ad1; q114 a2).

'ought' (debere) to cover the broad area of moral requirements in general, and to use 'oblige' when he is thinking of a duty as imposed by law. This, however, is a tendency rather than an absolute rule; for the broad scope of 'law' allows a broad scope to 'obligation' as well.[16]

The distinction between duty and obligation clarifies the sort of moral requirement that applies to God. God is not under any obligations, because no one imposes them on God. Still, something is due to God's creatures, if it is needed to fulfil their nature (q111 a1 ad2). God has duties, and these have an important role in Aquinas' account of justification and salvation. God does not owe us existence; he gives it to us out of 'pure generosity'.[17] God does not owe grace or glory to us, except on the assumption that he has ordered things this way; but he owes it to himself to fulfill his own ordering (q114 a1).[18]

Aquinas believes that these duties hold because of facts distinct from any act of imposition by a legislator. The natural law rests on these sorts of duties, rather than any imposed obligation. The special relation of rational creatures to the eternal law does not consist in our recognition of the eternal law as a command of a superior. We share in divine providence by exercising foresight for ourselves and for others (q91 a2). We share in the divine reason in so far as our own reason is naturally illuminated so that we distinguish good from bad.[19] This participation in the eternal law, in discriminating good from bad and having foresight for oneself and others, constitutes natural law.[20]

Aquinas, therefore, does not take all law to involve an obligation that requires an act of will by an imposer. The necessary connexion between law and obligation is fulfilled by a principle that presents requirements (debita).

304. Law, Reason, and Ends

But even if obligation does not require imposition, Aquinas also agrees that law prescribes and prohibits. Does this feature of law imply acts of prescription and prohibition by a commander expressing will?

Aquinas argues that, since commanding belongs to reason, law must belong to reason. Since a law involves a 'rule' (or 'standard', regula) and a 'measure' (mensura), and a rule

[16] Contrast Suarez, *Leg*. i 11.2.

[17] *SG* ii 44 $1217: 'God . . . from no debt, but from sheer generosity, brought things into being'. In the proper sense, creation does not involve justice, because justice requires the existence of someone to whom something is due; 'but if justice is understood broadly, we can say that there is justice in the creation of things, to the extent that it fits divine goodness' (ii 28) Cf. 1a q21 a3.

[18] 'To each is due what is his own. Now what is directed to someone is what is said to be his own. Thus the servant is of <i.e., belongs to> the master, and not conversely; for what is free is whatever is its own cause. In the word "debt", therefore, is implied some direction of requirement or necessity of something in relation to the thing to which it is directed. . . . in the divine operations debt may be regarded in two ways, either in so far as something is owed to God, or in so far as something is owed to a created thing. And in both ways God renders what is owed. . . . God exercises justice, when he gives to each thing what is owed to it according to the character (ratio) of its nature and condition. . . . And although God in this way gives what is owed to each thing, still God himself is not also a debtor, since he is not directed to other things, but rather other things are directed to him.' (1a q21 a1 ad3).

[19] 'the light of natural reason, by which light we distinguish what is good and bad, which belongs to natural law . . .' (q91 a2).

[20] Cajetan's commentary supports this general view. He maintains that the relevant standard (regula) of action comes from the intellect (ad 1–2 q90 = L vii 150). He treats God's providence as a measure and a binding standard (regula obligatoria; ad q91 a1 = 153), expressed in the divine law, which is given to human beings to govern themselves (ad q93 a3 = 165). He does not suggest that any divine command is needed for natural law to be a binding standard.

and measure involves reason, law involves reason.[21] 'Rule' might suggest a standard that is created by a legislative act of making a rule; such a standard might be expressed in the imperative mood. But Aquinas has a different sort of 'rule' or 'standard' in mind. A legislated rule addressed to tenants in a building might say: 'Tenants must respect the right of other tenants to peace and quiet at night'. The standard underlying this legislated rule is the right of tenants to peace and quiet. This is the sort of standard that Aquinas has in mind; it may be the basis of a legislative act, but it is not itself the result of a legislative act.[22]

In his view, reason is the rule and measure of human actions. This rule distinguishes genuinely human actions from those acts of a human being that are not properly human actions.[23] Reason is the measure of human actions because human actions differ from other movements in so far as reason 'fixes' or 'presents' (praestituere) the end. It fixes the end by directing us towards (ordinare ad) the end.[24] The standard grasped by reason is the one that practical reason relies on in directing one's action to an end. The standard that is distinctive of law is a rational standard. Hence law, in contrast to an arbitrary act of will, is the product of reason.[25]

Similarly, Aquinas rejects the apparently plausible inference from the fact that law commands to the conclusion that it requires the expression of the will of a commander; for he claims, as he claimed earlier, that commanding belongs to reason rather than will (1-2 q17 a1).[26] The commanding function of law is fulfilled by directing our action (cf. *Ver.* q22 a12 ad4), through either an indicative or an imperative declaration (intimare). It does not require an explicit attempt to move anyone to action, since indicative declarations do not include this explicit attempt. A command by reason presupposes an act of the will, because it succeeds in moving us to action only if we will an end to which the command is relevant; but the command itself need not contain any attempt to move us to action.[27]

This broad conception of commands explains why Aquinas, following Aristotle, says that prudence is 'prescriptive' (praeceptiva), but belongs to practical reason (1-2 q57 a6). Similarly, he agrees that a law is a command, but he does not understand a command as a

[21] 'Law is some sort of (quaedam) rule and measure of acts, in accordance with which someone is led towards acting or is restrained from acting; for law (lex) is spoken of from binding (ligare), because it binds (obligat) one to acting. Now the rule and measure of human acts is reason, which is the first principle of human acts, as is clear from what has been said above. For it belongs to reason to direct towards an end, which is the first principle in things to be done, according to the Philosopher. Now in any given genus whatever is the principle is the rule and measure of that genus: for instance, unity in the genus of numbers, and the first motion in the genus of motions. Hence the remaining possibility is that law is something that belongs to reason' (1-2 q90 a1).

[22] On Aquinas' use of 'regula' see Suarez, *Leg.* ii 5.6. He comments on the broad use of 'mensura' and 'regula' in 2-2 q141 a6 and ad1, and he argues that this use is too broad to be the sense intended in speaking of a law.

[23] See 1-2 q6 intro, quoted at §239n17.

[24] praestituere: 1-2 q66 a3 ad3; 2-2 q47 a6 ad3. Aquinas claims that the end is the first principle in things to be done (in agendis). To see how this claim is consistent with the claim that reason is the first principle of human acts (actuum), we need to distinguish two claims: (i) The starting point in deciding what I am to do (in agendis) is the end, since practical reason has to deliberate towards the end. (ii) But the starting point of distinctively human action is reason, because the rational presentation of a more proximate end directed towards the ultimate end is the source of distinctively human action.

[25] 'Reason has its power of moving from the will . . .; for from the fact that one wills the end, reason commands about the things towards the end. But in order that the will about the things commanded may have the character of law, it needs to be regulated by some sort of reason. And in this way it is to be understood that the will of the sovereign has the force of law; otherwise the sovereign's will would be iniquity rather than law' (q90 a1 ad3).

[26] Cf. *4Sent* d15 q4 a1 sol.1 = P vii 756b–757a. See §246.

[27] On the significance of Aquinas' broad conception of command cf. Suarez, *Leg.* i 4.14; ii 6.3.

simple expression of will. He understands it as the rational direction (ordinare)[28] of oneself towards an end and towards one's conclusion about what needs to be done to achieve the end.

Aquinas, therefore, agrees that a law binds and obliges. But he does not infer that law involves the will either of the commander or of the commanded. A law consists in its being true that one ought to do x, on the assumption that one wills y. This law moves us only if we will y, but the law exists whether or not the commander or the commanded wills y, and whether or not the commander wills the commanded to pursue y.

So far Aquinas has argued that a law exists if reason presents an end and the means to it. He has not suggested that it requires a command in addition to the rational presentation of an end and the means. His discussion of law and a common good confirms this connexion between law and goal-directed reasoning. Since practical reason directs us towards the ultimate end, this is also the concern of law (q90 a2). Law involves practical thought, and hence deliberation aimed at one's own happiness. It is directed to a common good rather than to one's individual good, because a common good is a more 'perfect' or 'complete' good.[29] In turning to the end pursued by law, we do not turn away from individual happiness, but we complete it.

Aquinas' remarks, therefore, distinguish law from any legislative act proceeding from the will of a legislator. If the existence of rational agents who guide their actions by rational presentation of ends and deliberation about means to these ends constitutes the existence of a natural law, the existence of a legislator issuing commands is not necessary.

305. Law and Publication

The last condition that apparently connects law with acts of legislation is the demand for publication. Aquinas argues that publication (promulgatio) is necessary for law, and that natural law is published because God has placed it in human minds (q90 a4 ad1).[30] Does he imply that God's action is necessary for the existence of a natural law? How else could it have been published to all human minds?

We have reason to doubt whether he implies this, if we examine his conditions for publication. He claims that publication requires a law to be applied to those who ought (debent) to be regulated by it. But one might take this in either of two ways: (1) Unless someone has performed an act of publishing to us, no law applies to us. (2) Unless we are in the cognitive situation of having had a law published to us, no law applies to us.

[28] On ordinare cf. 2-2 q81 a5.

[29] See 1-2 q9 a1; q19 a10; q83 a1 ad5; *SG* iii 17 §1994; 39 §2168; 146 §3196.

[30] 1-2 q90 a4: '. . . a law is imposed on others by way of a rule and measure. Now a rule or measure is imposed by being applied to those who are regulated and measured. Hence, in order for a law to acquire the power of obliging that is proper to a law, it is necessary that it be applied to the human beings who ought (debent) to be regulated in accordance with it. Such application is made by its being brought to their notice from the publication itself. Hence publication is necessary for the law to have its power. Thus from the four preceding articles, the definition of law may be gathered: and it is nothing else than a directing of reason to a common good, by the one who has care of the community, which has been published.' ad1: 'The publication of the natural law is from the very fact that God placed it in the minds of human beings to be recognized (cognoscendam) naturally'.

Aquinas intends the second claim. A law is brought to our notice (deducitur in notitiam), and God has done this by placing the natural law in us 'to be recognized' (cognoscendam) naturally. Publication does not require that we actually know it, but only that it is available for us to know. We would be bound by the law if we were in the right cognitive condition to come to know the law, even if no one had put us in this condition. Aquinas does not suggest that I am obliged to do x only if someone tells me that he wants me to do x, or that I am obliged to do x only if I recognize that someone is telling me that he wants me to do x. His conditions allow publication without a publisher. In that case we have a further reason to suppose that natural law exists if there are rational beings who are capable of grasping rational principles to direct their actions towards ends.

306. Eternal Law and Natural Law

But even if the natural law does not essentially include any act of commanding or promulgation, it is essentially connected to the eternal law that is grasped by the mind of God. Must it not, therefore, include some divine mental act, even if it is not an act of commanding or publishing?

Aquinas argues that there is an eternal law in God's reason (q91 a1), and that there is a natural law in human beings, in so far as they share in the eternal law in a special way, by exercising foresight for themselves and others (q91 a2).[31] If rational creatures simply conformed to the eternal law, it would not thereby be present in them. It is present in them because they have foresight for themselves and others. This foresight is a law because it is a rule of reason directing them towards the appropriate end. Rational beings are conscious of the natural law, and so are a law to themselves. The specific natural inclination that manifests our share of divine providence is our concern for the welfare of ourselves and others. God has this sort of foresight for us and for every part of creation; we share in it in so far as we have some foresight for ourselves and others.[32]

The natural law in us, therefore, is our disposition to deliberate with reference to our own ultimate end. We direct our actions towards the ultimate end through natural law, because that is how we exercise providence for ourselves.[33] We are a law to ourselves, and we have the natural law in ourselves, because we direct our actions towards our happiness.[34]

[31] Quoted in next note.

[32] '. . . it is obvious that all things share in some way in the eternal law, namely to the extent that from its impression on them they have a tendency towards the acts and ends proper to them. Among other things, however, a rational creature is subject to divine providence in a more excellent way, to the extent that it itself acquires a share in providence, by exercising foresight (providens) for itself and others. Thus it shares in eternal reason, through which it has a natural inclination to the required (debitum) action and end. And in a rational creature this participation in the eternal law is called the natural law' (1-2 q91 a2). On providence and prudence cf. *Ver.* q5 a1 ad6: 'For the eternal law should be considered to be in God in the way in which naturally recognized principles of action are understood to be in us, from which we advance in deliberating and electing; and this is prudence or forethought (providentia). And so the law of our intellect is related to prudence as a principle <is related to a conclusion> in a demonstration.'

[33] 'For all reasoning is derived from principles that are naturally known, and all desire of means to an end is derived from natural desire for the ultimate end. And so it is also necessary that the first directing of our acts towards the end comes about through natural law' (q91 a2 ad2).

[34] Cf. *4Sent.* d33 q1 a1 = P vii 967a, quoted in n56.

Attention to natural law, therefore, does not turn us away from the eudaemonist outlook that has been characteristic of the *Summa* so far. It leads us back to the analysis of will, reason, and action that underlies Aquinas' claims about rational aiming and happiness.

Aquinas' conception of natural law is therefore reductive and deflationary in one respect. He does not take our awareness of the natural law to be a new source of moral insight distinct from our reflexion on our happiness; nor does he take it to provide distinct grounds for virtuous action, apart from those that have already appeared to practical reason. He has argued that, on a reasonable understanding of law, his discussion of the virtues and practical reason shows that we are aware of a natural law within us. To recognize this natural law, we need not recognize God as a legislator. Aquinas certainly believes in God as a legislator, but he does not take the truth of this belief to be essential to the existence of natural law.

It is less clear whether Aquinas believes that natural law is wholly external to the reason and will of rational agents. If natural law essentially includes precepts, and precepts essentially include an exercise of command (imperium), natural law essentially includes the act of reason that is required for command. Though precepts need not be in imperative form (in the narrow sense in which we normally understand it), they must apparently consist in something more than the existence of the facts that are grasped by rational agents.

Aquinas' position therefore seems to distinguish—though only implicitly—the facts grasped by rational agents from the rational agents' grasping of them, and seems to require both of these for the existence of natural law. But the facts themselves, independently of any command of God, provide rational agents with reasons for acting. Hence, when Aquinas discusses the precepts of the natural law, he mentions the natural facts that provide reasons for us to grasp. Though these facts do not seem to be sufficient for natural law, they are sufficient to make it true that we ought (debere) to act in certain ways.[35]

307. The Natural Law and the Will of God

This explanation of natural law separates the existence of natural law in human beings from the instructions of any legislator. None the less, Aquinas believes that the natural law is also divine law. It comes from God in two ways: (1) God has created us with this nature, these natural inclinations, and this natural grasp of the principles of natural law. (2) God wills that we obey the natural law, and commands us to obey it; moreover, we are required (teneri) by the natural law to conform our will to the will of God (1-2 q19 a9-10; *Ver.* q23 a7).

These two aspects of natural law are necessarily connected with Aquinas' conception of the nature and will of God. It is impossible, within Aquinas' conception of God, for God to create us as we are without commanding us to obey the principles that we grasp naturally and are naturally inclined to follow. For the natural law prescribes what is right and good for us, and God, being good, necessarily wills what is right and good for the creatures he has created.[36] Given that we have been created with the nature we have, we benefit from

[35] See further Suarez, *Leg.* ii 9.4.

[36] '. . . since a debt paid out of divine justice is either owed to God or owed to some creature, neither sort of debt can be omitted in any work of God. For God cannot do anything that is not appropriate to his wisdom and goodness; and this is the way in which . . . anything is owed to God. And similarly, whatever he does in created things he does in

being commanded to obey the natural law, and so, given God's nature, God cannot fail to will that we obey the natural law, and cannot fail to command us to obey it. The apparent possibility of God's creating us and not commanding us to obey the natural law is merely apparent; it appears possible only if we do not know enough about the nature of God.

Aquinas, therefore, emphasizes that God does not make it right to observe natural law by willing it, but prescribes actions that are already right in themselves, not right simply as a result of God's prescription.[37] Actions are right in themselves because they promote the end of human life; that is why God commands them.[38] God's will to prescribe the observance of the natural law rests on God's understanding of the fact that the natural law expresses what is good and bad for human beings because of their nature.[39]

The necessary connexion between God's will and God's understanding of what is naturally good for human beings does not limit God's freedom. If God creates the world because God sees it is good to do so, and if God commands us to follow the natural law because God sees it is good to command creatures to do what suits their nature, God's freedom is not thereby restricted.

accordance with appropriate direction and proportion, in which the character of justice consists. Thus justice must be in all God's works' (1a q21 a4).

[37] 'For the precept is of two sorts—i.e., of natural and of positive right (ius). The things prohibited by a precept of natural right are those that are bad in their own right (secundum se). But those prohibited by precepts of positive right are those that can be occasions of bad things; or else the things prescribed (praecipiuntur) are things that direct towards virtue, which the legislator aims to bring about' (*4Sent* d15 q3 a1 sol 4 = P vii 729a).

[38] 'An action is said to be bad in its own right. And this is true in so far as the action disagrees with correctness of reason. For each nature has in it a natural tendency towards its end; and thereby there is in reason a natural correctness through which it tends towards the end; and thereby whatever leads away from that end disagrees with reason. And because the natural law is the <law> in accordance with which reason is correct, that is why Augustine says . . . that something is called a sin in so far as it disagrees with the eternal law, whose expression is this very natural law. And so, the more an action leads away from the end of human life, the more serious is a sin in its own right' (*2Sent* d42 q2 a5). Aquinas cites Augustine, *Faust.* xxii 27 (also discussed in 1-2 q71 a6; see §292), which explicitly refers only to eternal law (factum vel dictum vel concupitum aliquid contra legem aeternam), but warrants Aquinas' reference to the natural law, by introducing the connexion between eternal law and natural order: 'The eternal law is divine reason or the will of God, commanding the conservation of natural order, and forbidding its disturbance. We must, then, ask what the natural order is in a human being.'

[39] '. . . the things prescribed by divine law have correctness not only because they are laid down by law, but also in accord with nature. (1) For by the precepts of the divine law the human mind is subordinated to God, and all the other things in a human being are subordinated to reason. But this is just what natural direction (ordo) requires, that the inferior be subject to the superior. Therefore the things commanded by the divine law are in themselves naturally correct. (2) Human beings by divine providence are allotted a natural criterion of reason (naturale iudicatorium rationis) as the principle of their proper activities. Now natural principles are directed to things that are naturally. Therefore there are activities naturally appropriate (convenientes) to a human being that are correct in their own right, and not merely as being laid down by law. (3) Whatever things have a definite nature, these things must have definite activities appropriate to that nature: for the proper activity of each thing follows its nature. Now it is settled that the nature of human beings is definite. There must therefore be certain activities that in themselves are appropriate to a human being. (4) Wherever something is natural to a given subject, any other thing without which the first thing cannot be had must also be natural; for nature does not fail in necessities. Now it is natural to a human being to be a social animal; this is shown from the fact that one human being alone is not sufficient for all the things that are necessary for human life. Therefore the things without which human society cannot be preserved are naturally appropriate to a human being. Such things are securing to every person what is his own, and refraining from acts of injustice (iniuriis). Some things, therefore, among human actions are naturally correct. . . . It is clear, therefore, that good and bad in human actions are not only in accord with the laying down of law, but in accord with natural direction (ordinem). That is why it is said in a Psalm "The judgments of the Lord are righteous, justified in themselves" [*Ps.* 18:10]. But this rules out the position of those who say that things are just and correct only by the laying down of a law' (*SG* iii 129 §§3009–13, 3017–19). 'Iudicatorium' is also translated by 'judgment', 'code', 'tribunal'. M ad §3011 cites *ST* 1-2 q 71 a6 ad4; *Ver.* q17 a1 obj5 ad5; *ST* 1a q79 a13. On this chapter see also §274.

Human beings act freely in so far as they follow their ultimate end; but their ultimate end is external to them, since they receive it from God. Moreover, facts about goodness and badness are external to any particular human agent, in so far as they exist independently of any individual. The good that God aims at is not external to God in this way, and so God is not determined by the good in the way that human beings are. The relevant good is God's own goodness, and it is not external to God in the way that the human good is external to human beings.[40]

God is omnipotent in so far as God's rational will is not restrained by anything external.[41] But this does not mean that God is free to change himself. In particular God is not free not to have the sort of will that prefers the good; for if God lacked such a will, God would be less perfect than he is. God does not will of necessity everything that he wills (1a q19 a3); he could have created a better world than the one he chose to create (q25 a6).[42] Still, God is not free not to choose what seems to him better all things considered. On this point Aquinas is an intellectualist about God's freedom.[43]

The will of God is not subject to the eternal law; for it is itself the eternal law.[44] Particular aspects of creation result from God's willing to carry out some plan that God's reason grasps as part of the eternal law. But God's will, God's reason, and the eternal law are not three independent things. Given God's simplicity and eternity, they are three ways of referring to the same thing. God's will is not compelled by something external to and independent of it. Divine freedom, therefore, does not require God's will to be capable of changing the eternal law. The eternal law expresses God's free will.

These facts about God imply that the rightness and goodness of the principles of natural law are not independent of God; since it is necessary that God wills what is right and good, the principles of natural law would not be right and good if God did not will them. Still, they are not constituted or created by God's will. For God's will necessarily recognizes right and good that are not created by his will.

The relation between the first principle and the subordinate principles of natural law presupposes that natural rightness is distinct from the will of God. It is not always obvious how the higher principles of natural law justify one or another specific subordinate principle. But the task of reaching subordinate principles is not simply a task for legislation, human or divine. It is a task for rational inquiry and discovery. Neither a human nor a divine legislator

[40] 'And so as concerns things divinely willed, we should recognize that there is something that it is absolutely necessary for God to will, but this is not true of all the things God wills. For the divine will has a necessary relation to its own goodness, which is its proper object. Hence God of necessity wills the being of his goodness, just as our will of necessity wills happiness . . . But God wills things apart from himself in so far as they are directed to his goodness as towards their end' (1a q19 a3).

[41] '. . . anything that can have the character of being is included among the absolutely possible things, in respect of which God is said to be omnipotent. Now nothing is opposed to the character of being, except non-being. Therefore, whatever implies being and non-being at the same time is inconsistent with the character of the absolutely possible thing that is subject to the divine omnipotence' (1a q25 a3).

[42] Difficulties in Aquinas' position are explored by Kretzmann, *MT* 217–25; *MC* 130–41; 'General'; 'Particular'. Cf. §§347, 396.

[43] On intellectualism see §268.

[44] '. . . since the will of God is his very essence, it is subject neither to the divine government, nor to the eternal law, but is the same thing as the eternal law. In another way we can speak of the divine will, as concerns the things themselves that God wills about creatures; these things are subject to the eternal law, in so far as their concept [ratio] is in divine wisdom' (1-2 q93 a4 ad1). Cf. q91 a1c, ad1.

is free to legislate as he pleases about rightness and goodness, because the relevant facts are independent of legislative acts. The scope for pure legislation is limited to the area of the civil law, where the general requirements of human nature and human society do not give us a reason to prefer one option over another. At the higher levels of natural law, God is not sovereign over it in the sense of being free to change it at will.

Though God is not free to violate the natural law or to refrain from commanding its observance, God's legislative role is not confined to endorsing the provisions of natural law. God also commands actions that are not commanded by natural law, which it would not be wrong to omit if they had not been commanded. Violation of such a command is 'bad because it is prohibited' (malum quia prohibitum) rather than 'prohibited because it is bad' (prohibitum quia malum), whereas violations of natural law are prohibited because they are bad.[45]

In allowing that God's legislation can make some actions wrong that would not otherwise be wrong, Aquinas does not retract his view that right and wrong are prior to God's legislative will. God's right to legislate and our obligation to obey God's legislation presuppose a principle, independent of God's legislative will, that prescribes obedience to the legitimate commands of a legislator. The wrongness—prior to God's legislation—of disobeying God is presupposed by the possibility of God's legislation making specific actions right or wrong.

308. What is Natural about Natural Law?

We have now seen what Aquinas does and does not mean by speaking of natural law as a kind of law. We have considered the different reasons that might be given for attributing to him the view that it consists essentially in acts of divine legislation, and we have found that none of these reasons is cogent. He discusses the features of law that seem to refer to acts of legislation (obligation, rule, command, publication), and argues that they do not imply any acts of legislation, but belong to the natural law in so far as it belongs to the nature of rational agents. In this respect, Aquinas reduces facts about natural law to facts about rational agents.

[45] Violations of natural law are bad without prohibition, and therefore are prohibited because they are bad. Violations of divine positive law, however, are bad only because they are prohibited. See 1-2 q71 a6 ad4 (we can speak of every sin being bad because it is forbidden by natural law from the very fact that it is misdirected (inordinatum)); 2-2 q57 a2 ad3 (both divine and human law include things that are naturaliter iusta, whose violation is prohibited because it is bad, and things that are bad because prohibited); *in 1Tim*. 1.3 = P x 588b (what conflicts with natural law is bad in its own right, whereas what conflicts with positive law is bad because prohibited). Some sins are sinful only because they are prohibited, and would not otherwise be sinful. The most significant of these sins is the sin of Eve and Adam in eating the apple. See *2Sent* d21 q2 a2 sc1 = P vi 575b (Adam sinned by doing what was bad only because it was prohibited). Many, however, sin by doing what is bad in both ways, both in its own right and because it is prohibited. On Adam's sin see §412; *Mal*. q2 a6 = M 480b (some actions are sins only because prohibited); q2 a9 ad4 = M 487a (in things that are bad in their own right, not only because they are prohibited, disobedience is not the whole evil; hence sins can differ in degree in accordance with the good that one loses); *CT* 188 (eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil was not prohibited because it was antecedently bad, but God commanded human beings to observe this moderate prohibition simply on the ground that God prohibited the eating). Similarly, some ways to salvation are required only because they are commanded. See *in Ioann*. 13.2 §6 = P x 529b (Jesus' washing of Peter's feet was necessary for salvation only because it was prescribed).

What, then, makes natural law natural? It is different, as the Stoics argue, from any positive law. It is also different, as the Christian Fathers insist, from the revealed law that we know from the Scriptures.[46] It is not separate from the divine law, since it is part of the eternal law; but it is not the whole of the divine law. Aquinas begins with the aspects of divine law that we know naturally, before he proceeds to explain why we also need the revealed law of the Pentateuch and the Gospel.

In calling natural law natural, he makes at least three claims about its status: (1) He refers to our way of knowing the law. To know the precepts of positive law, we need specific information about a particular community, but to know the precepts of the natural law we need no special education or information. We have the relevant knowledge by nature, without education or training, and no matter how bad our education and training may be. Our natural knowledge of the natural law is the basis for acquiring knowledge of further practical principles (1-2 q91 a3). Different people are aware of these first principles of practical reason to different extents, and with different degrees of explicitness; but since we all grasp them in some way, we naturally participate in the eternal law (q91 a2).[47] Our awareness of the first principles of natural law is meant to explain how it is possible for us to guide our action correctly by reason and will. (2) The natural law is natural not only because of how we know it, but also because of its content. It applies to us in virtue of our nature. The principles of natural law are the correct principles for us to follow as the sorts of creatures we are with the natures we have. In so far as we know the principles of the natural law, we learn something about our nature and about what is suitable for us.[48] (3) This law is natural for us in so far as we naturally follow it. We naturally participate in the eternal law not only by knowing what is suitable for our nature, but also by naturally behaving in accordance with it. This is why Aquinas claims that the precepts of the natural law are revealed in our natural inclinations (q91 a2).

It is not logically necessary for one and the same law to have all these features. Natural knowledge (or some degree of cognition) of a truth does not make it a truth about our nature. We might, for instance, have been born with some innate cognition of arithmetic or some innate awareness of a quality-space of colours, but our innate cognition would not necessarily be about our nature; we would not necessarily understand arithmetic or colours better by reflexion on our nature. It seems logically possible for God to give us natural knowledge of practical principles that are similarly unrelated to our nature. In such an apparently possible world, the principles that prescribe what is suitable for our nature might be unknown to us; or else we might be able to learn about them without knowing them naturally, and we might discover that they are quite different from the principles that we know naturally. Again, knowledge—whether natural or not—of the principles that suit our nature seems to be consistent with the absence of any inclination to act on them. Apparently, we might be aware of what suits our nature, but—because of some perversity in our will—be disinclined to act on it.

[46] See Lactantius, quoted in §197. Cf. §206.

[47] This claim about natural awareness of the law does not undermine the claim that rational agents differ from non-rational in being guided by reason and will, as opposed to natural desire (q91 a2 obj2; ad2; ad 2 quoted above n33).

[48] See *SG* iii 129, quoted above n39.

Aquinas believes our world is a bit like these worlds, in so far as our knowledge and our inclination are imperfect. Original sin leaves us with misdirected desires that tend to obscure our knowledge and to pervert our inclinations and actions. This imperfection in our nature means that we cannot simply discover what is naturally suitable for us by an indiscriminate survey of our natural beliefs and inclinations. If we took these as our guides, we would treat the impulses of our misdirected desires as impulses towards what is naturally suitable. To avoid the distorting effects of misdirected desires, we must rely on our knowledge of human nature and the ultimate human end, and use this to identify the natural beliefs and inclinations that tell us what is suitable for our nature. In the *Summa* Aquinas discusses sin immediately before law, so that we recognize some of the tendencies of misdirected desires, and do not identify them with the requirements of our nature.

With these qualifications and reservations, Aquinas takes the three aspects of the naturalness of the natural law to be connected. He appeals to natural beliefs and inclinations in order to support his claims about what is naturally suitable, though these appeals are not left to stand on their own without support from the rest of his ethical theory. To justify his claims about the coincidence of these three features in natural law, he has to show that some set of principles meets all his three conditions; they must be naturally known, they must be about what suits our nature, and we must have a natural inclination to follow them.

309. The Relevance of Natural Law

The precepts of natural law ought to specify the content of the natural inclinations that make us aware of what is suitable for our nature. But they seem quite heterogeneous. Some of them seem to be nearly tautologies, or at least conceptual or analytic truths. We might say this about 'Good is to be done and evil is to be avoided'. Others, such as 'Theft must not be committed' (*in EN* v 12 §1018) seem to have more moral content; they seem to be moral rules corresponding to parts of the Decalogue (1-2 q100 a1, 3). Aquinas recognizes this variety in precepts of natural law, and arranges them in order, claiming that the more specific are derived from the higher principles. We must understand both the character of the higher principles and the sort of derivation he has in mind.

The very first precept of natural law is the principle that good is to be done; the other precepts are founded on this one.[49] This principle is not a mere tautology. It connects the discussion of natural law with Aquinas' exposition of the good as the ultimate end. For rational agents, good is what is to be done, in so far as they have wills that aim at their objects as good, not as merely attractive. We will something as good in so far as we choose it for some reason beyond the mere fact that we desire it. We choose for reasons independent of desire in so far as we assess particular goods with reference to one another in our conception of the ultimate good.[50] In claiming that his principle about the good is the very first principle of natural law, Aquinas implies that all the prescriptions of the natural law must fit the teleological structure that he has described in his discussion of the ultimate end.

The claim that moral principles are provisions of natural law does not require us to cast our moral reasoning in quasi-legal form. If Aquinas had intended this, it would have been

[49] See §272; Bradley, *ATHG* 282–8, 312–13. [50] See §275.

appropriate to mention natural law at the beginning of his ethical argument, rather than waiting until he has presented an account of the virtues. He seems to introduce natural law so that we can understand something about what we have already discovered without reference to natural law.

The point of referring to natural law is most easily seen if we consider the difference between rational and non-rational creatures (q91 a2).[51] The specific natural inclination that manifests our share of divine providence is our own concern for the welfare of ourselves and others. God has this sort of foresight for us and for every part of creation; we share in it through our own foresight for ourselves and others. The sort of foresight that gives us a share in the natural law is not simply concern for the future; it is concern for ourselves that is based on awareness of our nature and what is suitable for it. Non-rational creatures simply follow their natural tendencies and conform to their nature in that way. Rational creatures are aware of the natural law, in so far as they can become aware of their nature and of what it requires; this is how they exercise foresight for themselves. Aquinas claims, then, that in reflecting on the final good, the will, the passions, and so on, we discover our nature and what is suitable for it, and thereby discover the law of our nature.

Aquinas has therefore pursued his reductive treatment of moral theory in his discussion of natural law. Reflexion on rational agency is the rational basis for understanding not only happiness and the virtues, but also the requirements of natural law. A proper understanding of natural law reveals its requirements in the features of rational agency that we have already understood through the earlier inquiries in the Prima Secundae.

This is an informative, even a controversial, claim if it is intended to rule out other explanations or interpretations of what we learn about in the ethical reflexion of the Prima Secundae. It conflicts with Nietzsche's view that our ethical views, and the psychological views connected with them, express an illusion about ourselves.[52] Aquinas also rejects the view that our ethical views simply reflect our preference for this conception of ourselves, and do not tell us anything further about how we really are. In claiming that we conform to natural law, we claim to know something about how we are, and to express this in our ethical choices. Hence the virtues we recognize are appropriate for the sort of creature that we are; they are not simply expressions of one among many views of ourselves.

Aquinas already asserts this connexion between nature and rational desire at the beginning of the Prima Secundae; his formal criteria for happiness anticipate his claims about natural law. He argues that our ultimate end is not the satisfaction of our desires, but the perfection of ourselves; we aim at what we value as the perfection of our nature. In the discussion of natural law, Aquinas adds that our aiming at our perfection is not completely misguided. In conceiving ourselves as rational agents who aim at our perfection we correctly grasp our own nature.[53]

If this is what Aquinas means in invoking natural law, he imposes a constraint on acceptable moral systems. Our nature does not determine that one specific system rather than another is the right one. To find the right one for people at a particular time or place, we must consider not only the fact that we are rational agents of a certain sort, but also the

[51] Quoted above n32. [52] See Nietzsche, *TI* vii 1 = PN 501.

[53] On Aquinas' naturalism see Finnis, *Aq*, ch. 7, esp. 88, 101–2.

fact that we are in particular conditions that may distinguish us from people at other times or places. Still, our nature imposes some moral constraints that we must recognize if we are to explain how different circumstances matter. We may decide, for instance, that in some circumstances we ought to ration food and in others we ought to ration water. Natural law requires neither rationing of food nor rationing of water; but we need to refer to a natural need for food and drink if we are to justify rationing in particular circumstances, by appeal to some principle requiring equitable distribution of resources needed to meet basic needs.

310. The First Principle of Natural Law

Natural law does not present a new kind of moral consideration, lying outside deliberation about happiness. On the contrary, the presence of natural law in human beings consists in their being rational agents pursuing their final good. When Aquinas tells us that the precept that good is to be pursued and evil avoided is the first principle of natural law, he means that we regard other principles as correct in so far as they prescribe actions that promote the final good, and that if we knew they did not promote the final good, we would no longer regard these actions as required.

The natural law prescribes the actions of all the virtues, in so far as it prescribes action in accordance with nature.[54] What is natural for human beings is what accords with their nature as rational beings. This is the sort of action towards which human beings have a natural inclination, which they form because of a natural judgment or 'natural criterion of reason' (*SG* iii 129).[55] Our reason for obeying the natural law is not that God orders us to obey it, as though we were regarding it simply as a divine command based on no further reason. It is, as Butler says, the law of our nature; it would be suitable for our nature whether or not God commanded us to do it. We can confirm that our natural inclinations lead us to what is suitable for our nature, by comparing their tendencies with an account of human nature. This is what Aquinas does in the *Summa*.[56]

[54] 'If we speak of virtuous actions in so far as they are virtuous, in this way all virtuous actions belong to the law of nature. For it has been said that everything to which a human being is inclined in accordance with his nature belongs to the law of nature. Moreover, everything is naturally inclined to the activity that is suitable for it in accordance with its form, as fire, for instance, is inclined to heating. Hence, since rational animal is the form proper to a human being, every human being has a natural inclination towards action in accordance with reason. And this is action in accordance with virtue' (1-2 q94 a3).

[55] The passage is quoted in full in n39. On this account of rightness see §334; Suarez, *Bon*. ii.2.11 = 295a.

[56] 'All things have present in them naturally principles by which they not only can carry out their characteristic actions, but by which they make them appropriate (convenientes) to their end, whether they are actions that follow on a thing from the nature of its genus, or they follow from the nature of its species.... But because a human being, among the other animals, has cognition of the character (ratio) of the end and the proportion of the action to end, that is why the natural conception placed in him to direct (dirigatur) him towards acting appropriately is called natural law (lex) or natural right (ius)... The natural law, therefore, is nothing other than the conception naturally placed in a human being, by which he is directed towards acting appropriately in the actions characteristic of him, whether they belong to him from the nature of the genus (e.g., generating, eating, and so on), or from the nature of his species (e.g., reasoning, and so on). For everything that makes an action inappropriate to the end that nature aims at in an action is said to be against the law of nature. For an action may be inappropriate to the principal or to the secondary end; and this may happen in two ways. (1) In one way, from something that altogether impedes the end, as too much or too little eating impedes bodily health, as the principal end of eating, and impedes fitness for getting on with one's work, which is the secondary end. (2) In another way, from something that makes the attainment of the primary or secondary end difficult or less suitable,

The role of our natural inclinations, however, is not purely epistemic; they do not simply inform us about what is suitable for our nature, but they actually fulfil our nature. When we reflect on the actions we do by natural inclination, we discover that they include the rational activities that direct other inclinations. By natural inclination we exercise foresight for ourselves; this is the participation in divine providence that defines rational agents.[57]

How much knowledge of natural law is contained or implied in the knowledge that belongs to every rational agent? Aquinas claims that natural inclination leads us not only to the first principle, that good is to be pursued and evil avoided, but also to some more definite principles. He divides these secondary principles into four groups: (1) The highest precepts. (2) Precepts (such as those in the Decalogue) easily reached from the highest precepts. (3) Subordinate precepts requiring more reflexion, derived as conclusions from premisses. (4) Precepts derived as determinations rather than conclusions.

311. Natural Inclinations and the Highest Precepts of Natural Law

The highest precepts are immediately derived from the first principle, in accordance with the order of natural inclinations: 'Therefore, according to the order of natural inclinations is the order of precepts of the law of nature' (1-2 q94 a2). Different natural inclinations rest on different aspects of our nature. (a) The inclination that results in precepts about self-preservation rests on the nature we share with all other natural substances. (b) The inclination that results in precepts about the satisfaction and control of bodily appetites rests on the nature we share with other animals. (c) The inclination that results in precepts about social life rests on our nature as rational animals (q94 a2; a4; q95 a4).

It is not easy, however, to see how much content Aquinas wants to attribute to the common and first principles of natural law.[58] Sometimes they appear to be very general

e.g., excessive eating, in so far as it happens at a time when it ought not to. If, therefore, an action is inappropriate to an end, as altogether prohibiting the principal end, it is directly prohibited through the law of nature by the first precepts of the law of nature, which are in matters of action as common conceptions are in theoretical matters. If, on the other hand, it is unsuitable to an end of some secondary sort, or even to a primary end, as making the attainment of the end difficult or less suitable, it is prohibited not by the first precepts of the law of nature, but by the second, which are derived from the first, just as conclusions in theoretical matters gain their credibility from principles known through themselves' (*4Sent.* d33 q1 a1 = P vii 967a).

[57] The essential connexion between being a rational agent and grasping the natural law is revealed in Aquinas' explanation of why no one, not even ourselves, teaches us the natural law: 'Those who attain to works of virtue without an external instructor or legislator are said to be a law to themselves; "When the Gentiles, who have not the law, do naturally the things that belong to the law, . . . they are a law to themselves". Therefore he also who acquires knowledge through himself ought to be called his own teacher' (*Ver.* q11 a2 obj 5). (On the passage from *Romans* see n4 above.) But he rejects the suggestion, on the ground that A cannot teach A unless the aspect of A that teaches is distinguishable from the aspect of A that is taught. In the case of the natural law, A could teach A only if both the teaching A and the taught A were a rational agent. Since any rational agent must already grasp the natural law, and thereby be a law to himself, no agent who is a law to himself can be taught the natural law: 'A law in matters of action has the same character as a principle has in matters of speculation, but not the same character as a teacher. Hence it does not follow that if someone is a law to himself, he can be a teacher to himself' (*Ver.* q11 a2 ad5).

[58] These principles '. . . need no further publication than that they are written in natural reason as known through themselves, such as that one ought to do evil to no human being, and others of this sort' (q100 a3).

and formal, prescribing that (for instance) we act in accordance with reason, but leaving it for further inquiry to decide what is involved in acting in accordance with reason.[59] But sometimes they seem to have more definite content. Aquinas claims that a prohibition on killing is derived from the prohibition on harming, which in turn is derived from the unreasonableness of harming (q95 a2). The principle from which the specific precepts are derived is the principle about human nature and especially about the naturally social character of human beings (q95 a4).

Aquinas seems to mean that the principle of acting in accordance with reason is most directly derived from the principle that good is to be done and evil avoided, and that the principle of not harming is derived from the principle of acting in accordance with reason. The principle of not harming seems to have some definite content that is absent from the principle of acting in accordance with reason. Aquinas seems to rely on a connexion between the rational and the social nature of human beings.

We may grasp his argument better if we recall that he does not simply appeal to needs, desires, and sentiments that human beings share. He appeals to the rational agency that we share. Morality, as he understands it, is the application of rational agency to the different aspects of human life. The application of rational agency proceeds through one's conception of one's final good. The appeal to human nature does not rely on a conception of happiness as the fulfilment of one's desires. Aquinas argues that this is a mistaken conception of happiness, because my ultimate end as a rational agent is not simply the satisfaction of my desires. I pursue my perfection, in so far as I seek to satisfy the desires that are worth satisfying. I do not want my ultimate ends to be things that I simply happen to prefer.

This makes a difference to our understanding of the appeal to 'natural inclinations'. If we appeal to all unlearnt impulses or desires in anyone, some of these seem inappropriate to provide a moral norm or standard. Even if we appeal to the impulses that are statistically more widespread in the human species, we still seem to commit ourselves to morally doubtful conclusions.[60] Aquinas believes that natural and widespread impulses are to be shaped and redirected by the training that forms moral virtues; he could not reasonably take untrained natural impulses to set goals for morality.

Aquinas' claims about natural inclinations need to be interpreted in the light of his conception of agency. He thinks of human nature as essentially rational, and therefore as requiring the application of rational agency to choices.[61] His argument from natural inclinations appeals to these aspects of rational agency.

[59] 'All hold this to be right and true, that one should act in accordance with reason. Now from this principle it follows as an appropriate conclusion, that deposits are to be returned, and this indeed is true in most cases; but it is possible for it to happen in a particular case that it would be harmful, and therefore unreasonable, if deposits were returned, if, for instance someone asked for <something to be returned> in order to attack his country' (q94 a4). Cf. 2-2 q47 a7: 'And this end is presented (praestitutus) to a human being in accordance with natural reason; for natural reason prescribes to each person that he should act in accordance with reason'. This is apparently a reference to synderesis; cf. q47 a6 ad1. See §317.

[60] For an example of a morally questionable appeal to nature see 2-2 q154 a11.

[61] As Aquinas makes clear in speaking of the 'order' of natural inclinations (q94 a2), the application of rational agency does not disregard the aspects of human beings that make them living organisms and make them animals.

312. Rational Agency and Social Nature

If we rely on Aquinas' claims about rational agency, we can understand his claims about our inclination towards society.[62] We might think he refers to a natural desire for social life, and that the various principles of justice and so on seek to achieve this natural desire. This would be an insecure starting point.[63] For we might infer that the strength of my desire for the end determines the weight of my reason to pursue the means to the end, so that people who care less about social life have less reason to care about the good of others.

This is not Aquinas' argument. He believes that a rational agent's perfection requires social life in which one is concerned about the good of others in the same way as one's own. Can we understand this in the light of Aquinas' claims about perfection?

In Aquinas' view, we cannot be free in relation to our ends unless we can regard them as matters for deliberation as opposed to mere preference. This sort of freedom is valuable to us, because our ends seem to matter to us for some reason beyond the mere fact that we prefer them; that is why we aim at perfection. Once we recognize that we care about perfection, not simply about the satisfaction of preferences, we also notice that my preferring this end—its being my end in particular—is not a sufficient reason for pursuing it. There must also be something to be said for it beyond the fact that I care about it.[64] In this sense my desire for my happiness turns out not to be entirely self-centred, once I understand that happiness requires reasons that go beyond my preferences.

The demand for reasons going beyond my preferences affects my adoption of one end over another, by accepting one conception of happiness over another. But it also affects my relations to other rational agents. To find a reason for preferring one end to another is to find a good that is good antecedently to my desiring it; my desire rests on an external reason that does not depend on my desires. External reasons are good reasons not because they seem good to me, but because they are good reasons that must seem good to a qualified judge who does not share my initial desires. This is how reason-based ends differ from preference-based ends.

In caring about my own perfection, and not simply about the satisfaction of my own preferences, I have to recognize other rational agents as agents who can recognize a good reason for preferring one end over another. Aquinas is right to suppose that my natural inclination—properly understood—towards my own good as a rational agent also implies an inclination towards social life. I have to respect the judgments of others to some degree, since I regard their judgments as being possibly relevant to my decisions about the ends it would be best for me to pursue. This kind of respect for others places us in a rational community with them.

[62] 'Thirdly, a human being has a tendency towards a good in accordance with the nature of reason, which is proper to him. Thus he has a natural tendency towards grasping the truth about God, and towards living in society. And on this ground the things that refer to this sort of tendency belong to the natural law; for instance, to avoid ignorance, not to offend those he ought to interact with, and other things of this sort that refer to this' (q94 a2). At the end of the first sentence the antecedent of 'which' might be 'tendency', 'nature', or 'reason'.

[63] The insecurity of appeals to natural desires becomes clear in Pufendorf's attack on appeals to natural sociability at *JNG* vii 1.3.

[64] See *2Sent*. d3 q4 a1 ad2 = P vi 427a; Finnis, *Aq*. 111.

One might object that this sort of respect for other people's judgment falls short of the sort of respect for their needs and interests that is necessary for a 'natural inclination to live in society' (as Aquinas puts it). It seems quite possible to respect another person's judgment, and even to regard it as a source of insight into one's own good, while being entirely indifferent to the other person's interests.

We might answer that the two forms of respect are distinct, but connected. I have more reason to respect and to trust another person's judgment if we treat each other with mutual respect. If I depend on you, and you treat me purely as your instrument, I have some reason to give you the sorts of answers that you will want to hear; you are more likely to hear my honest opinion if I am not entirely dependent on your favour. We are more likely to recognize other people's views as counting for something in their own right if we all recognize one another as counting for something in our own right.[65]

This argument for connecting two forms of respect concedes that my planning for my own life on the basis of my judgments about my good is quite independent of what other people do. If we reject this concession, we can strengthen the argument for connecting a rational community with a moral community. For more of my life is subject to rational agency if I care about others for their own sakes, not simply as means to the satisfaction of my preferences. Non-instrumental concern for others promotes my own perfection, as Aquinas conceives it, since they are rational agents with whom I can deliberate about what ends are worth pursuing.

If my concern for others is purely instrumental, they have no reason to believe that any plans of mine involving them count for anything more than my preferences about them; my plans for them do not necessarily define ends that they have any reason to care about for themselves. But if we are concerned about one another for our own sakes, our lives can all embody ends that we all recognize as worth pursuing for some reason apart from our preferences. In that case, my life is not guided simply by my preferences; it is guided by preferences grounded in reasons that can be recognized as such by all rational agents. If I simply regard other people as means to achieving my aims, I can give no reason for them to prefer my aims to theirs, and so we have reason to cooperate only as long as our aims happen to coincide. When I care about others for their own sakes, however, we are capable of sharing deliberations that take account of reasons that we can all accept. Hence the conclusions of our deliberation have a rational claim on us all.

These arguments about the inclination to society go beyond anything that Aquinas explicitly defends. But they indicate how one might connect his claims about natural law with his conception of rational agency. Moreover, they are relevant to the claims that he presents more fully in his arguments for friendship and justice.[66]

The claims about inclinations and nature show that Aquinas' claims about the basis of natural law in human nature do not rely on an empirical survey of prevalent human desires. They rely on distinctive features of his conception of rational agents and their ultimate end. This is the conception that we need to keep in mind in examining his attempts to derive precepts of natural law from the basic principles.

[65] Cf. Hegel's views on different sorts of recognition, discussed by Neuhouser, *FHST*, ch. 3.

[66] See §337.

313. Derived Principles of Natural Law

The awareness of our nature that is embodied in our natural inclinations allows us to form more specific precepts that tell us what is required by the inclination to society. Given the specific needs of a human society, we can see why we need the precepts of the Decalogue.[67] The precept against killing is derived from the precept against harming (q95 a2), and the law of nations—i.e., the laws and institutions found universally in different nations—is derived from the law of nature 'by means of a conclusion that is not very far removed from the principles' (q95 a4 ad1). The principle from which the specific precepts are derived is the principle about human nature and especially about the naturally social character of human beings. The needs of a human community explain the provisions for property, exchange, and so on that are found, in one form or another, in different human societies.[68]

Aquinas contrasts the precepts of the Decalogue with the common principles from which they are derived. The Decalogue itself does not state the common principles, but states the most general guides to action that can be derived from them.[69] The common principles provide the first level of natural law, and the Decalogue the second level. The precepts of the law of nations also belong to the second level. They are less obvious than the precept against killing, but they are more obvious than those that 'by the diligent inquiry of wise people (sapientes) are found to accord with reason' (q100 a3). Reflexion on the needs of a human community tells us that (e.g.) every community needs to assure some protection, security, and support for human social life, but it does not tell us exactly how these aims are to be fulfilled in specific circumstances.

When we add more specific detail, we can reach a third level of precepts. In contrast to the precepts of the Decalogue, precepts at the third level demand more reflexion if we are to see that they are required by natural law (q100 a1, 3). The non-obvious consequences of the common principles include some important areas of morality. Aquinas has to explain why the Decalogue does not include duties to oneself, but confines itself to duties to God and to one's neighbour. He offers different explanations: (1) The requirements of natural law are obscured by sin in the case of precepts about loving others, but not in the case of precepts of self-love. (2) True self-love is included in the love of God and one's neighbour. (3) Everyone easily recognizes that we have duties (debita) to God and our neighbour, but not everyone easily recognizes that we have duties to ourselves; 'for at first sight it appears that everyone is free in those matters that refer to himself' (q100 a5 ad1; 2-2 q122 a1).

[67] 'For some things in human actions are so explicit that immediately, with slight consideration, they can be approved or rejected through those common and first principles. . . . For there are some things that the natural reason of any human being at all at once through itself judges to be things to be done or not to be done, such as Honour your father and your mother, and Do not kill, Do not steal' (q100 a1).

[68] '. . . it belongs to the character (ratio) of human law, to be derived from the law of nature, as is clear from what has been said. On this basis positive right (ius) is divided into the right of nations and civil right—namely, on the basis of the two ways in which something may be derived from the law of nature, as stated above. For to the right of nations belong those things that are derived from the law of nature as conclusions from principles—such as just purchases, sales, and other things of this sort, without which human beings cannot live together. This concerns the law of nature, because a human being is naturally a social animal, as is proved in *Politics* i' (q95 a4). Aquinas' account of the law of nations is discussed and modified by Suarez, *Leg*. ii 20.2.

[69] As Aquinas puts it, the Decalogue contains the common principles in the sense in which an immediate conclusion contains its premisses (q100 a3).

Since the Decalogue includes only precepts that are easily recognized,[70] it does not include precepts of self-love.[71]

To accept precepts at this third level, people need instruction from the wise, and so these precepts are excluded from the list in the Decalogue. The reference to the wise (sapientes) suggests that we recognize that we have duties of self-love (as opposed to self-regarding reasons for it) only through the sort of 'diligent inquiry' that traces the more remote consequences of the common principles of natural law.

Precepts at the fourth level are reached less directly from the natural law. They are not derived from the first principles as conclusions from premisses, but are 'determinations' rather than 'derivations', because they specify one among a number of possible ways of fulfilling a requirement of natural law. The natural law requires, for instance, that wrongdoers should be punished, but it does not require that they should receive this or that punishment. When we lay down a specific punishment, we 'determine' a requirement of natural law, by stating a specific way, not itself required by natural law, of fulfilling the generic requirement of natural law (1-2 q95 a2; a4 ad1).

Aquinas sharply distinguishes this fourth group of precepts from the third. People do not agree without reflexion that the natural law requires us to recognize duties of self-love. But once we reflect appropriately, we see that these are required by the natural law; they are not optional or alterable. In reflecting about punishment or about taxation, by contrast, we will not (Aquinas assumes) reach the conclusion that imprisonment for five years is the only just punishment for a specific type of offence, or that direct rather than indirect taxation is always uniquely just.

The fourth group of precepts belongs to civil, not to natural law (q95 a4 ad1). The first group belongs to natural law. It is less clear what Aquinas believes about the second and third groups. He distinguishes the law of nations from natural law while claiming that it is derived from natural law.[72] But he does not seem to take this view of duties to oneself; they do not seem to be any less a requirement of natural law simply because they are not obviously required by it. Perhaps Aquinas believes that all of these precepts belong to natural law, in the sense that they can be justified by derivation, simple or complicated, from the first principles of natural law.

Does Aquinas' division of the different precepts derived from the common principles give us a clear idea of how the subordinate principles are to be derived, by easy inference or diligent inquiry? He suggests that the different basic inclinations of human nature indicate to us that we need provisions for the preservation of life, for relations between men and women and parents and children, and for our relations to a community and to God (q94 a2). From these, he suggests, we can understand why we need the different provisions that are embodied in the precepts derived from natural law.[73]

The sort of argument, then, that is needed to discover what is required by natural law seems similar to the sort of argument that is needed to show that one or another state of character is a virtue; the results of each type of inquiry ought to overlap. They cannot coincide

[70] Cf. 2-2 q56 a1; 1-2 q100 a3.

[71] On duties to oneself see Butler, *D6*.

[72] Aquinas discusses the question further in 2-2 q57 a3.

[73] Contrast Scotus' introduction of the divine will in formulating these principles, §384.

exactly, since Aquinas' discussion of the precepts derived from natural law is concerned with duties (debita) that are owed by one person to another person or to the community or to God; a search for these precepts will not necessarily include everything that is included in the virtues in quite the same order. Aquinas remarks, for instance, that self-regarding precepts are more difficult to recognize as duties, but our awareness of them is less dimmed by sin than is the awareness of other-regarding precepts. We more readily recognize them as the source of virtues if we are arguing from the ultimate end to the virtuous character.

314. Dispensations and Exceptions

This division of precepts of the natural law helps Aquinas to resolve an apparent difficulty for his view that natural law is independent of divine commands. Any Christian moralist has to explain cases where God has apparently given 'dispensations' from obedience to the natural law. On God's orders, Abraham prepared to kill Isaac, the Israelites plundered the Egyptians, and Hosea married a prostitute. In these cases God appears to have permitted or even instructed someone to violate a moral law. These cases appear to be dispensations from the natural law, since God seems to gives permission to break the natural law.[74] Are these really dispensations, and do they show that God is sovereign over the natural law?

We need to distinguish dispensation, which creates an exemption from a rule, from moral reflexion, which discovers an exception to a generalization. A dispensation creates an exception simply by declaring it, whereas the discovery of an exception depends on deliberation and argument, rather than an act of declaration. Only a properly constituted authority can dispense from a rule, whereas anyone in principle can discover an exception; the truth of the discovery of an exception does not depend on who discovered it, but the validity of a dispensation depends on who dispenses. If the regulations of a university require a professor to return from a leave of absence after at most two years, university officials may still dispense her from this requirement, if, for instance, she holds some public office. In doing this they do not alter the regulation. The professor would not have created a valid exemption without dispensation by the appropriate authority; reasoning about the point of the regulation and the value of disregarding it would not have not have shown that the regulation did not hold in all cases. Whether or not the officials acted wisely, the dispensation is valid if they are empowered to dispense from this regulation. But if we are to find a genuine exception to a generalization, we need to deliberate wisely, and it does not matter who finds it.

Aquinas agrees that God has the power to dispense from some laws, since positive law allows dispensation. God granted the Hebrews polygamy, concubinage, and divorce through a dispensation from the usual requirements of divine law (*SG* iii 125 §2986). A dispensation for a particular case does not change the law, and does not alter the fact that the law is violated; the law remains the same, but in this case the violation is permitted. These dispensations all dispense from the requirements of divine positive law.

[74] On the treatment of dispensations before Aquinas see Lottin, *PM* ii 99–100. Peter Lombard, *3Sent.* d37 c.5 defends the plunder of the Egyptians by claiming that it was not theft, because it fulfilled a divine command. He cites Augustine, *in Exod.* 39; *Faust.* 71.

But if we go further, and ascribe to God the power of dispensation from natural law, we destroy Aquinas' account of the rightness of natural law. If God can dispense from natural moral law, God must be sovereign over it. If his giving permission to violate the law makes it all right to violate it, the wrongness of violating the law in other cases must be the fact that it involves disobedience to a command. If wrongness consisted in something more than disobedience to God, God's permission to do the action could not change the action from being wrong to being right.[75] If his dispensation makes the action right, it must have been wrong only because God prohibited it (malum quia prohibitum).

Aquinas believes that we are committed to these false conclusions about natural law and the will of God if we allow that God dispenses people from obedience to the natural law.[76] God did not dispense Abraham from obedience to the natural law, since God did not instruct Abraham to violate the natural law. If God told Abraham to prepare to sacrifice Isaac, Abraham's obedience did not violate the natural law, even though he would have violated it if he had prepared to sacrifice Isaac without God's instruction (1-2 q100 a8 ad3).[77]

The alleged 'dispensations', therefore, do not exercise God's sovereign will, but manifest God's wisdom. Since God understands the natural law better than we do, God is right in instructing us to act in ways that in other circumstances would be morally wrong. The lower precepts of the natural law cannot be stated in generalizations that hold without exception and that we can immediately apply to practice without further moral reflexion. The generalizations that we formulate and legitimately rely on may none the less have exceptions. Sometimes we can discover these exceptions for ourselves, but sometimes we ought to rely on God to reveal them to us. It was not up to Abraham to decide for himself when he ought to prepare to kill an innocent person. But when we have reason to believe we have been given God's instructions about a particular case, we have reason to believe that the generalization we normally accept has an exception, since God's instructions are infallibly correct.

In denying that these exceptional cases are genuine dispensations, Aquinas makes it clear that he identifies the natural law with the truths grasped by God's wisdom, not with commands coming from God's legislative will. The fact that God commands the observance of the natural law gives us a reason to observe it, distinct from the reason derived from the

[75] On apparent 'change' in secondary precepts see 1-2 q94 a4; *in EN* v lec. 12; *3Sent.* d37 q1 a3 sol. = P vii 425b.

[76] On dispensations see *3Sent.* d37 q1 a4 = P vii 436–7. On Scotus' treatment in *3Sent.* d37 see §383. Cajetan comments in ad 1-2 q100 a8 = L vii 216–17. See Boler, 'Exceptions'.

[77] 'Now the precepts of the Decalogue contain the very aim (intentio) of the legislator, namely God. For the precepts of the first table, which direct us to God, contain the very direction (ordo) to the common and final good, which is God. And the precepts of the second table contain the very direction of justice that is to be observed among human beings, namely that nothing that ought not to be done (indebitum) should be done to anyone, and that what is owed (debitum) should be rendered to each . . . . Consequently the precepts of the Decalogue are altogether indispensable' (1-2 q100 a8). 'Consequently when the children of Israel, by God's command, took away the spoils of the Egyptians, this was not theft, because it was owed to them, according to God's judgment. Similarly, when Abraham consented to kill his son, he did not consent to murder, because it was required (debitum) by the command of God, who is lord of life and death, that his son should be killed. . . . In this way, therefore, the precepts of the Decalogue, as far as concerns the character of justice that they contain, are unchangeable. But as far as concerns some determination by application to individual actions—for instance, that this or that is murder, theft or adultery, or not—this is changeable' (1-2 q100 a8 ad3). On the immutability of the natural law see also 1-2 q94 a5 ad2; 2-2 q64 a6 ad1; q104 a4 ad2; q154 a2 ad2. Aquinas' position is discussed at length by Suarez, *Leg.* ii 15.16–28. Suarez argues that in each case of an apparent dispensation, the subject-matter or the circumstances differ, so that the action that would otherwise be a theft is not a theft (see esp. his helpful example of annulling, rather than dispensing from, a promise, §27).

fact that it is the law suitable for our nature. Suitability to our nature gives both God and us the basic reason for acceptance of the natural law.

315. Misunderstandings of Natural Law

Later moralists, both inside and outside mediaeval Aristotelianism, continue the discussion of natural law, and many of them continue the discussion of questions raised by Aquinas, To approach this later debate on natural law, it is useful to draw some preliminary conclusions about Aquinas' position.

We have found so far that Aquinas is not a 'natural law moralist', since he does not try to explain morality from some prior conception of law.[78] His view about the connexion of moral principles to natural law does not imply that ethics should be cast in legal form—that, for instance, the actions required by each of the virtues can be fully expressed in a set of rules that are determinate enough to serve as guides for action applicable to particular cases. Aquinas believes that some specific legal precepts can be defended by appeal to natural law, but he does not commit himself to the further claim that a definite set of such precepts specifies the entire content of the virtues.

According to Aquinas, natural law does not introduce a new understanding of the nature of moral obligation, or some attempt to explain moral requirements as a type of legal requirements.[79] One might reasonably interpret Aquinas in these ways, if one simply noticed his use of legal terms in his discussion of natural law. But if one also attends to his application of these legal terms to the natural law, one sees the error in such an interpretation. For he argues that the demands of the virtues are precepts of natural law. To see this, we have to expand our conception of law; Aquinas does not expect us to apply our previous conception of a law to morality. In this respect his account of natural law is reductive.

Aquinas' appeal to natural law is therefore important and controversial; it claims that our basic ethical principles must correspond to the requirements of our nature, and that we have some idea of what these requirements are. It does not, however, imply that we ought to learn to be virtuous by learning a set of rules and applying them to action. Nor does it imply that the right moral system is ultimately deontological, resting on a set of principles requiring types of action or states of character without reference to any further goal.

If the introduction of natural law had these implications, it would depart sharply from an Aristotelian approach to ethics, and we might seek historical explanations of such a departure. We might, for instance, appeal to the influence of ways of thinking inspired by the Decalogue. Such an explanation may explain why other people attach importance to natural law, but it is irrelevant to Aquinas. His appeal to natural law does not imply any deviation from the fundamentally teleological aspects of Aristotelian ethics. His explanation of law and natural law seeks to show that the Aristotelian framework can readily incorporate reasonable claims about natural law.

One might suppose that a conception of morality as law binding rational agents as such is sharply opposed to the teleological and eudaemonist conception of agency and morality

[78] See §302.

[79] See Anscombe, 'Modern', discussed at §114.

that we normally attribute to Aristotle.[80] But Aquinas does not see any opposition; for he believes that his eudaemonist discussion of the final good explains to us the principles that he introduces in his discussion of natural law.

[80] Schneewind, *IA* 20: 'But Thomas departs from Aristotle in holding that the laws of the virtues can be formulated and used in practical reasoning. There are laws containing precepts for all the virtues and thus providing rational guidance where we need it (1-2 q65 a3; cf. 1-2 q94 a3). Thomas does not invoke the Aristotelian insight of the virtuous agent as our final guide. For him, the virtues are basically habits of obedience to laws.' See also 287: '. . . St Thomas subordinated the virtues to the laws of nature'. Schneewind may intend to claim both (i) that Aquinas' attitude to the virtues is deontological, whereas Aristotle's is teleological, and (ii) that he accepts general rules, whereas Aristotle is a particularist. Or he may intend (ii) alone.

22

AQUINAS: PRACTICAL REASON AND PRUDENCE

316. Virtue, Will, and Practical Reason

Examination of Aquinas' account of natural law brings us back to some questions about practical reason that faced us in our discussion of the virtues and vices. He suggests that the content of the subordinate principles of the natural law has to be discovered by reasoning that leads us to the whole content of the virtues. His account of the virtues accords a similar role to practical reason. He claims that virtues belong to passions that conform to reason, and hence conform to a good will. Since practical reason directs the passions, it should fix the appropriate ends of action.

The account of virtue that accords primacy to will and practical reason fits into Aquinas' claims about the will. He argues that it is distinctive of rational agents to choose freely, by deliberation in the light of the ultimate end. If the moral virtues manifest this freedom, they include an appropriate place for deliberation and practical reason. If the characteristics that distinguish the virtuous person from the vicious could not be traced to deliberation and will, we would not be exercising our freedom in forming our moral character.

Is Aquinas entitled to the claims that he makes for practical reason in his account of virtue and passion? We have already noticed a difficulty.[1] The most obvious exercise of practical reason is deliberation; deliberation is confined to means, and does not extend to ends; hence prudence, the deliberative virtue of practical intellect, is also concerned with means, and not with ends.

Questions about the scope of prudence take us back to our discussion of Aristotle. If we suppose that, in Aristotle's view, pre-rational habituation of the non-rational parts gives us virtue of character, which determines our ends, we attribute to him an anti-rationalist view that subordinates prudence to a non-rational grasp of ends.[2] But Aristotle's claim that

[1] See §288.

[2] This pre-rational habituation is only part of what Aristotle has in mind when he speaks of *ethismos*, which also includes the development of prudence. See §87. Bradley, *ATHG* 237–9, holds that an anti-rationalist interpretation of Aristotle is correct, at least 'if we choose to remain within the limits set by the texts and not to read between the lines' (238), and so he finds a sharp contrast with Aquinas' position.

deliberation and prudence are confined to means to ends does not support an anti-rationalist view. Aquinas, following Aristotle, takes 'means to ends' (ea quae sunt ad finem) to include parts and constituents of ends. We can deliberate about which ends to pursue by asking how they contribute to a more ultimate end. Hence we can elect the virtues, and the actions expressing them, so as to choose them for their own sakes.

These claims about deliberation do not resolve all the difficulties about practical reason and prudence. How can deliberation reach the conclusions that the virtuous person reaches? Since instrumental deliberation rests on causal reasoning, we can understand how such deliberation is correct or incorrect. Deliberation about constituents is not so easy to understand. We can illustrate it by giving simple examples—deliberating about what would constitute a good meal or an enjoyable holiday—but we might doubt whether such examples show that deliberation has the scope Aquinas claims for it. In these simple examples, we need some fairly clear idea of what would be a good meal or an enjoyable holiday, in order to deliberate about its constituents. But in the case that interests Aquinas, our initial idea of the ultimate end does not seem clear enough for us to find its constituents by deliberation. We want our conception of the ultimate end presupposed by deliberation to be definite enough to provide a starting point for deliberation, and also to be indefinite enough to preserve freedom. But if it is definite enough for deliberation to start, must it not be definite enough to introduce some element in our character that is beyond our deliberative control?

In Aquinas' view, deliberation begins from an appropriate conception of the ultimate end. This conception is clear enough for the virtuous person to get the right answer about the constituents of the end, but it is also indefinite enough to leave the choice of virtuous ends in our control. Does he offer a plausible defence of this view?

In clarifying Aquinas' views on these questions, we will also clarify his views on the rational character of the will. Aquinas conceives the will as rational desire. In asserting the primacy of the will against the passions, he asserts the primacy of rational against irrational desire; but he does not intend to assert the primacy of reason over desire. A proper conception of the will must include both a cognitive and a desiring element; and we must neither assume that all rational desire is simply the product of instrumental reasoning directed towards a non-rational desire nor reduce the desire in rational desire to a mere product or epiphenomenon of practical reason. He claims that the will is, on the one hand, rational desire and, on the other, rational by participation in reason.

Aquinas, then, does not want to reduce will to practical reason, or to suggest that practical reason motivates without desire. This extreme rationalist position would reduce virtue to knowledge, as Socrates did (*ST* 1-2 q58 a2). In opposing this extreme rationalist view, Aquinas urges that something needs to be added to knowledge if we are to explain the role of practical reason in a human being's action.

The anti-rationalist position of Hutcheson and Hume claims that the different specific ends people pursue reflect their different desires, inclinations, and attitudes, and must ultimately be explained by these, rather than by their different rational beliefs about anything.[3] Anti-rationalists might agree with Aquinas' claim that reason is needed to grasp ultimate ends;

[3] See Hutcheson, *IMS* 123.

but they must interpret this to mean that we need reason to recognize what in fact we pursue as our ultimate end. This function for reason is simply the task of recognizing a fact about the actual structure and tendency of our desires; it does not require the will to be moved towards this end by any sort of reason.

It would be just about possible to interpret Aquinas as a sort of anti-rationalist, if we focussed exclusively on his claims about our grasp of the ultimate end; for he agrees that we do not have any choice about whether to prescribe the pursuit of this to the will. We must consider whether this aspect of his view implies a severe restriction on the scope of practical reason.

317. Universal Conscience and the Ultimate End

The functions of deliberation depend on a non-deliberative grasp of principles, parallel to the function of theoretical intellect in grasping principles. Theoretical intellect grasps the principles of theoretical sciences intuitively, without any further inferential justification; and Aquinas believes that this intuitive grasp of principles has a practical non-deliberative counterpart. The correct ends for human life are fixed (determinati, 2-2 q47 a15), and are the objects of our natural inclination (1-2 q51 a1; q63 a1; *Ver.* q18 a7 ad7), but grasped by practical reason. This practical reason that grasps the end is different from the practical reason that follows the desire for the end and finds means to that end. Only the second sort of practical reason belongs to prudence.[4] These two functions of practical reason deal, respectively, with universal and particular principles.[5]

This division between two roles of practical reason has no explicit Aristotelian support, but it is a reasonable expansion of Aristotle. For we need some account of how we can form the ends that are characteristic of the virtuous person. To answer this question, Aquinas introduces synderesis ('universal conscience'), which is the specific disposition of practical reason that grasps the first principles.[6] He claims that these principles are the first principles of natural law.

Aquinas inherits a conception of synderesis originally from Jerome. Discussions of Jerome treat synderesis as a universal grasp of basic moral principles that is present in us all, no matter how bad we become. It explains why even bad people retain their capacity to recognize the wrongness of what they are doing.[7] Aquinas tries to explain this capacity

[4] '. . . reason, in so far as it grasps the end, precedes desire for the end (cf. q12 a1 ad1, 3), but desire for the end precedes reason reasoning towards electing the things that are towards the end, which belongs to prudence' (1-2 q58 a5 ad1).

[5] 'About the universal principles of things to be done a human being is rightly disposed through the natural understanding of principles, through which a human being cognizes that nothing bad is to be done, or also (vel etiam) through some practical science. But this is not enough for reasoning correctly about particulars' (1-2 q58 a5). Cajetan ad loc (= L vi 378 §viii) takes 'or also' to introduce prudence as scientia, contrasted with intellectus of the principles.

[6] 'Synderesis' should perhaps be translated 'observance'; see Lampe, *PGL* s.v. *suntêrêsis*, §2. Synderesis is a topic of discussion in mediaeval philosophy independent of reflexion on Aristotle; Aquinas is the first writer to connect the discussion systematically with Aristotle. See Lottin, *PM* ii 103; Potts, *CMP* 10; Crowe, *CPNL* 123–7 (who argues against reading 'synderesis' in Jerome).

[7] Jerome introduces synderesis in his discussion of *Ezekiel* 1:5–10. He mentions that many people take the face of the eagle to represent a fourth part of the soul that is superior to the other three Platonic parts. It displays 'sparks as of the appearance of shining bronze' (scintillae quasi aspectus aeris candentis, 1:7). Jerome identifies the sparks with *synteresis*,

through an Aristotelian account of practical reason. He follows his predecessors in citing Aristotle's claim that all intellect is correct (*DA* 433a26; *in DA* iii 15 §§826–7).[8] Since Aristotle could not reasonably claim that every exercise of practical intellect is correct, he must, in Aquinas' view, be thinking of practical intellect applied to ultimate principles.[9] This is where he needs an infallible grasp of principles. In the theoretical sciences, the truth of conclusions derived from the principles depends on the correctness of our grasp of principles. Equally, we must grasp the principles of practical reason.[10] The practical principles that guide our natural inclination are naturally known, as the first principles of theoretical sciences are (1-2 q63 a1; 2-2 q47 a6). The special faculty that grasps ultimate practical principles is synderesis (1a q79 a12).

Aquinas, therefore, identifies synderesis with the Aristotelian intellect that grasps first principles.[11] He believes that Aristotle himself recognizes this function for practical intellect. Synderesis is always correct because it grasps the ultimate first principles, and we cannot be mistaken about them. Hence it can fulfil its function—as described by Jerome on Cain—of 'protesting against evil' (remurmurare malo).

Earlier writers use 'conscientia' to apply indifferently to our grasp of ultimate principles and to our grasp of what we should do in this or that particular situation. Aquinas

a capacity, present even in bad people, to grasp the rightness and wrongness of particular actions: '. . . that spark of conscience (scintilla conscientiae) which was not extinguished in the breast of Cain after he was turned out of Paradise, and by which we discern that we sin, when we are overcome by pleasures or frenzy and sometimes even deceived by a likeness of reason itself' (Jerome, *in Ezech*. 1.7). Jerome believes that conscience is not effective in everyone; he cites *Jeremiah* 3:3, 'Yet you have the forehead of a whore; you refuse to be ashamed'. But he treats it as a moral capacity superior even to reason. Jerome's comment becomes part of mediaeval discussion on conscience because Peter Lombard cites it among authorities for the view that a human being naturally wills good; he takes Jerome to refer to 'the superior spark of reason' (*3Sent*. d39). Aquinas refers to Jerome at *Ver*. q16 a1 obj1; a3 sc2.

[8] For earlier evidence see Lottin, *PM* ii 132, 167. Aquinas' predecessors cite this claim without trying to integrate universal conscience into an account of Aristotle on practical reason, but Aquinas tries to show how Aristotle's outlook includes universal conscience.

[9] Aristotle himself probably does not recognize a role for non-inferential 'understanding' (*nous*) in grasping ultimate practical principles. One might appeal to *EN* 1143a35–b5 to argue that he recognizes such a role. Aquinas, however, wisely avoids this interpretation of the passage; see *in EN* vi 9 §§1247–55.

[10] 'And so, in human actions also, in order for some correctness in them to be possible, it is necessary for there to be some permanent principle that has unchangeable correctness, a principle by reference to which all actions are examined, so that this permanent principle resists everything evil and assents to everything good. And this principle is synderesis, whose task it is to protest against evil and to tend towards good' (*Ver*. q16 a2).

[11] '. . . so also in practical reason some things preexist as principles naturally known; and of this sort are the ends of the moral virtues, because the end in things to be done is related as the principle is in theoretical matters, as was said above. [See 2-2 q23 a7 ad2; 1-2 q57 a4.] Some things are in practical reason as conclusions; this is the character of the things towards the end, which we arrive at from the ends themselves. These are the concern of prudence, applying universal principles to particular conclusions about things to be done. And thus it does not belong to prudence to fix the end for the moral virtues, but only to arrange about the means to the end' (2-2 q47 a6). 'What fixes the end for the moral virtues is the natural reason which is called universal conscience' (q47 a6 ad1). 'And so, just as in theoretical reason there are innate principles of demonstrations, so also in practical reason there are innate ends that are connatural to a human being. And so about these <principle> sthere is no state of possession that is acquired or infused, but one that is natural, as universal conscience is, in whose place the Philosopher places understanding in matters of action. . . . [P]rudence is in practical reason in so far as it treats of things that are towards the end. But because the natural tendency towards an end comes from the one who constitutes (praestituente) nature, who assigns this sort of direction to nature, for that reason the natural tendency of the will towards the end is not from reason, unless in accord with a natural communication, by which it results that desire joined with reason tends naturally to conforming itself to reason as standard (regulae). And from this it results that the will tends naturally towards the end that is naturally placed in reason' (*3Sent* d33 q2 a4 sol.4 = P vii 365a). Aquinas says nothing in support of this interpretation of Aristotle in his commentary on the relevant part of the *EN*.

believes that this broad use of 'conscientia' is confusing. We should confine it to our grasp of particulars, and use 'synderesis' for our grasp of the ultimate principles. To capture Aquinas' distinction, we may render 'synderesis' by 'universal conscience' and 'conscientia' by 'particular conscience'. The distinction helps to clarify Jerome's view. When Jerome says that conscience can be overcome, he refers to the failure of particular conscience to recognize that a particular action, or a specific type of action, is wrong. The spark of conscience that is not extinguished in anyone is universal conscience.[12]

Practical intellect, exercised in universal conscience, is prior to the desire for the end, since apprehension precedes desire (1-2 q58 a5 ad1); but the desire for the end precedes the election of the means, which concerns prudence. Virtue aims at the right end not because of prudence, but because of universal conscience. The truths that concern universal conscience are sharply contrasted with those that concern prudence; for the right ends of human life are 'fixed' or 'definite' (2-2 q47 a15), whereas the means to these ends are not fixed, and hence are subject to the deliberative virtue of prudence.[13]

How should we connect this moral insight belonging to universal conscience with the moral convictions that we form through the moral virtues? If universal conscience is a source of moral principles independent of the moral virtues, Aquinas seems to recognize two distinct, and possibly conflicting, sources of moral principles. The moral virtues have a eudaemonist focus; the right actions depend on the different ways in which the will ought to control the passions for the ultimate good of the agent. If universal conscience is a separate source of moral principles, it may lack this eudaemonist focus.

Moreover, Aquinas' doctrine of universal conscience may well appear to require a strongly rationalist and non-deliberative interpretation or reconstruction of Aristotle's views on practical reason.[14] The rational understanding that belongs to universal conscience is non-deliberative, and so is distinct from the understanding that belongs to prudence. Aquinas' appeal to an analogy with theoretical demonstration suggests that he may be substituting a deductive for a deliberative account of practical reason. If he does this, he takes practical reason to be analogous to theoretical reason in ways that Aristotle does not seem to contemplate. Unlike Aristotle, he appeals to self-evident basic ethical principles and to derivative principles that are (apparently) to be deduced from them.

If he attributes this role to universal conscience, Aquinas correspondingly reduces the role of deliberation in practical reason. The only function that Aristotle explicitly attributes to practical reason is deliberation, but it has often been supposed that this cannot be the only function he has in mind. Aquinas may be influenced by this argument: (1) Deliberation is about means to ends and has to assume some initial grasp of ends. (2) This initial grasp of ends must be a function of practical reason. (3) Hence it must be intuitive rather than deliberative. (4) Hence it must consist in a grasp of self-evident principles. We need to see whether Aquinas' remarks on universal conscience imply this strongly foundationalist and demonstrative picture of practical reason.

[12] See *2Sent* d39 q3 a1 = P vi 740a; *Ver.* q17 a2 = M 331a.

[13] See 2-2 q47 a15: sed ea quae sunt ad finem in rebus humanis non sunt determinata.

[14] On synderesis and Aristotelian practical intellect cf. Bradley, *ATHG* 240. He finds a sharp contrast between Aristotle and Aquinas partly because he holds an anti-rationalist view of Aristotle on desire and practical reason. See §89.

318. How Universal Conscience Grasps Natural Law

To see where Aquinas stands on these questions, we may consider his views on the relation of universal conscience to natural law. We saw that he follows St Paul in taking human beings to be a law to themselves, because of their universal knowledge of natural law. He also agrees with St Paul in attributing this universal knowledge to conscience, but he tries to be more precise.

The sources that he discusses use 'conscientia' (or the underlying Greek *suneidêsis*) indiscriminately. To clarify their views, he needs to say whether a given remark refers to particular or to universal conscience. When Damascene describes conscience as the law of our intellect (*Ver.* q17 a1 sc1), Aquinas applies the description to universal rather than particular conscience.[15] Similarly, he takes St Paul's remarks on conscience to mean that universal conscience grasps the natural law, whereas particular conscience applies the principles of the natural law to actions.[16]

This connexion of the natural law with universal conscience helps to explain how rational agents necessarily grasp the natural law. For universal conscience differs from particular conscience in being infallible and inextinguishable.[17] The source of moral error is not the loss or corruption of universal conscience, but the errors we make in applying it in the exercise of particular conscience. The first principle of natural law is grasped infallibly and inextinguishably by everyone.

It is difficult to say how many of the precepts of natural law are within the proper scope of universal conscience. On the one hand, universal conscience is infallible in everyone. On the other hand, it protests at evil-doing, as it does in Cain. But these two features are difficult to reconcile. For if it is infallible, it cannot include any of the mistakes that lead the bad person astray; hence its principles need to be very general and schematic. But if it protests, it must include precepts that are specific enough to expose the bad person's errors.[18]

Universal conscience does not extend to precepts of natural law at the lower levels.[19] The fourth class, determinations of natural law, are not requirements of natural law itself. The third class, consisting of the less obvious derived precepts, are not first principles of natural law, whereas universal conscience is confined to first principles.

It is difficult to decide whether universal conscience grasps all the precepts at the first and second levels. Precepts at the second level, including the Decalogue, are obvious consequences of the principles of natural law, but they are not the most obvious precepts of all, since they are derived from precepts prohibiting harm.[20] But Aquinas sometimes seems to imply that universal conscience does not grasp precepts at either of these levels. Some people do not accept them; if they fell within the scope of universal conscience, then,

[15] 'It should be said that conscience is the law of our intellect because it is the judgment of reason, derived from natural law', *Ver.* q17 a1 ad sc1. See also a2 ad4; *ST* 1a q79 a13.

[16] 'One is said to be conscious to oneself through the natural law in the way of speaking in which one is said to consider in accordance with principles, but [one is said to be conscious to oneself] through conscience in the way of speaking in which one is said to consider by the very act of consideration' (*Ver.* q17 a1 ad sc2; cf. a2 ad6).

[17] See *Ver.* q16 a2, quoted in n10 above.

[18] On the extent of infallible moral knowledge see *in DA* iii 15 §826; *in EN* v 12 §1018; *2Sent.* d24 q2 a3.

[19] See §314.

[20] 'The precepts of the Decalogue are first precepts of law, and precepts to which natural reason assents at once as most obvious' (2-2 q122 a1). See Finnis, *NLNR* 51.

apparently, universal conscience would be mistaken in these people, and would not be infallible, as Aquinas claims it is. People's grasp of the natural law does not always lead them to the right conclusions, even on simple moral questions.[21] That is why the written law is needed to correct the natural law.

To explain the extent of error, Aquinas distinguishes the common first principles, which are always valid and always recognized by everyone, from the secondary precepts, which have exceptions and are not always recognized by everyone. The common first principle of acting in accordance with reason is always valid and always recognized, and hence never lost through error. The precept of returning deposits follows from this common first principle as a precept valid for most cases; but it has some exceptions, and people can be in error about it.[22] Passions or bad habits or a bad natural condition may distort one's grasp of a secondary precept; the Germans, for instance, found nothing wrong in theft 'even though it is expressly contrary to the law of nature' (1-2 q94 a4).[23] In these cases, apparently, we go wrong because we do not accept a principle, not because we fail to see how our principle applies to this case.

Aquinas suggests that the destructible precepts are those that have exceptions. The rule of restoring deposits has genuine exceptions, and we need to reason about the cases in which it ought not to be followed (q94 a4). Since there is room for such reasoning, there is also room for us to mislead ourselves into thinking the principle is never valid, or that the exceptions are so numerous that we need not restore deposits except when it suits us. The true belief that the precept has exceptions gives an opening for the sophistical and self-serving reasoning (explicit or implicit) that challenges the precept even on the occasions when it should be observed.

319. Why Universal Conscience is Indestructible

To clarify Aquinas' claims about the scope of universal conscience, we may examine his claim about indestructibility. Acceptance of the very first principle, that good is to be done and evil avoided, is not a merely anthropological or psychological fact, but a defining feature of a rational agent. Similarly, someone who did not accept any principle of acting in accord with reason would be unwilling to consider an action with reference to what is good all things considered; and someone who did not consider actions from this point of view would not be a rational agent at all.

The indestructible principles, then, seem to be those that are necessary for being a rational agent open to moral evaluation. These are indestructible in a rational agent, because their destruction would transform a rational agent into something else. If we became entirely indifferent to questions about the overall goodness of her actions, we would no longer be agents open to moral assessment. However vicious a rational agent becomes, some principles cannot be destroyed in him. An agent in whom they were destroyed would no longer be morally vicious, but would display some non-moral type of badness that would not

[21] '. . . the law of nature in some people's hearts, as it concerns some matters, is corrupted to the extent that they regard as good things that are naturally bad' (q94 a5 ad1).

[22] Scotus exploits these exceptions to argue for divine dispensations. See §379.

[23] Cf. q94 a6; q99 a2 ad2.

reflect a bad state of character. Since universal conscience grasps this universal aspect of the natural law, it cannot be destroyed, even in vicious people.[24] It does not grasp the precepts of the Decalogue. The wrongness of theft is obvious not to all those who think about it, but only to those whose thought is free of corrupting influences (such as those that affected Caesar's Germans). The precepts that are obvious to everyone who thinks about them are the higher precepts about acting according to reason and (perhaps) about refraining from harm. These are the principles whose acceptance is a condition of being a rational agent.

Aquinas has a good reason, therefore, for believing that universal conscience is infallible and indestructible in everyone. His belief does not rest on optimism about the moral sensitivity of every human being; it rests on conditions for rational agency. These are the same conditions that Aquinas develops and clarifies in his account of the will, of responsibility, and of the virtues. Rational agents, as he understands them, have an indestructible grasp of these conditions. His account of universal conscience does not introduce a new claim about human moral knowledge; he simply returns to the basic characteristics of a rational will.

This explanation of indestructibility supports Aquinas' view that universal conscience grasps the first principles of natural law. The awareness of natural law is also indestructible; everyone has some grasp of it, just by being a rational agent. He does not believe that the indestructibility of the natural law is merely contingently connected to being a rational agent. Since he takes the connexion to be necessary, he believes it is captured in the teleological character of rational agency.

But this austere conception of universal conscience faces an objection. Universal conscience protests at evil-doing, but the precepts that it grasps seem too schematic to protest at anything. Could Cain not have accepted all the highest principles of the natural law, and still have claimed to be justified on this occasion in killing Abel? If universal conscience is indestructible in rational agents because it is necessary for rational agency, it is present even in rational agents who make the wickedest conceivable choices. It can protest against these choices only if they violate the conditions of rational agency; but Cain's choice seems to be compatible with being a rational agent.

Aquinas might reply that if Cain is a rational agent, he has some regard for human society and for other rational agents. He does not believe in general that other people should simply be treated either as mere resources for securing his ends or as mere obstacles in his way. But he thinks he is allowed to make an exception to his general attitude because of his rivalry with Abel, even though he could not justify this exception if he were challenged. Evildoers do not really act on the basis of a considered conception that connects their action with the ultimate practical principles they accept. On the contrary, they fail to act on their ultimate principles, and their failure is to be explained by the bad influences—passion, custom, and so on—that Aquinas mentions. Cain killed Abel because he resented Abel's success, and

[24] 'And in this way it is impossible for universal conscience to be destroyed in the universal case, but it is extinguished in a particular case whenever someone sins in election. For the power of appetite or of some other passion so absorbs reason that in election universal conscience does not apply the universal judgment to the particular action. But this does not extinguish universal conscience without qualification, but in a particular respect' (*Ver.* q16 a3). 'He is indeed corrupted about the principles of things to be done, not indeed in the universal, but in the particular thing to be done—namely, in so far as reason is abased through the state of vice, so that he does not apply the universal judgment in electing its particular thing to be done' (*Ver.* q16 a3 ad3).

failed to subdue his sinful desire (*Gen*. 4:7).[25] He did not attempt to justify what he had done; he did not even admit he had done it.[26] Cain acted on the good presented to him by passion, not on the good implied by his ultimate convictions or assumptions about good and evil.

The vicious person accepts the correct principles grasped by universal conscience. His error is the result, as Aquinas says, of 'the custom of sinning'.[27] The error is 'about particulars', in the sense that it is about specific and determinate ends; but it is not confined, as incontinence is, to particular occasions (1-2 q77 a2). The vicious person is wrong about the specific ends that are worth pursuing. His convictions do not result from a serious effort to reach a rational conception of the good from the ultimate practical principles grasped by universal conscience; they result from ignoring these principles and their implications, because at the moment some particular goods seem immediately attractive.

This description clarifies the protesting function of universal conscience. The vicious person does not always recognize that his action violates the ultimate practical principles he accepts; but he accepts principles whose clear implications forbid the vicious actions he chooses. The 'protest' of universal conscience is silent; the vicious person would see his error if he considered the clear implications of the ultimate principles he accepts. Like Cain, the vicious person does not try to justify his actions by reference to ultimate practical principles. He does not, for instance, believe he has some good reason that he can defend to other people for stealing or killing, and he does not deny that human society requires a prohibition on killing or stealing; he simply does not face these questions when he forms a conception of the good under the influence of his passions.

Even the vicious person, therefore, grasps the common first principles. Some of the principles embodied in the Decalogue are obvious consequences of the common first principles, and people naturally recognize them as consequences, but not everyone consistently accepts them. Those who do not accept them are diverted from the normal and natural course of reasoning because their reason is depraved 'from passion, or from bad customs or from a bad natural state' (q94 a4). The common principles cannot be destroyed from human hearts in their universal character, but the natural law can be destroyed 'in a particular action to be done (operabili), in so far as reason is impeded from applying a common principle to a particular action to be done, because of appetite or some other passion' (q94 a6).[28]

We noticed earlier that Aquinas' appeal to universal conscience and natural law might be taken to suggest a strongly deductive picture of practical reason, filling a gap in Aristotle's account by appeal to ultimate principles intuitively known, from which other practical principles are reached by deduction. We can now see, however, that this would be a mistaken interpretation of Aquinas; the principles grasped by universal conscience are necessary features of rational agency. They lack the sort of moral content that would allow us to say that we grasp basic moral principles by intuition and deduction. If Aquinas had claimed

[25] 'But if <you act> badly, sin will at once be at the door; but its desire will be under you, and you will master it' (*Gen*. 4:7 Vulg.).

[26] See *Gen*. 4:9; 'I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?'

[27] See 1-2 q99 a2 ad2; *Mal*. q3 a12 = M 516a.

[28] Both of these deficiencies, in applying the most common principles and in recognizing the principles derived from them, make it appropriate for divine law to enjoin on us even the principles that we can know by reason (1-2 q99 a2 ad2). The divine law need not cover the principles that are not obscured by sin, but it must cover those that are obscured by sin, even if these principles are obvious to anyone who reflects clearly without being biased by a tendency to sin (1-2 q100 a5 ad1; 2-2 q22 a1 ad1).

that, for instance, we know the precepts of the Decalogue by intuition and can therefore treat them as ethical axioms, he would be adding an important claim to Aristotle that would turn Aristotle's theory in a definitely intuitionist direction. This, however, is not Aquinas' view of the Decalogue; for he suggests that our tendency to draw mistaken conclusions from the most common principles is the reason why God revealed the Decalogue to us (q99 a2 ad2). If he had supposed that we have non-inferential knowledge of principles at the level of the Decalogue, he would not have given this explanation of our tendency to error.

Since universal conscience is infallible and indestructible, it does not grasp the specific end that guides the virtuous person. The end grasped by universal conscience is common to virtuous and vicious people, whereas the virtuous person has a more detailed conception of this end, ruling out the exceptions that vicious people allow themselves. Aquinas' claims about the proximate end of the virtuous and the vicious person show that the vicious person's error does not consist simply in his misdirected appetites; it also consists in deliberative error that prevents him from seeing that the virtuous person's end is the way to achieve happiness.

Something must mediate, therefore, between universal conscience and the virtuous end.[29] Since the natural law includes specific principles that are not within the scope of universal conscience, we need the intellectual virtue that grasps them. The prescription of universal conscience commits us to the further principle: 'It is reasonable to impose whatever control over appetite is needed for action in accordance with reason'. But this principle does not identify a specific and determinate type of control over appetite. To find the more specific principles that identify the right kinds of actions, we need to proceed 'by rational inquiry' (per rationis inquisitionem, 1-2 q94 a3). To see where the vicious person goes wrong, we need to examine the type of 'rational inquiry' that Aquinas introduces to discover the principles of the virtues.

320. How Prudence Discovers Ends

The intellectual virtue that allows us to engage in this rational inquiry successfully is prudence. If prudence is a deliberative virtue, the rational inquiry that takes us from the universal to the specifically virtuous end is deliberative inquiry. But this conclusion may surprise us if we remember that deliberation is restricted to discovering means to ends. If this restricted role for deliberation prevents it from discovering specific ends that embody

[29] 'For just as reason in theoretical matters is derived from principles known through themselves, the state possessing which is called understanding (intellectus), so also it is necessary that practical reason be derived from principles known through themselves, e.g., that what is bad is not to be done, that the precepts of God are to be obeyed, and so on for other cases; and the state possessing these is called universal conscience. For this reason I say that universal conscience is distinguished from practical reason not through the substance of the capacity, but through the state, which is in a certain way innate in our mind from the very light of the active intellect, in the same way as the state that possesses theoretical principles (e.g., that every whole is greater than its part, and so on) <is innate in our mind>' (*2Sent*. d24 q2 a3 = P vi 600b). 'This very thing that is being conformed to correct reason is the proper end of each moral virtue. For temperance aims at (intendit) this, namely that a human being should not deviate from reason because of appetites; and similarly <the aim of> bravery is that a human being should not deviate from the correct judgment of reason because of fear or rashness. And this end is fixed for a human being in accordance with natural reason; for natural reason instructs each person to act in accordance with reason' (2-2 q47 a7).

universal ends, some non-deliberative function of prudence is needed for the formation of the specifically virtuous end.[30]

To see what function Aquinas intends for prudence, we should see how he describes the inquiry that discovers the virtuous end. The vicious person has only the 'prudence of the flesh' that is mentioned by St Paul, whereas the virtuous person has genuine prudence, the 'prudence of the spirit'.[31] Since genuine prudence 'arranges' the different ways in which the different virtues achieve the mean that consists in acting in accord with reason, prudence finds the virtuous end.[32]

The specific end of the virtuous person is the proximate as opposed to the ultimate end of virtue. The proximate end is an object of election, in so far as it is chosen as a way to realize the ultimate end. Since Aristotle claims that virtue makes the end right, Aquinas says that aiming at the correct end is an act of moral virtue 'principally'. But since the aiming is a result of the correct election, it must be a result of deliberation, which is the basis of election. Since prudence is the deliberative virtue, correct aiming is an act of prudence 'originally', since it results from the exercise of prudence. Prudence does not simply find ways to achieve the virtuous end in specific types of cases; it also discovers the virtuous end by deliberation, and thereby fixes the end for virtue.[33] Deliberation finds 'the things towards' the universal end of acting in accordance with reason. If we find the way to achieve the universal end, we have

[30] This argument may influence Westberg, *RPR* 165–7.

[31] *Rm.* 8:6 (Vulg.), 'for the prudence of the flesh (prudentia carnis: Gk *phronêma sarkos*) is death'. See 2-2 q47 a13.

[32] '. . . prudence is correct reason about matters for action, as the Philosopher says in *Ethics* VI (c.4). Now correct reason about things to be done presupposes one thing, and produces three things. For it presupposes the end, which counts as (sicut) the principle in things to be done, just as theoretical reason presupposes principles from which it demonstrates. But correct reason in matters of action produces three things: First, it deliberates correctly; secondly it judges correctly about the results of deliberation; thirdly, it prescribes (praecipit) correctly and steadily (constanter) what has been reached by deliberation. And so for the prudence of the flesh it is required that someone presupposes as the end what is pleasing to the flesh, and that he deliberates about, and judges about, and prescribes, the things that are appropriate for this end . . . Prudence of the spirit is spoken of, in accordance with what has been said, when someone, having presupposed the end of spiritual good, deliberates, judges, and prescribes the things that are appropriately directed to this end' (*in Rm.* 8:1 = P xiii 76b). The role ascribed to prudence here applies to the acquired virtues, as opposed to the infused virtues.

[33] '. . . For the perfection of a moral virtue three things are necessary. The first is the presentation of the end. The second is the tendency towards the end that has been presented. The third is election of the things towards the end. Now the proximate end of human life is the good of reason in common; hence Dionysius says that human evil is to be against reason. That is why the aim in all moral virtues is to lead passions and actions to the correctness of reason. Now correctness of reason is natural; hence the presentation of the end belongs to natural reason and precedes prudence, just as the understanding of principles precedes scientific knowledge (scientiam). That is why the Philosopher says, in Ethics VI, that prudence has as its principles the ends of the virtues. But this good of reason is determined in so far as a mean in actions and passions is constituted by the right (debitam) proportion of circumstances, which prudence brings about. And so the mean of moral virtue, as is said in Ethics II, is in accord with correct reason, which is prudence; and so in a certain way prudence presents the end to the moral virtues, and its action is mixed in their actions. But the tendency towards that end belongs to moral virtue which consents to the good of reason in the natural way (per modum naturae); this tendency towards the end is called election, in so far as the proximate end is directed towards the ultimate end. And that is why the Philosopher says, in Ethics II, that moral virtue makes the election correct. But the discernment of the things by which we can achieve this good of reason, in actions and in passions, is an act of prudence; hence the presentation of the end precedes the act of prudence and of moral virtue; but the tendency towards the end, or correct election of the proximate end, is an act of moral virtue principally, but of prudence originally. Hence the Philosopher says that correctness of election belongs to the other virtues from prudence, just as correctness in natural aiming comes from divine wisdom directing nature. And in accord with this the action of prudence is also mixed in the actions of the other virtues. For just as the natural tendency <towards an end> comes from natural reason, so also the tendency of moral virtue comes from prudence; but election is of the things towards the end, in so far as election involves (importat) a precept of reason about pursuing these things' (*3Sent.* d33 q2 a3 = P vii 362a).

found the distinctive end of the virtuous person.[34] Neither virtue nor prudence presents (praestituere) the universal end, but prudence finds the things 'towards' it.[35] It presents the specifically virtuous end as a result of deliberation about how to realize the universal end presented by universal conscience.[36]

Some of Aquinas' successors mark the different roles of prudence by identifying two different type of prudence. 'Universal' prudence takes us from the universal end to the specifically virtuous end. It begins from the precept of acting in accordance with reason and reaches the conclusion that we should (for instance) modify our tendency to fear so that we are ready to face danger in the right causes. From this deliberation we conclude that we should cultivate bravery. 'Particular' prudence takes us from the specifically virtuous end to the right actions. It assumes that bravery is a virtue, and considers what it would be brave to do in these circumstances.[37] Though Aquinas himself does not explicitly distinguish universal from particular prudence, he recognizes the two different tasks for prudence that underlie this division. He attributes to prudence the scope that is assumed by those who speak of the two types of prudence.

Prudence, therefore, directs all the moral virtues.[38] This directing does not extend simply to the choice of means to the ends of the different virtues; this is the task of particular prudence. It also includes the fixing or 'presenting' (praestituere) or 'determining' (determinare) of the end. The specific determination that he mentions is the determination of the mean that constitutes moral virtue; this determination is a task for universal prudence.[39] Prudence discovers the right proximate end, a specific sort of mean, by reflexion on the common end. The presentation of the proximate end precedes the discovery of the right action by particular prudence, but it does not precede every operation of prudence; it presupposes that universal prudence has discovered the proximate end by reflexion on the ultimate end.[40]

[34] 'But in what way and through what things a human being in acting is to reach the mean of reason—this belongs to the arrangement [dispositionem; v.l. 'rationem'] made by prudence. For, granted that reaching the mean is the end of moral virtue, still the mean is found by the right arrangement of the things that are towards the end' (2-2 q47 a7).

[35] 'The end does not belong to the moral virtues as themselves presenting the end, but because they tend towards the end that is presented by natural reason. They are helped to do this through prudence, which prepares the way for them, by arranging (disponendo) the things that are towards the end. Hence the remaining possibility is that prudence is nobler than the moral virtues and sets them in motion. But universal conscience sets prudence in motion, just as understanding of principles sets science in motion' (2-2 q47 a6 ad3).

[36] On prudence and the Decalogue see 2-2 q56 a1.

[37] Evidence of this development is traced by Lottin, *PM* iv 551–626. He mentions James of Viterbo (561); Henry of Ghent, *Quodl.* v 17; xii q14; Godfrey of Fontaines, *Quodl.* ii 11; the Paris MAs (626).

[38] 'Prudence directs the moral virtues not only in electing the things towards the end, but also in presenting the end. For the end of each moral virtue is to attain the mean in its proper matter; and this mean is determined in accord with the correct reason of prudence' (1-2 q66 a3 ad3). See also 1-2 q21 a2 ad2; q58 a2 ad4; 2-2 q119 a3 ad3.

[39] Hughes, BF xxiii 209n, seeks to explain why this claim is not in conflict with the passages on prudence as concerned with means (1-2 q57 a4; 2-2 q47 a6): 'Prudence presupposes a right attitude, *appetitus*, to moral ends, then prescribes where these are to be found here and now'. This answer seems to underestimate the role that Aquinas has in mind in this passage (which is not simply concerned with finding the mean here and now), and fails to ask how the 'right attitude' can be formed without some prior contribution by prudence. One might have looked for clarification of Aquinas' remark about fixing the end in his comments on Aristotle's claim that prudence is the 'true apprehension (*hupolêpsis*) of the end', *EN* 1142b33. But he reproduces the passage without comment at *in EN* vi 8 §1233. See §324n1.

[40] '. . . it is necessary that through reason, which prudence perfects and makes correct, the end should be presented (praestituere) to the other virtues—not only the common end, but also the proximate end, which is to attain the mean in the proper subject-matter <of a virtue>. Now a mean is determined in accordance with correct reason, as is said in *Ethics* II. Secondly, through correct reason comes the tendency of the virtues towards their proper end, which is aiming at the end in acquired virtues, in so far as from actions regulated by reason the state of virtue causing the aim just mentioned is

This account of the prudent person's deliberation explains the division of labour that is implied in the claim that virtue grasps the end and prudence finds the means. While this division of labour implies two distinct roles, it does not imply that either is prior to or independent of the other. On the contrary, the grasp of the end that is proper to virtue is the product of the grasp of the means that is proper to universal prudence. For the 'means' grasped by universal prudence specify the schematic ultimate end, and so they are suitable ends for the virtuous person. While a virtuous person acts because of the good that is characteristic of his specific virtue, he also pursues the ultimate end. The good specific to a virtue is its proximate end, and universal prudence discovers this by reference to the ultimate end (2-2 q123 a7).[41]

We need not suppose, then, that universal prudence reaches the specifically virtuous end from the universal end by some non-deliberative process. Aquinas' account of the ultimate end, deliberation, and election explains how prudence discovers a specific end by deliberation. He relies on a function of deliberation that he needs in his argument about freedom, happiness, and the virtues.

Our necessary desire for the ultimate end does not severely restrict the scope of practical reason. The desire that is presupposed is schematic; it aims at an end with a certain structure, but leaves the discovery of the content to further rational reflexion. The schematic, structural desire for the ultimate end is not distinctive of virtue, since it is common to all rational agents, and is not subject to their will; it is necessary for rational and free agency. Similarly, universal conscience is not a non-deliberative capacity for reaching the ends of the virtuous person. For universal conscience is common to virtuous and vicious people; it recognizes the common end of acting in accord with reason, but it does not specify this common end as the virtuous end.

Nor does Aquinas fill any gaps in his account of deliberation by appeal to natural law. He does not appeal to our innate awareness of general moral principles in order to explain how we reach the ends distinctive of the virtues. The first principle of natural law is the general form of rational agency that belongs to universal conscience. To reach more specific principles, we need rational inquiry, which is the task of deliberation and prudence. Different conceptions of the good result from different views about goods that are 'means' to the ultimate end. Happiness is 'constituted' of these goods and 'consists' in them.[42] In finding the means to the ultimate end we find the proximate end for the virtues.

This conclusion fits Aquinas' general views about rational agency and will, and the view of freedom that rests on his conception of agency. Freedom and virtue require rational agents who aim at a conception of the ultimate end; for deliberation would not be essentially comparative and essentially focussed on the overall good unless it were based on desires with the appropriate structure. But this structure still leaves it open to agents to fix the more determinate ends they will pursue. Rational agents fix these ends by their rational capacities, in contrast to non-rational agents who are 'determined to one end'.

brought about; and with reference to this, prudence is said to be the mother of the virtues. Thirdly, through prudence the way is made correct for each virtue, which tends towards <the correct> end in so far as through deliberation and election the useful is separated from the harmful in relation to the end of the virtue; and with reference to this, prudence is said to be the mediator and guardian of the virtues' (*3Sent*. d33 q2 a5 sol. = P vii 366a).

[41] Cf. *in EN* iii 15 §549.

[42] See 1-2 q1 a5 ad1; a6 ad2.

Aquinas uses this point to reconcile Aristotle's belief that election is confined to means with his claim that virtue makes the election right. An objector argues that in making the election right virtue must itself elect, and that since what virtue makes right is the end, it must be possible to elect ends, and not only means (1-2 q13 a3 obj1). In reply Aquinas allows that virtue elects, and that ends are subject to election, but he repeats that only means can be elected. The ends that virtue grasps are subject to election because they are directed towards the ultimate end.[43] Since we can elect ends that are directed towards the ultimate end (q13 a3 ad2), we can elect virtues through deliberation. Since our necessary pursuit of happiness does not make us aware of what happiness actually consists in, we can acquire merit by following the right view of what happiness consists in.[44]

These passages on deliberation and happiness explain how universal prudence takes us from the universal end grasped by natural reason to the specifically virtuous end. Prudence considers those things by which one achieves happiness;[45] to consider this question adequately, it must deliberate about different possible conceptions of happiness.

Just as Aristotle sometimes obscures the central role of deliberation in his account of prudence and the virtues, Aquinas sometimes obscures it too, though he clarifies it more than Aristotle does. His Aristotelian claims about virtue grasping the end, and his non-Aristotelian claims about natural law and universal conscience, might understandably encourage us to assign a more limited role to deliberation and to prudence than we have found in Aquinas. But the extended role that we have found fits his account of will, happiness, and virtue. This role helps to explain features of morality through features of rational agency.

321. How Prudence Forms the Virtuous Motive

Since prudence discovers the specifically virtuous end, it is needed for the correct election involved in acting virtuously. Prudence ensures the right motive for the action; for the prudent person's deliberation about happiness results in the right determinate conception of happiness, and this conception forms the end of the virtuous person's actions. Aquinas follows Aristotle not only in claiming that prudence requires the moral virtues (1-2 q57 a4; q58 a3; a5), but also in claiming that they require prudence (q57 a5; q58 a4). His reason for the second claim is Aristotelian. Moral virtue requires not only the right action, but also the right way of doing it. The right way of doing it must proceed from reason, not only from impulse or passion (q57 a5);[46] to proceed from reason it must proceed from correct election.

If correct election were concerned only with relatively low-level, technical choices, it would not be an obviously necessary condition for virtue. To say that virtue requires the right election would be to claim that agents who know the right sorts of things to pursue, but just lack the causal information needed to find them, cannot be virtuous. But this is not what Aquinas means. When he claims that virtue requires correct election, as opposed to

[43] '. . . the ends proper to the virtues are directed towards happiness as the ultimate end; and in this way there can be election of them' (q13 a3 ad1).

[44] See *Ver.* q22 a7, quoted at §273.

[45] ea quibus pervenitur ad felicitatem, 1-2 q66 a5 ad2.

[46] On this condition see §285.

impulse or passion, he means that reason produces the appropriate motive for choosing the virtuous action.[47] If we are guided by prudence, we do the generous action, say, for the right reason, and not simply because we have a generous impulse (q24 a3 ad1; q77 a6 ad2). The distinctive feature of the right reason is not the fact that it rests on correct causal information, but the fact that the person acting on the right reason cares about the appropriate aspect of the virtuous action (cf. q65 a1; q19 a7 ad2). Those who do the generous action from the right motive are not generous because they believe that the generous action will have precisely this effect on the other person, but because they act on their settled conviction about the value of this sort of action. Their conviction expresses the agent's conception of the ends worth pursuing, not simply her views about the most effective way to reach the ends she has set herself. That is why prudence is necessary for the perfection of the reason that is involved in election, and so necessary for moral virtue (q58 a4 ad1). The correct election of the virtuous person rests on a true conception of the ends worth pursuing, and prudence forms this conception.

This conclusion reconciles Aquinas' views about virtue with his views about freedom, responsibility, and practical reason. He believes that we are free to be either virtuous or vicious and are responsible for being one or the other. In his view, freedom belongs to the will in so far as it is capable of acting on the results of deliberation about alternatives.[48] This deliberation about alternatives cannot be applied to the ultimate end itself, since we are not free to accept or reject it. Nor can it be applied to the principles grasped by universal conscience, since we are not free to accept or reject these if they are indestructible in rational agents. Neither of these apparent restrictions on freedom, however, is a real restriction; each specifies the conditions for being a rational agent, which are also the conditions for being free.

If the determinate principles characteristic of the moral virtues were grasped by universal conscience, we would not be free to accept or reject them. Aquinas, however, believes that we are free to choose between virtue and vice, and therefore to choose the distinctive end of virtue or vice. His account of freedom implies that these ends are open to deliberation. If they are within the scope of prudence, then they are open to deliberation, and hence open to our free choice.

This implication of Aquinas' views on freedom shows how his different claims support one another if the specifically virtuous end is reached by deliberation, and how they threaten one another if he accepts some other account of how we reach the specifically virtuous end. Both an anti-rationalist account, attributing the right ends to the training of non-rational passions, and a non-deliberative rationalist account, attributing them to intuitive knowledge of principles, make it difficult to see how Aquinas' claims about the will, freedom, virtue, and practical reason cohere in the way he intends them to.[49] If the right ends are discovered by prudence, deliberating from the universal end and reaching the specifically virtuous end, Aquinas' position is coherent and intelligible.

[47] '. . . the motion of virtue has its origin in reason and its terminus in desire, in so far as it is moved by reason. That is why in the definition of moral virtue it is said, in *Ethics* ii, that it is "a state involving election, consisting in a mean that is determined by reason, as the wise person will determine it".' (1-2 q59 a1). The Latin version uses 'sapiens' to translate *phronimos* here, but Aquinas takes it to refer to prudence (*in EN* ii 7 §323).

[48] See §286. [49] On mortal v. venial sin see §297.

322. Objections to Aquinas' View

Ought Aquinas to have assigned such a broad role to prudence? We may wonder whether universal and particular prudence are inseparable aspects of a single virtue or separable virtues. We might suppose that someone could be good at one of these deliberative tasks and bad at the other, so that the two virtues must be separable. We might even doubt whether universal prudence is a virtue of a moral agent at all. It seems to belong to a moral theorist who is considering what states of character are virtues and how to produce them; these are the questions that both Aristotle and Aquinas answer. But the ability to find the right answers at this high level does not seem to guarantee the ability or the experience that we need to find answers about what to do in particular situations. Equally, we might suppose that a virtuous person who has the right ends and knows what to do about them in particular situations could nonetheless lack the knowledge that would answer the theorist's questions.

This issue about the universal prudence of the moral theorist and the particular prudence of the virtuous agent already arises for the reader of Aristotle. The *Ethics* is a work of political science, political science is the same state as prudence, and prudence is deliberative. The theorist who writes the *Ethics* seems to display the same deliberative virtue that the virtuous agent displays in deciding what to do here and now.[50]

To defend his belief in the unity of prudence, Aquinas needs to show that the higher-level deliberation fixing the specifically virtuous end makes a morally significant difference to the action or motive of the virtuous person. If he is right, we must be able to see that something relevant to the moral evaluation of the action or agent depends on the presence or absence of universal prudence. We might hope to find morally relevant effects of universal prudence if we examine Aquinas' detailed discussions of individual virtues of character. Universal prudence matters in virtuous agents, if these agents are not allowed simply to take the specifically virtuous end for granted, but must also have some conception of why it is the right end to accept. If Aquinas describes this conception in any detail, he will also make it clear what sort of deliberation leads us from the universal end to the specifically virtuous end.

323. Natural Law, Universal Conscience, and Prudence

We may now review Aquinas' discussion of natural law, universal conscience, and practical reason, to see how they affect his theory. Both natural law and universal conscience are mandatory topics of discussion for him, since they are recognized by moralists who do not accept his Aristotelian assumptions and framework.[51] If he had no room for them within an Aristotelian account, he would have acknowledged the failure of an Aristotelian account to capture these recognized aspects of morality and moral understanding.

He reaffirms his Aristotelian account. The roles of universal conscience and of natural law fit his view that the central element in the Aristotelian position is the account of a rational agent as necessarily pursuing a final good and deliberating about its composition. Universal conscience is not a source of moral principles unavailable to a rational agent who tries to

[50] On this issue in Aristotle see §98. [51] See §301.

deliberate about the means to happiness; it makes us rational agents who have a conception of a final good that is open to deliberation. Similarly, the first principle of natural law does not add a further constraint on the deliberation of a rational agent about his own good; it simply expresses a necessary feature of this rational agent. The subordinate principles of natural law are reached by deliberation about happiness, and therefore they are the proper concern of prudence.

If we agree with Aquinas on these points, we agree that true moral principles are the conclusions of a rational agent's correct deliberation about her own happiness. Deliberation about happiness is essential to free rational agents. The principles that such agents implicitly accept in being concerned with their own happiness are strong enough to vindicate the moral virtues, as Aquinas conceives them.

Though this position is Aristotelian, Aquinas has no explicit Aristotelian precedent for his claim that deliberation about happiness is an essential feature of a rational agent and of a free agent. In his explanation of claims about rational agency and freedom through features of deliberation about happiness, he extends and develops Aristotelian claims, though not in an un-Aristotelian direction. The central role that Aquinas attributes to deliberation about happiness requires him to assign a large role to prudence. He emphasizes those remarks in Aristotle that favour a wider role for prudence over those that favour a narrower role.

In contrast to this Aristotelian and eudaemonist position, claims about universal conscience and natural law might seem to force Aquinas in a different direction. But he argues that they do not. All reasonable claims about moral insight derived from these sources can be understood, in his view, within the deliberative account of practical reason. This deliberative account expresses Aquinas' reductive claim that there is nothing more to the understanding of morality than the understanding of rational agency. His views on practical reason, prudence, universal conscience, and natural law, all support the reductive claim.

23

AQUINAS: THE CANON OF THE VIRTUES

324. The Unity of Prudence

How much can we learn from universal prudence, as Aquinas conceives it? In his view, universal conscience grasps the common principles of natural law, but it does not specify the virtues that fulfill the natural law. It recognizes that good is to be done and evil avoided, and that we achieve the good in acting in accordance with reason. But we need further rational inquiry to discover that the precept of acting in accordance with reason requires the cardinal virtues. This inquiry is the task of universal prudence, which reaches the specifically virtuous end by deliberation in the light of the ultimate end.

Since we are rational agents who also have passions, we need virtues that conform our passions to our wills and conform both passions and wills to a true conception of the ultimate end. Since we aim at our perfection, and not simply at the maximum coherent satisfaction of our desires, virtue does not consist in guiding our passions by a conception of the good that aims at the satisfaction of these same passions.

Aquinas' claims about prudence commit him to a further claim about the general character of a virtue. He believes that universal prudence (reaching the specifically virtuous end by deliberation from the ultimate end) is the same virtue as particular prudence (reaching the virtuous action by deliberation from the specifically virtuous end). Hence he believes in the 'vertical unity' of universal and particular prudence. Moreover, he believes that the same prudence is needed for each of the virtues of character, so that he believes in the 'horizontal unity' of prudence. Virtuous people have the right conception of the end for the sake of which they do their different virtuous actions; the right conception of this end, as Aristotle insists, is prudence (*EN* 1142b31–3).[1]

Since prudence is horizontally and vertically unified, it is concerned with 'the whole of human life' (*in EN* vi 4 §1163), and the end it grasps is 'the common end of all of human life' (*in EN* vi 8 §1233). We must grasp this common end to form the right conception of

[1] In *in EN* vi 8 §1233 Aquinas clearly takes 'the end' to be the antecedent 'of which prudence is the true apprehension' in *EN* 1142b33. Some interpreters of Aristotle suppose, implausibly, that the antecedent is 'what is expedient towards the end'.

the end that guides practical reasoning (*EN* 1144a31–6; cf. *in EN* vi 10 §1273–4). Aquinas attributes belief in this common end to Aristotle, and takes it to underlie Aristotle's belief in the unity of prudence.[2] Since all the virtues aim at this common end, they need a horizontally and vertically unified prudence to tell them how to achieve their aim. The unity of prudence, therefore, is not a merely generic unity that would allow the existence of mutually independent species.

325. The Reciprocity of the Virtues

These claims about the unity of prudence imply that discovery of the virtues requires prudence. Aquinas therefore affirms one part of the traditional belief in the reciprocity of the virtues (RV).[3] The virtues are connected in so far as they are all about passions and actions that are connected to one another (*ST* 1-2 q65 a1 ad3; *Virt. Card.* a2 ad4). A stronger connexion is their connexion with the common end of human life; the correct conception of this single common end is required for every virtue.[4]

This aspect of RV follows from Aquinas' conception of the ultimate end. His initial conception is purely formal, in the sense that it does not yet specify some definite way of life or traits of character. But it imposes a non-trivial structure on ends and on deliberation. To pursue a final good is to seek to combine different ends in some mutually-supporting system that achieves the perfection of the agent. The traits and actions required by each virtue must contribute to this system of ends. This aspect of RV, therefore, follows from Aquinas' basic claims about rational agency. The relation between prudence and the perfection of the passions secures the other half of RV, the necessity of virtue for prudence (1-2 q58 a5).[5] We need our passions perfected if we are to focus steadily and without distraction on the right end.

In committing himself to RV, Aquinas implies that each virtue relies on the same universal and particular prudence in the virtuous agent and that the specific perfection of the passions required by each virtue is necessary for prudence. Some of Aquinas' predecessors and successors reject RV;[6] Scotus and Ockham argue against it at length. Some aspects

[2] 'He says "being one", because, if there were different prudences concerned with the matters of different moral virtues, just as there are different kinds of artifacts, it would be quite possible for one moral virtue to exist without another, each of them having a prudence corresponding to it. But this cannot be the case, because the principles of prudence are the same for the whole matter of morals, so that everything is derived from the standard of reason. And that is why because of the unity of prudence all the moral virtues are connected with one another' (*in EN* vi 11 §1288).

[3] On RV see §12 (Socrates); §49 (Plato); §116 (Aristotle); §185 (Stoics). It becomes a topic of discussion in mediaeval ethics because of Augustine; see §229. Some predecessors of Aquinas who discuss this issue are cited by Lottin, *PM* iii 209–23.

[4] See *3Sent.* d36 q1 a1 = P vii 415b: 'For each virtue operates because of the good of virtue. Hence if one aims at the good of virtue, as is appropriate for the virtuous person, one does not turn one's aim away from that end. Hence the Philosopher says that the wasteful person, who spends without concern for the good, easily turns away to any evil.' Cf. ad2, ad3. Lottin, *PM* iii 233. This is how Godfrey of Fontaines defends the unity of prudence and argues from it for RV. See Lottin, *PM* iv 590; 600.

[5] Discussed in §316.

[6] Some moralists accept RV in the case of infused moral virtues; when charity is infused by divine grace, the other virtues are infused at the same time. But this feature of the infused virtues makes it seem more plausible to deny RV in the case of the acquired virtues. See Lombard, *3Sent.* d36 c1; Bonaventure, *3Sent.* d36 a1 q1 (affirming the connexion for the infused virtues); q3 (denying it for the acquired virtues) = OO iii 790–9; Aquinas, *3Sent.* d36 q1 a2 = P vii 416.

of Aquinas' defence are better postponed until we have examined the objections; but a preliminary discussion will help us to follow the later debate.

326. Objections to the Reciprocity of the Virtues

According to RV, a perfectly virtuous agent would have all the virtues. But the very idea of such an agent may seem to rest on a misunderstanding of the character of the virtues.[7] It is difficult to see how the virtues of a Greek hoplite could co-exist with those of a mediaeval monk and with those of a twenty-first century social worker. But RV appears no more plausible if it is applied only to the virtues recognized at a particular time; why should every set of virtues in every society and culture be linked in the way required by RV?

In any case, RV seems to conflict with fairly obvious facts. The best people we can think of, from our own time or other times, do not seem to exemplify all the virtues. Perhaps they would have had less of the virtues they had if they had also tried to form other virtues. The idea that everyone should ideally display all the same 'required' virtues may seem both unrealistic and unattractive; perhaps the varieties and imperfections of different people's moral characters actually add appealing diversity to human life.

These objections to RV are especially compelling if the virtues are remedial conditions that counteract different specific tendencies for things to go wrong. If we suffer from our proclivity to excessive fear and excessive pleasure, we need bravery to counteract one proclivity and temperance to counteract the other. If we tend to take a biased view of other people's claims, we need justice. If we tend to be indifferent to the needs of others, we need benevolence.[8] The judgments that shape our conception of the virtues are judgments about the different things that can go wrong.

This remedial conception of the virtues conflicts with the conception of perfect virtue that supports RV. If different virtues counteract different dangers, they may be separable and may conflict, just as different medicines prescribed for different diseases may have conflicting effects.[9] If the virtues are piecemeal remedies for specific dangers and threats, the complete development of each virtue may not incorporate the other virtues. If we acquire different virtues, we may have to choose between conflicting goods, so that we face an inevitable loss whatever we choose.[10]

If different virtues apply conflicting remedies to different flaws, one person ought not to aim at them all. And so Aristotle's assumption that we cannot have too much of a virtue appears to ignore a remedial view. Even if a single person can or should cultivate all the virtues, they may not be internally related in a perfectly virtuous person. Perhaps the demands of justice or honesty should not incorporate the demands of generosity or kindness.

[7] See Strawson, 'Social' 27–9; Flanagan, *VMP* 10–11f.

[8] This view is developed by Warnock, *OM*, ch. 6; he rejects RV, 87. Foot, *VV* 10, also accepts a remedial view, and rejects RV, 17.

[9] Aquinas remarks that 'a medicine that would be adapted to one disease would be harmful to the second . . . and what would be a suitable medicine for one sin might provide an incentive to the second' (*ST* Suppl. q9 a2).

[10] '. . . so far from forming a unity in the sense that Aristotle and Aquinas believed they did, the virtues actually conflict with each other: which is to say that if someone has one of them he inevitably fails to have some other' (Foot, 'Dilemma' 57).

To see whether these are well-founded objections to RV, we need to consider whether Aquinas has good reasons for insisting that each virtue incorporates prudence. He takes universal prudence to grasp a set of principles that express the requirements of all the virtues.[11]

327. From the Ultimate End to the Cardinal Virtues

To show that prudence is unified, Aquinas needs to show that universal prudence, deliberating from the universal end, discovers the specific ends of each of the virtues, and that these ends are connected in such a way that understanding of one requires understanding of the others in their relation to the ultimate good.

Has Aquinas given deliberation too large a task, and too indefinite a starting point? We might agree that agents such as us need passions and wills guided by reason and virtue if they are to pursue their good correctly, but we might still have no clear view about what the virtues are—whether, for instance, they include the control of appetites or the formation of rational plans for the maximum satisfaction of appetites. As Aquinas remarks, we might agree that the human good requires us to act in accordance with reason, but still not agree that acting in accordance with reason requires temperance and bravery, as he understands them. It seems still more obvious that we might agree about acting in accordance with reason, but deny that such action includes action for the good of others that does not provide some antecedently-desired good for ourselves.

If our deliberation is to reach a definite result, do we perhaps need some principles, accepted apart from deliberation, that constrain the process of deliberation and introduce some definite moral content? Scotus and Ockham derive these further principles from the revealed will of God.[12] Others might derive them from some definite social facts, or collective preferences, or contingent psychological traits, that apply to some group of actual human beings but cannot be derived from Aquinas' general claims about rational agency. Any of these attempts to constrain deliberation rejects Aquinas' attempt to explain the virtues by reference to rational agency.

Aquinas believes that deliberation about one's ultimate end yields not only an account of virtue, but also a sufficiently detailed account of the virtues. Deliberation shows that the moral precepts of the Decalogue are required by the virtues, and that we have reason to care about the interests of other people for their own sakes. The considerations he has appealed to so far seem to him to support a detailed account of the virtues.

This detailed account is mostly presented in the Secunda Secundae. This Part discusses a bewildering variety of virtues and vices. Moreover, it clearly belongs to moral theology more than to moral philosophy, since it presupposes the supernatural additions (infused virtues, and so on) to the acquired moral virtues. Still, its main structure and aims are fairly clear; it tries to answer some of the questions about the virtues that we might ask when we reflect on the ultimate end, prudence, and deliberation.

[11] *in EN* vi 11 §1288, quoted in n2.

[12] Ockham agrees with Aquinas in recognizing non-positive and positive elements of morality. But he takes the positive elements to include higher principles that Aquinas regards as non-positive. See §395.

The main argument rests on Aquinas' claim that the matter of morality is derived from the four distinct cardinal virtues.[13] In his view, the various traits that we recognize as virtues are either aspects or applications of the cardinal virtues. They have a definite structure that shows how they meet some general requirements of rational agency.[14]

328. The Nature of a Cardinal Virtue

The cardinal virtues express the 'perfect character of virtue, which requires correctness of desire' (1-2 q61 a1). They are not necessary for every virtuous action, since not all virtuous action requires correct desire, and a mere capacity to perform some virtuous action does not imply the possession of a cardinal virtue. Aquinas' distinction between virtuous action and acting virtuously supports his claim that prudence is necessary for being a virtuous person (cf. q56 a3; q57 a5), and hence supports his defence of the reciprocity of the virtues.

To act virtuously, according to Aquinas, we must act on the cardinal virtues, no matter what special virtue we display in a particular action. Some virtues are cardinal (*cardinales*, from *cardo*, 'hinge') because they are those 'in which the moral life turns and is founded in a certain way'. The moral life is founded on them because that is the life proper to a human being, in contrast to a non-rational animal or an angel; this is the life of practical reason, the 'active life, which consists in the exercise of moral virtues'. Aquinas infers the generic features of such a life from Aristotle's account of acting virtuously (*EN* ii 4; *Virt. Card.* a1).[15] Aristotle's demand for knowledge introduces prudence;[16] his demand for correct election for the right end introduces justice; and his demand for firm and unshakeable election introduces temperance and bravery (2-2 q123 a11). Prudence is relevant because it provides the appropriate prescriptive (praeceptiva) knowledge, justice because it directs a person's actions to the right end, temperance and bravery because they produce the appropriate control (moderatio) and firmness.

These claims do not fit the passage in Aristotle that Aquinas cites, but they fit Aristotle's intentions in his account of virtue as a whole. The reference to prudence fits Aristotle's remark that the mean must be determined by the reason by which the prudent person would determine it. The demand for the right end fits Aristotle's claim that we need the right election. Firmness and control fit his demand for a firm and unchanging state. Firmness and constancy depend on the condition of our non-rational desires and passions; if they are misdirected, they will make us waver even if we make the correct (in some ways) election on occasions where strong passions are not involved.

We discover the virtues by examining the 'formal principle', which is the good of reason. This consists, first of all, in consideration by reason itself, and, secondly, in the direction of

[13] See *3Sent.* d33 q2 a1 sol.4 = P vii 359ab.

[14] Jordan, 'Scientia' 91–5, discusses the organization of *ST* 2–2, and emphasizes Aquinas' innovation in making the cardinal virtues the principle of organization.

[15] He cites *Proverbs* 26:14 ('As a door turns on its hinge, so does an idler in his bed') as his Scriptural authority for the term 'cardinal', and he cites Ambrose as his patristic authority for the use of 'cardinal' for the canon of four virtues. See *Card.* a1; *ST* 1-2 q61 a1 sc; *3Sent.* d33 q2 a1 sol.2 = P vii 358b.

[16] Aquinas' interpretation does not fit; Aristotle seems to be demanding simply the sort of knowledge that is necessary for voluntariness. Aquinas recognizes this point about the passage in 2-2 q58 a1. At *in EN* ii 4 §283 he does not introduce his own interpretation of the demand for knowledge.

other things by reason. These other things are actions and passions; the passions are those that can turn us away in bad directions or prevent us from going in good directions. We need prudence (for consideration by reason), justice (for right action), and temperance and bravery (for the proper regulation of potentially distracting and inhibiting passions). The same conclusion results if we consider the subject of the different aspects of the right formal principle. One subject has to be the rational part, of which prudence is the virtue. Another has to be the part that is rational by participation, and this is divided into the will, the spirited part, and the appetitive part (1-2 q61 a2).[17]

The cardinal virtues, therefore, are generic and pervasive; we do not need to look for particular occasions on which we are exercising prudence or temperance, say, as opposed to some other virtue. This feature seems to distinguish them from a virtue such as generosity or wit; if we are not in the right situation, we cannot display wit, but if we are in any situation that calls for any of the virtues, the appropriate action displays the formal principles of the different cardinal virtues (cf. 2-2 q123 a11; q141 a7).

Aquinas' view that the cardinal virtues mark pervasive features of all virtuous action is defensible by appeal to Aristotle; but it is more characteristic of Stoicism.[18] The Stoics claim that in every virtuous action we act in accordance with each of the cardinal virtues, even though we exercise some specific virtue in a way in which we do not exercise all the others. Aquinas argues that the four virtues are different specific virtues, so that we exercise temperance (e.g.) on particular occasions on which we do not (in the same way) exercise other virtues as well. This emphasis on the different occasions for the exercise of the four virtues is more clearly Aristotelian than Stoic, though the Stoics also admit that not all of the virtues are always exercised in the same way.

329. 'Principal' Displays of the Cardinal Virtues

Aquinas claims that the cardinal status of these four virtues supports and justifies the Aristotelian view that they are different specific virtues displayed in distinct ranges of action. The goodness of the pervasive virtues is displayed 'principally' or 'especially' in different ranges of action.[19] Whenever we act virtuously, we must display the appropriate firmness, but we especially display it in facing the danger of death; hence it is appropriately displayed in bravery, which is the virtue concerned with facing this danger. A similar argument applies to temperance. The claim that these are special or 'principal' displays of the relevant pervasive virtues supports the claim that these are distinct virtues with their own range of actions.

[17] For objections to this classification see §290.

[18] Ambrose relies on the Stoic division in *Off*. He argues that the saints of the Old Testament display the cardinal virtues: 'What duty (officium) belonging to the principal virtues was lacking in these men?' (i 115). In his view, the types of duties originate (nacsuntur) in the four virtues (116). He uses Stoic arguments to show that each of the cardinal virtues deals with questions that can be answered only by appeal to the other cardinal virtues (i 126–9). See Davidson, ad i 115. On the treatment of the cardinal virtues in early Christian writers and in mediaeval writers before Aquinas see Lottin, *PM* iii, ch. 12 (see esp. 154). The four virtues are mentioned in *Wisdom* 8:7 (referring to wisdom): 'And if anyone loves justice, her labours are virtues; for she teaches temperance and prudence, justice and bravery, and nothing is more useful in life for human beings than these'. On *4 Macc.* see §203.

[19] See 1-2 q61 a3; 2–2 q123 a11; 141 a7; *Virt. Card.* a1.

These are 'special' or 'principal' displays in two ways: (1) These are cases in which it is especially difficult to display the pervasive virtue of (say) bravery, because the danger of death is especially likely to impede us from following the right course of action. (2) These are cases in which it is especially important to display the pervasive virtue; our moral lives will go to pieces if we cannot manage to exercise firmness in this area.

These two points sometimes pick out the same actions; the difficulty and importance of restraining certain fears may partly explain why we need a virtue that restrains them. But the most difficult actions are not always the most important. A gymnast may show a principal or outstanding degree of physical agility in doing something that is especially difficult, but it may not be important for other people to cultivate precisely this degree of agility. Similarly, we may not all need the firmness of the people who face death in battle bravely, if most us need not face that situation; perhaps we ought to cultivate firmness in sticking to our convictions on the appropriate occasions, if that trait affects much more of most people's lives.

Aquinas does not always separate these two types of 'principal' exercise of the virtues. Sometimes he mentions difficulty (2-2 q123 a11), but sometimes he has importance in mind. He argues that prudence, rather than other virtues of practical intellect, is cardinal, because it makes the decisive difference to our action (*Virt. Card.* a1 = M 815a). In the case of the pleasures of touch, which concern temperance, he mentions that desires for these pleasures are strong (2-2 q141 a4) and that they involve the necessities of life (q141 a5); these two facts give two reasons for taking temperance to be a cardinal virtue.[20]

The case of justice highlights the issue about difficulty and importance. It seems to be more difficult to exercise virtue when we have to consider the interests of others than when we have to consider only ourselves. On this ground, pursuit of the right end may be said to be 'principally' shown in other-directed action. Is such action also a 'principal' manifestation in the other sense, that it is especially important? That depends on whether concern for the good of others is especially important; we apparently need to be convinced on this point before we can be convinced that justice, as Aquinas understands it, is really a cardinal virtue.

Aquinas has good reason to treat the cardinal virtues, in the broad sense, as pervasive features of acting virtuously. He also has good reason to recognize some cardinal virtues in his narrower sense, as specific virtues with their different range of actions; for some specific ranges of actions may be more relevant than others to achieving the pervasive virtues. In agreeing with Aquinas on this point we need not also agree that he has the right account of what the cardinal virtues (in the narrow sense) are.

Indeed, we need not even agree that the same things are cardinal virtues in all times and places. Perhaps bravery, understood as firmness in facing death in battle, was once a cardinal virtue, but ceased to be one as circumstances changed. If we reach this conclusion, we recognize one merit of Aquinas' account: he offers us a reasonable basis for deciding whether a virtue is really cardinal, and therefore a reasonable basis for disagreeing with his conclusion about the cardinal status of a particular trait.

[20] '... on the one hand, because such pleasures are more natural to us, and therefore it is more difficult to refrain from them and to restrain appetite for them; on the other hand, because their objects are more necessary for the present life' (2-2 q141 a7).

330. The Range of a Cardinal Virtue[21]

Aquinas attributes a wide scope to each cardinal virtue. Bravery, for instance, is concerned with fears and confidence, but more specifically with the fear of death, not simply because it is difficult not to be moved by the fear of death, but also because love of one's own life is natural (2-2 q123 a4 ad2). Since the love of life is natural, it is both difficult and important to control one's fear of death; hence this is a 'principal' exercise of bravery in both senses.

Aquinas agrees with Aristotle's claim that bravery is properly concerned with the danger of death in war, not with all danger of death equally. He distinguishes those dangers that result from our pursuing a good from those that happen to us whether or not we are pursuing a good, and he argues that dangers of the first sort are especially appropriate concerns of a virtue. The danger of death resulting from illness or storms or robbers or (Aquinas might have added) earthquakes or road accidents 'do not seem to threaten someone directly because of the fact that he is pursuing some good' (2-2 q123 a5). They happen to us anyhow, and we do not avoid them by becoming less active in the pursuit of goods. We expose ourselves, however, to the danger of death in war precisely because we 'defend the common good through a just war'; we would be less exposed if we failed to defend the common good in this way. This is a good reason for claiming that we need a state of character that is not deterred from active pursuit of the relevant good by the danger of death in war; for (Aquinas assumes) the fact that we expose ourselves to this danger is not a sufficient reason to give up the pursuit.

Once we see Aquinas' reasons for picking out the danger of death in war as a special concern of bravery, we can see why other dangers might also be relevant. Even the dangers he initially dismissed may be proper concerns of bravery in the right circumstances. We may face the danger of death from disease if we continue to visit a friend who suffers from an infectious disease, and we may face danger from shipwreck or robbers if we 'pursue some pious undertaking' (e.g., a pilgrimage). In training people to face the danger of death in war bravely, we should also train them to see the same reasons for facing the danger of shipwreck or illness. Death in war, therefore, need not be the exclusive or primary focus of bravery. It is a 'principal' case because it illustrates the type of danger that is the primary focus of bravery, and why it is primary; but other types of danger may also be relevant to bravery.

If Aquinas believes that bravery embraces all the dangers that might wrongly deter us from the appropriate pursuit of good, is his conception unrealistically broad? Some people might be good at facing one sort of danger without being good at facing others. Are we to deny that someone is brave if he is completely fearless in war, but weak and vacillating if it will cost him something to stick to his convictions? Someone might display both characteristics in the same area. A general, for instance, might be unafraid of the danger of death in battle, but might still be afraid to change his strategy, because he is afraid to admit he has failed and to expose himself to criticism and humiliation.[22] Does he display one sort of bravery and

[21] On Green and Aquinas on Aristotelian virtues see §113; Green, *PE* §253. On Aquinas' treatment of bravery see Walsh in BF xlii, Appx. Ambrose argues for a broad conception of bravery in *Off.* i 175–209. He rejects the view that bravery belongs primarily to aggressive war. He mentions not only the warriors of the Old Testament but also the Christian martyrs.

[22] Cf. Hector's fear of Polydamas' reproaches, *Iliad* xxii 98–110.

lack another? Or does his fear show that he is not brave? Perhaps we cannot expect firmness in facing every sort of danger that might threaten our pursuit of a good.

Aquinas might reasonably reply that his discussion of the cardinal virtues is not meant to describe features of every virtuous action, but to describe necessary conditions of acting virtuously—the sort of action that proceeds from a virtuous character. Perhaps we could be trained to face one sort of danger without being trained to face others that are equally important for the pursuit of the good. But if we did not see the point of resisting all the dangers that would wrongly impede us in the pursuit of the good, we would not see the point of bravery, and we would not be brave.

The demand that a brave person should see the point of brave action and bravery clarifies and supports Aquinas' belief in the horizontal and vertical unity of prudence. To see what dangers ought to be faced, and hence to see the point of facing this or that danger, we need to connect facing danger with the human good, and thereby to connect the specifically virtuous end with the universal end of human beings. Universal prudence grasps this connexion, and shows why the ends promoted by bravery are promoted by other virtues as well.

If Aquinas is right, people who see the point of resisting all these dangers may still be better at resisting some than at resisting others. Even if we have been trained to resist all sorts of dangers, we may be more used to some than to others. Unfamiliar dangers may produce the 'sudden motions' of passion that are especially difficult to resist.[23] Even if we have the appropriate virtue, we may need to get used to the sound of gunfire in a battle, or to the sight of blood in a hospital, before we can face the situation appropriately. Aquinas' claims about the extent of bravery do not imply that brave people can resist every sort of danger the first time they encounter it.

Aquinas' argument about facing danger in war makes it easier to recognize bravery in cases that Aristotle does not even contemplate. Martyrdom, for instance, is an expression (actus) of bravery (2-2 q124 a2). From Aristotle's point of view, it might appear inferior to death in battle, since it is rather passive, and does not involve the active prosecution of one's ends that Aristotle regards as characteristic of brave actions; hence it seems to belong with death in a shipwreck, which is not a primary concern of bravery (*EN* 1115a35–b6). But Aquinas' account of why bravery is a virtue shows that active prosecution is not necessary. After the remark that in shipwrecks and so on death is not fine (*kalon*, 1115b4–6), Aquinas suggests that it is brave and praiseworthy to face death when something good results from one's death.[24] Martyrdom meets this condition for bravery. Martyrs pursue the good by resisting danger; since the good they pursue in this case is the supreme good, their resistance to danger expresses bravery.

This example shows how Aquinas' account of a cardinal virtue helps him towards an appropriately flexible account of the scope of each virtue. His belief that bravery is a cardinal virtue and that it requires these specific actions rests on his conception of the human good and of the actions needed to achieve it. If we find some error at these points in his position, we may take a different view about which virtues are cardinal, and what actions they require. His appeals to universal prudence give us the means to endorse or to correct his views. It is

[23] On sudden motions see §§253, 289.

[24] 'neque ex morte aliguid bonum sequitur' (sc. in shipwrecks, etc.), *in EN* iii 14 §542. 'Bonum' renders *kalon*; see §332 below.

reasonable to draw the lines between the virtues where he draws them, and to single out some actions as principal exercises of the virtues. If his account needs to be corrected, he shows us how to correct it.

331. Subordinate Virtues

Aquinas believes that other recognized virtues can be classified as either integral or subjective or potential parts of the cardinal virtues.[25] The integral parts 'must concur to produce a perfect act of that virtue' (2-2 q48 a1), and so are aspects of the virtue, inseparable from it in the way that beams and foundations are inseparable from a house. The subjective parts are species of the virtue—for instance, the types of prudence that are displayed in different areas (2-2 q48 a1). The potential parts are 'annexed virtues that are directed towards some secondary acts or materials, as not having the whole power of the principal virtue' (q48 a1). They apply the virtue to areas that are less difficult than the areas of the primary exercises of the virtues.

Aquinas' description of these potential parts assumes that the cardinal virtues are pervasive features of acting virtuously. Though the potential parts of each cardinal virtue are less difficult to exercise than the principal cardinal virtue itself, they are inseparable from the principal virtue; we cannot have magnanimity, for instance, without bravery. The circumstances in which magnanimity maintains firmness are less difficult than those in which bravery maintains firmness, but since they require the same sort of firmness for the same reasons, magnanimity is a part of bravery.[26]

By organizing the virtues around the cardinal virtues, Aquinas argues that the virtues do not conflict, and especially that recognized 'pagan' virtues do not conflict with 'Christian' virtues. His treatment of magnanimity and humility illustrates his strategy. Once we see the relation of these subordinate virtues to their cardinal virtues, we see that they do not conflict. Magnanimity strengthens us in the pursuit of appropriately great actions, while humility restrains us from the distractions that would result from illusions about our own importance; hence we need both magnanimity and humility to pursue the right ends without distraction.[27]

If we object to magnanimity because it includes contempt for others, Aquinas answers that this contempt is contempt for the evil aims of others. Such contempt prevents the magnanimous person from accepting or acquiescing in the evil projects of others, and so he needs it if he is to be independent enough to stick to the right course of action. This contempt for others is not opposed to humility; for we can honour other people in so far as they display the gifts of God, and we can recognize our own failure to use the gifts we have received from God.[28] Determination to use our gifts for great results, and rejection of the

[25] 2-2 q48 a1; cf. q79; q80; q128; q143.

[26] '. . . magnanimity agrees with bravery in so far as it confirms the mind about something difficult. But it falls short of bravery in this point, that it confirms the mind in something about which it is easier to preserve this firmness' (2-2 q129 a5).

[27] 'That is why a double virtue is necessary in relation to desire for a difficult good. One is needed to control (temperare) and to restrain the mind from an uncontrolled (immoderate) pursuit of high objects; and this belongs to the virtue of humility. The other is needed to strengthen the mind against despair, and urge it on after great things in accordance with correct reason; and this is magnanimity' (2-2 q161 a1).

[28] Humility does not require false modesty. Aquinas (if he is the author of the prayer) prays that he will be 'humilem sine fictione', P xxiv 242a.

evil aims of others that would impede the proper use of our gifts and theirs, are two aspects of magnanimity.[29] In recognizing our own failure to use all our gifts, and in appreciating the gifts shown by others, we display aspects of humility.[30] Neither magnanimity nor humility can do its proper work without the other.

Humility also prevents a false sense of self-importance. This is why it does not always reject the sorts of actions that would sometimes show a lack of self-respect. Sometimes 'abject' services are required by charity, and in these cases a person without false self-importance will not refuse to do them.[31] Hence it is not abject to belong to a mendicant religious order, even though it would be abject to beg from others simply from disinclination to support oneself (*SG* iii 135).[32] Humble people do not refuse the abject course of action in the right circumstances, though they do not accept it indiscriminately.

The connexion between magnanimity and humility answers some objections to RV. We might well cite these two virtues to show why virtues sometimes conflict, and why traits required by one impede traits required by another. Aquinas answers that this appearance of conflict may mislead us about the relation between the two virtues. We can see that they do not conflict once we understand the circumstances in which contempt for others or belief in our own unworthiness is appropriate; for the two virtues have the same aim, and do not conflict, but complement each other. Recognition of the connexion between the virtues involves universal prudence, since it refers to the universal end promoted by the specific ends of the different virtues.

This example suggests how the cardinal virtues, as Aquinas understands them, make the other virtues intelligible. The subordinate virtues promote or facilitate or protect the goods pursued by the cardinal virtues. This arrangement of the subordinate virtues allows Aquinas' theory to be flexible. Different circumstances might produce different threats to the goods pursued by the cardinal virtues, so that the same subordinate virtues might have different contents, or different traits might actually become subordinate virtues. Aquinas' account shows why in different circumstances a particular subordinate virtue needs to be cultivated.

[29] Cf. 2-2 q21 a1 sc.

[30] 'In a human being one finds something great, which he possesses through the gift of God, and something defective, which belongs to him from the weakness of nature. Magnanimity, therefore, makes a human being think himself worthy of great things from consideration of the gifts he possesses from God. For instance, if he has great virtue of mind, magnanimity makes him pursue perfect works of virtue . . . Humility, however, makes a human being think little of himself from consideration of his own deficiency. Similarly, magnanimity despises others in so far as they fall short of God's gifts; for it does not think so much of others as to do anything inappropriate for their sake. But humility honours others and thinks them superior, inasmuch as it looks upon something of God's gifts in them. . . . And in this way it is evident that magnanimity and humility are not contraries, though they seem to aim towards contraries, because they proceed in accordance with different considerations' (2-2 q129 a3 ad4). The attitude that Aquinas describes here is endorsed by Paul at *Rm*. 12:3; '. . . not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment (*sôphronein*)'.

[31] 'It is not, therefore, characteristic of humility, but of stupidity, if one accepts whatever is abject, but <it is characteristic of humility> if one does not refuse because of its abjectness what is necessary to do because of virtue. For instance, if charity demands that one carry out some abject task for one's neighbours, because of his humility one does not refuse to do this' (*SG* iii 135 §3097).

[32] MacIntyre, *DRA* xi, mentions this aspect of humility (in 'a prayer composed by Aquinas in which he asks God to grant that he may happily share with those in need what he has, while humbly asking for what he needs from those who have') in order to contrast Aquinas' outlook with Aristotle's views on magnanimity ('a prayer that in effect, though not by Aquninas's own intention, asks that we may not share some of the attitudes of Aristotle's *megalopsychos*'). He develops this contrast later (127). He may be referring to the prayer (of dubious authorship) in *P* xxiv 241b (da bonum quod non habeo ab habentibus humiliter quaerere).

Prudence and temperance, for instance, do not always require saving money for tomorrow. If the rate of inflation is high, someone who merely saves impoverishes himself, and would be better advised to take a less conservative attitude to short-term financial risk. In these circumstances the attitude conventionally recognized as 'prudent' may be ill-advised; but the virtue of prudence is not ill-advised. On the contrary, prudence advises a less conservative attitude to risk in these circumstances. The virtue of prudence, as Aquinas understands it, helps us to see why one subordinate virtue ought to be replaced by another.

His theory explains not only why certain traits are virtuous at a particular time, but also why it would be reasonable for subordinate virtues to change over time, within the constraints of the same cardinal virtues. He includes some details about the specific traits and actions required of virtuous people, and about the social roles and institutions that support these requirements. If we reject these details, we do not necessarily reject Aquinas' theory of the virtues. If he relies on some subordinate social or psychological assumption that either was always false or is no longer true, an objection to the details may not undermine the theory.[33] Once we understand the theoretical aspects of his account of the virtues, we can distinguish the acceptable from the unacceptable conclusions. If Aquinas' theory of the virtues works, it ought to allow us to argue effectively about the content and application of the virtues; if we can use his theory to give good reasons for rejecting his conclusions, we have vindicated the most important parts of his theory.

This point is relevant not only for the philosophical assessment of Aquinas' theory but also for understanding its historical fortunes. It was criticized, not surprisingly, for the particular description of rules and requirements that reflect its historical circumstances.[34] But the rejection of Aquinas' specific virtues does not justify the rejection of his theory of the cardinal virtues and subordinate virtues, and the way he tries to derive these from his conception of rational agency. We need to consider more closely whether the historically influential criticisms of Aquinas go beyond criticism of relatively superficial details that do not affect the main theoretical issues.

332. Moral Goodness in Latin Sources

We may accept Aquinas' claim that prudence, bravery, and temperance underlie any action that we can take to proceed from a moral virtue. But this is not enough to show that deliberative prudence supports the moral virtues, as he conceives them. For he takes the virtues to aim not at every sort of good, but at the morally good (1-2 q18). This requires conformity with reason (q18 a5; a8; a9; a9 ad2; *Mal.* q7 a6).[35] Reason directs actions to the common end of human life (q21 a2 ad2). This common end requires concern for the good of others, and hence for justice (q21 a3). Hence a morally good action is praiseworthy, in so far

[33] Aquinas' discussion of usury in 2-2 q78 offers an example of such assumptions. He qualifies the general prohibition with the conditions set out in a2–3. The development of discussions of usury in moral theology is described by Jonsen and Toulmin, *AC*, ch. 9 It is summarized by Davis, *MPT* ii 373–7, who mentions 'extrinsic titles' that justify the taking of interest on a loan (e.g., loss sustained by the lender, or real and unusual risk incurred by the lender).

[34] For Machiavelli's objections to the Christian character of the virtues that Aquinas describes see §407. Hume expresses rather similar objections in speaking of the 'monkish' virtues, *Inq.* ix 3.

[35] On good and moral good see Bradley, *ATHG* 277.

as it is in the power of the will; it is correct (rectus), in so far as it is directed to the appropriate end; and it is meritorious, in so far as it conforms to justice in relation to another (q21 a3).

We might reasonably expect Aquinas to say more about the general character of moral goodness. In particular we might expect an Aristotelian theory to recognize Aristotle's claim that the moral virtues are distinguished by their concern for the fine (*kalon*). Aquinas' treatment of this claim connects Aristotelian and Stoic treatments of the fine with modern views on moral goodness and rightness, and so it deserves some discussion. But the connexion is not as simple as we might expect it to be, and we need to trace some of the details.

Latin writers on Stoicism follow Cicero in translating '*kalon*' by 'honestum' in moral contexts.[36] Ambrose, for instance, follows Cicero in distinguishing the honestum from the useful (*Off.* i 27–8), and in believing that, properly understood, the honestum and the useful coincide (ii 28; iii 9, 13, 44, 52, 60, 63); we achieve what is genuinely useful if and only if considerations of the honestum outweigh (praeponderare) all others (iii 66). The honestum is the general character shared by the four cardinal virtues (e.g., i 175, 182, 191, 210–11, 258; ii 1), and the source of all duties (ii 22). Ambrose implicitly distinguishes the honestum from beauty, for which he uses 'pulchrum' (i 83), but he recognizes that the honestum has a beauty of its own (iii 57). He connects the honestum with the seemly and appropriate (decorum) (i 219; iii 52, 54, 88, 118), and with what accords with nature (iii 28).[37] In his view, the Scriptures agree with the philosophers in claiming that only what is honestum is good (ii 8, 18; iii 29, 37,[38] 84–91, 96–9, 125–6).

But though Ambrose follows Cicero in using 'honestum' for the Greek '*kalon*', to mark moral goodness, not all translators agree with him. The translators of the Vulgate render '*kalon*' by 'bonum'.[39] One might defend their decision by observing that Ambrose uses 'honestum' to refer to the good that matters most from the moral and religious point of view; in calling something 'honestum' we recognize it as the most important good. At any rate, whatever may have been the reasons for the translation adopted by the Vulgate, their choice may have influenced the translators of Aristotle's *Ethics*; for in almost all

[36] See §180. [37] He justifies the connexion with nature by saying that God made all things 'very good', iii 28.

[38] On Ambrose's discussion of Gyges' ring see §50.

[39] Vulg. OT has 'bonum' where LXX has '*kalon*'. The effects of its rendering of NT passages are still visible in English versions. Rheims, being a translation of Vulg., uses 'good' in these passages, and the AV follows it. Jesus tells the disciples to let their light shine before men so that 'men may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven' (*Mt.* 5:16). Paul finds that 'when I would do good, evil is present with me' (*Rm.* 7:21). He tells the Galatians not to be 'weary in well-doing' (*Gal.* 6:9 NRSV: 'doing what is right'). In all these cases, and in many others, the Latin renders '*kalon*' by 'bonum', and many English versions follow it. They do not always do this. Paul tells the Romans not to return evil for evil, but to take thought for things that are *kala* in the sight of everyone (*Rm.* 12:17). Vulg., as usual, has '*bona*', but AV recognizes '*kala*', and renders 'Provide things honest in the sight of all men', following the English practice of using 'honest' to render '*kalon*'. See Empson, *SCW* 185–6. He mentions cases where earlier English versions have 'honest' and AV replaces it. The practice of Vulg. is even more surprising when one notices that it occasionally uses 'honestum', but not to translate '*kalon*'. When Paul urges the Romans to cast away the works of darkness and put on the armour of light, he tells them to walk '*euschêmonôs*', 'decently' as in the day. Here Vulg. translates by '*honeste*', and Rheims and AV have 'honestly' (*Rm.* 13:13). The use of 'honestum' here is quite reasonable; but it would be at least as reasonable in many of the passages where 'bonum' renders '*kalon*'. Vulg. shows why translators of Aristotle seeking help with Greek philosophical vocabulary might understandably suppose that 'bonum', rather than 'honestum', is the appropriate rendering of '*kalon*', and that therefore no distinction needs to be drawn between the *agathon* and the *kalon*. They also follow Vulg. in using 'honestum' to render '*euschêmon*' (see Aquinas, *in EN*, iv.16 §859, commenting on §608, which uses 'honestas' to render '*euschêmosunê*' in 1128a25).

the places in the *Ethics* where Aristotle uses '*kalon*', the mediaeval Latin translators use 'bonum'.[40]

This translation creates more difficulties for readers of Aristotle than for readers of the Bible, because Aristotle sometimes tries to distinguish features of the *kalon* from features of other sorts of goods.[41] The mediaeval translation conceals some of Aristotle's distinctive claims about the *kalon* from Aquinas. Aristotle often remarks that action for the sake of the *kalon* is characteristic of the virtuous person. In these passages the Latin version says that the virtuous person acts for the sake of the good (e.g., *EN* 1116a28; b3; Aquinas, *in EN* iii 9, §§373, 375). Since everyone acts for the sake of the good, the Latin version changes an apparently distinctive feature of the virtuous person into a feature that virtuous and non-virtuous people share. Aquinas often follows the Latin version in using 'bonum' where Aristotle has '*kalon*', and so he misses the fact that Aristotle is saying something about the *kalon*.[42]

Often, however, the translation fails to conceal Aristotle's point from Aquinas. For he often recognizes that Aristotle is talking about the honestum. In these passages Aristotle uses '*kalon*', but the Latin (as usual) has 'bonum'. Aquinas paraphrases Aristotle's remarks about the *kalon* by speaking of the honestum. These places are less numerous than the places where he simply uses 'bonum', but they are numerous enough to require some explanation.[43] Consideration of the context in Aristotle suggests to Aquinas that Aristotle is speaking of the honestum. The suggestion cannot come entirely from Aristotle, if Aquinas does not know that Aristotle uses '*kalon*' in these passages. Probably, then, he relies on some conception of the honestum that he finds in a non-Aristotelian source.

[40] See, e.g., 1094b15, 1099a27, 1100b27, 30, 1104b31, 1110b15, 1114b6, 1115a30, b23, 1116a11, b3, 1117a8, 1120a27, 1122b6, 1168a33, 1169a6–b1. At 1099a22 and 1123b8 the translation used by Aquinas has 'pulchrum'. The earlier translations are in *Aristoteles Latinus* xxvi 1–3 (see the Greek–Latin index in fasc. 5). Sometimes 'honestus' is used for '*sôphrôn*' (e.g., 1102b30) and once 'honestas' renders '*epieikeia*' (1121b14). Mercken, *GCNEA i* 64, remarks that Grosseteste seeks 'to find for each Greek word a corresponding one in Latin'. Just as Grosseteste fails to provide a distinctive equivalent for '*kalon*' in his translation of the *Ethics*, he fails to provide one in his translation of the Greek commentaries of Eustratius and others (edited by Mercken). The same practice in translating '*kalon*' is followed outside the *Ethics*; see, e.g., Aquinas, *in Met*. xii 7 §2522. Perhaps Grosseteste was influenced by his Greek-speaking informants, since '*kalon*' in later Greek has a broader use than in Classical and Hellenistic Greek.

[41] The choice of 'bonum' to render '*kalon*' in Aristotle's *Ethics* is defensible, but also questionable. The translator has to weigh three maxims for a good translation: (a) Use the same Latin word to render the same Greek word. (b) Use different Latin words to render different Greek words. (c) Use a Latin word that provides a plausible rendering of a given Greek term in a particular context. Latin translators could follow the first two maxims if they always used 'honestum' for '*kalon*' and always used 'bonum' for '*agathon*'. This practice, however, would violate the third maxim, because 'honestum' is an unnatural and misleading rendering when '*kalon*' refers to beauty. The mediaeval Latin translators decide to use one term 'bonum', which does not appear as unnatural as 'honestum' would appear in passages that refer to beauty. Their choice violates the second maxim, since it fails to distinguish '*kalon*' from '*agathon*' in contexts where one ought to distinguish them. Renaissance translators deal with Aristotle's different uses of '*kalon*' by using 'pulchrum' and 'honestum' according to the apparent force of '*kalon*' in different passages, and so violate the first maxim. For Lambinus' decisions see, e.g., his renderings of 1116a28, b3, 1120a12, 23–4.

[42] When Aristotle says that even in adversity the *kalon* 'shines through' (*EN* 1100b30), Aquinas says that the good shines even in misfortune (*in EN* i 16 §195). When Aristotle says that virtuous actions are *kalon*, and done for the sake of the *kalon* (*EN* 1120a23–4), Aquinas makes the boring remark that they are good and done for the sake of the good (*in EN* iv 2 §666). In many other places he does not know that 'bonum' conceals occurrences of '*kalon*'.

[43] Aquinas probably does not rely on definite information about the Greek text, obtained from someone who had consulted it directly. If he had such information, why does he not use it in places where it would have been relevant? Had he known that Aristotle said that virtuous actions are *kalon* and done for the sake of the *kalon*, he would have had good reason to introduce the honestum into his paraphrase of the relevant passage (*in EN* §666 on 1120a23–4; see n42); but he does not introduce it here.

The most probable immediate source is Albert's commentary on the *Ethics*; for Albert also lacks direct access to the Greek, but still takes Aristotle to discuss the honestum.[44] Albert takes his conception of the honestum from Stoic sources, and applies it to Aristotle. He accepts Cicero's account of the honestum as what attracts us by its own power, apart from any further utility, and so he infers that it most deserves to be called good without qualification (simpliciter); for it does not appeal to us simply because it is useful for satisfying some prior desire.[45] For the same reason it is the only unqualified good, in contrast to the goods of fortune that in some circumstances are bad (*SE* v 2 = 314.22–34). Since it is the unqualified good, the honestum rather than the pleasant is the basis of choiceworthiness, and so our desire for it is rational rather than appetitive (non per modum concupiscentiae, sed per modum amicitiae, *SE* x 2 = 713.11–15). Hence the honestum is not the same in essence as the pleasant, though it always involves pleasure (*SE* x 2 = 713.37–44). All virtue, therefore, has as its object this one kind of good, the honestum.[46]

Since Albert notices that Cicero finds the honestum especially in the best form of friendship (*SE* viii 3 = 601.29–58),[47] he takes Aristotle's conception of the friendship of virtue to involve the honestum (*SE* viii 1 = 592.61–9). Cicero contrasts concern for the honestum with exclusive concern for one's own advantage;[48] Albert connects this contrast with Aristotle's contrast between friendship for utility or pleasure and friendship that involves concern for the other for the other's own sake.[49] The connexion between the honestum and unselfish action also explains why justice involves the honestum. In Albert's view, 'everything just, in so far as it is just, is also honestum'.[50] These remarks on the honestum in the 'questions' section of the commentary explain Albert's judgment that in various places Aristotle refers to the honestum.[51]

[44] The commentary *Super Ethica* (cited as *SE*, from Albert, *OO* xiv.1–2) is taken by its editors to be the one that Aquinas is said to have helped to edit. See Preface to xiv 1, pp. v–vi. On the influence of Albert on Aquinas' commentary see Gauthier, *EN* i 1, 122–3; L xlvii 1, 235–57; Bourke 'Ethics'; Doig, *APCE* 24–33 and ch. 2. Albert includes both a 'literal exposition' and a series of 'questions' that discuss philosophical issues raised by the text, but not necessarily discussed by Aristotle. Aquinas includes only the literal exposition, without the questions; one might say that the 'questions' section of his commentary appears in the *Summa*. (See Gauthier, *EN* i. 1, 131.) Albert's questions make clear the assumptions about the honestum that guide him in mentioning it at various places in his literal exposition. Passages where both Albert and Aquinas mention the honestum include 65.22 on 1104b31 (Aquinas §273); 282.53–4 on 1127a6 (§827); 594.96 on 1155a29 (§1544); 647.37 on 1162b35 (§1737); 684.61 on 1168a10 (§1848); 688.54 on 1169a–b1 (§1881). Passages where Aquinas mentions it and Albert does not mention it include 1094b14 (Aquinas §33); 1115a12 (§533); 1121b9–10 (§695); 1122b6 (§714); 1126b29 (§§824–5); 1168a33 (§1857); 1175b29 (§2051); 1176b8 (§2070).

[45] See *SE* i 9 = 50.66–8, from Cic. *Inv.* ii 157. See also *De bono in genere* q5 a1 ad2 = *OO* xxviii 72.51: the honestum is 'what is sought because of itself' (cf. 33.15–18, 62.22–30); *De prudentia* q1 a3 ad5 = xxviii 230.72–4: the honestum is 'what attracts us by its power and draws us by its proper and natural worthiness that it presents'.

[46] *De bono in genere*, q5 a1 ad1 = *OO* xxviii 71.73. Cf. Cic. *Inv.* ii 159.

[47] Cic. *Amic.* 44.

[48] Cicero acknowledges that the two types of concern sometimes coincide; *Inv.* ii 157.

[49] This is why he believes that the actions Aristotle discusses in his account of good self-love must be honestum actions; he calls them first 'bonae operationes', but then 'honestae operationes' (*SE* ix 10 = 688.40–55).

[50] See *De iustitia* q2 a1 ad8 = *OO* xxviii 282–79–85. Cf. Cic. *Amic.* 51. At 281.8–11 Albert ascribes to Cicero the account of law (lex) as 'written right (ius) prescribing the honestum and prohibiting the contrary'. On the sources of this definition see note to *OO* xxviii 46.69–47.2.

[51] In his other commentary, the *Ethica* (= *Opera*, ed. Borgnet, vii), Albert does not provide the same explicit discussion of the honestum. But some of his remarks show that he presupposes the sort of view that he develops explicitly in *Super Ethica*.. He treats the division of goods into the honestum, utile, and delectabile as familiar (i 3.6 = 38a). He does not mention the honestum at the point where Aristotle introduces the threefold division in Book ii (ii 8 = 162). But he introduces the honestum prominently into the discussion of friendship. See viii 1 = 518a: 'Further, not only is friendship about things necessary for life—for in that case it would only be useful—but it is also a good in its own right and

333. The Honestum in Aquinas' Commentary

Albert's comments help us to see why Aquinas believes that Aristotle discusses the honestum. Aquinas does not detect a reference to the honestum in every place where Aristotle speaks of the *kalon*; often he follows the Latin version in using 'bonum'.[52] But nearly every place where he uses 'honestum' marks an occurrence of '*kalon*', and he captures the main points of Aristotle's use of '*kalon*'. He relies on (i) the contrast between good and pleasant, (ii) claims about praiseworthiness, and (iii) claims about disinterestedness. When he detects a mention of the honestum, he seems to have one of these three features in mind. We may illustrate his reasoning by surveying some places in his commentary on the *Ethics* where he speaks of the honestum.

Aristotle remarks that fine and just things (*kala kai dikaia*) that are the concern of political science are subject to difference and variation, so that some people think they are conventional, and not natural (*EN* 1094b14–16). Aristotle replies that goods also display the same variation. Since the Latin version renders '*kala*' by '*bona*', it suggests that Aristotle first makes an observation about good and just things, and then proceeds to make an observation about good things treated as a separate class.[53] A commentator might find this curiously repetitive. But Aquinas avoids attributing this repetition to Aristotle by recognizing that the first lot of *bona* are 'virtuous actions, which he here calls just' (*in EN* §33). When he comments on difference and variation, he says: 'For some things which by some are counted just and right (honesta) are by some <counted> unjust and wrong' (§33). Since Aquinas' 'just and right' reverses the order of the Greek phrase '*kala kai dikaia*' used by Aristotle, he probably does not intend it as a translation of Aristotle, but as an explanation of the type of good and just things that he has in mind. Aristotle's reference to political science may have suggested to Aquinas that Aristotle has morally right actions in mind. Aristotle's use of '*kalon*' in this passage confirms Aquinas' judgment.[54]

Aristotle distinguishes three objects of choice that the virtuous person gets right and others get wrong: the *kalon*, the advantageous (*sumpheron*), and the pleasant (*hêdu*) (1104b30–1). The Latin, as usual, uses 'bonum' for '*kalon*', and uses 'malum' to render '*aischron*' (though it sometimes uses 'turpe', the normal opposite to 'honestum'). Aquinas, however, glosses

honestum. A sign of this is the fact that it is proper to the good to be praiseworthy. For we praise friend-lovers, that is to say, lovers of deliberative friendship; so that friend-loving seems to all to have the character of honestum goods, and is loved in its own right.' Cf. viii 2 = 519b: 'The honestum good and the pleasant good are ends, but the honestum is an end in relation to reason, whereas pleasure <is an end> in relation to sense, or in relation to nature generally'. The best kind of friendship is founded on the honestum (ix 3.2 = 588b). The two commentaries are discussed by Dunbabin, 'Albertus'.

[52] Nor does every mention of the honestum in Aquinas' commentary correspond to a mention of the *kalon* by Aristotle. For one exception see *in EN* §1552, discussed below.

[53] See 'Talem autem quendam errorem habent et bona . . . ' *in EN* §16.

[54] Next he comes to Aristotle's claim that good things display the same sort of variation as we find in fine and just things. He reads it (as the Latin suggests) as a claim about good things displaying the same sort of variation as we find in good and just things. He infers that the second occurrence of '*bona*' refers to a subset of goods, and so he suggests that Aristotle refers to external goods ('bona exteriora', §34). He is probably wrong about this; the second example of goods that Aristotle offers is bravery (1094b19), which is not a merely external good. Aquinas deals with this difficulty by suggesting that 'bravery' here simply refers to bodily strength ('fortitudo corporalis', §34). Here he follows Albert and Eustratius (20.29–21.14). Since Eustratius already had the same idea when he read the Greek text, we cannot attribute Aquinas' exegesis simply to his reliance on the Latin. None the less, had he known where Aristotle uses '*kalon*' rather than '*agathon*', he might have thought differently about the remark on goods.

'bonum' by 'honestum' ('bonum, id est honestum', §273). To explain Aristotle's claim that the *kalon* is pleasant, Aquinas suggests that the honestum is pleasant in so far as it is in accord with reason ('secundum quod est conveniens rationi', §275).

The fact that Aristotle, as rendered into Latin, mentions three objects of choice of which the good is only one might suggest to a reader that 'good' refers to a subset of goods and not to all goods (since all objects of choice are goods in some way); in that case, it would be easy to infer that the relevant subset of goods are the honesta. In Book viii Aristotle mentions the good (*agathon*), the pleasant, and the advantageous as objects of love (*philêta*), and, after dismissing the advantageous as a merely instrumental object, identifies the good and the pleasant as the ends that are objects of love (1155b18–21). The division in Book ii appears to be parallel to that in Book viii, except that Book ii has '*kalon*' instead of '*agathon*'.

Aquinas sees the possible relevance of this passage in Book viii. For when he comes to comment on it, he explains it just as he explains the passage in Book ii, supposing that where the Latin text has 'bonum', Aristotle actually has the honestum in mind (§1552, per se bonum, id est honestum). Aquinas' suggestion that Aristotle is thinking of the honestum gives us some reason to attribute to him the argument that we have already noticed—that if Aristotle treats the good as only one object of desire, he must have in mind some proper subset of goods.

In the first five chapters of Book iii Aristotle several times mentions the *kalon*.[55] In all of these passages the Latin has 'bonum', and Aquinas follows it. In some passages the Latin uses 'turpe' (usually the opposite of 'honestum') as the opposite of 'bonum', so that a reader might suspect that the honestum is involved. Even here Aquinas does not take the hint offered by 'turpe'.[56] But sometimes he recognizes that Aristotle uses 'turpe' to refer to vicious behaviour. To illustrate Aristotle's claim that some things are so shameful (turpe) that we should refuse to do them at any price, he cites St Laurence, who endured being roasted on the gridiron rather than sacrifice to idols (§395).[57]

The section of the *Ethics* that discusses the particular virtues often refers to the special connexion between virtue, acting virtuously, and acting for the sake of the *kalon*. Aquinas misses several of these references.[58] But sometimes he captures them. Aristotle says that there are some things we ought to fear, and fearing them is *kalon*, while not fearing them is *aischron* (1115a12–13). Aquinas comments that in some cases fear is honestum (§533). The

[55] See *EN* 1110a21; b9; 1112b17; 1113b9; 1114b7.

[56] See *in EN* §§388–9, 393, 403–4, on 1110a4–8, 19–22, b9–15. Perhaps Aquinas fails to take the hint because he does not suppose that in this discussion 'turpe' always refers to moral wrongness. This is clear from his interpretation of Aristotle's remark that people are sometimes praised for 'enduring something *aischron* or painful as the price of great and *kala* things' (*EN* 1110a19–22). Aquinas does not take Aristotle to mean that people are praised for doing something vicious to promote some good; the 'shameful' (turpe) things he has in mind, according to Aquinas, involve humiliation rather than sin (*in EN* §393). Since he believes that Aristotle does not intend 'turpe' to refer to moral wrongness, he misses the hint that Aristotle is also referring to the honestum.

[57] Aquinas overlooks some interpretative issues that would arise for him if he had been aware of Aristotle's use of '*kalon*'. In his discussion of deliberation, for instance, Aristotle remarks that when several means to our end are open, we look for the 'easiest and finest (*kallista*)' means (1112b16–17). In using 'finest' here, Aristotle may well intend to point out that we must use moral criteria, as well as criteria of mere efficiency, in identifying possible means. This possibility does not strike Aquinas.

[58] Aristotle says it is characteristic of virtue to do good rather than receive it and to do *kalon* actions rather than to refrain from *aischron* actions (1120a12–13). Though the Latin uses 'turpe' rather than 'malum' where the Greek has '*aischron*', Aquinas says nothing about the honestum in this context (see §661). Similarly, he simply follows the Latin in other remarks about the *kalon*.

context helps him, since Aristotle goes on to say that the person with these appropriate fears is decent and has the proper sort of shame (*epieikês kai aidêmôn*). When Aristotle says brave people act for the sake of the *kalon*, Aquinas realizes that he does not simply intend the uninformative claim that they act for the sake of the good, but must mean that they act for some more specific end peculiar to their virtue (1115b23; §§549–50).[59]

Aristotle sometimes remarks that attention to the *kalon* is the hallmark of the virtues (see above on §661); the magnificent person, for instance, spends money for the sake of the *kalon*, because that is common to the virtues (1122b6–7). In Aquinas' paraphrase this person spends 'for the sake of the bonum honestum as an end; for acting for the sake of good is common to all the virtues'. The 'for . . . ' clause makes it clear that Aquinas takes Aristotle to have mentioned the bonum. He does not explain why he introduces the honestum.

Aristotle mentions the *kalon* several times in discussing friendship.[60] When he says friendship is not only necessary, but also *kalon* (1155a29), Aquinas comments that it is something good, that is to say, praiseworthy and honestum (§1544). He clearly supposes that the text he is explaining has 'bonum'; but Aristotle's remark about praiseworthiness suggests to him that the honestum is the relevant good. Similarly, when Aristotle remarks that people wish *kalon* things, but decide on advantageous things (1162b35), Aquinas takes him to say that people approve honestum things (§1737). Aristotle's example of something *kalon* is A's doing a good turn for B without expectation of return from B; his example of something advantageous is receiving a good turn from another. Aquinas notices that the first example illustrates the honestum. For the same reason, he mentions the honestum in his discussion of Aristotle's remark that the benefactor's action is *kalon* for the benefactor, but merely advantageous for the beneficiary (1168a9–12; §§1848–50).

Aquinas marks Aristotle's comment that the good person is normally supposed to act because of the *kalon*, and not for his own sake (1168a33–5). As before, the contrast between acting for the *kalon* and acting for one's own advantage suggests to Aquinas that the honestum is being discussed (§1857).[61] Similarly, when Aristotle says the virtuous person seeks to gain the *kalon* in preference to 'contested' goods (1169a20–5), Aquinas infers that Aristotle refers to the honestum (§§1878, 1881).[62] When Aristotle says that some appetites (*epithumiai*) for *kalon* things are praiseworthy, Aquinas mentions the honestum (1175b29 §2051); the reference to praiseworthiness gives him the clue. Similarly, Aristotle's contrast between the *kalon*, which is choiceworthy in itself, and pleasant amusement suggests to Aquinas that the honestum is relevant (1176b8 §2070).

[59] He does not mention the honestum here. But he mentions it in his discussion of the lower grades of bravery (§564). In the discussion of generosity, Aquinas passes over occurrences of *kalon* without comment, except when he remarks that extravagant people decline towards pleasure because they do not direct their lives to the bonum honestum (1121b9–10; §695). Perhaps he introduces the honestum because Aristotle mentions the good and the pleasant as the two possible aims of one's life. As before, Aquinas assumes that when Aristotle refers to pleasure and to good as ends, he has in mind some specific type of good (since pleasure is also a good, and pursued for the sake of the good); the non-instrumental good contrasted with pleasure is the honestum.

[60] When Aristotle says friendship promotes *kalon* actions (1155a15), Aquinas simply speaks of good actions (§1540).

[61] In two further places that mention the *kalon* Aquinas says nothing about the honestum (1169a6 §1873; 1169a8 §1874). This is surprising; for the first passage contains the contrast between the *kalon* and the advantageous, which usually prompts Aquinas to mention the honestum, and in the second passage Aristotle claims that when everyone strains to achieve the *kalon*, the common good is advanced.

[62] In Book x Aquinas sometimes accepts the 'bonum' of the Latin version without further comment (1179a5, 11; §§2129–30).

In these passages of his commentary, Aquinas speaks of the honestum where the context suggests that Aristotle speaks of, or alludes to, one of the three features of the honestum. He ascribes these features to the honestum on the strength of Albert's commentary. He relies, through Albert, on Ambrose and Cicero, and so ultimately on Stoic sources. Aristotle does not clearly express the conception of the *kalon* that the Stoics formulate, but the Stoic conception fits his claims. According to Albert and Aquinas, the honestum is good without qualification (simpliciter); its goodness does not consist in its being the object of a desire. That is why it attracts us by its own character.[63] It involves disinterested concern, as opposed to concern that is guided by one's own advantage. For these reasons, it is praiseworthy, and not simply advantageous.

This interpretation of Aristotle is supported by evidence that Aquinas is unaware of. In the contexts where he thinks Aristotle refers to the honestum, Aristotle actually uses '*kalon*', though the Latin versions use 'bonum'. We ought not to be surprised by the correspondence between Aristotle's Greek and Aquinas' exposition. For the Stoic assumptions about the *kalon* that underlie Aquinas' claims about the honestum also match Aristotle's claims about the *kalon*. Aquinas' success in identifying Aristotle's uses of '*kalon*' on the basis of Stoic views about the honestum suggests that the Stoic views fit the Aristotelian position as well.

334. The Honestum in the *Summa*

Aquinas' treatment of the honestum in his commentary on the *Ethics* provides a starting point for examining his remarks in the *Summa*. Though he does not explicitly introduce the honestum into his explicit discussion of moral goodness (1-2 qq18–21), it has an important place in his conception of the virtues and of moral goodness.

He divides the good in general into the pleasant, the useful, and the honestum, citing Ambrose as his authority.[64] He recognizes that the division seems to be proper to the human good, but takes it to be applicable to good in general, if the honestum is identified with what is desired for its own sake.[65] Elsewhere, he comments on the relation between the honestum and the useful, explaining that everything honestum is also useful, except for the ultimate end.[66]

At the beginning of the Prima Secundae, Aquinas takes for granted this notion of the honestum as the non-instrumental good (1-2 q8 a2 ad2; q8 a3, ad sc). He speaks of the honestum on the assumption that it is moral goodness. In the discussion of the passions, he insists that the honestum is good in accordance with reason (q34 a2 ad1). The passions

[63] See §2070: virtuous actions are 'good in their own right and honesta, so that some also say that honestas is what draws us by its own power and attracts us by its own worthiness'.

[64] Ambrose, *Off.* i 27. See §332 above.

[65] 'This division seems to be proper to human good. But if we consider the character of good from a higher and more universal point of view, we shall find that this division belongs to good in so far as it is good. . . . What is desired (appetitur) as the last thing, completely ending the motion of desire, as a thing towards which, in its own right, desire (appetitus) tends, is called honestum, because what is called honestum is what is desired (desiderare) in itself' (1a q5 a6).

[66] 'Among goods, however, is found what is good without qualification and in its own right, as honesta goods are, which are desired as ends for their own sake, even though they lead to something else, because in all honesta usefulness coincides with honestas, except in the ultimate <good>, which is the end of ends, which is to be desired (cupere) only for itself' (*2Sent.* d21 q1 a3).

are relevant to moral virtue, in so far as they can be regulated by the rule of reason, which is the root of the honestum good.[67] In saying that the honestum has the character of the praiseworthy and the meritorious (q39 a2 obj2), he refers back to the discussion of moral goodness (q21 a2), without suggesting that any further explanation is needed. He assumes—even though he did not say so in his discussion of moral goodness—that the features of moral goodness belong to the honestum.

In the Secunda Secundae he assumes that the virtues involve the honestum. Friendship has the character of the praiseworthy and honestum only in so far as it is 'founded on the honestas of the virtues', hence only in the best kind of friendship (2-2 q23 a3 ad1). The duty (debitum) of honestas extends to the requirements of the virtues in general, going beyond the demands of strict justice (q102 a2 ad2; q106 a1 ad2; a4 ad1; q114 a2).[68] This honestas of virtue involves unselfishness; it is especially displayed in benefiting another, in contrast to the merely useful good of gaining a benefit for oneself (q26 a12). This remark occurs in a discussion of Aristotle's chapter on benefactors and beneficiaries (*EN* ix 7), where Aquinas' commentary introduces a reference to the honestum. Aristotle claims that virtuous people prefer the *kalon* even at the cost of their life (1169a25–6); Aquinas follows him (with a modification), claiming (without specific reference to Aristotle) that the honestum is to be preferred even at the cost of one's bodily life (2-2 q110 a2).

After these brief references to the honestum, Aquinas discusses it more explicitly quite late in the Secunda Secundae, when he considers honestas as a part of temperance (q143 a1). He relies on a remark by Cicero that connects the honestum with the fitting (decorum, *prepon*), and connects the fitting with (among other things) temperance, because the temperate person does what is fitting for a human being, as opposed to a non-rational creature (Cic. *Off.* i 93–4).[69] Aquinas follows Cicero to this extent (2-2 q141 a2 obj3 ad3).[70]

The connexion of the honestum with temperance leads him to consider the honestum in general. He confirms its connexion with virtue as a whole (q145 a1); the virtues are honestum because they are ends in themselves though not the ultimate end (q145 a1 ad1).[71] It is characteristic of the honestum to direct all human affairs in accord with reason; this is what makes it 'fitting' (decorum) (q145 a2). What is ordered in accordance with reason is thereby naturally fitting for a human being (q145 a3); temperance is especially honestum because it prevents actions that are especially base (*turpe*) by being contrary to rational nature (q141 a8 ad1). The features that Aquinas attributes to the honestum are those he previously attributed to the morally good.[72]

For this account of the honestum Aquinas relies on Stoic sources, and especially on Cicero. On this point the *Summa* is similar to the commentary on the *Ethics*. His attitude to

[67] 'Now every honestum good proceeds from these two things, namely from correctness of reason and of will' (q39 a2). 'All the passions of the soul ought to be regulated in accordance with the rule (or "standard", regula) of reason, which (sc. rule? reason?) is the root of the honestum good' (q39 a2 ad1).

[68] On debitum see §320.

[69] On the decorum see §332 above on Ambrose.

[70] On temperance and the honestum see Albert, *De Temperantia* q4 a4 = *OO* xxviii 192.81, 193.3–7.

[71] Cajetan comments that Aquinas speaks differently of the honestum in 1a q5 a6 from how he speaks in 2–2. In the Prima Pars he takes honestum, utile, and delectabile to divide the good exhaustively. Here, however, he speaks more narrowly, with special reference to morals; 'et ideo honestum concidit hic cum virtute seu virtuoso' (ad 2-2 q145 a1 = L x 147, also quoted in M).

[72] See also 2-2 q110 a2 (the honestas of virtue); Supp. q49 a2 ad6 (the correct use of something useful is the basis of honestas).

Stoic sources is critical, however. He rejects the Stoic doctrine that the honestum is the only good. He agrees that it is the principal human good, because it belongs to reason, which is principal in a human being; but since it is not the only human good, sorrow can reasonably be directed to the loss of non-moral goods (3a q15 a6 ad2).

Aquinas, therefore, treats honestas as moral goodness, a good that is discovered by reason, specifying what fits rational nature, and not only good for the individual, but also meritorious because of its contribution to the common good maintained by justice. In the *Summa*, no less than in the commentary on the *Ethics*, Aquinas' conception of the honestum forms his Aristotelian account of moral goodness.

These points about the role of the honestum in Aquinas' theory are clear to Suarez. As we will see, he recognizes the cumulative importance of Aquinas' scattered remarks, and presents a connected account of moral rightness (honestas) as fitness to rational nature.[73] He has good reason to claim that he is making Aquinas clear and explicit, not adding a new element to Aquinas' position. The position that can reasonably be ascribed to Aquinas can no less reasonably be ascribed to Aristotle as well.[74]

These details on Aquinas' treatment of the honestum should help us to see what he commits himself to in his claims about the deliberative aspects of prudence. Once we see that he is committed to an account of moral virtue that gives this central place to the impartial, rational outlook concerned with the common good, we can ask more precise questions about his description of prudence and its relation to the moral virtues. We need to see whether he can argue that prudence forms a conception of the ultimate end from which deliberation leads us to the honestum.

335. Justice

The virtues as a whole, including the self-regarding virtues, aim at the honestum primarily because they require justice; for the impartial outlook aiming at the honestum is characteristic of justice.[75] Aquinas suggests that justice is especially concerned with actions rather than passions, and that it belongs to the will in contrast to non-rational desire. He is right to claim that acting virtuously requires a contribution by the will as well as the passions. But why should this contribution belong to a distinct virtue, and why should this virtue be justice? We might suppose that bravery and temperance themselves require a rightly-directed will that the virtuous person's passions obey. Apparently we can make this clear without mentioning justice.

This objection takes us back to Aquinas' puzzling claim that bravery and temperance belong to the non-rational parts and justice belongs to the will.[76] We may agree that it is not the function of justice to correct and modify any particular set of non-rational desires, whereas this is the function of bravery and temperance. But we can agree about this difference while still insisting that bravery and temperance also engage the will. So far, then, Aquinas has no sufficient reason for making justice a cardinal virtue.

[73] See Suarez, *Bon.* ii. 2.11 = 295a. [74] See §116.

[75] See §320 on debitum. Sometimes the debitum honesti is contrasted with the debitum iustitiae.

[76] See §290.

Why should our pursuit of our ultimate end, which is our own happiness, involve a virtue that is directed towards the good of others? Aquinas does not answer this question when he discusses whether justice is a virtue.[77] He simply assumes that justice correctly directs (rectificat) human actions, and that therefore it makes a human being good. We do not learn much more from his reasons for thinking that right (ius) is the object of justice (2-2 q57 a1). He assumes that justice involves some 'work that is equalized (adaequatum) to another in accordance with some way of being equal' (q57 a2). But the basis for this claim about the connexion between right direction and equality is not clear.

Aquinas is right to suppose that the cardinal virtues must include some provision for 'co-ordinating' the actions of different human beings (q58 a8).[78] But some sorts of co-ordination might appear to result from my successful manipulation of other people for my own advantage. This is not the sort of co-ordination on the basis of equality that Aquinas has in mind. What would support the more precise claims he makes about the content of justice?

He claims that human beings are naturally social, and that their social inclination underlies the common principles of natural law (1-2 q94 a2).[79] But Aquinas does not describe the inclination in much detail.[80] In particular, he does not make it clear how a bare inclination towards society supports a demand to treat others on some basis of equality. This lack of detail in Aquinas corresponds to a similar gap in Aristotle, who also fails to explain fully why the other-regarding virtue of justice must be included among the virtues that are necessary for an agent's happiness.[81]

336. Friendship

At this stage in Aristotle's argument, we appealed to his discussion of friendship. Does Aquinas' treatment of friendship give us any similar help? At first sight, it is different from Aristotle's treatment; he treats friendship as one of the two types of love, and he treats love as the primary passion.[82] But he does not really treat friendship as a species of passion; for he distinguishes the love belonging to friendship from the love belonging to appetite.[83] The love

[77] 'A human being's action is made good by meeting the standard (regula) of reason, in accordance with which human actions are made correct. Hence, since justice makes human actions correct, it is clear that it makes the action of a human being good' (2-2 q58 a3). Cf. *2Sent.* d27 a3 ad3 = P vi 633b; *in EN* v 2 §908.

[78] 'Whatever can be corrected through reason is the matter for moral virtue, which is defined through correct reason . . . Now through reason one can correct the internal passions of the soul, and the external actions, and also the external things that a human being can use. But through external actions and external things, by which human beings can have a common life (communicare), one looks for the proper direction (ordinatio) of one human being to another . . . And that is why, since justice is directed to another person, it is . . . only about external actions and things, . . . in so far as one human being is co-ordinated with another (alteri coordinatur) in accordance with them' (2-2 q58 a8). Cf. *3Sent.* d33 q1 a1 sol.3 ad3 = P vii 350b.

[79] See §311. Cf. *SG* iii 128–9, partly quoted at §307n39.

[80] The commentary on Aristotle's *Politics* i 1 (= P xxi 371a) is also brief on this point.

[81] On egoism see Finnis, *Aq.* 111, citing *2Sent.* d3 q4 a1 ad2 = P vi 427a (we do not love something because it is ours but because it is good; for good is per se the object of will); *ST* 2-2 q31 a2 ad2 (the human nature of sinners has a claim on us apart from their fault); q64 a6 (we ought to love the nature that God has made).

[82] In *Rhetoric* ii 4 Aristotle treats love or friendliness (*philia*) as a passion, but he makes no such claim about friendship in his discussion in the *Ethics*.

[83] '. . . the movement of love tends towards two things: towards the good that one wills to someone (to oneself or to another) and towards that to which one wills good. Therefore one has appetitive love towards the good that one wills

of friendship is intellectual love, belonging to the will, in contrast to sensory love, belonging to the sensory appetite.[84] Intellectual love, resulting from the recognition of the good pursued by the will, is not a passion, though it has the same name as the passion of love (q26 a2). This sort of love is 'dilection', the product of election rather than passion (q26 a3; cf. 1a q60 a3).

Aquinas argues that this different relation to reason and election is connected with a difference in the objects of love (1-2 q26 a4; cf. 2–2 q23 a1). Amicable love for another person is love of the person in his own right (secundum se), whereas love of the other for the sake of some further benefit to oneself is purely appetitive love (1-2 q27 a3). In amicable love we do not look for any further result for ourselves, and in this respect the object of love can be an ultimate object.[85] This does not make it the ultimate end, but it is an ultimate end in the sense that it is not simply directed towards a further end of ours.[86] If we do not wish good to the other person himself, but want his good for our sake, that is appetitive love rather than amicable love.[87]

The basis for this amicable love is some similarity between oneself and the other.[88] This recognition of similarity is also described as an 'apprehension of unity', in which one recognizes the other as 'another oneself' (alius ipse),[89] and achieves the 'intimacy' (inhaesio)

to another, and amicable love towards the one to whom one wills good. Now the members of this division are related as primary and secondary: for whatever is loved with amicable love is loved without qualification (simpliciter) and in its own right (per se), but whatever is loved with appetitive love is loved, not without qualification and in its own right, but for something else. . . . Consequently the love with which a thing is loved, that it may have some good, is love without qualification, whereas while the love with which a thing is loved so that it may be another's good is love in a certain respect (secundum quid)' (1-2 q26 a4).

[84] 'Love is something belonging to desire, since good is the object of both. Hence the division of love corresponds to the division of desires. . . . there is . . . desire following an apprehension in the subject of the desire, but from necessity and not from free judgment. This is the character of sensory desire in non-rational animals. In human beings, however, it has some share in freedom, to the extent that it obeys reason. Again, there is another desire following an apprehension in the subject of the desire in accordance with free judgment. And this is the rational or intellectual desire, which is called will' (1-2 q26 a1).

[85] 'The object of love is of two sorts. One is the sort that is loved in the manner of goodwill, whenever we wish someone's good because of himself, as when we love friends even if nothing has to come about from them for us. Another is the sort that is loved with appetitive love; and this is good that is in us or it is loved because some good in us arises from it, as when we love pleasure or we love wine to the extent that it produces pleasure. Now whatever is loved with appetitive love cannot be an ultimate object of love, since it is referred to the good of another—the one who has the appetite; but what is loved with the love of goodwill can be an ultimate object of love' (*4Sent* d49 q1 a2 sol.1 ad3 = P vii 1188a).

[86] 'Loving someone because of himself can be understood in two ways. One is the way in which something is loved as ultimate end; and in this way only God is to be loved because of himself. Another is the way in which we love someone to whom we will good, as comes about in morally right (honesta) friendship, but not the way <in which we love> a good that we will for ourselves, as comes about in pleasant or advantageous friendship, in which we love the friend as a good of ours—not because we desire advantage or pleasure for the friend, but because from the friend we desire advantage and pleasure for ourselves, just as we love other things that are pleasant and advantageous for us, such as food or clothes. But when we love someone because of virtue, we will good to him, not for ourselves [or: not him for ourselves?]; and this especially arises in the friendship of charity' (*Car.* a8 ad16).

[87] 'According to the Philosopher, not just any love has the character of friendship, but the love that is with goodwill—that is to way, when we love someone in such a way that we will good to him. If, however, we do not will good to the things we love, but we will their good for ourselves, in the way in which we are said to love wine, or a horse, or anything of that sort, it is not amicable love, but a sort of appetitive love. For it would be absurd to speak of having friendship for wine or for a horse' (2-2 q23 a1).

[88] 'For from the very fact that two are similar, as having one form, they are in a way one in that form: thus two human beings are one thing in the species of humanity, and two white human beings are one thing in whiteness. Hence the affection of one tends towards the other, as being one with him, and he wills good to him as to himself' (1-2 q27 a3).

[89] 'Now since love is of two kinds, appetitive love and amicable love, each of these arises from a kind of apprehension of the oneness of the beloved with the lover. For when we love a thing, as having an appetite for it, we apprehend it as

that seeks to know the other as one knows oneself. Since this amicable love is directed to features of the other person, apart from one's own previous needs, it produces 'ecstasy', taking one's concern outside oneself. Appetitive love involves a concern for something outside oneself, but only in relation to oneself and what one lacks. Amicable love takes one more radically outside oneself, in making one concerned for the other person in his own right,[90] so that it remains in the object, whereas appetitive love turns back to oneself.[91] In this respect amicable love values its object apart from its relation to oneself. Hence one loves the good for its own sake, not because it is one's own good.[92] Whereas appetitive love draws external things into ourselves, in so far as we fit them to our antecedent concerns, amicable love draws us towards external things, by fitting our concerns to other people's concerns.[93]

Since amicable love is directed towards other people in their own right, it is 'complete' or 'perfect' love, whereas appetitive love is imperfect.[94] We perfectly love another person when we want his good; for our love is directed entirely towards him. We love him imperfectly when we want his good for some further end to which our love is primarily directed.[95] In amicable love, therefore, we love the other person 'as ourselves', not because

belonging to our well-being. Similarly, when one loves another with amicable love, one wills good to him, just as one wills good to oneself, and that is why one apprehends him as another oneself—that is to say, in so far as one wills good to him as to oneself. That is why a friend is said to be "another oneself".' (1-2 q28 a1).

[90] As far as the desiring part is concerned, one is said to undergo ecstasy, when one's desire is carried towards something else, going out from oneself in a way. . . . [This] ecstasy is caused . . . by amicable love, without qualification, but by appetitive love not without qualification, but in a certain respect. For in appetitive love the lover is carried out of himself in a certain way—namely, to the extent that, when he is not content to enjoy the good that he has, he seeks to enjoy something outside himself. But since he seeks to have this external good for himself, he does not go outside himself without qualification, but this movement remains within him in its end. But in amicable love one's affection goes out from oneself without qualification because he wills and does good to his friend, as having concern and foresight for the friend because of the friend himself' (1-2 q28 a3).

[91] 'One can tend towards the good of a thing in two ways. One is the way in which one refers the good of that thing to another . . . as someone loves wine to the extent that he wishes for the sweetness of the wine, and he delights in this because he enjoys it, not because the wine itself has it. This is the love that some call appetitive love. But this love does not stop with the thing that is said to be love, but is turned back to the subject for which the good of the thing loved is desired. In another way love is carried towards the good of a thing so that it stops at the thing itself, to the extent that one is satisfied that what has a good has it, and one wishes for it a good that it lacks. And this is the love of goodwill, which is the beginning of friendship, as the Philosopher says' (*3Sent* d29 q1 a3 = P vii 318a).

[92] 'Nature is said to be turned to itself, because one always loves one's own good. But it is not necessary that one's aim comes to rest in the fact that it is one's own, but in the fact that it is good. For unless something were good for oneself in some way, either in reality or in appearance, one would never love it. But one does not love it because it is one's own, but because it is good; for good is in its own right the object of will' (*2Sent* d3 q4 ad2 = P vi 427a).

[93] 'In appetitive love, we draw to ourselves things that are external to us, since we love other things with this love to the extent that they are useful or pleasant to us. But in amicable love it is the other way round, because we draw ourselves to things that are outside us; because we are related to the people whom we love with this love as we are related to ourselves, sharing ourselves in a way with them. And so in amicable love similarity is the cause of love; for we do not love someone in this way except to the extent that we are one with him, and similarity is a sort of unity' (*in Ioann.* 15.4 = P x 570b).

[94] 'Now love is of two kinds, one incomplete, and the other complete. It is incomplete love of a thing, when one loves a thing not so that one wills good to it in itself, but so that one wills its good for oneself. Some people call this appetite, as when we love wine, wanting to enjoy its sweetness, or when we love a human being because of our own advantage or pleasure. But another kind of love is complete love, by which the good of someone in himself is loved, as when by loving someone I will that he himself have a good, even if nothing comes to me from it. This is said to be amicable love, by which someone is loved in his own right; that is why it is called complete friendship, as is said in *Ethics* VIII' (*Spe* a3c).

[95] 'Complete love is that by which someone is loved in his own right, as the one for whom one wills good, in the way in which a human being loves his friend. Incomplete love is that by which one loves something not in its own right, but so that he may obtain that good for himself, in the way in which a human being loves the thing he has an appetite for' (2-2 q17 a8).

we love him as much as we love ourselves, but because we love him as someone similar to ourselves.[96]

This description of love is clearer than Aristotle's on some points. Aquinas explains more clearly why friendship for another for the other's own sake is the only complete form of friendship. In his view, it is the only one that proceeds from the love of friendship, which is intellectual rather than appetitive love. The lower two types of Aristotelian friendship lack 'the character of genuine friendship',[97] because they rest on purely appetitive love. In non-amicable love our concern does not go completely outside ourselves, because we want to have some external good for ourselves.[98] Purely appetitive love does not reach its conclusion (terminus) with the good of what we love, but turns back to ourselves (*3Sent* d29 q1 a3). In this respect Aquinas does not distinguish our acquisitive love for wine or other possessions from the lower types of friendship for persons.

We might legitimately criticize him for failing to recognize the respects in which the lower types of friendship are not purely possessive. He seems to assume without warrant that appetitive love is always acquisitive; but it need not be so, except in the formal sense in which (according to Aquinas) every sort of desire aims at some sort of good for oneself. This sort of self-direction does not imply selfishness.

Aquinas could perhaps concede this point without damage to his main argument. In appetitive love we are constrained by affections and inclinations that both begin and sustain love. Recognition of goodness in the other (person or thing) depends on belief in its correspondence with some prior preference of mine; if the preference changes, the reason for loving the other disappears. Intellectual love, by contrast, responds to the recognition of some value that we recognize as a good reason to continue our preference; we suppose that if our preference were to go away but the value that we recognize did not go away, that would be a sign of error in our preference.

This contrast between appetitive and intellectual love helps to explain why intellectual love is needed for the love of friendship. Aquinas identifies a distinctive type of concern for other people, and for some non-personal objects; we have a reason for this concern that does not depend on our antecedent inclination, and we would think our inclination mistaken if it went away while the reason remained unchanged. For these purposes it is more important to ask what sustains the relevant concern than to ask what originates it. Some non-rational preference or attraction may provoke concern for this person rather than that one. But the type of friendship that results depends on the sort of concern that sustains it.

Aquinas' contrast between amicable and appetitive love anticipates Kant's contrast between acting on duty and acting on other motives.[99] Kant's main point is not that all

[96] 'The expression "as himself" can in one way qualify the knowledge and the love on the side of the one known and loved. In this way one angel knows another as himself, because he knows the other to be even as he knows himself to be. In another way the expression can qualify the knowledge and the love on the side of the knower and lover. In this way one angel does not know another as himself, because he knows himself through his essence, and the other not through the other's essence. Similarly he does not love another as himself, because he loves himself through his own will; but he does not love another through the other's will' (1a q60 a4 ad1). 'One is required to love one's neighbour as oneself, not however as much as oneself. Because of this it does not follow that all neighbours are to be loved to an equal degree' (*Car.* a9 ad9). Aquinas' views on degrees of love are discussed by Steel, 'Preferential'.

[97] . . . deficit a ratione verae amicitiae, 1-2 q26 a4 ad3.

[98] . . . affectio in fine infra ipsum concluditur, 1-2 q28 a3.

[99] Kant, *G.* 397.

motives other than the motive of duty are selfish. The two people he contrasts with the person acting out of duty are the trader who does the honest thing for the sake of his business and the philanthropist who acts out of his generous sentiments. The action of the philanthropist lacks moral worth not because it is selfish, but because his reason for doing the generous action rests ultimately on his generous impulses; if he lacked them, he would have lost his reason for these actions. Kant is primarily concerned with the distinction that Aquinas draws in his account of intellectual love.

This account of the love of friendship shows that Aquinas is closer to Aristotle's account of the best kind of friendship than to modern conceptions of friendship. We might well find it surprising to be told that genuine friendship depends on the recognition of value and not on our inclination, preference, or caprice. But Aquinas' view of the love of friendship makes it a more suitable basis for the sort of moral concern that might be defended by appeal to the judgments of prudence.

The appeal to similarity and to union is still not very informative. Aquinas implies that I recognize in another the same features calling for love that I recognize in myself when I have the proper sort of self-love for myself (cf. 1a q60 a3–4). He also seems to suggest, however, that some further type of union is involved besides mere similarity; hence he speaks of the union that results from membership in a family or a political community (1a q60 a4).

These different features of friendship should explain why we care about others for their own sake. They rest on Aquinas' claim that everyone seeks his own perfection. As we have seen, this involves the application of intellectual love to our desires and aims. The desire for perfection differs from the desire for the systematic satisfaction of my desires; it does not take my current desires for granted, but criticizes them to see whether they really fulfil my capacities as a rational agent. This criticism shows us that we perfect ourselves only in so far as we regard other people as valuable in their own right and not simply as means to aims that we can pursue without attributing such value to others.

This argument does not yet make it clear why pursuit of my own perfection requires concern for the good of others for their own sake. Aquinas' view of intellectual love shows why it is possible to care about the good of another person apart from any antecedent inclination of mine. But it does not yet seem to show why such concern for another person is required by reason.

To find the appropriate argument, it is helpful to consider the connexion between intellectual love, concern for one's own perfection, and interaction with others. Intellectual love causes us to aim at our perfection rather than the mere satisfaction of our desires. Equally, concern for our perfection causes us to act on intellectual love. For we seek our perfection as rational agents, and our rational agency consists in acting on intellectual love; as rational agents we pursue ends that we see some good reason for pursuing apart from our antecedent inclinations.

In seeking our own perfection as rational agents, we have reason to co-operate with other rational agents. When Aquinas speaks of 'sharing' (communicatio) with another person, he especially refers to the sharing of rational activity. As Aristotle sees, this shared activity includes common deliberation about what to do. Aquinas' emphasis on intellectual love adds a further element of sharing. In recognizing another as a rational agent, I recognize her as being moved by intellectual love. I therefore take her views on the merits of different

actions to be worth considering, since she at least assesses actions by some estimate of their value. If her views are worth considering, I have reason to share in common deliberation about value with the other person.

This conclusion may seem relevant to 'respecting' (as we say) a person's opinion, in the sense of thinking it worth some consideration. But such respect seems to fall short of concern for persons and their welfare. Can we bring Aquinas' claims about rational agency any closer to the attitudes proper to friendship?

He might plausibly reject any sharp division between respect for a person's opinion as a co-operator in practical reasoning and respect for a person as deserving concern for her welfare in her own right. If we are mutually concerned for each other's welfare, we have more reason to trust each other's opinion about the good. Since my advice to you aims at your good, you have reason to take it seriously; similarly, I have reason to listen to your advice, which aims at my good. Each of us has reason to believe that our joint advice to ourselves aims at our common good.

This argument suggests why Aquinas has a good reason for resting his claims about friendship on the apparently rather austere basis of intellectual love and external reasons. In his view, we cannot recognize ourselves as rational agents, moved by intellectual love to seek our own perfection, without being committed to friendship for rational agents as such.

The argument from intellectual love to friendship is basically the same as the argument for society that Aquinas offers in the context of natural law. He claims that as rational agents we have a natural inclination towards society. Once we try to amplify this claim, we find that he appeals to the connexion between rational agency and concern for other people as participants in rational agency. The basic connexion between rational agency and co-operation with others underlies Aquinas' arguments both about friendship and about justice.

337. Friendship as a Basis for Justice

This account of friendship clarifies Aquinas' claim that a human being is naturally political. This claim does not mean simply that human beings have naturally social instincts or preferences; for in that case the value of social ties would depend (as far as this argument goes) on their satisfying these preferences. Aquinas means that the good of others is a proper concern of intellectual love; the appropriate sort of community fulfils the rational demand for perfection.

It is difficult to find a clear argument in Aquinas that connects intellectual love, concern for the good of others, human beings as naturally political, and the demands of justice.[100] Moreover, the argument we have just attributed to him may appear to give an unwelcome result. Is a defence of friendship not too narrow for a defence of justice? The demands of justice extend to people for whom we lack the sort of concern that is characteristic of friendship.

[100] For further passages on the naturally political nature of human beings see BF xxxviii, App.1. Some of the passages in 2–2 that add some detail to the general claims in 1–2 are 2–2 q26 a3; q47 a10 ad2; q58 a5; a9 ad3; q64 a2; q65 a1; q114 a1 ad2.

This objection overlooks Aquinas' description of the basis of the love of friendship. In claiming that it involves the recognition of similarity and the recognition of value connected with this similarity, he allows the possibility of variations in the closeness of friendship. Since we can recognize relevant sorts of similarity in many people, Aquinas has defined an ethical relation that extends more broadly than friendship as we might naturally conceive it. Hence he speaks of love between citizens as the love that belongs to civic virtue, involving the sharing of right (honesta) actions.[101] His account of the love of friendship and its connexion to similarity is meant to explain the relation between citizens as well as the relation between closer friends (cf. *Div. Nom.* 4.9 = P xv 314a). We are entitled, then, to appeal to Aquinas' claims about friendship in order to understand his views about fellow-citizens.

We can connect friendship more closely with justice through the claim that justice involves the recognition of equality and the appropriate treatment of people as equals (2-2 q57 a1–2). When we recognize the relevant sort of equality, and treat people in accordance with it, we assign to each person what is his own.[102] Not all recognition of similarity involves recognition of equality (1a q60 a4 ad1), but recognition of equality involves the recognition of some aspect of similarity. In the case of distributive justice, the recognition of equality includes A's recognition of the equality of B and C, when A has to divide something between B and C. In the case of corrective justice, recognition of equality includes A's recognition of the equal right or equal claim of B and C. Recognition of the second sort of equality is especially important when we are trying to see how a virtue that concerns the good of others can fit into the outlook of a rational agent who is concerned with his own good.

If Aquinas is right to claim that recognition of the right sort of similarity is the basis for the love of friendship, he has a reason to believe that the sort of co-ordination required by justice (2-2 q58 a8) requires recognition of equality and concern for benefiting others. If we knew nothing of his views on the basis of friendship, we might object to Aquinas' claim by arguing that the appropriate sort of co-ordination is the sort that allows me to exploit other people to fulfil my antecedent inclinations, without any independent concern for their good. He can answer this objection by appeal to his account of friendship. If we are concerned for our own perfection, and we see that we cannot engage in the activities that perfect our own rational agency if we do not pursue the good of other people for their own sakes, we will not suppose that the right sort of co-ordination must be (as far as we can manage) purely exploitative.

338. The Aims of Justice

This argument suggests a possible defence of Aquinas' puzzling claim that justice differs from the other cardinal virtues in belonging to the will and in dealing with actions rather than passions. These features of justice are part of his reason for regarding justice as a distinct cardinal virtue. Earlier we rejected his grounds for believing that bravery and temperance

[101] See 1a q60 a4; *3Sent.* d29 q1 a6 = P vii 321a.

[102] '. . . the matter of justice is an external action in so far as either it or the thing we use through it is made proportionate to some other person towards whom we are directed (ordinamur) by justice. Now each person's own is what is owed (debitum) to him according to equality of proportion. Therefore the proper act of justice is nothing else than to render to each what is his own' (2-2 q58 a11).

belong to the passions rather than the will.[103] We might still agree, however, that justice differs from bravery and temperance in not being concerned with a specific passion or range of passions. The passions must be perfected in a just person, since different sorts of misdirected passions may cloud or distort a will that aims at just action; but no specific passion is connected to justice in the way fear is connected to bravery. The aim of justice is not to perfect any passions, but to turn the will in the right direction. We may be surprised to hear that the right direction of the will turns it towards the good of others; for we might expect that the special virtue of the will would direct it to the agent's own good.[104]

It is easier to agree with Aquinas if we see the connexion that he intends between concern for our perfection and concern for the good of others. When we choose on the basis of reason and deliberation, we act on will in contrast to passion. Aquinas believes that when we take this point of view, we can see why we need to be concerned for the good of others. If we were simply concerned with orderly satisfaction of our current desires, then we would have no desire-independent reason to care about the good of others for their own sake; but when we pass beyond satisfaction to perfection, we see the reasons for accepting justice. Aquinas has a reasonable defence of his view that the appropriate perfection of the will results in the virtue that also embodies the appropriate concern for the good of others.

This argument for connecting justice with the will applies to justice quite generally, but Aquinas believes that it applies in different ways to different types of justice. He follows Aristotle in distinguishing general from special or partial ('particularis') justice. General justice and virtue as a whole imply each other, though they differ in definition; special justice is co-ordinate with the other special virtues, and extends only over part of the area of general justice (2-2 q58 a6–7).

Aristotle's basis for distinguishing these two types of justice is not clear. Aquinas distinguishes them along lines that are not explicitly marked by Aristotle, though they have an Aristotelian basis. While both types of justice are concerned with our relations to other people, general justice is properly concerned with directing different people's actions towards a common good, whereas special justice is concerned with the relations of one individual to another.[105]

In Aquinas' view, general justice 'directs the actions of all the virtues towards a common good' (2-2 q58 a6). He does not mean that we could have all the virtues without directing them towards a common good; he means that if we had them to the extent that is possible without direction towards a common good, we would not have all the virtues. This description of general justice fits Aristotle's claim that general justice prescribes the actions of the other virtues with a view to the good of the political community (*EN* 1129b17–19).[106]

Special justice differs from general because it is properly concerned not with the common good, but with directing an individual's actions in relation to another particular individual (ad alteram singularem personam, 2-2 q58 a7).[107] Aquinas considers whether this distinct virtue is superfluous because general justice already embraces concern for the good of other people. He answers that general justice considers the good of individuals only mediately,

[103] See §290. [104] On justice and the will see Scotus' discussion of the two affections, §363.

[105] On general justice see Finnis, *Aq.* 118. [106] See §117. Aquinas introduces the common good at *in EN* v 2 §912.

[107] Aquinas introduces this aspect of special justice (ad aliquam personam privatam) at *in EN* v 3 §918, without explicit support in the text of Aristotle.

and that therefore it is necessary for some other virtue to consider the good of individuals immediately (2-2 q58 a7 ad1).[108] He connects this division with the division between public and private law (ius; 1-2 q60 a3).[109]

This division fits Aristotle, in so far as Aristotle's divisions of special justice seem to be especially concerned with relations (for instance, distribution, rectification, and exchange) that involve claims by individuals on one another. Aristotle also marks out special from general justice by claiming that special justice is properly concerned with equality (*EN* 1129a31–b1) and with ensuring that each person has his 'own' or his 'due' (*ta hautou*, 1132b16–20). Aquinas, however, takes concern with equality and with one's due to be a feature of justice as a whole, of general no less than of special justice. Nor does he rely on Aristotle's claim that special justice and injustice are concerned only with external goods.[110] Instead, he appeals to the distinction between a concern for individuals and a concern for the common good.

In support of Aristotle and Aquinas, we may notice that some provisions of justice seem to be concerned with facts about individuals—what someone has done, who has paid what, what agreements have been made, and so on—rather than with facts about the common good. By contrast, the requirement that citizens perform military service seems to refer directly to a common good, not to what this or that individual has done; the fact that it is a common good, rather than a good for this particular individual or group, seems to explain, at least in part, why it is just to require service from individuals. The different conditions that show why a requirement is just seem to suggest that the division between facts about individuals and facts about the common good is relevant.

Sometimes, however, both sorts of questions about justice seem to arise about the same action or policy. Even if the requirement of military service or taxation rests on the common good, its imposition on particular individuals raises questions of special justice; unfair benefits and burdens are imposed, for instance, if some people are exempted from service or taxation for inappropriate reasons. From one point of view, this unfairness does not affect the common good. If, for instance, the rich are allowed to avoid military service by paying for substitutes, the substitutes might be equally effective soldiers; similarly, the state might raise as much money by inequitable as by equitable taxation. If this is against the common good precisely because it is unjust, the requirements of special justice constrain the content of general justice. The constraints might also go the other way. Punishments for the crimes of an individual may be affected by considerations of the common good; we may consider whether, for instance, someone is a danger to society or whether a particular sort of punishment is likely to deter other people.

These questions are prominent in later arguments about justice. Aquinas does not discuss them. He does not suggest, for instance, that general justice could achieve the common

[108] 'Legal justice certainly directs someone sufficiently in things related to another—as far as the common good is concerned, immediately, but as far as the good of an individual person is concerned, mediately. And so there needs to be some particular justice to direct someone immediately towards the good of another particular person' (2-2 q58 a7 ad1).

[109] This distinction is briefly discussed by Nicholas, *IRL* 207–8. He remarks that the distinction in Roman law between crimes (public law) and delicts (private law) does not correspond exactly to the distinction between crimes and torts. But he draws a distinction that helps to explain Aquinas' claims: '. . . the distinction is between an act which endangers the order or the security of the state, and one which is an infringement of an individual's rights . . . .'

[110] He mentions this aspect of special justice at *in EN* v 3 §919.

good by ignoring the legitimate claims of individuals. He takes it for granted that general justice considers the good of individuals mediately (2-2 q58 a7 ad1), and he does not suggest that the common good might conflict with the good of this or that particular individual.

Some of his remarks about justice, however, suggest how a conflict might arise. The good of each individual and the common good would not coincide if the common good were calculated by aggregation of the gains and losses to individuals; for in that case a course of action might promote the common good, but harm particular individuals. Aquinas appeals to 'utility' in arguing for the justice of laws and institutions.[111] He does not go into detail about how utility is to be assessed or how it affects justice, but he suggests a basis for claims about general justice that potentially conflicts with the good of each individual.

A further potential conflict appears if the common good is taken to be the good of a society in contrast to the individuals composing it. The difference becomes clear if we think of a society as having an interest in its own survival across generations; this might require a sacrifice of the interests of individuals who are required to harm themselves in order to defend this state from dissolution and absorption into another state. This would be an application of the analogy of part and whole, which Aquinas sometimes uses for the relation of state to individual.[112] The whole has an interest in its survival that sometimes may require it to destroy a part; similarly (we may say) the state as a whole has an interest in its survival that may require harm to individuals.

We would reach a close coincidence between the common good and the good of individuals if we insisted that, contrary to the previous suggestion, the common good must be what is best for everyone. Each individual would have a strong 'veto' over every course of action proposed in the name of the common good, so that if x is proposed as promoting the common good, but A can show that A benefits more from y than from x, then A has shown that x does not promote the common good.

If Aquinas allows this strong veto to individuals, he is entitled to assume that nothing promoting the common good can violate individual goods. But a veto seems to impose unreasonable restrictions on the pursuit of the common good. Institutions and requirements such as military service, taxation, observance of traffic laws, and so on, do not seem to allow individuals the sort of veto that they would allow if they observed Aquinas' constraint, so interpreted.

But Aquinas does not endorse a strong veto; he does not assert that general justice mediately pursues what is best for each individual, but only that it mediately pursues individual good. This condition might be satisfied if pursuit of the common good requires benefit to each individual, but not necessarily greater benefit than would have been achieved in some other way. Perhaps x benefits both A and B, but A would have benefited more from y, which would have harmed B, and B would have benefited more from z, which would have harmed A. In that case, x promotes the common good of A and B, and so is to be preferred over y and z, even though both y and z would have been better for someone. In this case, we may say that A and B have a weak veto though not a strong veto.[113]

[111] See, e.g., 2-2 q64 a3, ad3; q77 a1. [112] On whole and part see n100 above.

[113] This weak veto, in turn, might be understood to require (a) a basic minimum for both A and B, or (b) a reasonable degree of equality between A and B.

This suggestion that the good of individuals imposes a weak veto on the common good, gives Aquinas a plausible claim about justice. For we often suppose that a course of action is unjust if it imposes an unreasonable degree of sacrifice on particular people, even if it also confers a large benefit on a larger number. A weak veto embodies a conception of 'one's own' or 'one's right' (ius suum).[114] Some rights guarantee the protection of certain goods for each individual against the demands of others. A weak veto seems to embody a reasonable guarantee. It may still be too demanding; for we may suppose that many just and beneficial policies make some people worse off than they were before. Such policies might be rejected as unjust only if they impose an unreasonable degree of harm. In deciding what would be an unreasonable degree of harm, we decide what should be guaranteed to individuals as their right.

339. Eudaemonism and Justice

In trying to understand some of these aspects of justice, we seem to raise a more general difficulty for the overall structure of Aquinas' conception of the virtues. Though a weak veto for individuals might seem to do better than a strong veto in capturing an aspect of justice, it might seem to be too weak for the demands of Aquinas' general theory. Since he accepts eudaemonism, he seems to assume that the will aims at the overall good for oneself. How, then, can a rational and informed will accept a course of action that fails to secure what seems best overall for oneself? If individuals have only a weak veto on the common good, they may be required to forgo what seems better for themselves and to accept the just course of action that protects them against unacceptable harm but fails to secure what is best for them. Given Aquinas' eudaemonism, must he not insist on a strong veto? But if he does that, he seems to demand more than it is reasonable to demand in the just pursuit of the common good.

This objection affects the unity of prudence, and hence affects RV. Aquinas believes we can reach the specific end pursued by justice, by deliberation from the universal end of one's own good. If the requirements of justice do not always seem to promote one's own good, how can we justify them by deliberation that refers ultimately to one's own good?

Aquinas might answer by distinguishing the eudaemonist basis of pursuit of a common good from the basis of policies that advance a common good. His eudaemonism requires us to satisfy ourselves that we are better off participating in a society pursuing a common good than we would be without it. We must rely on Aquinas' claim that human beings are naturally political, and on the defence of this claim that rests on his account of friendship. That account supports the claim that one's ultimate good requires participation in a common good, and hence membership of a society that pursues it.

Individuals, therefore, have a strong veto on the existence of a political community, and it is unjust to force them into a community that makes them worse off than they would be under any other arrangement open to them. They also have a strong veto on the effect of the community on their lives as a whole; if they are forced to have a worse life within the community than they would have under any other arrangement open to them,

[114] Some related issues about rights are discussed by Tuck, *NRT*, ch. 1.

the community fails a eudaemonist constraint.[115] Aquinas might reasonably argue that a community does not really pursue a common good unless it meets this constraint.

But an individual need not have a strong veto over every action taken by the community in the pursuit of the common good. For Aquinas' eudaemonism does not necessarily apply eudaemonist reasoning to every question. We have already seen a limit on eudaemonist reasoning in Aristotle's conception of action for the sake of the fine (*kalon*). Virtuous agents who recognize that a situation requires virtuous action act virtuously, without further reflexion on the implications for their own happiness. But the choice of virtuous action depends on deliberation about happiness; for this deliberation shows, according to Aristotle, that we promote our happiness by taking the virtuous person's attitude, which sometimes rejects eudaemonistic deliberation.[116]

Aquinas takes over this limit on eudaemonist reasoning, since he incorporates Aristotle's views about the fine in his own conception of the morally right (honestum). He argues that the brave person acts for the sake of the good of his proper state of character, or 'to express a likeness of his state in his action' (2-2 q123 a7). This aim does not conflict with the claim (quoted from Augustine) that the virtues aim at happiness; happiness is the ultimate end, but the end proper to the virtue is the proximate end.[117] Prudence arranges actions to aim at the ultimate end,[118] but brave people do not focus directly on this end in particular actions; they aim to act appropriately for their state of character.[119] Eudaemonist deliberation justifies the cultivation of bravery as a virtue, but it does not replace the normal reflexions of the brave person facing a particular choice.

We have already noticed that Aquinas distinguishes the ultimate from the proximate end, in explaining how prudence does and does not set the end for virtue. Prudence does not set the ultimate end, but it sets the proximate end by deliberation on the content of the ultimate end. This is the deliberation that belongs to universal prudence reaching the properly virtuous end. The deliberation of particular prudence takes the virtuous end for granted and reaches conclusions about the appropriate actions.

The deliberation of universal prudence has a teleological and eudaemonist form, since it starts from the ultimate end. But the deliberations of particular prudence need not have this form. Once we have concluded that we ought to pursue a specific proximate end for the sake of the ultimate good, we may not need to keep referring to the ultimate good. Indeed, reflexion on the nature of the particular end may convince us that we ought not to refer explicitly to the ultimate good in all circumstances.

It is plausible to suppose that when we form the proximate ends proper to friendship and justice, we will limit reflexion on the ultimate good. For we may find that we can achieve these proximate ends only if we pursue them for their own sake without further reflexion on their effects. This conclusion does not conflict with Aquinas' eudaemonism.

This understanding of the universal and the specific end of virtue explains how Aquinas' eudaemonist outlook both controls the content of justice and marks out an area that is

[115] Plato raises this question at *R*.520. See §62. [116] See §112.

[117] This is relevant to Aquinas' answer to questions about pagan virtue. See §356.

[118] In 'in agibilibus per prudentiam disponuntur actus humani' (q123 a7) Aquinas distinguishes the concern of prudence for the ultimate end from the concern of bravery for the proximate end.

[119] 'intendit enim agere secundum convenientiam sui habitus', q123 a7.

not directly subject to eudaemonist considerations. If the existence of a community that promotes the happiness of individuals requires them to suspend eudaemonist deliberation in some cases, and to be guided simply by the considerations proper to justice, eudaemonist considerations do not imply a strong veto for each individual on pursuit of the common good.

Later theorists recognize the importance of accepting practices that restrict appeals to the sort of deliberation that justifies acceptance of the practice. Aquinas does not emphasize the importance of such restrictions when he discusses justice. But his account of rational action allows such restrictions; he recognizes that 'the power of the first aim' (virtus primae intentionis) remains in actions that do not themselves proceed, on that occasion, directly from reflexion about the end we are aiming at.[120]

Aquinas does not develop his position in the detail that would be necessary for us to see what he thinks it is committed to, or how he thinks it can answer objections. Study of his views on justice is useful partly because they raise many of the issues that concern later theorists, and in particular because he combines several claims—especially those about the common good and about individual rights—that have tended to mark out sharply different conceptions of justice. His position has resources to answer the questions that arise as a result of more detailed examination of justice.

340. Commands and Counsels

RV commits Aquinas to the recognition of virtues that are required for everyone; these virtues are derived from the precepts of natural law, which direct natural human inclinations for one's own good and the good of others. He faces a complication, however, when he needs to make room for some of the specific demands of Christianity, and especially those that are held to justify the outlook of religious orders. These demands seem to create a difficulty, because they require religious (i.e., the members of these orders) to withdraw from the ordinary self-regarding and other-regarding obligations that go with the different virtues, in order to devote themselves to prayer and special discipline.

The moral basis of the religious life is not simply a question for Aquinas in his specific time and circumstances. It also requires us to ask when it is permissible to pursue some aim or aspiration that withdraws us from the ordinary obligations of a member of society, in order to achieve some good that we take to be especially important, in circumstances where we know that most people will not be attracted to this aim.

The obligations that constitute the way of life of a religious order (monks, nuns, or friars) separate some people from the obligations imposed on the rest of their society. Members of these orders are exempt from some of the requirements imposed on ordinary citizens, and they are subject to special obligations that cannot be imposed on everyone. Indeed, the observance of some obligations of the religious life (e.g., virginity) seems to depend on the assumption that other people will not observe them.[121]

[120] See §248. Aquinas' remarks on bravery (just quoted) suggest how his views about 'virtual intention' might clarify his account of the virtuous state of character.

[121] Aquinas' explanation in *SG* iii 130 cites *Matt.* 19:21; 1*Cor.* 7:23, 32–3; *Heb.* 12:17; *Cant.* 8:7; *Matt.* 13:45–6; *Phil.* 3:7–8.

Aquinas faces a difficulty, since he admits that these special obligations do not specify the demands of virtue and justice.[122] He takes them to rest on 'counsels of perfection', as opposed to 'precepts of necessity'. They are not prescribed as necessary for achieving the ultimate end, and hence they are not necessary parts of the virtues; but they are advised as the best way of reaching the end. This claim may puzzle us. If the counsels identify better or easier means to achieve the end that everyone wants, why do they not apply to everyone? For surely good deliberation picks the best and easiest means? Should we not abandon a merely possible means if a better and easier one is available, given the difficulty of the merely possible means and the value of the end being pursued?

Aquinas gives two reasons for not requiring everyone to follow this route: (1) Not everyone is capable of following it; as St Paul suggests, it might be better to be unmarried and free of lust, but since this is not possible for most people, it is better for them to marry than to burn.[123] If it is not possible for everyone, it would be self-defeating to impose this conduct on everyone. (2) The 'reasonable order' of human beings requires most people not to take the road of the counsels but to take the ordinary road.

If the second point were true, but the first false, some people might be compelled to undertake special burdens, since they would be required to undertake difficult tasks that they would like to avoid. Sometimes people have supposed that Plato's rulers must undertake special burdens of this sort.[124] Aquinas does not believe that the counsels force this issue on us. For if most people would not in any case want to follow the counsels, and would not be capable of it, it is not unfair if some people withdraw from ordinary roles and tasks. Those who withdraw do not impose unfair burdens on people who would like to be monks or friars but are needed to maintain the reasonable order of society; for the number of people who are capable of the religious life is small enough to make it unnecessary to select among equally qualified candidates.

To justify this claim that most people neither can nor want to take up the religious life, Aquinas might appeal to the fact that religious—from one point of view—abandon some of the basic human concerns prescribed by natural law because of human nature. This is part of the ground for objecting to voluntary poverty (*SG* iii 131). Self-preservation, reproduction, and concern for others are all abandoned to the extent that the ordinary means for securing them are rejected. Aquinas needs to argue that they are not entirely abandoned; the religious assure themselves that all these functions can be handled 'by proxy', since they are taken care of by other people's deliberation. Other people must carry out these basic provisions of natural law. The religious assume that society takes care of the things that they set aside, and in particular that other people exercise charity by supporting the religious.

[122] 'But this is not necessary to a human being for justice in such a way that justice cannot be without it; for virtue and justice are not destroyed if a human being uses bodily and earthly things in accordance with reasonable order. And for that reason the kinds of advice given by divine law of this kind are called counsels, and not precepts, in so far as a human being is exhorted to lay aside less good things for the sake of better things' (*SG* iii 130). 'Things that belong to excellence come under counsels of perfection rather than under precepts of necessity. That is why precepts were not to be given about magnificence and magnanimity, but rather counsels' (2-2 q140 a2 ad1).

[123] 'I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own special gift from God, one having one kind and another a different kind. To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is well for them to remain unmarried as I am. But if they are not practicing self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion' (*1Cor.* 7:7–9). Aquinas comments in *ST* Suppl. q42 a3 ad4.

[124] See §62.

Is this an unfair expectation? If what other people are required to do is simply what nature makes appropriate for them and is not an unwelcome burden in comparison with the religious life, it is not unfair if the religious live in a way that presupposes that other people will continue with the natural functions. Other people are reluctant to give up the life according to nature for the withdrawn life; and there is no reason to tell them that they must overcome their reluctance. Indeed, it would be disastrous if they all did overcome it.

Moreover, the fact that religious orders withdraw from some aspects of society does not make them socially useless parasites. Aquinas defends voluntary poverty by arguing that a religious undertakes it in order to be more useful to other people in other ways.[125] On this ground, he defends friars, who teach and engage with others, in comparison with monks who withdraw more completely. In his view, complete separation from society is not necessary in order to devote oneself to the contemplative life. Teaching immerses friars in the everyday world less than ordinary occupations and social roles would immerse them. In their partly withdrawn way of life, they devote less anxiety (sollicitudo) to securing the basic means of life; hence the idea of abandoning ordinary pursuits in order to take some of them up again is not as pointless as it sounds.

But even if, from the human point of view, the religious option involves no unfairness to the ordinary people and imposes no special burden on them, does it involve some unfairness from the divine point of view? For if the counsels of perfection are really divine advice about the best way to salvation, do they not give some people an easier route to salvation than other people have? Worldly cares are presumably to be avoided because they introduce temptations, opportunities to abandon one's ultimate good. Is it not unfair for one sort of person to face these temptations that other people can avoid?

One might answer that this is not a special difficulty about the religious life. Even if it were always true that religious are exposed to less dangerous temptations than those that confront other people, they would not necessarily gain an unfair advantage just by being religious. They simply exemplify the more general point that different people face different temptations and dangers. Someone like Trollope's Dr Grantly is not free of dangers in his life as a Christian minister, but he has a relatively easy time fulfilling his vocation to some degree, just as a soldier in peacetime has a relatively easy career as a competent soldier. Dietrich Bonhöffer faced more severe temptations and dangers as a Christian minister, and displayed a degree of heroic virtue that Dr Grantly would never display, even if he were better than he is.[126] Similarly, a general who commands an army in wartime in difficult and dangerous situations has an opportunity to display greatness, and to suffer humiliating

[125] 'Hence the one who through voluntary poverty removes from himself the capacity to help others in temporal goods, in order to acquire spiritual goods through which he can help others more usefully, does not act against the good of human society . . . ' (*SG* iii 134).

[126] See Trollope's description of Dr Grantly: 'He was a moral man, believing the precepts which he taught, and believing also that he acted up to them; though we cannot say that he would give his coat to the man who took his cloak, or that he was prepared to forgive his brother even seven times' (*W*, ch. 2). On another generally sympathetic character Trollope comments: 'Mr Harding's warmest admirers cannot say that he was ever an industrious man; the circumstances of his life have not called on him to be so; and yet he can hardly be called an idler' (ch. 1). Bonhöffer describes the moral predicament of Germans in 1943 in the Prologue to *LPP*: 'The great masquerade of evil has played havoc with all our ethical concepts. For evil to appear disguised as light, charity, historical necessity, or social justice is quite bewildering to anyone brought up on our traditional ethical concepts . . . ' (4). On the attempt to live a life of private virtue that might be reasonable in more normal circumstances he comments: 'Here and there people flee from public altercation into the

failure, that the peacetime general never has. If the Stoics are right to say that a virtuous person acts reasonably in accordance with the circumstances, and that reasonableness includes a disposition to act rightly in counterfactual as well as actual circumstances, the facts about different circumstances do not necessarily introduce unfairness.[127] Hence they do not create any special moral or theological objection to the religious life.

People who are incapable of the religious life cannot reasonably complain that they are not allowed to share in it, provided that their incapacity does not result in their being treated unfairly. Similarly, if some people are capable of the religious life, but are required to renounce it for the sake of the common good (because society needs them as farmers, or plumbers, or politicians), they have no reason to complain, provided that they are not unfairly penalized because they have remained in situations where they cannot follow the counsels of perfection. The demands of RV and the requirements of friendship and justice do not necessarily conflict with the ways of life recommended by the counsels of perfection.[128]

341. Self-Love, Sin, and Virtue

We have noticed that this discussion of the virtues, and especially of friendship and justice, raises a question, for Aquinas no less than for Aristotle, about the primary and fundamental character of one's desire for one's own happiness. Aquinas follows Aristotle in maintaining the primacy of self-love. He rejects the view that self-love needs to be limited by some other affection, and he examines the Scriptural and Augustinian arguments that appear to raise moral objections to self-love, in order to show that they do not support justified objections to self-love, correctly understood.

Aquinas believes that we ought to love God more than ourselves, and hence that we should not take states of ourselves to be the most important end to achieve.[129] He compares the subordination of self-love to the love of God with the subordination of concern for one's own advantage to the common good. The love of God is not separate, any more than concern for the common good is, from one's pursuit of one's own happiness. We come to love God as the common source of all goodness because we are concerned about our own

sanctuary of private virtuousness. But anyone who does this must shut his mouth and his eyes to the injustice around him' (5).

[127] The view that virtue requires an appropriate attitude to a variety of circumstances, as opposed to one definite way of life, is explored by Taylor, *SS*, ch. 13, esp. 222–4 (who discusses this view as a form of opposition to a specifically religious way of life).

[128] I say 'do not necessarily conflict' in order to acknowledge that in some particular situations (e.g., conditions of scarcity or emergency) there may be no room for the withdrawal required by the religious life. Machiavelli might be taken to claim that he lived in such conditions of emergency; see §409.

[129] 'Natural love is founded on the sharing of natural goods given to us by God. By this natural love not only a human being, in the unimpaired condition of his nature, but also every single creature, each in its own way, loves God above all things, and even more than itself, because each part naturally loves the common good of the whole more than its own particular good. This is clear from what they do; for each part has its principal inclination towards common action for the benefit (utilitas) of the whole. This is also evident in civic virtues, in accordance with which citizens sometimes accept damage even to their own property and persons for the sake of the common good. Hence this is found to be true much more in the friendship of charity, which is founded on the sharing of the gifts of grace. For this reason a human being ought, out of charity, to love God, who is the common good of all, more than himself, because happiness is in God as in the common and original principle of all who can share in happiness' (2-2 q26 a3).

good (1-2 q2 a8). Hence we could love God above everything by our uncorrupted natural abilities without grace; we need grace only because of the corruption resulting from sin.[130]

Overriding love of God does not require us to renounce self-love; for self-love does not require us to care less about the love of God. Aquinas agrees with Aristotle in claiming that vicious people have misguided self-love, but have no more self-love than virtuous people have.[131] Vicious people have the 'prudence of the flesh', which rests on a false conception of themselves. This is not a type of genuine prudence, but an impostor, because it does not include a grasp of the correct end.[132] Similarly, vicious people do not love themselves more than virtuous people love themselves; they have the wrong conception of the self who is appropriately loved.

In one way the love of God or the common good limits self-love, but in another way it does not. To see the difference, we may recall Aquinas' division between the universal and the specific end of the virtuous person, and the corresponding roles of universal and particular prudence. The universal end is one's own happiness; inquiry about this discovers the particular end that happiness consists in. Understanding of the particular end may show us that when we act on it we should not ask whether our action promotes the universal end. In our practical thought as a whole, self-love is not limited; for we are always following

[130] 'Now in natural things, everything which, as such, naturally belongs to another, is principally, and more strongly inclined towards what it belongs to than towards itself. . . . And since reason imitates nature, we find the same inclination in the civic virtues; for it is characteristic of a virtuous citizen to expose himself to the danger of death for the safety of the whole commonwealth. . . . And so, since God himself is the universal good, and under this good angels, human beings, and all creatures are included, because every creature naturally, in accordance with what it is, belongs to God, it follows that by natural love angel and human being alike loves God more and more principally than himself. Otherwise, if either of them naturally loved self more than God, it would follow that natural love would be perverse, and that it would not be perfected but destroyed through charity' (1a q60 a5). '. . . in the state of unimpaired nature a human being referred the love of himself to the love of God as to its end, and similarly the love of all other things. And so he loved God more than himself and above all things. But in the state of corrupt nature man falls short of this as far as the desire of his rational will goes; for because of the corruption of nature it follows its private good, unless it is healed through God's grace' (1-2 q109 a3).

[131] 'Properly speaking, it is impossible for someone to hate himself. For everything naturally desires good, nor can anyone desire anything for himself, except under the character of good: for "evil is outside the scope of the will", as Dionysius says. . . . Now to love someone is to will good to him. . . . Hence it is necessary for someone to love himself, and impossible to hate himself, properly speaking' (1-2 q29 a4). 'Now the fact that someone desires a temporal good misdirectedly results from his loving himself misdirectedly; for to will some good to someone is to love him. Therefore it is evident that misdirected love of oneself is the cause of every sin' (1-2 q77 a4). 'Properly directed self-love is required (debitus) and natural, so in such a way that one desires an appropriate good for oneself. But misdirected self-love, which leads to contempt of God, is taken to be the cause of sin, according to Augustine' (1-2 q77 a4 ad1). 'A human being loves himself in this, that he wills his excellence; for loving oneself is the same as willing good to oneself. Hence it amounts to the same to take arrogance or self-love to be a beginning of all sin' (1-2 q84 a2 ad3).

'Love of self is common to all, in one way; in another way it is proper to the good; in a third way, it is proper to the bad. For it is common to all for each one to love what he thinks himself to be. Now a human being is said to be something, in two ways. First, in accordance with his substance and nature; and in accordance with this all take it to be a common good to be what they are, that is, composed of a soul and body. And in this way all, both good and bad, love themselves, in so far as they love their own preservation. Secondly, a human being is said to be something in accordance with some principal characteristic, as the principal one in a state is spoken of as being the state, so that what the principal ones do, the state is said to do. In this way, all do not regard themselves as what they are. For the rational mind is principal in a human being, and the sensory and corporeal nature is secondary. . . . Now the good regard their rational nature . . . as principal in them, and hence in accordance with this they regard themselves as what they are. Bad people, however, regard their sensory and bodily nature . . . as principal in themselves. Hence, since they do not recognize (cognoscentes) themselves correctly, they do not truly love themselves, but they love what they suppose themselves to be. But the good, since they recognize themselves truly, truly love themselves' (2-2 q25 a7). Aquinas continues with a paraphrase of *EN* ix 4.

[132] Aquinas discusses prudence of the flesh (based on *Rm.* 8:6, Vulg.) at 2-2 q47 a13. Contrast Luther, who identifies it with self-love without qualification. See §416.

our judgment about our own happiness. But in our actions in pursuit of the particular end, self-love is limited; for we discover—by deliberation about our happiness—that we ought not to be deliberating directly about happiness when we pursue the particular end.

Aquinas believes, therefore, that when Satan sinned against God, he did not sin simply in so far as he was moved by self-love and treated his own happiness as his ultimate end. In these respects he did not sin at all. His sin resulted from misdirected self-love, not from self-love itself. Though self-love is the source of all sin (amor sui principium peccati, 1-2 q77 a4; 2–2 q25 a7), it does not lead us into error by causing us to care too much about our own happiness. We fall into error only if we assign the supreme place to ourselves in pursuing the relevant particular end. We make a mistake if we believe that our own happiness depends entirely on ourselves and that it does not require subordination to the will of God. This mistake expresses the outlook of arrogance (superbia). Hence it would be more exact to say that arrogance is the source of the sin of Satan (1a q63 a1–2, a4).[133] The claim that self-love is the source of every sin is true only in so far as arrogance is a form of misguided self-love.[134]

The sin of Satan rests on an error about the nature and sources of his happiness, and so on an excessive desire for some condition of himself to the exclusion of anything else. He manifests his error in his failure to direct his own perfection towards a higher end (*SG* iii 109 §2846). But this does not mean that he cares too much about his own happiness as opposed to some other ultimate end; it means that he is wrong to suppose that concern for his happiness justifies exclusive self-love. His particular end ought to have included a correct view about his subordination to God; he ought not to have been so absorbed in himself and his concerns.

This general treatment of self-love fits Aquinas' discussion of friendship and justice. In both cases, the rational will does not have to step outside its desire for happiness. We ought to choose on the basis of beliefs about our perfection. In his view, correct beliefs about perfection support the practice of all the cardinal virtues, including those aspects that require concern for the good of others.

342. Success of the Argument for the Virtues

We have seen how Aquinas explains his conception of the free and rational will, and uses this conception to identify the virtues of a rational agent. Since the freedom of the will depends on deliberation about the good, the virtues that embody the good use of free will result from this deliberation. To show that this is the right way to understand the virtues, Aquinas

[133] 'In spiritual goods there can be no sin while someone has an affection towards them, unless regulation by the superior is not maintained in such an affection. And this is the sin of arrogance, not to be subject to a superior where one ought to be. Hence the first sin of the angel can be nothing other than arrogance' (1a q63 a2).

[134] 'The sin of arrogance may be considered in two ways. First . . . it is a special sin, because it has a special object: for it is misdirected desire of one's own excellence. . . . Secondly, it may be considered as having a certain overflowing into other sins. In this way . . . all sins can arise from arrogance, in two ways. First, properly, to the extent that other sins are directed towards the end of arrogance . . . Secondly, indirectly and as though accidentally, by removing something that prohibits, namely to the extent that through arrogance a human being despises the divine law through which he is prohibited from sinning. . . . But one should notice that it belongs to this generic character of arrogance that all the vices can sometimes arise from arrogance, but it does not belong to it that all the vices always arise from arrogance' (2-2 q162 a2). Cf. 1–2 q84 a2.

argues that universal prudence reaches the specifically virtuous ends by deliberating about how to achieve the universal end of the agent's ultimate good.

At two points in the description of the virtues, Aquinas might appear to deviate from this line of argument, by introducing moral content that cannot be reached by deliberation about the universal end: (1) His list of specific virtues of character might appear to require some views about their content that cannot be derived from reflexion on rational agency; we might expect that such views would be derived from our knowledge of the natural law. (2) His appeal to the first principles of natural law grasped by universal conscience might appear to imply that we have knowledge of moral principles that are independent of an individual rational will's pursuit of its ultimate end.

At both points, however, Aquinas adheres to his main purpose of deriving moral content from deliberation about the universal end. Our grasp of natural law does not yield general moral principles known independently of eudaemonistic grounds. The natural law is the 'law of our nature'; our nature is the sort of rational agency that Aquinas describes; and so an appeal to natural law does not lead us away from rational agency, but leads us back to it.

Aquinas' view of the will and the passions shows why we need the cardinal virtues, both as pervasive features of virtuous action and as distinct traits of character. If we were not subject to passions, we would not need the virtues that are concerned with their proper direction. If we did not have a will that aims at perfection, we would not know, without appeal to some further standard, what the proper direction of the passions consists in. If, for instance, our ultimate end were simply the orderly satisfaction of our first-order desires, whatever they might be, the specific end to be pursued by the virtues would depend on the nature of our first-order desires. Since, however, our ultimate end is our perfection as rational agents, specific desires are open to criticism and reform in the light of this end.

We might concede that this argument explains why some self-regarding conditions are virtues, but still deny that it will account for other-regarding virtues. This objection leads us to Aquinas' description and defence of friendship and justice. He argues that his account of rational agency answers this objection. He believes that if we recognize a virtue of the rational will that co-ordinates one's actions with those of other people, we ought to value friendship, to recognize the appropriate sort of equality, and to participate in a society aiming at a common good.

The arguments supporting Aquinas' conception of the different cardinal and subordinate virtues support his view that universal prudence reaches the specifically virtuous ends, and that the deliberation proper to universal prudence is part of a virtue of character. For the scope and connexions of the virtues are determined by their effect on one another and by their contribution to the ultimate end. We must understand this contribution if we are to understand why bravery sometimes requires active resistance, sometimes passive acceptance, and why both pride and humility are appropriate for different aspects of oneself and for different comparisons of oneself with others. In specifying the requirements of the different virtues, Aquinas argues from the ultimate end of agents who pursue their own perfection as rational agents with wills, and therefore pursue the good of others as part of their own good.

24

AQUINAS: SIN AND GRACE

343. Questions for Aquinas

Apart from the questions about sin and vice that arise for the moral philosopher, Aquinas faces special questions that arise from Christian moral theology. For the Christian moralist, sin is a pervasive feature of human life. The division between vicious people and other people does not mean that only vicious people are subject to the perversion of the will that produces sin. Christian doctrine implies that everyone is marked by original sin, which has some causal influence on actual sin. Even in the regenerate the influence of original sin does not disappear. Baptismal regeneration releases them from some effects of original sin, but not from actual sin. Though divine grace helps them, it does not cancel the effects of sin altogether.

These doctrines require Aquinas to explain how sin can be as pervasive as Christianity says it is, if Aristotle is right about virtue and vice. They raise a question about the voluntariness of sin, and therefore of virtue and vice. Aquinas argues that we are free and responsible agents in our choice between virtue and vice, and between virtuous and vicious actions. In forming our rational conception of ways to achieve happiness, and in consenting or refusing consent to the influence of our passions, we exercise freedom. Aquinas has to show that our most important choices are not mere reactions to the influence of irresistible passions 'submerging' and 'binding' the rational will; our outlook cannot be so warped as to deprive us of choice between good and bad characters and actions.

We might doubt this position if we reflect on ordinary facts about environment, heredity, upbringing, and culture. But these sorts of apparently interfering causal influences seem less severe threats than the threat arising from the Christian doctrine of original sin. This doctrine seems to imply that we are irresistibly inclined to error quite independently of any choice of ours.[1] To solve the theological problem, Aquinas has to show that his account of freewill leaves room for the appropriate degree of freewill despite the influence of original sin.

[1] See e.g. Articles §10 on free will. Cf. *West. Conf.* 6.4–5: 'From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions. This corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated; and although it be through Christ pardoned and mortified, yet both itself, and all the motions thereof, are truly and properly sin.'

Doubts about freewill raise difficulties not only for Aquinas, but also for the Christian moralist generally. If original sin and divine grace play a primary causal role in making us sinful, vicious, or virtuous, we do not seem to be responsible, praiseworthy, and blameworthy for our virtue and vice. The Christian moralist cannot simply accept this consequence. For the Christian position maintains that sin deserves punishment; without blame and liability to punishment, there would be nothing to forgive.

The pervasiveness of sin implies a correspondingly pervasive role for God on the positive side. Since the acquired moral virtues do not remove sin, we need something else to remove it. We depend on divine grace, working in several ways. It releases us through baptism from some of the effects of original sin. It disposes us to turn to God; it infuses theological and moral virtues in us; and it gives us perseverance to remain in them. Once we recognize the extent of divine intervention, we may well conclude that the acquired moral virtues become insignificant. The infusion of divine grace is not a reward for having acquired the moral virtues by ourselves; why, then, should these virtues have a central place in the pursuit of the ultimate end? The crucial steps seem to proceed from divine grace.

Questions about the connexion between vice, sin, grace, and virtue are not simply questions for someone who agrees with Aquinas' Aristotelian starting point. They also arise in trying to find a coherent statement of the Christian position on sin, grace, and responsibility. We need to see whether Aquinas' Aristotelian theory makes it easier or more difficult to find this coherent statement of the Christian position.

At first sight, Aristotelian assumptions raise doubts about the Christian position. For Aristotle recognizes the possibility of becoming virtuous by our own efforts and through our own will. If we agree with him, we seem to raise difficulties for the Christian belief in the ubiquity of sin; this is why Luther believes that the incorporation of Aristotelian ethics is a fatal dilution of the Christian conception of human nature.[2] If Aquinas is to avoid this objection, he needs to describe sin in such a way that it does not imply an Aristotelian vice, but can be present in someone who has the acquired moral virtues.

Aquinas' views on the roles of original sin, grace, and human merit are complex. On the one hand, he seems to affirm the possibility of being virtuous by our own efforts; and so, if God approves human virtues (which he should, because of his relation to the natural law), our acquired virtues seem to be a source of merit. On the other hand, Aristotle's conditions for voluntariness leave Aquinas with more scope than another theory would allow him for attributing a large causal role to external influences—either original sin or divine grace—while insisting that an action or state of character is up to us and that we are responsible for it. He has a possible basis for reconciling our responsibility for our actions with Christian doctrines about grace and merit.

These questions are relevant not only for the student of Aquinas' theology, but also for the student of some aspects of his moral philosophy. (1) We may reasonably be interested in the coherence of his overall position. If his explanation of central concepts in morality and moral psychology does not fit the Christian doctrines that use these concepts, some aspect of his position needs to be revised. (2) If Aristotelian moral philosophy does not fit Christian theology, the project of 'baptizing' Aristotle does not succeed; Christianity not

[2] See §411n5.

only introduces new moral beliefs but also demands a new theoretical framework to explain them. This view about Christianity is one part of Luther's case against the 'Aristotelian church'.[3] If it is right, it supports the belief in a sharp discontinuity in the history of moral philosophy. (3) Comparison between Aristotelian and Christian views may also help us to decide about their soundness. If the two positions conflict, they cannot both be right. Whether or not we accept the Christian position because it is Christian, we may believe that, as Kant argues, it embodies some reasonable moral assumptions.[4] If these are incompatible with Aristotle, they point to errors in the Aristotelian position. Conversely, we may believe that the superiority of Aristotelian ethics reveals some moral errors in Christianity. If the two positions agree in the way that Aquinas believes they agree, it does not follow that they are both true, but we will not face the objections that arise from a conflict between them.

344. The External Causes of Sin

Aquinas relies on his conception of responsibility and freedom to defend the common assumption that we act freely and responsibly both in sinning and in acting virtuously. We are not victims of passions or of ignorance that we are not responsible for; it is in our power to acquire the virtues. Hence we are responsible for sin no less than for virtuous action.

The common assumption about responsibility faces two objections that arise from God's role in the production of sin: (1) God seems to be responsible, as creator and first cause, for the existence of sin.[5] (2) God has willed all human beings to be subject to original sin.

The second objection casts doubt on a possible answer to the first. For we might argue that God has created us with freewill, and that we have no one but ourselves to blame for our sins. But the doctrine of original sin seems to imply a closer connexion between God and sin; for God seems to have willed us to have an innate tendency to sin. If we claim that Adam was free because he was capable of choosing without any antecedent bias one way or the other, we make it difficult to see how we can be free; for original sin seems to give us an antecedent bias towards sin. If this sort of bias undermines our responsibility for sinning, Aquinas' claims about sin and freewill are inconsistent.

His account of freewill, therefore, needs to leave room for original sin and for divine grace. Augustine's controversies with the Pelagians show the difficulties raised by Christian theology for a philosophical account of freedom.[6] Pelagius' position tries to limit the role of divine grace so that it does not threaten human freedom; God does not determine the human will, but responds to the free actions that we undertake without being determined one way or the other by our sinful nature or by irresistible divine grace. We might take Pelagius to rely on assumptions about freedom that underlie an incompatibilist account. Augustine's answer to him seems to concede that if Pelagius is right about freewill, the right account of divine grace excludes freewill. Augustine, however, does not believe that divine grace really excludes freewill, since he also rejects Pelagius' conception of freedom.

[3] See §411. [4] See Kant, *Religion*, Parts 1–2.

[5] See 1a q19 a9. Cf. *West. Conf.* 5.4: 'the sinfulness thereof [sc. of the sin of Adam and Eve] proceedeth only from the creature, and not from God; who being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin'.

[6] See §225.

He affirms that some sort of freedom is necessary for the sort of responsibility that Christian doctrine attributes to human beings both for their sins and for their merits.[7]

Aquinas approaches the dispute between Augustine and Pelagius with a more explicit account of freewill and responsibility. He claims to have shown that, in the respects necessary for freedom, the human will is not determined, but is capable of going in both directions as a result of deliberation. We have found that he does not commit himself to an incompatibilist account of freedom. We ought to be able to confirm or to refute this account of his views on freedom once we see how he applies them to questions about grace and sin.

345. Sin and Causal Responsibility

Aquinas argues that God is not the cause of sin, because sin is a deviation from the order that is directed to God as the end, whereas God inclines everything to turn towards himself as the end. The sin is to be attributed to the sinful will, not to God himself (*ST* 1-2 q79 a1–2; 1a q49 a2). This answer may seem unsatisfactory, as Aquinas sees, given that God creates human beings with wills that are liable to sin (1-2 q79 a1 obj3). Aquinas needs to show that his claims about responsibility for sin take account of this fact.

God's primary aim in creation is the good of the whole universe (1a q49 a2), and in order to achieve the perfect good of the whole he permits some defects in particular things (1a q22 a2 ad2). It is part of God's providence that some creatures capable of falling sometimes actually fall (1a q49 a2). The defects in particular creatures are the result of God's concern for the good of the whole universe, and so he causes them 'consequently, and as though by accident' (1a q49 a2). Aquinas does not mean that they need not have happened, or that God's choices did not make them inevitable. He means that they are by-products of the aim that God achieves directly.[8]

This causal role might suggest that God is responsible for sin by permitting it. The pilot is the cause of the shipwreck because he is absent from his post and fails to do what would have prevented the shipwreck (cf. 1a q49 a2 obj3). We might analyse this causal role counterfactually; the pilot causes the shipwreck because if he had been present and piloting the ship, the shipwreck would not have happened, and so he made the crucial difference between the shipwreck's happening and not happening. If this analysis is applied to God, God seems to be the cause of sin. For God could have prevented sin, either by not creating the particular sort of free and imperfect will that is liable to sin and is required to sin sometimes for the sake of the whole universe, or by providing the help that would prevent the sin.[9]

Aquinas, however, adds a further clause to the counterfactual analysis; the pilot ought to have been piloting the ship at the time when he was not (potens et debens gubernare, 1-2 q79 a1). The absence of the pilot was not the cause of the shipwreck if the crew foolishly put to sea before the pilot was expected to come on board, even though he would have piloted

[7] See §225n64. [8] Some relevant problems are discussed by Kretzmann; see §307n42.

[9] 'For it happens that God does not provide help to some people to avoid sin, and that if he provided this help, they would not sin' (1-2 q79 a1).

the ship and the ship would have avoided the rocks, if he had come on board earlier. Such examples suggest that the merely counterfactual test allows too many things to count as causes. It not only gives the wrong answer about the pilot's responsibility, but also allows many other inappropriate candidates to be causes. If, for instance, the sailor at the wheel had happened to be better at piloting, the wreck would have been avoided; but his ignorance is not the cause of the wreck, unless there is some reason to expect him to be a better pilot, or to expect a better pilot to be at the wheel.

These examples suggest that our causal judgments assume some background of standing normal conditions. The absence of the pilot causes the shipwreck on the assumption that the crew behaves normally, the ship has no hole in the side, the winds are not irresistibly strong, and so on. Given these presumptions of normality, the absence of the pilot is the crucial deviation from normality that explains what went wrong in this particular case. In Aquinas' view, our assumptions about the standing conditions must include assumptions about what can reasonably be expected not only from a purely predictive point of view, but also from an evaluative point of view. If it would not be reasonable to expect the pilot to be on board, his absence cannot be cited as the cause of the shipwreck. In this case our expectation is moral, not predictive; if he ought to be on board, but more often than not he is drinking in the pub when the ship sails, his absence is still the cause of the shipwreck. Aquinas, therefore, has some reason to claim that sometimes a moral judgment reasonably influences our causal judgment, because the relevant moral facts determine the causal facts.[10]

This analysis of causal judgments about the pilot is important for Aquinas' argument. To decide whether God is the cause of sin, we cannot simply ask whether there would have been no sin if God had wanted to prevent sin. We must also consider whether God ought to have intervened to prevent sin. Aquinas argues that the answer to this question is No. In God's providence and concern for the good of the whole universe (cf. 1a q49 a2 ad3), God creates creatures with freewill who are capable of sinning and will sometimes sin; God did nothing wrong in creating them or in allowing them to sin.

A similar reply deals with the objection that God sometimes turns people's will to evil.[11] Even if A's action could have prevented something happening to B, it does not follow that A caused what happens to B. If the dentist had kidnapped me and filled my tooth against my will, my tooth would not have fallen out; but she does not cause my tooth to fall out by not kidnapping me. But if she failed to do something she ought to have done to take care of my teeth, she might be the cause of my tooth falling out.

If some of the relevant causal judgments depend on judgments about whether an agent who failed to intervene ought to have intervened, we cannot first decide whether God is the cause of sin, and then use our conclusion on this point to decide whether he treats us fairly or not. We must first decide whether God treats us fairly, and then we can say what he causes.

[10] On some cases where judgments about recklessness influence judgments about causation see Hart and Honoré, *CL* 143–5.

[11] 'God is said ... to incline wills towards evil, not by acting or by moving them, but rather by deserting or not impeding, just as if someone were not to give a hand to someone falling and were said to be the cause of that person's fall. God, however, brings it about from a just judgment that he does not provide help to some people to prevent them from falling' (*Mal.* q3 a1 ad1).

346. God and Human Freewill

This evaluative element in some causal judgments underlies Aquinas' account of the role of God in the production of actual sin as well as original sin. Aquinas argues that since God has created us with freewill, God is not responsible for our acts of sin, even though God plays a crucial causal role in bringing them about. The effects of an inferior cause can be attributed (reducere) to a superior cause as long as they follow the direction of the superior cause, but cannot be attributed to the superior cause if they violate its direction. If servants violate their master's instructions, their error cannot be attributed to him; similarly, the error of a freewill that violates God's instructions cannot be attributed to God (1-2 q79 a1 ad3).

We might object that if the master knows his servants are about to make an error and fails to correct them, he is still the cause of the error, since they would not have made the error if he had not left them alone. In Aquinas' view, this objection is sound only if the master could reasonably be expected to intervene to prevent the servant's error. If Aquinas' claims about God's providence are accepted, the crucial condition about reasonable expectation fails when we consider God's relation to our freewill.

On this basis Aquinas tries to show how God's will is the cause of the act of sin even though it is not the cause of sin (q79 a2). He admits that the cause of the act of sin is the movement of the freewill, and that God is the cause of every movement (q79 a2 sc). To make his position consistent Aquinas distinguishes two claims: (1) God is the cause of the act of sin in so far as it is an act of freewill. (2) God is the cause of the sinful character of the act of sin. Since he affirms (1), but denies (2), he claims that his recognition of divine causality does not make God the cause of sin. When we walk with a limp, the fact that we move at all results from our 'motive power'; if we did not decide to walk, we would not walk with a limp. But our limping instead of walking normally is the effect of the condition of our leg, not of our motive power. Similarly, God is the cause of our moving ourselves to action, and therefore is the cause of all our actions, including sinful actions, but God is not the cause of their sinfulness.

This is a satisfactory resolution only if we accept Aquinas' distinction between primary and secondary causes.[12] In claiming that the freewill is the cause of its motion, Aquinas intends a modest claim, that 'a human being moves himself to action through freewill' (1a q83 a1 ad3). This claim does not imply that human beings are the first causes of their actions, so that the motion of the free will has no external first cause. Motion resulting from freewill is the natural form of motion for rational agents, just as other sorts of motion are natural for other creatures. In creating us to be moved by reason and deliberation, God has given us freewill (cf. 1-2 q9 a6).

Aquinas does not say or imply that God gives us freewill only if he creates us so that there is no external cause of any of the movements of our freewill. He implies that we have freewill even if God is the first cause of a necessitating sequence that ends with our sinful action. Aquinas denies that God is the cause of our sin not because he denies that

[12] See §270. *West. Conf.* 5.2 relies on a similar claim about freedom and secondary causes: 'Although in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly, yet, by the same providence, he ordereth them to fall out according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently'.

God's action necessitates our sin, but because he thinks it is not reasonable to expect God to prevent our sinning. He relies on his interpretation of the analogy with the pilot.[13]

This reconciliation of God's causal role with human freedom rests on a compatibilist account of freedom. Specifically, it rests on Aquinas' claims that all the facts about freedom are included in the facts about the human will and its deliberative pursuit of the ultimate good. If he had accepted an incompatibilist account of freedom, his concessions about divine causality would raise serious difficulties about the reality of human freedom. His moral psychology fits his theology.[14]

347. How God Causes Sin

Aquinas admits that in an important sense God is the cause of blindness and hardness of heart (1-2 q79 a3), and that these actions express God's predestination, either election or reprobation (1-2 q79 a4).[15] But this causal role does not make God the cause of sin, because God does not arbitrarily choose to blind or to harden someone. The sun does not shine into the house if we pull the curtains[16] to block it out; similarly, Aquinas suggests, it is up to us to present an obstacle to illumination by divine grace.[17] But he recognizes that this comparison is not completely accurate. In the case of the sun and the light, the sun does not withdraw the light by its own judgment; the cause of the withdrawal is the person who closes the curtain. God, however, withdraws grace by his own judgment (proprio iudicio), and so he, as well as the person who creates the obstacle, is a cause of the person's blindness or hardness of heart.

In recognizing that God withdraws grace by his own judgment, Aquinas implies that God does not face an obstacle that he cannot remove. God sees that he could intervene effectively, but he chooses not to; and so he bears some causal responsibility for the hardening of hearts. Indeed, if the purely counterfactual test for causation were adequate, God would be the cause; for our presenting the obstacle to God would not result in the hardening of our hearts if God chose to intervene with his grace to enlighten us. Aquinas, however, prefers to say that both God and the sinner are causes of the hardening of the sinner's heart, since the freewills of two agents play an indispensable role in producing the result. The sinner's presenting the obstacle is indispensable, though it would not have been indispensable if God had decided differently. Though God could have chosen to withdraw grace from anyone he pleased, he chooses in fact to withdraw it only from those who present an obstacle;[18] he would not have withdrawn it if the sinner had not presented the obstacle. None the less—as Aquinas points out in qualifying the comparison with the sun—God's withdrawal of grace is not an automatic result triggered by the sinner's presenting the obstacle; it is God's decision to respond in this way.

To see how large a causal role Aquinas has assigned to God, we should combine this claim about the withdrawal of grace with the previous points about primary and secondary

[13] This point was introduced in §270. [14] On compatibilism see §§264, 270.

[15] Relevant issues are discussed by Stump, 'Sanctification' 227–34.

[16] Aquinas speaks of closing the windows, which makes the same point, given the sort of window he was familiar with.

[17] Cf. 1-2 q79 a3. [18] Hence withdrawal of grace is a punishment for sin; 1-2 q87 a2.

causes. God's providence and predestination initiate a sequence of sufficient conditions that result in the creation of free agents with different kinds of wills; and Aquinas allows the necessitation (in the sense of a sequence of sufficient conditions) of the choices and actions of particular agents.[19] This is the result of God's predestination operating, so to speak, in advance. God also operates, so to speak, at the same time as the sinner chooses rightly or wrongly, by illuminating or blinding, and so ensures that the sinner will or will not persist in sin. God, therefore, contributes both to our initial sins and to our persistence in sin.

Aquinas believes that these divine causal contributions to sin fit his account of how human agents are responsible for their sins. If the will is moved by considerations that make it open to rational criticism, praise, and blame, we are responsible for actions produced by the will. Aquinas' account implies that it does not matter how we came to be in the condition in which we are moved by such considerations; in particular it does not matter whether or not we are responsible for being in this condition. Responsibility and freedom depend on the will as proximate cause. They do not depend on our views about the ultimate cause, and God's causal contribution does not cancel them.

From an incompatibilist point of view, this is a serious flaw. For Aquinas seems to allow the possibility that God creates a series of sufficient causal conditions for sin; if God does this, we cannot, on incompatiblist assumptions, be responsible for our sins. This doubt seems equally pressing if the series of sufficient conditions results from natural processes independent of God. Incompatibilists believe that the type of necessitation involved in causal determination excludes the capacity for choosing opposites that is characteristic of freedom. Aquinas, however, assumes that the relevant capacity allows a compatibilist analysis.[20]

348. Original Sin

Aquinas faces a further objection besides the one that arises from belief in God as omnipotent creator. He supposes that if God leaves us with the sort of will that has the relevant rational capacities, we are responsible for actions that proceed from the will. Another Christian doctrine, however, seems to suggest that God does not leave us with the right sort of will. If we have original sin, one source of sin is not voluntary, but an inevitable feature of human nature (given the sin of Adam). Aquinas recognizes that as a result of the sin of Adam, 'human nature is corrupted (vitiata) to the extent that we are all prone (proclives) to sin' (1-2 q80 a4). He believes there would still be sin without original sin, but he clearly believes that original sin plays an important role in the production of sin.

He suggests that the devil could be regarded as the cause of sin, in the way in which someone who dried out the wood was the cause of the burning of the wood. He implies that the effects of original sin are not by themselves sufficient for actual sin. But he leaves open the question whether they make sin inevitable.[21] In an environment where very few people drop matches, no other sparks fly, and so on, drying out a piece of wood may not result in

[19] The compatibility of Aquinas' position with causal necessitation is affirmed vigorously by Banez. See §418.

[20] Hume accepts compatibilism, but does not believe that it removes objections to predestination. See *IHU* viii (last para.).

[21] Cf. *Articles* §9; see §418n97.

a fire. But if we dry it out in a place where people habitually make campfires, its being dry may well be taken to be the cause of the fire, and even (in the circumstances) to make the fire inevitable.

Aquinas denies that original sin is transmitted because some corrupt element is transmitted in generation, and specifically in the semen of the father. Such a view would make original sin a hereditary defect parallel to an inherited disease such as haemophilia. Aquinas objects that this explanation does not show how original sin could be a source of culpability; it seems to exclude anything blameworthy (q81 a1). He therefore rejects the view that Adam sinned, and passed the fault in him on to us through generation.

In his view, Adam sinned, and generated us, so that we share the blame for his sin. We share the fault of Adam not through something transmitted in our generation, but simply by being his descendants.[22] Aquinas appeals to the solidarity of the human race, treated as a 'collective' (collegium, *Mal.* q4 a1). Membership in a collective allows us to attribute to each member the actions taken on behalf of the collective. Aquinas believes that this solidarity is similar enough to the solidarity of a single organism to justify the transference of the guilt of Adam to us. If my hand carries out a murder, the murder is voluntary, not by the will of the hand, but by the will of the soul that moves the hand, and it can be imputed to the hand because of its connexion with the whole body (1-2 q81 a1c §4). Aquinas suggests that the generative relation of Adam to the rest of the human race implicates the rest of us in his sin just as the will of the soul implicates the hand in the murder.

This analogy seems to collapse just where Aquinas relies on it. In the case of the single organism the hand is not a responsible agent in its own right, and so no question arises about the division of responsibility between it and the will that moves it. If my hand really did have a will of its own, and we knew that it had protested against, or failed to support, the decision of the will, we might doubt whether it would be just to punish the hand as well as the rest of the person. Could God not have chosen not to punish us for the sin of Adam?

Aquinas tries another illustration. He recognizes (following a passage in Aristotle) that someone is not properly reproached for his hereditary defects; but he argues that someone can properly be reproached 'in so far as he is traced back to some origin' (q81 a1 ad5). He suggests that someone shares the disgrace of his family as a result of the fault of his ancestors. This illustration, however, does not make Aquinas' view more plausible. For he has to say it is just to punish descendants for the crimes of their ancestors, even if the descendants are completely ignorant of them, or repudiate them, or try to make amends for them.

We need not deny that descent has some relevance to what we should take responsibility for. Sovereign states and other bodies undertake responsibilities that outlast the life of any particular person or generation; if, for instance, Britain undertook to offer citizenship to emigrants from some other country, a later generation are not free to withdraw the offer simply on the ground that they are not the actual people who made it. Perhaps it is no more unreasonable for a later generation to take responsibility for some of the harm done by their ancestors, and to do something towards undoing the harm or compensating the victims. But it is difficult to see how anything reasonable in these claims about taking responsibility

[22] See esp. q82 a1 ad2. Original sin 'has the character of blameworthiness (culpa), to the extent that it is derived from our first parent'.

for something could be used to show that we are justly punished for the sin of Adam simply because we are his descendants.

349. The Effects of Original Sin

We need to accept Aquinas' belief in collective inherited responsibility if we are to agree with him in believing that we are justly punished for the sin of Adam and that we need baptism to free us from the guilt that we contract simply by being descendants of Adam. But even if we do not agree with these aspects of his view, we may agree with him about the presence of original sin in us, and we can still ask whether his belief in its presence fits his claims about the freedom of the human will.

In claiming that original sin belongs to us because of the sin of Adam, Aquinas means to say that it is not a necessary feature of human nature. Human nature does not exclude the formation of a human being from human flesh, outside the historical connexion with Adam, who would have no original sin (q81 a4). Original sin is a fact about the human beings who actually exist, but not about all possible human beings.

In actual human beings original sin causes the privation of original justice. Original justice in Adam was the appropriate harmony in his soul that turned him firmly towards God and away from concentration on the particular goods pursued by different parts of his soul (q82 a1c, ad1; cf. *Mal.* q4 a1). Original justice is not a natural feature of human beings; God created Adam with freewill and the capacity for virtue, simply by creating a human being; but original justice was a gift from God distinct from the act of creating a human being, and God gave it to Adam as a gift to be passed on to his descendants.[23] Adam lost this gift by sinning through his freewill, and he lost it on the same terms as those on which it had been given, as a gift to him and to his descendants.[24] He sinned in so far as he turned away from God to a created good (*Mal.* q4 a2); the effect of his sin in us is the loss of the original justice that we would have had if he had not sinned.

Even if we do not agree that responsibility and guilt are transmitted, Aquinas might still be right about the possible transmission of original justice. Original justice or its privation need not be transmitted genetically or by a separate act of God for each new person; it could be transmitted historically and culturally. Without any further intervention by God, earlier generations with original justice could bring up later generations in surroundings favourable to justice. In fact, however, the effects of sin are transmitted, and they explain why later generations grow up as they do, among people and institutions resulting from earlier generations who have turned away from original justice.

If Aquinas identifies original sin in us with the privation of original justice, it is not the total corruption that would make us psychologically incapable of avoiding sin. Admittedly, once original justice is lost, the human mind and will are no longer subject to God (1-2 q82 a2; a3). Since we now lack the firm state of character that maintains the appropriate order

[23] *Mal.* q4 a1: 'This gift had been given to the first human being, not only as an individual person, but also as a sort of principle of the whole of human nature, so that from him it would be transmitted to his descendants through the origin'.

[24] *Mal.* q4 a1: 'And when this gift had been received, the first human being by sinning through freewill lost the gift on the same terms (eo tenore) as those on which it had been given—that is to say, for himself and for all his descendants'.

among our different impulses and desires, we are prone to commit sin. But we keep the capacity to avoid sin, in so far as we have freewill in relation to the impulses leading to sin; Aquinas' account of original sin does not deny us freewill. Considerations leading us towards sin attract us more than they would if we had original justice. Since we lack the order that turns us towards God, particular goods that distract us from God attract us more than they otherwise would (q82 a3); they appeal to the inferior part of the soul that can 'cloud and distract reason' (q82 a3 ad3). But clouding and distracting are not the same as 'binding' reason. The passions move us only in so far as the will consents to them; attention to the relevant considerations of overall good changes our minds about consenting to the passions. Original sin does not undermine our responsibility for actual sins.[25]

Baptism removes some, though not all, the effects of original sin.[26] We retain the 'fuel' of sin in the non-rational parts of the soul, and so we retain some tendency towards sin.[27] In baptism, however, we receive grace and virtue to overcome the disorder in the non-rational desires (3a q69 a4). The baptized person still has the appetites that make us prone to evil and make it difficult to act correctly, but baptism reduces these appetites, 'so that a person may not be overcome by them' (q69 a4 ad3), and it is easier to avoid evil and to choose right action.

The difference between the unbaptized and the baptized person seems to be that in the unbaptized person the rational part of the soul is not well enough ordered to avoid finding the suggestions of the inferior part attractive enough to be obeyed. This is partly a fault in the rational part, and partly a result of the strength of the impulses in the non-rational part. Baptism makes a difference to both causes of sin; it supplies grace and virtue to the rational part, and makes the desires of the non-rational part less insistent, so that the rational part both has less to overcome and has more resources for overcoming it.

350. Natural and Supernatural Good

Though Aquinas insists that the corruption of human nature that consists in the loss of original justice still leaves us with freewill, he also believes that our capacity for virtue is limited, and that its limits reveal our need of divine grace.[28] If we had been untouched by original sin, we would be capable, without any further divine grace, of (1) performing particular good actions, (2) achieving the acquired virtues of character, and (3) achieving the good proper to the acquired virtues,[29] though we would be incapable, without further help of divine grace, of (4) achieving our supernatural good.

[25] For Luther's and Melanchthon's views on the effect of original sin see §§415, 418.

[26] 'Original sin is removed by baptism in respect of guilt (reatu), in so far as the soul recovers grace, as far as concerns the mind. Original sin remains, however in respect of actuality (actu), as far as concerns the fuel (fomes), which is the disorder of the inferior parts of the soul and of the body itself.' (1-2 q81 a3 ad1).

[27] 'It belongs to the very character of the fuel that it inclines us towards evil or makes a difficulty in the way of the good' (3a q27 a3).

[28] *Articles* §10; see §419.

[29] 'But in the undamaged condition of nature, as far as sufficiency of active virtue is concerned, a human being was able through his natural powers to will and to achieve in action the good proportionate to human nature, which is the character of the good of <i.e., achieved by> acquired virtue . . .' (1-2 q109 a2).

In our actual state, affected by original sin and its results, we are still capable of particular good actions. Aquinas describes these as 'works leading to some good proper to the nature (connaturale) of a human being' (1-2 q109 a5); he cites Augustine's examples of tilling the fields, drinking, eating, and having friends (q109 a2, a5). We are still incapable of the supernatural good. The difference between our sinful state and the state of original justice appears at the third stage, in our inability to achieve the human good.[30] Though we can achieve the acquired virtues, we cannot achieve the good that they aim at. Since acquired virtue does not require the absence of sin, we can achieve acquired virtue even if we cannot avoid sin. Without grace we are capable of avoiding sin on a particular occasion, but not capable of avoiding it altogether; our misguided passions and intellect present us with false suggestions that we sometimes accept (q109 a8).[31] In the original condition of uncorrupted nature we were able to fulfil the commands of the law without grace, as far as concerns the 'substance of the actions', but in our corrupt condition we cannot fulfil them (q109 a4).[32]

The difference between the particular good actions prescribed by the acquired virtues and the ultimate good aimed at by these virtues helps to explain the places where Aquinas seems to say that we can achieve a good proper to our nature without grace.[33] We are capable of acquired political virtue by our natural ability without divine grace, and this allows us to achieve a 'proportionate' good through the particular actions prescribed by the acquired virtues.[34] By achieving the proportionate good, we take a step towards achieving the good that is proper to human nature, but we cannot achieve that whole human good by our natural ability.[35]

351. The Need for Grace

If we need grace to achieve both the natural and the supernatural good, why, and at what stage, do we need it? We might suggest that even if we cannot achieve the supernatural good by our natural abilities, we can still exercise these abilities to take the necessary steps towards receiving grace. Aquinas asks (1) whether we can prepare ourselves for grace without first receiving grace, (2) whether we can rise from sin without grace, and (3) whether, once we have received grace, we can do good works without further grace. By answering No to all these questions, he shows the different ways in which grace is necessary.

[30] 'In the state of corrupt nature, a human being even falls short of this <good> that he is capable of in accordance with his nature, so as to be unable to achieve (implere) the whole good of this sort through his natural abilities' (q109 a2, following quotation in n29).

[31] Cf. Melanchthon, §418.

[32] On Luther's discussion of the 'substance of the action' see §415.

[33] '<A> good that is proportionate to human nature, a human being is capable of achieving (implere) though freewill' (*Ver.* q24 a14). 'To <a> good that is proper to human nature, a human being is capable <of attaining> through freewill, but <attaining to a> meritorious good is above his nature' (q24 a14 ad4).

[34] 'The good of political virtue is commensurate with human nature. And hence, without the help of grace making him acceptable the will of a human being is capable of tending towards that good, though admittedly not without the help of God' (2-2 q136 a3 ad2).

[35] In *in 2Cor.* iii 1 = P xiii 512b Aquinas explains how Paul affirms the necessity of divine grace without denying free will: 'But so that he does not seem to be doing away with freewill by saying this, he says ''by us, as though out of us'', as though he were to say: I can indeed do something, which belongs to freewill, but the fact that I do it is not out of me but from God, who confers this very ability (posse)'.

To prepare ourselves to receive grace, we would have to turn away from sin by turning towards God, in the sense specific to a just person, who is eager to hold fast to God (cupiunt adhaerere, q109 a6). Since, in our sinful condition, we lack this direction to God, we cannot turn ourselves towards God by our natural abilities; hence we cannot prepare ourselves, without grace, to receive grace.[36] God alone is the cause of grace (q112 a1); though preparation of the human being is needed for the reception of grace, this preparation is the work of God.[37] We cannot, therefore, treat grace as simply a response to some effort or attitude that is independent of grace.[38]

To emphasize the fact that divine grace is not a response to human effort, Aquinas insists that the first grace that turns us to God cannot be merited. No one can merit the first grace of justification for himself (q114 a5), and no one can by his natural powers merit the sort of happiness that consists in eternal life (q114 a2c, ad1). Grace and justification are not a fitting response to someone who does what he can to prepare himself for them (q112 a3), in the way that punishment is a fitting response to crime. On the contrary, 'the gift of grace exceeds all preparation of human virtue' (q112 a3). In 'operating grace', the first grace that God gives, God does not respond to any preparation independent of grace; any preparation is itself the result of operating grace.[39]

These assertions about the necessity of grace independently of any human preparation might suggest that Aquinas takes grace to replace freewill. But he disagrees. Though he denies that we can prepare ourselves for grace without having received grace, he believes we must prepare ourselves.[40] Preparation includes turning ourselves towards God through freewill; but freewill cannot turn to God unless God himself turns it (q109 a6 ad1).

Since turning to God is an act of freewill, we are responsible for remaining in sin and presenting an obstacle to grace (*SG* iii 159).[41] If we exist in sin without grace, we cannot avoid sin in general, even though we can avoid it on each particular occasion. Hence 'it will not be entirely in one's power to present no obstacle to grace' (iii 160). God's withholding grace consists in his not removing this obstacle that we present (160). A person's sins can be imputed to him even if they result from his inability not to sin; for he has acquired this

[36] 'A human being cannot prepare himself for receiving the light of grace, unless through the gracious (gratuitum) help of God internally moving him' (q109 a6).

[37] 'No preparation is needed on the side of the human being, as though preceding the divine help. Rather, whatever preparation there can be in a human being is from the help of God who is moving the soul towards good. And on this account even the good movement of the freewill by which someone is prepared for receiving the gift of grace is the action of the freewill moved by God . . . It is principally from God moving the freewill' (q112 a2). 'It is clear, however, that what belongs to grace is the effect of predestination; and this cannot be taken to be the reason of predestination, since it is included under predestination. . . . Now what comes from freewill is not distinguished from what comes from predestination, just as what comes from a secondary cause is not distinguished from what comes from a first cause; for divine providence produces effects through the action of secondary causes . . . Hence also what is through freewill is from predestination. . . . Whatsoever is in a human being directing him towards salvation is all included under the effect of predestination; even the preparation for grace; for neither does this come about except through divine help . . .' (1a q23 a5).

[38] See also *SG* iii 149. Aquinas' views are discussed by Stump, *Aq*., ch. 13.

[39] 'In that effect in which our mind is moved and does not initiate motion, and God alone initiates the motion, the activity (operatio) is attributed to God; and in accordance with this we speak of operating grace' (1-2 q111 a2).

[40] 'It belongs to a human being to prepare his soul, because he does this through freewill. And yet he does not do this without the help of God moving him and drawing him to God' (1-2 q109 a6 ad4).

[41] '. . . before a human being's reason, in which mortal sin is, is restored by justifying grace, he can avoid individual mortal sins, and avoid them for a time, since it is not necessary for him to be always actually sinning. But to remain for a long time without mortal sin cannot happen' (1-2 q109 a8).

inability by previous sin. Even if he cannot avoid sin altogether, he can avoid it on this occasion, so that it is fairly imputed to him. This complex analysis is intended to show that God is not the cause of sin for anyone (162), but none the less exercises predestination and reprobation (163).

Turning to God has to be an act of freewill, because otherwise it would not be a genuine human action. Similarly, a movement of freewill is needed for the justification of sinners (1-2 q113 a3), because movement according to freewill is the natural form of movement for rational agents (as opposed to young children, q113 a3 ad1). Justification requires a movement of the mind to turn it towards God; and the first such movement is the movement of faith, which has to be an act of freewill (q113 a4).[42] When God infuses grace, God at the same time moves the freewill to accept grace (q113 a3).[43] Aquinas asserts a role for freewill, but not independently of the grace of God. A person's faith is not a contribution distinct from God's, and therefore does not constitute merit or some substitute for merit, independent of, and antecedent to, God's grace. Grace is the mover of the free will.[44]

If we hold an indeterminist view of freewill, Aquinas' claims may appear inconsistent. According to an indeterminist view, it would be self-contradictory to claim that God could initiate causally sufficient conditions for an action of the freewill; God could only initiate a series that includes an undetermined movement of the freewill. Since Aquinas does not insist that acceptance of divine grace depends on some undetermined movement, he seems not to rely on an indeterminist view of freewill.

In Aquinas' view, God moves us by our freewill in the way that is natural for human beings, by presenting us with an apparent good.[45] God presents us with a good that is so clearly the best available good that, given our beliefs and desires, we see no reasonable alternative to pursuing it. God does not interfere with our wills; we could still reject the option that God presents, if we were to concentrate on some other aspect of it (as we can do with all non-final goods).[46] But if God knows our beliefs and desires, God can present us with an option that we will not reject.

God is similar, in this respect, to causes of sin that are outside the will. The passions, for instance, may present a particular course of action as being so attractive that, given the sort of person we are, we will choose that course of action; but the will assents to this course of action as a result of deliberation, in an act of freewill. God has a greater influence over us than our passions have; for God can infallibly determine how good an option will appear to us to be, in the light of our beliefs and desires, and therefore God can determine whether we choose it or not. But God's causal role still allows us to be moved by our freewill.

[42] Conversio; cf. 1-2 q5 a5 ad1.

[43] For this role of grace see *BCP*, Collect for Easter: ' We humbly beseech thee, that as by thy special grace preventing us thou dost put into our minds good desires, so by thy continual help we may bring the same to good effect'. This is translated from the Roman Missal: 'vota nostra, quae praeveniendo aspiras, etiam adiuvando prosequere'.

[44] '. . . the virtues, through which the powers <of the soul> are moved to action, flow into the powers of the soul from grace itself. And in this respect grace is compared to the will as the mover to the moved, which is the comparison of a rider to the horse—but not as an accident to a subject'. (1-2 q110 a4 ad1).

[45] 'For the gift of justifying grace especially orders a human being towards <a> good, which is the object of will, and hence a human being is moved towards it through the movement of the will, which is the movement of freewill' (1-2 q113 a3 ad2).

[46] cf. q13 a6 ad3.

352. Grace, Freewill, and Merit

Though our turning to God is an action of freewill, it is not independent of grace; and so God does not respond to it by giving us grace. On the contrary, our freely turning to God is an effect of grace. Hence we do not merit God's justifying grace. God's grace moves us towards the condition of justice, by forgiving our sins and infusing grace. It is not simply an action of God, but also produces a qualitative change in us, by making us worthy of eternal life (q113 a2).[47] But this justifying grace does not actually make us just people.[48] Justification is a movement towards the condition of justice (in statum iustitiae), but the end of this particular movement is not our being just, but our having our sins forgiven (q113 a6).[49] Justification happens at an instant (q113 a7), but it does not make further, non-instantaneous progress impossible or irrelevant.

Before justification merit is irrelevant, but after the first grace of justification it has a place. God gives us a start without merit, but it is up to us whether we take the further steps; if we take them, we have obtained merit as a basis for reward. Action on freewill is the basis of any merit (q114 a1c, ad1); since actions resulting from grace are also the products of freewill, Aquinas claims that they can have merit. But in allowing a place for merit, he does not mean that a human being acts independently of divine grace in achieving eternal life. He rejects such a division of contributions (q114 a5 ad1, on Augustine's error). Any meritorious action depends on our having received the first grace of justification, and its continuation depends on further grace.

Moreover, the fact that actions have merit at all depends on God's direction. In an ordinary case of merit, A's action merits B's reward if and only if B's reward is proportional to A's action; if B gave a smaller reward to A than A merited, B would be underestimating the degree of benefit that A has done to B and would be trying to escape with doing a smaller benefit to A. This way of measuring merit cannot be applied to the relations between God and human beings. It must be up to God to decide what the appropriate measure of merit is to be.[50] Since human actions have merit only 'from the presupposition of divine ordering', God does not owe any reward to us; he owes this treatment of our actions only to himself (q114 a1 ad3).[51]

Aquinas distinguishes the 'condign' merit of desert from the 'congruous' merit of suitability. Our meritorious actions do not deserve eternal life 'in accordance with the substance of the action', as products of our own freewill, but they are capable of being suitable.[52] 'In accordance with their substance' they are building a house, ending a war, helping a person in need, and so on. None of these, considered as such, could entitle us to

[47] For opposition to this see §420.

[48] See q113 a1, ad statum iustitiae; a5, in statum iustitiae, . . . accedat ad iustitiam; a8 ad1, adeptionis iustitiae. These should be given an ingressive rather than a perfective interpretation.

[49] See Cajetan's note ad loc. (quoted in M).

[50] 'Now the way and measure of virtue for a human being is from God. And therefore a human being's merit in relation to God cannot exist unless in accordance with a presupposition of divine ordering; namely, in such a way that a human being receives by his own activity a sort of reward <for the action> for which God also assigned him a power of acting' (q114 a1).

[51] On God's debita to himself, see §303.

[52] ' . . . it seems appropriate that if a human being acts in accordance with his power (virtutem) God should reward him in accordance with the excellence of his (sc. God's) power (suae virtutis)' (q114 a3). The translation of 'suae virtutis' follows M, which refers to God's generosity.

demand eternal life as a reward. As actions of our freewill, they do not entitle us to eternal life, because our willing of them is still imperfect, and still not entirely free from sin. If human beings do what they can, it is appropriate to reward them in proportion to their actions, even though they have no right to claim the reward that God offers out of divine generosity.

But these meritorious actions also have the merit of desert, in so far as they proceed from the grace of the Holy Spirit, as the results of God's choice to give us the grace that leads us to eternal life.[53] The reward, consisting in eternal life, is not an expression of God's generosity in doing something that God has not undertaken to do, but it is a reward that God has promised to give. Since the actions are the effects of the grace that God has given us to lead us to eternal life, they are the effects of God's promise to give us eternal life, and so they deserve eternal life. God's own actions through grace constitute a claim on God, even though our actions, considered simply as ours, do not.

When we look at our actions in accordance with their substance and as products of freewill, Aquinas means us to abstract from the fact that they are the products of divine grace; in abstraction from that fact, they have only congruous merit. But when we look at our actions as proceeding from the grace of the Holy Spirit, we ought not to abstract from the fact that they also proceed from freewill; for human actions have no genuine merit unless they are the products of freewill. Since the actions inspired by the Holy Spirit have the merit of desert, they result from freewill. The Holy Spirit infuses charity, since what we do out of love is more voluntary than anything else, and voluntariness is the basis of merit.[54] The fact that we depend on the grace of God for inspiration by the Holy Spirit, and the fact that intervention by the Holy Spirit is effective, do not remove freewill. If the Holy Spirit initiates the right sort of deliberation and election in us, our actions are the product of freewill and therefore can claim merit.

Does this intervention by the Holy Spirit undermine Aquinas' claim that we are self-determining in the sense relevant to freedom? If a neuro-surgeon controls me so effectively that I seem to myself to be deliberating as I normally would, the surgeon, not me, seems to control my action, and so I do not seem to be free. Does Aquinas' view imply that such unobserved intervention results in free action?

Intuitive reactions to these cases may not refute his claims about the Holy Spirit. The neuro-surgeon is assumed to manipulate our mental activities in ways that interfere with the normal processes of practical reason and deliberation; perhaps he programmes me to favour one candidate in an election, even though, without his intervention, I would still have been convinced by my previous reasons for preferring the other candidate. But if the neuro-surgeon simply presents me with very convincing arguments—convincing to someone with the outlook I have already formed—for favouring one candidate, he has not manipulated me, since he has contributed to the normal rational process, and has not circumvented it or interfered with it. This description of the neuro-surgeon removes

[53] 'For in this way the value (valor) of the merit depends on the power (virtus) of the Holy Spirit moving us into eternal life. . . . Moreover, the worth (pretium) of the action depends on the worthiness (dignitas) of the grace through which a human being, being made a partaker of the divine nature, is adopted as a son of God, to whom is owed the inheritance by the very right of adoption' (q114 a3).

[54] '. . . in so far as the character of merit requires that it should be voluntary, merit is attributed primarily to charity' (q114 a4 fin.).

the point of calling him a surgeon—someone who can interfere and manipulate purely physiologically and not rationally.

To understand the operations of the Holy Spirit, we need to think of rational intervention, not of the sort of interference that undermines the normal causal role of reasons in deliberation and action. If the Holy Spirit simply makes it clear what the rationally preferable course of action is, it does not interfere with our free will, even if its intervention is always effective; for it is not effective by extra-rational means.

In all these arguments Aquinas affirms that freewill is central in sin, grace, and merit. He denies that God is the cause of sin, but he does not deny that we are causally determined to sin as a result of God's will. Justification requires an act of freewill, and the result of justification is meritorious free action; but both the act of freewill in justification and the merit of our free action depend on divine grace. He affirms the role that Christian doctrine attributes to the will of God in relation both to sin and to justification, while still affirming that we are responsible both for our sinful and for our virtuous actions.

In Aquinas' view, the conception of the will and of freedom that is needed to explain these Christian claims is also the conception that is needed to make sense of rational agency. If we understand how the will is free in relation to the passions, and how we can act freely and responsibly in choosing virtuous action and in turning away from it, we also have the right theoretical basis for understanding the theological claims about sin and grace. Aquinas has defended his moral psychology and ethics from a Christian point of view, and he has defended Christian doctrine from a philosophical point of view.

His defence does not seem completely successful. He does not seem to have vindicated the justice of God in punishing us for the sin of our ancestor. He has a better defence, however, of the justice of God in allowing the descendants of Adam to lack original justice and to be deformed by original sin. God would apparently be treating us unfairly if he held us responsible for actions that we did under the influence of some condition that deprived us of freewill; Christian theology would undermine the presupposition of freedom that seems to be basic for morality. Aquinas argues against this objection to Christian dogma, by explaining why it does not require the denial of freewill and does not make the pursuit of the moral virtues pointless.[55]

Aquinas' conception makes freewill and responsibility co-exist with a large role for external determination. If his conception is wrong, he is also wrong to suppose that sound moral philosophy can be combined with Christian theology in the way he describes. In the 16th and 17th centuries, questions about his position resulted in the disputes between Calvinists and Arminians (in the reformed churches), and between supporters of Banez and of Molina (among Roman Catholics).[56]

353. Infused Virtue

These views on original sin and grace underlie Aquinas' account of the infused virtues and their relation to the acquired virtues. We need infused virtues because of the nature of

[55] Cf. Melanchthon on the 'philosophical virtues', §417n59. [56] See §418.

happiness. One sort of happiness is proportionate to human nature, which human beings are capable of achieving through principles of their own nature. Another sort is a happiness exceeding human nature, which a human being can achieve only by divine power, by some sort of sharing in divinity. Aquinas believes, as Aristotle does, that 'through a virtue a human being is perfected for the acts by which he is directed towards happiness'; and so, since there are two kinds of happiness, two kinds of virtues direct us towards them. Since the second kind of happiness is beyond human ability, the virtue that directs us towards it is also beyond our ability, and hence is infused in us by the grace of God (1-2 q62 a1). This kind of virtue supports Augustine's claim that 'the whole life of unbelievers is sin, and nothing is good without the highest good' (q63 a2 obj1). Aquinas believes Augustine's claim is false of the acquired virtues, but true of the infused virtues (q55 a4).[57]

The three primary infused virtues are the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. They turn us towards supernatural happiness in so far as they turn us immediately to God. Since supernatural happiness is our complete and unqualified ultimate good, the virtues that are infused with charity are the only complete and unqualified virtues; for moral virtue requires prudence, and complete prudence has to be directed towards the right ultimate end, which is set by charity (1-2 q65 a2; 2–2 q23 a7).

With this infused charity all the moral virtues are infused (1-2 q65 a3). We need infused moral virtues (q63 a3) to perfect us in relation to the different spheres of the moral virtues, so that we achieve the right order in relation to God (q63 a3 ad2). The supernatural end to which the theological virtues direct us also demands exercises of the moral virtues that we recognize as necessary to achieve this end.[58] Infused temperance makes us abstain from bodily pleasures to a degree that is not necessary for the ordinary acquired virtue of temperance. The infused virtue of generosity makes us go further in benefiting other people than someone with merely acquired generosity could be expected to go. This is the outlook described in the Beatitudes (q63 a2).

The infused virtues differ from the acquired virtues in the place they give the will. The acquired virtues are states leading to actions that constitute 'the good use of freewill', and they are acquired by habituation and training that involve choice by the will. We seem to have no similar role in the production of infused virtue.[59] Does this mean that Aquinas makes freewill unimportant? If we are passive in relation to the infused virtues, supernatural happiness may appear to be outside our control altogether. Aquinas sometimes emphasizes the primacy of the will in the moral virtues; he understands them as the states formed by rational agents who correctly deliberate about the ways to secure the ultimate end and who make the correct election as the result of deliberation. But this emphasis on the will applies only to the acquired moral virtues. We need to decide whether the infused moral virtues reduce the importance of the acquired moral virtues so drastically that the acquired virtues have no important role to play in happiness.

[57] On pagan virtue see §356 below.

[58] Human nature provides the principles from which we acquire the acquired virtues, but the theological virtues provide a different set of principles: 'Hence it is necessary that to these theological virtues there should correspond other states divinely caused in us that are related to the theological virtues in the way in which the moral and intellectual virtues are related to the natural principles of the virtues' (q63 a3; cf. *Virt.* a10).

[59] '. . . but it is caused in us only through divine action (operatio). And that is why Augustine, defining this kind of virtue, included in his definition of virtue "which God brings about (operatur) in us without us" ' (q63 a2).

We might think that the acquired virtues are related to the infused virtues in the way that making soup from scratch is related to opening a tin of soup (or eating the contents of a tin of soup without having to open it); if the tinned soup is equally cheap, nutritious, tasty, and so on, then there seems to be no point in bothering to make soup ourselves, unless we happen to enjoy that sort of thing as a recreation. But Aquinas does not intend this to be the relation between the acquired and the infused virtues. He does not take grace to cancel free will; the operation of grace ensures that our free will leads us in a particular direction, not that we go in that direction independently of free will. Similarly, when God infuses charity in us, the Holy Spirit does not operate without our free will. Since love is a voluntary motion, it has its principle in the human will; it consists in some 'habitual form' that is the source of voluntary action (2-2 q23 a2).

The Holy Spirit is not limited in its operation by the previous state of the human will; hence it does not presuppose the acquired virtues in anyone who is to receive the infused virtues (q24 a3). But in initiating our voluntary action, it also initiates our voluntary approval of the outlook of the moral virtues. Infusion of divine grace causes us to see that other actions besides those we would have approved of otherwise are required by the moral virtues.

The description of the infused virtues helps to explain the degree to which human beings by their natural capacities can achieve happiness. Human beings can make clothes and find other defences to compensate for lack of natural bodily defences; similarly, he says, though a human being lacks the natural capacity to acquire happiness, he has freewill 'by which he is capable of being turned towards God who makes him happy' (1-2 q5 a5 ad1). Since a human being has to turn towards God by freewill, and since he exercises the infused virtues by freewill (q68 a3 ad2), the right direction of the will in the acquisition of moral virtues is not irrelevant to the infusion of the infused virtues. The acquired moral virtues are not needed to prepare us for infused virtues,[60] but they are an appropriate way to direct the will towards the ends that are included in the ends of the infused virtues. 'The good use of freewill' that Aquinas takes to be central in his account of the acquired moral virtues is central in the account of the infused virtues as well.

The acquired and the infused virtues have the same matter. Temperance seeks the mean in the enjoyment of physical pleasures; as we discover further ends that are promoted by restraint in this enjoyment, we discover further reasons for restraint. If, for instance, an athlete needs to eat a lighter meal to stay in training or a scholar needs to eat a lighter meal to keep a clear head, they discover different applications for temperance. This is why the infused moral virtues are still called by the names of the acquired moral virtues, even though they differ in species, because of their different objects (1-2 q63 a4; *Virt.* a10 ad8).

[60] 'The virtue in accordance with which God gives his gifts to each one, is a disposition or previous preparation or attempt (conatus) of the one who receives grace. But the Holy Spirit also precedes (praevenit) this disposition or attempt, by moving a human being's mind either more or less, in accordance with his [sc. the Holy Spirit's] will' (2-2 q24 a3 ad1).

354. How the Infused Virtues Perfect the Acquired Virtues

In his exposition of the Beatitudes Aquinas claims that the infused virtues are the perfections of the acquired virtues.[61] His claim might puzzle us; for we might suspect that the pursuit of supernatural happiness will require us to modify, even to abandon, the states of character that belong to the acquired virtues. Aquinas admits that sometimes the states of character we have acquired may make it more difficult to practise the infused virtues (q65 a3 ad2); why, then, will we not become indifferent or positively hostile to the acquired virtues if we practise the infused virtues? Infused temperance practises a degree of asceticism about bodily appetites that goes beyond the requirements of acquired temperance. Why not say that in relation to Aristotle's Doctrine of the Mean this ascetic outlook goes too far in the direction of deficiency, and so does not really count as the virtue?

Aquinas does not believe the infused virtues, leading us to follow the divine law, conflict with the virtues that we can vindicate by reference to the natural law. He relies on the primacy of charity among the infused virtues. Charity is not only the love of God, but also the love of other people, in so far as they are 'in God' (2-2 q25 a1), or in so far as something of God is in them (q25 a1 ad1). Love for God extends to all rational creatures in so far as they are God's creation and participate in his rational nature. This is why it extends to strangers, enemies, and evil people. Since charity extends an individual's concern more widely than the acquired moral virtues extend it, charity introduces new moral demands. But the point of view of the acquired moral virtues shows us that the demands of charity are reasonable; for it shows us that it is reasonable to love God's creation if we love God. Hence we can see how the infused virtues extend the outlook of the acquired virtues, and do not supplant it with a completely different outlook.

Even from outside the theological perspective, we can see, in Aquinas' view, why the infused virtues are perfections of the acquired virtues. If we have the acquired virtues, we can see what their perfection would be like, but we recognize that we lack it. We ought to be able to see that the degree of justice that we are capable of is the most that can be reasonably expected within human limits, but that a more complete justice would be preferable; and then we ought to see that the infused virtue of justice is preferable in the relevant ways. This is how the person who 'hungers and thirsts after justice' (*Matt.* 5:6) differs from the person who is just within the limits that can ordinarily be expected in a human being.

The particular end of the acquired virtues is 'genuinely good, as being capable of being directed, as far as it is in itself, towards the principal good'. There can be a genuine virtue, if it is directed towards a genuine particular good, though it is imperfect if it is not directed towards the ultimate good (2-2 q23 a7). Aquinas suggests that charity makes a difference in so far as it directs the good pursued by the acquired virtues towards a supernatural good.

The continuity of the infused with the acquired virtues affects the plausibility of Aquinas' theory as a whole. If he could not show that the infused virtues express more fully the outlook of the acquired virtues, it would be difficult for him to show that they are the

[61] 'A virtue withdraws a human being from following the irascible passions, in accordance with the standard of reason, so that one does not exceed in them. But a gift withdraws him in a more excellent way, so that, in accordance with the divine will, one is entirely undisturbed by them' (q69 a3). Aquinas continues with parallel remarks about virtues controlling the appetitive passions and about virtues concerned with the good of others.

exercise of the same free will that is moved by deliberation about the final good to form the states of character that constitute the acquired virtues. If the infused virtues were entirely discontinuous, how could the same processes of deliberation that support the acquired virtues support the infused virtues? It would be reasonable to conclude that infusion by-passes freewill, or that the acquired virtues are not genuine virtues at all, or both.

If we deny that the acquired virtues are genuine virtues, we separate 'secular' from 'Christian' morality. Eudaemonist reasoning seems to lead to the cultivation of the Christian virtues, while secular morality may be regarded simply as a device to protect us from death and violence. Such a division between different areas of morality has Augustinian precedents.[62] Aquinas rejects this division; he agrees that there are distinctively Christian virtues, but he insists that the acquired virtues are genuine virtues too, and that the Christian virtues are developments of, not alternatives to, the virtues that perfect human nature in relation to its natural end.

355. Sin and Infused Virtues

Sometimes Aquinas emphasizes the similarity between acquired and infused virtues. Though infused virtues are not acquired by practice and habituation, they are relatively stable states; they are capable of increase and decrease, and they can be lost. On other points he contrasts infused with acquired virtues; but some of his contrasts are open to question.

He believes that the presence of an acquired virtue is consistent with sin, because the error implied by one sin is consistent with the presence of the aims and patterns of choice that constitute an acquired virtue. Infused virtues, however, are destroyed by just one mortal sin, because they are not acquired by gradual practice. Charity depends on an infusion by God, who infuses it in the way that the sun infuses light into the air. The infusion of light is stopped at once, if some obstacle is put in the way; similarly, the infusion of charity is stopped at once, and the state is lost (2-2 q24 a12). St Peter actually lost charity when he denied Christ, but quickly recovered it (q24 a12 ad2; cf. obj2). Whereas the other infused virtues remain in an unformed state as a result of a mortal sin contrary to them, we cannot say this about charity, since it is the ultimate form of the virtues (q23 a8 ad1; q24 a12 ad5).

This comparison assumes that the infusion of charity must be like the infusion of light, which is absent if any barrier is put in the way.[63] But if we compared it with the infusion of electrical current, we need not say that it is absent if its normal effects are blocked; electricity is still coming into the house even if I pull all the plugs out and do not use any of it; and water is still present in a pipe even if I keep the tap turned off. The mere claim that charity is infused directly by God does not seem to require Aquinas' comparison rather than one of these other comparisons.

His real objection to the compatibility of charity with mortal sin seems to come from his claim that charity is the ultimate form of the virtues. Charity co-ordinates all the other virtues for the right end (cf. q23 a7–8), by fixing our attention on the ultimate end through the love of God. If we turn away from God, as we do in a mortal sin, we must lack the virtue that

[62] See §228. [63] On light and on obstacles to divine grace cf. 1-2 q79 a3.

fixes our attention on the ultimate end, since our attention is not in fact steadily fixed on the ultimate end. Charity is the very virtue whose presence is intended to exclude the sort of lapse that is characteristic of mortal sin; and so we cannot have charity if we commit mortal sin.

This point does not justify Aquinas' division between the acquired and the infused virtues. The acquired virtue of justice requires attention to (say) the common good; and so a grave act of injustice implies that our attention is not in fact fixed where it ought to be. Still, as Aquinas agrees, a sin does not completely destroy the virtuous state that forbids it; an otherwise just person who does an unjust action does not suddenly become an unjust person. Similarly, even though God directly infuses the infused virtues, St Peter did not become indistinguishable from that of a hardened sinner the moment he denied Christ.

These objections to Aquinas are relevant to an evaluation of his conception of the infused virtues. To the extent that he contrasts them with the acquired virtues, he suggests that their infused character marks a contrast with the normal relation of a state and its exercise to the will of the agent. In the case of the acquired virtues, he believes that the possession of a virtue still leaves the will liable to error, but he takes an infused virtue to exclude this sort of error. If the contrast he draws is open to doubt, perhaps he should allow a closer parallel than he recognizes between acquired and infused virtues. Perhaps the two types of virtue are even more closely connected than he allows.

356. Defence of Pagan Virtue

Aquinas' conception of charity and the acquired virtues explains why sinful people can have virtues, and why these virtues are not abolished by charity. When Aquinas asks whether it is possible to have virtues without the theological virtue of charity, he refers specifically to Augustine's attack on pagan virtue (1-2 q63 a2; q65 a2; 2–2 q23 a7; *Virt. Comm.* a9). He argues that we can acquire genuine virtues without theological virtues, though they are imperfect virtues; they rest on a conception of happiness that is correct as far as it goes, though it is a conception only of imperfect happiness (1-2 q5 a5).

According to this argument, Augustine's teleological criterion is right, if it is understood as the moderately strict criterion requiring the virtuous person to have the correct specific end.[64] In Aquinas' view, the acquired moral virtues aim at an end that pagans are capable of aiming at; if pagans do the appropriate actions, and do them for the sake of this end, they have genuine virtues. The absence of the higher end does not imply the absence of the lower, and hence it does not imply the absence of the goodness appropriate to the lower end.[65]

Aquinas' division of virtues and ends supports, but also restricts, Augustine's claim that actions lacking charity are sinful because they lack charity.[66] Aquinas adds that this is not the

[64] See §230.

[65] *2Sent.* d41 q1 a2 = P vi 755b: 'Hence, although this goodness, in accordance with which an action is called meritorious, is removed from the actions of unbelievers, none the less there remains another sort of goodness or civil virtue, either from the circumstance or from the kind. And therefore it is not necessary that every action of theirs is bad, but only that it has a goodness that falls short; just as, though a horse falls short of the rationality that a human being has, it is not therefore bad, but it has goodness that falls short of the goodness of a human being.' The views of Aquinas and some predecessors and successors on the acquired virtues are discussed by Lottin, *EM*, chs. 2–3.

[66] Augustine, *c. Iul.* iv 3.

only aspect of such actions that deserves moral evaluation; they should also be evaluated with reference to their more immediate ends (*Virt. Card* a2).[67] If the actions of agents who lack the infused virtue of charity proceed from an acquired virtue, their goodness is limited, but genuine.[68] In this respect, they do not sin,[69] and their action does not constitute demerit before God.[70]

These two aspects of the virtuous actions of a virtuous pagan clarify a point that Augustine leaves obscure. If the agent does not believe in God, he does not love God for God's sake, does not acknowledge his dependence on God, and so on. But these errors do not remove the goodness of his actions or of his character. The presence of the motive appropriate to the relevant virtue (together with the appropriate action) implies the presence of the virtue.[71] Pagan virtues are genuine virtues because they aim at some particular praiseworthy end.[72] A genuine virtue cannot aim at a genuine good that one uses for a bad end; it must also use goods for a good end. Measured by this standard, the acquired virtues are the appropriate, though imperfect, formation of the free will in ways that make it suitable for being directed by grace towards the supernatural ultimate good.

When Aquinas distinguishes perfect from imperfect happiness, and tries to connect two distinct kinds of virtue with these two types of happiness, he goes beyond Augustine's explicit remarks. But he clarifies an aspect of pagan virtue that Augustine implicitly recognizes, since Augustine also recognizes that pagan virtues identify some genuine elements of happiness.[73]

[67] Aquinas replies to objections derived from Augustine: 'An unbeliever having intercourse with his wife does not sin, if he does it for the good of offspring, or renders what is due to the fidelity by which he is bound to his wife, since this is an act of justice and temperance, which observes the due circumstances in pleasures of touch; just as he does not sin in doing other actions of civil virtues. Nor is it said that all the life of unbelievers is sin because they sin in every action whatever, but because they cannot be freed from the slavery of sin through their action' (*4Sent.* d39 q1 a2 ad5 = P vii 1025b).

[68] 'There can be another act of someone lacking charity, not in so far as he lacks charity, but in so far as he has some other gift of God, either faith or hope, or, indeed, some good of nature, which is not entirely removed through sin, as has been said above. And in this way there can be without charity an act that is good in its kind, but not perfectly good, because it lacks the necessary direction towards the ultimate end' (2-2 q23 a7 ad1). 'As has been said above' refers to 2-2 q10 a4; cf. 1-2 q85 a2.

[69] *in Rm.* 14:23: 'But in an unbeliever there is a good of nature together with unbelief. And therefore, when an unbeliever does something good on the instruction of reason, not by referring it to a bad end, he does not sin.'

[70] *Mal.* q2 a5 ad7: 'Hence someone who, not having charity, honours his parents, does not merit eternal life, but does not incur demerit either.'

[71] See 2-2 q123 a7 obj2: 'Augustine says (*De Trin.* xiii 8): "We love virtues for the sake of happiness alone, and yet some dare to seek to persuade us <to love them> in such a way", (namely by saying that the virtues are to be desired because of themselves) "that we do not love happiness itself. If they do this, we will even cease to love them, whenever we do not love that because of which alone we loved them". But bravery is a virtue. Therefore the act of bravery is to be referred not to bravery but to happiness. . . . [Reply in corpus:] . . . as his proximate end, the brave person aims at expressing in action a likeness of his state; for he aims at acting in accord with what is appropriate for his state. But his remote end is happiness or God.' Cf. Augustine's discussion of this text in §231.

[72] 'If, however, we take virtue in so far as it is directed towards some particular end, in this way some virtue can be spoken of without charity, to the extent that it is directed to some particular good. But if this particular good is not a true, but an apparent good, the virtue that is directed to this good, will also not be a true virtue, but a false likeness of a virtue. . . . If, however, this particular good is a true good, for instance the preservation of the state, or the like, it will indeed be a true virtue, but an imperfect virtue, unless it is referred to the final and perfect good. And according to this, a true virtue simpliciter cannot be without charity' (2-2 q23 a7). I have omitted Aquinas' quotation from Augustine; see §230n106.

[73] Contrast Kent's comparison of Aquinas with Augustine, *VW* 27: 'Aquinas argued that only supernatural virtues are virtues *simpliciter*, that those virtues alone direct one to the ultimate end, that they alone are perfect virtues. To that extent he followed Augustine's teachings. Yet he broke with Augustine in arguing that natural virtues are true virtues even in the absence of charity and other supernatural virtues.' On Aquinas and Augustine cf. Lottin, *EM* 98–9.

But does Aquinas take proper account of Augustine's objections to the pagans?[74] Augustine urges that the good conduct of the miser, who aims at a good immediate end for the sake of a bad ultimate end, is insufficient for a virtue. But Aquinas also argues that pagan virtues aim at a correct, though incomplete, conception of the ultimate end; that is why he speaks of imperfect happiness (1-2 q5 a5).[75] Imperfect happiness is not simply a particular good; someone who aims at it, and correctly (though incompletely) grasps its composition, is not like Augustine's miser, but aims (within limits) at the right ultimate end.[76]

One sort of Augustinian might answer Aquinas by appeal to an extremely strict teleological criterion, and might argue that pagans who are wrong about the ultimate end have no virtue at all.[77] According to this view, one's conception of the ultimate end is fundamental. If we think of the ultimate end as a foundation, it is reasonable to suppose that effects of error about it will be pervasive. If the foundation of a tower leans, the tower will lean, however good the upper parts may be. Similarly, if pagans are wrong about the ultimate end, they set out in the wrong direction, and so cannot have any virtues.

Aquinas' conception of pagan virtue reverses the relation of foundation and superstructure. We may build a leaning tower if we begin with a straight foundation, and add a leaning superstructure. In his view, failure to pursue the right ultimate end does not entirely warp the direction of one's will.[78] Though pagans do the right action for an incorrect end, they also do the right action for a correct end.[79]

This explanation of Augustine's remarks on pagan virtue removes a reason for believing that secular and Christian morality are sharply separate. According to Aquinas, Christian moral reflexion should not denounce the acquired virtues as misguided or irrelevant, but

[74] See Baius' criticism of Aquinas, quoted at §417.

[75] See 1-2 q65 a2: 'Moral virtues, in so far as they work good as directed to an end that does not exceed the natural capacity of a human being, can be acquired through human works. And acquired in that way, they can be without charity, even as they were in many of the Gentiles.' Cf. q63 a2.

[76] The question that arises about the misuse of the intellectual virtues also seems to arise about the acquired and the infused virtues. Cf. §291. Since acquired virtues can be present in a state of sin (not properly acknowledging one's limitations and one's dependence on God, as Augustine argues), they are—in a way—subordinate to the sinful disposition that 'misuses' them by failure to recognize God's role in their acquisition.

[77] Ockham does not go this far, but he argues that since Christians perform virtuous actions for the honour of God, their end in performing such actions is different from the end of a pagan who performs the same actions. Since different ends define different virtues, the virtues of pagans and of Christians differ specifically, not just numerically (*4Sent.* q5 = P vii 58.5–23; *Quaest. var.* q7 a4 = P viii 402.634–403.652).

[78] 2-2 q10 a4 ad2–3: 'Faith directs one's aim in relation to the supernatural last end: but even the light of natural reason can direct one's aim in relation to a connatural good. [ad 3] Unbelief does not so wholly ruin natural reason in unbelievers that it prevents some cognition of the truth from remaining in them, through which they are able to do some work that is good in its kind.' This distinction between the incorrect and the correct end of the pagans seems to be overlooked in Ockham's discussion of pagan virtue at *4Sent.* q5 = OT vii 58.5–23. He argues against the view that the virtues of pagans are 'eiusdem rationis' (53.19–27) as the virtues of Christians. He has no difficulty in showing that there is one end they do not share, in so far as the Christian acts 'because of God' and 'because God has prescribed' (58.11). But he does not discuss the possibility that Christians and pagans also have the same end in so far as they aim at virtue and human happiness. His view is more complicated at *Q var.* q7 a2 = OT viii 335.115–337.167. Here he mentions different degrees (gradus) of virtue. He recognizes one stage at which the virtuous person chooses the right action precisely because it is required by right reason (335.132–6). A person with heroic virtue acts in addition (praeter hoc) for the love of God (335.137–336.142). Since heroic virtue adds an additional end to the end of the virtuous person not moved by the love of God, Ockham is in a position to accept Aquinas' account of pagan virtue. Indeed, he considers such an account favourably at *Dial.* i 6.77 On the degrees of virtue see King, 'Theory' 233–5; Wood, *OV* 208–15.

[79] I have not considered the difference between an incomplete conception of the ultimate end and a correct conception of the imperfect ultimate end. See further Bradley, *ATHG*, ch. 8; Shanley, 'Pagan virtue'.

should defend the Christian point of view from the principles that we already accept if we take the point of view of the acquired virtues. Aquinas' views on this question did not convince all his successors; a more extreme 'Augustinian' view was revived during and after the Reformation. But his discussion suggests that this extreme Augustinian view may not be the authentically Christian or the authentically Augustinian outlook.

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SCOTUS: WILL, FREEDOM, AND REASON

357. Alternatives to Aquinas

Aquinas intends his position to be (1) faithful to Aristotle, (2) philosophically plausible, and (3) theologically adequate.[1] Scotus and Ockham share Aquinas' aims, but believe they can improve on his position. First, they argue that their position, as opposed to Aquinas' position, is really supported by Aristotle, or at least fits Aristotle no less well than the Thomist position fits it. In particular, Scotus' discussion of Aristotle on rational capacities and of the relation of virtue to the rational and non-rational parts raises legitimate questions about the soundness of Aquinas' interpretation.

Secondly, Scotus and Ockham sometimes doubt whether the position that Aquinas finds in Aristotle is true, and they are reluctant to attribute a false view to Aristotle if a true view can be attributed to him with equal plausibility.[2] But they do not follow Aristotle uncritically. One of Scotus' major departures from Aquinas—the belief in the primary and irreducible affections of the will for the advantageous and for the just—is introduced without any appeal to Aristotelian authority.

Thirdly, Scotus and Ockham argue that Christian doctrine conflicts with some of Aquinas' major doctrines, especially on human freedom and divine grace. If Aquinas' position is closer to Aristotle, but it conflicts with Christian doctrine, Aristotelian moral philosophy cannot be reconciled with Christian faith.

Some of these mediaeval criticisms of Aquinas underlie objections to the Aristotelian outlook that are sometimes regarded as distinctively modern. If we go straight from Aquinas to Hobbes, we may be struck by some rather sharp contrasts, and we may attribute these

[1] On these aims see §235.

[2] Wolter, 'Potency' 165, cites a comment by Scotus on his attitude to Aristotle: 'Regarding the meaning (intentio) of these philosophers, Aristotle and Avicenna, I do not want to attribute more absurd things to them than the things they themselves say, or the things that necessarily follow from the things they say. And from the things they say I want to take the most reasonable understanding (intellectus) I can' (*1Sent.* d8 q5 = OO v 2, 810 = *Ord.* i d8 = V iv 294 §250). The text in V differs from OO. In citations from Scotus 'OO' refers to Wadding's edition of Scotus' *Opera Omnia*, the only fairly complete edition. 'W' refers to Wolter, *DSWM*, the only extensive selection of relevant texts and translations (sometimes unreliable). 'V' refers to the incomplete Vatican edition. 'OP' refers to the incomplete St Bonaventure edition (consulted for *QM*). On texts and editions of Scotus see Williams, *CCDS* 6–13.

contrasts to the difference between a mediaeval outlook and a distinctively modern outlook raising questions that could not have arisen within a mediaeval framework. If, however, we find that the 'modern' views are either present in or anticipated by Aquinas' mediaeval critics, we will be less inclined to mark a sharp division between mediaeval and modern outlooks.

We might suppose, for instance, that modern views differ from mediaeval views in not taking Aristotelian eudaemonism for granted. Hobbes argues that there is no supreme good of the sort that the old moral philosophers accepted. Butler argues that the principle of self-love is not supreme, but is subordinate to conscience.[3] But these objections to the Aristotelian view are not modern innovations. Scotus raises them both. It should be worth our while, therefore, to see why he raises these objections and how he defends them.

358. Early Critics of Aquinas

It may be helpful to consider Scotus' views in the context of other objections to Aquinas, and especially to Aquinas' moderate intellectualist doctrine of the will. This doctrine is a basic element in his account of freewill, of the will and the ultimate good, and of the relation between practical reason and virtue. Aquinas believes that his doctrine shows how human actions are free and not necessitated, and how the freedom he accords to the will guarantees freewill and responsibility.

His view provoked disagreement. In 1270, while Aquinas was probably composing the Prima Secundae, Stephen Tempier, the bishop of Paris, condemned thirteen theses, including two theses about will and freewill that might plausibly be ascribed to Aquinas.[4] One of them maintains that the human will wills or elects by necessity; the other claims that freewill is a passive capacity that is moved necessarily by the object of desire.[5] In the *Summa* Aquinas rejects these theses about necessity, on the strength of his views about deliberation and about the capacity of the will to alter our attention.[6]

The *Summa*, however, did not reassure everyone. In 1277, just after the death of Aquinas, Bishop Tempier again condemned a list of philosophical theses incompatible with Christian orthodoxy.[7] This time he condemned 219 theses, including several that Aquinas seems to accept. One of the condemned theses is the intellectualist claim that the will is determined by reason, but is none the less free.[8] Tempier did not name Aquinas, and one might argue that this thesis does not capture Aquinas' position.[9]

[3] See Hobbes, *L*11.1; Butler, *S* ii 16.

[4] See Torrell, *Aq*. 146–7 (on the date of the Prima Secundae); 191 (on the condemnation of 1270).

[5] See Props. 3, 9; in Aquinas, *SG* = M iii 492–3.

[6] Torrell, *Aq*. 225, says that in the commentary on *De Int*. Aquinas 'alludes to the errors of the moderni on free will (i 14)'. He presumably refers to i 14 sub fin. (= P xviii 36), where Aquinas discusses the claim that the will cannot fail to desire what appears good, and therefore is moved by necessity.

[7] On Tempier see Korolec, 'Free will' 637; Piché, *CP* 159–82; Hissette, *Enquête* 230–63; Torrell, Aq. 299–303.

[8] 'That the will necessarily follows what is firmly believed by reason, and that it cannot refrain from what reason prescribes. For this necessitation is not force, but the nature of the will.' (Prop. 163; see Piché, *CP* 128) Cf. Props. 158–60, 164. Prop. 129 is closely related to intellectualism. It appears to condemn Aquinas' account of incontinence, which Prop. 163 may allude to in 'firmly believed'. See §295.

[9] Lottin, *PM* i 280, argues that, though Prop. 163 probably aimed at Aquinas, it does not accurately capture his views. See also Torrell, *Aq*. 244–5. Torrell, 299–302, is confident that Aquinas was an implicit target of the condemnation. This claim is defended by Wippel, '1277'.

After the death of Aquinas, both Franciscans and fellow-Dominicans attacked him. An early Franciscan opponent, William de la Mare, compiled a 'Correctory of Brother Thomas', to warn readers against his errors.[10] A Franciscan chapter general of 1282 prohibited the reading of the *Summa* except by readers with understanding,[11] and in copies that had the Correctory copied in the text. On the other side, some of the Dominican chapters general denounced detractors of the works of Aquinas, and reaffirmed his authority.[12]

The Correctory concentrates on the intellectualism that was condemned in 1277.[13] It asserts that the condemned thesis about the will being determined by the intellect follows from Aquinas' explanation of freedom through reason (a7). The discussion of happiness and the will supports the primacy of the will against Aquinas' emphasis on intellect. William attacks Aquinas for claiming that a human being is in control of his actions because he has deliberation about them (a6), that a human being determines himself through reason to willing one thing or another (a7), that command is an act of reason (a8), and that reason is the cause of freedom (a10). In all these cases, William objects that Aquinas undermines freedom by subjecting the will to necessitation by the intellect. One Thomist critic implicitly admits that the objection is damaging if it is true; for his defence of Aquinas underestimates the role that Aquinas actually assigns to reason in explaining freedom.[14]

Is the condemned thesis a fair summary of Aquinas' position? One critic, Henry of Ghent, believes it is, and criticizes Aquinas' view on that basis. He ascribes to 'certain people' (98.90) the view that the will is determined by judgment in the way in which natural desire in non-rational animals is determined by their cognition (98.02–03).[15] One supporter of Aquinas, Godfrey of Fontaines, does not deny that Aquinas holds the thesis, but argues instead that the thesis should not have been condemned.[16] Eventually Godfrey was vindicated. Aquinas was canonized in July 1323, and in early 1325 the Bishop of Paris rescinded the condemnation of 1277, in so far as it might be taken to apply to Aquinas' position.[17] The rescission, however,

[10] On William de la Mare's 'Correctorium fratris Thomae' and the replies written by Thomists see Glorieux, *Correctorium* vii–x; Kent, *VW* 81–4; Stadter, *PMMF* 239–44.

[11] The text in Fussenberger, 'Definitiones' 139, has 'rationabiliter intelligentes', with the variant reading 'notabiliter intelligentes'.

[12] See Reichert, *Monumenta* 199.1–11 (for the year 1278); 204.19–25 (for 1279); 235.1–9 (for 1286).

[13] The discussion of Aquinas' moral philosophy in the Correctory is selective. In its treatment of the Prima Secundae it discusses happiness and the will, but it passes from Question 17 (a10) to Question 88, and then to 110 (a12); hence it omits Aquinas' main treatment of the virtues and of the natural law.

[14] William's objections and the replies of a Thomist are in Glorieux, *Correctorium* 230–40. The Thomist's attempt to explain away Aquinas' views is hasty: 'I am always amazed by the way in which these people twist Thomas' words into their own false construction, when he himself in his whole discussion teaches the opposite. Hence this fairy-tale deserves no answer' (233).

[15] See Henry, *Quodl.* 1 q16 (ed. Macken, 98.90–101.57). See Prop. 159, quoted in §389n12. His view is discussed by Wippel, '1277', 256n68. Stone, 'Freedom', offers a survey of Henry's views on will and action.

[16] See Godfrey, *Quodl.* 12 q5, p. 102. Godfrey says that this and others among the condemned theses seem (videntur, p. 102, last para) to have been taken from Aquinas' writings. He also insists that some of the condemned theses do not seem to be false (non est multum manifestum quod sint erronei, p. 103, para 3). He does not say that the thesis about the will and the intellect is both Aquinas' view and not clearly false, but he does not say that it misrepresents Aquinas either.

[17] 'If in the past any of our predecessors of blessed memory as bishops of Paris condemned as erroneous certain articles, by a sentence of excommunication, and expressly prohibited them, for fear that people understanding them badly would fall into error, among which articles some were asserted by some people to touch on the teaching of blessed Thomas Aquinas:—by the firm opinion of those present, we entirely annul the aforesaid condemnation of the articles and the sentence of excommunication, to the extent that they touch on, or are asserted to touch on, the teaching of the aforesaid blessed Thomas, without thereby either approving or rejecting the articles themselves, but freely leaving them to discussion in the schools' (Denifle and Chatelain, *CUP* ii §838, for the year 1325). On the rescission see Torrell, *Aq.* 324.

neither identifies any theses that had been taken to represent Aquinas' views nor asserts that he did or did not hold any of the theses.

Aquinas' attitude to the condemned thesis depends on his account of the influence of the will on the intellect. The will may move us to act against a conclusion of reason, if we choose to attend to more attractive aspects of the option that we have just rejected, so that we change our minds and come to prefer the option previously rejected. But this role for the will does not modify Aquinas' intellectualism; the effects of the will on the intellect still depend on the apparent good, and hence on the intellect.

Moreover, even if Aquinas' views about the influence of will on intellect implied the rejection of intellectualism, it would not follow that the condemned thesis misrepresents him. The condemned thesis does not refer to the operations of the will that influence intellect by causing us to change our minds after forming an initial impression of the goodness of some object; for while we are subject to these operations that make us eventually prefer y to x, we do not firmly believe that x is better. The condemned thesis says only that the will necessarily follows what is firmly believed by reason; 'firmly' excludes the operations of the will that make us change our minds. Even if Aquinas held that the will's influence on deliberation is undetermined by reason, he still holds that the will necessarily follows the firmly-held conclusion of reason, and hence he holds the condemned thesis.[18]

The critics reject the claim that determination of the will by the firm belief of reason is not a case of force (coactio), but simply the nature of the will. They imply that such determination forces the will, and therefore takes away freewill.[19] Another condemned thesis claims that the will of a human being is necessitated by its cognition, just as the desire of a non-rational animal is (Prop. 159). The critics would be wrong to ascribe this thesis to Aquinas if they meant that he makes the relation of human cognition to human willing just the same as the relation of an animal's perception to its sensory desire. But they are right if they mean that without a cognitive change the will cannot change.

The critics infer that 'after the conclusion has been reached about something to be done, the will does not remain free' (Prop. 158). Their claim would be false, if it means that we cannot reconsider conclusions we have reached, but it is true if it means that we are not free to will not to act on a conclusion without seeing any reason to object to it. The critics suppose, then, that we are forced and not free in our action unless our action proceeds from a will that is free to change its direction independently of any cognitive change.

The implicit view of the critics is the explicit position of Henry of Ghent, one of the commissioners who drew up the condemnation. He argues that the will has the appropriate sort of freedom only if it is not determined by the apparent good presented by intellect. In

[18] Lottin, Hissette, and Wippel (see nn8–9) hold that the thesis does not express Aquinas' view; they do not give enough weight to 'firmly'. They assume that the role of will in directing our attention proves that Aquinas does not hold the view.

[19] It is perhaps confusing to suggest that the objector is opposing 'determinism' (as Hissette claims, *Enquête* 225, speaking of 'déterminisme psychologique', which he takes to be evidently incompatible with the Christian conception of liberty). Determinism may be irrelevant for two reasons: (1) It is not clear that if the will is undetermined by reason it is not determined by anything; hence the objector does not rule out all forms of determinism. (2) Even if Aquinas were to allow the operations of will in influencing intellect to be undetermined, this would not make it false that the will necessarily follows the firm belief of reason. We need not suppose that the objector takes indeterminism to be necessary or sufficient for the absence of force.

his view, the intellect simply presents the apparent good, and the will is free to accept or to reject it.[20] If we said only that the will is free to prefer an apparently greater good to an apparently lesser good, we would make the will inappropriately dependent on the intellect. Without voluntarist freedom the will is forced.

Henry has good reason to assume that Aquinas holds the position that he rejects.[21] According to Aquinas, we are free because we can deliberate well and badly, and can attend rightly or wrongly to different aspects of different options open to us; hence it is reasonable to assess our actions by the standards that are involved in praising and blaming. Henry argues that Aquinas' defence of freedom is inadequate, and hence the condemnation of the intellectualist position is justified.

Henry's defence of the condemnation of 1277 shows that Aquinas' intellectualism appeared to conflict with Christian doctrine because it appeared to preclude freewill. If the critics are right, they not only undermine Aquinas' views on the will, but also raise doubts about his conception of the final good, and about its role in moral theory; for his moral theory rests on his conception of rational agency, and hence on his conception of the will.

Scotus formulates the anti-intellectualist objections clearly, and presents a voluntarist account of the will. He also explores some of the implications of voluntarism for freewill, for the virtues, and for the theological issues that Aquinas tries to understand within his conception of the will. He argues for both voluntarism and rationalism. On the one hand, he denies that the will is determined by intellect. On the other hand, he maintains a sharp division between the rational will and the non-rational passions. He maintains voluntarism to defend freedom, but maintains rationalism to maintain the primacy of reason over passion in determining virtuous action.

To show that his voluntarism is consistent with his rationalism, Scotus needs to show that the will is rational even though it is not determined, as the intellectualist supposes, by reason. If he shows this, he also needs to show that the rational character of the will allows voluntarism about freewill. Some disputes among interpreters of Scotus reflect disagreement about the relative importance of the voluntarist and the rationalist strands in his position. It is perhaps less important to decide where exactly Scotus stands than to see where his arguments against Aquinas might lead.[22]

Some of Aquinas' critics argue that his position is an unstable combination of conflicting elements. In particular, he tries to combine Aristotelian eudaemonism and intellectualism with the Christian and Augustinian views on will and freedom. The solution offered by the critics abandons eudaemonism and intellectualism in order to maintain freedom. But, as we will see, the critics' solution may be less stable than Aquinas' position.

The view of Scotus as a sharp critic of Aquinas may be criticized for attributing too extreme a position to him. Similar objections have been raised against attempts to draw a sharp contrast between Aquinas' intellectualism in ethics and the voluntarism attributed to Ockham and his successors as well as to Scotus. Whether or not these objections are

[20] See Henry, *Quodl.* 9 q5 = Macken 121.27–122.50 (tr. Teske, 51–2).

[21] He paraphrases Aquinas, *Mal.* q6 at *Quodl.* 9 = 120.14–16 Macken (tr. Teske, 50–1).

[22] Some critics believe it is misleading or unhelpful to describe Scotus as a voluntarist, or even to be preoccupied with the question of whether he is a voluntarist: 'Thanks to the serious research advanced by notable scholars, this question no longer preoccupies us' (Ingham, 'Moral order' 127, with references).

justified, it is none the less useful to consider the arguments that might be used to support a strongly voluntarist reaction to Aquinas. Even if they lead to a more extreme voluntarist conclusion than Scotus himself accepts, the arguments have been thought to justify a strongly voluntarist conclusion, and this feature of them has made them both historically and philosophically important and influential.[23]

359. The Character of the Will

To explain his conception of the will, Scotus exploits Aquinas' interpretation of Aristotle. In *EN* i 13 Aristotle distinguishes the rational part of the soul from the 'desiring' part that is capable of obedience to reason and is rational by participation. Aquinas takes this division to divide intellect from every form of desire, including will, and so he includes will among the states of the soul that are rational only by participation (*ST* 1-2 q56 a6 ad2).[24] Scotus endorses Aquinas' conclusion that the will is rational not essentially, but by participation (*3Sent*. d33 q1 schol. = OO vii 2, 697 = W 322–4). According to Scotus, this means that the will, like the passions, does not necessarily follow the judgment of reason.

This is not Aquinas' interpretation of 'by participation'. In his view, the will is necessarily and essentially rational; it is rational by participation only because it is rational derivatively, because of its relation to intellect. Scotus, however, argues that 'by participation' implies that the will is neither essentially nor necessarily rational. He maintains that unless we agree that the will does not necessarily follow intellect, we deny freewill.

His conception of freedom sets out from another point of agreement with Aquinas. Freewill depends on the capacity of the will to go in either of two directions. Aquinas derives this capacity of the will from the capacity of deliberating reason to go in either of two directions (1-2 q6 a2 ad2). Scotus agrees that freedom involves the capacity for opposites, but he does not agree with Aquinas' attempt to trace this capacity to deliberation.

Aquinas connects the capacity for opposites with deliberation because he takes it to be confined to election of means to the ultimate end, which are the concern of deliberation. Since it is not in our power not to pursue the ultimate end, our will is determined to follow the course of action that appears, as a result of deliberation, to promote the ultimate end.[25] We are free in being determined by the result of our deliberation about the good. If we did not necessarily pursue the final good, we would not be applying reason to our desires, and hence we would not be acting on our wills.

This pursuit of the final good requires external reasons. If there were no external reasons, we could discover what promotes happiness only by reference to our non-rational desires, and the will would be ultimately non-rational. Our discovery that x is better than y would always be open to revision as a result of our simply coming to prefer ends to which y is a

[23] Wolter, *PTJDS*, chs. 7–9, argues that the voluntarist elements in Scotus' position have been exaggerated. A strongly voluntarist account of Scotus is defended by Williams, *MPJDS*, who is criticized by Vos et al., *DSDL* 58–62. Cross, *DS*, ch. 7, maintains a voluntarist account of Scotus' moral psychology, but a less voluntarist account of his ethics.

[24] See §257 for further discussion of this passage in the *EN*.

[25] This claim needs some qualifications: (1) It does not exclude the possibility of reconsidering our deliberation. (2) It does not allow for cases where a non-rational impulse deprives us of the use of reason. See §253.

means over ends to which x is a means. Aquinas, however, believes that we can change our mind about the merits of x and y only if we concentrate on aspects of y that make y seem better to us (cf. 1-2 q13 a6).

Since Aquinas' views on freedom are so closely connected with his eudaemonism, Scotus disagrees on both counts. He argues that eudaemonism not only excludes freedom but also conflicts with obvious truths about rational action. He has three main arguments against eudaemonism: (1) Psychological: facts of experience show that we sometimes fail to pursue what we believe to promote our happiness. (2) Moral: the eudaemonist position conflicts with facts about the moral virtues and the motives of the virtuous person. (3) Metaphysical (libertarian): the eudaemonist position implies that the will is not free, because we are not free to reject happiness, or to choose contrary to what we believe to promote it. Though these arguments raise distinct issues, they are difficult to keep apart; in particular, Scotus' views about rationality and freedom influence his objections to eudaemonism on psychological and moral grounds.

360. Psychological Objections to Eudaemonism

In Scotus' view, the will is partly a natural desire; to this extent, it 'necessarily and perpetually and above all (summe) desires happiness' both in general and in a particular case (*4Sent*. d49 q10 schol = OO x 506 §3 = W 184). Because of this natural desire, the will never rejects something precisely because it promotes happiness and never wills anything precisely because it leads to unhappiness (*4Sent*. d49 q10 = OO x 514 §10 = W 192). But since the will is also a free desire, it cannot be necessarily determined to will any end, even happiness.[26] Our pursuit of happiness, therefore, is natural only in a loose sense, because the will often freely chooses to follow its natural inclination to happiness (*4Sent*. d49 q10 = OO x 513 §6 = W 190).

If the will necessarily pursued happiness, it would follow that whenever I believed both x and y were open to me and that x rather than y would promote my happiness, I would choose x rather than y. But Scotus replies that sometimes we are aware that x rather than y promotes happiness, but we can simply choose to pursue neither x nor y. If we suspend further action, we choose to be indifferent towards happiness.[27]

Even when we act, we do not always act with a view to happiness, and hence we do not necessarily will happiness.[28] Since we aim at particular ends without reference to happiness, and we do not always stop to think about how they bear on happiness, eudaemonism is

[26] '. . . the will contingently wills the end and happiness, both in general and in particular, although in most cases it seeks happiness in general, and also in particular when the intellect has no prior doubt that happiness consists in this particular thing' (*4Sent*. d49 q10 = OO x 513 §6 = W 188–90).

[27] ' . . . it can suspend itself from every act, when happiness is shown to it. Hence, for any object, the will is capable of neither willing nor rejecting it, and of suspending itself from any act in a particular case about this or that object. And this anyone can experience in himself, when someone offers him some good, even if <the other> were to show him a good as a good to be considered and willed; he is capable of turning away from this, and of eliciting no act of will about it' (*4Sent*. d49 q10 = OO x 514 §10 = W 194).

[28] '. . . if the will necessarily willed happiness, it would determine [determinabit] the intellect to consider about happiness always, which is false' (*4Sent*. d49 q10 = OO x 513 §5 = W 188).

false. In such cases, we choose 'negatively' not to pursue happiness, because we have a good reason for pursuing something without considering happiness. In other cases, we choose 'contrarily' not to pursue happiness, because we recognize that our action is contrary to happiness, but we still choose to do it.[29]

361. Defences of Eudaemonism

Scotus treats his arguments against eudaemonism as appeals to obvious facts of common observation that a eudaemonist cannot describe or explain. But Aquinas does not say that we consciously think about happiness whenever we act. He claims that in many cases the 'power of the first aim' (virtus primae intentionis) remains in the pursuit of subordinate ends (*ST* 1-2 q1 a6 ad3).[30] We 'consider' happiness only in so far as we are guided by our conception of the ultimate end; we need not have it in mind all the time. In reply to Scotus Aquinas might reasonably claim that if we hold our particular aims open to scrutiny and revision in the light of our other aims, even though we do not scrutinize them on a particular occasion, we still rely on a conception of happiness. Even if we will to act contrary to our conception of happiness, we act (according to Aquinas) on the consent of the will, and hence we assume that our conception of the good allows us to act on this particular impulse. Given the influence that Aquinas ascribes to our conception of the good, cases where we do not consider it or we act against it do not seem to present decisive objections.

Cajetan's defence of Aquinas against Scotus rests on an apparently more controversial aspect of Aquinas' doctrine. According to Cajetan, if we refrain from pursuing happiness 'negatively', we assume that our action fits our ultimate end, because we do not stop to consider the question; this is what happens in the thoughtless pleasures that are venial sins. If we choose contrary to our conception of happiness, Cajetan argues that we must actually have formed a different conception of our ultimate end, and a mistaken one. If we did not change our conception of happiness, we would desire the contrary of our full perfection, and such a desire is impossible.[31]

Cajetan's answer to Scotus depends on his assumption that no one can desire the contrary of his full perfection. Perfection is the aspect of happiness that requires more than mere comprehensive satisfaction of our actual desires; in appealing to perfection we take our

[29] Even if one recognizes that fornication cannot be directed towards happiness, one may choose it none the less, without directing it towards happiness (*4Sent.* d49 q10 = OO x 540 §15 = W 194–6). It is not clear whether Scotus regards this second case as a case of incontinence, or as a case where the agent sees overriding reason to choose F while still believing that F is contrary to his happiness. If he thinks it is a case of incontinence, Scotus rejects Aquinas' explanation of incontinence by appeal to ignorance. If he thinks it is not a case of incontinence, Scotus disagrees even more deeply with Aquinas' view of rational choice. He should apparently allow both cases.

[30] See §248.

[31] 'For let us speak of the ultimate end taken formally. We say that nothing can be desired except this end itself or something for the sake of this end . . . No one can desire the contrary of his full perfection. For whatever one desires, one desires it so that one may have some perfection, even though he desires contrary to the sort of thing that is the ultimate end (as is evidently the case in someone who sins mortally), and apart from it (as is evidently the case in someone who sins venially)' (Cajetan ad Aquinas, *ST* 1-2 q1 a6 = L vi 15). When he says that the sinner 'desires contrary to the sort of thing that is the ultimate end', Cajetan means that the sinner is acting in accordance with his own conception of the ultimate end, though not in accordance with the correct conception.

desires to be open to criticism by reference to what we take to be a correct conception of ourselves.[32] When Cajetan claims that all our desire aims at some perfection, perhaps he relies on Aquinas' view that we will something on the basis of external reasons that we take to be mutually supporting. If we act on our will, and not on our non-rational desire, we rely on assumptions about external reasons that involve perfection.

Cajetan's objection, therefore, is stronger than it initially appears.[33] If voluntarists cut the link between will and the rational comparison that refers to a final good, do they not cut the link between will and practical reason? If they do that, how does the will differ from a passion? Scotus needs to show not only that we can ignore or reject happiness in our choices, but also that these choices are expressions of the will rather than of some other desire. He would not secure his main point if we were to concede only that some of our desires are immune to 'global' considerations of comprehensiveness and perfection. For Aquinas recognizes such desires; they result from passions so strong and disordered that 'reason is totally bound'; they 'submerge' reason so that they move us irrespective of our rational aims and plans.[34]

Scotus argues not that some desires are independent of the desire for happiness, but that the will is independent of it. Will differs from passion in being rational desire, and hence in being responsive to critical evaluation of one's desires and their objects. Aquinas claims that will is thoroughly rational desire because it responds to the global criticism that our conception of happiness applies to particular objects of desire. This conception of will underlies Cajetan's objection to Scotus. Scotus does not explain why the agent who prefers a particular good over his conception of the ultimate good acts not on a passion, but on a rational desire that belongs to the will. Hence he does not refute eudaemonism.

Scotus describes the will as 'free desire' (liber appetitus), and so denies that it is determined by the antecedent strength of one's non-rational desire—in this case the desire for happiness. Aquinas agrees that the will is free by not being determined by the strength of non-rational desires; he takes this freedom to require the will to respond to the rational evaluation of desires. But the choices that we recognize, according to Scotus, as contrary to our conception of our ultimate end seem to be determined by the antecedent strength of our particular desires. If the 'free desire' identified with the will does not rest on evaluation of our desires, how does it differ from a passion? Scotus' argument to show that we can desire objects contrary to happiness does not show that we can will them.

362. The Conflict between Eudaemonism and Freedom

Scotus replies that eudaemonist claims exclude freewill. Aquinas tries to secure freewill by arguing that though we pursue happiness necessarily, we do not pursue particular goods necessarily. Our freedom consists, then, in the fact that our deliberation compares alternatives and fixes on one of them. But Scotus claims that this account of freedom rests

[32] See §274. [33] Cf. Godfrey in §390.

[34] We might even argue that Aquinas is wrong to deny that incontinence is a case of binding; and so we might understand Scotus' example of choosing contrary to our conception of happiness as a case of incontinence that involves the binding of reason by non-rational passion. Such an argument would not secure Scotus' main aim. See §253.

on two inconsistent claims: (1) We all necessarily desire happiness when it is apprehended universally. (2) We do not necessarily desire it when it is apprehended in a particular case. While the first claim implies that we are necessitated to prefer what apparently promotes happiness, the second claim implies that we are not (*4Sent*. d49 q10 = OO x 505–6, 512–13 = W 184–8).

This objection raises questions about Aquinas' account of the influence of the will on deliberation. He believes it is in our power to fix on the alternative that we will pursue. He even believes that we are free not to pursue the option that initially seems best; if we focus on the bad aspects of x and the good aspects of y, we may change our initial view that x is better than y. Since it is up to us what we attend to, our choice and our action are in our power.

A voluntarist might infer that it is up to us to focus on whatever aspects of a subordinate good we please, independently of our conception of the good. But, according to Aquinas, I can will to stop deliberating or to ignore some features of an action in favour of others only if I believe it is better to direct my deliberation and attention in these ways. Our other beliefs determine what we look for and what we discover. If we cannot persuade ourselves, in the light of our beliefs, that a particular good is not on the whole desirable, we are necessitated (in his view) to choose it. From Aquinas' point of view, this sort of necessitation does not threaten freewill, but preserves it.

From the voluntarist point of view, however, this intellectualist conception of the role of the will excludes freedom. Scotus argues that if the will is not free not to pursue the final good, it is not free not to pursue subordinate goods. We lack freedom in relation to the final good (according to Aquinas) because our will depends on our conception of the good; if, then, our will equally depends on our conception of subordinate goods, it equally lacks freedom in relation to these subordinate goods.

This argument is cogent only if Scotus has given the right account of how we lack freedom in relation to the final good. In Aquinas' view, lack of freedom does not result from the dependence of our will on our conception of the good; he believes we would lack freedom only if we were incapable of recognizing and of acting on alternatives. In relation to subordinate goods we have the relevant capacity for recognition and action. Aquinas argues that we can ascribe this capacity to ourselves without denying the dependence of will on intellect.[35]

Even if Aquinas claimed that the will is independent of intellect in forming our deliberation about subordinate goods, he would still have to agree that it depends on intellect once we

[35] It may be useful to distinguish two claims: (1) It is not necessary that (when we recognize x as promoting the ultimate end, we desire x). (2) In cases where we recognize x as promoting the ultimate end, it is not necessary that we desire x. (1) denies the necessity of the connexion between recognizing x as good (i.e., as promoting happiness) and desiring x. Scotus is right to say that if we accept (1), we can no longer maintain eudaemonism. (2), however, denies the necessity of desiring x, but not because it denies the necessity of desiring x once we recognize it as good. We might accept (2) if we accept the necessity of desiring happiness, but reject any necessary connexion between desiring happiness and desiring x. Acceptance of (2) rather than (1) seems to underlie Aquinas' argument for denying the necessity of pursuing a non-ultimate good. For, in his view, every non-ultimate good can be looked at from some point of view that would make it appear not good; we must deliberate correctly if we are to look at it from the right point of view (1-2 q10 a2; q13 a6). Aquinas believes that our general desire for the ultimate end does not necessitate us, independently of our deliberation, to recognize one or another particular good as a means to the ultimate end. But he does not deny that we are determined to pursue something as a means to the ultimate end once we recognize it as such and do not change our mind.

have definitely made up our minds; when we have a firm belief about what is better, we have no alternative but to follow it. This is the claim that Tempier's commission took to be incompatible with freewill, and Scotus agrees with the commission. But why should Aquinas agree? In his view, freewill gives a reasonable basis for praise and blame, and we have a reasonable basis in the antecedents of a human action, as he describes them. We need to go further into Scotus' position to see why he believes that Aquinas' account cannot justify praise and blame.

The disputes about happiness identify the main points of disagreement between Aquinas and Scotus about how the will is a free and rational desire. From the voluntarist point of view, Aquinas' conditions for freedom are inadequate, because they imply that the will is determined by our natural desire for happiness and our beliefs about what promote it. Scotus believes that the will is not free unless it is free in relation to our natural desires. From Aquinas' point of view, however, the voluntarist conception of freedom is self-defeating; since it rejects determination by the ultimate end, it rejects determination by reason, and hence prevents the will from being free in relation to non-rational desires.

One might conclude that Aquinas is right about rationality, but Scotus is right about freedom, so that our initial belief in the will as a free rational desire is incoherent. In order to settle the issue in favour of Scotus, we must be able to understand how a will that has the degree of freedom required by voluntarism is also rational.

363. Moral Objections to Eudaemonism: The Two Affections of the Will[36]

To answer the eudaemonist objection that he cannot attribute both rationality and freedom to a will detached from eudaemonist global reasoning, Scotus appeals to the two primary affections that Anselm ascribes to the will: the affection for advantage and the affection for justice.[37] If we had only the will to happiness, we could not be blamed for pursuing happiness through unjust means; for if we believed that these unjust means promoted happiness, we could not avoid pursuing them (Anselm, *De Casu Diaboli* 13). In order to be open to praise and blame for acting justly and unjustly, we must have a will to justice that is independent of the will to happiness.[38] The affection for justice causes us to will something that is not directed towards ourselves. It manifests freedom in the will, because an agent who is capable of choosing the just rather than the advantageous is not necessitated by nature to pursue only his own advantage.[39]

[36] On the two affections see Boler, 'Transcending'.

[37] For Anselm's distinction see *3Sent.* d26 q1 = OO vii 2, 635 §17 = W 178; *2Sent.* d6 q2 = OO vi 1, 537 §5 = W 464; Wolter, 'Native freedom' 149–50; Visser and Williams, 'Freedom'; Delahaye, 'Morale'. Cf. §280n46.

[38] '. . . it is necessary that God make both wills come together in him [sc. Satan], so that he would both will to be happy and will justly. In this way justice being added would control the will for happiness in such a way that it would both restrain the excess of the will and would not cut off the power of exceeding' (Anselm, *De Casu* 14).

[39] If we pursued everything with a view only to advantage, we would not have a free will; we would only have a 'natural desire belonging to an intellectual nature' just as a non-rational animal has a 'natural desire belonging to a sensory nature' (*2Sent.* d39 q2 = OO vi 2, 1021 §5 = W 202).

We might recognize these two affections without rejecting eudaemonism. Aristotle contrasts the choice of the fine with the choice of the advantageous, meaning that in choosing the fine I forgo some advantage for myself.[40] Similarly, the Stoics contrast the useful (utile) with the fine (honestum), and Aquinas takes over the contrast.[41] A eudaemonist claims that both of these affections are expressions of our pursuit of happiness, and that someone with a correct conception of his own happiness will prefer the just over the merely advantageous. Aquinas agrees that justice has some special connexion with the will because it requires an agent to consider other people's advantage, and not merely her own; he does not regard this as an objection to eudaemonism.[42]

Anselm suggests a further argument against eudaemonism besides this argument from responsibility. He describes a just person as one who 'preserves correctness of will not because of anything else, in so far as he is to be called just, than the correctness itself' (*De Veritate* 12). The clause 'not because of anything else than the correctness itself' might be taken to mean that the just person regards correctness of will as worth preserving even if no further benefit results from it. This is what Aristotle means in saying that the virtuous person acts for the sake of the fine itself. But Anselm might intend a further and more restrictive claim, that the just person cannot value correctness of will for anything other than itself, and hence cannot value it for the sake of happiness.[43] He maintains that we are not just if we will the action we ought to will only because we are led to it by force or by external reward.[44] But he does not make it clear whether the prospect of happiness is necessarily an external reward that excludes choosing correctness of will for its own sake. If the prospect of happiness counts as an external reward, the just person does not always choose for the sake of happiness.

Scotus accepts this restrictive claim. He takes the existence of an affection for justice to refute eudaemonism, because he identifies the pursuit of happiness with the pursuit of advantage (*3Sent*. d27 q1 = OO vii.2, 651 §12 = W 434). If our happiness were our supreme end, we would not be free to choose justice over our own advantage, and we would not be free to love God above everything. Hence the appropriate sort of love for God subordinates self-love to the love of God, and so subordinates our desire for our happiness to the love of God.[45]

Scotus rejects the 'refined' eudaemonism that tries to reconcile apparently self-sacrificing action with the primacy of one's pursuit of one's own happiness. He argues that brave people who sacrifice their lives will the non-existence of themselves and their virtue for the good of the community; they act for the sake of the community, not for the sake of their

[40] See, e.g., *EN* 1162b34–1163a1; §§106–7. [41] See §§180, 332. [42] See §339.

[43] See Delahaye, 'Morale' 406, on *De Veritate*: 'La finalité morale s'exprime en termes de justice, non pas en termes de béatitude'.

[44] '. . . someone who wills what he ought to will only if he is forced to, or when induced by an external reward, does not preserve correctness for its own sake, but preserves it only for the sake of something else—if he can be said to preserve it at all' (*De Veritate* 12).

[45] 'Everyone who loves out of charity loves himself as directed towards the infinite good, because he loves the act or state by which he tends towards that good, and in this respect his love tends towards another, because his act is towards God as its principal object, and then he has charity to himself not as the final object, but as a proximate object directed towards the final and first object which is distinct from himself' (*3Sent*. d29 q1 supp = OO vii 2, 667 §4 = W 456).

own virtue.[46] It must be possible, therefore, for virtuous people to choose the common good while recognizing that it conflicts with their own happiness.

This example is similar in one respect to Scotus' earlier example of the person who chooses 'contrarily' against happiness; it reflects the deliberate choice of a course of action that is contrary to one's own happiness. But in the earlier case, we objected that Scotus does not show that the choice against happiness really proceeds from the will, because he does not show that it proceeds from rational desire. In the present case, he answers that objection. For he assumes that if we are moved by justice, or bravery, or the love of God, we take it to be best all things considered; what we have best reason to do does not necessarily promote our own happiness. Familiar assumptions about morality show, in his view, that choice with a view to one's happiness is not the only sort of rational choice that can be ascribed to the will. The eudaemonist position is indefensible, if it fails to make room for the non-self referential character of the choices required by morality.[47]

364. Freedom Identified with the Affection for Justice

Scotus identifies this affection for justice with the innate freedom of the will.[48] If the will were merely an intellectual desire focussed on happiness, it would not be free; hence the free will is not bound to the pursuit of happiness.[49] We have a natural tendency to pursue our own happiness (identified with our self-confined advantage); freedom not to follow this natural tendency is a necessary condition of having the affection for justice.

Such freedom, however, seems to be insufficient for justice. Scotus accepts Anselm's account of justice as 'correctness of will maintained for its own sake' (*4Sent*. d46 q1 = OO x 238 §2 = W 240).[50] In speaking of justice he refers to what is right and reasonable from an impartial point of view distinct from one's own preferences. Why should innate freedom of the will involve an affection for some impartial standard of rightness?

Perhaps Scotus means that the virtuous person who freely rejects his happiness is free because he is not simply moved by the strength of some inclination, but is moved by some rational appraisal of the options open to him. Scotus suggests that rational appraisal is embodied in the outlook of justice. If we are considering our own advantage against some action for the sake of some different end, we need to compare the two actions by some

[46] 'The Philosopher maintains in Ethics iii that the person with the bravery of a citizen in accordance with correct reason ought to expose himself to death for the good of the commonwealth. But the philosopher would not suppose that such a person would have any reward after this life . . . And so, setting aside all future reward, this is in accord with right reason, that every person with the bravery of a citizen should will his own non-existence to prevent the perishing of the good of the commonwealth. Now according to correct reason, the divine good and the good of the community (politicum) are to be loved more than the good of some individual. Therefore a given person, in accordance with correct reason, ought to will his own non-existence because of the divine good' (*3Sent*. d27 q1 = OO vii 2, 652 §13 = W 436).

[47] On Scotus' rejection of eudaemonism see Williams, 'Happiness'; 425–45; Cross, *DS* 85–9.

[48] 'Justice can be understood either as infused (which is called "gratuitous") or as acquired (which is called "moral") or as innate (which is the very freedom of the will)' (*2Sent*. d6 q2 = OO vi 1, 539 §8 = W 468). Scotus identifies the affection for justice with 'the innate freedom of the will, in accordance with which it is capable of willing some good not directed towards itself' (*3Sent*. d26 q1 = OO vii 2, 635 §17 = W 178).

[49] 'In this way, therefore, it is clear that a free will is not bound in every way to will happiness, in the way in which it would will it if it were only an intellectual desire without freedom' (*2Sent*. d6 q2 = OO vi 1, 540 §9 = W 470).

[50] Cf. Anselm, *De Veritate* 12 (quoted above, n44); Lottin, *PM* i 13.

standard that shows us how far it is reasonable to pursue our own advantage and how far it is reasonable to pursue the other end. This standard estimates different ends by reference to some impartial conception of what deserves to be chosen. Attachment to this impartial standard is the affection for justice. Hence the affection for justice is not a natural affection that we freely chose to follow; it is the expression of freedom.

Scotus seems to believe, then, that the affection for justice, not the desire for one's own happiness, is the standard for the evaluation of our natural inclinations. Aquinas says that we have freewill in so far as we act on deliberation about our own happiness, but Scotus argues that we have freewill in so far as we act on deliberation about justice.[51] The freedom of a rational will is displayed in the recognition of some impartial standard of rightness.[52]

This defence of Scotus' claims about freedom and the affection for justice helps to explain a disagreement with Aquinas over the status of the desire for happiness. For Aquinas, it is not a contingent fact that a rational will desires the ultimate good identified with happiness; a correct explication of the desire for happiness also explicates a rational will. Aquinas thinks it is essential to a rational will to assess the comparative merits of different actions; and he identifies this comparative assessment with assessment in the light of an ultimate end. An agent who was incapable of this comparative assessment would not be a free agent at all.

In contrast to Aquinas, Scotus treats the pursuit of happiness as a contingent feature of a rational will. It is a necessary and natural feature of a human will, but it is not essential to its being a rational will. In Aquinas' view, we no longer have a rational will if we do not have a will that decides in the light of an ultimate end. Scotus, however, argues that impartiality is essential to a rational will. The rational point of view identifies and considers the actual merits of different courses of action, and sets aside the particular inclinations of the various 'interested parties'. Ordinary inter-personal justice may be understood as the application of this attitude to inter-personal questions, but the attitude applies to cases where the 'interested parties' are aspects of one person, rather than different people.[53]

This aspect of the affection for justice is also an aspect of the desire for happiness, as Aquinas understands it. The pursuit of happiness requires global and systematic practical reasoning. But it also includes aiming at perfection; this aim rests on a conception of the merits of different options, not simply on how they fit into the agent's preferences. This aspect of Aquinas' position is strongly and appropriately emphasized in Scotus' claims about the affection for justice.

365. Sin and Self-Love

This comparison between Aquinas and Scotus might suggest that they emphasize distinct, but perhaps complementary, aspects of the rational will. Aquinas insists that its outlook is

[51] If he means this, the difference between him and Aquinas might not be very great. The difference would be that Aquinas emphasizes the desire for happiness as our starting point, whereas Scotus emphasizes the application of an impartial standard as the conclusion that we reach.

[52] To show that we are capable of not pursuing our own advantage, it is sufficient to cite disinterested actions. But these do not show that we have freewill, if that is a property of a rational will.

[53] On reason and impartiality see Cumberland, *LN*, i 30; Berkeley, *PO* 7.

global and systematic, whereas Scotus insists that it is impartial. But Scotus also believes that eudaemonism is mistaken, because it would sometimes be wrong to choose happiness over justice. Since the choice of happiness is sometimes blameworthy, it must be the free choice of evil; since the will is free to refuse it, the will cannot be determined to pursue happiness. When Lucifer asserts himself against God, he does not act out of love of God, which cannot be excessive; hence, he does not act on the affection for justice, which would require the love of God above all else. He must, then, be acting on excessive affection for the advantageous, which Scotus identifies with desire for one's own happiness.[54] The city of the devil rests on 'love of self that goes as far as contempt of God' (*2Sent.* d6 q2 = OO vi 1, 535 §4 = W 464); Lucifer ought to have preferred justice over his own advantage, but he sinned by preferring his own advantage.[55] If he sinned, he must have chosen freely between his own advantage and justice. Lucifer sins in so far as he pursues his own happiness, but, according to the eudaemonist, he has no choice about whether to pursue his own happiness. Hence the eudaemonist has to say that Lucifer does not act freely, and that we cannot fairly blame him.

This example does not refute eudaemonism. Aquinas agrees that Lucifer's sin is excessive love of himself to the exclusion of others. Self-love is excessive in someone who focusses on himself to the exclusion of other things and people; but this exclusive focus rests on a mistake about one's own happiness.[56] Aquinas agrees that the affection for justice and the love of God ought to override self-absorbed self-love, but he distinguishes this sort of self-love from the desire for happiness.

Is it worthwhile to defend Aquinas' position in this way? Why should we insist that the affection for justice and the love of God are really the expression of the desire for one's own happiness? Such a defence seems to force us into a misleadingly self-centred way of describing desires that do not really put self-love above everything.

Aquinas might answer by appeal to Scotus' belief that in pursuing the demands of justice and charity we pursue what is best all things considered. To justify this belief, we need to explain why we should care about the requirements of justice and charity in relation to other appropriate objects of concern, including self-regarding goods. Aquinas defends non-self-regarding concerns by appeal to the sort of good that we also pursue in the pursuit of self-regarding goods. Concern for our own good leads us to impartial love for another person, for the common good of a community, and for God as including all the good that we find partly realized in other things (*ST* 2-2 q26 a3; *Car.* a4 ad2 = M 764a). A self-regarding starting point shows why we have good reason to take an impartial attitude to some goods.

This progress from self-regarding to impartial concern does not reduce non-self-regarding concern to self-regarding concern. But it shows how our self-regarding concerns pursue an end that we achieve more fully in impartial concerns. If we connect our actions to a systematic ultimate end, we can show (according to Aquinas) that the aims of impartial

[54] See *2Sent.* d6 q2 = OO vi 1,537 §5 = W 464: 'the greatest advantage is one's complete happiness'.

[55] Scotus' quotation is inexact. Augustine actually speaks of the earthly city, not the city of the devil, as the one that is guided by excessive self-love (*CD* xiv 28a). Augustine also speaks of the earthly city with its angels as founded on self-love (xiv 13–14). He agrees with Scotus in saying that the basis of Lucifer's sin is excessive self-love. But he does not commit himself to Scotus' view that Lucifer is moved by desire for his happiness rather than some other desire. See §226; O'Donovan, *PSLSA*, ch. 2.

[56] On Aquinas' view see §341.

concerns are not completely separate from the aims of self-regarding concerns. If Scotus agrees that it is reasonable to look for this sort of connexion, he accepts one of Aquinas' claims about happiness as the ultimate end.

These questions about the implication of eudaemonism are relevant to Scotus' argument to show that some rational choices are not directed to one's happiness. He argues as follows: (1) The desire for happiness is directed towards oneself. (2) Virtuous people's choice is not directed towards themselves. (3) But their choice is rational. (4) Therefore, some rational choice is not directed towards oneself. (5) Therefore, it is not directed towards one's own happiness.[57] The argument depends on the claim that some choices are or are not 'directed to oneself' (ordinatum ad se). If Scotus is right, eudaemonism is incompatible with admitted facts about the virtuous person's rational choices (stated in (2) and (3)).

'Directed towards oneself' seems to have different senses in Scotus' argument. The virtues forbid the self-centred attitude that takes one's own interest to be more important than anyone else's, or takes the interests of others to be purely instrumental to one's own. According to Aristotle and Aquinas, however, this self-centred attitude is not required by the desire for one's own happiness. To desire one's own happiness is to aim at some feature of oneself in contrast to other people; but it does not imply that one cares less about others than about oneself.

The first step of Scotus' argument is true, therefore, if 'directed towards oneself' refers to the self-referential character of the desire for happiness. But the second step is false, if it refers to the same thing. The second step is true if 'directed towards oneself' means 'self-centred'; but if it means the same in the first step, that step is false. The conclusion damages eudaemonism only if 'directed towards oneself' means 'self-referential'; but it does not follow from the first two steps if they are both true.

This reply does not show that a eudaemonist can justify the non-self-centred attitude of the virtues within the self-referential outlook of the desire for one's own happiness. But it suggests that this question about justification is at least worth asking. If Scotus were right, it would not be worth asking, because the eudaemonist would be attempting an impossible task.

366. Sin and Freedom

In Scotus' view, eudaemonism distorts the relation between the pursuit of happiness and the affection for justice. The sin of Lucifer is a genuine sin only because we are capable of moderating our desire for happiness, and are required to moderate it. Lucifer could have freely chosen to moderate his affection for advantage, but he freely chooses not to moderate it.

According to this picture, the will has two affections, for advantage and for justice, and freedom consists in our choosing between them. But how are we to reconcile this picture with Scotus' claim that the freedom of the will is its affection for justice? (*2Sent* d6 q2 = OO

[57] 'The affection for justice is nobler than the affection for the advantageous, where "justice" is understood not only as acquired and infused justice, but as innate justice, which is the inborn freedom in accordance with which one can will something not directed towards oneself' (*3Sent*. d26 q1 = OO vii 2, 635 §17 = W 178).

vi.1, 539 §8 = W 468)?[58] Scotus explains that if the will simply had an affection for advantage, it would be simply a natural rational desire, and would not be free. The affection for justice is freedom, because it is the primary controller of the affection for advantage.[59]

But what are we to say about the will of Lucifer who chooses his own happiness freely but inappropriately? If his freedom consists in his affection for justice, apparently he acts on his affection for justice. In that case, he believes that justice supports his self-assertion, because the divine law imposes unreasonable limits on his happiness. God requires Lucifer to find his own happiness in loving God rather than in loving himself without God, to achieve it at the time God wills, and to achieve it by merit (*2Sent* d6 q2 = 00 vi.1, 540 §9 = W 470); perhaps Lucifer thinks these are unreasonable restraints on him. He exercises freedom, therefore, in so far as he compares God's demands on him with some impartial standard of reasonable action, and concludes that it is unreasonable for him to sacrifice his happiness to God's demands. This explanation traces Lucifer's sin to an error about the justice of the limits that God imposes on Lucifer's happiness. It is similar, therefore, to the eudaemonist explanation, in so far as it appeals to error, but it differs about the content of the error.

But if Scotus agrees with the eudaemonist even to this extent, can he maintain his objection to eudaemonism? He rejects the eudaemonist explanation not only because of its broad conception of one's own happiness, but also because it traces Lucifer's sin to his false belief about the means to happiness. If his choice resulted from this false belief, his intellectual error would not convict him of sin, because such errors are not subject to freewill.[60] If Lucifer acts on some rational standard that he mistakenly supposes to justify his self-assertion, his mistake explains his sin. Ignorance resulting in misapplication of a rational standard should deprive him of freedom in precisely the way in which, according to Scotus, the pursuit of happiness would deprive us of freedom, if Aquinas were right about the status of happiness. Scotus' argument about ignorance and freedom seems to undermine his account of how Lucifer sins freely.

We might answer that it is too simple to assert that ignorance and error exclude freedom by excluding praise and blame. Sometimes ignorance and error are blameworthy; and if Lucifer's ignorance is blameworthy, it does not exempt him from blame and praise. But if Scotus relies on this defence to show that Lucifer sins freely, the eudaemonist may also rely on it. Whether it is difficult or easy to identify the relevant kind of ignorance, Scotus and the eudaemonist seem to face the same task.

If, then, Scotus sticks to his objection about ignorance and responsibility, he should not say that Lucifer's free choice of his own happiness is a result of his affection for justice. Instead he should say that the choice is the result of his preference for following his natural desire for happiness over the affection for justice, and that this preference is to be ascribed to the free will. Lucifer compares the requirements of justice and the requirements of his own advantage, and chooses to follow his own advantage, by the free exercise of his rational will, but not because he misapplies some rational principle.

[58] Quoted in n48.

[59] '. . . that affection for justice, I say, is the inborn freedom of the will, because it is itself the primary controller of such an affection [sc. for advantage]' (*2Sent*. d6 q2 sch. = OO vi 1, 540 §8 = W 468–9).

[60] See *2Sent*. d6 q2 = OO vi 1, 539 §8 = W 468: nec imputaretur sibi ad peccatum. Hume uses the same sort of argument to show that false judgments cannot be the source of immorality: *T* iii 1.1 §12.

According to this view, freedom is not identical to the affection for justice; for Lucifer's will is free and he acts freely even though he rejects the affection for justice and the rational standard that it follows. Scotus' rejection of explanations appealing to ignorance implies that a free will could be fully informed about the implications of any rational standard and could still refuse to follow that standard. The affection for justice makes freewill possible, since an agent without such an affection could not reject happiness; but it is not identical to the freedom of the will. The will is no less free in rejecting than in accepting the affection for justice.

But how can Lucifer's sin, understood as a rejection of the affection for justice, express the choice of his will rather than his passion? Scotus' argument about freedom and ignorance excludes any explanation that refers to Lucifer's mistaken belief about what is best. Hence his choice depends on some motive that does not respond to a judgment about what is best. The passions are motives of this sort, but Scotus argues that Lucifer acts on his will rather than his passions. What is the difference? Scotus complains that when Aquinas seeks to make the will rational, he deprives it of freedom; but when Scotus wants to make the will free, he deprives it of rationality. Admittedly, Scotus does not believe that the will is insensitive to the greater good; he recognizes that it is difficult to reject the conclusion of practical reason.[61] Still, he believes we can reject this conclusion, on the basis of some reason that we acknowledge to be inferior. We might, therefore, wonder why this is an act of the will rather than a passion.

367. Eudaemonism, Intellectualism, and Voluntarism

Scotus' claims about the two affections and about freedom attack Aquinas' eudaemonism and intellectualism. Against eudaemonism Scotus argues that a free rational will chooses by reference to an impartial rational standard that is distinct from, and not subordinate to, one's own happiness. His objection to eudaemonism would be plausible if Aquinas treated the desire for happiness as a self-confined natural impulse; but Aquinas treats the desire for happiness as a necessary characteristic of a free and rational will, not as an impulse that restricts the freedom of a rational will.

But even if Scotus' argument against eudaemonism fails, his positive claim that a free will is rational and impartial may be a viable alternative to eudaemonism. We might, then, understand him as a non-eudaemonist intellectualist who assigns to the affection for justice the place that Aquinas assigns to the desire for happiness. Scotus might be right to take some impartial perspective as the defining feature of a rational will. Aquinas believes that this impartial perspective can be fitted into a broadly eudaemonistic perspective; but the reverse procedure might appear equally plausible, or even more plausible.[62]

[61] Bonansea, 'Voluntarism' 99, cites *2Sent.* d6 q2 = OO vi 1, 540 §8: 'In so far as the will is simply intellectual desire, it would be inclined actually above all to the highest intelligible good . . . But in so far as it is free it can restrain itself in eliciting an act, so as not to follow that inclination, neither as regards the substance of the act nor as regards the intention to which the capacity is naturally inclined.' Bonansea adds *Rep. Par.* ii d39 q2 = OO xi 1, 406 §5: 'It is difficult for the will not to incline to what is prescribed finally by practical reason, but it is not impossible'.

[62] To pursue this line of inquiry is to see some of the reasons that might support Butler's belief that conscience is the supreme principle in a rational agent.

It is difficult, however, to combine this intellectualist position with Scotus' other main attack on eudaemonism. He argues that if the will were not free to reject happiness, it would not be free, since it could not choose between opposites in this respect. A parallel argument shows that the will must be free to reject justice. While Scotus sometimes identifies the freedom of the will with the affection for justice, he cannot identify the two if he also maintains his broader objection to eudaemonism. Freedom seems to require the ability to reject justice no less than the ability to reject happiness.

This voluntarist aspect of Scotus' position dissolves any special connexion between freedom and the affection for justice.[63] Disinterested malice, for instance, seems to express freedom in a choice that rejects both happiness and justice. If you harm me or someone or something I care about, I may want you to suffer even if I recognize that I will gain nothing and that it is quite unjust for you to suffer (if what you did was completely justifiable or excusable). Scotus should apparently agree that a free will can make such choices.[64] He cannot identify the affection for justice with the innate freedom of the will, if disinterested malice expresses innate freedom.

Scotus could maintain a consistently voluntarist position by abandoning his claim that freedom of the will consists in the affection for justice. But then he would also abandon his reason for believing that a free will is also a rational will. On the one hand, he contrasts the free will with dependence on natural inclination, but on the other hand, he contrasts it with dependence on the greater good. The first contrast gives us a reason to reject the second; for the relevant contrast between the rational will and non-rational inclination requires the will to be responsive to value in a way that is excluded by the second contrast.

We would free his position from conflict if we were to deny any connexion between the doctrine of the two affections and voluntarism.[65] We might take the doctrine of the two affections as a part of Scotus' moral theory, not as part of his theory of the will and its freedom. In that case, we could affirm that the will is equally free whichever of the two affections guides it, and that the affection for the just is morally better, but not a fuller expression of freedom. Perhaps Scotus is confused in identifying freedom with the affection for justice.

We should not conclude so readily, however, that he is confused. For if we deny the identification of freedom with the affection for justice, we make it more difficult to separate the will from the passions. If the impartial attitude of the affection for the just is the outlook of reason, the free and rational will acts primarily through the affection for the just. But if the will is equally expressed through the rejection of happiness for something worse, through the affection for advantage, and through the affection for the just, what makes the will a rational capacity? It is not easy to defend Scotus' belief that the will is rational without his claim that the affection for the just most fully expresses the free will. We might even decide that his claims about freedom and the affection for the just are plausible apart from his voluntarism.[66]

[63] For a more sympathetic account of Scotus on freedom and justice cf. Adams, 'Will' 252–4.

[64] Scotus might say that malicious action of this sort really manifests my desire for revenge, and so it is self-regarding after all; but if he is willing to allow a eudaemonist explanation in this case, it is difficult to see why he is entitled to resist a parallel explanation of behaviour that he takes to rest on the affection for justice.

[65] Boler, for instance, in 'Transcending', treats the doctrine of the two affections as primarily an aspect of Scotus' moral theory.

[66] A similar conclusion may emerge from consideration of similar questions about Kant's position.

368. A Dualism of Practical Reason?

Scotus' attack on eudaemonism shows that he does not take the supremacy of self-interest for granted, and that he does not treat this as the only principle of practical reason. On this point, he rejects the main tradition of ancient and mediaeval ethics.[67] In modern moral philosophy Butler rejects this primacy of self-love. Sidgwick recognizes the importance of the question raised by Butler, and discusses it in his account of practical reason. Since Scotus anticipates Butler and Sidgwick, it is helpful to anticipate some of the questions that they raise.[68]

One of Sidgwick's claims about Butler raises a worthwhile question about Scotus as well. Since Butler rejects the primacy of self-love, we may say that he accepts a 'duality' of practical reason, marked by the irreducible principles of self-love and conscience. Sidgwick also claims that Butler recognizes a 'dualism' of practical reason; not only are there two irreducible principles, but neither is subordinate to the other or to any third principle. But Butler does not seem to treat his duality as a dualism. He maintains that self-love and conscience are distinct superior principles, but conscience is supreme. He therefore denies that they are equally ultimate principles.

Where does Scotus stand on this question? Does he regard the affection for advantage and the affection for justice as two ultimate and equal principles, or does he take the affection for justice to be superior? A non-eudaemonist intellectualist interpretation of his account of the will suggests that the affection for justice is the supreme principle. If the will is a rational capacity, and the two affections of the will are two aspects of the application of practical reason to our actions, perhaps they express the same general principle. In deliberating with a view to our own happiness, we impose the appropriate rational order on our desires with reference to our own good; in deliberating with a view to justice, we impose the appropriate rational order on the desires of the different people affected. Deliberation with reference to happiness imperfectly embodies practical reason for only one person's desires, whereas deliberation with reference to justice embodies it more fully.

This interpretation of Scotus fits the intellectualist version of his doctrine of freedom. But it does not account for all of his position. The most plausible argument for the supremacy of justice treats the affection for justice as a higher level of the sort of rational order that is present in the desire for happiness. If we find this rational order in the desire for happiness, it is plausible to treat the desire for happiness as a necessary structural feature of a rational agent. But this structural conception of the desire for happiness is Aquinas' conception. Scotus does not treat the desire for happiness, as Aquinas does, as a rational order in desires. On the contrary, he tends to treat the desire for happiness as though it were a desire for some specific object, or some specific bias in our desires, that is not an essential feature of a rational agent.

Scotus' conception of happiness is consistent with the supremacy of the affection for justice, but it deprives him of a plausible argument for it. If we doubt whether practical reason involves the impartial outlook of justice, we can remove this doubt by noticing that

[67] The Cyrenaics are his only predecessors; they reject eudaemonism for quite different reasons. See §§31–2.

[68] See Sidgwick, *ME* 197–8.

we acknowledge a similar, though partial, outlook in rational self-love. Butler, Reid, and Sidgwick see this parallel between the outlooks of prudence and of impartial morality. The parallel gives a good reason for taking the affection for justice to be superior to the desire for happiness. But this reason is not available to Scotus, given his conception of happiness. In trying to maintain the rationality of the affection for justice without allowing the rationality of the desire for happiness, he weakens his case for the supremacy of justice. Kant faces a similar difficulty for similar reasons.

Even apart from his views on happiness, Scotus' views about freedom make it difficult for him to maintain the superiority of the affection for justice. For he believes that freedom requires the capacity both to follow the affection for justice and to reject it. Lucifer exercises this capacity by rejecting justice in favour of his own advantage. This position is consistent with the supremacy of the affection for justice; for we might say that justice is rationally supreme, resting on the best reasons, and that Lucifer exercises his freedom by rejecting action based on the best reasons. But it is difficult for Scotus to defend this view, if he also believes that the free will is essentially rational, and hence that Lucifer made a rational choice in favour of self-interest. The essential rationality of the free will makes it plausible to affirm a dualism, not merely a duality, of practical reason, so that neither the affection for advantage nor the affection for justice is superior. According to this dualist position, deliberation with a view to happiness does not rest on a principle that also underlies deliberation with a view to justice. The two kinds of deliberation rest on fundamentally different aims and assumptions that cannot be rationally subordinated to each other. Though Sidgwick's description of the dualism of practical reason may not fit Butler, it may fit Scotus.

This conclusion reveals a question about the non-eudaemonist intellectualism that Scotus sometimes seems to accept (when he identifies freedom with the affection for justice, or with innate justice). If we accept the argument from prudence to justice, relying on impartial reason, we may be less tempted to reject eudaemonism; for the impartial aspects of the affection for justice do not (for the reasons we have considered) require us to abandon the supremacy of the desire for happiness.

A similar question may face Butler.[69] His argument to show that self-love is a superior principle with authority over particular passions seems to presuppose a structural conception; self-love does not pursue some specific object co-ordinate with the objects of the other desires and competing with them, but it pursues some more abstract object that is partly constituted by the satisfaction of particular passions. This conception of self-love fits the Aristotelian conception of the desire for happiness, and also fits Butler's conception of the role of conscience in inter-personal relations. But this Aristotelian conception of self-love may make us less inclined to deny the supremacy (properly understood) of self-love.

Butler has a more plausible argument against the supremacy of self-love if he relies on the hedonist conception that he sometimes accepts. This conception partly corresponds to Scotus' view of the affection for advantage as a purely natural feature of a human being, rather than an essential feature of a rational agent. But this conception also carries a cost for Butler; for it does not include the abstract and structural conception that displays the continuity between self-love and conscience.

[69] For Butler's account of the superiority of self-love see, e.g., *S* ii 11–13.

Perhaps, then, Sidgwick's claims about Butler point to an important question about both Butler and Scotus. Perhaps Butler's most plausible argument for the supremacy of conscience rests on a conception of self-love that makes it less plausible to deny the supremacy of self-love. Similarly, perhaps Scotus' conception of the pursuit of justice as the fullest manifestation of freedom and practical reason is most plausible in the light of an account of happiness that Scotus rejects. This does not imply that either Scotus or Butler ought to be a dualist, believing in two equally ultimate principles. It may imply that they are wrong to reject the eudaemonist assumptions that they reject.

This conclusion may not do justice to the case for maintaining a duality of practical reason without a dualism. Perhaps the acceptance of Aquinas' conception of the desire for happiness does not justify us in accepting the supremacy of happiness, once we consider the claims of impartial justice to express human freedom. The non-eudaemonist intellectualist interpretation of Scotus anticipates a Kantian argument for connecting freedom with practical reason. This argument raises difficulties for Kant that are parallel to some of the difficulties that we have found in trying to make room for Scotus' voluntarism. Both Scotus and Kant may be better off with a more intellectualist conception of freedom than the one that they tend to accept.

369. Will as Rational Capacity

From an intellectualist point of view, therefore, Scotus' view that freedom requires the freedom to reject the rational standards both of happiness and of justice seems to be his fatal error. Intellectualism without eudaemonism would be an intelligible and consistent position; why does Scotus insist on his further claim about freedom?

His answer depends on his view about the defining characteristic of the will. In his view, the will differs essentially from other desires in being an Aristotelian rational capacity (potentia rationalis; *QM* ix q15 = OO iv 796b = W 144), and hence a capacity for opposites.[70] Will, rather than intellect, matches Aristotle's conception of a capacity for opposites; hence Aristotle even 'hints' (innuit) that his conception of a rational capacity applies strictly to nothing except the will (*QM* ix 15 schol. 3 = OO iv 799b–800a §§9–11 = W 160–4).

According to Aquinas, however, Aristotle believes that rational capacities are actualized in ways that are subject to will and election, and that the will itself is not a rational capacity (1-2 q55 a1).[71] Aristotle cites sciences and crafts as his examples of capacities for opposites (*Met.* 1046b2–3, 6–8). He even distinguishes desire and decision from the capacities that he describes as capacities for opposites (1048a10–11). These remarks support Aquinas, and Scotus recognizes this objection to his own view (*QM* ix q15 = OO iv 797a §3 = W 148; 'Secundo, quia . . .'). Still, he believes that Aristotle's account of rational capacities does not fit intellect, which is not capable of opposites in its own right.[72] Once intellect is determined

[70] He agrees, therefore, with Henry of Ghent's claim that 'the will in a human being is called a rational capacity because it is capable of opposites' (*Summa* a36 q5, sol., Bad. 237B (p.124, Wilson), quoted by Wolter, 'Potency' 164n9).

[71] Cf. §285.

[72] 'Reason is not determinative, since it is of opposites with respect to which it cannot determine itself, and much less something other than itself' (*QM* ix 15 schol. 3 = OO iv 799b §9 = W 160).

to one effect, it no longer has the other in its power; and so it is no longer a capacity for opposites.

This argument assumes a strong sense of 'capacity for opposites', so that a subject has this capacity only if nothing external to the capacity itself ever determines it to one of the opposites. But the assumption is doubtful. We might say that a car can travel at either under or over 100 km/h, but when I press the accelerator hard enough, it is determined to travel at over 100 km/h; it is no longer able to travel at under 100 km/h at that very time in those very circumstances. If Aristotle attributes such a capacity to intellect, he can say that we are capable of believing either that the earth is round or that the earth is flat, until we find strong evidence for its being round; this evidence determines us to believe that it is round. Similarly, the doctor's knowledge makes her capable of healing and of poisoning, until she decides to heal; then she is determined to heal.

But in this sense non-rational capacities also seem to be capacities for opposites. The capacity of water to heat or to cool whatever is placed in it is capable of opposite actualizations before it is determined to one of the opposites. If we throw an ice cube into water at 20 degrees C, the ice cube will be warmed; if we throw a red-hot poker in, the poker will be cooled.[73] Since Aristotle claims that rational capacities differ from non-rational in being capacities for opposites, he cannot mean that x has a capacity for opposites by being capable of F and not F before being determined to F. Scotus infers that Aristotle intends rational capacities to be capable of opposites in Scotus' strong sense.[74] Intellect, therefore, is not a rational capacity (since it is not capable of opposites in the strong sense implying absence of external determination); only will is a rational capacity.

This argument is open to question if Aristotle believes that intellect has a capacity for opposites that distinguishes it from non-rational capacities but does not imply absence of external determination. And in fact Scotus acknowledges such a capacity: intellect has a special relation to opposites because of its representative character; it includes awareness of the relevant opposites.[75] Medical knowledge gives us awareness both of sickness and of health and of a rational basis for preferring one over the other; this is a difference between its relation to opposites and the relation of non-rational capacities to opposites.

Aquinas relies on this conception of a rational capacity to show how action caused by the will results from the exercise of a capacity for opposites. He argues that rational agents are moved by their will as a result of rational comparison.[76] This comparison requires both awareness of the possibility of opposite actions and consideration of their merits. In acting on such a comparison we realize a capacity for opposites; since we compare and evaluate these opposites, our capacity is different from that of a non-rational agent.

Scotus objects that if this were sufficient for a rational capacity, the possession of the rational capacity for F and the opposite of F would be insufficient for doing F and for doing

[73] Scotus cites this example from Boethius (quoted in OP iv 693) on Aristotle, *De Int.* 21b10.

[74] 'If it is said that a rational capacity is capable of opposites unless it is determined to one of them, in which case it is not [capable of both], it follows from this that there is no difference between opposed rational and irrational capacities as far as concerns this point, of being capable of opposites' (*QM* ix 15 schol. 3 = OO iv 800 §12 = W 166).

[75] 'A form that is grasped by intellect, as a science is, is a principle for assimilating to opposites by an intentional similitude, just as the science itself is a virtual similitude of opposites that are cognized, since one contrary includes the privation of the other' (*QM* ix 15 = OO iv 797a, §2 = W 148).

[76] See §245.

the opposite of F, even if the external conditions are suitable for one or the other; for if we know how to cure and how to poison, but we do not choose to do one or the other, we will do neither. Scotus takes this consequence to refute the claim that awareness of opposites gives us a capacity for opposites, because he assumes that x is not really the capacity for F if something external to x is needed to cause F.

This demanding conception of a capacity, however, does not seem to be Aristotle's; for, in his view, rational capacities need something else in the agent, and not just suitable external conditions, if they are to be actualized.[77] Hence he accepts the consequence that Scotus regards as unacceptable. That is why he denies, as Aquinas sees, that the will is a rational capacity. For rational capacities need something further to determine them in one direction or the other, but since the will determines the direction in which we apply a rational capacity; it is not itself a rational capacity.

These features of Aristotle's account cast doubt on Scotus' claims that intellect does not meet Aristotle's condition for rational capacities, and that only will meets this condition. But even if Aristotle had identified will with a rational capacity, he would not have implied that, as Scotus claims, nothing external can determine the will; for he does not believe that rational capacities cannot be determined by anything external to them. If Scotus were right, Aristotle would have claimed that if we have a capacity for opposites, then we must be able to do not-F at every time before we do F, and that nothing before actually doing F provides a sufficient condition for our doing F. This would be an indeterminist conception of the relevant sort of capacity. In claiming that Aristotle attributes an indeterminist capacity for opposites to us, Scotus ascribes indeterminism to Aristotle. In claiming that only the will satisfies the appropriate conditions for being a capacity for opposites, he accepts indeterminism in his own right. His argument fails, since we can apparently draw the distinctions that Aristotle draws without committing ourselves to indeterminism.

370. Rational Capacity and Contingency

But even if Scotus is wrong about *Metaphysics* ix, he still has a reason to believe that Aristotle needs Scotus' conception of the will. For Scotus argues that a will with the strong capacity for opposites (i.e., the capacity to actualize either one without external determination) is needed if our action is to be contingent.[78] Aristotle insists (in *De Interpretatione* 9) that some events happen contingently; hence (Scotus infers) he accepts Scotus' conception of rational capacity as involving this strong ability to do opposites.

Scotus assumes: (1) If my doing F is contingent, then when I choose to do F I am capable of refraining from F. (2) If I have this capacity when I choose to do F, then nothing prior

[77] 'Something else, then, namely desire or decision, must control the action; for when the agent has an overriding desire for one alternative, that is how it will act, whenever it is in the conditions suitable for its potentiality and meets the thing that is acted on. Necessarily, then, when anything with a rational potentiality desires to act in a way for which it has a potentiality, and it is in the conditions suitable for the potentiality, it acts' (Ar. *Met.* 1048a10–15).

[78] '. . . unless <a rational capacity> were capable of opposites when it is determined in actuality—that is, at that very moment in which <it decides> for that one—no effect that actualizes <it> would be actually contingent' (*QM* ix 15 schol. 3 = OO iv 800a §12 = W 166).

to my choosing to do F determines my choosing to do F.[79] Both assumptions are open to doubt. We might question the first assumption by claiming that my doing F is contingent even if my choosing to do F removes my capacity to refrain from F. But even if we accept Scotus' first assumption, we might question the second. Even if I have some capacity to refrain from F when I do F, it is not clear why this capacity excludes prior determination to do F. If there are antecedent sufficient conditions determining me to choose F rather than not F, my choosing F is necessitated; but Aristotle does not infer that it is necessary. In his discussion of the Sea Battle he denies that past truth necessitates a future event, but he does not infer that contingent human choices and actions have no sufficient causal conditions.[80] He does not rely on the strong conception of rational capacity that Scotus attributes to him, and he does not treat the will as such a capacity.[81]

Still, Scotus may have identified a serious difficulty in Aristotle and in Aquinas. Perhaps the distinctions Aristotle draws are too weak to support his claims about contingency. He believes that something about the contingency of human choices and actions justifies us in taking them to be open to praise, blame, and moral evaluation. Scotus claims that we cannot find the relevant sort of contingency in human choices unless we identify the will with a rational capacity, as he conceives it.

371. Voluntarism and Indeterminism

Scotus maintains, against Aquinas' intellectualism, that the belief that x is better than y does not determine the will to choose x rather than y. If anything external to the will determined the will, it would exclude freewill; for it would imply that the will itself is not a capacity for opposites, since something external to it would determine which opposite would be realized.

This argument helps us to see how Scotus' position goes beyond the simple rejection of intellectualism. If I freely choose between x and y, my choice (according to the anti-intellectualist) is not determined by my conception of the merits of x and y, since that would be determination by an appearance that lies outside the will; but my choice may still be determined by how the will is. If we attribute this sort of freedom to the will, we might still accept a determinist (or compatibilist) account of the formation of the will. Voluntarism, therefore, does not include incompatibilism, and so does not require indeterminism.

But this version of voluntarism may well seem unattractive. It is difficult to see why appearances and considerations should be the only external determinants that exclude free will. Compatibilist voluntarism, however, allows our beliefs, values, and choices, to be

[79] '. . . I say that the will can be moved to an act with no determination to the act previously understood in it, in such a way that the first determination in time and nature is in the positing of the act, and that if then it is supposed that it is capable of nothing unless previously determined, that is false' (*QM* ix 15 = OO iv 801a §13 = OP 696 = W 168). I follow the text of OO and OP rather than W.

[80] Some readers have claimed to find it in *Met.* vi 3, but it is difficult to convince ourselves that he accepts it there if we are not already persuaded that Aristotle accepts indeterminism. For references see Kirwan, *Met.* 222–5. Aquinas explains the chapter through his doctrine of different types of causes in *in Met.* vi 3 §§1215–22.

[81] On Scotus' view that he agrees with Aristotle see Wolter, 'Potency' 177–8. On earlier Franciscan disagreements with Aristotelian views see Stadter, *PMMF* 4–6, 79–80, 124, 136, 182, 210–11.

determined by a sequence of sufficient conditions that goes back outside us, indeed to events long before we were born.

Scotus might reasonably claim to offer a more plausible version of voluntarism. In his view determination of the will by considerations external to it is to be rejected not because the determinants are intellectual, but because they are external to the will. His belief in self-determination rests on his belief that the will is a rational capacity, capable by itself of going in opposite directions.

Scotus' defence of voluntarism, therefore, commits him to indeterminism. If something prior to my willing now to raise my arm determined my willing this now, my will would not now be a rational capacity that determines itself to opposite effects. His strong claim about the will as a rational capacity commits him to both voluntarism and indeterminism.

Just as voluntarism without indeterminism is consistent but unattractive, Aquinas' intellectualism makes compatibilism attractive. The determination of will by intellect is compatible with indeterminism about freewill; perhaps the will is determined by the intellect, but we act freely only if the conclusion of the intellect is not causally necessitated.[82] This view, however, is unstable. Aquinas suggests that we have freewill because we deliberate about alternatives, and the result of our deliberation affects our choice and action. This is his explanation of the intuitions that suggest that freedom requires some ability to do otherwise. If his explanation is correct, these intuitions do not require incompatibilism; hence we undermine one argument to show that the ability to do otherwise must include an indeterministic process.

Aquinas' intellectualism, therefore, supports compatibilism, and Scotus' voluntarism supports indeterminism. These are not the only consistent combinations; later discussions of freewill try other combinations.[83] But Aquinas and Scotus have good reasons for believing that they are more plausible than the other consistent combinations would be.[84]

[82] On incompatibilist intellectualism see §270n62.

[83] Hobbes, e.g., defends both compatibilism and anti-intellectualism against Bramhall.

[84] The issue about determination leads to another dispute between Aquinas and Scotus. Aquinas' account of human freedom in relation to external causal influences depends heavily on his distinctions among types of causes. Provided that the proximate cause is in the will responding in the right way to the merits of the situation, the fact that the will's response is itself the product of external causal influences does not seem to him to compromise human freedom; it simply has to be connected to human action by the right sort of causal chain. Aquinas relies on this distinction to argue that external causal influences such as the passions, human nature, external events, the Devil, and God do not threaten human freedom. See §270. Scotus is dissatisfied with Aquinas' solution, because he rejects Aquinas' distinction among causes. See Adams, *WO* ii 1117–30.

26

SCOTUS: VIRTUE AND PRACTICAL REASON

372. Passion, Will, and Virtue

Scotus believes that since freedom depends on will rather than intellect, and since virtuous action is (as Augustine says) the good use of freewill, the will is also the subject of the moral virtues. If the moral virtues belonged to the passions or to the intellect, they would not be subject to freewill, and so we would not be open to praise or blame for being virtuous or vicious.

If the will is the subject of the moral virtues, Aristotle and Aquinas are wrong to make the passions the subjects. Scotus rejects Aristotle's view that (as Averroes remarks) assigns the virtues to the sensory appetite rather than to the will (*3Sent. d33* q1 = OO vii 2, 696 §1 = W 318). This is also the view of Aquinas (*ST* 1–2 q56 a4). Such a view seems to leave out the essential role of the will.

Though he rejects the view that he ascribes to Aristotle, Scotus also believes that Aristotle sometimes treats the will as the subject of the virtues. He mentions some plausible Aristotelian reasons: (1) Virtue is a state involving election, which is a product of the will. (2) Virtue is the origin of praiseworthy actions, which must proceed from the will. Scotus assumes that voluntary actions and states depend on the will, and that states and actions are praiseworthy in so far as they are voluntary. (3) The object of virtue is the right (or 'fine'; bonum honestum), which is the intrinsic object of the will (*3Sent.* d33 q1 = OO vii 2, 696 §2 = W 320). Aristotle connects the pursuit of the right with the rational part (e.g. *EN* 1169a3–6). Since he insists that the virtuous person elects what is right for its own sake, he seems to attribute the characteristically virtuous attitude to the will.

These are good reasons for treating the will as essential to moral virtue. They rest so firmly on Aristotelian principles that neither Aristotle nor Aquinas could reasonably reject them. Scotus is justified in claiming that Aristotle's explicit account does not reflect the importance of the will in virtue. Moreover, Aquinas does not completely correct Aristotle. On the one hand, he agrees that the subject of a state that is to be called a virtue without qualification is the will or some other capacity in so far as it is moved by the will (1-2 q56

a3);[1] hence a virtue must be either in the will itself or in some capacity that is moved by the will. On the other hand, he denies that the will is the subject of bravery and temperance. He allows only that it is the subject of virtues aiming at some external good, directed towards God or one's neighbour (q56 a6c; ad3).

Some of Scotus' arguments expose this internal difficulty in Aquinas. He does not rely on voluntarist claims about the will that Aquinas rejects, but he explains why Aquinas' views about the will should make the will a subject of the moral virtues (*3Sent*. d33 q1 = OO vii 2, 702 §13 = W 332). Scotus argues that every moral virtue requires a good habituated state in the will no less than in the sensory desires. Since Aquinas gives inadequate reasons for assigning some of the virtues to the passions and some to the will,[2] he should amend his view so as to give a larger role to will, in contrast to passion, in the moral virtues.

373. Intellect, Will, and Virtue

Some of Scotus' other objections to Aquinas, however, are more strongly voluntaristic. He rejects not only passions but also intellect as the subject of the moral virtues. Aquinas agrees with him in denying that intellect is the subject, but Scotus draws a more extreme conclusion from this point. He believes that if we place virtue in the intellect, we make vice a matter of ignorance, so that virtue and vice will not be open to praise and blame. Against this position, he defends the view that he attributes to Augustine, ascribing virtues to the direction of an agent's 'love', and therefore to the will.[3]

He argues, therefore, against the view that virtue consists in correct reason.[4] If this view were right, the will would be passive in relation to the intellect; hence (Scotus infers) we would not be blameworthy, since our errors could be traced back to cognitive mistake or ignorance.[5] If a mistaken choice of the will results from ignorance of the good, the will did not choose freely, and therefore we cannot be blamed for the choice. Since we are praised and blamed for virtue and vice, virtue and vice must belong fundamentally to a will that does not necessarily follow practical reason. If the will necessarily followed practical reason, it would not warrant praise or blame, and so would not be the subject of virtue and vice.

The view that Scotus attributes to his opponents is more extreme than Aquinas' view. Aquinas does not claim that knowledge is all that is needed for virtue. He argues that we must also be turned towards the right ends, and that therefore virtue requires a good state of the passions (1-2 q56 a4 ad4). Since the passions present some goods to us in an especially attractive way, we can be diverted from our conviction about what is best by the particular attractions offered by the passions. Since Aquinas does not suggest that every error is purely cognitive, he does not hold a purely intellectualist view of virtue.

[1] See §290. [2] Walter of Bruges criticizes Aquinas on this point. See Kent, *VW* 66.

[3] On Augustine see §218.

[4] He denies that 'it suffices <for virtue> that reason presents <the object> correctly, and therefore virtue is needed in reason, not in the will' (*3Sent*. d33 q1 schol. = OO vii 2, 698 §5 = W 324).

[5] '. . . then reason would have to go wrong first in presenting <the object> before the will elected badly, and thus there would be an error in the intellect before the first sin of the will. This is unreasonable; for in that case the punishment would precede the crime' (*3Sent*. d33 q1 schol. = OO vii 2, 698 §5 = W 324–6). This proposition (si ratio recta, et voluntas recta) about the primacy of intellect was condemned in 1277. See Prop. 130 (Piché, *CP* 118).

None the less, if we have a clear and firm grasp of the greater good, that greater good, according to Aquinas, is what we choose. Since Aquinas believes that the will follows the intellect's conception of the good, he believes that in this respect the intellect is prior to will, so that in this respect the will is not primary in moral virtue. If the true grasp of the good is the source of virtue, failure to be virtuous must result from an imperfect grasp of it. In Aquinas' view, the imperfect grasp is not always the result of ignorance; in some cases, the will is 'clouded' by the passions, though it is not forced to consent to them. Even when our imperfect grasp of the end results from ignorance, we may be responsible, since the ignorance may be culpable.[6]

From a voluntarist point of view, these attempts to hold us responsible for our imperfect grasp of the end are unsatisfactory. First, we may ask why the will consents to the erroneous suggestions of the passions. Its error in consenting must apparently be explained either by ignorance or by negligence. But negligence must be explained by ignorance or by the influence of passions, which we are still trying to understand. Moreover, ignorance itself does not merit blame; if it is to be blameworthy, the ignorance must be the result of some blameworthy omission or negligence; but what makes this blameworthy? If we appeal to the passions again, we seem to be embarked on an infinite and vicious regress.

We embark on this regress if we assume that responsibility is to be explained wholly by reference to the causation of the state or action, and that this causation must involve the transmission of responsibility from some subject that is more fundamentally responsible. Eventually we need to describe fundamental responsibility.[7] Aquinas disappoints us here, since the causal sequences he traces for us seem to leave us with our original question about fundamental responsibility still unanswered. Dissatisfaction with this result leads naturally into a voluntarist account of fundamental responsibility.

This is Scotus' account. He argues that passion and ignorance are not sources of blameworthy error, and that only the will is fundamentally responsible. An erring will need not be misled by the attractiveness of some object of the passions, and it need not be ignorant. Even if it is fully informed about the better, it may none the less choose the worse. This fundamental level of responsibility neither allows nor needs further explanation.

The difficulties that face a voluntarist account of the will, however, also cast doubt on this fundamental responsibility. If we cannot stop with ignorance or passion because we still need an explanation of our ignorance or of our consent to the passion, we equally seem to need some explanation of the choice made by the will. But voluntarism seems to preclude any explanation of the choice. If the appeal to ignorance or passion is unsatisfactory, the appeal to the will, as conceived by a voluntarist, seems equally unsatisfactory.

Aquinas, therefore, ought not to agree that the cause of responsible action is something that we are more fundamentally responsible for. He ought to argue that we look for the sort of causal origin that will make it appropriate and fair to praise and to blame the agent. Praise and blame look forward, since they seek to modify the agent. They also look backwards, since they presuppose that the agent was open to praise and blame in choosing to behave one way or another, and therefore that he could reasonably have been expected to take account of these consequences when he decided what to do.[8]

[6] See §262. [7] See Strawson, *FB* 48–50.

[8] This retrospective aspect of praise and blame distinguishes them from the mere attempt to change someone's behaviour in the future; it is also needed to justify the infliction of punishment in cases where future reform is not to be expected.

Aquinas' description of the influence of the passions and of the role of the will supports the claim that agents are open to the influence of praise and blame, and so are justifiably praised or blamed for choosing one way or the other. Praise and blame appeal to the agent as being rational and capable of modifying his choices as a result of considering what is best all things considered. If we recognize the influence of passions, and also recognize the decisive role of the will, we can modify our actions by consideration of the overall good. We need not be most fundamentally responsible for the action or state that causes us to be deliberately ignorant or negligent; it is only necessary to show that when we are in this state we are open to the sorts of rational considerations that belong to praise and blame.

This defence of Aquinas raises doubts about Scotus' specifically voluntarist reasons for believing that the will is the subject of virtue. Even if virtue is praiseworthy, knowledge and ignorance may be a basis of responsibility. And even if a firm and clear conviction of what is best necessarily results in the corresponding action, the will may still be a subject of virtue.

Scotus' basic disagreement with Aquinas, therefore, is not about whether the will is the subject of the moral virtues, but about the sense in which we should understand this claim. If we were to agree that the will is the subject of these virtues, but we maintained Aquinas' intellectualist conception of the will, Scotus would still believe that we had failed to explain how we exercise our freewill in virtue and vice, and therefore how we are responsible for our actions and characters.

374. Universal Conscience

Since, therefore, Scotus believes that the subject of moral virtue is the will, understood as the voluntarist understands it, he rejects those aspects of Aquinas' account of the virtues that rest on assumptions derived from Aquinas' intellectualism and eudaemonism. These assumptions are prominent at different places in Aquinas' doctrine of practical reason. The ultimate principles of practical reason, grasped by universal conscience, refer to the final good and what is required of a rational agent who pursues it. The principles grasped by universal conscience necessarily move the will once they are grasped, since they show us what is required for our happiness. The subordinate principles of natural law are not grasped by universal conscience and do not necessarily move the will, because some people do not recognize their connexion with happiness. These people go wrong because negligence, ignorance, passion, or bad upbringing makes them unaware of, or inattentive to, the connexion between (say) the different precepts of the Decalogue and the ultimate end.

Since Scotus rejects the conception of the will that underlies Aquinas' doctrine of practical reason, he rejects Aquinas' account of the relation between universal conscience, prudence, and motivation. In his view, the recognition of a connexion between a particular action (or state of character) and one's ultimate good is not sufficient for the choice of that action; we are free to reject happiness either for something better or for something worse. Hence the explanation for failure to follow the requirements of the moral law cannot simply be failure to see the connexion between these requirements and one's own happiness; it must also be possible to exercise one's freewill in rejecting happiness. Nor can recognition of the

connexion between a particular action and one's own happiness be the appropriate motive for the virtuous person's choice of that action; that motive is inappropriate for those virtues that require us to be moved by the affection for the just.

Scotus, therefore, alters Aquinas' claims to fit a voluntarist position. Intellect grasps the first principles of morality, but they do not necessarily move the will, since the will is free and is not necessarily moved in one or the other direction by what intellect discovers (*2Sent*. d39 q2 = OO vi. 2, 1018–19 §3 = W 200–2). An undetermined choice of the will is needed to determine whether it will follow our natural inclination to justice.

Universal conscience tells us what is just. In doing what it tells us, we follow our affection for justice rather than our affection for advantage (*2Sent*. d39 q2 = OO vi 2, 1021 §5 = W 202 [ad 2]). This answer is similar to Scotus' treatment of the desire for happiness. He admits that we have a natural inclination towards happiness (*4Sent*. q49 d10 = OO x 513 §6 = W 190), and agrees that most of the time the will chooses to follow this; but he denies that the will necessarily pursues happiness, and insists that it freely chooses whether or not to follow our natural inclination.[9]

According to this strongly voluntarist view, the will freely chooses between the affection for justice and the affection for advantage; once it has chosen justice, it follows the demands of the natural law. The will is not moved by the thought that it is more reasonable to follow the inclination towards justice or the inclination towards advantage; for if that were the basis of the will's choice, it would remain passive towards reason, contrary to Scotus' view.[10]

Scotus' anti-intellectualism gives a clear reason for separating the cognitive from the motive aspects of prudence. Neither Aristotle nor Aquinas treats the operations of prudence as simply theoretical reasoning that may or may not move the agent. Prudence includes a motivational aspect because it begins its deliberation from the agent's desire for happiness, and discovers ways to fulfil that desire. From Aquinas' point of view, someone who grasps all the precepts of prudence but does not act on them has failed to grasp clearly and steadily the connexion between these actions and his own happiness. Scotus denies this link between prudence and motivation, whether prudence tells us about what is required for happiness or about what is required for justice. The information that it gives us must leave the will free to choose one way or another.

Since Scotus applies his voluntarism to practical reason and prudence, he separates the cognitive from the motive element in moral virtues more than Aquinas ever does. If the virtuous person has a good will, and chooses the right actions for the right reasons, will, as opposed to intellect, is the primary element of virtue. Aquinas is not forced into this choice; since both the virtuous and the vicious person aim at happiness, the difference between them reflects their different conceptions of happiness. But if Scotus is right, the virtuous and the vicious person may have the same conception of happiness.

[9] Sometimes Scotus, as we have seen, affirms a necessary connexion between the freedom of the will and its affection for justice. In that case, the free will must choose in accordance with the impartial norms of justice. But such a view makes it difficult to maintain that universal conscience belongs entirely to the intellect and has no necessary effect on the will. For if universal conscience discovers what is just by discovering the first principles of natural law, it seems to determine the free will that is determined by the norms of justice.

[10] Cf. §393.

375. Practical Reason and Prudence[11]

Scotus' doubts about Aquinas' eudaemonism, and hence about Aquinas' conception of practical reason and prudence, influence his treatment of the reciprocity of the virtues (RV), and of the horizontal and vertical unity of prudence. In his view, different virtues embody independent ways in which the will can be correct, and independent aspects of prudence belong to the different virtues. Prudence is vertically unified because the prudence belonging to each virtue includes both universal and particular prudence; but it is horizontally divided among the different virtues.

To show that prudence is vertically unified, Scotus assumes that virtue requires not only the acceptance, but also the election, of a specific end. In electing things for their own sakes we are electing them as ends (or as constituents of them). Since election rests on deliberation, the correct election of an end must rest on some deliberative virtue. This deliberative virtue is prudence.[12] Scotus might reasonably connect this claim about grasping the end with Aristotle's conception of a moral virtue as an elective state (*hexis prohairetikê*). The virtuous state is distinguished from others by its tendency to elect specific things for their own sakes. He might reasonably argue that Aristotle's description of a virtue presupposes deliberation resulting in the choice of ends.

A second argument for the vertical unity of prudence rests on the unity of each virtue. This unity depends on the unity of the end 'towards the election of which it primarily inclines us' (*3Sent*. d36 = OO vii 2, 813 §18 = W 408). If there were no prudence prescribing the election of this end, there would be no single end for the virtue to elect. This argument presupposes that virtue involves election of things for their own sakes, and so involves a distinctive pattern of deliberation. This distinctive pattern requires a distinct end, and therefore requires universal prudence.

While Scotus argues on these grounds that virtue is inseparable from both universal and particular prudence, and so defends the vertical unity of prudence, he denies the horizontal unity of prudence, and so denies RV. He claims that Aristotle's account implies the separability of the virtues, because both correct action and correct judgment about the subject-matter of one virtue can be present by themselves, without correct action or judgment on the other virtues.[13] The different virtues are similar to different senses; each may work perfectly well without the others.[14] The state of a perfectly

[11] See §394; Adams, 'Connection'. 375

[12] 'Moral virtue always, by a certain natural direction, follows some sort of prudence; now from the election of a particular end, say chastity, a moral virtue is generated. And so some sort of prudence precedes that election' (*3Sent.* d36 = OO vii 2, 813 §18 = W 408).

[13] 'The character of a virtuous act or state needs nothing except conformity to right reason, which is evident from the first chapter of the second book of the Ethics: "A virtue is a state that elects, existing in a mean, determined as a wise person will determine it." But without any agreement of virtues concurring in the same agent, it is possible for there to be such conformity, of state no less than act, to right reason in accordance with which one elects. What is assumed is evident; for one does not elect rightly about the matter of temperance except by right reason preceding and prescribing about such-and-such an object of election; but it is possible for the correct prescription of one virtue to precede without any prescription of reason about the matter of a second virtue' (*3Sent.* d36 = OO vii 2, 787 §5 = W 384).

[14] 'One is not . . . a moral person without qualification unless one has all the virtues, just as one is not a perceiver [sentiens] without qualification unless one has all the senses. But one is none the less perfectly temperate, even if one is less perfectly moral, just as one is not less perfect as a seer or hearer even if one is less perfect as a perceiver' (*3Sent.* d36 = OO vii 2, 793 §9 = W 388).

virtuous person's character is not unified, but simply a conjunction of the different specific virtues.[15]

Even if we allow that the virtues ought to co-operate, we need not accept RV. Perhaps the actions and motives appropriate for each virtue depend partly on the other virtues, so that the virtues do not tread on each other's toes. But we might know enough to avoid conflict with the other virtues even if we lacked the other virtues. If I am painting a room and you are going to polish the floor, I may know that I ought not to splash paint all over the floor because it will make your work more difficult, but I may not know how to polish the floor. Similarly, we may need some principles of universal prudence if our different virtues are to co-operate; but it does not follow that we need universal prudence.

376. The Unity of Prudence: Aquinas against Scotus

Aquinas implicitly rejects both horizontal and vertical separation, in explaining why we need prudence. Virtue requires both doing good actions and acting well (bene operari, *ST* 1-2 q57 a5), but we do not act well if we depend entirely on other people's deliberation; 'one's own action is not yet completely perfected as far as concerns reason that directs and desire that sets us in motion' (q57 a5 ad2). If we deliberate for ourselves about how to fulfil the specifically virtuous end, but we rely on other people's deliberation to form the specifically virtuous end, our reason and desire are not completely perfected.

Aquinas assumes that virtuous agents can see how different virtues interact, and how they together promote the final good. The requirements of justice, for instance, determine which situations and goals require us to face danger, and so they influence brave people's conception of why they ought to face this danger but not that one. Moreover, the requirements of justice preserve a human community with a specific form of social life that promotes the human good; hence the requirements of justice ought to determine some requirements of bravery.

If Aquinas is right about this, he has an answer to Scotus. Though Scotus points out that some motivational and deliberative aspects of virtue fall short of RV, the aspects that he recognizes do not satisfy Aquinas' demand for perfected desire and reason. Agents who lack universal prudence cannot grasp why these actions are really brave, or why co-operation with other virtues requires these actions; and so, since their own deliberation does not grasp these things, they have to rely on the deliberation of others.

Is Aquinas right, or does his argument about the importance of one's own deliberation and the perfection of one's own reason rest on an absurdly demanding conception of perfect virtue?[16] If he is right, we have less than a complete virtue if we do not see the point of the virtue and the actions it requires, and we do not see how it ought to co-operate with the other virtues. In the Secunda Secundae Aquinas illustrates his claims in his discussion

[15] This analogy with the senses might fit virtuous motives as well as virtuous actions. Even if we agree that each virtue requires the right motive, we need not agree that we have the motive appropriate for one virtue if and only if we have the motive appropriate for each of the others. And so, even if we need prudence to give us the right motive for each virtue, we need separable aspects of prudence for the different virtues.

[16] See §§98, 322.

of such virtues as bravery, magnificence, and magnanimity (2-2 qq 123–35).[17] Many of the objections he answers rest on a narrow conception of these virtues. He rejects this narrow conception by an appeal to wider moral principles. These principles explain why a martyr can be as brave as a soldier, and why magnanimity does not conflict with humility (2-2 q129 a3 ad4). We need universal prudence if we are to understand what a particular virtue requires; if we have too narrow a conception of the virtue, we have the virtue imperfectly.[18]

Scotus, therefore, seems to overlook some requirements that are included in the virtues. We do not face these requirements on every occasion; that is why we recognize everyday virtuous acts, and take the virtue of the agent for granted, without demanding everything that Aquinas demands of the virtuous agent. But we should not attend only to easy and everyday cases; states of character are revealed by difficult and testing situations.[19] In these situations Aquinas' requirements are relevant, and the opponents of RV demand too little.[20]

377. Eudaemonism and the Unity of Prudence

Universal prudence, according to Aquinas, aims at achieving the ultimate good, and so must be horizontally unified.[21] Scotus, by contrast, recognizes no common end for all the virtues or for every branch of prudence. For, in his view, the will aims either at the advantageous, if it follows our natural inclination, or at the just, if it exercises its freedom. Since some of the moral virtues aim at the agent's own advantage, and some aim at the advantage of others, some appeal to our affection for advantage, and others appeal to our affection for the just. Scotus recognizes no comprehensive end regulating our tendency to follow these two affections; the will has no further reason for following the affection for the just in some cases and the affection for advantage in other cases.

[17] See §331.

[18] Some more modern examples support Aquinas. The sense of honour that leads some characters in nineteenth-century novels to suppose that insults need to be avenged by duelling, or that gambling debts have to be paid first, or that different standards of fidelity apply to husbands and wives, turn out to rest on misunderstandings of the nature and point of different virtues and their relation. More recently, the assumption that concern for fairness and justice requires exclusive attention to merits and qualifications, narrowly conceived, can be challenged in various ways; one reasonable challenge argues that the assumption rests on a misconception of the nature of the relevant virtues and of their connexion to other virtues and principles. These examples suggest that it is difficult to divide the concerns of particular prudence from those of universal prudence, or the concerns of the moral agent from those of the moral theorist. Aquinas' suggestion that virtuous agents need universal prudence to carry out the correct deliberation does not betray any exaggeration, or any tendency to confuse the agent with the theorist. It would be exaggerated to suggest that a virtuous agent must be able to construct the sort of theory that Aristotle or Aquinas constructs; but it is not exaggerated to suggest that a virtuous agent must grasp (perhaps without formulating) the sorts of considerations that concern the theorist. Aquinas' own discussion of the virtues illustrates this role for universal prudence in influencing the outlook of agents on their virtues.

[19] See Aristotle, *EN* 1130a1–2; Aquinas, *in EN* v 2 §909.

[20] We can defend RV against some objections that appeal to historical and psychological counter-examples. To say that virtuous agents must grasp the relations of a particular virtue to other virtues, and must guide their actions by their grasp of those relations, is not to claim that they must display all the virtues to an equal degree, or that their situations require the actions characteristic of all the virtues. People may 'specialize' in different virtues; social and psychological facts may make specialization mandatory or desirable. But we can be specialized in one virtue without ignoring the claims of other virtues; and the demand for virtuous agents to attend to the claims of the different virtues is the central demand that supports RV. RV is exacting, and we cannot take it for granted that even the people conventionally regarded as exemplars of the virtues have actually fulfilled it; but it is neither unrealistic nor unreasonable.

[21] See §324.

Since Scotus rejects eudaemonism, he loses some reasons that convince Aquinas of RV. Aquinas believes that reference to some single comprehensive end is necessary for rational willing. Since Scotus rejects any such condition on rational willing, he denies that the virtuous person's deliberation would be defective if it did not refer to a comprehensive end; and so he has no reason to insist on RV.

If we agree with Aquinas on universal prudence, and accept his suggestion that the aims of the different virtues are connected and mutually supportive, we accept the main assumptions about practical reason that underlie his belief in an ultimate end. Indeed, his belief in an ultimate end simply extends this picture of the virtuous person's reasoning to rational action in general.[22]

Equally, Scotus' view about the connexion between eudaemonism and the reciprocity of the virtues is intelligible in the light of his views about freewill. For if the virtuous person has to see some connexion between the self-regarding and the other-regarding virtues in the light of some end that makes them all reasonable, a will that refuses to choose all or some of them fails to see something that makes them reasonable objects of choice. But this explanation of wrong choice by reference to ignorance is the very sort of explanation that Scotus rejects as inconsistent with the freedom of the will. We may welcome this consequence of Scotus' voluntarism. Alternatively, we may decide that it casts doubt on his account of a free and rational will.

378. Knowledge of Natural Law

Scotus disagrees with Aquinas not only on the connexion between practical reason, prudence, and motivation, but also on the nature of the principles grasped by practical reason. In agreement with Aquinas, he recognizes a natural law that we grasp by natural reason, and he believes that God prescribes the observance of this natural law. But he differs from Aquinas about the extent of the natural law, and about its relation to the will of God. He is less optimistic about the practical guidance we can derive from the higher principles of natural law.

According to Scotus, natural law is relevant to our moral knowledge in three ways: (1) We know that some moral principle is true from its terms, so that it is a first principle corresponding to a first principle of demonstration in theoretical science. (2) A principle follows evidently from a first principle. (3) A principle is said to belong to natural law by extension if it is a practical truth concordant (consonum) with the principles or conclusions of natural law, 'in so far as it is immediately known to all to agree (convenire) with such a law' (*4Sent*. d17 = OO ix 296–7 §3 = W 262).

We do not need any special revelation to know natural law; it is known by 'natural light'. On this basis we can know all three classes of truths about natural law, and hence we can know, for instance, that monogamy rather than bigamy accords with natural law (*4Sent*. d33 q1 = OO ix 706 §7 = W 294). Similarly, we can know by the natural light that a guilty person must be judged, because this accords with natural law (*4Sent*. d17 = OO ix 298 §7 = W 266). Scotus allows that paternal authority is just by natural law, but he denies that

[22] See §§271–3.

political authority can claim any title in natural law; it rests on the agreement and choice of the community (*4Sent*. d15 q2 = OO ix 156 §6 = W 314). It seems to follow that political life is not justified by the natural law.

As Scotus explains the natural law, its highest principles do not proceed from the sovereign will of God. Scotus reports other people's view that principles belonging to the law of nature 'possess necessary truth; therefore God cannot make them false' (*3Sent*. d37 = OO vii 2, 857 §1 = W 270).[23] He agrees with this view as far as concerns the first two types of principles; for he agrees that God's intellect by itself, apart from God's will, recognizes principles of the first two types.[24] If, therefore, all the precepts of the Decalogue were of these two types, God's will would not be free to reject them; God would have practical knowledge of moral principles whose rightness is independent of God's will.[25]

Scotus, however, claims that the precepts of the second table of the Decalogue, containing duties towards our neighbour, belong to the third class of principles. Unlike principles in the second class, they do not follow evidently from the first principles. Though they 'agree' with the natural law, they are not required by it.[26] In opposition to the view of Aquinas that all the moral precepts of the Decalogue belong to the natural law, [27] Scotus claims that the second table does not belong to it in the strictest sense. Its precepts are not necessary for achieving the end that is pursued in the natural law.[28]

Gabriel Biel elaborates Scotus' views about the relation of the second table to the natural law. He maintains that it is not strictly part of the natural law, because, as Scotus maintains, it is not necessary for reaching the ultimate end (*3Sent* d37 a2 concl. 3 = W & H 636 M 2). In Biel's view, these precepts are only part of natural law 'construed broadly' (large accepta).[29] He follows Scotus in relying on 'consonance' to explain the relation of these precepts to the natural law.[30]

[23] These people infer that 'the things that are commanded <in natural law> are not good only because they are commanded, but, on the contrary, it is because they are good in their own right (secundum se) that they are commanded' (*3Sent*. d37 = OO vii 2, 878 §2 = W 272).

[24] For any principles of these first two types it would follow that 'God's will would be necessarily determined without qualification about objects of will other than himself' (*3Sent*. d37 = OO vii 2, 879 §4 = W 274).

[25] *3Sent*. d37 q1 sch. = OO vii 2, 879 §4 = W 274. See n41 below.

[26] 'Things are said to belong to the law of nature in another way, because they are highly consonant with that law, even though they do not follow necessarily from the practical first principles that are known from their terms and are necessarily known by every apprehending intellect. And in this way it is certain that all the precepts of the second table as well <as the first> belong to the law of nature, because their rightness is very much consonant with the practical first principles that are necessarily known' (*3Sent*. d37 = OO vii 2, 898 §8 = W 278).

[27] For Aquinas' view see *ST* 1-2 q100 a1, described by Scotus *3Sent*. d37 = OO vii 2, 877–8 §2 = W 272. Cf. §309.

[28] 'For in the things prescribed in it [sc. the second table] there is no goodness that is necessary for <achieving> the goodness of the ultimate end; nor in the things prohibited in it is there evil necessarily turning us away from the ultimate end. Rather, if that good were not prescribed, the ultimate end could <still> be achieved and loved. And if that evil were not prohibited, the achieving of the ultimate end would <still> be consistent with it.' (*3Sent*. d37 = OO vii 2, 898 §5 = W 276). Scotus' views on the natural law are discussed by Crowe, *CPNL*, ch. 7.

[29] 'But that they belong to the law of nature, as commonly construed, is clear because they are highly consonant with that law, even though they do not follow from the first practical principles, which are known from their terms to every understanding and are necessary. For the first precept <of the second table>, the one about honouring one's parents, is highly consonant with this principle: benefits are to be repaid to a benefactor. The other precepts, the negative ones, are consonant with this one: one's neighbour is not to be unjustly condemned' (Biel, *3Sent*. d37 a2 = W&H 637 M 17–21). See Oberman, *HMT* 94. Suarez criticizes Scotus' view at *Leg*. ii 15.6–12. See also Cajetan ad 1-2 q100 a8.

[30] On 'valde consonans' cf. Suarez, *Leg*. ii 19.9, who takes it to mean 'suitable' ('utilem et consentaneum ipsi naturae') rather than 'consistent'.

Scotus and Biel differ from Aquinas on this point. In Aquinas' view, prudence discovers by rational inquiry that principles at this level are required by the law of nature. Even though prudence can discover such principles, the Decalogue was issued because some of them are difficult to discover, partly because of the ingrained tendency to sin. A divine command is needed to make them clear to everyone. Scotus might reasonably point out that Aquinas does not give a very clear account of how prudence discovers these principles. His disagreement about the second table of the Decalogue may rest partly on doubts about Aquinas' claims on behalf of prudence, and especially universal prudence.

379. Divine Commands and Natural Law

If Scotus is right, we cannot reach the precepts of the second table of the Decalogue by deliberation about means to the ultimate end. Greater insight into the requirements of the natural law and greater knowledge of the circumstances of human life cannot close the gap between the principles of natural law and requirements at the level of the second table.[31]

Scotus infers that the precepts of the second table are aspects of divine positive law expressing commands of God. A peaceful social life does not require a positive law prescribing private property, because we could achieve a peaceful social life by other means.[32] God specifies the natural law, not through practical knowledge of what it requires, but through a free choice of how it is to be applied.

This treatment of the moral principles of the Decalogue leaves room for dispensations.[33] Scotus agrees with Aquinas' view that the provisions of the natural law itself are indispensable. But he believes that the second table of the Decalogue goes beyond the natural law, strictly speaking, and that its precepts are dispensable. Contrary to Aquinas, Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac is not justified by the natural law, but is permissible only because of a dispensation; God decides that Abraham need not obey the moral principle that we are usually required to obey. Though Abraham's intended action is murder, God does not require him to refrain from intending murder in this case. Since the specific prohibition on intending murder is not required by the natural law, but is a command of God, intending murder is wrong only because it violates a command of God. If, therefore, God commands us to commit a murder, he makes murder permissible in this case.[34] God is free to dispense from the general rules because they are the result of God's choice.

[31] Scotus' views on the natural law were among the 'rash opinions' of his that were attacked by a 'doctorum theologiae multitudo' (according to Du Plessis d'Argentré). Scotus (with Biel and Almain) is taken to claim that 'the things prohibited in the second table of the Decalogue (including lying) are not bad in their own right'. His critics maintain that all injustice against one's neighbour is immutably bad 'propter ipsam rationem connexi cum sapientia Dei et iustitia' (*Iohannis Duns Scoti temerariae opiniones*, §10, in Du Plessis, *CJNE* i. 289–90.) See Oberman, *DR* 207.

[32] 'And this is how it is perhaps in all cases of positive rights (iuribus positivis), because, granted that there is some one principle that is the foundation in establishing all these laws or rights (leges sive iura), still the positive laws do not follow necessarily without qualification from that principle; rather, they clarify (declarant) that principle or explain it (explicant) as far as it applies to certain particular cases; and these explanations are very much in accord with the universal first principle' (*3Sent.* d37 Schol. §190 = OO vii 2, 898–9 = W 280).

[33] On the difference between dispensations and exceptions see §314.

[34] 'What belongs secondarily to the law of nature is what is regularly consonant with the law of nature spoken of in the primary way. About the first [type of precept of natural law] no dispensation applies, and therefore its opposite seems to be invariably a mortal sin. About the second a dispensation applies in a case in which the opposite seems to be commonly consonant with the law of nature' (*4Sent.* d33 q1 = OO ix 706 §7 = W 294).

Biel is less permissive than Scotus. He argues that though God could dispense from the precepts of the second table, God chooses not to dispense from them, because their consonance with natural law makes them so close to it.[35] Though Biel does not allow actual dispensations, he agrees with Scotus that God is free to dispense from these precepts, because God is sovereign over them.[36]

This affirmation of God's power of dispensation differs from Aquinas' appeal to God's insight into the requirements of the natural law. Aquinas denies that the natural law is dispensable. Since it prescribes what suits human nature, God cannot want to violate it or to permit others to violate it. He can, however, act on his understanding of why the natural law requires Abraham to be ready to sacrifice Isaac. In Scotus' view, God is not bound by any requirement of the natural law. Since he imposed the prohibition on murder, he is also free to dispense from it.

380. Natural Law and the Will of God

The objections to Aquinas that we have considered so far do not rely on voluntarism. Even if we agreed with Aquinas' conception of the will, we might share Scotus' doubts about the derivation of specific precepts from the higher principles of natural law. These doubts arise from Aquinas' claim that if we consider 'the law of our nature', and what is naturally suitable for creatures with our nature, we can find some rational basis for accepting some specific moral and social precepts over others.

In appealing to natural law as the source of such precepts, Aquinas maintains the demand for external reasons that we have found to be central in his conception of freedom. If we appeal to natural law, we appeal to some reason that rests on what we are and what is suitable for us. This reason is external to what particular rational agents want, and so we exercise freedom in examining our desires in relation to this external reason. Aquinas' intellectualist conception of freedom imposes conditions that he seeks to satisfy through his conception of practical reason and natural law.

If we accepted this intellectualist conception of freedom, and rejected Aquinas' optimism about deriving precepts from the higher principles of natural law, we would have to recognize that our freedom is limited at this level, or else we would have to find some rational standard distinct from our nature. To recognize that some appeal to something other than our nature must enter at this stage, however, is compatible with accepting the rest of Aquinas' conception of the will.

But a voluntarist must reject Aquinas' account of the relation of God's will to the natural law. If we suppose that God creates the world, defines the natural law, and speaks through the prophets and the Scriptures, because God recognizes that this is best, we seem to deprive God of freewill, as the voluntarist understands it. Some of the reasons for this voluntarist

[35] 'Though God as legislator could, without qualification, dispense by relaxation of the precept, in relation to the observance of the precepts of the second table, still God does not dispense in this way in fact, because of their great closeness to the law of nature properly so called' (*3Sent.* d37 a2 concl. 5 = W&H 637 N 1–5).

[36] Among later Scotists Poncius, *PMSCI 366*, affirms the possibility and the actuality of dispensations. He argues that Abraham and so on really violated the natural law.

objection apply to God in the same way as they apply to human wills; just as we are free not to observe the natural law even if practical reason prescribes it to us, God must also be free not to observe it.

Other reasons for the voluntarist objection apply particularly to God. God differs from a human agent in being omnipotent. Intellectualists and voluntarists agree about this, but they do not agree on the relevant conditions for omnipotence. From a voluntarist point of view, an intellectualist conception of God's will limits God's power. If God responds to external reasons in the same way as we do, their influence on God seems to limit divine power. The doctrine of divine omnipotence seems to support a voluntarist account of the freedom of the divine will.

381. God's Justice

Some of Scotus' disagreements with Aquinas' views on practical reason are closely connected with these voluntarist claims about God. If he agreed with Aquinas about the derivation of practical precepts, while still maintaining voluntarism, the results would be unwelcome. The principles of the natural law, according to Aquinas, support the precepts of justice, because they show that the precepts of justice are best all things considered; but, according to the voluntarist, God is free to reject what is best all things considered; hence God is free to violate the precepts of justice. Since it is possible for God to do what he is free to do, it is possible for God to violate the precepts of justice.

Scotus rejects this conclusion; for he agrees with Anselm's claim that only what God wills is just and what God does not will is not just (*4Sent.* d46 q1 §8 = OO x 252 §8 = W 246). Anselm does not affirm a voluntarist interpretation of this claim. On the contrary, he argues that since God is just, and it is just to give both the good and the bad what they deserve, God must give both the good and the bad what they deserve. Similarly, he argues that God's justice must give rise to mercy because that is just.[37] Scotus agrees that Anselm's claim about God's necessarily willing what is just expresses a necessary truth about God's will.

If Anselm is right, and Aquinas is right about the natural basis of precepts of justice, God is not free to violate the precepts of justice. A voluntarist, however, cannot accept Aquinas' explanation of how God necessarily wills what is just. Aquinas makes knowledge of justice part of God's nature, so that from the voluntarist point of view, God is not free, since the choice of moral principles is not left entirely to God's will.

Scotus, therefore, interprets Anselm's claim so that it fits voluntarism. He treats justice as the result of God's choice, undetermined by any knowledge of what is best.[38] Just as the

[37] Anselm, *Proslogion* 11: 'For the one who rewards the merits of both the good and the bad is more just than the one who rewards the merits of the good alone. It is just, therefore, in relation to (secundum) you, just and benevolent God, both when you punish and when you spare.... For only what you will is just, and what you do not will is not just. In this way therefore your mercy arises from your justice, because it is just for you to be good in such a way that you are good in sparing.'

[38] 'The divine will is not inclined determinately through anything within itself towards any secondary object in such a way that it would be inconsistent for it to incline to the opposite object to that one, because just as the divine will can will the opposite without contradiction, so it can will it justly; otherwise it could without qualification will something and not will it justly, which is inappropriate' (*4Sent.* d46 q1 §8 = OO x 252 §8 = W 246).

legal is defined by the decision of the legislator, the just is defined by the decision of God the legislator. This is why God cannot act unjustly and cannot instruct us to violate justice.[39]

God's relation to justice is different, therefore, from the relation of a human will to justice. Scotus believes (in some of his comments, at least) that we have freewill because we are capable of rejecting the affection for justice. God, however, is incapable of rejecting it; his freedom consists in following the affection for justice. Scotus sometimes implies that this is true of human wills as well, though he cannot easily reconcile this claim with his voluntarism.[40] But he affirms unequivocally that the divine will is necessarily just. In the divine will, however, adherence to the affection for justice does not constrain the content of the willing as it does in a human will; for Scotus believes that whatever God freely wills is just in so far as God wills it. A human will guided by an affection for justice is guided by impartial rational standards, but God acts justly whatever standard God follows or violates.

These claims about divine and human justice form a consistent position. A human will follows justice by following an impartial rational standard because that is the standard that God has chosen to follow. But since God's choice establishes impartial rationality as the standard of justice, God's own will cannot be related to it in the same way as a human will.

We may find it difficult to reconcile this account of justice with our belief that justice essentially has some more definite content. According to Scotus, if God had chosen to treat human beings completely capriciously, without reference to their merits, their desert, or their nature, that treatment would have been just. Our belief that treatment in accordance with one's nature is just reflects our knowledge of the secondary principle of justice that rests on God's undetermined choice. God retains the power to alter secondary principles and to replace them with others that would be equally just (*1Sent.* d44 q1 sch. = OO v 2, 1368–9 §§1–2 = W 256).[41] Our beliefs about the content of justice do not tell us what justice requires in all possible worlds; they tell us only about the situation that is maintained by God's 'directed' (or 'ordered', ordinata) power, not about the situations that are possible within God's unqualified (absoluta) power.[42]

If we supposed that it would be unjust for God to treat us in ways that conflict with our nature, we would be assuming that God has a duty (debitum) towards us. But Scotus denies that God has any duties towards us. Since God does not owe (debere) us anything, God cannot violate any duty.[43] The fact that God treats us in accordance with our nature is an expression of God's generosity, but it does not fulfil God's duty of justice, since God has no such duty.[44] God is not bound to do anything except to love his own goodness. Treatment in accordance with one's nature is recognized as just by the creature; but God makes it just

[39] This issue returns in Shaftesbury's criticism of voluntarism. See *Sens. Comm.* 3.4 = *Char.* i 123 = 57 K.

[40] See §364.

[41] 'If, before the act of divine will, the divine understanding could have such knowledge, it would have it purely naturally and necessarily, because all knowledge that precedes the act of will is purely natural, and through its essence, as is the purely natural character (ratio) of understanding. Of necessity therefore it would know that this is to be done, and then the <divine> will, to which <the understanding> presents it, could not fail to will it, because in that case it could fail to be correct, because a will that can disagree with practical reason can fail to be correct' (*1Sent.* d38 q1 schol §2 = OO v 2, 1286) The text at V vi 305 is slightly different.

[42] On potentia ordinata v. absoluta see §396.

[43] On debitum and obligatio in Aquinas see §303.

[44] 'He owes something to creatures out of his generosity, to share among them what their nature demands; for this demand in them is taken as something just, as a sort of secondary object of that [primary] justice. Still in truth nothing is both determinately just and outside God, except in a qualified way, namely with this modification, as far as a creature is

out of generosity, having chosen to treat creatures in accordance with their nature. It was God's free choice, independent of any antecedent requirements of justice, to create us and to treat us in accordance with our nature. If God had chosen differently, God would have been no less good and no less just; for what counts as just is the result of God's choice.

Scotus, therefore, rejects Aquinas' views about practical reason and natural law. If practical reason were able to derive specific precepts of justice from natural law, the content of justice would be fixed (to this extent) by natural reason, and if God chose to follow different precepts, God would choose to violate justice, contrary to Anselm's principle. Scotus denies that practical reason can find precepts of justice, because he denies that we can argue from the higher principles to specific precepts. The content of precepts of justice depends on the free choice of God.

We can now understand the connexion between Scotus' voluntarism and his doubts about practical reason. While he could have maintained a consistent voluntarist position together with Aquinas' views on practical reason, such a view would have required him to maintain that it is possible for God to violate justice. To maintain a version of voluntarism that denies this possibility, he needs to limit the scope of prudence.

382. Consonance with Natural Law

Has Scotus reached a satisfactory conclusion about the ways in which God's commands determine the content of precepts of justice? In his view, secondary principles, including the precepts of justice, are not required by the higher principles of natural law. Hence he claims that the precepts of the second table of the Decalogue are not necessarily connected with the final good.[45] What does he mean?

We might take him to mean that the natural law never requires (for instance) truthfulness rather than lying, so that, even if all the circumstances of a given action are taken into account, lying is never contrary to the higher precept requiring love of God and one's neighbour. On this view, both truthfulness and lying are equally consistent with natural law, just as driving on the right and on the left are equally consistent with it. It is up to God to decide whether truthfulness is to be prescribed as a general rule, just as it is up to a legislator to decide on the rule of the road. Equally, it is up to God to dispense from that general rule in particular cases, just as a legislator might choose to allow some vehicles (such as bicycles or trams) to travel on the opposite side to other vehicles.

But this interpretation does not fit Scotus' claim that some specific secondary principles are 'highly consonant' with the primary principles of natural law. In saying that some rules are highly consonant with natural law, he seems to mean that their observance promotes

concerned. What is just without qualification is only what is related to the primary justice, because, that is to say, it has actually been willed by the divine will' (*4Sent* d46 q1 = OO x 253 §12 = W 252–4).

[45] 'The reasons (rationes) of the things that are prescribed or prohibited there are not unqualifiedly necessary practical principles or unqualifiedly necessary conclusions. For in the things prescribed there is no goodness necessary towards the goodness of the ultimate end, turning us towards the ultimate end, nor in the things prohibited is there badness necessarily turning us away from the ultimate end. Rather, if that good thing were not prescribed, the ultimate end could be loved and achieved, and if that bad thing were not prohibited, the acquiring of the ultimate good would be compatible with (staret cum) it' (*3Sent*. d37 q1 = OO vii 2, 898 §5 = W 276).

its aims better than other action would. Hence the prohibitions of lying and stealing are not simply consistent with natural law, but very much in accord with it (*3Sent*. d37 = OO vii2, 899 §8 = W 280). The requirements of the natural law show that truthfulness rather than lying is generally, though not always, more in accordance with it.

Scotus, therefore, concedes something to those who take the secondary principles to be independent of God's legislative will. For the fact that truthfulness is more consonant with the primary principles of natural law is not a result of God's legislation. The primary principles are not fixed by God's free choice, and their content, rather than God's choice, determines what is more or less consonant with them. Scotus sees a role for God's choice, however, in the fact that these rules should not always be observed. They are highly consonant, but not required, because sometimes we ought not to follow them. In claiming that some rules derived from the common principles of natural law should not always be observed, Scotus agrees with Aquinas (*ST* 1-2 q94 a4).[46] He infers that on the occasions when we ought not to observe the highly consonant rules, God freely dispenses us from their observance. Hence, in his view, the secondary principles are not required by natural law, but are fixed by God's choice.

But this is a puzzling conclusion. Scotus seems to argue that if a given secondary principle is not required by natural law, it depends on God's free choice and God can dispense us from observing it. But how can it be up to God to choose the secondary principles, if some courses of action are especially consonant with nature and the higher principles? Scotus concedes that even though the correct secondary principles do not follow necessarily from the higher principles, rational inquiry can discover their special consonance with the higher principles. In that case God should have practical knowledge of the secondary principles, contrary to Scotus' view. Since practical reason can establish them, God could not reject them without willing injustice.

If some secondary principles are especially consonant with the higher principles, the fact that they have exceptions may not help Scotus. He assumes that exceptions are dispensations, depending on the authoritative legislative will of God, rather than exceptions discoverable by practical reason.[47] But it is difficult to agree with him. If we can discover by practical reason that a general rule is consonant with the law of nature, we should also be able to discover by practical reason the exceptions to the general rule that are consonant with the primary aim of the rule. If natural law is necessarily connected to the human good, the principles about the human good that tell us what is usually in accord with natural law should also tell us that the usual provisions have exceptions and why these are reasonable exceptions to make. When Aristotle discusses equity, he suggests that exceptions to a generalization are to be justified by the principles underlying the generalization (Aristotle, *EN* 1137b11–24).[48]

But if Scotus were to say this, he could not claim that God exercises freedom in dispensing us from the natural law; he would have to claim that God's superior practical knowledge sees appropriate grounds for recognizing exceptions to general rules.[49] If breaking this promise

[46] See §318. [47] See §§314, §379.

[48] See also Suarez on the difference between the principle and the formulations of it, *Leg*. ii 13.6.

[49] Wolter's account of dispensations, *DSWM* 26–7, seems to explain them by appeal to God's practical knowledge; that is why 'they are something the human mind did figure out, or might have, if emotions did not blind one's reason' (26). Boler, 'Psychology' 44–56 discusses Scotus' claims about commands and dispensations in detail.

here and now is more consonant with the natural law than keeping this promise would be, God's permission to break this promise does not dispense us from the natural law; for it is based on the wise recognition that the natural law supports breaking rather than keeping this promise. If God is not free to reject natural law, God is not free to reject the rule that is more in accordance, either in general or in a particular case, with natural law. The second table of the Decalogue, then, does not consist of laws that God is free to change or to dispense us from in particular cases; it is guided by aims and principles that are independent of God's legislation.

In that case, the admission that correct precepts of justice are especially consonant with natural law creates serious difficulties for Scotus.[50] It would be easier for him to defend his claims about the role of God's free choice if he held that both monogamy and polygamy, both respect for human life and committing murder, are equally consonant with the primary principles. If he took this view, he could say that only God's legislation makes respect for human life more consonant with the natural law. He would then reconcile his views about the natural law with his claim that God is free to do anything that does not involve a contradiction and that everything God is free to do would be right and just if he were to choose to do it.[51]

Perhaps the conflicting tendencies in Scotus' claims about secondary principles can be explained by an ambiguity in his claim that observance of these principles is not necessary for achieving the final good. This claim might mean two things: (1) We can achieve the final good even if we violate these rules in every case. (2) We can achieve the final good even if we violate them in some cases. The second claim, but not the first, allows us to believe that the rules are highly consonant with natural law. The first claim, but not the second, allows us to believe that God exercises free choice in prescribing the observance of these rules and in dispensing us from it.

Since some of Scotus' claims seem to depend on the first interpretation of his claim about non-necessity and some seem to depend on the second, and since the two interpretations are incompatible, his position seems to be unstable. The claims about consonance moderate his voluntarism. But if they conflict with the voluntarist claims he accepts, they suggest that his version of voluntarism is difficult to maintain.

383. Biel on Consonance and Dispensations

Some of the difficulties in Scotus' position become clearer if we consider Biel's efforts to explain what we know in knowing that a subordinate precept is 'consonant' with natural law. Biel includes among things 'naturally known' as part of natural law both the necessary consequences of the principles and the non-necessary consequences that are 'very consonant'

[50] Contrast Wolter, *DSWM* 24, 59, 71. It is not clear that the position he ascribes to Scotus is consistent.

[51] On the second table of the Decalogue see Prentice, 'Contingent', who explains the non-necessity of the second table by arguing that these precepts are not strictly necessary in all circumstances for achieving the ultimate end. But it is difficult to see what this means. It would be relatively simple to argue that God could have placed us in circumstances where we could have done without private property. But this would only show that, given the nature of the human good, different arrangements are required in different circumstances. That does not necessarily increase divine freedom in dispensing from the requirements of the second table.

(multum consona) with the principles, and therefore form subordinate precepts. Private property, for instance, is not necessary for a political community, since people might maintain peace even if they had everything in common. But private property 'is highly consonant' with peaceful living among individuals with human weaknesses. For such people take better care of private assets than of public, and are prone to struggle for the possession of public assets (*3Sent.* d37 q1 a1 not. 2 F = 631.1–15).

If this is Biel's conception of what is consonant with the principles of natural law, consonance is more than consistency. A consonant precept also tends to promote the end prescribed by the principle. Private property is not simply one means to secure peace; it is usually the best way, though in some circumstances some other arrangement might be as good or better.

It is difficult to see how principles that are consonant with natural law in this sense are dispensable. In the usual circumstances, private property (let us suppose) advances peace better than common possession would. In those circumstances, then, the abandonment of private property would violate natural law, by frustrating the end of the precept. Similarly, the precepts against murder and theft do not seem to be dispensable in most cases. But in the circumstances where the observance of these precepts would violate the end of the relevant higher principles, we ought not to avoid murder and theft; murder or theft seems to be not only allowed but even required by natural law. It is only in the circumstances where the observance and the violation of the rule equally fulfil natural law that both observance and violation of the rule might reasonably be permitted. But in such circumstances we do not seem to need anyone's permission; we only need the reasonable belief that both actions are permissible.

Given Biel's conception of the subordinate principles as highly consonant with the higher principles, it is reasonable for him to understand dispensations more narrowly than Scotus understands them. The only two types of dispensation that he allows are the revocation of a law and its clarification (631 G 1–4) He rejects dispensations that would give permission to violate a precept without revoking it. This last kind of dispensation is the kind that Scotus and Ockham seem to allow; hence Biel does not seem to agree with them about what dispensations are possible.

Even within the range of dispensations that he allows Biel is quite restrictive. He argues that the precepts of the second table are not part of natural law in a strict sense, but only in a broad sense (636–7, M 1–21). They do not follow necessarily, or from the meaning of the terms, or from the principles that strictly belong to natural law, but are said to belong to natural law because of their consonance with the higher principles (637 M 17–21). Biel claims that these principles are dispensable, in the sense that God could dispense us from their observance; he mentions Abraham's willingness to kill Isaac and Hosea's marrying a prostitute as examples to prove that God has the relevant power. None the less, he argues, these precepts are not in fact subject to dispensation, because God does not exercise his power to dispense from them. God refrains from actual dispensation because these principles are consonant with the strict law of nature (637 N 1–4).

This is a puzzling conclusion. It would be intelligible if Biel were to deny that God dispenses from these precepts in the sense that Biel mentions and sets aside—giving permission to

violate them, while leaving them standing. It is also reasonable for him to reject dispensations in the first sense he allows, by revoking the precept altogether. But it is more difficult to see why he rejects dispensations of the sort that clarify the import of the law and the intention of the legislator. The general consonance of the precept with natural law does not seem a good reason for refusing to point out that in these circumstances observance of the precept does not promote the end of the higher precept. In such cases, we might suppose, we are not simply allowed, but even required, to point out that observance of the precept does not promote the end of a higher precept. Perhaps Biel has a more indirect argument in mind, claiming that because of the general benefit of following a rule we ought not to weaken respect for it by violating it even on the occasions when violation would have better results. But he offers no such argument for rejecting dispensations.

Biel's reflexions on dispensations are instructive. He agrees with Scotus and Ockham in allowing possible dispensations from precepts that belong to natural law only by being consonant with its higher principles. But he finds their arguments for actual dispensations unsatisfactory, and so confines himself to claims about possible dispensation. He is also dissatisfied with their account of a dispensation, and rejects the possibility of dispensations that give permission to violate a precept that one recognizes as correct. But after he has narrowed his conception of dispensation, it becomes difficult to see why he rejects actual dispensation.

384. The Extent of God's Freedom

Some of the difficulties that Scotus raises are clearer if we distinguish different things that might or might not be subject to the will of God. Three claims deserve to be considered: (1) Avoiding murder and theft is usually, though not always, good for creatures with our nature. (2) Avoiding murder and theft is usually, though not always, in accordance with natural law. (3) It is usually, though not always, right, to follow the natural law. Different types of voluntarism result from giving God power over the truth or falsity of these three claims.[52]

Scotus does not take God to have power over the first claim. He does not suggest that God's free choice determines what is good for creatures with our nature. When God decided to create two things, no further choice was needed to make more than one thing; God could not both have created two things and refrained from creating more than one thing. This limitation follows from God's lack of freedom to make contradictions true. Similarly, then, although it was God's choice to create human beings, no further choice was needed about what would be good for them. In creating beings with human nature, God created creatures for whom specific things are good.

If God were free in relation to these sorts of choices, Scotus would have to choose between some unappealing explanations of God's freedom. Could there be, without contradiction, creatures with the same nature but different goods? Or could there be, without contradiction,

[52] Cf. Wolter, *DSWM* 23–5.

the same creatures with different natures? Or, even if these things are self-contradictory, could God none the less have made them true? Scotus does not seem to be tempted to answer Yes to any of these questions. If he were tempted in any of these directions, he would face serious difficulties about goods, natures, and species, or about the extent of God's power.

If Scotus claims that God's will determines whether the natural law accords with what is good for creatures with our nature, he affirms that the natural law might not have been connected with our good. This claim would be difficult to accept; what would be natural about natural law if it were not connected with what is good for creatures with our nature? Scotus seems to believe that the rules derived from natural law depend on what is good for creatures with our nature. We consider our good in asking which rules are highly consonant with natural law, and the answer to this question depends on practical reason, not on the divine will.

Apparently, then, the most plausible way for Scotus to affirm divine freedom is to maintain that, though natural law makes peace rather than war good for human beings, God is free to violate natural law. Though God cannot (in the sense explained) change natural law, God can, on this view, violate it by ordering us to lie, cheat, steal, and so on indiscriminately. But Scotus rejects this view; he affirms that whatever God wills is just, and therefore in accordance with the natural law, even if it is not in accord with the usual provisions of the natural law.

Scotus does not claim that God is free to change the usual provisions of the natural law, but that God is free to dispense us from them. Hence he allows a necessary connexion, not subject to God's will, between the requirements of the human good and the usual provisions of natural law, but he denies that this necessary connexion eliminates God's power over the natural law. This solution faces the difficulties about consonance that we have noticed.

The same difficulties cast doubt on Scotus' explanation of the view that necessarily whatever God wills is just. In the actual world justice accords with our nature. But the precepts of justice depend on God's will. Hence there is a possible world in which God chooses to treat us in ways that violate our nature, and chooses to command us to treat one another in such ways. In this possible world, such violations of our nature are just, since whatever God wills is just. Moreover, in this possible world, people who understand human nature and justice know what treatment accords with human nature, but do not believe that this treatment is just.

This combination of views is open to doubt. Our knowledge that justice requires treating people in accordance with what is naturally appropriate seems to be similar to our knowledge that temperance requires the proper control of desires for physical pleasure, and that bravery requires the proper control of fear. Scotus does not suggest that God could decide that temperance requires unrestrained indulgence, bravery requires unrestrained fear, friendship requires indifference to the interests of others, and so on. He might say that these suggestions would be self-contradictory, and that God cannot make self-contradictions true. But his claim about justice seems no less self-contradictory than these claims about the other virtues would be.

Scotus might answer this objection by claiming that he is not speaking of justice as simply one virtue among others, but using 'just' to refer to rightness in general. This answer does not seem to fit everything he says; for when he begins the discussion of divine justice, he refers to the Aristotelian virtue. But when he says that whatever God wills is just, he may identify justice with rightness (rectum) generally. He seems to distinguish this sort of justice from the type of justice that prescribes treatment appropriate to the subject.[53] Perhaps he means that if God exercised unqualified power differently, God would act rightly in prescribing intemperance rather than temperance and in prescribing injustice rather than justice.

The difficulty that Scotus faces here results from his voluntarist conception of God's omnipotence, combined with the ethical demand for God to act justly. To make his position consistent, he has to interpret justice as simply the product of God's exercise of unqualified power in preferring one type of requirement over another. But normally he believes that the natural law imposes certain restrictions on the content of acceptable precepts; this is why only some precepts are consonant with natural law. Since these are the precepts that God commands us to observe, the right principles have some content that is not simply the product of God's choice. But once we make this clear, Scotus' claims about God's freedom in relation to the precepts of justice are difficult to accept.

385. God's Promises and God's Generosity

Scotus argues that God's freedom in relation to precepts of justice does not make God arbitrary or capricious; God's goodwill is reliable even though it is not necessary. God's generosity explains how God reliably benefits us even though God is free not to benefit us. When God created us, God freely undertook to follow natural law, which seems to express the same impartial norms as those that appeal to our affection for justice. God undertakes this by making a promise like the promise to Noah (*Gen.* 9:12–17).

But how can we rely on God's undertaking, unless God accepts the principles of right and justice underlying the keeping of promises? But if God already accepts these, must they not already have guided God in creation? If God reliably accepts them, God reliably follows the affection for justice. But it is not necessary that God follows the affection for justice, since God is free; hence God's preference for the affection for justice must result from God's free choice. A choice in favour of the precepts of justice does not seem any less arbitrary if it is supported by a promise.[54] We might suppose that, in Scotus' view, God is necessarily guided by an affection for justice, since it is necessary that whatever he wills is just. But this necessary truth, if understood to fit Scotus' voluntarism, does not commit God to any

[53] 'The claim that <the divine will> cannot sometimes act against the second <sort of justice> does not seem defensible (probabile) because whatever does not include a contradiction is something that <the divine will> is capable without qualification of doing, and thus of willing. But it cannot will anything that it could not will correctly (recte) because God's will is the primary rule; and so whatever does not include a contradiction God can be understood to will. And so since this secondary justice determines to something whose opposite does not include a contradiction, God can will and will rightly, and act against this secondary justice' (*4Sent.* d46 q1 = OO x 241 §6 = W 244).

[54] A similar question arises for Hobbesian people making a covenant in the state of nature. Cudworth raises this question, supposing that Hobbes faces the difficulties faced by theological voluntarism. See Cudworth, *EIM* i 1.4 = H13.

definite content for justice; in particular, it does not commit him to the aspect of justice that requires the keeping of promises. The objection that God's promises are unreliable still seems to be unanswered.

Biel also combines voluntarism about the will of God with claims about God's generosity and mercy.[55] In justifying us God does not owe us anything. God's treatment of us manifests divine mercy (misericordia), expressing God's indescribable righteousness (ineffabilis iustitia), and not responding to our goodness. Biel relies on the Christian doctrine that God does not justify us because God sees that we are good,[56] but seems to draw the unwarranted conclusion that God does not justify us because God sees that it is the best thing to do.

Truths about divine mercy and generosity do not seem to support voluntarism. Generous people do more, for the right reasons, than justice demands, or they demand less, for the right reasons, than justice allows them to demand. But if they act for the right reasons, they are not indifferent to justice.[57] If, for instance, A threatens harm to an innocent victim B, it is not generous of C to refrain from harming A, if harming A is the only way to prevent harm to B; and if A wants to buy C's gun to harm B, it is not generous of C to give A the gun as a free gift. If we were to call C generous in these cases, we would normally say it was 'misplaced' generosity, to separate it from the virtue of generosity.

If, then, Scotus believes that God is not bound by obligations of justice, but acts out of generosity, he should not ascribe to God a motive independent of justice. He should show that God acts on principles that do even more for us than can be demanded by justice, but in harmony with, and not contrary to, the aims of justice. If, then, God is necessarily generous, God is necessarily guided by the aims of justice. But being necessarily generous seems no less incompatible with divine freedom (as a voluntarist conceives it) than being necessarily just would be. Hence God cannot be necessarily generous, if God is free.

According to Christian doctrine, some of God's actions towards human beings are not owed to them in strict justice, but express God's readiness to do more for us than God could be expected to do in strict justice. But God's willingness to go beyond strict requirements does not mean that God is not guided by what is best all things considered; on the contrary, if an intellectualist is right, God sees that the generous treatment of human beings is better than the merely just treatment of them, and God sees that this generous treatment does not violate the aims of justice, but fulfils them. Attempts to support voluntarism through appeals to the Christian doctrine of divine mercy do not seem to succeed. They do not seem to remove the doubts that Scotus' voluntarism raises about divine goodness. We do not make the voluntarist account of divine freedom any more intelligible by trying to connect it with generosity; it is no more appropriate for generosity than for any other virtue.

[55] 'For neither is it because something is good or just that God wills it, but it is because God wills it that it is thereby good and just. For the divine will does not depend on our goodness, but our goodness depends on the divine will, and nothing is good except because God has accepted it as such' (Biel, *Can. Miss. Exp.*, Lect. 23E [= O&C i 212]). See Oberman, *HMT* 96–7. For Luther's view see §411.

[56] On justification see §351. [57] Cf. Aquinas, *ST* 2-2 q117 a5.

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386. Approaches to Ockham

Ockham has become notorious for holding views that, from a later philosophical perspective, have appeared to undermine the Aristotelian outlook that is expounded by Aquinas.[1] This is true in ethics as in other areas of philosophy. Such an approach to Ockham is open to question. Ockham does not affirm the radical consequences that other people draw from him. Moreover, it is not obvious that Aquinas always presents the best account or defence of Aristotle; his opponents may intend to offer a better defence of Aristotle rather than abandon an Aristotelian outlook. It is not always easy to decide what Aristotle means, or how to give Aristotelian answers to questions that arise for his theory. Scotus and Ockham disagree with Aquinas' answers to these questions, but they often believe that Aquinas is wrong about Aristotle as well as about the truth.

Still, it may be reasonable to examine aspects of Scotus or Ockham that suggest more extreme conclusions than they draw. Some aspects of their position may commit them to more than they recognize, and on this point later philosophy may sometimes be a good guide to the interpretation of earlier philosophers. We have illustrated this point in Scotus, especially on freedom and on the natural law. His claims about freedom, the will, and the affection for justice express both a more intellectualist tendency (identifying freedom with the rational affection for justice) and a more voluntarist tendency (identifying freedom with the undetermined capacity to choose either advantage or justice). Similarly, he treats God as partly sovereign over the natural law, but denies that God alters the natural law randomly or arbitrarily; hence he claims that the precepts of the second table of the Decalogue are 'highly consonant' with the natural law, though not required by it. On these and related points, Ockham develops a more strongly voluntarist position; it is useful to see how he answers some questions that Scotus appears to leave unsettled.

Ockham believes he rejects the insufficiently Aristotelian elements in Aquinas and others. He believes, for instance, that Aristotle's rejection of Platonic Forms supports the metaphysical priority of the particular, and that the views of Aquinas and Scotus on universals concede too much to an un-Aristotelian Platonic realism.[2] In moral philosophy

[1] See Freddoso in Ockham, *QQ* i, pp. xix–xxi. [2] See Freddoso in *QQ* p. xx; Adams, *WO*, ch. 2.

Ockham agrees with Scotus' view that Aquinas' intellectualism and eudaemonism conflict with the freedom and contingency of human action. Since Aristotle insists on these features of human action, a plausible defence of Aristotle should, in Ockham's view, reject Aquinas' position. Similarly, Ockham gives Aristotelian reasons for rejecting Aquinas' claims about virtue, practical reason, and prudence.

387. How to Reject Happiness

Ockham rejects eudaemonism, because he agrees with Scotus in believing that we do not necessarily will happiness. Some of his arguments appeal to experience; they might persuade us without reference to any controversial doctrine about freewill. He argues, for instance, that in some circumstances we might believe we cannot achieve happiness, and therefore might cease to will to be happy. Similarly, if we will not to exist, we thereby also will not to be happy.[3] Since it is possible in these ways not to will happiness, we do not necessarily will happiness.[4]

The eudaemonist position would be open to this objection if it claimed that we always will happiness in a sense of 'will' that implies we always believe happiness is possible for us. In this sense I do not will to lift a sack that I believe weighs a ton, though I might wish I could lift it. But this is not the sense of 'will' that is relevant to the eudaemonist thesis. As Aristotle says, we can wish (*boulesthai*; 'velle' in the Latin version) even for things that we believe to be impossible and for things that are not up to us (*EN* 1111b20–30), and this is the attitude that, according to the eudaemonist, we take towards happiness as an end.

This attitude to happiness does not imply that our desire for it is empty, or practically irrelevant. We might wish we could be invulnerable to disease or immortal, but our wish might make no difference, since there is nothing we can reasonably do about it. We can, however, act in ways that bring us closer to happiness, even if we cannot ensure our happiness. That is why our pursuit of happiness guides our actions even when we think happiness is not open to us; for even in these cases we try to get closer to happiness. This defence answers Ockham's first example.

A similar defence answers his second example, of willing our own non-existence. If, for instance, I choose to suffer death rather than betray people who count on me, I recognize that I would be worse off as a traitor than I would be if I were dead. The suggestion that I would be better off dead is initially paradoxical, but not unintelligible; it implies that I would be so much worse off if I remained alive as a coward that I ought to prefer non-existence to such a life.[5]

These ways of dealing with Ockham's alleged counter-examples will not convince anyone who does not find eudaemonism plausible in other respects. But if we are convinced by

[3] 'I say first that the will . . . can reject (nolle) the ultimate end whether it is shown in general or in particular. . . . What the intellect can dictate is to be rejected can be rejected. This is evident in itself. But the intellect can believe that there is no ultimate end or happiness, and consequently can dictate that the ultimate end or happiness is to be rejected. Secondly, whoever can will the antecedent can will a consequent that he believes to be a consequent. But one can will not to exist, therefore he can reject existence, therefore he can reject the happiness that he believes to follow on his existing' (*4Sent.* q16 = OT vii 350.5–14).

[4] On rejection of happiness cf. Adams, 'Will' 257–62; Heinaman, 'Rationality'.

[5] Cf. Plato, *La.* 195c7–d3.

the theoretical reasons for accepting Aquinas' version of eudaemonism, we need not be dissuaded by these objections.

388. Does Eudaemonism Exclude Freedom?

Ockham also argues against eudaemonism on the ground that the will is a free capacity and can therefore receive two contrary actualities (*4Sent.* q16 = OT vii 350.17). If the will is free, then, in Ockham's view, it must be free to refuse happiness; hence we cannot will the ultimate end naturally, unless 'naturally' means simply that we most commonly do it (*1Sent.* d1 q6 = OT i 507.9–16). If the will is free, it can refuse happiness, both in general and in particular, because otherwise it would lose the indifference needed for freedom (*1Sent.* d1 q6 = OT i 501–2; *4Sent.* q16 = OT vii 350–3).[6]

Aquinas maintains that the will is not free in relation to the pursuit of the ultimate end, but is free in relation to the pursuit of subordinate ends, because it has the capacity for contrary actualities in relation to these ends. Ockham rejects this defence of freedom because he rejects Aquinas' account of how the will is free in relation to subordinate ends. From Ockham's point of view, Aquinas' position implies that the choice of the will is determined by the judgment of intellect about means to the final good. If this determination does not ensure freewill, Aquinas does not allow us freedom.

Even if Aquinas showed that the will is in some way indifferent in relation to means, he would not meet Ockham's conditions for indifference. We recognize freedom and contingency, in Ockham's view, if we regard human beings as being in control of (or 'masters of', domini) their actions.[7] Control and power over one's actions comes from freewill,[8] which involves indifference and contingency.[9] Hence it requires metaphysical indeterminism.[10] Admitted facts about freedom require us to have powers that are indeterministically actualized; no past conditions determine the actualization of these powers in one way or the other.

Ockham, therefore, demands more than Aquinas' conditions for contingency and freedom. Though Aquinas agrees that control requires contingency, he does not interpret contingency in Ockham's strict sense, which assumes Scotus' conception of a rational capacity. Scotus argues that the will is free to choose either of two opposite courses of action, and that therefore nothing outside the will determines our choice; hence the greater apparent good does not determine the will. Ockham follows Scotus on this point.

This claim about freedom raises a question about Ockham's views on how we know we are free. He argues that any attempt to prove the reality of freedom must rely on some

[6] Cf. Scotus, *1Sent.* d1 q4 schol. = OO v 1, 209 §3 = d1 pars 2 q2, V ii 66–7 §§91–2.

[7] He discusses, for instance, Damascene's remark that non-rational agents are acted on as opposed to acting. On Damascene see §243n40.

[8] See Aquinas, *in Met.* ix 2 §1787: 'For only the rational part of the soul is in control (domina) of its action, and in this it differs from inanimate things'.

[9] 'Those things that have freewill have control and power over their actions; but this requires indifference and contingency' (*1Sent.* d1 q6 = OT i 502.10–15).

[10] [Freedom:] 'I can cause and not cause the same effect, there being no difference anywhere else outside that capacity' (*Quodl.* i q16 a1 = OT ix 87.12–15). [The contingent:] 'what produces a given effect, and, with nothing changed either on its own part or on the part of anything else, has it in its power equally to produce or not to produce, because from its own nature it is determined to neither' (*1Sent.* d1 q6 = OT i 501.8–11).

premiss less known, or no better known, than the conclusion, but none the less our freedom can be grasped (cognosci) evidently through experience, through the fact that a person experiences that whenever reason dictates (dictet) something, the will is still able to will or not to will or to reject it (*Quodl.* i 16 = OT ix 88.25–8).

This appeal to experience may show that we can conceive opposites and choose between them. But might we not explain this capacity through Aquinas' appeals to the role of deliberation? Aquinas does not guarantee the precise sort of contingency that Scotus and Ockham have in mind; but we might doubt whether we experience this sort of contingency in our deliberation and choice. It is not clear that experience gives us certain knowledge of undetermined choice.

389. Moderate v. Extreme Voluntarism

On these points Ockham agrees with Scotus. But he goes further than Scotus in rejecting a connexion between will and reason. Though Scotus rejects the dependence of will on intellect, he takes the will to involve a rational capacity, and hence a certain kind of rational preference. Hence he attributes to the will both an affection for advantage and an affection for justice, and he sometimes identifies the freedom of the will with the affection for justice. This identification raises difficulties. If freedom consists in acting from the affection for justice, it seems to consist in a certain kind of determination, not in the absence of determination. If, however, the will is equally free in acting on either of its main affections, it is not clear why freedom is expressed in acting on one rather than on the other.

Ockham does not follow Scotus in treating the will as essentially rational; nor does he connect freedom with the affection for justice. Instead, he emphasizes indifference, contingency, and self-determination. His claims about freedom and capacity exclude an intellectualist account of the will—both in its eudaemonist version and in Scotus' version that identifies the freedom of the will with the affection for justice. An intellectualist account implies that the will does not meet the strong conditions for a rational capacity; for it implies that the will is determined by the conception of the overall good (happiness or justice) as it appears to the intellect, and therefore by something outside itself. But—Ockham replies—in an agent with freewill, the will is self-determining; if it were not, its choices would be necessitated by something outside it. According to Ockham, Scotus' claims about the self-determining character of the will conflict with the primacy that Scotus assigns to the affection for justice. Ockham asserts the independence of the will from reason and makes reason simply the servant of the will.

According to Henry of Ghent, this is the only sense in which reason has a 'directive' function. Just as a servant directs his master by carrying a light to show him how to go where he wants to, reason directs the will, and since the will is the master, it can withdraw reason from its enlightening function when it wants to.[11] The demotion of reason to the 'guiding'

[11] 'To the fifth point, that what directs is superior to what is directed, it must be said that something can direct in two ways. First, by authority, as a master directs a servant. He is superior. In this way the will directs the intellect. Second, by providing a service, as a servant directs a master, by holding a lamp before him at night, so that the master does not

role of a servant expresses the difference between Scotus and Ockham, on the one hand, and Aquinas, on the other. The difference is obscured by Scotus' claims about the affection for justice, but it is clear once Ockham discards these claims.

This demotion of reason fits the voluntarist attempt to explain how action on the will differs from action on the passions. Whereas external or internal stimuli determine the passions, nothing determines the will; even considerations presented by the intellect cannot determine it. The intellectualist position makes the will too much like the passions, by taking it to be determined by an external stimulus.

This objection to intellectualism underlies some criticisms of Aquinas' position. Tempier, for instance, condemned any belief in the necessitation of the will by the apparent good.[12] If we free the will from this sort of necessitation, we may claim to have done what Aquinas failed to do, by identifying the distinctively human form of choice and action.

390. Difficulties for Voluntarism

Once Ockham makes clear the implications of voluntarism, he also invites criticisms. Voluntarists set out to explain phenomena that they believe Aquinas' intellectualism fails to explain; but one may doubt whether they really explain these phenomena.

Freedom is supposed to provide appropriate grounds for praise and blame; hence Scotus complains that an intellectualist account makes sin non-blameworthy by reducing it to cognitive error. To see whether the voluntarist position does any better, we may consider the choice that faces the will when it gets advice from reason. Voluntarists do not allow the will to choose in the light of the apparent overall good; for if that determines it, practical reason determines it. But if it decides by something other than the overall good, does it not choose non-rationally, as we would choose on the basis of a passion? And if we conclude that it cannot decide on the basis of any considerations at all, do we not introduce a degree of randomness and irrationality that makes us wonder why we should care so much about having freewill?

Such questions raise doubts about voluntarism. It tries to capture the difference between the free and rational will and the non-rational passions. But a degree of freedom that excludes intellectualism also seems to exclude a genuinely rational will. In that case, how are praise and blame appropriate? For if the will is not necessarily moved by rational considerations, it does not seem to respond to the considerations that are mentioned in praise and blame.

This objection may seem unfair. For we might argue, on behalf of the voluntarist, that if the will is not necessarily moved by reason, but usually follows reason, it still seems fair to expect us to respond to the right considerations; claims about responsibility do not seem to

stumble. Such a director is inferior. And this is the way in which the intellect directs the will. Hence the will can withdraw the intellect from directing and understanding whenever it wills, as a master can withdraw a servant' (Henry of Ghent, *Quodl. quodl.* i q14, ad 5am f 17vb = Lottin, *PM* i 275). 'It must be said therefore without qualification that, when a good and a better thing have been proposed, the will can elect a less good thing' (q16 f21va = Lottin 277). Here Henry follows Tempier's condemnation of rationalism (prop. 163, quoted in §358). See §403.

[12] 'That the will of a human being is necessitated by his cognition, just as the desire of a non-rational animal is' (Prop. 159 in Piché, *CP* 126). Cf. Prop. 164.

need a necessary connexion. This reply does not entirely answer the objection, however. Any choice that is an appropriate basis for praise and blame should be appropriately connected to the right reasons; an arbitrary or capricious choice of the right course of action does not warrant praise, and such a choice of the wrong course does not seem to justify the blame that would apply to a non-arbitrary choice. According to the intellectualist, non-arbitrary choice of the right or wrong action is determined by the right or wrong reasons. What can the voluntarist say? If recognition of the right reasons leaves us no less free to choose the wrong action, and we are no more determined by the right reasons when we choose correctly than when we choose arbitrarily, how does correct choice differ from arbitrary choice of the right action?

Godfrey of Fontaines supports this objection by arguing that 'one is less able to maintain freewill by claiming that the will moves itself immediately than by claiming that it is moved by an object'.[13] Since voluntarism makes all choices equally undetermined by considerations adduced by reason, it cannot draw the appropriate distinction between deliberate and impulsive ('sudden') actions, and cannot explain why the distinction matters.[14] We would normally say that deliberate actions are caused by deliberation, and respond to the reasons presented in deliberation, whereas impulsive actions are not determined by consideration of the comparative weight of reasons on each side. Voluntarists, however, cannot draw the distinction in this way, and cannot say how the good will responds to the right considerations; for, in their view, all free actions are equally undetermined by the considerations revealed by deliberation.

If this is a fair objection to voluntarism, Aquinas' position may seem more attractive. His intellectualism would restrict our freedom to an unwelcome degree if he did not allow such a wide scope for deliberation and rational comparison of alternatives.[15] If, for instance, we necessarily pursued not only some conception of an ultimate end, but a rather precisely specified ultimate end, then some important choices that we take to be in our control would not be in our control and we would be less free than we think we are. Aquinas, however, is not open to this objection; in his view, we are free to pursue or to reject specific conceptions of an ultimate end, and our deliberation determines the specific ends we pursue. His intellectualism is more plausible given the wide scope that he attributes to deliberation.

Aquinas, then, has a reasonable reply to voluntarism. He argues that freewill consists in the operation of the will that results in free election, and that we are capable of free election.

[13] Godfrey of Fontaines, *Quodl.* xv q4b 26. Korolec, *CHLMP* 637, mentions other opponents of voluntarism.

[14] 'The third reason is of this sort: The position that cannot preserve the freewill in the second act more than in the first, and <cannot preserve it> in a deliberate act more than in a sudden one, is less able to preserve freewill than a position that can do this. But that position that proposes that a human being has freewill precisely because the will is in no case moved by anything else, but moves itself immediately, cannot preserve freewill in the first act any more than in the second, or in a deliberate act any more than in a sudden one; for in all cases without distinction the will moves itself. But that other position, which proposes that a human being has no freewill except through the fact that by the mediation of the deliberation of reason a human being moves himself towards secondary objects of will, is more able to preserve mastery of one's act and freedom of the act in the second act than in the first one, and in a deliberate act more than in a sudden one. . . . And from this same point it follows, as was said above, that all acquiescence, however sudden, in things that are mortal sins in their genus would be a mortal sin' (Godfrey, *Quodl.* xiv q4b 28). A position similar to Godfrey's is defended by one of the 'Averroist' commentaries on Aristotle's *Ethics* discussed by Gauthier, 'Commentaires' 199.

[15] See §270.

If he makes the will subject to the appearance of the greater good, that does not refute his account.

391. Developments of Voluntarism

Even though the objections presented by Godfrey of Fontaines are serious, they do not necessarily require a return to intellectualism. They might suggest that a voluntarist should abandon the remaining element of intellectualism that remains in Scotus and Ockham. They separate will from passion by treating the will as a rational capacity, and they connect the rationality of the will with freedom and responsibility. Ockham rejects the connexion that Scotus sees between freewill and the affection for justice, but he still connects freedom with reason. Though he rejects intellectualism, and even abandons the elements of intellectualism in Scotus' position, he still (according to our previous distinctions) maintains rationalism rather than anti-rationalism, in so far as he distinguishes the rational will from the non-rational passions.[16] But the difficulty that Ockham faces in explaining the rationality of the will may raise doubts about his separation of will from passions.

Some of the later history of reflexions on reason and will suggests how one might separate will, freedom, and reason, and why it is difficult to separate them. Voluntarism is one element in the Kantian conception of the will. But Kant does not give up the connexion between the will and practical reason. The voluntarist aspects of his position conflict with the intellectualist aspects. He returns to Scotus' belief that the affection for justice is somehow constitutive of, not simply one possible manifestation of, the freedom of the will; and so some of the objections to Scotus seem to fit Kant as well. A thorough attempt to separate the freedom from the rationality of the will appears only in Schopenhauer and in existentialist views about radical freedom.[17]

Ockham does not accept any of the later views that abandon the essential rationality of the will and rely exclusively on self-determination. But it is relevant to compare these later views with his view. For if they are the most plausible attempts to develop the voluntarist side of Scotus and Ockham, they show how one might defend the voluntarist position.

Ockham claims to account for our intuitive knowledge of our freedom. But he seems to undermine some of our further intuitive beliefs about the will and agency. For it now becomes difficult to see why self-determination by the will should be either necessary or sufficient for rational agency. Ockham begins, as Aquinas does, by seeking to give an account of the distinctive features of rational agents who have control over their actions. But even if self-determination, as Ockham understands it, ensures control, as he understands it, it does not seem to ensure rational agency. If a voluntarist tries to answer this objection by adding some further condition satisfied by rational agents, we may wonder whether the 'further' condition does not capture rational agency by itself without any appeal to self-determination by the will.

This doubt about voluntarism might suggest an anti-rationalist solution. Voluntarist arguments may convince us that an intellectualist conception makes the will no more

[16] On intellectualism v. rationalism see §256.

[17] See Schopenhauer, *EFW* 41. On existentialism, see Olafson, *PP*, chs. 1–2.

free than the passions, since it implies that both are externally determined. Intellectualist arguments may convince us that a voluntarist conception of the will also blurs the distinction between will and passion, since it does not make will essentially rational. We might respond by rejecting the division between will and passion. If the mere fact that an action is self-determined (according to the voluntarist conception) does not make it morally more significant, we may infer that the contrast between the will and the non-rational impulses is not morally significant either. Hence we might as well say that the will is a sort of passion, or that reason is the servant of the passions no less than of the will.

This is the anti-rationalist ('sentimentalist') conclusion of Hobbes and Hume. In their view, freedom consists simply in internal determination; they see no relevant distinction between the will and the 'sentiments' or 'passions' as sources of the internal determination. They reject both an indeterminist and an intellectualist account of freedom.[18] Though they accept the voluntarist criticisms of intellectualism far enough to believe that determination by intellect is not freedom, they do not regard voluntarism as an adequate alternative. Against both intellectualists and voluntarists, they conclude that the will is a passion.

Hence Hume's sentimentalist maxim (in which he follows Locke and Hobbes) that 'reason is and ought to be the slave of the passions' is an intelligible outcome of Henry of Ghent's claim that reason is the servant of the will. Voluntarism opposes sentimentalism in asserting a sharp distinction between the passions and the will; but the voluntarist claim about the subordination of reason might well appear more plausible than the voluntarist account of the difference between the will and the passions. Hume's sentimentalist conception of the will and practical reason is therefore an indirect result of voluntarist criticism of Aquinas.[19] But it is not clear that arguments for voluntarism and sentimentalism justify the rejection of Aquinas' view.

392. Virtue and Passion

Ockham not only believes that Aquinas gives an inadequate account of the freedom of the will, but he also believes that the free will should have a more prominent part than Aquinas allows it in an account of the moral virtues. He supports Scotus' objections to the role that Aquinas assigns to the passions. He rejects Aquinas' view that virtue must belong to the sensory part because the sensory part has to be perfected (*3Sent.* q11 = OT vi 352). He agrees with Scotus in placing virtue in the will (354), because only a condition of the will is properly a virtue (358). Since the will is the basis of praise and blame, it must be the subject of virtue.[20] Ockham argues that the will has to have a causal role in the formation of a virtue sufficient to justify praise and blame.[21]

[18] See Hobbes, *L*6.53; Cudworth, *F* c.5, 167H; Hutcheson, *IMS* 165–6. On Locke's hesitations about sentimentalism see E ii 21.47.

[19] Similarly, Reid's reply to Hume is a partial, though not total, return to Aquinas' position. See, e.g., *EAP* 534H.

[20] 'The only state that is properly virtue is the one whose act is the only one that is virtuous. But only the act of the will is virtuous. Proof: Only the act of will is praiseworthy or blameworthy; hence only it is virtuous; hence only the state produced from such an act is virtue. This is confirmed by the Philosopher in *Ethics* III, where he says that no act is blameworthy unless it is in our power. For no one faults a person blind by nature for being blind. But if he is blind by his own sin, then he is at fault' (*3Sent.* q11 = OT vi 366.1–9).

[21] Cf. *Quodl.* ii q16 = OT ix 182.19–25; Freppert, *BMWO* 49.

This argument shows only that the will must be one subject of virtue, and that any other subject of it must be closely enough connected to the will to make the virtue as a whole praiseworthy. But this conclusion does not conflict with the basic elements of Aquinas' position. Nor does it justify Ockham's further claim that the will is the only subject of virtue, so that the passions cannot also be a subject.

Ockham claims that his view is consistent with Aristotle. According to Ockham, Aristotle's frequent remarks that the virtues of character are in the non-rational part mean that these virtues are in the will, not that they are in the passions; the will is a 'non-rational' part because it is rational only by participation (*3Sent.* q11 = OT vi 368.14–21).[22]

But even if Aristotle treats the will as non-rational in this sense, his remarks about the role of the non-rational part of the soul in virtue do not seem to fit the will. For he explains his claim that the moral virtues are in the non-rational part by discussing the training of passions, pleasure, and pain. He refers to this aspect of the non-rational part (contrary to Ockham's view) when he takes moral virtue to be virtue of the non-rational part.

In treating the will as a subject of moral virtue, Ockham draws attention to a feature of the will that is insufficiently recognized in Aquinas' account of virtue. The arguments that Ockham and Scotus present show that Aquinas should make the will a subject of every moral virtue. But they do not undermine Aquinas' arguments for making the passions a subject of some virtues. Consideration of all these arguments should lead us to deny that each moral virtue must have just one subject. These claims of Ockham's about the importance of the will in virtue are not necessarily voluntaristic. We could accept them even if we accepted Aquinas' view that the will is determined by one's conception of the good. We have argued that Aquinas should accept these conclusions, given his conception of the will. We have no further reason, so far, to suppose that a true account of the virtues rests on a voluntarist conception of the will.

393. Correct Reason and Will

As we have understood Scotus, he holds an externalist view about the relation between the grasp of moral principles and motivation. This raises a difficulty for his claim that prudence makes an action morally good. Ockham exploits this difficulty, in his discussion of the sense in which virtue involves acting in accordance with correct reason.[23] As elsewhere, he revises Scotus' position so as to give the free will a more prominent place.

The primacy of the will implies that a morally good action cannot simply be an action conforming to correct reason. If God were to cause my will to conform to correct reason, but my will remained completely passive (voluntate nihil agente) in this process, this act would be neither virtuous nor deserving (*3Sent.* q11 = OT vi 389.18–22). Only the act of the will conforming to correct reason is primarily good or bad, because this is primarily imputable to the agent (vi 390.3–4).

To evaluate Ockham's argument, we need to see what it means for God to cause my will to conform to correct reason. God might induce purely external conformity, by causing

[22] In applying this formula to the will Ockham follows Aquinas' questionable account of *EN* i 13. See §257.

[23] See Freppert, *BMWO* 59–68.

a series of random thoughts in a 'Random Good Samaritan' to conclude with an equally random choice to take the injured stranger to the inn. This choice is not praiseworthy and does not engage the will actively. Alternatively, God might cause an 'Intellectualist Good Samaritan' to notice all the features of the injured stranger and his situation that justify helping him, so that the Samaritan's will is engaged by the greater good of helping the stranger. In the second case, an intellectualist does not admit that the Samaritan's will does nothing; the conformity of the will to right reason is not purely external, but includes a correct response. This sort of conformity to correct reason seems—to an intellectualist—to be imputable to the agent.

Ockham seems to believe that neither the Random nor the Intellectualist Good Samaritan has genuine virtue; for in neither case would the will be 'active' in the sense that is needed for imputability. In denying that the will of the Intellectualist Good Samaritan is active he relies on a voluntarist account of the conditions for activity of the will and for imputability of an action to an agent. If the will necessarily conformed to correct reason, virtuous action would not be in the power of the will, because the will would be unable to prevent action on correct reason. Since one's will does not necessarily conform to one's correct reason, correct reason itself cannot ensure virtue, but may be present in either a virtuous or a vicious agent. An agent who chooses to act for a bad end may have correct reason but freely choose to disregard it; hence correct reason is not the primary cause of virtuous action (*Q. var.* q7 a3 = OT viii 364.534–48). Virtuous action needs both actual prudence and the activity of the will (*Q. var.* q8 = OT viii 417.189–418.2).

Virtue, then, seems to consist in a choice by the will to act in accordance with the provisions of correct reason. This choice is not in accordance, or in conflict, with correct reason, but is undetermined by reason.[24] If we are virtuous, or even continent, we need not only the appropriate dictate of correct reason, but also the undetermined free choice of the will.

These views conflict with Aquinas' view about the role of prudence in virtue. He claims that universal prudence grasps the components of happiness, and thereby fixes (praestituere) the end for the moral virtues.[25] Given this conception of universal prudence, and given Aquinas' conception of the will and its relation to the good, prudence is responsible for the distinctively virtuous condition of the will. Since the will aims necessarily at the ultimate good, and since prudence discovers the constitution of this good, the will of a prudent person necessarily pursues the distinctively virtuous end that prudence has discovered. We can distinguish the cognitive contribution of prudence from the motive contribution of the will; but, given Aquinas' eudaemonism, the right direction of the will follows from the discovery of the constitution of the ultimate end. Since prudence is necessary and sufficient for virtue, the virtuous person differs cognitively from the incontinent, continent, and vicious person.

Scotus rejects this role for prudence, since he takes the will to be independent of practical reason. In his view, neither the affection for advantage nor the affection for justice determines the will; whatever we take to be the content of practical principles grasped by prudence, no will necessarily accepts them once it is aware of them. But Ockham believes that Scotus

[24] '. . . Correct reason dictates the contrary of what is desired by sensory desire. And the will from its freedom does not will what sensory desire desires, but what is dictated by correct reason . . .' (*Q. var.* q6 a10 = OT viii 272.11–13).

[25] See §320.

does not go far enough in pursuing the implications of his voluntarism.[26] Ockham agrees that prudence accords with correct reason, so that prudence is a partial efficient cause of the virtuous action. It is not the whole efficient cause, however, because virtue requires an independent act of willing in accordance with the dictates of correct reason. Since this is an act of a will that is free to reject any dictate of reason, it does not result from attention to a decisive practical consideration; for if there were such a consideration, its decisiveness would limit the freedom of the will. No consideration, therefore, moves the will reliably.

Ockham offers one answer to a difficulty that faces Aristotle's claims about the relation between prudence and virtue of character. When Aristotle claims that virtue makes the end right and prudence the means, we might take this in an anti-rationalist sense, so as to imply that correctly-oriented passions make the end right.[27] Ockham approaches this anti-rationalist interpretation, though he does not completely accept it. He takes Aristotle's references to a non-rational part to indicate the role of will, and so he infers that an act of will, independent of reason, is essential to virtue. Ockham does not deny that virtue is more reasonable than vice; in Hutcheson's terms, he grants that we have justifying reasons in favour of virtue rather than vice.[28] But he denies that these justifying reasons supply the virtuous person with decisive motivating reasons.

Ockham's development of Scotus' voluntarism about prudence and virtue results in his claim about the motivation of the virtuous person. This cannot be the general desire for the good, since that belongs to every will. It must be a choice, not determined by any further reasons, to accept the conclusions reached by correct reason. In this respect, it must be a choice beyond the scope of practical reason.

394. Separability of the Virtues

Ockham goes further than Scotus goes in rejecting Aquinas' belief in the reciprocity of the virtues and in the unity of prudence.[29] His views on prudence reflect the role that he attributes to the will in each virtue. He denies that the different virtues aim at any unified good, since he does not believe that they all aim at happiness. He has no reason, therefore, to believe that the same deliberative knowledge is required to grasp the relations and connexions of the different ends of the virtues in a single conception of happiness.

Once we admit these differences in the ends of different virtues, we have no reason to recognize prudence as a horizontally unified science of the good. Moreover, if the will is not determined by the conclusions of prudence, we lose one of Aquinas' reasons for accepting the necessary connexion of the different virtues. Since the prescriptions of prudence belonging to the different virtues belong to distinct sciences, a will assenting to the conclusions of prudence for one virtue may not assent to its conclusions for another virtue.

Ockham therefore claims that different virtues have independent desires and aims. Even if we are intemperate to some degree, we may still have the will (velle) to carry out the actions required by justice (*Q. var*. q7 a3 = OT viii 346.115–23). If, for instance, we suppose that justice requires us to aim at the common good, we can have this aim while still having

[26] See §§383–4. [27] See §89. [28] See Hutcheson, *IMS* 121. [29] On Scotus see §375.

some tendency to intemperance.[30] In such cases we are not so intemperate that we would be willing to damage the common good for the sake of our intemperate desires, but we are intemperate enough to indulge our intemperate desires when we do not seem to harm the common good.

For similar reasons, Ockham believes we can have correct reason about the subject-matter of one virtue (for instance, temperance) and not about the subject-matter of another (for instance, generosity). Hence he agrees with Scotus in rejecting the horizontal unity of prudence (*Q. var.* q6 a10 = OT viii 284.290–285.303). The virtues are connected in so far as they all accept certain universal principles such as 'everything right (honestum) is to be done', 'everything good is to be loved', and 'everything prescribed by correct reason is to be done' (*Q. var.* q7 a3 = OT viii 347.141–52). But to reach a practical conclusion from these general principles we need the different types of prudence that are acquired by experience in the different areas of the different virtues.[31] Prudence in the proper sense has to be both about particulars and acquired by experience, and so there is a different prudence for each virtue (*Q. var.* q6 a10 = OT viii 282.233–41).

This division of prudence seems to conflict with Aristotle's view that there is one prudence for many virtues (*3Sent.* q12 a4 = OT vi 406.5–10).[32] Ockham replies that there are different prudences for the principles and for the conclusions, and in fact prudence is most properly about particular things that we can do (*3Sent.* q12 = OT vi 419.17–18). Hence the horizontal unity that Aristotle attributes to prudence is a purely generic unity that allows different and independent species of prudence to belong to different virtues. In this treatment of prudence Ockham agrees with Scotus, who argues that 'different things to be done require different prudences' (*3Sent.* q36 = OO vii 2, 823 §22 = W 410), so that prudence is a genus embracing the specific prudences belonging to the different virtues.[33]

Contrary to Scotus, however, the prudence that is needed for a given virtue does not include any universal prudence, and so prudence is not vertically unified. In Ockham's view, only a loose and improper use of 'prudence' allows prudence to grasp universal principles reached through experience.[34] Prudence in the proper sense is confined to particulars (*Q. var.* q6 a10 = OT viii 282.249); it is 'immediate directive knowledge acquired only through experience with respect to something that can be done' (*Q. var.* q7 a2 = OT viii 331.20–6). It is exemplified in the knowledge that this angry person is to be pacified by gentle words (*Q. var.* q7 a2 = OT viii 331.20–6;[35] cf. q6 a10 = OT viii 281.225–282.232).

Ockham, therefore, disagrees with Scotus' view that any application of moral science to action is an exercise of prudence.[36] In his view, an exercise of prudence involves a singular

[30] Ockham takes prudence to be necessary for each virtuous action. See Freppert, *BMWO* 53.

[31] 'The <different forms of> knowledge are prudences that are directive in different virtuous actions' (*Q. var.* q7 a3 = OT viii 347.149–50).

[32] The editors of OT suggest that Ockham is referring to *EN* 1140a25–7. A more appropriate passage is 1145a1–2.

[33] Ockham concedes that when one virtue is sufficiently perfected, it inclines us towards the primary expression (actus) of another virtue (*Q. var.* q7 a3 = OT viii 347–8); he also allows that the virtues share their common principles (*3Sent.* q12 = OT vi 425–6). But he insists that each virtue requires its own prudence derived from the experience that is necessary for that virtue and unnecessary for other virtues.

[34] Cf. *Q. var.* q7 a2 = OT viii 330.1–13.

[35] Cf. *1Sent.* Prol. q11 = OT i 319.25–321.9; q12 = OT i 359.16–360.16; *Quodl.* 2 q14 a3 = OT ix 177.30–178.50. Strictly speaking, prudence is the grasp of the 'minimum universale', which the craftsman (artifex) has.

[36] Scotus, *Ord.*, Prol. 5, q1–2 = V i 227–8 §351 = Prol. q4 schol. = OO v 1, 163 §41.

proposition acquired by experience (*Q. var.* q6 a10 = OT viii 283.252–80). The virtues do not aim at any single good, and so they are not essentially connected. While they may share some general principles, the sharing of these general principles is not essential to each of the specific virtues.

It is easy to quote passages from Aristotle on Ockham's side. Aristotle often insists that prudence requires grasp of particulars if it is to be genuinely practical knowledge (e.g., *EN* 1141b21–2; 1142a23–30; 1143b2–5). One might argue, in support of Ockham, that Aquinas and his successors introduce a conception of universal prudence with no solid support in Aristotle. But we have seen that Aquinas' conception of prudence rests on a plausible interpretation of Aristotle's doctrine of practical reason. Aquinas sees that Aristotle's eudaemonism requires the expansive conception of prudence that is not prominent in Aristotle's own remarks on prudence. Though Ockham relies on one genuine element in Aristotle, the doctrines of Aquinas that he rejects are central Aristotelian doctrines.

395. Non-positive v. Positive Morality

Aquinas' account of practical reason influences his treatment of two elements of Christian moral theology that have no explicit place in Aristotelian ethics: the belief in universal conscience and the doctrine of natural law as an expression of the eternal divine law. Aquinas fits these Christian elements into his Aristotelian theory, by identifying universal conscience with the constitutive elements of practical reason, and by taking the precepts of natural law to be discovered by practical reason deliberating about the human good that is grasped, in schematic form, by universal conscience. Aquinas infers that the content of natural law is a matter of practical knowledge, and specifically of deliberation. It is not an expression of divine positive law that is created by God's willing it to be so. It expresses divine reason, since it embodies the principles on which God creates the natural world and human beings in it.

Scotus and Ockham agree with Aquinas in recognizing moral principles grasped by natural reason. According to Scotus, these constitute the principles of natural law, properly so called, which are not subject to God's will or dispensation. But their content is restricted, since the second table of the Decalogue cannot be derived from them. Since Scotus restricts the content of natural law properly so called, he expands the area of divine positive law, and so restricts the deliberative task of practical reason; deliberative prudence cannot discover the second table from the precepts of practical reason. But this apparently clear division is obscured, as we have seen, by Scotus' claim that the principles of the second table are 'highly consonant' with natural law in the strict sense.

Similar questions arise about Ockham. He recognizes both a non-positive part of moral science and a positive part (*Quodl.* ii q14 a2 = OT ix 177.18). He does not follow Scotus in regarding the whole second table as positive, and so he seems to be less voluntarist than Scotus. But it is difficult to understand the extent of non-positive morality and its relation to the divine will.[37]

[37] Non-positive morality: King, 'Theory' 228.

Non-positive moral science directs human actions without any precept of a superior. It is demonstrative because its first principles are grasped (notis, 177.25–6) through themselves or known (scitis) through experience, and it derives its conclusions necessarily from these. Principles known through themselves include 'Everything right (honestum) is to be done' (ix 177.26); 'The will ought to conform itself to correct reason'; and 'Every blameworthy evil is to be avoided'. As an example of a principle known through experience Ockham mentions 'Any angry person on such an occasion is to be mollified and calmed by gentle words'; this can be known only by experience of calming particular angry people by gentle words (*Q. var.* q6 a10 = OT viii 282.228).[38]

Positive moral science contains human and divine laws, which oblige (obligant, ix 177.21) us to pursue or avoid things that are good or bad only because they are ordered or prohibited by a superior to whom it belongs to legislate. This part of moral science is not demonstrative.

Principles of non-positive morality are not specific precepts at the level of the second table of the Decalogue. But they are not all as tautologous or analytic as 'The will ought to conform itself to correct reason' seems to be. They also include 'One should benefit a benefactor'.[39] Hence Ockham seems to allow more content than Scotus allows to natural law in the strict sense.[40] Aristotle's *Ethics* discusses principles of non-positive morality,[41] but Ockham does not say whether these principles are the whole, or only a part, of the *Ethics*. His views do not suggest that non-positive morality includes the sort of detail that we find in the *Ethics*; he does not seem to share Aquinas' confidence in the competence of rational inquiry and deliberation to reach specific precepts of justice.[42]

Ockham implies, therefore, that at least some of our moral knowledge—both of general principles and of particular prescriptions for action—is epistemically independent of any beliefs about the legislative will of God. But he also denies that the principles of correct reason are independent of God's legislative will.[43] Since the divine will is prior to correct reason, virtue is in accord with correct reason 'as long as the divine command stands' (stante praecepto divino) or as long as the present order stands.[44]

What sort of priority does Ockham ascribe to the divine will? We might take him to mean that though the requirements of correct reason are independent of God's will, God is free to endorse or to reject them. If God were to reject them, and to demand that we act contrary to correct reason, virtue would not be in accord with correct reason. That is why—we might

[38] For these examples cf. *Q. var.* q7 a2 = OT viii 330.11–13.

[39] See *Q. var.* q6 a10 = OT viii 281.219–282.232 (omni benefactori est benefaciendum). Ockham argues (viii 283.252–284.280, against Scotus) that this knowledge, combined with the recognition that this person is a benefactor, can direct our action, so that in this case prudence is not required for directing action.

[40] See §378.

[41] In *Quodl.* ii q14 a2 = OT ix 177.24–8, Ockham mentions principles known through themselves and known through experience, 'such as that everything right (honestum) is to be done and everything wrong is to be avoided, and <principles> of this sort, about which Aristotle speaks in moral philosophy'.

[42] On non-positive and positive morality see Clark, 'Voluntarism'. He suggests that Ockham's basic principle relies on right reason, which requires the love of God, and that the will of God gives all further content to morality. But the example of the benefactor suggests that Clark may exaggerate the emptiness of non-positive morality. See also Adams, 'Naturalist?'; 'Structure'.

[43] See McGrade, 'Omnipotence' 274–9 (a more moderate interpretation of Ockham's position); Clark, 'Right reason'.

[44] See *Quodl.* iii q14 = OT ix 255.43–5; cf. *Q. var.* q7 a3 = OT viii 363.515; *Q. var.* q7 a4 = OT viii 394.440–2. On directed and unqualified divine power see §396 below.

suppose—Ockham believes that the accord between virtue and correct reason holds only as long as the divine command (accepting the conclusions of correct reason) stands.

But this is not Ockham's view. For he also seems to believe that two facts depend on the divine will, both (1) the fact that virtue agrees with correct reason, and (2) the fact that correct reason requires the specific actions it requires.[45] The fact that God wills an action makes it true that the action conforms to correct reason. Ockham does not simply hold, as Aquinas holds, that the divine will and correct reason necessarily agree; he also holds that correct reason prescribes a given action only because God wills it. God cannot reject the dictates of correct reason, but this does not mean that God's freedom is limited by the requirements of correct reason; on the contrary, whatever God wills thereby becomes a dictate of correct reason. Our intuitive knowledge of the requirements of correct reason reflects God's prior willing that has made it true that correct reason requires this action rather than another.[46]

This view of correct reason supports Ockham's view of dispensations. If God's will fixes the requirements of correct reason, it seems to be within God's power to change them. Since the fact that correct reason accepts a principle does not show that it is not dependent on the divine will, all the precepts of the Decalogue are dispensable.[47] Ockham, therefore, goes further than Scotus, who makes only the second table of the Decalogue dispensable. God could make hatred of God meritorious, even though the love of God is—given what God has actually willed—required by correct reason.

This dependence of correct reason on the prior will of God makes it difficult to understand what content we are to attribute to correct reason. Ockham's position would be intelligible if we found that some synthetic practical principles appeared irresistibly to us as fundamentally reasonable, even though we could not say what is reasonable about them. One might say that they seem basically reasonable but not further justifiable, because they record the results of God's antecedent acts of will that have constituted these principles as reasonable. If, however, we follow Aquinas in supposing that the basic principles of morality can be discovered by the appropriate sort of deliberation on the human good, it is difficult to see how correct reason and morality, so understood, could simply express God's antecedent will; they seem to reflect distinct facts about human nature, which do not depend on the divine legislative will.

It is rather difficult, then, to see what Ockham means about the relation between the divine will and correct reason. He seems to treat correct reason as a source of non-positive morality in a purely epistemic sense; though we grasp these moral principles without any explicit reference to the divine legislative will, our knowledge of their content does not capture their metaphysical status. Though we can know them without reference to divine legislation, in fact they depend on divine legislation. This claim that correct reason depends

[45] Ockham takes this view when he asks whether there is some cause of predestination in the predestined (*1Sent.* d41 q1 = OT iv 597.19–598.4). He denies that something must cause God's will to conform to correct reason: 'It can be said that every correct will conforms to correct reason. But it does not always conform to a prior correct reason that shows the cause why the will ought to will this. Rather, by the very fact that the divine will wills this, correct reason dictates that it is to be willed' (*1Sent.* d41 = OT iv 610.1–5). This passage is discussed by Oakley, 'Natural law'. See also Kilcullen, 'Natural law and will'; Clark, 'Right reason'.

[46] Cf. Scotus' treatment of Anselm's maxim, §381.

[47] See Suarez, *Leg.* ii 15.3, relying on Ockham, *2Sent.* q15 ad 3 = OT v 352.

on the divine legislative will seems to require a rather impoverished conception of the content of correct reason. If this is what he means, his departure from Aquinas is more radical than it might initially have seemed if we attended simply to the prominence of Ockham's remarks on correct reason.

None the less, since he believes that we can grasp some important elements of morality by correct reason, Ockham is justified in endorsing a conception of natural law.[48] Though he discusses it in his political writings, rather than a moral context, his remarks on it are not surprising. Indeed, it would be plausible to identify the basic principles of natural law with the basic principles of non-positive morality, as he understands it. These are principles that we know because we are rational agents, not because we recognize any specific divine precepts.

396. Divine Freedom and Divine Justice

If we agree that moral principles—both positive and non-positive—depend on divine legislation, a further question arises about the relation of the divine will to this legislation. Is God free to change this divine legislation or not? Ockham's conception of divine freedom prevents him from agreeing that morality consists of principles that God cannot change. He is dissatisfied with Aquinas' argument to show that God acts freely and not from necessity (Aquinas, *Pot.* q1 a5; q3 a15), because he thinks Aquinas sets the standards for freedom too low.[49] In Ockham's view, Aquinas shows only that God acts through his intellect and will, but this is insufficient to show that he acts freely.[50] Ockham cites Aquinas' own remark that action through intellect and will is not necessarily free action.[51]

Aquinas argues that his conception of freedom answers this objection. In his view, God does not act out of a necessity of his nature, but is self-determining.[52] He understands necessity as 'mere' necessity, to be contrasted with acting for an end of one's own. In saying that God does not act out of mere necessity, he does not concede that it is possible for God not to act for the end for which God acts; on the contrary, he affirms that God cannot fail to act for the sake of God's goodness.[53] God's non-necessary choice is reflected in the fact that more than one good ordering of creatures would have been consistent with God's essential

[48] Ockham's views on natural law are rather loosely connected to his moral theory in general. But his discussion of the first two types of natural law ('absolute' v. 'with some condition') fits his conception of non-positive morality. The main passage is *Dial.* iii, Tract 2, 10, translated in Ockham, *LFM* 261. For further details see Crowe, *CPNL* 201–5; Offler, 'Modes'; McGrade, *PTWO* 177–85.

[49] See Pegis, 'Necessity'; Freppert, *BMWO* 105.

[50] See *2Sent.* q3–4 = OT v 52.14–53.3; q3–4 = OT v 55.15–56.5; *1Sent.* d43 q1 = OT iv 625.8–626.19.

[51] See Aquinas, *ST* 1a q60 a2 (natural dilectio involves intellect and will but is not free); 1-2 q1 a2; *Pot.* q10 a2 ad4, 5.

[52] '. . . whatever acts out of necessity by nature (ex necessitate natura), it is impossible for it to be an acting principle, since the end would be determined for it by something else. And so it is clear that it is impossible for God to act out of necessity of nature' (Aquinas, *Pot.* q1 a5c = M 19a).

[53] 'The natural end of the divine will . . . is its goodness, which it cannot not will. But creatures are not commensurate with this end in such a way that without these the divine goodness could not be revealed; and it is this revealing that God aims at from creatures. For just as the divine goodness is revealed through the things that now are and through the ordering of these things, so also it can be revealed through other creatures and creatures ordered in another way. . . .' (*Pot.* q1 a5c = M 19b).

goodness. God does not act necessarily; God chooses one of these good options, when it is open to God to choose one of the other good options.[54]

This answer does not satisfy Ockham. In his view, God must be free to reject all the various good options; no constraint requiring God to choose among the good options is consistent with divine freedom. God was free to choose some other set of laws than the ones God actually chose, and therefore God is free to alter those already chosen. The decision not to alter them is an expression of God's 'directed' or 'ordered' (ordinata) power; this is God's power directed in the way God has freely chosen to direct it. This directed power is distinct from God's 'unqualified' or 'absolute' (absoluta) power.[55] Hence the fact that it is not within God's directed power to change a given law simply means that God has directed his power so as to leave this law unchanged; it still remains within God's unqualified power to change the law. God has the unqualified power to cause A without causing B unless A and B are identical (so that it would be self-contradictory for something to be A without being B) (*2Sent.* q15 = OT v 342.8–21). Hence God's power extends to doing everything that can be done without a contradiction or blameworthy evil.[56] Only God's currently-directed power would be violated if God were to change the current order to another order. When Ockham says that certain principles are stable 'given that the divine command stands', he means that they are stable from the point of view of God's directed power, but it is still within God's unqualified power to change them.[57]

In the light of these views about morality and divine freedom, Ockham defends his version of Anselm's claim that what God wills is necessarily just and right. God is not obliged to do anything, because God is no one's debtor. Even if a human being is obliged to do x and would act wrongly by doing not-x, God is not obliged to do x and would not act wrongly by doing not-x (*Q. var.* q8 = OT viii 434.573–436.607). For sin consists not only in a specific sort of action, but also in the fact that the action violates an obligation. Since God cannot be obliged, God cannot sin.[58] Similarly, punishment is owed to any human being only because this is how God has ordered it.[59] Since God is not obliged to do anything, and therefore is not obliged to do anything other than what God does, Anselm is right to believe that God cannot act unjustly. A human will needs some rule to direct it to act rightly, because it does

[54] On divine freedom and creation see Aquinas, §§307, 347.

[55] On potentia absoluta and potentia ordinata see §381; Aquinas, *ST* 1a q25 a3 ad1; Scotus, *1Sent.* d44 = OO v 2, 1368 §2 = W 256 (with Wolter's introduction, 56–7); Ockham, *Quodl.* vi q6 = OT ix 604.14–16; *1Sent.* d20 = OT iv 36.4–10; Adams, *WO* ii 1186–207; Wood, *OV* 22–5. Aspects of the historical influence of the distinction are explored by Oakley, 'Absolute'.

[56] 'omne quod non includit contradictionem nec malum culpae potest fieri a Deo solo', *2Sent.* q15 = OT v 342.19–21.

[57] For 'given that the divine command stands' see n45 above.

[58] 'For one does not call a sin, as has been said, anything other than some act of commission <that a human being is obliged not to do> or of omission <of an action> that a human being is obliged to do. . . . But God cannot be obliged to do any act, and therefore, by the very fact that God wills this, it is just to be done. . . . It is obligation, therefore, that makes someone a sinner or not a sinner' (*4Sent.* q10–11 = OT vii 198.4–13). On God's debts and obligations see Adams, 'Will' 264–5.

[59] '. . . for, just as God creates any creature out of his mere will (mera voluntate), so also by his mere will he is able to do whatever pleases him about his creature. For just as, if someone were always to love God and were to do all works accepted by God, God could annihilate him without doing <him?> any wrong (sine aliqua iniuria), so also he can give him, after such works, not eternal life but eternal punishment without doing <him> wrong. And the reason is that God is no one's debtor, but whatever he does for us, he does out of mere grace. That is why, by the very fact that God does something, it is done justly. For it is clear that Christ never sinned, and yet was most severely punished even unto death' (*4Sent.* q5 = OT vii 55.11–21). Cf. *4Sent.* q11 = OT vii 225.19–226.5; Holopainen, *WOTFE* 134.

not act rightly of itself. The divine will, by contrast, needs nothing to direct it, because it is itself the primary directive rule, and cannot act badly (*Q. var.* q8 = OT viii 410.19–23).

Ockham seems to assume a strictly positive conception of obligation and of right and wrong. Apart from principles that cannot be denied without self-contradiction, all right and wrong is the creation of someone's will. Hence nothing that God chooses to do, whatever it might be, could be wrong.[60] Right and wrong presuppose the imposition of a debt or obligation by an imposer who is distinct from the debtor or the person obliged.[61]

397. Questions about God's Justice

Ockham's claims about the necessary conditions for obligation and sin seem to require a voluntarist interpretation of his claims about non-positive morality. His claims about the connexion between obligation and imposition seem to require him to deny that the principles of non-positive morality have any content that is independent of God's legislative will. If they had independent content, some things that are always morally right might not be obligatory until God chooses them. But Ockham does not seem to allow the possibility that in some circumstances non-positive morality might be possibly right but non-obligatory; he expresses moral principles with gerundives ('right actions are to be done' etc.), which he normally uses to express obligations.

His claims about God's freedom from obligations and duties seem to rest on a narrow use of 'obligation' and 'duty' (or 'debt', debitum).[62] We might disagree with him on several grounds: (1) We might agree that obligations and duties are the same, but deny that obligation requires imposition.[63] (2) We might agree that obligations and duties are the same, and agree that obligations are imposed or incurred by voluntary action. On this view, non-obligatory actions might create obligations or duties. We might believe that while people have no obligation to become parents, or spouses, or monks, they incur obligations once they enter into these conditions. Similarly, then, though God was not obliged to create us, God might incur an obligation towards us by creating us; once God created us, perhaps some things that would not otherwise have been wrong for God to do became wrong. (3) We might agree with Ockham's assumption that obligation requires not mere imposition, but imposition by a superior. But then we might follow Suarez in separating obligations from duties and maintain that God has duties, though no obligations, towards us.[64] (4) Even if we agree with Ockham that obligations and duties are the same and that they all require imposition by a superior, we might believe that some right and wrong action is independent of obligation and duty.

To agree with Ockham, then, we must reject all of these views, and agree that obligations imposed by a superior exhaust the content of the morally right and wrong. It is not clear

[60] 'A human being never sins except because he is required (tenetur) to do what he does not do or because he does what he ought (debet) not to do. By this account a human being is made a debtor (debitor). God, however, is required to do nothing and is not obliged as a debtor, and for that reason he cannot do what he ought (debet) not to do and cannot not do what he ought to do' (*2Sent.* q15 = OT v 343.17–22).

[61] See Aquinas on God and debitum; *ST* 1a q21 a1.

[62] Ockham does not seem to distinguish debitum from obligatio.

[63] Perhaps Aquinas accepts this view. See §303.

[64] On obligationes v debita see Suarez, *Leg.* ii 9.4.

why we should agree on this general point about obligation and morality, since the four other views seem at least as plausible, from the moral point of view, as Ockham's view. We seem to have a reason to accept his views about obligation only if we already accept Ockham's views on divine freedom. In this case, then, his views on freedom seem to be the basis of his views on morality.

But even if we agree that all right and wrong action by one agent presupposes a debt or obligation imposed by another agent, Ockham still has not vindicated Anselm's claim. For even if he has shown that it is impossible for God to act wrongly or unjustly, given God's freedom from imposed obligations, it does not follow that everything God does is just and right. Why should we not say instead that what God does is neither right nor wrong?

It is not clear how Ockham answers this question. Though he claims that wrongness requires the violation of an imposed obligation, he does not say that rightness requires the fulfilment of an imposed obligation. But it is difficult to see why rightness and wrongness should differ in their relation to imposed obligations. If Ockham claims that God's will, simply by being God's will, is just, he apparently ought to say that whatever violates or opposes God's will is unjust, whether or not God has laid any obligation on us to obey his will.[65] But if he takes wrongness to presuppose an imposed obligation, he apparently ought to say the same about rightness.

Perhaps Ockham is not clear about the relation between two claims that he seems to accept: (1) What is right is what accords with God's will. (2) What is right is what is imposed by the will of a superior. If we consider which human actions are right, both claims imply that God's legislative will determines what it is right for us to do. But if we consider God's actions, the two claims have different implications; for the first implies that what God does is right, whereas the second implies that it is neither right nor wrong. Ockham's claims about obligation, rightness, and wrongness commit him to the view of some later voluntarists, that God's actions are neither just nor unjust, because they are above any imposition of obligation.[66] He should not agree, therefore, with Anselm's view that God's actions are necessarily just.

398. Conflicts within Morality

These claims about the dependence of morality on God's will do not cancel the difference between non-positive and positive morality. If we consider God's unqualified power, even non-positive morality is—according to one of Ockham's explanations, at any rate—a product of God's freely willing one content rather than another for the principles of correct reason. But once God has willed that content, we can consider morality with reference to God's directed power; with this condition assumed, we can know by correct reason, without reference to any further act of divine legislation, that some actions are right and others are wrong, and we can also count on God to act and prescribe in accordance with the principles we grasp by correct reason.

[65] As Ockham sees, this point requires some qualification, to take account of the fact that God wills that we not will our parents' death, even though God wills that our parents will die (*Q. var.* q8 = OT viii 434.573–435.583).

[66] Cf. Locke, discussed by Price, *RPQM* 43.

Though the content of non-positive morality known to correct reason is fixed, in relation to God's directed power, non-positive morality may still conflict with divine positive morality. For apparently God might freely choose to violate a precept of non-positive morality, or might instruct us to violate it. Scotus does not acknowledge this possibility; the only dispensations he mentions are dispensations from divine positive law. Ockham, however, acknowledges the possibility of a conflict. God's unqualified power extends to everything that does not involve a contradiction, and (according to Ockham) it is not self-contradictory to deny that theft and adultery are sometimes right; hence God could (by his unqualified power) command us to commit adultery, so that adultery would be right.[67] In the extreme case, God could make it right to hate God.[68]

On the strength of this claim, Suarez takes Ockham to hold that no action is bad except in so far as it is prohibited by God, and no action could not become good if it were prescribed by God, and conversely.[69] Ockham relies on God's freedom from obligation, and on the fact that God's will, exercising unqualified power, fixes the content of non-positive morality. Non-positive morality does not consist entirely of analytic truths that would be immutable even within God's unqualified power (because God could not make them false without self-contradiction). It consists of substantive principles that contain obligations resulting from the divine will. Hence non-positive morality is mutable within God's unqualified power.

It is therefore logically possible for God to give us a command that we could not obey. In Ockham's view, we obey God's commands because we follow the precept of non-positive morality that enjoins the love for God. In following this precept we follow the law that accords with the will of God, and it is not within God's directed power to change it. But God could, as far as God's unqualified power goes, change loving God from being right to being wrong. God might command us not to love God; we could not be moved to obey this command unless we loved God, but if we loved God we would not be obeying this command. Hence we could not obey God's command not to love God (*Quodl.* iii 14 = OT ix 256.74–257.94).[70]

This argument presupposes that the only motive for obeying God that we need to consider is love for God. Ockham is not considering obedience out of 'servile' fear of God's power to harm us,[71] but obedience on moral grounds, and hence obedience based on the love of God. On this assumption, God can give us a command that we cannot fulfil—not because God

[67] 'On another point I say that, granted that hatred, theft, adultery, have a bad circumstance attached to them, and so do similar things in the common law, in so far as they are done by someone who by a divine precept is obliged to the contrary; still, as far as concerns the unqualified being of such actions, they can be done by God without any bad circumstance attached. And they can even be done meritoriously by a traveller <in this life>, if they were to fall under a divine precept, just as now in fact their opposites fall under a divine precept' (*2Sent.* q15 ad3 = OT v 352.3–9).

[68] 'God is not obliged to cause any action, and therefore he can cause any action at all without any blameworthy evil (malum culpae), and similarly <he can cause> its opposite. And for that reason, just as he can cause entirely an act of loving without moral goodness or badness (because moral goodness and badness connote that the agent is obliged to that act or to its opposite), so also he can cause entirely an act of hating God without any moral badness for the same reason, because he is not obliged to cause any act' (*2Sent.* q15 ad4 = OT v 353.11–18). Ockham uses 'connote' (connotare) for a secondary or indirect signification; see Adams, *WO* i 147–8.

[69] 'nullum esse actum malum, nisi quatenus a Deo prohibitus est, et qui non possit fieri bonus si a Deo praecipiatur, et e converso', Suarez, *Leg.* ii 6.4.

[70] Cf. *Quodl.* iii 15 = ix 260 fin.

[71] On servile fear see Aquinas, *ST* 2-2 q7 a1.

commands us to do something self-contradictory in itself, but because our obedience to any command of God presupposes a motive that is prohibited by this particular command.[72]

Ockham describes this possibility in order to show what his position implies about the will of God, not because he believes that God does or will command us not to love God. He takes divine freedom to exclude any conception of God that makes God's choices depend on God's understanding of what is best. Though Ockham accepts the Anselmian principle about God's justice, he accepts it in the attenuated sense that regards justice as simply a product of God's choice.

399. God and Morality: Versions of Voluntarism

Neither Scotus nor Ockham is an unqualified voluntarist about morality and the divine will. The qualifications are especially clear in Scotus. He attributes to God an affection for justice that is the mark of divine freedom no less than of human freedom. This affection for justice ensures the truth of the Anselmian principle that necessarily God wills what is just. Moreover, not all the principles of morality are products of God's choice, since the higher principles of natural law (including the first table of the Decalogue) are discoverable by natural reason as principles about natural suitability. The positive laws that God imposes on us (including the second table of the Decalogue) also manifest the affection for justice, since they are highly consonant with the higher principles of natural law. Ockham also recognizes the rational and just aspects of the divine will. He does not follow Scotus in connecting the affection for justice with freedom, but he recognizes a non-positive area of morality, and believes that God endorses it.

It is not easy to combine God's acceptance of justice with God's freedom, as Scotus conceives it. If he is right about freedom, God's preference for justice and for the principles of natural law is a preference of God's self-determining will that chooses between justice and injustice, but not on the basis of goodness or rightness. To maintain the Anselmian maxim, Scotus has to treat justice as simply the product of God's choice. Similarly, Ockham believes that God's legislative will is necessarily rational; it is not guided by rational principles, but creates them. Human moral judgment, however, is guided by reason; facts about moral rightness and wrongness are accessible to human reason, and virtue consists in willing in accordance with correct reason. Ockham does not share the scepticism of later writers who deny any special connexion between practical reason and morality.

The position of Scotus and Ockham is often taken to be an important influence on the direction taken by later moral philosophy. Sometimes it is taken to be the origin of 'divine command' conceptions of morality defended during and after the Reformation.[73] This is not simply the view of historians in the nineteenth century or later. Cudworth defends eternal and immutable morality, as he conceives it, both against the positivism that he traces back to Protagoras and against the theological voluntarism that he attributes to Ockham, other

[72] See Adams 'Structure' 27–31; *WO* ii 1273–8 (on divine power). According to Oberman, *HMT* 94–5, Biel rejects Ockham's account of God's command to hate him. The evidence cited for this claim about Biel is insufficient; see *3Sent.* d37 a2 concl 3 = 636L W&H. Gregory of Rimini argues against Ockham at *1Sent.* d42–4 q1 a2 = 384–7 T&M.

[73] See §§411, 421–2.

mediaeval theologians, 'modern' theologians, and Descartes. From Cudworth's point of view, the mediaeval voluntarists abandon the view that morality has rational foundations. Cudworth does not invent this assessment of voluntarism; he relies on the critique of Ockham by Suarez, who cannot be accused of ignorance of Scholasticism or of raising anachronistic questions.[74]

This assessment of Scotus and Ockham may not be correct, since they may not accept all the views that later critics, or later followers, connect with voluntarism. They both understand morality as conformity to correct reason.[75] Is this a reason for rejecting the criticisms presented by Suarez and Cudworth?

Ockham maintains: (1) Moral virtue is in accord with correct reason. (2) Correct reason grasps the principles of non-positive morality. (3) Non-positive morality consists of obligations. (4) All obligations are imposed by God. (5) God's will does not follow any independent principles of morality. These claims are consistent, but they force Ockham into an awkward position. He has to claim that the content of correct reason itself is the product of a choice made by the free will of God independently of any antecedent principles of right. But this way of safeguarding the freedom of the divine will makes it difficult to see what is rational about the principles accepted by correct reason. We cannot say that some specific aim or character constitutes their rationality, since that would constrain God's choice of what to count as correct reason.

Ockham seems to be committed, therefore, to saying that it is logically possible for God to have made correct reason require cruelty, self-destruction, injustice, neglect of the future for the sake of the present, and so on. If this is indeed a consequence of his position, we might reasonably conclude that the appeal to correct reason has lost the sense that it has in Aquinas, and really amounts to nothing more than the claim that God has put some specific convictions into us.

Ockham seems to imply that it is up to God to choose what the natural law will be. He thereby denies any necessary connexion between the nature of a creature, the good of that creature, and the natural law applying to that creature. If the creature's nature fixes its good, but God is free to vary the natural law so that it does not conform to a creature's nature, apparently God is free to prescribe laws that conflict with the creature's good. Ockham does not claim that the principles of justice are unconnected with the good of human beings, or that God is free to impose new principles of justice that are unconnected with human good; but it is difficult to see how he can avoid such a claim, if he admits that the nature of human beings fixes their good.

He might, therefore, reply that the nature of a creature does not fix its good, and that God is free to change a creature's good together with changes in the natural law. This denial of a necessary connexion between human nature and the human good ought not to appeal to Scotus; for belief in such a necessary connexion seems to underlie his account of the affection for advantage. He accepts the Aristotelian view that facts about a creature's nature, rather than the creature's preferences or divine preferences, fix its good. As long as we maintain this connexion between a creature's nature and its good, we cannot make its good depend

[74] See Cudworth, *EIM* i 1.5 = H14.

[75] See Wolter, *DSWM* 16–29; Adams 'Structure'; Bonansea, 'Voluntarism' 95–6.

on the divine legislative will. Ockham does not explicitly reject Scotus' claims about nature and good, but his position might be more defensible if he rejected them.

A thoroughly voluntarist position, eliminating the possibility of conflict between nature and the will of God, might seek to make the human good depend on God's will, without completely severing it from human nature. Ordinary legislators support their commands with sanctions. If God does this too, God can attach pleasure to the fulfilment of divine commands and pain to the violation of them. Since we naturally aim at pleasure and avoid pain, God can change the natural law without changing this aspect of our nature.

This penal conception of our reason for obeying natural law would not avoid a conflict between God's commands and our nature, if our nature made other things non-instrumentally good for us apart from pleasure. If, then, we want to maintain the penal account of natural law, we are well advised to accept a hedonist account of the good. Hence Hobbes combines a penal account of natural law with hedonism. In his view, the laws of nature, apart from divine commands, are not really laws, but counsels of prudence prescribing means to our pleasure. As divine commands they are laws combined with sanctions appealing to pain and pleasure. The appropriate connexion with human nature relies on a hedonist conception of the good.[76]

This more extreme voluntarist position is not the logical outcome of Scotus' and Ockham's qualified voluntarism. From the extreme voluntarist point of view, Scotus and Ockham create difficulties for themselves by failing to reject Aristotelian assumptions about the connexion between natural law, the human good, and facts about human nature. These assumptions open the prospect of conflict between human nature, the human good, and the will of God. Ockham accepts the possibility of such conflict. If we take it to be morally and theologically unacceptable, we will discard the Aristotelian assumptions. This is not the only possible conclusion, however. Perhaps we should accept the possible conflicts resulting from Scotus' and Ockham's position, or we should prefer Aquinas' position over voluntarism.

A different sort of voluntarist response to the difficulties faced by Scotus and Ockham might deny that divine legislation fixes the human good, and confine it to the fixing of moral rightness and wrongness. According to this view, facts about human nature and human good are fixed by the existence of human beings in their natural environment, but they are separate from moral rightness and wrongness until God commands the observance of principles promoting the human good. According to this view, the will of God is sovereign over whether the natural law is really law; without the divine command, it would not be natural law, but simply a set of principles. This conception of law relies on Ockham's narrow conception of obligation, making obligation depend on imposition by the will of another, and taking law to imply obligation.[77]

This version of voluntarism avoids the difficulty that arises for Ockham, since it does not fix the content of correct reason by acts of divine free choice, but allows the content of correct reason to be fixed by human nature and human good. But this advantage is costly; if we separate the content of correct reason from the strictly moral principles that require divine imposition, we sever the connexion that Ockham preserves between correct reason and morality. This element of anti-intellectualism takes a step beyond Scotus and Ockham, though one can see why reflexion on the difficulties in their position might support this step.

[76] See Hobbes, *L.* 15.41.

[77] Different versions of this view are defended by Suarez and Pufendorf.

400. Voluntarism, Morality, and Reasons

We have now discussed the aspects of voluntarism that are intended to maintain divine freedom against the restrictions (as Scotus and Ockham suppose) that would follow from acceptance of Aquinas' view. Similarly, voluntarists intend to safeguard human freedom in relation to God and morality. In their view, God does not present us with principles that are rationally compelling for us, so that we would be acting irrationally if we rejected them. Instead, Scotus argues that God presents the natural law as a series of requirements of justice; we will have a reason to follow them if we choose to follow our affection towards justice, but we have no overriding reason to choose to follow this affection rather than some other.

If facts about human nature do not provide external reasons, the voluntarist loses Aquinas' account of the basis of ethics in natural reason. The voluntarist's alternative basis consists in principles that provide internal reasons for agents who already have the relevant sorts of affections and have made the appropriate sorts of undetermined choices. If we choose to follow our affection towards our own advantage, self-interested principles give us internal reasons; if we choose to follow our affection towards justice, other principles provide internal reasons.

If all reasons are internal, we can solve difficulties about divine commands and ethics that might seem to arise otherwise. A believer in external reasons must apparently recognize at least the logical possibility of a conflict between divine commands and rational principles of morality; for why, we might ask, should God not order us to do one thing while rational morality orders us to do another? If we are thorough voluntarists at the human as well as the divine level, we can remove this difficulty. God cannot command us to act contrary to external reasons, if there are none. The right way to describe a conflict between God's commands and some other principle is to say that some other affection of ours prompts us to do x, but God commands us to do y. It is then up to us to choose whether to follow the affections that incline us to obey God (love of God, fear of divine punishment) or to follow our other affections. None of these courses of action is externally more reasonable than another; which it is reasonable for us to follow depends on our undetermined choice to follow one or another affection.

These voluntarist views help us to understand some of Hobbes's assumptions. If there are no external reasons, reasons and obligations rest on some affection and some choice. If our basic affection aims at self-preservation, any obligation must ultimately appeal to that affection; hence it must appeal to our desire for self-preservation either directly or indirectly (through a sanction for violation). Since God and human legislators impose a sanction for the violation of their commands, their commands provide us with obligations.[78]

Hobbesian assumptions about motivation and affection do not follow from a voluntarist position. But the starting point of the Hobbesian argument, assuming the unintelligibility of external reasons, may well appear arbitrary and unjustified unless we are already convinced by voluntarist arguments against Aquinas' version of intellectualism.

[78] For this sort of view see Tuck, *NRT*, ch. 4, on Selden.

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MACHIAVELLI

401. Questions about Moral Philosophy

In some ways Machiavelli is not a very suitable source if we are looking for serious philosophical criticism of Aquinas. His main interests and abilities lie in politics and history, and he is neither a deep nor a systematic philosophical thinker. Still, these very features of his views make it even more useful to examine them; for he shows how specific practical problems and attitudes may suggest objections to the Christian assumptions embodied in Aquinas' system. Machiavelli intends to challenge the Christian conception of the place of the Christian virtues in social and political life. But he also raises a broader question that he does not intend: what counts as an adequate theory of the virtues? Machiavelli sets out some demands that the Christian conception does not satisfy; but it is not obvious that any other conception of the virtues can satisfy his demands.[1]

Aquinas intends his account of the ultimate end and the moral virtues to embrace different sorts of practical situations and demands. The virtues satisfy the demands of (i) self-interest; (ii) morality; (iii) the common good of a community; (iv) a human being's approach to the vision of God. Machiavelli rejects Aquinas' system by arguing that no one set of virtues can satisfy all four sorts of demands.

Aquinas believes that the virtues contribute to a person's own interest because they require the regulation of passion by practical reason, and because the particular sort of regulation they require is appropriate for a human being's social and political nature. The kinds of demands and restrictions imposed on us by the requirements of morality do not conflict with the good of the individual human being; on the contrary, they fulfil it.

The second and third demands on the virtues are not sharply distinct; for Aquinas, following Aristotle, identifies the requirements of social morality with the common good of some community, small or large. But it is useful to see that two distinct conditions have to be satisfied. Aquinas connects them closely because he does not believe that we can determine

[1] Burd, *Il Principe* xiv, remarks: 'It is no paradox to say that *The Prince*, though in many ways immoral, has been none the less of indirect service to morality. . . . [It] has the significance which belongs to the works of all authors who have questioned, not in a spirit of selfishness or from indifference, but from a reasoned conviction, the commonly accepted codes of morality. Such writings serve, by contrast, for a perpetual reminder that the ultimate sanction of morality is, for the non-religious mind at any rate, the suicidal nature of immorality . . .'

the good of the community by some non-moral standard, and then subordinate morality to this goal. The community whose good is to be promoted must itself be formed on principles suitable for the nature of the individuals belonging to it; this is one consequence of the Aristotelian claim that the state is a natural association. Principles derived from the moral virtues partly determine what counts as the good of a community.

The virtues are to satisfy the fourth demand because the pursuit of a comprehensive good in this life is the appropriate preliminary to the vision of God in the next life; Aquinas' conception of the final good prevents him from saying that if we want the vision of God, we ought to renounce the world altogether. He has to appeal to his specific analysis of the virtues to show that the moral virtues needed for social life do not conflict with the Christian virtues. The kinds of bravery and magnanimity that are appropriate to a citizen do not conflict with the humility required of a Christian.

Machiavelli offers a powerful objection to Aquinas because he casts serious doubt on whether any one set of virtues can really satisfy all the four sorts of demands that Aquinas recognizes as legitimate. It is useful to consider his grounds for scepticism.

402. Civic Virtues

Machiavelli and Aquinas share one of their starting points. For Machiavelli follows Greek and Roman political theory in placing a high value on the virtues of the citizen and on the demands of civic life. He is concerned with the fortunes of a city-state that has to struggle to maintain its political independence and its civic harmony; and to this extent the problems he faces are similar to those that face Thucydides, Plato, and Aristotle. Even though his major work is a series of discourses on Livy, his situation and experience are closer to those of the Greek historians and political theorists than to the actual situation of Livy, who looks back on Rome's existence as a city-state from the rather different perspective of the early Empire under Augustus.

Some of Machiavelli's priorities are also similar to those of Greek political thinkers. He aims at a city's independence from external control and at its internal cohesion. He sees that factions tend to form, especially around powerful and ambitious individuals, and the deeper division between the rich and the poor tends to divide the citizens along more permanent lines. The citizens rightly want to preserve their liberty, including both freedom from external domination and freedom to choose the rulers they prefer. Most people, in Machiavelli's view, want freedom from interference by the state so that they can ensure security for themselves in their private lives (*D* i 16.8); but citizens with the right sort of civic spirit seem to want such freedom for its own sake (cf. ii 23.4).

The sovereign 'republic' governed by its citizens[2] (or some of them) is not the only sort of state that Machiavelli knows. He also discusses monarchies, and indeed *The Prince* is a book of advice for autocratic rulers. But he makes it clear that he prefers a republic. In the *Discourses*

[2] 'Free government'; *D* i 18.1. I cite *D* by the chapters and sections in Walker, and *P* by chapters and pages in Atkinson. I usually follow Walker's translation of *D* (severely criticized by Whitfield, *DM* 231–7) and Atkinson's translation of *P*. I cite Walker's edition as 'W'. Walker is forthright about the point of view from which he considers his subject: '. . . scholarship in the broad sense should place a man's stature against the background of really great thinkers, indeed against the background of common human judgment and of Christian perception, and, as judged from this standpoint, many of Machiavelli's principles, principles which are basic to his outlook and his theory, stand universally condemned' (i 8).

he is mainly concerned with republics, and clearly thinks it is desirable to maintain a republic in good condition if it is already healthy. He thinks it is a more difficult task to introduce a republic among people who have been used to absolute rule, or to restore a republic that has been 'corrupted' (*D* i 49); corruption is easy, and the danger is always present (i 42). The welfare of the state is always precarious; Machiavelli tries to protect it by giving advice about the sorts of dangers that may arise, and by suggesting ways to counteract them.

The aims of a republic, and the threats that it faces in trying to achieve these aims, determine Machiavelli's conception of a citizen's virtue. A good state maintains virtue in its citizens, and the only way to reform a state is to introduce laws and institutions that encourage the development of virtue. The virtue of a citizen is the set of characteristics that promotes the preservation of the republican state. The primary characteristic is willingness to make sacrifices for the common good. A secondary characteristic is a desire for glory, which is the most reliable motive leading to public spirit (cf. i 43). This desire is secondary in civic virtue because it needs to be restrained and controlled by the demands of the public interest; if it is necessary to sacrifice glory in order to preserve the state, that sacrifice should be made.[3]

Machiavelli does not always speak of virtue in exactly this way. He uses the term univocally[4] for the qualities that are most appropriate for achieving a given end; but since he considers different ends in different contexts, the qualities he includes under 'virtue' may differ also. He speaks of virtue not only in a civic, but also in a military context; the virtue of a general or a soldier is the appropriate sort of military efficiency rather than efficiency in promoting the common good of a state.[5] Civic virtue includes the appropriate degree of military virtue; and no doubt a good soldier must be ready to do his part in the whole army he belongs to. But still the two sorts of virtue may not be identical; it is clear and familiar to Machiavelli that an efficient and successful general may not be devoted to the common good of his state, and indeed may often be a threat to it.[6] A ruler may even be successful in maintaining his power and ensuring stability in the state; but if he behaves as Agathocles did, he cannot win glory and cannot count as having virtue (*P* 8). Machiavelli's use of 'virtue' for these two different, though related, sets of qualities raises no special difficulty; it is no less natural than the use of 'good' in 'good politician', 'good citizen', and 'good general'; but we have to be careful to see what sort of virtue he is referring to on each occasion.

403. Civic v. Christian Virtue

In the light of his conception of virtue, Machiavelli thinks he can show that the Christian virtues conflict with civic and military virtue. The Christian attitude to the world tends to develop the wrong traits of character and to impede the development of the right ones.[7]

[3] 'For when on the decision to be taken wholly depends the safety of one's country, no attention should be paid either to justice or injustice, to kindness or cruelty, or to its being praiseworthy or ignominious' (iii 41.2). W ad loc. points out that the historical examples cited by Machiavelli do not show that either the Romans or the French agree with his general principle.

[4] On 'virtue' see W i 99–102; Skinner, *FMPT* i 138; 'Virtù' 163; Plamenatz, 'Virtù;'. On contemporary uses of 'virtue', compared with Machiavelli's use, see Skinner, *FMPT* i 125–6.

[5] See W i 100–2.

[6] See *D* i 10.6; *P*19 (on Severus); *P*7 (on Cesare Borgia).

[7] 'For our religion, having taught us the truth and the true way of life leads us to ascribe less esteem to worldly honour' (*D* ii 2.6).

The cultivation of 'humility, abnegation, and contempt for mundane things' as the highest human good weakens the proper civic attachment to 'magnanimity, bodily strength, and everything else that tends to make men very bold' (*D* ii 2.6). Christianity demands strength in suffering rather than strength in action.[8]

It is not clear, however, that Machiavelli regards these harmful effects as necessary results of Christianity. For he suggests that the apparent conflict between the Christian virtues and active civic virtue may result from a misunderstanding of Christianity.[9] Unfortunately he does not try to reconcile this suggestion with his previous remarks. It would be strange if he meant that Christianity does not encourage the virtues of humility and detachment from the concerns of the world; for he is correct in saying that it does not place a person's highest good in worldly success. But he may mean that the cultivation of the Christian outlook need not conflict with a proper civic spirit, because Christian principles allow[10] loyalty to one's community and vigour in promoting its welfare.

This is an important concession by Machiavelli. For even the less 'monkish' form of Christianity that he recognizes does not regard loyalty to the state as an individual's overriding goal. He does not suggest that 'civic Christianity' would regard every action necessary for the defence of the state as morally legitimate and beyond criticism. If he concedes this, he also concedes that the appropriate civic virtue need not include an unreserved commitment to the preservation of the state.

It is doubtful, however, whether Machiavelli consistently intends to allow that civic virtue requires only the Christian's limited loyalty to the state. For his usual view implies a much deeper objection to Christian morality. His position is summed up in the claim that 'it is good to defend one's country in whatever way it is done, whether it entail ignominy or glory' (iii 41.1). Machiavelli illustrates this extreme principle with some relatively innocuous examples that might be consistent with a more moderate principle; he mentions the use of tricks and stratagems in war[11] and the acceptance of humiliating terms of peace. But he accepts the extreme principle without restriction, as a defence of actions that are not merely humiliating but clearly immoral. Any action taken by a ruler organizing a republic is justified if its effects are good enough.[12]

[8] 'This pattern of life, therefore, appears to have made the world weak, and to have handed it over as a prey to the wicked, who run it successfully and securely since they are well aware that the generality of men, with paradise for their goal, consider how best to bear, rather than how best to avenge, their injuries' (ii 2.7).

[9] 'But though it looks as if the world were become effeminate and as if heaven were powerless, this undoubtedly is due rather to the pusillanimity of those who have interpreted our religion in terms of laissez faire [or 'inactivity'; ozio], not in terms of virtue. For, had they borne in mind that religion permits us to exalt and defend the fatherland, they would have seen that it also wishes us to love and honour it, and to train ourselves to be such that we may defend it' (ii 2.7). W ad loc. cites Aquinas' comments on the bad effects of tyranny, *Reg. Princ.* i 3 = M 5a: 'Moreover it is natural that when people are brought up under fear, they decline into a servile outlook, and become pusillanimous towards every manly and demanding (strenuum) activity'. Aquinas blames tyranny for the outlook that Machiavelli blames on Christianity.

[10] In the passage just quoted from W, Machiavelli says only 'allows' rather than 'enjoins'. W translates 'permette', but some texts read 'promette' (preferred by Rinaldi, *O*, and glossed 'invita a').

[11] On these W ii 204 cites Aquinas, *ST* 2-2 q40 a3. Aquinas argues that attempts to deceive the enemy by lying or breaking promises are impermissible and contrary to the 'iura bellorum' that should always be observed. But stratagems (insidiae) that may mislead the enemy are permissible.

[12] 'Nor will any reasonable man blame him for taking any action, however extraordinary, which may be of service in the organizing of a kingdom or the constituting of a republic. It is a sound maxim that reprehensible actions may be justified by their effects, and that when the effect is good, as it was in the case of Romulus, it always justifies the action' (i 9.2). W ad loc. cites examples given in iii 3–4.

This general principle explains Machiavelli's conviction that the recognized moral virtues do not suit a ruler who tries to do what has to be done for the sake of the state. In discussing the qualities that a ruler should cultivate, he rejects the usual advice of moralists who urge rulers to cultivate the moral virtues.[13] Such advice is inapplicable to the real world, where a ruler has to be willing to act immorally on the right occasions, if he is to maintain his position.[14] This instruction to any ruler who wants to maintain his power follows from Machiavelli's separation of civic virtue from moral virtue. He rejects the advice of moralists because he assumes that the overriding aim is the safety of the state or the ruler; moral principles conflicting with this aim are irrelevant.

We might, then, suppose that Machiavelli accepts Augustine's contrast between pagan and Christian virtue, but draws the opposite conclusion from it. If Augustine treats pagan virtues as 'splendid vices' and insists that genuine moral virtue is based on Christian faith, Machiavelli agrees with him on both points. He disagrees with Augustine in preferring the splendid vices of pagans to the Christian virtues, because he believes that the arrogance and self-assertion that Augustine finds in the pagan outlook are desirable traits.

404. Machiavellian Virtue v. Moral Virtue

We have found, however, that Augustine does not hold this view of pagan virtue, and that he is right not to hold it.[15] The virtues advocated by pagan moralists are not forms of self-assertion or arrogance; they include concern for the interests of others for their own sake. Machiavelli's division between the pagan and the Christian outlook does not fit the views of pagan moralists.

We can confirm this claim by considering the example of Romulus' murder of Remus. Machiavelli cites this incident to show that ruthlessness is sometimes necessary (i 9.2; Livy i 7.1–2). In this case it was immoral and vicious for Romulus to do what he did, but it was necessary for the preservation of his own rule and for the preservation of the state; hence it was justified, though not morally justified. Machiavelli admits that the traits of character he advises a ruler to acquire will appear deplorable and vicious from the moral point of view, not simply from the Christian point of view.[16]

Cicero mentions this incident as an apparent example of a conflict between the right (honestum) and the expedient (*Off.* iii 40–1). He assumes that it would be wrong to prefer the expedient over the right (nam id quidem improbum est, 40). He argues that in some cases reflexion on a particular case shows that the expedient course of action that seemed

[13] For the usual advice to a prince see the selections from Pontano and Platina in Kraye, *CTRPT* ii, chs. 5–6.

[14] 'Many writers have conceived of republics and princedoms which have never in fact been seen or known to exist. Since there is so great a discrepancy between how one lives and how one ought to live, whoever forsakes what is done for what ought to be done is learning his ruin rather than his preservation. For a man who wants to practise goodness in all situations is inevitably ruined, among so many men who are not good. Hence a prince who wishes to retain his power must learn to be able not to be good, and to use, or not to use, that ability according to necessity' (*P* 15, 255–7).

[15] See §228.

[16] 'I know everyone will admit that it would be most laudable for a prince to be endowed with all the qualities mentioned above, those that are considered good. But since he is unable to possess them, or comply with them, entirely because of human conditions which do not permit it—he must be prudent enough to know how to escape the infamy of those vices that do cost him his power' (*P* 15, 257–9).

unjust is not really unjust (Collatinus, 40);[17] but he rejects this defence of Romulus' conduct, and concludes that what Romulus did was wrong (41).

Cicero qualifies his judgment by remarking that Romulus did not simply assert the claims of expediency over morality; he cited the incident of Remus' jumping over the walls as an aggressive action that deserved punishment. Even if we think Romulus was justified, we need not agree that his action was clearly immoral, and hence we need not agree that it clearly illustrates the separation of the expedient from the right.

Machiavelli's brusque rejection of Cicero's argument shows that his attack on Christian morality is misleading. He attacks morality on a broader front, and repudiates the values of Cicero no less than those of Christian moralists. His focus on Christian values has misled interpreters who have supposed that he advocates the Classical, civic virtues against the other-worldly, Christian virtues.[18] This contrast is misleading because Machiavelli's outlook conflicts with the views of pagan moralists, who agree with Christians in denying that an appeal to the expedient can justify violation of justice.

It is not entirely misleading to connect Machiavelli's views with Classical antiquity. His conception of the ruler who values strength and self-assertion, and of the citizen or soldier who values glory, fits some aspects of the Homeric outlook. This outlook never entirely faded from Greek and Roman life and thought. Machiavelli's contrast between the active and aggressive pagan outlook and Christian humility anticipates Nietzsche's contrast between the Hellenic and the Jewish outlooks.[19] But while he captures the self-assertive aspect of Greek and Roman thought, he conveys the false impression that this is the dominant character of pagan moral theory. To suggest that principles for the moral restraint of self-assertion are the invention of Christians, or of philosophers out of touch with ordinary morality, is to distort the apparent facts. Since Machiavelli distorts history in this way, he makes his own position seem more attractive than it ought to seem.

Cicero offers a further comment on morality and expediency that corrects any over-simplified contrast between the 'pagan' and the 'Christian' ideals. After his judgment that Romulus was wrong to murder Remus, he adds that it would be unreasonable to require complete self-sacrifice, and that self-assertion without injury to other people is legitimate. He endorses Chrysippus' comparison with a race, in which competition is legitimate, but tripping up the other runners is prohibited.[20] Neither Cicero nor Chrysippus maintains that it is always wrong to harm anyone else; the successful competitor harms the losers, by winning

[17] See *D* i 28.3; iii 5.1; Livy ii 2.7.

[18] For a misleading contrast between Machiavelli and Christian morality see Berlin, 'Originality' 45: '. . . what he institutes is . . . a differentiation between two incompatible ideals of life, and therefore two moralities. One is the morality of the pagan world: its values are courage, vigour, fortitude in adversity, public achievement, order, discipline, happiness, strength, justice, above all assertion of one's proper claims and the knowledge and power needed to secure their satisfaction . . . These seem to Machiavelli the best hours of mankind and, Renaissance humanist that he is, he wishes to restore them. Against this moral universe . . . stands in the first and foremost place, Christian morality.' The conflict between Machiavelli and Cicero is appropriately emphasized by W ii 278; Skinner, *M*36–47; *FMPT* i 128–35 (on Machiavelli's rejection of traditional, and not only Christian, conceptions of the virtues). It is underestimated by Colish, 'Cicero and Machiavelli'.

[19] See Nietzsche, *GM* i 7.

[20] 'Someone who is running a race ought to strain and strive as hard as he can to win; but he ought not at all to trip up another competitor or to push him aside with his hand. So also in life, it is not unfair for each person to seek for himself what is appropriate for his use, but it is not right for him to snatch from someone else' (*Off.* iii 42 = SVF iii 689) Cf. §182n45.

at their expense. But Chrysippus implies that competition and self-assertion are subject to some constraints of justice, so that legitimate competition should not injure others, even if it harms them.

The constraints accepted by Cicero and Chrysippus do not offer very definite guidance in practice. They do not say, for instance, whether two states at war are engaged in legitimate competition or illegitimate aggression. But they are not practically empty either; for they imply that exclusive concern for one's own interest without reference to the interests and legitimate claims of others does not sufficiently justify one's action. If Chrysippus had been our only ancient source for this moral constraint on self-assertion and competition, we might have treated it as a Stoic paradox that was out of step with common morality. But Cicero does not treat it as a Stoic paradox; he treats it as being obviously right and not very controversial, a maxim that he expects to find broad acceptance. This is the elementary moral restraint, accepted by both pagan and Christian moralists, that Machiavelli thinks must be rejected.

For this reason we should not take Machiavelli at face value when he appears to be defending pagan virtue against Christian virtues. His advice to rulers is incompatible with the civic virtue that is recognized as a support of the Classical city-state, no less than with the Christian virtues that he accuses of undermining civic virtue. In both cases Machiavelli rejects any moral restraints on the end that he regards as overriding. Why does he suppose that the end he favours has this overriding status?

405. Civic Virtue and its End

It is difficult to see what Machiavelli's argument is. Some clarification is useful, not for the sake of finding out what he really means, but for the sake of a better understanding of some recurrent ambiguities in many people's presentation of the issues. For in this case too we can find a more extreme and a more moderate defence of his position.

If certain virtues and moral restraints are to be rejected because they conflict with specific ends, they must have less value than the ends that they conflict with; if this were not so, the conflict might equally give us a reason for rejecting the ends. Why does Machiavelli believe that the moral virtues must always give way in case of a conflict? His extreme defence requires him to claim that some particular end is more important than the moral virtues; his more moderate defence does not require this claim.

According to the extreme defence, Machiavelli means: 'If we have the correct view of what is worth pursuing in life, we will see that the preservation of the state is a more important end than any other end or any combination of other values; and so it is irrational to observe any other principle that conflicts with this end'. This is the most reasonable interpretation of Machiavelli's favourable remarks about Roman civic virtue. The Romans (in Machiavelli's image of them) take the preservation of the state to be the supreme end, and subordinate every other end and value to this one; because they organize their lives on this principle, they have civic virtue, and deserve praise for it.

Why, then, does Machiavelli believe that the preservation of the state should be the overriding end? He could certainly find widespread support in Classical theorists for the view that civic life is the best form of life, or one of the best forms of life, for a human being, or that

life in a state is necessary for other goods that make life worth living. We might even concede to him that if we face a choice between the preservation of this state and an irrevocable relapse into the disorganized, fragmented, insecure way of life that would result from the non-existence of any state, we ought to preserve the state at all costs. But any such concession clearly falls far short of the conclusion that Machiavelli needs. For he appeals to civic virtue to show that we ought to prefer the preservation of this particular state, as an independent political entity with this particular form of government, over anything else, whatever the moral cost might be. Nothing we have said seems to support this extreme claim.

Greek and Roman theory and practice seem to reject the extreme claim. Throughout Greek history groups within a city were willing to compromise its political independence in order to change the constitution; both sides did this in Athens at the end of the Peloponnesian War, and Polybius defends those who preferred Macedonian control over the degree of independence that allowed pro-Spartan oligarchies to rule.[21] These are not exactly cases of a conflict between the preservation of the state and the observance of moral principles; but they show that the end Machiavelli regards as overriding is at least not self-evidently overriding. His appeal to antiquity does not support his claim that unconditional loyalty to Athens or Florence is more reasonable than, say, loyalty to Athens or Florence with this constitution and this way of life following these moral principles. If the price of preserving the state is the violation of a principle that partly defines the object of our loyalty, then it is not clear that we always ought to preserve the state.

This objection to Machiavelli does not dispose of all the reasons that might be offered for choosing immoral means to the preservation of the state on particular occasions. But at least it casts doubt on his claim that we ought to pay any moral cost, however steep, because the mere preservation of the state, irrespective of its character or constitution, is the supreme end. The fact that his supreme end violates morality does not show that it needs no defence; and he offers no defence of it.

Perhaps, then, he does not intend the extreme claim that the preservation of the state is the supreme end. A more moderate defence of his position might set out from the assumption that all virtues, moral principles, and other values derive their value for an agent from the agent's choice of some ultimate end. If the ultimate end is the source of all other values, we cannot appeal to any of them to defend the choice of an ultimate end. If, then, we choose the preservation of the state as our ultimate end, we cannot appeal to the moral virtues, whose value for us is entirely derived from our choice of ultimate end, to justify moral restraints on our pursuit of this ultimate end. Hence we should be willing to violate the moral virtues for the sake of this ultimate end.

406. Instrumental Practical Reason

This defence has an advantage over the extreme defence, since it does not require Machiavelli to explain why the supreme end he picks is the best one to choose. He no longer has to pronounce on this question. He is free to say that neither the Christian nor the civic ideal

[21] Polybius xviii 14.

(understood as entirely devoted to the preservation of the state) is more rational than the other. In that case, he has nothing to say against us if we choose the outlook of the moral virtues, but he warns us that we had better recognize the price we must pay. Since he is not willing to pay the price, he prefers to subordinate morality to the preservation of the state. He is not claiming that the moralists are wrong, but simply warning us that if we listen to them, we may find the results disagreeable.

This second interpretation of Machiavelli's position makes it easier to understand why he sometimes offers his advice in a conditional form that might allow him to deny that he advocates immorality. In the *Prince* he often remarks that he is not saying whether monarchy is a desirable form of government, whether someone ought to have set up a particular regime, or whether a particular regime ought to survive. He confines himself to saying what a ruler has to do if he wants to survive, and what will affect his reputation in different ways. He need not concern himself with questions about whether there ought to be any such rulers or whether they ought, all things considered, to act in the ways he describes.[22]

It is more difficult to make this interpretation fit the *Discourses*, however; Machiavelli does not seem to be neutral on the question whether the unconditional preservation of the state is the supreme end, or whether civic virtue should be cultivated. But perhaps his partisan position can be reconciled with a refusal to evaluate ends. He might consistently admit that he is offering no reason for preferring the end that he prefers, but, since he prefers it, he advocates the course of action needed to advance it.

If this is the right interpretation of Machiavelli, it is easier to see why he does not offer any justification of his preferred ultimate end. If he thinks that justification has to proceed by reference to some more ultimate end, he has a reason for denying that the choice of one or another ultimate end can itself be justified. On this point he anticipates an argument of Hume's. The Humean argument might be taken to develop one aspect of a voluntarist treatment of will and reason. When Henry of Ghent maintains the subordination of intellect to will, he suggests that intellect is limited to the role of counsellor or guide along the path that the will chooses.[23]

One aspect of this argument is Aristotelian, and not exclusively voluntarist; for it is a standard Aristotelian view that—in some sense—the ultimate end provides the justification for other ends, and is not itself justified. But Aquinas does not infer that a choice between different conceptions of the ultimate end cannot be justified. The ultimate end that Aquinas takes as the starting point for further justification is the human good, identified with happiness; he believes that this can be specified enough to justify one conception of the ultimate end over another.

This is the point at which Machiavelli disagrees. Though he gives no reason for disagreeing with Aquinas, he identifies a point where Aquinas' position especially needs defence. Aquinas assumes that our views about worthwhile ultimate ends can be reconciled and explained in the light of his conception of happiness; if he is wrong about this, but still accepts a teleological pattern of justification, the questions raised by Machiavelli become more pressing.

But even if we think Machiavelli has raised a reasonable question, we need not follow him to his conclusion. For even if we find it difficult to say why one ultimate end is preferable to another, we ought to find it even more difficult to believe that it is never more reasonable

[22] On advice and generalizations see W i 69–73.

[23] See §389.

to prefer one over another. It seems possible to form trivial and silly conceptions of what is ultimately worthwhile; and Machiavelli does not try to persuade us that these are just as reasonable as any other conception. Once we admit this, we may well be surprised by the suggestion that we should take the unconditional preservation of the state as our ultimate end. If we separate unconditional loyalty to this state from loyalty to a certain kind of state, it does not seem a particularly reasonable end, given the costs that it is likely to involve.

It is still less obvious why a ruler should take the preservation of his own power as the ultimate end. Why should we not suppose that he has a mistaken conception of what is most important? Since he stands to lose heavily if he is driven from power, we may suspect that he exaggerates the importance of his staying in power. Machiavelli makes his conception of the overriding end seem more attractive and plausible because he tries to connect it with the Classical ideals of civic virtue; but the connexion breaks down at the very point where he needs it to prove his case. Once he departs from pagan as well as Christian morality, he removes one crucial support for his claim that there are worthwhile ultimate ends for which the Christian virtues have to be sacrificed.

One might argue that it does not matter if Machiavelli has no rational defence for the overriding end that he favours; for perhaps he can show that it is our natural and inevitable end, and that we will take the necessary means to it once we see that they are necessary for that end. This is the basis of Hobbes's argument for some of Machiavelli's conclusions about the paramount importance of the preservation of the state.[24] But it is difficult to argue that preservation of the state or of the present regime in the state corresponds to any natural and inevitable end of human motives. To show that it is connected with any such end, we need to show that the preservation of the present regime is necessary for reliable and secure self-preservation. Hobbes tries to find arguments to support this conclusion. His difficulty in finding such arguments suggests that Machiavelli's position is difficult to defend.

But even if we reject Machiavelli's argument to show that there is some conflict in principle between the Christian virtues and the appropriate sort of loyalty to the appropriate sort of state, we have not necessarily disposed of his objections to moral constraints on the preservation of the state. Many of the considerations he appeals to could be used in support of a different argument. We might argue that, in the actual circumstances we face, any moral system that allows overriding importance either to Christian or to pagan moral virtues must also face conflicts. Even if we do not demand unconditional loyalty, we may find, for instance, that the preservation of a just state seems to require resort to immoral means. Lenin and Trotsky came to this conclusion in their defence of the Bolshevik Revolution. They were not concerned with the territorial integrity of the former Russian empire for its own sake, but they believed that they could not preserve or construct a just society without resort to apparent immorality.

The existence of such conflicts need not result from a confrontation between two opposed ideals; it may turn out that one and the same ideal pursues aims that are not incompatible in principle, but turn out to result in serious conflicts when we try to realize them in the actual circumstances. The discovery of these conflicts, if they are serious and widespread enough, will show us that we cannot rely on our moral ideal for the sort of guidance that we might reasonably expect; and then we may want to consider whether our moral ideal needs to be revised.

[24] See Hobbes, *L*13.14.

This way of using Machiavelli's argument does not count as an interpretation of it; for he clearly intends a more radical criticism of morality than would follow from the exposure of internal conflict. But this more moderate use of his arguments may result in a more damaging criticism of the ideals connected with morality. We should therefore look more closely at Machiavelli's reasons for thinking that we will often have compelling reasons for rejecting the normal constraints of morality.

407. Morality and Circumstances

Aristotelian ethics relies on some assumptions not only about human nature—the sort of creature a human being is—but also about what human beings are like in actual circumstances. It also relies on assumptions about other external circumstances—the material resources available, the different kinds of dangers and threats presented by the external world and by other societies. In the *Politics* Aristotle makes it clear how important these assumptions are in arguments to show that particular virtues are to be cultivated in one or another set of circumstances.[25] The ideal state, in which the Aristotelian virtues can be fully developed, needs the right sort of people, with the right sorts of occupations, and therefore in the right sorts of material circumstances.

Aristotle insists that the conditions taken for granted by a political theorist should not be totally unrealistic; they should not assume that human beings are omniscient or free of their normal tendencies to vice, or that they can achieve physical security and comfort without any effort. But though our assumptions should not be unrealistic to this degree, Aristotle allows them to be quite demanding; the description of the ideal state and of the virtues of its citizens is not meant to present an attainable ideal for all of us in our ordinary circumstances.

Aquinas' conception of the virtues is intended to make them less dependent on favourable circumstances than they appear to be in Aristotle's account.[26] Still, Aquinas must make some assumption about reasonably favourable circumstances; these are the circumstances in which the actions normally characteristic of the virtues can be expected to have the results that make them appropriate expressions of the virtues.

Magnanimity, for instance, requires people to accept gracefully the honours they receive for virtuous actions; this requirement presupposes circumstances in which people will be honoured for the appropriate actions. Justice requires us to keep promises; this requirement presupposes circumstances in which we trust other people enough to keep promises. The virtues that involve reference to other people and to external circumstances have to rely on presuppositions about people and circumstances, if they are to give us definite advice about what to do. In metaphysical terms, virtues impose a certain form on the actions and circumstances that provide their matter; the characteristics of the matter affect the sort of form that can be imposed on it, and the means that allow the form to be imposed.[27]

[25] See, e.g., *Pol.* vii 4–7.

[26] Aquinas' accounts of bravery and magnanimity, e.g., make these virtues applicable in conditions where the corresponding Aristotelian virtues would not apply. See §331.

[27] Machiavelli uses the contrast between matter and form at i 18.5.

Machiavelli's arguments are relevant to this feature of a moral theory, since they tend to reject the presuppositions that normally underlie the moral virtues. Machiavelli's remarks about human nature suggest that we cannot rely on other people as much we would have to if the virtues were to have their 'normal' application. People do not in general behave like rational agents. Even if they live in a sound and uncorrupted republic, they are not content with what they have, but are always looking for novelty, and begin to seek domination over other states.[28] Hence prosperity and success lead to corruption; and when people are corrupted, they are even more unreliable (e.g., *D* iii 8.5–6).

Corruption arises gradually, especially from inequality (i 17.5). It is difficult to reverse, since any reversal requires re-education; and once corruption has happened, strong action is needed to restore the state to its original sound condition. Restoration requires either the elimination of small defects before they become too serious, or removal of the large defects after they have become apparent. But Machiavelli thinks neither of these courses of actions is very likely. Before the defects have become serious, they are likely to be unnoticed or ignored; and after they have become serious enough to be noticed, it is too late to do anything about them by normal 'constitutional' methods, since these normal methods will also have been corrupted (i 18.5).

At this point extraordinary means are needed to remove corruption and to restore the state to its original soundness. But Machiavelli thinks this is unlikely to work out satisfactorily.[29] The sort of person who is likely to be willing to seize power in a corrupt republic is not usually the sort of person who might be expected to remove its corruption.

In Machiavelli's view, then, the circumstances of a republic are always precarious. In favourable external conditions, people's desire for novelty and domination tends to begin the processes leading to corruption; and in unfavourable conditions the corruption is difficult to remove. The Greek view that we should establish the best constitution, and then make sure by legislation and moral education that it does not collapse, does not fit Machiavelli's view of the actual circumstances. He does not believe that the right legislation and moral education will produce the moral characters and the forms of political and social life that will maintain the best constitution. On the contrary, he believes that states find it difficult to restrain their tendency to corruption. 'Normal' political behaviour, in which we can reasonably assume that the state will survive in its present form or in a better form, has no place in Machiavelli's account of the relation between human beings and their social environment.

408. Adaptation to Circumstances

In the light of these views, Machiavelli forms a conception of virtue that is quite different from the moral virtues recognized by the moralists he opposes. External conditions, summed

[28] See i 37.1; ii, Pref.7 (where W cites Polybius vi 57); iii 21.2 ('. . . men are fond of novelty; so much so that it is often those who are prosperous who desire it than those who are in evil plight'); *P* 3, 103.

[29] 'Hence it is necessary to resort to extraordinary methods, such as the use of force and an appeal to arms, and, before doing anything, to become a prince in the state, so that one can dispose it as one thinks fit. But, to reconstitute political life in a state presupposes a good man, whereas to have recourse to violence in order to make oneself prince in a republic supposes a bad man. Hence very rarely will there be found a good man ready to use bad methods in order to make himself prince, though with a good end in view, nor yet a bad man who, having become a prince, is ready to do the right things and to whose mind it will occur to use well that authority which he has acquired by bad means' (i 18.5–6).

up by Machiavelli under the head of 'Fortune', interfere with everyone's plans; but he does not think we should just resign ourselves to frustration by fortune. On the contrary, part of virtue is the capacity to plan effectively for the results of fortune, so that they will not ruin our plans completely; for though we cannot control it, we can to some extent foresee it, and adapt ourselves to it when it happens.[30] For this reason Machiavelli argues that virtue as well as fortune played a large role in the rise of Rome (ii 1–2).

From his remarks about fortune Machiavelli infers that virtue consists in being prepared for fortune. The Stoics might agree with him, but not exactly in the sense that he has in mind.[31] In his view, virtue, and especially prudence, consists in the ability to adapt ourselves to fortune. To this extent his conception of prudence is closer to the one that is most familiar to us than to an Aristotelian conception. Machiavelli remarks that in the wars that the Romans won 'it will be seen that in them, mingled with fortune, was virtue and prudence of a very high order' (ii 1.4). The prudent person does not care about loss of honour or dignity if the dishonourable course is the most efficient way to deal with present circumstances (i 38.2). Someone who refuses to change his character to fit the demands of the circumstances is bound to come off worst (iii 9). The Romans showed their prudence in so far as they dealt with fortune actively, by anticipating it and adjusting to it.[32] But most people cling irrationally to tactics that have succeeded in the past, so that they cannot deal with new circumstances.[33]

Machiavelli's advice to be adaptable might be interpreted in more than one way. Some sort of adaptability is reasonable; if we care enough about our ends, it is foolish not to think about ways to secure them in different circumstances. Totally inflexible people simply show that they are too lazy or too unconcerned to think about ways to promote their ends. But some circumstances make it more difficult to promote some ends than others, and in these cases we face a choice between failure and adaptation. It is not clear in this case why Machiavelli should always advise adaptation. Some of our goals consist in trying to achieve particular results, while other goals consist in acting in particular ways. If the first sort of goal conflicts with the second, it is not clear why the second should always give way. In advising complete adaptability Machiavelli seems to assume that every other aim should give way to the aim of achieving what we can in the circumstances.

Once we accept Machiavelli's conception of the ends to be aimed at, and of the circumstances in which we have to aim at them, his view that virtue differs from the recognized moral virtues becomes easier to understand. However admirable it may be for rulers to keep their word, they must, in the prevailing conditions, be ready to break it. They

[30] '[Fortune] shows her power in places where no virtue has been directed (ordinate) towards resisting her; she directs her onslaught to those places where embankments and dams have not been constructed to retain her' (*P* 25, 363).

[31] Skinner, *M*25–7, presents a somewhat misleading contrast between Classical moralists (who think fortune favours the brave and whom Machiavelli follows) and Christians (especially Boethius, who think of fortune as indifferent to human aims). The 'Christian' conception is also Stoic, and therefore Classical.

[32] 'Nor were they ever satisfied with what is constantly on the lips of current sages, "reap the benefit of time", but rather they reaped the benefit of their virtue and prudence' (*P* 3, 117). The Romans displayed the prudence that 'consists in knowing how to recognize the character of the obstacles and in choosing the lesser evil as good' (*P* 21, 339).

[33] 'Nor is there a man prudent enough to know how to adjust to all this; either he is incapable of deviating from what nature inclines him to do, or else, since he has always flourished by keeping to one path, he is unable to persuade himself to leave it . . . Yet if nature were to change with the times and circumstances, fortune would not change' (*P* 25, 367).

must resort to both force and fraud when the occasion demands them.[34] In advocating force and fraud, the tactics of the lion and the fox, Machiavelli alludes again to Cicero's condemnation of such tactics. When Cicero mentions these two ways of committing injustice, he remarks that 'both are most foreign to a human being, but fraud deserves greater hatred' (*Off.* i 41).[35]

409. Exceptions to Morality?

Machiavelli's argument for the legitimacy and appropriateness of fraud is not completely clear; in fact he seems to rely on two arguments, whose combination makes his claim seem less immoral than he intends it to be. He argues: (1) We have to take account of the fact that other people are dishonest and cannot be relied on; and so we have to be prepared to forestall their dishonest behaviour. (2) Considerations of efficiency often suggest that we should break promises; we should make and break them simply on grounds of self-interest.

If we accept the first argument, we have some reason to reject the second. We may reasonably cite other people's wickedness as a moral defence of our behaviour. Machiavelli points out that the circumstances in which a promise is made reasonably affect one's obligation to keep it (*D* iii 42), so that, for instance, a promise extracted by force may be regarded as non-binding. He might appear to be arguing for limits on our moral obligation to keep promises. But if we think we need to make a moral case for breaking our promises, we do not suppose that expediency is all that matters; hence we will reject Machiavelli's second argument, which appeals exclusively to expediency.

If, however, we accept Machiavelli's second argument, it is not clear why his advice would be invalid, as he says it would be, if other people were just and reliable. When most people keep their promises, the advantage to be gained by a false promise is often greater, since people will be readier to believe that you will keep your promise and will be taken off guard if you break it. The second argument makes it irrelevant to ask whether I am violating a promise to an honest person who is morally entitled to rely on me.

Apparently, then, Machiavelli's reliance on these two argument reveals some confusion of thought about the relation of morality and expediency. Each argument seems to undermine the other. But their combination may none the less appear to help his case. For if we confusedly suppose that the moral considerations he offers justify the unscrupulous policy he advocates, we may overlook the immoral character of his policy.

We will perhaps move more readily from Machiavelli's first claim to his second if we believe that the demands of morality are entirely abrogated whenever we cannot count on their reciprocal observance. This might be thought either to support, or to follow from, the view that morality consists in the observance of mutually recognized rules, and therefore requires the existence of stable social institutions enforcing compliance and reciprocity.

[34] 'Hence a prudent ruler cannot and should not respect his word, when such respect works to his disadvantage and when the occasions that made him promise no longer exist. And if all men were good, this precept would not be good; but since they are bad and do not respect their own promise to you, you need not respect your promise to them either' (*P* 18, 281).

[35] W i 104 discusses Machiavelli and the relevant senses of 'fraud'.

This is Hobbes's view of morality.[36] But it is not clear that we should accept it; certainly a defender of such a view cannot take it for granted that all moral obligations are cancelled towards those who violate moral obligations. It is reasonable to say that we have different moral obligations in these cases; but that admission does not force us into acceptance of Machiavelli's second argument.

He might mislead both himself and us because of another obscurity in his advice. Many of his examples suggest that he is advocating this policy: (1) Disregard ordinary constraints of morality when the survival of the state depends on disregarding them.[37] This policy applies to many of the incidents that Machiavelli records from Roman history, when the Romans thought they had their backs to the wall and that extraordinary means were needed. But his policy on promises is rather different: (2) Take account only of instrumental considerations in deciding what to do for the preservation of the state.

The second policy implies, but the first does not, that one should never be willing to pay any price in efficiency in order to follow the requirements of morality. Machiavelli suggests, however, that we ought to endorse it if we endorse the first policy. Perhaps some of the ordinary rules of morality are suspended if we face genuine emergencies. As he argues, considerations of glory and honour may be secondary to the safety of the state, if our survival depends on it (cf. *D* iii 41). But if this is so, the adoption of extraordinary means in emergencies is consistent with acceptance of the moral virtues; for the moral virtues leave room for these extraordinary means. Machiavelli seems to argue that since extraordinary means are morally acceptable in emergencies, we ought to disregard morality altogether in all circumstances. The argument is not only unconvincing but also inconsistent; for if we think it matters to find moral grounds or permission for extraordinary means in emergencies, we cannot consistently suppose that moral considerations never matter.

Perhaps this conflict in his argument is less evident to Machiavelli because he does not see any sharp distinction between ordinary and extraordinary circumstances. Given the inherent defects in human nature, and the ever-present danger of corruption, every situation is an emergency in which the prudent politician must be ready to use measures that (from the moral point of view) might be regarded as extraordinary. We cannot count on finding circumstances in which it is safe to follow the ordinary moral rules prescribing the conduct typical of the different virtues.

The demand for extraordinary means assumes that any middle course is disastrous. We might be tempted to conclude from Machiavelli's arguments that we need to be prepared to compromise—that on the whole we should follow the recognized moral virtues, but we should be ready to depart from them in an emergency, to the minimum degree that seems necessary to resolve the immediate difficulty. But Machiavelli believes that this effort to incorporate his advice into a more respectable and traditional framework is bound to get the worst of both worlds. A strictly moralistic course of action, indifferent to worldly success or civic considerations, is at any rate consistent; we know where we are with such people, and we will keep them out of public life. But if we adopt immoral means only reluctantly and in

[36] Hobbes draws this sharp distinction between the state of nature and the commonwealth at *L* 15.40.

[37] Cicero endorses a restricted version of this principle: 'For them [sc. consuls exercising military command in the field] let the safety of the people be the supreme law' (*Leg*. iii 8). See W ii 207.

small doses, they will not have the proper effect; too little severity today will only make the situation worse and require more severity tomorrow.

He argues, therefore, that we ought to set out on the immoral course whole-heartedly and without any half-measures. We cannot hope to keep a republic exactly in the right condition; and so it is better to be frankly aggressive and to pursue expansion in the hope of maintaining the status quo (i 6.10).[38] We face a clear choice between the moral virtues and the unscrupulous outlook; and his warnings about the dangers of corruption in a republic imply that any politician will have to be prepared to 'enter on the path of wrong doing'. Though Machiavelli speaks as though he is giving advice only to people who want to be tyrants, the principles underlying his advice support a much broader rejection of morality.

He defends his advice by arguing that people who have listened to their moral objections to ruthless measures have made things worse than they would have made them if they had frankly and whole-heartedly disregarded moral scruples. The scrupulous policies of Soderini, whose excessive mildness and reluctance to use harsh measures caused his overthrow, show why it is a mistake to shrink from immorality (iii 3.2; cf. i 52.2). Soderini failed to adapt himself as he should have to circumstances (iii 9.5; cf. iii 30.4). The foolish people who try to practise the ordinary moral virtues, even in cases where the overriding end requires immoral means, defeat all of their ends. Instead of condemning ourselves to such failures, we ought to make up our mind about which ends we are going to take to be primary.

Even if Machiavelli were right to claim that 'extraordinary' measures should be more ordinary than we suppose, he hardly shows that extreme situations occur so often that the moral principles applying to non-extreme situations are inapplicable to practice. Moreover, the more convincing he makes his case to show that normal moral restrictions should be suspended, the more he undermines his case to show that expediency is all that matters. For the most convincing case for suspension of ordinary moral restraints will draw attention to the prohibitive moral cost of sticking to ordinary restraints. The more strongly we can demonstrate the prohibitive moral cost, the more we support the moral principles in the light of which we assess moral costs. If Machiavelli simply argued that sometimes morality involves some sacrifice of advantage, he would hardly make a convincing case for the immoral course of action. He has a much stronger case if he appeals to moral cost; but that appeal does not show that moral considerations are irrelevant; on the contrary, it acknowledges that they are relevant.

410. The Strength of Machiavelli's Objections to Morality

Machiavelli's case against the moral virtues seems to generalize hastily from a few examples.[39] He does not consider the broader consequences of the tactics that he advocates. In inter-state relations mutual distrust is no less damaging to the interests of each state than naive

[38] 'Such methods are exceedingly cruel, and are repugnant to any form of life (vivere), not only Christian, but also human. It behooves, therefore, every man to shun them, and to prefer rather to live as a private citizen than as a king with such ruin of human beings. None the less, the sort of man who is unwilling to take up this first course of well doing, if he wants to hold what he has, he must enter on the path of wrong doing. Actually, however, most men prefer to steer a middle course, which is very harmful; for they know not how to be wholly good nor yet wholly bad . . .' (i 26.3; cf. i 30.2; ii 23.2). On Machiavelli's use of 'vivere' for social and political life see Rinaldi ad loc., n19.

[39] W i 102–14 criticizes some of Machiavelli's claims.

trustfulness would be. Machiavelli has something in common with many people who suggest that the moral virtues do not pay; he offers arguments for his own side that are much less rigorous than those he demands from his opponents. If one concedes that there are cases of the sort Machiavelli describes, it is equally necessary to consider the destructive effects of ruthlessness within a society and of deception in relations between societies.

It is doubtful in the end whether Machiavelli actually leaves himself with a more coherent outlook than the one he rejects. In his view, the only consistent course of action for advocates of the Christian virtues is to retire to a monastery; their efforts to combine Christian virtues with civic virtues result in a half-hearted and dangerous attitude to the needs of states and citizens. But his own position seems to contain an internal conflict at least as serious as the one he alleges in his opponents' views. For the tactics he recommends to political leaders seem to conflict with his admiration for civic virtue. He recognizes that a sound republic depends on general confidence in the observance of laws; but he advises rulers to disregard these laws whenever it is to get rid of their opponents. As an advocate of civic virtue he advocates loyalty by citizens to rulers whom they have no reason to trust; in expecting them to be loyal to a community, he is indifferent to the character and behaviour of the rulers of the community. As he recognizes, the sort of person who is willing to take the measures needed for effective government is not likely to be the sort of person who inspires trust.

But even if Machiavelli's own position is incoherent, he might still have found serious objections to the moral outlook that he criticizes. Suppose it is true that in a significant number of cases the preservation of a state requires measures that would normally be rejected as immoral. What should the defender of the moral virtues say in reply? Three main types of answers might be considered: (1) Morality, as normally understood, is supreme, and the price has to be paid. If survival ever requires killing of the innocent, it requires something that is absolutely wrong, and we must forgo survival. (2) Morality is not supreme; when these issues are at stake, it does not apply, and it should not restrain us from taking the prudent course of action. (3) Morality is supreme, but it does not require us to pay the extreme price; it can explain why what would ordinarily be impermissible is required or permitted in these extreme cases.

The only possibility that Machiavelli really considers is the first. He assumes that the defender of the Christian virtues is obliged to condemn all emergency measures, and thereby is obliged to admit that the Christian virtues are not a promising option for anyone who has some concern about social and political life. Machiavelli has a rather loose conception of an emergency; he tends to confuse genuine emergencies with cases where nothing more than the survival of a particular government is at stake. Still, we may concede for the sake of argument that there are cases like the one faced by Soderini, where the survival of a free community depends on the adoption of measures that would normally be rejected. How should Machiavelli's moralist opponents respond?

Moralists who reject extraordinary means in principle seem to set themselves against concern for social and political life. But then what, we may ask, is the point of their system of virtues? The other-worldly answer that Machiavelli envisages is one consistent answer. But it is not available to Aquinas; for he thinks the moral virtues are not simply a preparation for the afterlife, but contain the right principles for the organization of social life that recognizes

a human being's political nature. An extreme world-renouncing view seems to threaten the social character of Aquinas' moral outlook.

Does this make it difficult to defend the first answer to Machiavelli's objections? This question depends partly on how often the situations described by Machiavelli arise. Defenders of the first answer, holding that some measures are absolutely wrong whatever the cost, point out legitimately that the cases where an action is both clearly immoral and clearly required by circumstances are difficult to identify in actual conditions. Machiavelli's examples seem similar to the artificial examples in which the deliberate killing of one innocent person is both necessary and sufficient for saving the lives of many other innocents. Even though Machiavelli's examples are historical rather than fictional, they are similar to fictional examples in failing to consider the possibility of other measures that would not be open to the same moral objections.[40]

But though this defence shows that the first answer may not have the extreme and costly consequences that might appear to result from it, we may doubt whether it entirely answers Machiavelli. If morality refuses to acknowledge the possibility of emergencies in which extreme measures are needed to defend those social relations that are necessary for the embodiment of the moral virtues in social life, morality seems to undermine its own necessary conditions.[41] A supporter of Aquinas' conception of social morality has some reason to reject the sort of absolutism that allows no room for emergencies.

The second answer to Machiavelli's objections might appeal, in different forms, to Luther and to Hobbes. For each of them, for different reasons, tries to withdraw some of the moral virtues from any competition with the outlook that Machiavelli advocates. From Luther's Augustinian point of view—or at least from one of Luther's points of view, corresponding to one Augustinian point of view—the Christian virtues are other-worldly, and do not apply to secular rulers in secular situations. Different standards apply to secular rulers, and they are allowed to operate independently of moral scrutiny from the Christian point of view.[42] From Hobbes's point of view, the virtues are relevant only when the essential background of peace and stability is assured; and this is the background that concerns Machiavelli. Hobbes's account of morality relieves Machiavelli from any need to admit that the measures he advocates are immoral; they are simply beyond moral evaluation.

The third answer would no doubt appear to Machiavelli to be the sort of unsatisfactory compromise that he condemns. But the very considerations that make his examples seem attractive support the third answer. If we are moved by any of Machiavelli's examples, it is not because we recognize some conflict between moral considerations and some totally different kind of consideration. That might be our reaction to a conflict between the demands of morality and those of art or culture or religion. Whatever questions are raised by these sorts of conflicts, they do not seem relevant to the present issue. If we agree with Machiavelli

[40] Geach, *V* 114–16, discusses related issues, suggesting that it is not clear how often immoral means are the only effective ones.

[41] Rawls, *TJ* 217, recognizes circumstances where liberty may reasonably be limited for the sake of forming conditions for the fuller exercise of liberty.

[42] This concession from the Christian point of view does not lead directly to Machiavelli's conclusion; for Christians who hold this view still assume that the secular moral virtues will guide secular life. But it may be easier from this point of view to regard secular morality as simply a means to the ends of secular life, rather than forming the ends against which it can be evaluated.

that extreme measures are sometimes necessary, we recognize that people's survival and welfare are involved; and indeed if someone failed to take extreme measures, we might well think he was open to moral condemnation for sacrificing the lives and welfare of the people who could have been saved. The very fact that absolutist theories try to justify failure to bring about a great good at the cost of some moral evil shows that we are powerfully impressed by the moral force of the argument for extraordinary measures. If we are really moved by moral considerations here, then it seems that we ought to be able to articulate these considerations within our general view of the moral virtues.

The mere acceptance of this solution does not imply that an account of the virtues can easily be adjusted to suit Machiavelli's objections. If the kinds of cases that concern him arise very often, then any attempt to take account of them might result in principles and policies very different from those that Aquinas connects with the moral virtues. But here we should recall the limits of Machiavelli's argument. The fact that in some cases some moral considerations have to be sacrificed to others does not show that no moral consideration ever has anything more than an instrumental role. A reasonable view of which elements in Machiavelli's case are plausible makes it easier to see how his opponents' position can be defended.

We ought to conclude, then, that Machiavelli presents no devastating objection in principle to the account of the virtues and of human welfare that is defended by Aquinas. His arguments and examples might appear to show that the Christian virtues are irrelevant or harmful in social and political life; but this appearance is deceptive.

29

THE REFORMATION AND SCHOLASTIC MORAL PHILOSOPHY

411. Objections to Scholasticism

Modern moral philosophy developed especially in England, Scotland, and Germany, in areas where the Reformation was widely accepted, in its Lutheran, or Calvinist, or Anglican forms. Since mediaeval moral philosophers were also theologians, expounding the doctrines and practices of the mediaeval Latin Church, and since the Reformers rejected some of these doctrines and practices, it is worth considering whether the religious and theological disputes connected with the Reformation affect prevalent attitudes to mediaeval moral philosophy.[1]

We may recall some of Aquinas' views about the relation of theology and moral philosophy: (1) His theology explains why it is worthwhile to engage in moral philosophy. God's wisdom reveals itself in the natural law, and in the system of moral virtues that we can construct on the basis of what we know in the natural law. The Christian doctrine of God and creation, as Aquinas understands it, justifies us in supposing that God has created us with the capacity to find the truth about the world and about ourselves by rational inquiry. Aristotle's ethics is the system that results from the most successful use so far of our capacity for rational inquiry. Hence, we have reason to suppose that it shows us the truth, and that it reveals to us part of the mind of God. (2) Aquinas' theology not only makes room for moral philosophy, based on reason without revelation; it also relies on the conclusions of moral philosophy. The virtues that result from the infusion of divine grace do not require us to reject or to abandon the acquired virtues. They build on the acquired virtues, and perfect them, even though they also go beyond them in aiming at an ultimate end beyond anything that we can conceive or realize through the acquired virtues.[2] Part of the reason for supposing that the infused virtues are genuine virtues is the fact that they

[1] 'The Reformers' include Luther, Melanchthon, Calvin, and confessional documents of various dates (including the Augsburg Confession (1530), the Westminster Confession (1647), and the English Articles (1553, 1563)). Schaff, *CC* iii, prints these documents.

[2] See §353.

fit the acquired virtues in these ways.[3] (3) Aquinas discusses the nature of sin, free will, divine grace, justification, faith, and good works. His views on these questions are closely connected with views about the role of the institutional Church in (for instance) the grace conferred in baptism and the Eucharist, the functions of confession and repentance, and the relation of the monastic to the secular way of life.

Though we have seen that Aquinas' successors do not agree with him about everything, the summary we have given applies fairly well to later Scholasticism as well, and suggests a starting point for comparison with the Reformers. It is easy to see that the Reformers reject Scholastic views in the third set of questions, about the Christian doctrine of salvation, and about its institutional implications for the life and discipline of the Church. Disputes on these questions are elaborated in the Reformers' confessions of faith and the responses produced by the Council of Trent.

These disputes are connected with disputes on the first and second sets of questions. Luther and Calvin assert that the Scholastics are mistaken in their views about the acquired moral virtues and their relation to the moral demands of the Christian faith. These Scholastic errors are connected to errors about freewill. The Reformers oppose these errors through their distinctive doctrines of predestination, election, grace, and faith.

Luther and Calvin advocate the study of Scripture without the overlay of Scholastic doctrine. Luther sometimes suggests that this doctrine is not only unhelpful, but positively misleading in the search for a true understanding of Scripture.[4] He charges that the Scholastics have replaced the genuine Church with a 'Thomist or Aristotelian Church'.[5] One of his early works, the 'Disputation against the Scholastic theologians', is a long list of Scholastic theses he rejects.[6] Calvin conveys the same judgment in constantly referring to the Scholastics as 'sophists'.[7] Neither Luther nor Calvin rejects the use of post-Biblical authorities to understand Christian doctrine. They often cite Augustine with approval, and criticize some Scholastics for misunderstanding him.[8]

[3] See Aquinas, *ST* 1-2 q65 a2–3.

[4] 'Indeed, I believe that I owe this duty to the Lord of crying out against philosophy and turning men to Holy Scripture. For, perhaps, if someone else who had not been through it all were to do it, he would either be scared to do it or he would not be believed. But I have been in the grind of these studies for, lo, these many years, and am worn out by it, and, on the basis of long experience, I have come to be persuaded that it is a vain study doomed to perdition' (Luther, *Rm.* 8:19 = Pauck 236).

[5] See *Babylonian Captivity* = *Works* xxxi = Dillenberger 265–6. Luther is discussing the doctrine of transubstantiation, which he ascribes to Aquinas' misunderstanding of Aristotle's doctrine of substance and accident. He concludes: 'I feel we ought to be sorry for so great a man, not only for drawing his views from Aristotle in matters of faith, but also for attempting to found them upon a man whom he did not understand, thus building an unfortunate superstructure on an unfortunate foundation'.

[6] See C v 320–6 = *Works* xxxi 9–16. Some of his comments on Aristotle: (41) 'Almost the entire *Ethics* of Aristotle is the worst enemy of grace. (42) It is an error to maintain that Aristotle's doctrine concerning happiness does not contradict Catholic doctrine. (43) It is an error to say: without Aristotle no one becomes a theologian. (44) On the contrary, no one becomes a theologian unless he does it without Aristotle.'

[7] See, e.g., *Inst.* i 16.3, with McNeill's note (200n5).

[8] 'Now let us hear Augustine speaking in his own words, lest the Pelagians of our own age, that is, the Sophists of the Sorbonne, according to their custom, charge that all antiquity is against us' (Calvin, *Inst.* ii 3.13). 'Moreover, they unjustly set the fathers against us (I mean the ancient writers of a better age of the church) as if in them they had supporters of their own impiety. If the contest were to be determined by the authority of these fathers, the tide of victory—to put it very modestly—would turn to our side' (*Inst.*, Pref. §4). 'Obviously, he [sc. Peter Lombard] intended to follow Augustine's opinion, but he follows it at a distance and even departs considerably from the right imitation of it. . . . The schools have gone continually from bad to worse until, in headlong ruin, they have plunged into a sort of Pelagianism'

Though the Reformers attack Scholasticism, it is not always easy to see what these attacks imply about Aquinas. They normally have in mind the views of later Scholastics. Calvin sometimes discusses the 'sounder Schoolmen', who are less seriously wrong than the later Scholastics.[9] His division between Scholastics deserves to be taken seriously. For on some critical questions in moral psychology and the foundations of morality, the later Scholastics disagree sharply with Aquinas. Hence, some of the Reformers' objections to the Scholastics may not constitute objections to Aquinas.[10] We need to compare the views of the Reformers with Aquinas' actual position, not simply with the Scholastic position as they interpret it.

The Reformers' views on questions in moral philosophy are secondary to their theological arguments. Neither Luther nor Calvin offers the detailed discussion that we find in Aquinas or Scotus. Melanchthon, however, provides an outline of his moral philosophy in a short textbook. Though this material does not amount to a detailed discussion or critique of Scholastic ethics, it gives us enough to ask our main question: does the theological position of the Reformers require a departure from Scholastic moral philosophy?

412. Natural law

The Reformers accept the Scholastic belief in natural law as a source of our basic knowledge of moral principles.[11] They rely on St Paul's remark that the Gentiles without the Mosaic law are a law to themselves. According to Augustine and his successors, St Paul affirms a natural law known independently of revelation.[12] Calvin, agreeing with Aquinas, takes the Decalogue to make clear the requirements of the natural law, which are known independently of revelation. He appeals to St Paul in his support.[13] We know the principles

(iii 11.15). In iii 15.7 Calvin distinguishes the later sophists from Lombard, 'their Pythagoras', who is sound and sober in comparison with them.

[9] After a discussion of Peter Lombard on operating and co-operating grace, he adds: 'I chose to note these two points in passing that you, my reader, may see how far I disagree with the sounder Schoolmen (sanioribus Scholasticis). I differ with the more recent Sophists to an even greater extent, as they are further removed from antiquity' (ii 2.6). In iv 17.14 he suggests that Lombard and others try to explain away the extreme statements by the Papacy on transubstantiation.

[10] Luther's conception of the Scholastic position is largely, but not entirely, derived from Biel (but see n5 above, on transubstantiation). On Calvin's knowledge of Aquinas see Wendel, *Calvin* 126–7. Barth, *TJC* 22 comments on Luther's and Calvin's neglect of Aquinas: '[They] avoided the man in whom they must have recognized, even if he was not then the most widely read author, and whom they ought to have fought as their most dangerous opponent, the true genius of the Catholic Middle Ages. I refer to Thomas Aquinas. . . . The reformers engaged in close combat with late scholastics of the age of decline, about whom we say nothing today, when all the time behind these, and biding his time, stood their main adversary Thomas . . . How could it be possible that in the first half of the 17th century a Lutheran theologian from Strassburg could write a book entitled *Thomas Aquinas veritatis evangelicae confessor*!'

[11] Cf. *West. Conf.* 19.1–2: ' God gave to Adam a law, as a covenant of works, by which he bound (obligavit) him and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience; promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it; and endued him with power and ability to keep it. This law, after his fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness; and, as such, was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai in ten commandments, and written in two tables; the first four commandments containing our duty toward God, and the other six our duty to man.. . . '

[12] The views of the Reformers are summarized by McNeill in 'Reformers' and 'Luther'. He suggests that Zwingli is the most inclined to treat St Paul's remarks on the natural law as simply a reference to especially good pagans who received special grace. See §226 (on Ambrosiaster).

[13] 'For he proves that ignorance is put forward in vain by the Gentiles, since by their deeds they declared themselves to have no small rule of righteousness; for no people did ever at any time so abhor from humanity, that they did not keep themselves within some laws. Since, therefore, all the Gentiles voluntarily, and without any [external] supervisor

of natural law through conscience, and so we cannot plead ignorance of morality as an excuse for our errors.[14] We need the Decalogue to remind us of the requirements of the natural law, but we do not depend on it for our grasp of these requirements.[15]

This description of the natural law gives it an epistemological function independent of the will of God; Ockham accepts this epistemological function, while claiming that it is metaphysically dependent on the will of God.[16] According to Aquinas, the natural law is not only known naturally without revelation, but is also appropriate for human beings with their nature; hence it is the basis of 'intrinsic rightness' (as Suarez puts it), so that morality is not the result of divine imposition, but of facts about human beings. Ockham rejects this view, arguing that the provisions of natural law are the result of divine imposition, and subject to dispensation.[17] It is not clear how the Reformers understand the metaphysical status of the natural law.

Luther sometimes adopts a voluntarist position close to Ockham's. He follows Ockham and Biel in arguing that God's mercy and generosity require the voluntarist conception of the relation between his will and the moral law. Luther argues that if God acted as he does because he sees it is good, then his action is required of him, and he is bound to act as he does. But the Christian doctrine of God's grace and God's love imply that God is not bound to act as he does. His treatment of us is not owed to us in justice, as a response to our merits, but an expression of his mercy and grace. This argument leads Luther into a sharp contrast between the divine and the human will and between divine and human love. God does not love something because it is an appropriate object of love; on the contrary, God makes something lovable by loving it.[18]

(monitore), are inclined to make laws unto themselves, it is out of all question that there are naturally grafted in the minds of all men certain conceptions of justice and uprightness, which the Greeks call *prolêpseis*. They have, therefore, law without law, because, even though they have not the written law of Moses, they are by no means devoid of the knowledge of right and equity; for otherwise they could not discern between vice and virtue . . . He has opposed nature to the written law, meaning that there appeared in the Gentiles a natural light of justice, which supplied the place of the law by which the Jews are taught, so that they were a law to themselves.' (Calvin, *ad Rm.* 2:14).

Luther, *ad Rm.* ad loc. mentions Augustine's two interpretations, and prefers the second.

[14] '. . . natural law is that apprehension of the conscience which distinguishes sufficiently between just and unjust, and which deprives men of the excuse of ignorance, while it proves them guilty by their own testimony' (*Inst.* ii 2.22). Cf. *West. Conf.* 4.2: ' After God had made all other creatures, he created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness after his own image, having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfil it; and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject unto change. Besides this law written in their hearts, they received a command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; which while they kept were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures.' On this difference between the natural law and the command not to eat the apple see §307n45.

[15] 'If the Gentiles by nature have law righteousness (legis iustitiam) engraved upon their minds, we surely cannot say they are utterly blind as to the conduct of life. There is nothing more common than for a man to be sufficiently instructed in a right standard of conduct by natural law (of which the apostle is here speaking)' (*Inst.* ii 2.22). 'Now that inward law, which we have above described as written, even engraved, upon the hearts of all, in a sense asserts the very same things that are to be learned from the two Tables. For our conscience does not allow us to sleep a perpetual insensible sleep without being an inner witness and monitor of what we owe God, without holding before us the difference between good and evil, and thus accusing us when we fail in our duty' (*Inst.* ii 8.1). For further references see McNeill's note ad loc.

[16] See §395. [17] See §395.

[18] *Heidelberg Disputation* = C v 391.30 = *Works* xxxi §28: 'Divine love does not find but creates its object of love. Human love of a human being comes into being through its object of love. The second part is clear and accepted by all philosophers and theologians. For the object of love is its cause, assuming, in agreement with Aristotle, that every

This attempt to connect a voluntarist conception of God's will with the Christian doctrine of God's grace and mercy seems to rest on the confusion that we have found in Biel. The argument seems to assume that if God does not recognize a requirement based on justice, he cannot act on the belief that what he does is the best thing to do, or is appropriate to the nature of the recipient. But this assumption rests on the further questionable assumption that only a voluntarist can give an account of mercy and generosity.

Calvin's position in the dispute between naturalism and voluntarism is less evident. One might expect him to favour voluntarism, given his emphasis on the sovereignty of God. Moreover, some of his remarks on the inscrutability of God's decrees might be taken in a voluntarist sense. This interpretation, however, is too hasty. His description of the natural law as the law of God is indecisive.[19] He takes a more definite position, however, in rejecting the doctrine of God's unqualified power. He denies that God is 'without law' (exlegem).[20] God's will is free of all vice, 'the highest rule of perfection, and the law of all laws'. Hence 'whatever God wills must be accounted just from the very fact that he wills it' (iii 23.2).

This Anselmian formula allows, but does not require, a voluntarist interpretation. Calvin invokes it in his discussion of predestination, in order to answer those who demand to be given a reason that explains to them why God elected those who were elected rather than others. Calvin's denial that we can understand these decrees of God does not commit him to the general claim that rightness is wholly dependent on God's will. In his view, we can reasonably be confident that what God wills is right, even though we cannot always know why it is right; he does not deny that God's willing conforms to standards of rightness that are not wholly dependent on it. Hence he rejects the doctrine of God's unqualified power, antecedent to any standard of right.[21]

Melanchthon expresses the most definite commitment to metaphysical naturalism. It is because moral philosophy relies on facts about human nature that its principles are certain, even though some more specific rules may be merely plausible. For this reason, sceptical doubt about the principles is excluded.[22] When he begins his exposition of ethics,

capacity of the soul is passive and material and acts by receiving . . . The first part is clear, because the love of God living in a human being loves sinners, evil people, fools, and weaklings in order to make them just, good, wise and strong. . . . For sinners are beautiful (pulchri) because they are loved, not loved because they are beautiful.'

[19] *Inst*. iv 20.16.

[20] 'But we do not give any countenance to absolute power, which, as being profane, should rightly be hateful to us. We do not imagine a God outside law who is a law to himself (non fingimus Deum exlegem qui sibi ipsi lex est). For, as Plato says, human beings oppressed by appetites need law; but the will of God is not only pure of all vice, but the highest rule of perfection, and indeed the law of all laws' (iii 23.2). Battles translates 'qui sibi ipsi lex est' as part of the view that Calvin repudiates, whereas Beveridge translates it as part of Calvin's view (Wendel, *Calvin* 127–9, agrees with him). Battles' rendering is more probable. Calvin seems to contrast the view that God has no inherent law but gives it to himself (sibi lex est), with the view that he has an inherent law in his will ('the law of all laws'). Wendel incautiously cites this passage as evidence of Calvin's agreement with Scotus on God and the natural law. Schneewind, *IA* 32n, treats it as evidence of Calvin's voluntarism about the natural law.

[21] *Inst*. i 17.2: '. . . let our law of soberness and modesty be to assent to his supreme command, that his will may be for us the sole rule of justice, and the most just cause of all things. Not, indeed, that absolute will of which the Sophists babble, separating his justice from his power by an impious and profane division—but providence, that governing principle of all things, from which flows nothing but right (rectum), though the reasons have been hidden from us.' McNeill ad loc. quotes parallel passages.

[22] 'But here we must take note that philosophy is not every opinion of everyone, but certain items of knowledge, which are demonstrations, or else the parts of them, i.e., principles or conclusions. For just as in other arts there are principles and demonstrations that cannot be mistaken, so also in moral philosophy there are certain practical principles,

Melanchthon repeats that we must begin from human nature, because we must begin from the ultimate end for a human being.[23] In these ways, he treats natural law as the law of human nature, and hence treats moral philosophy as a study of the good that is determined by human nature.

413. Dispensations from Natural Law?

This connexion between natural law and human nature also settles some questions about the relation of natural law to the divine will and especially to divine freedom. In claiming that natural law is a law of human nature, Melanchthon implies that, even if we had this nature without being created by God, we would still have rational principles guiding our actions and character. He also implies that by creating us with this nature and this knowledge, God did not have to do anything else to give us rational principles for guiding our action. If the natural law is the law of our nature, some actions are rationally and morally significant for us apart from the legislative will of God. If, however, our knowledge of natural law were simply (as Ockham supposes) our natural knowledge of God's legislative will, we would have no reason to follow it distinct from any reason we had to follow God's legislative will.

If natural law depends on facts, distinct from God's legislative will, about human nature, how is it related to morality and to the legislative will of God? If God were to require us to violate natural law, would that be a case in which it would be right to violate natural law, or would it be a case in which God would require us to act wrongly? This counterfactual question raises the general question about divine dispensations.

Melanchthon's view on this question rests on his account of the immutability of natural law. He argues that natural right (ius[24] naturae) is always immutable (*PME* 210.7), but he explains this claim in ways that take account of apparent mutability.

First, he argues, using Plato's example in *Republic* i, that a lower principle must be interpreted in the light of a higher, so that the principle of returning deposits must be qualified by reference to the principle of not harming someone who is not inflicting harm. Such examples show that a law of nature is immutable, given its place in the order of laws of nature.[25] Sometimes one law has to be limited by another because of human sin. The law of nature prescribes that everything should be available for common use; but, because of human sin, common use would allow harm to innocent people; and so the principle of not

and from them secure demonstrations result. And just as the arts are an exposition (explicatio) of nature, so also demonstrations in moral philosophy are an exposition of human nature. . . . We must therefore reject the Academics, who remove the reputation of certainty from the arts. Rather, philosophy sometimes accepts, just as medicine does, creditable (probabiles) arguments, and it is for the expert to judge how far they hold; for those that conflict with the principles are to be altogether repudiated' (*PME* 158.32–159.6).

[23] 'Now the first question is about the end, because, just as natural philosophy looks for the other causes of a human being, so moral philosophy properly considers the end of a human being. Therefore in order to grasp the nature of a human being we need moral philosophy, because the complete grasp of anything, in so far as it can be achieved, requires a search for all the causes. Next, the learned person must consider at this point, that moral philosophy arises from nature, because the search for a cause belongs primarily to the natural philosophers' (*PME* 163.19–27). Melanchthon's teleology is a major topic omitted from Kusukawa, *TNP*, chs. 4–5.

[24] He defines ius as a facultas, 207.34.

[25] 'Thus, the law of nature is immutable in such a way that each item of knowledge is maintained in its proper place and order' (210.17–19).

harming the innocent makes private property preferable in our actual circumstances. In this sense, private property belongs to natural right.[26]

A second division among requirements of natural right distinguishes those that cannot be violated without a complete corruption of human nature. These include not harming the innocent, the responsibility of parents to bring up children, and the keeping of honest agreements. These are genuine practical principles, or conclusions necessarily derived from them.[27] Other principles are in accordance with nature, but may be violated without a complete corruption and ruin of human nature. In our present state of sin, it is sometimes better to permit them, and to concentrate on preventing the violations of the higher principles.[28]

This is Melanchthon's explanation of some of the so-called 'dispensations' from the natural law that are described in the Old Testament. In his view, they are not genuine dispensations. God tolerated polygamy in Israel because it was not a breach of the higher principles of natural right. Melanchthon gives two explanations: (1) Since God is the author of nature, natural right is also in his power. (2) In contrast to the principles of natural knowledge, our assent to moral principles is weakened because of sin and the corruption of our nature.[29] These explanations are meant to show why the Israelites allowed polygamy.[30] The second is fairly easy to understand. The first is more puzzling, since it suggests that God has power over natural right, and therefore can dispense from its observance. If that is what Melanchthon means, he aligns himself with Scotus in believing that these are genuine dispensations, and hence exercises of God's will as legislator.

But Melanchthon does not seem to regard God as dispensing from the natural law. If I am dispensed from observing the law, then the law remains in force and applies to me, but I have no obligation to keep it because the legislator has given me permission not to keep it. Melanchthon seems to have a different view, that God in his role as judge remits any punishment, and in his role as overseer permits the Israelites to go on with this practice. The sense in which God has power over natural right is not the power to change it or to dispense from the obligation to keep it, but the power to refrain from enforcing it with sanctions.

Melanchthon does not commit himself, therefore, to the voluntarist account of dispensations endorsed by Scotus and Ockham. He does not deal with all the cases discussed in the dispute about dispensations; the commands to Abraham and Hosea, for instance, do not seem to fit the pattern he suggests. Nor is it clear whether he takes God to have been free, as Ockham believes, to prescribe some other set of laws that would not have been appropriate for human nature.

[26] 'So also it is the law of nature to use things in common. But because this law now, in corrupt nature, conflicts with the higher law to harm no one, reason now teaches the one who has harmed no one to distinguish areas of ownership (dominia), because under the pretext of the law about common use, many in this corruption of nature would be moved by unjust appetites to harm others' (210.21–7).

[27] 'For the wreckage and destruction of human nature would immediately follow, if everyone were allowed, whenever he felt like it, to attack the fortunes or bodies of others' (211.1–4).

[28] See Suarez, *Leg*. ii 20.3 on toleration of behaviour prohibited by natural law.

[29] 'For since God alone is the founder of nature, even the law of nature is in his power alone. Moreover, the following must be added. Though moral principles are secure, just as natural principles are, that heavy things are borne downwards, and so on, still assent to moral principles is less secure, because of the corruption of nature. For because they do not obey nature enough, assent becomes less secure, and the items of knowledge themselves are less clear, and we easily assent to imaginings that are contrary to them' (211.21–8).

[30] Cf. Suarez on prostitution etc., *Leg*. ii 20.3.

Melanchthon makes no basic innovation in Scholastic views of natural law. He does not maintain the most strongly voluntarist Scholastic view. In his claims about human nature and the ultimate end for human beings, he is still influenced by Aristotelian assumptions.

414. Hooker on Natural Law

Melanchthon's predominantly naturalist account of natural law may be compared with Hooker's unequivocally naturalist position. Hooker defends the principles of the Reformation (as he understands them) against a more extreme voluntarist position that rejects natural reason as a moral authority and demands direct warrant from Scripture, and he uses his doctrine of natural law to defend natural reason in morality. He faces opponents who appeal directly to the will of God, as revealed in Scripture, as authority for church order, and hence (in their view) for a presbyterian rather than an episcopal polity.

Hooker does not try to resolve this issue about government by arguing for the unique Scriptural authority of episcopacy. Instead he argues that God acts in accord with natural law, which is not a product of God's purely legislative will.[31] Since the principles of natural law are the basic principles of practical reason, we have access to them through our practical reason. When God does not legislate specifically on a particular question, he leaves us free to settle it through our practical reason, guided by the principles of natural law. One such question is the question about the government of the Church, which we ought to settle by consideration of what is just and expedient for particular places at particular times.

Hooker begins this argument by accepting the naturalist view that the principles of natural law constitute moral requirements antecedent to any legislative act of God. Hooker agrees with Aquinas on the natural law and natural reason. In his view, God's intellect grasps the principles of natural law, apart from any act of will or command. This view of the role of reason and will in natural law is close to the position later defended by Vasquez, and lacks the voluntarist elements (however limited these may be) found in Suarez.[32]

To explain why he speaks of a natural law that God does not legislate, Hooker distinguishes two senses of 'law'. In the narrower sense law requires imposition by superior authority, but in an 'enlarged' sense it requires only a rule by which actions are framed. The natural law and the eternal law are laws in the enlarged sense. Their existence does not imply that anyone imposes them on anyone; it requires only the appropriate sort of fact to constitute a rule, canon, or norm.[33]

[31] 'They err therefore who think that of the will of God to do this or that there is no reason besides his will' (*LEP* i 2.5 = Keble i 203). Hooker cites *Eph.* 1:11 on God's 'counsel' (*boulê*).

[32] For Suarez's narrower conception of law see *Leg.* i 12.4.

[33] 'I am not ignorant that by "law eternal" the learned for the most part do understand the order, not which God hath eternally purposed himself in all his works to observe, but rather that which with himself he hath set down as expedient to be kept by all his creatures according to the several conditions wherewith he hath endued them. They who thus are accustomed to speak apply the name of Law unto that only rule of working which superior authority imposeth; whereas we somewhat more enlarging the sense thereof term any kind of rule or canon whereby actions are framed, a law.' (*LEP* i 3.1). For more evidence of Hooker's naturalist attitude to natural law, as the expression of the divine intellect, see i 2.2 ('The being of God is a kind of law to his working: for that perfection which God is giveth perfection to that he doth') 5.1–2; 8.4; ('A law therefore generally taken, is a directive rule unto goodness of operation') 8.8; 12.3; 14.4; ('. . . so our own words also, when we extol the complete sufficiency of the whole entire body of the Scripture, must . . . be

This appeal to reason and natural law, understood as a rule rather than as a product of legislative will, influences Hooker's ecclesiology as well as his moral philosophy. In controversies about the episcopal government of the Church, he rejects the position of his Puritan opponents, that a specific form of church government must be justified directly from the Scriptures as having divine authority. In his view, episcopacy is justified by appeal to natural reason, and that should be sufficient warrant for it.[34] We should not suppose that God directs us only through laws revealed in Scripture; God also directs us through the natural law and through practical reason drawing conclusions from the natural law.[35]

Hooker not only rejects an extreme Protestant position on the sources of authority in church and state, but also rejects an extreme voluntarist position on divine commands and morality. His argument helps us to understand the significance of the Reformation for the doctrine of natural law. While voluntarism was defended before the Reformation, the particular emphasis of the Reformers on the sovereignty of God and the sufficiency of Scripture as a rule of doctrine and life might easily suggest a voluntarist conclusion. Luther draws this conclusion in his early work.[36] Hooker's opponents are Calvinists who draw the same conclusion. But though the views of the Reformers might suggest this conclusion, they do not require it. Melanchthon rejects it and Hooker argues strongly against it. If one objects that they are too moderate to count as authentic exponents of the Reformers' position, Calvin's position is even more significant; for though he might be expected to find voluntarism congenial to his general position, he does not endorse it. The later Calvinists, such as those whom Cudworth attacks for their voluntarism, go beyond Calvin's position.[37] The sympathetic attitude to naturalism that we find in Culverwell is a plausible development of Calvin's position.[38]

415. The Effects of Sin

Belief in a natural moral law implies belief in moral principles prescribing actions suitable for human nature and known by natural reason. These principles provide a standard for measuring one's actions. Since, according to Aquinas, natural law requires the cultivation of the virtues of character, we observe natural law by forming the Aristotelian virtues. If we acquire these virtues, we should be able, in reasonably favourable external conditions, to achieve the natural good for human beings.

Aquinas examines our capacity to achieve the virtues and the natural human good, in the light of Christian doctrines of sin, and of the necessity of grace (*ST* 1-2 q109). He maintains

understood with this caution, that the benefit of nature's light be not thought excluded as unnecessary, because the necessity of a diviner light is magnified') 16.2.

[34] See e.g. vii 14.3. Hooker's moderation on this point does not satisfy his editor Keble. See Keble's elaborate discussion, lxvii–lxxv.

[35] 'For as they [sc. our opponents] rightly maintain that God must be glorified in all things, and that the actions of men cannot tend unto his glory unless they be framed after his law; so it is their error to think that the only law which God hath appointed unto men in that behalf is the sacred Scripture . . . yea, those men which have no written law of God to show what is good or evil, carry written in their hearts the universal law of mankind, the Law of Reason, whereby they judge as by a rule which God hath given unto all men for that purpose. . . . So that in moral actions, divine law helpeth exceedingly the law of reason to guide man's life; but in supernatural it alone guideth' (i 16.5).

[36] See n18 on the *Heidelberg Disputation*.

[37] See Cudworth, *EIM* i 1.5 = H15.

[38] See Culverwell, *LN*, ch. 6 = G&M 55.

(q109 a2) that we can both will and do good without grace in the state of sin, even though we cannot attain our natural good in the state of sin.[39] According to the Reformers, this concession to human beings in the state of sin underestimates the effects of original sin.[40] But it is not so easy to see where they disagree with Aquinas, or what difference their disagreement makes.

Sometimes Luther expresses his disagreement with the Scholastics by rejecting their claim that 'as far as the substance of the act is concerned', we can fulfil the law even in the state of sin. This contrast may be somewhat misleading. In rejecting the Scholastic view, Luther does not mean to deny that on particular occasions we can do the very action required by the moral law, if this is understood in a purely behavioural sense. In this sense, both the person who cares about justice and the person who simply wants to avoid getting caught may do what justice requires, as far as the substance of the act is concerned.

In speaking of the substance of the act, however, neither Luther nor the Scholastics have in mind this purely external sense.[41] When Aquinas speaks of 'the substance of the works (opera)' (e.g., 1-2 q109 a4), he does not refer simply to behaviour. He speaks of 'just and brave actions and the other works of the virtues' so that they include the virtues themselves; for he believes that even in the condition of sin we can acquire the moral virtues (q109 a2). Luther disagrees on this point; he often rejects Aristotle's claim that we become good by doing good actions.[42] He seems to deny that we can achieve the acquired virtues, as Aquinas understands them.

In Luther's view, the Scholastic pursuit of the moral virtues conflicts with St Paul's view that 'through the law comes the consciousness of sin'.[43] In trying to keep the moral law, we realize that we cannot keep it by our own efforts, and this realization makes us aware of our need of divine grace. The belief that we can acquire the moral virtues prevents us from recognizing our incapacity to keep the law.

This objection by itself is not convincing. Aquinas does not claim that we can keep the law by our own efforts; he does not even claim that we can do all the works of the law (q109 a4). The virtues that we can acquire, in his view, are not those that fulfil the divine law, but only those that are suitable for human nature without the further help of divine grace. It would

[39] See §350.

[40] See *West. Conf.* 9.1–3: ' God hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty, that it is neither forced, nor by any absolute necessity of nature determined to good or evil. Man, in his state of innocency, had freedom and power to will and to do that which is good and well-pleasing to God; but yet mutably, so that he might fall from it. Man, by his Fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.' On original justice in Aquinas see §349; Abercrombie, *OJ* 60–72.

[41] 'It may be, then, that they mean by "substance of the deed" an external action. But they do not do this at all; they have reference also to an internal action. For they subsume under "substance of the deed" a work that is done for the sake of God from the heart by an act of the will that is naturally educed. Fools that they are, they do not notice that the will, even if it could, would never do what the law prescribes. For it resists the good, and inclines towards evil. . . . For as long as it is reluctant towards the law, it is turned away from it and thus does not fulfil it. Consequently, it needs grace to make it willing and cheerful towards the law' (*Rm.* 4:7 = Pauck 133–4). See also *Rm.* 8:1–4 = Pauck 218.

[42] See *Rm.* 1:17 = Pauck 18: 'The righteousness of God must be distinguished from the righteousness of men which comes from works—as Aristotle clearly indicates . . . According to him, righteousness follows upon and flows from actions. But, according to God, righteousness precedes works and works result from it.' Cf. *Rm.* 8:3 = Pauck 228: 'Works and actions do not produce virtue, as Aristotle says, but virtues determine actions, as Christ teaches'.

[43] See *Rm* 3:20 = Pauck 106.

be possible, indeed appropriate, for virtuous people, by the standards of the moral virtues, to be acutely aware of their sinfulness and of their incapacity to keep the divine law.[44]

Luther rejects this position because he believes the aim of acquiring the moral virtues is more deeply misguided. Sometimes he suggests that the virtues, as Aristotle conceives them, are not the source of praiseworthy actions, since no action can be praiseworthy in the state of sin.[45] His argument is Augustinian, in so far as he claims there is something lacking in the motives of even the best of us without divine grace. His view about what is lacking reflects his disagreement with the Scholastics about the effects of original sin.

According to the Scholastics, the primary effect is in the 'fuel' (fomes)[46] in the appetitive part of the soul. This makes our desires misdirected by lacking the proper direction towards God that they all had in the condition of original justice. Aquinas does not mean that the rational part is still completely correct, and that our fault can be confined to the non-rational part. The rational part is clouded, and hence liable to be misled, by misdirected passions, and it lacks the basic direction towards God that would make all the other genuine goods clear to it.

Aquinas' view is optimistic, however, in so far as he believes that original sin does not inevitably turn the will to a wholly perverted conception of the ultimate end. Without divine grace, we cannot conceive our supernatural end, and without original justice we cannot even keep an adequate conception of our natural end constantly in mind. But we are capable of forming a conception that, even if inadequate, is correct, because it contains the components of contemplation and virtuous activity. If the will forms this conception of the end, we are capable of acting on it far enough to form the states of character that constitute the moral virtues. Since we have universal conscience (synderesis) to grasp the first principles, and we have prudence, to take us from first principles to the specifically virtuous end, we are capable of acquiring the virtues.[47]

On this point, Luther disagrees. For he believes that our conception of our ultimate end, in the state of sin, is basically and inevitably misguided; he denies that universal conscience gives us a true grasp of the ultimate end.[48]

[44] See §§350, 356.

[45] *Rm.* 9:6–9 = Pauck 266: 'So then, why does man take pride in his merits and good works? They cannot in any way please God because they *are* good and meritorious, but only because God has elected from eternity that they would please him. We do the good only on the basis of gratitude, because our works do not make us good, but our goodness, or, rather, the goodness of God makes us good and our actions as well. For what we do is not good in itself, but only because God reckons it to be so . . . It is therefore wrong to define virtue in the way of Aristotle: It makes us perfect and produces laudable acts only in the sense that it makes us perfect and causes our acts to be praiseworthy before men and in our own eyes. Before God this is abominable, and the opposite would please him much more.'

[46] Luther speaks of the fomes at *Rm* 4:7 = Pauck 126: '. . . sin itself is that passion (fuel) and concupiscence, or that inclination towards evil and resistance against the good which is meant in the statement, "I had not known that concupiscence is sin" ' (*Rm.* 7:7).

[47] To this degree Aquinas maintains the principle that the keeping of a law is practicable. See (against the 'heretics') Suarez, *Leg.* i 9.18 (referring to the Council of Trent).

[48] See *Rm.* 4:7 = Pauck 130: 'They [sc. the Scholastic theologians] said . . . that when the will is subject to synteresis, it is, only slightly to be sure, "inclined toward the good". And this tiny motion towards God (of which man is naturally capable) they imagine to be an act of loving God above everything!' Cf. 8:1–4 = Pauck 218: 'Thus philosophy stinks in our nostrils, as if reason could plead at all times for the best, and we tell tall tales about the law of nature. Now it is true that everyone knows the law of nature and that reason pleads for the best. But what best? It pleads for that which is best, not according to God's standards, but according to ours, in other words: it pleads for an evil kind of good. For it seeks itself and its own in all things but not in God. . . . it knows only its own good or what is good, honourable, and useful for

416. Objections to Self-Love

Luther is pessimistic about our prospects for acquiring virtues because he believes that our motives and aims in the state of sin are basically corrupted by self-love.[49] The commandment to love our neighbour as ourselves does not, according to Luther, include a command to love ourselves. On the contrary, it condemns the love of ourselves, and instructs us to turn the attention and love that we now sinfully turn towards ourselves, until it becomes the love of our neighbour instead of ourselves.[50]

Like Scotus, Luther takes self-love to be a natural attitude that has to be abandoned if we are to love God as our ultimate end. In contrast to Scotus, he assumes that self-love is in itself bad, and that in a genuinely virtuous person it would have to be renounced in favour of the love of God. He also rejects Scotus' view that we are capable, in the state of sin, both of self-love and of the love of God, and hence capable of rejecting self-love as our ultimate end. In assuming the inevitable supremacy of self-love in the state of sin, he agrees with eudaemonists against Scotus. In assuming that the love of God requires the renunciation of self-love, he agrees with, and goes beyond, Scotus against the eudaemonism of Aquinas.

Calvin agrees with Luther's view that we are not commanded to love ourselves; he denounces the primacy of self-love as a fiction of the 'Sophists'.[51] But he does not suggest

itself, but not what is good for God and for others. Therefore it knows and wills mainly a good that is a particular good, indeed, that is good only for the individual self.' On Luther's treatment of synteresis see Rupp, *RG* 150–3.

[49] '. . . these words will appear strange and even foolish to those who regard themselves as holy and who love God with a covetous love, i.e., for the sake of their own salvation and eternal rest, and for the purpose of avoiding hell, in other words: not for God's sake but for their own sake. They are the ones who babble that ordered love begins with itself and that everyone must first of all wish his own salvation and then his neighbour's as his own. . . . But as a matter of fact, to be blessed means to seek in everything God's will and his glory, and to want nothing for oneself, neither here nor in the life to come' (*Rm.* 9:3 = Pauck 262). See also *Rm.* 8:5–13 = Pauck 224: 'The "prudence of the flesh" chooses what is to selfish advantage and it avoids what is harmful to the self. Moreover, it rejects the common good and chooses what harms the common spirit. This is the prudence that directs the flesh, i.e. concupiscence and self-will. It enjoys only itself, and uses everyone else, even God; it seeks itself and its own interests in everything . . . Good is only what is good for him and bad only what is bad for him.' Luther alludes to Augustine's division between usus and fruitio; see §231n122.

On the ordo caritatis see Scotus *3Sent*. d29 schol. = OO vii 2, 667; Biel *3Sent* d29 a2 = 523C–528H (W&H).

[50] Luther argues against the view that ordered love begins with oneself and extends to one's neighbour: 'It does not seem to me to be a solid understanding of the commandment "You shall love your neighbour" if one interprets it in terms of the notion that in view of the fact that the commandment itself says "as yourself", the one who loves is the model according to which he loves his neighbour. For one derives the following conclusion from this: You must love yourself first and according to the pattern of this self-love of yours you must also love your neighbour. . . . I believe . . . that by this commandment "as yourself" man is not commanded to love himself but he is shown the wicked love with which in fact he loves himself; in other words, it says to him: You are wholly bent in on yourself and versed in self-love, and you will not be straightened out and made upright unless you cease entirely to love yourself and, forgetting yourself, love only your neighbour. . . . we are commanded to have the same eagerness for the love of others as for self-love. . . . what is commanded (namely, the love of the neighbour) is based on what is prohibited (namely, self-love)' (*Rm.* 15:2 = Pauck 407–8).

[51] 'Let us therefore hold, that our life will be framed in best accordance with the will of God, and the requirements of his Law, when it is, in every respect, most fruitful for our brothers. But in the whole Law, there is not one syllable which lays down a rule as to what man is to do or avoid for the advantage of his own flesh. Indeed, since men are naturally prone to excessive self-love, which they always retain, however far they depart from the truth, there was no need of a law to inflame a love already present in excess. Hence it is perfectly plain that the observance of the Commandments consists not in the love of ourselves, but in the love of God and our neighbour; and that the one who leads the best and holiest life is the one who as little as possible lives and is concerned for himself; and that no one lives worse or more wrongly than the one who lives and is concerned only for himself, and considers and seeks only what is his own. Indeed, to express more clearly how strongly we should be inclined to love our neighbour, the Lord has referred to self-love as the rule (regula), because he could refer to no stronger or more intense feeling. And the force of the way of speaking

that self-love is itself a result of sin, or that the moral law condemns self-love; it condemns only excessive self-love. The persistence of self-love is not a reason for condemning human beings in their natural and sinful state; nor does the moral law require the renunciation of self-love.

The primacy of self-love guarantees, for Luther, that we cannot acquire the moral virtues, if these are taken to require the choice of virtuous action for its own sake. If we choose them for the sake of pleasure, or to avoid punishment, or in the hope of glory, then, Luther assumes, we cannot be genuinely virtuous.[52] But if we deny that we are moved by either of these motives, that is also boastful vainglory.[53] For if we are pleased to do good works, we lay ourselves open to subtle self-deception about our moral condition; we are acting for our delight and inward satisfaction, not out of the love of God.[54] In all these cases our good action is really 'passive', because fear and desire force us to do what we would not do voluntarily.[55]

Luther's attack on the motives of allegedly virtuous people combines two charges: (1) Because of original sin, we are subject to self-assertion, arrogance, and delusions of perfection that may corrupt our motives even when we do virtuous actions. (2) If we are moved primarily by self-love, we are inevitably dominated by self-assertion, arrogance, and so on. If the second charge is correct, then we cannot consistently both be psychological eudaemonists and take the moral virtues to be attainable.

This attack does not imply that the philosophers' conception of moral virtue is mistaken. On the contrary, Luther seems to take it for granted that virtue requires the pursuit of virtuous action for its own sake; on the basis of this assumption he argues that the aspiration to virtue of character is misguided, once we acknowledge the dominance of self-love in the state of sin. He does not seem to endorse one objection that might be attributed to Augustine—that the pagan philosophers' conception of moral virtue is itself flawed.[56]

Aquinas could accept—though he does not accept—Luther's first charge without any basic damage to his Aristotelian conception of virtue and happiness. If arrogance and self-satisfaction are more widespread and pervasive than Aquinas believes they are, then it

must be carefully considered. For he does not (as some sophists have stupidly dreamed) assign the first place to self-love (*philautia*), and the second to charity. He rather transfers to others the affection of love that we feel for ourselves. Hence the Apostle declares, that charity "does not seek its own," (*1Cor.* 13:5). Nor is the Sophists' argument worth a straw, that the thing regulated (regulatum) is always inferior to its rule (regula). The Lord did not make self-love the rule, as if love towards others was subordinate to it; but whereas, through natural depravity the feeling used to stay within ourselves, he shows that it ought to be diffused to another, so that we should be prepared to do good to our neighbour with no less eagerness, ardour, and concern, than to ourselves' (Calvin, *Inst.* ii 8.54). Contrast Aquinas' explanation of the omission of self-love from the Decalogue, §313.

[52] 'Even though they do good works outwardly, they do them either because they fear punishment or because they love riches or glory or some other created good, but not willingly and gladly (non voluntate et hilaritate)' (*Rm.* 3:9 = Pauck 86).

[53] A human being 'cannot but seek his own and love himself above everything. That is the sum and substance of all his faults' (*Rm.* 3:10 = Pauck 88–9).

[54] 'Inasmuch as the love of spiritual values is honourable and good, it very often becomes an end in itself, so that these values are not placed in relation to God and referred to him. And so we pursue them not because they are pleasing to God but because they give us delight and inward satisfaction, and also because we thereby earn the plaudits of men; in other words: we pursue them not for God's sake but for our own' (*Rm.* 3:21 = Pauck 112–13).

[55] 'And thus they do the good not actively but (if I may say so) passively (non faciunt, sed potius . . . faciuntur); i.e., fear and desire force them to do the good that they would not do voluntarily. But people who seek God do the good gratuitously and joyfully and only for God's sake, and not in order to obtain some created good either spiritual or corporeal' (*Rm.* 3:12 = Pauck 93).

[56] See §§229–30.

is more difficult than Aquinas supposes it is to acquire the moral virtues. It is the second charge that attacks Aquinas' basic principles. For it relies on Scotus' view that the supremacy of self-love prevents the appropriate love of virtue for its own sake and the appropriate love of God for his own sake. In his treatment of self-love, arrogance, and the sin of Lucifer, Aquinas answers this objection to the supremacy of self-love.

Luther's objection to self-love is more extreme and more strident than Scotus' objection. It is also more disputable. If self-love is understood as the desire for happiness, as Aquinas understands it, it does not necessarily conflict with the love of God above everything else; for Aquinas believes he can show that our happiness consists in the self-forgetful love of God, just as it consists partly in the self-forgetful love of our neighbour.

417. Pagan Virtue

These reflexions on the condition of human beings in the state of sin lead the Reformers back to Augustine's attack on the pagan virtues. They do not seem to be satisfied with Aquinas' attempt to reconcile Augustine's position with the acknowledgment of genuine moral virtues independent of Christian faith. Augustine's remarks inspire later Christian attacks on pagan virtues. Such attacks were ascribed to Jan Hus, and condemned as heretical by the Council of Konstanz in 1415.[57]

Luther argues that since all the alleged virtues of pagans rest on self-love, they are really vices and not virtues.[58] Melanchthon suggests that when the Scholastics recognize pagan virtues, they are really allowing justification by works, not recognizing the necessity of grace and faith.[59] Calvin's position is more qualified, and closer to Augustine's. He suggests that the fault of pagans is that they do not refer their actions to the appropriate end, the service of God; they are open to this objection even if they are not vicious, measured by non-theological standards.[60]

Attacks on Aquinas were not confined to the Reformers. On the Roman side, Michael Baius discusses these issues at length in *De Virtutibus Impiorum*, where he often appeals

[57] D §1216.

[58] 'No one loves justice, except Christ alone. All others love either money or pleasure or honour, or, despising these, love glory at any rate, or, if they are the best of all, love themselves above justice. . . . Therefore, since love of oneself remains, it is quite impossible for a human being to love, speak, or do justice, even though he may simulate all these things. It follows that the virtues of all philosophers, indeed of all human beings, whether jurists or theologians, are virtues in appearance, but really vices' (Luther, *Heb.* 1:9 = C v 347.8–18 = *Works* xxix 119). Further passages are quoted by Rupp, *RG* 203–5.

[59] Melanchthon, *LC* 21–2 = Pauck 33–4: 'And our sophists are not yet ashamed to teach righteousness of works, satisfactions, and philosophical virtues. Let us grant that there was some kind of constancy in Socrates, chastity in Xenocrates, temperance in Zeno. Still, because they were in impure minds—indeed, because these shadows of virtues arose by love of oneself (amore sui) from selfishness (philautia), they ought not to be counted as true virtues, but as vices. . . . what do most philosophers teach, even the best of them, except trust and love of ourselves?' Chemnitz defends a hostile view of pagan virtue against Trent at *ECT* i 387–405 (Topic 6).

[60] Calvin discusses *c. Iul.* at some length in *Inst.* iii 14.3. He does not actually claim that pagan virtues are really vices. He comes close to saying so: 'Therefore, since by the very impurity of the heart these <good works> have been corrupted as from their origin, they ought no more to be reckoned among virtues than the vices that commonly deceive on account of their affinity and likeness to virtue. . . . He [sc. Augustine] therefore affirms that all Fabricii, Scipiones, and Catones in their illustrious achievements have sinned in that, since they lacked the light of faith, they did not refer them to the end to which they ought to have referred them.'

to Augustine. The Pope condemned his views in 1567.[61] The Jansenists revived similar views, with the same Augustinian inspiration;[62] the Pope condemned them in 1690.[63] Baius' objection seems to be similar to Calvin's rather than Luther's; he appeals to the absence of the right end (serving God) rather than the presence of the wrong end (self-love) to explain why pagan virtues are spurious.[64]

The Council of Trent presents the official Roman reaction to these views. It rejects the view that all the actions of pagans, whatever their reason or motive, are really sins and deserve the hatred of God.[65] The English Articles are more cautious than Luther and Baius and simply say that the works of unbelievers have the 'nature' or 'character' of sin.[66]

[61] Pius V, 1567, *Errores Michaeli Baii* = D §1925: 'All the actions of unbelievers are sins, and the virtues of philosophers are vices'. §1933: 'Everything that a sinner, or slave of sin, does is sin'. §1937: 'Anyone who acknowledges any natural good, that is to say, any good that takes its origin from natural powers alone, agrees with Pelagius'. On this ground Baius supports Ambrosiaster's interpretation of Paul's remarks on the Gentiles in *Rm*. 2; he argues that those who accept a 'natural law' interpretation of these remarks endorse Pelagianism (§1992). These are the Pope's descriptions of Baius' views, not quotations from Baius.

[62] Knox, *E*209, explains the connexion between Jansenism and objections to pagan virtue: 'If you believe in the Fall as a shattering blow that unmade man to his very essence, . . . you begin to suspect common human virtues; you trace ulterior motives in them, and write them down as "natural", useless in God's sight'. At 219 he discusses the Jansenist use of the Augustinian division: 'either by charity or by cupidity'. See Augustine, §230n113. Wang, *SAVP* 33–5, discusses this disjunction, and its role in the controversy arising from the Jansenist-inclined Synod of Pistoia (D §§2623–4).

Abercrombie, *OJ* 87–92, 125–8, summarizes the views of Baius and Jansen. In his long, tedious, and polemical *Augustinus* Jansen presents an extreme version of Augustine's case against pagan virtue, relying especially on Augustine's polemic against Julian (see §230). In his view, Augustine allows only the right officium and nothing more to pagans. He tries to show (ii 162) that Aquinas really agrees with his view that any genuine virtue must refer all one's actions to God as their end As an example of someone who tries to evade Augustine's plain meaning, Jansen attacks Suarez, *De Gratia* i 7.19–20 = OO vii 399, who interprets Augustine along the lines we have attributed to Aquinas; see §356.

[63] The Pope ascribes these views to Baius: 'It is necessary for an unbeliever to sin in every work. Anyone who hates a sin simply because of its wrongness and inappropriateness to nature, without any reference to the offence against God, truly sins' (D §§2308–9).

[64] 'St Thomas . . . thinks they are virtues because they are referred to some particular genuine good, which can be referred to the universal good, even if these states are found in those who are ignorant of the one true God because of blindness, or who despise him because of arrogance. However, these are clearly similar to the one of whom the Psalmist says: "The fool has said in his heart, There is no God". Here one must especially wonder how St Thomas thought this possible reference of a proximate end to the universal good could be enough to constitute a virtue, given that the same possible reference belongs also to that particular good that the impious seek above the universal good and in explicit contempt of it. . . . A human being is made, and is required, to love God with all his might and to serve him alone; now anyone who lives in accord with virtue does what he is required to and what he is made for; therefore, anyone who does not serve God and seeks to do the duties belonging to the virtues not because of something else but for their own sakes, does not live in accord with virtue' (Baius, *Virt. Imp*. 4 = p. 65). The omitted passage includes a quotation from *c. Iul*. iv 3.

Gregory of Rimini also presents an Augustinian attack on pagan virtue: 'And for that reason one must say the following about the pagans and unqualifiedly faithless who are said to have practised such things: Granted that they did things of the sort that were good in their genus and in accordance with duty (ex officio), as Augustine puts it, still they did not do these things ultimately because of God, and for that reason neither did they do them finally because of the end they ought to have done them for, and thus they did not do them virtuously, but badly and viciously . . .' (*2Sent*. d26–8 q1 98N (p.73 ed Marcolino et al.)). He refers to Augustine, *c. Iul*. iv 3.22. See Leff, *GR* 176; Trinkaus, *IL* 74.

[65] 'If any one says that all the things done before justification, in whatever way they may be done, are truly sins, or merit the hatred of God . . . let him be anathema' (D §1557).

[66] 'Works done before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of the Spirit, are not pleasing to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesu Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or (as the School-authors say) deserve grace of congruity: yea rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin' (*Articles* §13). The Irish Articles of 1615 have 'we doubt not but they are sinful' (§26 = Schaff, *CC* iii 531). 'Have the nature of sin' corresponds to 'peccati rationem habere' in the Latin version, which one might be more inclined to render 'have the character of sin'. This Article is not on exactly the same question as the passage from Trent just quoted. For even though the Article is entitled 'Of works before justification', it actually

The Westminster Confession takes a similar view, that the works of unbelievers are sinful in so far as they lack the appropriate motive.[67]

Aquinas' interpretation of Augustine is consistent both with the position of the Council of Trent, that not every aspect of all works before justification is truly sinful, and with the view of the English Articles, that 'forasmuch' as these works are the works of pagans, they have the nature of sin, and cannot even deserve grace by congruity.[68] The Council of Trent and the Articles mention the two aspects of pagan virtue that Aquinas distinguishes; he also agrees with the Articles that works before justification do not deserve grace even by congruity.[69]

Among these different views about pagan virtues, the most radical is Luther's attack based on claims about self-love. He draws on Augustine's description of the outlook of the 'earthly city' as the self-love that goes as far as contempt of God. This description might be taken to imply a sharp contrast between self-love and the love of God; this is how Scotus takes it.

Such a contrast, however, raises a difficulty for Augustine, who also recognizes the basic and universal character of the desire for one's own happiness.[70] He might appear to be committed to all these claims: (1) The desire for one's own happiness is basic and universal in human beings. (2) The desire for one's own happiness is a manifestation of self-love. (3) To love God above all things requires the abandonment of self-love. (4) The Christian is required to love God above all things. Since Aquinas accepts (2), he rejects (3), and claims that Augustine rejects it; in his view, Augustine condemns only misguided self-love. Scotus accepts (3), and therefore denies (1).

Luther accepts all four of these claims, applied to human beings in the state of sin without grace, and so he infers that we cannot fulfil the requirement of loving God above all things in that state. But he suggests that even if we cannot fulfil the law in our state of sin, because of self-love, we can at least recognize and lament our inability to fulfil it; he sometimes regards this as the appropriate preparation for the reception of grace.[71] He seems to expose a difficulty in his position. For his unqualified claims about the pervasiveness of self-love seem to imply that self-love must underlie even our sorrow at our failure to keep the law; and so even this sorrow must be no less sinful than all our efforts to keep the law.

The strong claims about self-love, selfishness, and arrogance support Luther's claim that all actions in the state of sin without grace are sinful because of their motives. But we do not need to accept these strong claims if we are to say more generally, as the English Articles say, that actions in the state of sin 'have the character of sin', in so far as they are not appropriately directed towards God.[72]

mentions works 'before the grace of Christ', which are not the same (since some works that are not before the grace of Christ are before justification).

[67] 'Works done by unregenerate men, although for the matter of them they may be things which God commands, and of good use both to themselves and others; yet, because they proceed not from a heart purified by faith; nor are done in a right manner, according to the Word; nor to a right end, the glory of God; they are therefore sinful and cannot please God, or make a man meet to receive grace from God. And yet their neglect of them is more sinful and displeasing unto God' (*West. Conf.* 16.7).

[68] See the passages just quoted in n66.

[69] See *ST* 1-2 q109 a6; q114 a5; §§350–2.

[70] See Augustine, §231n121.

[71] 'Their works are good, not when they put their trust in them, but when they do them in preparation for justification, confident that they will be made righteous through it alone' (*Rm.* 3:21–2 = Pauck 108).

[72] See *Articles* §13 (n66 above).

Even if Luther were right in his strong claims about self-love, he would not be entitled to infer that the Scholastic pursuit of the moral virtues is entirely misguided. He would be right to say that the Scholastics are wrong to suppose that the moral virtues, as they understand them, really move us to act virtuously for its own sake; they cannot, then, meet the Scholastics' own standards for being genuine virtues. They might still, however, be states preferable to their opposites, in so far as they move us to the right actions on the basis of motives that, however sinful, are none the less preferable to the motives characteristic of the vices.

Luther could avoid this qualified endorsement of the moral virtues, if he denied that the actions and motives they encourage are preferable to their opposites. He does not deny this, however, and he has good reason not to deny it. For he acknowledges that, even in the state of sin, we are bound by the natural law, that we acknowledge it, and are capable of fulfilling it to some degree. Neither St Paul nor Luther suggests that observance of the natural law consists simply in behavioural conformity to it; the observers of the law are supposed to have a trained and sensitive conscience as well.[73] Once this is conceded, the virtues of character must be worth cultivating, even if all that we can achieve in the state of sin is a state of character that is irreparably flawed by self-love.

But it is not clear in any case why we ought to agree with Luther's claim that pagans are so dominated by inappropriate self-love that they are incapable of the degree of unselfish motivation that is needed for moral virtue. If we appeal to eudaemonist arguments to show that they are dominated by self-love, we have not shown that this self-love is inappropriate; even if we agree that (as Calvin claims) we are excessively prone to inappropriate self-love, we may believe we are capable of overcoming it far enough to acquire the moral virtues. Luther's most extreme claims may appear to depend on a shift between self-love in general (universal, but not inappropriate) and selfish self-love (inappropriate if taken to excess, but not universally dominant). If we fail to distinguish the two, we may agree too hastily with this claim that self-love is both universally dominant and inappropriate.

If we reject Luther's extreme position, the claim that the works of unbelievers are sinful need not conflict with the claim that unbelievers can acquire genuine virtues. Aquinas agrees with the Augustinian and Calvinist claim that in failing to pursue a supernatural end, unbelievers sin; but this claim is consistent with acknowledging that they can have genuine virtues that are focussed on moral rightness (honestas). This position is set out clearly by Gonet, a later Thomist, who argues that the moral virtues are directed towards the moral good, which is a genuine good, though not a complete good (verum bonum, sed non perfectum).[74]

[73] *Rm.* 2:15: 'They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or perhaps excuse them'.

[74] In *MT* Trac. iv, ch. 6, Gonet discusses the question 'Can there be moral virtues without charity?' because modern (recentiores) writers have said No, and have appealed to Augustine, *c. Iul.* iv 3, and to *De nupt. et concup*. 3–4. He answers (iv 6.8, p. 212) that these passages refer to perfect virtues that lead to eternal life, and that Augustine (*Ep.* 130) also recognizes real but imperfect virtues. Aquinas takes the same view, that the acquired virtues are genuine virtues because they focus on the honestum: ' From what has been said you will understand that there are three kinds of virtue. Some are not true virtues, but only apparent, because they are not directed to true good, but to apparent, [e.g., the 'prudence' of the miser]. Others are true virtues, but not perfect, because they are directed to true good, but not to perfect good; for they are directed to good as right (bonum honestum), which has not got the character of the ultimate end, but only of an intermediate end; the acquired moral virtues are of this kind' (iv 6.13, p. 212).

These areas of agreement and disagreement about the works of unbelievers also help us to understand the dispute about whether it is possible for us to keep the moral law in the state of nature. Luther and Calvin believe it is impossible; Calvin recognizes that his view 'is commonly looked upon as a most absurd opinion' (*Inst*. ii 7.5), but he takes it to be obviously true none the less. He argues that no one has succeeded in loving God completely, and that no one has ever been free of sensory appetite (concupiscentia).[75]

On the other side, Suarez rejects the heretics' view that we cannot keep the law in the state of sin. He argues that God does not require what is impossible, but God requires the keeping of the law (*Leg*. i 9.17–18). This raises complex questions about different views of freedom, which Calvin discusses at length (*Inst*. ii 5). But the opposition between the two views is not quite as sharp as it first appears. Aquinas agrees with Calvin that in the state of sin we cannot fulfil the whole law, because we cannot completely fulfil the commandment to love God (*ST* 1-2 q109 a4). It is possible for us to fulfil the law only because it is possible to act with the help of God (q109 a4 ad2).

The impossibility of fulfilling the law would be much more serious if we agreed that every action that is not done out of the love of God is sin, and therefore violates the natural law. Suarez opposes this view, which he ascribes to Baius and to the Lutherans (*Leg*. ii 11.6–7). Baius appeals, as Luther does in such contexts, to Augustine.[76] But if we do not accept the extreme view about self-love, we need not accept this indiscriminate condemnation of the works of unbelievers. Nor is it necessary for Calvin's argument about the necessity of grace for justification.

A summary account that ignores the details of the complex and polemical arguments on each side inevitably over-simplifies the issues and exaggerates the extent of agreement. But it may none the less be useful for our main purpose. Apart from Luther's exaggerated claims about self-love, the arguments of the Reformers do not show that the Scholastics were wasting their time in advocating the Aristotelian virtues of character. To refute the Scholastics on this point, the Reformers would have had to show that they had seriously misunderstood the demands of the natural law and the states of character needed to fulfil these demands. But the arguments about the effects of original sin do not show that the Scholastics were wrong on these points.

One might, however, draw a conclusion more hostile to the Scholastics from these questions about the motives of allegedly virtuous pagans. If one accepts the extreme Lutheran claims about self-love and its corrupting effects, one might infer that it is a mistake to connect the natural law with the cultivation of the virtues. If we grant that genuine virtue is impossible without the transformation resulting from divine grace, we might decide that natural reason has nothing to do with this 'genuine' virtue, and that we can abandon genuine virtue to the theologians. Hence we might prefer to confine the natural law to prescriptions for action, without reference to motives. Even if these actions are worthless, from the

[75] 'By impossible I mean that which never was, and, being prevented by the direction and decree of God, never will be. I say, that if we go back to the remotest period, we shall not find a single saint who, clothed with a mortal body, ever reached the goal of love so as to love the Lord with all his heart, and soul, and mind, and strength. And again I say there has been no one who has not been weighed down by appetite. Who will answer this?' (*Inst*. ii 7.5).

[76] The relevant passage from Baius is quoted by Perena ad loc.

theological point of view, without divine grace, they are still useful for the good of society; perhaps these are the real concern of natural law.

This reduced conception of natural law is a Hobbesian conception; the dismissal of genuine virtue is Mandeville's reaction to disputes about virtues and motives.[77] Such a conclusion does not express the views of the Reformers. Their central views about the effects of original sin, and about grace and justification, do not undermine the pursuit and cultivation of the moral virtues, as Aquinas understands them.

418. Sin and Freewill

The Reformers believe that the Scholastics over-estimate the role of freewill in human beings in the state of original sin. Luther sometimes asserts that freewill remains 'in name alone' in the state of sin.[78] The Council of Trent condemns this formulation,[79] though it affirms that freewill was weakened by original sin.[80] The Augsburg Confession takes a more moderate position than Luther's extreme view, claiming that freewill extends to 'civil justice' and to 'things subject to reason'.[81]

It is sometimes difficult to see what the disputes are about because of some obscurities in claims about freewill. Melanchthon recognizes three sorts of freedom: (1) Power over external actions; it depends on our choice whether we act one way or the other. (2) Contingency of our actions in relation to external causes, both natural and divine. (3) Independence of will from the passions.[82] According to Melanchthon, we clearly have

[77] See Hobbes, *L*15.40; Mandeville, *FB* i 56–7.

[78] 'After <original> sin freewill is present in name alone, and as long as it does what is up to it, it sins mortally. After <original> sin free will is capable of good as a subjective capacity, but of evil always as an active capacity' (Luther, *Heid. Disp*. 13–14 = C v 378 = *Works* xxxi 48–9 = Dillenberger 502).

[79] Canon 5 on Justification: 'If anyone says that after the sin of Adam human freewill is lost and extinguished, or says that it is a thing in name only, in fact a name without any <corresponding> reality, and a fiction that Satan introduced into the Church, let him be anathema' (D §1555).

[80] '. . . in them [sc. the Jews] freewill was not at all extinguished, though admittedly it was weakened in its powers and bent down' (D §1521).

[81] 'Of freewill they [sc. the Lutherans] teach that man's will has some liberty to choose civil righteousness, and to work things subject to reason. But it has no power, without the Holy Spirit, to work the righteousness of God, that is, spiritual righteousness; . . . but this righteousness is wrought in the heart when the Holy Spirit is received through the Word. . . . [A quotation from Augustine follows.] They condemn the Pelagians and others, who teach that without the Holy Spirit, by the power of nature alone, we are able to love God above all things' (*Aug. Conf.* 18). Melanchthon expands this claim by distinguishing the roles of reason and faith: 'Nor, indeed, do we deny liberty to the human will. The human will has liberty in the choice of works and things which reason comprehends by itself. It can to a certain extent render civil righteousness or the righteousness of works; it can speak of God, offer to God a certain service by an outward work, obey magistrates, parents; in the choice of an outward work it can restrain the hands from murder, from adultery, from theft. Since there is left in human nature reason and judgment concerning objects subjected to the senses, choice between these things, the liberty and power to render civil righteousness, are also left. . . . But . . . human hearts without the Holy Spirit sare without the fear of God; without trust toward God, they do not believe that they are heard, forgiven, helped, and preserved by God. Therefore they are godless. . . . Therefore, although we concede to free will the liberty and power to perform the outward works of the Law, yet we do not ascribe to free will these spiritual matters, namely, truly to fear God, truly to believe God, truly to be confident and hold that God regards us, hears us, forgives us, etc. . . . Therefore such a distribution is of advantage in which civil righteousness is ascribed to the free will and spiritual righteousness to the governing of the Holy Spirit in the regenerate' (*Apol. Aug. Conf.* 18). On civil righteousness see Maurer, *HCAC* 89–101.

[82] For (1) see *LC* 13.2 = Pauck 27. For (2) see 11.17 = Pauck 24–5. For (3) see 13.11 = Pauck 27.

the first sort of freedom; we can experience it in our actions. But it is not enough for the freewill that the Scholastics affirm. We lack the second type of freedom, since nothing is contingent in relation to the will of God. We also lack the third type of freedom. Since the second and third types of freedom are essential for the truth of the Scholastic claims, we must reject these Scholastic claims.[83]

In arguing against Erasmus, Luther agrees that we have the first type of freedom, but denies that we have the second type.[84] To claim the second kind of freedom, we must, in Luther's view, deny the sovereignty and efficacy of the will of God, as we know of it through the Scriptures.[85] Luther rejects the view of providence and predestination that makes it depend on God's foreknowledge of what will happen independently of God's will. If God's providence simply rested on foreknowledge of what we will do freely, our sinning or avoiding sin would be up to us, and we would not depend on divine grace to escape from sin. Since we have Scriptural authority to show that we are absolutely dependent on divine grace, we cannot have freewill to act independently of God in the state of sin, and God's providence cannot rest simply on foreknowledge. We cannot restrict God's role to foreknowledge. We must also allow, according to Luther, that God begins a causal chain that, given God's initial will, inevitably results in one or another action of ours. This is God's predestination.[86]

Luther and Erasmus agree that if God initiates a causal chain in which each previous condition is sufficient for a specific successor, and in which the whole chain is sufficient for my action, I lack freewill. Since Luther is convinced of the truth of predestination through such a causal chain of sufficient conditions, he believes he must deny freewill; the mere fact that our choice to do A rather than B is among the conditions determining our doing A rather than B does not ensure that our doing A rather than B is an exercise of freewill. Since Erasmus is convinced that it would be unjust of God to condemn us for actions that we are not free not to do, he believes he must deny predestination, as Luther understands it.

We can find a role for predestination without denying freewill, as Luther and Erasmus understand it, if we adopt a Molinist solution.[87] According to this view, predestination is an act of the divine will, not simply the product of God's foreknowledge of what we will do independently of him. But it rests on a special kind of divine knowledge. God knows not only the laws of nature and the actual future. He also knows the counterfactual futures; this is his 'middle knowledge'.

God knows, for instance, what I would freely do in different circumstances. He knows that if I were offered a bribe of §10, I would not sell state secrets to the enemy, but if I were offered §10m, and threatened with the death of my family, I would sell the secrets. He also knows the circumstances in which an enemy agent would offer me the small bribe, and those in which he would offer me the large bribe and present me with this threat. Both

[83] When Chemnitz states what he takes to be the 'chief point at issue' about freewill, he does not go as far as Luther in denying contingency; see *ECT* i 420–7. At 426–7 he accuses Trent of obscuring the issues by its condemnation of Pelagianism.

[84] Luther discusses Erasmus' account of freewill in *SA* Part 3 = C iii 150–6 = *BW*, tr. Packer and Johnson), 137–43.

[85] See *SA* = C iii 150–93 = *BW* 137–89.

[86] Calvin discusses freewill at length in *Inst.* ii 2. At ii 3.5, he distinguishes necessity from compulsion (coactio), as Luther does at *SA* = C iii 125 = *BW* 102.

[87] See Freddoso's helpful edition of Molina's *Concordia*. The controversy is discussed by Farrelly, *PGFW*. Molina sets out from Aquinas' discussion of non-actual possibles in *ST* 1a q14 a9.

my decisions and the enemy's decisions are free; the antecedents and circumstances do not provide sufficient conditions.

If God knows all this, and wants me to sell the secrets, God arranges the second set of circumstances. Hence my selling the secrets is the result of God's will, not simply of God's foreknowledge; for God chooses to put me in these circumstances rather than in any of those in which God knows I would not sell the secrets. None the less, it does not threaten my freedom, because God's choice of the circumstances rests on knowledge of what I would freely do in different circumstances.

The Molinist appeal to middle knowledge as the basis of predestination identifies a role for predestination within an incompatibilist conception of freewill. A compatibilist might also attribute knowledge of counterfactual futures to God, but such knowledge would play no special role in a defence of freewill. The special role in a defence of freewill relies on the claim that God's middle knowledge is of what I would do in different circumstances, without being determined to do it. If each set of circumstances and antecedent conditions provided sufficient conditions for one or another action by me, middle knowledge would be irrelevant.

The Molinist solution does not fit the Reformers' conception of predestination and divine grace. If we remain free to avoid sin in the state without grace, then we do not depend on God's grace; both sin and virtue are in our power and independent of God. This is why Luther insists that the proper recognition of divine sovereignty and divine grace requires the rejection of freewill. The form of predestination that rests on middle knowledge falls short of the form of predestination that Luther takes to be required by Christian doctrine.

One might argue, in any case, that the Molinist position fails to do all that might be expected of it. One reason for insisting on freewill, conceived as excluding determinism, is the belief that if we allow God's choices to initiate a causal chain of conditions sufficient for sin, we make God the author of sin, and hence responsible both for the sin and for the condemnation of the sinners whom God chooses not to save. Middle knowledge may seem to avoid this objection, since sinners would not sin without having made the undetermined choice to sin; hence, they, and not God, are responsible.

To be content with this answer, however, we must ignore the fact that God chooses to confront sinners with circumstances in which God knows they will sin. God could have confronted them with different circumstances in which they would have freely chosen not to sin. If, then, Judas would not have sinned without God's predestination, and since God's predestination ensures that Judas will sin, by ensuring the circumstances in which—as God knows—he will sin, God seems to bear responsibility for Judas's sinning, even if Judas himself also bears responsibility for it.

These arguments between Erasmus, the Reformers, and the Molinists proceed on assumptions that are shared by Scotus and Ockham, who also believe that if the will is determined by antecedent external conditions, we lack freewill.[88] But Aquinas does not seem to accept these assumptions, since his account of the relation between human freedom and divine foreknowledge and predestination does not depend on the denial of determinism. In his view, contingency requires secondary causes operating in the way proper to their nature; it does not require any gap in sufficient conditions. Human wills are secondary causes

[88] See §371.

operating properly when they are moved by the greater apparent good; if our actions are caused by our wills moved by the greater apparent good, we act freely, no matter how it comes about that the greater apparent good is presented to us in this way.

According to Aquinas, then, we are responsible for our sinful actions because we choose them as a result of will and election. We, and not God, are the causes of our sins because God does nothing wrong in failing to prevent them.[89] This all remains true even though God's will initiates a set of sufficient conditions for our sinful action. This is the position that Banez ascribes to Aquinas and defends in opposition to the Molinist solution.[90]

Aquinas' position, as defended by Banez, maintains the claims about freewill that Luther opposes, but it does not weaken the claims about predestination that Luther supports. It is not surprising, then, that Banez's position was attacked as being too close to that of the Reformers. The Banezians and the Molinists agreed on a series of agreed statements on freewill and predestination, to distinguish them both from Pelagians and Calvinists.[91] But their agreement concealed a disagreement about the nature of freewill. Aquinas maintains his combination of views because he maintains a weaker condition for freewill than the one that Luther and Erasmus share. Hence, the conditions that appear to Luther to exclude freewill may not exclude it, if we accept Aquinas' conception.

If this is true, Luther has a reason for rejecting the Tridentine formulations about freewill if he accepts an indeterminist conception of freewill. But his Scriptural reasons for denying freewill are reasons for affirming predestination, and may not require the denial of freewill as Aquinas understands it.

On this issue, then, the conflict between the Reformers and the Scholastics may be less sharp than it initially appears. Luther's primary dispute is with the position of Scotus, Ockham, and Biel on freewill; this is the position that Erasmus defends. The debate between Luther and Erasmus neglects the conception of freewill that goes back to the Stoics and to Aristotle. This is also Aquinas' conception of freewill.

On the division between the will and the passions, the opposition between Melanchthon and Aquinas is sharper. Melanchthon opposes Aquinas on both historical and philosophical grounds: (1) He believes that the division between will and passion is un-Biblical. In the Scriptures, the source of motivation and action is the 'heart', without further distinction.[92] (2) The division between will and passion conceals the fact that we necessarily follow our strongest passion. In suggesting that it is up to us to resist our passions, the Scholastic position commits itself to a Pelagian position about our freedom in the face of sin.[93]

[89] See §345.

[90] Banez presents his view in *SC* ad 1a q19 a8 = 425–35; ad q23 a5 = 506–59. Freddoso, *DF* 24–8 differentiates the Banezian view from simple compatibilism about freewill and determinism.

[91] In 1607 Pope Paul V forbade the opposing sides to accuse each other of heresy. See D §1997; Farrelly, *PGFW* 147–8.

[92] '... philosophy gradually crept into Christianity, and the impious doctrine about freewill was accepted ... The term "freewill" was used, a term most foreign to the divine writings, and to the sense and judgment of the Spirit, and a term by which we see holy men have often been offended. The equally harmful term "reason" was added from Plato's philosophy. For just as we in these later ages of the Church have embraced Aristotle in place of Christ, so immediately after the beginning of the Church Christian doctrine was weakened through Platonic philosophy' (*LC* = *MWA* ii 1, 8.32–9.2 = Pauck 23). It would have been better to follow the Scriptural doctrine that God judges hearts, and to avoid the Aristotelian notion of the will (15.22–31 = Pauck 29).

[93] According to Melanchthon the crucial division separates the cognitive power from what we can indifferently call 'will', 'affection', or 'desire' (9.13–14 = Pauck 23). He rejects an intellectualist account of the will: 'For just as a tyrant

Melanchthon's historical argument is open to question. While the Aristotelian distinction is not constant or explicit in the Scriptures, it does not seem alien to Paul's remarks about willing and doing, or about the contrast between appetites and mind.[94] Moreover, if it is anachronistic to apply the Scholastic division to the Scriptures, it is no less anachronistic to apply Melanchthon's anti-rationalist thesis about action on the strongest affection to them.

The more important objection to the Scholastic division is the second, resting on philosophical and theological argument. Melanchthon suggests that if the will is capable of rejecting and restraining the suggestions of the passions, it is in our power to refrain from sin, and hence—contrary to fact—we do not depend wholly on divine grace to free us from sin. [95] The Scholastics do not see what is wrong with the claims of pagans to genuine virtue, because they do not see that confidence in our capacity to achieve virtue is simply the arrogance that excludes the appropriate sort of trust in God. According to Melanchthon, the Scholastics are open to Augustine's objections to pagan pretensions to virtue.[96]

This would be a fair objection, if the Scholastic division implied a voluntarist conception of the will. According to this conception, the will cannot be determined, and hence cannot be determined to sin, by anything external to it. Aquinas' intellectualist conception of the will, however, is not committed to this claim about external determination. If sinful action is attractive enough to our non-rational desires and to our intellect, it may present an irresistibly attractive apparent greater good to our will, so that our will is determined to pursue the sinful course of action. We are free to avoid a sinful action on a particular occasion, because our acting or not acting depends on the consent of our will.[97] But if the sinful action is so attractive to our will that the will must recognize it as the greater good, then it is impossible for us not to choose the sinful action. This sort of impossibility is consistent with Aquinas' division between will and passion, and with his claim that the will is not necessarily moved by the passions. Aquinas offers this explanation of our inability to refrain from sin (1-2 q109 a8).[98]

On this issue, then, we ought to reach the conclusion that we reached on the issue about predestination. The Reformers have a good reason, from within their own theological perspective, for criticizing the Scholastics who are also voluntarists. They have no equally

is in a republic, so is the will in a human being, and just as the senate is subjected to the tyrant, so is cognition to the will, so that, although cognition gives good advice, still the will rejects it and is carried off by its affection . . . ' (9.24–8 = Pauck 24). In some cases where the Scholastics think will rather than affection controls us, Melanchthon suggests that we are really controlled by the stronger affection, and in other cases we act against affection because of pretence (per simulationem, 14.1 = Pauck 28), 'as when someone behaves in a friendly, affable, and polite way, perhaps for no certain reason, towards one whom he sincerely hates and wishes harm to'. This sort of pretence encourages the Scholastics to recognize a distinct faculty of will: 'And this <apparent freedom> is that will that the stupid scholastics have imagined for us, namely a power such that however you may be affected it can still direct and control the affection. . . . However you may be affected, they ascribe to the will a power of eliciting, as they put it, good actions' (14.8–13 = Pauck 28).

[94] See §212. [95] See *LC* 21.31–22.16 = Pauck 34, quoted at n59 above.

[96] You pretend that you do not deny original sin, and yet you teach that a human being by his own powers can do something good' (*LC* 24.5–7).

[97] Articles §9 describes the pervasive effect of sin without explicit denial of freewill: 'Original sin consisteth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagains do vainly talk), but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit; and therefore in every person born into the world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation'.

[98] See §350. In *LC* 26.19–24 Melanchthon attacks the 'sophists' who identify the flesh with sensory desire. Articles §9 mentions this and other views of 'flesh' without deciding between them.

good reason for rejecting the views of the Scholastics who are intellectualists. Their claims about predestination and sin rule out human freedom as Scotus, Ockham, and Biel understand it. But they do not rule out freedom as Aquinas understands it, and they do not conflict with Aquinas' moral psychology.

419. Justification, Grace, and Faith

The Reformers emphasize our inability to avoid sin and the sovereign predestination of God, in order to explain the Pauline doctrine of justification. They follow Paul and Augustine in taking justification to be the work of God's grace and generosity, working through faith, and not a human achievement or a response by God to human merits, resulting from voluntary and meritorious actions that require a favourable response from God. Emphasis on human achievements and merits independent of God appears to them to fall into the Pelagian heresy that Augustine exposes and rejects.

The Pelagian position is heretical, if it claims that virtuous actions by themselves merit the divine reward of eternal life. Such a claim makes it difficult to understand the Scriptural emphasis on grace and faith as opposed to works and merits. It is more difficult, however, to reject the (so-called) 'Semi-Pelagian' view that justification requires God's grace and cannot be achieved by human merit, but God's grace is itself a response to human effort.[99] Though this effort does not merit eternal life, it is still a human contribution, independent of divine grace, that prepares us for divine grace. We might conceive this preparation as the faith to which God responds, or we might conceive faith as a gift of grace, given in response to appropriate human endeavour.

Though Luther's *Lectures on Romans* sometimes seem to recognize the possibility of 'preparation' as a human achievement,[100] he normally rejects this view of preparation. He argues that God's grace forgives us our sins, and thereby justifies us. It does not reward us for having refrained from sin as far as possible. It does not even reward us for recognizing and lamenting our inability to avoid sin; for that would itself be a human achievement limiting the operation of divine grace.[101]

Luther attacks a doctrine of preparation that can be found in Ockham and Biel.[102] But it is not so clear how far his attack affects Aquinas' position. For Aquinas denies that we can merit the grace of justification, either by condign or by congruous merit, independently of

[99] Some of the relevant issues are discussed by McGrath, *ID* §7.

[100] *Rm*. 2:12 = Pauck 51: ' . . . people who by some good action toward God, according to the measure of their natural ability, earned grace which then directed them farther—not as if grace were given to them in recognition of such a merit, because then it would not have been grace, but because they thus prepared themselves for receiving it as a free gift'. On preparation see Rupp, *RG* 185.

[101] The Articles reject a doctrine of preparation, understood as our own efforts independent of divine grace. See §10: 'The condition of Man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn, and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon God: Wherefore we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will'. In 'by his own natural strength and good works', and 'without the grace of God. . . ', the Article explains the sense in which it rejects a doctrine of preparation, and the sense in which it denies a role to freewill. The Article is headed 'Of Free-Will', but it does not deny that we have freewill in the condition of sin.

[102] See McGrath, *ID* §§20–1.

grace (*ST* 1-2 q109 a6; q112 a2).[103] Luther has no reason to reject Aquinas' views on this issue about justification. Might he, however, reasonably reject Aquinas' claim that preparation for grace and turning to God are acts of freewill rather than acts of God operating independently of our freewill? If we accept a voluntarist and indeterminist conception of freedom, Aquinas' claims about preparation and turning to God imply that, despite his views on merit, he believes that justification depends on some human action that is independent of divine grace.

Aquinas does not believe this, however, since he does not rely on a voluntarist and indeterminist conception of freedom. In his view, God's grace moves us in the way that human beings are characteristically moved, and hence it moves us through freewill. God moves us by presenting a good for us to consider and act on, even if God infallibly determines us. Aquinas considers the doctrine of preparation that Luther rejects, according to which a human being's unaided efforts ensure a divine response.[104] He rejects this doctrine, since he denies that preparation precedes grace and is the effect of a human being's unaided efforts.[105] He believes none the less that justification requires preparation that is an act of human freewill.

Luther might object that Aquinas' emphasis on freewill in preparation and turning to God is inconsistent with his claim that preparation and turning to God are the effects of God's grace rather than of unaided human effort. But the charge of inconsistency is unjustified. In the light of Aquinas' conception of freewill, the roles of divine grace and human freewill are consistent. The role that Aquinas allows to freewill does not imply Semi-Pelagianism. Though the Council of Trent is less unambiguous than Aquinas is on this point, it does not disagree with Aquinas on the sufficiency of divine grace for justification.[106] Though both

[103] See §352. The Articles also reject congruous merit before justification. See §13: 'Works done before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of the Spirit, are not pleasing to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesu Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or (as the School-authors say) deserve grace of congruity: yea rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin'.

[104] 'It would seem that grace is necessarily given to whoever prepares himself for grace, or to whoever does what he can, because, on *Rm.* 5:1, "Being justified . . . by faith, let us have peace," etc. the gloss says: "God welcomes whoever flies to Him, otherwise there would be injustice with Him." But it is impossible for injustice to be with God. Therefore it is impossible for God not to welcome whoever flies to Him. Hence he receives grace of necessity' (*ST* 1-2 q112 a3 obj1). This view is rejected by Luther on *Rm.* 14:1 = Pauck 391. Pauck cites this passage from Aquinas, not remarking that it is a view that Aquinas rejects. Luther's view and its antecedents are explored by Oberman, *DR*, ch. 4, esp. 97–9.

[105] 'This gloss is speaking of one who flees to God by a meritorious act of his freewill that has already been informed through grace; for if he did not receive this <meritorious act>, it would be against the justice that God himself established. Or if it is referred to a movement of freewill before grace, it is speaking in the sense that a human being's flight to God is through a divine motion, and that it is just for this motion not to fail' (*ST* 1-2 q112 a3 ad1).

[106] The Council discusses the beginnings of justification in its Decree on Justification, ch. 5 = D §1525: 'While God touches the human heart through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, neither does a human being do nothing at all when he receives that inspiration (since he is also capable of rejecting it), nor, however, is he capable of moving himself towards justice in the sight of God by his own free will without the grace of God'. The context shows that the last phrase means that we move ourselves by our own free will with the grace of God. Cf. Canons 1–4 = D §1551–4. Can. 4 rejects the view that human freewill 'cannot dissent, if he were to will to (si velit), but like some inanimate object does nothing at all, but is in a purely passive condition'. The 'si velit' here introduces ambiguity. For if it is true that if God chooses, then a person will not want to reject grace, God's grace is sufficient for justification even though 'si velit' is true. It is not clear, then, that Luther or Calvin needs to maintain the view that is condemned here, if he wants to maintain the sufficiency of grace. Similarly, Can. 9 (§1559) condemns the view that we are justified by faith alone, 'in such a way as to understand that nothing else is needed to co-operate for gaining the grace of justification, and that it is in no way necessary for him to be prepared and disposed by the movement of his own will'. The Council does not make it clear whether divine grace is sufficient for the movement of one's own will.

Aquinas and the Council emphasize the importance of freewill, they do not treat the role of freewill as involving a role for unaided human effort.[107]

It is clearer that Luther disagrees with Aquinas about whether justification requires both an act of divine grace and an act of the human being who is justified. Sometimes the Reformers state their view of justification by claiming that it is entirely God's action and that human beings are simply recipients. On this view, justification is entirely passive; the 'effect' on the recipient is a mere 'Cambridge' change.[108] If A kills B's wife C, then A makes B a widower, and if A marries C, then A makes C's brother B into A's brother-in-law. But in both cases what 'happens' to B is entirely reducible to what A does and what happens to C. Similarly, one might understand the Reformers' doctrine of justification as a purely forensic action. If it consists simply in God's forgiving sinners, and 'justifying' or 'acquitting' them by remitting the punishment that would otherwise fall on them, then it is a one-sided transaction. Nothing happens to sinners beyond the fact that God chooses to pronounce them innocent.[109] Aquinas is wrong, then, to claim that justification requires a movement of a sinner's freewill in turning to God. Even if this turning to God is itself an effect of God's grace, Aquinas is mistaken, from the purely forensic point of view, in ascribing any real change or any real action to the sinner. He is wrong, that is to say, in treating justification as though it were really making just (iustum facere) rather than simply 'reckoning just', in a sense that does not imply being just.[110]

Some of Luther's remarks certainly suggest a purely forensic and one-sided view of justification. It is less clear that this could be the Reformers' consistent position. To see the issues that arise in trying to settle this question, we may turn to further areas of disagreement with the Scholastic view.

420. Grace and Virtue

As Aquinas understands grace, it begins a qualitative change in the justified sinner. When grace is infused, we also receive the infused moral virtues. Since these virtues are superior to the acquired moral virtues, the infusion of grace ensures that we become better than we were. In our unjustified state, we could not fulfil the 'works of the law', the moral demands of rational morality and the further demands imposed by the Gospel. With the help of grace, however, we can avoid the distorting effects of original sin, and so we can now fulfil the demands that we previously could not fulfil.

Some of Luther's remarks appear to oppose this view. In being justified, we do not cease to be sinners.[111] This is a natural conclusion from a purely forensic conception of justification

[107] The Council's emphasis on freewill is endorsed by Ignatius Loyola, *SE* §17: '. . . we ought not to speak so lengthily and emphatically about grace that we generate a poison harmful to freedom of the will. Hence one may speak about faith and grace as much as possible, with God's help, for the greater praise of his divine majesty; but not in such ways or manners, especially in times as dangerous as our own, that works and free will are impaired or thought worthless.'

[108] On active and passive states see §245.

[109] The Council of Trent affirms that justification is God's work, but still more than a mere Cambridge change in us: 'for the justice that is said to be ours, because we are justified through its being inherent in us, that same justice is God's, because it is infused in us by God through the merit of Christ' (ch. 16 = D §1547). Similarly, it condemns the view that justifying grace is only the favour of God, to the exclusion of infused charity (Can. 11 = D §1561).

[110] On justification and making just in St Paul see §§209–10.

[111] 'Iustus et peccator simul': *Rm.* 7:25 = Pauck 127: '. . . he is at the same time both a sinner and righteous, a sinner in fact but righteous by virtue of the reckoning and the certain promise of God that he will redeem him from sin. . . ' Cf. McGrath, *ID* 199. Related remarks by Luther are cited by Rupp, *RG* 175–80: Maurer, *HCAC* 328–30.

that makes it simply an action of God without any further change in the justified person. If this is the whole of Luther's position, justification consists in being forgiven the sins that are not forgiven in the unjustified sinner. According to this view, we would have no reason to expect the justified person to sin any less often than the unjustified.

Since Luther rejects this conclusion, he cannot believe that justification, forensically conceived, is the only effect of divine grace. Following St Paul, he rejects the suggestion that it is all right to continue in sin once we recognize that we are forgiven and justified.[112] He argues that, on the contrary, good works are required of a justified sinner, and that the justified sinner will want to perform them; as Luther says, they are 'fruits' of faith and justification.[113]

This claim is consistent with a purely forensic view of justification, if we distinguish justifying grace from sanctifying grace. Even if justification itself consists only in forgiveness, and therefore does not by itself make us just, still, God makes sanctifying grace follow justifying grace, and sanctification involves the capacity for the good works that are the fruit of justification. If this is what Luther means, his claim that grace does not involve a qualitative change in the sinner must be confined to justifying grace. Infusion, as Aquinas understands it, is not an aspect of justification, but of sanctification (as Luther conceives them).[114]

Apparently, then, the Reformers have no reason to reject belief in infused moral virtues. Still, they do not recognize any such virtues. Why do they reject them? One possible reason is relatively superficial. Aquinas has a rather extreme conception of the conditions for the presence of an infused virtue; he takes it to be incompatible with any mortal sin. This does not mean that the person with infused moral virtues is guaranteed not to fall into mortal sin; it means that once we fall into mortal sin, we lose all our infused virtues, and on repenting of it, we get them all back. This is what happened to St Peter; in denying Christ he lost all his infused virtues, and in repenting of his betrayal, he got them all back.

One might conclude that Aquinas has an unreasonably demanding conception of the life resulting from justification. Since the Reformers maintain that justifying and sanctifying grace do not eliminate sin, they might reasonably deny that justification results in the infusion of virtues whose presence is incompatible with sin, and so they might reasonably reject Aquinas' conception of infused virtues.

If, then, we were to relax Aquinas' standards for infused virtues, so that both the acquired and the infused virtues allow the presence of sin, would the Reformers have a good reason

[112] See *Rm.* 6:1 (§210n89). Trent condemns the view that the Decalogue does not bind Christians (Can. 19 = D §1569). *West. Conf.* agrees with Trent: 'The moral law doth forever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof; and that not only in regard of the matter (vi materiae) contained in it, but also in respect of the authority of God the Creator who gave it. Neither doth Christ in the gospel any way dissolve, but much strengthen, this obligation (vinculum)' (19.5).

[113] On fruits of faith see *Aug. Conf.* Art. 6: '. . . that faith ought (debeat) to bring forth good fruits, and that they should (oporteat) do good works, commanded by God, because of the will of God, not so that we may be confident that we merit justification in the sight of God through these works'. Art. 20 repeats this point about works. See McGrath, *ID* 203–4. Other passages are cited by Maurer, *HCAC* 369–71.

Trent condemns the view that even for the justified it is impossible to keep the commandments of God (Can. 18 = D §1568). It affirms that good works are not merely the fruits and signs of justification, and that the justice received is conserved and increased (Can. 24 = D §1574). The *Articles* describe good works as fruits of faith, but do not endorse the view, condemned by Trent, that they are nothing more. See §12: 'Albeit that good works, which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment, yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith; insomuch that by them a lively faith may be evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit'.

[114] Calvin discusses sin and sanctification in *Inst.* iii 3.10–14.

to believe in infused virtues? An answer to this question partly depends on whether they agree with Aquinas on the relation of the infused to the acquired virtues. Aquinas takes them to increase the acquired virtues, and to fulfil their demands more completely. But if we think of the 'fruits of justification' as simply actions that fulfil God's commands, but are not necessarily connected to the actions enjoined by the acquired virtues, we reject Aquinas' view of the infused virtues.

The Council of Trent distinguishes the Roman from the Reformed view by claiming that good works after justification are more than simply fruits of justification (Canon 24). The point of this claim is to make these good works sources of merit. In so far as genuine virtues might also be regarded as sources of merit, the dispute about merit might also affect different people's judgment about whether good works after justification really proceed from infused virtues.

The belief that good works are sources of merit might easily be regarded as a semi-Pelagian position. Even if we deny that good works before justification merit eternal life, we might argue that two essential roles are left for freewill acting independently of divine grace. We might regard preparation for reception of grace as an action of freewill, and we might regard good works as a response of human freedom to the help given by divine grace in justification. This second role for freewill conflicts with the Reformers' treatment of good works as nothing more than fruits of justification.

From the Tridentine point of view, then, the Reformers seem to deny the essential role of human freewill in co-operating with divine grace. From the Reformers' point of view, the Tridentine position seems to re-assert the insufficiency of divine grace, and to treat God's action as the required response to human merit.

Aquinas denies that human beings by their natural capacities can acquire either condign or congruous merit before justification. But he maintains that good works after justification have congruous merit, as the products of human freewill, and condign merit, as the actions of the Holy Spirit (*ST* 1-2 q114 a3).[115] He recognizes a crucial role for freewill in these good works after justification. But he does not argue that since these works are the products of freewill, they are the products of human choice independent of divine grace. His conception of freewill does not commit him to this claim about independence. In the light of Aquinas' conception of the will, we can understand how we are capable of forming the acquired virtues in a state of sin, and how we receive the infused virtues in a state of grace, without losing the freedom that is characteristic of the will.

421. Natural Law and Ethics

If we accept a Lutheran or Calvinist view of grace, justification, and sanctification, what role is left for morality and moral philosophy? One might argue that in the Christian life ordinary morality has been superseded, because the Christian is not under law, but under

[115] See §352. The Roman Missal expresses this view in the Collect for Pentecost 12: '. . . Deus, de cuius munere venit, ut tibi a fidelibus tuis digne et laudabiliter serviatur'. BCP for Trinity 13 has 'of whose only gift it cometh that thy faithful people do unto thee true and laudable service'. The reference to condign merit is obscured by the substitution of 'true' for 'digne', but not entirely removed (since 'laudable' is retained).

grace (*Rm.* 6:14), and the law is given only for sinners (*1Tim.* 1:9). In some places Luther suggests that Christians are not bound by law, because 'the righteous does of himself all and more than all that the laws demand'.[116] This claim provokes objections from the Roman side. Suarez devotes a chapter of *De Legibus*, Book i to a refutation of the Lutheran view (as he understands it) that the righteous are not subject to the law (i 18–19).[117] But whatever Luther holds on this question, Calvin asserts that the Christian is bound by the moral law (*Inst.* ii 7.12–15).

The positive role of the moral law explains why Melanchthon emphasizes the natural law in his exposition of moral philosophy. His justification for doing this appears in his treatment of the 'righteousness of reason' in the *Apology for the Augsburg Confession*. In this work he follows Luther in denying that we can merit God's favour or forgiveness by the righteousness of reason and 'civil works'. If these works were all we need, Roman theologians would be justified in their practice (as he describes it) of teaching Aristotle's ethics in place of the Gospel; 'for Aristotle wrote so well on natural ethics that nothing further needs to be added' (*Apol. Aug. Conf*, Art. 2).[118] The Roman theologians are wrong, because the righteousness of reason does not make us independent of divine grace. But that does not make the righteousness of reason valueless. It is required both by natural reason and by divine command.[119] Hence Luther's critique of the law and 'righteousness of works' does not imply the rejection of moral philosophy. Natural law is the subject-matter of moral philosophy, as distinct from the Gospel.[120]

Since natural law is not the Gospel, we cannot achieve our ultimate end of knowing God by following the natural law, as prescribed by moral philosophy. Still, moral philosophy is a part of the divine law, in so far as it can be discovered by reason. Even though awareness of it is obscured by sin, it is not completely lost, and it is worth our while to clarify it (*PME* 158.12–24). Melanchthon takes up some of the main topics of Aristotle's *Ethics*—the ultimate end, the virtues, and the voluntary. He expands Aristotle's treatment of justice, including a discussion of particular cases of right and wrong, Biblical, Classical, and contemporary. He concludes with a discussion of some particular virtues and duties, including friendship. He lays less emphasis than Aquinas lays on the individual virtues of character, and more emphasis on the requirements of justice and right. But he does not suggest any basic change in the structure of an Aristotelian moral theory. He discusses moral philosophy and natural

[116] Luther, *Temporal Authority* = *Works* xlv 89 = Dillenberger 369.

[117] See Skinner, *FPMT* ii 139. See also Suarez, *De bonitate*, iii 1 = *OO* iv 305b. He attacks Luther's claim that all the actions of a human being are sins, even though they are not imputed to the faithful.

[118] This is the passage that Leibniz presumably has in mind in saying that in this work Luther 'allowed a favourable mention of Aristotle and his *Ethics*' (*Theod.* Prelim. Diss §12 = Huggard 81).

[119] 'We for our part maintain that God requires the righteousness of reason. Because of God's command, honourable works commanded in the Decalogue should be performed, according to *Galatians* 3:24 and *1 Timothy* 1:19 . . . To some extent reason can produce this righteousness by its own strength, though it is often overwhelmed by its natural weakness and by the devil, who draws it to open crimes. We freely give this righteousness of reason its due credit; for our corrupt nature has no greater good than this, as Aristotle correctly says, 'Neither the evening nor the morning star is more beautiful than righteousness'. . . . Nevertheless, it ought not to be praised at the expense of Christ' (*Apol. Aug. Conf.* Art. 4). On Melanchthon's attitude to moral philosophy see Kusukawa, *TNP* 64–72.

[120] 'Moral philosophy is that part of divine law that prescribes about external actions' (*PME* 157.7). 'For this is the firm and especial merit (laus) of moral philosophy, to understand what is truly a part of divine law. . . ' (157.16). For Leibniz's praise of Melanchthon see Leibniz, *Theod.* Prelim. Diss. §12 = G vi 57 = Huggard 81.

law because he wants to make it clear how the knowledge available to the moral philosopher differs from the proper concern of the theologian.[121]

One aspect of Melanchthon's conception of the natural law and moral philosophy may appear to separate him from Aquinas. He sometimes takes moral philosophy to be concerned specifically with external actions, in contrast with the Gospel, which is concerned with the 'perfect obedience of the heart'.[122] This claim seems difficult to reconcile with Melanchthon's Aristotelian view that moral philosophy is about the virtues, understood as states of character, including states of the will,[123] and therefore not simply about right external behaviour. A virtue requires right judgment, which must guide the will.[124] Given this conception of virtue, Melanchthon cannot consistently claim that moral philosophy is concerned only with external actions, if external actions are mere patterns of behaviour as distinct from their causes in will, judgment, and character.

His view is consistent, however, if the contrast between 'external actions' and 'the obedience of the heart' refers to the difference between the motives of people in the state of sin and the motives of people under grace. In a sinful condition, even virtuous states of character, as measured by moral philosophy, are merely 'external', in so far as they do not proceed from the love of God above everything. If this is what Melanchthon means, his claim about external actions tries to reconcile Aristotelian moral virtues with Luther's extreme Augustinian view that we are totally incapable of genuine virtue when we are in the state of sin. The use of 'external actions' for Aristotelian virtues does not convey this point very well; it would have been better to contrast the motives that are possible without grace with those that become possible under grace, rather than to speak of external and internal. But once we understand Melanchthon's use of 'external', his position is a reasonable clarification or modification of Luther's claim about the possibility of virtue in the state of sin.

422. Implications

Even this superficial survey of some of the issues relevant to moral philosophy that were discussed by the Reformers and their opponents may help to explain some of the different effects of the Reformation. Some elements in the views of the Reformers initiate some significant changes in approach to moral philosophy; but other elements support the outlook of Scholastic naturalism.

[121] 'Thus far we have set out preliminaries about this area of learning, so that it may be distinguished from the Gospel, and so that we can understand how far it is to be approved, and what benefits it has' (163.16–18).

[122] 'For the divine law was stamped on the minds of human beings, but it was darkened in this weakness of nature, so that we cannot sufficiently grasp those precepts, and what they order us to hold about the will of God, and what they prescribe about the perfect obedience of the heart. But there remains judgment about right (honestis) external actions, and this arises in us; it is itself the law of nature and a part of divine law. (158.13–19). And properly instructed philosophy is inherently and truly the clarification of natural law. And so, just as the pious are allowed to rely on the law of God or the law of nature, so also they are allowed to rely on moral philosophy, which applies to external practices (mores)' (160.14–17).

[123] 'Virtue is a state that inclines the will towards obedience to correct reason' (174.30–1).

[124] 'For so that there will be some definite rule of virtue, the will is to be directed by the judgment of the mind. And that judgment is the knowledge of natural law and of divine law and of all learning that has firm grounds taken from natural and divine law, or is the clarification of natural and divine law' (175.23–8).

Hobbes's views on moral philosophy and on Christianity reflect the views of some Reformers.[125] He believes that human nature in its own right is not fulfilled by morality, and that morality has to be imposed on human beings to restrain their self-seeking tendencies. This imposed morality concerns civil obligation in which the civil authorities are supreme. God is free in relation to the moral law and freely chooses to impose it on us, for reasons that do not concern us; reflexion on the Scriptures reveals the commands of God, and these commands require our subjection to the civil authorities. Each one of these claims could be defended from some tendency in the thought of the Reformers, and especially of Luther.

Hobbes did not have to turn to the Reformers to find such views. He develops the outlook of mediaeval voluntarists, derived from a one-sided reading of Augustine's two cities. But since the Reformers make this outlook especially prominent, their influence explains some of Hobbes's attitudes. Hobbes has some support for his claim that he expounds Christian teaching from the point of view of the Reformation.

None the less, Christians had good reason to reject Hobbes's views on morality and on Christianity. For though Hobbes's views draw on some elements in the Reformation, they conflict with the considered views of (for instance) Luther, Melanchthon, Calvin, and Hooker. For different reasons and to different degrees, these all take Aristotelian ethics to be basically sound. They do not believe that morality is simply a device for securing mutually beneficial patterns of action among self-seeking individuals. They believe, as Aquinas believes, that moral thought and action should cultivate the moral virtues that fulfil rational nature. This aspect of the outlook of the Reformers is a defence, not a rejection, of Scholastic naturalism.

[125] See Grove, *WFSAD* 26.

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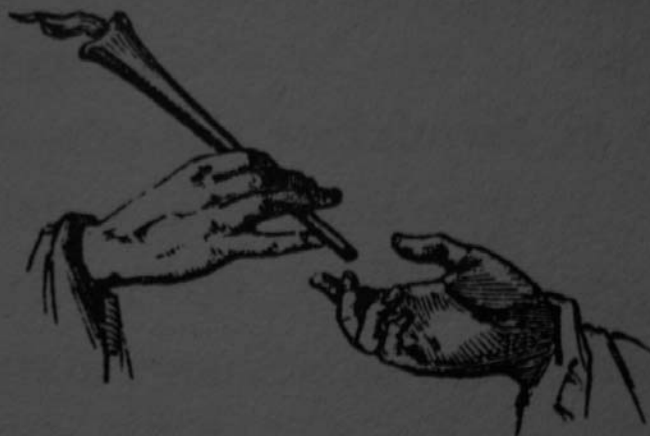

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Great Clarendon Street, Oxford OX2 6DP

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Published in the United States
by Oxford University Press Inc., New York

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First published 2008

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
Data available

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
Data available

Typeset by Laserwords Private Limited, Chennai, India
Printed in Great Britain
on acid-free paper by
Biddles Ltd., King's Lynn, Norfolk

ISBN 978–0–19–954327–4

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

PREFATORY NOTE

This is the second of three volumes. The division into volumes is not meant to be thematically significant, and so the second volume simply begins where the first left off. The numeration of the sections continues from the first volume, and references to §§1–422 refer to the first volume. The preface, dedication, and introduction to the first volume belong equally to the second. In particular, the introduction explains the aims, scope, and limits of the book.

I have benefited from helpful comments and advice by readers for the Press, and from discussion with Stephen Darwall and Nicholas Sturgeon. For help in the Sisyphean task of checking, verifying, and correcting the penultimate draft I am most grateful to Kristen Inglis and Tom Ainsworth.

Faculty of Philosophy
University of Oxford
May, 2008

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ABBREVIATIONS

This list includes only the most frequently used abbreviations, and those that might puzzle a reader. I have tried to cite primary texts from sources that will be fairly readily available.

Greek and Latin texts appearing in the OCT, BT, and Loeb series are listed with a reference to the relevant series, but without further details.

I have mentioned only a few of the available translations and editions.

Acronyms are normally used for the titles of books, journals, and collections. Short titles are used for articles and essays.

Page references include 'p.' only in cases where it might avoid ambiguity.

A page number with a letter (e.g., 'Reid, *EAP* 755 H') usually indicates the relevant edition. For less accessible texts available in Raphael, *BM*, or Selby-Bigge, *BM*, a reference to one of these collections is usually given.

ACPQ = *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*
AJP = *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*
Aquinas, *in EN* (etc.) = Aquinas' commentaries on Aristotle and on Biblical books.
BCP = *Book of Common Prayer*
BT = Bibliotheca Teubneriana. Greek and Latin texts
Cic. = Cicero
CSEL = *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*
CUP = Cambridge University Press (Cambridge, London, New York)
D or Denz. = Denziger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*
DM = Suarez, *Disputationes Metaphysicae*
DTC = *Dictionnaire de Thȩ́ologie Catholique*
EN = Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea (Nicomachean Ethics)*
ET = English Translation
Fin. = Cicero, *De Finibus*
G = Kant, *Groundwork*
H = Hutton, edn. of Cudworth; or Hoadly, edn. of Clarke; or Hamilton, edn. of Reid
HJ = *Historical Journal*
HPQ = *History of Philosophy Quarterly*
HS = *Hume Studies*
HUP = Harvard University Press (Cambridge, Mass.)
IPM (or *I*) = Hume, *Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*
JHI = *Journal of the History of Ideas*
JHP = *Journal of the History of Philosophy*
JP = *Journal of Philosophy*
KpV = Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*

L. = Hobbes, *Leviathan*
Leg. = Suarez, *De Legibus*
Loeb = Loeb Classical Library (Greek and Latin texts with facing English translations, of varying quality). Cambridge MA: Harvard U Press, and London: Heinemann.
M = Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos*
M = *Mind*
Mal. = Aquinas, *De Malo*
ME = Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics*
NRSV, see Bible. New Revised Standard Version
OCT = Oxford Classical Texts (Scriptorum Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxoniensis). Greek and Latin texts (OUP)
Off. = Cicero, *De Officiis*
OO = *Opera Omnia,* various authors
OT = Ockham, *Opera Theologica*
OUP = Oxford University Press, including Clarendon Press (Oxford, London, New York)
P = Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrrhoneae Hypotyposes*
PAS = *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*
Phil. = *Philosophy*
PPA = *Philosophy and Public Affairs*
PQ = *Philosophical Quarterly*
PR = *Philosophical Review*
PS = *Political Studies*
PUP = Princeton University Press (Princeton)
R = Raphael, ed., *British Moralists* (cited by section)
RKP = Routledge; or Routledge and Kegan Paul (London)
SB = Selby-Bigge, ed., *British Moralists* (cited by section)
Sent = *Sententiae* or *Scriptum super Sententiis* (various authors)
SJP = *Southern Journal of Philosophy*
SPAS = *Proceeedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volume*
SR = Plutarch, *De Stoicorum Repugnantiis*
ST = Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*
T = Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*
TD = Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*

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SUAREZ: LAW AND OBLIGATION

423. The Questions about Natural Law

Discussion of natural law reaches a new level of sophistication in Suarez's elaborate and careful treatment. He takes account of Aquinas, Scotus, Ockham, and their successors, and claims to defend Aquinas' views on the main issues. Since his discussion is usually fuller than Aquinas' discussion, and explores questions that Aquinas does not discuss at length, Suarez deserves careful study.

We may not always agree with his claim to defend Aquinas' position. Indeed, some readers, especially among those sympathetic to Aquinas, have argued that Suarez does not simply disagree with Aquinas on some details, but radically alters Aquinas' views on natural law and the foundations of ethics, and alters them for the worse. This departure from Aquinas is historically significant because—it is suggested—Suarez strongly influences the theory of natural law that has been prominent in post-Reformation Roman Catholic moral theology.

Historians of ethics and political theory have concentrated on Suarez's treatment of law, and especially of natural law. His treatise 'On Laws and God the Legislator' clarifies many issues that his predecessors pass over. Aquinas has relatively little to say on the relation of the principles of natural law to the will of God. Some of his successors, particularly Scotus and Ockham, have more to say. Suarez sets out and discusses in full the major issues that arise in his predecessors; he considers how many separable claims can be made, and what follows from each of them. Since Grotius and Cudworth are probably familiar with Suarez's discussion, it provides a useful basis for comparing modern with mediaeval views.[1]

The prominence of Suarez's discussion of law might lead us to suppose that law is more important in his conception of morality than in Aquinas' conception. If this were so, Suarez would be closer to a modern than to a mediaeval position on one important issue.[2] We should keep in mind, however, the fact that Suarez conceives his treatise on laws as part of a discussion of Aquinas' *Summa*. When he comes to discuss Aquinas' *Treatise on Law*, he

[1] On Grotius' knowledge of Suarez see §463. On Cudworth see §546.
[2] On modern v. mediaeval views on natural law and ethics see §453.

does not need to remind his readers that he is presupposing the previous parts of the *Prima Secundae*; he takes it for granted. His treatise on laws should be understood in the light of his comments on the rest of the Prima Secundae.

A discussion of Suarez's treatment of natural law will lead us to his treatment of moral goodness. For our purposes, his reflexions on this issue are even more important than his views on natural law; for they correct a misleading impression that we might get from exclusive attention to his treatment of natural law.

424. Some Issues and Clarifications

Discussions about the relation of natural law to the divine will involve several distinct questions that are not always kept apart.[3] Since Suarez does most to distinguish the questions and to show how the answers to them are and are not connected, it is helpful to consider the questions as he sees them.

Orthodox Christians agree that all natural facts that essentially refer to contingent particular beings depend on the creative will of God.[4] Since it was up to God whether or not to create human beings, it depends on God's will whether or not there are any good or bad human actions. But does it equally depend on God's will what human actions are good or bad? Was God free to create human beings for whom murder would have been good and generosity bad? Naturalists answer No, because they believe that moral goodness and badness are fixed by the nature of human beings, and that creatures for whom murder was good would not be human beings. Ockham, however, appears to answer Yes, claiming that our rational knowledge of what fits human nature is itself the result of an exercise of God's free will.

But even if facts about what is good and bad for human beings are grasped by the divine intellect and do not result from a choice made by the divine will, a question still arises about moral goodness. Naturalists believe that moral facts are among the natural facts that are fixed for human beings with our nature. Voluntarists argue that, even if natural facts include facts about the human good, moral facts are not natural facts; for moral facts depend on a further exercise of the divine will, beyond its exercise in creation, and the natural facts do not determine this further exercise. Scotus suggests that the moral principles referring to our neighbours (the second table of the Decalogue) are really divine positive laws, and that in this legislation God's will is not determined by any prior requirements of right and wrong. Ockham goes further, and claims that all the requirements recognized by right reason (including the commandment to love God) result from exercises of the divine will undetermined by any divine knowledge of antecedent right and wrong.

Even if we are naturalists about moral facts, we may still be voluntarists about natural law; for we may claim that facts about intrinsic moral goodness (fixed by natural facts) do

[3] A survey of different conceptions of the natural law is offered by the commentators on Scotus, *3Sent* d37 = OO vii.2 858.

[4] This clumsy formulation is intended to take some account of Suarez's views on essences (*DM* xxxi).

not imply the existence of natural law, because natural law depends on a further act of divine legislation. If we say this, we raise a further question about the relation of the divine will to intrinsic morality; is it necessary that God legislates in accordance with intrinsic morality, or is God free to legislate differently? Different answers give us different degrees of voluntarism about natural law.

In trying to understand the naturalist and the voluntarist answers to these different questions, we may resort to counterfactual questions. We may ask whether the same things would have been right and wrong if God had not legislated, and we may say that intrinsic natural facts are those that would exist even if God had not exercised legislative will. But this claim needs to be treated carefully. On one way of understanding it, there are no intrinsic natural facts; for, since God is a necessary being, God is necessarily good, and God's goodness requires the exercise of God's legislative will, natural facts cannot exist without God's having legislated. We must, therefore, understand the relevant counterfactual differently. We must hold God's goodness fixed, and assume, contrary to fact, that God's goodness does not require God to legislate; then we ask what intrinsic natural facts there would be on that assumption.

The same point applies to all counterfactuals that consider what intrinsic natural facts would exist if God did not exist. Anyone who believes in God as creator must believe that without God there would be no natural world. Moreover, anyone who believes that God is a necessary being must believe that if God did not exist, there would be no intrinsic natural facts. The counterfactuals that ask what would be the case if God did not exist must be taken to assume the impossible situation in which God does not exist and still the world is in other ways as it actually is.

These questions and distinctions may help us to understand how Suarez sees the main issues, and where he stands on the most important questions in dispute.

425. Suarez's 'Intermediate' Position

Suarez describes his account of natural law as a middle way, which he also takes to be the view of Aquinas, and the common view of theologians (*Leg*. ii 6.5). An extreme naturalist view makes the law of nature purely 'indicative', showing us what is intrinsically good and bad (ii 6.3).[5] An extreme voluntarist view claims that the natural law lies entirely in the commands proceeding from the divine will, and is therefore entirely a prescriptive (praeceptiva), not an indicative, law (ii 6.4).[6] Suarez's view is intermediate because it claims that 'the natural law is not only indicative of good and bad, but also contains its own proper prohibition of evil and prescription of good' (ii 6.5).[7] He agrees with the naturalist view that it is indicative of what is intrinsically good and bad,[8] but he claims that it is also essentially prescriptive.

[5] Quoted in §436. [6] Quoted in §435.

[7] Suarez takes the gerundive form to mark indicative law, and only the imperative form to mark prescriptive law. See §442.

[8] Since he takes 'indicative of good and bad' to distinguish his position from the voluntarist position he has just mentioned, he must take this phrase to mean 'indicative of what is intrinsically good and bad'.

To see what Suarez means by speaking of an indicative and a prescriptive law, and why he thinks the natural law must have both features, we should consider his description and discussion of the naturalist and the voluntarist views. Then we can ask what his view claims, and whether it is preferable to the two extreme views.

It is easiest to begin with his discussion of naturalism. For once we understood the points on which he agrees and disagrees with naturalism, we can see what he thinks about voluntarism. His critique of naturalism also includes an affirmation of some aspects of naturalism; these show us where he rejects voluntarism.

Suarez claims to hold an intermediate position about the status of natural law, but we also want to know whether he holds an intermediate position about morality. Since he recognizes that the natural law indicates what is intrinsically good and bad, he is a naturalist about some goods and evils. But which goods and evils are these? If they are moral goods and evils, he is a naturalist about morality, though not about natural law. If they are non-moral, he is a voluntarist both about morality and about natural law.

426. Naturalism

For a statement of a naturalist position that treats natural law as purely indicative, Suarez turns to Gregory of Rimini.[9] Suarez relies on Gregory's admission that even if, per impossibile, God did not exist, or did not use reason, or did not judge correctly, lying, for instance, would still be a sin, because it would still be contrary to correct reason. According to Gregory, sin is contrary to divine reason because divine reason is correct, not because it is divine. Gregory infers that whatever is against correct reason is thereby against the eternal law.[10]

Gregory's account is the basis of Biel's instructive discussion of Augustine's definition of sin. This definition might appear to favour a voluntarist, since it mentions divine law (*2Sent* d35 qun a1), but Biel, following Gregory of Rimini, modifies it gradually in a naturalist direction. First, he argues (a1C = 609) that the divine law is essentially connected with divine reason, and that divine reason is essentially correct. Hence he infers that Augustine's

[9] 'In this matter the first opinion is that natural law is not properly a prescriptive (praeceptiva) law, because it is not a sign of the will of some superior, but that it is a law indicating what is to be done or avoided, what by its own nature is intrinsically good and necessary or intrinsically evil. And thus many people distinguish two sorts of law: one sort indicating, the other prescribing. And they say that the natural law is a law in the first way, but not in the second. . . . And consequently it seems that these authors will concede that the natural law is not from God as from a legislator, because it does not rest on the will of God, and thus by its force God does not behave as a superior prescribing or forbidding. Indeed, Gregory says (followed by the others), even if God did not exist or did not employ reason or did not judge correctly about things, even so, if there were in a human being the same dictate of correct reason dictating, for instance, that it is bad to lie, this would have the same character of law that it has now, because it would be a law showing the badness that exists intrinsically in the object.' (ii 6.3)

[10] 'Whatever is against correct reason is against the eternal law. If it is asked why I say it is against correct reason without qualification, rather than, more narrowly, against divine reason, I reply: so that it will not be thought that a sin is precisely against divine reason, and not contrary to any correct reason about it. Otherwise it would be supposed that something is a sin not because it is against divine reason in so far as it is correct, but because it is against it in so far as it is divine. For if by an impossibility divine reason or God himself did not exist, or if that reason were in error, still, if anyone acted against correct reason—angelic, human, or any other—he would be in error.' (Gregory, *2Sent*, d34 q1 a2, concl.1 = T&M vi 235. 11–12, quoted by Perena on Suarez, *Leg*. ii 6.3.) Gregory's account of sin is quoted by Biel, *2Sent*. d35 q1 a1 D. See Oberman, *HMT* 105–8.

account means that sin is an offence against correct reason. To the objection that such an account eliminates a reference to divine law, Biel replies that the relevant sort of law need not be imperative in the strict sense that involves a command 'expressed through a word in the imperative mood or something used instead of it to signify similarly' (a1E.1–3). It may be an indicative law, 'by which it is signified only that something is not to be done (non esse agendum), or something <is signified> from which it follows that it is not to be done' (a1D.8–9). An indicative law says or implies that something ought (debere) not to be done (a1D.13), and from that we can infer that the action is in some way prohibited. Hence a reference to a law and a prohibition does not imply a reference to an imperative law. When we speak of a divine or an eternal law commanding and prohibiting, we should not take this to imply an imperative law, but should take 'law' broadly so as to include indicative law (a1E.7–8).

Biel's last step towards naturalism, still following Gregory of Rimini, explains the meaning of 'contrary to correct reason' in his revised definition of sin. He now argues that the reference to correct reason should not be taken to imply that someone's actual correct reason has to oppose the sinful action. Even if, per impossibile, God did not exist, or if God's reason were not correct, or if no one had correct reason, what would be contrary to correct reason would still be wrong (a1E.17–25). We need to make this clear, Biel remarks, so that no one will suppose that a sin is an act contrary to divine reason insofar as it is divine; it is contrary to divine reason only insofar as divine reason is correct (a1E.17–21).[11]

It is difficult to reconcile this naturalist account of sin with a voluntarist account of the basis of the natural law. Biel's account of correct reason implies that the relevant sort of correctness does not depend on the reason of any person, human or divine; correct reason would forbid an action because the action is inappropriate for human nature. If we claim that this is all true because of God's exercise of ordered power, we imply that God is free, by an exercise of absolute power, to change what is appropriate for human nature, or free to command actions that are inappropriate for human nature.[12] Neither result is satisfactory. God could change what is appropriate for human nature only by making human beings have a different nature; but then they would not be the same species. Nor does Biel allow that God could command what is inappropriate for human nature, though perhaps Ockham is willing to allow it.[13]

Neither Gregory nor Biel affirms that what is intrinsically wrong is thereby contrary to the natural law; they speak only of what is contrary to correct reason. But Suarez is justified in assuming that Gregory has intrinsic wrongness in mind. When Gregory speaks of correct

[11] 'For if by an impossibility God, who is divine reason, did not exist, or that divine reason were in error, still if anyone acted against correct reason—angelic or human or any other sort, if there were any—they would sin. And if no correct reason at all existed, still if anyone acted against what correct reason, if there were any, would prescribe to be done, they would sin.' (a1E.21–5)

[12] On absolute v. ordered power see §396.

[13] 'This immanent validity, however, is reliable solely for the reason that its justice is derived from the eternal law or divine reason. This eternal law in its turn is dependable because it is not subject to arbitrary decisions of God's will, or reason, but to a final standard of justice that would even endure if there were no divine reason at all; its steadfastness would not be shaken even if the divine reason would deviate from this norm.' (Oberman, *HMT* 107) Oberman tries to reconcile this claim with a voluntarist thesis that the natural law depends on God's ordered power, but it is difficult to see how he reconciles them.

reason, he does not presuppose the existence of anyone who has correct reason—God, angel, or human being. Correctness is not defined by the conclusions of someone's reasoning; on the contrary the correctness of the conclusions of anyone's reasoning is defined by reference to correct reason. Suarez is justified in suggesting that Gregory alludes to the intrinsic rightness and wrongness of actions, in their own nature and apart from anyone's reasoning about them.

These remarks imply only that some actions are wrong intrinsically, and hence contrary to correct reason, whether or not God prohibits them. But Gregory also claims that what is contrary to correct reason is contrary to the eternal law. Whereas he claims that it would still be wrong even if God did not prohibit it, he does not say it would still be wrong even if the eternal law did not prohibit it; hence he seems to infer that what is intrinsically wrong is essentially contrary to the eternal law. If the existence of the eternal law implies the existence of the natural law, whatever is intrinsically wrong is thereby also contrary to the natural law.[14]

Gregory's counterfactual assumption about the non-existence of God makes the implications of the naturalist position clear. Suarez also cites Vasquez's affirmation that the natural law is independent of the will and command of God (*Leg*. ii 5.2).[15] Though Vasquez does not use the supposition of the non-existence of God to explain his point about the natural law, he agrees with Gregory in affirming that the natural law is independent of divine legislation.[16]

Vasquez's main reason for denying that natural law depends on the divine will is his conception of the content of natural law. He insists that it describes things that are good and bad in their own nature, independently of any will. He infers that natural law does not consist in any command; 'for we said that it is primarily rational human nature itself'.[17]

[14] Whether or not Gregory means to say that natural law would still exist even if God did not exist depends on what he means by his claim that whatever is contrary to correct reason is also contrary to the eternal law. He might have either of two claims in mind: (1) Whatever is contrary to what correct reason would say, whether or not anyone's reason says it, is also contrary to what the eternal law would say, whether or not there is any such law. (2) Whatever is contrary to what correct reason would say, whether or not anyone's reason says it, is also contrary to the actual provisions of the actual eternal law. Suarez assumes that Gregory has the second claim in mind; since Gregory does not qualify his claims about eternal law in the way he qualifies his claims about divine reason, Suarez's assumption is fair. I have emphasized the plausibility of Suarez's claims about Gregory because Haakonssen, *NLMP* 20, maintains that 'Suarez's formulation of Gregory's view . . . polemically distorts it in a significant way. Gregory did not say, in the passage referred to by Suarez, that without God the dictates of right reason would still have the same "legal character" . . . He said only that, even without God, there would be sin, or moral evil (peccatum).' This criticism of Suarez does not take sufficient account of Gregory's remarks about the eternal law, which are plausibly taken to say that the dictates of right reason would have the same legal character without God.

[15] Quoted in §427.

[16] 'If, however, one is talking about the natural law, which is said to exist by its own nature, not by decision or by anyone's will, one must speak differently. For since law or right (ius) is a rule that actions must conform to in order to be just (iustae), natural law or natural right will be a natural rule that exists by no will, but by its own nature. And in fact the existence of such a law or right, which is constituted by no will, not even by the will of God, is most of all confirmed by what we said above, in Disputation 97, Chapter 3. That is to say, some things are evils and sins from themselves in such a way that this prohibition depends on no will, even the will of God—this was proved by us more than adequately. Indeed we not only showed this, but we also pointed out that many things are evil from themselves in such a way that their badness is prior in accord with reason to all judgment of the divine intellect. That is to say, they are not bad because they are judged bad by God; rather, they are judged bad because they are such from themselves. From this it results that before any will and command (imperium) of God, indeed before any judgment, some works are good and evil from themselves.' (Vasquez, *Disp*. 150 c.3 §22, p. 7)

[17] nam primarie diximus esse ipsam naturam rationalem hominis, *Disp*. 150 c.4 §29.

In claiming that it is prior to any will, 'we ought not to say on that account that it is any judgment of reason, even of the divine reason; for it is prior to any judgment'.[18] Natural law obliges, simply in virtue of being natural law;[19] obligation requires nothing more than the existence of the rational beings for whom the natural law is natural.[20]

This conception of the source and obligation of natural law supports Vasquez's denial that the natural law is dispensable. If we make it dispensable, we allow, as Scotus and Ockham do, that sometimes the Decalogue requires a specific action, but a particular person is not required to do it. In Scotus' view, dispensations do not dispense from the natural law; for he takes the moral laws concerning our neighbours to be divine positive law. Since, as Aquinas agrees, divine positive law is subject to dispensation, these moral laws are subject to dispensation too. Ockham goes further than Scotus, and takes the whole of the natural law to be subject to dispensation.[21] But according to Vasquez's account of natural law, the whole Decalogue embodies natural law, and therefore is not subject to dispensation.[22] Since natural law is fixed by the facts about rational nature, God cannot make it right to violate natural law simply by dispensation, without any change in the facts about rational nature.

These claims about natural law rest partly on Vasquez's earlier discussion of sin. In connexion with Aquinas' discussion of the account of sin as being contrary to the eternal law (*ST* 1–2 q71 a6),[23] he asks whether 'all sin is sin by being contrary to law'.[24] He argues that this view overlooks the fact that the badness of sin is prior to any law.[25] God cannot change the nature of things, and the nature of things makes anything good or bad.[26] If goodness or badness were in some way constituted by a law, it would be mutable in a respect in which we know it is immutable.

[18] ob id tamen dicendum non est esse iudicium aliquid rationis, etiam divinae; nam quocumque iudicio prior est, *Disp*. 150 c.4 §30.

[19] 'Now about the natural law, which sometimes does not oblige when one faces the danger of death, our philosophical account must be such that we do not say that the danger of death prevails against the obligation of natural law; for if the obligation and every circumstance of the precept <of natural law> still remained, it would oblige even at the price of death. In this way, the law of nature about not lying, even venially, is to be kept even with the danger of death. By this law the substance of the precept about not lying remains untouched, with all its circumstances, and none of them, even the smallest is removed by the danger of death; for <the substance of the precept> consists wholly in this, that one speaks externally against what one believes internally. Rather, our philosophical account must be such that we say that when the danger of death arises, some circumstance of the natural law is removed, given that the law would otherwise oblige.' (Vasquez, *Disp*. 161 c.2 §13, p. 111)

[20] This position on obligation is similar to Clarke's. See §617.

[21] See ii 15.3. On Ockham see §395.

[22] 'For the law of the Decalogue, as we said, is natural law. But the natural law is nature itself, which a given thing is said to agree or disagree with, not without qualification but with the required circumstances. And if these circumstances remain, no one, not even God, can so interpret the law that it does not oblige. For—given that rational nature itself cannot be changed—if the facts and circumstances are unchanged, a true and veracious intellect, such as the divine intellect is, cannot interpret the law itself in different ways.' (*Disp*. 179 §15, p. 268)

[23] Quoted in §235n6.

[24] omne peccatum eo sit peccatum quo est contra legem, *Disp*. 97 = i 657.

[25] He refers to Part 1, *Disp*. 104 c.3, on Scotus; and to 1–2 *Disp*. 179 on dispensations.

[26] 'Moral badness consists in that relation of opposition with rational nature. Moreover, some things are bad from themselves in such a way—that is to say, unfitting to rational nature in the way in which heat is to water—that if they are done with these circumstances, they have this character by their own nature, not by the will of God prohibiting or by his judgment judging. For, just as the essences of things, from themselves and not from the will or intellect of God, do not imply a contradiction, as we were saying above, and one is contrary and unfitting to another, so also hatred of God and perjury are unfitting to a human being from themselves, and not by the intellect or will of God. And therefore not all sins are sins because they are prohibited.' (*Disp*. 97 c.3, p. 658) On mala quia prohibita cf. §307.

427. Two Versions of Naturalism

According to Suarez, the naturalist position claims that rational nature is itself the natural law.[27] It claims that rational nature is the epistemological basis for the law, since our reason gives us access to the actions that do and do not accord with our rational nature. But it also holds the metaphysical thesis that natural law is rational nature (*Leg*. ii 5.1).

Suarez recognizes two versions of this naturalist thesis: (1) Objective naturalism: As Vasquez claims, natural law is rational nature itself, insofar as different things are appropriate for it, and therefore right, or inappropriate, and therefore wrong. (2) Cognitive naturalism: Natural law is rational nature as grasping what is appropriate for rational nature (ii 5.1).

The two versions appeal to the same underlying facts—the facts about appropriateness to nature that make an action right or wrong. But cognitive naturalism takes the natural law to consist in a further fact, the judgment of correct reason about what is appropriate or inappropriate. The point of cognitive naturalism is not to say that natural law consists in the judgment about rightness rather than in rightness itself; since the judgment must be correct, genuine natural law rests on actual rightness itself. But cognitive naturalism claims that the mere fact of something's being right or wrong does not by itself constitute the existence of a natural law; there would be no natural law if correct reason did not also make a judgment about it.

Suarez agrees with one part of objective naturalism. He believes in intrinsic rightness and wrongness that are constituted by facts about rational nature in its environment, not by facts about anyone's beliefs, judgments, or commands (ii 5.5). Rational nature is the 'foundation' of the objective rightness of actions, but that does not make it law. Similarly, rational nature is the 'measure' or 'rule' of rightness, but not every measure or rule is thereby a law (ii 5.6). Suarez appeals to Aquinas' broad use of 'measure' and 'rule', and asserts that Aquinas would not speak of a law in all these cases (ii 5.6, citing Aquinas, *ST* 2–2 q141 a6 and ad1). Both as a foundation and as a measure, rational nature lacks the essential functions of a law in prescribing, directing, and enlightening.[28] To assert that rational nature lacks these features, but is still natural law, is to use 'law' equivocally, and thereby to undermine the whole discussion (quod evertit totam disputationem, ii 5.5).

Suarez now argues that objective naturalism makes natural law insufficiently dependent on God, since natural law turns out to oblige God. Since lying is no less inappropriate to God's rational nature than to ours, God's nature will also be a measure or rule of the rightness that requires truthfulness. Hence it will be a law for God no less than for human beings. If objective naturalism is right, the same result follows from Aquinas' claim that God owes to himself what is appropriate to his nature (*ST* 1a q21 a1 ad3). Since God's nature provides a measure, and a measure is a law (according to objective naturalism), God will be

[27] '. . . rational nature, in its own right and in so far as it does not involve any contradiction, and is the foundation of all rightness of human acts that are appropriate for such a nature, or, on the contrary, of <all> wrongness of them through inappropriateness for that nature, is itself the natural law' (*Leg*. ii 5.2).

[28] '. . . rational nature itself, considered precisely, in so far as it is this sort of essence, neither prescribes, nor displays rightness or wrongness, nor directs, nor enlightens, nor has any other effect that is proper to law' (*Leg*. ii 5.5).

obliged by the law of his nature, just as human beings are obliged by the law of their nature; and this, in Suarez's view, seems absurd (*Leg*. ii 5.7).

The independence of natural law from God, as explained by objective naturalism, has the unwelcome result that natural law is not divine law and is not from God (non esse legem divinam, neque esse ex Deo, ii 5.8).[29] The feature of rational nature that makes actions right and wrong does not depend on God for its character (ratio),[30] though it depends on God for its existence; for the fact that lying is inappropriate to rational nature is not from God, does not depend on God's will, and is even logically (in ordine rationis) prior to a judgment of God (ii 5.8). This passage shows that Suarez takes 'from God' (ex Deo) and 'dependent on God' (pendere ex Deo) to be equivalent. He is not claiming that the relevant facts, according to naturalism, are prior to God, but only that they are not posterior to him, as they ought to be (in his view) if they are really a divine law.

Here Suarez agrees that facts about intrinsic rightness and wrongness do not depend on God. He agrees with objective naturalism about rational nature, intrinsic rightness, and their independence of divine commands. That is why he thinks they cannot be natural law.

After these objections to objective naturalism, Suarez turns to cognitive naturalism. According to this view, the existence of natural law consists not merely in the facts about intrinsic rightness and wrongness, but also in the facts about our rational capacity to discriminate intrinsic rightness and wrongness (ii 5.9). Suarez holds that Aquinas, contrary to Vasquez, takes these cognitive facts to be essential to natural law. He believes that Aquinas agrees with him, against Vasquez, in separating a law (lex) from a standard (regula) and a measure (mensura). When Aquinas refers to our capacity to discriminate right and wrong, he describes (according to Suarez) conditions for the existence of the natural law.

This assumption about Aquinas is insecure. Admittedly, he takes a law to be 'some sort of standard and measure of actions' (quaedam regula . . . et mensura actuum) in accordance with which one is led to act or restrained from acting (*ST* 1–2 q90 a1). But he does not say specifically how a law differs from other standards that might guide action. In order to show that reason is a standard and measure of human action, he asserts simply that it is a measure and standard by being a principle of actions; he infers that law belongs to reason. Our rational capacity for distinguishing right and wrong may be necessary for the presence of the natural law in us, but not for the existence of the natural law (q91 a2).

Aquinas, therefore, may accept objective naturalism, and may not be disturbed by the implications that disturb Suarez. But he does not clearly endorse objective naturalism. In claiming that the natural law consists of precepts, he assumes that it requires 'command' (imperium), which is an act of reason presupposing an act of will.[31] Aquinas' claim that command belongs to reason suggests that a fact external to agents does not constitute a precept until it is grasped by some agent, divine or human. Hence the existence of the

[29] ET mistakenly puts 'therefore' at the beginning of §8. 'Deinde' marks the second of the 'inconvenientia' mentioned at the beginning of §7.

[30] 'Rational basis' ET. Perena's 'en su esencia' is preferable.

[31] For Aquinas' views on imperium see 1–2 q17 a1; a3 ad1; 2–2 q47 a8; q50; §257. Cajetan on 1–2 q17 a1 defends intellect as the source of imperium, connecting it with the view that prudence itself is prescriptive. He attacks Scotus on this point. Suarez agrees with Scotus in taking command to proceed from the will, in contrast to intellect (*Leg*. i 4.14). See Farrell, *NLSTS* 56; Finnis, *NLNR* 54, 337–43, 347.

natural law seems to require rational agents who grasp it. This aspect of Aquinas' view separates him, as Suarez says, from Vasquez.

Still, Vasquez's view captures Aquinas' belief that natural facts make actions right or wrong, and hence provide the content of precepts of natural law. In Aquinas' view, facts about human nature constitute duties (debita), because they would be prescriptive for us if we grasped them and connected them appropriately with our will.

Suarez, therefore, is right to distinguish the two forms of naturalism found in Aquinas and in Vasquez, and to explore their implications.

428. Suarez's Objection to Naturalism

Suarez criticizes cognitive naturalism, which takes knowledge of right and wrong to be essential for the existence of natural law. According to this view, the natural law proceeds from God as creator, not as legislator; it does not essentially convey God's commands, but indicates what is good or bad in itself.[32]

Both objective and cognitive naturalism would be open to attack if they could not be reconciled with the Scriptural evidence that Suarez accumulates to show that natural law is divine prescriptive law (*Leg*. ii 6.7–8). If a naturalist position could not explain how God can command observance of the natural law, it would have to say that the natural law is purely declarative, and not prescriptive (ii 6.3).

A cognitive naturalist might fairly reply that the indicative character of the natural law does not preclude God's also commanding us to obey it. God's command is a further exercise of divine freewill beyond its exercise in creation. Once we exist as creatures who ought to obey the natural law, we still have a choice about whether to obey it. Moreover, God has a choice about whether to command us to obey it. This does not mean it is possible for God to create us and then to abstain from commanding us to obey the natural law; such an abstention would be contrary to God's goodness. But the fact that God's nature makes it impossible for God, having created us, not to command us to obey the natural law does not imply that God does not freely command us to obey it.

This claim about God's freedom will convince us if we explain divine freedom as Aquinas explains it, but not if we agree with Scotus or Ockham about divine freedom. Since Suarez accepts Aquinas' explanation, he cannot reasonably deny that God commands out of his freewill that we obey the natural law that exists independently of his command.

Suarez has a further objection to the naturalist position; it implies that the natural law is not essentially commanded by God. This claim about essence may be expressed by the counterfactual claim that even if God had not commanded us to obey the natural law, there would still have been natural law. In reply Suarez affirms an essential connexion between the natural law and God's commands. Both versions of naturalism imply that if any divine

[32] 'God is, therefore, without doubt the producer and, so to speak, the teacher of the law of nature. But it does not follow from this that he is the legislator, because the law of nature does not indicate God as prescribing but it indicates what is good or bad in itself, just as sight of a certain sort of object indicates that this is white or black, and as an effect of God indicates God as its author, but not as legislator. That, then, is how we will have to think of the natural law.' (*Leg*. ii 6.2)

prohibition were removed, action contrary to the purely indicative principles of goodness and badness would violate the natural law.[33]

Why should we find this result unacceptable? If the naturalist view is right, natural law is not essentially genuine law, as Suarez understands it, because it does not require any command by a superior (ii 6.6). But the best authorities, in his view, understand natural law as genuine law, because they insist that God prohibits offences against the natural law.[34] Suarez misses the mark; a naturalist need not deny that the natural law is in fact commanded by God. The crucial naturalist claim is simply that it is not essential to natural law to be commanded by God.

Suarez now argues that it is not a contingent fact that God commands observance of the natural law. Since God is creator and governor, it is appropriate and necessary for God to command the good and forbid the evil.[35] Given that a rational creature has been created, it is necessary that such a creature is subject to moral government, and therefore to the commands of a superior (i 3.3). Once naturalists concede that the natural law indicates what is naturally right and wrong, and also admit the necessary goodness and rationality of God, they must agree that it is necessary for the natural law to be commanded by God.[36]

These arguments assume a naturalist opponent who believes it is possible that an action violates the natural law and does not violate a divine command. Suarez replies that this conjunction is impossible, because it is necessary that whatever is intrinsically good and bad is commanded and prohibited by God.[37] It cannot simply be a contingent feature of good and bad action that God commands the one and forbids the other; given the nature of good and bad, and the nature of God, something's being good or bad implies that God commands or forbids it. Hence it is not possible for something to be prescribed by the natural law but not commanded by God.[38]

Suarez is open to an objection. Even if the natural law is necessarily commanded by God, it does not follow that it is essentially commanded by God. For not all necessary properties

[33] 'Therefore the natural law, as it is in a human being, does not only indicate the thing itself in its own right, but also as prohibited or prescribed by some superior. The consequence is clear, because if the natural law intrinsically consists in the object by itself in its own right, or in showing it, the violation of it will not, in itself and intrinsically, be against the law of a superior. For, if every law of a superior were removed, a human being would <still> violate the natural law by acting against that dictate <of reason simply showing the goodness and badness of the object>.' (ii 6.7)

[34] 'All the things that the natural law dictates to be evil are prohibited by God, by his special prescription and by the will by which he wills us to be required and obliged by the force of his authority to keep these <dictates>. Therefore the natural law is properly a prescriptive law, or introduces (insinuativa) <its> proper precept.' (ii 6.8)

[35] 'God has perfect providence over human beings. Therefore it is proper for him and his supreme governance of nature to forbid evils and to prescribe goods. Therefore, even though natural reason indicates what is good or evil for a rational nature, nonetheless God, as ruler and governor of such a nature, prescribes the doing or avoiding ["vitare" (Perena); OO has "vetare"] of what reason dictates to be done or avoided.' (ii 6.8)

[36] 'Whatever is done against correct reason displeases God, and the contrary pleases him, because, since the will of God is supremely just, what is wrong cannot not displease him, and what is right cannot not please him, because the will of God cannot be irrational . . . Therefore correct reason, which indicates what is good or bad for a human being in its own right, consequently indicates that it is in accord with the divine will that the one should be done and the other avoided.' (ii 6.8)

[37] This is not quite accurate, since it overlooks the distinction between the required (debitum) and the merely desirable, which I will return to later.

[38] 'Finally, the obligation of the natural law is true obligation. Now this obligation is a good in its own way, existing in the nature of things. Therefore, it is necessary that that obligation should proceed from the divine will willing that human beings be required to observe what correct reason prescribes.' (ii 6.10)

of a subject are part of the essence of the subject, and hence they do not all belong to it as that subject. The essential properties (according to Aristotelian metaphysics) are those (putting it too simply) that explain the subject's having the other necessary properties it has. Suarez does not seem to have shown why the natural law is essentially commanded by God.

One might try to defend Suarez by arguing that the counterfactual accepted by the naturalist is inconsistent with the recognition of a necessary connexion between the natural law and God's command. The naturalist accepts a counterfactual saying that if God did not command observance of the principles requiring good action, observance of them would still be in accordance with natural law. Since it is necessarily true that God commands observance of the natural law, the truth of the antecedent of the counterfactual implies that these good actions are not in accord with the natural law. Hence the conditional as a whole says that these actions both are and are not in accord with the natural law. Hence the naturalist's supposition leads to a contradiction, so that the whole counterfactual conditional is false.

But we would be wrong to argue in this way against the naturalist thesis, however, since we would misinterpret the counterfactual. If a counterfactual has an impossible antecedent, we need to be careful in saying what features of the actual world we hold fixed in evaluating the counterfactual. In particular, we must not regard as false all the truths about the actual world whose falsity follows necessarily from the truth of the antecedent.[39] We are to suppose that the world is otherwise the same, apart from the fact that God does not command the observance of the natural law. This supposed state of affairs is impossible, given what we know about God, but we ignore this impossibility in considering the counterfactual. We may still affirm that the counterfactual is true, even though it is impossible that God does not command observance of the natural law.

Is this an over-subtle interpretation of the relevant counterfactual, or is it anachronistic for Suarez? It is the interpretation that he applies to the counterfactual claim that if God did not command us to observe the natural law, things would still be good and bad in their own right. He defends the coherence of this counterfactual while agreeing that the antecedent is impossible.[40] The same treatment of the naturalist claim (that even if God did not command us, good and bad action would still violate the natural law) removes Suarez's objection to the coherence and the truth of this claim.

The argument about counterfactuals, therefore, does not refute the naturalist claim that the natural law is not essentially commanded by God, and therefore would still be natural law even if God did not command it. Suarez would have found a strong objection against naturalism if he had shown that naturalism makes it false, or merely contingently true, that God commands the observance of the natural law. Perhaps he believes that this follows for any naturalist who accepts the counterfactual that Gregory uses to formulate the naturalist position. But he would be wrong to believe this. We might reasonably believe that natural law is the natural standard that would have existed even if God had not legislated, but the

[39] For Aquinas' treatment of counterfactuals with impossible antecedents see *ST* 1a q25 a3 ad2: 'For nothing rules out a conditional from being true whose antecedent and consequent are impossible, as if it were said, "If a human being is an ass, he has four feet." ' (cf. q44 a1 ad2).

[40] See *Leg*. ii 6.14, discussed in §441.

world had otherwise been the same. This is consistent with the belief that God necessarily commands the observance of the natural law.

429. True Law

Suarez, therefore, has a cogent argument against the naturalist account of natural law only if he can show that natural law is essentially a genuine law, and therefore essentially commanded by God. To see whether he can show this, we should look more closely at his account of genuine law and of its connexion with commands.

In speaking of 'genuine' or 'true' law, Suarez allows a broader sense. Hooker draws a similar distinction between a law imposed by authority and an 'enlarged' sense of 'law' that refers simply to the principles on which God acts, which are not products of divine legislation, but part of the nature of things.[41] This is the sort of law that Vasquez describes in claiming that law is 'an operation of reason, not of will' (*Comm.* ad90.1, p. 6). He considers the view of those who believe that the connexion of law to obligation requires us to think of natural law as 'the will of God by which he wills us to be obliged' (voluntas Dei qua vult nos obligari, *Disp.* 150 c.3 §21, p. 7). These people think that the existence of law requires an act of legislation, but Vasquez believes they are wrong.

To explain how the natural law is law, Vasquez introduces a further sense of 'law'. It depends neither on the divine will nor on the divine intellect. Hence natural law is law in a broader sense, which Vasquez would prefer to call 'ius' rather than 'lex'. The mark of natural law is its being a rule of just and unjust.[42]

Suarez rejects this treatment of natural law. Though he allows the broader sense of 'law' that includes indicative law, he believes that natural law is law in a more precise sense. In his view, a law is 'a common precept, just and stable, sufficiently promulgated' (*Leg.* i 12.4); in this conclusion he agrees with Aquinas (*ST* 1–2 q96 a1 ad2). The crucial emphasis in this definition, for present purposes, lies on 'precept', which Suarez takes to imply a command expressing the will of a superior.

Suarez reaches this definition by rejecting conceptions of law that he takes to be too broad. The first of these is derived from Aquinas' description of law as a rule or measure that guides action.[43] On this conception, all creatures, not only rational agents, receive and obey law. This would be a mistake, because non-rational creatures 'are not properly capable

[41] See §413 on Hooker.

[42] 'From this teaching we infer this noteworthy conclusion, that the name of law (lex) does not fit natural law as well as it fits positive law, whether the word is derived from reading (legere) from a written text, or from election. For the natural law is neither read in a written text, nor is constituted voluntarily by any election, even a divine election; but it exists necessarily by its own nature. Therefore it is more properly called right (ius), because it is the rule of just and unjust.' (Vasquez, *Disp.* 150 c.3 §26, p. 8)

[43] 'Law is a type of rule and measure of acts [Suarez's quotation omits "of acts"] in accordance with which someone is led to action or is restrained from action: for "lex" [law] is so called from binding (ligare), because it obliges (obligat) to action.' (Aquinas, *ST* 1–2 q90 a1) The explanatory clause suggests that Aquinas takes his definition to capture the fact that law binds. But it is difficult to see how the obligatory character of a law, so understood, is captured in Aquinas' description, unless the combination of 'rule' and 'led' (inducere) indicates obligation, or 'a type of rule' (quaedam regula) indicates that he has not fully specified the type of rule that is to be identified with law.

of <receiving> law, just as they are not properly capable of obedience either' (*Leg*. i 1.2).[44] If we speak of non-rational creatures being governed by divine law, when we really refer to 'the efficacy of divine power' and to natural necessity, we are speaking metaphorically (i 1.2). Aquinas takes the eternal law to extend to all creation,[45] but, in Suarez's view, this claim is true only if it is taken metaphorically (i 3.9). Natural law, insofar as it belongs to moral doctrine and to theology, applies only to rational creatures (i 3.10).[46] Aquinas seems to agree, because he distinguishes the way in which rational creatures participate in eternal law from the way in which non-rational creatures do, and concludes that 'natural law is nothing other than participation in eternal law in a rational creature' (*ST* 1–2 q91 a2).

Suarez believes all this because he believes that no command can really be addressed to non-rational creatures; they cannot understand or obey commands as expressions of the reason and will of a superior. This connexion of law with rational will, in both the legislator and the subject, is recognized by Aquinas, according to Suarez, in the derivation of 'lex' from 'ligare', because 'the proper effect of law is to bind (ligare) or oblige (obligare)' (*Leg*. i 1 9).

The reasons that Suarez offers here for taking law to require a command—understood as the expression of the will of a superior—do not seem persuasive, either from Aquinas' point of view or in their own right.[47] We might well agree that rational creatures 'participate' differently in a law, insofar as they are guided by their understanding of it; but this does not mean that it must be addressed to them as a command, or that they must regard it as a command. Similarly, we might agree that a law obliges, but deny that only a command can oblige.

Suarez's arguments make it difficult to identify his basic conviction. Does his whole argument rest on a conception of the nature of law, and does his claim about obligation depend on his view of how law operates? Or does it all rest on his conception of obligation, and does his claim about law depend on his view that law obliges? If we are to accept his claims about natural law we need some independent argument either for his claim about the nature of law or for his claim about the nature of obligation; if this argument is convincing, we must also be convinced that natural law is essentially genuine law, and that it imposes genuine obligation.

430. Obligation and the Natural Law

While the naturalist claims that the natural law would still be natural law even if God did not command it, Suarez denies this claim. He believes that since the natural law essentially imposes a genuine obligation, it essentially proceeds from a divine command.[48] Law requires

[44] nam res carentes ratione non sunt proprie capaces legis, sicut nec oboedientiae. (*Leg*. i 1.2)

[45] '. . . since all things subject to Divine providence are ruled (regulantur) and measured by the eternal law, . . . it is evident that all things partake to some degree of the eternal law—namely, in so far as, from its being imprinted on them, they have their tendencies towards their proper acts and ends' (*ST* 1–2 q91 a2).

[46] 'And so natural law properly speaking, which applies to moral doctrine and to theology, is the law that is seated in the human mind for distinguishing right from wrong (honestum a turpi) . . .' (*Leg*. i 3.9). For the reference to distinguishing honestum from turpe cf. Aquinas *in EN* §1019.

[47] Aquinas holds a broader conception of command (imperium). See §306.

[48] *Leg*. ii 6.10, quoted in previous section.

commands because law imposes obligation,[49] and obligation requires command; hence if natural law is true law, it requires a divine command. Facts about rational nature fall short of natural law, according to Suarez, because natural law is genuine law. For rational nature in itself does not issue commands, but these are essential to genuine law (ii 5.5).[50]

We might doubt whether rational nature lacks all the features relevant to a law. Natural facts may serve as signs or directives to knowers and agents who understand them appropriately. If Suarez objects that they do not do these things 'considered precisely' insofar as they are these sorts of facts, but only in relation to the appropriate sorts of knowers and agents, we may reply that laws do not enlighten or direct 'considered precisely' in themselves, but only insofar as knowers and agents understand them and care about what they say.

Still, Suarez might fairly maintain that laws mark an intention to display, direct, and enlighten, and that natural facts involve no such intention, and hence do not command. On this point about intention he has found a genuine difference between commands and natural facts. He needs to persuade us that the natural law requires this intention. To be persuaded, we have to accept Suarez's claim that natural law is essentially true law, as he conceives it.

Vasquez's discussion suggests that a naturalist has no reason to concede without argument that natural law is essentially true law. He admits that natural law lacks features that we might readily attribute to law, on the basis of what we know about positive law. But he infers not that he has given the wrong account of natural law, but that natural law is properly called 'natural right' (ius) rather than 'natural law' (lex). Has Suarez an argument to show that Vasquez makes some mistake in this answer to the question about law?

He might have a basis for argument in claims about obligation; for Vasquez assumes that the natural law is obligatory. If, then, Suarez is right about the nature of obligation, and the natural law obliges, it requires a command, and hence is true law. Hence he sometimes argues that since the natural law essentially obliges us, and since obligation requires us to be bound by the command of a superior, we are obliged to follow the natural law insofar as it is commanded by God. The natural law, therefore, is essentially commanded by God.

What does Suarez mean by insisting that genuine obligation requires a command? We might take him to present an account of normative facts and principles. Normative—i.e., reason-giving—principles imply that we ought to act in some way, or we have reason to act in this way. Some have argued that these reason-giving facts must include facts about the will or desires of agents; others have maintained that external natural facts by themselves imply that agents of a certain sort ought to act in a specific way, whether or not a given agent's will is appropriately directed.

According to one interpretation, Suarez's separation of intrinsic natural facts from divine commands separates non-normative natural facts from normative principles of morality.[51]

[49] quia de intrinseca ratione eius [sc. legis] est ut aliquam intrinsecam obligationem inducat . . . (i 9.17). See also i 11.2 (the assumption that law obliges is the basis for the claim that it must be promulgated); i 14.1 ('The special effectiveness of law in making human beings good is its obligation, which seems to be especially its intrinsic effect . . .').

[50] Quoted in §427.

[51] This interpretation goes back at least to Culverwell. See §558. It is accepted by (e.g.) Chroust, 'Grotius' 117: 'In order to make any act a truly moral one, we still need the rational insight that this act coincides with the divine will, the author of the natural and moral order.' (Chroust cites *Leg*. ii 6.7, but I do not see where it supports his claim.) According to this interpretation, Suarez is a 'natural-law moralist' in the sense explained in §455. Culverwell's interpretation suggests

His claims about obligation might be taken to affirm that genuinely normative principles require divine commands. Natural goodness and badness exist independently of God's legislation, and, as he often says, they are the 'foundation' of natural law. But they do not become moral goodness and badness until they are the subject matter of divine commands. The natural is to be distinguished from the normative, because the normative is the area of obligation, and hence of command and legislation.

According to this interpretation, then, Suarez separates the natural from the normative. He believes that without laws and commands, we have no genuine moral obligation, and hence no genuine moral ought or conclusive moral reason. His distinction between the indicative and the prescriptive might be taken to suggest this point; we might suppose that he identifies the indicative with the descriptive and therefore non-normative, and identifies the prescriptive with the normative. If that is what he means, we might suppose that obligation is necessary for genuine norms, so that law and commands are necessary for norms, and hence for the moral ought.[52] If this is Suarez's view, he is a natural-law moralist in a strong sense; he not only believes in natural law, but also believes that morality is essentially and fundamentally natural law.[53] He believes this primarily because he is a prescriptivist about norms.

431. Conceptions of Obligation

To test this prescriptivist interpretation of Suarez, we should see how he understands obligation. If he believes that the moral is to be distinguished from the non-moral by the presence of moral obligation, we might reasonably suppose that his concept of obligation is the concept of a genuinely normative requirement. But we cannot simply take it for granted that this is his concept of obligation. In moral philosophy in English, 'oblige' (or 'obligate') and 'obligation' have been a source of dispute and confusion since the 17th century. We must try to see whether Suarez has a reasonably clear concept, and what it is.

To grasp Suarez's concept of obligation (obligatio), it may be useful to survey some different claims that have been made by writers in English about the concept of obligation. Though they do not exactly capture Suarez's concept, they indicate some of the relevant distinctions.

According to a narrow 'impositive' analysis, an obligation is a special sort of moral requirement, in which the source of the requirement is some voluntary act that imposes the obligation. I have an obligation, therefore, to keep a promise insofar as making a promise is acting so as to bind myself in a particular way. But if I have not done anything to bind myself to refrain from harming innocent people, and no one else has imposed the obligation on me,

a division between the merely natural and the moral that is accepted by Locke, Cumberland, and Pufendorf. They all agree that morality depends on natural law, and hence on divine commands, and that the natural foundation of morality consists in natural, but non-moral, goodness and badness. If Suarez anticipates them in marking this division, he is clearly a natural-law moralist, since he takes morality to consist in the obligations that belong to natural law.

[52] This is Finnis's interpretation of Suarez in *NLNR* 47n, 350.

[53] Hence he engages in the 'attempt to understand morality in the legalistic terms of a natural law', Haakonssen, *NLMP* 15. We attribute a natural-law theory in this strong sense to Aquinas, for instance, if we agree that 'for him, the virtues are basically habits of obedience to laws' (Schneewind, *IA* 20). See §315.

I have no obligation to refrain from harming them, even though I nonetheless ought not to harm them.[54]

We accept a 'compulsory' analysis of obligation, in contrast to other sorts of relations between agents and actions, if we concentrate on the necessitating or compulsory aspects of obligations.[55] If I am morally obliged to act in a certain way, it is not simply desirable, or preferable, or a good idea, or attractive, or appealing, to act in that way, but I have no choice about doing it. The sense in which I have no choice is not the physical or the psychological, but the rational sense; nothing else in the circumstances could be a reasonable choice for me. In this way of conceiving it, moral obligations correspond to the compulsory, as opposed to the optional, parts of a syllabus or examination. If we think there are non-moral obligations, they will have the same compulsory character. This contrast between the obligatory and the desirable may be identified with the contrast between the required and the supererogatory areas of morality, if we think morality extends beyond what is required.

In contrast to these analyses, a 'purely deontic' analysis takes an obligation to correspond to every practical use of 'ought'.[56] On this view, since morality and prudence tell us what we ought to do, all true moral and prudential ought-judgments specify obligations.

A 'motivational' analysis might be combined with any of the previous three analyses. It tries to explain the sort of necessity or requirement that belongs to obligations as a motive

[54] Hart, 'Obligation' 100, mentions three features of an obligation: '(1) dependence on the actual practice of a social group, (2) possible independence of content, and (3) coercion'. The first feature introduces imposition. Baier, *MPV* 218, agrees with some of this analysis; in his view, 'obligations between people can arise only on account of what has already happened or been done'. Obligations 'arise only when the normal moral relationship between two or more people, that of moral non-involvement, is disturbed, and they end only when the state of moral non-involvement is restored' (216). In 'Moral obligation', Baier rejects Hart's narrowing of 'obligation' and 'duty' (212). But he still maintains that 'obligations arise when and only when a morally binding directive gives rise . . . to a task . . .' (213). A directive is 'the content of speech acts capable of guiding those to whom it applies' (210). He seems to suppose that the existence of directives depends on the existence of the relevant speech acts. Sometimes he even seems to identify obligations with obligation claims: 'All obligation claims are subclasses of general directives with morally binding force, and so are an integral part of a morality, even though some, e.g., promissory or legal obligations, assign tasks which, but for being *thus* assigned, would not be moral tasks' (226). Baier asserts a similar connexion between obligations and speech acts, in *RMO* 315: 'What is peculiar to them [sc. obligations] is that the institutions that generate them have only one role, that the content of the duties generated in this way is determined by the words used by the role player . . . and that the aim of the institution is the generation of such tailor-made duties . . . In promising one obligates oneself, in legislating one obligates others. The most important thing that distinguishes an obligation from other kinds of assumed duty is that it is generated by one's saying something.' In *TJ* 113/97 Rawls accepts a narrow concept of obligation: 'There are several characteristic features of obligations which distinguish them from other moral requirements. For one thing, they arise as a result of our voluntary acts; these acts may be the giving of express or tacit undertakings, such as promises and agreements, but they need not be, as in the case of accepting benefits. Further, the content of obligations is always defined by an institution or practice the rules of which specify what it is that one is required to do. And finally, obligations are normally owed to definite individuals, namely those who are cooperating together to maintain the arrangement in question.' Rawls contrasts duties: 'Now in contrast with obligations, it is characteristic of natural duties that they apply to us without regard to our voluntary acts. Moreover, they have no necessary connexion with institutions or social practices; their content is not, in general, defined by the rules of these arrangements' (114/98). Hence he recognizes natural duties that do not depend on any institutional background. These differentiating features of obligations do not all fit Suarez's concept of obligation. The clearest point of connexion appears in Rawls's reference to an institutional context as the source of the requirement. This is what Suarez has in mind when he takes obligations to presuppose an act of imposition. (He recognizes something like Rawls's division, as a division within obligations, as he understands them, at *Leg*. ii 14.7, 20, 25.) Rawls refers to Hart, 'Legal'; Whiteley, 'Duties'; and Brandt, 'Obligation'. Brandt offers some parallel with Suarez's narrow concept of obligation, by stressing the connexion of paradigmatic uses of 'obligation' with voluntary undertakings and impositions.

[55] See Adams, *FIG* 231–2.

[56] I say 'practical use' to exclude cases such as 'The bread ought to be baked by now', where no obligation is involved.

that inclines the obliged agent to action. If we also accept a purely deontic analysis of obligation, we will take all true moral judgments to imply a motive.

In calling these analyses of the concept of obligation, we distinguish them from claims about the content of obligations. We should especially keep this distinction in mind in considering restrictive analyses of obligation. If one accepts a purely deontic analysis of obligation, and then claims that all obligations are imposed, one makes the restrictive claim that all genuine moral oughts and reasons are imposed. But one is not committed to this restrictive claim if one accepts the impositive analysis of obligation; acceptance of that analysis allows moral oughts and reasons that are not obligations, and are therefore not imposed.

These remarks may help us to be cautious in approaching Suarez's claims. If he offers an impositive analysis of obligation, and claims that obligation, so understood, requires divine commands, he is making a restricted claim about one area of morality; he does not imply that morality in general requires divine commands. But if he accepts a purely deontic analysis of obligation and holds that obligation, so understood, requires divine commands, he holds a broader thesis about the relation of morality to divine commands.[57]

432. Why Obligation Requires Laws and Commands

Suarez clarifies his views on obligation in dissenting from the naturalist claim that obligation follows from the presence of a specific principle in the divine intellect. Naturalists argue that the obligation and prohibition inherent in the natural law consist in the fact that the principles present in God's intellect as creator have been communicated to us as creatures.[58] Suarez argues that the appeal to the divine intellect makes the alleged obligation consist simply in the intrinsic goodness and badness of the actions.[59] A reference to God introduces no more obligation than we find in intrinsic goodness itself; that is to say, intrinsic goodness plus the divine intellect as its source constitutes no obligation whatever. By referring to God's intellect, we assure ourselves that an action really has intrinsic goodness, but we learn nothing more about any obligation. God's intellect recognizes goodness that does not depend on its being recognized, and therefore the goodness itself has to be the source of the obligation.[60]

[57] For convenience, I represent 'obligare' by 'oblige' and 'obligatio' by 'obligation', without assuming that these provide the best translation into philosophical English of the Latin terms. What Suarez says about obligations may or may not constitute his account of obligation, in any more idiomatic sense.

[58] 'Some people reply that it suffices for natural law that there is some natural dictate of the divine intellect, by which it judges that these evils are to be avoided and these goods to be done. For about those things that in themselves and intrinsically are such, that prescription is not free but necessary. And from that dictate of divine and eternal law in such a subject matter there necessarily extends a certain participation in it to a rational creature, on the assumption that it has been created. And from this participation and derivation, without any other act of the divine will, there extends to a rational creature, as by a sort of natural consequence, a special obligation, because of which he is required to follow correct reason as indicating the eternal rule that is in God. And thus, whatever may be the case about the free act of the divine will, this obligation and prohibition follow altogether necessarily from divine reason.' (*Leg.* ii 6.22)

[59] 'Further, because that <alleged> obligation does not go beyond the force of an object that is good or bad in itself, from which the action has its being good or bad in itself; the judgment of reason has only the character of applying or showing that sort of object.' (ii 6.22) By 'that obligation' (illa obligatio) Suarez must mean 'that obligation alleged by my opponents', which he does not take (in the light of his previous remarks) to be a genuine obligation.

[60] 'Finally, rational nature showing good and bad obliges neither further nor more strongly from the fact that it is a participation in divine reason than it would oblige considered in its own right and if it were from itself.' (ii 6.22)

Suarez believes that these appeals to intrinsic goodness and badness overlook the distinctive features of obligation. Obliging implies a deliberate attempt by the imposer to move the will of the subject who is obliged.[61] If this attempt succeeds, you have obliged me to act, and thereby you have 'conferred' or 'introduced' a new moral necessity that did not already exist before the act of obliging.[62] Hence 'oblige' does not refer to the fact that it is morally necessary for me to act in a specific way, but to the source of this necessity.[63]

The difference between created and antecedent moral necessity marks the difference between the roles of will and of intellect in law. Intellect recognizes an antecedent requirement that does not depend on intellect. But will is needed for the intention to bind someone else by imposing a moral requirement. Since obligation involves this prospective element, it involves will.[64]

The connexion between law, obligation, and intention to bind is so close, according to Suarez, that law is fundamentally a 'mental law'.[65] The written law simply presents and declares this mental law to the subject, in order to make the legislator's act of will effective. But the act of will that the published law declares is not a mental law unless it is an act of obliging, which is an act of will that creates a moral necessity. Every obligation, properly so called, arises from law.[66] The existence of a moral necessity does not always require a law, but obliging—the imposing of a moral necessity—requires a law.[67]

Given this account of obligation, Suarez denies that God is obliged by the intrinsic goodness of (e.g.) keeping a promise.[68] If God is to be obliged, someone must impose the obligation

[61] 'But this answer cannot be understood, because the dictate of intellect without will cannot by itself have the character of a precept in relation to another, nor can it bring about in the other a special obligation, because obligation is a certain kind of moral moving <of someone> towards acting. Now, moving another to operation is a work of will.' (ii 6.22)

[62] '<We must prove> that some conditions necessary for law are found in an act of will and not properly in an act of intellect. The first condition is initiating motion (movere) and applying a subject to carrying out an action (always including omission under action). For the principle initiating motion and applying something to carrying out an action is will; for intellect rather initiates motion to the extent of specifying <an action>, and therefore is said to direct rather than to initiate motion. The second condition is having the force (vis) of obliging, a force which properly is in will and not in intellect. For intellect is only capable of showing the necessity that is in the object itself, and which the intellect itself could not assign (tribuere) to the object if it were not in it. Will, however, confers necessity that was not in the object, and brings it about that, for instance, in the area of justice, that a thing should have this much or that much value, and in the area of the other virtues brings it about that here and now it is necessary to act, which otherwise would not be necessary in its own right.' (i 5.15)

[63] 'For that will that the superior has of obliging a subject to such an action, or (which amounts to the same thing) of constituting such matter within the necessary limits of virtue, is best called by the name of law . . . Nothing antecedent to this will can have the force of law, since it cannot introduce (inducere) necessity.' (i 5.16)

[64] 'For if one attends to the power of initiating motion that is in law, and thereby one calls law that which is in the ruler which initiates motion, in that way law is an act of will. If, however, one looks at and considers the power in law of directing to what is good and necessary, in that way it belongs to intellect.' (i 5.21)

[65] 'The mental law, so to speak, is an act of a just and correct will in the legislator himself, an act by which the superior wills to oblige to the doing of this or that.' (i 5.24)

[66] i 14.12; 'If obligation is properly and proportionately understood, it always arises from some right (ius) and law (lex), and so in this sense this can be called the adequate effect of law.' We must distinguish the 'foundation' or 'proximate material' of an obligation from the obligation itself. If, for instance, we make a vow, the foundation is a voluntary promise; 'but in so far as it properly obliges us to its fulfillment, it is natural and divine law. . . . And that is also why the jurists say that all obligation that arises from contracts is natural or civil, because it arises from the law of nature or nations or from civil law.' (i 14.13)

[67] On the connexion between obligation and imposition see i 18.1; 'But obligation essentially refers to someone on whom it is imposed.'

[68] ii 2.6; 'And so if a promise is added beyond a general law, God will now be obliged to keep that promise, not by positive law, but by the natural correctness that arises in such an object from the force of a promise.' The sequel

on God. But God has no superior who is entitled to impose the obligation; hence no one can oblige God.[69] Since God acts simply on a judgment of reason, no obligation is involved. The dictates of the divine reason express what is morally right and wrong, and thereby dictate what is to be willed by God (dictant de volendis ab ipso Deo), but they lack the character of law (*Leg*. ii 3.5) because they reveal, but do not create, moral requirements. The eternal law is law because God imposes it on intellectual creatures (ii 3.8). Hence the eternal law, as law, must introduce an obligation.[70] God introduces an obligation because God has the supreme power to command (ii 4.2), and commands are the only possible source of obligations.

These claims about obligation and acts of binding help us to understand Suarez's account of obligation as a certain kind of 'moral moving'.[71] Some have understood 'moral moving' as 'moral motivation', and taken Suarez to mean that obligation consists in motivation, so that being obliged (i.e., being under an obligation) is being moved (being motivated) to act in the appropriate way. Since (we might suppose) we morally ought to do x if and only if we are obliged to do x, and the appropriate sort of motivation must come from a command, all genuine moral oughts must come from commands.[72]

This interpretation, however, does not fit Suarez. In this context he discusses the active sense of 'obligation', in which someone obliges someone else; as he says, moving someone else to action is a property of the will. His claim does not mean 'Obligation is a certain moral movement[73] towards acting'. The right rendering is 'Obliging is a certain moral moving of someone <else> to act'.[74] Suarez is concerned with the act of obliging, or putting someone under an obligation, not with the state in which someone is under an obligation.[75] The act of obliging, he claims, must involve a will. He does not suggest that you have obliged me only if you have produced a certain motive in me.

shows that Suarez rejects this consequence; though God ought (debet) to do what is naturally correct, God is not obliged to do it.

[69] 'The judgment of reason is necessary in God only from the fact that nothing can be willed except what is foreknown. However, this judgment has not got the function as of obliging or determining the will. Rather the will is in itself correct and right (honesta), and thereby the dictate of reason, the dictate that is understood to be logically (ratione) prior in intellect, cannot have the proper character of law in respect of the divine will. You will say: Granted that it cannot be said to be a compelling (cogens) law, it can be called a law that directs and that shows the appropriateness (convenientiam) or rightness (honestatem) of the object. I answer: This is not enough for a moral law, as is clear from what has been said, and as will be made clearer in what follows on the natural law; but, as is agreed, a metaphorical way of speaking is not to be admitted, unless it is commonly used.' (ii 2.8)

[70] Lex autem divina, ut lex, habet potius rationem moventis et imprimentis inclinationem vel obligationem ad opus . . . (ii 3.10).

[71] ii 6.22, quoted in §432.

[72] This is Finnis's interpretation, *NLNR* 47: 'Aquinas would deplore the confusion (shared by Hume and Suarez!) of obligation with impulse or influence . . .'. In support of this claim about Suarez Finnis cites ii 6.22, translated 'obligation is a certain moral impulse (motio) to action'. This interpretation is accepted and expanded by Moore, 'Good without God' 236–8. Finnis is right to suggest that, if his interpretation is correct, Suarez's account of obligation is similar to Hume's. It is also similar to Hobbes's account; see §485.

[73] Or 'moral impulse' (ET).

[74] For 'moraliter movere' cf. i 5.5, 'that judgment does not bring about a binding or a moral setting-in-motion, but that is necessary in a law'. See also i 4.8, 'obligatio est effectus moralis et voluntarius principis.' This should be rendered 'obliging is a moral and voluntary bringing-about by the prince'. 'Moral effect' (ET) is misleading. See also i 5.7: 'God by making a law does not impel physically to the act prescribed by law, but only lays down an obligation, which is something moral, and it cannot come about in that physical way . . .'. Cf. i 5.17: 'to oblige by a law is a moral bringing about (effectus), dependent on the freedom of the legislator'.

[75] 'Obligatio' is ambiguous between process and product. Cf. Aquinas' discussion of 'perfectum' in his account of God's perfection, *ST* 1a q4 a1 ad 1.

Suarez assumes this connexion between obligation and the act of binding or obliging whenever he explains the sense in which the eternal law includes obligation.[76] It obliges because it expresses a divine command through which God carries out the relevant sort of moral (as opposed to purely physical) moving. To know that the divine law obliges us we must know that God binds us through the expression of will in commanding obedience to it.[77] Since this act of binding is essential to obligation and to law, the natural law cannot be purely indicative.[78]

433. Obligations v. Duties

This survey of some of Suarez's claims about obligation should help us to decide what question he intends to answer with his account of obligation. Does he use 'obligation' with a broad sense, extending to all moral oughts, and claim that all these obligations require laws and commands? Or is he trying to analyse the concept of obligation as involving will and acts of binding, without claiming that all moral oughts involve these relations?

We have found good reasons for ascribing the second view to him. He never suggests that obligations are the only moral requirements. On the contrary, he takes it for granted that natural facts can provide an indicative law, because they constitute reasons for us to act one way or another. Obligations in his narrow sense are not the only relations that introduce moral requirements; they introduce a different sort of moral requirement from the sorts involved in other moral relations. Obligations introduce a reason for acting that results from imposition, understood to include an expression of the will of the imposer.

Suarez is right to suggest that someone's wanting me to act in a certain way may give me a reason for doing that action beyond the reasons I would have anyhow. If, for instance, I set out to buy you food for a week, I will probably think I should buy you bread and milk among other things and my shopping list will probably not be confined to junk food. If you

[76] 'About the eternal law, therefore, . . . we say that it has a power of obliging of itself, if it is sufficiently promulgated and applied. The proof is this: because otherwise it would not be a true and proper law, since it belongs to the character of law to oblige. . . . Further, because God has the supreme power of commanding (imperare), and therefore of obliging, since the precept of a superior brings in obligation. Now through his eternal law he commands . . . Therefore through this same law he obliges.' (ii 4.2)

[77] 'In the divine law, the obligation is immediately from God himself; for, in so far as it is in a human being it does not oblige except in so far as it indicates the divine reason or will.' (ii 4.8)

[78] 'Finally, a judgment indicating the nature of an action is not an action of a superior, but it can be in an equal or an inferior, who has no power of obliging. Therefore it cannot have the character of a law or a prohibition. If it could, then a teacher showing what is bad or good would impose a law; but we cannot say that. A law, therefore, is that command (imperium) that can bring about an obligation. That judgment, however, <that we just mentioned> does not bring about an obligation, but shows the obligation that must be supposed. (Iudicium autem illud non inducit obligationem, sed ostendit illam quae supponi debet.) That judgment, therefore, in order to have the character of law, needs to indicate some command from which such an obligation flows.' (ii 6.6) It is not completely clear what Suarez means in 'That judgment, however . . .'. 'That judgment' seems to refer back to the judgment indicating the goodness or badness of an action. In what sense does it 'reveal the obligation (illam) that must be supposed'? Suarez would be destroying his argument if he said that the judgment of goodness or badness in its own right revealed an obligation. Probably, then, he means that it reveals an obligation that must be supposed, if we already believe that God commands what is good and prohibits what is evil. In this case the obligation must be 'supposed', and is not stated explicitly. The next sentence ('Therefore that judgment . . .') says what is needed for an explicit statement of an obligation.

have particularly asked for bread and milk, your request is in one way superfluous, since I would have bought it for you anyhow. But it is not altogether superfluous, since it will make me especially careful to make sure I get you bread and milk; it warns me that, even if I had not already included these items on the shopping list, I should include them because you have asked me.

This example does not capture obligation, as Suarez conceives it, which includes necessity. To impose an obligation, the imposer must be in a position to make it true, by the expression of the will for me to act in a certain way, that I have no rational alternative to acting in that way. I oblige myself when I make a promise or some other commitment to another person that expresses my own will to act in a certain way. When another person is in the appropriate position, the expression of her will imposes a necessity on me. This may be true, even if I intend to do the same action anyhow on prudential or moral grounds. The imposition of an obligation makes me aware of reasons that ought to move me even if I were unmoved by the prudential or moral grounds independent of obligation.

Suarez, therefore, does not imply that without an imposed obligation we have no sufficient moral reason for observing the principles of the natural law. God's imposition gives us a further reason, but not the only reason, for observing these principles. This further reason essentially depends on God's expressing the will for us to observe these principles, not on our recognizing that God believes we ought to observe them. Hence natural law requires more than God's intellectual affirmation of the principles of natural law. If Suarez means that we have a distinctive reason to keep the natural law, in addition to other reasons we have, his insistence on the obligatory character of the law, and on the connexion of obligation with God's will, is intelligible.

434. Obligation, Law, and Natural Law

Suarez's introduction of an impositive concept of obligation clarifies some issues about natural law. If we confine 'obligation' to this impositive sense, the element of obligation in the natural law adds moral significance to the moral force that would exist without obligation. God's command, as an expression of God's will communicated to us, introduces a reason for following the principles of natural law that we would not otherwise have.

These observations about obligation justify some of Suarez's objections to some naturalist views. For he is right to suggest that naturalists have not clearly recognized how a divine command affects the moral status of the natural law. His opponents do not make it clear that the natural law includes a divine command, and that this fact alters its moral character. Obligation is morally distinctive because it creates a moral necessity through an act of will, and in particular through an act of the will of a superior. If I recognize an obligation, I recognize that a superior has communicated the will that I do x, and that this expression of the will of the superior leaves me with no rational alternative to doing x. In Suarez's view, this expression of the will of the superior is a command of the superior.

This expression of will differs from a request in its imposition of necessity. If I simply ask you to have dinner with me, I do not claim that my expressing my wish that you have

dinner with me should be rationally decisive for you. I might make this simple request even if I am your superior and entitled to give you orders. But in giving a command I imply that the expression of my will is morally decisive for you. If I am not entitled to command you, my issuing a command is inappropriate, since I have no right to expect you to treat the expression of my will as morally decisive for you.[79]

According to Suarez, 'obliging' is the name for the act of introducing a moral necessity by expressing one's will. The only agent who can introduce such a necessity is an agent who is entitled to introduce it, because he has the appropriate authority. Such an agent introduces the necessity by issuing a command. That is why obligation requires a command by a legitimate authority.

He is right, therefore, to claim that divine commands introduce a distinct type of moral necessity. In recognizing imposed necessity, we recognize that God's having communicated his will to us makes what he commands morally necessary, whether or not it was already morally necessary. Suarez believes that if an action is intrinsically wrong, it is morally necessary to avoid it. But this is not the same moral necessity that God attaches to avoiding the action by forbidding us to do it.

But if we agree with Suarez so far, we still face a difficulty in understanding natural law as divine prescriptive law. For we need to be able to understand this conception of natural law without appealing to specific times when God issued instructions, as he did to Moses. The natural law was divine prescriptive law before the Decalogue was revealed to Moses, and revelation is not necessary for us to be obliged. We must, therefore, be able to infer from natural facts not only the existence of natural rightness and wrongness and the existence of God, but also the fact that God commands us to do what is naturally right, and therefore imposes a natural law on us.

It is rather difficult to understand this claim if we stick to a conception of a command as some act of communication that manifests the will of the commander. Perhaps I am a pilot in a dangerous situation, and my commanding officer knows I am in this situation (he is watching my aircraft on the radar), but I am not in direct communication with him. I might well be able to infer that he would order me to act in a particular way, and I might act this way partly because this is what he would order me to do. Still, it is difficult to see how he could give me an order, or how I could act because I had been ordered to, if we were not in communication. This example seems to count against Suarez's claims.

This example may be unfair, however, because it concerns an order to do a particular action about which we do not communicate. An example that helps Suarez more might be derived from claims about what the law requires without explicit commands. According to one view of the US Constitution, the Constitution requires judges to decide legal cases by reference to the correct principles of political morality, in accordance with principles laid down or implied in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.[80] Judges might, therefore,

[79] If we distinguish requests from commands in this way, we can see that the difference between them is not grammatical. If I see something interesting out of the window, and I say 'Come and look at this', I do not suggest that you are required to come and look; I am simply using the imperative to make a vigorous request. If, however, the sergeant tells the private, 'You will do fifty push-ups in the next ten minutes', she is neither predicting nor requesting, but—in most circumstances—giving an order, representing the action as introducing rational necessity.

[80] Dworkin has defended this view in many places, e.g., in 'Hard cases' 86–8.

reasonably claim to be obeying the law, and not simply doing what they think right, when they take account of these moral principles in deciding particular cases on which they have no explicit legislative guidance. Perhaps Suarez can argue that, similarly, we obey God's presumed law, and we act because it is God's presumed law, if we follow the requirements of natural law, on the assumption that God commands their observance.

If this is a reasonable defence of Suarez's claims about natural law and divine commands, he is right to insist that laws and commands introduce a morally distinctive requirement, and demand a morally distinctive response. Acting in response to the command of a legitimate authority is a different action, resting on a different reason, from doing what one regards as right because it is right. The first reason is neither a substitute for the second nor reducible to the second. This is the main point that Suarez clarifies through his doctrine of obligation.

The moral distinctiveness of obligations exposes a flaw in some naturalist accounts of the natural law. If we agree, as naturalists agree, that God commands observance of the natural law, we ought not to regard these commands as simply further evidence of the intrinsic rightness or wrongness of an action. If I know that God believes murder is wrong, I have a further reason to believe that murder is wrong. But the moral basis for avoiding murder is just the same; it consists in the intrinsic wrongness of murder. If we treat divine commands as further evidence of intrinsic wrongness, we miss the fact that they give us a new moral reason, not just further evidence to support the old reason.

Suarez might reasonably point out that the distinctive element of imposed moral requirements is left out of naturalist accounts of natural law in Vasquez and Aquinas. Even if they agree that God commands observance of the natural law, they do not explain how divine commands create a moral necessity rather than simply revealing one. Suarez has good reason, therefore, for claiming that his predecessors have not recognized the significance of the fact that natural law is prescriptive and not simply indicative. His analysis of the narrow concept of obligation makes clear the essential elements of imposed moral necessity.

But if we agree with Suarez on this point, how should we modify a naturalist position? We ought to agree that the natural law includes imposed necessity and obligation because it includes divine commands. We ought further to agree that without divine commands it would include no obligation. But ought we to agree that the natural law essentially includes obligations and commands? In support of his view, Suarez appeals to the general agreement that natural law is genuine law; since genuine law imposes an obligation, natural law must impose one too. But this point does not show that natural law is essentially true law; even if it is necessarily true law, we may argue that it would still be natural law even if God did not command it.

This reply to Suarez suggests a defence of the naturalist position. When Vasquez claims that natural law essentially imposes obligations, he does not use 'obligation' in the narrow impositive sense, but in the purely deontic sense. Since he recognizes narrower and wider senses of 'law', he also uses 'obligation' in a wide sense to match the wide sense of law. Suarez's claims about obligation do not refute Vasquez's claims about obligation, once we distinguish the different concepts of obligation.

A defence of these aspects of Vasquez's position allows us to incorporate Suarez's main conclusions about law and obligation. Whether or not we believe that what would be left

without divine commands would properly be called natural law is less important than what we believe about the significance of divine commands. Suarez improves on the naturalist analysis by insisting that insofar as natural law is true law, it involves a new moral relation beyond those involved in intrinsic rightness; it involves the imposed moral necessity that distinguishes prescriptive from purely indicative law.

435. Voluntarism

Suarez, therefore, appears to maintain the naturalist position about intrinsic morality and to criticize the naturalistic analysis of natural law. To see whether this appearance is correct, we may turn to his account of voluntarism. If we are right about his view of naturalism, we ought to find that he disagrees with voluntarism about morality.

He takes the voluntarist to claim not only that the natural law depends on the divine will, but also that the whole natural law consists in divine commands.[81] If that is all there is to natural law, intrinsic rightness is unnecessary. One might ask, then, how the natural law differs from a divine positive law. Suarez answers on behalf of the voluntarist that a divine command constitutes natural law if and only if what it commands is proportionate to the natures of things. If God were to issue commands that are not proportionate to the natures of things, these would not constitute natural law.

How can a voluntarist recognize actions that are proportionate to the nature of things? Is that feature of actions independent of divine commands? If it is, voluntarists deny that being proportionate to nature is sufficient for being intrinsically right. In that case it is possible for God to command actions disproportionate to the natures of things, so that there would be no natural law, and what is right would not accord with the natures of things. Alternatively, the voluntarist might claim that the divine will and command determine what is proportionate to the nature of things.[82]

The voluntarist position that Suarez discusses defends the more extreme view that the divine will determines what actions are proportionate to nature.[83] He takes Anselm to support this position in claiming that all and only what God wills is just.[84] Since at least part of the goodness of a good action consists in its being proportionate to nature, and since all its goodness depends (according to the voluntarist) on God's will and command, proportion to nature must also depend on divine commands.

[81] 'The second opinion, the extreme contrary to the first, is that the natural law is placed entirely in a divine command (imperium) or prohibition proceeding from the will of God as author and governor of nature, and consequently this law, as it is in God, is nothing other than the eternal law, as prescribing and forbidding in this sort of area (materia). In us, however (according to this opinion), the natural law is a judgment of reason, to the extent that it signifies to us the will of God about things to be done and avoided as concerns those things that are in accord with natural reason.' (ii 6.4)

[82] See Ockham, §395.

[83] 'They also add that the whole character of good and evil in things to do with the natural law is placed in the will of God, and not in the judgment of reason, even of the reason of God himself, nor in the things themselves that are forbidden or prescribed through such a law. The basis of this opinion seems to be that actions are not good or bad except because they are prescribed or forbidden by God, because God himself does not will to prescribe or forbid this to a creature precisely because it is bad or good, but, on the contrary, this is just or unjust precisely because God willed it to be done or not done.' (ii 6.4)

[84] For Scotus' use of Anselm's remark see §381. As Idziak (123) notices, the list of authorities that Suarez cites in ii 6.4 agrees with Andreas, *1Sent* d48 q1 a2 concl.2 (p. 28).

The same conclusion follows from the view that the natural law is entirely (omnino) placed in the divine command or prohibition. It is assumed that what God commands as part of the natural law is good, and what he prohibits is bad. If, then, God were to command what is antecedently and intrinsically good, the natural law would not be entirely placed in divine commands and prohibitions.[85] Our access to the natural law through our natural reason is a sign of the fact that God's will requires us to do what fits natural reason. The naturalness of the natural law also depends on God's command.[86]

This position is the extreme contrary to the naturalist thesis ascribed to Gregory of Rimini, because the naturalist thesis makes intrinsic rightness necessary and sufficient, and divine commands unnecessary and insufficient, for the existence of natural law. The voluntarist thesis denies intrinsic rightness, and makes divine commands necessary and sufficient, for the existence of natural law.

This voluntarist position discussed by Suarez is more extreme than the one we find in Scotus. For Scotus takes the principles of the natural law, strictly so called, to state what is right independently of any command of God. That is why God cannot dispense from them; the dispensable principles belong to the natural law only in a broader sense. Ockham comes closer to the position described by Suarez; for he takes God's command and prohibition to be the necessary basis of moral right and wrong. Ockham's belief in non-positive morality that can be grasped by natural reason fits the voluntarist position described by Suarez; for this position allows that 'in us the natural law is a judgment of reason'. Suarez notices that

[85] The position that Suarez describes matches the one defended by Andreas de Novo Castro. He is most probably to be identified (according to Idziak's edition) with Andrew of Neufchateau (André de Neufchâteau, second half of 13th century). As Suarez's source Perena cites Andreas, *1Sent* d48 q1 a1 concl.4, obj. 3 (Idziak, pp. 16, 21). Andreas discusses the question 'whether every good other than God is contingently good, from the free ordering of the divine will' (p. 3). As an objection he cites Augustine, *Lib. Arb.* i 4 (aliquod est malum non quia prohibetur, sed ideo prohibetur quia est malum). He returns to this at q2 concl.1 obj1 (p.76), where he also cites Aug. *Quaest. in Hept.* iii q68, lb. 19.11. He answers in ad 1 (p. 82) that Augustine simply means that the wrongness of adultery and lying precedes any written prohibition, not that it does not consist in being prohibited by God. His reply to the main question is affirmative. He supports the claim for moral good (concl.1, p. 10): 'because it is good in this way because it conforms to prudence and correct moral reason in accord with natural right (ius), but such reason is correct because the divine intellect and will so prescribes and directs and approves'. Here he follows Ockham's view about the divine will as the basis of correct reason. He considers the objection (obj3, p. 16) that 'it follows that from the standpoint of natural light all actions of a rational creature are indifferent and no act would be good or bad in itself from the nature of the thing'. Andreas replies (ad3, p. 20) that it does not follow 'because God instituted natural right and fixed (certas) laws in accord with which many acts are unqualifiedly good according to rule (regulariter), and some are good in their kind; but if one refers to the unqualified power of God, the conclusion is admitted'.

[86] 'In this way it is taken from Ockham . . . to the extent that he says that no action is bad, except to the extent that it is prohibited by God, and <no action is bad> that could not become good, if it were prescribed (praeceptum) by God, and conversely. . . . Hence he supposes that the whole natural law consists in divine precepts (praecepta) laid down by God, which God himself could remove and change. If someone were to object that such a law is not natural but positive, he would reply that it is called natural because it is proportionate to the natures of things, not because it is not laid down by God from outside. Gerson tends towards this opinion . . . This opinion is defended in a broad form (late) by Petrus Alliacus. . . . The same <is defended> most broadly (latissime) by Andreas de Novo Castro.' (ii 6.4) ET translates both 'late' and 'latissime' by 'at length' without distinction. Perena uses 'largamente' and 'extensismamente'. Perhaps 'most broadly', i.e., 'with fewest restrictions', might be the right rendering. 'Taken (sumitur) from Ockham' and 'to the extent that' (quatenus) may indicate that Suarez is not sure how far Ockham goes in endorsing this position. In 'he would reply', he is not reporting Ockham, but saying what he might say in response to the objection. The passage that Suarez cites and paraphrases in support of his claim about Ockham is *2Sent*. q15 ad3, ad4 = *OT* v 352–3, quoted in §398n67. (This is numbered as q19 in the older edition of Ockham.) The fairness of his judgment is discussed by Kilcullen, 'Natural law' 24. On Cudworth's use of this passage in Suarez see §546.

Ockham takes the requirements of right reason to hold only subject to the present order being maintained by God's ordered power.[87]

Since Suarez rejects this voluntarist position, he accepts some elements of naturalism. But which elements? Since the voluntarism he describes is an extreme position, he might reject it by accepting a naturalist view of proportion to nature, and hence of natural goodness and badness, or he might go further and accept a naturalist account of intrinsic rightness and wrongness. How far, then, does he go towards naturalism?

[87] See §395.

31

SUAREZ: NATURALISM

436. The Natural Basis of Natural Law

So far we have not found that Suarez takes every moral ought to require an obligation imposed by the command of a superior. He maintains only that the impositive obligation belonging to the natural law is derived from a divine command. To discover other aspects of his view about the relation between obligation and moral oughts, we need to see what is left of the natural law without the impositive obligation coming from a divine command. His claims about obligation constitute an analysis of a narrow concept of obligation, and do not imply that all moral requirements involve an imposed necessity. In that case, he ought to recognize moral necessity and moral requirements that are independent of obligation (in his sense).

If we abstract from any divine command, what is left cannot meet Suarez's conditions for natural law, since he believes that natural law, as such, includes an obligation derived from a divine command. But we can still consider the actual principles of natural law, if these are understood as the actual principles that constitute natural law when God commands the observance of them. To clarify Suarez's attitude to the voluntarist conception of natural law, we may ask what our moral position would be if we had been created as we are with the nature we have, but God had given us no commands.

According to one voluntarist view, nothing would be morally right or wrong in these circumstances; our natural knowledge of the natural law is simply knowledge of the divine commands. On this view, natural law is natural in the epistemic sense, but not in the metaphysical sense.[1] God was free to make us with the nature we have, but to command something different, and to give us natural knowledge of it; if God had done that, the principles of natural law would have been different, and the morally right and wrong would thereby have been different, even though our nature would have been the same.

A voluntarist view may acknowledge that goods are intrinsic, fixed by the nature of human beings, but deny that the intrinsic character of goods implies a similar fixity in the morally right. Rightness, according to this view, goes beyond natural goodness because it requires a divine command. Good and bad, we might say, can be derived from the

[1] This is Ockham's view. See §395. On Aquinas see §308.

requirements of nature, but moral rightness and wrongness must come from a law.[2] If Suarez means this, his claim about the connexion between obligation and law commits him to a controversial, but defensible, position, that morality, rightness, obligation, and law all go together.

We should ask, therefore, what other properties Suarez takes to be connected with natural goodness. It is useful to consider his use of 'right' (honestum), 'wrong' (turpe), 'ought' (debere, debitum),[3] 'required' (teneri ad) and 'sin' (peccatum). If he attaches all these predicates to naturally good and bad actions in their own right, he believes that actions have moral properties apart from divine commands.

437. The Foundation of Obligation

Suarez's description of the natural facts that underlie natural law answers some of our questions. He believes that he follows Aquinas in claiming that divine commands introduce an obligation added to natural rightness and wrongness.[4] Natural law, as divine command, adds 'its own moral obligation'.[5] But it does not add a second obligation to a previous obligation;[6] such a claim would violate Suarez's careful impositive analysis of obligation. Nor does it add morality to a non-moral basis. In Suarez's view, natural law adds moral obligation to the moral rightness and wrongness that exists apart from divine commands. When he calls this rightness and wrongness natural, he does not mean that it is not moral, but that it is based in nature, and not on any human action.[7]

Suarez clarifies this point later, in asking what a divine command adds to the natural properties of actions. A naturalist might claim that obligation is not created by the natural law, but presupposed by it.[8] Suarez rejects this claim, which conflicts with his analysis of obligation; in his view, we are not obliged to do good and avoid evil before any command and prohibition. But he recognizes a moral requirement before any command and prohibition; for natural goodness and badness tell us what we ought (debere) to do. Divine commands, introducing genuine law, oblige us to do something that we already ought to do.[9] Natural

[2] This is the view that *DTC* declares to be an element of truth in voluntarism; see §603.

[3] On precept and debitum see Aquinas, *ST* 1–2 q100; *Quodl.* v 19. Cf. §303.

[4] He relies (cf. *Leg.* ii 5.2) on Aquinas, *ST* 1–2 q100 a8, and (cf. ii 6.5) 1–2 q71 a6; q100 a8 ad2.

[5] 'Therefore it is necessary that it add some obligation of avoiding the evil that is evil from itself and by its own nature. Further, there is no contradiction if a thing that is right from itself has added to it an obligation to do it, or if a thing that is wrong from itself has added an obligation to avoid it. . . . Therefore also the natural law, inasmuch as it is genuine divine law, can add its own moral obligation arising from a precept, beyond the natural (if I may put it so) badness or rightness that the matter on which this precept falls has from itself.' (ii 6.12)

[6] Williams's rendering 'some sort of additional obligation' is therefore misleading.

[7] On this sense of 'natural' see ii 9.4, quoted below.

[8] '. . . This law forbids something because it is bad. Therefore before that law there is an obligation of avoiding this sort of bad thing. And the same is true, proportionately, about a command (imperium) and precept to do a good thing because it is good' (ii 9.4).

[9] 'For if this law forbids something because it is bad, it brings about its own special necessity of avoiding it, because this is intrinsic to forbidding. At the same time, however, it proves that this law assumes something, which belongs to the intrinsic duty of nature, because everything in a particular way has a duty to itself to do nothing that conflicts with its own nature. But beyond this duty the law adds a special moral obligation, and we say that this obligation is the effect of this law. The jurists customarily call this a natural obligation, not because it is not moral, but in order to distinguish it from a civil obligation.' (ii 9.4) On natural v. civil obligation, cf. i 14.9.

law, therefore, requires both a divine command and prior intrinsic rightness.[10] The moral judgment and the recognition of moral duty (debitum) are prior to any act of will, by the lawgiver or by the subject.[11]

In all this discussion Suarez distinguishes 'ought' (debere) and 'duty' (debitum) from 'obligation' (obligatio).[12] A class of actions that we ought to do, and that it would be right to do and wrong to avoid, is already fixed by nature; the divine command adds an obligation to do the things we already ought to do. Suarez's use of 'debere' follows Aquinas.[13] We noticed earlier that Aquinas sometimes uses 'oblige' rather narrowly, and seems to have in mind a specific action of laying someone under an obligation. Suarez follows him in this narrow use of 'obligation', and in the broad use of 'duty'.

The obligation imposed by a divine command is binding on our conscience. If we abstract from divine command, the principles of natural law do not give rise to an obligation binding on conscience. But even without divine commands, the inherent rightness or wrongness of certain actions implies that we are required (teneri) in conscience to do or avoid them.[14] Suarez's denial of obligation apart from command and law does not lead him to withhold deontic predicates from naturally good and bad actions.[15]

[10] 'Although that obligation which natural law adds, in so far as it is properly prescriptive, is from the divine will, still that will presupposes a judgment about the badness of, for instance, lying, and similar judgments. Still, because from the force of the judgment alone no proper prohibition and no obligation of a precept is introduced, since this cannot be understood without will, for that reason there is added a will to prohibit that action because it is bad.' (ii 6.13) I take 'properly prescriptive' (proprie praeceptiva) to modify 'lex naturalis' (so also Perena). ET renders 'properly preceptive obligation'.

[11] Suarez explains the difference between natural law and other laws: 'Further, this law prescribes what is suitable to rational nature, as rational, and forbids the contrary. But that [sc. what is suitable to rational nature] is precisely the right, as is agreed. Moreover, the natural law differs from other laws on just this point, that the others make something bad because they prohibit it, and make something necessary or right because they prescribe it. But the natural law presupposes in the act or object a rightness that it prescribes or a wrongness that it prohibits; and that is why it is usually said that through this law something is prohibited because it is bad or prescribed because it is good.' (ii 7.1)

[12] ET uses 'obligation' for both 'debitum' and 'obligatio'. Perena uses 'deber' and 'obligacion' to mark the difference in the Latin.

[13] Finnis, *NLNR* 45–6, contrasts Suarez and Aquinas as follows: '. . . Suarez . . . maintained that obligation is essentially the effect of an act of will by a superior, directed to moving the will of an inferior . . . Aquinas, on the other hand, treats obligation as the rational necessity of some means to (or way of realizing) an end or objective (i.e. a good) of a particular sort'. The evidence cited from Suarez deals with his use of 'obligatio'. Hence evidence of a difference between Suarez and Aquinas ought to deal with Aquinas' use of 'obligatio'. However, most of the passages cited by Finnis (46n) do not include 'obligatio' or 'obligare'. Most of them simply deal with the relation of means to the ultimate end. Some of them (*ST* 1–2 q99 a1; 2–2 q44 a1) include 'debitum'. One passage (1–2 q99 a1) says that since a precept of law imposes an obligation (sit obligatorium), it has the character of a debitum; but none of them suggests that Aquinas takes a debitum to imply an obligatio. Later (341n) Finnis contrasts Aquinas with Suarez by saying that 'for Aquinas, obligation is simply a rational necessity of certain sorts of means to certain sorts of ends'. He cites 1–2 q99 a1 and 2–2 q58 a3 ad2. In the latter passage Aquinas says that necessity that is not coaction arises out of the obligatio of a precept or (sive) from the necessity of an end. He implies that an obligatio involves necessity, but does not imply that all teleological necessity, or every debitum, involves an obligatio. Finnis is right to maintain that these passages show something about Aquinas' views on obligation, as we might understand it. But if we want to know Suarez's views on obligation, as we might understand it, we should look at his views on debitum as well as his views on obligatio. If the question about obligation is given the same sense as applied to Suarez and as applied to Aquinas, it is much more difficult to see the difference suggested by Finnis.

[14] 'Hence, if we speak strictly about a natural obligation, it certainly cannot be separated from an obligation in conscience. For if it is <an obligation> to avoid something, it arises from the intrinsic wrongness of an action that is therefore to be avoided in conscience. But if it is to do something, it arises from the intrinsic connexion of such an action with the rightness of virtue, which we are also required in conscience to maintain in our actions. Hence in that case the omission of an action that is a duty is bad in itself.' (ii 9.6)

[15] Ward, *NG* 432–40, summarizes Suarez's position, and presents a generally sound interpretation of it, appropriately emphasizing Suarez's belief in intrinsic morality. He fails, however, to recognize Suarez's distinction between debitum

438. Moral Goodness

These remarks about obligation imply that Suarez rejects voluntarism not only because he recognizes natural goodness apart from the divine will, but also because he recognizes intrinsic morality. If we abstract divine commands from the natural law, what is left is morality (honestas), not just natural goodness. We should examine his conception of moral goodness more closely, to see how strongly he is committed to a naturalist account of honestas, and how far honestas corresponds to morality. In the *De Legibus* he relies on the account of goodness that he expounds more fully in *De Bonitate*[16] and in *Metaphysical Disputation* x.

Suarez places the good as right (bonum honestum) in the threefold division of good into pleasant, useful, and right. Both his account of good in general and his account of the specific good that he identifies with the right commit him to an objectivist and naturalist account; both goodness and rightness belong to the nature of things, and are not constituted by human choice, desire, or judgment. Suarez follows Aquinas' account of the moral good as the honestum; but his specific emphases make clearer the relation of his views on the right and good to issues about voluntarism.[17]

To emphasize this feature of the good, Suarez clarifies Aquinas' claims about the good and the desirable.[18] He follows Cajetan in arguing that goodness cannot be reduced to desirability.[19] This is a reasonable understanding of Aquinas, but the emphasis on the objective character of the good, and its distinctness from anything created or constituted by desire, intellect, will, or command, is characteristic of Suarez. Since many of Aquinas' successors claim that the morally good is the desirable, or what is prescribed by right reason, or what is commanded by God, Suarez tries to be more precise about these connexions between goodness and other properties. He insists that none of these other descriptions gives us the essence of the good or the morally good. He sets out on a meta-ethical inquiry that continues in (among others) Cudworth, Price, and Moore.[20]

Suarez discusses rightness in his exposition of the section of the *Summa* in which Aquinas describes the good to be found in human voluntary actions. Both Aquinas and Suarez take this good to be the moral good.[21] The good as right is to be distinguished from good as

and obligatio; Ward uses the terms without distinction, citing Frassen in his support (449–50). Ward claims that Frassen 'fully admits . . . that the natural law *supposes* an obligation which already exists'. But here Ward uses the words of an objection that Frassen answers. In his answer (*SA* Tract. 4 disp.2 a2 q2 concl.1 = vi 51) Frassen endorses Suarez's view that the natural law presupposes some 'intrinsecum debitum naturae' to which it adds a special obligation. He does not say that the natural law presupposes a prior obligation. In his description of Frassen's view Ward overlooks the difference between obligation and debitum. But he has a stronger basis for his claim about Frassen when he cites a second passage: 'God is not related to the natural law in the way in which a ruler (princeps) is related to positive law. For the ruler confers the entire strength and force (vim et virtutem) of obliging on a law by his will alone. God, however, supposes some obligation on the side of the things, which seems essential to the things themselves, because they are right (honestae) and good from the nature of the thing. For, as we said above, this is the difference between natural and positive law, that the natural law prescribes those things that are right and good in themselves, whereas the civil law only makes right the things that it prescribes, and makes bad the things it prohibits.' (*SA* Tract. 4 disp.2 a3 q1 concl.1 = vi 62. Ward quotes the third sentence of this passage, giving a wrong reference.) Here Frassen forgets or ignores Suarez's distinction between debitum and obligatio. On Ward see also §604.

[16] *De bonitate et malitia obiectiva humanorum actuum* = *OO* iv 288–305.

[17] Aquinas on the honestum; see §§333–4.

[18] Suarez refers to Aquinas *ST* 1a q5 a1; a3 ad1; a4 ad1; q16 a4 ad1, ad3; *SG* i 4 arg.3.

[19] See *DM* x 1.19 = *OO* xxv 334b = Suarez, *MGE*, ed. Gracia and Davis, 116.

[20] See §547.

[21] 'The moral good, therefore, is the same as the good as right more strictly taken as what is fitting through itself and agrees with a rational nature as such. . . . The natural good is said to be whatever agrees with a given nature, in

perfection that belongs to God in himself. Rightness implies a relation; the bonum honestum is not 'absolute' and 'transcendental', in a sense that would imply the sort of perfection that belongs to a subject in itself. Rightness is a relational good, and so it involves relation to rational nature as such (*Bon.* ii 2.8 294a).

Like the pleasant and the useful, the right involves some kind of fittingness (convenientia). But it cannot be simply the fittingness that belongs to these other goods. The goods that the Stoics call primary natural advantages (*ta prôta kata phusin*) and that Aristotle treats as external goods, are not honesta. Suarez supports his claim by referring to Cicero (in *De Finibus* iii–iv).[22] The right has a special relation to rational nature.[23]

Goodness as rightness belongs to the object of a human will. By belonging to the object it makes an action morally good. This is the kind of goodness that Aquinas had in mind in discussing the morally good.[24] Suarez says 'we call this goodness a right object'; he seems to acknowledge that Aquinas' treatment of moral goodness does not use the term 'right' (honestum), but he assumes, reasonably, that this is what Aquinas intends. He clarifies, but does not alter, Aquinas' doctrine by speaking explicitly of honestas. The relevant kind of goodness belonging to the object of will is the right (honestum), because it is neither the pleasant nor the useful. Since we can recognize that something is either pleasant or useful and still regard it as morally indifferent or morally bad, some further feature is needed to make it morally good.[25]

In distinguishing the moral good from the pleasant and the advantageous, Suarez agrees with Scotus. Scotus, however, infers that the moral good cannot consist in agreement with nature; he opposes the natural affection for advantage to the rational affection for the just. Suarez rejects this opposition, which he traces back to Anselm, between the natural and the right. He argues that fittingness to one's nature does not necessarily imply a reference to one's private advantage; it may realize or express one's nature in its own right apart from any further advantage to the subject. In this respect the Incarnation was fitting for God's nature, though it was not advantageous for God.[26]

accordance with what it naturally is or can naturally do. But the moral good is what agrees with a thing, in so far as it acts freely; for custom (mos), from which "moral" is said, consists in free action, as is agreed.' (*DM* x 2.30 = *OO* xxv 344b) Suarez cites the commentators on Aquinas, *ST* 1–2 q18, where Cajetan argues that, according to Aquinas, acts have moral goodness from their objects (Leonine edn. of *ST* vi 129).

[22] See esp. Cic. *F.* iii 24, quoted by Maxwell in a relevant context. See §536.

[23] 'Therefore they have them in them some character of goodness, which we properly call rightness, by the character of which such objects are judged through correct reason to be fitting to a human being, and correctly loveable because of themselves.' (*Bon.* ii 1.5 = 290a)

[24] 'In the objects of human actions that are morally good, some rightness is necessary that fits the object from <the object> itself and not through the action; and that goodness can correctly be called objective goodness.... [He cites Aquinas *ST* 1–2 q19 a1 ad3.] In this <Thomas> says openly that good is presupposed as object before an act of will, and in respect of a morally good action. That good in some way belongs to the genus of morality through direction towards reason. There is therefore in that <good> some goodness that correct reason knows, and this goodness we call a right object.' (*Bon.* ii 1.3 = 289a) At the end he cites Aquinas, 1–2 q20 a1 ad1; *Mal.* q2 a3c, ad8.

[25] 'This is proved by reason, because the object of will is good under the character of good; therefore that goodness that moves the will does not flow from the will, but is assumed in the objects. The same, therefore, is true correspondingly in all states or acts of the will, because all tend towards an adequate object of the power in a corresponding way. Therefore it is necessary to say the same about good and correct actions. Therefore they assume in their objects some goodness moving the will towards such actions and formally completing their tendency. Then further, that goodness of such an object does not constitute the useful or the pleasant good; therefore it is right. Therefore in itself it is a certain rightness, sufficient in its kind to give moral goodness to an action, and thereby it is correctly called objective moral goodness.' (ii 1.4 = 289b)

[26] 'For sometimes the fitting is understood as what is expedient for something in such a way that it provides the thing with some perfection and, one might say, usefulness, and this is the way it is used in the objections. In another way,

To identify the kind of fittingness that is moral goodness, we must insist that it is fitting to human nature as a whole as rational nature.[27] Other things that are fitting to human nature are fitting to part of our nature, and in that way are derived from fittingness to our whole nature.[28] Something may be in accord with some aspect of human nature without being unqualifiedly loveable in its own right. In this sense Suarez agrees with Cicero's division between the good of nature and the good as right; it may be morally wrong to love life or health or the other advantages of nature in some circumstances. The moral good that is grasped by correct reason must be appropriate for the nature of human beings as free and rational agents.[29]

Suarez has now affirmed that the intrinsic goodness and badness independent of divine commands is more than the goodness of advantage and pleasure. In appealing to our judgments about moral goodness in order to show that these other two forms of goodness are not moral goodness, Suarez appeals to something that we recognize as distinct from the agent's own advantage. In referring to Cicero's comments on life and health, he relies on moral judgments. Though some later natural-law moralists restrict intrinsic goodness to pleasure and advantage, Suarez does not.[30]

439. The Objectivity of Moral Goodness: An Argument for Naturalism

Suarez believes that the right, as he has described it, is necessarily connected to correct reason, but not relative to correct reason. Relativity to correct reason gives the wrong direction of causation. Correctness in moral judgments is parallel to correctness of judgment in general; it consists in some conformity to some feature of the object judged, rather than

however, something is said to be fitting that through itself is suitable in some way and in agreement with the thing's nature and tendency. In this way the Incarnation is said to be fitting for God and for his goodness . . . Hence there are many objects of this kind that either bring nothing expedient beyond the rightness itself of virtue or are not aimed at because of that <expedient result>.' (ii 2.13 = 295b)

[27] Passmore, *RC* 103 cites John of Salisbury, *Metalogicon* i 3 = 829d–830 Webb, satirizing the excessive appeals to convenientia among those who try to innovate without much understanding: 'They talked of nothing but "suitability" or "reason", and "argument" sounded in everyone's mouth. To mention an ass or a human being or any work of nature was as bad as a crime, or excessively inept or vulgar and foreign to a philosopher. It was thought impossible to say or do anything appropriately or according to the standard of reason unless a mention of the "appropriate" and "reason" were expressly inserted.'

[28] 'Everything that is loveable (amabile) as fitting in itself is derived from (reduci ad) the good as right; hence, granted that we concede that that fitting with nature objectively founds the goodness of an action, none the less that is truly called a kind of rightness.' (ii 1.5 = 290a)

[29] 'Therefore in the objects of human actions the advantage of nature alone is not enough for the rightness of the actions. Therefore there is in them some character of goodness, which we call rightness properly, by the character of which goodness such objects are judged through correct reason to be fitting (decentia) for a human being, and to be correctly loveable because of themselves.' (ii 1.5 = 290a) 'This right, as such, formally requires fittingness and proportion with rational nature. But we must add that this fittingness must be with rational nature in so far as it is rational and can be governed by correct reason, because this rightness is the supreme goodness that can be present in this sort of fittingness in relation to a human being. Therefore it must be in accordance with the most perfect degree and supreme perfection that is in a human being. Therefore we must look for it in rational nature in so far as it is rational.' (ii 2.11 = 295a)

[30] See §532 on Cumberland; §565 on Pufendorf.

in the creation of such a feature.[31] We ought not, therefore, to define right and wrong by reference to correct reason. Though the right accords with correct reason and judgment, this accord is not what fundamentally makes it right. Reason or judgment is right because it conforms to the nature of a rational agent, but the converse is false.[32]

This argument recalls Suarez's initial discussion of naturalism.[33] He distinguishes 'objective' from 'cognitive' naturalism (as we called them) about natural law, and he prefers cognitive naturalism (though he still rejects it). Cognitive naturalism takes the rational grasp of rightness to be necessary for natural law, and Suarez agrees. But when he discusses moral goodness itself, he prefers objective over cognitive naturalism. He agrees with Vasquez's belief in objective rightness independent of anyone's judgment about it; he disagrees only insofar as he refuses to identify it with natural law. Suarez denies that rightness consists in conformity to a law, and affirms that the correctness of a law presupposes rightness distinct from it. Some cases of rightness arise from law, 'to the extent that this very thing, namely subjection to law and conformity to it, is good'. Nonetheless, this special fact about the goodness of obedience still requires conformity to rational nature if it is to constitute a form of goodness (*Bon*. ii 2.7 = OO iv 294a).

Suarez regards this account of rightness as an account of moral goodness, as Aquinas understands it. Aquinas' fullest discussion of moral goodness (*ST* 1–2 qq18–21) does not include Suarez's explanation. Indeed, our suspicions may be aroused by the fact that Suarez explains the right as appropriateness to rational nature. This would be a suitable explanation of the Stoic notion of the right (*kalon*, honestum), since the Stoics believe that living rightly is living in accordance with nature—one's own rational nature and the nature of the universe.

We have found, however, that Suarez is justified in taking Aquinas' remarks about moral goodness to apply to the honestum. Even though Aquinas does not make this clear in his explicit discussion of moral goodness, he makes it clear in his other remarks about the honestum. Nor does Suarez innovate in connecting the right with what is fitting for rational nature; Aquinas recognizes this same connexion between the morally good and rational nature.[34] Both Aquinas and Suarez believe that the right is fitting for rational nature and therefore contributes to the individual rational agent's own ultimate end,

[31] 'Objects are not right because they are judged right, but rather, on the contrary, correct reason judges them right just because they are such. For just as in other judgments, their truth is founded in things, if indeed they are such as they are judged to be, so also in this judgment of correct reason that correctness is founded in the object judged. Therefore the rightness of the object cannot consist in conformity to such judgment.' (ii 2.3 = 293a)

[32] '. . . this good is usually expounded through fittingness to the dictate of correct reason; for that good is right which correct reason dictates as one to be done or loved, etc. Nevertheless, if this statement is understood about correct reason in so far as it states judgment or knowledge of what it is expedient (expedit) to do, in that case rightness does not consist in conformity to the dictate of reason, nor is <correct reason> the first rule or first principle (ratio) of such rightness. For the good is not right because correct reason judges it to be such, but rather the converse: because the good itself truly and in reality is right, consequently it is judged to be such by correct and true reason. Therefore, as far as we are concerned, correct judgment is the rule of the good as right (bonum honestum) because it reveals it to us. However, in its own right, the judgment presupposes a proper fittingness from which the good as right derives its being so; and we say that this is a fittingness to the rational nature in so far as it is such and has such properties or attributes. If, however, the dictate of reason is taken not formally but as it were radically, then it is said correctly and a priori that the good as right is what conforms to reason—that is to say, what conforms to rational nature, which furthermore is naturally <able> to judge that this <good> is to be done or desired for itself' (*DM* x 2.12 = OO xxv 339a). On Gregory's views see §426.

[33] See *Leg*. ii 5, discussed at §426, on two versions of naturalism.

[34] See §334.

her happiness. Suarez accepts both Aquinas' eudaemonism and his naturalism about the morally good.[35]

Admittedly, Suarez would depart from Aquinas if he supposed that we can discover fitness to rational nature by direct intuition, or by reflexion on logical compatibility and incompatibility. If he took this view, he would anticipate Clarke's interpretation of fitness.[36] In his explicit remarks about rightness and fitness, Suarez does not say much about how they are to be discovered. But he interprets them teleologically, by reference to the appropriate ends for a rational agent.[37] Nor does he suggest that fittingness is to be discovered simply by considering actions and rational nature without reference to the circumstances; on the contrary, circumstances are relevant to deciding fittingness, and therefore rightness (*Bon.* ii 3.5 = 298b).

These claims about moral rightness distinguish morality from the content of divine commands. Suarez recognizes moral goodness and rightness as a property of actions themselves in relation to rational nature. If he were to claim that the imposition of some obligation is needed for rightness, morality, or duty, his position would be deeply inconsistent.[38]

440. Metaphysics and Meta-ethics

In speaking of intrinsic natures Suarez refers to his metaphysics. If we look beyond his meta-ethics to his metaphysical treatment of essences and reality, we can confirm and clarify some of our conclusions about moral rightness.

Metaphysical Disputation xxxi discusses the status of essences and their relation to the existence of finite things.[39] The most robustly realist view of essences claims that, whether or not individual human beings and horses exist, their essences have non-temporal being; it is always true that human beings are rational and horses have four legs, and that a chimaera is an impossible combination of man and horse, whether or not the actual world exists or

[35] Suarez endorses Aquinas' views about happiness as the ultimate end, against Scotus' objections, in *De Ultimo Fine* iii 6.1–3 = *OO* iv 37b–38a. His views on the ultimate end are discussed by Ward, *NG* 404–18 (who unduly weakens the force of Suarez's claim).

[36] See §619.

[37] 'Some things through themselves and by the character of their essential perfection are in agreement with human nature, either because they are its ultimate end, as God is; or else because a human being achieves them together with that end, such as knowledge or the love of God, because from themselves they correctly dispose a human being in the direction of such an end; or remotely, such as acts of justice (iustitiae), etc. For from this it comes about that such things are proportionate to rational nature, in so far as it is capable of happiness and tends towards it, and thereby an action tending towards such objects is also called correct, because through it a human being correctly tends towards the end he ought to tend towards.' (*Bon.* ii 2.14 = *OO* iv 295b)

[38] Suarez's views may influence some of Whichcote's aphorisms on moral objectivism and right reason (cited by Rivers, *RGS* i 64): 'Right is the rule of law; and law is declaratory of right.' (*MRA* §3) 'If we consider what is becoming reasonable nature; then shall we have a rule to guide us as to good and evil.' (§14) 'The rule of right is the reason of things; the judgment of right is the reason of our minds perceiving the reason of things.' (§33) 'There is a reason for what we do, from the things themselves: truth and falsity, good and evil, are first in things, and then in persons. There is a difference in things; and we must comply in all matters with the reason of things and the rule of right, which is the law of God's creation.' (§§455–6). On Whichcote see further §541.

[39] Suarez's views are briefly discussed and compared with other views by Bolton, 'Universals' 180–3, and more fully examined by Wells in Suarez, *EFB* 6–27.

God has created anything. Suarez rejects this most strongly realist view, and argues that 'no Catholic doctor' would maintain that the essences of creatures have some real being distinct from the being of God. Nor did God create them from eternity, since creation takes place in time (*DM* xxxi 2.3 = OO xxvi 230a). The necessary truth that man is a rational animal is to be analysed conditionally: 'if anything is a man, it is a rational animal' (2.8). Things in actuality and in potentiality are to be distinguished formally as being and not-being, not as two kinds of being (3.8). Real actual being depends on a real efficient cause (4.1).

Suarez's discussion seeks to show that essences have no actual being independent of the causal structure of the actual world. Since he takes the efficient cause of the actual world to be God, he believes that the being of essences depends on God as creator. Nothing antecedent to God's freewill makes it true that the appropriate natural kinds for him to place in the world are man, horse, and so on, rather than some other possible kinds.

But after having affirmed the dependence of essences on actual efficient causes and causal laws, Suarez accepts some aspects of the robustly realist case that he has rejected. He allows that essences are real as potential beings, though not as actual beings (2.10). As potential beings, they are independent of the divine will (12.40, 45, 46). Truths about essences include conditionals with impossible antecedents ('if a stone is an animal, it is able to sense') and truths about impossible objects ('a chimaera is both a man and a horse'). All these are true apart from any efficient cause (12.45), and the fact that the conditionals have impossible antecedents does not make them false or incoherent.

In all these cases, Suarez opposes voluntarism about essences. They do not depend on God as creator.[40] The root and origin of necessity in these truths does not depend on divine intellect (12.46). Suarez maintains the position that Descartes takes to undermine divine freedom and omnipotence.[41]

Suarez recognizes different kinds of eternal truths that exist apart from the creative will of God. Some describable kinds are not suitable for being created. Chimaeras are an impossible combination of species, and God could not make it true that they are a possible combination. Man differs from chimaera, apart from the creative will of God, in containing no internal repugnance; its 'non-repugnant' character makes it one of the possibilities among which God chooses (2.2, 10). Just as God could not choose to create round squares, God could not choose to create any other inconsistent combinations.

[40] 'Enunciations . . . are known because they are true; otherwise no reason could be given for why God necessarily knows they are true. For if their truth proceeded from God himself, that would happen by means of God's will, and thence it would not proceed by necessity, but voluntarily. Again, with respect to these enunciations, the divine intellect is compared as merely speculative, not as active; but the speculative intellect assumes the truth of its object, and does not produce it. Therefore, enunciations of this sort, which are spoken of in the first, and indeed in the second, way of being spoken of through itself, have permanent truth not only as they are in the divine intellect, but also in their own right, and in abstraction from the divine intellect.' (*DM* xxxi 12.40)

[41] Cf. Descartes's letter to Mersenne, 6 May 1630 = AT i 149.21: 'As for the eternal truths, I say once more that they are true or possible only because God knows them as true or possible. They are not known as true by God in any way which would imply that they are true independently of him. If men really understood the sense of their words they could never say without blasphemy that the truth of anything is prior to the knowledge which God has of it. In God willing and knowing are a single thing in such a way that by the very fact of willing something he knows it and it is only for this reason that such a thing is true. So we must not say that if God did not exist nevertheless these truths would be true; for the existence of God is the first and most eternal of all possible truths and the one from which alone all others proceed.' Cf. letter of 15 April 1630 = AT i 145.10. Cronin, *OB*, ch. 2, compares the views of Suarez and Descartes on essences and eternal truths.

The similarity between the issues arising in this discussion and those in the discussion of goodness is clear in Suarez's use of the same formula, ultimately derived from Plato's *Euthyphro*, of explanatory asymmetry. God knows the eternal truths because they are true, and it is not the case that they are true because God knows them. It is necessarily true that God knows them, and so it is not possible for them to be true without God's knowing them; still, the counterfactual claim is true that even if God were not to know them, they would be true.

Suarez protests that the voluntarist view distorts the status of the relevant truths. For we want it to be part of God's omniscience and wisdom that he knows all necessary truths, and that he is guided by them in his creative activity. But if we make necessary truths subject to his creative will, they lose their necessity. Similarly, we want to attribute some knowledge to his speculative (i.e., theoretical) rather than his operative (i.e., active and productive) intellect; but it is the mark of speculative intellect that it grasps truths independent of it, not that it acts so as to bring them into being. Voluntarism about the eternal truths undermines any reasonable conception of God's wisdom. To express the point in more recent terminology, voluntarism commits us to the wrong 'direction of fit'; it implies that necessary truth requires the conformity of reality to mind, whereas a proper account of necessary truth should make mind conform to reality.[42]

Even this brief survey of Suarez on essences helps to explain how he uses his metaphysics to clarify his claims about goodness. We notice, as we notice in his discussion of natural law, an initial firm statement of an apparently voluntarist claim, safeguarding divine freedom and sovereignty. But after this initial statement, Suarez does not endorse the whole voluntarist position. He insists that the proper recognition of God's sovereignty leaves untouched the belief in essences and truths that are independent of God's will.

The same is true of his views on goodness. The human good is not an eternal essence that God had to bring into the actual world, since God did not have to choose to bring human beings into the actual world. Nor do the various features of the human good exist independently of God's other creative decisions; it is not necessary, for instance, that human beings need water or shelter, since God could have made water and shelter unnecessary for us without creating creatures of a different species. However, God could not both have made human beings and have made all of the human good and human goodness entirely different from what it is. For the human good is fixed by human nature; to make the human good entirely different, God would have had to create an inconsistent state of affairs, by creating creatures who were human beings, but lacked human nature.

This is why Suarez claims that essences of things that do not imply a contradiction have their own being independent of will. While it is up to God to create human beings or not, it is not up to God to make the human essence inconsistent, as the essences of chimaera and of round square are, or to make inconsistent essences consistent. In order to create human beings and make their good something different from what it is, God would have had to make inconsistent things consistent. On this point Suarez is a naturalist.[43]

[42] On direction of fit see §256n43.

[43] A doctrine of intrinsic evils 'can be founded in that metaphysical principle that natures as far as their being goes are immutable essences, and consequently also <are immutable> as far as the appropriateness or inappropriateness of natural properties goes' (*Leg*. ii 6.11).

441. Intrinsic Rightness

If we now return to the *De Legibus*, and examine Suarez's remarks about obligation and intrinsic morality in the light of the meta-ethical doctrines we have discussed, we see that he adheres to these doctrines, and recognizes their naturalist implications.

In one place he says that rational nature is the foundation of objective right and wrong in human moral actions.[44] References to a 'foundation' are obscure on the relevant point. The foundation of a house is a necessary condition for a house, but it is not a house; but if we grasp the 'foundations' or 'fundamental elements' of French, we speak French, though we may not grasp it completely. In what sense does Suarez speak of the foundations of right? Does he mean that rational nature is sufficient for it, or only that it is necessary?

He answers this question when he agrees that God's command and prohibition presuppose a necessary rightness and wrongness, not only a necessary goodness and badness, in actions themselves.[45] Hence actions are right and wrong by their own nature, and not because of any divine command.[46] The rules that constitute the principles of right are not natural law, but the foundation of the law.[47] We can know enough about rational nature to discover that some types of actions accord with it and others do not. If this is the foundation of natural law, our knowledge of natural law informs us not only about the divine will, but also about the requirements of rational nature.

Suarez believes that actions are right or wrong insofar as they accord with or violate rational nature, even if we abstract from the fact that such actions are commanded and forbidden by God. To explain the abstraction, he relies on the counterfactual supposition that God does not command or forbid. But this counterfactual, as we have seen, needs to be explained carefully. In making the supposition we must not hold fixed the fact that God forbids all and only what is wrong; if we held this fact fixed, our counterfactual assumption would say that the action violating rational nature but not commanded by God is both wrong and not wrong. Instead, we are to consider the consequences of supposing simply that none of the wrongness of an action comes from God's prohibition, and to ask whether it is still wrong.[48]

Suarez relies on the sort of counterfactual argument that Gregory of Rimini uses to establish the independence of the natural law from the will of God. He rejects Gregory's counterfactual, but he accepts the analogous counterfactual in the case of intrinsic rightness and the will of God.[49] In *De Bonitate* he defends the counterfactual claim in order to show

[44] See ii 5.6, discussed in §427.

[45] 'This will of God, prohibition or prescription, is not the whole character of the goodness and badness that is present in the observance or transgression of natural law, but it assumes in the actions themselves some necessary rightness or wrongness, and joins to them a special obligation of divine law.' (*Leg.* ii 6.11)

[46] 'In this opinion, I take to be true the teaching that it assumes in its foundation about the intrinsic rightness or wrongness of actions, by which they fall under the natural law that forbids or prescribes . . .' (ii 5.5).

[47] 'Not everything that is a foundation of the rightness or correctness of an action prescribed by a law, or that is the foundation of the wrongness of an action prohibited by a law, can be called a law. And so, granted that rational nature is the foundation of the objective rightness of good moral actions, it cannot thereby be called a law.' (ii 5.6)

[48] *Leg.* ii 6.14.

[49] 'For let us grant by an impossibility that there is no superior prescribing or prohibiting. This object itself, which is lying, put forward in itself, is wrong, and, on the contrary, speaking the truth is right. And for this reason even in relation to God they are understood to have these characters, and for this reason the latter is repugnant to him and the former is natural. This rightness, therefore, through itself and formally, abstracts from law.' (*Bon.* ii 2.6 = *OO* iv 293b)

that rightness cannot consist in conformity to law. Similarly, in *De Legibus* he takes the truth of the relevant counterfactual to be crucial for settling the issues about the relation between natural law, intrinsic goodness, and divine commands.[50]

He defends the counterfactual against the objection that it involves a contradiction. His opponent suggests that the counterfactual says that lying (a) is a sin, because it is unfitting to rational nature, but (b) is not a sin, because it is not forbidden (ii 6.14). Suarez answers that clause (b) does not follow from the supposition. The supposition simply tries to establish that goodness and badness are prior logically (secundum ordinem rationis) to command and prohibition.

One might, however, still object that even though the counterfactual supposition is not self-contradictory in itself, it has contradictory implications: (a) if God does not forbid an action, it is not displeasing to him, and therefore it is not bad; but (b) if it is unfitting to rational nature, it is bad. Therefore (c) it is bad and not bad. Suarez replies that this objection begs the question, since (a) implicitly denies the truth of the counterfactual claim. The counterfactual claim does not imply that being bad and being prohibited by God are really separable (in re separabilia) (ii 6.15), and so the actual connexion between wrongness and God's prohibition does not refute the counterfactual.

We might still doubt the truth of the counterfactual once we see that it implies that actions not prohibited by God can be sinful and blameworthy. We might be tempted to reject this implication if we accept Augustine's description of sin as an offence against the eternal law (cf. Aquinas, *ST* 1–2 q71 a6). One reply to this objection asserts that actions not prohibited by God are not sinful or blameworthy, even though they are intrinsically bad (*Leg*. ii 6.16). If Suarez accepted this reply, we might say that intrinsic badness falls short of moral wrongness, since it does not imply sin and blameworthiness. But he rejects this reply, because an intrinsically wrong action would still be a sin (peccatum) even if God did not prohibit it; hence neither sin nor blameworthiness (culpa) depends on divine prohibition. Both sin and blameworthiness follow from the fact that a voluntary act is contrary to right reason; hence, sin, so understood, is the proper concern of the moral philosopher.[51] The implication that initially appeared unacceptable is not unacceptable after all.

Suarez's conclusion from this discussion sets out the relation between divine command and intrinsic goodness.[52] Moral badness and blameworthiness, from the moral philosopher's point of view, follow simply from contrariety to reason, apart from any divine command.[53]

[50] 'For it all turns on this hypothesis: Even if God did not prohibit or prescribe the things that belong to the law of nature, none the less lying is bad, and honouring one's parents is good and a duty (debitum).' (*Leg*. ii 6.14)

[51] Suarez cites Aquinas, *ST* 1–2 q21 a1–2; q71 a6 ad4–5 (partly quoted at §235n6).

[52] 'I reply, therefore, that in a human action there is some goodness or badness from the force of the object considered in abstraction (praecise), as it agrees or disagrees with correct reason. In accordance with that <goodness or badness> [Perena, ET supplies "<correct reason>"] it can be called both a sin and blameworthy in the respects mentioned, apart from its relation to proper law. [Or "law, properly speaking" (Perena, ET).] But beyond this <goodness or badness> a human action has a special character of good and evil in being directed towards God, when a divine law is added, either prohibiting or prescribing, and in accordance with that <character> [Perena; ET supplies "law"] a human action is called a sin or blameworthy action, in a special way, in the sight of God, by its character of transgression of a law that properly belongs to God himself.' (ii 6.17)

[53] 'In that case, therefore, the bad action would be a sin and a fault morally, but not theologically, or as directed towards God.' (ii 6.18)

The divine command adds a special sort of sin and blameworthiness that consist in disobedience to God, but it presupposes the sin and blameworthiness that belong to some actions precisely because of their relation to right reason.[54] Without a divine command or prohibition, actions would lack 'the complete and perfect character of a divine fault and offence, which cannot be denied in actions that are precisely against the law of nature' (ii 6.18). But they would not lack moral properties.[55]

The use of deontic terms for naturally good and bad actions makes it clear that Suarez's division between obligation and intrinsic goodness is not the division between impartial morality and mere self-interest. The use of 'right' and 'wrong', as well as 'good' and 'bad' for actions, apart from any divine command, shows that Suarez refers to the impartial aspect of morality.

These moral properties are 'intrinsic' to actions (ii 16.3). By this Suarez does not mean that they belong to actions irrespective of context or circumstances; the principles of natural law need interpretation so that we can identify the relevant circumstances.[56] Rightness and wrongness are intrinsic because they are determined by rational nature in its circumstances, and not by some external command.

The relation of right and wrong to human nature explains the sense in which natural law is everlasting and immutable.[57] Natural law remains the same because it depends on

[54] ii 6.18 fin. Finnis, *NLNR* 350, suggests that Suarez's distinction between debitum and obligatio is unsatisfactory: 'Since Suarez is under pressure from theological tradition to admit that an action can be identified as contrary to one's obligation, and that the doing of it can be described as guilty, *without reference to God's will*, his effort to be consistent with his own concept of obligation is only verbally successful; again and again in these paragraphs he is brought to the brink of saying that even without reference to any divine precept, acts (or their avoidance) can be obligatory (or guilty/sinful); this is betrayed in his repeated statement that the obligation imposed by the divine will underpinning natural law is "some sort of *additional* obligation" (paras. 12, 13), a "special obligation" (paras. 11, 17, 22).' Finnis's objections are unconvincing. Suarez is not 'brought to the brink of saying' that there can be sin without any obligation imposed by God; he clearly insists on this point. Finnis's claims about an 'added' and a 'special' obligation suggest that he takes Suarez to concede that the divinely imposed obligation is added to an obligation that is already there because of natural goodness and badness. I see no justification for this claim. When Suarez claims that an obligation is 'added', he does not mean that it is added to an obligation, but that it is added to a debitum. When he says it is a special obligation, he does not mean that it is to be contrasted with another sort of obligation, but that obligation is special to command, and not present in a natural duty. Finnis assumes that Suarez takes obligations to be identical to oughts and duties, so that it is awkward for Suarez to admit that actions can be wrong and sinful without violating an obligation. The objections collapse once we recognize that Suarez uses 'obligation' in the narrowly impositive sense; once we see that, his remarks about sins, added obligations, and special obligations are clear and intelligible.

[55] For further discussion of sin as offence against God see *De Peccatis* ii 2.5–8 (= *OO* iv 516b–517a). Though Suarez does not directly address the possibility of sin without infraction of divine law, his remarks are consistent with our present passage. He refers to Aquinas, *ST* 1a q48 a6; 2–2 q10 a3.

[56] 'Human actions, in their rightness and badness, depend greatly on circumstances and occasions of action, and in this there is great variety among them. For some are simpler (so to speak) than others, and need fewer conditions for their goodness or badness to arise. Now the natural law, considered in its own right, does not prescribe an action except in so far as it assumes that it is good, and does not prohibit an action except in so far as it assumes that the act is intrinsically bad. And therefore, in order to understand the true sense of a natural precept, it is necessary to inquire into conditions and circumstances with which that action in its own right is bad or good. And this is called interpretation of a natural precept, as far as concerns its true sense.' (*Leg.* ii 16.6) See §447 on dispensations.

[57] 'I say, therefore, that, properly speaking, the natural law through itself cannot cease or be changed, neither as a whole nor in a particular, given that rational nature remains with the use of reason and freedom. For this latter assumption is always taken as understood and assumed; for, since the natural law is a sort of property of this nature, if this nature were wholly removed, the natural law would also be removed, as far as its existence goes, and it would remain only in accordance with the being of essence or as possible objectively in the mind of God, just as rational nature itself would.' (ii 13.2) Suarez cites Aquinas, *ST* 1–2 q94 a4–5; q100 a8; 2–2 q66 a2 ad1; q104 a4 ad2.

human nature, which remains the same.[58] This reference to human nature explains his claim that intrinsic rightness and wrongness rest on non-contradiction.[59] He does not mean that the principles of natural law are necessarily true in a way that would make their denial self-contradictory in itself; he means their denial conflicts with the relevant facts about human nature. Because of the facts about human nature, the natural law 'presupposes in its material an intrinsic rightness or badness altogether inseparable from this material' (ii 15.4). In metaphysics he argues that essences are in certain respects independent of the divine will. He claims the same independence for moral properties.

442. Theoretical and Practical Reason

We have found that Suarez recognizes two morally significant elements in the principles of natural law; they specify intrinsic rightness and they express divine commands. The 'foundation' of natural law is the set of principles describing the right actions appropriate for rational nature. Obligation is imposed by a divine command.

The division between intrinsic morality and obligation may provoke an objection. We may take it to imply that every ultimate moral principle is divisible into a strictly practical and prescriptive component, requiring a command, and a purely theoretical component, describing rational nature. The identification of moral goodness with some relation of appropriateness or fitness to nature may appear to be alien to Aristotle's and Aquinas' conception of practical knowledge. Suarez seems to make moral goodness a matter of purely theoretical study; once we know what human nature is, we can also discover what is appropriate to it.

This conception of moral goodness seems to reduce moral deliberation to theoretical rather than practical knowledge, and hence seems to conflict with Aquinas' emphasis on the strictly practical character of prudence.[60] Aquinas may appear to avoid Suarez's separation of theoretical and practical components, because he expresses the principles in gerundive form ('good is to be pursued' etc.), and so makes them neither purely theoretical nor purely prescriptive.[61] Suarez, however, seems to leave room for someone to accept the truth of the theoretical principles, while refusing to issue any commands.

This objection, we might suppose, is not obvious to Suarez, because he maintains that God in his goodness cannot both create human beings and command that they act contrary to their nature. But the objection seems damaging if we consider human agents confronted by natural law or by its theoretical basis. It seems that we do not necessarily will what is fitting for rational nature; and we might wonder why the mere knowledge that some action

[58] The natural law is natural 'not because its fulfilment is natural or comes about by necessity, but because that law is a sort of proper characteristic (proprietas) of nature and because God himself has planted it in nature.' (i 3.9)

[59] '. . . moral actions have their intrinsic natures and immutable essences, which do not depend on any external cause or will any more than do other essences of things which in themselves do not imply a contradiction, as I now assume from metaphysics.' (ii 5.2) Perena ad loc. cites *DM* x 1.12 = *OO* xxv 332a, where Suarez explains how goodness adds to being only the convenientia that something has in virtue of its being (ratione entitatis). The metaphysical basis of Suarez's ethical conceptions is explored at length by Gemmeke, *MSGFS*, esp. Part 2. Cf. §547 on Cudworth.

[60] Suarez's view of prudence is contrasted with Aquinas' view (on tenuous grounds) by Treloar, 'Demise'.

[61] See §425 on ii 6.3. On gerundives and commands in Aquinas see §257.

fits human nature will move us to choose that action. Even if we know that God commands us to do that action, why should that purely theoretical knowledge make a difference to our action?

This objection to Suarez's position is a version of Hume's argument about 'is' and 'ought'. According to Hume, we have given the wrong account of a moral judgment if our account allows someone to believe that a moral judgment is true without having any motive to act on it.[62] If this is a correct constraint on any acceptable account of a moral judgment, Suarez's account is clearly unacceptable. But Aquinas may appear to satisfy Hume's constraint. For he formulates the basic principles as gerundives, and hence (we might infer) not as indicative statements about what is appropriate for human nature; hence they are neither ungrounded commands nor purely theoretical principles. We cannot accept a gerundive (we may suppose) without having some motive to obey it. If this is an adequate defence of Aquinas, he avoids the Humean objection that confronts Suarez.[63]

Sympathy with the Humean objection may encourage an interpreter to accept the account of Suarez's views on obligation that we have rejected. For we may suppose that Suarez believes that purely indicative judgments cannot contain moral oughts, because they do not by themselves motivate the agents who accept them; that he takes prescriptions, and hence commands, to be necessary for motivation, and hence for moral oughts; and that therefore he takes obligations—i.e., moral oughts—to require commands. According to this view, Suarez separates the two components that Hume takes to be necessary for a genuine moral judgment—the descriptive and the prescriptive—and assigns them, respectively, to intrinsic natural facts and to divine commands.

This is not exactly Hume's view, since the existence of a divine command does not guarantee action on it; it still leaves an open question about whether the agent to whom the command is addressed is moved to act on it. But, according to some views, Suarez tries to cover this gap by speaking of obligation as 'moral moving'. If this is to be understood as 'moral motivation', he assumes that obligation requires both a divine command and the motivation to follow it.

[62] On Hume see §752. Cf. Finnis, *NLNR* 36–48.

[63] Grisez criticizes Suarez for misunderstanding the character of practical knowledge: 'The theory of law is permanently in danger of falling into the illusion that practical knowledge is merely theoretical knowledge plus force of will. This is exactly the mistake Suarez makes when he explains natural law as the natural goodness or badness of actions plus preceptive divine law' ('First principle' 378). He cites *Leg*. ii 7, and refers with approval to Farrell, *NLSTS* 147–55. The description of Suarez's position in 'when he explains . . .' is not grossly inaccurate, but Grisez makes some contestable assumptions in claiming that this position relies on the mistake that Grisez alleges about practical knowledge. He seems to suggest that, according to Suarez: (1) Knowledge of natural goodness and badness is purely theoretical knowledge. (2) Knowledge of natural law is practical knowledge. (3) The difference between the two kinds of knowledge must lie in the command that belongs to natural law. While (2) is right, (1) is dubious. Suarez nowhere says or suggests that if we are aware of natural goodness and badness and unaware of any divine command, we have neither a reason nor a motive to pursue the good and to avoid the bad. Perhaps Grisez attributes this view to Suarez because Suarez takes natural law, and hence divine command, to be necessary for moral obligation. But, as we have seen, obligation, in Suarez's restricted sense, is not the only source of moral reasons or motivation.

On Suarez as a source of 'Scholastic natural-law theory' see also Grisez, *WLJ* 103–5. According to Grisez and Finnis, Suarez's main mistake is to treat the principles of natural law as theoretical principles that simply state that something is fitting to rational nature. They contrast this with Aquinas' view, according to which the principles have a gerundive form, and so avoid moving from is to ought. This is also relevant to the issue about debitum and obligatio. For we might suppose that the prescriptive aspect of morality enters only with the imperative obligatio and that the merely descriptive debitum is purely theoretical and lacks the appropriate prescriptive character.

We need not examine this interpretation further, since we have seen that it does not fit Suarez's claims about obligation and intrinsic morality. This is not surprising, since we have no reason to suppose that Suarez takes Hume's questions seriously. Still, we might argue that, since Hume's questions are legitimate, Suarez ought to have accepted the view that we have rejected on his behalf about obligations, commands, and oughts. If he takes intrinsic facts to be sufficient for moral oughts, he seems to open himself to Hume's objection, since Hume argues that we cannot move directly from such facts to oughts.

Does Aquinas' gerundive formulation avoid the objections Hume raises to deriving ought from is? The gerundive formulation is ambiguous, and the ambiguity may be resolved in different ways: (1) We may take the gerundive as equivalent to an imperative. In that case, the principles of natural law are really imperatives, and are in danger of being groundless, if they lack what Suarez calls their foundation. (2) We may take the gerundive to say that there are reasons for pursuing certain actions and avoiding others. But if these reasons are connected, for instance, with claims about rational nature, a Humean can ask why we should care about these reasons in particular. (3) We may take them to include both an imperative and a purely descriptive element. But in that case we can ask, in a Humean spirit, how the two elements are related. If the Humean gap is a genuine gap, we cannot accept Aquinas' principles unless we have made the transition from 'is' to 'ought' that Hume challenges.

In deciding how we ought to understand Aquinas' gerundives, and how we ought to connect them with Hume's objections, we need to take account of some complications in his position. At first sight, gerundive formulations may appear to be imperatives; for Aquinas himself says that the propositions expressed with these gerundives are the 'precepts' of the natural law. Precepts belong to the natural law because it is essential to law to command (*ST* 1–2 q90 a1 sc) and thereby to move us to action. In order to explain how law can have this motive character and still belong to reason, Aquinas relies on his account of command (imperium) as an act of reason presupposing an act of will (q90 a1 ad3; q17 a1).

But Aquinas' account of command precludes an implicit answer to Hume. If he understood all commands as imperatives, he might agree that anyone who accepts a command must be motivated to act on it, by assenting to an imperative. But his actual conception of command is much broader; for commands can be expressed through the indicative mood, with a gerundive ('This is to be done'), and not only through the imperative mood ('Do this') (q17 a1).[64] Hence the fact that he speaks of commands does not imply that he refers to imperatives addressed to oneself or to others.

This broad use of 'command' is relevant to the natural law. For its precepts are in gerundive form, and hence are 'indicative intimations', not 'imperative intimations'. They direct us to act appropriately, and if their directing is to result in action, we must have the appropriate will; but they do not themselves contain any appropriate act of will, and they do not imply that we have engaged or will engage in any such act of will. If all these precepts were imperative intimations that I address to myself, they would constitute attempts to move my will. But we cannot draw this conclusion from the fact that the precepts are indicative intimations. Once we recognize that Aquinas' conception of a command is

[64] See §257 on Aquinas.

broader than we might expect, we find that the precepts of the natural law—being indicative intimations—belong on the 'is' side of Hume's division.

If, then, Hume is right to suppose that we cannot move from is to ought without some appropriate desire or motive, Aquinas makes an illegitimate transition. For Aquinas believes it is legitimate to move from 'x is good (in the relevant way)' to 'x is to be done by me' and to 'I ought to do x', without any intervening act of will. The gerundive precept that x is to be done need not arise from, and need not produce, any desire to do x or to achieve the end to which x is a means.

Do Suarez's claims about commands make any essential difference? He agrees with Aquinas in taking gerundive judgments to be indicative (indicantem quid agendum vel cavendum sit, *Leg*. ii 6.3).[65] But he rejects Aquinas' view that to make a gerundive judgment of this sort is a way of commanding or prescribing. To express a precept, we must use the imperative mood. When he says that many people distinguish an indicative from a prescriptive law (lex indicans v. lex praecipiens, ii 6.3), he takes a law formulated with gerundives to be an indicative law. In his view, such a law is not a law, strictly speaking, because a law, strictly speaking, must contain actual precepts, which must be in the imperative mood. His use of 'command' and 'precept', therefore, is narrower than Aquinas' use, and closer to our usual use.

Once we recognize this disagreement between Aquinas and Suarez about the extent of commands, we see that their apparent agreement about the character of the natural law conceals an important disagreement. They agree that the provisions of the natural law are precepts. But Aquinas believes that the precepts are indicative, since he expresses them in gerundives. According to Suarez, however, a so-called precept in gerundive form is not a genuine precept, since it is indicative. Hence he believes that Aquinas' conception of a precept is too generous. He does not, therefore, take Aquinas' gerundive formulations to express the prescriptive character of natural law.

Suarez, therefore, might appear to accommodate Hume's demands better than Aquinas does. For if I accept any genuine precept of natural law, I accept a command. I must conform my will to the command by moving in the way I am commanded to move. One might, therefore, argue on Suarez's behalf that in accepting the precepts of natural law, I introduce the motive element that, according to Hume, is needed to explain the transition from is to ought.

This defence of Suarez, however, rests on a misunderstanding. For he does not believe that this motive element is needed to justify the acceptance of ought-judgments. He believes, as Aquinas does, that gerundives and ought-judgments are indicative, and do not include any special motivation. Hence he does not believe that any motive element is needed to explain the transition from is to ought. From Hume's point of view, both he and Aquinas make exactly the same illegitimate transition from is to ought without introducing a motive element to explain the transition.

Suarez's claims about obligation and command, therefore, do not result from any concern to exhibit the prescriptive character of moral judgments, or from any other concern that is related to Hume's questions about is and ought. His account of obligation is not meant to be

[65] Quoted in §426.

an account of moral requirements, reasons, or oughts in general and is not meant to explain how we can be given reasons or motives to act on moral principles in general. He believes that the moral principles constituting the foundation of natural law are 'merely descriptive', if that is taken to mean that they do not embody an attempt to move one's own will or anyone else's; hence he says they are purely indicative rather than prescriptive. But he does not think they are 'merely descriptive', if that is taken to mean that he thinks they require some further explicit prescriptions, conveyed through divine commands, before we have any reason or motive to act on them. Since these indicative principles include gerundives and oughts, they are already normative (i.e., they already give reasons) without any further prescription.

Suarez makes it clear that he does not think divine commands are needed to give us sufficient reasons or motives to act on the principles of intrinsic morality. The principles that require us to seek good and to avoid evil, to preserve ourselves and to promote the interests of others, and, in general, to act rightly and in accordance with rational nature, are grasped by practical reason apart from divine commands. We need not appeal to divine commands in order to have sufficient reason to choose intrinsically right actions. To suppose that moral reasons and moral motivation belong exclusively to obligations, as Suarez conceives them, is to overlook his narrow concept of obligation, and to underestimate the significance of intrinsic morality without imposed obligation.

Practical, rather than theoretical, reason grasps these principles, because we reach them if we start out from our necessary pursuit of the ultimate good; we discover that these principles achieve the ultimate good for a rational agent. We have reason, therefore, to follow them insofar as we are rational agents; and we recognize we have reason to follow them insofar as we recognize ourselves as rational agents pursuing our ultimate good, and recognize that these principles achieve this good. Aquinas gives reasons for supposing that we are rational agents of this sort, and that we necessarily regard ourselves as such, though we do not see all the implications of attributing this agency to ourselves. Suarez endorses these aspects of Aquinas' position; they are the background for his claims about natural law.

If these are the relevant aspects of Aquinas' doctrine, he has two answers to different parts of a Humean objection: (1) If the question 'Why should I care about these principles?' is a request for a justifying reason, it is answered by the connexion between natural law and practical reason. (2) If it is a request for an exciting reason, it is answered by the features of Aquinas' position that are often taken to constitute psychological egoism.

Neither of these answers to Hume meets Hume's demand for an account of moral principles that guarantees that anyone who believes them has a desire to act on them. But that is a highly disputable demand; failure to satisfy it may not be an error in Aquinas or in Suarez.

443. Natural Rightness and Divine Freewill

We have now explored the two elements that Suarez distinguishes in the natural law: intrinsic morality and divine commands. How are they related? Could they diverge? Even if Suarez agrees with naturalism about the existence of moral reasons based on intrinsic

rightness and wrongness, he would still accept a significant part of the voluntarist case, if he were a voluntarist about the relation of intrinsic rightness to God's legislative will. A position we might ascribe to Ockham insists that God is free to command obedience to the principles of non-positive morality or principles conflicting with non-positive morality. By unqualified ('absolute') power God can accept or reject non-positive morality; only ordered power restricts God to the acceptance of non-positive morality.[66] At any given time, God is exercising only ordered power; we do not have to consider both what God might do on the basis of ordered power and what God might do on the basis of unqualified power. Hence we can rely on God to keep on commanding us to follow the non-positive morality that Suarez calls intrinsic morality.

Still, if we rely on God to command intrinsic morality, we rely on God's choice not to change his mind, rather than on his essential goodness. If Ockham is right, it is consistent with God's essential goodness to command us to violate intrinsic morality, though God has told us that he will not command us to do this. If God instructed us to violate intrinsic morality, and gave us innate knowledge of these instructions, there would be no natural law in the metaphysical sense, because God would not command us to act in ways fitting to rational nature; there would only be a natural law in the epistemological sense. The fact that God has created us with the nature we have does not, in Ockham's view, require God to impose any specific laws on us; hence God would have been equally good if God had told us to violate intrinsic morality. That is why God was free to command us to hate God, and hence to give us a command that we could not rationally obey (if we can rationally obey God's commands only out of love of God).[67]

According to Suarez, God was free to create or not to create beings with our nature.[68] The eternal law does not bind God independently of his will; it is a law for creatures arising from God's freewill as legislator. He imposes it on himself, as a craftsman, having decided to make a certain kind of thing, imposes a law on himself (ii 2.4). In this context Suarez speaks of God's ordered power, as Scotus does.[69] Still, God cannot violate his own decrees, because violation would be intrinsically wrong, and therefore is contrary to the intrinsic nature and essence of God (ii 2.7).[70] Suarez relies on this distinction between God's freedom in advance of creation and his lack of freedom after creation, in order to answer the question about whether it is possible for God not to command the observance of intrinsic morality.[71]

Scotus gives a voluntarist answer to this question, by exploiting the distinction between types of power. He claims that general laws come from the divine will, and not from the divine intellect prior to the divine will.[72] Scotus argues that if the divine intellect fixed

[66] On absolute v. ordered power see §396. Ockham probably does not suppose that non-positive morality is independent of the divine will (see §395), but if we did suppose that, we could reconcile naturalism about morality (in the form defended by Gregory of Rimini) with voluntarism about the divine will and morality.

[67] See §398. [68] See §395on Ockham's objections to Aquinas on God's freedom in creation.

[69] At ii 2.4 he cites Scotus, *1Sent*. d44 q1 = *OO* v.2 1368–9. The passage Perena cites ad loc. is from the commentary in *OO*, not from Scotus.

[70] Suarez cites Aquinas, *ST* 1–2 q93 a4 ad1; 1a q21 a1 ad2.

[71] 'Is the hypothesis possible, that God, by the proper act of his will did not attach a proper law forbidding or prescribing the things that belong to the prescription of natural reason?' (ii 6.20)

[72] '. . . some general laws, prescribing correctly, were prefixed by the divine will and not by the divine intellect as preceding the divine will . . .; but when the intellect offers the divine will such a law, . . . if it pleases God's will, which is free, it is a correct law' (Scotus, *1Sent*. d44 q1 §6 = *OO* v.2 1368 §2 = V vi 365.9–15).

the laws, the divine will would not be free, but would will by necessity.[73] God is free to change these laws by his free will; in such a case his action is not disorderly (inordinatus), but according to a different order that is no less right than the first one.[74] This voluntarist conception of the general laws makes room for dispensations that are no less right than the general laws they violate. Scotus agrees that God cannot dispense from observance of natural law, but argues that our duties to our neighbour do not fall under natural law, and therefore God can dispense us from them. Ockham allows dispensation from each precept of the natural law.[75]

The dispensability of natural law may appear to be a welcome consequence of voluntarism; for familiar Scriptural examples seem to show that God makes exceptions to the precepts of natural law, by dispensing particular people from observance of them. If God is free to make exceptions to the natural law, God seems to be sovereign over natural law, so that natural law does not seem to contain any requirements that are independent of God's legislative will.

Suarez, however, follows Aquinas in discussing the alleged possibility of dispensations from a naturalist point of view. He examines the claim that God can, by absolute power, though not by ordered power, refrain from commanding what is intrinsically right.[76] It is not clear that Scotus holds this view, since he does not agree that the principles of justice with regard to one's neighbour are about what is intrinsically right; these principles depend on God's free will, and for that reason are subject to dispensation. Ockham comes closer to the position that Suarez discusses, since he recognizes non-positive morality. But if even non-positive morality depends on God's having freely ordered his absolute power in a particular way, it does not seem to meet Suarez's conditions for intrinsic rightness. Suarez discusses dispensations on the assumption that he has already shown that natural law includes intrinsic morality, so that dispensations from natural law would have to allow the violation of intrinsic morality.

Instead of directly answering the view he ascribes to Ockham, he turns to Aquinas' view that God cannot change his will on the natural law. In Suarez's view, Aquinas cannot be referring simply to immutability on the assumption of a divine decree, since even divine positive law is immutable in that sense. Aquinas, therefore, must refer to absolute immutability; he should be taken to claim that it is not even within God's absolute power to refrain from commanding the natural law.[77] Against Aquinas, Ockham believes that

[73] In *1Sent* d44 Scotus refers back to his discussion of this issue in d38 = *OO* v.2 1286–7 = V vi 306–7.

[74] 'I say, therefore, that God cannot only act otherwise than is ordered by a particular ordering, but can act otherwise than is ordered by universal order—that is, according to the laws of justice, because things that are beyond that order as well as things that are against that order could be brought about in an orderly way by God, in accordance with unqualified power.' (*1Sent*. d44 = *OO* v.2 1369 §3 = V vi 367.9–14)

[75] See next note.

[76] '. . . God can in accordance with unqualified power not make such a prohibition' (Suarez, *Leg*. ii 6.20). Perena cites Ockham, *2Sent*. q15 ad3, ad4 = *OT* v 352–3, quoted in §398n67.

[77] 'God cannot not prohibit what is intrinsically bad and misdirected in rational nature, nor can he not prescribe the contrary. This is openly asserted by St Thomas, . . . in so far as he says that the decree of divine justice about this law is immutable. This assertion cannot be understood as being only about the immutability that assumes a decree. For in this way any decree at all of God in any positive law whatever is immutable. Therefore St Thomas is speaking of unqualified immutability. Hence his view is this, that God cannot in this case remove the order of his justice, just as he cannot deny himself, or just as he cannot not be faithful in his promises.' (*Leg*. ii 6.21) He cites Aquinas, *ST* 1–2 q71 a6 ad4; q100 a8 ad2.

God's absolute power to impose one or another law is not limited by God's having created creatures with our nature. From Ockham's point of view, the necessity that Suarez maintains of prescribing these specific principles to rational creatures is an inadmissible restriction of divine freedom. The necessity of prescribing these principles would follow from the necessity of choosing the best course of action; but, according to a voluntarist, such necessity is inconsistent with freedom.

Suarez agrees with Aquinas on this point.[78] God was free not to impose the natural law, since God was free not to create us. But if rational creatures exist, God's goodness requires God to prescribe obedience to intrinsic morality. Hence God's absolute power does not extend to imposing another law.[79] The freedom of God is exercised in creation; hence the necessity of imposing observance of the principles of natural law does not cancel divine freedom. Suarez relies on this claim to answer Scotus' objection that the necessity of imposing observance of the second table of the Decalogue would restrict divine freedom.[80]

444. Subordinate Principles of Natural Law

If Suarez holds this naturalist position about intrinsic rightness, he cannot allow dispensations from natural law; for its precepts prescribe intrinsically right actions, which God necessarily (in the respect described) wills that we do. Suarez therefore needs to show that apparent dispensations from requirements of natural law are not real dispensations, and hence do not require us to admit that God can allow violations of natural law.

Apparent dispensations are among apparent exceptions to the natural law. Suarez's careful discussion of the various cases that we might—misleadingly, in his view—include under the head of 'exceptions' explains his view about the ways in which God can or cannot create exceptions. To understand this view, we must understand his general view about the relation of subordinate principles to the higher principles of natural law. This view is worth exploring in its own right, before we see how Suarez uses it to explain apparent dispensations.

Following Aquinas, Suarez recognizes principles of natural law at different levels, and sees that the difference between these levels has to be taken into account when one speaks of the immutability or mutability of different provisions of natural law. As we have seen, he insists especially on the importance of fixing the relevant circumstances in considering what a specific provision says.

He therefore denies that the same action can sometimes be bad in itself and sometimes good in itself. Since an intrinsically bad action conflicts, by its own nature, with the requirements of rational nature, one and the same action with the same nature cannot both

[78] On absolute and ordered power see §396.

[79] 'For, speaking without qualification, God could have prescribed or prohibited nothing. However, on the assumption that he willed to have subjects who use reason, he was unable not to be their legislator, at any rate in those things that are necessary for natural rightness of morals.' (ii 6.23)

[80] '. . . it is not inappropriate for the divine will to be necessitated to that prohibition, on the supposition that it decided to establish human nature and to govern it, i.e. (seu), to have appropriate foresight about it' (ii 15.12).

conflict and not conflict with rational nature.[81] To identify the same action, we must fix the relevant circumstances and conditions. The same action, with these fixed, cannot be sometimes good and sometimes bad.[82]

To fix the relevant conditions and circumstances, and hence to find the actions that are intrinsically right and wrong, is the task of prudence, as Aquinas conceives it. Suarez agrees with Aquinas' view that natural law supports some fairly specific rules if the relevant circumstances are built in; hence it supports rules about respect for private property, even though it does not require property. We reach the relevant rules by interpretation (ii 16.6).[83] Suarez's appeal to circumstances and restricting conditions presupposes that the natural law prescribes and prohibits actions with reference to intrinsic goodness and badness, measured by agreement and disagreement with the requirements of rational nature. What rational nature requires depends on circumstances and conditions. Hence, the provisions of natural law take account of the appropriate circumstances and conditions.

A different conclusion would be forced on Suarez if he were to believe that intrinsic rightness and wrongness are intrinsic to action types in themselves, without reference to the agents or the circumstances. This would be a view similar to Clarke's belief in 'eternal relations of fitness'. If such a view were right, then we could infer simply from the fact that A had benefited B that B ought to benefit A in return, without reference to the fact that A and B are rational agents in specific circumstances that affect their rational agency.[84] In appealing to nature, Suarez rejects this explanation of intrinsic rightness, and defends his appeal to circumstances and conditions.

445. Our Knowledge of Natural Law

This discussion of subordinate principles confronts the believer in natural law with a dilemma created by two demands: (1) On the one hand, natural law is supposed to be epistemically accessible and reliable; its principles are readily grasped by everyone and are evidently the basis of any acceptable moral principles. (2) On the other hand, it must yield principles that are applicable to specific questions and practical situations; otherwise it is useless for guiding particular choices and actions.

These two demands seem to conflict. The demand for epistemically accessible and reliable principles encourages us to follow Aquinas in attributing such principles as 'Good is to be done and evil avoided', or 'One must act in accord with reason' to the natural law. But these principles do not include the sort of content that makes them practically applicable. When

[81] 'You will say that it can happen that the same action is sometimes bad from itself, but sometimes is not. On the contrary: in that case it will not be able to have both characters with the same circumstances or conditions on the side of the subject matter. For, since goodness or badness arises from the agreement or disagreement of an act with rational nature, it cannot happen that the same act with the same conditions is through itself both in disagreement and in agreement, because opposite relations do not arise from the same foundation.' (ii 15.30)

[82] Suarez explains the sense in which a right action could become wrong: 'And so, if that occasion with all its circumstances remains the same, the precept cannot fail to oblige; for if the occasion and the circumstances change, then the obligation can fail, but not because of a dispensation, but because this is the nature of an affirmative precept, that it always obliges [i.e., invariably on this occasion] but not for always [i.e., for every occasion].' (ii 15.29)

[83] Quoted in §441. [84] On Clarke see §§618–19.

we try to introduce content without sacrifice of accessibility, we seem to sacrifice reliability. Both Aquinas and Suarez recognize this in the case of the precepts about killing, returning deposits, and keeping secrets; and we might also want to recognize it in the case of the precept against lying. While these precepts seem simple and accessible, they also seem to face counter-examples.

Aquinas answers that some conclusions from the highest principles of natural law hold only usually and have exceptions (*ST* 1–2 q94 a4). He suggests that the precept of returning what you have borrowed holds usually, because we ought to recognize it as valid only subject to certain circumstances that hold usually, but not always. These circumstances do not hold if you are returning a gun to someone who is threatening suicide or murder; in these circumstances you must not return what you have borrowed.

If failure in these circumstances to return what we have borrowed does not violate natural law, the higher principle that supports the usual practice of returning what we have borrowed must support a more complex principle than 'Return what you have borrowed'. If it really supported the unqualified principle, any failure to return what we have borrowed would violate natural law. But any identification of the more complex principle seems to raise a question about accessibility or about applicability. Either (1) the principle is 'Return what you have borrowed unless the lender is suicidal or . . . (listing all the relevant qualifications)'; or (2) the principle is 'Return what you have borrowed in the right circumstances'. In the first case, the relevantly qualified principle does not seem accessible; in the second case, it is not applicable to particular cases, since it still leaves us to list the relevant circumstances.

Suarez considers some of these difficulties in his treatment of the character and content of principles of natural law. In discussing the mutability of natural law, he points out that we need to decide what sorts of principles we are to attribute to natural law. We may formulate the precepts as 'A deposit must be returned', and so on, but these formulations of the precepts are not the precepts themselves.[85] Hence the alleged exceptions to a given precept are really included in the circumstances that are part of the precept (*Leg*. ii 13.7).[86]

[85] 'Hence we must further take account of this: The natural law, since in its own right it is not written on tablets or pages, but in minds, it is not always dictated in the mind in those general or indeterminate (indefinitis) words in which we express it orally or in which it is written. For example, the law about returning a deposit, in so far as it is natural, is not judged in the mind so simply and unqualifiedly (absolute), but with limitation and circumspection; for reason dictates that a deposit is to be returned to one who asks for it lawfully (iure) and rationally, or <that it is to be returned> unless some reason of a just defence, a reason applying either to the commonwealth or to oneself, or to an innocent person, prevents it. Commonly, however, this law tends to be expressed only in these words: "A deposit is to be returned". That is because the other things are implicitly understood, and cannot all be made clear in the form of law laid down in a human way.' (ii 13.6)

[86] Suarez's separation of precepts from formulations in rules rests on the sorts of considerations that move Scanlon, *WWOEO* 199, to deny that principles are to be identified with particular rules that can be applied to settle questions without much further exercise of judgment: 'Principles . . . are general conclusions about the status of various kinds of reasons for action. So understood, principles may rule out some actions by ruling out the reasons on which they would be based, but they also leave wide room for interpretation and judgment.' Scanlon explains his point through an example quite like Suarez's: 'Consider, for example, moral principles concerning the taking of human life. It might seem that this is a simple rule, forbidding a certain class of actions: Thou shalt not kill. But what about self-defence, suicide, and certain acts of killing by police officers and by soldiers in wartime? . . . The parts of this principle that are the clearest are better put in terms of reasons: . . . So even the most familiar moral principles are not rules which can be easily applied without appeals to judgment. Their succinct verbal formulations turn out on closer examination to be mere labels for much more complex ideas.' (*WWOEO* 199) Scanlon speaks as though the fifth commandment in the Decalogue were an unqualified prohibition of killing. But Christian moralists do not normally understand it in this way, as Aquinas' treatment shows; the usual interpretation makes it a 'principle' rather than a 'rule that can be easily applied without appeals to judgment'.

Here he follows Aquinas' interpretation of the fifth commandment. Aquinas considers an argument to show that the precepts of the Decalogue are dispensable, because the Decalogue forbids killing, but human law allows killing of evildoers and enemies.[87] Aquinas answers that the commandment expresses a principle about wrongful killing, but it does not state a rule that prohibits all killing.[88] If we recognize justifiable killing, we have not found an exception to the commandment; we have found a more accurate statement of it. To find a full statement of the commandment we would need to identify all the circumstances that justify killing. If we cannot confidently claim to have done that, we cannot confidently claim to have formulated the whole content of the principle that forbids wrongful killing.

This conception of principles clarifies Suarez's conception of the precepts of natural law. Since they are precepts of practical reason about what is suitable to human nature, they include circumstances and conditions. Since practical reason does not prescribe unqualified precepts, such precepts do not belong to natural law. Practical reason has to take account of the systematic character of the precepts of natural law. Since natural law, taken as a whole, expresses what is intrinsically right and appropriate for human nature, the different precepts do not express separate moral requirements; they express different aspects of the relevant sort of appropriateness.[89] Reflexion on returning deposits and on other precepts of natural law shows us that we need to limit the circumstances for returning deposits. These limits introduce other precepts and virtues; we have to know whether someone is asking 'lawfully', and whether some 'just defence' requires us to withhold the deposit. We cannot apply the precepts one at a time without reference to the rest of natural law.

The implicit flexibility of the precepts of natural law allows us to understand how they make room for some dispensations. Suarez discusses the papal power to dissolve marriages that have been properly and canonically contracted, but not consummated. He argues that the power to dispense from such a marriage is not a power to dispense from

[87] 'Further, among the precepts of the Decalogue is one forbidding murder. But it seems that a dispensation is given by human beings in this precept: for instance, when according to the precept of human law, such people as evil-doers or enemies are permissibly slain. Therefore the precepts of the Decalogue are dispensable.' (*ST* 1–2 q100 a8 obj.3)

[88] 'The killing of a human being is forbidden in the Decalogue, in so far as it has the character of the wrongful (indebitum): for this is how the precept contains the very character of justice. Human law cannot make it permissible for a human being to be killed wrongfully. But it is not wrong for evil-doers or enemies of the common weal to be killed. Hence this is not contrary to the precept of the Decalogue; and such a killing (occisio) is not a murder (homicidium), which is forbidden by that precept, as Augustine says . . . And similarly, if someone's property is taken from him, if it is right (debitum) that he should lose it, this is not theft or robbery, which are forbidden by the Decalogue.' (1–2 q100 a8 ad3) This way of understanding the commandment has been followed in some modern English versions of the Decalogue. See, e.g., NRSV, REB, at *Exodus* 20:13. The sense of the Hebrew is not completely clear. See, e.g., Rylaarsdam in *IB* i ad loc.: 'The verb is not limited to murder in the criminal sense and may be used of unpremeditated killing (*Deut*. 4:22). It forbids all killing not explicitly authorized. This means that in Israelite society it did not forbid the slaying of animals, capital punishment, or the killing of enemies in war.' Stamm and Andrew, *TCRR* 99, after criticizing the rendering 'murder', have nothing more precise to suggest than 'illegal killing inimical to the community'.

[89] This systematic character of the natural law, as Suarez conceives it, may be contrasted with an intuitionist view, such as Clarke's or Price's, that recognizes independent, and possibly conflicting, self-evident and equally basic principles, each of which can be grasped by an independent act of intuition. According to an intuitionist view, we can grasp the principles of justice independently of grasping the principles of benevolence, and a further intuition is needed in case of conflict between the two sets of principles. See §§620, 823.

natural law; on the contrary, the natural law justifies the dissolution of such marriages by public authority.[90] The ends to which the precepts of natural law are directed warrant the dissolution of some marriages by public authority. This is not a concession that allows the violation of natural law for some other end, but a provision that promotes the ends of natural law.

Suarez's treatment of the precepts of natural law shows that he maintains their reliability even if he makes it more difficult to show that they are accessible or applicable. The teleological and rational character of natural law shows that it includes the reasonable moral judgments that lead us to doubt the simple and unqualified formulations of the precepts. Among these simple and unqualified formulations are those contained in the Decalogue. These Scriptural formulations do not fully express, but simply indicate, the underlying precepts of natural law.

446. Application of the Precepts

If this reasoning shows how the precepts of natural law are accessible to us, does it show that they are applicable to action? They are more difficult to apply than the unqualified precepts, because they require us to recognize what a 'just defence' might be, which is more difficult than recognizing whether we have borrowed something and the time has come at which we agreed to give it back. Suarez implies that the study of apparent exceptions that appear on reflexion to be justified, in the light of all the precepts of natural law, gives us a reasonable basis for recognizing the qualifications implicit in each precept. Consideration of the point of keeping promises, returning deposits, and so on reveals limits that we must recognize in the different precepts.

This view of the precepts of natural law affects Suarez's treatment of specific areas of moral perplexity, including the laws of war. One approach assumes that we have already established the precepts of natural law at a rather high level of abstraction; we know, for instance, that the natural law prohibits killing innocent people, and we examine the circumstances of war to see whether they warrant an exception to this general principle. This is not Suarez's approach. We have a reasonable prospect of grasping the precepts of natural law only when we have examined all the relevant circumstances to see how they affect the content of the precepts.

On the one hand, this may appear a rather flexible approach to the moral questions raised by war. Since we do not examine them in the light of principles whose content we already know, the cases we consider in examining war influence our view of what the relevant principles say. Hence they are part of the process of discovering the principles, not part of the process of applying principles we already know.

[90] 'The fact that such a dispensation may be granted by public authority is not contrary to the natural law, but in agreement with it, because nature itself is capable (if I may put it this way) of giving up its own right (ius) because of some greater good that even results in its own advantage. And because the administration of those rights (iurium) that belong to the common good of nature is committed to the power that has charge of the commonwealth, for that reason it is not against natural right (ius) that such an act <of entering into marriage> is dissolved by public authority.' (ii 14.20)

On the other hand, Suarez disallows a familiar means of allowing some moral flexibility in the treatment of war. We might say that in war the normal moral rules are suspended, so that the principles that normally determine the legitimacy of (say) killing or expropriation or deception do not guide our actions in this particular area. According to Suarez, nothing about war makes the ordinary precepts of natural law inapplicable. Hence we have to justify belligerent actions by considerations that we can show to be equally legitimate in other contexts.

If we recognize that the requirements of natural law may be complex, we cannot find them without careful attention to cases in which we see the need for some complication. Hence Suarez's view on natural law leads him directly into the discussion of 'cases of conscience'. His discussion of cases related to lying and deception illustrates his general outlook. He argues that cases of equivocation, ambiguity, and mental reservation should not be classified as lying, since those who speak ambiguously or incompletely (with mental reservation) assert what they really believe, though their audience does not take them to assert this.[91] Hence these misleading ways of speaking are not covered by the prohibition against lying (*Iur.* iii 11.4 = *OO* xiv 700b). But Suarez does not infer that they are permissible simply because they are not lies. Even if one says, strictly speaking, what one believes, the use of equivocation and ambiguity is wrong and contrary to the needs of human society, since it undermines the normal basis of communication. It is justified, however, in cases where one's interrogator has no right to ask the questions, and where one would be open to blame for giving an unequivocal answer.[92] If a dangerous armed intruder asks where his intended victim is, we ought to say 'I don't know', meaning 'I don't know anything I am required to tell you about this'.

Suarez does not apply this casuistical argument to purely imaginary cases. English Roman Catholics put it into practice when they were interrogated by a magistrate who (in their view) was asking questions beyond his legitimate authority.[93] The position Suarez defends was widely criticized, and it is an example of the sort of argument that gave casuistry, and especially Jesuit casuistry, a bad name. But the position is easier to dislike than to refute.[94] His permission for equivocation and reservation is carefully restricted. The restrictions are stated in rules that cannot be applied directly to practice without further moral reasoning. He might be criticized because he leaves room for dispute when he introduces 'necessity' and 'just cause'. But is not clear that such criticism would be justified; perhaps moral rules ought to leave room for further moral reasoning and possible dispute.

Suarez's conception of intrinsic goodness explains his attitude to precepts of natural law. Natural law prescribes what is intrinsically good, and therefore what is suitable for rational nature. The requirements of rational nature help us to see some of the qualifications that

[91] *De iuramenti praeceptis* iii 9.2 = *OO* xiv 695a.

[92] 'Still, one must be careful that people do not take from this excessive permission to speak or swear in this way; for that is without doubt contrary to good morals and contrary to the simplicity of speech, if I may so call it, that is necessary for human society. We must, therefore, add that this way of speaking through ambiguity (amphibologia), and especially by speech that is incomplete in the words uttered and in a way (quasi) completed by concepts, is not permitted, unless from some just cause and necessity, and unless otherwise something blameworthy would be done.' (*Iur.* iii 10.10 = *OO* xiv 699b)

[93] See Zagorin, *WL* 182–4.

[94] Kirk, *CP* 205–6, mentions some Protestant casuists who condemn the defence of mental reservation endorsed by Suarez, but do not seem to reject it so absolutely in their own treatment of cases.

are incorporated and understood in the different precepts of the natural law. Since these requirements underlie all the precepts of the natural law, they determine the demands of one precept in the light of the demands of other precepts.

447. Divine Dispensations from the Natural Law?

This discussion of exceptions to general rules shows us how to interpret apparent exceptions so that they are not contrary to principles of natural law, but only contrary to particular formulations of principles. Such an interpretation of apparent exceptions helps Suarez to explain apparent dispensations from natural law.

If it is necessary for God, given the creation of rational creatures, to impose obedience to the principles of natural law because of their intrinsic rightness, God is not free to dispense us from obedience to them.[95] Suarez therefore rejects Scotus' treatment of dispensations. He needs an alternative explanation of the admitted cases in which God either allows or requires someone to violate a common formulation of a precept of natural law; the explanation should show that God does not really dispense from the natural law, because these cases do not really violate natural law. The previous discussion of apparent exceptions to natural law helps Suarez to explain why precepts of the natural law are not subject to God's free will in a way that allows dispensations.

According to Scotus (as Suarez sees, ii 15.8), God cannot dispense us from the natural law, strictly construed; Scotus takes this to extend only to the first table of the Decalogue, from which God cannot dispense us without self-contradiction. God can dispense us, however, from the second table; its precepts are divine positive law that is 'very much in accord' with natural law. Since these precepts are not required by natural law, violation of them is allowed by natural law, and so God is free to dispense us from them.

In reply Suarez argues that the second table of the Decalogue contains the requirements of the natural law in our treatment of other people. We do not vindicate the possibility of dispensations simply by showing that the precepts of the second table, conceived as unqualified prohibitions of action-types described in entirely non-moral terms, have exceptions. The principles of natural law are not unqualified prohibitions of this sort. They declare what is intrinsically right and wrong given certain circumstances, and we need interpretation to find the relevant circumstances. The view that principles of natural law are dispensable, and the view that they are subject to modification by equity (discussed in ii 16) or any human legislation (ii 14), rest on the same error. We fail to understand the immutability of the natural law, if we do not see that it applies to actions in specific circumstances, not to unqualified action types.

Suarez, therefore, rejects an apparently plausible form of argument for dispensations. We might argue that since the natural law forbids killing, but killing is sometimes permissible (ii 15.13), the natural law is dispensable. Suarez replies that the natural law does not forbid

[95] Similarly, no human power can abrogate or dispense from the law of nature; '. . . the natural law, as far as all its precepts go, belongs to the natural properties of human beings. But human beings cannot change the natures of things' (ii 14.8).

all killing; the types of killing it forbids must be decided by interpretation in the light of the fact that all the principles of the natural law aim at promoting good and avoiding evil.

To show that God cannot dispense from observance of the second table of the Decalogue, Suarez argues that apparent dispensations result from a non-legislative action of God. Aquinas argues that the supposition of a dispensation from natural law involves a contradiction, because it requires us to say both that the action is due (debitum), as required by the natural law, and that it is not due, insofar as God's dispensation permits us not to do it.[96] His opponents argue that this argument simply assumes that God cannot dispense; for that is the only basis for the claim that the action we are dispensed from is still a duty. Since the question is about whether God can dispense. Aquinas simply argues in a circle (ii 15.16–17).

To show that Aquinas does not argue in a circle, Suarez distinguishes two sorts of duty (debitum). One is the duty arising from the law as an effect of it. If this were the only duty in question, Aquinas would be arguing in a circle. But that is not all Aquinas means by saying that we still have a duty to do the action from which God allegedly dispenses us. For he appeals to the duty that follows immediately from the intrinsic proportion between the object and the act compared to correct reason or to rational nature. In this case the action in question is intrinsically right or wrong. Hence the relevant duty is inseparable from the actions themselves, because it is antecedent to any law.[97] Since it is not imposed by any law, God cannot dispense anyone from it, since dispensation can only be from an obligation imposed by a law. In Suarez's terms, God's permission not to fulfil an obligation that God has imposed cannot dispense from a duty that exists independently of divine imposition.[98]

This argument alone does not show that God cannot dispense us from the natural law. It shows only that God's dispensation could not prevent the action from being intrinsically wrong. We might argue that if God dispenses, an action is intrinsically wrong, and hence violates one duty, but is permitted by God, and hence by a second duty, which is an obligation. This solution might seem to be suggested by Suarez's distinction between the two types of duty belonging to the natural law.

Such a solution is unwelcome to Scotus and Biel, who deny that God gives permission for intrinsically wrong actions. Biel, in contrast to Scotus, believes that God is free to permit such actions, and simply decides not to permit them.[99] The solution that allows God to permit intrinsically wrong actions might be more congenial to Ockham, who allows a possible

[96] In §§16–18 ff both Perena and ET translate 'debitum' by 'obligation', giving the impression that Suarez contradicts his normal view about obligation.

[97] 'This duty, however, is inseparable, not because it is not subject to dispensation (for that would be question-begging), but because it is assumed to exist in things themselves intrinsically before every extrinsic law, and therefore, given that the same things remain, it cannot be removed, because it does not depend on any extrinsic will, nor is it anything distinct, but it is a sort of wholly intrinsic mode, or a sort of relation that cannot be prevented, given that the foundation and term <of the relation> is assumed.' (ii 15.18)

[98] 'But granted that we imagine that the prohibition added by the will of God can be removed, still, it is entirely repugnant for what is in its own right and intrinsically bad to cease to be bad, because the nature of a thing cannot be changed. Hence such an action cannot be done freely without being a bad thing and discordant with rational nature, as we showed there from Aristotle and others.' (ii 15.4)

[99] See §379.

conflict between non-positive morality and divine positive morality. But it is difficult to identify non-positive morality, as Ockham conceives it, with intrinsic morality, as Suarez conceives it. For Ockham seems to believe that even non-positive morality expresses the ordered power of God, and so is subject to change within the unqualified power of God. If Suarez were to attribute to God the power to permit intrinsically wrong actions, he would allow a more direct conflict between the will of God and morality than any voluntarist accounts of dispensations have allowed.

Suarez rejects Scotus' view that violations of the moral law could be in accord with natural law. For the natural law prescribes, forbids, and permits actions insofar as they are intrinsically right, wrong, or neither.[100] It would be self-contradictory for the provisions of natural law to be determined both (i) solely by intrinsic right and wrong, and (ii) by God's dispensations.

This argument does not rule out all dispensations. We might argue that God's dispensation does not say that it is in accordance with the natural law to do something intrinsically wrong. It simply says that in this case we do not violate a duty to God if we violate the natural law. Hence the necessary connexion between natural law and intrinsic right and wrong does not show that God cannot dispense from natural law.

To close this loophole for dispensations, Suarez must claim that God necessarily prescribes and prohibits in accordance with intrinsic wrong and right. Hence, since God prescribes obedience to the natural law, God leaves no room for dispensations from it; there would be room for them only if God prescribed obedience to natural law as a positive divine law. In prescribing obedience to a positive law, God does not prescribe or prohibit on any specific basis, and hence it is up to God to change the prescriptions. But in prescribing obedience to the natural law, God prescribes on the basis of intrinsic right and wrong. Hence God would violate the will expressed in prescribing the natural law if God were free to dispense us from its provisions.

Once he has rejected dispensations, Suarez tries to explain the appearance of dispensations. Dispensations embody a legislator's permission to violate the provisions of a law, but God can alter our moral situation without granting dispensations, For God is not only supreme legislator, but also supreme owner (dominus) and supreme judge. Apparent dispensations really result from God's exercise of the powers of an owner or a judge.[101] The standard examples of Abraham and Isaac, the spoiling of the Egyptians, and Hosea are used to illustrate this explanation of apparent dispensations.

Our examination of Suarez's attitude to dispensations shows how far he accepts voluntarism about the will of God and the natural law. He believes that the obligation imposed by the natural law requires a command expressing God's legislative will, but he intends this point to clarify his strict concepts of law and obligation. Though he disagrees with Aquinas on this point, he accepts the further claims of Aquinas that Scotus and Ockham oppose. He claims that actions are intrinsically right and wrong, and hence are the source of duties, apart from any divine command; God necessarily prescribes and forbids these actions because

[100] 'For, as has often been said, the natural law prohibits those things that are bad in their own right, in so far as they are such. And therefore it assumes in the objects or acts themselves an intrinsic duty.' (ii 15.18)

[101] 'Whenever, therefore, God makes permitted an action that by right (ius) of nature appeared to be prohibited, he never does so as a pure legislator, but by using some other power. For that reason he does not dispense.' (ii 15.19)

they are intrinsically right and wrong. Suarez denies, therefore, that morality depends on divine commands.

448. The Natural Law and the Law of Nations

Suarez's exploration of the higher and lower provisions of the natural law leads him into a disagreement with Aquinas over the relation of the 'law' or 'right' (ius) of nations to the natural law. Suarez's views about the extent of law are stricter than Aquinas' views; this is one source of his disagreement with Aquinas about the necessary conditions for the existence of a natural law. Suarez recognizes two distinct sources of the validity of natural law: (1) It is not valid as law unless it expresses the will of the legislator who prescribes it. (2) It is not natural law unless it expresses intrinsic right and wrong. Recognition of different sources of validity also clarifies the status of the law of nations (ius gentium), which belongs to positive law, not to the natural law (*Leg*. ii 19.8). Suarez uses 'law of nations' to refer to two sets of laws: (1) laws common to different nations; and (2) the proper subset of these laws that governs relations between nations. Laws belonging to this second category of the law of nations constitute 'international law', and these include the laws of war.

If the law of nations is positive and not natural, we might infer that all of its provisions owe whatever moral force they have to the fact that they result from some sort of human legislation. If, then, justice in relation to war is a part of the common positive law of nations, different legislation seems to make different kinds of war just and unjust. Suarez, however, qualifies the positive character of the law of nations, by describing it as 'a sort of intermediate' (veluti medium) between natural and civil law (ii 20.10). Though it differs essentially from the natural law, it nonetheless agrees with it on many points (ii 19.1).

Aquinas seems to say, as Suarez acknowledges, that the provisions of the law of nations are conclusions from the higher principles of the law of nature (*ST* 1–2 q95 a4). Indeed, he argues that the provisions of the law of nations are derived from the social nature of human beings. If he is right, the provisions of the law of nations seem to be simply subordinate principles of the natural law, and hence impose duties—with appropriate allowance for circumstances and conditions—in the same way as other subordinate principles do. But if this is what Aquinas means, it is puzzling that he regards the law of nations as positive law; for conclusions from principles of natural law are not merely positive law.

In response to this difficulty in Aquinas, Suarez argues that the law of nations is simply positive law, not part of the natural law (*Leg*. ii 19.3).[102] It is not based on written statues, but on custom (ii 19.6). To explain Aquinas' apparently contrary opinion, Suarez suggests that Aquinas is speaking of 'conclusions' in an extended sense (ii 20.2). Some of the puzzles about Aquinas' position are removed by a distinction he draws when he first distinguishes human positive law from natural law. He says that in this human positive law we can find both conclusions and determinations of natural law. Conclusions have their

[102] The law of nations is positive law; 'The negative precepts of the right of nations do not prohibit something because it is bad in its own right—for that [sc. being bad in its own right] is purely natural. Hence, on the side of human reason, the right of nations does not simply reveal badness, but constitutes it. Therefore, it does not prohibit bad things because they are bad, but by prohibiting makes them bad things.' (ii 19.2)

force from something more than human enactment, whereas determinations rest simply on human enactment.[103] They are enacted, by explicit statute or by custom, as part of positive law.

Aquinas' conception of the law of nations is similar to Suarez's conception of the law of nature, insofar as it has two sources of its 'force' (vigor) and of the duties that it requires. Just as Suarez takes natural law to include a divine command, Aquinas takes the law of nations to require more than derivation from the law of nature; it must also be part of positive law. A conclusion from the law of nature that is not recognized by the common custom of the nations cannot belong to the law of nations.

Suarez draws a somewhat similar distinction in his own account of the law of nations.[104] In the case of civil law, something needs to be done to fulfil the requirements of natural law, but it can be done more than one way, and there is no reason to choose this way over that way (as with the rule of the road), or else the reason for choosing this way of fulfilling the law is quite local, referring to the specific circumstances of a particular people. In the case of the law of nations, however, the reason for having this particular rule is clear from the law of nature and rests on considerations that apply to human beings universally. Though the deduction from natural law is not evident, since the rule is not absolutely necessary for right practices, it still fits nature, and the rule is readily agreed on by all (ii 19.9).

Given Suarez's conception of the subordinate precepts of natural law, the law of nations introduces no dispensations from, or exceptions to, natural law. For natural law specifies what is intrinsically right and in accordance with human nature; if any positive law recognized exceptions to natural law, it would permit intrinsically wrong actions, but these actions cannot be morally justified. Still, the provisions of the law of nations cannot be required by intrinsic rightness and appropriateness to human nature; if they were required, they would be part of natural law.[105]

[103] 'Both <conclusion and determination> therefore, are found in the human law. But things of the first sort are contained in human law not as simply laid down by law, but they have some force from the natural law also. But things of the second sort have their force from human law alone.' (*ST* 1–2 q95 a2)

[104] 'For in civil or private right (ius), a determination takes place either (1) that is merely arbitrary, about which it is said that "what pleased the prince has the force of law", not because his will alone suffices as a reason, but because that determination would be rational, if made in different ways, and often there is no reason why it should be made this way rather than that, and thus it is said to be made by will rather than by reason; or (2) certainly when some special reason intervenes, it is considered in relation to the particular and (so to speak) material circumstances, and thus the determination is more in the circumstances than in the substance. But by the right of nations, precepts are more general, because in them the utility of all nature, and conformity to the first and universal principles of nature, is considered. And for that reason they are called conclusions reached from those <first principles>, because from the power of natural discourse appear at once the suitability and moral utility of such precepts, and this <suitability and moral utility> has led human beings to introduce such moral practices (mores), more by the demand of necessity than by will, as the Emperor Justinian has said.' (ii 20.2)

[105] Suarez rejects some inadequate reasons for distinguishing the law of nations from natural law itself. The mere fact that some provisions of natural law presuppose the existence of human society, or private property, does not make them any less provisions of natural law, since, for the reasons we have seen, the subordinate principles of natural law must include a reference to the relevant circumstances: 'Therefore, in order to distinguish the law of nations from natural law, it is necessary that, even when a given sort of material is presupposed, it does not follow through an evident inference, but through a less certain inference, in such a way that human judgment (arbitrium) and moral expediency (commoditas) rather than necessity, intervene. In my opinion, therefore, we must conclude that the law of nations does not prescribe anything as being from itself necessary for rightness (honestas), nor prohibit anything that is bad in its own right and intrinsically—either <bad> without qualification or <bad> on the supposition of a given state and condition of things . . .' (ii 17.9)

The law of nations, like civil law, differs from natural law because it does not prescribe or forbid something as intrinsically right or wrong.[106] But, in contrast to civil law, it is established by 'custom' or 'practice' (usus, ii 19.1; 6), not by formal acts of legislation. This custom is nonetheless legislative; it does not presuppose that this course of action is intrinsically right, but makes it right because of the custom.[107]

Within this law of nations Suarez distinguishes the laws that different nations have in common for dealing with their internal affairs from those that they have in common for dealing with one another; the latter set of laws constitutes 'the law that all peoples and the different nations ought (debent) to maintain between them' (ii 19.8). Some examples illustrate this international aspect of the law of nations: the immunity of ambassadors; free trade between individuals in different states; the law of war; slavery as a punishment for the defeated side in a war; and truces and treaties of peace.

In these cases, natural reason, seeking to discover the implications of natural law, finds some principles to guide international relations, but it cannot give complete answers.[108] A provision of the law of nations rests on three claims about the law of nature: (1) It is intrinsically right to achieve F. (2) It is equally right to achieve F by doing G or by doing H. (3) It is intrinsically right to make an agreement to do G rather than H or to do H rather than G. None of these three claims is subject to human agreement or decision, but human agreement enters in choosing G rather than H.

In this respect civil law shares the positive character of the law of nations. The preservation of life and health requires some rule of the road. It neither favours driving on the left nor favours driving on the right. But it certainly favours driving on the side that is prescribed by positive law. Once the positive law exists, natural law requires a specific type of action—different in different places (driving on the left in Japan, but on the right in the USA)—that it would not require otherwise. Similarly, natural law does not require the

[106] 'Hence, on the side of human reason, the law of nations does not simply present badness, but constitutes it; and therefore it does not prohibit bad things because they are bad, but by prohibiting them makes them bad.' (ii 19.2)

[107] Circumstantial dependence does not prevent an action from being intrinsically right or wrong; for, as we have seen, Suarez takes intrinsic rightness and wrongness to belong not to action types described without reference to circumstances, but to action types including all the circumstances that are relevant to appropriateness to rational nature. To fall outside the law of nature a precept must include some further uncertainty. This description, taken by itself, might suggest that a precept falls inside or outside natural law because of its degree of certainty. This seems to be a misleading suggestion. We might not be certain whether the good of human society and of rational nature is advanced by supporting the nuclear family or by encouraging communal upbringing of children (as in Plato's *Republic* or in an Israeli kibbutz). But our uncertainty does not by itself make it false that one sort of arrangement is better than the other. If research and experience prove that one arrangement is better, we have not caused it to be required by natural law; it has been required by natural law all along, and we have just discovered that is required. If we take uncertainty to be sufficient to place a precept within positive law, we violate Suarez's claim that no part of the law of nations prescribes what is intrinsically good; for, despite our uncertainty, some precepts might prescribe what is in fact required by natural law. Once we see that Suarez ought not to be relying on mere uncertainty, we can look for a more satisfactory interpretation of his remarks on the role of human judgment.

[108] 'For this reason they [sc. nations] need some law (ius) to rule them and direct them correctly in this sort of communication and association. And although this comes about to a large degree through natural reason, this is not sufficient and immediate on all questions; and so some special laws could be introduced by the practice of these nations. And this is especially so, because the things belonging to this law are few, very close to natural law, and allow a very easy inference from that law, and one that is so useful and so agreeable to nature itself that, granted that there is no evident inference, as being in itself altogether necessary for rightness of conduct, it is still highly appropriate to nature, and in itself acceptable to everyone.' (ii 19.9)

specific institution of immunity for ambassadors, or slavery as a means of punishment. Other means of communication or punishment could have been devised. The established ways are the right ways to communicate or to punish only because of the general agreement that has established the universal or usual practice.

Suarez believes nevertheless that natural law is relevant to the content of the different practices that belong to the law of nations. The unity of the human race implies a natural requirement.[109] Though each state is a complete community in itself, it is nonetheless a member of the moral and political universe, and therefore subject to moral requirements. Natural law is relevant not only because different states need to co-operate for their own advantage, but also because of a prior moral duty derived from mutual love and mercy.

Suarez believes, therefore, that the law of nations is positive law, but closely connected to the provisions of natural law. The provisions of the law of nations are similar to the provisions of the law of nature, insofar as they result from consideration of what is intrinsically right in the relevant circumstances. But since this consideration shows that we need to make an agreement and establish a custom, our conclusion requires us to establish a course of action that is right because it is commanded, not commanded because it is right. Nonetheless, the provisions of the law of nations must conform to natural law.[110] If we correctly judge that both G and H are ways of achieving an intrinsically right result F, the disjunctive requirement of doing either G or H is right. Suarez's point is that neither doing G rather than H nor doing H rather than G can be defended as intrinsically right, but it is right to do one or the other. It is the choice between these two courses of action that is a matter of practice rather than intrinsic rightness.

The law of nations, however, also permits some actions that are contrary to the natural law; for instance, it permits prostitution and a moderate degree of deception in business dealings, even though these actions are evils prohibited by the natural law (ii 20.3). Not every action prohibited by natural law is also prohibited by the law of nations.

How is this claim to be reconciled with the close connexion that Suarez sees between the law of nature and the law of nations? He argues that though the natural law prohibits prostitution, it does not require positive law prohibiting prostitution, but, on the contrary, justifies us in not legislating against prostitution. Hence it is a conclusion from the law of nature that there ought to be no positive law against prostitution; hence the law of nations contains no such positive law. The absence of this positive law does not make the practice of prostitution right. In this case the reasons for refraining from positive legislation appeal to

[109] '. . . the human race, however much divided into different peoples and kingdoms, always has some unity, not only specific, but also, one might say, political and moral; this is indicated by the natural precept of mutual love and mercy, which extends to all people, even to foreigners and to people of every nation. Therefore, granted that any complete state (civitas), either commonwealth or kingdom, is a complete community in itself and consisting of its own members, nonetheless any of them is also a member in a certain way of this universal community, insofar as it relates to the human race. For these communities are never so self-sufficient individually that they have no need of some mutual help, society, and communication, sometimes for their own greater well-being and greater advantage, but also sometimes because of moral necessity and need, as is shown by past practice' (ii 19.9).

[110] '. . . equity and justice must be maintained in the precepts of the law of nations. For this belongs to the character of every law that is a true law, as has been shown above; and the laws that belong to the law of nations are true laws, as has already been explained, and are nearer than civil laws are to natural law; hence it is impossible for them to be contrary to natural equity . . .' (ii 20.3).

the 'fragility and condition of human beings or transactions'.[111] An argument from higher principles of natural law, including the relevant facts about human beings, shows not that these actions are right, but that it is right for positive law to permit them.[112]

This apparent divergence between the law of nations and the law of nature helps to clarify Suarez's position, and to show how he basically agrees with Aquinas. He follows Aquinas in believing that the principles of natural law justify relatively specific conclusions about rules of moral and social behaviour. The positive character of the law of nations does not constitute an objection to this belief about natural law; on the contrary, natural law justifies the existence of the positive law of nations and the ways in which the provisions of the law of nations differ from those of natural law.

449. Natural Law and the Basis of Political Society

Suarez follows Aquinas in believing that a political society (a civitas), no less than smaller social groups, is to be justified by appeal to the law of nature, and, more specifically, to the social nature of human beings.[113] This social nature is the source of our need for positive law (i 3.19–20).[114] Human nature is fulfilled by the different virtues, including justice in relations with other people. The demand for just relations with others is a demand of the law of nature prior to any state or civil law, and the state is needed to fulfil this demand.

Since Suarez derives the state from the law of nature in general, he recognizes no special or overriding claim for self-preservation. He does not suggest, for instance, that the laws of nature incline us towards accepting a state simply because of the dangers and threats to physical security in any condition without a state. They make more specific demands on a state, so that a state does not necessarily fulfil the requirements of the law of nature by ensuring the physical security of its members.

For similar reasons, Suarez does not agree that a state or a government is at liberty to do whatever promotes safety and self-preservation. He takes this view about the liberty of a state to be Machiavelli's view, and he devotes a chapter to refuting it (iii 12). In Suarez's view, Machiavelli wrongly supposes that the preservation of the common weal (res publica) is secured by the preservation of the regime, and that everything promoting this end is to be accepted.[115] This position would be reasonable only if the preservation of a regime could

[111] '. . . this very permission may be so necessary, given the frailty and condition of human beings or transactions, that practically all nations agree in maintaining it' (ii 20.3).

[112] Cf. Melanchthon on toleration of error, §412.

[113] At ii 8.4 Suarez follows Aquinas in tracing different aspects of natural law to different aspects of human nature, living, animal, and rational.

[114] 'For <that necessity of law> is founded on this, that a human being is a sociable animal, demanding by his nature a civil life and communication with other human beings. And for that reason it is necessary that he should live correctly, not only in so far as he is a private person, but also in so far as he is a part of a community.' (i 3.19)

[115] '<According to this view>, the subject matter of the laws is that which serves the political order and its maintenance or increase; and directed towards this end these laws are enacted, whether true rightness is found in them, or only pretended and apparent rightness, by concealing even unjust actions, if they are useful to the temporal commonwealth. This is the teaching of politicians of this age; Machiavelli above all has tried to persuade secular leaders of it. It is founded solely on this claim, that the temporal commonwealth cannot be maintained in any other way.' (iii 12.2)

be given absolute priority over every other demand of natural law. But Suarez's conception of natural law assigns no such absolute priority to the preservation of a particular state, or even to the preservation of one's own life, without regard to the other goods and virtues that natural law maintains.

Suarez's answer relies on the prior validity of natural law and the different duties it imposes. Since these duties include more than the preservation of the state, Machiavelli's position cannot be sustained by appeal to the natural law. And since the natural law is prior to civil law, civil law cannot impose a valid obligation that is contrary to natural law (iii 12.4). Hence Suarez endorses the apostles' view that 'we must obey God rather than human beings' (iii 12.5; *Acts* 5:29).

These features of Suarez's views about political society are worth attention not because they are new, but because they are familiar from Aristotle and Aquinas. His contribution is to make clear their implications in the face of the questions, objections, and alternative views presented in Aquinas' successors, including Suarez's own contemporaries. It is useful to keep them in mind so that we can contrast them with the sharply opposed position of Hobbes, and with the more ambiguous positions of Grotius and Pufendorf.[116]

450. The Law of War as Part of the Law of Nations

It is useful to illustrate some of the more specific applications of Suarez's views about natural law and the law of nations by considering his treatment of the law of war, which is part of the law of nations. An account of the rights and wrongs of war is needed to counter the Machiavellian view that war is simply an instrument of national policy, and hence to be judged simply by its effectiveness.[117] This view ignores the fact that war threatens human welfare. A threat to human welfare constitutes a presumption against war, and hence brings it into the area of natural law.

Nonetheless, questions about the legitimacy of war and of particular practices within war cannot be decided simply by appeal to natural law. For natural law does not require resort to war rather than arbitration.[118] On the contrary: the contending parties ought to submit their

[116] On Suarez's political theory, and especially the role of consent see Sommerville, 'Suarez to Filmer', esp. 534, who argues that Suarez has a more radical constitutionalist view than is sometimes thought. Since Suarez regards the state as essentially aiming at the public good, he argues that it is legitimate for the community to depose a ruler who acts against the public good. A law professing to authorize a ruler to do what he likes, even against the public good, would not meet the conditions of *Leg*. i 6 for being a genuine law, and so citizens could not be obliged to obey it. See also Skinner, *FMPT* ii 158–66; Hamilton, *PTSS* 62; Tuck, *NRT* 56–7.

[117] 'There was an old error current among the Gentiles, who thought that the laws (iura) of nations rested on arms, and that it was permissible to make war simply to acquire reputation and wealth. This view, even from the point of view of natural reason, is most absurd . . . No war can be just unless it relies on a lawful and necessary cause . . . This just and sufficient cause is a serious injury that has been inflicted, and that cannot be punished or compensated in any other way. . . . A war is permissible so that a commonwealth can guard itself against loss. Otherwise war tends against the good of humankind, because of the deaths, loss of property, etc. If then, that <just and sufficient> cause ceases, the justice of the war will also cease.' (*De Bello* 4.1)

[118] We could have formed a practice of always submitting disputes to arbitration and abiding by the results of the arbitration. But war is 'more in agreement with nature' than arbitration by third parties would have been. Presumably Suarez does not mean that it is more in accord with natural law—for in that case it would be part of natural law, not of the law of nations. Probably, then, he means that it is more in accordance with tendencies in human nature. He clarifies

dispute to 'the arbitration of good men' (*De Bello* 6.5).[119] The duty of recourse to arbitration rests on the natural law, and hence on what is appropriate for rational nature. States do not often resort to arbitration, because they are suspicious of the potential arbitrators (6.6). This may be why Suarez maintains that the practice of resort to war is more in accordance with natural law than resort to arbitration would be. But he acknowledges that resort to arbitration, in cases where the arbitrators are not open to suspicion, is better than resort to war.

For similar reasons, Suarez believes that war is needed for the punishment of injuries.[120] Different states do not agree in acknowledging experts who are sufficiently wise and impartial to find the right solution to their disputes; nor do they recognize any common authority with the right and the power to enforce such a solution. Hence each state is both advocate and judge in its own cause.[121] But though a state cannot normally resort to an independent arbitrator in the confidence that the other party to the dispute will accept the result of arbitration, it is nonetheless required to inquire carefully by consulting 'prudent and learned' advisers (6.6).

Suarez allows defensive war to prevent our being victims of aggression. He also allows aggressive war (1.6), in cases where we are not being attacked by another, in order to punish another state for infliction of an injury, if the other state is not willing to give just satisfaction for the injury (4.5).

In these grounds for war Suarez gives no permission for pre-emptive strikes against an enemy. One might argue that they are covered by the right of self-defence in cases where one can be appropriately certain that an attack is imminent, rather than simply believing that the other side is dangerous. The only other ground that he recognizes besides self-defence is punitive. A pre-emptive punitive attack would constitute an attempt to prevent a prospective wrongdoing.

this point in his discussion of the certainty required about the justice of a cause of war: '. . . the law of war, in so far as it is founded on the power possessed by one commonwealth or a supreme monarchy either for punishment and retribution or for reparation for the injury inflicted on itself by a second <state>, seems properly to belong to the law of nations. For from the force of rational nature alone it was not necessary for this power to lie in the commonwealth that suffered the injury; for human beings could have set up another means of retribution, or committed this power to some third ruler as a sort of arbitrator with power to coerce. Still, because the present way <of exacting retribution> that is now followed is easier, and more in agreement with nature, it has been introduced by custom, and is just in such a way that it cannot be lawfully resisted' (*Leg.* ii 19.8).

[119] 'For they are required to avoid war by morally right (honesta) means, as far as they can. Therefore, if no danger of injustice is to be feared, this [sc. arbitration] is the best means, and hence is to be embraced. This opinion is confirmed. For it is impossible that the author of nature should have left human affairs, which are more often governed by conjectures than by certain reason, in such a state that all disputes between supreme rulers and between commonwealths had to be ended only through war. For that is contrary to prudence and to the common good of humankind, and therefore contrary to justice. Moreover in that case the more powerful side would, according to rule (regulariter), have the greater right (ius), and to that extent the right would have to be measured by arms, which is quite clearly barbarous and absurd.' (*De Bello* 6.5)

[120] '. . . just as within a commonwealth some lawful power to punish crimes is necessary to the preservation of peace, so also in the world as a whole, so that different commonwealths may live in peace, some power is necessary for the punishing of injuries inflicted by one on another. But this power is not present in any superior, because they have none, as we assume. Hence it must be present in the supreme ruler of the injured commonwealth, to whom another ruler is subject because of the crime. Hence a war of this sort was introduced in place of a court assigning just punishment' (4.5).

[121] 'The cause is simply that this act of punitive justice was necessary for humankind, and, naturally and in the human way, no more suitable means could be given, especially because we must anticipate, before the war, the contumacy of the offending party, refusing to give satisfaction—for in that case <the offending party> has only himself to blame if he is subject to the one whom he has offended.' (4.7)

Suarez rejects such attempts. He discusses the justice of killing enemy non-combatants who might be capable of bearing arms and who might renew a war. He argues that this practice is no more justified than pre-emptive punishment would be within a state.[122] Similarly, pre-emptive war would have to be aimed against injustice that is not imminent, but merely prospective. A purely judicial and punitive rationale for aggressive war does not support a war that would violate the ordinary restrictions on punishment.

Is it unreasonably narrow of Suarez to consider only a punitive justification for aggressive war? Should he not also consider a preventive justification? One might argue that in a public health emergency we would be justified in isolating the carriers of a disease, in order to protect other people, even though we might thereby reduce the victims' chances of recovery. Could we not offer the same sort of defence for an aggressive war? Perhaps the enemy is not yet guilty of any specific violation, but we are protecting more innocent people from the danger presented by the enemy.

To see how Suarez might answer this objection and defend his narrow justification for aggressive war, we may consider his views about the threshold for any justifiable war. He sees a presumption against war that needs to be overcome.[123] Since it is certain in advance that a war involves great evils, a justification for a war must offer a sufficient degree of practical confidence that it is necessary for the avoidance of still greater evils. Suarez rejects the demand for complete 'moral certainty' (4.10), but still demands 'the maximum certainty that he [sc. the ruler] can obtain'.

These demands on a legitimate cause of war make it difficult to see how a purely pre-emptive war to avoid a prospective injury could be justified. We have strong reasons for avoiding punishment for merely prospective offences. Given these strong reasons, in addition to the admitted evils involved in war, the credible threat of punitive aggression is preferable to pre-emptive aggression. This is why we do not imprison or punish people simply as a pre-emptive measure.

451. Sedition and Rebellion

Suarez does not believe that war between sovereign states involves the suspension of ordinary moral principles. He therefore argues that the same principles apply to violent conflict within a state. In his view, this is justified within the moral limits that also apply to wars between states. The obligation of obedience and non-resistance to a sovereign is limited; Suarez even defends rebellion and tyrannicide in some circumstances. This aspect of his views did not make Suarez popular in England or France in the early 17th century.[124]

[122] '... no one may be punished for a prospective sin, if he does not otherwise deserve death, especially because that presumption <of prospective sin> does not seem sufficient for killing human beings, since especially in a criminal trial there ought to be sufficient proofs, and rather <than being presumed guilty> he who is not proved guilty is presumed to be innocent' (7.16).

[123] '... while a war is not in itself evil, nevertheless, on account of the many disadvantages that it brings with it, it is one of those undertakings that are often executed in an evil way. And that is why it also needs many circumstances to make it right' (1.7).

[124] On the reception of Suarez's *DFC* in England and France, see De Scorraille, *FS* ii 189–216. The book was burnt at St Paul's Cross; it was also condemned by the Parlement of Paris and burnt. James I required William Talbort to say

An aggressive war against the ruler of one's own state is justifiable in the appropriate circumstances, if it meets the normal conditions for a just war. Suarez takes it to be obvious that defence against injury by the ruler is justified. He takes it to be easy to justify aggressive action against a tyrant who has no just claim to be the ruler (8.2). It is more difficult to justify aggression against a second kind of tyrant—a ruler who has a just claim to be ruler, but abuses his power and acts unjustly. In this case Suarez holds that individuals have no right to take aggressive action. He relies on the general principle that the common good requires that only a sovereign should have the authority to attack a sovereign (8.2). But in some cases the whole commonwealth (respublica) has the right of revolt against a legitimate ruler acting tyrannically.[125] If the ruler is clearly behaving tyrannically, the commonwealth as a whole has the right to exercise the power that it retained when it made him the ruler. The commonwealth gave him this right and power on the condition of ruling 'politically'.[126]

Natural law requires some sort of government because it requires the promotion of the common good. Since human beings have a common good, and since the uncoordinated actions of individuals do not achieve the common good, some special provision for it is needed.[127] Though individual human beings are not naturally subject to political rule, they are naturally 'subjectible' (subiicibilis) to it (*Leg*. iii 1.11). The role for human agreement is similar to the role we have already discussed in the law of nations. Natural law does not impose a government independently of human agreement; but it requires us (in normal conditions) to agree to set up a government, and therefore requires us to obey it once we have set it up.

But who are the 'we' who set up a government? In Suarez's view, the legislative power belongs directly to a 'collection' of human beings. It cannot belong to an individual or group unless the 'community' to which it originally belongs has transferred it (iii 2.3). This account might appear to assume the very fact it is supposed to explain. For it seems to assume that some sort of human community is the body that makes the agreement to set up a ruler. But how can we have a community capable of making such an agreement unless we already have a political community with some sort of ruler?

Suarez answers this objection by distinguishing two ways of looking at human beings without government. We can consider them as a mere 'aggregate' (aggregatum quoddam) of individuals with their individual concerns. No legislative power is proper to this collection

what he thought of Suarez's views on the obligations of the subjects of a tyrant deposed by the Pope, before he released him from the Tower. When Talbort did not condemn it, he was given life imprisonment. When John Ogilvie, a Scottish Jesuit, was interrogated, he was also asked to denounce Suarez's views, and refused to do so.

[125] 'The reason is that in this case the whole commonwealth is superior to the king; for since it gave him power, it is regarded as having given it on the condition that he would rule politically, not tyrannically, and if he did not, he could be deposed by the commonwealth.' (8.2)

[126] We might suppose that the ruler is established by a real or implied agreement that requires him to observe the laws and constitution, and that this observance constitutes ruling politically. Suarez, however, does not explain the relation between the ruler and the people in this way.

[127] 'For each individual member has a care for its individual advantage, and these are often opposed to the common good. And sometimes many things are necessary for the common good, which do not belong in the same way to individuals; and though they may at times belong to an individual, he provides for them not because they are common, but because they are proper to him. Therefore in a complete community, a public power is necessary to which it belongs as a matter of duty (ex officio) to aim at and to provide for the common good.' (*Leg*. iii 1.5)

of human beings; they have only the root of it (quasi radicaliter, iii 2.4). We must consider them in another way, so that even without an actual government, a group of people may form a single political community and 'mystical body'.[128] To form a single body, people need not individually want to set up a government, and they need not make a promise or agreement to set it up. Suarez assumes a less specific shared desire and aim. The human good requires promotion of a common good, and hence requires some agent with the specific task of promoting it. Insofar as human beings recognize a common good, and will an effective means of promoting it, they have a common will that makes a single community.

This common will makes it reasonable for them to agree on constituting some agent with the specific task of promoting the common good. This is the 'special will or common consent' that makes a single political body, and hence makes a body capable of placing its legislative power in some agent with the special task of promoting the common good. Common consent is not necessarily explicit consent to a particular ruler or regime. Suarez does not take such consent to be necessary for a legitimate ruler. He allows tacit or presumed consent, to explain why a ruler who initially rules by tyrannical force may in time acquire legitimate legislative power (iii 4.4). In the case of conquest through a just war, the subject people are required (tenetur) to obey their new ruler. In this case also, according to Suarez, we can see consent, either explicit or owed (debitum, 4.4).

Suarez does not recognize the validity of any complete and unconditional transfer of legislative power to a ruler. Breach of the conditions on which power has been transferred is a justification for the community—in contrast to a private individual—to rebel against a ruler.[129] Even if James VI and I—Suarez's immediate target—could persuade the English people, freely and without coercion, to agree to a complete and unconditional transfer of legislative power, such an agreement would not be binding. If it is not invalid because of ignorance or coercion, it still fails to bind, because it is unjust.

To see why any such agreement would be unjust, and therefore could not cancel the exception that is always understood in any transference of power, we need to return to the sort of common consent that Suarez takes to be the basis of legislative power. The common consent was consent to the promotion of the common good that needs to be promoted by an agent with this specific task. This common consent is justified by appeal to natural law, because it aims at the common good. Any agreement that violated the necessary conditions for a legislative power aiming at the common good would violate the initial common consent. Even if it could obtain actual consent, this would not matter, because such consent would be contrary to the natural law. The aspect of the natural law that is

[128] 'A multitude of human beings should therefore be considered in another way in so far as they are gathered together by a special will or common consent into one political body by one bond of association (societas), and in order to give one another help directed to a single political end. In this way they make one mystical body that can be said, from a moral point of view, to be one in its own right; and this body therefore needs a single head'. (iii 2.4)

[129] 'If, then, a lawful ruler is ruling tyrannically, and if the kingdom has available no other remedy for defending itself, except the expulsion and deposition of the king, the whole commonwealth, acting on the public and common advice of the cities and leaders, will be allowed to depose him. This is true both by virtue of natural law, by which it is permissible to repel force with force, and also because this situation, needed for the preservation of the commonwealth itself, is always understood to be excepted in that first agreement by which the commonwealth transferred its power to the king.' (*DFC* vi 4.15)

relevant is intrinsic morality, specifying what is suitable for rational and social agents. Suarez's naturalism about morality informs not only his meta-ethics, but also the concrete applications of his moral theory to political questions.

To grasp the role of common consent, we should look more closely at what the political community gives to the ruler. One might expect Suarez to argue that, since the original legislative power belongs to the political community as a whole, and not to any specific government, the government is simply an agent or delegate of the community, and therefore subject to dismissal at the discretion of the people. Suarez, however, denies that all legislative power is delegated by the people. He argues that the community can give away its legislative power to a government, so that the government is not necessarily bound by its own laws, and does not need to seek the continued approval of the community. In such a case the ruler has 'ordinary' power, and not merely 'delegated' power (4.9), and hence the ruler is entitled to delegate power to a subordinate without any special permission from the community.

On this point, Suarez rejects one element of democratic theory; he does not take the moral basis of political society and government to require a conception of legislative power as delegation. But his claims about the transfer of legislative power do not lead him to conclude that the common consent of the community becomes irrelevant once it has established a ruler with ordinary power. A hereditary ruler, for instance, inherits ordinary power together with the conditions on which the ordinary power was originally transferred (4.3). A community cannot transfer legislative power unconditionally; hence it cannot irrevocably abandon any power to restrain or to replace its rulers.

452. The Separation of Morality from Natural Law

Our discussion suggests that Suarez does not differ from Aquinas in any essential point about the nature and basis of morality. His disagreement about the role of divine commands in the natural law does not affect his view about the moral foundation of the natural law, and, in particular, does not lead him to maintain that morality depends on divine commands. In claiming that moral goodness is fixed by rational nature, he follows Aquinas' naturalism. Moreover, in claiming that we are rationally concerned about moral goodness because we aim at our ultimate end, and our ultimate end is realizing our rational nature, he accepts Aquinas' combination of eudaemonism with naturalism. On these basic points, then, he is a traditional moralist, insofar as he stands in the tradition that includes Aquinas. The naturalist and eudaemonist aspects of his conception of goodness and rightness, as opposed to the voluntarist aspects of his conception of natural law, are the essential features of his theory of morality.

We can sum up some of the specific points we have discussed about Suarez by considering the sense in which he is a 'natural-law theorist'. He is clearly a natural-law theorist in the straightforward sense of believing in natural law. One might also say that he is a natural-law theorist to a greater degree than Aquinas and Scotus are, since he has more to say about it, and in particular has a more precise account of what makes it genuine law. It does not follow, however, that natural law is theoretically more important or basic in Suarez, or

that his conception of it radically changes the character of his moral theory. The length of his treatment reflects the controversy among Aquinas' successors about the character of natural law and its relation to divine freewill and divine commands. Suarez has to deal with articulated options that do not confront Aquinas.

His examination of the issues about natural law results in some major differences from Aquinas. His view that law and obligation rest on command and on will partly reflects his disagreement with Aquinas about the relation of command to will and to intellect. This disagreement helps to explain Suarez's relatively narrow conception of law, in contrast to Aquinas' view that our share in divine providence also gives us a grasp of divine law.

In moral philosophy, however, Suarez does not take natural law to be theoretically fundamental. His imperative conception of natural law as requiring divine commands is not intended to show that morality requires divine commands. He distinguishes morality, which is independent of divine commands, from natural law, which depends on them. He is not a 'natural-law theorist', if such a theorist gives theoretical priority to natural law in an account of morality. His elaborate discussion of natural law really has the opposite effect. For since he believes that natural law essentially depends on divine commands, and that moral right and wrong do not essentially depend on divine commands, he believes that moral right and wrong do not essentially depend on natural law, but are prior to it. He rejects the view, shared by Aquinas and Scotus, that natural law is essential to morality.

To describe his position in this way is to give a misleading impression of the substantive differences between Suarez's views and the naturalist views of his predecessors. In describing morality he includes the features that Aquinas ascribes to the natural law, and so he retains Aquinas' view of the metaphysical status of morality and of its independence of divine commands. He differs from Aquinas in concluding that morality is also independent of natural law, given his conception of law.

One of the most plausible parts of Suarez's argument about law is his account of the distinctive moral relation that is introduced by law, as he understands it. He recognizes that there is a difference between the sort of reason for actions that is given by facts about rational agents in their circumstances and the sort that is derived more directly from the expression of the will of other rational agents. Law introduces a new moral requirement based on the will of an authority, and not only on the recognition of some moral fact that is prior to any expression of will. We recognize the distinct sort of reason that is derived from law if we recognize that the expression of the will of another person in an appropriately authoritative position gives me a further reason to act, beyond the specific content of that other person's will. Suarez argues that God is a legislator in this sense, and that therefore a further set of moral reasons results from his legislation.

Clarity on this point about the reasons derived from law makes the non-legal character of morality clearer to Suarez. He distinguishes natural law from its basis in intrinsic morality, so that we can both see the distinctive moral reason introduced by law and see the moral reasons that are independent of, but presupposed by, the obligation introduced by law. He therefore emphasizes the natural basis of intrinsic morality no less strongly than he emphasizes the character of imposed obligation. All obligation requires an imposer, whereas morality requires no imposer. On this last point Suarez agrees, as he claims, with Aquinas; but since he distinguishes natural morality from non-natural imposition more explicitly than

Aquinas does, the purely natural character of intrinsic morality appears more sharply in Suarez than in Aquinas.

We would misinterpret Suarez, therefore, if we took him to hold that natural law, as he conceives it, is necessary for morality. Such a misinterpretation would distort his most important claims about the natural status of morality. As we will see, however, some of his early readers misinterpreted his views in just this way.[130]

[130] Mahoney, *MMT* 227, describing Suarez's place in the history of moral theology, attributes to him a voluntarist 'view of morality as expressed predominantly in terms of law and the centrality of the will'. See also §461.

32

NATURAL LAW AND 'MODERN' MORAL PHILOSOPHY

453. The Modern Theory of Natural Law

The mid-17th century is often taken to mark the beginning of 'modern' philosophy, because of Descartes's attack on his Scholastic predecessors. Since this is also the period of the 'Scientific Revolution' and of the emergence of the modern nation-state, it would be satisfying (to some historians) to find a similarly sharp break in the history of moral philosophy. This desire to see the origin of a new age in the 17th century is shared by some 17th and 18th-century writers. Hobbes takes himself to turn away from the errors of the 'old moral philosophers' by explaining the virtues as ways of fulfilling natural law. He is not alone in supposing that moral philosophers have taken a new direction by identifying moral philosophy with the study of natural law.

This is why some later writers recognize Hobbes and Grotius as their predecessors. Cumberland mentions Grotius as the first significant writer on natural law.[1] Pufendorf agrees with him; he discusses Grotius in detail and does not bother with writers between antiquity and the 17th century. In his essay 'On the origin and progress of the discipline of natural law', he suggests that no one before Grotius had accurately distinguished natural from positive law.[2] In his view, the Scholastics were too confined by excessive esteem for Aristotle, and so did not add much to the scattered remarks of the ancient philosophers on natural law.[3]

Perhaps Barbeyrac does most to form the view that the modern age in moral theory begins with Grotius' account of natural law. He translated both Grotius and Pufendorf into French, and his valuable notes to the translations were also included in English versions.[4] These notes discuss modern views of natural law, and try to harmonize the views of Grotius

[1] See §530. [2] See Pufendorf, *ES*, ch.1 §1 = *GW* v 123.10–12.

[3] *ES*, ch.1 §4 = *GW* v 125.34–126.6. The index to ET of *JNG* contains no references to Suarez or Aquinas, though some to Vasquez. On Pufendorf's tendency to ignore Spanish Scholastic sources see Simons, 'Introduction' 16a. In *ES* Pufendorf discusses an argument for naturalism by Zentgraf, who cites Suarez in his support; see *GW* v 209.19–30. He remarks that for Zentgraf the name of Suarez is 'par Apostolis nomen'. Zentgraf was a Lutheran theologian; on his critique of Pufendorf see Palladini, *DSSP* 217–21. Chroust, 'Grotius', attacks Pufendorf's estimate of the originality of Grotius and his low estimate of mediaeval philosophy.

[4] Barbeyrac's notes appear in Whewell's edn. of Grotius, and in Kennett's translation of Pufendorf. See Tuck, *NRT* 73n, 160n.

and Pufendorf. Barbeyrac defends the position of Pufendorf against Leibniz's attack.[5] He also defends Pufendorf's conception of natural law through a selective history of moral philosophy that presents Grotius as a pioneer.[6]

In Barbeyrac's view, Bacon inspired Grotius to set moral theory on a new footing based on natural law. By appealing to natural law Grotius 'broke the ice' in moral philosophy. Melanchthon failed to anticipate Grotius, because he was too confined by Scholastic views to make the advance that Grotius made.[7] These Scholastic views are so deeply infected by falsehood that Barbeyrac, like Pufendorf, does not think it worthwhile to try to separate the true elements in them, or even to give an account of their main errors.[8] The honour of emancipating moral philosophy from Scholasticism belongs to Grotius—with certain qualifications to be examined later.[9]

Barbeyrac's view has been taken seriously as a correct estimate of the radical and innovative character of Grotius' and Pufendorf's moral theory in comparison with their predecessors, both the mediaeval Scholastics and the Protestant and Roman moralists of the 16th century. If he is right, these 17th-century theorists of natural law need to be examined, to see where they differ from their predecessors, and whether the differences are improvements.

But while many later critics have agreed with Barbeyrac in treating Grotius as a pioneer, and in taking modern moral philosophy to begin with Grotius, they have not all agreed with him about what makes Grotius a pioneer. In fact, later critics who disagree sharply with Barbeyrac and with one another about what is distinctive of modern moral philosophy have claimed that this distinctive feature begins with Grotius. If they are all right about Grotius, Grotius' position is internally inconsistent. And if they are all right about modern moral philosophy, its distinctive features are inconsistent.

To understand these different claims about Grotius and about modern moral philosophy, we should begin with Barbeyrac, and see how his view compares with other views.

[5] On Leibniz see §591.

[6] Barbeyrac's 'Morality' appeared in the 1706 edn. of his translation of Pufendorf's *JNG*. See Tuck, *NRT* 174–7; Hochstrasser, 'Conscience', esp. 294 on Barbeyrac's history of moral philosophy (underestimating the degree of Barbeyrac's commitment to voluntarism). Hochstrasser, *NLTEE* 11–18, discusses other histories of morals that emphasize modern natural law.

[7] 'Tis pretended, that Melanchthon had already given a sketch of something of this kind [sc. a system of the law of nature], in his Ethics; and they tell us too of one Benedict Winckler, who published in 1615 a book intitled Principia Iuris; wherein he entirely departs from the method of the Schoolmen; and maintains against them, amongst other things; that the will of God is the very fountain and foundation of all justice. But 'tis acknowledged that the latter of these two often confounds the law of nature with that which is positive: And that neither the one, nor the other has afforded any more than a small gleam of light; not sufficient to dissipate those thick clouds of darkness, in which the world had been so long inveloped. Besides, Melanchthon was too much prepossessed in favour of the Peripatetic philosophy, ever to make any great progress in the knowledge of the true fundamental principles of the law of nature, and the right method of explaining that science. Grotius therefore ought to be regarded, as the first who broke the ice.' ('Morality', 79) On Melanchthon cf. Stewart, quoted in §462.

[8] 'From thence [sc. the Peripatetic philosophy] sprang the scholastic philosophy, which spread itself all over Europe, and with its barbarous cant became even more prejudicial to religion and morality, than to the speculative sciences. The ethics of the Schoolmen is a piece of patchwork; a confused collection, without any order, or fixed principles; a medley of divers thoughts and sentences out of Aristotle, civil and canon law, Scripture, and the Fathers. Both good and bad lie there jumbled together; but so as there is more of the latter, than the former. The casuists of the succeeding centuries, made it their sole business to out-do their predecessors, in broaching of vain subtilties; nay, what is worse, monstrous and abominable errors, as all the world knows. But let us pass by these unhappy times; that we may at length come to that age, where in the science of morality was, if I may so say, raised again from the dead.' (79)

[9] On the limitations of Grotius see §463.

454. Barbeyrac's View of Grotius

Barbeyrac examines Grotius and Pufendorf in comparison with Hobbes. Though he praises Hobbes, he also attacks him for treating self-interest as the only basis of society. This is the main flaw in *De Cive*.[10] In the *Leviathan*, according to Barbeyrac, Hobbes goes even further, making the sovereign the basis of morality and religion.[11] Barbeyrac shares Pufendorf's concern to distinguish natural law theory from Hobbes's position. According to Hobbes, the content of natural law, independent of divine or human legislation, consists of the demands of self-interest. Barbeyrac wants to show that Grotius and Pufendorf offer more than this minimal Hobbesian content.

Barbeyrac's estimate of Grotius may usefully be compared with Gershom Carmichael's opinion. Carmichael agrees that Grotius is important, because he gave a lead in the discussion of natural law.[12] Carmichael excludes Selden and Hobbes from those who followed Grotius' lead. Selden relies on the Noachite precepts, and hence on divine positive law, not on natural law, while Hobbes corrupts the study of natural law.[13] Carmichael agrees with Barbeyrac in treating Grotius and Pufendorf as exponents of the same doctrine. He does not discuss the apparent differences that occupy Barbeyrac; in particular, he does not discuss questions about naturalism and voluntarism.[14]

But Carmichael does not seem to agree with Barbeyrac about why Grotius and Pufendorf are important. He regards the modern treatment of natural law as the true successor, in moral philosophy, of Scholastic ethics. It rightly omits irrelevant elements in Scholastic treatments, including those parts of theology that are known only by revelation (viii). Carmichael seems to suggest, therefore, that the originality of modern treatments of natural law is not primarily any novelty in doctrine, but the clear separation of moral philosophy from other disciplines.

To see whether Barbeyrac or Carmichael is right, we need to compare these modern moralists with the Scholastics. Barbeyrac's claim on behalf of Grotius is initially puzzling, since neither Grotius nor Melanchthon was the first to treat the theory of natural law as a part of

[10] '. . . he endeavours to establish, and that too in the geometrical method, the hypothesis of Epicurus, which makes self-preservation and self-interest, to be the original causes of civil society' ('Morality' 88).

[11] 'That the will of the sovereign alone constitutes, not only what we call just and unjust, but even religion also; and that no divine revelation can bind the conscience, till the authority, or rather caprice, of his Leviathan; that is, of the supreme arbitrary power, to which he attributes the government of every civil society; has given it the force of a law.' ('Morality' §29, p. 66)

[12] 'After the ancients moral philosophy was neglected for many centuries, until the work of the incomparable Hugo Grotius, who gave the lead for others to follow.' (Carmichael, *PDOH* vi) Cf. Moore and Silverthorne, 9–10: '. . . Moral science . . . had been most highly esteemed by the wisest of the ancients, who devoted themselves to its study with great care. It then lay burdened under debris, together with almost all the other noble arts, until . . . it was restored to more than its pristine splendour (at least in that part of moral science which concerns the mutual duties of men . . .) by the incomparable Hugo Grotius. . . . For more than fifty years scholars more or less confined their studies within the limits set by Grotius . . . But then that most distinguished man Samuel Pufendorf, . . . by arranging the material in the work of Grotius in a more convenient order and by adding what seemed to be missing from it to make the discipline of morals complete, he produced a more perfect system of morals.'

[13] [Hobbes] 'iuris naturalis disciplinam non illustrare instituit, sed corrumpere' (*PDOH* vi). Barbeyrac offers a similar explanation for Selden's failure, despite his merits, to eclipse Grotius; 'he derives not the principles of the law of nature from the pure dictates of reason', but from the Noachite principles, relying uncritically on tradition (80).

[14] The chapter 'On lasting happiness and the divine law' (Suppl. 1 = M&S 21–9) claims that morality expresses divine commands, but it does not say that it essentially expresses divine commands. Though Carmichael knows Suarez (see M&S 41n), he does not discuss the questions that Suarez discusses about voluntarism.

moral philosophy. Natural law is a standard element of Scholastic moral philosophy; Aquinas and his successors discuss natural law in their accounts of law, morality, the Decalogue, and the moral precepts of the Gospel. We have considered the careful reflexions of Suarez on this Scholastic tradition. Since Barbeyrac does not bother to discuss Scholastic views of natural law, he does not say how Grotius' view differs from Scholastic views. But if Grotius is an innovator, we ought to find some major point on which he departs from the Scholastic views.

455. The Fundamental Status of Natural Law

To explore possible defences of Barbeyrac's claim, we might consider different ways of understanding the place of natural law within morality. Moral theories differ according to their views about which aspect of morality is theoretically fundamental and which aspects can be derived from which. Hence one might recognize natural law as an aspect of morality without being a natural-law moralist, if one does not treat morality as primarily and fundamentally natural law. Perhaps, then, Barbeyrac might claim that Grotius is the first to make natural law primary and to reduce other aspects of morality to features of natural law. If Grotius does this, he is the first natural-law moralist.

One might support Barbeyrac by observing that, though the natural law is prominent and important in Aquinas and in his naturalist and voluntarist successors, it is not primary. The *Prima Secundae* begins not with the natural law, but with the ultimate end. Law, including natural law, is introduced only after the discussion of human actions, passions, states, virtues, and sins. It takes us from the sinful condition of human beings to the infusion of virtues that comes from grace. Suarez also places his treatise on law in this sequence; it is 'on God the legislator', in contrast to the treatise on grace 'on God the justifier'.[15]

In one respect, the principles and precepts of natural law are fundamental. In Aquinas' theory, three apparently distinct basic principles are identified: (1) Universal conscience, grasping the ultimate principles from which prudence deliberates. (2) Natural law. (3) Happiness as the ultimate end. They are connected because universal conscience grasps the basic principles of natural law, which enjoin the pursuit of one's ultimate good. Within Aquinas' theory, then, the principles of natural law provide the starting points for prudence; the conclusions of universal prudence are the ends characteristic of the various virtues.

In assigning this basic status to natural law, however, Aquinas does not make it prior to his teleological argument from the final good and human action to the virtues. On the contrary, the argument from the basic principles of natural law just is this teleological argument. The introduction of natural law provides a new description of the argument that has already been given; it does not provide a different sort of argument, let alone an argument for different conclusions. Aquinas' explanation of natural law implies that facts about rational nature are the basis of the precepts of natural law. If we take natural law just to consist in these facts, natural law is not prior to facts about rational nature.

Different questions arise about the place of natural law in Scholastic theories that reject either Aquinas' eudaemonism, or his belief in intrinsic morality (as Suarez calls it), or both.

[15] See §302n7; Aquinas, *ST* 1–2 q90 pref.; Suarez, Preface to 'Tractatus de gratia Dei, seu de Deo Salvatore, iustificatore, et liberi arbitrii adiutore per gratiam suam', *OO* vii, p. viii.

Scotus rejects eudaemonism, and takes the affection for justice to be separate from the natural pursuit of happiness. He recognizes intrinsic morality consisting in the precepts of the first table of the Decalogue; these are natural law, strictly speaking, and do not depend on the free will of God. The greater part of morality is strictly only 'highly consonant' with natural law, and is part of divine positive law. Ockham asserts a closer dependence of morality on God's free choice. Both non-positive and positive morality reflect God's choice in different ways. In his theological works Ockham does not identify either of them with the provisions of natural law. Remarks in his political works show that he recognizes natural law; but he does not suggest that belonging to natural law is the crucial test of morality.

Aquinas and his successors, therefore, do not seem to be natural-law moralists. Though they take the precepts of natural law to include fundamental moral principles, they do not take moral facts to be reducible to facts about natural law. On the contrary, Aquinas takes facts about natural law to consist in those facts about rational nature that underlie his account of the virtues.[16] Some of these questions about the status of natural law are obscure because of Aquinas' rather broad conception of law. Since he believes that natural law exists if we are guided by rational principles, it is easy for him to believe in natural law; if there are virtues of the kind Aquinas describes, their principles belong to natural law. From this point of view, it is difficult to see how natural law could be primary in morality.[17]

Different questions arise, however, from Suarez's account of law. Since he takes law to require commands and acts of legislation, he takes natural law to require divine commands imposing obligations (in his narrow sense). Relying on this conception of natural law, he argues that natural law is not primary in morality. Natural law presupposes intrinsic morality, which consists in appropriateness to rational nature. Though the duties that belong to intrinsic morality coincide with the precepts of natural law, their place in natural law is not essential to their being part of intrinsic morality. Suarez, therefore, is not a natural-law moralist.

Barbeyrac would have a plausible case, therefore, for his view that modern moralists are innovators, if he could show that they take morality to consist essentially in principles of natural law, as Suarez understands it. On this view, we have no morality without divine commands and acts of legislation that prescribe actions in accord with nature. Such a view rejects both the strong theological voluntarism that identifies morality with divine positive law and the naturalist view that takes commands and legislation to be inessential to morality. Barbeyrac would vindicate his claim if he could show that Grotius and his successors hold

[16] Haakonssen, *NLMP* 15, understands a natural-law moralist as one who engages in the 'attempt to understand morality in the legalistic terms of a natural law'. We attribute a natural-law theory in this strong sense to Aquinas, for instance, if we agree that 'for him, the virtues are basically habits of obedience to laws' (Schneewind, *IA* 20). See §315.

[17] Schneewind, 'Misfortunes' 44–6, argues that emphasis on natural law results from scepticism about virtues and from the reductive project of treating all moral requirements as fundamentally required by rules and laws. The evidence that he offers to show that Christian moralists or moralists who believe in natural law generally endorse this reductive project is not completely convincing. One might agree (as Aristotle agrees) that the requirements of general justice embrace the requirements of all the virtues, and (as Aquinas agrees) that natural law prescribes the actions that accord with all the virtues, without agreeing that the virtues consist fundamentally in tendencies to obey rules. To illustrate his claim Schneewind quotes a passage from William Perkins: 'Universal justice is the practice of all virtue: of that whereby a man observes all the commandments of the Law'. But this passage (recalling Aristotle, Aquinas, and St Paul) does not say what is theoretically fundamental. Schneewind's quotation from Locke, *EHU* ii 28.14, is apposite; but Locke holds a legislative conception of morality (explained in the context), which does not follow from a belief in natural law.

this view about morality as natural law. We will have to see what conception of natural law he relies on in claiming that Grotius and his successors are natural-law moralists.

456. Sidgwick: A Jural Conception of Ethics

It is useful to compare Barbeyrac's interpretation of Grotius and his successors with Sidgwick's description of modern moral philosophy. Sidgwick agrees with Barbeyrac's claim that modern moralists recognize natural law as fundamental. According to Sidgwick, modern moralists take this view because they rely on a 'jural' notion that is largely foreign to the teleological outlook of Greek ethics.[18] According to the teleological outlook, a virtue is fundamentally some kind of good; the theorist's task is to find the connexion between the good that is virtue and other goods (*ME* 106). A jural outlook, on the contrary, conceives moral principles as imperative and inhibitive, rather than teleological.

Sidgwick qualifies his view that jural ethics is characteristic of modern, as opposed to ancient, moral thinking. He argues that Greek philosophers are aware of some idea of moral law, and that Stoic ideas of natural law introduce a transition to a jural conception of ethics. Roman law and Christianity form a jural conception.[19] Mediaeval philosophy, therefore, includes some aspects of a jural conception; Aquinas takes the content of natural law to include the Aristotelian virtues, but, according to Sidgwick, he presents these virtues 'in a new form' (*OHE* 144) that inclines towards a jural conception. Sidgwick, therefore, does not believe in a sharp transition from a teleological to a jural conception of ethics, and does not believe that any sharp transition of this sort separates modern from pre-modern ethics.[20] But he seems to believe that only modern philosophers have clearly stated and articulated this conception.[21] Hence his argument might be taken to support Barbeyrac's view that Grotius begins the modern period in ethics.

[18] 'Ethics may be regarded as an inquiry into the nature of the Good, the intrinsically preferable and desirable, the true end of action, &c; or as an investigation of the Right, the true rules of conduct, Duty, the Moral Law, &c. The former view predominated in the Greek schools, at any rate until the later developments of Stoicism; the latter has been more prominent in English philosophy since Hobbes, in an age of active jural speculation and debate, raised the deepest views of morality in a jural form. Either view can easily be made to comprehend the other; but the second seems to have the widest application.' (*ME* [1] 2–3. *ME* [2] and later editions mention the two views of ethics, but abbreviate the reference to Greek ethics and delete the reference to Hobbes and a jural conception.) '. . . it is possible to take a view of morality which at any rate leaves in the background the cognition of rule and restraint, the imperative, inhibitive, coercive effect of the moral ideal. We may consider the action to which the moral faculty prompts us intrinsically "good"; so that the doing of it is in itself desirable, an end at which it is reasonable to aim. This . . . is the more ancient view of Ethics; it was taken exclusively by all the Greek schools of Moral Philosophy except the Stoics; and even with them "Good" was the more fundamental conception, although in later Stoicism the quasi-jural aspect of good conduct came into prominence.' (*ME* [1] 93) In discussing Sidgwick I sometimes use 'jural' where he uses 'quasi-jural'.

[19] 'Reflexion . . . will show that the common notion of what is good for a human being . . . includes more than the common notion of what is right for him, or his duty; it includes also his interest or happiness. . . . Thus we arrive at another conception of ethics, in which it is thought to be concerned primarily with the general rules of duty or right action—sometimes called the moral code . . . On this view, the study connects itself in a new way with theology, so far as the rules of duty are regarded as a code of divine legislation. . . . it has a close affinity to abstract jurisprudence . . . We might contrast this as a modern view of ethics with the view before given, which was that primarily taken in ancient Greek philosophy generally—the transition from the one to the other being due chiefly to the influence of Christianity, but partly also to that of Roman jurisprudence.' (*OHE* 6–7) See also §224.

[20] *OHE* 144, 160, 163.

[21] Sidgwick is cautious in formulating the jural conception. 'It is . . . possible to take a view of virtuous action in which, though the validity of moral intuitions is not disputed, this notion of rule or dictate is at any rate only latent or implicit,

What is a jural conception? Since Sidgwick hesitates to attribute such a conception to the Stoics and to Aquinas, he implies that we do not hold a jural conception simply by believing in natural law. A jural moralist, in his view, treats moral principles as primarily imperative. Since Sidgwick assumes this connexion between law and imperatives, he seems to hold an imperative conception of law; that is why he takes any inclination to believe in moral law to imply acceptance of an imperative conception of morality. Hence he believes that the crucial element of modern ethics is foreshadowed in the earlier views that connect morality with the provisions of natural law.

But what is an 'imperative' conception of a moral principle? Sidgwick's answer is not completely clear, because he seems to combine two conceptions of the imperative: (1) Sometimes he contrasts 'imperative' with 'attractive'. Attractive principles refer explicitly to some desirable goal that the principles secure, whereas imperative principles do not. Hence 'imperative' seems to be equivalent to 'deontological'.[22] (2) Sometimes he assumes that imperative principles depend on acts of legislation.

These two conceptions of the imperative do not seem to pick out all and only the same principles. We may recognize rational principles that are not explicitly teleological, but nonetheless give reasons; if so, we recognize imperatives in Sidgwick's first sense. But it is not clear that we must also regard these principles as products of legislation, and hence as imperatives in his second sense. Scotus, for instance, may believe that our affection for the just commits us to rational principles that are neither teleological nor legislative. It is not clear whether Sidgwick allows the possibility of such principles, or whether he regards them as imperative.

If a jural conception requires only a deontological conception of moral principles, Sidgwick's contrast between the modern and the pre-modern outlook is insecure. Even if we set aside Scotus, Plato and Aristotle and their successors do not hold a purely teleological theory of the virtues. They believe that the virtues count as virtues because of their relation to the agent's good; but they do not assume that the content of the virtues is determined by reference to the agent's good. Aristotle does not suggest that we find out what is just or brave primarily by reflexion on our own good. What we ought (*dein*) to do, and what it is fine (*kalon*) to do, are determined by the common good of our community, rather than by our own good, though our reason for caring about justice and bravery depends on their relation to our own good. Aristotle's conception of the fine refers to the tendency of actions to promote a common good. His conception of morality is not directly teleological, and so it satisfies one of Sidgwick's conditions for a jural conception.

Sidgwick's position would have been clearer if he had discussed the character of imperatives more fully. Suarez's fuller discussion of law and imperatives suggests a more precise condition for a jural conception of morality. In Suarez's view, law essentially includes commands because it imposes moral necessity through will, rather than revealing a prior moral necessity. This conception of law makes it clear why a jural conception of morality

the moral ideal being presented as attractive rather than imperative. Such a view seems to be taken when the action to which we are morally prompted, or the quality of character manifested in it, is judged to be "good" in itself (and not merely as a means to some ulterior Good). This . . . was the fundamental ethical conception in the Greek schools of Moral Philosophy generally; including even the Stoics, though their system, from the prominence that it gave to the conception of Natural Law, forms a transitional link between ancient and modern ethics.' (*ME* 105)

[22] On this term see §520.

treats moral principles as products of legislation; for acts of legislation are the acts of will that impose moral necessity. But we have seen that Suarez does not use his imperative conception of law to defend a jural conception of morality; on the contrary, he uses it to distinguish morality from natural law. In his view, morality is the foundation of natural law, and would exist even without natural law, because it does not depend on the imperatives of natural law. Perhaps, then, Sidgwick takes a jural conception of morality to be both deontological and legislative.[23]

457. What is Distinctive of a Jural Conception?

Why does a jural conception of morality, as we have explained it, mark an important change in the understanding of morality? Suarez's division between indicative and prescriptive laws implies that they derive their 'moral necessity', their reason-giving character from different sources. Our reason to follow correct indicative laws depends on their content; they correctly represent the moral reality that exists independently of them. But we have good reason to follow prescriptive laws not because of what they tell us to do, but because of who tells us to do it. We need to look back to their source, whereas we need to look through indicative laws to their content. A competent authority issuing a command through the proper procedure introduces moral necessity.

According to this conception of prescriptive law, a command is legally valid if it is issued by legitimate authority in the appropriate circumstances. It does not necessarily say that I should obey it because of some end I care about. Though I may reasonably ask myself why I should obey the law, this question does not bear on its legal validity. Sidgwick may intend to apply this pattern to morality. A legal view of moral rightness makes moral rightness consist in the appropriate relation to a valid moral principle; questions about whether I have any reason to obey the principle, apart from my being commanded to obey it, do not affect what is morally right. This purely procedural test for the legal validity of a particular law does not apply moral, prudential, or pragmatic standards to the law. If I allege that it is invalid because it is not in my interest, or it is not in the interest of the governed, I fail to grasp the fact that law introduces moral necessity because of its imposer rather than its content; I treat a prescriptive law as though it were purely indicative. Since the necessity imposed by a prescriptive law comes from the will of the imposer, once we know that the imposer has imposed it, we know that it is morally necessary.

This procedural conception of the morally right marks a significant departure from the view that moral principles are essentially indicative laws independent of will. If this is what Sidgwick intends, he isolates an important difference between the jural tradition (as he describes it) and the normal Greek and mediaeval conception. The pre-modern moralists treat moral principles as indicative laws. They usually assume that virtue is some sort of good;[24] in the light of that assumption they try to decide what sorts of states of character and what sorts of

[23] Larmore, *MM* 19–24, defends Sidgwick's division between attractive and imperative approaches (identifying the imperative view with belief in the supremacy of morality over self-interest). He defends Anscombe's view (see §459) on the ground that it recognizes the same division.

[24] 'Usually' is needed because of Scotus' view on the affection for justice.

actions are virtuous. Plato's and Aristotle's question is not primarily about whether the virtues promote happiness, but about whether justice, bravery, and the other recognized virtues are genuine virtues; that question is partly answered by asking whether they promote happiness.

A jural conception immediately raises a question that we will find it useful to pursue in modern moralists. A conception of moral rightness as consisting in legal validity, understood by reference to its source, seems to be incomplete. For if a moral obligation results from a command issued by a legitimate commander with the authority to command, we do not know whether this is a genuine obligation until we know whether the commander is legitimate. To know this, we need to know whether it is morally right for the commander to command. That question cannot be answered by a purely procedural answer directing us to the source of a command. If the first commander commands obedience, that does not decide the question of legitimacy. And if we say that the legitimacy of the first commander is settled by the command of a second commander, we begin an infinite regress.[25]

If this argument is sound, a jural conception seems to answer only some of the questions that we might reasonably want a moral theory to answer. For it is difficult to see how the principles determining the authority of a legislator or commander could be prescriptive laws; if we appeal to their content rather than their source, we treat them as indicative laws. According to naturalism, the test for legal validity is not purely procedural, at least in the case of the natural law. In Aquinas' view, a rule belongs to natural law because it is morally right and prescribes what fits rational nature. Even for positive law, his test of validity is not purely procedural; it must have been enjoined by legitimate authority, but it must also be just. It is even more obvious that for natural law moral rightness is prior to any legislation. The basic principles underlying legal validity, therefore, are indicative laws, moral principles that do not rely on moral necessity imposed by will.

We might defend a jural theory of morality against this objection by arguing that the indicative laws determining the authority of a legislator are not moral principles. If this argument succeeds, we can acknowledge that jural morality rests on a non-jural basis without admitting that the non-jural basis is moral. If we examine jural theories, we also need to consider whether they offer a plausible non-moral basis. The task of finding such a basis is not straightforward. We can see why some legislators might be authorized on the basis of non-moral principles. If, for instance, we are members of a club and we want to settle procedures without endless argument, we might all find it in our interest to authorize a committee to make rules that will be binding on all members of the club. But this sort of authorization does not create a moral obligation to obey the rules. We might think that a properly moral obligation can come only from a legislator who is authorized on moral grounds. If a jural theory does not answer this objection, it seems not to offer an adequate account of morality.

458. Sidgwick and Barbeyrac

If this is a reasonable interpretation of Sidgwick's account of jural ethics, it also offers a reasonable interpretation of Barbeyrac's claim that Grotius is a pioneer in developing the

[25] Hart considers the problem of a regress, in *CL*, ch. 6.

theory of ethics as natural law. If Barbeyrac has in mind a jural conception, he is justified in believing that Aquinas and Suarez, for instance, are not part of the tradition that (in his view) begins with Grotius. The mere belief in natural law is not sufficient for Barbeyrac's purposes; for if we treat natural law as a purely indicative law (in Suarez's terms), we do not include the imperative element that is necessary for a jural conception.

Apparently, then, the only conception of natural law that supports a jural theory of morality is a voluntarist conception. If morality essentially consists in the provisions of natural law, and natural law consists essentially in divine commands, morality consists in being commanded by divine authority.[26] If that is Barbeyrac's view, we would expect him to endorse a voluntarist conception of natural law. A voluntarist conception might appear to constitute a distinctive point of view on morality; in contrast to a naturalist conception, it does not identify natural law with an indicative law specifying prior principles about what accords with rational nature, and therefore it does not identify morality with a purely indicative law. This, then, may be the innovation that Barbeyrac attributes to Grotius.

If Barbeyrac has voluntarism in mind, is he ungenerous to mediaeval voluntarists? He might answer that they have not made the voluntarist position clear. Scotus, for instance, believes that some principles of moral rightness are independent of the divine will; these are the parts of the natural law that are not subject either to divine commands or to divine dispensations. Natural law, then, does not primarily constitute moral goodness, since some of natural law recognizes antecedent moral goodness. Ockham seems closer to a purely jural conception, since he seems to regard even non-positive morality as subject to change within God's absolute power.[27] But it is not clear how closely he connects this conception of morality with a theory of natural law. He does not seem to take exactly the view that Barbeyrac ascribes to Grotius.

Whether or not we have accurately captured Barbeyrac's meaning, we have found, with Sidgwick's help, a reasonable interpretation of the claim that morality consists fundamentally in natural law. If Grotius defends the claim, so interpreted, he is a pioneer.

459. The Abandonment of Jural Morality?

Now that we have seen what Barbeyrac and Sidgwick may mean in claiming that modern moral philosophy maintains a jural conception of morality, it is helpful to contrast their view with Anscombe's sharply opposed view of modern moral philosophy. She agrees with Sidgwick in believing that ancient moralists have a non-jural conception. But she argues, contrary to both Sidgwick and Barbeyrac, that mediaeval Christian moralists hold a jural conception. They identified basic moral principles with the precepts of the Decalogue, understood as a body of divine legislation.[28] The Reformers abandon

[26] This view seems to be stated by Locke. See *EHU* ii 28.14, quoted in §562.

[27] On Ockham see §395.

[28] 'How did this come about? The answer is in history: between Aristotle and us came Christianity, with its *law* conception of ethics. For Christianity derived its ethical notions from the Torah. (One might be inclined to think that a law conception of ethics could arise only among people who accepted an allegedly divine positive law; that this is not so is shown by the example of the Stoics, who also thought that whatever was involved in conformity to human virtues was required by divine law.) In consequence of the dominance of Christianity for many centuries, the concepts of being bound, permitted, or excused became deeply embedded in our language and thought.' (Anscombe, 'Modern' 30)

this jural conception of morality because of the Lutheran separation between law and Gospel; in contrast to the mediaeval view about the scope of divine law, Luther claims that it applies only to unregenerate humanity.[29] Given this hostility to law (Anscombe claims), Protestants reject a jural conception of morality as a positive guide to life (though it serves to reveal sin). If she is right, we might expect Protestant moralists to look for an alternative way of understanding morality that separates it from divine law. In Anscombe's view, modern moralists have developed a non-jural outlook, but imperfectly, since they have retained beliefs in obligation that presuppose a jural conception.

According to this view, ancient and modern moralists agree, against the mediaeval Christians, in not appealing to divine legislation as the basis of morality. But modern moralists differ from the ancients in their use of a jural conception that they reject. Anscombe argues that the presuppositions, aims, and outlook of Greek ethics, especially Aristotelian ethics, are so radically different from those of modern moral philosophy that they really constitute a different philosophical enterprise. We cannot find room for our concept of the moral in any accurate account of Aristotle.[30] Aristotle uses 'should' and 'ought' with reference to goodness and badness, but not in the special moral sense that these terms have now acquired.[31] Since Aristotle does not use these terms with the special moral sense, he does not have a concept of the moral.

The special moral sense of the modern concepts of obligation, duty, and 'ought' are the remnants of the jural conception of ethics.[32] In its special moral sense, 'ought' is equivalent to 'is obliged', understood in a legal sense.[33] Our use of 'ought' in this special moral sense presupposes a conception of morality that we take to be false. In claiming that we morally ought to do x, we imply that some law obliges us to do x. But if a law obliges us to do x, some legislator must command us to do x. But we (secular modern philosophers) do

[29] '... the belief in divine law ... was substantially given up among Protestants at the time of the Reformation.' ('Modern' 31) Anscombe explains this surprising claim in a footnote: 'They did not deny the existence of divine law; but their most characteristic doctrine was that it was given, not to be obeyed, but to show man's incapacity to obey it, even by grace, and this applied not merely to the ramified prescriptions of the Torah, but to the requirements of "natural divine law". Cf. in this connexion the decree of Trent against the teaching that Christ was only to be trusted as mediator, not obeyed as legislator.' She refers to the Council of Trent, Decree on Justification, ch. 11 (De observatione mandatorum; see D 1536–9) and to Canon 21 (D 1571). On the views of the Reformers see §420; they do not justify Anscombe's sweeping claim.

[30] 'If someone professes to be expounding Aristotle and talks in a modern fashion about "moral" such-and-such, he must be very imperceptive if he does not constantly feel like someone whose jaws have somehow got out of alignment: the teeth don't come together in a proper bite.' ('Modern' 26) The term 'moral' itself 'doesn't seem to fit, in its modern sense, into an account of Aristotelian ethics' (26).

[31] '[These terms] have now acquired a special so-called "moral" sense—i.e., a sense in which they imply some absolute verdict (like one of guilty/not guilty on a man) on what is described in the "ought" sentences used in certain types of context ... The ordinary (and quite indispensable) terms "should", "needs", "ought", "must"—acquired this special sense by being equated in the relevant contexts with "is obliged" or "is bound" or "is required to", in the sense in which one can be obliged or bound by law, or something can be required by law.' ('Modern' 29–30)

[32] '... the concepts of obligation and duty—*moral* obligation and *moral* duty, that is to say—and of what is *morally* right and wrong, and of the *moral* sense of "ought", ought to be jettisoned if this is psychologically possible; because they are survivals, or derivatives from survivals, from an earlier conception of ethics which no longer generally survives, and are only harmful without it' ('Modern' 26).

[33] Anscombe claims that a legal conception explains a shift in the sense of the Greek term *hamartanein* from 'mistake' to 'sin', understood as a violation of law. The same legal conception makes it appropriate to use 'obligation', in a genuinely legal sense, for conformity with the virtues.

not believe that any legislator commands us to do what we morally ought to do.[34] Unlike Aristotle, we have the concepts of morality and the moral, though, unlike the mediaeval moralists, we do not believe in the divine legislator presupposed by our concepts.[35] Since we are—in this respect—post-Christian, we use the term in the moral sense, but our use rests on presuppositions that have been generally abandoned.[36]

This historical sketch makes Anscombe's position more credible. For if the modern use of 'ought' can be shown to rest on assumptions that once were widely shared, but are no longer widely shared, it is easier to understand how we could be relying on presuppositions that we do not recognize and that we even reject. The relevant use of 'ought' has been established in the light of these presuppositions; but, since they are presuppositions rather than explicit premisses, we may continue to speak in ways that rely on the presuppositions, even though we do not explicitly appeal to them.[37]

Anscombe is not the only one to claim that legislative concepts have influenced the development and the presuppositions of modern ethics. Schopenhauer argues that Kant's

[34] 'So Hume discovered the situation in which the notion "obligation" survived, and the word "ought" was invested with that peculiar force having which it is said to be used in a "moral" sense, but in which the belief in divine law had long since been abandoned: for it was substantially given up among Protestants at the time of the Reformation. The situation, if I am right, was the interesting one of the survival of a concept outside the framework of thought that made it a really intelligible one.' ('Modern' 30–1)

[35] Anscombe, therefore, maintains (1) 'Ought' and related terms ('should', 'must', etc.) have a special moral sense. (2) This special moral sense involves some absolute verdict. (3) The terms have this special moral sense by being equated with 'is obliged' (etc.) in a specific sense. (4) The relevant sense of 'is obliged' is the legal sense. (5) We have the concept of morality only if we use the relevant terms with the special moral sense, so understood.

[36] Does Anscombe mean that whenever we claim we morally ought to do x, our claim is (if measured by our other beliefs) false, so that we actually hold contradictory beliefs about what we morally ought to do? According to this view, my use of the moral 'ought' asserts something that I believe to be false. Perhaps, however, we should not take the use of 'ought' in the moral sense to include a false assertion. It may be more appropriate to connect Anscombe's account with Strawson's claims about presupposition in 'On referring'. Strawson argues that 'The present king of France is bald' does not make the false assertion that there is just one present king of France, and therefore the utterance as a whole is not false. In his view, the utterance lacks a truth-value; it would have a truth-value only if there were just one king of France. In asserting the sentence, I assume that it has a truth-value, because I presuppose that there is just one present king of France. The falsity of my presupposition deprives the assertion of any truth-value. A similar account of the error involved in the moral use of 'ought' might make Anscombe's claims more plausible. It is difficult to argue that an assertion of a moral ought actually asserts that a legislator has issued a command. It may be more plausible to claim that it presupposes such a command, so that it lacks a truth-value if this presupposition is false. Other views of presupposition might suggest different explanations of Anscombe's claim.

[37] To see what Anscombe might have in mind here, we might consider less disputable cases in which we retain attitudes that are intelligible only in the light of presuppositions that we consciously reject. If we have been in the army and under military discipline, we may have learned to dress smartly, with clean belts and boots, to march stiffly, and to conform to parade-ground regulations. If we have had to enforce this military discipline, we have learned to disapprove of failure to conform to these regulations. And we were right (let us assume), for reasons connected with military efficiency, esprit de corps, and so on, to disapprove of such failure. If we return to civilian life, and encounter casually dressed people with scuffed shoes who do not swing their arms, we may continue to disapprove of them. If someone objects that these are civilians and there is nothing wrong with the informality of their dress and manners, we may disagree, insisting that they are dressing or walking improperly. If we deny that the inappropriateness of such dress or manners is restricted to specifically military contexts, we might maintain that it is always more appropriate to have creased trousers, shiny shoes, and a 'military' bearing. In this case, it might be reasonable to conclude that our attitude is unintelligible except in the light of presuppositions that do not hold. To reach something like the situation that Anscombe envisages with the moral 'ought', we would need to suppose that a society retains this respect for 'military' dress and manners even when most people have never been in the army and do not recognize that their respect has this historical basis. The fact that they take these aspects of dress so seriously has no rational basis; but it would have had a rational basis if the military requirements still applied to their situation. As Anscombe suggests, this might all be true even if the people involved were ignorant of it, or explicitly denied it.

views covertly rely on a legal conception of obligation that presupposes a divine legislator.[38] Anscombe agrees with Schopenhauer and Nietzsche[39] in offering a genealogical explanation, showing that what no longer makes rational sense is the residue of practices that relied on assumptions—now rejected—in the light of which they once did make rational sense.

But though Anscombe agrees with many others in connecting legislative concepts with the moral ought, she sharply disagrees with Sidgwick and Barbeyrac. Whereas they take a jural conception of ethics to distinguish modern moral philosophy from ancient and mediaeval outlooks, she takes the abandonment of a jural conception to be characteristic of the Protestant Reformation and of the philosophical views that it has influenced. In her view, the peculiar predicament of modern moral philosophy lies in the combination of a non-jural conception of morality with a concept of obligation that depends on a jural conception.

Further consideration shows that Anscombe and Sidgwick (and Barbeyrac) are not as far apart as they might initially appear. For they agree that a jural conception of ethics results from the influence of Christianity. Anscombe believes that pre-Reformation Christianity holds this jural conception. She agrees with Sidgwick in attributing a non-jural view to the ancient moralists. As we have seen, Sidgwick is not entirely clear about whether he thinks mediaeval moralists hold a jural conception.

One might well suppose that Anscombe's position is more readily intelligible than Sidgwick's. If Christianity is responsible for the acceptance of a jural conception in modern Europe, we might reasonably be surprised if its influence in this direction is delayed for over a millennium and a half. In Anscombe's view, Sidgwick has overlooked the historical evidence showing that a jural conception is prevalent in mediaeval Christian moral philosophy.

460. Who Holds a Jural Conception?

To answer the questions raised by these different views of early modern philosophy, we need to discuss Grotius and his successors. But since some of these views rest on an interpretation of mediaeval moral philosophy, we can usefully ask which views fit better with our account of the Scholastics.

We have good reason to doubt Anscombe's view that a jural conception of morality is characteristic of Scholasticism. The prominence of natural law in Aquinas' account does not imply that he takes acts of legislation to be essential to morality. Given his broad conception of natural law, his belief that morality is essentially natural law does not commit him to a jural conception of morality. He holds a naturalist view that makes natural law essentially an indicative law, but not essentially a prescriptive law.

[38] 'In the centuries of Christianity, philosophical ethics has generally taken its form unconsciously from the theological. Now as theological ethics is essentially *dictatorial*, the philosophical has also appeared in the form of precept and moral obligation, in all innocence and without suspecting that for this, first another sanction is necessary.' (Schopenhauer, *BM* §4 = Payne 54)

[39] 'In *this* sphere, of legal obligation, then we find the breeding-ground of the moral conceptual world of "guilt", "conscience", "duty", "sacred duty"—all begin with a thorough and prolonged blood-letting . . . And may we not add that this world has really never quite lost a certain odour of blood and torture? (not even with old Kant; the categorical imperative smells of cruelty . . .)' (Nietzsche, *GM* ii 6 = Ansell-Pearson 45)

In describing Aquinas' view in this way, we rely on distinctions that are clearly drawn not by Aquinas, but by Suarez. Suarez disagrees with Aquinas in making natural law essentially prescriptive. But he maintains Aquinas' naturalist view of morality by denying that morality is essentially natural law. Reflexion on the views of Aquinas, Vasquez, and Suarez (to go no further) makes it clear that a naturalist, non-jural conception of morality is one prominent tendency in Scholasticism.

One might easily form the opposite impression, however, if one takes a different view about where Aquinas and Suarez agree and disagree. If one supposes that Aquinas shares Suarez's essentially prescriptive conception of natural law, his belief that natural law is essential to morality commits him to a jural conception of morality. Similarly, if one overlooks Suarez's claim that natural law is inessential to morality, one will attribute a jural conception of morality to Suarez as well. From this point of view, Scholasticism offers powerful, though not unanimous, support for Anscombe's account of the mediaeval Christian view.

461. Alleged Contrasts between Aquinas and Suarez

To see how one might defend Anscombe's view that mediaeval moralists hold a jural conception, it is useful to turn to a comparative discussion of Aquinas and Suarez. Walter Farrell compares them from a Thomist point of view, and he regards Suarez's departures from Aquinas as errors. The main differences Farrell mentions are these:[40] (1) According to Aquinas, 'a precept or proposition of natural reason is a true secondary cause, producing a real effect, sc. a real obligation'. Suarez, by contrast, claims that human judgment can only manifest obligation coming from the will of God. (2) According to Aquinas, 'eternal law—an act of divine reason—is the cause of all morality'. According to Suarez, 'this act of will of God—the Eternal Law—supposes in human actions a certain necessary honesty and malice'. (3) According to Aquinas, 'on the hypothesis that God never issued this precept which is Eternal Law and the Natural Moral Law, there would be no honesty or malice, for these consist formally in the accord or discord of human acts with a law or precept'. (4) According to Aquinas, 'in the absence of this divine precept these acts have no morality'. (5) According to Aquinas, 'the Natural Moral Law presupposes no goodness or malice; goodness or malice is the result of obedience or disobedience of this law'. (6) 'The idea of a "natural honesty" preceding all law is an evident contradiction in terms, since a morality would then be constituted without any norm or rule and morality consists precisely in the commensuration with a rule of morality. But the falsity of these propositions of Suarez is too evident to need refutation.'

Farrell is right to suppose that Aquinas and Suarez differ over the status of the natural law, and especially over whether it meets the conditions that Suarez lays down for being a true law. It is difficult to find any support in Aquinas for the view that it is law because it is commanded by the legislative will of God. But, given this difference, we ought to look

[40] Quotations are from Farrell, *NLSTS* 148–52. I have discussed Farrell both because he states some issues clearly, and because Grisez and Finnis follow him. See §§437, 442.

for Suarez's views on morality by considering his account not of natural law, but of the foundation of natural law. This foundation consists in the principles of intrinsic morality, which are the principles of the natural law, considered apart from its status as expressing God's legislative will. Once we attend to this aspect of Suarez's position, we see that his views on morality are close to Aquinas' views, despite their disagreement on the relation of intrinsic morality to natural law. For they agree in believing that the duty (debitum) to follow the actual principles of the natural law holds because of the nature of the relevant actions themselves, not because of a specific command from God's legislative will.

It is not exactly false, therefore, but it is misleading, to rest content with Farrell's second point of contrast. It is true that, according to Suarez, the eternal law requires an act of legislative will. But if one considers the eternal law as expressing the intellect and will of God the creator, Suarez and Aquinas agree that it is the cause of all morality; there would be no morally good and bad actions if there were no rational agents with our nature. Suarez does not believe that once God had decided to create human beings with our nature, it was still possible for him to prescribe a different natural law; but Aquinas does not believe this either.

The most surprising part of Farrell's case is the view expressed in points (3)–(5). His claim about Aquinas is defensible, provided that we do not assume that conformity to natural law essentially involves conformity to God's legislative will. Aquinas does not maintain that rightness and wrongness essentially involve conformity to divine legislative precepts. On the contrary, divine precepts prescribe actions that are intrinsically right insofar as they conform to rational nature.

Farrell's first point, therefore, gives a one-sided picture of Suarez's views on obligation. It is true that Suarez does not take natural law, apart from its being commanded by God's legislative will, to impose any 'obligation' (obligation); but he believes that the foundation of natural law contains its own duty (debitum). When Farrell cites evidence to show that Aquinas takes the natural law to include an obligation, he cites a passage in which Aquinas uses 'duty' (debitum) and not 'obligation' (obligatio).[41]

Farrell's sixth point also overlooks this distinction between duty and obligation. He rejects Suarez's belief in intrinsic natural rightness or wrongness presupposed by law, on the ground that rightness essentially consists in conformity to a rule or norm. He disagrees with Suarez only if every rule (regula) must also be a law (lex). Given his narrow use of 'law', Suarez need not agree that if intrinsic rightness is separate from law, it must also be separate from every sort of rule.[42]

Some of Farrell's objections may reflect misunderstanding of the sort of concession Suarez intends in considering the nature of intrinsic rightness on the supposition of God's non-existence or inaction. Suarez does not mean this supposition to show that right or wrong acts do or could exist independently of the creative will of God. They are only independent of God's legislation, which expresses a further act of freewill in addition to the act that results in creation. This does not mean that it is possible for God to have created us without

[41] Farrell, 130, cites 1–2 q100, and *Quodl.* v 19, both of which use 'debitum'.

[42] Farrell's account tends to assimilate Aquinas' views about morality to the modern Roman view that formal and complete morality requires obligation and legislation. The points on which he criticizes Suarez mark Suarez's deviations from the modern Roman view, on which see §602.

also legislating that we should observe the law of nature. Creation without legislation is impossible because of God's goodness and providence, not because God's creative will is identical to God's legislative will.

For these reasons, Farrell's comparison of Suarez with Aquinas exaggerates disagreements with Aquinas, in ways that distort both Suarez's and Aquinas' views. If we take account of Suarez's narrow conception of obligation, and the crucial deontic elements that he takes to be distinct from obligation, his belief in intrinsic rightness as the basis for God's legislation agrees with Aquinas' view. To deny that Aquinas agrees with Suarez on this point is to miss an essential element in Aquinas' conception of the basis of natural law. Some of Farrell's 'Thomist' criticism of Suarez relies on a voluntarist treatment of Aquinas, supposing that he takes divine legislation to be necessary for morality.

This treatment of Aquinas makes it intelligible that someone might suppose, as Anscombe supposes, that Aquinas holds a jural conception of morality and that Suarez gives it up. For Aquinas takes morality to be inseparable from natural law, whereas Suarez takes it to be separable. If we attend simply to this difference, without understanding its basis, we may infer that Suarez's belief in intrinsic morality represents a departure from Aquinas. We may even suppose that it marks a secular, non-jural conception of morality that Aquinas would reject.[43]

462. Grotius as a Secular Moralist

If we take this view of the contrast between Aquinas and Suarez, we may be ready to follow Anscombe in supposing that the modern conception of morality consists in the separation of moral right and wrong from the precepts of divine law. This outlook on modern morality suggests a corresponding account of the originality of Grotius. Though Anscombe does not support her thesis about modern moral philosophy with a detailed account of 17th-century theories, one might claim that some features of Grotius' position support her claims about the modern outlook. According to some modern readers, Grotius is similar to Hobbes in trying to defend a minimal conception of natural law, shorn of its Scholastic elaborations and addressed to opponents who reject the Scholastic outlook as a whole.

This picture of early modern moral philosophy underlies Dugald Stewart's account of Grotius. He maintains that Grotius follows the suggestion of Melanchthon, who is the first to maintain a naturalist view. Relying on Cudworth's reference to Ockham and other Scholastics, Stewart takes the Scholastics in general to have maintained a jural view.[44]

[43] Villey, *FPJM* 346–7, holds a rather similar view of how 16th-century Jesuits depart from Aquinas. In his view, they make right ('droit') independent of God, contrary to Aquinas, 'qui situait en Dieu les racines du droit naturel . . . Dans l'excès de leur polemique antiprotestante, nos jesuites déjà prêtent la main à ce futur rationalisme qui va déferler sur le monde moderne et mènera la plus grande partie de "l'école du droit naturel moderne" dans un laïcisme intégral.'

[44] At *DPMEP* 38 Stewart claims that Melanchthon's view 'like the other steps of the Reformers, . . . was only a return to common sense, and to the genuine spirit of Christianity, from the dogmas imposed on the credulity of mankind by an ambitious priesthood. Many years were yet to elapse before any attempts were to be made to trace, with analytical accuracy, the moral phenomena of human life to their first principles in the constitution and condition of man . . .' In a footnote, referring to Cudworth's remarks on Ockham, Stewart allows that Ockham was among the first to maintain a voluntarist view, but he says nothing about Scholastic views before Ockham. He acknowledges that 'the Catholics have even begun to recriminate on the Reformers as the first broachers of it [sc. Ockham's view]'.

Hence he takes Grotius to have been an innovator in his conception of natural law (171), and to have broken fundamentally with mediaeval views (174, 177). He agrees with Barbeyrac in treating Grotius as a pioneer; but his reason is the exact opposite of Barbeyrac's reason.

Hobbes and Grotius may be taken to present a new, secular account of morality that differs from the mediaeval account in two ways: (1) It develops a theory of obligation that avoids any reliance on divine commands. As Grotius puts it, even if God did not command observance of the natural law, we would still be obliged by its provisions. Similarly, Hobbes argues that the traditional laws of nature are defensible as means to peaceful and commodious living, apart from any question about divine commands. (2) It abandons dubious Scholastic claims about agreement with human nature, insofar as these claims cannot be expressed in claims about self-interest. Both Grotius and Hobbes suppose that sceptics who reject Scholastic claims about what suits rational nature cannot deny that facts about self-interest give reasons for action. Hence they defend the traditional content of natural law (or some of it) by appeal to self-interest and utility.[45]

If Grotius and Hobbes agree on these points, modern natural-law theory is a substitute for a traditional jural conception. The distinguishing feature of modern moral philosophy, on this view, is not the formulation of a jural conception of ethics, but the abandonment of it. Such an interpretation of Hobbes and Grotius fits Anscombe's general view, and casts doubt on the picture of modern moral philosophy that we find in Barbeyrac and Sidgwick. According to the views of both Stewart and Anscombe, on one side, and Barbeyrac and Sidgwick, on the other side, Grotius is an innovator, but the two sides give exactly opposite reasons. His recognition of morality apart from divine commands may be held to support Anscombe's claim that modern moral philosophy abandons a jural conception.

These contradictory views about modern moral philosophy agree in attaching special importance to a jural conception of morality. According to Anscombe, the primary error of modern moral philosophy is its rejection of a jural conception. According to Stewart, this is its primary advance. According to Anscombe, mediaeval moralists hold a jural conception. According to Barbeyrac, the formulation of a jural conception is the primary advance of modern moral philosophy. The different views reflect different judgments both about the historical developments and about the philosophical merits of a jural conception. But they all agree in supposing that the decision about whether to accept or to reject a jural conception is crucially important.

Our previous discussion counts against Anscombe and Stewart. Mediaeval moral philosophers do not characteristically hold a jural conception of morality. Given Aquinas' broad conception of law, he does not differ from Suarez about the status of intrinsic morality, and hence he does not hold a jural conception of morality. Anscombe's claim might fit Scotus and Ockham better, but it conflicts with the positions of Aquinas and Suarez. Equally, then, we have no reason to believe that a non-jural conception of morality is an innovation. Suarez's

[45] See Tuck, 'Modern'; Haakonssen (quoted in §464); Schneewind, *IA* 67. Korkman, *BNL* 81–115, argues against their reasons for thinking Grotius original (because of his response to scepticism); he does not discuss whether Grotius is original for some other reason. Shaver, 'Grotius', argues against Tuck that Grotius does not maintain an egoist position in his argument against Carneades.

non-jural account expounds Aquinas' non-jural account. Stewart is mistaken to claim that a non-jural account was an innovation by Melanchthon or Grotius.

To see whether Barbeyrac is right to claim that Grotius is the pioneer of a jural account, we must look more closely at what Grotius says and at what Barbeyrac takes him to say.

33

GROTIUS

463. Grotius and his Predecessors

We have seen that Pufendorf, Barbeyrac, and some later writers treat Grotius as the founder of a distinctively modern theory of natural law, even though they do not agree about what is distinctive in his position. They regard his theory not only as an innovation, but also as an advance. To see how far they are right, we should compare Grotius with his Scholastic predecessors, and especially with Suarez, whose work he knew.[1] Though Barbeyrac praises Grotius as a pioneer, he admits that Grotius was not completely emancipated from Aristotle and Scholastic errors.[2] If, then, we compare Grotius' account with Suarez's account, we may be able to decide whether Barbeyrac is justified either in his criticism or in his praise.

Some of Grotius' comments on Aristotle and on the Scholastics tend to confirm Barbeyrac's description of him. He does not dismiss them as curtly as Barbeyrac does, though he does not treat them as his primary authorities. He relies not on Scholastic but on Patristic authority, claiming that the general consent of the clearly orthodox writers, especially the earlier ones, ought to have significant weight in clarifying what is obscure in the Scriptures.[3] He claims to follow these Christian writers in their eclectic attitude to philosophical sources, picking out the elements of truth scattered in different writers. He contrasts this attitude with the Scholastic subjection to Aristotle that made him an intellectual tyrant. But he does not take this misuse of Aristotle to imply any objection to Aristotle himself, who deserves the first

[1] On Grotius' knowledge of Suarez see Scott, in Suarez, *STW* 19a–21a; Suarez, *Leg*. ed. Perena, iv, pp. lxviii–lxx. Grotius cites Suarez in *JBP*, at i 4.15.1; ii 4.5.1; ii 14.5; ii 23.13, but not specifically on the natural law. St Leger, *EDHG*, ch. 5, discusses the influence of Suarez on Grotius, suggesting that Suarez's reputation as a supporter of regicide may have discouraged Grotius from citing him too prominently. He quotes (110) a letter of 15 Oct. 1633 = *Briefwisseling* v 194, in which Grotius criticizes polemics against the Jesuits, and especially against Suarez, 'a man of such subtlety in philosophy . . . that, in my judgment, he scarcely has an equal'. Cf. the letter of 1 Aug. 1635 = vi 121, mentioning the Jesuits 'among whom the not undistinguished Francisco Suarez writes . . .'.

[2] 'Grotius saw what was the fundamental principle of the law of nature: But he does no more than just point it out in his Preface, and that in such a manner too, as gives us reason to conclude, that his ideas on that head were not altogether clear; nor enough disengaged from the prejudices of the Schools.' (Barbeyrac, 'Morality' §31, p. 70)

[3] momentum non exiguum habere debent, *JBP*, Prol. §51. Grotius' attitude to the Fathers as 'witnesses to the truth' is common, though not unchallenged, among Protestant writers. See Backus, 'Scholarship', and Meijering, 'Theology' (esp. 868–70 on Daillé and Rivet). I cite *JBP* from Whewell's edition, based on the one published in 1631. I sometimes modify Whewell's translation. On the editions of *JBP* see Tuck, *NRT* 73n.

place among philosophers.[4] He follows both Platonists and Christians, among whom he cites especially Lactantius,[5] in dissenting from Aristotle's doctrine of the mean, to which he devotes some less than penetrating criticism (Prol. §§43–5).

Still, his attitude to the Scholastics is not entirely hostile. They lived in unfavourable times and were handicapped by their ignorance of 'good learning' (artes bonae), so that it is not surprising that they made mistakes. Still, he takes much of what they say to be praiseworthy. They are good critics, attacking one another with a degree of moderation not found in contemporary controversy, and agreement among them is unlikely to be mistaken (§52).[6]

These remarks from Grotius' preface do not suggest that he rejects the views of his predecessors as a whole. On the contrary, he claims to accept the views generally accepted by the Scholastics, insofar as these agree with the common consent of the Christian Fathers. He does not suggest that either of these groups of authorities has gone radically wrong in its conception of the law of nature. Barbeyrac suggest that so much falsity is present in the Scholastics that it is not worth trying to extract the truth. Grotius holds the opposite view, that there is enough truth, and little enough falsity, to make the effort of extraction well worthwhile. This conciliatory attitude to the Scholastics might lead us to expect both that Grotius will try to find the position that commands most general assent among them, and that he will be sympathetic to such a position.

464. Naturalism

Grotius affirms the existence of a natural right (ius) that proceeds 'from principles internal to a human being' (Prol. §12). They are internal to us not only because we know them by nature, but also because they are appropriate for rational agents with our nature. To prove that something belongs to natural right, we need to show its 'necessary appropriateness or inappropriateness to rational and social nature' (i 1.12.1).[7]

[4] 'Among the philosophers the first place is deservedly assigned to Aristotle . . . Only it were to be wished that his authority had not, some ages ago, been converted into a tyranny; so that truth, in the pursuit of which Aristotle faithfully spent his life, suffers no oppression so great as that which is inflicted in Aristotle's name. I, both here and in other places, follow the liberty of the old Christians, who had not sworn allegiance to any sect of philosophers—not because they agreed with those who say that nothing can be firmly grasped (percipi), which is the most foolish view possible, but because they thought that there was no sect that had seen the whole of the truth, and none that had not seen some part of the truth. They therefore believed that to collect the truth, scattered among different philosophers among sects, into one body: would indeed be nothing other than handing on truly Christian teaching.' (Prol. §42) The last sentence quoted is taken from Lactantius, *DI* vii 7.

[5] See Lactantius, *DI* vi 15–17, cited by Whewell ad §43. Grotius quotes him in §45.

[6] . . . ubi in re morum consentiunt, vix est, ut errent, Prol. §52. Leibniz approves of Grotius' favourable remarks about the Scholastics, in *Theod.* 77.

[7] Grotius' early work *JP* (see Tuck, *PG* 170–6; Saastamoinen, *MFM* 110) appears to take a more voluntarist view of natural law. As his first rule Grotius states: 'What God has shown to be his will, that is law' (ch. 2 = ET 8). But this appearance of voluntarism may be misleading. It is not clear whether Grotius distinguishes the creative from the legislative will of God. Sometimes he seems to refer simply to God's creative will: 'The will of God is revealed . . . above all in the very design of the Creator; for it is from this last source that the law of nature is derived' (8). He might mean that the natural law consists in facts about the nature of creatures: '. . . since God fashioned creation and willed its existence, every individual part thereof has received from him certain natural properties whereby that existence may be preserved and each part may be guided or its own good, in conformity one might say, with the fundamental law inherent in its origin' (9). Grotius does not consider the dispute between voluntarism and naturalism, and does not state the naturalist position that he states in *JBP*; but it is not clear that *JP* maintains a voluntarist position.

On this point Grotius agrees with Scholastic naturalists. He signals his agreement when he says that his remarks would still have some standing even if we were to grant that God does not exist or that he is not concerned with human affairs.[8] This concession about God's non-existence is familiar; Suarez quotes it as part of the case presented by Gregory of Rimini and others, to display the distinctness of the natural law from God's commands.[9]

Grotius adds two points to Gregory: (1) He says this proposition cannot be granted without extreme wickedness (summo scelere). It would indeed be wicked to grant God's non-existence, if 'grant' meant 'accept it as true that God does not exist'. Grotius insists that he does not commit this wickedness, because he does not grant the non-existence of God, but simply entertains it counterfactually. (2) In contrast to Gregory and Suarez, one of his suppositions is that God does not care for human affairs; this is the supposition denounced by Plato in *Laws* X and later accepted by Epicurus. Grotius' familiarity (direct or indirect) with Plato or with Epicurean sources may explain why he modifies Gregory's supposition.

These two additions, then, do not make a significant difference to the issue raised by the counterfactual supposition. But what does Grotius mean by affirming the truth of the counterfactual? We may compare him with Suarez, who discusses two relevant counterfactual assertions: (1) Even if God did not exist or did not issue commands, there would be natural law, and obligation. (2) Even if God did not exist or did not issue commands, actions would be intrinsically right and wrong. Suarez rejects the first assertion, but accepts the second. Hence he holds a partly voluntarist conception of natural law, but a naturalist conception of morality.

Grotius does not say which counterfactual he accepts. He would endorse a more strongly naturalist position than Suarez accepts if he claimed that there is a natural law (lex), properly so called, apart from the legislative will of God, and that this law imposes a genuine obligation apart from God's command. This is Vasquez's naturalist position.[10] Grotius does not discuss it.

His initial discussion is confined to the existence of a right (ius), not a law (lex), of nature. In asking whether there is a right (ius) of nature, he takes himself to be asking whether anything is just (iustum) by nature, apart from positive legislation; in affirming that there is something just by nature, he rejects Carneades' sceptical position (Prol. §5). If his claim about the right of nature means only that something is just by nature, not as a result of divine legislation, Suarez agrees.[11]

When Grotius considers 'ius' in the sense in which he takes it to be equivalent to 'lex', he describes it as 'a rule of moral acts obliging to what is correct'.[12] Obligation, in his view,

[8] 'And certainly these things that we have just said would have some standing even if we were to grant what cannot be granted without extreme wickedness (locum aliquem haberent, etiamsi daremus, quod sine summo scelere dari nequit), that God does not exist, or that he is not concerned with human affairs.' (Prol. §11) In the first edition (1625) Grotius has 'locum haberent'. He added 'aliquem' in the edition of 1631 (presumably to make it clear that the non-existence of God would not leave everything unchanged). See Molhuysen, 'First edition' 106. Tuck, *NRT* 76, *PG* 197–8 ('All we have said now would take place . . .') follows the first edition.

[9] On Gregory see §436.

[10] On Grotius' knowledge of Vasquez see St Leger, *EDHG* 141–2, and Chroust, 'Grotius' 117. They take Grotius to agree with Vasquez rather than Suarez, because they hold a more voluntarist view of Suarez than I would think plausible.

[11] For the distinction between ius and lex in this context see Vasquez (quoted in §429); Suarez, *Leg*. i 2.11 fin.; Grotius i 1.9.1.

[12] '. . . regula actuum moralium obligans ad id quod rectum est.' (i 1.9.1).

implies some necessity that distinguishes it from advice (consilium). But he does not say whether this necessity also belongs to a duty (debitum). Hence he does not say whether every duty is also an obligation. Suarez distinguishes duty from obligation, taking obligation, but not duty, to involve imposed necessity, and therefore command. If Grotius believes that duty implies obligation, and that obligation implies command, he holds an imperative conception of duty. But if he believes that duty implies obligation, and some duties are independent of commands, he holds a non-imperative conception of obligation. It is not quite clear where Grotius stands on these questions.

Grotius describes natural right—understood as law (lex)—as including two elements: the moral wrongness or necessity of some action, because of its inappropriateness or appropriateness to rational nature, and the consequent divine prohibition or command.[13] Hence, insofar as he takes natural right (ius) to be law (lex), he takes it to require a divine command. On this point he seems to agree with Suarez.[14]

465. The Will of God

Though Grotius believes there would be natural right (ius) without law (lex), and hence without the legislative will of God, he does not believe that the existence of God is irrelevant to moral requirements. For we know that God exists and that he offers rewards and punishments (Prol. §11). Grotius now mentions different ways in which the will of God is relevant to questions of right (§13). (1) Right has another origin, besides nature, in the free will of God, whom we must obey. (2) But even natural right, which proceeds from principles internal to a human being, can be ascribed to God, since he willed that such

[13] 'Natural right is a dictate of correct reason indicating that some action, from its agreement or disagreement with rational nature itself, has in it moral wrongness or moral necessity, and for that reason such an action is either forbidden or commanded by God the author of nature. Actions about which such a dictate exists are required or impermissible in themselves, and therefore are understood to be necessarily commanded or forbidden by God.' (i 1.10.1) For 'rational nature' Barbeyrac and Whewell substitute 'rational and social nature', appealing to 12.1. Sidgwick, *OHE* 161n, gives good reasons for rejecting this change.

[14] Schneewind, *MP* i 88–9, describes the alleged innovation in Grotius' position as follows: '. . . he claimed that there would be binding laws of nature even if God did not exist. . . . If Grotius had claimed only that there are goods and ills independent of the existence of God, his view would not have been particularly original. Such claims had been made in one form or another by various earlier thinkers. They were what Suarez had in mind when he asserted that goods and ills alone do not give rise to obligation and that a sanction imposed by a lawgiver must be added if there are to be obligations. Grotius' innovation was his assertion that there would be obligations, and not simply goods and ills, even if God did not exist.' Schneewind refers to Prol. §11 in support of his claim; but this passage says nothing about obligation. The passage on the law of nature (i 1.10.1) includes a reference to a divine command; hence it does not show that Grotius takes a divine command to be unnecessary for natural law. In any case, even if Grotius maintained the position that Schneewind ascribes to him, it would not be an innovation; it would simply be the position of Vasquez (and probably the implicit position of Aquinas); see §426. Haakonssen, *NLMP* 29, contrasts Grotius with Gregory of Rimini: 'The scholastic point was that human beings have the ability to understand what is good and bad even without invoking God, but have no obligation proper to act accordingly without God's command. Grotius is suggesting that people unaided by religion can use their perfect—and even imperfect—rights to establish the contractual and quasi-contractual obligations upon which social life rests.' The epistemic thesis that Haakonssen mentions captures neither Vasquez's conception of natural law nor Suarez's views about intrinsic rightness and wrongness. His claim about 'obligation proper' is correct only if it refers to obligation in Suarez's narrow sense. Suarez distinguishes obligations from duties and recognizes duties without reference to divine commands. In this narrow sense of 'obligation', however, it is not clear that Grotius recognizes natural law and obligations without divine commands. Both Schneewind's and Haakonssen's attempts to separate Grotius from a familiar Scholastic position rest on inadequate evidence.

principles should exist in us.[15] (3) God made these principles more conspicuous to us, by giving the laws (leges) he has given for the guidance of people who are less capable of reasoning.[16]

The first and third of these claims seem to refer to God's revealing of a legislative will in the Decalogue. Grotius seems to contrast the role of God's will in legislation (in the first and third claims) with its role in natural right itself (in the second claim). He suggests, then, that God's legislative will has no role in the existence of natural right, but simply makes natural right clearer by issuing specific commands. He speaks of laws (leges) only when he mentions the laws that God gives us to make the requirements of natural right clearer.

Grotius' second claim intervenes, rather confusingly, between two claims about God's legislative will. The first claim mentions God's free will as a source of right distinct from natural right. The second claim suggests that even natural right is derived from the will of God, because he willed that such principles should exist in us. 'Principles' here does not refer to our knowledge of the natural law, but to the basic facts about human nature that Grotius has already mentioned. God is introduced here not as the source of our knowledge of natural right, but as the creator of human beings with the nature that is the objective basis for natural right.

Here, therefore, Grotius refers to God as creator, not as legislator; he does not endorse voluntarism about natural law or morality. Like Suarez, he acknowledges God's creative will as the source of human beings with their nature, and hence as the source of naturally right and wrong actions; but this does not imply that natural right and wrong are the result of divine legislation. Though it is up to God whether there are any human beings, and hence whether any human beings act rightly or wrongly, it is not up to God to decide what is good or bad, or right or wrong, for creatures with the nature that is essential to human beings.

It would have been helpful if Grotius had been as careful as Suarez is to separate questions about (i) the natural foundation of natural law (lex); (ii) the essential features of natural law; (iii) the relation of the natural foundation and of the law to God's creative will; (iv) their relation to God's legislative will. His treatment suffers from abbreviation, and he introduces the different points in an unhelpful order. We have no reason, however, to attribute any confusion to him.

He agrees with Suarez and Aquinas in recognizing a natural basis for what they call natural law. This basis is what he calls natural right (ius), and what Suarez calls naturally right (honestum).[17] He seems to agree with Suarez in recognizing duties (debita) that are independent of any divine command.[18] He may be closer to Vasquez's and Aquinas' view, that the existence of natural law (lex) consists in the existence of what is naturally right and wrong, than to Suarez's view, that the existence of natural law requires a divine command. This is the conclusion we will draw if we take Grotius' remarks about the role of God to be exhaustive; for he does not mention, as Suarez does, an act of God's legislative will

[15] See Pufendorf's use of this aspect of divine freedom, discussed in §566.

[16] On divine laws (leges) see Prol. §1. Cf. Aquinas on the function of the Decalogue, §319.

[17] On Grotius' use of 'honestum' see i 2.1.2.

[18] This also seems to be implied by i 2.1.1. Law (lex) introduces new duties (debita), but Grotius does not suggest that there are no duties prior to law.

prescribing observance of natural right, apart from the expression of God's revealed will in the Decalogue. But we have seen that his remarks on the role of God are less than completely clear. It might be wisest to attribute to him no clear view on whether the natural law is prescribed, as such, by God's legislative will.

The extent of a philosopher's commitment to naturalism about natural law is often clarified in his treatment of alleged dispensations. Aquinas, followed by Suarez, claims that genuine dispensations are impossible, since the provisions of the natural law specify what is right and wrong intrinsically, apart from God's legislative will. Grotius follows Aquinas on this issue. In his view, the intrinsic rightness and wrongness of actions does not depend on any divine legislation; God prescribes and forbids actions as being intrinsically right and wrong.

In saying that natural right indicates both intrinsic rightness and the divine precept, Grotius appears to agree with Suarez's claim that the natural law, as such, is prescriptive, and not purely indicative, law. With Aquinas and Suarez, he infers that the natural law is immutable, and cannot be changed by God without self-contradiction.[19] Since God cannot change natural law, apparent dispensations cannot be dispensations. Grotius agrees with Aquinas and Suarez that if God commands us to kill someone or take their goods, God does not make murder (homicidium) or theft lawful in this instance, but changes the circumstances so that the action of killing or taking is no longer murder or theft (i 1.10.6).

Though Grotius is less clear and less systematic than Suarez, he agrees with him on the naturalist claims about morality, on which Suarez also agrees with Aquinas. For he recognizes natural right and wrong, resting on the nature of human beings, apart from any divine legislation.

466. Natural Sociality

If Grotius agrees with Suarez so far on the relation of natural law to human nature, does he also agree with him about the basic features of human nature and about the principles that can be derived from it? Grotius begins by asking: Is there any such thing as right (ius) in the dealings of one people (populus) with another, whether this right is derived from nature or from divine laws (leges) or from custom and tacit agreement (Prol. §1)? Some people have denied that there is any such right beyond a mere name, on the ground that usefulness to a state is the measure of justice, or that a common weal

[19] 'Now the Law of Nature is so immutable that it cannot be changed even by God. For although the power of God is measureless (immensa), yet some things can be spoken of to which it does not extend. For things that are spoken of in this way, they are simply spoken of, but they have no sense that would express any reality (res), but are repugnant to themselves. Therefore, just as twice two's not being four cannot be brought about by God, so also it cannot be brought about that what is bad by its intrinsic character is not bad. . . . For as the being (esse) of things when they exist and by which they exist depends on nothing else, the same applies to the properties that necessarily follow on that being. Now such a property is the badness of certain actions, when they are compared with nature using sound reason. Therefore God himself allows judgments about himself in accordance with this norm . . .'. (i 1.10.5) In the omitted passage Grotius cites, as Suarez (see §447) does, Aristotle on adultery etc. Pufendorf (*JNG* i 2.6), Barbeyrac, and Whewell object to his use of this passage. On Pufendorf's criticism of the appeal to self-contradiction see §579.

cannot be administered without doing wrong (iniuria).[20] The second of these opinions is the view of Machiavelli, which Suarez discusses as 'the doctrine of politicians of our time' (*Leg*. iii 12.2).

Grotius seeks to answer this objection to the belief in any right that could impose a moral restraint on a particular state. He follows Lactantius and Vasquez in beginning with the objections to justice that are presented by Carneades.[21] According to Carneades' argument, rights (iura) simply embody calculation of utility, and therefore vary in accordance with practices (mores) and different times and occasions, so that there is no natural right (ius). Since everyone naturally pursues utility above all, either there is no justice (iustitia), or justice is foolishness, since consideration for someone else's advantage involves harm to oneself.[22]

Carneades' argument may be initially puzzling, since he says (i) that right reflects a calculation of utility, but (ii) it is foolish to be just. The first claim implies that it is sometimes sensible to follow provisions of right, since they promote utility. The second claim, however, maintains that it is not sensible to be just. The two claims are consistent because they refer to the advantage of different people. In the first claim Carneades asserts that right reflects a society's view of its advantage. In the second he suggests that in following the advantage of society, I harm myself. This combination of claims is familiar from *Republic* ii, which is Carneades' ultimate source; Glaucon, like Carneades, moves from the first claim, that justice embodies the advantage of a society, to the second claim, that it is 'another's good', and harmful to the individual just person.

This second claim can be answered if we have some reason for being just apart from the advantage of a larger society whose advantage may not coincide with our own. We may have such a reason, if principles of justice embody natural right—something that is right because of its agreement with human nature, apart from the advantage of any particular society. Grotius, therefore, tries to prove that there is such a natural right. On this point, his aim is similar to Suarez's aim in answering Machiavelli. He gives Carneades' scepticism about justice a more prominent place in his argument than Suarez gives it. This may be because he thinks it especially urgent to answer scepticism, or because, in fulfilling his aim of using Patristic sources, he relies on Lactantius, who preserves Carneades' critique of justice.

Grotius answers Carneades by denying that a society's view of its advantage is the only basis for right. In his view, there is a natural basis of right. It is founded on human nature, and especially on the human desire for society. This 'social' aspect of human nature is,

[20] 'In practically everyone's mouth is the remark of Euphemus in Thucydides, that for a king or city holding an empire nothing that is useful is unjust. And similar to that one is the remark that in supreme power (fortuna), whatever is stronger is more just (aequius), and the remark that a state cannot be managed without injustice.' (Prol. §3)

[21] Vasquez mentions the Pyrrhonians, ad *ST* 1–2 q94 a1 (p. 35), and quotes Cicero, *Leg*. i 42–7 against them. Lactantius summarizes Carneades' arguments against justice in Cicero, *Rep*. at *DI* v 12, 15. For Lactantius' views on natural law and pagan virtue see §§206, 228.

[22] 'Human beings established rights in accordance with their utility, rights that varied as their customs (mores) varied and even among the same people often changed with time; but there is no natural right. For all human beings and all other animals tended towards their own advantages (utilitates) under the guidance of nature, so that either there is no justice, or if there is any justice it is the height of folly, since one harms oneself in considering the advantage of others.' (Prol. §5)

according to Grotius, what the Stoics have in mind in speaking of 'conciliation' (*oikeiôsis*) of each person to himself and of one person to another.[23]

He describes this aspect of human nature in Stoic rather than purely Aristotelian terms. But, as Barbeyrac sees, the main idea has an Aristotelian source.[24] Grotius seeks to capture Aristotle's conception of a human being as a 'political' (*politikon*) animal, or, as the mediaeval sources render it, a 'social' (sociale) animal.[25] He ascribes to human nature both this social aim and the capacity to plan for present and future; in the light of this aim and this capacity we find principles that belong to natural right.

By appealing to the social nature of human beings Grotius seeks a natural basis for our pursuit of the right (honestum) as well as the advantageous (utile). Following Stoic sources, he claims that our recognition of the right arises from the growth of reason, as we discover a proper object for 'conciliation'. Our conception of the right is our recognition of what accords or conflicts with a rational and social nature.[26]

These claims about sociality and natural right do not necessarily reject Aristotelian eudaemonism. For Aristotle, the Stoics, and Aquinas, the social nature of a human being is part of the human nature that has to be fulfilled in human happiness; hence, the claim that a human being ought to take an appropriate role in a society does not conflict with the claim that each human being pursues his own happiness above all. Scotus rejects Aquinas' view that the pursuit of one's own ultimate good is the proper basis for concern for justice. Grotius does not mention this dispute between Aquinas and Scotus. He says nothing to suggest that he rejects the eudaemonist explanation of the duties belonging to natural right.

Whatever he thinks about eudaemonism, he rejects Carneades' view that utility is the only rational aim that can be founded in human nature.[27] As soon as he has introduced the Stoic notion of sociality (*oikeiôsis*), he rejects Carneades' claim about utility (Prol. §6 fin.). Against Carneades' claim that utility is the mother of the just and fair, he maintains that human nature is the mother of natural right, and would produce a desire for society even if we could satisfy our basic needs for survival without combining with other people (§16). Utility supports natural right, because we cannot supply our basic needs for survival

[23] 'And among these things that are proper to a human being is the desire (appetitus) for society, in other words for a community, not of just any sort, but a tranquil one that is ordered in accordance with the character of human intellect, with those who are of the same kind. This is what the Stoics called *oikeiôsis*.' (Prol. §6) Grotius cites John Chrysostom and Marcus Aurelius.

[24] On §6 Barbeyrac comments: 'But all these points seem to have flowed from what Aristotle said, "that every human being is akin to and a friend to every other" ' (quoted in Greek from *EN* 1155a21–2).

[25] This point is borne out by Grotius' recollection of Aristotle in §7: 'But a human being of mature age knows to treat like cases alike, and has a dominant desire for society, and is the only animal who has language, as a special means to fulfil this desire. Hence it is reasonable to suppose that he also has a capacity for knowing and acting in accordance with general precepts; the things that turn out to be appropriate for him do not belong to all animals, but are suitable for human nature.' This is partly derived from Aristotle, as well as from the Stoic and Patristic sources that Grotius cites.

[26] i 2.1–3. Tuck, 'Modern', argues that Grotius and Pufendorf differ from mediaeval theorists about natural law, because they intend natural law to answer Renaissance scepticism. According to this interpretation, they maintain that some points about self-interest survive the sceptical critique of objective and non-relative values. However, the view that self-interest is the basis of natural law seems as old as Aquinas' eudaemonism; it is not an innovation by Grotius. Saastamoinen, *MFM* 114, fairly criticizes Tuck's view. Haakonssen, *NLMP* 28–30 maintains a view similar to Tuck's.

[27] Grotius' early work, *JP*, ch. 2 (= Williams 14), affirms the social character of human beings, and cites Aristotle.

without the help of others; but it is not the only basis on which we can reasonably assess a particular state.

In all these claims, Grotius never denies that the natural desire for society is subordinate to one's desire for one's own good. He does not defend this eudaemonist thesis against Carneades. Nor does he suggest that it needs defence.[28]

467. Natural Law and Political Principles

Examination of the foundations of Grotius' theory does not suggest any radical innovation in comparison with Suarez. On the contrary, he offers an abbreviated and simplified version of the central naturalist aspects of Aquinas' and Suarez's theory of morality. The elements that Grotius adds from Stoic and Patristic sources supplement the Scholastic position, but they neither conflict with it nor modify its essential claims.

Even though Grotius agrees with Suarez on these basic issues, he does not agree with all his political conclusions. Suarez asserts claims about natural right in opposition to Machiavelli. Though Grotius agrees with him on some points, he does not follow Suarez in allowing a right of resistance.[29] In his long chapter 'On the war of subjects against superiors' (i 4), Grotius further limits even the limited permission that Suarez gives for rebellion.

One of Grotius' arguments against rebellion relies on a conception of rules and principles that Suarez rejects.[30] Grotius speaks as though we should regard principles as rules that give the right answer in most cases, and we should assume that if they do this, it is better to observe them even when they give the wrong answer than to modify the rule.

Grotius' argument is sometimes acceptable; for it may indeed be better to recognize a class of cases where we will not question a rule, even if our violating it would give better results in individual cases. But it does not follow that whenever we have a rule that most often gives the right answer, we should follow it even when it gives the wrong answer. It may be more reasonable to modify the rule so as to take account of the cases where some modification would give a better answer. This is Suarez's point when he argues that the precepts of natural law are not to be identified with the general rules that most often give the right answer. In his view, the precepts of natural law include the circumstances that introduce qualifications into simple generalizations. Grotius overlooks this aspect of Suarez's doctrine here.

Still, he does not adhere rigidly to his general rule. He acknowledges that 'it is a more difficult question, whether the law about non-resistance obliges us in a most serious and most certain danger' (i 4.7.1). He mentions David's rebellion against Saul and the rebellion of the Maccabees against Antiochus. In both cases he argues that only

[28] Contrast Darwall, *BMIO* 6. [29] On Suarez see §451.

[30] 'If the rulers at any time are misled by excessive fear or anger or other passions, so as to deviate from the right road that leads to tranquillity, this is to be held as one of the less frequent cases, which are to be estimated ... by the occurrence of better cases. Now laws take it to be sufficient to take account of what most frequently happens. ... For this is preferable to living without a rule (norma) or leaving the rule to the judgment of everyone.' (i 4.4.3)

extreme and most certain danger (summum certissimumque periculum, i 4.7.5) could justify their action; he rejects every other argument that might be given to support the Maccabean rebellion. He then adds a final doubt about the legitimacy of rebellion for Christians (i 4.7.8).

If, therefore, Grotius allows any right of resistance at all, he limits it to self-defence. He does not allow the form of aggressive war that Suarez allows, when the commonwealth deposes the ruler. He rejects the arguments of contemporaries who allow this power of deposition to inferior officials speaking on behalf of the commonwealth (i 4.6.1). In his view, they have only the status of private persons in relation to the supreme ruler whom they claim the right to depose.

These objections to the right of resistance and deposition ignore Suarez's main argument for attributing a right of aggressive war to the commonwealth against the ruler. Suarez argues that natural law does not permit ruling without regard to the common good, and that therefore the condition of ruling in accord with the common good always qualifies the legitimate transfer of power from the people to the ruler. Grotius accepts Suarez's grounds for founding political society in natural law and the common good. But he does not consider these grounds in his discussion of the right of rebellion. This sharp political difference from Suarez's claims about legitimacy and resistance is all the more striking in the light of the agreement between Grotius and Suarez on moral foundations.[31]

Grotius does not improve on Suarez here. For in agreeing that natural right precedes any right created by a state and its laws, and that natural right includes more moral demands than those referring to survival and physical security, he implies that states, governments, and political institutions may be judged by reference to the social nature of human beings, and to the success or failure of different states in fulfilling it. This judgment may not always justify obedience. An argument for obedience has to rely on empirical premisses that are sometimes open to dispute.

If this objection to Grotius' political doctrine is justified, the Scholastic and naturalist foundations of his moral theory of natural right tend to undermine his political claims. This conflict in his position is apparent to Pufendorf, who sees that the foundations need to be modified in order to remove the elements of natural right that limit the claims of a particular state on the obedience of a subject. Hobbes attacks the political theorists who rely on Aristotelian principles to support their foolish and dangerous objections to the established regime. If Grotius' position were harmonious, Hobbes's criticisms would be unwarranted, because Aristotelian principles would warrant unrestricted obedience. But when we examine the moral foundation of Grotius' position, we find that Hobbes is right, since Aristotelian principles do not warrant the unrestricted obedience that Grotius advocates. This is not a reason to prefer a Hobbesian over an Aristotelian position.

[31] On this particular issue Rousseau's comparison of Grotius and Hobbes contains a grain of truth in a large distortion: 'When I hear Grotius praised to the skies, and Hobbes covered with abuse, I perceive how little sensible men read or understand these authors. The truth is that their principles are exactly alike, they only differ in expression. Their methods are also different: Hobbes relies on sophisms; Grotius relies on poets; all the rest is common to them.' (*Emile* v = Pleiade iv 836 = Foxley, 421–2)

468. Is Grotius a Pioneer?

Examination of Grotius' basic claims about the moral character of natural law does not show that he is the pioneer of a new approach to natural law.[32] His exposition of natural law is brief and simple, in comparison with Suarez's, and it is not embedded in the moral and metaphysical context of Aquinas' Treatise on Law. But these non-Scholastic features of Grotius' exposition do not result in a new view of the relation of natural law to the legislative will of God and to natural rightness and wrongness.[33]

The obscurities in Grotius' views about the connexion of obligation, duty, and right sometimes make it difficult to say where he agrees or disagrees with Aquinas or Vasquez or Suarez. But they do not cast doubt on one central point of agreement; he believes, as they do, that natural rightness precedes any act of God's legislative will, and that natural law essentially corresponds to the requirements of natural rightness. Since he takes morality to consist in observance of what is naturally right, he holds a naturalist conception of morality.

On these basic issues, Grotius agrees with the naturalists, though it is not clear whether he agrees more closely with Vasquez or with Suarez. These points of agreement refute Barbeyrac's claim that Grotius is a pioneer. He does not introduce a jural conception of morality, but rejects a jural conception in favour of Scholastic naturalism. Nor does his belief that there would be morality even if God did not exist make him a secular moralist; since he shares this belief with leading Scholastics, he is no more secular on this point than they are. His reply to Carneades' scepticism about justice does not reduce justice to utility, but sticks to a Stoic and Peripatetic naturalist conception.

On these points in his theory of morality, therefore, Grotius is no pioneer. The most plausible assessment of his position is Gershom Carmichael's judgment that Grotius extracts from Scholastic views on natural law and moral theology the essential points that are relevant to moral and political philosophy. We have noticed that both Aquinas and Suarez recognize questions and forms of argument that belong to moral philosophy in particular; but they do not gather these questions and arguments in a separate treatise. Grotius may make a different impression on a reader because he collects some of the main elements in Scholastic moral philosophy, and clarifies them with references to Greek and Latin writers and to the Christian Fathers. But the doctrine that he expounds is a naturalist doctrine of morality such as we find both in Aquinas and in Suarez.

[32] Tierney, *INR*, ch.13, offers a balanced discussion of what is and is not distinctively modern in Grotius (without detailed discussion of Barbeyrac's interpretation). The 'natural law' view that Schneewind traces to Grotius in 'Kant and natural law' 56–8 is closer to Pufendorf than to Grotius. I am not taking a position on whether Grotius is in some way an innovator in political theory, as argued by Haakonssen in 'History'. Haakonssen acknowledges that Grotius' views about intrinsic morality and natural law are traditional (248–9); contrast his view quoted in §464 above.

[33] Beiser, *SR* 276, describes an interpretation of natural law theory. 'It assumed that human beings are self-sufficient atoms with a fixed nature prior to the social whole. Rather than depending on the social whole for the formation of their needs and capacities, individuals enter into society with them already formed, and then construct a social order and state according to their self-interest . . . Although this interpretation is indeed correct for the social contract theory developed by Hugo Grotius, Hobbes, John Selden, and Samuel Pufendorf earlier in the seventeenth century, it would be incorrect to generalize it and to apply it to the great majority of natural law theorists in the post-Restoration era.' Apart from the oddity of contrasting Pufendorf with the post-Restoration era, this description unjustifiably assimilates Grotius to Hobbes and Selden, in opposition to Cumberland and the others.

Barbeyrac, therefore, misunderstands Grotius in presenting him as a pioneer. To see why Barbeyrac is so wrong about Grotius, we need to consider his view of Pufendorf. He could hardly have reached his view about Grotius if he had not already accepted the views of Pufendorf, and set out to reconcile Grotius with Pufendorf in a distinctively modern theory of natural law. His efforts to make Grotius the first modern moralist, and a rebel against Scholastic views of morality, are basically misguided.

34

HOBBES: MOTIVES AND REASONS

469. Hobbes's Aims

Hobbes is dissatisfied with the error and disagreement among moral philosophers, in contrast to the consensus that natural philosophers have reached. In natural philosophy, inquiry proceeds from indisputable and undisputed first principles, and secures agreement at each step. Moral philosophy, by contrast, presents us with unresolved controversy, because inquirers begin from common beliefs and apparently plausible views.[1] The Aristotelian dialectical approach to moral inquiry begins from 'appearances' and does not confine itself to evident and indisputable starting points.[2] Hobbes believes that it leads to insoluble and fruitless disputes.

He does not believe that this difference between the progress of natural philosophy and the relative backwardness of moral philosophy marks a difference in the subject matter or in the appropriate method. Nor does he draw the sceptical conclusion[3] that knowledge of moral questions cannot be found, or the nihilist conclusion that there is no moral reality to be known. He believes that disputes result simply from failure to apply the method of natural philosophy.[4] We should begin with clear and indisputable axioms about human nature, and avoid the dialectical method that relies on common beliefs.[5]

[1] '[Those men who have taken in hand to consider nothing else but the comparison of magnitudes, numbers, times, and motions, and how their proportions are to one another] . . . proceed from the most low and humble principles, evident even to the meanest capacity; going on slowly, and with most scrupulous ratiocination.' (*EL* 13.3) '[Moral and political philosophers] . . . take up maxims from their education, and from the authority of men, or of custom, and take the habitual discourse of the tongue for ratiocination; and these are called dogmatici.' (*EL* 13.4) For Hobbes's rejection of appeals to received opinion cf. *Civ*. 1.2 (on human beings as naturally political); 10.8, 12.12 (on rhetoric). Skinner, *RRPH* 263, gives parallels from Bacon and others. References to *EL* follow Gaskin's numeration, which includes *Human Nature* and *De Corpore Politico*, with chapters numbered continuously (so that *De Corpore Politico* i 1 = *EL* 14).

[2] On Aristotle's method see §67.

[3] Tuck, *PG* 285–306, discusses the influence of scepticism on Hobbes's philosophical development. Skinner, *RRPH* 8–9, 299, expresses doubts about the extent of such influence.

[4] '. . . amongst all the writers of this part of philosophy, there is not one that hath used an idoneous principle of tractation.' (commodo usus sit docendi principio, *Civ*., Ep. Ded.) I quote from the translation of *Civ*. by 'C.C', published in 1651 and printed by Warrender and Lamprecht. Warrender, ed. of *DC* (Eng), 4–8, discusses the early evidence on the authorship of the English version, and argues that Hobbes is probably the translator; some of the variations between the Latin and the English versions are difficult to explain as decisions or errors of a translator other than Hobbes. Tuck, ed. of *DC*, pp. xxxiv–xxxvii, argues that Hobbes is not the translator, but he does not satisfactorily answer Warrender's arguments. Silverthorne's translation is in Tuck and Silverthorne's edition.

[5] Hobbes's method is discussed by Skinner in *RRPH* 294–375, who is criticized in Gauthier's review.

Hobbes expects his inquiries to settle moral disputes by offering new solutions. He will not show that (for instance) Aristotle is right against Chrysippus on one issue, or that Ockham is right against Aquinas on another. He believes that his answers will fall outside the range of answers that have been subjects of controversy in moral philosophy. The method of natural philosophy will produce consensus in moral thinking too.[6]

Some of Hobbes's complaints about disagreement in moral philosophy are familiar. The persistence of philosophical disputes is a source of one Sceptical argument for suspension of judgment. Sextus does not draw exactly Hobbes's contrast between natural and moral philosophy; he treats all sciences as open to Sceptical doubt. But he has something corresponding to Hobbes's distinction, since he recognizes instances of disagreement about specific cases ('Ought I to eat or to bury or to cremate my parents?') in the area of morality more than in the area of beliefs about the physical world ('Are ripe tomatoes red or blue?'). Hobbes answers the Sceptic by urging that something like the method of natural science will settle disputes about morality.

It would be unreasonable of him to claim that the persistence of disputes in moral philosophy implies lack of progress. Even if his contemporaries do not agree about the explanation of incontinence, the progress of debate shows that it will not do simply to assert either that the Socratic analysis is obviously true or that it is obviously false. Similarly, though the Scholastics disagree about the relation of natural law to the will of God, the debate summed up by Suarez makes it clear what each side needs to say to defend its position. Examination of the nature and sources of the disputes casts doubt on Hobbes's claim that the discipline has made no progress in 2,000 years.

His main objection to his predecessors is not that they disagree with one another, but that their doctrines are dangerous. A reconstruction of moral philosophy is necessary for the proper understanding of the moral basis of political life, since the mistaken moral philosophy of his predecessors has led to political error. Mistaken theories of Greek and Latin writers have encouraged citizens to believe that they have rights against their rulers. Citizens claim the right to judge their rulers by standards derived from moral principles, and so they try to replace their rulers by agitation or revolution.

Such dangerous claims may be traced back to Aristotle's objections to unjust regimes.[7] Though Aristotle does not derive these objections from a general theory of the rights of the citizen, and does not use them to defend disobedience or revolution, his claims about justice

[6] 'And truly the geometricians have very admirably performed their part . . . If the moral philosophers had as happily discharged their duty, I know not what could have been added by human industry to the completion of that happiness, which is consistent with human life. For were the nature of human actions as distinctly known (cognita pari certitudine), as the nature of quantity in geometrical figures, the strength of avarice and ambition, which is sustained by the erroneous opinion of the vulgar, as touching the nature of right and wrong, would presently faint and languish. . . . But now on the contrary, that neither the sword nor the pen should be allowed any cessation; that the knowledge of the law of nature should lose its growth, not advancing a whit beyond its ancient stature; that there should still be such siding with the several factions of philosophers, that the very same action should be decried by some, and as much elevated by others; these I say are so many signs, so many manifest arguments, that what hath hitherto been written by moral philosophers, hath not made any progress in the knowledge of the truth. . . . So that this part of philosophy hath suffered the same destiny with the public ways, which lie open to all passengers to traverse up and down . . . ; so that what with the impertinencies of some, and the altercations of others, those ways have never a seed time, and therefore yield never a harvest.' (*Civ.*, Ep. Ded.)

[7] Aristotle discusses instability in different forms of government in *Politics* v.

suggest possible defences. The Scholastics develop Aristotle's arguments. Suarez uses them to support a qualified defence of rebellion and tyrannicide.[8]

Contemporary experience in England, Scotland, Ireland, and Continental Europe suggests to Hobbes that this critical attitude to rulers undermines states and societies.[9] Grotius shares some of Hobbes's fears about the effects of philosophical arguments for disobedience, and so he tries to blunt the critical edge of some Scholastic theories.[10] Hobbes, however, does not share Grotius' view that the Scholastic doctrines can be largely maintained without endangering civil peace.[11] He believes they are so dangerous that they should be discarded. Once we discover the true basis of morality, we can explode the moral theories that support dangerous political demands.

These moral theories assert that some things are important enough to justify disobedience. No Scholastic argues that civil peace does not matter, but Scholastics who rely on Aristotelian arguments assert that extremely unjust rulers should not be obeyed. If we have to balance the importance of maintaining peace against the importance of maintaining justice, we are not (from Hobbes's point of view) reliable supporters of peace. To prevent this sort of balancing, we need to show that nothing matters enough to justify the disturbance of civil peace. Hobbes argues, therefore, that peace is absolutely prior to all other moral considerations; they all presuppose the maintenance of peace, and therefore cannot justify disturbances of the peace.

This is an over-simple summary of the practical and political aim of Hobbes's moral philosophy. In support of this aim, he goes back to human nature as the foundation of moral philosophy, because he believes that his predecessors go wrong at this basic level. Nor does he confine himself to moral and political philosophy. He does not, for instance, try to defend the priority of peace by a dialectical argument to show that, on reflexion, we really believe peace matters more than anything else. He does not suggest that if we reach 'narrow reflective equilibrium' among our moral and political views, we will accept the supremacy of peace.[12] He believes that if we recognize the true foundation of moral philosophy, we can

[8] On Suarez see §451.

[9] 'And now, considering how different this doctrine is, from the practice of the greatest part of the world, especially of those western parts, that have received their moral learning from Rome, and Athens; and how much depth of moral philosophy is required in them that have the administration of the sovereign power; I am at the point of believing this my labour as useless, as is the commonwealth of Plato. . . . But when I consider again, that the science of natural justice, is the only science necessary for sovereigns, and their principal ministers; . . . and that neither Plato, nor any other philosopher hitherto, hath put into order, and sufficiently, or probably proved all the theorems of moral doctrine, that men may learn thereby, both how to govern, and how to obey; I recover some hope, that at one time or other, this writing of mine, may fall into the hands of a sovereign, who will consider it himself . . . without the help of any interested, or envious interpreter; and by the exercise of entire sovereignty, in protecting the public teaching of it, convert this truth of speculation, into the utility of practice.' (*L.* 31.41) 'And by reading of these Greek and Latin authors, men from their childhood have gotten a habit, under a false show of liberty, of favouring tumults, and of licentious controlling the actions of their sovereigns; and again of controlling those controllers; with the effusion of so much blood, as I think I may truly say there was never anything so dearly bought as these western parts have bought the learning of the Greek and Latin tongues.' (*L.* 21.9) I cite *L.* by chapter and section in Curley's edition, which also quotes some of the significant variants in the Latin version (cited as 'LV'). LV is discussed at length by Tricaud, xvii–xxix (and briefly by Laird, *H* 33, and Curley, lxxiii). He argues (despite the absence of external evidence) that some parts of it antedate the English, which expands the Latin, whereas other parts postdate the English. Cumberland (see §530) cites the Latin version on the assumption that it is later.

[10] On Grotius see §467.

[11] On Hobbes and Grotius see Tuck, *PG* 305. We lack direct evidence to show that Hobbes read Grotius.

[12] On narrow reflective equilibrium see Rawls, *TJ* 42–5.

dismiss any confident and reflective moral judgments that threaten the supremacy of peace; all such judgments rest on errors about the foundation.

We have spoken of Hobbes's opposition to an 'Aristotelian' and 'Scholastic' view. But it is not easy to say whom he has in mind; for, in contrast to Scholastic writers, he does not compare his views systematically with the views of his predecessors. His explicit targets include Greek and Latin historians, orators, and philosophers. He often mentions Aristotle, both because of his historical prominence and because contemporary writers have relied on him.[13] It would have been instructive if he had discussed Grotius, who shares Hobbes's concern with peace and war, but defends a largely traditional moral theory. But he does not engage Grotius. Nor does he discuss the moral and political views of Scholastic writers—perhaps because he does not think much of them—and so it is not clear how well he knows them. It is reasonable to assume that he knows the *De Legibus* and the other political writings of Suarez, since Suarez became notorious in both France and England as a supporter of regicide, and the Civil War that led to the execution of Charles I made his views rather topical.[14] But though Hobbes refers to Suarez's works on free will, he does not cite his political writings.[15]

We therefore have to present the dispute between Hobbes and his opponents by considering where his views disagree with theirs, and what one might say on behalf of each side.

470. Passion v. Will

Hobbes believes that his new method demands an understanding of human action; if we grasped it as clearly as we grasp the basic elements of geometry, we could resolve

[13] See Laird, 'Aristotle'. Barker, *PTPA* 523, mentions a newspaper published briefly in 1654, entitled *Observations, Historical, Political and Philosophical upon Aristotle's First Book of Political Government*, which seeks to show 'the happiness of those people that live under such a government, where it is the duty of the governors to rule by law, as the Lord Protector here hath sworn to do'.

[14] On Suarez see §451.

[15] He sometimes mentions Suarez as a typical example of Scholastic unintelligibility. After quoting the long title of a chapter of Suarez's work 'Of the concourse, motion, and help of God' (the first opusculum in Suarez, *OO* xi), he comments: 'When men write whole volumes of such stuff, are they not mad, or intend to make others so?' (*Hom.* 8 = *EW* iii 70). In his view, Scholastic writers, such as Peter Lombard, Scotus, and Suarez, support the authority of the Pope by writing incomprehensible works that only a priestly class can read (*Behemoth*, Part 1 = *EW* vi 185). He does not expect them to have a wider appeal: 'But for the multitude, Suarez and the Schoolmen will never gain them, because they are not understood' (*EW* iv 330). He has more than a passing knowledge of Suarez's work on human freedom and divine foreknowledge. He attacks its account of some Scriptural passages (*EW* v 10) and its absurd conclusions: 'Whereof one conclusion is in Suarez, that God doth so concur with the will of man, that "if man will, then God concurs", which is to subject not the will of man to God, but the will of God to man' (*EW* v 18). He claims to find in this work the source of most of Bramhall's arguments on free will: '. . . whoever chanceth to read Suarez's Opuscula, where he writeth of free-will, and the concourse of God with man's will, shall find the greatest part, if not all, that the Bishop hath urged in this question' (*EW* v 37). Bramhall replies: 'It is indifferent to me whether the greatest part of what I urge in this question, or all that I urge, or perhaps more than I urge, be contained in Suarez his Opuscula. . . . In all my life, that I do remember, I never read one line of Suarez his Opuscula, nor any of his works the sixteen years last past. I wish he [sc. Hobbes] had been versed in his greater works, as well as in his Opuscula, that he might not be so averse from the Schools.' (*CMH* = *Works* iv 259–60) Bramhall implies that he had once read Suarez's major works, and that he still finds them reasonable. See also Hobbes, *EW* v 176; 266 (distinguishing Suarez, Scotus, and other Scholastic writers, whom Hobbes slights, from Protestant theologians, whom he respects). Suarez's works, then, seem to give us a fair idea of the style, method, and substantive positions that Hobbes rejects. Martinich, *TGL* 102, 132–4, 379–80, mentions the relevance of Suarez's views on law and political obligation to Hobbes's concerns, but mentions no references or allusions to Suarez in political contexts.

controversies about morality.[16] His predecessors have obscured the facts by their appeals to unintelligible faculties and abilities. He tries to correct them by reference to facts about desire, pleasure, and motivation that he takes to be indisputable.

Hobbes agrees with the Scholastics that an account of morality should rely on an account of action. We have seen how Aquinas' conception of the final good rests on his account of will, rational agency, and freedom. His distinctive contribution lies in his particular views about the nature of action.

To grasp the role of Hobbes's theory of action in his whole position, we might try to answer these questions: (1) Is his account of action plausible? (2) Is it an independent foundation for his moral theory, or should it persuade us only if we already accept his moral views? (3) Does it support his moral theory? (4) Are his moral claims plausible?

These questions suggest that Hobbes's views may not all stand or fall together, and that we might try different partial defences. If we agree with Hobbes's theory of action, but disagree with his moral theory, we may seek to construct another account of morality on a Hobbesian foundation. If we disagree with his theory of action, but agree with his moral theory, we should defend his moral claims independently of his foundation.

Hobbes rejects a basic point of agreement between Scholastics. Both intellectualists and voluntarists hold that human action essentially proceeds from the will and not only from passions. They believe that will, understood as rational desire (appetitus), differs from passion (sensory desire) because it is guided by rational deliberation, and does not simply follow sense-perception. This is not a Scholastic innovation; it simply develops Plato's and Aristotle's division between rational and non-rational desire.[17]

Hobbes denies this distinction between passion and will, by denying that will is a distinctively rational desire. In his view, will is simply the last 'appetite' (i.e., desire, appetitus) in deliberation.[18] Aquinas believes that will is a rational desire confined to rational agents, because it results from deliberation. But Hobbes believes that non-rational agents also deliberate, so that if will is desire resting on deliberation, it is not confined to rational agents. Scholastics claim that human agents act voluntarily because they act on their will and deliberate desire, whereas non-rational animals lack fully voluntary action because they lack deliberation and will. But if Hobbes is right, the will is not an intrinsically rational desire aiming at the good rather than the pleasant.

His account of deliberation assumes that desire is simply anticipatory pleasure or pain, which is the internal movement explaining action (*EL* 7.1–2). We move towards ends (7.4) that differ in their closeness or distance. We deliberate by being struck in succession by different attractive features of a situation.[19] The strongest appetite that emerges from that process immediately precedes action; this is the will.

[16] *Civ.*, Ep. Ded., quoted in §469. [17] On intellectualism and rationalism see §§256, 389.

[18] More fully: 'In deliberation, the last appetite, or aversion, immediately adhering to the action, or to the omission thereof, is that we call the will; the act, not the faculty, of willing. And beasts, that have deliberation, must necessarily also have will. The definition of the will, given commonly by the schools, that it is a rational appetite, is not good. For if it were, then could there be no voluntary act against reason. For a voluntary act is that, which proceedeth from the will, and no other. But if in stead of a rational appetite, we shall say an appetite resulting from a precedent deliberation, then the definition is the same that I have given here.' (*L.* 6.53) Cf. *EL* 12.2; *Hom.* 11.2.

[19] 'When in the mind of man, appetites, and aversions, hopes, and fears, concerning one and the same thing, arise alternately; and divers good and evil consequences of the doing, or omitting the thing propounded, come successively into our thoughts; so that sometimes we have an appetite to it; sometimes an aversion from it . . . the whole sum

Non-rational agents, therefore, also deliberate. They hesitate at the idea of something repellent and advance at the idea of something attractive; hence they deliberate, and act on their wills. Our goal-directed movements, therefore, do not rely on a rational appearance of an overall good (*EL* 7.5). Hence the Scholastic distinction between will and passion is misguided.[20]

This account of deliberation refers only to non-normative states; it does not mention our estimate of the value of the different options that occur to us in deliberation. It does not distinguish our being more attracted to one of two options from our believing that it deserves to be preferred. If we believe (as we suppose) that one option deserves to be preferred, we believe that the reasons for it are better than the reasons for the other option. This aspect of deliberation and will has no place in Hobbes's account; he does not suggest that our will results from the judgment that one option is better than the other, or from the judgment that we have stronger reasons for pursuing it.

471. Hobbes and Greek Scepticism

Hobbes's non-normative conception of deliberation recalls the Greek Sceptics' account of living without belief.[21] Sceptics take themselves to abandon the dogmatic aim of forming attitudes to the world on the basis of evidence and the weighing of reasons; they do not consider whether p is true before they assent to p. They claim to assent to appearances only to the limited extent that is implied by 'yielding', according to how the appearances strike them. Hobbes believes that we ought to treat deliberation and desire in purely psychological and non-normative terms. Deliberation and will, in his account, result from yielding successively to a sequence of appearances about different options, without any rational assessment of their value.[22]

This comparison between Hobbes and the Greek Sceptics is misleading on one point. The Sceptics agree with their dogmatic opponents that belief (*doxa*) is to be understood as a normative state; we form a belief by an attempted assessment of the evidence, and if we change our view about the evidence, we change our belief. Sceptics agree that dogmatists have beliefs, since their view of the world rests on an attempted rational assessment of the evidence. The dogmatists are wrong, however, to suppose that they rationally assess the evidence. Since Sceptics see the dogmatists' error, they give up forming beliefs. Their yielding to appearances is not belief, because it does not rest on an assessment of evidence, and therefore it is non-normative. The meat in the display case looks bright red, but if we are dogmatists we may not infer that it is red, if we remember that a red light is shining on it. The evidence that would otherwise persuade us to believe that the meat is red is open to question once we remember the red light shining on the meat, and so we will not hastily infer that the meat is fresh. But we yield to appearances when we find that the meat looks

of desires, aversions, hopes and fears, continued till the thing be either done, or thought impossible, is that we call deliberation.' (*L.* 6.49)

[20] Hobbes's rejection of the division between will and passion is discussed by James, *PA* 135; Tuck, 'Moral philosophy' 184.

[21] On Scepticism and belief see §139.

[22] On Scepticism and modern moral philosophy see §462.

red and do not question whether it is red, and we yield to them again if we find (when we get it home, in normal light) that it looks dull and dark; in neither case do we take the further step of considering whether it is really how it looks.

The Sceptics' account of the antecedents of action is equally non-normative; they describe a sequence of appearances causing us to yield to one appearance that results in our choice of one option. But the Sceptics, in contrast to Hobbes, do not regard this as deliberation. Aristotelian deliberation involves a rational estimate of grounds for preferring one or another option, and our election is guided by this rational estimate. Sceptics accept this description of deliberation, and therefore give up deliberation, because they make no rational estimates.

Hobbes, however, does not claim to reject deliberation. He does not agree with the Sceptical view that deliberation is a normative activity that dogmatists engage in because of their mistaken normative views. He claims to identify the intelligible elements in deliberation, and hence to describe and to analyse the activity that he and his opponents all engage in. His description is meant to be reductive, since it gives a clear, non-mysterious account of the character of deliberation, by identifying it with a series of simpler and more intelligible mental states. This reduction to something simpler is meant to vindicate the reality of deliberation, not to deny it; Hobbes intends us to agree that his analysis captures what we do when we deliberate, not to conclude that we do not deliberate.

He is right, therefore, to claim that his account of action excludes the Scholastic account, and the Scholastic ethical theory that rests on it. For his analysis of deliberation implies that the Scholastics are wrong to treat will as a distinctively rational appetite.

472. Objections to Hobbes's Account of Will

But ought we to accept Hobbes's account of deliberation? This question divides into three: (1) Is deliberation as described by Hobbes (let us call it 'H-deliberation') really deliberation, so that he gives a vindicating reduction of deliberation? (2) If not, is he right to reject a normative account of deliberation and will? (3) If he is right to reject it, is H-deliberation a good substitute for deliberation?

If we agree that H-deliberation is possible, why should we identify it with deliberation? H-deliberation is not the kind of practical thought that we take to be distinctive of rational agents; for we suppose that they reach a decision in favour of one action or the other in the light of some conception of the overall costs and benefits of their actions. Hobbes does not show that any such conception underlies the advances and hesitations of non-rational agents; hence the advances and hesitations of H-deliberation do not seem to be sufficient for deliberation.

H-deliberation makes a deliberating agent insensitive to any distinction between the strength and the rational weight or 'authority' of desires.[23] This distinction is Butler's formulation of the point underlying Plato's and Aristotle's division between rational and non-rational parts of the soul. It seems to capture a feature of our ordinary deliberation that separates it from H-deliberation. We might, for instance, first H-deliberate, and then ask

[23] See §683 on Butler, §831 on Reid.

ourselves whether we should do what our H-deliberation has inclined us to do. If the police are investigating a crime that I believe my friend George has committed, I may be inclined to lie to protect George, but also inclined to tell the truth because I am afraid of being prosecuted, and because I am angry at George and sympathetic to his victim. But after this H-deliberation, I may reconsider what to do, and ask myself which of these inclinations I should follow. This reconsideration seems to be deliberation; it does not seem to be further H-deliberation, since it examines the reasons for and against the different options.

H-deliberation, therefore, does not seem to be deliberation, and so Hobbes does not seem to have found a vindicating reduction of deliberation to H-deliberation. But what does he think about people who claim to engage in deliberation rather than H-deliberation? Are they mistaken about the character of their mental states, so that they falsely believe they are thinking about the merits of an action when they are really only experiencing a sequence of inclinations and aversions? If this is his view, any alleged deliberation beyond H-deliberation is an invention of the Scholastics, with no basis in the real antecedents of action.

Alternatively, Hobbes might take the view of the Greek Sceptics, admitting that some people deliberate and do not simply H-deliberate, but arguing that these people's deliberation lacks the basis that they think it has. Dogmatists suppose that we can discover reasons that do not simply register the strength of our preferences; but if we cannot find any such reasons, it is pointless to deliberate, though we will still H-deliberate.

If Hobbes took this line, suggesting that we will abandon deliberation when we see it is baseless, he would undermine his argument to show that will is simply the last appetite in H-deliberation. If deliberation is not simply H-deliberation, will is not simply the last appetite. If Hobbes held the Sceptical view, he would agree that we are capable of acts of will, but argue that we have no reasonable basis for them.

It is worth comparing Hobbes with the Greek Sceptics in order to see that he is committed to the eliminative view of deliberation; his claims about the will go beyond the apparently more plausible view that deliberation is possible but pointless. He takes himself to hold a vindicating reductive view of deliberation. He seems, however, to be committed to an eliminative view. He offers a mental substitute for deliberation that fails to mark the distinctions, especially those based on power and authority, that we mark in deliberation, as normally understood.

To support his eliminative position, Hobbes needs to show that we lack the mental capacities that would allow us to engage in more than H-deliberation. But he does not try to show this, and it seems difficult to show. Quite ordinary choices seem to presuppose some capacity for deliberation that involves weighing merits. We need quite strong arguments if we are to be convinced that we misconceive what we are doing when we suppose we are weighing merits. In comparison with the Scholastic account of deliberation and action, Hobbes's account is clear and simple; but it does not explain the choices and actions it seeks to explain.

473. Deliberation and Practical Reason

These doubts about Hobbes's account might matter less if we thought it deprives us of nothing that is practically important. If some H-deliberation results in choices that we

normally regard as reasonable, we can still distinguish reasonable from unreasonable action by appealing to different patterns of H-deliberation.

Hobbes faces a question analogous to a question that arises for the Greek Sceptics who claim to live without beliefs. We may concede, for the sake of argument, that the Sceptical outlook is consistent, and that it is logically possible for someone to live by yielding to appearances without beliefs about good and bad. But how can someone claiming to adopt such an outlook claim to live an ordinary life? For our ordinary life seems to rely on the beliefs that the Sceptic abandons; we often think we see more reason to believe and to do one thing rather than another. Sometimes I have a vivid impression of an elliptical coin, but I do not believe that the penny is elliptical. I pick it up and put it in a slot machine designed for a round coin. Do I not rely on beliefs that the Sceptic abandons?

Sceptics deny that such cases raise any difficulty. In their view, Sceptics do not yield to all appearances. In the case we have mentioned, they have a more vivid and more forceful appearance of the coin being round, and so they yield to that one, and put the coin in a slot machine, just as they would have if they had believed it to be round. Hence, they claim, the Sceptic can live an ordinary life. But this conclusion is plausible only if Sceptics have an appropriately forceful appearance in all or most of the cases where ordinary people form a given belief. Why should we expect they will have such an appearance? I may have a very strong and forceful appearance that this is real fruit in the bowl, but I may not try to eat it if I suspect that it is made of wax.

The Sceptic might deal with such cases by arguing that if I do not yield to the appearance of its being real fruit, the appearance cannot have been as strong as the appearance of its being made of wax. This answer is unconvincing. If strength of appearances is determined by phenomenal features distinct from whether or not I act on the appearances, my yielding to the strongest appearances may not lead me to follow ordinary life. If, however, an appearance is strongest in virtue of the fact that I act on it, the strength of the appearance may depend on the rational assessment of the evidence; but that basis for determining strength is not available to the Sceptic. Neither conception of strength (or forcefulness, or vividness) suggests that the Sceptic's yielding to the strongest appearance agrees with ordinary life.

Just as Sceptics claim to agree with ordinary life, Hobbes assumes that H-deliberation reaches the conclusions that we reach by ordinary deliberation. He claims that deliberation results from the foresight of good or evil consequences, and better deliberation results from the foresight of more consequences.[24] He assumes that if we foresee more of the consequences, we take account of their goodness and badness in our deliberation and in any decision that is based on deliberation. This is a reasonable assumption about ordinary deliberation, but not about H-deliberation. In ordinary deliberation we consider the goodness and badness of the consequences of an action, and our eventual choice results from our estimate of the overall goodness of an action. But H-deliberation is not guided by a comparison of the net balance of future expected good in different courses of action. H-deliberation is a series of advances and hesitations resulting from the appearance of

[24] 'But for so far as a man seeth, if the good in these consequences be greater than the evil, the whole chain is that which writers call apparent, or seeming good. . . . so that he who hath by experience, or reason, the greatest and surest prospect of consequences, deliberates best himself; and is able when he will, to give the best counsel unto others.' (*L.* 6.57)

expected pleasures and pains, and we choose the proposed action that arouses our strongest appetite as a result of these advances and hesitations.

Even if we confine goods to pleasures, we have no reason to assume that in the H-deliberating agent the apparently larger sum of future pleasures always arouses the stronger appetite. We may, for instance, be irrationally indifferent to the remoter future, or irrationally obsessed by it at the expense of shorter-term benefits, and these irrational tendencies may determine the course of H-deliberation. Consideration of more consequences may not improve my deliberation. If I am thinking about travelling by air, and I consider all the possible consequences, I may think about the possibility of the aircraft's crashing or exploding, and this thought, however improbable I may take the event to be, may turn me irrationally against travel by air. I would have reached a more reasonable conclusion if I had ignored these prospects.

If the apparently larger sum of future pleasures may not arouse the stronger appetite, H-deliberation may not follow the apparent balance of future pleasures. H-deliberation considers whatever happens to excite desire or aversion. We do not necessarily deliberate best, therefore, if our H-deliberation considers the 'greatest and surest prospect of consequences'; for the sparse equipment of H-deliberation includes no provision for the rational consideration of these prospects; if we are not guided by the expected balance of future good, the consideration of more consequences may produce irrational desires.

H-deliberation, therefore, does not seem to justify Hobbes's claims about the character of deliberation. His remarks about better and worse deliberation rely on a normative conception of deliberation, taking it to consider what is best overall and what we ought to do in the light of what seems best overall. H-deliberation has no room for this normative conception. If deliberation is guided by consideration of what promotes the overall good, the consideration of more consequences results in better deliberation, as Hobbes claims. But, if we are to accept this claim about deliberation, we can hardly confine it to H-deliberation. It is difficult, therefore, for Hobbes to show that H-deliberation reaches the conclusions that we reach from deliberation in ordinary life. The question that arises for the Greek Sceptics also arises for him.

474. Conflicting Views on Incontinence

Hobbes could answer these objections if he could assume that when we consider different consequences of an action, our advances and hesitations result from an estimate of overall goodness and badness. He may assume that the prospect of a larger sum of pleasures always arouses a stronger desire, so that deliberation and will result in an effort to get the apparently greater pleasure. If we assume that pleasantness and goodness are the same, both ordinary deliberation and H-deliberation are guided by belief about the overall good. This assumption makes H-deliberation appear less unlike ordinary deliberation than it really is, since it comes to somewhat similar conclusions.

This reconciliation of H-deliberation with ordinary deliberation is open to doubt if we are not always guided by overall goodness. The examples we have given suggest that the strength of our desires may diverge irrationally from our beliefs about overall good. Hobbes might try to reject our examples by arguing that in cases such as the 'irrational' fear of flying

we are really exaggerating the probability of a crash. If we are more afraid of flying than of driving on a dangerous road, we must hold false beliefs about the probabilities. Relative to our estimate of probabilities, then, our fear of flying is rational, and it does not refute Hobbes's empirical assumption about H-deliberation.

But however plausible or implausible this empirical assumption may be, it raises a difficulty for Hobbes. If our last appetite is always directed towards the apparently larger sum of pleasures, we cannot act contrary to our view about what will maximize the net balance of future pleasure. This is the view that Socrates holds in the *Protagoras*; he uses it both to reject the possibility of incontinence and to explain the appearance of incontinence. In his view, we appear to be incontinent in choosing the apparently lesser pleasure over the apparently greater only because we actually exaggerate the pleasure of whatever is temporally closer.[25] Hobbes, however, criticizes the Scholastic view because it excludes incontinence, and so he cannot accept the Socratic dissolution of incontinence.

To show that the Scholastics cannot allow incontinence he claims that they are committed to accepting this argument: (1) Incontinent action is voluntary. (2) All voluntary action is initiated by the will. (4) Hence no voluntary action is contrary to our will. (5) But our will aims at what appears best all things considered. (6) In acting incontinently we do not aim at what appears best all things considered. (7) Therefore incontinent action is impossible. Hobbes believes that the Scholastics are committed to the first six steps. Since he assumes that the conclusion is unacceptable, he assumes that incontinence is possible.

Hobbes is right to suggest that incontinence raises difficulties for Aquinas' view of the will.[26] One might suppose that his account is preferable to the Scholastic account in this respect, since H-deliberation leaves room for incontinence. But the empirical assumption that brings H-deliberation closer to ordinary deliberation requires the denial of incontinence.

Hobbes's views on deliberation and will, therefore, present him with a dilemma. On the one hand, his description of H-deliberation supports his objections to the Scholastic account of will, and also allows the possibility of incontinent action. But his description does not fit his claims about the connexion between deliberation and consideration of overall good. On the other hand, he may support his claims about deliberation and overall good by the empirical assumption that we always pursue the greater apparent good; but this empirical assumption conflicts with the possibility of incontinence.

The dilemma raises a question about Hobbes's general position. He cannot easily abandon his view that deliberation is simply H-deliberation; for that is the central element in his anti-Scholastic account of the will. But since H-deliberation does not support all his claims about better and worse deliberation, we may doubt whether his non-normative description of H-deliberation supports his ethical theory.

475. Will, Passion, and Freewill

Hobbes's views about the will support his position in the controversy about freewill. His views on this controversy are most clearly seen in the dispute with Bramhall. Since Bramhall

[25] On Socrates see §27. [26] On Aquinas see §295.

is sympathetic to Scholastic views about will and passion that Hobbes rejects, we might expect Hobbes to give reasons for rejecting the account of freewill that Aquinas offers. This, however, is not exactly what we find. Aquinas' view cuts across the dispute between Hobbes and Bramhall.

The disagreements between Hobbes and Bramhall recall those between Aquinas and Scotus. Both Hobbes and Bramhall reject Aquinas' intellectualism, the view that the will is determined by the greater good presented by reason. Bramhall, however, follows both Aquinas and Scotus in affirming the rationalist view that separates will from passion; on this point Hobbes is an anti-rationalist, in contrast to the mediaeval voluntarists. Bramhall is also an incompatibilist and indeterminist, since he believes in acts of freewill that cannot be parts of sequences of necessitating causes (i.e., sequences in which the earlier member is in each case sufficient for the later). Against Bramhall Hobbes defends the compatibilist view that we have attributed to Aquinas, and goes further by accepting soft determinism.

The mediaeval dispute draws our attention to possibilities that Hobbes and Bramhall overlook. Bramhall maintains a voluntarist, indeterminist, and rationalist position. He assumes that intellectualism is incompatible with rationalism, because intellectualists reduce the will to a passion, by taking it to be determined by the greater apparent good. In his view, then, the difference between will and passion matters because the will has to be free of all determination. For the same reason he assumes that rationalism requires indeterminism. Hobbes replies by rejecting both rationalism and indeterminism. Neither Hobbes nor Bramhall seems to consider rationalist compatibilism.

Bramhall holds the indeterminist view that a free agent is 'that, which, when all things are present which are needful to produce the effect, can nevertheless not produce it' (Hobbes, *LN* §§32, 35).[27] He is an indeterminist because he is a voluntarist; he appeals to the possibility of choosing the lesser good when one knows the greater good. Hence he offers Medea as an example of incontinence supporting voluntarism (§23). He takes this voluntarism to support rationalism (i.e., the rejection of Hobbes's sentimentalism) about the will. He contrasts spontaneous agents with rational and deliberative agents, and claims that only the latter are free. (Bramhall, *DLN* §6; *DTL* §8; Hobbes, *LN* §8.) He assumes that if the will is free from necessitation by passions, it is free from causal necessitation altogether.

This combination of views allies Bramhall with Scotus and Ockham, not with Aquinas. Since Aquinas believes that the will is not necessitated by passions, he speaks of freedom from necessitation, and so his remarks might suggest that he is an indeterminist. But he does not rely on indeterminism. In his view, we have freewill because the will is moved by rational deliberation rather than by the strength of the passions; this is what makes human beings masters of their own actions. Aquinas does not commit himself to Bramhall's incompatibilist indeterminism.[28] If Hobbes simply wanted to affirm determinism and compatibilism, he would have no reason to reject Aquinas' conception of freewill, since it is consistent with the compatibilist arguments against Bramhall. Similarly, Bramhall might reasonably reject Hobbes's anti-rationalism without rejecting determinism and compatibilism.

[27] Scotus and Ockham accept this assumption; see §§369, 388.

[28] On Aquinas see §270.

Hobbes argues for anti-rationalism against Aquinas' conception of freewill. He argues that deliberation is found in animals, and so belongs both to rational and to non-rational agency.[29] Even in human beings deliberation is not necessary for voluntary action, since impulsive and rash actions are also voluntary.[30] Hobbes suggests the reply to this claim about impulsive action; for he acknowledges that we treat it as voluntary because we assume it is subject to deliberation on some occasions, even if not immediately before acting. Aquinas' distinction between directly and indirectly voluntary actions helps to show that unpremeditated action is voluntary if is suitably connected to deliberation, even if deliberation has not immediately preceded.[31]

Hobbes's case against rationalism, then, relies primarily on his first objection, that deliberation is found in non-rational no less than in rational agents. He would be right, if his account of deliberation were right. But if his account is wrong, a Scholastic may fairly distinguish rational deliberation from the succession of impulses that makes H-deliberation. Butler reasserts this distinction as the distinction between authority and power.[32] Bramhall assumes some such distinction; Hobbes undermines it only if he shows that H-deliberation is deliberation.

Since this is Hobbes's only direct argument against the rationalist distinction between will and passion, and since it is a weak argument, a rationalist intellectualist such as Aquinas may reasonably reject Hobbes's case. Hobbes may suppose that he also has a strong indirect argument against rationalism, in his argument against indeterminism. Perhaps he assumes that an argument against indeterminism refutes not only voluntarists, who deny that anything necessitates the will, but also rationalists, who only deny that the passions necessitate the will. But an argument against indeterminism does not affect rationalism.

The weakness of Hobbes's objections to rationalism casts doubt on his account of freedom. He believes that freedom cannot intelligibly be ascribed to the will, and that human freedom cannot intelligibly consist in anything more than determination by the will; moreover, he thinks the will is nothing but the 'last appetite'. He sees no contrast between motivation by the will and motivation by the passions. Hence, since he believes in freedom, the relevant sort of freedom is internal determination by desire. If H-deliberation is not deliberation, his inferences about freedom are insecure.

476. A Hedonist Account of Desire and Emotion[33]

Hobbes links his account of deliberation to his views about pleasure and good; but it is not clear how he understands the link, and so it is not clear which of his various views is prior to

[29] '. . . horses, dogs, and other brute beasts, do demur oftentimes upon the way they are to take, the horse retiring from some strange figure that he sees, and coming on again to avoid the spur. And what else doth a man that deliberateth, but one while proceed toward action, another while retire from it, as the hope of greater good draws him, or the fear of greater evil drives him away' (Hobbes, *LN* §8).

[30] 'Besides, I see it is reasonable to punish a rash action, which could not be justly done by man to man, unless the same were voluntary. For no action of a man can be said to be without deliberation, though never so sudden, because it is supposed he had time to deliberate all the precedent time of his life, whether he should do that kind of action or not.' (*LN* §25)

[31] On Aquinas see §255. [32] On deliberation and will see *Hom.* 11.2.

[33] On egoism and hedonism see Hampton, *HSCT* 17–24. She does not consider all the possible versions of egoism and hedonism one might attribute to Hobbes.

which. We have to try to clarify his view of the connexions between his moral psychology and his conception of value.

He treats deliberation as a succession of advances and retreats consisting in desires and aversions. He understands a desire as an advance towards anticipated pleasure. Perhaps he believes that this conception best fits an account of desire that will apply both to human beings and to animals. Or perhaps he relies on the fact that, generally, if I believe x will please me more than y, or I will enjoy x more than y, I will want x more than y. He generalizes the connexion between desire and pleasure into a general account of the nature of desire, so that he maintains psychological hedonist egoism as a theory of motives.

He applies psychological hedonism to his description of the emotions, taking their objects to be connected with the pleasure or pain that may arise in different circumstances. The objects of our passions are means to our satisfaction or security, or in some other way directly related to it. Since our security involves our relation to other people and their security, many of the passions that Hobbes considers involve comparison between myself and others on the points that affect my security. Hence he describes various passions by reference to the feelings arising at different stages in a race or competition (*EL* 9.21).

Other passions seem to have a less direct relation to one's own satisfaction and security. If I pity someone quite unrelated to me who will not affect my security, I do not believe that this person or what is happening to him actually affects my security. In this case Hobbes believes that I think of what I would feel if my security, for instance, were threatened. In thinking of the counterfactual situation, I actually have some of the feeling that I would have if the situation were actual, and so I have the feeling even when my security is not involved.[34]

But even if this appeal to self-confined pleasure is legitimate, it does not vindicate psychological hedonism; it explains the genesis of the passions, not their nature or their objects.[35] It is not clear whether Hobbes sees this, and so it is not clear whether he recognizes non-egoistic passions. At any rate, he acknowledges no exceptions to a psychological hedonist account of desires and motivation. He believes that the non-egoistic passions (if there are any) motivate us only if they seem to affect our prospects of pleasure and pain. Hobbes does not modify a psychological hedonist account of desire and action.

His hedonism includes a distinctive view about pleasure. We might connect pleasure with satisfaction or contentment, and take this to be the ultimate end of desire. This is Epicurus' account of 'static' pleasures.[36] But Hobbes argues that this view does not explain why we go on desiring and acting and would not regard the cessation of desire as a welcome outcome (*L.* 11.1). Hence, we ought not to identify pleasure with Epicurean satisfaction or contentment; we ought to identify it with Epicurean 'kinetic' pleasure. We seek means to 'secure the way of our future desire'. But securing the way of our future desire cannot be our ultimate end; for we do not want to secure the way of our future desire for its own sake.

[34] This particular appeal to association is not extensively used by Hobbes. Hume exploits its possibilities for explaining the other-regarding feelings and sentiments.

[35] Those who argue that Hobbes is not, or is not consistently, an egoist appeal to the difference between the source and the objects of the passions. See Gert in Hobbes, *MC* 5–13 (citing *L.* 6.46; *Hom.* 12.10); Hampton, *HSCT* 21–4; Kavka, *HMPT* 44–51; Gert, 'Egoism'; 'Mechanism'; McNeilly, 'Egoism'; Watkins, *HSI* 110–14.

[36] On Epicurus see §151.

Presumably we want the uninterrupted sequence of particular satisfactions, and we secure the way of our future desire in order to ensure that the sequence continues.[37]

477. Pleasure and Good

Hobbes's view of the relation between good, desire, and pleasure expresses self-confined egoist hedonism.[38] The different kinds of good—beautiful, delightful, and profitable—are analysed with reference to one's own pleasure.[39] This list omits the honestum, which most people regard as a good that is not assessed by reference to the agent; Hobbes leaves no room for such a good. These remarks imply that every desire is a desire for one's own pleasure or for an apparent means to one's own pleasure.

This hedonist claim seems to rest on a subjectivist analysis of judgments about goodness. In saying that everyone applies 'good' to whatever pleases himself, Hobbes may simply mean that people apply 'good' to things 'at their pleasure' (as we might say), so that their judgments about goods reflect what they desire and prefer. This alleged fact does not show that the only object of their preferences and desires is pleasure. Perhaps Hobbes moves from the general use of 'pleasure' (as in 'at their pleasure'), referring to desire and choice quite generally, to the specific use, referring to one particular object of desire and choice.

But in any case it is not clear what he means by his claim that we call 'good' whatever pleases us. He might be asserting that 'x is good' means 'x pleases me'. If, then, we grasped the meanings of our words clearly, we would realize that if I say 'What pleases me is good', I express an analytic truth that means the same as 'What pleases me pleases me'. This account of the meaning of 'good' is doubtful, for reasons suggested by Price, Sidgwick, and Moore. When anti-hedonists claim that not all goods are pleasant, they seem to disagree about a question that can be discussed on the basis of some shared assumption about the meaning of 'good'. They seem to need more than a reminder of what 'good' means.[40]

Hobbes may intend the more plausible claim that all the things we call 'good' (in the ordinary sense) really have nothing in common beyond the fact that the person calling them 'good' finds them pleasant. This claim recognizes that 'good' does not mean the same as 'pleasant to me'. When we use 'good' in the ordinary sense for actions, people, institutions, and so on, we suppose that we are ascribing to them some property beyond their being pleasant to us. But Hobbes believes that when we use 'good' with this objective sense, we

[37] On the concerns of Hobbesian prudence see Hampton, *HSCT* 37–42.

[38] 'But whatsoever is the object of any man's appetite or desire, that is it which he for his part calleth good; and the object of his hate and aversion, evil; . . . For these words of good, evil, and contemptible, are ever used with relation to the person that useth them: there being nothing simply and absolutely so; nor any common rule of good and evil to be taken from the nature of the objects themselves . . .' (*L.* 6.7) 'Every man, for his own part calleth that which pleaseth, and is delightful to himself, good; and that evil which displeaseth him: insomuch that while every man differeth from another in constitution, they differ also from one another concerning the common distinction of good and evil. Nor is there any such thing as *agathon haplôs*, that is to say, simply good. For even the goodness which we apprehend in God Almighty, is his goodness to us.' (*EL* 7.3) On 'self-confined' egoism cf. Broad, 'Egoism'.

[39] 'So that of good there be three kinds; good in the promise, that is pulchrum; good in effect, as the end desired, which is called iucundum, delightful, and good as the means, which is called utile, profitable.' (*L.* 6.8)

[40] For similar arguments see §812 on Price.

are misled, since good things have no objective goodness distinct from their pleasing the person who judges them good.

Perhaps, then, Hobbes argues: (1) All that good things have in common is their being desired by the agent who calls them 'good'. (2) All that we desire is our own pleasure. (3) Therefore, when we call things 'good', all that we are actually talking about is what we take to promote our own pleasure. The basic illusion about 'good' is the belief that it refers to something that good things have in common beyond being desired. This connexion between calling x 'good' and finding x pleasant follows from the truth of psychological hedonism (whether or not people believe it is true). It does not rest on an implausible claim about the meaning of 'good' (though Hobbes may accept such a claim).[41]

If Hobbes is right about the connexion between judgments of goodness and apparent pleasure, judgments about goodness vary not only among different people, but also within a single person at different times. He sometimes suggests that if I desire x more strongly than y, x appears pleasanter to me than y, and hence I judge x better than y. But if he believes this, it is difficult to understand how I can desire x more strongly than y while believing y to be pleasanter and better than x; hence it is difficult to see how I can be incontinent. Since Hobbes allows the possibility of incontinence, it is not easy to reconcile all his views about desire, pleasure, and goodness.

478. Practical Reason and Prudence

Hobbes's account of will, passion, and pleasure excludes one traditional role for practical reason. According to Aquinas, will differs from passion by being rational desire, formed by practical reasoning that seeks to discover the constitution of the ultimate good and the means to it. Practical reason, therefore, reaches conclusions that guide rational desire. Hobbes disagrees because he denies that will is essentially rational desire. In his view, practical reason simply discovers means to our future-directed desires for pleasure.[42]

In confining practical reason to this function Hobbes avoids questions about how practical reason and prudence (as Aristotle conceives them) can discover what is really good for us, and therefore can discover the external reasons that we already have, independently of our desires, for choosing one course of action rather than another.[43] In order to reject the Scholastic division between mere passion that is guided by pain and pleasure, and rational will that is guided by deliberation about the good, Hobbes argues that all motives either express a passion or result from deliberation about the means to satisfy a passion. He relies on his hedonistic analysis of desires.[44]

The instrumental role of reason in discovering means to future pleasure and the avoidance of future pain explains how reason can 'prescribe' (praecipere) an action and can declare an

[41] Cf. Hampton, *HSCT* 29.

[42] On practical reason see *Hom*. 12.1 (quoted in this section); *Civ*., Ep. Ded. 3.31 (quoted in this section).

[43] 'And this knowledge is called experience; and the wisdom that proceedeth from it, is that ability to conjecture by the present, of what is past and to come, which men call prudence.' (*EL* 27.13)

[44] More precisely, it depends on the truth of some theory that, like hedonism, helps to explain how practical reason could be purely instrumental. Hobbes offers hedonism to fulfil this role.

action to be good, favouring the principles that Hobbes identifies with the laws of nature. Once we desire peace, reason tells us how to achieve it.[45] The laws of nature are 'precepts of reason' or 'precepts of rational nature' (*Civ*. 3.32) because they are 'certain conclusions understood by reason' (3.33) about the means to self-preservation.

In Hobbes's view, reason does not simply take for granted an antecedent desire for peace. It also declares peace to be good.[46] But it is not clear why reason should declare this without qualification; should it not say that peace is good if and only if you want the further pleasures that peace brings?

The attitude of reason to peace reflects the more general preference of reason for prudence. A preference for some present good over a greater long-term good is irrational, in Hobbes's view; it is rational to focus on the long-term rather than the short-term good. The Stoics are right to say that passions disturb the operations of reason, because they distract us from the aim that reason approves—pursuit of a long-term good.[47] Reason, therefore, directs us towards the pursuit of our long-term good, which Hobbes identifies with self-preservation.

Hobbes is right to suggest that passions lead to irrational action if they cause us to act blindly without considering all the consequences that would turn us against the passions. If anger makes us forget some goal that we prefer over revenge, it makes us frustrate our dominant desire, and hence makes us act against reason. But suppose we are well aware of the costs of acting on anger, and still have a stronger desire to act on it. What is irrational, on Hobbes's account, in acting on anger in such cases?

Hobbes avoids this objection if he restricts his claim about reason to situations in which everyone agrees in desiring peace. Since one counts as good simply whatever seems to promise one pleasure, different people's judgments about good differ, just as their pleasures differ. Hence they disagree, and their disagreement leads to strife and discord.[48] But they all dislike this strife that puts them in a state of war, and in this state of war they all prefer peace, and hence agree that peace is good.[49] Peace is not good apart from their different desires,

[45] 'And thus much for the ill condition, which man by mere nature is actually placed in; though with a possibility to come out of it, consisting partly in the passions, partly in his reason. The passions that incline man to peace, are fear of death; desire of such things as are necessary to commodious living; and a hope by their industry to obtain them. And reason suggesteth convenient articles of peace, upon which men may be drawn to agreement.' (*L*. 13.13–14)

[46] 'They therefore who could not agree concerning a present, do agree concerning a future good, which indeed is a work of reason; for things present are obvious to the sense, things to come to our reason only. Reason declaring (or 'prescribing' (praecipiente) peace to be good, it follows by the same reason, that all the necessary means to peace be good also . . . But because men cannot put off this same irrational appetite, whereby they greedily prefer the present good (to which, by strict consequence, many unforeseen evils do adhere) before the future, it happens, that though all men do agree in the commendation of the foresaid virtues, yet they disagree still concerning their nature . . .' (*Civ*. 3.31–2)

[47] 'They are called perturbations because they frequently obstruct right reasoning. They obstruct right reasoning in this, that they militate against the real good and in favour of the apparent and most immediate good, which turns out frequently to be evil when everything associated with it hath been considered. . . . Therefore, although the real good must be sought in the long term, which is the job of reason, appetite seizeth upon a present good without foreseeing the greater evils that necessarily attach to it. Therefore appetite perturbs and impedes the operations of reason; whence it is rightly called a perturbation.' (*Hom*. 12.1) 'Therefore in this instance the emotions need to be governed by reason. For reason is that which, by measuring and comparing both our powers and those of the objects regulates the amount now of hope and then of fear, so that we may neither be mocked by hopes nor lose by fear without just cause those goods that we have.' (*Hom*. 12.4) See also 12.9.

[48] On this argument see §490.

[49] 'We must know therefore, that good and evil are names given to things to signify the inclination, or aversion of them by whom they were given. But the inclinations of men are diverse, according to their diverse constitutions, customs, opinions; as we may see in those things we apprehend by sense, as by tasting, touching, smelling; but much

but in the state of discord that (according to Hobbes) results from disagreement, everyone's desires coincide, because everyone sees that strife frustrates their attempts to secure the way of their future desire.

In this specific case, therefore, reason says just the same thing to everyone, since it tells everyone truly that peace is a means to satisfying their desires. This does not mean that in all circumstances reason prescribes one single course of action to everyone irrespective of their desires. Hence, when reason declares peace and the means to it to be good, it is not really saying more than Hobbes's theory allows it to say. It simply takes for granted the agreement of desires for peace in this state of general disagreement, and issues its precepts on that assumption.

This is a rather elegant result that Hobbes might well take to confirm the soundness of his method. We might reject his simplifying reduction of good to pleasure, on the ground that we make objective judgments about goodness; and do we not need objective judgments in order to find a rational moral basis for political society? Hobbes answers that we do not need the sort of objectivity that he denies about goodness. On the contrary, once we recognize the consequences of his subjectivist view, we can see an acceptable substitute for objectivity. The subjectivity of value judgments, given the actual differences between human beings, leads to discord; but discord, given the similarities between human beings, leads to the unanimous desire for peace.

Hobbes's account of the role of reason, therefore, fits his general view of motivation. He does not revert to the Scholastic view of practical reason that conflicts with his normal view of the role of reason.[50] If we have an overriding desire for self-preservation, we discover the means to it only by reasoning about future goods. If we do not consider the long-term consequences of our action, we frustrate our desire for self-preservation. In the same way we may expect reason to regulate hope and fear; for baseless fear is based on a false supposition about the future, and reason is needed to find true or plausible beliefs that guide our fears. Someone who acts on a fear resulting from groundless beliefs about the future acts 'against reason' by acting contrary to beliefs about what promotes the satisfaction of the overriding desire for self-preservation, or by failing to consider what promotes the satisfaction of this overriding desire.

And so when Hobbes says that reason declares peace to be good, the declaration by reason is elliptical; it means that in these circumstances of strife where everyone wants to get rid of strife, reason declares that peace is a means to the ending of strife. Since human beings are always either in a state of war or in danger of relapsing into a state of war, they always want to avoid strife, and therefore reason declares peace to be good. The declaration is not categorical, in Kant's sense, by being independent of human inclinations; it is a hypothetical imperative that applies to actual situations.

more in those which pertain to the common actions of life, where what this man commends, (that is to say, calls good) the other undervalues, as being evil; Nay, very often the same man at diverse times, praises, and dispraises the same thing. Whilst thus they do, necessary it is there should be discord, and strife: They are therefore so long in the state of war, as by reason of the diversity of the present appetites, they mete good and evil by diverse measures. All men easily acknowledge this state, as long as they are in it, to be evil, and by consequence that Peace is good.' (*Civ.* 3.31)

[50] Gert in Hobbes, *MC* 14–16, discusses Hobbes on practical reason.

Hobbes's view does not imply that it is irrational to act for the sake of revenge rather than self-preservation, if one acts in the light of true beliefs about the consequences of both courses of action. But Hobbes assumes that reason favours the means to self-preservation, because he assumes that when we see that we must choose between an action that promotes our self-preservation and an action that threatens our self-preservation for some shorter-term end, we desire the first course of action more strongly. If, then, we see the consequences for self-preservation, we choose the action that promotes it. Exposure to reason always results in self-preserving action. 'Irrational' action is chosen with less than full awareness of the consequences.

These assumptions about motivation, however, revive the difficulty that arises from Hobbes's views about incontinence. For reason speaks in favour of peace only if our strongest desire is for self-preservation and the means to it. But if we desire something else more strongly than we desire the means to self-preservation, reason should tell us to do what satisfies this other desire. Since Hobbes recognizes that we sometimes have other desires stronger than the desire for self-preservation, he should also agree that reason does not always declare that peace is good. His own views cast doubt on the empirical assumptions that support his claims about practical reason.[51]

Hobbes's treatment of practical reason, therefore, displays two aspects of his reductive outlook. He wants to reduce claims about reason and morality to psychological claims grounded in his account of human nature. This reduction is partly eliminative, showing that there is no sound basis for some traditional beliefs, and partly vindicative, showing that traditional beliefs obscurely grasp some genuine features of human nature. Hobbes's account of the distinction between will and passion is eliminative, arguing that scholastic rationalism is misguided in drawing a distinction. But he intends his reduction of prudence to vindicate it.

The first aspect of his position, however, raises questions about the second. His eliminative treatment of will and passion implies that he can endorse prudence as rational only because he makes an implausible assumption—implausible even within his own account of the passions—about motivation. His position would be more consistent if he were to deny that prudence itself is rational, and to argue that it is rational to follow the prudent course of action only if we have the relevant desire. He ought to agree that when our desires are relevantly different, prudence is not rational, since we will not adopt the prudent course of action when we are informed about the consequences of the choices open to us. Hobbes does not draw this conclusion from his account of practical reason, but Hume draws it.[52]

479. Pleasure, Reason, and the Human Good: Rejection of Eudaemonism

Hobbes's views about motivation and practical reason require the rejection of Scholastic views about the human good. Aquinas follows Plato and Aristotle in taking happiness to be

[51] On reason and motivation see Hampton, *HSCT* 34–42. She introduces an appeal to physiological abnormality to explain why passions are against 'reason' (what one would want if one were in a normal physiological condition). This appeal disguises the controversial move as a physiological speculation.

[52] On Hume see §736.

the goal of rational will as opposed to non-rational passion. Reason approves what is good for oneself as a whole, as opposed to the more limited end sought by a particular passion. Greek eudaemonism asserts that whatever I choose for its own sake I regard as either a means to, or a part of, the good for me; but this restriction does not imply that the only thing I can choose for its own sake is a state exclusively of myself. We can consistently accept eudaemonism and value our friend's good for our own sake, if we regard our friend's good as part of the life that is best for us. While all the goods that I choose for their own sake are self-referential, they need not all be self-confined. Whether they are all self-confined is a further question to be answered by an account of what happiness consists in.

Hobbes's rejection of a division between will and passion and between good and pleasure commits him to the rejection of the ultimate good as an object of will. His views require him to go further than most of his hedonist predecessors go in rejecting eudaemonism.

Some hedonists take hedonism to be subordinate to eudaemonism. Epicurus agrees with Aristotle and Aquinas in taking the ultimate good to be a proper starting point for ethical argument; then he argues that pleasure meets reasonable formal criteria for the final good.[53] According to Aristotle, these criteria include completeness and self-sufficiency, measured by reference to the fulfilment of human nature. Epicurus accepts these criteria, and argues that pleasure—with certain qualifications—satisfies them.

Hobbes, however, does not subordinate pleasure to happiness, since he does not recognize any more general or more ultimate end than my own pleasure. He appeals to pleasure, as the Cyrenaics do, as an alternative to the eudaemonist's ultimate good. In his view, everything I choose for its own sake is some pleasure of my own, and so must be some self-confined condition; it must be a state of myself that does not include (though it may causally depend on) a state of someone or something else.[54]

He opposes eudaemonism by rejecting belief in an ultimate end beyond the continual pursuit of pleasure. He argues that if there were a last end we could reach, our desires would come to an end, and that would not be a desirable life.[55] He recognizes a difference between close and distant ends, but he recognizes no ultimate end. In claiming that the felicity of this life does not consist in the repose of a mind satisfied, Hobbes alludes to the familiar fact that human life is subject to changes and vicissitudes, and that it is not reasonable to look for complete satisfaction in these circumstances. Aquinas agrees with Hobbes on this point (*SG* iii 48);[56] that is part of his reason for concluding that the degree of happiness that we can achieve in this life is incomplete (imperfecta).

Hobbes, however, draws the more extreme conclusion that complete satisfaction is not only unavailable, but undesirable. When we achieve any end we were pursuing, we stop acting. If, then, the ultimate end were attainable, it would require the cessation of activity.

[53] Socrates may agree with Epicurus. See §21.

[54] Kavka, *HMPT* 40–1, discusses this aspect of self-confined egoism. See also Gert, 'Psychology'.

[55] 'To which end we are to consider, that the felicity of this life, consisteth not in the repose of a mind satisfied. For there is no such finis ultimus (utmost aim) nor summum bonum (greatest good,) as is spoken of in the books of the old moral philosophers. Nor can a man any more live, whose desires are at an end, than he, whose senses and imaginations are at a stand.' (*L.* 11.1) 'But for an utmost end, in which the ancient philosophers have placed felicity, and disputed much concerning the way thereto, there is no such thing in this world, nor way to it, more than to Utopia; for while we live, we have desires, and desire presupposeth a further end.' (*EL* 7.6)

[56] On Aquinas see §280.

Since a life without activity is not good for a human being, the achievement of an ultimate end is would not be good for a human being.

In this objection to the eudaemonist belief Hobbes does not distinguish process from activity, as Aristotle understands them.[57] Hobbes assumes that action, as opposed to passive enjoyment, is instrumental, aimed at the achieving of some end separate from it. Aristotle rejects this assumption, since he recognizes activities that are parts of happiness and to be chosen for their own sakes. If we achieve the ultimate end, we still have a motive for action; for we want to perform the activities that are characteristic of being happy. Aristotle's conception seems ridiculous from Hobbes's point of view only because Hobbes cannot see the point of Aristotle's distinction between process and activity. He cannot see the point of it because it conflicts with Hobbes's view that action is all purely instrumental.

Even if Aristotle avoids Hobbes's objection on this point, Hobbes has a further objection to a traditional view of the ultimate good. In his view, it requires a definite list of activities constituting the human good; but any such list fails to recognize that human desires and aims are varied and mutable. According to Hobbes, our conception of the good always changes and develops, according to how much we have already got. Since the achievement of one end leads us to look for something beyond it, we cannot determine any fixed final good.

Perhaps eudaemonism does not require the sort of list that Hobbes rejects. The mere recognition of an ultimate good does not commit us to any definite claims about its content. But this defence of eudaemonism concedes Hobbes's main point; it seems pointless to recognize a final good if we cannot form any fairly definite and defensible views about its content. As Aristotle says, we recognize a final good and ask what it is so that we can use our answer to this question in deciding what to do. Hence we expect our inquiry to discover desirable activities specifying the human good.

Still, Hobbes's objection misinterprets the eudaemonist's commitment to a 'fixed' final good. Aristotle need not recognize any determinate set of particular activities that constitute the good. He need only claim that the activities in question fall into some relatively definite types. It might well be true that if we achieve our aim of knowing one language, say, we set ourselves to learn another; but these are two exercises of our language-learning capacity. Similarly, if the continual progress of desire from one object to another stays within the types of capacities whose fulfilment Aristotle takes to constitute the good, such progress does not count against the Aristotelian view.

480. The Instability of Desire

A cogent objection to Aristotle, then, requires us to deny that the fulfilment of any definite types of capacities constitutes the human good. To see why Hobbes might deny this, we may point to the instability of desires for long-term goals. If a ten-year-old child wants to be a pilot, it would be unwise for her to form, or for us to form on her behalf, a plan for her to be a pilot; for by the time she can do anything to put the plan into effect, she may have lost her enthusiasm for being a pilot and decided to be a rock star instead, and may

[57] Aristotle on activity; see §95.

then have abandoned this second enthusiasm in order to be a stockbroker. In this case the best advice would perhaps be to secure the way of her future desire, not to tie her to one specific plan of life. Hobbes may believe that all our long-term desires, apart from the desire for pleasure, are unstable in this way, so that it is futile to try to construct a conception of an ultimate end. The only sensible long-term plan, therefore, is to secure the way of our future desire.

This does not refute an Aristotelian view of the final good. Even if people change their minds about long-term ends, they may still have a sufficiently determinate ultimate good.[58] We may be able to see why, in their different circumstances, they change their conceptions of their good; as Aristotle suggests, different circumstances and experiences make the value of one or another good more obvious to them (*EN* 1095a23–5). We may be able to correct the one-sided conceptions they form as a result of different experiences. Such variation, therefore, does not undermine the claim that an Aristotelian conception of the good fits human capacities.

This defence of Aristotle conflicts with Hobbes's explanation of variation in people's views about the good. He believes that the different things that are good for us are good because we happen to desire them; hence we cannot discover which things are good for us whether or not we happen to desire them. This desire-based conception of the good, however, needs some defence; the bare assertion of it to begs a crucial question against the Aristotelian conception. Hobbes believes we accept a desire-based conception as soon as we accept psychological hedonism and reject any division between the will and the passions. If, however, we are sympathetic to an Aristotelian conception of the good, we have a good reason for rejecting some of the premisses of Hobbes's argument for these other positions.

Does Hobbes derive psychological hedonism from the assimilation of will to passion, or does he argue in the reverse direction? Perhaps he takes psychological hedonism to be so obvious in its own right that it is a firm basis both for the assimilation of will to passion and for a desire-based conception of the good.[59] He accepts hedonism because it expresses the basic fact (in his view) that people's judgments about goodness simply reflect what they prefer, and hence (as he supposes) what pleases them. If his argument relies on the subjective character of judgments about goods, it rests on a claim that he does not defend fully against an Aristotelian alternative.

From an Aristotelian point of view, therefore, Hobbes is one of the people who argue too hastily from variation in evaluative judgments to metaphysical subjectivism (*EN* 1094b14–19). He does not show that observed variations in judgment require the subjectivist explanation. As Aristotle points out, if sick people value health more than habitually healthy people value it, that disagreement is easily explained by their different perspectives. Again, if some people prefer lobster and others prefer cheese, and we cannot show that one is really better than the other, that may be because they are equally good.[60]

Hobbes's convictions about goods reflect a more general feature of his moral psychology. Aristotelian eudaemonism includes a belief in external reasons. If external reasons must be accessible in principle to deliberation, Hobbes's purely psychological account of deliberation

[58] It needs to be determinate in the sense previously explained (allowing for different ways of achieving the same good).

[59] Butler on Hobbes on pleasure and happiness; see §688.

[60] See Reid's comment on this example; §829.

rules out external reasons; for recognition of reasons, in his view, consists in the awareness of the comparative strength of our desires. Perhaps this is why Hobbes takes his specific points about the insatiable character of desire to refute the whole Aristotelian conception of the human good.

Aristotle believes that in attributing a nature to a human being, we attribute desires with a particular rational structure, because we recognize not only mere desires, but also rational desires that are guided by comparative evaluations derived from a final good. In Aristotle's view, the examination of human capacities and circumstances results in the discovery of a conception of the good. This conception shows what desires a rational agent has good reasons to acquire. Such reasons are external to an agent's desires.

In Hobbes's view, examination of human nature does not reveal these external reasons. We examine human desires, and discover their relative strength, and the means to their satisfaction. This disagreement with Aristotle rests partly on the analysis of deliberation and reasons that we have examined. Since deliberation simply records a series of inclinations of different strengths, it cannot find a course of action that rests on the best reasons. The reasons that emerge from Hobbes's analysis of human nature are strictly internal and dependent on desires.[61]

481. Aristotelian Teleology

Hobbes's rejection of the traditional conception of the ultimate end, and of the whole Aristotelian conception of human nature that supports Aristotelian eudaemonism, rests partly on his broader reasons for doubting the whole Aristotelian argument. In Aristotle's view, we can discover a creature's good from examining its nature. In both human and non-human cases we can discover the characteristic activity that is essential to this organism, distinguishes it from others, and is the goal of its other processes and actions. This argument is summed up in the appeal to the human function.

Hobbes agrees with many of his contemporaries that Aristotelian teleology is incompatible with the truth of corpuscular explanations, because they believe the Aristotelian claims to require empirically undiscoverable non-bodily causal mechanisms with no corpuscular basis. This belief underlies Locke's criticism of substantial forms, entelechies, and so on,[62] on the assumption that they involve the mechanical explanation as we find in corpuscular explanations (in Aristotelian terms, involving material and efficient causes). Since teleological claims do not describe corpuscular mechanisms, they must (it is assumed) be attempts to describe occult, non-corpuscular mechanisms. The interpretation rests on dubious assumptions, accepted by Hobbes, about the Aristotelian conception of formal and final causation.

These doubts about Aristotelian teleology do not imply the rejection of teleology. Boyle objects not to teleology itself, but to Peripatetic views of nature that (he supposes) introduce additional agents besides God, and conflict with the freedom and transcendence of God;

[61] On external reasons see §259 (Aquinas), §684 (Butler).
[62] See, e.g., Locke, *EHU* ii 23.3; 31.6–8 (on substantial forms); iii 10.14.

these views reflect an 'idolatrous' conception of nature.[63] Hobbes agrees with Boyle in rejecting agents distinct from God that have their own inherent goal-directed natures. He treats the study of human action as part of the study of 'motion'. Deliberation and desire should be understood, in his view, as the result of the interplay between motions of varying strengths that determine the motion of the human being as a whole. He regards desire as genuine motion, and attacks those who treat it as merely metaphorical motion (*L.* 6.2).

He has a further reason for scepticism about Aristotelian teleology in morals and politics. Teleological claims about the proper functions and aims of the political community and of the ruler were used to support demands for reform or for limits on the power of the ruler, or for revolutionary action in support of such claims. Hobbes regards such claims as dangerous errors.[64] Even those who agreed with Hobbes's support for the Royalist side in the Civil War did not welcome him as an ally, since they welcomed neither his rejection of traditional arguments nor his use of arguments that appeared to them to place the state on the wrong basis.[65]

Hobbes, then, follows Aristotle in arguing for a conception of the human good from claims about human nature.[66] He disagrees with Aristotle on the conclusions that can be drawn about the human good from an appeal to human nature. In particular he denies that we can discover anything like an Aristotelian ultimate end.

He therefore approaches the task of describing moral good and evil without Aristotelian assumptions. He does not believe that the human good consists in a life that realizes human capacities under the control of practical reason. The examination of human capacities and their relations does not help us to discover the virtues. Nor does he claim that the good for a human being essentially includes the good of others, because he cannot rely on the argument about self-realization that leads Aristotle to this conclusion. Hence he denies that a human being is naturally social.[67]

Though Hobbes's opposition to Aristotelian eudaemonism reflects a broader opposition to Aristotelian teleology, this broader opposition does not wholly explain the dispute about the human good. If Hobbes had agreed with Aristotle about the good, he could have expressed his agreement within a non-Aristotelian account of the physical world. His attempt to reduce deliberation to a process that can be understood in purely psychological and non-normative terms is not required by post-Aristotelian physical science; it seems to reflect doubts about practical reason that are independent of general doubts about teleology.

Perhaps, therefore, we should explain Hobbes's opposition to Aristotelian ethics by going back to his initial complaint about contemporary moral philosophy, that its appeals to practical reason, natural ends, objective goods, and so on, simply lead to disagreement. To resolve the disagreement, he tries to go below the normative level to purely psychological

[63] See Boyle, *FE* iv 48–51. Leibniz answers accusation of idolatry, in 'On nature itself'. In general I assume that Hobbes accepts his professed theological doctrines and puts them forward as seriously meant. Whether or not (as a matter of biography) he sincerely accepted them, we can account for their content and presentation, and for the hostile reaction of many Christian readers, without assuming that they were either insincere or were meant to be recognized as insincere. Martinich, *TGL*, offers an elaborate defence of the sincerity of Hobbes's Christianity. Curley's opposing position is briefly set out in Hobbes, *L.*, pp. xii–xiv, xl–xlvi.

[64] See Laird and Barker, cited in §469.

[65] Some of these critics are discussed by Mintz, *HL* and Bowle, *HC*.

[66] On the appeal to nature cf. §675 (Hobbes v. Butler), §§727–8 (Hume).

[67] See *Civ.* 1.12; *L.* 17.6–12. On Cudworth's criticism see Passmore, *RC* 72; Hampton, *HSCT* 10. See also §§531, 564, 610.

descriptions. He agrees with the Greek Sceptics in separating the normative from the purely psychological, but he uses the separation for different purposes. In the Sceptics' view, reflexion on normative disagreements causes us to abandon the normative outlook in favour of simply 'yielding' to appearances. Hobbes believes that a purely psychological description allows him to interpret normative claims in psychological terms, and so to formulate normative claims that we will accept, once we form the enlightened view of human nature.

We might argue that Hobbes's psychological picture is simpler than Aristotle's. He begins from the desire for pleasure; we already recognize this as a desire that sufficiently explains an action. According to Hobbes, we need not recognize any further desires, irreducible to this one, in order to understand our actions in general. The task of arguing from an Aristotelian account of the ultimate good to specific virtues is difficult; many of the obscurities in Aristotle's arguments remain in Aquinas' arguments. Since Hobbes's argument avoids Aristotelian obscurities, it is worth examining, to see whether it offers a plausible account of moral good and evil.

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HOBBES: FROM HUMAN NATURE TO MORALITY

482. Moral Philosophy, Old and New

Hobbes tries to follow an 'idoneous principle of tractation' in moral philosophy, by beginning with an account of human nature and human motives.[1] On this basis he hopes to improve the lamentable situation in which knowledge of the law of nature has failed to grow 'beyond its ancient stature'.[2] He assumes that sound moral philosophy will discuss natural law, but will reject previous views of natural law. In claiming that knowledge of natural law has not advanced beyond its ancient stature, Hobbes implies that Scholastic discussions of natural law have not advanced moral philosophy. We can perhaps clarify his aims in moral philosophy if we see what he rejects in Scholastic views of natural law.

Aquinas introduces natural law as part of an Aristotelian and eudaemonist theory. The moral virtues are the states of character that constitute the appropriate control by practical reason, aiming at the good of the agent or the good of others or the good of the community; the good of others and of the community enter because they are parts of the good of the agent. Virtuous actions are all connected to natural law (*ST* 1–2 q94 a3). Natural law prescribes the first principles of ethics, grasped by universal conscience (q94 a1 ad2), because 'everything to which a human being tends in accordance with his nature belongs to the law of nature' (q94 a3). The principles of natural law are those that human beings grasp in the rational pursuit of the ultimate end to which they tend by nature. We tend naturally towards our ultimate end, and we are capable of rational understanding of the means to it; in exercising this rational understanding correctly, we grasp the principles of natural law.

Aquinas does not believe, then, that natural law introduces a source of moral principles apart from the rational pursuit of one's own happiness. He does not introduce a deontological element in morality that is separate from his teleological account of the moral virtues. He believes that a correct grasp of the ultimate end for a human being also grasps the principles of natural law. We grasp the natural law insofar as we grasp the first principles of practical

[1] *Civ.*, Ep. Ded.; see §469. On Hobbes's aims see Hampton, 'Naturalism'.

[2] *Civ.*, Ep. Ded.

reason.[3] Since the task of practical reason is to discover what constitutes and promotes the human good, our view about the content of natural law will match our view of the nature and scope of practical reason.

Aquinas' successors disagree about the relation between the natural law and the will of God. Scotus and Ockham allow more of what Aquinas counts as natural law to depend on the free will of God; they take the rightness of the various precepts to consist in their being prescribed by God. Suarez's discussion of disputes about divine commands leads him to distinguish two aspects of natural law: its status as law depends on divine commands, but it is natural because it prescribes and forbids actions that are intrinsically right and wrong apart from divine commands.

These different aspects of Scholastic discussion of natural law influence Hobbes. Indeed, the extent of their influence makes it initially surprising that he believes the Scholastics have made so little progress. He agrees with Aquinas' claim that we grasp the principles of natural law by grasping the end to which human nature is naturally inclined. Insofar as he derives an account of the virtues from an account of human nature Hobbes agrees with Aquinas. Hence he identifies moral philosophy with the science of the laws of nature. The true doctrine of the laws of nature specifies the virtues and vices that are the subject matter of moral philosophy.[4]

Hobbes suggests that traditional views do not regard moral philosophy as the doctrine of the laws of nature. As we have seen in discussing Grotius, this suggestion is ambiguous. Scholastic views certainly connect the requirements of the virtues with the provisions of natural law. But it is not so clear whether they regard morality as essentially or fundamentally natural law. Suarez argues that though intrinsic morality is prescribed by natural law, this is not essential to intrinsic morality. According to Suarez, moral philosophy is primarily the science of the honestum, of what is fitting for rational nature; it is the science of natural law only because it is necessarily true that natural law prescribes what is fitting for rational nature.

The sense Hobbes attaches to the claim that moral philosophy is about natural law depends on the sense he attaches to claims about natural law. Suarez distinguishes morality from natural law because he believes that natural law is essentially law, and that law essentially requires the command of a legislator, whereas intrinsic morality is prior to natural law. How does Hobbes understand the natural basis of natural law—the facts that Suarez takes to constitute intrinsic morality? And how does he take natural law to be related to divine commands?

483. Human Nature and Natural Law

Hobbes believes that natural law rests on the requirements of human nature. On this point he agrees with Aquinas and his successors. But he departs from Aquinas in claiming this law

[3] On Aquinas see §272.

[4] 'The science of them [sc. the laws of nature] is the true and only moral philosophy. For moral philosophy is nothing but the science of what is good, and evil, in the conversation and society of mankind.' (*L.* 15.40)

simply prescribes means to self-preservation.[5] Past philosophers did not see this essential connexion with self-preservation.[6] They were roughly right about which traits are virtues, but they were wrong about what makes them virtues, not seeing their essential connexion with 'peaceable, sociable, and comfortable living'.[7]

It would be misleading to suggest that previous philosophers thought the virtues do not contribute to peaceful and sociable living. Aquinas and others suppose that this contribution is essential to the virtues, because peaceful and sociable living fulfils the nature of human beings as rational and sociable creatures. But Aquinas believes that the study of human nature allows us to form a conception of the human good that shows us how the moral virtues perfect human nature and achieve the good; peaceful and sociable living is only part of this good. Hobbes denies that when we study human nature we discover that human beings have a natural ultimate good that supports an account of the virtues. If he is right, we cannot discover from the examination of human nature and the human good that we have good reason to follow the principles of natural law. Suarez and Grotius[8] must therefore be wrong to believe that some actions are intrinsically right (honesta) by being appropriate for rational nature. Since their view presupposes that the human good consists in more than the satisfaction of desires, it is not open to Hobbes.[9]

To reach his account of the virtues, therefore, Hobbes appeals to his account of human nature. He rejects the Aristotelian view—later revived by Butler—that human nature constitutes a system, rather than a collection of desires, and that the task of practical reason

[5] A law of nature is '. . . a precept, or general rule, found out by reason, by which a man is forbidden to do that which is destructive of his life or taketh away the means of preserving the same . . .' (*L.* 14.3).

[6] 'Now the science of virtue and vice, is moral philosophy; and therefore the true doctrine of the laws of nature is the true moral philosophy. But the writers of moral philosophy, though they acknowledge the same virtues and vices: Yet not seeing wherein consisted their goodness; nor that they came to be praised, as the means of peaceable, sociable, and comfortable living; place them in a mediocrity of passions: as if not the cause, but the degree of daring, made fortitude; or not the cause, but the quantity of a gift, made liberality.' (*L* 15.40) 'But because men cannot put off this same irrational appetite, whereby they greedily prefer the present good (to which, by strict consequence, many unforeseen evils doe adhere) before the future, it happens, that though all men doe agree in the commendation of the foresaid virtues, yet they disagree still concerning their nature, to wit, in what each of them doth consist; for as oft as another's good action displeaseth any man, that action hath the name given of some neighbouring vice; likewise the bad actions, which please them, are ever entitled to some Virtue; whence it comes to pass that the same action is praised by these, and called virtue, and dispraised by those, and termed vice. Neither is there as yet any remedy found by philosophers for this matter; for since they could not observe the goodness of actions to consist in this, that it was in order to peace, and the evil in this, that it related to discord, they built a moral philosophy wholly estranged from the moral Law, and unconstant to itself; for they would have the nature of virtues seated in a certain kind of mediocrity between two extremes, and the vices in the extremes themselves; which is apparently false . . .' (*Civ.* 3.32). On the doctrine of the mean cf. *EL* 17.14. For further discussion see Skinner, *RRPH* 322–6.

[7] 'Yet reason is still the same, and changeth not her end, which is peace and defence; nor of the mind which the means to attain them, to wit, those virtues we have declared above, and which cannot be abrogated by any custom or law whatsoever.' (*Civ.* 3.29) 'But forasmuch as all men are carried away by the violence of their passion, and by evil customs do those things which are commonly said to be against the law of nature; it is not the consent of passions, or consent in some error gotten by custom, that makes the law of nature. Reason is no less of the nature of man than passion, and is the same in all men, because all men agree in the will to be directed and governed in the way to that which they desire to attain, namely their own good, which is the work of reason: there can therefore be no other law of nature than reason, nor no other precepts of natural law, than those which declare unto us the ways of peace, where the same may be obtained, and of defence where it may not.' (*EL* 15.1)

[8] On Hobbes and Grotius see Tuck, 'Modern', cited at §466n27. His comparison does not mention this important difference over the honestum.

[9] On the relation of Hobbes's position to the voluntarism of Scotus and Ockham see §391.

is to discover what is appropriate for the needs of the system as a whole.[10] In Hobbes's view, human nature is a collection of desires without a system; practical reason, therefore, must simply look for the means to satisfy one's predominant desire. If our predominant desire is to secure the way of our future desire, we care most about our self-preservation. Practical reason justifies the laws of nature if it shows that they specify means to self-preservation. This is what Hobbes tries to show about the laws of nature.[11]

When Hobbes attributes the laws of nature to reason, he means that reason prescribes means to ends that, in the circumstances Hobbes describes, everyone will want more than they want any other ends. These precepts and prescriptions, in his view, depend on our desires, but they are nonetheless genuine precepts of reason and rational nature.[12] When 'reason prescribes peace to be good',[13] its prescription is the empirical proposition that peace promotes the satisfaction of our desires in the specific circumstances of the state of nature.

We might think that this empirical proposition falls short of a precept of reason, since it does not assert that we ought to seek peace, that we have a reason to seek peace, or that we have a duty or obligation to seek peace. Hobbes, however, believes that he can answer this objection, since he believes that natural laws impose obligations. To see what he means by this, we need to grasp his conception of obligation. Since he defines obligation by reference to rights, we need to discuss his view of rights before trying to understand his view of obligation.

484. Freedom and Rights

Hobbes explains an obligation by contrasting it with a right. Being obliged to do F is incompatible with being free to do either F or not-F, and therefore incompatible with having the right to do F or not-F. Hence, if we are obliged to do F, we lack the right to do F or not-F. These connexions between obligation, freedom, and rights make it reasonable for Hobbes to explain obligation as the absence of freedom. Obligations require some restriction of the right of nature, which is one's freedom to use the means of self-defence.[14] Hobbes does not treat this right as a morally protected or justified freedom; he means simply that an individual is not physically prevented from doing what he thinks will preserve him. If someone has a right to preserve himself, it does not follow that it is wrong to prevent him.

Elsewhere, however, Hobbes seems to treat a right as a morally protected liberty, something that we are morally permitted to do, or a 'blameless liberty'.[15] We might suppose

[10] On human nature as a system rather than a collection see §77 (Aristotle); 679–80 (Butler).

[11] Hobbes's restricted conception of natural law, confining it to the preservation of peace, may be compared with Selden's conception, as described by Tuck, *PG* 216–17.

[12] In *L*. 14.3 'praeceptum . . . sive regula generalis' is used for 'precept or general rule'.

[13] *Civ*. 3.31 (quoted in §478). The EV has 'declares'. Silverthorne translates 'teaches'.

[14] 'The right of nature . . . is the liberty each man hath, to use his own power, as he will himself, for the preservation of his own nature; that is to say, of his own life; and consequently, of doing any thing, which in his own judgment, and reason, he shall conceive to be the aptest means thereunto.' (*L*. 14.1) '. . . right consisteth in liberty to do, or to forbear; whereas law determineth and bindeth to one of them: so that law and right differ as much as obligation and liberty, which in one and the same matter are inconsistent' (14.3). Pufendorf, *JNG* i 6.10, criticizes Hobbes's account of right and obligation. See also §624 on Clarke.

[15] 'Neither by the word right is anything else signified, than that liberty which every man hath to make use of his natural faculties according to right reason. Therefore the first foundation of natural right is this, that every man as much

that in claiming that we 'must' be allowed a right to all necessary means to an end that we have a right to pursue, Hobbes introduces a moral claim. If he were talking about purely physical freedom, the claim about means would apparently not follow. If I am not physically prevented from pursuing my self-preservation, it does not follow that I am free to use all the necessary means to it; if I am in the middle of a desert, I may not have access to water.

But perhaps Hobbes will reject this argument. He might reply that if I am physically prevented from using all the necessary means to an end, I am also prevented from pursuing the end, and hence I lack the freedom to pursue it. And so he might still defend a non-moral interpretation of his claims about natural rights.

What does he mean by claiming that we have the natural right to use our faculties 'according to right reason' for our self-preservation?[16] We might take this clause to restrict our right to do whatever we think will promote our preservation; perhaps 'right reason' confines our right to means that accord with right reason. In that case, the use of a rationally unjustifiable means to preserve ourselves (e.g., by practising unnecessary cruelty on our opponents) would exceed our right. Rights, therefore, seem to be confined to legitimate liberties, those that others ought to respect.

But the reference to right reason does not require Hobbes to restrict rights to legitimate liberties. He may simply mean that human beings are free by nature to preserve themselves to the best of their ability, because in the state of nature nothing impedes our taking this course of action. To say this is not to exclude our being free to do other things; hence our right is not confined to prudent action.[17]

Hobbes, however, does not believe—or at least does not always believe—that our natural right extends to everything that is physically possible in the state of nature. Some remarks (outside *Leviathan*) about violations of the law of nature in war suggest ways of exceeding our natural rights. We are physically at liberty to act cruelly or to get drunk, but we violate

as in him lies endeavour to protect his life and members. But because it is vain for a man to have a right to the end, if the right to the necessary means be denied him, it follows, that since every man hath a right to preserve himself, he must also be allowed a right (consequens est . . . ut unusquisque ius etiam habeat, LV) to use all the means, and do all the actions, without which he cannot preserve himself.' (*Civ* 1.7–8) At *EL* 14.6 Hobbes describes a right as a blameless liberty: 'And forasmuch as necessity of nature maketh men to will and desire *bonum sibi*, that which is good for themselves . . . it is not against reason, that a man doth all he can to preserve his own body and limbs both from death and pain. And that which is not against reason, men call *right* or *jus* or *blameless liberty* of using our own natural power and ability. It is therefore a right of nature, that every man may preserve his own life and limbs, with all the power he hath.' *EL* 14.10 seems to imply that statements about rights have some moral content: 'For seeing all things he willeth, must therefore be good to him in his own judgment because he willeth them, and may tend to his preservation some time or other, or he may judge so, and we have made him judge thereof, . . . it followeth that all things may rightly also be done by him. . . . insomuch that *jus* and *utile*, right and profit, is the same thing.' *EL* 14.13 suggests that might makes right: 'A man therefore that hath another man in his power to rule or govern, to do good to, or harm, hath right, by the advantage of this his present power, to take caution at his pleasure, for his security against that other in time to come'. Some of these rights are retained in the commonwealth: 'As it was necessary that a man should not retain his right to every thing, so also was it, that he should retain his right to some things . . . Nor doth the law of nature command any divesting of other rights than of those only which cannot be retained without the loss of peace.' (*EL* 17.2) On Hobbes on the right of nature see Tuck, *NRT* 120–32; §535 (Cumberland).

[16] See Darwall, *BMIO* 62.

[17] *Civ*. 1.9–10 makes each person the judge of what is needed for the preservation of his life. 1.14 allows a right to the stronger that is not restricted by considerations of morality or prudence. On Hobbes's treatment of rights see further Hampton, *HSCT* 51–7; Kavka, *HMPT* 297–303, 319–22.

the law of nature in doing so, and Hobbes infers that we do not act 'with right'.[18] He justifies this inference by arguing that such actions do not promote one's self-preservation, and that one cannot honestly claim that they do.[19] In this case, then, physical freedom does not seem to be sufficient for a right.

485. Obligation as Renunciation of Rights[20]

These different claims about rights complicate our understanding of obligation, because Hobbes understands obligation as the 'laying down' of a right.[21] Sometimes he explains laying down a right as my refraining from exercising a liberty to interfere with your pursuit of a goal that we are both free to pursue. If a 100-euro note is lying in front of it, we are both free to try to pick it up. I lay down my right, and divest myself of my liberty, to hinder your picking it up, if I stand out of your way.[22] If laying down my right is sufficient for obligation, I oblige myself to let you pick up the note by standing out of your way.

But Hobbes usually suggests that this physical renunciation of a right is not the same as obligation. In his view, I lay aside my right by renunciation or by transfer, not by actually standing out of your way, but by saying I will stand out of your way.[23] Once I have done this, I am obliged to stand out of your way and I ought to stand out of your way; if I do not stand out of your way, I act without right.[24] Words and actions

[18] 'There is a little . . . to be said concerning the laws that men are to observe one towards another in time of war, wherein every man's being and well-being is the rule of his actions. Yet this much the law of nature commandeth in war, that men satiate not the cruelty of their present passions, whereby in their own conscience they foresee no benefit to come. For that betrayeth not a necessity, but a disposition of the mind to war, which is against the law of nature.' (*EL* 19.2) 'But there are certain natural laws whose exercise ceaseth not even in the time of war itself; for I cannot understand what drunkenness, or cruelty (that is, revenge which respects not the future good) can advance toward peace, or the preservation of any man. Briefly, in the state of nature, what is just and unjust, is not to be esteemed by the actions, but by the counsel and conscience of the actor. That which is done out of necessity, out of endeavour for peace, for the preservation of ourselves, is done with right; otherwise every damage done to a man would be a breach of the natural law, and an injury against God.' (*Civ*. 3.27n)

[19] Hobbes does not make this point about drunkenness, but he makes it about cruelty (*EL* 19.2). Hence his prohibition of cruelty is consistent with his claim in *Civ*. 1.9 that each person is to be allowed to judge what promotes his own self-preservation. If someone believed that cruelty is expedient (by making people less eager to oppose him in future), Hobbes would presumably have to allow him a right to act cruelly.

[20] See Darwall, *BMIO* 56.

[21] For further discussion see Barry, 'Warrender'; Gauthier, *LL* 40, Kavka, *HMPT* 303.

[22] 'To lay down a man's right to any thing, is to divest himself of the liberty, of hindering another of the benefit of his own right to the same. For he that renounceth, or passeth away his right, giveth not to any other man a right which he had not before; because there is nothing to which every man had not right by nature: but only standeth out of his way, that he may enjoy his own original right, without hindrance from him.' (*L*. 14.6)

[23] 'The way by which a man either simply renounceth, or transferreth his right, is a declaration, or signification, by some voluntary and sufficient sign, or signs, that he doth so renounce, or transfer, or hath so renounced, or transferred the same, to him that accepteth it.' (*L*. 14.7)

[24] 'And when a man hath in either manner abandoned, or granted away his right; then is he said to be obliged or bound [LV 'debet' is all that corresponds to 'obliged or bound'] not to hinder those, to whom such right is granted, or abandoned, from the benefit of it: and that he ought, and it is his duty, not to make void that voluntary act of his own: and that such hindrance is injustice, and injury, as being *sine jure*; the right being before renounced, or transferred. So that injury, or injustice, in the controversies of the world, is somewhat like to that, which in the disputations of scholars is called absurdity.' (*L*. 14.7) In *Civ*. 3.3 wrong is compared to contradiction, on the assumption that it involves violation of a promise.

signifying the transfer of right are 'the bonds by which men are bound, and obliged'. Hence words are 'the verbal bonds of covenant' in contrast to natural bonds (chains; *EL* 22.3).[25]

What we have said so far might suggest that I have obliged myself once I have told you I will lay down my right. This would be a surprising use of 'oblige'. If I tell you that I will eat a boiled egg for breakfast, but then I change my mind and eat a fried egg instead, have I obliged myself to eat a boiled egg and do I violate my obligation by eating a fried egg? His other remarks do not suggest that it is quite so easy to oblige myself. I oblige myself to you through a valid covenant of mutual trust, involving the future performance by both parties. Such a covenant requires some assurance that the other party will also keep the covenant (*L.* 15.3). We can acquire this assurance more easily by recognizing that once A has performed A's part of the covenant, it is reasonable for B to perform B's part (*L.* 15.5).[26] When both A and B have the appropriate assurance, each obliges himself by signifying his intention to lay aside his right.[27]

It is difficult, however, to understand this obligation as a case of laying aside my right, if we stick to Hobbes's initial account of a right as a physical liberty. For if I oblige myself by covenant to repay my debt to you, I do not abridge or 'lay aside' my physical freedom to refrain from paying my debt; on the contrary, if I did not keep that physical freedom, there would be no need for me to make a covenant. The freedom that I abridge or lay aside is my moral freedom. But my moral freedom to keep my money seems to consist simply in the fact that I am not obliged to give you the money. In that case, the account of obligation as laying aside moral freedom is not very illuminating; it simply says that when I oblige myself I make it no longer true that I am not obliged.

Moreover, if Hobbes's claims about liberties and rights must be taken to refer to moral rather than physical liberty, he has not vindicated his claims about the right of nature. For the mere fact that nothing stops me from trying to preserve myself does not show that I am morally free to do whatever I think will preserve me. If Hobbes argues for the right of nature from the mere fact of physical freedom, he is wrong to say that the obligation incurred in making a promise is the laying aside of a right. If his position is consistent, his claim about the right of nature should assert my moral freedom in the state of nature. But then he needs some defence of the claim; the mere fact of physical freedom is not a sufficient defence.[28]

[25] Raphael, 'Obligation', calls this 'artificial' obligation, and Barry, 'Warrender', thinks it is the main kind of obligation that Hobbes is talking about (except in passages where he speaks of natural obligation). *L.* 14.7 (just quoted) is used by both Barry and Raphael. According to Raphael 'A man is artificially obliged to keep his covenants by the mere fact of having made them, but this obligation has little or no force' (348). 'Force' comes from prudential natural obligation. Raphael compares this to the view that it is logically true that we ought to keep our promises, but only utilitarian reasons can be given to justify the practice of making and keeping promises (351). It is not clear, however, that Hobbes takes the making of a promise all by itself to constitute an obligation. This claim has to be restricted to cases where the promise is not 'invalid'. The obligation involved here is also prudential, provided that we think in the indirect prudential way that we must adopt in order to explain why the laws of nature are obligatory in foro externo in a commonwealth. Cf. Kavka, *HMPT* 338–49, on 'rule-egoism', and §501.

[26] This passage is used by Barry, 'Warrender' 50. See also Darwall, *BMIO* 72.

[27] On obligation v. ought-judgments see Kavka, *HMPT* 307, 309.

[28] This point tends to support Clarke's objection. See §§624–5.

486. Obligation as Motivation

In the case we have considered, obligation arises from a voluntary action of binding oneself by covenant. This is to be contrasted with the physical obligation that obliges us to stay where we are if we are bound hand and foot. Sometimes Hobbes suggests that a voluntary act is necessary for all non-physical obligation.[29] But how, we might ask, could this be true of the obligation arising from the laws of nature? And what does the obligation consist in? We have found that it is unhelpful to say simply that it is the renunciation of moral liberty, and then to say that moral liberty is simply the absence of obligation.

Hobbes throws some light on his view of obligation by connecting it with motivation. In non-physical obligation 'liberty is taken away . . . by hope or fear', rather than by physical restraint.[30] When we recognize that something promotes our self-preservation, we have (according to Hobbes's account of motivation) a predominant desire for it, and in that respect our recognition of the effects of the action takes away our liberty not to perform the action and 'binds' us to perform the action. We act freely in choosing the action, in the sense of 'free' that Hobbes applies to actions, because our desires cause our action; but since our desires necessitate our action, they take away (in one respect) our liberty not to act.

This explanation of obligation helps to explain how voluntary agreement may contribute to obligation. We might suppose that the agreement creates the obligation, so that I am obliged to keep my promise in virtue of having made the promise to you and your having accepted it. But this is not Hobbes's view. He believes that we are obliged only when our acts of agreement are made in circumstances that offer us sufficient benefits and assure us of mutual compliance. When these conditions hold, we have a predominant desire to keep the agreement; this predominant desire is the motive that is the obligation. The agreement does not create the obligation; words or other signs are means, but not the source, of obligation.[31] The words contribute to our being obliged only insofar as we have sufficient motives for doing what we say we will do.

In this sense the laws of nature also oblige us. We see that observance of them (in foro interno or externo, as appropriate to the situation)[32] promotes our interest. When we see this, we are moved by hope and anticipation of future good to ourselves; and since

[29] 'For in the act of our submission, consisteth both our obligation and our liberty; which must therefore be inferred by arguments taken from thence; there being no obligation on any man, which ariseth not from some action of his own; for all men equally, are by nature free.' (*L.* 21.10)

[30] 'Now if God have the Right of Sovereignty from his power, it is manifest, that the obligation of yielding him obedience lies on (incumbere) men by reason of their weakness; for that obligation which rises from contract . . . can have no place here, where the right of ruling (no covenant passing between) rises only from nature. But there are two species of natural obligation, one when liberty is taken away by corporal impediments, according to which we say that heaven and earth, and all creatures, do obey the common laws of their creation; the other, when it is taken away by hope or fear, according to which the weaker, despairing of his own power to resist, cannot but yield to the stronger. From this last kind of obligation, that is to say, from fear, or conscience of our own weakness (in respect of the divine power), it comes to pass, that we are obliged to obey God in his natural kingdom; reason dictating to all, acknowledging the divine power and providence, that there is no kicking against the pricks.' (*Civ.* 15.7)

[31] 'And the same [sc. words and actions in an agreement] are the bonds, by which men are bound, and obliged: bonds, that have their strength, not from their own nature, (for nothing is more easily broken than a mere word,) but from fear of some evil consequence upon the rupture.' (*L.* 14.7)

[32] In the state of nature the laws of nature bind only 'in foro interno': 'that is to say, to a desire they should take place: but in foro externo; that is, to the putting them into act, not always' (*L.* 15.36).

this motive always dominates every other motive, it compels us to act. This obligation removes our freedom to violate the laws of nature once we realize what they say.[33] They oblige us only if we recognize that they are counsels of self-preservation. If we do not know this about the laws of nature, their mere existence does not restrict our freedom.[34] Only ignorance of the content and implications of the laws of nature can explain their violation.

The laws of nature and the virtues connected with them are eternal; they oblige, and are laws, in the court of conscience (*Civ.* 3.29).[35] The fulfilment of the natural law is 'all we are obliged to by rational nature' (*Civ.* 3.30). This is why the sovereign is subject to the laws of nature, though not to the civil law (*L.* 24.7, 29.9). The laws of nature oblige him (*L.* 30.1; *Civ.* 13.16), just as they oblige all mankind (*L.* 30.4, 15).[36]

By making obligation include psychological necessitation, Hobbes fulfils his basic aim of reducing moral to psychological claims.[37] If we assume that we form a predominant desire for every action that appears to promote our self-preservation, we see why reason prescribes the means to self-preservation, and why we are obliged to follow the principles that tell us to follow these means. According to Hobbes's moral psychology, all predominant motives necessitate; hence we are obliged insofar as we have a predominant motive necessitating our action. In this sense the laws of nature oblige us.

How is this type of obligation related to the type that belongs to voluntary undertakings such as covenants? It is different since it does not require any specific act of agreement between two parties. It is not so clear, however, whether it violates the principle that all obligation arises from one's voluntary action. The laws of nature do not oblige any agents who do not seek to preserve themselves and to secure the way of their future desire; for they do not tell us to preserve ourselves, but only what we need to do if we want to preserve ourselves. Perhaps, then, the voluntary action that is presupposed is our self-preserving endeavour; this is not an act of agreement or consent that underlies the obligation (as in covenants), but it is still a voluntary action.

Apparently, then, Hobbes holds a unified conception of non-physical obligation as the removal of liberty through voluntary action that results in a predominant motive. Within this conception, he can explain why the laws of nature prescribe and create obligations, by being empirical propositions about means to self-preservation. If they were not propositions about self-preservation, we could not explain how reason could prescribe them, or how they could oblige everyone who understands what they say.

[33] On Hobbes's confusions about freedom, as (i) metaphysical, hence consistent with being psychologically compelled, and (ii) moral, giving permission to act otherwise, see Pufendorf, *JNG* i 6.10; Barry, 'Warrender' 62n.

[34] This is made clear by *Civ.* 3.26, where Hobbes argues that everyone is obliged by the natural law, because everyone can easily see that the provisions of the natural law promote self-preservation. Cf. *Civ.* 2.1n4: '. . . the whole breach of the laws of nature consists in the false reasoning, or rather folly of those men who see not those duties they are necessarily to perform towards others in order to their own conservation'.

[35] Conscience; cf. *Civ.* 12.2.

[36] This is the type of obligation that Oakeshott, 'Introd.' p. lix, calls 'rational obligation' in contrast to 'physical obligation'. Gauthier, *LL* 67, discusses Oakeshott, and concludes: 'Although there is only dubious justification in Hobbes's writings for erecting this concept of rational obligation, we have no major quarrel with Oakeshott, if he wishes to suppose that rational precepts are rationally obliging'. In Gauthier's favoured sense of 'obligation', the laws of nature do not oblige. Cf. Hampton, *HSCT* 242.

[37] On freedom see Barry, 'Warrender' 60, with further references.

487. Natural Law and Divine Commands

This discussion of the laws of nature shows that Hobbes agrees with some of Suarez's claims about intrinsic morality. The laws of nature are precepts of reason in their own right, apart from divine commands, and so we ought to observe them.[38] Hobbes takes a more naturalistic position than Suarez accepts, since he agrees with Vasquez's view that the laws of nature create obligations apart from divine commands; this view follows from Hobbes's motivational account of obligation together with his account of human motivation. Whereas Suarez confines obligations to laws issued by a legislator, and attributes only duties to intrinsic morality, Hobbes finds obligation without legislation. Hobbes's claim that the laws of nature oblige (*L.* 15.3, 36; *Civ.* 3.26, 27, 29) precedes his claims (in *Civ.* 4) about their divine origin and the obligation resulting from it. The obligation to keep the laws of nature does not require them to be laws commanded by God.[39]

But Hobbes also sometimes agrees with Suarez's account of a law, taking it to require the command of a legislator. When he maintains 'true reason is a certain law' and the laws of nature are dictates of reason,[40] he speaks of law in the broader sense allowed by Hooker and Vasquez. But sometimes he claims the laws of nature are laws only because they involve a divine command.[41] Without a divine command, the laws of nature would

[38] 'A law of nature, (*lex naturalis*,) is a precept, or general rule, found out by reason, by which a man is forbidden to do, that, which is destructive of his life, or taketh away the means of preserving the same.' (*L.* 14.3) 'Therefore true reason is a certain law, which (since it is no less a part of human nature, than any other faculty, or affection of the mind) is also termed natural. Therefore the law of nature, that I may define it, is the dictate of right reason, conversant about those things which are either to be done or omitted for the constant preservation of life and members, as much as in us lies.' (*Civ.* 2.1)

[39] See Nagel, 'Obligation'; Plamenatz, 'Warrender' (answered by Warrender, 'Reply').

[40] *Civ.* 2.1, quoted in §486.

[41] The evidence in *L.* is not clear: 'These dictates of reason (dictamina rationis), men use to call by the name of laws; but improperly: for they are but conclusions, or theorems concerning what conduceth to the conservation and defence, of themselves; whereas law, properly is the word of him, that by right hath command over others. But yet if we consider the same theorems, as delivered in the word of God, that by right commandeth all things; then are they properly called laws.' (*L.* 15.41) Nothing corresponds to the last sentence, however, in LV. Nor does Hobbes say anything similar in 26.8, where it is the commonwealth that makes the laws of nature genuine laws. A similar question arises about a later remark: 'The office of the sovereign, be it a monarch or an assembly, consisteth in the end for which he was trusted with the sovereign power, namely the procuration of the safety of the people, to which he is obliged by the law of nature, and to render an account thereof to God, the Author of that law, and to none but Him' (*L.* 30.1). Here again the crucial phrase ('the author of that law') is absent from LV. Indeed, the sense of the Latin is much clearer than that of the English. The Latin reads: Summi imperatoris officia . . . manifeste indicat institutionis finis, nimirum salus populi: quam lege naturae obligatur, quantum potest, procurare: et cuius rationem Deo, et illi soli, tenetur reddere. This might be translated: 'The duties of the supreme commander . . . are indicated by the end of his institution, namely, the safety of the people, which he is obliged by the law of nature to procure as far as he can, and of which he is required to render an account to God and to him alone'. This makes it clear that the safety of the people is not the sovereign's office, but the end for which he was instituted, and that the sovereign is not obliged, but required (teneri) to render an account to God.

On the laws of nature as commanded by God see *EL* 17.12: 'And forasmuch as law, to speak properly, is a command, and these dictates, as they proceed from nature, are not commands, they are not therefore called laws, in respect of nature, but in respect of the author of nature, God Almighty'. Cf. *Civ.* 3.33. *Civ.* conceives divine legislation as positive, given through the Decalogue. This may also be what Hobbes has in mind in *L.*, in speaking of 'theorems, as delivered in the word of God'. But in *Civ.* 15.8 he agrees with Suarez in taking God to have commanded observance of the natural law through our natural reason: 'Because the word of God ruling by nature only, is supposed to be nothing else but right reason, and the Laws of Kings can be known by their word only, its manifest that the Laws of God ruling by nature alone, are only the natural laws; namely those which we have set down in the second and third chapters, and deduced from the dictates of reason, humility, equity, justice, mercy, and other moral virtues befriending peace . . .'

be advice about self-preservation, but they would not carry the obligation that belongs to a law.[42]

What does Hobbes take to be added by a divine command? Suarez believes that a command is needed to create genuine law, and to create obligation, since obligation requires the imposition of necessity through a command. Hobbes agrees with him on the first point, since he claims that the laws of nature are not properly laws unless they are commands. But he does not seem to agree that commands are necessary for obligation. God's commands take away freedom through hope of rewards and fear of punishments; this hope and fear is the source of the obligation. Once we recognize that there is a God and that he is the creator, and that he rewards and punishes for obedience and disobedience to the natural law, we are obliged to obey the natural law.[43] God's commands are relevant because God supports them with sanctions. The command itself does not create the obligation, but the obligation consists in the motives that are excited by the sanctions.[44]

[42] Taylor, 'Hobbes' 40, notices that Hobbes speaks of laws of nature as dictamina. See, e.g., *L.* 15.41 (quoted in §487); *Civ.* 2.1 ('Therefore the law of nature, that I may define it, is the dictate of right reason, conversant about those things which are either to be done, or omitted for the constant preservation of life, and members, as much as in us lies.'). *L.* 14.3 calls a law of nature a 'precept or general rule' ('praeceptum sive regula'). As we have seen (§478), this does not mean that laws of nature are categorical requirements. As the passage in *Civ.* makes clear, they are dictates only for something that we are all presumed to want. From the fact that they are called dictamina, Taylor infers that they are not simply consilia. But this inference conflicts with *Civ.* 14.1, where Hobbes distinguishes counsel from command: 'Now counsel is a precept in which the reason of my obeying it, is taken from the thing itself which is advised; but command is a precept in which the cause of my obedience depends on the will of the commander'. The laws of nature, abstracting from divine commands, are the first sort of praeceptum, and hence are consilia. This aspect of Hobbes, and the critics who have emphasized it, are discussed by Boonin-Vail, *THSMV* 92–106.

[43] Hobbes ascribes obligatory force to divine power: 'The right of nature whereby God reigneth over men, and punisheth those that break his laws, is to be derived, not from his creating them, as if he required obedience as of gratitude for his benefits, but from his irresistible power . . . To those . . . whose power is irresistible, the dominion of all men adhereth naturally by their excellence of power; and consequently it is from that power that the kingdom over men, and the right of afflicting men at his pleasure, belongeth naturally to God Almighty; not as Creator and gracious, but as omnipotent.' (*L.* 31.5) '. . . the divine laws, or dictates of natural reason . . . the same laws of nature, of which I have spoken already . . . ; namely, equity, justice, mercy, humility, and the rest of the moral virtues.' (31.7). Though Hobbes does not use the phrase 'natural obligation' in this chapter, his view seems to be the same as in *Civ.* 15.7, where the phrase occurs. On natural law and the natural kingdom of God see *Civ.* 15.4–5 (not only Christians and Jews recognize the laws of nature as laws).

[44] Bramhall objects to this remark on our obligation to obey God: '. . . it is an absurd and dishonourable assertion, to make our obedience to God to depend upon our weakness, because we cannot help it, and not upon our gratitude, because we owe our being and preservation to him' (Hobbes, *EW* iv 291). Hobbes replies (295) that Bramhall has misinterpreted him. He agrees that he says in *L.* 'that the right of nature whereby God reigneth over men is to be derived not from his creating them, as if he required obedience, as of gratitude; but from his irresistible power'. But he denies that this is dishonourable to God, since all power is honourable and the greatest power is most honourable. Bramhall's view suggests that God needs gratitude. Hobbes claims that Bramhall misinterprets the passage in *De Cive*: '. . . and [he] says I make our obedience to God depend upon our weakness; as if these words signified the dependence, and not the necessity of our submission, or that *incumbere* and *dependere* were all one' (*EW* iv 295). Hobbes's objection to Bramhall's use of 'depend' is not clear. We might suppose that he appeals to his own use of 'incumbere' to indicate that God's power creates an obligation directly, and not through our fear of him; but this cannot be his point, since he goes on at once in *De Cive* to say that fear is the source of obligation. We might look for some clarification to Hobbes's footnote on his claim about obligation: 'If this shall seem hard to any man, I desire him with a silent thought to consider, if there were two Omnipotents, whether were bound to obey; I believe he will confess that neither is bound: if this be true, then it is also true what I have set down, that men are subject unto God because they are not omnipotent' (*Civ.* 15.7n). (Silverthorne translates 'ideo . . . quia' ('precisely because') as 'primarily because' without any warrant.) The supposition of two omnipotents raises some difficulties. If each has the power to do everything, one might suppose that it has the power to do what it wants to despite what anyone else wants. But this cannot be true of either of them, if the other is also omnipotent. So perhaps we must infer that the will of two omnipotent beings must always agree, and that each is omnipotent insofar as it can do what it wants to despite what any non-omnipotent being wants. This point, however,

Since God's commands create an obligation only through providing us with a motive, the motive, rather than its source in a command, is the obligation.[45] Since obligation is imposition of necessity, and since the relevant type of necessity is psychological necessity, we are obliged wherever we have compelling motives, whether or not they result from commands. This is why the laws of nature oblige us, whether or not they are genuine laws. Whether or not God exists or commands them, they are counsels of self-preservation, but they are laws insofar as they are commanded by God (*L.* 15.41).[46]

Our obligation consists in our overriding desire to obey natural laws as means to self-preservation, both because of their intrinsic character (apart from divine commands) and because we fear punishment, since God, even more than the sovereign (*L.* 26.8, 22), can enforce his will by force. A commander is necessary to turn the laws of nature into genuine laws, and their status as genuine laws provides us with a further source of obligation. It does not, however, provide us with a different kind of obligation; in both cases our obligation consists in the prospective benefits of following the laws of nature and the consequent desire to follow them.

Though divine commands do not create a new type of obligation, they are not superfluous. Since we may not always recognize that the laws of nature promote our self-preservation, we may be tempted to violate them. But if we recall that they are also divine commands, we face a further sanction apart from their natural effects, and therefore we have a further motive to obey them.[47]

We might doubt whether this is a realistic appeal to a second source of prudential motivation. For if we believe God commands observance of the natural law because it is a means to our self-preservation, would not any doubts about whether a type of action promotes self-preservation result in doubts about whether God commands it? In that case, both sources of prudential motivation would disappear at once.

Hobbes might answer this objection by denying that God commands observance of the natural law because it promotes our self-preservation. If we thought that this is God's reason, we would be assuming that God is the source of natural law as the creator who aims at the benefit of the creatures, and that we have a reason to obey God as a benevolent creator. Hobbes denies that this is God's relation to the natural law. In his view, we have a reason to obey God simply because of God's power. God is not bound to command one thing rather

does not seem to bear on Hobbes's argument. Perhaps he introduces the two omnipotent beings to suggest that neither would have any motive to obey the other; since we are not omnipotent, and God is, we have a motive to obey God. But this point does not challenge the accuracy of Bramhall's presentation of Hobbes. Bramhall seems to be justified, therefore, in claiming that Hobbes derives obligation from weakness and fear.

[45] Hobbes's claims about obligation have aroused some dispute. Gauthier thinks Hobbes faces a difficulty if the laws of nature oblige irrespective of divine commands. He assumes that 'if obligatory, they must be genuine laws' (*LL* 67). But Hobbes's remarks about obligation do not support this assumption. See Plamenatz, 'Warrender'.

[46] Bramhall accuses Hobbes of contradicting himself about whether the laws of nature are genuine laws. See *CL*, ch. 3, 577–8. He argues that an appeal to divine commands conveyed through the Scriptures will not make Hobbes's position consistent: 'But this will not salve the contradiction, for the laws of nature shall be no laws to any but those who have read the scripture, contrary to the sense of all the world' (578).

[47] Warrender, 'Reply' 95, acknowledges that, contrary to Taylor's view that Hobbes's position is strictly deontological, we can interpret the obligation created by divine commands as prudential. Hence Warrender's defence of Taylor's interpretation seems to amount to the claim that divine commands are the only source of obligation. This claim, however, conflicts with Hobbes's clear remarks. One need not infer that God is irrelevant as a source of obligation (Nagel and Plamenatz sometimes seem to come close to this).

than another, but simply exercises power in commanding what God wills. In that case, we have no reason to infer that God commands an action only if that action seems to us to promote self-preservation; the character of the natural law shows nothing about necessary features of God's will.

In this respect, then, Hobbes is a voluntarist about the divine will and the content of morality. He implies that it is logically possible for God to command us to violate the counsels of self-preservation that we have overriding reason to pursue (apart from any beliefs about divine commands). On this point, he agrees with Ockham's views about divine power and morality.

Our obligation to follow the laws of nature, both as counsels of prudence and as divine commands, differs in its origins from the obligation arising from contract. I do not acquire a natural obligation by any voluntary act of agreement to the obligation. But the character of the obligation itself is not different. Whether or not I enter into the obligation by an act of agreement, the obligation consists in the overriding prudential motive to do what I am obliged to do. Hobbes has a unified account of non-physical obligation, and the laws of nature fit into it, both as counsels of self-preservation and as divine commands.

While Hobbes agrees with Suarez in taking obligation to impose necessity, he differs from Suarez about the nature of the necessity. Suarez believes the necessity is moral necessity, leaving us with no reasonable alternative to compliance.[48] This is a normative necessity, to be explained by reference to reasons and oughts, not further reduced. Hobbes does not allow any irreducible normative necessity; the necessity imposed by obligation is psychological. In Suarez's view, God's communicating a command to me is sufficient to oblige me to obey it, whether or not I want to obey it. According to Hobbes, however, it is not sufficient; my motivation is also necessary.

This disagreement with Suarez is closely connected with Hobbes's rejection of Suarez's view of the 'foundation' of natural law. Suarez identifies this with moral principles recognized by natural reason, and consisting in the requirements of the honestum. Hobbes does not recognize the honestum as an aspect of morality distinct from the pleasant and the useful; hence he takes the natural foundation of natural law to consist wholly in counsels of self-preservation.[49] This disagreement with Suarez also reflects Hobbes's aim of reducing facts about reasons to facts about motives. Natural law is prescribed by correct reason only insofar as we have an overriding motive to obey it; and we have such a motive only towards counsels of self-preservation.

Hobbes's views on natural law are criticized by Sharrock from a more traditional point of view.[50] Sharrock mentions the classical and patristic sources of the doctrine of natural law that recognizes natural rightness (honestas); he connects them all with St Paul on the Gentiles who are a law to themselves. He also points out that the 'more recent' theologians,

[48] Suarez's view would be much more similar to Hobbes's view if Finnis's interpretation of 'moraliter movere' and related phrases were correct. See §442. Bramhall uses 'moral motion' (*LN* 46, ed. Chappell) in the way Suarez uses it. Hobbes, *EW* v 293, professes to be unable to make sense of the expression: 'Moral motion is a mere word, without any imagination of the mind correspondent to it.'

[49] Cf. Pufendorf, discussed in §571.

[50] The full title of Sharrock's work explains its point: *Hupothesis ethike, de officiis secundum naturae ius, seu de moribus ad rationis normam conformandis doctrina. principia item et rationes Hobbesii Malmsburiensis ad ethicam et politicam spectantes, quatenus huic hypothesi contradicere videantur, in examen veniunt.*

both Roman and Protestant, agree with this position.[51] On this basis he argues, against Hobbes, that the laws of nature are properly called laws even without commands (*HE* 46). Here he seems to take Vasquez's position against Suarez. He argues that the laws of nature are laws, because obligation requires law, and the natural dictates of conscience oblige everyone; no command could oblige unless we were already obliged to obey the command. This objection is effective only if Sharrock assumes that all moral requirements and oughts imply obligation, and so fails to draw Suarez's distinction between obligation and ought (debitum). On this assumption he argues against Hobbes's view that self-interest (*philautia*) is the only basis for obligation; in Sharrock's view, we are not required to pursue our self-interest, and hence self-interest cannot yield the sort of necessity that belongs to morality and obligation.[52]

Though Sharrock does not explore the different options that are open to someone who claims that obligation requires commands, and in particular fails to consider Suarez's position, he presents a reasonable alternative to Hobbes's view about the extent of obligation. We will need to consider whether Hobbes can consistently or reasonably maintain a purely psychological conception of obligation in his discussion of the obligatory character of practical reason.

488. Why Moral Principles are Laws of Nature

We can now return to Hobbes's claim that moral philosophy is simply the science of the laws of nature, and ask whether this claim is as distinctive as he suggests it is. He believes that the principles of morality are fundamentally laws of nature, if 'law of nature' is understood as he understands it, as a counsel of self-preservation. Given this understanding, he claims that the principles of morality are counsels of self-preservation.

In Hobbes's view, this account of morality captures the ways in which morality contains precepts that generate obligation. If a genuine virtue includes an obligation to perform some range of virtuous actions, it must conform to the conditions that generate obligations. We cannot specify the virtues simply by considering human nature and the human good. We must also add the fact that we need peace, and have an opportunity to secure it, so that we have good reason to follow the principles that secure it for us.

Hence we have no reason to act on the laws of nature until we can expect the appropriate sorts of effects. Hobbes suggests that if we simply consider the moral virtues by themselves, they tell us nothing more than what we need to do if we are to observe the laws of nature. They do not tell us that we have any reason to observe the laws of nature; and indeed, in Hobbes's view, we have no good reason to observe the laws of nature except insofar as they actually advance our desire for self-preservation.[53] Hence our reason to practise the

[51] 'Idem etiam sine ulla refragatione omnes ex omni secta iuniores affirmant theologi' (*HE* 44). He cites, among others, Suarez, *Leg* i 3.9, 9; Aquinas, *ST* 1–2 91 a2, 93 a4; *in Rm* 2.14; Calvin; and Melanchthon.

[52] 'Nemo enim necessario obligatur ad utilitatem suam, quia iuste possit ab ea recedere et iuri suo commodisque quibuscumque ad placitum et pro arbitrio renuntiare.' (52)

[53] When the observance of them does not directly promote our self-preservation, it may still promote our self-preservation indirectly, if the observance of the laws of nature is commanded by God. When Hobbes says that God 'by

moral virtues is extrinsic to them. We cannot find a reason if we simply consider human nature as shaped by the virtues; we must also consider it in the specific circumstances where we find a predominant desire to practise the virtues.

We might suppose that this difference between Hobbes and Aquinas does not make any practical difference; do they not defend the same virtues by different routes? One important practical difference is that they do not necessarily defend the practice of the same virtues in the same conditions. Hobbes sees that the traditional virtues do not always promote self-preservation. He does not conclude that he is wrong to defend them by appeal to self-preservation, or that the laws of nature are not counsels of self-preservation; instead he concludes that we have no reason to practise the traditional virtues when they do not promote self-preservation.

The aim of demonstrating that the laws of nature are counsels of self-preservation may appear misguided. For Hobbes's conception of the content of these laws is mostly quite traditional; he recognizes that they are different ways of treating other people fairly and with respect. The laws of nature prohibit arrogance and prescribe truthfulness, the keeping of promises, living in harmony with one's neighbours, and so on. Many of these principles require individuals to perform actions that are disadvantageous to them and to refrain from actions that would benefit them.

Hobbes deals with this feature of morality by connecting it with self-preservation in two stages: (1) The observance of moral principles tends to preserve a commonwealth, a stable society offering protection from aggression by others. (2) It is always better for me if the commonwealth is preserved than if it is dissolved or weakened. The connexion with self-preservation does not belong to moral principles directly, but to the commonwealth that they preserve. Hence we need not be surprised that moral principles say nothing directly about self-preservation; we see the connexion with self-preservation only when we consider the cumulative effects of all moral principles. We must see how the observance of moral principles preserves the commonwealth if we are to see how it preserves ourselves.

The two stages in Hobbes's argument suggest that in one respect it is misleading to maintain that the moral virtues are essentially concerned with self-preservation. If we are looking for a goal that will allow us to understand the character of the moral virtues, we ought to turn not to self-preservation, but to the preservation of the commonwealth. A virtue prescribes actions and traits of character insofar as they promote this end, and that is the end that unifies the efforts of the virtuous person. To see whether we have cultivated the virtues in a society we need to see whether we have promoted the traits that tend to preserve the commonwealth. For this purpose, reference to individual self-preservation is beside the point.

Self-preservation enters when we raise a different question: why are these traits that preserve the commonwealth prescribed by correct reason? According to Hobbes's psychological reduction of reason, what is prescribed by correct reason is what produces an overriding motive, and hence creates an obligation; only counsels of prudence do that. If we were not interested in knowing the connexion between morality and correct reason, we could ignore

right' commands the observance of the laws of nature, we must take him to mean that God has a right to command this observance; and if we apply Hobbes's account of a right to this claim about God's right, we must take Hobbes to mean that God is free, since nothing prevents him, to command obedience and to enforce compliance with his command.

the reference to self-preservation. But if we were not interested in this question, we would overlook an essential feature of morality; for genuine morality is recommended by correct reason, and so Hobbes has to show that it meets his conditions for correct reason.

489. The Reduction of Morality

In connecting the laws of nature, as he understands them, with morality, Hobbes seeks to reduce morality to counsels of self-preservation. We can ask two questions about Hobbes's account of morality: (1) Does it provide an explanatory reduction? Hobbes seeks to show what all the recognized moral virtues have in common. By doing this he believes he can explain what other theorists dimly recognized, even though they claimed to construct the list of virtues on some other basis. (2) Does it provide a vindicating reduction? if the moral virtues specify the means of peace and security, have we sufficient reason to follow them?

Hobbes's explanatory account of the moral virtues is worth discussing and criticizing in its own right, apart from his psychological and political views. According to his analysis of the moral virtues, moral considerations are characteristically about the public good, narrowly conceived as the preservation of the commonwealth. Hobbes's egoism and his restrictive conception of reasons do not affect this account of morality. He recognizes—at least implicitly—objective moral properties.[54] He may be right about what these properties are even if he is wrong about the mental states of moral agents.

Still, the questions about explanation and about justification are not completely separable, either in Hobbes's view or in fact. Hobbes would find it unwelcome if he had to conclude that the foundations of morality are quite unconnected with his psychological theory. If Hobbesian agents had no reason to care about morality, Hobbes's theory would separate morality from the principles that might rationally guide our actions. If a theorist reaches this conclusion, we have some reason to suppose that he is wrong about either morality or rationality or both.

The traditional account of the virtues assumes that the virtues are conditions that a rational agent has good reason to acquire. If we had no reason to cultivate the conditions that Hobbes calls moral virtues, that would be a reason for rejecting his account of the virtues. Since he wants to avoid this objection, Hobbes does not separate moral from rational considerations; and so he argues that Hobbesian agents have reason to take moral considerations seriously on some occasions.

Hobbes, therefore, seeks an explanatory and vindicating, not an undermining, reduction. When we see what moral principles really are, we ought to see thereby that we have good reason to follow them in the appropriate circumstances. Hobbes's account of human nature shows why Hobbesian agents have reason to follow counsels of self-preservation. If moral principles simply are these counsels, Hobbesian agents have reason to follow moral principles.

[54] Cf. Hampton, *HSCT* 42–51, on 'objectivism'. Recognition of some form of objectivism does not make Hobbes's position deontological. We have seen that he does not give a deontological ground for our obligation to obey divine commands. Nor does he assess moral rules deontologically. He assesses them with reference to the public interest, and this assessment depends on a rule-utilitarian explanation.

Most moral agents and moral theorists do not believe Hobbes's claim about the character of morality and moral philosophy. Many people suppose that moral obligations extend beyond the circumstances in which their fulfilment promotes peace. We might suppose, for instance, that in some circumstances it is better to rebel than to conform to a government, despite the danger to peace and self-preservation. In Hobbes's view, such beliefs about morality rest on failure to examine the rational grounds of moral obligation. If morality is rationally justifiable to rational agents, and if Hobbes's analysis of human nature is right, he is right about the character and basis of morality.

Hobbes believes that his account of human nature and its pursuit of peace both unifies and justifies the different moral virtues.[55] Hence his theory of human nature influences his account of morality. We could accept his views about which states are virtuous without accepting his claims about the connexion between the virtues, the preservation of peace, the laws of nature, and self-preservation. But if we did not accept these other Hobbesian claims, we would not, according to Hobbes, have explained why the virtues are important for rational agents. Hobbes believes we can see why his defence of the moral virtues is the only plausible defence, once we have accepted his views about the nature of human action and practical reason.

To see whether Hobbes's reduction of morality succeeds, we can raise two questions: (1) Have Hobbesian agents good reasons to follow Hobbes's rules? (2) How far do Hobbes's rules capture morality? The same questions arise for Plato and Aristotle.[56] But Hobbes rejects the solution that they prefer; for he does not adjust his conception of human nature to take account of apparently plausible views about the value of morality. He takes his theory of human nature to be fixed independently of beliefs about morality. This assumption makes the character of his argument, and the criteria for success, clearer than they are in Plato and Aristotle.

This difference between Hobbes and Plato and Aristotle reflects a difference in moral epistemology that we have seen in Hobbes's statement of his method for reaching consensus in moral philosophy and moral thinking generally. He claims that if we follow a 'geometrical method', we begin with simple and indisputable principles and advance from them by uncontroversial steps. Since morality is an area of dispute, we should begin with non-moral foundations, fixing the nature of human action and deriving an account of morality. His procedure is open to question, however, if the non-moral foundations themselves are not simple and indisputable; if they are open to reasonable dispute, they do not offer a decisive reason for accepting the moral consequences that Hobbes draws from them.

A fair estimate of Hobbes's success in his moral theory will take account of the restricted place that he allows for justification. While it is helpful and appropriate to say that he tries to 'vindicate' and to 'justify' morality, and to show that we have 'reason' to follow it, it is also misleading; Hobbes has no room for these normative claims, except insofar as they can be reduced to claims about motivation. A justification of morality and a demonstration that we have reason to follow morality is simply a true prediction that in the specified circumstances we will have an overriding motive to follow it.

[55] This also explains their universality. See *Civ.* 3.32.

[56] See §60 (Plato); §114 (Aristotle).

But can we perhaps ignore this reduction of the normative to the psychological, if we are considering Hobbes's defence of morality as counsels of self-preservation? Might this defence not succeed even if the reduction of the normative to the psychological fails? If it were to succeed, one of Hobbes's attempts at a vindicating reduction would be more plausible than the other.

It is not quite so easy, however, to separate Hobbes's different reductions. For his view that morality consists simply in counsels of self-preservation rests partly on his conception of human nature. He rejects the Aristotelian view that natural law is about what is appropriate for rational nature, because he denies that human nature is the rational system that Aristotle and Aquinas take it to be. He denies that it is a rational system because he does not recognize essentially rational desires, or decisive reasons that are not reducible to overriding motives. He connects morality with self-preservation because he takes the desire for self-preservation to be our overriding motive; hence, his argument for reducing morality to self-preservation depends on his reduction of the normative to the psychological. If we reject the latter reduction, we have good reason to question his defence of morality.

490. The State of Nature

Hobbes's reduction of the moral virtues vindicates them within limits. For his account of human nature implies that the human good and the moral virtues are not connected in all possible circumstances, or even in all circumstances that need to be considered in practical reflexion. Hobbes allows us to consider only the demands of self-preservation, and it seems obvious that, as Thrasymachus, Glaucon, and Adeimantus point out to Socrates, we often promote our self-preservation more effectively by acting against the virtues.

Hobbes deals with this objection in three stages: (1) It is sometimes correct. The state of nature sums up the circumstances in which we have no reason to practise the moral virtues. (2) However, we are worse off in these circumstances than if we are members of a commonwealth. Hence we ought to become members of a commonwealth and to follow the rules for the construction and the preservation of a commonwealth. The relevant rules are counsels for the preservation of peace, which are embodied in the moral virtues. (3) If we are members of a commonwealth, our self-preservation requires us to do whatever preserves peace, and hence requires us to practise the moral virtues.

Glaucon and Adeimantus agree with Hobbes about the first and second stages. They agree that we have no reason to be just outside a commonwealth, and that the existence of a commonwealth requires general observance of justice. They argue, however, that for a reasonably astute individual in an ordinary commonwealth, injustice remains advantageous. Epicurus tries to answer this defence of injustice by arguing that injustice brings fear of punishment and that this fear makes injustice inexpedient for us. His reply is unconvincing. Hobbes's account of the third stage is meant to give a better reply to critics of morality.

Hobbes does not argue that the moral virtues are good for each human being who is rationally concerned with his own good, irrespective of circumstances. He tries to describe the conditions in which the moral virtues are good for us. He does this by contrasting the situation in which the moral virtues do not benefit us with the one in which they do benefit

us, and by arguing that we are better off in the second situation than in the first. The first situation is the state of nature; the second is life under a commonwealth.

Hobbes is not the first philosopher to appeal to a state of nature as a starting-point for understanding the basis of moral principles and political obligation. The 16th-century Scholastics and 17th-century natural law theorists also rely on a state of nature.[57] But agreement in appealing to a state of nature does not imply agreement on the sort of theory that emerges; for different theorists describe the state of nature differently.

According to Aquinas' account of human nature and the law of nature, an appeal to the state of nature helps to explain the moral constraints on the formation of a state. For characteristics of human nature explain why it is reasonable to form a state; and the provisions of the law of nature determine the sorts of powers that people can legitimately assign to the state.[58] Hobbes, by contrast, appeals to the state of nature to show why no moral constraints can reasonably be imposed on the state. He rejects Scholastic conclusions because he relies on a different account of human nature and of the place of moral considerations in the state of nature. For his purposes, he needs to show that the state of nature is a state of conflict or potential conflict.

The state of nature, according to Hobbes, is a state of war.[59] This conclusion relies on his account of human passions and of their effect in the circumstances where no power coerces each individual alike. Given what we know about human nature, we can predict that in the absence of equal coercion each person will try to get what he wants by attacking others. People will not generally observe the principles embodied in the moral virtues. Moreover, given Hobbes's account of the human good, people are right to believe they are better off by not observing the virtues.

Why is the state of nature a condition of perpetual conflict? Hobbes's most general argument rests on one aspect of his views about the subjectivity of goodness.[60] Since I use 'good' for what pleases me (oysters), and you use 'good' for what pleases you (cheese), we differ in our judgments about what things are good. Hence our judgments about goodness display 'discord and strife'. Hobbes argues that this discord in judgments explains the discord that marks the state of nature.

This argument is open to objection; for variation in judgments about goods need not lead to the sort of discord that makes peace seem good. If you find x pleasant and I do not, we are not really disagreeing about any property of x; my report of my reaction to x does not conflict with your report of your reaction to x. The mere fact that we have different reactions does not produce the sort of disagreement that results in strife and war. Again, if I judge x good (because it pleases me) and you judge y good (because it pleases you), this discord in our judgments seems to protect us from any practical conflict or competition. Indeed, agreement in judgments about goodness seems far more likely to produce practical conflict. If you and I both agree that it is good for an ordinary person to possess the 100-euro note on the ground in front of us, our agreement is more likely to produce strife and discord.

[57] Scholastic views on the state of nature are described by Skinner, *FMPT* ii 154–66.

[58] On the state of nature see §§449–50 (Suarez).

[59] 'Hereby is it manifest, that during the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called war; and such a war as is of every man against every man.' (*L.* 13.8)

[60] On goodness see §477.

When Hobbes suggests that the subjectivity of goodness results in discord, he seems to confuse variation of taste, disagreement in judgment, and conflict in action. Perhaps he fails to distinguish (1) the 'discord' that consists in failure to agree in objective judgments about which things are good, from (2) the discord that consists in conflicting plans and actions. The first sort of discord is not the source of the most serious conflicts in the state of nature.

491. Competition and Conflict

Hobbes needs a better argument to show that practical conflict is inevitable in the state of nature. He does not show that his description of the state of nature applies to all of us outside a commonwealth. We all desire to assure the way of our future desire; but this desire does not involve conflict with other people, unless their desires threaten our assurance of being able to satisfy ours. If none of us wants unshareable goods that others want, we have no motive, according to Hobbes's account, for competing with other people, and so we are not forced into conflict and instability.

Hobbes's argument, therefore, turns on the prevalence of competition. Competition enters only because we desire 'unshareable' goods—objects that other people also desire and that we cannot share without some of us getting less than we want—and because there are too few of them for each of us to have all we want. These are what Plato and Aristotle call 'contested (*perimachêta*) goods'. The contest over them causes aggression, or at least the constant danger of aggression.

Why can we not all be satisfied with some quota of unshareable goods? Hobbes might have two explanations in mind: (1) Though our desires for them are limited, the supply is even more limited. If I want a loaf of bread to keep me alive, and you want the same for yourself, but there is only one loaf of bread, we will compete for it. But we will no longer compete if two loaves are available. (2) We have essentially competitive desires, so that each of us desires more than the other has, however much the other has; hence, however much you get, I still want more.[61]

Which of these views does Hobbes maintain? Sometimes he seems to believe that some universal human desires are essentially competitive and that these desires are strong enough to produce competitive behaviour even when it threatens our security. If we desire not only to secure the way of our future desire, but also to secure our future superiority over others, the state of nature implies conflict, however abundant the unshareable resources may be. Clarke rightly suggests that, according to Hobbes, the desire for power over other people is 'one of the first and most natural principles of human life'.[62] Glory seems to rest on a desire for eminence in comparison.[63] In general, the analysis of passions and desires

[61] Cf. Rousseau on inflamed amour propre (§884). [62] Clarke, *DNR* = H ii 635 = R 258. Cf. Hobbes, *L.* 11.2, 17.1.

[63] 'First, that men are continually in competition for honour and dignity; which these creatures are not; and consequently among men there ariseth on that ground, envy and hatred, and finally war . . . Secondly, that amongst these creatures the common good differeth not from the private; and being by nature inclined to their private, they procure thereby the common benefit. But man, whose joy consisteth in comparing himself with other men, can relish nothing but what is eminent.' (*L.* 17.7–8) Cf. *EL* 9.1. On competitive desires see McNeilly, 'Egoism' (who underestimates their importance in *L.*). Cf. §675.

gives a prominent place to competition.[64] It might suggest that the passions are essentially competitive, involving a desire to do better than other people, whether or not I gain any further benefit.

This view conflicts with psychological hedonism; for if we essentially take pleasure in power, we desire power for its own sake, and so pleasure is not the only thing we desire for its own sake.[65] But the conflict may not be obvious to Hobbes; it is not a good reason for doubting that he believes in essentially competitive desires.

A better reason for doubt emerges from his discussion of the desire for power. Though he treats this desire as a general inclination, he treats it as a consequence of the desire for assurance of the way of one's future desire.[66] He suggests that power is valued only for the sake of assurance. We pursue greater and greater power as a means to assurance, but if we have this assurance, we may abandon the pursuit of power.[67] In contrast to naturally social animals, human beings can distinguish private from public good; foresight allows them to recognize future dangers to their well-being, and they seek superiority over others as a means of protection against these future dangers. Similarly, competitiveness and desire for glory result from the search for assurance.[68] Men 'naturally love liberty and dominion over others' (*L.* 17.1) because they want assurance; the same search for assurance brings them into the state, from 'foresight of their own preservation'. Competition does not rest on a desire for superiority for its own sake, but on a desire for assurance.[69]

But in what sense does Hobbes subordinate competitive desires to the desire for assurance? Does he believe that they originate in it, or that it controls them? Even if the desire for assurance makes us competitive, competitive desires may become independent of it, so that, even if we are assured about the future, we may persist in competition beyond the demands

[64] See *EL* 14.3. [65] On this argument against hedonism see §95 (Aristotle); §688 (Butler); §804 (Price).

[66] 'Felicity is a continual progress of the desire from one object to another, the attaining of the former being still but the way to the latter. The cause whereof is that the object of man's desire is not to enjoy once only, and for one instant of time, but to assure forever the way of his future desire. And therefore the voluntary actions and inclinations of all men tend not only to the procuring, but also to the assuring of a contented life, and differ only in the way, which ariseth partly from the diversity of passions in diverse men, and partly from the difference of the knowledge or opinion each one has of the causes which produce the effect desired. So that in the first place, I put for a general inclination of all mankind a perpetual and restless desire of power after power, that ceaseth only in death.' (*L.* 11.1–2) 'So that . . .' in the last sentence suggests the subordination of the desire for power to the desire for assurance.

[67] The passage quoted earlier in this section from *L.* 11.2 continues: 'And the cause of this is not always that a man hopes for a more intensive delight than he has already attained to, or that he cannot be content with a moderate power, but because he cannot assure the power and means to live well, which he hath present, without the acquisition of more. And from hence it is that kings, whose power is greatest, turn their endeavours to the assuring it at home by laws, or abroad by wars: and when that is done, there succeedeth a new desire; in some, of fame from new conquest; in others, of ease and sensual pleasure; in others, of admiration, or being flattered for excellence in some art or other ability of the mind.' (*L.* 11.2)

[68] 'Competition of riches, honour, command, or other power inclineth to contention, enmity, and war, because the way of one competitor to the attaining of his desire is to kill, subdue, supplant, or repel the other.' (*L.* 11.3) 'Moreover, considering that many men's appetites carry them to one and the same end; which end sometimes can neither be enjoyed in common, nor divided, it followeth, that the stronger must enjoy it alone, and that it be decided by battle who is the stronger. And thus the greatest part of men, upon no assurance of odds, do nevertheless, through vanity, or comparison, or appetite, provoke the rest, that otherwise would be contented with equality.' (*EL* 14.5)

[69] If this explanation is right, Rousseau is unjustified in attacking Hobbes for presupposing desires that are essentially 'social' and 'competitive'. See §883. Similarly, we have reason to doubt Oakeshott's claim that Hobbes treats pride and competition as basic motives: '. . . although men and animals are like in their self-centredness, the characteristic difference between them lies in the competitive nature of human appetite and passion: every man wishes to out-do all other men' (*RP* 253).

of assurance. But if the desire for assurance controls competition, passions have a stable hierarchy.

The choice between these two views about assurance and competition affects our view about practical reason and the desire for peace. Reason is uniquely concerned with finding the means to peace if and only if the desire for peace is always dominant; if other desires were sometimes dominant, reason would be equally concerned with finding means to satisfying these desires whenever they are dominant. Hobbes's assumptions about practical reason and peace may rely on a more basic assumption about assurance. The desire for assurance is not an inherently rational desire (since Hobbes recognizes no such desires), but (he may assume) it controls the strength of other desires.

If Hobbes does not take competitive desires to be essential to human nature, his state of nature does not include every logically possible condition of human beings outside a commonwealth; it includes only the circumstances in which there do not appear to be enough unshareable goods to go round. Hence Hume believes that justice is appropriate only in specific external circumstances that do not follow from human nature itself.[70] The competition that leads to a state of war results from human nature only in conditions of scarcity.

This may seem a relatively trivial objection to Hobbes, since it concerns what we say about human motives in the rather unlikely counterfactual situation in which there are enough unshareable goods to satisfy everyone's desires (not modified by consideration of other people's desires and needs). It may be important, however, for considering Hobbes's view about the difference between the state of nature and the commonwealth. If our desires are only contingently competitive, it may be more difficult for Hobbes to prove that the state of nature is so insecure that we need to create a commonwealth with unrestricted power to coerce. He may remove this difficulty if he is allowed to assume essentially competitive desires as part of human nature. But that assumption may make it more difficult to explain the stability of a commonwealth of Hobbesian agents. A commonwealth may remove some conflicts, by assuring each of us of protection for our unshareable resources; but it does not prevent conflicts that arise from essentially competitive desires.

492. Why a State of War?

To explain why the state of nature is a state of war, Hobbes might appeal to different sorts of beliefs and desires that suggest three different explanations:[71] (1) In the state of nature no agency compels mutual non-aggression, or compliance with promises, or observance of any of the other laws of nature. Since we lack the necessary assurance that others will behave peaceably to us, it is not in our interest to behave peaceably to them. Hence it is in our interest to violate the laws of nature that we would observe if we were in a commonwealth. (2) In the state of nature we can see that peace is good, and so we want to live at peace. But not everyone sees this all the time. Sometimes it appears that I would be better off

[70] See Hume, §770.

[71] Hampton, *HSCT*, chs. 2–3, discusses these different explanations. Pufendorf implicitly notices them in *JNG* ii 2.8–9.

if I cheated my neighbour this time; I do not attend to the remoter consequences of my actions, or I do not think carefully about their impact on my future desires. In these cases our passions distort our conception of our interest. (3) Even though I recognize that peace is good and that it is in my interest to observe the laws of nature, I sometimes care more about satisfying some particular passion—anger, spite, gratitude, for instance—and so I knowingly act against my perceived interest. In this case my passions do not distort my conception of my interest, but they cause me to act against it nonetheless, and so I violate the demands of peace.[72]

These different explanations for violation of the laws of nature in the state of nature are consistent; each may explain violations of natural law on different occasions in the state of nature. They may suggest different and mutually supporting arguments for establishing a commonwealth. But they may also confront Hobbes with difficult choices; for aspects of the state that remove one source of instability and war may encourage others, and therefore may both remove and create instability.

Hobbes believes that in the state of nature peace seems good to us. Within his moral psychology this claim is true to the extent that peace appears to us to fulfil our overriding desire. If the desire for the end to which peace is a means always dominates us, we always think peace good. But if this is true of us in the state of nature, why do we need to be compelled to keep the peace? Why do we not recognize that we all have an overriding desire for peace, so that we keep the peace? Hobbes argues that we lack assurance that others will keep the peace if they are not compelled to keep it, and therefore we need a coercive power over us. But why should I lack assurance, if I know that everyone else desires peace as strongly as I do?

To answer this question, we need to assume that we are prone to mistakes about the sorts of actions that undermine peace. If (contrary to Hobbes's assumptions) we found ourselves at peace, but without any coercive power over us, I would be strongly tempted to believe that I could gain some benefit for myself by aggression against you—cheating, stealing, or assaulting—without disturbing the peace; for I might predict that, even if you found me out, I could defend myself against retaliation from you, and that others might not find it in their interest to take the trouble to help you retaliate against me. Since I know that you think in just the same way about me, I lack the relevant sort of assurance about you. Since you know that I think in just the same way about you, you lack assurance about me. When we lack assurance, it is not in our interest to make and to keep agreements. Hence we lapse into a state of war.

Hobbes believes we are liable to these errors within a commonwealth. We tend to resent the disagreeable aspects of government and authority, because we do not take a wide enough view to see that these are needed to keep the peace.[73] Though we want peace above all, we have unrealistic views about the necessary means to peace. We need a coercive power over us to deter us from putting our unrealistic views into practice by evading our taxes or cheating our neighbours. In the state of nature, we are prone to equally unrealistic views;

[72] This seems to be Spinoza's view, given his views on reason and self-preservation. See §515; Curley, *BGM* 124.

[73] 'For all men are by nature provided of notable multiplying glasses (that is their passions and self-love) through which every little payment appeareth a great grievance, but are destitute of those prospective glasses (namely moral and civil science) to see afar off the miseries that hang over them and cannot without such payments be avoided.' (*L* 18.20)

but since we have no coercive power over us, nothing stops us from acting on them, and so we cannot get out of the state of war.

This account of the instability of the state of nature fits best into Hobbes's theory. It explains why we can be in a state of war despite our predominant and universal desire for peace; hence it justifies his claims that we think peace good and that practical reason uniquely prescribes the means to peace. It fits his reduction of reasons to motives and his analysis of goodness by appeal to desire.

But it does not fit all his moral psychology. Some of his views commit him to the second explanation of the state of war. For he does not always maintain that our strongest desire is for the long-term assurance that is secured by peace. He allows that we sometimes have stronger desires for short-term satisfactions; according to his account of judgments about goodness, we must judge these short-term satisfactions good when we desire them more strongly. He cannot consistently claim that we steadily judge peace good, even when we desire something else more strongly. Nor can he claim that reason always prescribes the pursuit of peace; for if some desire other than the desire for self-preservation dominates us, reason prescribes pursuit of the means to that dominant desire.

Still, even if Hobbes's moral psychology does not entirely fit his claims about goodness and about practical reason, it may not damage his argument for the commonwealth. He may reasonably rely on the second claim about the state of nature, appealing to varying judgments about goodness that result from the predominance of different passions at different times. On the occasions when we judge peace to be good, we can see the point of taking steps to protect ourselves against the occasions when we or others will judge some short-term gain to be better than peace. We can even use this variation in judgments about goodness to explain why in the state of nature we lack assurance about other people's intentions. Since they are liable, just as we are, to unstable judgments about good, we cannot be assured that we or they will retain a dominant preference for peace. Hence we have a reason to make it difficult for ourselves and others to undermine peace when we or they desire something else more strongly. We need a commonwealth, to make the benefits of peace so clear that we will not be easily persuaded to violate the laws of nature, and to coerce people who do not constantly see the benefits of peace.

The third explanation of the state of war is more difficult to reconcile with Hobbes's views about goodness, but he seems to be committed to it. For he claims that we can sometimes desire one option more strongly even if we believe that the other option is better. This is why he claims, against Bramhall, that incontinence is possible. This claim about incontinence is inconsistent with Hobbes's view that our judgments about goodness correspond to the strength of our desires.

Hobbes appears, therefore, to be committed to different explanations of the state of war that rest on conflicting elements in his moral psychology. It is not yet clear, however, whether the conflicts in his moral psychology make a difference to his argument from the state of nature to the commonwealth. For all three explanations of the state of war agree about how we can escape it. When we are in our far-sighted moods, we agree that peace is good and that we would like to bring it about. We see that to bring it about, we need to counteract the effect of the near-sighted deliberation that sometimes causes us to overlook the long-term benefits of peace, and the effect of near-sighted desires that cause us to choose

some immediate goal at the cost of a longer-term goal. The commonwealth counteracts the effect of the beliefs and desires that divert us from the pursuit of peace.

If we recognize these features of motivation in the state of nature, we may be tempted to infer that Hobbes offers two different sorts of arguments for the state. The first argument asserts that there are moral reasons for establishing the state and that the social contract gives it moral legitimacy. Hence the argument from the goodness of peace and the rationality of pursuing it might be taken to show that the state is morally required. The second argument simply identifies the motives that underlie the foundation of a state, implying that fear of other people is the psychological basis for obedience to law and governments. According to this argument, the social contract establishes only the psychological possibility of the state, saying nothing about whether the state is morally legitimate.[74]

It is plausible to claim that Hobbes offers both sorts of arguments; for he wants to explain both how the state is possible and what makes it morally legitimate. But it is also misleading to distinguish two sorts of argument; for in his view, they are not really distinct. He speaks of the laws of nature as precepts of reason, and says that reason helps us out of the state of nature; but he also believes that this role for reason depends on the appropriate sorts of passions. His account of morality and obligation implies that recognition of reasons demonstrating the goodness of something is simply a dominant motive to pursue it. Hence we recognize that peace is good just insofar as we have a dominant desire for it. With this in mind, we can consider the arguments that he offers to justify a commonwealth, and the motives that he appeals to.

493. Arguments for a Commonwealth

The laws of nature are counsels for securing and preserving peace. Given that we fear death, and seek 'commodious living', we agree that peace is good, and that it is in our interest to join in the formation of a commonwealth.[75] If we cannot secure an agreement that leads to peace, we are allowed to violate the laws of nature.[76] Our overriding desire for peace leads us to accept (in the right circumstances) the agreement to set up a sovereign and the associated covenant that requires all the contractors to give up their freedom to commit aggression on each other by using the 'helps and advantages' of war.

If we make and keep a covenant to live at peace with one another, we gain all the benefits of peace. But our simply making it does not ensure that we will keep it. For some of the different beliefs and desires that explain aggression in the state of nature also explain why some people may not keep a covenant to live at peace. And if the people who lack these misguided beliefs and desires know that other people are likely to break the covenant, they will also be less disposed to rely on it, because of their lack of assurance. If each of us

[74] Passmore, 'Moral', discusses these two tendencies in Hobbes. He finds rational, moral argument ('rationalism') mainly in *Civ.*, and purely psychological argument ('naturalism') in *L.*, but with elements of the rationalist position still present and creating a conflict with the naturalist elements.

[75] *L.* 13.14, quoted later in this section.

[76] '. . . every man, ought to endeavour peace, as far as he has hope of obtaining it; and when he cannot obtain it, . . . he may seek, and use, all helps, and advantages of war' (*L.* 14.4).

oscillates between a peaceful outlook and one of the outlooks that causes violations of a covenant, we will all agree, in our peaceful periods, that we need to be assured that other people will keep their covenants.

The making of an agreement, therefore, cannot by itself generate the sort of community that removes conflict.[77] As a Hobbesian agent, I have a good reason to agree to end the state of war, if other people will comply with the agreement. But I also have a good reason to gain as much as I can from my imperfect compliance with the agreement. For the very best outcome for me would be the one in which other people avoid aggression against me, but I am free to commit aggression on them when it suits me; hence I have a reason for violating the agreement when I can get away with it.

This argument for violating agreements is over-simplified, since we cannot completely separate reasons for making an agreement from reasons for keeping it. I benefit from an agreement insofar as other people keep it; but if my keeping it contributes to their keeping it, and my breaking it contributes to their breaking it, I have reason to keep it. Hence, since I value the survival of the commonwealth, I have a reason to comply to the extent that my compliance encourages other people to comply.

But how much compliance does this principle justify? Questions about the effects of my compliance or violation are not always easy to answer.[78] If very few people make the agreement, and if they will know not only that the agreement has been broken but also who broke it, reflexion on the ways in which my violation would undermine general compliance with the agreement might encourage my reliable compliance. But if the effects of violation are not so easily known, I seem to have a better reason to violate agreements. Moreover, everyone else has these reasons for compliance and for violation, and hence for wariness about other people's likely behaviour. In such conditions, it is difficult to form reliable estimates of consequences, even if we assume that we are all very good at estimating them. Moreover, if we assume, plausibly, that some people may be less good at this than others are, it becomes even more difficult to form a reliable estimate. Hence our collective situation is still unstable, because we have not removed all the sources of instability that are present in the state of nature.

Hobbes infers, therefore, that we must not only agree to live at peace, but also assure compliance with agreements. Hence we must agree on a coercive power to enforce the terms of peace. He defends this claim when he considers 'laying down our arms'.[79] In the

[77] 'Nevertheless, in contracts that consist of such mutual trust, as that nothing be by either party performed for the present, when the contract is between such as are not compellable, he that performeth first, considering the disposition of men to take advantage of every thing for their benefit, doth but betray himself thereby to the covetousness, or other passion of him with whom he contracteth. And therefore such covenants are of none effect. For there is no reason why the one should perform first, if the other be likely not to perform afterward. And whether he be likely or not, he that doubteth, shall be judge himself . . . as long as they remain in the estate and liberty of nature.' (*EL* 15.10)

[78] See Hampton, *HSCT*, ch. 2, esp. 78. She cites Cudworth, *TISU*, ch. 5, part 5 = iii 499–502. In ch. 3 Hampton accepts the 'short-sighted' account of instability in state of nature. But perhaps it becomes more rational to cheat and distrust in the state of nature, if the laws of nature rest on indirect egoist arguments (cf. Hampton 93). If I benefit from observing the laws of nature only insofar as I live under a system in which we all forgo direct egoistic deliberation, it seems rational for us to be direct egoists in the state of nature. Hence it is rational for us to distrust one another; hence it is rational to behave in ways that make the state of nature a state of war. That is why we can only wish we were in circumstances in which we could observe the laws of nature in foro externo; in the state of nature we have not made ourselves indirect egoists.

[79] In the state of nature, 'Reason suggesteth convenient articles of peace upon which men may be drawn to agreement' (*L.* 13.14). 'Therefore before the names of just and unjust can have place, there must be some coercive power to compel

state of nature, we must grasp the arguments justifying the setting up of a coercive power; for they explain how Hobbesian agents could set up a sovereign.

If we set up a sovereign with sufficient coercive power, violation will no longer be so attractive to people who might otherwise be inclined to violation. Coercion alters the options in two related ways: (1) The commonwealth compels me to comply, and punishes me for non-compliance, in cases where it would appear beneficial for me to cheat if I were not going to be punished. Since I now face a threat of punishment, it no longer appears to be in my interest to do what would otherwise appear to be in my interest. (2) I will now be assured that potential violators will be deterred from violation, and so I will be confident about making and keeping agreements. I need no longer refuse to make the agreement out of fear that others will not comply. Moreover, they can reach the same estimate about my behaviour.

According to Hobbes, the second effect of coercion is more important than the first. The main difficulty lies not in giving me a reason to keep my agreements, but in assuring me that others will keep their agreements if I keep mine. I am sufficiently assured only if I know that others will be punished for any violations. The obligation to keep a promise precedes any legal sanction.[80] The coercive power of the commonwealth is relevant, not primarily because it coerces me to do my part, but because it assures me that others will do their part for fear of being punished (*L.* 14.18–19). With this assurance about others, I have sufficient reason to keep my part of the promise. According to Hobbes, I am obliged to keep it, whether or not I will be punished if I do not keep it.[81]

The obligation to keep a promise, apart from the threat of punishment, arises from the law of nature. When we understand the law of nature, we see that the universal keeping of promises promotes the preservation of society; and since the preservation of society promotes my preservation, I have a reason for agreeing to the universal keeping of promises.[82] According to Hobbes's view of reasons, motives, and obligations, my obligation—apart from any threat of punishment—to keep my promise consists in my having a sufficient motive to keep it, when I bear in mind all the relevant consequences of keeping it and of breaking it. Coercion has to be applied to us, not because we have no reason to keep our agreements otherwise, but in order to give everyone sufficient reason to believe that others will keep agreements.

494. Objections to the Prudential Argument

This is a plausible argument to show that a Hobbesian agent has an overriding motive, and therefore (according to Hobbes's analysis of reasons) a sufficient reason, to join in the

men equally to the performance of their covenants, by the terror of some punishment greater than the benefit they expect by the breach of their covenant . . . and such power there is none before the erection of a commonwealth.' (15.3)

[80] 'In contracts we say, I will do this; In laws, Do this. Contracts oblige us, laws tie us fast, being obliged. (lege obligati tenemur.) A contract obligeth of it self, the law holds the party obliged by virtue of the universal contract of yielding obedience. Therefore in contract it is first determined what is to be done, before we are obliged to do it; but in law we are first obliged to perform, and what is to be done is determined afterwards.' (*Civ.* 14.2) Cf. Taylor, 'Hobbes' 55.

[81] This point is emphasized by Barry, 'Warrender' 54.

[82] This is what Kavka, *HMPT* 358, calls 'rule-egoism', discussed by Boonin-Vail, *THSMV* 82–92.

creation of a commonwealth. But it is open to objections, or at least to qualifications, if we look more carefully at the motives of such an agent.

Hobbes compares two situations: (1) We are in the state of nature and we have made no agreement to set up a commonwealth (including the laying down of our arms). (2) We are living in a commonwealth set up as a result of our agreement. He argues plausibly that if we are in the first situation, we prefer the second. But it does not follow that we can replace the first situation with the second. The commonwealth comes into existence only if we have both made and fulfilled an agreement to lay down our arms and to resign the use of force to the sovereign. Can Hobbesian agents be expected to fulfil such an agreement? Will it appear to them to be in their interest to comply with the provisions setting up a sovereign with a monopoly of the use of force?

Hobbes introduces coercion to counteract people's tendencies to violate agreements, but the only mechanism for introducing coercion seems to be an agreement. The sovereign monopolizes the use of coercive force only after we have all laid down our arms, and so the laying down of our arms cannot be coerced. I must lay down my arms without coercion, in compliance with an agreement, before we have a mechanism to assure compliance with agreements. But if agreements without coercion are unstable, the agreement to establish a coercive mechanism is unstable.

Hobbesian agents create this instability. Each one has a good reason for making an agreement that requires all to lay down their arms, but also a good reason for breaking the agreement. Since we are still in the state of nature, it is to my advantage to induce other people to disarm before I do; once they have done that, I have gained a competitive advantage, and the resulting situation will be better for me than either unilateral disarmament by me or simultaneous disarmament by all would be.[83] The analogous position involving sovereign states who try to agree on disarmament seems to suggest the difficulties of securing an effective agreement, given the benefits of inducing others to disarm first.

This suggestion may appear unrealistic. It implies that we can take Hobbes's picture literally enough to imagine the situation in which we are all disarmed, but the sovereign is not yet in a position to exercise coercive power. But perhaps we cannot really distinguish these two stages. Perhaps we should think of the agreement to lay down our arms, to set up the sovereign, and to authorize him to act for us, as a single indivisible agreement enacted all at once, and not in stages.[84] We cannot, then, assume a situation in which all are disarmed and so unable to protect themselves, while waiting for the sovereign to protect them. And even if we could legitimately think of distinct stages in setting up the sovereign, would it really be to my advantage to be the last one to disarm? If the others have a reasonable prospect of setting up a sovereign with the power to coerce, would it not be hazardous for me to hesitate to join them, since I would be exposed to the danger of retaliation? In this

[83] See Hampton, *HSCT* 135.

[84] Hobbes describes authorization: 'This is more than consent, or concord; it is a real unity of them all, in one and the same person, made by covenant of every man with every man, in such manner, as if every man should say to every man, I authorize and give up my right of governing myself, to this man, or to this assembly of men, on this condition, that thou give up thy right to him, and authorize all his actions in like manner' (*L.* 17.13). See Hampton, HSCT, ch. 5; Kavka, *HMPT* 391. Cf. Cudworth (§551).

respect, the comparison between Hobbesian individuals and sovereign states considering disarmament may be misleading.

But Hobbes may face a related difficulty. His argument assumes individuals thinking about forming an agreement to act collectively. But he does not consider the possibility of groups of people who may see a benefit in remaining armed while others disarm. A group may be strong enough collectively to defend itself against punishment, especially if it can organize its aggression so as to prevent the disarmers from forming effective means of coercion.

One might ask on Hobbes's behalf whether this appeal to groups does not take for granted an answer to his question. How can a group be stable enough if it has not already made the sort of agreement that he describes? If unwillingness to disarm prevents the formation of a commonwealth, will it not prevent the formation of smaller groups as well? As Plato remarks, even the members of an aggressive group must refrain from injustice against one another; but how can they manage that without a Hobbesian covenant?[85]

This defence against the objection does not seem adequate. For even if a Hobbesian commonwealth is needed for complete assurance in making and keeping covenants, assurance may come in degrees. We might see enough mutual advantage in the short term to warrant a short-term agreement. Even if an armed gang can manage only a short-term agreement, it may still disrupt the formation of a commonwealth by attacking the people who disarm.

This objection to Hobbes does not assume that the members of a gang are correct in believing it is in their interest to attack the disarmers who are trying to form a commonwealth. It is enough if they believe it. For Hobbes acknowledges that the sovereign needs to coerce people who form false views of their interest even when they are within the commonwealth. Before we form a commonwealth, people are liable to errors about their interest; that is why we need to bring a commonwealth into being. But if some people's false views encourage them to form armed gangs, it is difficult to see how others can bring the commonwealth into being. The very existence of armed gangs makes it more reasonable for those who would like to form a commonwealth to form their own armed gangs instead.

Hobbes might try to turn this objection to his advantage. The difficulty that we face in starting the process of disarmament will be apparent to a Hobbesian agent. He will see that the formation of gangs may leave him and everyone else stuck in the state of nature, which they all recognize to be worse than the commonwealth. Since he recognizes this, can he not also see that they would all be better off if they all refrained from this line of thought and simply accepted the agreement to set up the commonwealth?

We may grant that any individual Hobbesian agent can see this, and that everyone can see this sometimes. But it does not follow that enough people can share this insight for long enough to make disarmament effective. Hobbes seems to rely on an unrealistic assumption about stable and correct shared beliefs; and so he does not show that the process that sets up a commonwealth is accessible to Hobbesian agents. He could ensure stable and correct shared beliefs if he simply postulated that each individual has only true beliefs about his own interest; but he does not intend to postulate this, since he defends the coercive power of the state by arguing that it is needed to coerce individuals with false beliefs about their interest.

[85] Cf. Plato, *Rep*. 352b–c.

This argument tends to show that Hobbes relies on unrealistic claims, as measured by his description of Hobbesian agents, about the people who are supposed to establish the commonwealth. He does not seem to show that Hobbesian agents can establish a commonwealth. Reliance on unrealistic assumptions may in some circumstances be reasonable, as we will see in considering later appeals to a social contract. But it needs to be justified by showing that the unrealistic assumptions give the argument an appropriate rational or moral significance.[86] Hobbes takes its rational and moral significance to be derived from its psychological realism. An attempt to derive rational and moral significance from something other than psychological realistic assumptions requires us to depart from Hobbes's basic aim of reducing moral reasons to overriding motives.

495. Prudence and Motivation in the State of Nature

Our objection to Hobbes has assumed that, as he sometimes assumes, everyone's dominant motive pursues the long-term satisfaction of one's desires; in short, prudent desires dominate. We ought now to withdraw this assumption, and allow, as Hobbes sometimes allows, that people have other motives, concerned with shorter-term satisfaction, that may be stronger than prudent motives. As he acknowledges, it is possible for us, when we deliberate about our interest, to decide in favour of an imprudent action.

If Hobbes agrees that imprudent desires may be stronger than prudent desires, he should not be satisfied with an argument to show—even if he could show—that self-interested and prudent people will form and maintain a commonwealth. Such an argument does not show that the laws of nature always oblige us; for they may not always engage our prevalent motives. The mere knowledge that forming a commonwealth promotes my longer-term interest does not necessarily move me to try to form a commonwealth.

The comparative weakness of prudent desires does not refute Hobbes's claim that we can act on the laws of nature. For if we recognize that in the future we may want to act imprudently, we can do something to prevent ourselves from undoing our prudent choice. If I want to stop drinking whisky, and recognize that I will want to drink more in the future, I may take steps to frustrate my future desire, by pouring the whisky down the sink now, or by making it difficult in the future for me to buy more. These methods of tying my hands in the future explain why it is sensible, from Hobbes's point of view, to join in forming a commonwealth that can coerce me if I try to break its rules. If I foresee that I and others may want to break the rules, I act now to frustrate that future desire.[87]

Moreover, the recognition of imprudent desires may help Hobbes to solve the difficulty that we have raised about starting the process that creates a commonwealth. The instability of our prudent reasoning makes it difficult to see how we could agree to lay down our arms if disarmament must result from an uncoerced agreement. But we can avoid this difficulty about an agreement if we do not assume that submission to coercion must be the product of agreement. Previously we have mentioned the possibility of armed gangs as an objection to Hobbes's argument for the state. But we might try to use them in his favour. If some people form a

[86] Cf. Rawls, *TJ* §§24–5. [87] Cf. Hume on justice, §768.

gang that is stable enough to compel the rest of us to obey, a Hobbesian agent might see that it is in his interest and everyone else's to submit to the gang and make its leader the sovereign.

This attempt to make an armed gang the nucleus of the commonwealth rather than a threat to its formation raises further questions. (1) Why should we trust the gang to avoid aggression against us if we submit? (2) If the gang is made up of Hobbesian agents, how, on Hobbes's view, could it form a stable enough association to be able to compel the rest of us?[88] These questions about assurance do not show that Hobbesian agents cannot form a short-term alliance in a gang; but they become relevant when we consider the gang as a possible basis for a sovereign.

We avoid some difficulties if we exploit Hobbes's admission (sometimes) that our dominant motive is not always prudent. Suppose that A and B form a temporary association in the state of nature. But then A's forceful personality causes B to form a passion of fanatical loyalty to A. A and B then become a strong team, since their partnership is immune to the normal Hobbesian sources of instability; B's fanatical loyalty makes him forgo opportunities to betray A, and A sees that B is too useful to be mistreated; hence the association benefits each of them. Now they see that they will be even better off if they can capture other members, in whom they can form the fanatical attachment to A and B collectively that B had to A. Fanaticism helps to remove the distrust that would be left by a purely prudent desire, and the result of it would be in everyone's interest. A band of fanatics may steadily improve its competitive position against non-fanatics, since non-fanatics lack the rigid and imprudent outlook that would be needed for concerted action against the fanatics. Hence fanaticism might spread.

Rejection of the primacy of prudence, therefore, makes one aspect of Hobbes's account of the basis of morality more plausible. Fanaticism is possible if short-term passions are sometimes stronger than long-term desires. These passions are more attached to their objects than they would be if we were purely prudent. We discover on reflexion that we are all better off because some or all of us are sometimes moved by imprudent passions. Recognizing this, we might try to cultivate some irrational passions so that we benefit in the ways we would not benefit if we were always prudent.[89] Imprudent passions help Hobbes to explain those aspects of the origin of the commonwealth that do not fit his claims about the primacy of prudence. If, therefore, Hobbes recognizes imprudent passions, he can more easily explain the formation of a commonwealth in the state of nature.

496. Reason and the Laws of Nature

But the argument about the state of nature is not merely intended to show how the formation of a commonwealth is psychologically possible; it is also intended to show that

[88] On alliances in the state of nature see *EL* 19.4. Hobbes's views on agreements resulting from submission to force (*EL* 22.2) suggest what he might say about gangs or 'protection associations'. Hampton, *HSCT* 169–82, suggests that gangs can be formed without any appeal to fanaticism, because there are enough sufficiently far-sighted people around to form them. But this does not ensure their stability; if their members are Hobbesian agents, they seem to have the normal motives for treachery. The difficulty that Plato takes to arise for thoroughly unjust members of gangs seems to arise for Hobbesian gangs.

[89] Cf. Parfit's argument for being irrational on occasions, *RP* 12–13. Cf. Hampton, *HSCT* 63–8, on non-rational passions.

the laws of nature are 'precepts of reason' (*Civ.* 3.32). In Hobbes's view, this is because the laws of nature concern a future good, which is the concern of reason; in violating the principles that secure this future good, we act on 'irrational appetite' (*Civ.* 3.32).[90]

All these claims about the laws of nature presuppose that it is rational to do what must be done to preserve peace and to secure commodious living, in preference to acting on desires that threaten our prospect of peace. This presupposition would be correct if we always preferred peace and commodious living over any other end. In that case, the laws of nature would oblige us; our dominant desire for the end to which they secure the means would move us to observe them. But Hobbes is not justified in claiming that it is especially rational to desire peace, or to follow the laws of nature rather than principles that further our imprudent desires at times when they dominate us. Nor are we always obliged, even in foro interno, to follow the laws of nature. For, according to Hobbes's conception of obligation as motivation, we are sometimes obliged to follow the laws of nature, but we are also sometimes obliged to follow principles that conflict with them; our obligations follow our dominant motives.

These aspects of Hobbes's position do not conflict with his claim that the laws of nature are precepts of reason. But they imply that violations of the laws of nature are also precepts of reason. For since precepts are rational insofar as they identify means to satisfy our desires, precepts that prescribe means to satisfy imprudent desires are no less rational than the laws of nature. It is rational to establish a commonwealth, when our prudent desires dominate, and rational to frustrate its establishment, when imprudent desires dominate. When we are prudent, we can take steps to frustrate our imprudent desires when they arise; hence, for instance, we pour the whisky down the sink if we believe we will want to drink too much of it. But equally we can take steps when we are imprudent to frustrate our prudent desires; if I am angry enough at you, I may insult you, even though I know I will want your help in the future and that the insult will turn you against me. Both attitudes to our future desires are equally rational, given the purely instrumental account of rationality.

The position that Hobbes is committed to, therefore, is different from the one he puts forward. It is close to Hume's position. Hume goes further than Hobbes goes in tracing the implications of a purely instrumental view of practical reason. Since Hobbes sometimes accepts this purely instrumental view, he is committed to acceptance of the conclusions that Hume draws from it.[91] But he does not draw these conclusions. In particular he does not apply them to his defence of the laws of nature.

Questions about self-preservation expose some of the basic difficulties in Hobbes's argument. His account of the laws of nature and our obligation to seek peace seems to require the primacy of self-preservation. But that primacy both lacks support in Hobbes's account of deliberation and conflicts with some of the mechanisms that are apparently needed to bring a commonwealth into existence. No easy modification allows Hobbes to defend all his main claims.

[90] Quoted more fully in §493.

[91] See Hume (§736) and §496 above.

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HOBBES: MORALITY

497. Hobbes's Attitude to Morality

Hobbes believes that the difference between the state of nature and the commonwealth explains why the true moral philosophy is the science of the laws of nature. If Hobbesian agents form a commonwealth that has the power to compel the observance of rules preserving the peace, they have sufficient reason, according to Hobbes, to observe these rules. The benefits of stability and non-aggression are so large and so evident that we must, if we think clearly about our interest, want them to continue at any cost. Since the laws of nature are also the principles of morality, we have good reason to accept morality.

If we attend to Hobbes's defence of morality, we may be surprised that his early critics attacked him for his allegedly immoral conclusions.[1] Did they simply misunderstand him, or did they perversely refuse to give him credit for his aims, or did they believe that he failed in his aims?

Hobbes's approach to morality is reductive; he attacks those who believe that morality rests on justified claims about human nature that go beyond his psychological account. But such a reduction might be intended either as a vindication or as a rejection of morality. It is a vindication if it shows that the main claims of morality are justified within Hobbesian psychology. It is a rejection of morality if it shows that there is no place for morality within Hobbesian psychology.

Some criticisms of Hobbes are unfair because they do not recognize that he seeks a reductive vindication of morality. They treat him as an enemy of morality because he traces morality to these specific psychological foundations; but Hobbes believes that his exposure of these psychological foundations supports morality, by showing that it does not need the indefensible psychological claims invoked by Scholastic theories.

It is unfair to treat Hobbes as an enemy of morality, if we consider only his intentions. But it may not be unfair, if we also consider the implications of his arguments. For if Hobbesian psychology tends to undermine morality, critics fasten on a genuine feature of Hobbes's position, even if he does not intend it.

[1] His critics include Cudworth, Clarke, Cumberland, and Pufendorf. See also Bowle, *HC*; Mintz, *HL*, ch. 6.

498. Hobbes's Defence of Morality

Hobbes's restricted conception of practical reason limits his vindication of morality. Even if he shows that it is instrumental to self-preservation, he does not show that it is uniquely rational; it is rational only on those occasions when the desire for self-preservation is dominant. On other occasions some other principles are rational. But this restriction might not make much difference. If our desire for self-preservation is often dominant, it will be especially useful to find the principles that further this desire rather than others. If morality can be shown to further this desire, that is a significant vindication.

To vindicate morality in this way, we must also restrict its scope. Some of the 'old moral philosophers' claim that morality is good for human beings without qualification, because it suits human nature; it relies on reasons that we can see to be good reasons for rational agents as such. Hobbes believes that this defence of morality is too ambitious, and therefore tends to undermine morality. In some circumstances moral considerations do not give us good reasons, and so the moral virtues are not suitable for human beings as such. In the state of nature we have no reason to accept the principles we intuitively regard as moral principles. It is too dangerous to treat other people well, since we may just increase their ability to harm us when they double-cross us. Since we cannot be assured that they will observe the laws of nature towards us, we are unwise if we observe the laws of nature towards them. Moreover, since our motives and aims are all self-interested, we have no reason to treat other people in accordance with moral principles; for it will not be in our interest to do this in the state of nature.

But though we have no reason to follow moral rules in the state of nature, we can defend them in more restricted circumstances. The commonwealth reduces the costs that deter us from following moral principles in the state of nature; for it coerces violators, and so removes the competitive advantage that others might gain from double-crossing me after I treat them well. In these circumstances morality is not only less dangerous, but also rational; for moral principles are those that informed self-interested agents want to be the rules governing a Hobbesian state. Since a Hobbesian state is in their interest, acceptance of these moral principles is in their interest too.

Only part of this argument presupposes Hobbes's psychology. Even if we are not Hobbesian egoists, we might agree that in the state of nature, as he describes it, the normal moral requirements do not apply, because the cost of fulfilling them is too high. We might agree with Hobbes's view that morality costs us too much, because we lack mutual assurance. If we agree that we ought not to observe the ordinary moral rules if they are ruinous or dangerous to us, we agree that self-preservation imposes some limits on the observance of these rules. But it does not follow that the observance of moral rules must always be in my interest; they may often require some sacrifice of self-interest, as long as it is not ruinous.

Hobbes's psychology supports his further claim that we have reason to observe moral rules only if it promotes our self-preservation. That is why he believes that our agreement to form a commonwealth, to assure mutual compliance, must also be in the interest of each agent. In his view, we are obliged to follow morality if and only if we have a dominant motive to follow it; we have a dominant motive if and only if we recognize that it is in

our interest. If we are members of a commonwealth, we find that morality promotes the preservation of the commonwealth that is in our interest.

499. Indirect Arguments for Morality

Within a commonwealth, therefore, Hobbes argues that we have self-interested reasons to observe ordinary moral principles. But he does not argue that the observance of every single moral principle on every occasion benefits me, or even that it preserves the state. The different moral principles and virtues constitute a set of rules for the preservation of the state and for the preservation of 'peaceful, sociable, and comfortable living' within the state. He mentions justice, gratitude, modesty, equity, mercy, and the other recognized virtues. But none of these virtues explicitly limits itself by the requirements of the preservation of the state.

Hobbes's appeal to these virtues implies that we preserve the commonwealth better if we follow rules that do not aim directly at its preservation. He offers an indirect consequentialist defence of morality. It is indirect because it gives us reasons to follow a specific rule on a particular occasion without attention, on that occasion, to the consequences of our action or of the observance of the rule. The benefits of this inattention are familiar in non-moral action. If we are looking for means to enjoyment, we may discover that whole-hearted absorption in an activity is sometimes the best way to enjoy it. We may interfere with this absorption if we turn our attention to the pleasant consequences of the activity, so that we make it a less effective means to our enjoyment. Something similar may be true about moral rules. If we are acting bravely or kindly, for instance, we may do better if we act spontaneously and immediately; attention to the consequences of our actions may prevent them from achieving the consequences we attend to.

To explain such cases we may introduce a 'two-level' argument. We may distinguish the context of immediate deliberation about what to do here and now from the context of reflexion. We do not consider consequences in our immediate deliberation, but we consider them in reflexion about what virtues we ought to cultivate, what habits of action we ought to strengthen or weaken, and what patterns of immediate deliberation we ought to use. Butler suggests that in the context of reflexion—'in a cool hour', as he puts it—we can appropriately ask questions that ought not to intrude into immediate deliberation.[2] This form of two-level indirect justification is the most plausible way of understanding the relation of the Aristotelian virtues to the pursuit of one's own happiness.

Two-level arguments may involve two different sorts of relations between the two levels. In a 'transparent' theory the principles underlying the two levels are consistent, and the second-level principles explain the truth of the first-level principles, even though we ought not to consider them in immediate deliberation. We can reflect on our first-level principles when we are not engaging in first-level activities, and then we can recognize the second-level basis of the first-level principles; we vindicate our first-level principles. In an 'opaque' theory, however, one level relies on principles that we reject when we think at the other level.

[2] See §708.

The second-level principles do not explain why the first-level principles are true; they might advise us to behave as if they were true, or to induce ourselves to believe in their truth, or to close our eyes to reasons for disbelieving them. In this case the two levels are 'opaque' to each other.

Our previous example of enjoyment illustrates the difference between transparent and opaque theories. Perhaps I regard enjoyment as a worthwhile end, and I recognize that I will gain most enjoyment by pursuing an activity that I value apart from its enjoyment, and by excluding thoughts of enjoyment when I am engaged in the activity. With this in mind, I might play the violin, valuing it for itself. I hold a two-level conception, but the levels are transparent to each other. When I reflect in a cool hour on the fact that I play the violin for my enjoyment, I do not undermine my pursuit of the activity; nor do I question my belief that it is valuable apart from my enjoyment. If, however, I regard enjoyment as the only end worth pursuing for its own sake, and the rest of the story is the same, the two levels are opaque to each other. For when I reflect in a cool hour, I must recognize that I not only believe (at the first level) that playing the violin—something other than enjoyment—is to be valued as an end, but also believe (at the second level) that nothing except enjoyment is to be valued as an end. My belief at one level conflicts with my belief at the other level.

An opaque two-level theory is easy to understand if different people occupy the two levels. If you are trying to educate me, you may want to teach me not only to act in certain ways, but also to act for certain reasons and to follow certain rules. But if you teach me to do this, you may not tell me why you want me to follow these rules or to recognize these reasons; you may have your own reasons for teaching me to follow the rules that I follow. If I learn your reasons, I may or may not change my mind about whether the reasons I act on are good reasons.

But how can a two-level theory be opaque if the same person holds the theory at both levels? If I recognize both levels, how can I avoid rejecting one or the other when I see the conflict between them? We can answer this question once we see that we may fail to recognize the conflict between our beliefs at different levels, or we may fail to confront it. Even if we confront it, we may not abandon either level of the theory; perhaps the opaque theory is the best we can do. One might even argue that, having recognized the conflict, we ought to try to forget about it. A troop of soldiers sent on a dangerous mission with only a slight chance of success might want to try to disregard the evidence showing that they are very likely to be killed. They might prefer to expose themselves to influences that will make them more prone to believe they will succeed in their mission. If they thought about why they form these beliefs in themselves, they would come to see that the beliefs are false; hence it is better if they do not think about this.

These reflexions on two-level theories may help us to identify some of the questions that arise about Hobbes. His definition of a law of nature connects it with one's own preservation (*L.* 14.3); but his discussion of the individual laws of nature does not connect them directly with one's own interest. He connects the individual laws of nature with the preservation of peace and the stability of the commonwealth, and therefore connects them indirectly with my self-interest, because I gain from the preservation of peace. Even if the preservation of the commonwealth is in my interest, it does not follow that everything that is required of

me to preserve the commonwealth is more in my interest than anything else I might do. Hobbes's argument, then, is indirect.

Similarly, the connexion between specific moral principles and the preservation of peace is indirect. Hobbes does not suggest that each principle aims at the preservation of peace. He needs to explain why it is better to follow the recognized moral virtues, which do not refer to the preservation of peace, than to follow rules aiming explicitly at this end. An indirect defence of morality may be more or less plausible if it is a two-level theory, transparent or opaque. An opaque theory is most flexible in accommodating intuitive objections to a consequentialist defence, since the theory implies that we will hold lower-level beliefs inconsistent with the higher-level principles. But an opaque theory raises the prospect of instability between the two levels, if reflexion at one level tends to undermine the beliefs we hold at the other level.

500. Morality and the Preservation of Peace

Hobbes's argument about morality succeeds only if each of his two indirect arguments succeeds. The indirect argument connecting peace with self-interest proves the point about morality only if the indirect argument connecting morality with the preservation of peace succeeds. We may therefore begin with the argument about morality.

Hobbes can show that moral principles tend to preserve peace, if he offers a plausible account of the content of moral principles and he shows that precisely these principles preserve peace. He is justified in claiming that the accepted moral rules help to preserve peace, since observance of them reduces the tendency to conflict. But this fact about the moral rules does not explain their character, unless we can show that no other rules would preserve peace as well or better. If we have reason to prefer the accepted moral rules over other rules that preserve peace as well or better, the tendency to preserve peace cannot be our whole reason for accepting the moral rules or their sole justification.

To see whether Hobbes is right, we need to consider apparent exceptions to the requirements of the traditional virtues. Might we protect the state better and preserve peace better if we followed less sweeping rules with more exceptions? These rules might allow, for instance, the breaking of promises on the right occasions, or might allow public officials to break the law when it is expedient. Machiavelli argues that a ruler should sometimes violate the requirements of justice, gratitude, and mercy, to secure the stability of the state.[3] In his view, steady adherence to moral rules makes the state too inflexible to meet emergencies, and so we ought not to commit ourselves to them.

Hobbes agrees with Machiavelli's claim that my obligation to follow the rules of conventional other-regarding morality is strictly limited, and in particular that it depends on my view of how far I can rely on other people to follow the same rules. Following Machiavelli, he believes that self-preservation and the preservation of the state are the basic

[3] See §404. Influence of Machiavelli on Hobbes's moral and political theory has not been shown, though it has sometimes been suggested. Saxenhouse, 'Modern' 124–37, suggests that the case for such influence is strengthened by consideration of a discourse on Tacitus (which she takes to be an early essay by Hobbes, published in 1620).

aims that give us good reason to follow or to break a moral rule.[4] Machiavelli particularly wants to show that it is legitimate for a ruler (individual or collective) to advance the interests of the ruler or the state (not always clearly distinguished) even by immoral means. Hobbes tries to convince subjects that they have no good reason to disobey the ruler. He believes that if we understand the moral virtues, we see that we have good reason to observe them, in the appropriate circumstances, and in particular we see why we are not justified in disobeying the ruler. Here, then, he is not concerned directly with Machiavelli's concerns. But he also assumes that subjects of the commonwealth can expect their rulers to observe the laws of nature in relation to them. He does not endorse Machiavellian rules that violate the laws of nature.

But Hobbes does not try to show that there are no occasions of the sort that Machiavelli describes. This is a gap in his argument. If his claims about peace commit him to acceptance of Machiavellian rules, he cannot justify the traditional moral rules, which do not allow Machiavellian restrictions on promise-keeping and so on. If Hobbes has reason to reject the traditional moral rules in favour of Machiavellian rules, or if he gives no reason for preferring the traditional rules over Machiavellian rules as means for keeping the peace, he does not explain the moral virtues. Morality, therefore, may not be a system of Hobbesian laws of nature, designed to secure a Hobbesian state. In that case, Hobbes has no good reason to assume that traditional moral principles preserve the state better than Machiavellian rules would.

Hobbes might argue, however, that people are more likely to accept the ordinary moral rules than to accept the more efficient Machiavellian rules, and that therefore the adoption of ordinary moral rules is more likely to lead to the law-abiding habits that increase stability in the commonwealth. Perhaps it is better, he might argue, if people are trained simply to accept ordinary moral rules than if they are trained to consider the preservation of peace all the time. This is a two-level justification.

Are the two levels transparent or opaque to each other? That depends on why ordinary moral rules (requiring, say, that promises be kept and that punishment be inflicted only when guilt has been settled) are better at preserving peace than more flexible rules (allowing public officials to break promises or to inflict penalties on the innocent) would be. If the reason is that most people think there is some reason, apart from preservation of peace, for observing the stricter rules, the two levels are opaque to each other. For, according to Hobbes, the preservation of peace is the only reason for accepting one moral rule rather than another; if we believe that some rules safeguard rights that belong to human beings apart from any commonwealth, we are mistaken.

Hobbes does not go into this question in detail. It is difficult to believe, however, that he can plausibly maintain all these claims: (1) Preservation of peace is the only good reason for prescribing a particular moral rule. (2) Ordinary moral rules are better than Machiavellian rules would be at preserving peace. (3) The two levels are transparent to each other.

If the third claim is true, our readiness to believe ordinary moral rules, and to suppose we have reason to act on them, is not undermined by our coming to believe that they are justified only to the extent that they preserve peace. But this is quite unlikely. We are

[4] On criticisms of Machiavelli by some Scholastics see §449.

relatively stable in our observance of moral rules, apart from what we may regard as the best means to preserve peace, because we think we have some distinct reason for observing them. If this is so, Hobbes's claim to defend ordinary moral rules by appeal to their role in preserving peace depends on our observing them for reasons that, in the light of his theory, are bad reasons. His defence, then, raises some serious objections that he does not try to answer.

These considerations suggest that we might prefer Hobbesian laws of nature over Machiavellian rules on the ground that they preserve the peace more effectively. If Hobbesian laws of nature are generally accepted, and known to be accepted, in a commonwealth, people will trust one another more, and trust their rulers more. There will be less injustice, conflict, and suspicion, and so the commonwealth will be more stable than the sort of republic that Machiavelli imagines. Hence, we might argue, rulers will not need to resort to Machiavellian devices. But this defence of Hobbes is not decisive. For the Machiavellian might still answer that Machiavellian rules allow the rulers to react more flexibly to dangers to the peace.

This dispute between a Hobbesian and a Machiavellian view suggests a possible compromise. Why not allow the rulers to violate Hobbesian laws of nature while teaching their subjects to observe them?[5] In that way we seem to get the benefits of both Machiavellian flexibility and Hobbesian stability. We can reduce the danger of instability arising from distrust if the rulers conceal their violations of the laws of nature as far as possible. Such an arrangement would give us an opaque two-level theory of morality, but the two levels would reflect the outlook of different people. The subjects would accept moral rules without reference to their usefulness for preserving peace, while the rulers would impose them on the subjects, not on themselves, as means to preserving peace. Any moral objections to this arrangement are irrelevant unless they can be expressed in Hobbes's terms, as arguments to show that the arrangement threatens the preservation of peace.

We need not try to settle this dispute between Hobbes and Machiavelli. It is enough to point out that the dispute seems to turn on empirical questions. If Hobbes wants to defend the laws of nature as means to the preservation of peace, he should compare them with more Machiavellian rules and strategies, and explain why he has a better empirical case for the laws of nature. Since he does not do this, he gives us no Hobbesian reason for preferring the laws of nature.

We may overlook this weakness in his case if we evaluate it from the moral point of view. We may be inclined to reject Machiavellian rules, however effective they may be, once we see that they are immoral. Once we see that, further inquiry (we may suppose) is unnecessary. This sort of reply, however, is not open to Hobbes. Since he intends to explain and to justify moral claims by reducing them to rules for the preservation of peace, he cannot reject alternative rules for the preservation of peace on the ground that they are immoral.

Hobbes's claims about morality anticipate some of the difficulties that arise for moralists who try to explain moral principles as maxims for promoting the general good or for maximizing utility. They have to show that the promotion is indirect, and explain why this

[5] Some of Machiavelli's remarks suggest that this is his view. See §§403, 410.

is preferable to more direct promotion. Hobbes is in a weak position, since he takes the laws of nature to aim not at the public good, but simply at the preservation of the state. It seems easier to show that the relatively narrow aim of preserving the state may diverge from morality than to show that the broader aim of maximizing the good of all those affected may diverge from it; for the broader aim is more plausibly connected with the outlook of universal benevolence. But the general question arises for later utilitarians no less than it does for Hobbes.

501. Revolutionary Objections

Let us now suppose that Hobbes succeeds in his indirect consequentialist defence of morality as a means to preserve peace. The next indirect argument in his defence of morality seeks to link preservation of peace with one's individual interest.

To show that it is always in my interest to prefer the preservation of peace over any other prospective benefit, Hobbes needs to answer three different sorts of objections: (1) Some members of a commonwealth might decide that they would be better off if the commonwealth were dissolved and replaced either with the state of nature or with a different commonwealth. This is a 'revolutionary' threat. (2) Some might decide they would be better off if the state were deliberately made less efficient in enforcing its rules, so that they could benefit from the loopholes that would be created. This is a 'libertarian' threat. (3) Some might decide they would be better off if the state remained as efficient as it is, but they disobeyed the laws when they could get away with it. This is a 'non-conformist' threat.

Hobbes answers the revolutionary threat by arguing that since peace and stability are better than war and the state of nature, it is always better to put up with the commonwealth we have. This answer aims at two types of revolutionary: (a) One revolutionary plans a civil war, and therefore a return to the state of nature, as a means to improving the commonwealth. (b) Another takes the risk of war, and hence the risk of returning to the state of nature, as part of the strategy of improvement. The 1917 Bolshevik Revolution followed the first strategy. The Parliamentary leaders in England in the early 1640s followed the second strategy, and found that they had to fight a civil war. In 1688 the risk of a civil war did not result in a war in England, but resulted in one in Ireland. Hobbes's argument is primarily concerned with the second type of revolutionary, since a refutation of this strategy will also refute the first type.

He asks us to compare the worst possible result of pursuing either of the options open to us. The two worst results are: (1) We put up with the commonwealth we have, even though it is extremely oppressive. (2) Our revolutionary strategy returns us to the state of nature. Since the worst outcome of acquiescence in an oppressive state is better than the worst outcome of the revolutionary strategy, we ought to prefer acquiescence. This is an instance of the 'maximin' attitude to risk.

This maximin attitude seems to assume an unjustified degree of aversion to risk. The argument proceeds without any attention to the probability of any of the results, and so it prohibits us from considering the probability in deciding which option to prefer.

Hobbes offers the same argument against those who break rules without intending to cause a revolution. But it seems irrational to ignore probability altogether. Even if peace advances self-preservation more than anything else does, and we value self-preservation above everything else, it does not follow that we should never accept the smallest risk to self-preservation in order to gain some other good. Hobbesian agents who took such an attitude to risk would never cross the street.

Hobbes might answer that this objection misses the point of his attitude to risk. He is not necessarily advocating a maximin attitude to risk in deciding whether to cross the street. But the special features of choices involving the dissolution of the state justify an extremely conservative attitude to the risks involved. In some cases we face a choice between Option 1 (with possible outcomes 1a and 1b) and Option 2 (with possible outcomes 2a and 2b) that satisfies these three conditions: (i) The probabilities are unknown, or difficult to fix with any confidence. (ii) The worst outcome, 2b, is catastrophic. (iii) Neither 1a nor 1b is catastrophic. (iv) 2a is the best outcome, but it offers us comparatively trivial gains over 1a and 1b. In these conditions the maximin attitude is reasonable, and we ought to choose Option 1 over Option 2, even though Option 2 offers us the best of the possible outcomes (2a).

In Hobbes's view, the choices that face us in deciding whether to risk a return to the state of nature have this character. The importance of peace and self-preservation, compared to other goods, ensures that the third and fourth conditions are satisfied. The first option is preservation of the peace with the current unsatisfactory regime either a bit improved (1a) or no better (1b). The second option is revolution, either leading to a much better regime (2a) or back to the state of nature (2b). In this case the second option offers us the prospect of improvement (2a), but this advantage over the first option is small in comparison to the disadvantage of reversion to the state of nature (2b). Hence we should prefer the first over the second option.

Hobbes's argument suffers from his failure to show that the first condition is satisfied. In some cases, may we not reach a reasonable estimate of the probabilities of different outcomes that might justify us in proceeding on a more optimistic assumption than the maximin attitude underlying the choice of the first option? Hobbes might fairly point out that revolutionary action sometimes proceeds on a foolishly optimistic judgment about probabilities, or on a negligent failure to consider them. But it would be difficult to show that all revolutionary action faces this objection. Hence a maximin attitude is unjustified.

But even if we concede Hobbes's assumptions about probabilities, his moral psychology makes it difficult to see how Hobbesian agents could reliably satisfy the second and fourth conditions for a maximin attitude to revolution. In his view, the reasonable course of action is fixed by reference to what promotes our dominant desire at a particular time. But our desire for self-preservation may not always dominate us. Hobbes sometimes maintains that other desires sometimes cause us to act imprudently (from the point of view of self-preservation). From the point of view of such desires, the difference between Option 2a and Option 1 might not be as small as it would need to be to justify the choice of Option 1. Since these other desires may sometimes be stronger than the desire for peace, and since Hobbes treats claims about obligation as predictions about motivation, he is not justified in claiming that

everyone always has an overriding obligation to preserve peace and to choose the means to it. We have seen that some 'fanatical' desires are needed to set up the commonwealth. If some members of a commonwealth still have fanatical desires, they are not always obliged to seek peace above all. Even if the desire for self-preservation is always overriding, it may not override strongly enough to make the difference between Option 2a and Option 1 small enough.

Might Hobbes concede that our desires do not always result in a maximin outlook, but argue that they ought to, and that they would if they were rational? If he claims that a refusal to adopt a maximin outlook in these circumstances is irrational, he relies on an irreducibly normative conception of rationality. But then he violates his aim of reducing reasons to motives.

Hobbes succeeds in his aim of vindicating morality only if he can show that his assumptions about aversion to risk are psychologically correct; they must be true descriptions of the outlook of agents in the situations he describes. But his argument fails this condition. He may still be right to claim that morality rests on assumptions about aversion to risk. If these assumptions cannot be justified on psychological grounds, they may be understood as aspects of the moral outlook; morality refuses to subject certain kinds of protection to gambling. Hobbes notices that these attitudes are characteristic of morality, but he cannot explain, within his psychological assumptions, why they are reasonable.[6] He fails to include them within a vindicating reduction of morality; for Hobbesian psychology makes morality sometimes irrational.

502. Libertarian Objections

Hobbes's defence of morality presupposes that we want an efficient state. He assumes that I will be ready to observe moral rules that require me and everyone else to forgo some immediate advantages for the sake of peace, if I believe that general observance of such rules increases efficiency. But might I not benefit from a less efficient system? If I could gain some advantages over other people, by greater prudence and more acute calculation of my interests, might I not benefit if the state were inefficient enough to allow me to violate the conditions of agreement on occasions when it suited me? I seem to have no sufficient reason for keeping the rules if I am not forced to keep them; and I seem to have no sufficient reason to prefer a very efficient mechanism of enforcement.

Such libertarian arguments fail if it is better for me to live in a state that enforces compliance on its citizens predictably and efficiently than to live in a less efficient state. One might argue in Hobbes's defence that the libertarian argument ignores the corrosive effects of giving other people the opportunity that I want for myself to break the rules. I may be harmed if other people have this opportunity, even though I would benefit if I alone had the opportunity. Though I might want Gyges' Ring for myself alone, I might not want it if everyone else had it too. Hence I might prefer no one's having it over everyone's having if, if these were my only options.

[6] These assumptions are prominent in Rawls, *TJ*, ch. 3. Rawls tries to show why they provide an appropriate basis for a moral theory, without claiming that they are realistic.

This argument does not secure Hobbes's conclusion. We cannot always assume that everyone will be equally astute or active in breaking the rules when it suits him. Hence an opportunity for me to break the rules may not allow a greatly increased scale of rule-breaking. The more astute or unscrupulous or energetic might have reason to welcome an arrangement that they would not welcome if everyone were to exploit it in the way they propose to exploit it.

Hobbes faces a further difficulty from the possibility of fanaticism. We saw earlier how fanaticism might help the formation of a state that would be in the interest of Hobbesian agents. Fanaticism equally makes it easier for the Hobbesian agent to reject the Hobbesian state in favour of a more inefficient one. We could defend an efficient Hobbesian state, if a loophole for even one Hobbesian agent created massive instability; and an inefficient state might leave this dangerous loophole, if all citizens were equally clear-sighted and well-informed Hobbesian agents. But if this is not so, a Hobbesian agent might well prefer a less efficient state. If some citizens are fanatical enough, they will not break the rules even if it is in their interest to do so, and even if they see that it is. If their compliance can be relied on, the Hobbesian agent has good reason to observe the rules less than he would have to if these other people were less fanatical. Evidently, the more disloyal one citizen is, the greater the fanaticism required in the rest of the citizens. It suits him best if other people are so attached to moral rules that they can be relied on to follow them without worrying about their good consequences.

These objections to Hobbes assume that one person takes advantage of the fact that other people are less astute, or lazier, or more fanatical. By taking advantage of these facts, I can do better than I would do if I followed the rules that Hobbes takes to be in each person's interest. From the moral point of view, we clearly take unfair advantage of the differences between people. But the Hobbesian basis of morality does not explain why we should not take this unfair advantage.

503. Non-conformist Objections

The objections of non-conformists to morality raise further questions about the effect of one individual's action on the actions of others. The non-conformist does not want the state to become less efficient, but he wants to take advantage of the opportunities for breaking the rules. If not everyone is equally astute or energetic, not everyone will take advantage of the opportunities for injustice that are open to different people; and so the system need not collapse. Hence Hobbes's 'fool' denies that it is always in his interest to keep the rules of justice. He accepts Hobbes's reasons for agreeing to the commonwealth in the first place, but he points out that these reasons do not justify him in doing what the commonwealth requires of him, if he can gain some greater benefit by unjust action and can avoid punishment for it.[7]

[7] 'He does not therein deny that there be covenants; and that they are sometimes broken, sometimes kept; and that such breach of them may be called injustice, and the observance of them justice: but he questioneth, whether injustice, taking away the fear of God (for the same fool hath said in his heart there is no God), may not sometimes stand with that reason, which dictateth to every man his own good; and particularly then, when it conduceth to such a benefit, as shall put a man in a condition, to neglect not only the dispraise, and revilings, but also the power of other men.' (*L.* 15.4) The fool's argument is discussed by Gauthier, *MD* 136–7, 144–6.

Hobbes argues that the fool's strategy is not rational, since it is not based on a prudent calculation of the fool's interest. The fool assumes that other people make a mistake about his trustworthiness.[8] But Hobbes answers that the fool makes a mistake here, because he 'could not foresee nor reckon upon' these errors by others. What sort of mistake does the fool make?

Hobbes might intend any of three replies to the fool: (1) His assumptions are so unrealistic that his strategy can never be founded on a reasonable estimate of the facts and probabilities. This reply seems empirically unwarranted. (2) An ordinary estimate of probabilities supports the fool. Still, the dangers of being found out are so severe that we ought to be strongly risk-averse in our calculations about breaking rules. This point, anticipated by Epicurus,[9] is reasonable, but it does not justify Hobbes's claim.[10] Even an appropriate allowance for the costs of discovery, or for the fear of discovery, seems to leave us room to break rules. If Hobbes assumes a maximin attitude, he raises the difficulties that we have already noticed. (3) Perhaps 'cannot' in 'cannot reckon upon' refers to a moral prohibition rather than an impossibility or an error in calculation. Perhaps we are morally required to assume that others are as intelligent as we are, and are likely to find us out. Here an assumption of equality plays an important role.

The second and third of these replies might be taken to rest on some basis other than mere empirical prediction. Hobbes might mean that the fool takes unjustified risks, or that he takes unfair advantage of other people's conformity to rules. But such a reply fails to refute the fool, from Hobbes's self-interested and purely psychological point of view.

In answering the fool, Hobbes assumes that from the self-interested point of view we can see the truth of the assumptions on which justice depends, and that therefore we can see the correctness of the laws of nature from the point of view that showed us why we ought to agree to the setting up of this society. He does not vindicate this claim. He does not justify a stable commitment to morality for the sorts of agents he describes.

504. Indirect Prudence

These replies to the fool assume the legitimacy of his question. They assume that it is reasonable for Hobbesian agents within the commonwealth to appraise a particular action with reference to their individual advantage. In order to answer the fool on this assumption, we must show that the observance of rules is directly beneficial. We have seen, however, that an analogous assumption about the relation between moral rules and the preservation of peace does not support Hobbes. It seemed more plausible to maintain the two-level view that peace is preserved best if we observe moral rules without thinking about this effect. Does this sort of indirect strategy refute the fool?

It may be difficult to see the point of observing the laws of nature, if we consider one action at a time; for then it is easy to see how we may profit by violating them. But we see

[8] '... if he live in society, it is by the errors of other men, which he could not foresee, nor reckon upon; and consequently against the reason of his preservation.' (*L.* 15.5)

[9] See §158. [10] Darwall, *BMIO* 75, accepts this account of the answer to the fool.

their point if we consider the benefit of having them observed as a whole, in contrast to having them violated as a whole. This point of view shows us why it is better to have some mechanism for compelling obedience to the laws of nature. A coercive mechanism ensures obedience, obedience ensures peace, and we all benefit from peace. If this indirect, global reflexion shows us the benefits of observing the laws of nature, it ought to influence our choice of the motives we want to encourage.

The argument with the fool shows us some motives that we ought not to encourage. We will all be better off if we are all unlike the fool, so that we do not calculate our advantage in particular situations. We will be better off if we confine our calculation of advantage to the initial calculation of the benefits of peace and general observance of the laws of nature. Hobbes suggests that when we enter the state we give up the condition in which 'private appetite is the measure of good and evil'.[11]

Here Hobbes continues his ambiguous and perhaps confused argument about 'discord and conflicts' in our evaluations in the state of nature.[12] He has argued that since what each person calls good is simply what he desires, we are in 'discord' about goods, because our desires differ. This discord results in a state of war. We resolve the discord by agreeing that peace is good, because it fulfils each person's overriding desire. The commonwealth is founded on this common point of view, and requires us to agree in our judgments about goods.

Agreement about goods is not enough, however. For we might agree that it is good for the fool to violate justice. If this is the judgment on which the fool acts, he is not relying on purely private appetite. Similarly, he agrees with other people in thinking peace is good, though he does not agree in observing all the rules designed for preserving peace. We do not require him simply to agree with us in our judgments about what is good; we also require him to agree in being guided by what is good for all of us. Hobbes obscures this point in his claims about private appetite and agreement.

We might, then, treat the claim about abandoning private appetite as an indirect consequentialist claim; in the commonwealth we abandon the policy of considering the costs and benefits of each particular action prescribed by a moral rule. We take a two-level attitude. At the deliberative level, we accord supremacy to the moral rules, and we do not think about whether we gain most for ourselves by observing them. At the reflective level

[11] 'And therefore, so long a man is in the condition of mere nature, (which is a condition of war), as private appetite is the measure of good, and evil: and consequently all men agree on this, that peace is good, and therefore also the way, or means of peace, which (as I have showed before) are justice, gratitude, modesty, equity, mercy, and the rest of the laws of nature, are good: that is to say: moral virtues; and their contrary vices, evil.' (*L.* 15.40) '. . . one [seditious doctrine] is that every private man is judge of good and evil actions. This is true in the condition of mere nature, where there are no civil laws; and also under civil government in such cases as are not determined by the law. But otherwise, it is manifest that the measure of good and evil actions is the civil law . . . From this false doctrine, men are disposed to debate with themselves and dispute the commands of the Commonwealth, and afterwards to obey or disobey them as in their private judgments they shall think fit; whereby the Commonwealth is distracted and weakened.' (*L.* 29.6) 'And when men that think themselves wiser than all others clamour and demand right reason for judge, yet seek no more but that things should be determined by no other men's reason but their own, it is as intolerable in the society of men, as it is in play after trump is turned to use for trump on every occasion that suit whereof they have most in their hand. For they do nothing else, that will have every of their passions, as it comes to bear sway in them, to be taken for right reason, and that in their own controversies: bewraying their want of right reason by the claim they lay to it.' (*L.* 5.3) *Civ.* 3.32 (quoted in §478) also suggests that when we recognize that the laws of nature aim at peace, we resolve disagreements about what things are good, because we see that the laws of nature aim at peace, which we all take to be good.

[12] See §478.

we observe that in according supremacy to morality at the deliberative level we preserve peace, and therefore gain more for ourselves than we would gain if we were to think about our own advantage at the deliberative level. We do not follow the fool in assessing the consequences of this or that particular violation of the laws of nature; we bind ourselves to accept the laws of nature as the measure of good and evil.

This is a legitimate two-level indirect consequentialist move. We may be able to see that we are better off if we adhere to the laws of nature without consideration of our own advantage. In that case, just people do better for themselves than fools do. The fact that everyone else has equally good reason to draw the fool's conclusion, and that everyone will be worse off if everyone draws it, can be turned to Hobbes's advantage. Prudential calculation, carried out at the right level and in answer to the right question, shows why we are better off if we do not think as the fool thinks.[13]

This two-level argument, however, does not entirely answer the fool. Even if he agrees to abandon his practice of calculating his advantage in particular cases, he might ask whether it is in his interest to keep this agreement. Even if he agrees that people ought to be trained to obey the laws of nature without question, he might still find that his training leaves him aware of the advantages he might gain by violating the laws of nature. He certainly benefits if other people obey the laws of nature and abandon the calculating of advantages. He also benefits if he appears to be like other people in these ways. Still, he may benefit even more if he is different from other people and is ready to take advantage of opportunities for disobedience.[14] The fool takes unfair advantage of others; but why should this concern him from the point of view of his self-interest?[15]

A further argument for indirect prudence might try to exploit the fool's reasoning. Since we can see that everyone, arguing as a direct egoist, may reach the fool's conclusion, we can see that once we allow ourselves the licence to deliberate as direct egoists, we undermine the system that we try to set up in our collective interest. It is in everyone's interest, therefore, to advocate a system of moral education that trains everyone not to think of their individual interest. While we may advocate this system for indirect egoist reasons, we ought not to allow people to ask about its indirect egoist basis; for once they ask that question, they will see that it is rational for each of them not to follow the requirements of the system.[16]

[13] Gauthier, 'Theorist' 21; 'Three' 142–3, suggests this line of argument. He argues that in emerging from the state of nature we must give up the right of nature to think for ourselves about the means to our self-preservation: 'In place of natural reason, one must accept the conventional reason of the law, which directs one to adhere to one's covenants' (143). He quotes from Hobbes's discussion of Bramhall (*EW* v 193): 'We choose no further than we can weigh. That is good to every man, which is so far good as he can see. All the real good, which we call honest and morally virtuous, is that which is not repugnant to the law, civil or natural; for the law is all the right reason we have, and . . . is the infallible rule of moral goodness. The reason whereof is this, that because neither mine nor the Bishop's reason is right reason fit to be a rule of our moral actions, we have therefore set up over ourselves a sovereign governor, and agreed that his laws shall be unto us, whatsoever they be, in the place of right reason, to dictate to us what is really good. In the same manner as men in playing turn up trump, and as in playing their game their morality consisteth in not renouncing, so in our civil conversation our morality is all contained in not disobeying of the laws.'

[14] Gauthier, 'Three' 144–5, acknowledges that these questions arise for his argument. He discusses them in *MA*, ch. 6. See also Hampton, *HSCT* 209–14.

[15] On the fool see Kavka, *HMPT* 137–56. On rule egoism see 358, 380, discussed by Gauthier, 'Taming'.

[16] This would be the moral equivalent of giving up our right to self-defence once we enter the state, also on indirect egoist grounds. See Hampton, *HSCT* 201. An indirect argument could answer the difficulty she raises for Hobbes, but only at the greater cost I describe.

If Hobbes went this far, he would endorse an opaque two-level theory. Once we understand the reason—based on collective self-interest—for the moral rules that we must (for reasons of collective self-interest) obey from non-egoistic motives, we must also see that our individual self-interest sometimes justifies the breaking of the rules. Hence our commitment to the rules cannot survive discovery of their basis.

If Hobbes had to reach this conclusion, he could still maintain that knowledge of his theory of human nature and the basis of morality is useful for the cultivation of the moral virtues. But it will be useful only for the cultivation of moral virtues in people who do not know his theory. If we have the task of constructing and teaching a moral code for a given society, and we are convinced by Hobbesian arguments about the importance of peace and the importance of rigid adherence to the laws of nature, we will try to train citizens, in their collective interest, to adhere rigidly to the laws of nature without raising any questions about their own interest. If they start to ask whether rigid adherence promotes their own interest, they will start thinking like the fool.

We will reach this conclusion from Hobbesian premisses, if we reject his reasons for believing that the deliberative and the reflective point of view are transparent to each other. These reasons underlie his confidence in answering the fool. But if Hobbes were to abandon his belief in transparency, he would have to abandon the psychological assumptions that make it seem plausible to base morality on self-preservation in the first place; for an indirect argument assumes that we can act for reasons that do not seem to us to promote our own interest. If Hobbes were to admit that, he would be abandoning his reason for believing that the desire for self-preservation is the basis of the laws of nature.

Even if Hobbes were to retreat from his actual position to an opaque two-level theory of morality and self-interest, he would face some difficulty in defending a stable commitment to morality. How could a reflective agent be expected not to ask about the relation between her own interest and the moral rules she has been trained to accept? Once she raises the question, she seems to have good Hobbesian reasons for taking the fool's point of view. This conclusion vindicates some of the objections of Hobbes's opponents who regarded his views as dangerous to morality.

To answer these objections Hobbes might appeal to his further claim that the laws of nature are divine commands. If people are trained to recognize this, they have a motive to follow them even if they do not think about their natural consequences (apart from divine sanctions) for the preservation of peace. If Hobbes took this view, he would reach a position rather similar to the one that Berkeley defends in his sermon 'Passive Obedience'.[17] Perhaps God has chosen to exercise divine power by commanding obedience to rules that in fact promote the preservation of peace; but we need not take this consideration into account, since we have a sufficient motive in the prospect of divine punishment for disobedience. If Hobbes took this view, the appeal to divine commands would bear more weight than it bears in his actual argument.[18] He does not consider this possibility; he relies on a transparent two-level defence of morality.

[17] On Berkeley see §699.

[18] This might be regarded as a grain of truth in Warrender's emphasis on divine commands in Hobbes's position. See §487.

505. Psychology and Morality: The Presumption of Equality

In considering objections to Hobbes's defence of morality, we have relied on his psychological assumptions, and on his attempt to reduce norms and obligations to facts about overriding motives. If he maintains this part of his position, he has to rely on some rather strong psychological assumptions that have no obvious basis in his own account of human nature.

It is therefore worth considering a different interpretation of Hobbes's assumptions. We might suggest that, though they are empirically implausible, they deserve consideration as procedural assumptions about morality. Perhaps Hobbes is not describing what is historically or psychologically likely or realistic, but setting out the conditions in which the correctness of a moral rule or system should be assessed. Hobbes seeks to explain the characteristics of moral principles by reference to the state of nature. Demands and assumptions characteristic of moral principles are, in his view, intelligible responses to the specific circumstances of the state of nature. Hence they are intelligible devices for dealing with the threats to peace that arise in the state of nature; since they preserve a commonwealth, they keep us out of the state of nature. So far we have taken arguments from the state of nature to appeal to psychological necessity and plausibility, as determined by Hobbes's psychology. But it is also worth considering them as procedural arguments about the moral point of view.

We can make these different possibilities clearer by examining some of the difficulties that arise for Hobbes's claim that morality presumes equality. The ninth law of nature requires every man to acknowledge every other man as his equal. The tenth law, relying on this acknowledgment, asserts that people have equal rights on entry into the state.[19] People in the state of nature are disposed to demand equal treatment for themselves, and no agreement can be made on any other basis. Hence the rules accepted in the state of nature capture the recognized principles of justice and morality.

[19] 'If nature therefore have made men equal, their equality is to be acknowledged; or if nature have made them unequal, yet because men that think themselves equal will not enter into conditions of peace but upon equal terms, such equality must be admitted. And therefore for the ninth law of nature, I put this: that every man acknowledge another for his equal by nature. The breach of this precept is pride. On this law dependeth another: that at the entrance into conditions of peace, no man require to reserve to himself any right which he is not content should be reserved to every one of the rest.' (*L.* 15.21–2) On equality and justice see also: *EL* 16.5: '. . . injury, which is the injustice of action, consisteth . . . in the inequality that men, contrary to nature and reason, assume unto themselves above their fellows'. On this point Hobbes believes Aristotle is completely mistaken. See *EL* 17.1: 'The question, which is the better man, is determinable only in the estate of government and policy, though it be mistaken for a question of nature, not only by ignorant men, . . . but also by him, whose opinions are at this day, and in these parts of greater authority than any other human writings. . . . For though there were such a difference of nature, that master and servant were not by consent of men, but by inherent virtue; yet who hath that eminency of virtue, above others, and who is so stupid as not to govern himself, shall never be agreed upon amongst men; who do every one naturally think himself as able, at the least, to govern another, as another to govern him. And . . . as long as men arrogate to themselves more honour than they give to others, it cannot be imagined how they can possibly live in peace: and consequently we are to suppose, that for peace sake, nature hath ordained this law, That every man acknowledge other for his equal. And the breach of this law, is that we call pride.' Hobbes interprets the commandments of Jesus as requiring that a man 'should esteem his neighbour worthy all rights and privileges that himself enjoyeth; and attribute unto him whatsoever he looketh should be attributed unto himself: which is no more, but that he should be humble, meek, and contented with equality.' (*EL* 18.6) Failure to acknowledge equality is the source of perpetual war in the state of nature: 'But it is easily judged how disagreeable a thing to the preservation either of mankind, or of each single man, a perpetual war is: But it is perpetual in its own nature, because in regard of the equality of those that strive, it cannot be ended by victory; for in this state the conqueror is subject to so much danger, as it were to be accounted a miracle, if any, even the most strong should close up his life with many years, and old age.' (*Civ.* 1 13) On the importance of equality see Hampton, *HSCT*, 24–7.

If moral rules must satisfy a demand for equality, we can see why not all possible rules for maintaining peace are principles of morality. Hobbes's position on this point is not completely clear. He believes that peace is worth any price; if we can secure peace only by accepting someone's offer to make us his servants on any condition he chooses, that is what we have to do. Hence we have no reasonable objection to tyranny. Hobbes does not regard this condition as slavery, since he believes slaves have given no promise to submit to their captors; but it need not differ from the condition of a slave in any other respect.[20]

But despite this attitude to tyranny and oppression, Hobbes does not consider principles that maintain peace by forcing some people into miserable conditions in order to make others better off, even though this arrangement is not necessary for maintaining peace. This is not a purely theoretical possibility that he neglects; many oppressive governments violate many of Hobbes's laws of nature while still maintaining peace. Still, he does not consider the possibility of these principles that maintain peace, but violate the laws of nature. The presumption of equality explains why we might rule out these principles; if they allow oppression of some people simply for other people's benefit, we would not accept them from a starting point of equality.

Hobbes claims that the presumption of equality is realistic because it expresses the actual facts about individuals in the state of nature, and the terms on which they must be supposed to enter the commonwealth. Is he justified in this claim? Perhaps people in the original position would be sensible not to count too heavily on their physical or mental superiority to other particular individuals. But they surely need to consider the possibility that people are unequal in their capacity to grasp the benefits of peace; for the commonwealth is set up to counteract the effects of miscalculation about the effects of grasping at short-term advantage. This question about inequality arises even if we accept Hobbes's assumption that the desire for self-preservation is dominant among people in the state of nature.

But we have also found reasons to question the assumption about self-preservation. The shared desire for self-preservation is not enough to remove distrust and instability in the state of nature. To explain the formation of the commonwealth, it is more plausible to assume some degree of fanaticism in members of gangs who might coerce or persuade others to submit to them. If this is the most plausible mechanism for generating a Hobbesian commonwealth from the state of nature, Hobbes's defence of the presumption of equality is open to doubt. For if a gang can coerce other people for long enough to set up a relatively stable order, individuals have good reason to accept the benefits of peace without equality.

[20] 'Dominion acquired by conquest, or victory in war, is that which some writers call despotical. . . . And this dominion is then acquired to the victor when the vanquished, to avoid the present stroke of death, covenanteth, . . . that so long as his life and the liberty of his body is allowed him, the victor shall have the use thereof at his pleasure. And after such covenant made, the vanquished is a servant, and not before: for by the word servant . . . is not meant a captive, which is kept in prison, or bonds, till the owner of him that took him, or bought him of one that did, shall consider what to do with him: for such men, commonly called slaves, have no obligation at all; but may break their bonds, or the prison; and kill, or carry away captive their master, justly: but one that, being taken, hath corporal liberty allowed him; and upon promise not to run away, nor to do violence to his master, is trusted by him. It is not therefore the victory that giveth the right of dominion over the vanquished, but his own covenant.' (*L.* 20.10–11) 'And because the name of tyranny signifieth nothing more nor less than the name of sovereignty, be it in one or many men, saving that they that use the former word are understood to be angry with them they call tyrants; I think the toleration of a professed hatred of tyranny is a toleration of hatred to commonwealth in general, and another evil seed, not differing much from the former.' (*L.*, Review 9)

This is a case of 'despotical dominion';[21] Hobbes believes that we must accept it if it is the only option open, since any condition that ends the war of all against all is better than the state of nature.

If this is true, a tyrannical regime, violating the laws of nature but preserving the peace, seems to be the most probable alternative to the state of nature. It is difficult to agree with Hobbes's assumption that facts about the state of nature justify his presumption of equality. The ninth and tenth laws of nature, therefore, do not seem necessary for the preservation of peace. Since these two laws of nature are plausible and important moral principles, Hobbes's failure to explain them as means to the preservation of peace tends to undermine his attempted explanation of the traditional virtues. The unrealistic character of the presumption of equality—regarded from the point of view of Hobbes's state of nature—raises a doubt about Hobbes's account of morality.[22]

Hobbes is right to suggest that it is morally appropriate to insist that some equality 'must be admitted' in specifying the terms of social co-operation. A social institution or practice or law that was designed entirely for the benefit of some people without reference to any benefit of the others would be open to objection on moral grounds. Similarly, one might defend a presumption of equality and equal rights as a basic constraint on the preservation of peace; the only peace that deserves to be maintained, one might argue, is the peace that safeguards equal rights. If Hobbes were entitled to that presumption, it would be easier for him to reject some apparently immoral but efficient measures for preserving peace.

We might offer the same defence of assumptions about the equality of individuals within a commonwealth. Hobbes seems to assume equal astuteness and energy in different individuals; without such an assumption his arguments against the libertarian and the non-conformist collapse. The assumption is not empirically plausible, but we might argue that it describes the right point of view for evaluating moral claims. Hobbes rules out calculations that take advantage of other people's lack of astuteness and energy in breaking rules. We might defend him by arguing that it is unfair to take advantage of people in these ways. To avoid taking advantage of them, we ought to assume the same high level of astuteness in everyone.[23]

Hobbes speaks as though the presumption of equality rests simply on people's presumed unwillingness to accept unequal treatment. Such a presumption is difficult to defend on empirical grounds, and that is the only defence he allows. But his emphasis on the presumption highlights a feature of morality that might be defended apart from Hobbes's psychological assumptions.[24] We might take the presumption of equality to mean that a moral principle is acceptable if and only if it can be defended to a group of rational self-interested, non-benevolent agents who regard themselves as equal to each other. This interpretation of Hobbes explains why he sometimes appeals to reciprocity, and advises us to take the other person's point of view.[25] If we do this, we use a social contract as a point

[21] See §§494–5. [22] On Hobbes on equality cf. Green, *PE* §190.

[23] Kavka, *HMPT* 188–208, 400, offers a moral interpretation of Hobbes's contract. Gauthier, 'Taming', objects that the state of nature is not a privileged situation for choice (analogous to Rawls's original position).

[24] Hume's account of justice also rests moral demands on empirical psychological claims See §770.

[25] '. . . there is an easy rule to know upon a sudden whether the action I be to do, be against the law of nature or not. And it is but this: that a man imagine himself in the place of the party with whom he hath to do, and reciprocally him in

of view for appraising rules from the impartial, and hence (supposedly) the moral point of view.

506. Psychology and Morality: Risk and Reciprocity

This approach to Hobbesian assumptions as features of the moral point of view may also throw light on his treatment of risk. He relies on a strong aversion to risk in his answer to the revolutionary, but it seems empirically implausible to assume that everyone who contemplates revolutionary action is strongly averse to risk. Nonetheless, this attitude may express the morally right point of view for considering the risk of catastrophe. Since moral rules are supposed to insure us against catastrophe, rather than simply to improve our chances of increasing our welfare, perhaps we should appraise them from a point of view that is strongly averse to the risk of catastrophe. This policy might be justified from a moral point of view, if it is assumed that morality requires us to make our decision without reference to the specific circumstances and risks that we face.

Similarly, the reply to the fool is more plausible if Hobbes's assumptions about risk are not empirical, but procedural assumptions that define the considerations that a moral argument should take into account. If the fool ought to assume that others are his equals in astuteness, he ought not to act on the assumption that he can deceive them. Similarly, if he ought to be extremely averse to the dangers of being found out, he ought not to act on ordinary calculations about the probability of being found out. His attitude, on this view, does not necessarily rest on false empirical assumptions, but it violates the procedures that define the moral point of view.

These procedural attitudes to equality and to probability are summed up in Hobbes's treatment of the Golden Rule.[26] He suggests that if we observe it, we can save ourselves the trouble of working out the long-term benefits of observing each law of nature on each occasion. I ought (rationally) to assume it is probable that other people will treat me in the way I treat them, and so I ought (rationally) to treat them in the way I would want them to treat me; if I do this, I will be following the laws of nature. In observing the Golden Rule, I follow a pattern of equal treatment between others and between others and myself. I rely on an assumption of reciprocity that has not been shown to be probable. The thought that other people might not be as malevolent or exploitative or clever as I am may suggest to me that I do not need to worry about retaliation for bad treatment. But Hobbes insists that I ought to exclude any such thought from my moral calculation, since it would allow me to give an unfair advantage to myself.

We might claim that if morality can be seen to be reasonable in the light of these assumptions about knowledge and motives, Hobbes has justified morality. For he has shown (we might suggest) that morality can be justified to a 'hypothetical' egoist, in the light of specific assumptions about the agent's motives, knowledge, and circumstances.

his. Which is no more but a changing, as it were, of the scales. For every man's passion weigheth heavy in his own scale, but not in the scale of his neighbour.' (*EL* 17.9).

[26] See *EL* 17.9, just quoted; *Civ*. 3.26; *L*. 15.35.

If this suggestion can be defended in detail, it is an important result. It captures an important aspect of the moral point of view by reference to a special kind of hypothetical egoist.

But even if we could design a hypothetical egoist to whom it would appear reasonable to choose all or most of morality, we would not have reached Hobbes's intended result. For why is the hypothetical egoist relevant? If the constraints that distinguish him from ordinary people are reasonable only from the moral point of view, how do they explain or justify the moral point of view?

Hobbes does not intend to raise these questions. He intends to describe actual agents and to justify morality to them. If he only describes hypothetical agents whose differences from actual agents are not psychologically plausible, he does not justify morality. If moral principles rely on assumptions that he cannot defend from his account of the state of nature and the commonwealth, his explanation and justification collapse. Still, one might argue that Hobbes's main insight is not the psychological theory that is meant to explain morality, but the moral constraints that capture the moral point of view.[27]

507. Moral Theory in Hobbes's System

The difficulties in Hobbes's account of our reasons for observing morality within the state expose some difficulties in his broader aim of reconciling his account of morality with his psychology. His account of morality as a set of rules for the preservation of peace and the public good departs from older conceptions of morality, by recommending the practice of the moral virtues only within the framework of the commonwealth. Still, the principles that he accepts are a part of morality, as understood by older views.

Moreover, if he is committed to a two-level opaque theory, the first-level reasons for observing these principles may be close to those given by the old moral philosophers. Hobbes's account of morality as consisting of principles for preserving the commonwealth is more plausible at the second level than at the first; it may give reasons for cultivating the virtues and the reasons for acting that the old moral philosophers defend. Similarly, his account of morality as counsels of self-preservation is more plausible at a still higher level, telling us why we have good reason to design principles whose observance preserves the commonwealth.

Hobbes does not clearly distinguish the different roles of his claims about preservation of the commonwealth and about self-preservation. Once we distinguish them, we see that he stays closer to the old moral philosophers than at first he appears to. The possibility of an opaque two-level theory resolves some of the difficulties that face Hobbes's actual theory with its assumption of transparency; but it also raises further difficulties for him.

Human nature itself, as Hobbes understands it, gives us no reason for observing moral rules. Nothing about human nature itself makes morality suitable for it in its own right;

[27] In this way one might support the judgment that he is 'the father of British ethics in its greatest period, although most of his progeny were anxious to show why and in what ways they could not live down to so disreputable an ancestor' (Laird, *H* p. v).

hence knowledge of human nature does not show that morality is a non-instrumental element in the human good.[28] A correct account of human nature shows, in Hobbes's view, that no correct conception of the human good supports claims about the first principles of natural law. To this extent, he is a radical sceptic about morality.

He believes, however, that, given the actual circumstances that face human beings, he can avoid general scepticism about morality. His analysis of the content of morality implies that it aims at the public good; hence, if we find a reason, from an egoistic hedonist point of view, to pursue the public good, we find a reason to observe moral rules. He thinks he has found an appropriate reason in the desirability of peace. Peace is attractive to human beings in the state of nature. Once we see that the moral rules are means to attaining and to preserving peace, we see reason to take them seriously.

This argument fails, if it is intended as a realistic prudential argument aimed at a reasonably astute and well-informed agent who is not already committed to morality for its own sake. It fails, whether it is meant to show that such an agent has overriding reason to enter a commonwealth, or to show that such an agent within a commonwealth has overriding reason to observe the moral rules that preserve the commonwealth.

This objection would confront Hobbes even if he had a traditional conception of practical reason, and did not try to reduce reasons to motives. But he also faces a more serious objection. For he cannot easily begin the appropriate sort of instrumental argument for morality. His argument requires an account of practical reasoning that is alien to his explicit account. In defending morality, he assumes that in order to grasp the instrumental role of the laws of nature we must form a conception of our overall, long-term good and keep this steadily in mind. But we cannot form such a conception if we rely on Hobbesian deliberation. The function of Hobbesian deliberation is simply to discover the means to the satisfaction of our currently strongest desire; the results of this sort of deliberation do not match the results of deliberation about our long-term good.

Hobbes cannot reasonably predict, then, that people who conform to Hobbesian psychological laws will accept morality. If he argues that nonetheless such people have good reason to care about morality, he introduces normative considerations that have no basis in the practical reason that he recognizes. We have reason to doubt Hobbes's claim that if his account of human nature and rationality is right, we can justify a firm commitment to morality. It turns out that we cannot even justify a firm commitment to prudence, as ordinarily understood. Hobbes's attempt to explain and justify morality from an empirically respectable (as he supposes) account of human nature neither explains nor justifies prudence or morality.

When Hobbes sets out to explain why the traditional moral virtues are genuine virtues, he assumes that traditional views are right in supposing that we have good reason to acquire and to practise these virtues, so that the 'fool' and similar doubters are mistaken. In his view, reasons and obligations are reducible to motives. Hence he argues that we have good reason to practise the virtues by arguing that moral obligation is a form of prudential motivation. He does not suppose he could give a correct account of the moral virtues without also showing that we have reason to cultivate them.

[28] Hobbes and Butler on nature; see §675.

If Hobbes does not find a vindicating reduction of the moral virtues, where has he gone wrong? His critics give different answers. According to sentimentalist critics, he has appealed to the wrong non-normative facts, because he is wrong about the motives that actually influence us. Hutcheson treats normative facts as facts about the reactions of our moral sense.

According to rationalist critics, Hobbes is more deeply mistaken. Cudworth and Clarke attack all attempts to vindicate morality by reducing normative facts (i.e., facts about what we ought to do, and what we have reason to do) to non-normative psychological facts (about what we are in fact moved to do). This rationalist criticism of Hobbes also raises a question about Hutcheson's reductive position.

If we are convinced by Cudworth's and Clarke's arguments against Hobbes, and if we reject the reduction of moral obligation to motivation, we open a gap that he keeps closed. We cannot give Hobbes's reason for believing that if we have a moral obligation to do x, we thereby have a sufficient reason and motive for doing x. But if the appropriate connexion between obligations, reasons, and motives does not appear immediately in our account of moral obligation itself, where are we to find it? Once we raise this question, we can see both why the reductive aspirations of Hobbes's account of obligation remain attractive to many theorists, and why theorists who reject these reductive aspirations raise difficulties for themselves.

How far does Hobbes keep his promise to practise a new method in moral philosophy? He offers something new in seeking a vindicating reduction of moral obligation to non-moral psychological facts about motivation. If he had succeeded in his vindicating reduction, he would have discovered the nature of moral virtues and our reasons for practising them, by reference to an account of human motives that does not itself rely on any normative non-psychological assumptions about morality or about rationality. But his reduction fails. His attempted account of deliberation and practical reason is not even descriptively adequate; what he describes is not deliberation, but only the mental processes that are allowed within his psychological theory. Hobbes's psychological theory is questionable; and if it were correct, it would undermine, rather than vindicate, morality. The difficulties that he encounters in practising his new method suggest objections to the method.

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SPINOZA

508. Spinoza's Attitude to Ethics

Both the title of the *Ethics* and some of its contents imply that Spinoza intends to contribute to moral philosophy. The last three parts of the *Ethics*, on the affects and on human freedom, are directly about ethical questions. The first two parts, on God and on the origin and nature of the mind, are on topics that many philosophers take to be relevant to moral questions. Moreover, Spinoza suggests that his philosophy supports important practical conclusions. It shows us why we should depart from some ordinary assumptions and outlooks on life. We should not care as much as most people care about the goals, aims, and concerns that we adopt under the influence of emotions. Human bondage consists in 'man's lack of power to moderate [or "govern", moderari] and restrain the affects' (*Ethics* 4Pref. = C 543).[1] Spinoza agrees with one of the main tendencies of Platonic and Aristotelian moral philosophy. Aquinas, for instance, clearly believes that the outlook we form under the influence of our passions misleads us about what is worth pursuing in life.

Spinoza, however, rejects Aquinas' alternative to domination by the passions. Aquinas believes that our main ethical task is to exercise our will in free and responsible action that restrains and controls our emotions; we should form our will in accordance with a true conception of the proper ultimate end of a human being, and if we freely choose to adapt, modify, or restrain our passions in the light of this end, we achieve the virtues. These claims about choice and action appear to Spinoza to be basically misguided.

Spinoza exposes the basic errors of traditional eudaemonist moral philosophy, in the parts of the *Ethics* that might appear to be less relevant to ethics. For he believes that a true account of the nature of the universe and of human beings exposes the errors in a Scholastic view of agency. Scholastic errors rest on false conceptions of freedom and of teleological order. Once we reveal these errors, we can understand human freedom and the human good without reference to indefensible claims about will and agency.

This summary of Spinoza's conclusion also raises a question about his position. In rejecting a Scholastic view of will, freedom, and agency, Spinoza agrees with Hobbes. But Hobbes

[1] I will normally omit the title of the *Ethics*, and cite by part and subdivision, with the page in Curley's edition. Thus, 4d1 = C 546, refers to Part Four, Definition 1, on p. 546 of Curley. Quotations are taken from (or based on) Curley.

also tries to replace the Scholastic view with a view of human nature and human agency that supports different ethical conclusions from Spinoza's. We have found reasons for doubt about Hobbes's criticism of the Scholastic view, about his own account of agency, and about the moral theory that he rests on it. We may ask, therefore, whether Spinoza does better than Hobbes on these points.

He argues that, as Hobbes also believes, the Scholastic view implies that human actions are entirely outside the natural order of cause and effect and of natural law. Since Spinoza believes that human actions cannot have this status, he rejects the Scholastic conception of agency. But he does not thereby undermine belief in agency; he might still allow an account that avoided the Scholastic non-naturalist assumptions.

He seems to hold, however, that Hobbes repeats the errors of the Scholastics; for Hobbes retains their assumption that we can affect our behaviour by our will, deliberation, and election. This seems to be a common-sense assumption about will and action, not confined to any particular philosophical theory. If Spinoza rejects this common-sense assumption, he seems to leave little room for agency, and hence little room for ethics. If, then, we are convinced by Spinoza's metaphysics, and we agree that it undermines traditional ethics, perhaps we will find that it undermines his own ethics too. On the other hand, if we interpret the metaphysical conclusions so that they leave room for Spinoza's ethical outlook, perhaps we will find that they lose their force against traditional views.

Spinoza does not believe that he faces this dilemma, because his ethical views seem to him to be defensible without common-sense assumptions about agency. This is perhaps the most challenging aspect of his conception of ethics. Though we might claim that Hobbes undermines agency through his views about deliberation and action, this is not how Hobbes sees it; he takes himself to vindicate agency by explaining it in non-Scholastic terms. Spinoza goes beyond Hobbes in rejecting common-sense views about action. But he still believes, as Hobbes does, that he vindicates ethics. We need to see whether he can reconstruct ethics so that it can do without agency.

This is one reasonable way to approach Spinoza. But we might also consider whether his moral outlook is plausible without reference to the metaphysics views that precede it in his argument. Some of Hobbes's moral views can be evaluated without reference to his claims about action and human nature. It is worth seeing whether the same is true of Spinoza.

509. Mind and the Limits of Agency

To understand how Spinoza argues for his ethical proposals, we have to grasp his distinctive views about agency. We normally assume that we are capable of actions, and that ethics matters because it concerns (among other things) the regulation of actions. Among the sorts of actions that matter to ethics are my walking on your toes, helping you up if you have fallen, signing a cheque to pay you what I owe you, saying something that offends you. Each of these actions includes a bodily movement, and each of them may, in the appropriate circumstances, be right or wrong, virtuous or vicious. The acceptance and improvement of moral judgments seem to matter for action because we seem capable of different bodily movements in the appropriate circumstances. Similarly, when we praise or

blame people, we often praise or blame them not only for having good or bad thoughts, but for forming these thoughts into intentions that normally produce bodily movements of the relevant sort.

Spinoza rejects these claims about agency. They rest on the assumption that mental states can cause bodily movements, but this assumption, in his view, is false. He especially attacks Descartes for his belief in the possibility of interaction between mind and body. Descartes believes in interaction through the medium of the pineal gland, and Spinoza rejects this account of how interaction is possible (5Pref = C 596). But he does not merely reject Descartes's account; he also believes that what Descartes tries to explain cannot be explained, because there is nothing to explain.

Interaction between mind and body is impossible, according to Spinoza, because we cannot recognize the appropriate sorts of necessitating relations between mental and bodily events.[2] We find the appropriate sort of necessitation in the relation of different features of a triangle. The angles of a triangle add up to 180 degrees because a triangle has three sides; the fact about its angles follows from the fact about its sides. Similarly, the conclusion of a syllogism is true because its premisses are true and the conclusion follows from the premisses. According to Spinoza, genuine causation includes this sort of necessity.[3] If we understand the nature of the universe, we see how all of its states of affairs are related by this sort of necessity. If mental and bodily events are not related by this sort of necessity, the genuine states of the universe do not include causal connexions between mind and body.

If mind and body are not causally connected, how are we to explain our stubborn conviction that they are closely related in some way, so that we mistakenly suppose they are causally connected? Spinoza explains our error by claiming that the body is the object of the idea constituting the human mind (2p13d = C 457). What we are aware of, then, in a mental state is some state of the body.

To say that everything we are aware of is some state of the body is to reject a version of mind-body dualism. Spinoza denies that our awareness of an act of will or thought gives us knowledge of a purely mental event with no bodily aspect at all. But even if he is right about this, mind and body may interact; for if mental events are also bodily events, they seem to be capable of causing bodily events. In this respect, we might be tempted to express Spinoza's position as a form of materialism, affirming that all mental events are also physical events with physical causes and effects.[4]

This materialist view, however, does not take account of all of Spinoza's views. He goes further insofar as he also denies interaction between mental and bodily events. For he does not agree that a mental event can cause a physical event, even if the mental event is itself physical. He suggests that the mental event is simply the awareness of a bodily event. When we think our intention of raising our arm has caused us to raise our arm, we are wrong; our intention is simply the awareness of a physical event that has really caused the rising of our arm. The causal connexion holds not between our intention and the rising of our arm, but between the physical event our intention makes us aware of and the rising of our arm.

[2] See Bennett, *SSE* 29–32, on causal rationalism, referring to 1a3.

[3] Cf. 4p57s = C 578.

[4] This is Hampshire's view of Spinoza in *S* 55–61; *TTM* 58.

This account of mental events conflicts with ordinary assumptions about agency. If I am watching an assembly line by closed-circuit television, I may have mental states that are aware of every state of the assembly line, but the content of these mental states does not causally explain anything about the assembly line. In this case the direction of causation and explanation goes from the assembly line to my awareness of it. If I were also provided with a panel of buttons to push while I watch the process on the assembly line, and I did not know what was going on, I might be deceived into believing that I control the assembly line by pushing the buttons. If I had the same sort of access to states of my own brain, but they operated quite independently of the mental content of my awareness of them, I might be under the illusion that I control them through my mental content, but in fact the mental content would be causally irrelevant to the states of my brain; this would still be true even if the states of awareness were themselves further brain states.

This conception of my mental states as merely epiphenomenal states of awareness of physical states fits Spinoza's attack on ordinary assumptions about agency. But it does not completely fit his views about mind and body; for our comparison with the television implies causal interaction between physical states (of the assembly line or brain) and states of awareness. On Spinoza's view, connecting causation with necessity, this direction of causation from body to mind is no less unintelligible than the direction that goes from the mind to the body. He does not explain how he can avoid some sort of causation in his claims about objects and ideas. But since this direction of causation is not the most important one for claims about agency, we need not pursue this objection to his position; we can concentrate on the other direction of causation.

We believe we have reliable access to agency, because we are aware of causal influence of our mental states on our actions. We take this to be familiar from experience.[5] Moreover, we take it to be obvious that the intentional and rational content of our mental states explains intelligent action.[6] This common conviction does not rest on metaphysical dualist assumptions. It asserts that mental properties are relevant to explaining those physical events that are also actions. If the object to be explained is a picture or a temple, it needs to be explained—we assume—by certain kinds of aims and intentions.

Spinoza attacks common convictions about mental explanation and causation on different grounds. Some of his attacks seem to be directed at the conviction that choices and decisions are free.[7] We might take him to mean that our false beliefs about freedom reflect ignorance of the causes of our mental states; if that is all he means, he need not deny that the mental states cause bodily movements.

[5] 'But they will say that—whether or not they know by what means the mind moves the body—they still have experience that unless the human mind were capable of thinking, the body would be inactive.' (3p2s = C 495)

[6] 'But they will say that it cannot happen that the causes of buildings, of paintings, and of things of this kind, which are made only by human skill, should be able to be deduced from the laws of nature alone, insofar as it is considered to be only corporeal; nor would the human body be able to build a temple, if it were not determined and led by the mind.' (3p2s = C 496)

[7] 'So the infant believes he freely desires (appetere) the milk; the angry child that he wills (velle) vengeance; and the timid, flight. So the drunk believes that it is from a free decision of the mind that he speaks the things he later, when sober, would will (vellet) not to have said. . . . So experience itself, no less clearly than reason, teaches that men believe themselves free because they are conscious of their own actions and ignorant of the causes by which they are determined, that the decisions of the mind are nothing but the desires (appetitus) themselves, which therefore vary as the disposition of the body varies.' (3p2s = C 496–7)

But if this were all Spinoza meant, he would not have argued for his more sweeping claim that 'the body cannot determine the mind to thinking, and the mind cannot determine the body to motion, to rest, or to anything else . . .' (3p2 = C 494). He believes that our illusions about freedom reflect general ignorance about causation. Our belief that we are free depends on our ignorance of causal facts about our mental states. When we discover how ignorant we are, we should also admit that we have no good reason to make dogmatic claims about the effects of our mental states, or about the explanatory role of their intentional content. Hence we ought not to assert dogmatically that the body is incapable of producing the relevant events by itself, since we do not know how much the body is capable of by itself. Since we are ignorant of how the mind moves the body, we ought not to assert that it moves the body.

The argument from ignorance is open to question. We might concede that we are sometimes wrong in claiming that our intentions cause our actions, and that they do not cause actions except through a physical process that we are unaware of or do not know in detail. But this does not give us a good reason to doubt that we sometimes know that we act because we intend to act. I do not know everything about how my pressing the accelerator pedal causes a car to move forward, and it is logically possible that the car is really controlled by a computer that is also linked to my brain; perhaps the computer both moves the car forward and depresses the accelerator when I decide to press it, but my deciding to depress the accelerator is entirely epiphenomenal in relation to the movement of the car. But though it is logically possible that all the states of my brain are related to my intentions and my actions in this indirect way, we should not take this logical possibility seriously. We have no reason to believe it, and we have no reason to abandon our initial conviction that the content of my intention to raise my arm is causally relevant to my raising my arm.

Spinoza's argument, then, appears to rely on a questionable sceptical strategy. He argues that since we are sometimes wrong about mental causation, it is logically possible that we are always wrong, and hence we never know, and are never justified in believing, that any mental events explain any bodily events on any occasion. This is a Cartesian form of sceptical argument; it seems to exaggerate the significance of logical possibility.

Perhaps, however, Spinoza finds this Cartesian sceptical argument plausible in this case, because it fits some of his views about causation and logical necessity. If we admit that it is logically possible (for all we know) that our intention to raise our arm does not cause our arm to rise, we admit that it is not logically necessary (for all we know) that our intention causes our arm to rise. But since Spinoza thinks of causation as logical necessitation, our inability to defend a logically necessary connexion implies inability to defend a genuine causal connexion.

We may reply by challenging Spinoza's conception of causation. If we have good reason to believe that intentions cause actions, but we do not assert a logically necessary connexion between intentions and actions, have we not found counter-examples to Spinoza's claim about causation? Spinoza would not allow this form of objection by counter-example. His account of causation is not intended to offer the most plausible understanding of intuitively accepted examples of causes and effects. On the contrary, it is part of a foundationalist argument. The account of causation is supposed to be

certain and evident in itself; it is not intended as an analysis of an intuitive concept of causation, but it is a basis from which intuitive concepts can be criticized, and, if necessary, rejected.

If this is so, we have no good reason to agree with Spinoza's conclusions about agency unless we accept some of the most disputable aspects of his metaphysical system and of its underlying epistemology. He does not seem to have any plausible argument that can be defended independently of his whole system.

But if we accept his conclusions what do they commit us to? If we claim that intentions cause actions, we claim that they cause physical movements and processes, and that their content is causally relevant. But to which movements and processes is it relevant? When we speak of intentions causing actions such as raising my arm or writing a cheque, we are not picking out a type of movement that a physicist's or biologist's or physiologist's description is likely to recognize. The actions caused by our intentions are classified into types partly by the intentions that cause them. At a physiological level, we have no reason to assume that all the actions we distinguish as instances of writing a cheque have something in common that distinguishes them from all other movements of our hands and arms. But if our normal classification of actions rests on the illusory assumption (according to Spinoza) that our intentions cause our actions, we must also be mistaken in believing that some of our bodily movements are actions.

Spinoza introduces this question implicitly, in stating the common beliefs about mental causation. His opponent mentions paintings, buildings, and temples as cases where we need mental causation. Spinoza replies that we are too ignorant to be entitled to rule out the possibility of purely physical causation of these events; but this reply does not seem to grasp the main point of the objection. Suppose that we knew enough about marble, mules, ropes, beams, human physiology, and so on, to explain the events that resulted in the existence of the Parthenon and St Paul's Cathedral, without reference to any human intentions or aims. This is difficult to conceive, but even if we could conceive it, would such an explanation explain the existence of a temple and a cathedral? Temples and cathedrals are similar in some respects (as religious buildings), and different in others (since the Parthenon was intended to house a statue of Athena, whereas St Paul's was build for a congregation and for the bishop's chair). In some respects—external appearance—St Paul's is more similar to the Parthenon than to Notre Dame de Paris, but in other respects—as a Christian cathedral church—it is more similar to Notre Dame. It is difficult to see how we could understand or explain the relevant respects of difference and similarity between these different buildings if we did not refer to anyone's aims and intentions.

This point applies more generally to action. We might concede to Spinoza that a complete physiological non-mental explanation could be found for all the physical events that happen when I go for a walk or sign a cheque. But such an explanation does not explain why I go for a walk or sign a cheque. The properties of going for a walk and signing a cheque belong to events because of particular beliefs, desires, and intentions. Spinoza does not say where he stands on this question. He speaks as though we would face no special difficulty in conceiving purely physical explanations of everything that we explain by appeal to mental states. But once we see the difficulties that arise in eliminating

mental causation of physical events, we might reasonably find his argument for elimination over-simplified.

Spinoza's views about agency, therefore, go beyond the assertion of materialism. They imply that we are quite mistaken in our beliefs about the causal relevance of our mental states. We believe that the fact that our intention is an intention to raise our arm is causally relevant to the fact that our bodily movement is a raising of our arm. But, according to Spinoza, this belief is false. We know that some bodily changes are happening, but we cannot say, on the basis of our mental states, which bodily changes they are, or what causes them.[8]

510. Errors about Freedom

In regarding ourselves as agents, we assume that the content of our mental states is causally relevant to bodily movements. We also assume that we cause these bodily movements in a particular way. We take ourselves to have a will that is distinct from our intellect and does not necessarily follow it. We therefore attribute to the will some sort of freedom that we do not attribute to the intellect.[9] The freedom of our will is a distinctive feature of the agency that we ascribe to ourselves.

In Spinoza's view, this belief in freedom conflicts with facts about the causal order of the universe. He takes the essential element of freedom to be self-determination (the 'liberty of spontaneity') rather than the capacity for opposites (the 'liberty of indifference'). A free agent would have to be determined entirely by itself without any external determination. God is the only free cause, because God acts only from the necessity of the divine nature, and so is determined by nothing external (1p17c2 = C 425). Since God is identical to the whole universe, nothing external to God can compel God to act. But Spinoza denies that God has the capacity for opposites, and so he rejects the mediaeval views that allow God to have created something different from what has been created.[10] God cannot do anything different from what actually happens; for such a capacity would commit us to saying that God can make it false that from the nature of a triangle it follows that it has two right angles.[11]

We might be puzzled by this argument. Spinoza seems to assert that if we attribute any capacity for opposites to God, we must accept Descartes's extreme voluntarism, ascribing to God the capacity to make logical necessities false. His assertion is intelligible in the light of his conception of causation. If God has the capacity for opposites, it could have been false that God caused tortoises to exist. But if tortoises were caused to exist, it is logically

[8] Though Spinoza rejects the common belief that mental states are causally relevant to bodily actions, he does not deny that they are causally relevant to something. He believes that mental states cause mental states. In his view, it is possible to find the right sorts of logical connexions between bodily states and events, and also between mental states and events. Each of these mental states is also the idea of a bodily state.

[9] This is true even if we accept Aquinas' intellectualism. See §286.

[10] On these mediaeval views see Wolfson, *PS* i 308–19; Gueroult, *S* i 272–95.

[11] 'Others think that God is a free cause because he can (so they think) bring it about that the things which we have said follow from his nature (i.e., which are in his power) do not happen or are not produced by him. But this is the same as if they were to say that God can bring it about that it would not follow from the nature of a triangle that its three angles are equal to two right angles; or that from a given cause the effect would not follow—which is absurd.' (1p17s = C 425–6)

necessary that tortoises came into being; hence, if God had the power not to cause tortoises, a logically necessary truth could be false.

God, therefore, is self-determined, being identical to the whole universe, but lacks the capacity for opposites. We are not identical to the whole universe, but are finite modes of it; hence we are determined externally, and so we cannot be free.[12] Since we do not know the causes of our acts of will, we believe they are uncaused, and therefore we believe we are self-determined and free. Since we do not know the effects (or lack of them) of our acts of will, and do not know the causes of our bodily movements, we believe that our acts of will cause our bodily movements.[13]

In Spinoza's view, we should not simply deny that we know we are self-determined; we should also recognize that we are not self-determined, and are therefore not free. God exists necessarily, and acts by the necessity of God's nature. Everything else exists necessarily because of the necessity of God's nature.[14] Hence everything follows from facts about the divine nature, which is the nature of the universe as a whole.

We do not know how everything is necessary in such a way that we can exhibit its necessity. Some people are convinced that things are contingent, but this is because they are influenced by imagination (2p44c = C 480). Imagination picks out superficial features of situations in ways that make them appear different from how they really are, and therefore it obscures the features that make them necessary. But the point of view of reason regards things as necessary, setting aside the appearances that arise from imagination.

This does not mean that everything is necessary in the same way. Spinoza leaves room for recognizing a difference that might partly match the ordinary distinction between the necessary and the contingent. Unlike the facts about the divine nature, which are absolutely necessary in their own right, particular events and objects in the universe are not absolutely necessary in their own right, because they depend on the divine nature, and hence on the laws of the universe, and on prior events. Spinoza expresses this feature of contingent (as we might call them) things and events by saying that they are 'necessary through their causes', though not in their own right.[15]

This recognition of things that are not intrinsically necessary suggests a way of reconciling Spinoza with Aquinas on contingency in creation. Aquinas does not believe that if God's existence is necessary and everything else depends on God, there cannot be any freedom in the world. For, in his view, God creates secondary causes that have a causal role appropriate for their type of agency, and this role allows contingency.[16] We might think that something like this view would be open to Spinoza. But he seems to reject it.[17] He argues that the

[12] '. . . men are deceived in that they think themselves free, [i.e., they think that of their own free will they can either do a thing or forbear doing it], an opinion which consists only in this, that they are conscious of their actions and ignorant of the causes by which they are determined. This, then, is their idea of freedom—that they do not know any cause of their actions. For what they say, that human actions depend on the will, is words for which they have no idea. For all are ignorant of what the will is, and how it moves the body . . .' (2p35s = C 473. Curley includes the bracketed passage, inserted from the Dutch version). '. . . men think themselves free, because they are conscious of their volitions and their desire, and do not think, even in their dreams, of the causes by which they are disposed to desiring and to willing, because they are ignorant of <those causes>' (1appx = C 440).

[13] See Curley, *BGM* 78–82.

[14] 'In nature nothing contingent is given, but all things have been determined from the necessity of the divine nature to a definite way of existing and of producing.' (1p29 = C 433)

[15] See Bennett, *SSE*, ch. 5. [16] On Aquinas see §270. [17] See 1p26–9.

modes of the divine nature depend on God both for their existence and for their action.[18] It follows that particular things cannot determine themselves without God, and cannot make themselves undetermined. From this Spinoza takes his proposition about necessity to follow.

This argument does not directly address Aquinas' position. For Aquinas does not claim that secondary causes make themselves undetermined or self-determining. He claims that God makes them and the rest of the universe in such a way that what happens to them depends on their states—sensory or rational. Since they are not necessitated by the rest of the universe apart from their sensory and rational states, they determine things contingently. Spinoza does not argue clearly against this possibility. If his conclusion that things necessarily produce effects in a certain way follows from his claims about God, it does not rule out Aquinas' view; Aquinas is free to say that God necessarily makes things such that they are necessitated to be secondary causes, and sources of contingent events.

Spinoza can answer this objection to his argument if he appeals to his account of causation. For if causation requires logical necessitation, the suggestion that God could create contingent events—those that could not be shown to be necessary in the light of a complete understanding of their antecedents—must be rejected. If God is the cause of everything, it follows that everything can be known to be necessary in the light of the nature of God.

It is not clear how much room for contingency Spinoza leaves in his account of things that are necessary through their causes. Hobbes's views are hard to follow because he does not always seem to distinguish the claim that one event necessitates another from the claim that the first event makes the second necessary. We can speak of necessitation when the first event is a sufficient condition for the second; hence necessitation follows from the truth of determinism. But necessitation does not imply the necessity of the second event unless the first event is itself necessary, and Hobbes does not make it clear why he thinks human actions that are necessitated are also necessary. Spinoza is perhaps obscure on the same points as Hobbes; but he has a better answer to our question about why necessitation implies necessity. In his view, the initial condition, referring to facts about God or the universe as a whole, is absolutely necessary; and he might believe that whatever is necessitated by the absolutely necessary is itself absolutely necessary.[19] It is reasonable, then, given Spinoza's conception of freedom, for him to believe that facts about causation exclude freedom.

How much of the ordinary conception of freedom does Spinoza undermine with his arguments? If we are incompatibilists, we must deny freedom once we accept his determinism. If we are compatibilists who believe in contingency without indeterminism (as Aquinas does), we must deny freedom if we are convinced by his argument against contingency in secondary causes. But we might be compatibilists who are willing to admit that all our actions are necessary. We might agree that states of our will are caused, but argue that they are caused in the way appropriate for freedom. If our rational capacities make a difference to what happens, and they are not causally idle in the causal chain,

[18] '...God is the cause of these modes, not only in so far as they simply exist, but also...in so far as they are considered to be determined to produce something' (1p29d = C 433).

[19] Bennett, *SSE* 111, finds evidence for Spinoza's acceptance of this transitivity of necessity in 1p21–2.

then—according to some views—we act freely. We would indeed face a threat to freedom if the causation of our actions were entirely independent of our will, choice, and rational capacity; but we need some reason to believe this, beyond the reasons for believing that states of our will are caused.

Spinoza also rejects this aspect of compatibilism, because of his rejection of mental causation.[20] Apparently, then, his case against mental causation is the most important part of his argument against ordinary beliefs about freedom. Compatibilists might try to fit beliefs about agency into a deterministic word, even into a world of necessary events. But the compatibilist core (or, as incompatibilists would say, remnant) of freedom is rational agency, which cannot be reconciled with the truth of Spinoza's claims about mental causation.

511. Intellect and Will

If we are mistaken in believing that our will is free and that it causes our actions, what is left of our initial belief that we have wills? Spinoza does not take the initial belief to be entirely false. It is entirely false to believe that the will is causally relevant to bodily movements. But we are right to attribute some mental states to the will; the truth in our initial belief is clear once we reject any distinction between will and intellect.[21] To show that volitions and ideas are the same, Spinoza considers a volition 'by which the mind affirms that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles' (2p49d = C 484). He argues that this affirmation cannot be distinguished from the idea of a triangle; for we cannot have the relevant idea without the affirmation about its angles.

This may not seem an apposite example of a volition. It involves assent to something's being the case; in this particular instance, we assent to something that we must assent to in order to have the idea of a triangle. But even if we concede Spinoza's claim that we cannot distinguish idea from volition in this particular instance, we may not agree that all volitions can be treated in the same way. My volition to write a cheque may be understood as my assenting to its being good to write a cheque here and now. This assent depends on my having the idea of its being good to write a cheque here and now, and on my having the idea of a cheque and the idea of good. But none of these ideas seems to involve my assenting to its being good to write a cheque. Spinoza, therefore, seems to have generalized inappropriately from an untypical example.

His example seems to us to be untypical because it involves assent to something's being the case, and necessarily being the case. When we exercise our will, we assent—as it seems

[20] This claim about compatibilism needs to be qualified in the light of Spinoza's remarks on freedom. But those remarks do not vindicate a version of compatibilism that relies on mental causation. See Sleigh et al., 'Determinism' 1227–9; Garrett, 'Ethical' 299–301.

[21] 'The will and the intellect are nothing apart from the singular volitions and ideas themselves. But a singular volition and an idea are one and the same thing. Therefore the will and the intellect are one and the same thing.' (2p49dem = C 485) Bolton, 'Universals' 198–9, discusses Spinoza's view of the divine intellect and will. While he rejects voluntarism, he also rejects the naturalist view that God wills in accord with the good: 'For they seem to place something outside God, which does not depend on God, to which God attends, as a model, in what he does, or at which he aims, as at a certain goal. This is simply to subject God to fate, than which nothing more absurd can be maintained about God, whom we have shown to be the first and only free cause, both of the essence of all things, and of their existence.' (1p33s2 = C 438–9) Those who claim that God acts for the sake of an end imply that God is imperfect (1appx = C 442–3).

to us—to something's coming about that is not necessarily the case and that depends on our assenting or dissenting. In Spinoza's view, we might also think in this way of the triangle; we might ignorantly interpret our assent to the size of the angles of the triangle as a decision of ours. Our illusion is dispelled once we recognize that the truth about the triangle is necessary, not up to us. Until we recognize the necessity, we lack adequate knowledge of the triangle, because our idea of it is not clear and distinct (2p35dem = C 473). But when we have adequate knowledge, we see that we cannot have an adequate idea of a triangle without assenting to the truth about its angles.

According to Spinoza, we should explain our beliefs about the will in the same way. We suppose that it is up to us whether something happens, because we believe it does not happen necessarily, and hence independently of our will. But if we knew more about the event that we assume to be up to us, we would recognize that it is necessary, and indeed that we cannot have an adequate idea of it without recognizing its necessity. The appearance that willing is different from assent to a necessary truth is simply the result of our ignorance of the relevant necessity.

Spinoza does not suppose that it is easy to dispel the illusion that makes us think willing is different from recognizing a truth. Indeed, the difficulty of dispelling the illusion helps to explain some of the ethical value of the *Ethics*. Because we form our ideas on the basis of our imaginations, the way things appear to us does not always reflect adequate ideas. Even if we know the real distance of the sun from the earth, it still appears to me to be only 200 feet away (2p35s = C 473). But if we know the real distance, we do not act on the illusory appearance that proceeds from the imagination; we do not set out to reach the sun, as we might set out to reach something that we believe to be only 200 feet away. Though adequate knowledge does not dispel the illusion, it deprives the illusion of the cognitive results it would have if we did not correct it.

The example of our distance from the sun is meant to illustrate our errors about the will. We think things depend on us because we do not know what they really depend on. When we know the truths about the relevant necessities, we still have the appearance of things depending on us, but, because of our adequate knowledge, we no longer take the appearance seriously.

What knowledge is relevant for dispelling the illusions based on imagination? Spinoza might have two answers: (1) When we recognize that the causes of our action are outside us, we see that the action is not up to us, and we simply assent to it as something that is going to happen. (2) When we recognize that it is necessary, we see that it is not up to us, and we assent to it as a necessary truth.

The first answer assumes that freedom and causal determination by external causes are incompatible. If one rejects this incompatibilist assumption, one need not accept Spinoza's argument to show that our belief in freedom rests on ignorance of causes. This defence of freedom does not cope with Spinoza's second answer; for this answer asserts not just that our action is causally determined, but that its occurrence is a necessary truth. He is right to assume that if something is a necessary truth, we are not free to change it.

Spinoza may well not distinguish these two answers, because of his conception of causal explanation. If he believes that causal explanation of an event demonstrates its necessity, he will not admit the possibility of allowing causal determination without necessity. An

adequate explanation of my action will show that it is necessary. The appearance of its not being necessary is simply the result of my not having an adequate explanation.

This case for the identification of intellect and will has the advantages and disadvantages of several of Spinoza's arguments. On the one hand, his most surprising claims about agency and freedom are defensible, indeed unavoidable, within his metaphysical system. On the other hand, the elements of his metaphysical system that support his claims about freedom are quite disputable. Many apparent objections to Spinoza collapse if we accept his views about causation, explanation, and necessity; but these views do not seem so obviously true that we ought to withdraw all our doubts about his views on agency.

512. Emotion and Freedom from Emotion

From these views on agency and freedom, we can understand some of the ethical conclusions that Spinoza draws from his views on the emotions. In his view, it is misguided to deplore the emotions and their destructive effects.[22] We need to understand them and to see how they are a part of nature.[23] Since the emotions have natural causes, we ought to identify these causes. Since they can also be modified by natural causes, we ought also to find the appropriate causes so that we can modify our emotions in accordance with reason.

It is not surprising, in the light of what he has already said, that Spinoza rejects the attitudes of praise and blame that depend on assumptions about freedom, or that he tries to replace these 'active' attitudes with the 'passive' conditions of knowledge and understanding. We may be surprised, however, that after recommending the passive cognitive attitudes, he re-introduces activity and passivity and recommends the active outlook. How can he do this, if he has already undermined the convictions underlying our conception of agency?

Activity regains a place within Spinoza's system once he connects the division between activity and passivity with the division between adequate and inadequate ideas. The passions are essentially passive, and are the results of inadequate ideas.[24] Since inadequate ideas result from the imagination, and adequate ideas from intellect, passions are products of the imaginative point of view.

[22] 'And they attribute the cause of human weakness and inconstancy not to the common power of nature, but to some defect (vitium) or other of human nature, which they therefore bewail, or laugh at, or disdain, or (as usually happens) curse. And he who knows how to censure more eloquently and cunningly the weakness of the human mind is held to be godly.' (3Pref = C 491)

[23] '... nothing happens in nature which can be attributed to any defect in it; for nature is always the same, and its virtue and power of acting are everywhere one and the same—that is to say, the laws and rules of nature, according to which all things happen, and change from one form to another, are always and everywhere the same ... The affects, therefore, of hate, anger, envy, etc., considered in themselves, follow from the same necessity and force of nature as the other singular things' (3Pref = C 492).

[24] '... in so far as the mind has inadequate ideas, it necessarily undergoes certain things. ... From this it follows that the mind is liable to more affects to the extent that more of its ideas are inadequate, and conversely, is active in more ways to the extent that more of its ideas are adequate.' (3p1dem, cor = C 494) 'But in so far as the mind has inadequate ideas, it necessarily is passive (patitur). Therefore, the actions of the mind follow from adequate ideas alone, and the mind is passive only because it has inadequate ideas. ... We see, then, that the affects are not related to the mind except in so far as it has something which involves a negation, or in so far as it is considered as a part of nature which cannot be perceived clearly and distinctly through itself, without the others' (3p3dem, sch = C 498). On the passivity of the passions cf. Aquinas, §244.

The inadequate ideas of passion differ from the adequate ideas of intellect insofar as they do not include a grasp of the causes of events. To the imagination, many events appear contingent that will appear necessary if we look at them from the point of view of intellect; for since intellect grasps their causes, it also grasps their necessity.

We may be surprised that Spinoza connects activity with adequate ideas and passivity with inadequate ideas.[25] For we may suppose that the conviction of activity depends on belief in one's active power, and that this belief, according to Spinoza, rests on inadequate ideas. The replacement of inadequate by adequate ideas, according to this view, implies awareness of our own passivity, not of our activity. The position that Spinoza attributes to the passions seems to be a precondition for agency. He seems to acknowledge this point implicitly; for he uses the inadequacy of the ideas of imagination, which are the sources of the passions, in order to explain why we are subject to the illusions of free will (3p2sch = C 494–5) The same inadequate ideas seem to make us liable both to passions and to the conviction of agency.

From Spinoza's point of view, this close connexion between ideas of agency and the ideas that form passions is not so surprising. Passions and illusions of agency are different sides of a single mistaken picture of the mind and its relation to the world. If I take myself to be injured or affronted, I believe that something has happened to me that ought not to have happened; to that extent I think of myself as a victim of the contingencies of the world, and more specifically of the wills of other people. I react with anger; and in my anger I decide that I ought to do something about it. But if I form a more adequate idea of events, I see that they are necessary. In this respect, I abandon the idea that I interact with them as a free agent. I also abandon the idea that I am a victim of the contingencies of the world. Hence I should infer that neither activity nor response to contingency is part of an enlightened view of myself and the world.[26]

Spinoza might reasonably point out to us that we often connect activity and freedom with independence from passions. We say that we ourselves are acting and are not dominated by passions, if we are guided by our rational convictions and are not distracted by passions. Independence from passions is normally taken to be an aspect of self-government. If I am guided by reasons that seem good to me, and I do not vacillate from moment to moment under the influence of different passions, I am the one who decides and acts.

To be guided by adequate ideas is to be guided by reason, because recognition of the causes of things is recognition of their necessity. Recognition of necessity involves a rational transition of thought in which we see that the conclusion necessarily follows from the premisses. We do not come to believe that we ought to try to modify the influence of our passions on our thoughts and actions; any such belief rests on the illusory idea of free agency. Instead of causing beliefs about what we ought to do, the growth of adequate knowledge inevitably results, without any further action, in the decay of our passions. The conviction

[25] James, *PA* 145–7, discusses Spinoza's treatment of passivity and the passions.

[26] '...it [sc. knowledge of Spinoza's doctrine] teaches us how we must conduct ourselves concerning matters of fortune, or things which are not in our power, that is to say, concerning things that do not follow from our nature—that we must expect and bear calmly both faces of fortune. For all things follow from God's eternal decree with the same necessity as from the essence of a triangle it follows that its three angles are equal to two right angles' (2p49sch, iv(b) = C 490).

of necessity reduces the incidence of passions, or at least reduces their influence on our thoughts. We no longer believe that events in the world are contingencies that we ought to respond to with free actions that involve bodily movements. If we are guided by inadequate ideas, we are irrationally impressed by misleading appearances. But insofar as we are guided by adequate ideas, we become reasonable.

Since guidance by adequate ideas implies guidance by reason without the influence of misleading appearances, it makes us independent of the variations of our passions, and causes us to act as we ourselves think best. In these respects, guidance by adequate ideas makes us more active, and less subject to our passions. But this is not all that we normally include in being active. Normally we take more rationality to imply more freedom and more agency because we assume that our reason is applied to action; we think of guidance by reason as a source of action. Spinoza leaves out this aspect of our intuitive views about freedom and activity, but he assumes that he is still entitled to speak of freedom and activity. He replaces freedom in action with freedom of mind.[27]

But he does not abandon freedom of action altogether. Though he denies interaction between mind and body, he allows interaction among mental states. If we restrict 'action' to mental interaction, Spinoza allows action guided by reason. If this is the only freedom worth having, it is reasonable of him to claim that he allows us the freedom that is worth having, and that he allows us to be active rather than passive. He believes we can be free of the influence of the passions only if we give up the idea of acting (moving our bodies) for reasons altogether.

This is a high price to pay for freedom from disturbance by passion; it precludes Spinoza from giving ethical advice about external actions, and precludes us from giving such advice to ourselves. Perhaps this conclusion attributes too extreme a view to Spinoza; but if we retreat to a more moderate view that does not preclude advice about action, we raise difficulties for his views about freedom from passions. Freedom from passions comes from recognizing the necessity of things that we had previously taken to be contingent; these include the actions that are matters for moral deliberation and choice (before we agree with Spinoza).

But even if we could accept the implications of Spinoza's position and cease giving ourselves ethical advice, it is not clear how far we would modify our passions. Spinoza seems to assume that a change in our beliefs will weaken our passions, because we will recognize the falsity of the beliefs that are presupposed by the passions. But it is not clear that this will happen. Though recognition of the falsity of a belief results in our no longer holding the belief, we may still retain a false appearance, just as we do when we are afraid of being poisoned by a grass snake even after we learn that it is not poisonous.

We might try to defend Spinoza by arguing that adequate knowledge gives us a reason and a motive to try to moderate our passions, once we recognize that they have so far depended on false beliefs and now depend on false appearances. But a deliberate effort to moderate our passions rests on a false assumption about agency. Moreover, the assumption is not only false, but it conflicts with the main point of Spinoza's claims about adequate knowledge. He rejects the aim of deliberately modifying the passions; that aim depends on

[27] Cf. Hampshire, *TTM* 74.

the mistaken belief in freewill. A passion can be removed only by a stronger and opposite passion (4p7dem). Changes in the passions follow, without any further intervention of the will, from adequate knowledge of the necessary connexions in the world.

Spinoza's claims about the passions overlook the attitude of the ancient Sceptics. Sextus agrees with Spinoza, for different reasons, that we have no reason for acting in one way rather than another. He infers that we will give up acting on considerations that seem rational to us. But he does not infer that we will be free of passions. For even if passions include false beliefs or rely on them, recognition of the falsity of the beliefs does not imply the end of the passion. Even if we agree with Spinoza, and decide that we cannot respond as free agents to the contingencies of the world, our passions may not follow this conclusion. It is not clear, therefore, how the mental freedom that Spinoza describes will necessarily result in the modification of the passions.

513. Desires and Tendencies

Spinoza believes that some version of psychological egoism is correct; each person pursues his own good, because every being essentially tends towards its own continuance.[28] We might take him to be referring to a basic desire for one's own preservation; his statement of the basic 'striving' (conatus) may remind us of Aquinas' claim that all things 'desire' (or 'aim at', appetunt) being. But such a claim raises some difficulties for Spinoza.

The difficulty arises from an apparent conflict with his general opposition to all teleological claims.[29] His general view is that there are no final causes in nature. In his view, believers in final causes make the future exercise causal influence on the past, in defiance of the real order of causal influence.[30] They imagine that this is so in nature because they take nature to be a means of satisfying their own desires, and so they ascribe to nature the ends that they pursue for themselves.[31] But we have no reason to accept this anthropomorphic conception of nature.

The conclusion of Spinoza's argument raises some doubt about his premisses. For if all final causes are fictions, what about our belief that we have desires? If he explains our attitude to nature by reference to our desires, does he not explain them by reference to an end we pursue, and hence explain them teleologically, in defiance of the proper direction of causation? He might reply by denying that explanation by desire is teleological. A desire is a mental state earlier than the action, and so the causal influence goes in the proper direction. But this is not a complete reply to the objection. We normally suppose that the desire explains the action because of its goal-directed character; we choose that action as a means to

[28] 'So the power of each thing, *or* the striving by which it (either alone or with others) does anything, or strives to do anything—i.e., the power, *or* striving, by which it tries to persevere in its being, is nothing but the given, *or* actual, essence of the thing itself.' (3p7 = C 499)

[29] See Bennett, *SSE* 245.

[30] '. . . nature has no end set before it, and . . . all final causes are nothing but human fictions. . . . This doctrine concerning the end turns nature completely upside down. For what is really a cause, it considers as an effect, and conversely . . . . What is by nature prior, it makes posterior' (1appx = C 442).

[31] '. . . men act always because of an end, namely, because of an advantage they desire. That is why it happens that they always seek to know only the final causes of things that have been done . . .' (1appx = C 440).

an end that we pursue. The future-directed goal is causally relevant to this action; whether or not the action achieves the end, I chose it because of a desire with this future-directed character. If Spinoza allows this explanatory role to future-directed desire in human action, he leaves open the possibility of states that are future-directed in the same way in other natural explanation.

To avoid this teleological description of desires, Spinoza might argue that we have given the wrong account of their relation to action. Though we think they explain through their teleological content, we are wrong, just as we are wrong more generally in believing that the intentional content of our mental states explains our action. In desire we are simply aware of a bodily state that explains movements non-intentionally.

But what movements does it explain? We might be tempted to say that our desire for self-preservation is our awareness of states that result in our self-preservation, and that in general we can refer to the actual result of our bodily movement to identify the character of our desire. But this account of desire does not cope with the fact that someone's desire for self-preservation may also explain (as we suppose) actions that do not result in his self-preservation, but seem to him to be likely to result in it. The relevant movements are those that are directed towards self-preservation, and we cannot identify these except by reference to their intentional character and aim. If Spinoza adheres strictly to his ban on teleological explanation, he should apparently allow a desire for F only in cases where F is really achieved. This restricted appeal to desire limits the role of desire in explaining action.

A non-teleological reconstruction of desire also raises doubts about the universality of the desire for self-preservation. Since we all succeed in preserving ourselves for some time, Spinoza can consistently claim that we all act on the desire for self-preservation. But he also seems to treat this as a universal desire on all occasions.[32] Since we do not preserve ourselves on all occasions, it is not clear how the desire can be universal. If Spinoza claims that we all try to preserve ourselves even when we fail, he re-introduces a teleological concept. If he tries to remove the teleological content from trying, and replaces it with a mere tendency, he raises the difficulty about unsuccessful action again.

It is not clear, therefore, how much is left of the 'striving' (conatus) that Spinoza attributes to all human beings, once we remove the teleological content that conflicts with his metaphysics.[33]

514. Desire and Goodness

Some of Spinoza's views about the nature of desire affect his claims about the relation of desire and goodness. We might suppose that the desire for self-preservation rests, as Aquinas claims, on an assumption about goodness; in desiring something we see it in a particular light, in relation to other things that we count as good and worthy of desire, and that is why we try to get it. These intentional concepts do not fit Spinoza's attitude to teleology, and so he does not try to explain desire by reference to goodness. Our basic tendency towards

[32] See the passage just quoted.

[33] On Spinoza's conception of desire see Broad, *FTET* 23; Curley, *BGM* 107–9.

self-preservation does not rest on any conviction about goodness; we do not desire our own continuance, or anything else, because we take it to be good. On the contrary, desire is prior to belief about goodness.[34] Joy and sadness result from the recognition of something that satisfies this desire, by promoting or hindering our preservation.[35] This connexion between self-preservation and pleasure also explains why we identify good things with causes of pleasure.[36] Since Spinoza rejects teleology, he does not believe that we act from the idea of self-preservation. Pleasure is a feature of my awareness of states that promote my preservation, and this is the sort of state that I call good.[37]

So far, Spinoza agrees with the egoistic aspects of Aristotelian ethical theory, once they are re-interpreted to fit his own views about the character of desire. He agrees with Aristotle that human beings necessarily pursue their own good, and he identifies this with happiness. He assumes that the appropriate end for ethics is happiness, and that the dispute is about where it is to be found and how it is to be achieved. He does not say much about the composition of happiness, or about hedonistic, subjectivist, and objectivist conceptions of it. He claims that 'happiness consists in man's being able to preserve his being' (4p18s(i) = C 556). In speaking of happiness as satisfaction (acquiescentia), he seems to treat it as consisting in a state of mind, however it is achieved.

515. Passions as the Sources of Conflict

How can we acquire the relevant sort of satisfaction? Spinoza believes that we cannot acquire it if our passions dominate us. For passions rest on a naive and misguided view of the world; we think it is worth our while to be angry or resentful at what happens to us, to feel strong attachment to other people or strong dislike of them, and especially to try to change other people and the world for our own advantage. This outlook rests on the assumption that things happen contingently, and hence are up to us to change, and that we know how to change them because we know that our mental states causally affect external reality. Moreover, since our passions result from imagination, they result from superficial views of the world that are liable to vary from person to person. If we look at the same object from different angles, and we do not try to correct our first impressions, it will appear to us that we see different objects. Similarly, different people's passions fasten on different aspects of the same situation and form different aims. Conflicts result from these different aims, since each person's passions differentiate him from other people in accordance with his imagination.

[34] '. . . we neither strive for, nor will, nor desire, nor have an appetite for, anything (nihil . . . conari, velle, appetere, neque cupure) because we judge it to be good; on the contrary, we judge something to be good because we strive for it, will it, desire it, and have an appetite for it' (3p9s = C 500).

[35] 'By joy, therefore, I shall understand . . . that affect by which the mind passes to a greater perfection. And by sadness that affect by which it passes to a lesser perfection.' (3p11s = C 500–1)

[36] 'We call good or evil what is useful to, or harmful to, preserving our being, i.e., what increases or diminishes, aids or restrains, our power of acting. Therefore . . . in so far as we perceive that a thing affects us with joy or sadness, we call it good or evil. And so cognition of good or evil is nothing but an idea of joy or sadness that follows necessarily from the affect of joy or sadness itself.' (4p8 = C 550–1)

[37] On goodness see Garrett, 'Ethical' 272–4.

The condition of people who are dominated by their passions is therefore a Hobbesian state of nature, in which their disagreements in judgment lead to conflicts in action.[38] Spinoza agrees with Hobbes's view that a state of nature is the result of motives that are naturally present in human nature. But he does not agree exactly with Hobbes's account of why the state of nature is a state of war; his disagreement with Hobbes points to his distinctive view of how to emerge from the state of nature.

Hobbes takes both reason and passion to be sources of potential instability and conflict. Our lack of assurance makes it reasonable for us, from the point of view of self-preservation, not to observe the laws of nature in the state of nature. Hobbes reaches this conclusion because he assumes that reason requires us to compete with others for goods that cannot be shared but must be possessed by one individual to the exclusion of others (we cannot both be adequately nourished by eating a meal that is enough for just one person). Since reason requires us to enter the competition that we recognize as dangerous and destructive, it requires us to set up a commonwealth to restrain competition.

Spinoza's account of the state of nature is similar to Hobbes's account. He speaks of the 'right' of nature and 'law' of nature as one's freedom to exercise one's natural capacity; this is rather similar to Hobbes's view of the right of nature, which has no essentially moral character.[39] But his account of how to escape from the state of nature reflects the difference between his view of reason and Hobbes's.[40] Conflicts arise in the state of nature not because of reason (as Hobbes supposes), but only because of passions, which cause people to act on their partial views of things. But these same passions also tell us that we are better off if we listen to reason, since we dislike the effects of acting on our passions. We turn to reason because it considers the true good of human beings and promises to end conflicts.

We need the state, in Spinoza's view, because of our passions. If we listened to reason, we would be ready to keep promises, avoid deceit and violence, and observe the other Hobbesian laws of nature. We need a state with the power of coercion because of the people who are liable to be swayed by their passions into violating the laws of nature.[41] Spinoza is

[38] 'Men can disagree in nature in so far as they are assailed by affects that are passive, and to that extent one and the same man is also variable and inconstant.' (4p33 = C 561) On Spinoza and Hobbes see Curley, *BGM* 124–6.

[39] 'Since it is the supreme law of nature that each individual thing should strive (conetur) to preserve itself in its state, as much as lies in it, taking no account of another, but only of itself, it follows from this that each individual has the highest right to this, that is . . . to exist and act as it is naturally determined. . . . Hence among human beings, so long as they are considered as living under the command of nature alone, the one who has not yet come to know reason, or who has not yet acquired the state of virtue, lives with the highest right solely by the laws of desire, no less than the one who orders his life by the laws of reason.' (*TTP* 16 = S 527) 'The natural right of each human being is thus determined, not by sound reason, but by appetite and power.' (*TTP* 16 = S 527) I cite *TTP* by chapters and pages of Shirley.

[40] 'Nevertheless, no one can doubt how much more advantageous it is for human beings to live according to the laws and certain dictates of our reason, which . . . aim at nothing except the real advantage of human beings. Moreover, everyone is eager (cupiat) to live as far as possible without anxiety, free from fear, which, however, is quite impossible so long as everyone is permitted (licet) to do what he likes, and nothing more is allowed to the right (ius) of reason than to hatred and anger . . . When we reflect that human beings without mutual help must necessarily live most miserably and without the cultivation of reason . . ., we shall plainly see that men ought (debuisse) to have conspired together to live well and without anxiety . . . But their efforts to do this would have been vain if they willed (vellent) to follow what desire (appetitus) urged on them (for by the laws of desire each person is drawn in a different direction); they ought, therefore, to decree and pledge most firmly that they will direct everything by reason (which no one dares to oppose openly, lest he seem to lack any mind), and to restrain desire insofar as it urges anything harmful to another, and to do nothing to another that one does not will to have done to oneself, and to defend the right of another as one's own.' (*TTP* 16 = S 528)

[41] 'However, if all men could be easily led by the leading of reason alone, and could recognize the highest advantage and necessity of a commonwealth, everyone would repudiate deceit; for everyone would faithfully adhere altogether

justified in claiming to differ from Hobbes on this point, by taking reason to be always on the side of peace.[42] Hobbes sometimes suggests that reason may be the source of violations of the laws of nature, and so it needs coercion to change the rational attractiveness of the different options. Spinoza's claims about reason and passion are much clearer and less ambiguous. If he is right, we need the commonwealth to reduce the influence of the passions, not to make it rational for rational agents to make and keep covenants. He therefore seems to overlook the questions about assurance that lead Hobbes to argue that reason may be a source of conflict in the state of nature.

Spinoza's disagreement with Hobbes partly reflects his acceptance of the Stoic claim that happiness consists in living in accordance with nature.[43] To show how rational perfection is connected to moral virtue, he argues that if we live according to our own nature as rational beings, we live in ways that benefit others as well as ourselves.[44] Our passions tend to create conflicts, but reason resolves them, by giving us a common point of view that appreciates the benefits we gain from each other. Sometimes he suggests that reason presents to us the means of self-preservation, as Hobbes supposes. But his main reason for claiming that reason removes conflict rests on his distinction between the partial outlook of the passions and the insight of reason into general laws, giving it a common point of view.

Conflict does not arise, therefore, from two individuals' desiring the same thing, but from their having different passions towards it.[45] They may be right in both desiring the same thing; that is not the cause of their conflict. Conflict requires the idea of a gain

to their agreements because of their appetite (cupiditate) for this highest good, namely, the preservation of the commonwealth. . . . But it is far from being true that all can always be easily led by the leading of reason alone; for everyone is drawn away by his pleasure, while avarice, ambition, envy, hatred, and the like most often occupy one's mind so much that no room is left for reason. That is why, though human beings promise with certain signs of a sincere mind and undertake to keep their word, still no one can be certain about the good faith of another unless something is added to the promise, since everyone by the right of nature can act deceitfully, and is not required (tenetur) to stick to his agreements, except by the hope of a greater good, or the fear of a greater evil.' (*TTP* 16 = S 529–30)

[42] 'Whatever sort of state (civitas) a human being lives in, he can be free. For certainly a human being is free to the extent that he is led by reason. But reason (though Hobbes thinks otherwise) altogether urges peace; this, however, cannot be attained unless the common laws (iura) of the state are kept. Therefore the more a human being is led by reason—that is to say, the more he is free—the more constantly he will keep the laws of his state, and carry out the commands of the supreme power to which he is subject.' (*TTP* 16n33 = S 580–1)

[43] 'In so far as a thing agrees with our nature, it cannot be evil. Necessarily, then, it is either good or indifferent. In the latter case, namely that it is neither good nor evil, then nothing will follow from its nature that aids the conservation of our nature, i.e. (by hypothesis) that aids the preservation of the nature of the thing itself. But this is absurd. Hence, in so far as it agrees (convenit) with our nature, necessarily it is good.' (4p31d = C 560–1) '. . . what is most useful to a human being is what most agrees with his nature . . . But a human being acts entirely from the laws of his own nature when he lives by the leading of reason . . .' (4p35c1 = C 563).

[44] 'But because each one, from the laws of his own nature, desires what he judges to be good, and strives to avert what he judges to be evil, and moreover, because what we judge by the dictate of reason to be good or evil is necessarily good or evil, it follows that in so far as human beings live by the leading of reason, to that extent necessarily they do only those things that are necessarily good for human nature, and hence for each human being, i.e. those things that agree with the nature of each human being. Hence, in so far as they live by the leading of reason, necessarily they always agree.' (4p35d = C 563)

[45] '. . . it is far from true that they are troublesome to one another in so far as they love the same thing and agree in nature. Instead . . . the cause . . . is nothing but the fact that they are supposed to disagree in nature. For we suppose that Peter has the idea of a thing loved and already possessed, and Paul, on the contrary, has the idea of a thing loved and lost. That is why the one is affected with joy and the other with sadness, and to that extent they are contrary to one another. In this way we can easily show that the other causes of hate depend only on the fact that men disagree in nature, not on that in which they agree' (4p34s = C 562–3).

that causes another's loss; and that idea comes from their passions. The point of view of reason, however, endorses a common and non-competitive good. Hence 'men will be most useful to one another, when each one seeks his own advantage' (4p35c2 = C 563). The common point of view is common to different people who are guided by reason, since it presents the same conclusions to A and to B; it is free from the distorting influence of the passions that give A and B different points of view on the same situation. But it is also a common point of view because it prescribes whatever is for the common good of A and B.

It is difficult, however, to see why Spinoza supposes that a point of view that is shared by different people will necessarily prescribe a common good. Suppose, for instance, that reason tells us that each person needs to eat 3 kg of food per day to stay alive. Since this is true of everyone, reason tells A that each of A, B, and C, needs to eat 3 kg per day; and it tells B and C the same thing. Hence they can agree on its being good for each person to eat 3 kg. But if there are only 3 kg available to divide, the 'common' conclusion that each person ought to eat 3 kg does not tell anyone what to do; still less does it say what policy it will be good for everyone to adopt. In this respect, reason does not seem to present a common good; the good that it presents does not remove competition between individuals. One might say that the competition is only contingent, resulting from the lack of resources; but contingent competition is enough for Hobbes's argument about the state of nature to get started.

Spinoza is perhaps misled (as Hobbes sometimes is) by indiscriminate references to 'agreement' between individuals. We may concede his claim that reason leads to agreement; if two people equally exercise their reason on arithmetic or geometry and reach true conclusions, they will agree on the conclusions. But it does not follow that this agreement points out the sort of common good that eliminates competition between individuals. It may be true that if different people proceed rationally, free from the influence of their particular emotions, they will reach the same conclusion. But why will they not conclude that, for instance, it is good for you to attack me, and good for me to attack you? Why will they agree on a course of action that is good for all of them?

516. The Good of Rational Beings

Spinoza answers this objection through his conception of the nature of the common good. He considers the possibility that the good of one person is not the good of another, but he dismisses the possibility, on the ground that the very nature of human beings makes their good non-competitive. On this point he departs from Hobbes. According to Hobbes, peace is a non-competitive instrumental good; we all benefit from it in pursuing our various sources of pleasure and satisfaction, but our ends are not essentially non-competitive. Even from the rationally enlightened point of view, the non-competitive good is good only insofar as it is a means to other goods. Spinoza, however, believes that the ultimate good is essentially non-competitive. The good for a human being consists in 'an adequate knowledge of God's eternal and infinite essence' (4p36s = C 564). Since human nature is essentially rational nature, he agrees with Aristotle in taking happiness to require intellectual

perfection.[46] Each of us loves this good more to the extent that one sees it loved by others also; hence each of us will strive to make others love the same non-competitive good (4p37alt.dem = C 565).

What is the relation of the adequate and intuitive knowledge of God to blessedness? Perhaps Spinoza allows that internal satisfaction achieved by some other means than intuitive knowledge of God is still blessedness, but recommends intuitive knowledge of God as the best means to it. Alternatively, he may mean that only the satisfaction caused by intuitive knowledge of God is blessedness; in that case, he needs to explain why that specific cause should be regarded as a necessary condition of happiness.

His answer depends on the connexion between adequate knowledge and the intuitive knowledge of God. Since God is to be identified (speaking approximately) with the laws of nature, we come to know God by acquiring adequate knowledge of the laws of nature, and so understanding why what happens is necessary. This is the point of view of reason, which gets us away from the instability of the emotions. Since this point of view removes the disturbances that arise from domination by the passions, it is the only source of the satisfaction that is needed for happiness. Epicurus was right, therefore, to believe that happiness consists in freedom from disturbance (*ataraxia*), and that understanding the character of the gods promotes this undisturbed condition. But Spinoza's account of the understanding that achieves happiness is closer to Aristotle's conception of theoretical wisdom, grasping the necessary truths about the universe.

Once we grasp the connexion between happiness and intellectual perfection, we can reject Hobbes's purely instrumental attitude to the moral virtues. Spinoza believes that virtue deserves to be chosen for its own sake. He disagrees both with Hobbes, who believes it is worthwhile only for its natural consequences, and with theological moralists who believe it is only worthwhile on the assumption of divine rewards. All those who take an instrumental attitude to moral virtue fail to see that, as Spinoza understands it, it is the greatest happiness. God does not need to reward us for service, since the service of God is happiness itself.[47] We have no reason to regard the common point of view as simply a means to peace; it is a source of happiness quite apart from its role in providing counsels of self-preservation.

517. Intellectual Love of God

The enlightened common point of view of reason leads us to the intellectual love of God. This is 'the highest good which we can want from the dictate of reason and is common to all men; we desire that all should enjoy it' (5p20 = C 605). It is the common good that Spinoza believes we will want everyone to share (cf. 4p37alt.dem = C565, discussed above).

In speaking of intellectual love, Spinoza alludes to the sort of love that Aquinas attributes to us when we are moved by the intrinsic goodness of the person loved, rather than by

[46] 'In life, therefore, it is especially useful to perfect, as far as we can, our intellect or reason, and in this one thing consists the highest human happiness or blessedness, because blessedness is nothing but the very satisfaction (acquiescentia) of mind that arises stems from intuitive cognition of God.' (4app(iv) = C 588)

[47] 'From this we clearly understand how far those people stray from the true valuation of virtue, who expect to be honoured by God with the greatest rewards for their virtue and best actions, as for the greatest bondage (servitus)—as though virtue itself, and bondage to God, were not happiness itself, and the greatest freedom.' (2p49s4a = C 490)

pleasure or advantage.[48] But his conception of intellectual love is so different that we may reasonably wonder whether he is talking about the same thing. Aquinas takes the object of intellectual love to be a person, whether human beings or God. In loving God we love a person who also loves us; indeed, God's love towards us makes us capable of love towards God. In Spinoza's view, however, God is incapable of love and of any other affect of joy or sadness, because these affects would be incompatible with God's perfection (5p17 = C 604).

These adaptations of intellectual love take no account of Aquinas' view that God is capable of intellectual love without passions, because love belongs to God's will. It is reasonable for Spinoza to ignore Aquinas' view, given that he disagrees sharply with Aquinas about God's intellect and will. He denies any distinction between intellect and will, and in particular he denies it in God. Moreover, he denies that God has an intellect. God's nature does not allow the appropriate relation between an intellect and its objects; for a divine intellect could not be either posterior or simultaneous to its objects, as an ordinary intellect is. An ordinary intellect achieves knowledge insofar as it is passive, by grasping an object that exists independently of it; that is how it achieves the right direction of fit, by knowing rather than creating an object. But a divine intellect could not grasp its objects in this way; it would have to be prior to everything, since God is the cause of everything (1p17s(ii) = C 427). Since God is so different from any ordinary intellect, Spinoza concludes that intellect, will, and desire and so on, belong to natura naturata, not to natura naturans (1p31 = C 434–5); that is to say, they belong to 'what follows from the necessity of God's nature', and not to 'God, in so far as he is considered as a free cause' (1p29s = C 434).

The effect of these claims about God and intellect is to curtail the possibility of intellectual love, as Aquinas understands it. For Spinoza in contrast to Aquinas, it is not love directed towards God as a distinct person with intellect, will, and love. The features of distinct personality do not belong to natura naturans, and hence do not belong to God understood in his own right. This does not make intellectual love of God insignificant in Spinoza's system. Given his doctrine of intellect and will, intellectual love is directed towards adequate knowledge. Knowledge of God is knowledge of the structure and laws of the universe and of their necessity, not of a distinct person. Intellectual love is completely satisfied once we have a complete grasp of the necessary system of the universe.

Spinoza accepts one aspect of the traditional doctrine of intellectual love of God insofar as he takes it to involve union with God.[49] If we can be united with God, and if we love God, then apparently God also loves God. But Spinoza rejects this conclusion, because of his previous restrictions on the ways in which we can attribute intellect, will, and love to God. 'God loving himself' is not to be understood as love directed towards a distinct person beyond finite persons; for there is no such distinct person. The total system of the universe does not love itself. God's love of himself must be reduced to love by individual finite persons (who are all modes of God) for finite persons. That is the only sense in which one's

[48] See Aquinas, §336. Wolfson, PS ii 274–9, gives further sources, but he does not emphasize the moral and personal character of intellectual love, as Aquinas conceives it.

[49] 'The mind's intellectual love towards God is the very love of God by which God loves himself, not in so far as he is infinite, but in so far as he can be explained by the human mind's essence, considered under a species of eternity; i.e., the mind's intellectual love towards God is part of the infinite love by which God loves himself.' (5p36 = C 612)

intellectual love can be part of God's love of himself; it is part of the total of intellectual love present in all the finite persons.[50]

518. Reason and the Good of Others

Spinoza's account of happiness as intuitive knowledge and intellectual love of God helps us to see the good that is revealed by the common point of view of reason. His conception of the good gives him an answer to our earlier objection that the common point of view might reveal a good that is the object of competition. The intuitive knowledge of God is a non-competitive good; if I acquire it, I do not take any of it away from you, and in recognizing it as good for myself I recognize it as good for you also.

But this non-competitive good does not remove all the objections that Spinoza might face. Even if knowledge of God is the whole of a person's good, the resources we need to achieve it might involve competition; and so we still have no reason for being especially concerned for others in such a competition for resources. Moreover, Spinoza does not argue convincingly for his claim that knowledge of God is the whole of the human good. If we really thought that it is all that matters, we seem to have no reason to secure the more mundane goods for other people or for ourselves. The aspect of Spinoza's outlook that introduces a non-competitive good also curtails one's concern for the goods and evils that are normally taken to matter in inter-personal relations.

In his claims about the purely intellectual good of knowing God, Spinoza offers a genuine alternative to Hobbes. According to Hobbes, the only function for reason in the state of nature is to suggest 'articles of peace', on the assumption that the good of different human beings brings them into conflict and that the conflict has to be managed in people's mutual interest. Spinoza departs from Hobbes in not confining the human good to the sorts of self-confined pleasures that Hobbes considers. But it is not clear that it gets us out of a Hobbesian attitude to our social life.

Spinoza believes that Hobbes would be right if human beings could not reduce domination by passion (4p37sch2 = C 566–7). But he argues that reason can be practical in the ways that Hobbes supposes (4p65–6 = C 583), and he believes that his account of the common good pursued by reason explains how reason can remove Hobbesian conflicts. But it is not clear how this is so, if reason simply turns us towards the knowledge of necessary truths about the universe.

Perhaps he intends his account of reason and adequate knowledge to make a further difference to practical reason. If I am dominated by passions, I use reason to secure advantages for myself, as measured from the limited point of view of my own imagination. But if I

[50] This is Martineau's conclusion in *TET* i 364: 'So it comes out, that for God to love himself is for him to love men. But his love to himself . . . is equivalent to man's love to him; therefore his love towards man is equivalent to man's love to him. These wonderful transformations are all wrought by the mere verbal device of duplicate denominations of the same thing; one of the same feature, of love, is slipped, now under one name, now under another; the double names being of persons with the personality emptied out; and the result is a tissue of apparent contradictions which, on examination, prove to be a monotonous tautology. It was long before I could find courage to look behind the venerable mask of these empty propositions; and it was not without pain that I found in the guise of mystical devotion, what I can hardly rank higher than logical thimble-rigging.'

acquire adequate knowledge of myself and others, I no longer look at myself or others from the individual point of view that is influenced by my passions. I now look at all of us—it may be supposed—from a strictly impartial view, seeing everything as the necessary result of the laws of nature. One might suppose that, from this point of view, no room is left for any special concern with myself as opposed to others. Hence I have no reason to favour myself over others.

These claims about one's own good and the good of others are not alien to the Aristotelian outlook. Aristotle believes that the self-love of the virtuous person is also directed to the common good of rational agents, because each person recognizes himself as essentially rational. We have considered some of the objections that arise against Aristotle's use of these claims, and some of the replies that might be offered in his defence. Spinoza adds his own distinctive argument, in claiming that the point of view of reason removes the passions that produce conflict.[51] Enlightened people will not only be free of the competitive aspects of the emotions, but will also seek to co-operate with others.

This argument is open to question. If Spinoza's claims about the emotions are correct, we can see why enlightenment about the emotions will result in a less competitive attitude. But one might also suppose it will result in a less co-operative attitude as well. The emotions produce concern for others, since we believe we can (for instance) do something to relieve the sufferings of others. If we lose this belief in our agency, and we are less disturbed by grief at the sufferings of others, why should we still be concerned about their welfare? If the universal point of view resulting from adequate knowledge removes any bias in favour of myself, should we not also expect it to remove concern for others? If I am indifferent to others, and I also recognize that from the universal point of view I matter no more than others do, why should I not also become indifferent to myself? Co-operation requires not only removal of bias towards myself, but also positive concern for others. Spinoza does not explain why we will develop this positive impartial concern simply by acquiring an impartial point of view.

This difficulty in connecting rational impartiality with positive concern for others is not peculiar to Spinoza. It suggests a reasonable question that can also be raised about Kant's position. But the difficulty arises especially clearly for Spinoza, in his claims about the common point of view of reason. He does not seem to recognize that he needs to say more about why reason leads to co-operation.

Similarly, when he claims that virtue is worth choosing without any external rewards, he criticizes moralists who claim that only the prospect of rewards and punishments makes it worth our while to pursue virtue and avoid vice. But these moralists are not concerned with adequate knowledge of necessary truths; they might well concede that these are worth pursuing apart form their rewards. They are concerned with the moral virtues; since these virtues seem to require some sacrifice of our own interest, a divine reward is needed (on this view) to convince us that they are in our interest overall. If Spinoza rejects this view, he implies that the moral virtues themselves promote happiness. Since he has already said

[51] 'This doctrine contributes to social life, in so far as it teaches that each one should hate no one, despise no one, mock no one, be angry at no one, and envy no one; and also in so far as it teaches that each one should be content with his own things, and should be helpful to his neighbour, not from womanish compassion, partiality or superstition, but from the leading of reason, as the time and occasion demand.' (2p49s iv (c) = C 490)

that the satisfaction resulting from intuitive knowledge of God is blessedness, he should identify this state with moral virtue and show how it results in concern for the good of others.

Spinoza's metaphysics both suggests some of the most intriguing elements in his moral philosophy and confronts him with serious difficulties. His distinctive ethical recommendations depend directly on some of the elements of his metaphysics that undermine ordinary convictions about agency. When we reject ordinary views about agency, and replace them with adequate knowledge, we undermine the ordinary sources of anger, resentment, and conflict. But we also seem to undermine some of the convictions that lead to morality.

Similarly, Spinoza's conception of intellectual love makes it difficult to see how an appeal to intellectual love could help him at the points where his ethical doctrines are open to question. For even if we restrict it to other finite persons, and do not extend it to God, it is not directed to their characters or personalities or (as we normally conceive them) their interests. It must be confined to assent to the same necessary truths as they are grasped by other finite minds besides our own. If I assent to your grasping the laws of thermodynamics, and in that sense have intellectual love for you, it does not follow that I will enjoy your company, or care about your being free of pain or deprivation. We have seen why it would be unjust to charge Plato with abandoning the love of particular human beings for the intellectual acceptance of abstractions.[52] This charge seems more appropriate for Spinoza's doctrine of intellectual love.

Spinoza, therefore, does not resolve all the doubts that arise about his moral position. The specific metaphysical claims that are meant to free us from the passions that lead to selfishness and conflict seem to free us from too many other things as well. His attack on agency seeks to expose the illusions underlying our passions. But if it succeeded, it would also deprive us of any basis for moral concern, for ourselves and for other people. Spinoza speaks as though we can appeal to his metaphysics to free us from the passions, without drawing its destructive conclusions for morality. But it is not clear how we can reasonably limit the impact of his metaphysics in this way.

[52] On Platonic love see §63.

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THE 'BRITISH MORALISTS'

519. Rationalists and Sentimentalists

Whewell and Sidgwick both recognize a tradition of British moral philosophers whose outlook is defined, explicitly or implicitly, by questions raised by Hobbes. While philosophers in this tradition are also open to influences from outside Britain, they are especially concerned with Hobbes and his successors. Before we discuss, them, therefore, it may be useful to survey some of the different tendencies in the British moralists, and some of the different ways of dividing them into different schools or movements.

While Whewell and Sidgwick already recognize a distinct British tradition in moral philosophy, modern conceptions of this tradition have no doubt been influenced by Selby-Bigge, who published in 1897 a useful anthology of selections from the British moralists.[1] For the next 70 years, until the publication of Raphael's anthology in 1967, Selby-Bigge's collection introduced non-specialists to the works of the moralists whose works were not available in modern editions. It encouraged the wider knowledge of moralists who had often lain unread since the 18th century.[2] Selby-Bigge divides British moralists between Hobbes and Hume into 'sentimentalists' and 'intellectualists', but he does not explain what he means by these labels, or how they fit different moralists.[3] His first volume contains texts from the leading sentimentalist writers, Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Butler, Smith, and Bentham. He presumably includes Hobbes, Locke, and Hume in this class.[4] His second volume includes the intellectualist writers Cudworth, Clarke, Balguy, and Price.

This division between sentimentalists and intellectualists recalls the standard division between empiricists and rationalists. Indeed, Selby-Bigge's intellectualists are often called rationalists, and they are all rationalists in the sense often used by the student of the history of

[1] Selby-Bigge's collection is intelligently reviewed, with appropriate criticism of his arrangement, by Albee.

[2] Butler had not been neglected either in Oxford or in Cambridge. See Garnett, 'Butler'. But knowledge of other 18th-century writers in English does not seem to have been widespread. See Martineau, *ERA* iii 378; Taylor, 'Butler'.

[3] Raphael, *BM*, abandons Selby-Bigge's division into schools in favour of a historical arrangement. Schneewind, *MP*, returns to a division by schools, more complex than Selby-Bigge's; his collection is not confined to British writers.

[4] For chronological reasons he relegates Locke and Hobbes to an appendix. He excludes Hume because he had already edited his two major works.

metaphysics and epistemology. Similarly, the sentimentalists generally hold some elements of an empiricist position.[5]

Not all the philosophers on each side are exclusively rationalist or exclusively sentimentalist. Hobbes, for instance, mostly agrees with later sentimentalists, but he sometimes (perhaps inconsistently)[6] treats moral principles as requirements of right reason; on this point he maintains a connexion between reason and morality that Cudworth and Clarke (for instance) defend and that Hutcheson (for instance) denies. Similarly, Shaftesbury anticipates Hutcheson on many points, and so might be counted as a sentimentalist. But he maintains that moral rightness and wrongness are not dependent on the reaction of observers, and so he accepts one of the main rationalist objections against sentimentalism.

If we recognize these complications, we can still follow Selby-Bigge's division in studying these moralists. His sentimentalists, from Hobbes to Bentham, develop one relatively systematic approach to morality, and his intellectualists, from Cudworth to Price, develop a significant alternative approach. A comparison of the two approaches is philosophically instructive, since mutual criticism by philosophers on each side exposes some basic questions in moral theory. This mutual criticism provokes Hume's full defence of an elaborated sentimentalist position. His defence in turn provokes Price and Reid to a fuller defence of the rationalism of their predecessors.

These debates also help us to see how both sides treat the 'traditional naturalism' derived from Aquinas. Rationalists criticize sentimentalists on several points on which sentimentalists follow Hobbes against traditional naturalism. But they also accept some aspects of Hobbes's attacks on traditional naturalism. We can therefore use these discussions to identify the features of traditional naturalism that are abandoned on all sides, and we can try to see whether their abandonment is justified.

Under 'British' moralists, Selby-Bigge includes English, Welsh, Scottish, and Irish writers. They do not form a homogeneous tradition. The idea of a single British nation was formed only gradually during the 18th century,[7] and the relevant philosophical traditions are distinct. In the Scottish universities moral philosophy was a subject for formal and systematic undergraduate lectures, whereas in England it had no equally secure place in university education. Clarke's major work was delivered as a series of sermons. Within the English and Welsh Dissenting academies that produced Butler, Price, and Godwin, moral philosophy was taught more systematically. Both Scottish Presbyterians and English and Welsh Dissenters seem to have been exposed to Continental influences that did not affect English Anglican writers to the same degree. The study of Grotius and Pufendorf was entrenched both in Glasgow and in Philip Doddridge's Dissenting academy,[8] but English Anglican writers do not refer to them as often. Hutcheson unites these different intellectual traditions. He was educated in a Dissenting academy, and taught in one himself. He took part in the non-academic literary life of Dublin, for which he wrote his main

[5] For doubts about the division between rationalism and empiricism see Loeb, *DH,* esp. ch. 1. He does not discuss Platonism, Cudworth, Clarke, Butler, or Price at length. Consideration of them would reinforce doubts about a sharp division, and about the suggestion that empiricism is in some way characteristic of British philosophers.

[6] Hobbes on practical reason; §478.

[7] The Act of Union of 1707 introduced 'one united kingdom by the name of Great Britain'. The growth of a sense of British identity during the 18th century is studied in Colley, *BFN*; see, e.g., 122–4 on Scotland.

[8] On Carmichael in Glasgow and on Doddridge see §585.

works in moral philosophy. He was a professor in Glasgow, where he produced his textbooks.

Even if we doubt whether all these moralists belong to a single ‘British’ tradition, Selby-Bigge’s label is nonetheless justified insofar as the moralists he collects are engaged in debate primarily with one another. In this respect 18th-century writers differ, broadly speaking, both from their 17th-century predecessors and from their 19th-century successors. Though it is reasonable to begin the succession of British moralists with Hobbes, Cudworth, and Cumberland, these three are primarily concerned with the Classical and Scholastic tradition and with its development in natural-law theory. The beginning of the 18th century conveniently coincides with a more purely British intellectual context. Even if we recognize the importance of Grotius, Pufendorf, and the French Quietists, it is still broadly true that the earlier British moralists after Hobbes react to Hobbes, and that the later react to the earlier. Hutcheson’s early work supports Shaftesbury, and criticizes Clarke; it provokes a reply from Balguy and Burnet. His later work is influenced by Butler. Price discusses Clarke, Hutcheson, Butler, and Locke. Hume, Smith, and Reid discuss most of their British predecessors. It is worth our while, therefore, to examine some general approaches to this whole British tradition.

It would be unreasonable to insist on a sharp terminal date. One important division is marked by the return of Continental influence, on Bentham and Godwin through Helvetius, and on 19th-century writers through Kant. But despite these non-British influences, Whewell, Mill, and Sidgwick clearly continue the discussions begun by their British predecessors. Hence an understanding of the more exclusively British discussions of the 18th-century helps us to appreciate the 19th-century discussions as well.

520. Whewell: Dependent v. Independent Morality

Selby-Bigge’s division relies on moral epistemology and psychology, and hence on the foundations of the theories from which normative moral consequences are derived. A different division might appeal to the tendencies of different normative theories. Whewell sees such a division in 17th- and 18th-century British moral philosophy, between belief in ‘independent’ and in ‘dependent’ morality.[9] Morality is independent if it carries its own authority apart from its consequences; it is good in itself and gives us a sufficient reason for observing it, whether or not it also leads to our own pleasure, or the maximum universal pleasure, or to rewards in the afterlife. The authority of ‘dependent’ morality, however, depends on whether it leads to these consequences (*LHMPE* 52, 57). Hence Whewell sometimes speaks of ‘independent morality’ versus ‘the morality of consequences’ (84), and sometimes of ‘the morality of principles’ and ‘the morality of consequences’ (79).[10]

Whewell’s descriptions suggest two ways of distinguishing dependent from independent morality. (1) A metaphysical division. Some people affirm, while others deny, that moral

[9] Though one volume of Whewell’s lecture, *LHMPE*, speaks of England, he includes Scotland, Wales, and (through Hutcheson) Ireland as well.

[10] On independent morality see §604 on Ward.

properties can be reduced to such non-moral properties as our own pleasure, or universal pleasure, or the tendency to result in rewards after death. (2) A normative division. Some people reduce moral rightness to a tendency to promote some specific type of consequences (desired independently of morality?), whereas others deny this reduction.[11]

The parenthesis in the second division marks a question about Whewell's meaning. If it expresses his view, independent morality rejects the reduction of moral rightness to a specific non-moral property. In that case, the second division is a special case of the first division.[12] If, however, the bracketed phrase does not capture Whewell's intention, the second division is neither identical to the first nor a special case of it. We might hold that rightness consists in a tendency to promote morally desirable consequences, but deny that these consequences are themselves desirable independently of morality. If, for instance, we say that rightness consists in a tendency to promote goodness, but we hold that goodness is not reducible to a non-moral property, we believe in 'dependent morality' or 'the morality of consequences' according to Whewell's second division, but not according to his first division.[13]

521. Whewell and Utilitarianism

It is not mere pedantry to point out the difference between Whewell's two divisions. He runs them together because he attributes both conceptions of dependent morality to Paley and Bentham, and rejects them both on his own account. He derives the dependent view

[11] In discussing 'independent morality' Whewell speaks of 'conscience or moral faculty', which Hutcheson called the moral sense. Whewell assumes that Hutcheson and Butler refer to the same thing. (Preface to Mackintosh, *DPEP*, p. xxii.) This question concerns Whewell because he believes a non-utilitarian analysis of moral judgment is needed: 'Right, duty, what we ought to do, are not expressed to the satisfaction of any one by any phraseology borrowed from the consideration of consequences' (p. xxiv). This is why Bentham rejects 'ought' and 'ought not': 'These words—if for this one purpose the use of them may be allowed—*ought* to be banished from the vocabulary of ethics' (*Deont.* ii 1, p. 253). Whewell believes 'deontology' might appropriately be used to describe the outlook of independent morality: 'But the term Deontology expresses moral science (and expresses it well) precisely because it signifies the science of duty, and contains no reference to utility. It is a term well chosen to describe a system of ethics founded on any other than Mr Bentham's principle. Mackintosh, who held that *to deon*—what men ought to do—was the fundamental notion of morality, might very properly have termed the science deontology. The system of which Mr Bentham is the representative—that of those who make morality dependent on the production of happiness, has long been designated in Germany by the term Eudemonism, derived from the Greek word for happiness (eudaimonia). If we were to adopt this term we should have to oppose the deontological to the eudemonist school . . . ' (p. xxviii)

[12] It is only a special case, since there are other logically possible ways of reducing moral to non-moral properties that do not appeal specifically to causal consequences.

[13] Whewell discusses his division further in *LSM*: 'All systems which establish moral rules by their tendency to some external object;—happiness, utility, pleasure, interest, or whatever else; may be called dependent systems, in contradistinction to those which deduce moral rules from the constitution of man, not indeed overlooking the objects of human desires, but not governing themselves by these; such systems may be termed systems of independent morality . . . ' (137). Whewell takes Plato to represent independent morality, because he presents justice as desirable for its own sake as the health of the soul (*Rep.* iv) (138). He recognizes that Aristotle's position appears to be dependent morality, but he argues that the appearance is misleading: 'He analyses happiness, as the first step of his discussion of morality, but this step forthwith throws him back upon the constitution of man, the peculiar ground of the opposite school . . . And thus, in order to determine what modes of action tend to this ultimate and supreme good, he has to consider what the active powers of the soul are . . . ' (139). Hence Aristotle really upholds independent morality: 'For . . . the difference of the two schools of morality is not whether they do or do not speak of happiness; nor whether they do or do not allow happiness to be the supreme object of human action; but whether they do or do not establish their moral rules by their reference to some object considered as distinct from the human faculties themselves; be it called pleasure, or happiness, or utility, or by whatever other name' (141).

from Hobbes and voluntarism, and derives his own position from Cudworth and other rationalists. But a closer look at defenders of independent morality suggests that Whewell over-simplifies. Clarke and Balguy are rationalists who reject Hobbesian, voluntarist, and sentimentalist accounts of moral properties, but both of them show some sympathy to utilitarianism, though they do not accept it. They partly anticipate Sidgwick's combination of independent morality, as a metaphysical position, with utilitarianism as a normative position.

Still, Whewell might be right to combine the metaphysical and the normative conceptions of 'independent morality' as he does. For Adams, Price, and (less explicitly) Butler support his view that arguments for the metaphysical independence of moral properties also support a non-utilitarian normative position.

Is Whewell right? Is it a coincidence that these rationalists believe both his metaphysical and his normative position, and are they mistaken in supposing that the two positions are connected? Or do they show that their arguments for the metaphysical position undermine utilitarianism? Sidgwick implicitly—but perhaps intentionally—disputes Whewell's position, by trying to separate the metaphysical from the normative issue. But he may underestimate the strength and the character of the arguments that Whewell and the rationalists present against utilitarianism.[14]

Whewell's division, therefore, is partly metaphysical (in contrasting realism with anti-realism and voluntarism) and partly normative (in contrasting anti-utilitarianism with utilitarianism). Selby-Bigge's division is primarily epistemological, distinguishing different accounts of the character and basis of moral judgments. Whewell's division matches the epistemological division at some points. For some supporters of independent morality—Clarke and Price, for instance—are rationalists about moral knowledge and motivation. On the other side, some believe that Lockean empiricism commits them to hedonism as an account of motivation.

Whewell's treatment of the moral sense, however, cuts across Selby-Bigge's division between sentimentalists and intellectualists. In his view, some defenders of independent morality try to avoid the obscurities of the rationalist epistemology of Cudworth and Clarke, while still defending their essential metaphysical claims about the irreducibility of morality.[15] Butler is an 'unsystematic' defender of independent morality, whereas Shaftesbury and Hutcheson defend it more systematically, by appealing to a moral sense.

This description of a moral sense theory fits Shaftesbury, since he is a moral realist. Since Hutcheson claims to defend Shaftesbury, we might follow Whewell and suppose that he also defends Cudworth's and Clarke's metaphysical position on moral properties without their moral epistemology. If Whewell is right, Hutcheson rejects rationalism in order to defend realism and independent morality against Hobbesian voluntarism, not in order to defend Hobbes and Locke against the rationalists.

[14] Sidgwick, *ME*, Bk i, chs. 2–3, 8, express his agreement with rationalists on meta-ethical questions.

[15] 'In general the moral realists were aware that they gave their adversaries an advantage, when they ascribed the discernment of moral relations to the reason, narrowed as the domain of that faculty had in later times been. They now found it more convenient to assert that moral distinctions were perceived by a peculiar and separate faculty. To this faculty some did not venture to give a name, but described it only by its operations and results, while others applied to it a term, *The Moral Sense*, which introduced a new set of analogies and connexions.' (*LHMPE* 92)

In support of Whewell, we might cite Reid. Reid is a realist and defends independent morality, but he also sympathizes with those who treat moral knowledge as the product of a moral sense.[16] He argues that reference to a moral sense supports realism and independent morality, because it explains how we can form moral judgments and claim moral knowledge of the properties that Whewell has in mind.

Whewell's division helps us to correct a conclusion we might easily reach from Selby-Bigge's division. We may be tempted to believe that the crucial differences between moral theories lie in their epistemological foundations, and that these foundations determine the rest of a theory. Whewell suggests that metaphysical and normative differences are crucial, and that different epistemological positions may take different routes to the same metaphysical and normative position. His division is consistent with Selby-Bigge's; both divisions identify central issues in dispute, and each division identifies points of agreement and disagreement that the other division may obscure.

522. Whewell on Voluntarism

We may illustrate Whewell's point from an issue closely related to the ones he discusses. Moralists between Hobbes and Butler can be classified as naturalists or voluntarists on questions about morality and the will of God. Hobbes—as generally understood—is a voluntarist. Locke the sentimentalist follows him on this point, and naturalists oppose him. But the division between naturalists and voluntarists does not match the division between rationalists and sentimentalists. Shaftesbury and Hutcheson are naturalists about the relation of the divine will to morality, but they are sentimentalists—Hutcheson more clearly than Shaftesbury—about our knowledge of moral properties. These moralists support Whewell's view that the moral sense theory is a way of supporting independent morality. The belief in independent morality is opposed to voluntarism, and these moralists align themselves with naturalists in opposing voluntarism.

Whewell's judgment disagrees, however, with contemporary rationalist critics of Hutcheson. Burnet, Balguy, and Price argue that Hutcheson's belief in a moral sense requires him to reject realism and the metaphysical independence of morality. Whewell admits that Hutcheson's theory faces difficulties in defending independent morality. But he only discusses Balguy's objections to anti-rationalism, and overlooks Balguy's charge that Hutcheson's account of a moral sense leads to anti-realism.[17] Just as Balguy attacks Hutcheson for rejecting realism, he attacks him for his implicit voluntarism. Naturalists normally oppose voluntarism by arguing for natural rightness and wrongness, understood as objective properties of things, not constituted by anyone's acts of choice, preference, or legislation. This objectivist conception of moral properties seems to conflict with the sentimentalist view that moral properties are constituted by the moral sense of observers.

[16] Reid on the moral sense; §842.

[17] At *LHMPE* 94–7 Whewell discusses the criticisms brought by Balguy and the other 'remaining adherents of the old realist school' (94) against Hutcheson's sentimentalism, but he does not discuss Balguy's objections to Hutcheson's anti-realism (except that at 95 he mentions some 'more peculiarly realist arguments' offered by Balguy).

Hutcheson's critics argue that his sentimentalism exposes him to the objections that he raises against voluntarism.

If these objections to Hutcheson are sound, Whewell is wrong to suppose that a moral sense theory, as Hutcheson and his critics understand it, is compatible with the realism and anti-voluntarism that are the marks of a belief in independent morality. If Whewell is right to connect a moral sense theory with independent morality, either Hutcheson's critics are mistaken or else Hutcheson's version of a moral sense theory does not support independent morality.

Reid's version of a moral sense theory fits Whewell's account better; for Reid's conception of a moral sense is meant to show why we can reasonably claim knowledge of objective moral properties that are irreducible to acts of approval. From Whewell's point of view, we might take Reid to continue the non-rationalist defence of realism that Shaftesbury began.

But even if Whewell is right about Hutcheson's version of a moral sense theory, Hume's version raises a further question. For Hume intends his moral sense theory to express anti-realism and the rejection of independent morality.[18] Moreover, he believes that he continues and develops Hutcheson's approach to morality, and especially his account of the moral sense. If Whewell is to cope with all the facts, he should allow that a moral sense theory may speak on either side of his debate about dependent and independent morality. His approach to the debate makes Hume the exception to the predominant tendency of moral sense theories to support independent morality. If, however, we listen to Hutcheson's critics and to Hume, Hutcheson's doctrine speaks against independent morality. Shaftesbury and Reid, on this view, are sharply opposed to Hutcheson and Hume.

523. Objections to Whewell: Utilitarianism

A further difficulty for Whewell arises from his normative thesis about independent morality. Balguy both accepts metaphysically independent morality and is somewhat sympathetic to utilitarianism. Hutcheson is a utilitarian, and tries to show that a moral sense theory is committed to utilitarianism. He agrees with Whewell in connecting a meta-ethical with a normative thesis, but the connexion is the opposite of the one that Whewell asserts. Whewell believes that a moral sense theory is an expression of belief in metaphysically independent morality that includes non-consequentialist morality; Hutcheson, however, believes that a moral sense theory supports utilitarian morality.

This counter-example to Whewell's general thesis about independent morality and non-utilitarianism is less damaging, however, if Whewell is wrong to regard Hutcheson as a defender of metaphysically independent morality. If, as rationalist critics allege, Hutcheson's sentimentalism really conflicts with metaphysically independent morality, his acceptance of utilitarianism does not undermine Whewell's general position.

On this point also, Whewell may have in mind the position of Reid, who believes in a moral sense, metaphysically independent morality, and non-consequentialist morality.

[18] Whewell's discussion of Hume is very brief (*LHMPE* 181–2). He notices that Hume agrees with Hutcheson in arguing against Clarke's rationalism, and concludes that Hume and Hutcheson 'thus seemed to trample on the very ruins of the old fortress of immutable morality' (182). But he does not try to fit his discussion of Hume into his view that belief in a moral sense constitutes a defence of 'independent morality'.

Perhaps Whewell is misled by this combination of views in Reid, and wrongly attributes it to previous philosophers who reject voluntarism. In his view, the rejection of voluntarism requires belief in independent morality, which is both metaphysically irreducible and normatively non-consequentialist.

Perhaps Whewell is historically incorrect in his claims about how many people see the connexions he alleges between a moral sense, metaphysically independent morality, and non-utilitarian morality. But he is nonetheless philosophically correct, if these positions are connected in the way he suggests. If he is philosophically correct, the failure of some of his predecessors to hold all these components of his view may result from their failure to see how the components are rationally connected.

524. Appropriate Questions

Selby-Bigge's and Whewell's different schemes for classifying moralists after Hobbes point to different and appropriate lines of division among these moralists.

For a start, we have been able to distinguish different views about (1) epistemology, (2) metaphysics, and (3) normative ethics. Sentimentalists and rationalists disagree primarily on epistemological issues. Realists and anti-realists, and voluntarists and naturalists, disagree primarily on metaphysical issues. Consequentialists and non-consequentialists disagree primarily on normative issues. If we mark these different divisions, we need not be surprised if some people are sentimentalists, but also anti-voluntarists.

These divisions may be used either to represent the intentions of different moralists or to represent the positions they are committed to. Whewell tends to use his division between dependent and independent morality for both tasks. His claim that Hutcheson is a moral realist and a defender of independent morality is most plausible as a statement of what Hutcheson is trying to do. It is more difficult to defend as a statement of what Hutcheson actually achieves, for reasons that Balguy and Burnet point out. Whewell agrees with their criticism of Hutcheson, and in doing so casts doubt on his case for treating Hutcheson as a defender of independent morality.[19]

Similarly, Whewell's suggestion that realism and anti-voluntarism leads to non-utilitarian normative conclusions is questionable as an account of what the moralists themselves think; but it may be more defensible as an account of what their positions imply. Some of these divisions, then, need to be defended by exegetical argument, whereas some need to be defended by philosophical argument about the positions that have been distinguished on some reasonable exegetical basis.

525. The Significance of Voluntarism

Whewell distinguishes supporters of 'independent' morality from theological voluntarists, who make morality, and especially moral obligation, dependent on divine commands.

[19] See *LHMPE* 94–9. For Balguy's criticism of Hutcheson's anti-realism see §663.

It is useful to include voluntarism, therefore, in our preliminary survey of British moral philosophy after Hobbes. Though none of the major 18th-century British moralists defends this position, voluntarism is remarkably resilient, despite frequent and convincing attacks on it. Theological voluntarists include John Clarke (1726), Gay (1731), Rutherforth (1744), Brown (1751),[20] and Paley (1785). Their rationalist critics include John Jackson and Catherine Cockburn. Both rationalism, as defended by Cudworth, Clarke, Balguy, Price, and Reid, and sentimentalism, as defended by Hutcheson and Hume, oppose theological voluntarism.

Though British defenders of voluntarism are less careful and sophisticated than Pufendorf and Barbeyrac, they present a clear and forceful argument against naturalism, in both sentimentalist and rationalist versions. Paley's *Moral and Political Philosophy*, first published in 1785, summarizes the voluntarist argument. Since Paley influences both the development of utilitarianism and the criticisms of it, it is useful to see why the voluntarist position appears attractive to readers who compare it with the main rationalist and sentimentalist accounts of morality.

526. Tendencies to Voluntarism

In the view of many voluntarists, the voluntarist position is the orthodox Christian position. We might find this surprising among Anglican writers, given the naturalism of such orthodox and influential writers such as Hooker and Sanderson. But it is less surprising in the light of theological and philosophical influences that seem to raise difficulties for naturalism.

From the theological voluntarist point of view, the view that moral goodness is independent of the will of God seems to challenge the sovereignty of God; and the view that human beings can discover moral goodness either by reason or by a moral sense seems to deny the fallen condition of the human will and its need for grace. This voluntarist outlook is not surprising in moralists who are strongly influenced by Lutheran or Calvinist views. We have seen that it does not express the whole truth about either Luther's or Calvin's position, and in particular that it does not capture their views on natural law.[21] Still, their outlook includes voluntarist elements, and some of their successors emphasize these elements. Cudworth defends his naturalist account of rightness against both Descartes and Dutch Calvinists who maintain the position of Ockham.

The history of Anglican moral theology shows a tendency towards voluntarism.[22] Jeremy Taylor, in contrast to Hooker and Sanderson, tends to minimize the usefulness of appeals to natural law and natural reason. He holds a voluntarist view of the relation of natural law to divine commands, and commends the view that Suarez attributes to Ockham.[23] He implies that the appeal to nature and natural reason is inconclusive, and that we do better to appeal directly to the Scriptures for a guide to action.[24] While he does not deny the existence of a

[20] Mill expresses admiration for Brown's defence of utilitarianism, in 'Bentham' = *CW* x 87.

[21] See §§399, 412.

[22] See McAdoo, *SCMT*. Urban, 'Revolution', argues that Hooker began a basic shift from Aquinas' naturalism to Butler's belief in the subordination of nature to conscience. The story of this 'development' rests on some disputable interpretations of Aquinas and of Butler. For more evidence see Mautner in Hutcheson, *HN* 16–26.

[23] On Sanderson see §557.

[24] On Taylor and on Maxwell's criticism see §539.

natural moral law, his readers might reasonably conclude that it does not matter much to theoretical or practical ethics whether we believe in it or not.

Taylor's view is not accepted without question; Bramhall, for instance, accepts a more traditional view of natural law.[25] But it marks a tendency in English moral thought that tends to take the philosophical structure of Aquinas' ethics less seriously.

Moreover, questions about natural law and natural reason became entangled with a more specifically ecclesiastical controversy. Hooker defends episcopacy by appeal to reason; he does not represent it as prescribed by Scripture, but argues that it can be justified by appeal to natural reason in the relevant historical circumstances. This sort of warrant was not good enough for Hooker's opponents, who insisted that a form of church order and government is legitimate only if it can be proved from Scripture. This was the defence they offered of the presbyterian order. The defenders of episcopacy conceded this procedural question to the presbyterians. In contrast to Hooker, Bancroft argues that episcopacy is the divinely prescribed form of government.

In the early 17th century, voluntarism in morality may have gained some support from the political use of voluntarism about divine law. According to a voluntarist view, God maintains certain laws within his 'ordered' or 'directed' power (potentia ordinata), and therefore makes them stable on the assumption that he continues to directs his power in the same way. But it is always within his 'unqualified' or 'absolute' power (potentia absoluta) to change these laws. James VI and I relies on this distinction to explain the relation of the king to the laws of the state. The king is not bound to observe the laws; his observance of the law is the result of his directing his power in a particular way by deciding that these will be the laws and that he will observe them, but it is always within his unqualified power to change them.[26]

These issues about episcopacy and about monarchy (themselves closely connected) may have encouraged Anglican writers to abandon Hooker's position, or at least to refrain from strenuous defence of his naturalism. Once they conceded that a proof of something's being reasonable was not good enough, and that a proof of divine command was required, they might reasonably be expected to make the same sort of concession in ethics.

A tendency towards a voluntarist account of morality is consistent with recognition of natural law grasped by natural reason. The opponents of naturalism who identify morality with the revealed will of God go further than they need to go in order to maintain voluntarism. But the appeal to revelation is a further step that a voluntarist is likely to find plausible. For if some divine law is revealed through natural reason, we will find it rationally

[25] At *Works* iv 81 Bramhall affirms Aquinas' account of the natural law 'participated', which is 'the ordination of right reason, instituted for the common good, to show unto man what he ought to do and what he ought not to do'. At iv 329 his description is derived from Reginaldus, *PFP*: 'The law of nature is the prescription of right reason, whereby, through that light which nature hath placed in us, we know some things to be done because they are honest, and other things to be shunned because they are dishonest'. He quotes a definition by Reginaldus, *PFP* i 511: 'The natural law . . . is said specially of the dictate or judgment of our reason, the dictate by which through the light impressed on us by eternal law, we know certainly that some things are good, or agreeing with our nature, and judge that they ought to be done . . . '. Bramhall does not repeat the remark about agreement with nature, but he adds the naturalist point that the things prescribed by the natural law are prescribed because they are good, and not the other way round. At v 15–16 he insists on the immutability and indispensability of the natural law.

[26] See James, *PW*, pp. xxv, 180, 184, 186. The theoretical and political significance of these claims is connected with questions about divine right, discussed by Russell, 'Rights'.

acceptable independently of its being commanded by God, and then its moral status does not seem to depend on its being a divine command. A defender of voluntarism is wise to deny that morality is essentially accessible to natural reason.

527. Anti-Scholasticism

A different sort of argument for voluntarism rests on scepticism about the philosophical basis of naturalism. In Aquinas and his successors, a defence of a naturalist account of natural law or (in Suarez) of intrinsic morality rests on claims about nature. In claiming that right action is what fits rational nature, they claim that some actions are appropriate for human nature in itself, independently of divine legislation, and that therefore nature itself has properties independently of divine legislation. These are not simply the properties that natural scientists describe, but also include moral properties, and, more generally, teleological properties implying that natural organisms have natural goals.

Seventeenth-century critics attacked this Aristotelian belief in nature and natural teleology, for more than one reason. Some dismissed Aristotelian metaphysics as hopelessly anti-scientific, primitive, and obscure. Such criticisms are familiar in Descartes and Locke. Others attacked Aristotelian natural teleology on specifically moral and theological grounds. Boyle argues that Aristotelian teleology introduces additional agents besides God, and therefore compromises the freedom and transcendence of God. He attacks such a conception of nature as ‘idolatrous’.[27]

Whether such a charge is reasonable or (as Leibniz believes) unreasonable, it might be expected to inhibit a moralist from appealing too readily to assumptions that might appear Aristotelian and Scholastic. For a 13th-century moralist, the Aristotelian conception of nature provides an accepted background that makes claims about natural law more readily acceptable. For a late 17th-century moralist, any sign of Aristotelian influence might be a liability, not an asset.[28] Even the moralists (Cudworth, Clarke, Balguy, Adams, Butler, and Price) who reject voluntarism do not defend the Aristotelian or Thomist conception of natural law and first principles. The Aristotelian conception makes the grasp of natural law a part of the rational grasp of the ultimate end by rational agents. The later rationalists do not generally assert this connexion between ethical principles and natural teleology.[29]

This reluctance, on strategic grounds, to appeal to Aristotelian authority, is expressed in the defence of the ‘latitude-men’ by ‘S.P’.[30] The ‘latitudinarians’ try to explain Christianity in ways that are broadly comprehensive of Christian doctrine and natural reason. They are indebted to the Platonism of Cudworth and More. S.P. defends the ‘mechanical’ and ‘atomical’ philosophy against the Peripatetic.[31] New philosophy should lead to new divinity.

[27] Boyle, *FE* iv 48–51. In *CV* Boyle does not mention the charge of idolatry, but he alleges (e.g., 17) that the Scholastic outlook inhibits inquiry, and hence inhibits appreciation of the goodness of God in creation. McGuire’s discussion of Boyle in ‘Nature’ connects an anti-Aristotelian view with voluntarism.

[28] On anti-scholasticism cf. Hobbes, §§469, 482.

[29] Cudworth and Leibniz are exceptions. See §§541, 586.

[30] ‘S.P.’ is usually identified with Simon Patrick. Beiser, *SR* 283–4, discusses and quotes him on the disadvantages of appealing to Aristotle.

[31] ‘But there is another crime which cannot be denied, that they have introduced a new philosophy; Aristotle and the schoolmen are out of repute with them.’ (*BANSLM* 14)

Instead of trying to suppress new philosophy, as the Presbyterians did, the Church of England ought to embrace the new learning as the Roman Church has done in the works of Descartes and Gassendi (22).

S.P. qualifies the sense in which Aristotle and the schoolmen are 'out of favour'. The new philosophy does not reject Aristotle altogether.[32] But sensible defenders of Christian doctrine should avoid the appearance of being stuck in a Scholastic mould.[33] S.P. suggests that one would put off the 'ingenious gentry' by appealing to Aristotle or St Thomas. But he also implies that, if it were not for this strategic disadvantage, one might quite reasonably rely on these sources. He does not suggest that their content is theologically or philosophically unacceptable. Nonetheless, he agrees with Cudworth and More in reclaiming Platonism for Christianity, and thereby freeing the Church from an exclusive dependence on Aristotle.[34] A broader philosophical perspective will make the basic Christian claims seem more plausible, since they will not appear to depend on a questionable Aristotelian framework.

The Latitudinarian outlook described here is not intended to support voluntarism about morality. On the contrary; the rationalism of Cudworth and Clarke is an attempt to carry out the task that S.P. describes, showing that the essential Christian claims about morality fit the truths that can be independently discovered by natural reason about human beings and their actions. Still, some latitudinarian assumptions make it easier to be a voluntarist. For if one is reluctant to advertise any commitment to principles that might appear Aristotelian, one makes it more difficult than it would otherwise be to reject voluntarism. It is difficult to defend naturalism without making claims about the nature of things in their own right; and one might suspect that these claims really presuppose some aspects of Aristotelian teleology.

A proper resolution of this question would require some discussion of which aspects of Aristotelian teleology are needed for naturalism about morality, and of whether these aspects depend on other Aristotelian doctrines that are open to legitimate suspicion in the light of modern science or Christian theology. Leibniz sees that this discussion is needed, but he does not carry it out fully.[35] Clarke and Price try to reject voluntarism in favour of realism and rationalism, but without any commitment to Aristotelian claims about nature. Butler is doubtful about the prospects of this rationalist outlook, and returns to naturalism. We need to see what his claims about nature presuppose, and whether they presuppose questionable aspects of the Aristotelian position.

[32] 'Whatever is solid in the writings of Aristotle the new philosophers will readily embrace, and they that are most accused for affecting the new, doubt not but they can give as good an account of the old philosophy as their most violent accusers, and are probably as much conversant in Aristotle's writings, though they do not much value those small wares that are usually retailed by the generality of his interpreters.' (*BANSLM* 22)

[33] 'How shall the clergy be able to maintain their credit with the ingenious gentry, who begin generally to be acquainted with the atomical hypothesis, . . . or how shall they encounter the wits of the age, who assault religion with a new kind of weapon? Will they acquiesce in the authority of Aristotle or St Thomas? or be put off with *Contra negantem principia*? Let not the Church send out her soldiers armed with dock-leaves and bullrushes, to counter swords and guns . . . ' (24)

[34] 'True philosophy can never hurt sound divinity. Christian religion was never bred up in the Peripatetic school, but spent her best and healthfullest years in the more religious Academy . . . but the Schoolmen afterwards ravished her thence, and shut her up in the decayed ruins of Lyceum . . . Let her old loving nurse the Platonic philosophy be admitted again into her family; nor is there any cause to doubt but the mechanic also will be faithful to her, no less against the open violence of atheism than the secret treachery of enthusiasm and superstition, as the excellent works of a late learned author have abundantly demonstrated.' (24)

[35] On Leibniz see §586.

This sketch of different forms of opposition to voluntarism suggests why many people might find voluntarism appealing because of its apparent clarity. Appeals to 'the nature of things' might intelligibly appear to involve vague metaphysics, or exploded natural philosophy, or both.

528. Rationalism v. Orthodoxy

Even if the latitudinarian outlook unwittingly helps voluntarism, the main aim of Latitudinarians is to oppose voluntarism. Hence any doubt about the implications of Latitudinarian views tends to increase sympathy for voluntarism. The connexion between a Latitudinarian outlook and Cudworth's and Clarke's rationalism gives a reason for conservative Anglicans to resist their account of morality. An attempt to recommend Christian moral principles on rational grounds independent of revelation might appear to be part of a general programme of minimizing the dogmatic elements in Christianity. If one supposes that a major part of Christianity is its moral doctrine, and if one then discovers that its moral doctrine rests on rational, non-dogmatic foundations, one may infer that, as one writer puts it, Christianity is 'not mysterious' after all, because there is nothing more to it than we can discover by natural reason.[36]

For these reasons, the attitude to morality and religion that is defended by Cudworth and Clarke, and followed by Balguy, tends to co-exist, in these people, with an attitude to other aspects of Christianity that arouses orthodox objections.[37] Cudworth supports 'undogmatic' Christianity, and Clarke was accused of Arianism.[38] Balguy was a supporter of Hoadly, who wrote an admiring biography of Clarke. All of them were 'Latitudinarians' and defenders of minimalist Christianity (as their opponents conceived it).[39] None of these leading rationalists seemed a completely reliable Christian in the eyes of the defenders of Trinitarian theology. Butler is the exception to this generalization, since he shows no sign of unorthodoxy.[40]

The suggestion that naturalism about morality encourages scepticism about the dogmas of the Christian faith may seem strange if we think of Aquinas or of Suarez. But it is not entirely surprising. Some French Jansenist objections to the Jesuits express similar suspicions and objections.[41] From the point of view of Aquinas, or of the Council of Trent, it seems entirely unwarranted to claim that if Christianity includes basic moral principles that can be justified by natural human reason, it has no essential dogmatic elements that depend

[36] See Toland, *CNM*. Rationalist treatments of Christianity are intelligently discussed by Tulloch, *RTCP* ii, chs. 1–2. Stephen, *HET* i, ch. 3, offers a less subtle account. See also Beiser, *SR* 123–32.

[37] On Cudworth and Whichcote see Passmore, *RC* 81.

[38] On the connexion between Arianism and rationalism see Wiles, *AH*, ch. 4, esp. 110–25 (on Clarke, Butler, and Waterland), 149–51 (on Price). On Cudworth's unpopularity in some orthodox quarters Passmore, *RC* 101, quotes a comment by Warburton, *DL*, ed.1, Pref. to IV–VI: 'There wanted not country clergymen to lead the cry, and tell the world—That, under the pretence of defending Revelation, he wrote in the very manner that an artful infidel might be supposed to use in writing against it'.

[39] The growth of Latitudinarian views in Cambridge, and their rather heterogeneous sources (Puritan and rationalist), are described by Gascoigne, *CAE* 32 (on Pearson and Aquinas); 7, 86 (on John Moore, Clarke's patron); 117 (Clarke); 123 (Waterland); 127 (Rutherforth).

[40] In *Anal.* ii 1.18 Butler refers approvingly to Waterland on the use of the Trinitarian formula in Baptism.

[41] On Jansenism see §417; Knox, *E*, chs. 9–10; Abercrombie, *OJ*; Palmer, *CU*, ch. 2.

on revelation. But the unwarranted claim seems to influence people both for and against voluntarism.

These points help to explain an initially puzzling fact about support for and opposition to voluntarism. During the period of the Reformation, voluntarist tendencies are most marked in Lutheran and Calvinist sources. Voluntarism seems appropriate for a defence of the sovereignty of God, the weakness of human reason, and the dependence of human beings on divine grace. Cudworth still thinks of Calvinists as some of his main opponents. But in 18th-century England, the Dissenters, successors of the Puritans, often support rationalism against voluntarism in morality. The defenders of voluntarism are the orthodox Anglicans, who might have been expected to sympathize with Hooker and his more Thomist views. Butler and Price and (later on) Godwin were all educated in Dissenting academies.[42] Henry Grove and Philip Doddridge were prominent Dissenting ministers who also argued against voluntarism. On the other side, many writers who show most sympathy to voluntarism are Anglican clergy.

This difference between the 17th and the 18th century arises from theological disputes distinct from ethics. The Dissenters were not necessarily complete rationalists about Christianity; Grove and Doddridge clearly were not. But they were sympathetic to some rationalist elements insofar as they appealed to Scripture and reason against the traditional elements in Christianity that supported distinctively Anglican views. An appeal to Scripture and reason seemed to many Dissenters—notably Price—to undermine the dogmas set out in the historic creeds, and in particular the doctrine of the Trinity. Those who minimize the claims of natural reason are not the more extreme Protestants who believe that the Church of England retains too much of the Scholastic framework of mediaeval Christianity, but the defenders of tradition who resist the attempt to replace traditional dogmatic Christianity with a simplified and un-dogmatic appeal to natural reason and morality.

This reversal of attitudes to natural reason, and especially to natural reason applied to morality, helps to explain the curious alliance of orthodox Christianity with tendencies to voluntarism. Aquinas, Hooker, and Suarez would have been surprised, and with good reason. But those who supposed that the rejection of Aristotelian natural philosophy implied the rejection of the Scholastic position as a whole were unwilling to defend Aquinas' views in moral philosophy. They did not try to separate these views from any commitment to obsolete science or to dogmatic positions rejected by the Reformers.

529. Voluntarism and Egoism

The dispute between voluntarism and naturalism tends to be connected with a dispute between an egoistic account of motivation and a non-egoistic account that recognizes disinterested motivation. We might think it is merely accidental that voluntarists tend to be egoists and naturalists tend to reject egoism. The examples of Scotus and Ockham make it clear that voluntarism and egoism need not be combined. But in the 18th-century debates in Britain the connexion is not merely accidental.

[42] On Doddridge and Grove see §§877–8.

The controversy aroused in France by the Quietist movement affected British religious and ethical thought in a surprising way.[43] The Quietists advocated totally self-forgetful love of God; they went so far as to condemn any admixture of thoughts about one's own salvation in one's thoughts about God. Bossuet, with the support of the official Church, rejected this extreme attack on eudaemonism.[44] In Britain the Quietist attitude appeared to be an unwelcome manifestation of 'enthusiasm', displaying a tendency to fanaticism in religious thinking. This reaction was reasonable, but opponents of Quietist enthusiasm did not simply reject the total renunciation of self-interested motivation. They also concluded that the basic error of Quietism lay in its appeal to disinterested motivation altogether. Shaftesbury, Maxwell, and Butler all protest against the view that egoism is the only safe alternative to enthusiasm.

Sympathy towards egoism tends to encourage sympathy towards voluntarism, and tends to gain support from voluntarism. If we are naturalists about morality, we believe that we can grasp intrinsic morality—the reasons that are derived from the nature of human beings and their circumstances. But if we think there are no such reasons forming intrinsic morality, and we believe that moral rightness consists in being commanded by God, we need to explain why we have a reason to act on divine commands. If we say that they provide a reason because they meet some further standard for moral rightness, we seem to revert to naturalism; for conformity to this further standard seems to be what makes them right. We avoid this threat of a regress if we take Hobbes's way out and argue that God makes it in our interest to obey these commands.

An egoist explanation of moral reasons and motives makes voluntarism clear and comprehensible. Naturalism, by contrast, might appear both metaphysically and psychologically obscure and misleading. Naturalism in metaphysics appears to appeal to facts about the nature of things 'in themselves'; these facts seem to need some doubtful Aristotelian explanation. Naturalism about moral reasons and motives appeals to obscure reasons for choosing what is right 'in itself'. Naturalists who are eudaemonists seem to find it difficult to explain how concern for rightness in itself is related to one's own happiness. If they are not eudaemonists, they seem to find it difficult to explain how one can be concerned for what is right in itself. Puzzles of this sort in the naturalist position are solved by the combination of voluntarism with egoism. That is one reason why many English moralists find this combination plausible.

[43] See Knox, *E*, chs. 11–12; Ward, *NG*, ch. 3; Kirk, *VG* 451–63. On English discussions of enthusiasm see Beiser, *SR*, ch. 5. See also §588 (Leibniz); §611 (Shaftesbury); §717 (Butler).

[44] For the extreme rejection of eudaemonism see the Quietist views described in their official condemnation by the Pope in 1699 (Denz. 2351): 'A habitual state of love of God is given, which is pure charity and without any admixture of a motive of one's own interest. . . . No longer is God loved for the sake of (propter) merit, nor for the sake of perfection, nor for the sake of the happiness to be found in loving God.' 2355: 'We will nothing for ourselves, and everything for God. We will nothing in order to be perfect and blessed for the sake of our own interest . . . '. In 1687 similar views, attributed to Michael Molinos, were condemned (see 2207, 2209, 2212).

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CUMBERLAND AND MAXWELL

530. Cumberland's Aims

Cumberland intends his exposition of the laws of nature to supplement the arguments of his predecessors (Grotius and his brother, Sharrock, and Selden) who have argued 'from the effect to the cause', appealing to the shared sentiments of different people at different times to establish the existence of natural law. Cumberland especially commends Grotius' work, 'which was the first of the kind, worthy both of the author and of immortality' (*LN*, Introd. §1 = P 247).[1] But in contrast to Grotius and the others, he argues from cause to effect, by examining 'the causes, which produce in the mind of man the knowledge of the laws of nature' (Introd. §2 = P 248). He begins from the nature of the universe and the first cause, in order to show that our knowledge of the universe makes it reasonable for us to accept certain principles as laws of nature. We will find that the laws of nature are those principles that promote the greatest common good of rational beings, and that they are supported by divine sanctions.

Cumberland intends his account of the laws of nature to refute Hobbes. His book contains lengthy, often acute, discussion of Hobbes's views, both in *De Cive* and in the English and Latin versions of *Leviathan*.[2] He especially attacks Hobbes's account of human nature, of the state of nature as a state of war, and of natural right. At these points Hobbes reveals his basic errors about the content and aim of the laws of nature, and about our reason for following them. Cumberland argues against Hobbes that the laws of nature are not basically counsels of self-preservation, to be justified by their role in preserving the peace of the commonwealth and keeping us out of the state of nature. According to Cumberland, the laws of nature aim at the common good of rational agents, and this aim by itself makes it reasonable for rational agents to observe them.

[1] I quote from either Raphael or Maxwell, and give references to the sections of the Latin text and to pages of Parkin's reprint of Maxwell (cited as P). Maxwell's version is vigorous, and his notes are often acute. But he is sometimes misleading about the Latin, both by addition and by subtraction. (This may be partly because he has tried to free Cumberland 'from as many of his scholastic terms as I could, without hurting the sense, explaining such of the rest as seemed most to require it' (Pref. = P 5–6).) The list of subscribers to Maxwell's translation includes: Revd Dr Geo. Berkeley, Dean of Derry; Revd Mr Butler; Revd Dr Samuel Clark, Rector of St James's; Revd Mr John Hutchinson. Tyrrell's *BDLN* is a paraphrase of *LN*.

[2] At 1.26 = P 336 (see Parkin's note) and 3.2 = P 467, he comments on a difference between the English and Latin *Leviathan*, taking the Latin to be later. Cf. §469.

To give an account of the laws of nature, Cumberland enters the controversy about natural law and intrinsic morality. He does not discuss Grotius or Suarez or their predecessors, and he does not seem to acknowledge most of them. He describes Grotius as the first of his predecessors, as though Grotius himself were not a participant in a debate carried on by Vasquez, Suarez, and their predecessors. His explicit remarks might suggest that he ignores the Scholastics and thinks nothing can be learned from them. However, though he does not acknowledge them, he discusses some of the issues that they discuss, and he probably has their views in mind.

Cumberland's relation to the Scholastic discussion is quite complex. On the one hand, he rejects intrinsic morality; like Culverwell, he argues that morality and obligation come together and both require law. On the other hand, he does not agree with Hobbes and Pufendorf in supposing that the non-moral natural goods are simply those that promote one's own advantage.[3]

Cumberland's translator and editor John Maxwell carries the discussion further (as Barbeyrac does in translating and editing Grotius and Pufendorf). He is closer than Cumberland is to a Scholastic naturalist position. He sometimes cites Scholastics, and even when he does not cite them he defends them against Cumberland.[4] It is often instructive to consider Maxwell's criticisms of Cumberland, since they present views that Cumberland does not explicitly discuss.

531. Natural Law as Divine Legislation

Cumberland agrees that natural law involves goods and evils that rationally concern human beings, apart from any divine law. But he also insists that it essentially involves divine law and divine commands. Though he praises Grotius' treatment of natural law (Introd. §1), he takes a voluntarist position, which Pufendorf cites in his support.[5]

He accepts Suarez's strict understanding of 'law' (without mentioning Suarez), and criticizes those who speak of the laws of nature loosely, without deriving them from the will of a legislator. He agrees with Selden's view that if laws of nature were simply rational precepts, they would lack the authority that belongs to law.[6] Laws are 'practical propositions, with rewards and punishments annexed, promulged by competent authority' (Introd. §6 = P 253). To show that there are laws of nature, therefore, is not simply to show that there are rational moral principles, but to show also that they are the work of a legislator who imposes sanctions.[7]

[3] Some of the intellectual background to Cumberland's ethics is explored by Parkin, *SRPRE*.

[4] For instance, it is not clear whether Cumberland knows Suarez, but Maxwell cites him in 'Obligation' §1 = P 796n4. Maxwell does not often cite Scholastic sources. Most of his remarks on natural law refer to Selden, but he quite often mentions Grotius.

[5] See §564.

[6] '[Selden] hath well enough corrected our common moralists, who are wont to consider these dictates of reason as laws, without any sufficient proof that they have all the conditions required to make them so, viz., that they are established and declared to us by God as a legislator, who hath annexed to them sufficient rewards and punishments.' (Tyrrell, *BDLN*, Pref. Cf. *LN*, Introd. §3 = P 250.)

[7] 'A law of nature is a proposition quite clearly presented to, or impressed upon, the mind by the nature of things from the will of the First Cause, pointing out an action, of service to the common good of rational beings, the performance of

Cumberland distinguishes two elements of a law of nature. The 'precept' gives the content of a natural law, indicating the particular way in which it aims at the common good of rational beings. The sanction consists of the reward God assigns to observance of the law, or the punishment God assigns to the violation.

The 'sanction' that Cumberland has in mind is not confined to rewards and punishments that God artificially attaches to good and bad conduct, by (for instance) rewarding good conduct with temporal prosperity in this life (as the Psalmists suppose) or with happiness in the afterlife. The relevant sanction also includes the natural and essential contribution of virtue to our own well-being.[8] The fact that, as the ancient moralists claim, virtue promotes happiness appears to Cumberland to support his claim that God attaches a sanction to good and bad conduct. He does not believe that we must regard natural law as divine law if we are to recognize that sanctions are attached to it. In recognizing it as divine law we recognize that the connexion between virtue and happiness is the result of God's intention to impose this law on us. If we left God aside, we could not justifiably treat the natural law as genuine law, but we would still have good reason to obey it because of its natural sanction.

To this extent Cumberland agrees with Hobbes, but he disagrees with Hobbes about what the natural sanction is. Since Hobbes believes we have a good reason to obey the natural law even if we leave God aside, and he believes that the only good reasons are those that appeal to self-interested motives, he argues that it is in my interest to observe the laws of nature. Hence he treats the laws of nature as indirect counsels of self-preservation, because they preserve the commonwealth.

Contrary to Hobbes, Cumberland takes the laws of nature to be prescriptions about the common good of rational beings. They achieve the good of an individual rational being insofar as her good is a part of the common good. Hence observance of the universal law of nature promotes the good of each individual who is part of the whole.[9] This does not imply that in any given society the good of the whole coincides with the good of each part; for in a defective community, no less than in a diseased or injured body, the good of the whole may involve some harm to a particular part.[10] Civil

which is followed, owing to the nature of rational beings, by adequate rewards, while its neglect is followed by adequate punishments. The former part of this definition covers the precept, the latter the sanction; and both are impressed on the mind by the nature of things.' (5.1 = P 495–6 = R 112) Maxwell translates (P 495–6): 'The law of nature is a proposition proposed to the observation of, or impressed upon, the mind, with sufficient clearness by the nature of things, from the will of the first cause, which points out that possible action of a rational agent, which will chiefly promote the common good, and by which only the entire happiness of particular persons can be obtained. ["and . . ." has no basis in the Latin.] The former part of this definition contains the precept, the latter, the sanction; and the mind receives the impression of both, from the nature of things.' The reference to a sanction is introduced in a second printing (see Kirk, *RCNL* 31); but this is not an isolated revision. Cumberland also takes sanctions to be necessary at Introd. §§4, 6, 13.

[8] On Cumberland's lack of emphasis on post-mortem punishments and rewards, see Albee, *HEU* 38–40. Tyrrell (*BDLN*, Ep. Ded.) notices this feature of Cumberland, and adds some material from Parker on these sanctions.

[9] 'The endeavour, to the utmost of our power, of promoting the common good of the whole system of rational agents, conduces, as far as in us lies, to the good of every part, in which our own happiness, as that of a part, is contained.' (Introd. §9 = P 256)

[10] '. . . many things may happen, by means whereof this general care of the whole may not always produce the proposed happiness of individuals, without allay; as breathing and eating, however necessary to the whole body, do not ward off all diseases and accidents' (Introd. §22 = P 272).

government, therefore, seeks to prevent the conflict between individual and common good that arises from the misconduct of other people. The laws of nature secure the common good of rational creatures, and thereby secure the good of each rational creature.[11]

532. Cumberland's Voluntarism: Natural Law and Morality

This description of natural law agrees with Suarez's claim that natural law is genuine law, and hence requires a legislator. Cumberland also follows Suarez in taking obligation to require legislation. He rejects Hobbes's view that 'obligation' is properly applied to the mental state of the person obliged. He applies it to the imposer of the obligation, and therefore takes the divine will and command to oblige.[12] If he is right to claim that the natural law essentially carries obligation, and that obligation involves command, he is right to infer that the natural law requires divine legislation.

Suarez's voluntarism is limited to natural law, and does not extend to morality; he recognizes intrinsic morality independent of legislation and therefore (in Suarez's view) independent of obligation. Culverwell and Locke disagree with him, since they argue that morality requires obligation, and hence divine commands. Culverwell follows Suarez in recognizing natural 'conveniences' and 'disconveniences', and even natural rightness (honestas) apart from divine commands, but he takes these to be insufficient for morality. Locke departs further from Suarez; he allows natural 'convenience', but resolves it into pleasure and advantage without any natural rightness.

Cumberland's view is similar to Locke's, but with some qualifications that bring it closer to a naturalist position. He finds talk of 'agreement' obscure until it is explained by reference to the preservation and perfection of the subject with which an action 'agrees'.[13] But once

[11] Cumberland anticipates and rejects the charge that his account of the laws of nature 'has the effect of ranking the common good, and so the honour of God and the happiness of all other men, below the private happiness of each, and of making the common good serve private good as the supreme end' (5.45 = P 605 = R 117).

[12] 'Therefore the whole force of obligation is this, that the legislator has annexed to the observance of his laws, goods; to the transgression, evils; and those natural goods and evils, by the prospect of which men are moved to perform actions, rather agreeing than disagreeing with the laws.' (5.11 = P 519–20) 'I, therefore, think, that moral obligation may be thus universally and properly defined: Obligation is that act of a legislator, by which he declares, that actions conformable to his law are necessary to those, for whom the law is made. An action is then understood to be necessary to a rational agent, when it is certainly one of the causes necessarily required to that happiness, which he naturally, and consequently necessarily, desires.' (5.27 = P 554) 'I, therefore, resolve moral obligation (which is the immediate effect of nature's laws) into the first and principal cause of these same laws, which is the will and counsel of God who promotes the common good, and, therefore, by annexing rewards and punishments, enacts into laws the practical propositions which tend thereto. Men's care of their own happiness, which causes them to consider, and be moved by, rewards and punishments, is no cause of obligation, since that proceeds, wholly, from the law and the lawgiver; it is only a necessary disposition in the subject, without which the rewards and penalties of the law would be of no force to induce men to the performance of their duty.' (5.22 = P 543–4) On Suarez and Cumberland see Schneewind, *IA* 110n (he does not mention the crucial difference between Cumberland and Suarez about natural law and morality).

[13] 'Good is that which preserves, or enlarges and perfects, the faculties of any one thing or of several. For in their effects is discovered that particular agreement of one thing with another which is requisite to demonstrate anything good to the nature of this thing, rather than of others. In the definition of good I choose to avoid the word [agreement] [convenientia] because of its very uncertain significance. Nevertheless, those things whose actions or motions conduce to the preservation or increase of the powers of other things, consistently with the nature of the individual, may justly be said to agree with them.' (3.1 = P 462)

this explanation is provided, he agrees with those who say that natural law prescribes actions that fit human nature.[14]

In recognizing this natural good antecedent to legislation, Cumberland agrees with Suarez. But he rejects Suarez's further claim that this natural good is sufficient for morality. In his view, the moral good requires legislation.[15] This division between the natural and the moral agrees with Culverwell's interpretation of Suarez. But Cumberland disagrees with Culverwell about which goods are natural. In Culverwell's view, natural goods include natural 'honesty' that can be admired and valued from a point of view outside narrow advantage, but is insufficient for moral goodness. Cumberland restricts the range of natural goods further; he agrees with Suarez in taking honestas to be sufficient for morality, but he denies any natural honestas independent of the will of a legislator. He concedes to Culverwell that the perfection of natural goods gives us an intrinsic reason (antecedent to any divine legislation) to pursue them, but he denies that this is honestas or morality.[16]

This division between the natural and the moral good affects Cumberland's explanation of his account of the natural law. When the natural law is defined as aiming at the common good, 'good' refers to purely natural good, not to the moral good. To understand it as referring to the moral good would be to introduce a vicious circle, since moral good has to be defined by reference to natural law.[17] Only non-moral goods constitute the common good of rational agents. Morally right actions, therefore, should be understood teleologically and instrumentally, as means to non-moral goods.[18]

[14] 'There is also another manner of expressing the laws of nature, as thus, this or that possible action is most agreeable [convenit] to human nature. But the sense is doubtful; for (1) Human nature either signifies the particular nature of the agent, and then it is not expressive enough of what ought to be considered before action; . . . Or (2) human nature respects all men . . . But if, in either of these notions the public good is by consequence implied, this form of speaking is consistent with the first, which is therefore to be preferred, because it is free from this ambiguity. Again, it is doubtful to what the expression [is agreeable] relates: For (1) An action may be said to be agreeable to any nature, when it is agreeable to the principles of acting . . . (2) An action may be said to be agreeable to human nature, when its effects preserve or improve the nature of one or more men. This latter sense coincides with the form I first proposed, which is free from ambiguity. And the first sense of the agreeableness of actions may, for the most part, be reduced thereto.' (4.2 = P 484)

[15] 'Good of this kind, of which we form an idea without the consideration of any laws whatsoever, I call natural good . . . It is distinguished, by its greater extensiveness, from that good which is called moral, which is ascribed only to such actions and habits of rational agents as are agreeable to laws, whether natural or civil, and is ultimately resolved into the natural common good, to the perfection and increase of which alone all the laws of nature and all just civil laws do direct us.' (3.1 = P 463)

[16] See 5.42 = P 598, quoted in §535. Clarke quotes this in *DNR* = ii 628n H; see §617.

[17] 'The good placed in the definition, I understand that which by the philosophers is usually called natural good, and which I have already defined, with respect to created beings, as that which preserves, or renders them more perfect or happy. . . . The reader is to observe, that I have called these things naturally good, in that sense, in which these words, as being of a more extensive signification, (and, consequently, more general and first known in the order of nature) are distinguished from things morally good; for these are only voluntary actions conformable to some law, especially, that of nature. Therefore good is not to be taken in this sense, which it is inserted in the definition of the law of nature, because it is absurd, to define any thing, by what supposes the thing defined, already known. There are many things naturally good, that is, such as contribute somewhat to the happiness of man, which are not morally good, as being either not voluntary actions, or not commanded by any law. . . . When, afterwards we act in pursuance of these conclusions, and upon comparison, find our actions conformable to them; beside the previously known appellation of natural goodness, there accrues to these actions this, that they are morally good, from their conformity with the laws of nature already enacted.' (5.9 = P 516–17)

[18] 'Such actions as take the shortest way to this effect [sc. the common good] as to their end, are naturally right [rectae], because of their natural resemblance to a right line which is the shortest that can be drawn between any two given points. Nevertheless, the same actions afterward, when they are compared with the law, whether natural or positive, which is the rule of morality, and they are found conformable to it; are called morally good, as also right, that is, agreeing with the rule; but the rule itself is called right as pointing out the shortest way to the end . . . actions conducive

Cumberland does not consider Suarez's view that natural goods are sufficient for intrinsic morality that is antecedent to law. According to Suarez, natural law is just because it corresponds to intrinsic morality, but Cumberland implicitly rejects that view. Perhaps he agrees with Culverwell's view that the distinctive features of moral obligation require law, or perhaps he agrees with Suarez's view that obligation in general requires law. But he does not confront Suarez's reasons for distinguishing the duties (debita) of intrinsic morality from obligations, which depend on law.

Does this matter? Is the disagreement between Cumberland and Suarez about intrinsic morality purely verbal, or can we find some reason for agreeing with one or the other view? To answer this question we need to explore Cumberland's view on the non-moral good.

533. Individual Happiness and the Common Good

Cumberland's case for a legislative view of morality becomes clearer from his discussion of the ancient moralists and their non-legislative conception of the virtues.

He recognizes that the ancient moralists are eudaemonists, who take the ultimate end to be the agent's happiness. But he does not confuse their eudaemonism with hedonism, and he rejects hedonism. He takes activity and pleasure to be inseparably connected, and both to be necessary for happiness. Happiness is 'a certain aggregate, whose parts we are continually enjoying' (5.13 = P 523).[19]

He agrees with the ancient moralists who take virtue to be necessary for happiness.[20] Among these he agrees with those who take virtue to be a component of happiness, not merely a means to it. But he rejects the Stoic view that virtue is the only good; he endorses Cicero's argument[21] that the Stoic view takes away the point of virtuous action by denying that the effects it aims at are good.[22]

Though Cumberland agrees with these aspects of Greek eudaemonism, he is not a eudaemonist, since he does not agree that one's own happiness is or ought to be one's supreme end.[23] His reason for rejecting eudaemonism is not that he believes in a conflict

to this end, as being the best and most beautiful, are in themselves amiable, and highly to be commended by all rational beings, and therefore, upon account of that high honour to which their beneficent nature entitles them deservedly called honest or honourable in themselves [merito dici per se honestas; M omits "in themselves"].' (Introd. §16 = P 264)

[19] On happiness see Albee, *HEU* 31–2 (who emphasizes the hedonist side of Cumberland's position); Sharp, 'Cumberland' 377–9 (who argues that Cumberland is a hedonist, and claims rather questionably that Shaftesbury is one too).

[20] 'I might here easily show the wonderful agreement between the Peripatetics, the old and new Academy, and even the Epicureans themselves, though some taught virtue to be the only good; others only the chief good; some that it was itself the very end; others that it was the most proper and absolutely necessary means to the obtaining it.' (5.41 = P 593)

[21] See Cic. *F.* iv 31–3; §187.

[22] 'Upon this head the Stoics are to be reprehended who affirmed nothing to be good but virtue; nothing evil but vice. For whilst they endeavour to establish the transcendent goodness of virtue and the egregious evil of vice, they incautiously entirely take away the only reason why virtue is good and vice evil. For virtue is therefore good (and in truth it is the greatest good) because it determines human actions to such effects as are principal parts of the public natural good...' (5.5 = P 508)

[23] 'Although I have supposed that everyone necessarily seeks his own greatest happiness, yet I am far from thinking that to be the entire and adequate end of anyone.' (5.28 = P 556) 'Therefore, when moral writers speak of every man's happiness as his ultimate end, I would willingly interpret them in this sense, that it is the chief end among those which respect the agent himself only; and I doubt not, but that every good man has an end, that is, intends an effect, that is greater, namely

between one's own good and the common good; on the contrary, he believes that one promotes one's own good by advancing the common good of which it is a part.[24] But he does not believe that the justifying reason for pursuit of the common good depends entirely on its connexion with one's own good. In his view, it is independently reasonable to pursue the common good, and it would be unreasonable to follow some rule that does not aim at everyone's happiness. Even apart from any reference to the will of God, it is unreasonable to claim to be rationally justified in dominating others while admitting that they have an equally good reason for dominating oneself.[25]

Natural law, therefore, not only prescribes actions that promote one's own happiness, as we can see from the arguments of the Greek moralists; it also prescribes actions that are independently reasonable, because they present a common end that rational agents must observe. Since they can all reasonably agree on this end, it is the end that rational beings, as such, must pursue.[26] The 'sanction' of the natural law does not consist simply in its promotion of my private interest. A further 'reward' is the fact that the moral law promotes the common good.

Cumberland's claim about reason is similar to Spinoza's claim that reason expresses a common point of view on which rational beings agree if they use their reason correctly. This claim is plausible. But Cumberland, like Spinoza, is not clear about the difference between different kinds of agreement. We might agree that the same thing is good for me and for you, but it does not follow that we will agree in preferring that both of us pursue it; for if you cannot have as much as you want without leaving me less than I want, I might prefer you not to pursue it, even if I recognize that you have as good reason to pursue it as I have.

Does this objection affect Cumberland's conception of the common end? He might claim that if the common end is the common good, including each person's individual good, we can and should all agree to pursue it, because it is non-competitive. But we might still doubt whether this is so. Perhaps we can agree on pursuit of a common good, because we all hope to get our own good out of it; but it does not immediately follow that I have as good a reason to pursue the common good for its own sake as I have to pursue my own good.

Cumberland's appeal to a common good that is an independently and non-derivatively reasonable object of pursuit for rational agents is a suggestive innovation in a Scholastic

the honour of God and the increase of other men's happiness. I conceive the one chief end or best effect to be composed of our own happiness and that of all other rational beings (which we endeavour as opportunity offers).' (5.47 = P 612)

[24] 'The greatest benevolence of each rational agent towards all forms [constituit] the happiest state of each and of all benevolent persons, so far as it can be produced by them themselves.' (1.4 = P 292 = R 107) 'I use the word "forms" to indicate that the aforesaid benevolence is both the intrinsic cause of present happiness and the efficient cause of future happiness, and is necessarily required in respect of both.' (1.4 = P 293 = R 107) '. . . it is . . . perfectly plain that the happiness of each person, e.g. of Socrates, Plato, and all the other individuals . . . cannot be severally separated from the happiness of all . . . because the whole is no different from the parts taken together.' (1.6 = P 295 = R 108)

[25] 'For example, suppose right reason tells Titius that the happiness possible for him, and the end he should pursue, consist in the enjoyment of complete dominion over the land occupied by Seius and Sempronius, and over their persons, and over the land of all others; then true reason cannot dictate to Seius and Sempronius that their happiness, which they are to seek, lies in the enjoyment of complete dominion over the land and person of Titius and likewise of all others. For the precepts involve an obvious contradiction, so that only one of the two can be supposed true.' (5.16 = P 529 = R 115)

[26] 'For there is only one end in the pursuit of which all can agree; and it is most certain that no decision can be in accordance with right reason unless all can agree on it. Therefore there arises from our common rational nature a necessity that each, by exercising universal benevolence, should always seek the common good, and should seek his own as only a part of that and consequently subordinated to it; and this is the sum of natural law.' (5.46 = P 610 = R 118)

account of practical reason. We might argue that Scholastic views on correct reason are not all essentially eudaemonistic, and that they allow actions to be reasonable in themselves apart from one's own interest. But Scotus is the only one who explicitly distinguishes eudaemonist reasons from impartial practical reason, which he connects with the affection for the just.[27] In Butler, Scotus' division is clearly marked with the division between self-love and conscience. In Cumberland the division is not as explicit as it is in Butler, but he makes it clear that he believes in two irreducibly different aims of practical reason.[28]

534. Non-instrumental Goods v. Moral Goods

Cumberland's view of practical reason assumes that some natural goods are both non-instrumental and non-hedonic. These include the virtues of character recognized by the Greek moralists.[29] He therefore rejects the view of Hobbes and Locke, that the only natural goods are the pleasant (iucundum) and the advantageous (utile). But he disagrees with Suarez's view that the morally right (honestum) is one of the natural goods. In Cumberland's view, the natural goods that are good in their own nature also promote the common good, and may be pursued for the sake of the common good, apart from any law. But these goods cannot be the source of an obligation or a duty (debitum), and so cannot be honesta, without reference to a law. Hence he rejects Suarez's belief in natural duties prior to obligation and law.

For this reason, he believes that the views of the ancient philosophers about virtue fall short of grasping its genuinely moral character.[30] The fact that virtue is choiceworthy in

[27] On Scotus see §363.

[28] On Butler see §708. Sidgwick's judgment on Cumberland is rather severe, and underestimates his consistency: 'His account of the sanction, again, is sufficiently comprehensive, including both the internal and the external rewards of virtue and punishments of vice; and he, like later utilitarians, explains moral obligation to lie primarily in the force exercised on the will by these sanctions. He considers, however, that while this egoistic motive is indispensable, and is the normal spring of action in the earlier stages of man's moral obedience, yet rational beings tend to rise from this to the nobler motives of love to God, regard for His honour, and disinterested affection for the common good. At the same time it is difficult to put together in a clear and consistent view his different statements as to the connexion between the good of the individual and universal good, and as to the manner in which the rational apprehension of either or both goods operates in determining volition.' (*OHE* 174)

[29] 'They are indeed in their own nature good, though there were no law, because they conduce to the good state of the universe: But moral obligation, and the nature of a debt [debiti] thence arising, is unintelligible, without a respect to a law, at least, of nature. Nay further; the very honour, from which actions are, by their own nature, distinguished by the title of honestas, laudable practice, or are called honourable, [a quo actus sua natura boni honestatis titulo insigniantur, seu honesti dicuntur; Maxwell omits ''by their own nature''] seems wholly to come from this, that they are praised by the law of the supreme ruler, discovered by the light of nature, and honoured with the greatest rewards, among which is to be reckoned the concurring praise of good men. And justly are they called naturally lawful and honourable [liciti et honesti], because the law, which makes them such, does not depend upon the pleasure of the civil power, but arises necessarily, in the manner already explained, from the very nature of things, and is altogether unchangeable, whilst nature remains unchanged.' (8.1 = P 684–5)

[30] 'Much has been advanced by philosophers, especially the Stoics and Academics, which with strength and perspicuity demonstrates that the virtues necessarily bring happiness along with them, as essentially connected therewith: Which I did not think fit to transcribe, as being what the learned are already acquainted with. It is sufficient, that I readily acknowledge them to be the principal parts of human happiness, so that neither without them can any man (though abounding with all other advantages) be happy: Nor, if he possess them, can he be miserable, however unfortunate. They are therefore worthy of pursuit because of the perfection intrinsic to them, even if there were no law of nature that commanded them. (Dignae itaque sunt, quae propter intrinsceam sibi perfectionem appetantur, etiamsi nulla esset

itself as the most important part of happiness does not imply that it has moral goodness, which depends on divine law. The ancients should have seen that since the virtues are choiceworthy for themselves, they must have had this reward annexed to them by the first cause, who must therefore have commanded observance of them. They have moral goodness only because of this relation to a divine command.

535. Utilitarianism?

Cumberland's references to the common good, greatest happiness, and benevolence have given him a place in the history of utilitarianism, or at least among the forerunners of utilitarianism.[31] It is reasonable to connect his views with utilitarianism on some points. He takes principles of practical reason to be impartial, because reason is essentially impartial between rational beings. He offers a teleological theory of virtues, principles, duties, and rights with reference to the end of achieving the common good. On the basis of this theory, he rejects Hobbes's claims about the right of nature. He argues that the exercise of a Hobbesian right to do what I please in the state of nature would violate the demands of practical reason, and therefore go beyond my rights.[32]

We may also take Cumberland to be a utilitarian because of his emphasis on benevolence, which he attributes both to God and to virtuous human beings. He claims, as utilitarians do, that the benevolent agent is concerned with the greatest good of the beneficiaries.[33] Here we may see evidence of the maximizing outlook that defines the utilitarian view. It is not surprising that Hutcheson cites Cumberland in support of a maximizing view.

But it is difficult to show that Cumberland takes a utilitarian view of maximization and distribution. Hutcheson is a genuine utilitarian on these points because he argues that it is permissible to harm some people in order to increase the happiness of others, and thereby

naturae lex quae illas imperaret.) . . . What I would infer from these reasonings or concessions of philosophers is that we have a proof from nature that virtuous actions have a reward annexed to them by the will of the first cause; and therefore that it is the will of the same cause that men whom he has instructed how to foresee the rewards consequent upon such actions should act so as to obtain that foreshown happiness. In this discovery of the divine will consists the promulgation of the law of nature, and thence directly flows natural and moral obligation. And this is what even those philosophers who taught virtue to be the chief happiness seem not sufficiently to have regarded.' (5.42 = P 598–9)

[31] '. . . the fountain of all nature's law . . . is this: The greatest benevolence of every rational agent towards all forms the happiest state of every and of all the benevolent, as far as is in their power; and is necessarily requisite to the happiest state which they can attain, and therefore the common good is the supreme law' (1.4 = P 292). '. . . it is also most evident that the happiness of single persons, for example of Socrates and Plato and other individuals . . . cannot singly be separated from the happiness of all . . . because the whole does not differ from all the parts taken together' (1.6 = P 295).

[32] See, e.g., 1.30 = P 347: '. . . there can be no right of acting contrary to the law of nature, or the dictates of right reason, because right is defined to be a liberty of acting according thereto. But right reason . . . points out the necessity of coming to a division of things; and, according to Hobbes's own confession, forbids the retaining a right to all things.' Cf. Tyrrell, *BDLN* 40: '. . . there is no right conferred upon any man, of doing whatever his own wild fancy, or unbounded appetite may prompt him to, but only what he shall, according to right reason, truly judge necessary to his own or family's happiness and preservation, in order to the common good of mankind. . . . so that it can never be proved, that any one hath a right of preserving himself, unless it be first made out, how this right of self-preservation conduces to, or at least consists with this common good.'

[33] Maxwell's comment on 1.8 = P 297–8 pertinently questions Cumberland's claim that the virtue aiming at the common good is properly called benevolence.

to increase the total happiness. But it is not clear that Cumberland commits himself to these utilitarian claims.[34]

He takes the end to be not the greatest quantity of good, but the common good of all rational beings. We might take the common good to be the quantity of good that is composed of the quantities present in the lives of different agents; in that case, what promotes the common good may not promote the good of all, or even of most, individual agents. But this is not the only way to understand a common good. We might also understand it to refer to a good that is good for everyone in common, and not good for one person to the exclusion of others. This is how Aquinas understands the common good.[35]

We have good reason to understand Cumberland's claims about the common good in this second way. He claims that it is the whole of which individual goods are parts; that is why individual goods do not conflict in principle with the common good (though they may conflict because of some defect in a particular society). The common good is the end on which rational beings can agree and ought to agree. Since it is assumed that individual rational beings care about their individual goods, they have a reason to agree on the pursuit of a common good that embraces all the individual goods that they take to be reasonable objects of pursuit for different individuals. They have no similar reason, as far as we can gather from Cumberland, to sacrifice some people's individual goods simply to increase a total good that is indifferent to distribution.

Neither Hutcheson nor Sidgwick, each of whom takes Cumberland to be a precursor of quantitative utilitarianism, mentions this difference between Cumberland's common good and a utilitarian total good. Cumberland's conception stays quite close to the Scholastic conception of a common good. It even captures one of the most plausible elements in Hobbes's account of morality. When Hobbes suggests that morality preserves the commonwealth, he thereby suggests that it promotes a common good; for the preservation of the commonwealth is a common good for everyone. It is not good for one person in opposition to another; individuals do not need to compete for it, and if one of us has it, there is no less to go round for all the others. Cumberland takes this idea of a good for everyone, and extends it beyond a single society to all rational beings.

[34] Albee claims that Cumberland is 'the first English moralist who can properly be termed a utilitarian' (*HEU* 14), and attributes to him 'the first statement by an English writer of the utilitarian principle' (52). He does not say exactly where Cumberland commits himself to utilitarianism, and does not discuss the differences between Cumberland's conception of the common good and the maximizing outlook of utilitarianism. Sidgwick is cautious about treating Cumberland as a utilitarian: 'At any rate he is noteworthy as having been the first to lay down that "the common good of all" is the supreme end and standard, in subordination to which all other rules and virtues are to be determined. So far he may be fairly called the precursor of the later utilitarianism. His fundamental principle and supreme "Law of Nature", in which all other laws of nature are implicitly included, is thus stated: "The greatest possible benevolence of every rational agent towards all the rest constitutes the happiest state of each and all, so far as depends on their own power, and is necessarily required for their happiness; accordingly common good will be the supreme law." It is, however, important to notice that in his "good" is included not merely happiness, in the ordinary sense, but "perfection"; and he does not even define perfection so as strictly to exclude from it the notion of moral perfection or virtue, and thus save his explanation of morality from an obvious logical circle. A notion so incompletely determined could hardly be used for deducing particular moral rules with any precision; but in fact Cumberland does not attempt this; his supreme principle is not designed to rectify, but merely to support and systematize, common morality.' (*OHE* 174) Part of Sidgwick's objection about perfection is curious (and justly criticized by Albee, *HEU* 33), since Cumberland carefully excludes moral good from the good that is mentioned in the definition of natural law and the moral rules belonging to it. In the last sentence quoted Sidgwick correctly notes Cumberland's failure to draw utilitarian conclusions about distribution from his supreme principle.

[35] On Aquinas see §338. Cf. Suarez, §451.

If this is the right way to understand Cumberland, his view is not only non-utilitarian, but even anti-utilitarian. For if a course of action would maximize the total good, but would harm some people simply to achieve this end, it would not achieve a common good, and Cumberland has no reason to endorse it. Hence questions that might be raised about the quantitative and distributive aspects of a utilitarian view do not arise for his view.

536. Maxwell's Criticism of Cumberland's Account of Morality

Still, Cumberland's view of morality and the common good is open to doubt. Maxwell's comments raise some of the most pertinent questions.[36] Maxwell rejects non-normative accounts of goodness that do not make it clear that goodness deserves to be chosen and is a worthy object of pleasure.[37] For similar reasons he finds an account of goodness as 'convenience' unsatisfactory. He takes 'convenience' to refer only to the non-moral good, as Cumberland understands it, and he finds this inadequate to capture moral goodness.[38] If we combine an account of goodness as convenience with a eudaemonist conception of morality, we do not capture the essential features of moral obligation.[39]

It would be unfair to Cumberland to suggest that a non-normative account of goodness as convenience is his account of moral goodness. But Maxwell does not believe that the extra element that Cumberland adds is enough for moral goodness. According to Cumberland, the promotion of non-moral goodness is the whole of morality, if it is prescribed by divine law. But this account still, in Maxwell's view, reduces morality to an instrumental status.[40] Cumberland claims that moral principles are commanded by God simply as means to the public good; but this account of moral obligation makes it a purely prudential, not a moral, bond.[41]

Cumberland's view, according to Maxwell, overlooks the regulative role of morality in relation to the public good. It is morally permissible to pursue the public good only insofar as it does not violate morality.[42] If promotion of the public good requires injustice, for

[36] References are given to the sections and pages of Maxwell's 'obligation', printed at the back of the translation of Cumberland and printed in P as Appendix 2 (cited as 'App.').

[37] '[Good] ought not to be thus defined: "good is that which is pleasant to a perceptive life, jointly with the preservation of the perceiver". For the nature and notion of good does not consist in being pleasant, but in being worthy to be pleased with.' (App. §3 = P 799–800) The quotation is from More, *EE*, Bk. 1, ch. 4

[38] He argues that if something's nature is itself good, goodness cannot be confined to what is convenient for a thing's nature (App. §3(1) = P 800–1).

[39] 'But in the kingdom of God, a kingdom of virtue and of holiness, they . . . are linked together by an adamantine law of right and one agency, and by this legal necessity they are obliged not to be wicked, but to be holy and virtuous. They practise righteousness and true holiness for other ultimate reasons than personal self-respects, and they shun sin for other ultimate reasons than merely because it is a public nuisance and inconvenience.' (App. §3(3) = P 803)

[40] 'Wickedness is to be shunned not only as a public inconvenience, but for its own intrinsic turpitude, as all the virtuous philosophers, in consort with Christians agree.' (App. §3(4) = P 803)

[41] 'This scheme, of the law of nature, and its definition of good, introduceth an institution of morality, not truly moral, but merely politic and prudential. . . . A mere prudential institution of morality careth neither for virtue nor vice, or living well nor living ill, as such and for their own sake, nor any further than as they promote or hinder the public convenience. . . . So this institution affirmeth, that the laws of nature, and all the virtues, are nothing else but means of obtaining the common good. It supposeth, that virtue is not good, but only as a means to the common happiness; and that vice and wickedness is not evil, but as productive of public misery, as will further appear presently.' (App. §3(5) = P 804–5)

[42] 'But the common happiness of rational beings must be sought also from a principle of duty and virtue, and consequently it must be sought only in consistency with virtue, nor otherwise than as virtue requireth. A man may not

instance, it is open to moral objection; hence moral requirements are not exhausted by the requirement to pursue the public good.

This objection touches only some views that connect morality with the common good. It applies to Cumberland's view because he restricts the good promoted by morality to natural good, which does not include moral good. But if an account of natural law holds that the common good promoted by morality includes the moral good, Maxwell's objection does not touch it. This is Suarez's account, since he takes moral goodness to exist independently of any legislation. One might argue that Suarez's non-instrumental account of moral goodness is less clear and intelligible than Cumberland's purely instrumental account; but this does not make Cumberland's instrumental account preferable.

Maxwell acknowledges this point. In opposition to the instrumental view of morality that he attributes to Cumberland, he separates the honestum from other forms of goodness. Here he returns to consider convenience, and draws a distinction that he did not draw earlier. He attributes a non-instrumental notion of convenience, understood as appropriateness for a rational agent, from the Stoics.[43] In applying the Stoic doctrine to his own views about goodness, Maxwell implicitly acknowledges that an action may be 'convenient' to rational agents because it is suitable to their nature, without being purely instrumental 'because of the necessity of their affairs'.[44]

537. Morality and its Sanction

Maxwell believes that Cumberland demotes morality to instrumental prudence by subordinating it to the pursuit of the non-moral good; Cumberland does not see that morality deserves to be chosen for its own sake, and carries an obligation within itself. Hence, according to Maxwell, Cumberland overlooks the obligation that belongs to morality in its own right, apart from any sanction that God attaches to it.[45] According to Cumberland, the fact that virtue is a part of happiness is a sanction attached to virtue by a legislator. Maxwell takes this view to assume the character of virtue itself is distinct from the aspect of virtue that promotes happiness; otherwise that aspect of it could not be the result of 'attachment'. He objects that virtue must be right and obligatory independently of the sanction if the sanction is rightly 'attached' to it.

violate virtue nor touch with wickedness, no, not for the happiness of the universe.' (App. §3(6) = P 806) 'To endeavour the common good of rational beings is so far from comprehending all virtue that, unless our endeavours to promote this common good be duly qualified, it is not virtue, but vice and crime.' (App. §3(8) = P 809)

[43] 'The good life and practice must not be thought merely a public self-convenience which is necessary for men only because of the necessity of their affairs, but it is the doing what is simply and absolutely convenient. "Wisdom is a doing what is convenient—. As a stage player must not have any, but a certain action; and a dancer must not have any, but a certain motion: so a man must live not any, but a certain kind of life, which we call convenient and consentaneous."' (App. §6 = P 841) Maxwell quotes from Cic. *F.* iii 24.

[44] Perhaps Maxwell is influenced by Clarke's doctrine of fitness. See §618.

[45] 'But a man is bound, both when he cannot do a thing without sin and when he cannot do a thing without punishment, and both these obligations are in every law, and both concur to make the obligation of it. But because the obligation of *non licet* is antecedent to the obligation of *non impune*, the precept to the sanction, and the sin is made by the law, the law hath so much obligation as to make the sin, before the penalty is enacted; therefore the law has an obligation antecedently to the sanction of it. For everyone is bound to avoid what is sin.' (App. §3(13) = P 815–16)

This argument does not exactly capture Cumberland's view. According to Cumberland, the goodness of virtue is a sanction, even if it is essential to virtue; even if virtue promotes happiness simply by being good in itself, its promotion of happiness is a sanction. Hence the moral goodness of virtue need not be separate from the attached sanction.

But this reply to Maxwell reveals the basic difficulty in Cumberland's claims about sanctions. If the goodness of virtue is essential to it, because of its relation to the nature of rational agents, how can it have been 'attached' to virtue as a sanction? We cannot attach a key to a chain unless the key and the chain already exist; we do not attach trilaterality to a triangle. To recognize the inherent goodness of virtue is to recognize that this is essential to the nature of the agents whom God has created. One cannot legitimately treat such features as having been attached to the creation.

Might we reply on behalf of Cumberland that his remarks about 'attachment' are misleading, but the substance of his position is reasonable? Perhaps his claim that God 'attached' certain properties to virtue just means that he created human beings in such a way that these states of character would be both good for others and good for the virtuous agent. In that case the sanction might be treated as an essential part of virtue and human nature, not something externally attached as a chain is attached to a key.

But if we say this in support of Cumberland, we raise a more basic question about his appeals to divine legislation. As Suarez points out, claims about natural law and the will of God need to distinguish the creative from the legislative will of God. The fact that there are human beings, creatures for whom justice and benevolence are good, depends on God's will as creator; and if morality depends on human nature, the fact that these actions are morally required depends on God's having created rational animals rather than limiting the creation to plants and non-rational animals. But these facts do not show that morality depends on God's legislative will; for since facts about creation are facts about created nature, they are facts about how things are in their own right, apart from any further legislative act of God.

Some of Cumberland's arguments for his legislative thesis about morality seem to be open to this objection from Suarez. The fact that actions have natural consequences affecting our welfare does not show that God is a legislator, or that moral goodness depends on God's communicating divine law through a command. But Cumberland seems to confuse legislation with creation in his claims about sanctions. The fact that virtue has certain sanctions 'attached' to it, in the broad sense of 'attached' that covers essential properties, shows nothing about God's legislative will. It is simply a fact about the natures of created things.

Exploration of Maxwell's objections, therefore, reveals a serious difficulty in Cumberland's position. Maxwell claims that since morality is good and obligatory in itself, it possesses its goodness and its obligatory character independently of the sanction attached by divine legislation. He may have misunderstood Cumberland's broad use of 'sanction' and 'attach'. But if we allow Cumberland a broad enough use of these terms to answer Maxwell, we also cast doubt on Cumberland's claims about the extent of divine legislation in morality. For a broad use of 'sanction' includes non-legislative 'sanctions' that come from God as creator; the presence of these sanctions does not show that morality depends on divine legislation. The confusion between divine creation and divine legislation may be present in Grotius,

but it does not undermine his main argument.[46] In Cumberland, and even more clearly in Pufendorf, the confusion creates spurious support for a legislative conception of morality.[47]

538. Divine Goodness and the Stability of Morality

Though Cumberland does not know Cudworth's *Eternal and Immutable Morality*, he considers the objection to voluntarism that Cudworth implies in his title.[48] According to Cudworth, a legislative account of morality makes morality mutable in the wrong way, since it implies that if God had legislated differently, it would have been right (e.g.) to murder, cheat, and torture, and that therefore morality is mutable in relation to divine legislation. Cumberland answers that the law of nature is mutable only in relation to human nature (as Cudworth agrees), not in relation to any possible change in God's legislation; hence it is eternal and immutable in the way that Cudworth claims it is. It depends on the divine will only insofar as the maintenance of creation depends on the divine will; but—though Cumberland omits this point—that sort of dependence on God's creative will is different from dependence on God's legislative will.[49]

Cumberland's argument to show that morality is as immutable as human nature conflicts with Ockham's view that God is free to change what accords with human nature, and with Scotus' view that God is free to command us not to act in accord with human nature.[50] In his view, God necessarily wills that we act in accord with our nature, and therefore necessarily wills the common good of rational beings (with 'good' understood in a non-moral sense).[51]

Hence the natural law is not the product of the arbitrary will of God. Divine legislation reflects the divine goodness and wisdom that give God a right to rule and to legislate. Since the goodness of the common good recommends it to God as an end, God necessarily legislates that we promote the common good.[52] In doing so God manifests goodness, benevolence, and the other virtues.[53] Cumberland does not suggest that the natural law

[46] On Grotius see §465. [47] On Pufendorf see §566.

[48] Cumberland's connexions with Cambridge may have informed him of Cudworth's views, even if not of his writings.

[49] 'All considerate persons, therefore, I believe, will think, that I have proved the law of nature sufficiently immutable, when I have shown, that it cannot be changed without contradiction, whilst the nature of things, and their actual powers, (which depend upon the divine will,) remain unchanged.' (Cumberland, *LN* 5.23 = P 545)

[50] See §384 on Scotus; §397 on Ockham. [51] Cf. Pufendorf, §580.

[52] '... the dominion of God is a right or power, given him by his own wisdom and goodness, as by a law, for the government of all those things which ever have been, or shall be, created by him. In the divine wisdom is necessarily contained a dictate to pursue the best end by the necessary means; and in the goodness or perfection of the divine will is by a like necessity included a ready consent to promote the same. And these, by a natural analogy, answer to a ratification of the divine law, whence the divine dominion may take its original' (7.7 = P 673). 'For since he himself is rational, and it cannot be conceived how he can act rationally without proposing an end to himself, nor can there be a greater end than the aforesaid aggregate of all good things; we cannot but think he judges this to be the best end he can propose to himself. Nor is it to be doubted, but that the most perfect being will pursue that end which he has rightly judged to be the best, all circumstances rightly considered. For no reason can be assigned why he should stop short of it; nor can the most perfect will act without reason, much less against it. For although here the obligation of a law properly so called, which proceeds from the will of a superior, has no place, yet that perfection which is essential to him and invariable will invariably determine his will to concur exactly with his omniscient understanding. For it implies a contradiction that the same will should at once be divine, or most perfect, and disagree with the most perfect dictates of the divine understanding.' (5.19 = P 537–8)

[53] 'I choose the rather to observe that, from what I have proved concerning the reason and end of God, may be demonstrated that benevolence, justice, equity, and those other attributes which have any analogy with human virtues,

depends on the contingent fact that God is benevolent. If this were a contingent fact about God, it would also be a contingent fact that God legislates rules that promote the common good of rational agents; for if God were malevolent, rules designed to cause suffering to rational agents would be morally right. To avoid making rightness dependent on the arbitrary will of God, Cumberland insists that God is essentially good, and therefore is not free to legislate evil.

In attributing this character to God, Cumberland raises a familiar difficulty that confronts voluntarists: what do they mean in attributing goodness to God? If we say that God is morally good because God's actions are morally right, we can hardly mean that God obeys a law imposed by a superior, since God has no superior. We also face difficulties if we say that God's actions are right because they conform to God's legislation; for if we say that, we must say that they would still be right if God legislated differently and commanded us to act against the common good of rational beings. Apparently, we have to say that God's actions are morally right because they conform to a divine law prescribing promotion of the common good. But even this account of their rightness is not quite satisfactory. For we also believe that God acts rightly in legislating the natural law; since God does not act in conformity to a second divine law (which would lead us into an infinite regress), this morally right action seems to be right independently of legislation.

Cumberland might avoid these difficulties for his legislative account of morality if he gave up his claim that God is morally good and that God's action in legislating pursuit of the common good is morally right. He believes that practical reason, independently of any legislation, requires pursuit of the common good. Hence he might say that God is essentially rational, and so prescribes pursuit of the common good, because of an essentially rational will, though not because of a morally good will.

539. The Authority of Divine Legislation

Cumberland faces a related difficulty in explaining why we ought to obey God. If we claim that morality consists in acting according to a divine command, we need to explain why we are morally required to obey divine commands. If God issued a second-order command to obey all other divine commands, that would not answer our question, since we could ask the same question about the second-order command. If we believe that God has the right to command because God is essentially wise and good, we imply that we ought to obey a commander who is essentially wise and good. But this requirement seems to be antecedent to any command.

This is the basis of Maxwell's criticisms of Cumberland's account of God's authority. He argues that the authority of a human ruler is based on two conditions: (1) the necessity of rule for achieving the public good, and (2) the legitimacy of the ruler, making it right for us to obey. According to Cumberland, this second condition is established by reference to a divine command requiring obedience to the laws of nature that enjoin actions necessary for the public good.

are actually to be found in God and in his actions, and that it is therefore his will to govern men by precepts guarded with rewards and punishments; . . .' (5.20 = P 538)

But, as Maxwell sees, we cannot rely on the same two conditions to show that God is a legitimate ruler. For God's right to command us to do what is needed to promote the public good cannot be derived from any higher authority than God; hence (according to Cumberland's view of legitimacy) God is not a legitimate ruler. God's title to rule must rest entirely on the first condition; since we care, for non-moral reasons, about the promotion of the public good, and obedience to God's commands allows us to promote the public good, we have a non-moral reason to obey God's commands. Hence God's authority is less firmly established than the authority of human rulers.[54]

We might try to reply on Cumberland's behalf by deriving God's authority from the intrinsic rightness, rather than the non-moral attractiveness of promoting the public good. This would constitute a rationalist defence of God's authority. But it exposes Cumberland to a further objection. For if this intrinsic rightness is intrinsic moral rightness, it seems to presuppose morality antecedent to any law of God, since it cannot depend on divine legislation. Maxwell's objection, therefore, though it at first seems unfair, identifies a weakness in Cumberland's position.

Maxwell believes that we can avoid this fault in Cumberland's position only if we recognize a moral obligation—antecedent to any divine commands—to obey divine commands. Hence, in Maxwell's view, we must abandon Cumberland's voluntarism.[55] This argument for the priority of justice to law is very similar to Cudworth's argument against Hobbes; for, while Cumberland seeks to refute Hobbes, he still accepts some of the basic elements in Hobbes's position. Maxwell argues that Cumberland fails to recognize that divine rewards and punishments presuppose the rightness and wrongness of certain courses of action, and so cannot create it. Price endorses this objection to Cumberland.[56]

These observations on Cumberland support a general attack on voluntarism. Maxwell especially criticizes Jeremy Taylor for his endorsement of Ockham's position on divine commands and moral rightness.[57] Maxwell believes, as Cudworth does, that a voluntarist

[54] 'To this assumed dominion and sovereignty, assumed merely from necessity of common good and in order thereto, he cannot obtain our subjection, save only from necessity of the common good, and in order thereto. But if this is the whole of the divine dominion and sovereignty, he is far from having the most supreme dominion possible, which the Deity must have . . . ' (App. §3(9) = P 810)

[55] 'In this [sc. Cumberland's] scheme of the law of nature, agreeably to its notion of good, the due order of reasoning and of our obligation is inverted. For, antecedently to the law of endeavouring the common good, there is an obligation upon mankind, and therefore a law, of conscientious subjection and obedience to the authority of the lawgiver. He would not make this law for them, if they were not antecedently under such an obligation, if he could not claim subjection and obedience from them. Their subjection to this the supreme lawgiver is, therefore, the first law of nature.' (App. §3(12) = P 813–14)

[56] See Price, *RPQM* 114–16, discussed in §818.

[57] 'A mistake, touching the rule and measure of good and evil, of greater importance than any of these, is this; that the arbitrary will of God is constitutively the adequate rule and measure of good and evil, just and unjust, and that nothing is good or evil, but because it is commanded or forbidden.' Maxwell now illustrates this mistake by quoting two passages from Taylor's discussion of natural law: 'With which absurd notion Bp Taylor (*DD* b2 c1 n4, 52, 58) falleth in, affirming, "that nothing is just or unjust of-it-self, until some law of God or man doth supervene. God cannot do an unjust thing; because whatsoever he willeth or doeth, is therefore just, because he willeth and doeth it, his will being the measure of justice. [Though Maxwell treats "that nothing . . ." as a quotation from Taylor, the actual quotation begins only with "God cannot . . .". See *DD* ii c1 rule 1, #52 = *Works* xi 224.] It is but a weak distinction, to affirm, some things to be forbidden by God, because they are unlawful, and some to be unlawful because they are forbidden. For this last part of the distinction taketh in all that is unlawful in the world, and therefore the other is a dead member, and may be dropped off. So Occham affirmeth, against the common sentence of the schools (as his manner is,) nullus est actus malus, nisi quatenus a Deo prohibitus est, et qui non potest fieri bonus, si a Deo praecipiatur et e converso: every thing is good or

conception of natural law is an aspect of the position that also takes the eternal truths to depend on God's choice; for 'if truth is of so indeterminate a nature, good must be as arbitrary, as some say' (App. §7 = P 843).[58] The voluntarist position is 'absurd' because it undermines the basis of the law that voluntarists take to be the foundation of moral obligation.[59]

In Maxwell's view, as in Cudworth's, the voluntarist position conflicts with the facts about the honestum.[60] He rejects the voluntarist claim that legislation can make something genuinely honestum. His argument seems to be this: (1) The honestum is good in its own right and because of its own nature. (2) If legislation is the sole source of the honestum, it must make some actions good in their own right. (3) But if something is good in its own right, it is good independently of being commanded or legislated. (3) Legislation cannot make something good independently of being legislated. (4) Hence legislation cannot be the sole source of the honestum.

This argument does not show that Cumberland could not be right about natural law being the product of divine legislation. It shows at most that natural law cannot be the sole source of moral goodness, if moral goodness consists in honestas. If one wants to maintain Cumberland's position, one needs to deny the first step of Maxwell's argument. Cumberland, therefore, agrees that some things are good in their own nature and apart from legislation, and denies that these include honesta. But his position is difficult to maintain. For we are confident that God has imposed the right laws because we assume that the actions required by these laws are already honesta, morally good in their own right. Maxwell's argument suggests, therefore, that Cumberland must reject more of our basic beliefs about morality than he admits.

Since he rejects Cumberland's voluntarism, Maxwell also rejects his explanation of the immutability of the natural law.[61] If natural law depended on divine legislation, it could

bad, according as it is commanded or forbidden by God, and no otherwise.'' [The previous sentences are from *DD* ii c1 rule 1, #58 = 226] These sayings are attended with a self-contradiction (*DD* ii, c rule 9 n 12), ''that it is actually and indispensably necessary, that we love God, and that he cannot command us to hate him.'' ' (App. §7 = P 842–3)

Taylor believes that an appeal to a natural or rational basis for morality introduces too much uncertainty, and that we avoid such uncertainty by relying directly on the revealed will of God. He recognizes that the natural law has a rational basis: 'And when wise men say This is naturally understood: it must mean thus, naturally men find it reasonable, but not naturally to be a law; naturally the consent to it, but not naturally find it out, or naturally we may be instructed, but not naturally bound; but when God changes science into conscience, then he makes that which is reasonable to become a law.' (ii rule 1, §40). Taylor ignores the questions that are raised, e.g., by Sanderson (discussed in §557).

[58] He cites Descartes in this connexion, §7 = P 843.

[59] 'According to this scheme, law is supposed to make justice, whereas, without antecedent justice, it is impossible, that there can be any made law. For no law can be made, but by one, who hath right to be obeyed, and to whom obedience is due; right and due obedience, and consequently just and unjust, is necessarily antecedent to any made law. If nothing is unrighteous but by a made law, mankind must be considered as perfectly at liberty and un-obliged, antecedently to that law; and if we suppose them to be perfectly at liberty and un-obliged, then that law could not oblige them; for no command or prohibition can oblige them to obedience who are persons perfectly at liberty and unobliged.' (Maxwell, App. §7 = P 843)

[60] 'Bonum honestum or virtue is not a mere name, but hath its proper specific nature, which is the beauteous-beneficial [i.e., *kalon kagathon*] practice, as is already proved; which it is as certain that this name [virtue] denotes, as that the word [man] denotes a rational animal. . . . Moral good is therefore the beauteous-beneficial practice essentially and in its own nature, and consequently it is necessarily, unchangeably, eternally so. . . . hence it appeareth that the good in morality is that which is essentially and in its own nature such, and is not a matter of arbitrary determination.' (App. §8 = P 844–5) Perhaps Clarke is Maxwell's source for the claim about essences. But cf. §547 on Cudworth.

[61] 'The law of nature therefore, besides that it is imposed by a superior authority, appeareth to be a comprehension of what is, in its own nature, matter of law or obligation, antecedently to that authority; whence three honorary

be changed by a change in divine legislation, whether or not divine legislation will in fact change. If we make natural law depend on divine law in this way, we reverse their proper order; for the legitimacy of divine legislation presupposes an independent natural law giving God the right to legislate.[62]

If we recognize rightness independent of divine law, we also allow the possibility of a non-mercenary love of God as a morally perfect being, not simply as supremely powerful. Maxwell takes himself to be avoiding the extravagant appeals of 'enthusiasts' who claim to be moved by the disinterested love of God, and their 'rational' opponents who over-emphasize the pursuit of non-moral rewards. He agrees with Shaftesbury's efforts to defend the disinterested love of God without endorsing any harmful and irrational 'enthusiasm'.[63] In his view, we can maintain this position only if we recognize moral rightness independent of divine legislation.

540. Morality and Practical Reason

One might argue that Maxwell's objections to Cumberland ignore the differences between Cumberland's moderate voluntarist position and the more extreme voluntarism of Ockham or Hobbes. For Hobbes, the question about why we ought to obey God is easily answered. He derives the obligation (and hence motivation) to obey God from God's overwhelming power; he recognizes no distinction, for moral purposes, between power and authority (or legitimacy). Cumberland agrees with Cudworth in rejecting this basis for the moral requirement to obey God.[64]

Maxwell points out that it is difficult to find any genuinely moral basis for the requirement without violating Cumberland's legislative conditions for morality. But Cumberland might appeal to God's essential reasonableness; though we have no moral obligation, strictly speaking, to obey divine commands, we recognize a rational requirement, since we

attributes necessarily belong to it, immutability, eternity, universality, which Cicero hath conjoined. "All nations are at all times within the extent of one law sempiternal and immutable. In opposition to its immutability, which is generally acknowledged by philosophers, lawyers, and divines, some dispute (or rather loosely declaim), that the laws of nature can be dispensed with by divine power. But these will have (what none will allow them) an altering the case and a changing the matter, to be a dispensing with the law."' (App. §11 = P 854) A footnote to 'some dispute . . .' cites Taylor, *DD* ii1 rule 9. Taylor appeals to dispensations in support of voluntarism: 'I am willing publicly to acknowledge that I was always, since I understood it, a very great enemy to all the questions of the Schools which inquire into the power of God . . . But yet here I am willing to speak in the like manner of expression, because the consequent and effect of it goes not to a direct inquiry concerning the divine power; for it intends to remonstrate that because God does actually dispense in his own law, this prime law, or the law of nature, is nothing else but the express and declared will of God in matters proportionable to right reason and the nature of man.' (rule 9 §1) The last phase ('in matters . . .') agrees with naturalists that the natural law in fact prescribes what accords with reason and nature. Maxwell goes on to discuss polygamy and other alleged cases of dispensation.

[62] 'But, antecedently to this obligation from superior authority, it is of an obligatory nature, and must be considered as what is, in its own nature, matter of law, or of obligation; for, that this law is of this nature, will appear, as from other considerations, so from a due explanation of the good, which it requireth, and of the evil, which it forbiddeth.' (App. §1 = P 796)

[63] He quotes a long passage from Shaftesbury; see §611.

[64] As Whewell, *LHMPE* 54, notices, Cumberland does not say much about post-mortem rewards and punishments, though he mentions them. A fuller statement appears in the first of the introductory essays bound with Maxwell's translation; see §671.

believe it is reasonable to obey a wise and reasonable commander who prescribes actions promoting the common good. Cumberland can save his legislative account of morality if he rejects non-legislative moral requirements in favour of requirements of practical reason.

But if we defend Cumberland's legislative account of morality by these appeals to non-moral practical reason, we raise a deeper question about his position. Why should we not simply by-pass morality, as he conceives it, in favour of the requirements of practical reason? These are the requirements that Suarez attributes to intrinsic morality; Cumberland denies that they belong to intrinsic morality because they are independent of divine legislation, but his reasons for insisting that morality requires obligation (in the narrow sense) and legislation are not clear.

He might claim that, as Culverwell suggests, practical reason without legislation lacks the compulsory character that we ascribe to morality. But this claim would be difficult to defend in the light of the role that Cumberland ascribes to practical reason. He surely believes that it is compulsory, in whatever sense morally right action is compulsory, for us to obey God's commands; but if this requirement is not based on legislation, the compulsory character of morality does not depend on legislation. Similarly, the requirement on God to prescribe pursuit of the common good seems no less stringent than the requirement on us to promote the common good.

If, then, we are moved by the requirements of practical reason to promote the common good and to obey divine legislation that promotes it, we seem to recognize the stringency of moral requirements. Should we not identify moral rightness with action on the demands of practical reason? If Cumberland agreed, he would return to the Scholastic belief in intrinsic morality. Though he criticizes the Scholastic position for ignoring the legislative aspect of morality, the role that he assigns to practical reason brings him closer to the Scholastic position than he recognizes. His voluntarism implies that the promotion of the common good of rational agents would not be the supreme principle of morality unless it had been commanded by God. But he seems to agree that, apart from any divine command, it is recognized as the supreme principle of practical reason. He must claim, then, that this supreme principle, even though it is impartially concerned for the good of rational agents, is not a moral principle until God has commanded it. It is difficult to justify this restriction on the scope of morality.

Maxwell concludes that we can maintain the legitimacy and authority of divine legislation only if we accept a naturalist view of natural law.[65] He agrees with the position of Vasquez and (apparently) of Cudworth, who take natural law and its obligation to precede any divine command. Maxwell does not consider the 'intermediate' position of Suarez, who argues that law and obligation rest on commands, but moral right and wrong do not. Maxwell seems to agree with Cumberland and Pufendorf in taking morality to be inseparable from moral obligation, and so he does not consider the possibility that morality might be distinguished from moral obligation. Suarez's position would avoid the faults that Maxwell sees in Cumberland as well as Maxwell's more extreme naturalism answers them. The most

[65] 'The law of nature, therefore, is the comprehension of what is in its own nature matter of obligation, and ought to be, abstracted from the preceding authority of command, or the subsequent sanctions of rewards and punishments.' (Maxwell, App. §11(3) = P 859–60)

serious objections that face Cumberland arise from his rejection of intrinsic morality; but his emphasis on practical reason raises the legitimate suspicion that he appeals to intrinsic morality after all.

These aspects of Cumberland's position make it intelligible that different people react differently to its voluntaristic and naturalistic elements. On the one hand, Maxwell treats him as a voluntarist; Cumberland gives him the occasion for a general attack on voluntarism, and he believes that some of his attack applies to Cumberland. On the other hand, Clarke cites Cumberland in support of his own naturalist position; though he quotes quite selectively, his quotations pick out a genuine element in Cumberland's view. Though Cumberland defends some elements of voluntarism against Grotius and the Scholastics, his arguments against Hobbes bring him closer to naturalism than he recognizes.

40

CUDWORTH

541. Cudworth's Place in the History of Moral Philosophy

Cudworth died in 1688, but his main work on moral philosophy, *A Treatise concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality*, was not published until 1731. The first major moral philosopher who is clearly influenced by this book is Price.[1] Cudworth's *Treatise of Freewill* was published only in 1838. These facts about his posthumous works, however, may give a misleading impression of Cudworth's influence on the development of ethical thought. For Locke and Clarke may have been acquainted with Cudworth's main ideas, either through reading his manuscripts or through oral dissemination of 'Cambridge Platonism'.[2]

The fact that Cudworth exercised his direct and indirect influence on ethical rationalists may give a one-sided impression of his contribution.[3] Some historians place him in a Cambridge Platonist tradition of which Culverwell is presented as an earlier member. It is appropriate to connect Cudworth with Culverwell, but it is doubtful whether the connexion lies in their Platonism. It is Culverwell's Scholastic Naturalism, rather than his supposed Platonism, that provides the right context for understanding Cudworth's main arguments.[4] The Scholastic aspects of Cambridge Platonism were recognized by Anthony Tuckney, a rigid Calvinist. Tuckney's letters to Benjamin Whichcote show that Tuckney was disturbed by the deviations he saw in the outlook of Cambridge Platonism; he attributed these deviations to a preference for the study of Scholastic philosophy over the Scriptures.[5]

[1] Price; see §802.

[2] On Locke and Cudworth see §555. Scott, 'Introd.' 59–62, presents a series of alleged parallels between Cudworth and Butler. None of them suggests the direct influence of Cudworth on Butler; they can all be explained by reference to Clarke. But they are evidence of similarity between Cudworth and Clarke.

[3] Passmore, *RC* 100–3, argues that Cudworth's position is more sentimentalist than purely rationalist. Hence he connects Cudworth with Shaftesbury as well as with Price, and argues that Price misunderstands him.

[4] On Culverwell see §558.

[5] These informative letters appear in Whichcote, *MRA*, App. In his second letter Tuckney says he has heard that 'you in a great measure for the year laid aside other studies, and betook yourself to philosophy and metaphysics, which, some think, you were then so immersed in, that ever since you have been cast into that mould, both in your private discourse and preaching, both for words and notions; both which, I fear, have rendered your ministry less edifying . . .' (36). He mentions that in Cambridge Whichote was influenced by Field, Jackson, and Hammond: 'Whilst you were fellow here, you were cast into the company of very learned and ingenious men, who, I fear, at least some of them, studied other authors more than the Scriptures; and Plato and his scholars above others: in whom, I must needs acknowledge, from the little insight I have into them, I find many excellent and divine expressions . . . And hence in part hath run a vein of

Cudworth's reflexions on both free will and morality may have been stimulated partly by Hobbes, whom he often quotes. Hobbes intends his views on the will and its freedom to undermine Scholastic intellectualism and rationalism. He intends his account of morality to undermine the Scholastic view, stated by Suarez, that the morally right is what is appropriate to rational nature. Cudworth tries to refute these two aspects of Hobbes's attack on the Scholastic position.

To understand Cudworth in this way is not to imply that he is a thoughtless or uncritical supporter of Scholasticism. Like Simon Patrick, he thinks of Platonism as a way of compensating for the defects of Scholastic Aristotelianism as a defence of orthodox Christianity.[6] But he takes himself to defend Aristotle as well. On the crucial points about the freedom of the will and the natural character of morality, he believes Aristotle is right and Hobbes is wrong. Hobbes's errors reflect not only a mistaken approach to ethics, but also a mistaken approach to basic questions of epistemology and metaphysics. His position is a revival of the 'Democritic doctrine' that Cudworth sees in ancient atomism and empiricism. In Cudworth's view, the ancient doctrine of Democritus and Epicurus, recently revived by Gassendi and Hobbes, rests on an indefensible metaphysics. Hence *Eternal and Immutable Morality* begins and ends with discussion of ethics, but includes a long defence of rationalism in general.[7]

doctrine which divers very able and worthy men . . . are, I fear too much known by.—The power of nature in morals too much advanced—Reason hath too much given to it, in the mysteries of faith—A recta ratio much talked of, which I cannot tell where to find—Mind and understanding is all; heart and will little spoken of—The decrees of God questioned and quarrelled, because, according to our reason we cannot comprehend how they may stand with his goodness, which, according to your phrase, he is under the power of . . . A kind of moral divinity minted, only with a little tincture of Christ added; nay, a Platonic faith unites to God.' (38)

In his second letter Whichcote replies to Tuckney by denying that he has studied the suspect divines and schoolmen as much as Tuckney alleges: 'I should lay open my weakness if I should tell you how little I have read of the books and authors you mention: of ten years past, nothing at all. . . . And for schoolmen, I do not think I have spent four and twenty hours in them divisim these fourteen years. . . . and truly I have more read Calvin, and Perkins, and Beza, than all the authors, books, or names you mention.' (53) Tuckney, however, does not let the point drop. In his third letter he says more precisely whom he includes among Schoolmen: '. . . as to that about the Schoolmen, when I spake of them, I understood not only that narrower compass of them which some make from Albensis to Biel, but so as to take in Vasquez, Suarez, and other later authors of that kind; your perusing of whom so little in so many years, but that you say it and I believe you, I cannot but wonder: and must conclude that either those few hours of your converse with them made a very deep impression in you, moulding you much that way, or as "nascitur non fit poeta", that the natural frame of your head was much in that channel, which must keep us from wondering or finding fault if in your discourse the streams do so much answer the fountain.' (58) (For 'Albensis' Jeffery conjectures 'Alensis' (i.e., Alexander of Hales) or 'Albertus' (i.e., Albertus Magnus).) Whichcote does not answer this point about the later Scholastics, and does not deny the similarity of his views to theirs. Tuckney mentions both the Platonic and the Scholastic character of Whichcote's views; he does not suggest that Whichcote draws on one source rather than the other.

On the influence of Suarez cf. the life of Isaac Barrow, in *Works* i (unpaged). Barrow was appointed a lecturer in geometry at Gresham College, but '. . . when he commented on Archimedes, he did not forbear in discourse to prefer and admire much more Suarez for his book De Legibus . . .'.

[6] On Simon Patrick see §527.

[7] 'But the Aristotelic system is right and sound here, as to those greater things; it asserting incorporeal substance, a Deity distinct from the world, the naturality of morality, and liberty of will. Wherefore though a late writer of politics do so exceedingly disparage Aristotle's Ethics, yet we shall do him this right here to declare, that his Ethics were truly such, and answered their title; but that new model of ethics, which hath been obtruded on the world with so much fastuosity, and is indeed nothing but the old Democritic doctrine revived, is no ethics at all, but a mere cheat, the undermining and subversion of all morality, by substituting something like it in the room of it, that is a mere counterfeit and changeling; the design whereof could not be any other than to debauch the world.' (*TIS* i 1.45 (= 95 Harrison)). To illustrate Hobbes's attacks on Aristotle, Mosheim cites Hobbes, *L.* 46.23 (LV).

542. Reason and Will[8]

Cudworth's sympathetic but critical attitude to Scholasticism appears in his treatment of the psychological foundations of Hobbes's moral theory. He rejects three positions: (1) Hobbes's version of determinism and anti-rationalism; (2) the intellectualist position of Aquinas; (3) the voluntarist and libertarian conception of the will. On the first two points he agrees with Bramhall, but disagrees with him on the third, since Bramhall accepts the voluntarist claims that Cudworth criticizes. His criticisms of these three positions and his attempts to develop a fourth position are worth considering, even though it is not clear exactly what position he eventually maintains, or how it differs from the three positions he rejects.

Cudworth presents two Scholastic views under the head of 'the vulgarly received psychology' (*FW*, ch. 5 = H 167).[9] Both of them treat the will and understanding as mutually exclusive; hence they treat the will as 'blind', because it includes no element of understanding. The pure intellectualist view claims that the understanding alone determines the will. A more complex view claims that the will 'determines the understanding both to exercise, and specification of objects'.[10]

He rejects the pure intellectualist view as denying freewill. He rejects the more complex view for two reasons: (1) It is viciously circular, because it treats the will as 'blind' in itself; the will determines the understanding only insofar as the understanding presents something to it, so that it is really determined by the understanding.[11] (2) It does not safeguard freewill, because an undetermined but blind will would act capriciously and randomly, which is contrary to genuine freedom.[12]

Both Scholastic views are wrong, in Cudworth's view, because they treat the will and the understanding as though they were two distinct subjects (*FW*, ch. 7 = H 170–1). To speak of the understanding 'propounding' to the will, or 'alluring' or 'inviting' the will, and of the will as 'following' or 'refusing to comply' is to treat them as two distinct agents. But this treatment would be reasonable only if each of them were a real agent, and hence had both understanding and will. If we treat the will as an agent without understanding, we cannot find a satisfactory account of freedom. For if it is entirely blind, either it thoughtlessly follows understanding (as the pure intellectualist view claims) or it thoughtlessly and capriciously chooses to follow or not to follow understanding. In trying to explain intelligible choices by a real agent, who is a person with both understanding and will, we resort to unintelligible choices by a spurious agent, the blind will.

Are these objections to the Scholastic views justified? In Aquinas' view, the will is blind insofar as it pursues an object that is understood to have an appropriate character; it is the

[8] On different views about reason and will see §256 (Aquinas); §389 (Ockham); §470 (Hobbes).

[9] I cite *FW* and *EIM* by the pages of Hutton's edition (H).

[10] *FW*, ch. 5 = H 168 = R 142.

[11] 'They maintaining that the will can will nothing, but as represented to it first by the understanding, (since otherwise it must will it know not what), and again that the understanding cannot act about this or that but as it is moved and determined thereunto by the will, so that there must be both an action of the understanding going before every act of the will, and also an act of the will going before every act of the understanding, which is further contradictious and impossible.' (*FW*, ch. 6 = H 169 = R 143)

[12] 'But if the blind will does not only at first fortuitously determine the understanding both to exercise and object, but also after all is done remains indifferent to follow the last dictate of it or not, and doth fortuitously determine itself either in compliance with the same or otherwise, then will liberty of will be mere irrationality, and madness itself acting or determining all human actions.' (*FW*, ch. 6 = H 145 = R 144)

intellect that causes the object to appear in the right light. The ultimate object of the will is the final good, and it is this desire that initiates practical reasoning to find out what is really good, and how different goods can be combined in the final good. This desire for the final good has to be focussed on the conclusion of deliberation if deliberation is to result in action.

These features of Aquinas' view appear to match Cudworth's description of intellectualism. But Aquinas also accepts some of the claims that Cudworth uses to describe voluntarism, since he allows the will to 'determine the understanding both as to its exercise and objects' (*FW*, ch. 6 = H 169). Aquinas recognizes this distinction between exercise and specification, and allows the will some freedom in each respect; hence he argues that the will is not necessarily moved by the object that intellect presents to it (*ST* 1–2 q10 a2).[13] But Aquinas does not infer the will is undetermined in choosing what to do as a result of deliberation.

Aquinas' position is consistent if he denies that freedom of exercise and of specification require an act of the will that is independent of or prior to every act of the understanding. When we decide what to deliberate about, or whether to act on the conclusion of our deliberation, or what aspect of an imperfect good or evil to focus on, we decide independently of this particular act of understanding or deliberation, but we may still be determined by previous thought and deliberation. Cudworth is unjustified, therefore, in claiming that the Scholastic position involves a vicious infinite regress.

It would be more plausible to claim that Aquinas allows a circle, by taking the relevant acts of the will and the understanding to depend on each other. Though it is up to the will to decide to consider a question, and to deliberate again about a conclusion reached by the understanding, these acts of will may be determined by intellect. I may decide to consider or not to consider a question because I judge it better to do one thing or the other. But if Aquinas must recognize this circle, the circle is not vicious, since the relevant acts of will and understanding need not be temporally distinguishable.

Cudworth is mistaken, therefore, if he believes that recognition of freedom of specification and of exercise precludes an intellectualist account of the will. We reject intellectualism only if we take the will to be undetermined even by the last act of judgment,[14] so that in the same circumstances the will is capable of going in different directions.[15] Cudworth correctly describes Scotus' position in attributing indeterminism to the voluntarists.

He is rather hasty in assuming that indeterminism implies random and capricious motion that could not be a subject for praise and blame. The voluntarist might reply that when we choose the apparently greater good, we choose it because it appears greater, even though the causal connexion is not deterministic. We might fairly ask the voluntarist, however, why the non-deterministic character of the causal connexion is necessary for the choice to be free and responsible; on this point Cudworth has identified a reasonable objection to voluntarist indeterminism.

[13] On Aquinas see §258.

[14] '. . . this scholastic definition of freewill, viz., that it is, after all things put, besides the volition itself, even the last practical judgment in the soul too, an indifferency of not doing or of doing this or that' (*FW*, ch. 6 = H 170).

[15] 'This is an upstart thing, which the ancient peripatetics, as Alexander and others, were unacquainted with, their account thereof being this, that *autois periestôsi*, the same things being circumstant, the same impressions being made upon men from without, all that they are passive to, being the same, yet they may, notwithstanding, act differently. The last practical judgment also, as according to these, being that which as men are not merely passive to, so it is really the same thing with the *boulêsis*, the will, or volition.' (*FW*, ch. 6 = H 170)

But if Cudworth rejects voluntarist indeterminism, where does he stand on determinism? This is rather difficult to say. He rejects determinism, if this is understood as the doctrine that everything is necessitated by previous events; he takes Buridan's ass to show the presence of contingency in some choices (*FW*, ch. = H 164). He does not believe, however, that voluntary and responsible action is to be identified with this sort of contingency (*FW*, ch. 5 = H 166). Sometimes he suggests that we are responsible for an error if further consideration would have caused us to avoid the error by better judgment (*FW*, ch. 10 = H 179). He adds, however, that this further consideration must also be possible for us, and that this possibility requires the absence of determination by 'antecedent necessary causes' (*FW*, ch. 10 = H 179).

This demand might be an affirmation of indeterminism, or it might simply be the demand that causes external to the agent's deliberation and choice must not by themselves adequately explain the action. Cudworth sometimes expresses his view by saying that a person is a 'sufficient cause' (*FW*, ch. 22 = H 203). By this he means neither that we are sufficient irrespective of prior conditions, nor that we cannot fail to produce the effect; he means but that we are capable of producing or not producing it.[16] The possibility of praise and blame requires something more than the necessity of nature.[17] It is difficult to say how strongly or how consistently Cudworth believes that freedom from the necessity of nature requires the absence of determination.

543. The Hegemonicon

Cudworth suggests that the intellectualist Scholastic view that the will is determined by the greater apparent good is a threat to freewill (*FW*, ch. 2 = H 158). But it is difficult to see how far he departs from the intellectualist position. After rejecting the 'blind will' presupposed by both intellectualism and voluntarism, he suggests that we need a different account of the first mover that underlies rational action. In his view, this first mover is the desire for happiness.[18] This is not a desire for some specific object such as pleasure, but a more general desire explaining our particular desires; we want the different particular goods we want on the assumption that they achieve happiness.[19]

[16] 'Nothing is produced without an efficient cause, and such an efficient cause as had a sufficiency of power to enable it to produce it. But yet that person, who had sufficient power to produce an effect might notwithstanding will not to produce it. So that there are two kinds of sufficient causes. One is such as acteth necessarily and can neither suspend nor determine its own action. Another is such as acteth contingently or arbitrarily, and hath a power over its own action, either to suspend it or determine it as it pleaseth.' (*FW*, ch. 22 = H 203)

[17] '... it is plain that if we be determined by necessity of nature here, then is there nothing in our own power, nor can we be blameworthy or deserve punishment.... These things are imputed to the men themselves, as the causes of things, and as not being determined by necessary causes as much as the notions [sic; motions?] of a watch or clock are.' (*FW*, ch. 11 = H 183)

[18] 'Wherefore, we conclude that the *to prôtôs kinoun*, that which first moveth in us, and is the spring and principle of all deliberative action, can be no other than a constant, restless, uninterrupted desire, or love of good as such, and happiness. This is an ever bubbling fountain in the centre of the soul, an elator and spring of motion, both a primum and perpetuum mobile in us, the first wheel that sets all the other wheels in motion, and an everlasting and incessant mover.' (*FW*, ch. 8 = H 173 = R 147) Remarks such as this one lead Passmore, *RC* 52–6, to claim that Cudworth is not an unqualified intellectualist.

[19] '... a certain vaticination, presage, scent, and odour of one summum bonum, one supreme highest good transcending all others, without which they will be all ineffectual as to complete happiness, and signify nothing, a certain

This description of the desire for happiness captures the Aristotelian conception of a final good. This conception underlies Aquinas' intellectualist account of the will. Hence it is difficult to see how Cudworth's appeal to a desire for happiness marks a disagreement with intellectualism. Perhaps he rejects it by denying that the desire for happiness is always predominant; in that case he agrees with Scotus' critique of eudaemonism. He seems to endorse the Scotist position in his description of the other powers of the soul. He mentions the concupiscible and irascible parts over which we have no 'despotic' power, but which the 'hegemonicon' may gradually control. Similarly, the hegemonicon may support or reject the demands of conscience.[20] Cudworth does not suggest that the hegemonicon necessarily follows either particular impulses or the desire for happiness or the demands of conscience.

What, then, is the hegemonicon? Cudworth takes it to be the ultimate basis of freedom and of praise and blame.[21] He argues that it cannot be the Scholastic blind will, because it is indifferent and 'fortuitously' determines itself. But he acknowledges that it is guided by the appearance of good.[22] Here he seems to refer to Aquinas' account of the will rather than to Scotus' account. He objects to the explanation of our capacity to choose the lesser good in the case where we choose between two objects that do not appear good in every respect. He suggests that in cases where x appears much better than y, but both x and y have some pros and cons, the will may nevertheless, according to the Scholastics, choose y because of the relatively small apparent good in it. Cudworth objects that this description of the blind will and 'active indifference' makes it no more than 'active irrationality and nonsense', and hence unsuitable to be the hegemonicon (*FW*, ch. 9 = H 177).

Cudworth raises a reasonable question about Aquinas' explanation of the will's capacity for opposites. But he has not offered the most plausible account of Aquinas' position.[23] Aquinas does not seem to intend the situation described by Cudworth, in which it is perfectly

philosophers' stone that can turn all to gold. Now this love and desire of good, as good in general, and of happiness, traversing the soul continually, and actuating and provoking it continually, is not a mere passion or *hormê*, but a settled resolved principle, and the very source, and fountain, and centre of life. It is necessary nature in us, which is immutable, and always continues the same, in equal quantity. As Cartesius supposes the same quantity of motion to be perpetually conserved in the universe, but not alike in all the same bodies, but transferred, and passing from one to another; so, more or less, here and there, is there the same stock of love and desire of good, always alive, working in the soul by necessity of nature, and agitating it, though by men's will and choice, it may be diversely dispensed out, and placed upon different objects, more and less' (ch. 8 = H 174 = R 147).

[20] 'Then fancy or imagination, sudden passions and *hormae*, and commotions called concupiscible and irascible . . . we have no absolute, despotic, easy, undisputed power over them, notwithstanding which the hegemonic of the soul may, by conatives and endeavours, acquire more and more power over them. Above all these is the dictate of honesty, commonly called the dictate of conscience—which often majestically controls them [and] clashes with the former. This is necessary nature too, when here the hegemonic sometimes joins its assistance to the better one, and sometimes takes part with the worser against it.' (*FW*, ch. 8 = H 174–5) Allen's edition (31) prints a different text in the last two sentences just quoted: 'Above all these is the dictate of honesty, commonly called the dictate of conscience, which often majestically controls them, and clashes with the former; this is necessary nature too, being here the hegemonic, sometimes joining its assistance to the better one, and sometimes taking part with the worse against it.'

[21] 'For here, or nowhere else, is to be found the *to eph'hêmin* and the *to autexousion, sui potestas*, self-power, or such a liberty of will as whereby men deserve praise or dispraise, commendation or blame. This hegemonic of the soul is a thing that was much taken notice of by the Greek philosophers after Aristotle, and to this is ascribed by them the original of those moral evils that deserve blame and punishment.' (*FW*, ch. 9 = H 175) Cudworth supports his claim by discussing a passage in Origen.

[22] 'Nevertheless they themselves acknowledge that there is so much of necessary nature even in this blind and fortuitous will, that it is notwithstanding always determined to good, or some appearance of it, and can never possibly choose evil when represented to it by the understanding as wholly such.' (*FW*, ch. 9 = H 176)

[23] On Aquinas see §§266–7.

clear to us that x is much better than y, but we choose y nonetheless for the sake of the trivial good (or the extremely small chance of a more significant good) that it offers. He seems to intend the quite different situation in which, even though x might at first appear better than or as good as y, we attend selectively to the advantages of y and the disadvantages of x, so that we come to believe y is better than x.

Does this description avoid Cudworth's charge of attributing to the will some indifference that amounts to 'active irrationality and nonsense'? One might object that Aquinas' appeal to selective attention does not resolve the main difficulty; either this attention to the good features of the inferior option is an exercise of 'active irrationality', or else it is bound by our prior beliefs about the good, and so does not really introduce freedom. But perhaps this objection relies on false alternatives. At any rate, Aquinas' actual position raises a series of further possibilities that are not covered by Cudworth's objection to the Scholastic position.

In opposition to the Scholastic position, as he interprets it, Cudworth argues that the hegemonicon cannot be 'utterly devoid of all light, and perception, or understanding' (*FW*, ch. 9 = H 177). But he believes it cannot simply be reason, which is never mistaken; it must include the possibility of error, together with the possibility of directing one's attention and of beginning and ending one's deliberation.[24] These capacities in the hegemonicon explain why it is not simply a passive recipient of judgments of understanding.[25] Since we may make more or less effort to deliberate, and may deliberate more or less carefully, we may judge what is in fact worse to be better, and hence may make a culpable mistake; for it was in our power to deliberate more carefully.[26] The hegemonicon is fallible, and when it goes wrong it is responsible for a person's choosing badly.

This description explains why the hegemonicon is the source of freewill. Its good or bad deliberation about good and evil is the basis for praise and blame. But this is not because it possesses the liberty of indifference.[27] On the contrary: if our deliberation about the best thing to do did not determine our choice, but we had some natural and unpredictable tendency to choose the worse outcome for no reason when we were presented with the

[24] 'I say, therefore, that *to hêgemonikon* in every man, and indeed that which is properly we ourselves, (we rather having those other things of necessary nature than being them), is the soul as comprehending itself, all its concerns and interests, its abilities and capacities, and holding itself, as it were, in its own hand, as it were redoubled upon itself, having a power of intending or exerting itself more or less, in consideration and deliberation, in resisting the lower appetites that oppose it, both of [i.e., in consideration and deliberation both of . . .] utility, reason, and honesty; in self-recollection and attention, and vigilant circumspection, or standing upon our guard, in purposes and resolutions, in diligence in carrying on steady designs and active endeavours, in order to self-improvement and the self-promoting of its own good, the fixing and conserving itself in the same. . . . Wherefore this hegemonicon always determines the passive capability of man's nature one way or other, either for better or for worse; and has a self-forming and self-framing power by which every man is self-made into what he is, and accordingly deserves either praise or punishment.' (*FW*, ch. 10 = H 178 = R 150)

[25] '. . . though perception be nature or necessary understanding in us, yet for all that, we are not merely passive to our own practical judgments and to the appearances of good, but contribute something of our own to them, to make them such as they are' (*FW*, ch. 10 = H 179).

[26] The hegemonic power that Cudworth describes here seems to have the role that Locke attributes to reason, in suspending the operation of particular impulses and deciding which of them it is on the whole better to follow. See §555.

[27] 'But this not because it had by nature an equal indifferency and freedom to a greater or lesser good, which is absurd, or because it had a natural liberty of will either to follow or not follow its own last practical judgment, which is all one as to say a liberty to follow or not follow its own volition. For upon both these suppositions there would have been no such thing as fault or blame.' (*FW*, ch. 10 = H 179 = R 150) On the liberty of indifference see Passmore, *RC* 59. He thinks it raises difficulties for Cudworth.

choice between it and the better outcome, we could not reasonably be praised or blamed for anything. The fact that we made the worse choice would just be something about us that we could not be expected to alter; for no deliberation about altering it would be effective.

Instead of trying to find responsibility in indifference, we should place it in the agent's capacity to deliberate. This power to deliberate is inconsistent with the claim that everything is necessary.[28] Our use of this power determines whether we follow the dictates of conscience or the suggestions of other impulses.[29] Since we can choose to use our deliberative capacity well or badly, we can reasonably be blamed for the way we use it.

544. Does Cudworth Improve on the Scholastic View?

If our description of Aquinas' view was right, Cudworth's view differs far less from Aquinas' actual view than from the positions that Cudworth ascribes to the Scholastics. In particular, Aquinas' explanation of the non-necessity of deliberation and election does not seem to rely on the sort of indifference that Cudworth attacks as irrational. When Aquinas argues that it is possible for us to 'consider' the different aspects of good and bad in different options, he seems to mean what Cudworth means in saying that we are not merely 'passive to our own practical judgments', but contribute something to their character (*FW*, ch. 10 = H 179). Aquinas believes that our will influences our consideration of one or another aspect of a situation, but he does not suggest that this influence of the will is altogether independent of our judgment about what it would be best to consider.

So far, then, Cudworth's account of the will rests on justified objections to a doctrine of indifference that implies 'active irrationality and nonsense', but it does not rest on justified objections to Aquinas' position. In fact, he agrees with Aquinas in believing that one can attribute some sort of indeterminacy to deliberation and election without taking the will to be altogether independent of beliefs about better and worse.

Cudworth's major difference from Aquinas seems to be his rejection of the priority of the desire for happiness. In his view, the freedom of the will consists in its being bound neither by the desire for happiness nor by the demands of conscience. The hegemonicon considers the various aims that belong to us by nature—particular impulses, the desire for happiness, and concern for the honestum. Whereas Scotus identifies (at least sometimes) the freedom of the will with the affection for justice, Cudworth makes the hegemonicon superior to conscience as well as to self-love.

[28] 'But because he might have made a better judgment than now he did, had he more intensely considered, and more maturely deliberated, which, that he did not, was his own fault. Now to say that a man hath not this power over himself to consider and deliberate more or less, is to contradict common experience and inward sense. . . . But if a man have this power over himself to consider and deliberate more or less; then is he not always determined thereunto by any antecedent necessary causes. These two things being inconsistent and contradictious, and consequently there was something of contingency in his choice.' (*FW*, ch. 10 = H 179 = R 150)

[29] 'Again in that contest betwixt the dictate of honesty or of conscience and the suggestion of the lower appetites urging and impelling to pleasure or present good or profit, I say in this contest there is no necessary understanding interposing and coming in to umpire between, that does unavoidably and irresistibly determine one way or the other. But the matter wholly depends on the soul's hegemonic or power over itself, its exerting itself with more or less force and vigour in resisting these lower affections . . . Whereas it is plain that if we be determined by necessity of nature here, then is there nothing in our own power, nor can we be blameworthy or deserve punishment.' (*FW*, ch. 11 = H 182–3)

How, then, does the hegemonicon estimate the claims of conscience and of self-love, and how does it choose between them? This question seems to face Cudworth no less than it faces Butler; for both of them seem to take conscience to be (in Butler's words) superior to self-love, but they do not take superiority to imply that we necessarily prefer the demands of conscience over those of self-love. Cudworth does not want to conclude that the hegemonicon prefers self-love or conscience for no reason; that would be a return to 'active irrationality and nonsense', which he tries to avoid in denying indifference to the will. But apparently it cannot decide on the basis of self-love or of conscience, if it is capable of deciding between the two.

To resolve this difficulty, Cudworth might try to distinguish two aspects of conscience: (1) It takes an impartial point of view, standing outside the desire for one's own happiness, and considering the value of pursuing one's own interest in comparison with other values. (2) It endorses the specific principles prescribed by morality, embodying the honestum. If we consider the first aspect of conscience we might claim that it captures the point of view of the hegemonicon, because we are capable of looking at practical questions from a broader view than the view of self-love. To this degree we might identify the outlook of the hegemonicon with the outlook of conscience. But since our taking this point of view need not lead us to endorse the requirements of morality, we may still separate the outlook of the hegemonicon from the honestum.

But though this Butlerian solution offers a reasonable account of the deliberative standpoint of the hegemonicon, Cudworth does not present it. Though his account of freewill is suggestive, he does not develop it far enough to make it clear how he intends to answer the questions that can reasonably be raised about it.

545. What is Cudworth's Objection to Determinism?

Our discussion of Cudworth's criticism of the Scholastic view, and our survey of the positive view that he develops to answer these criticisms, should help us to see what he rejects in Hobbes. His conception of the hegemonicon makes it clear why he rejects Hobbes's anti-rationalism as an account of the will and as an account of freedom. For the hegemonicon is the source of freedom precisely insofar as it differs from a Hobbesian will; it is not simply the last appetite in Hobbesian deliberation, but it is the reflective and deliberative source of the comparative judgments that underlie rational action.

It is more difficult to see why Cudworth rejects Hobbes's determinism; for his description of the hegemonicon and of the source of freedom does not seem to conflict with determinism. He argues against Hobbes's claims about necessity with a counter-example. We are capable of choosing between qualitatively identical objects (20 gold coins at the same distance from the agent: *FW*, ch. 4 = H 163–4 = R 140). Since nothing about the situation itself determines the agent to choose one rather than another, Cudworth infers that he is not necessitated and that he chooses 'contingently'.[30] But this fact (if one grants it) does not

[30] 'But if being necessitated by no motive or reason antecedently to choose this rather than that, he must determine himself contingently, or fortuitously, or causelessly, it being all one to him which he took.' (*FW*, ch. 4 = H 164 = R 140)

refute determinism. It shows simply that some cause within the agent, and some cause that is not reflected in the agent's reasons, must be assumed.[31] Cudworth infers that human agents are not necessarily determined 'by causes antecedent' (*FW*, ch. 4 = H 164). If 'causes antecedent' are causes external to agents, his inference is plausible, but it does not refute determinism.

It is difficult to decide where Cudworth disagrees with Hobbes, because neither of them clearly distinguishes two claims: (1) Every event is necessitated by antecedent events, i.e., for every event there is some antecedent event that is causally sufficient for it. (2) Every event is necessary, i.e., it is not possible for it not to happen. Hobbes seems to confuse the two claims in saying that 'every sufficient cause is a necessary cause' (discussed by Cudworth in ch. 22 = H 203). If he just means that every sufficient condition necessitates its effect, this is an analytic truth. If he means that every sufficient condition is a condition that could not possibly not have obtained, and that therefore its effect could not possibly have not obtained, this does not follow from the definition of a sufficient condition.

Cudworth does not point out precisely this flaw in Hobbes's argument. He observes that an agent may be sufficient to bring about an action, by having sufficient power, to bring it about, but may nonetheless choose not to bring it about. This answer does not meet Hobbes's argument; when Hobbes speaks of a 'sufficient cause', he probably means an event that is a sufficient condition, but when Cudworth speaks of a sufficient cause, he does not refer to an event, but to an agent (who does not provide a sufficient condition). Hence he does not grasp exactly where Hobbes goes wrong.

For present purposes, however, it does not matter whether Cudworth is exactly right in his inferences from presumed facts about choices between equally choiceworthy alternatives. For, whatever kind of contingency he sees in these choices, he does not take it to be characteristic of moral responsibility. He argues that the liberty of indifference between equally balanced alternatives is irrelevant to moral responsibility, since no one is reasonably praised or blamed for choosing either one of x or y rather than the other when there is nothing to choose between them.[32] Hence his eventual position on the issues about determinism is this: (1) Examples involving indifference show that determinism must be false for some human choices. (2) But this sort of indifference is irrelevant to moral responsibility. (3) Responsibility requires a type of spontaneity that excludes necessity.

This position is still obscure. Does Cudworth take his third claim to exclude determinism? This is obscure because of his obscurities about necessitation and external determination. If deliberation has the role he attributes to it, external events do not necessitate human actions apart from how we deliberate and choose. But he could say this without rejecting determinism. Since some of his obscurities about necessitation and necessity correspond to Hobbes's obscurities, he fails to distinguish the Hobbesian views that are

[31] Cudworth answers this suggestion: 'But if you will say there was some hidden, necessarily determinating in this case, then if the trial should be made a hundred times over and over again, or by a hundred several persons, there is no reason why we must not allow that all of them must needs take the same guinea every time, that is either the first, or second, or third, etc., of them, as they lie in order from the right or left hand.' (*FW*, ch. 4 = H 164)

[32] 'But this contingent liberty of self-determination, which we have hitherto spoken of . . . where there is a perfect equality in objects and a mere fortuitous self-determination, is not that *autoexousion*, that *liberum arbitrium*, which is the foundation of praise or dispraise . . .' (*FW*, ch. 5 = H 166 = R 141)

inconsistent with his position from the determinist view that is (apparently) consistent with it.[33]

Still, Cudworth effectively attacks Hobbes's account of what free choice ought to consist in, from a compatibilist point of view. In Cudworth's view, human action is free and responsible to the extent that it is determined by practical reason and deliberation picking out the action that seems better on the whole. He rejects the Hobbesian view that prudent, rational action is simply the product of the strongest desire. Hence Cudworth infers that, given a correct account of freewill and rational choice, the Hobbesian account of action implies that there is no freewill. Hobbes's anti-rationalism about action and motivation raises a serious difficulty for human freedom, once we combine it with a plausible account of freewill. Hobbes conceals this difficulty only because he combines his anti-rationalist account of action with an account of freewill that is open to Cudworth's objections. On these questions Cudworth shows, both intentionally and unintentionally, that some aspects of the Scholastic position are more plausible than Hobbes's position.

546. The Nature of the Will and the Basis of Ethics

Cudworth sets out to defend neither the intellectualist nor the voluntarist conceptions of freedom embraced by different Scholastics. But his conclusion is closer than he realizes to the intellectualist position of Aquinas. He does not place freedom in an arbitrary choice that is indifferent to the comparative value of different options. He ascribes this freedom of arbitrary choice both to human and to divine wills, but he does not take it to be the sort of freedom that supports praise and blame. He does not take God's choices to result from the freewill that supports praise and blame; for the ways in which human choice goes beyond certain knowledge are alien to divine perfection.[34] God has liberty, but not freewill. Descartes's doctrine of the creation of the eternal truths makes these truths the result of God's arbitrary and contingent choice. Cudworth argues, on the contrary, that God's liberty consists in acting in accordance with the nature of the goodness and wisdom that necessarily belong to God.[35]

This opposition to voluntarism connects Cudworth's doctrine of the will with his conception of the basis of morality. If we accept a voluntarist account of divine freedom, we object, as Scotus and Ockham object, to a naturalist conception of natural law, on the ground that it limits divine freedom. Hence we treat the principles of natural law as the products of divine commands that are not constrained by any prior standards of goodness or rightness.

[33] Price's discussion of freewill (see §809) is obscure on the same questions about 'necessity'.

[34] 'So that it cannot belong to God or a perfect being to have a self-intending and self-remitting power, a self-improving and self-impairing power, a self-advancing and self-depressing. . . . Moreover a perfect being cannot have any such power of stretching its judgment beyond certain knowledge . . .' (*FW*, ch. 14 = H 185–6)

[35] 'Whereas according to Scripture God is a nature of infinite love, goodness, or benignity, displaying itself according to infinite and perfect wisdom, and governing rational creatures in righteousness, and this is liberty of the Deity, so that it consisteth not in infinite indifferency blindly and arbitrarily determining all things. There is a nature of goodness, and a nature of wisdom antecedent to the will of God, which is the rule and measure of it.' (*FW*, ch. 14 = H 187)

In Cudworth's view, the voluntarist account of morality reflects an error about the nature of freedom in general, about the sort of freedom that belongs to the divine will, and about the nature of morality. Voluntarists mistakenly believe that a naturalist account of morality would limit divine freedom. Once we find the correct account of freedom, we see that a correct naturalist account of morality does not limit divine freedom.

Against voluntarism, therefore, Cudworth affirms 'eternal and immutable morality'. This is certainly part of the general philosophical outlook that he claims to derive from Plato. But it is also relevant to the qualified defence of Scholastic views against Hobbes; in this respect it is continuous with the aims of his work on freewill.

Cudworth attacks Hobbes from two directions. On the one hand, internal difficulties in Hobbes's position, as judged by Hobbes's standards and by the standards of ordinary moral judgment, show that we must recognize objective moral properties and facts. On the other hand, Platonic metaphysics provides an account of reality that makes the existence of such properties and facts intelligible. Cudworth does not systematically distinguish these two directions of argument. But for our present purposes we may examine his arguments on the assumption that we are not antecedently convinced of his metaphysical framework.

He enters a debate about voluntarism and the basis of morality that is partly defined by Suarez's examination of the merits of different forms of voluntarism and naturalism about natural law. Culverwell's discourse shows that Cudworth's contemporaries in Cambridge were familiar with the Scholastic disputes. Though it is not clear how much Hobbes knew directly about these disputes, he accepts a voluntarist account of the relation between divine commands and morality.

But though Cudworth takes part in this debate, he also extends it to embrace questions that the Scholastics do not explicitly discuss. These questions arise in the discussion of nature and law (or convention; *nomos*) that he finds in Plato. Protagoras maintains that justice is determined by the law of a particular state, and Cudworth finds this position both in the outlook of the 'vulgar' and in Hobbes.[36] Against this 'positive' view of morality he defends the Platonic view that morality is eternal and immutable.

He believes that the Protagorean position opposed by Plato makes the same basic errors as those he finds in theological voluntarism. A positivist view makes morality 'mutable' because it implies that morality changes with the provisions of positive law in different places and times. The theological voluntarist tries to avoid this sort of mutability by treating morality as the unchanging commands of an eternal legislator. Hobbes accepts voluntarism by treating the laws of nature as the commands of God.[37] Descartes accepts voluntarism for the eternal truths, by treating them as the products of the divine will (*EIM* i 3.1–5 = H 22–5).

[36] 'As the vulgar generally look no higher for the original of moral good and evil, just and unjust, than the codes and pandects, the tables and laws of their country and religion; so there have not wanted pretended philosophers in all ages who have asserted nothing to be good and evil, just and unjust, naturally and immutably; but that all these things were positive, arbitrary and factitious only.' (*EIM* i 1.1 = H 9 = R 119) As Cudworth describes Hobbes's position, '... there are no authentic doctrines concerning just and unjust, good and evil, except the laws which are established in every city: and that it concerns none to inquire whether an action shall be reputed just or unjust, good or evil, except such only whom the community have appointed to be the interpreters of their laws.' (*EIM* i 1.4 = H 13) He quotes from Hobbes, *Civ.*, Pref. 8.

[37] '... certain it is, that divers modern theologers do not only seriously, but zealously contend in like manner, that there is nothing absolutely, intrinsically and naturally good and evil, just and unjust, antecedently to any positive

Cudworth answers that theological voluntarism repeats the mistake of Protagoras and Hobbes.

Cudworth attributes voluntarism both to modern theologians and to Scholastics; the Scholastics he cites are Ockham, Pierre d'Ailly, and André de Neufchâteau.[38] He quotes a passage in Latin to summarize Ockham's views. This is not a direct quotation from Ockham; nor does Cudworth say it is. The passage appears in Suarez's presentation of the voluntarist position. Suarez also mentions Cudworth's other two authorities.[39] Cudworth repeats Suarez's paraphrase of Ockham. He omits Suarez's reference to Gerson, who is said simply to 'tend' towards the voluntarist view, but he retains the references to the two authorities who, according to Suarez, maintain it 'broadly' and 'most broadly'. He has probably read Suarez, since he summarizes precisely the remarks that describe the extreme voluntarist view.[40]

Cudworth agrees with Suarez in defending moral properties that are eternal and immutable, in the sense that they are not subject to change either by human legislation or by the unqualified power of God. Suarez offers an account of moral properties, to explain why they are eternal and immutable in this sense. Does this account influence Cudworth, and does Cudworth change it significantly? These questions would be worth asking even if Cudworth had never heard of Suarez, but they are especially worth asking if Cudworth read Suarez and tried to make up his mind about Suarez's position.

He goes beyond Suarez in his conception of the history and philosophical significance of voluntarism. Cudworth connects the mediaeval debate with disputes in ancient philosophy about nature and convention, and so he allows himself to use the arguments for naturalism against voluntarism as arguments for objectivity. The connexion between positivism and voluntarism may have occurred to him because of his reflexions on Plato. He believes that the arguments inspired by Suarez support Plato's rejection of a positive and legislative conception of morality. He refers primarily to the *Theaetetus* and to the *Laws* (*EIM* i 1.1 = H 9), and he discusses the statement and refutation of Protagoras' position in the *Theaetetus* (esp. ii 1–3).[41] It is surprising that he does not consider Plato's discussion of theological voluntarism in the *Euthyphro*. He does not point out that the Scholastic voluntarists revive the position attacked by Socrates in the *Euthyphro*.[42]

command or prohibition of God; but that the arbitrary will and pleasure of God (that is, an omnipotent being devoid of all essential and natural justice) by its commands and prohibitions, is the first and only rule and measure thereof. . . . For though the ancient fathers of the Christian Church were very abhorrent from this doctrine . . . it crept up afterward in the scholastic age, Ockham being among the first that maintained "nullum actum malum esse nisi quatenus a Deo prohibitum, et qui non possit fieri bonus, si a Deo praecipiatur; et e converso". . . . And herein Petrus Alliacus and Andreas de Novo Castro, with others, quickly followed him' (*EIM* i 1.5 = H 14).

[38] Hutton, *EIM* 14n, suggests that these references are a sign of a seventeenth-century revival of Scholasticism in England, but she does not mention Suarez. The quotation from Ockham, and references to Pierre d'Ailly and André de Neufchâteau (among others) appear in Suarez, *De leg.* ii 6.4. On Ockham cf. §399.

[39] Quoted in §435n88.

[40] The summary of Ockham appears in Taylor, *DD* ii c1 rule 1 = *Works* xi 226. See §539. Like Suarez, but unlike Cudworth, Taylor refers to Ockham 2.19 ad3–4. It is likely, then, that both Taylor and Cudworth had read Suarez. Culverwell and Cudworth were both in Cambridge in the 1640s and 1650s. Taylor had been an undergraduate there in the early 1630s.

[41] He also refers to the attack on legal positivism in the *Minos* (*EIM* iv 6.3 = H 144).

[42] Passmore, *RC* 41, comments on Cudworth's treatment of positivism and theological voluntarism: 'Against all such theories he asserts a general logical principle, derived, as he points out, from Plato's *Euthyphro*: "It is a thing which we

Though Cudworth's silence is surprising, it is explicable. The Scholastic disputes, as summarized by Suarez, provide him with a well-defined problem that can be discussed without explicit reference to Plato. He may nonetheless recall the fact that Plato discusses both voluntarism and positivism.[43] Plato does not suggest that both positions rest on the same errors, but his treatment of them may have suggested the connexion that Cudworth asserts.

547. The Question about Immutability

In attacking the theological as well as the legal conception of morality, Cudworth clarifies his views on eternity and immutability. If God has commanded these laws from eternity, and always will command them, morality is apparently eternal, and no more subject to change than any laws of nature that God decides not to change. But this sort of eternality and immutability does not satisfy Cudworth.[44] Theological voluntarism ensures only that morality is unchanging, not that it is immutable; if it is to be immutable, it must be immune to changes in some counterfactual circumstances as well as in the actual world. The positivist and the theological moralist must agree that if the legislator changed his mind, right and wrong would change too.

shall very easily demonstrate, that moral good and evil, just and unjust, honest and dishonest, (if they be not mere names, without any significance, or names for nothing else but willed and commanded, but have a reality in respect of the persons obliged to do and avoid them), cannot be arbitrary things, made by will without nature, because it is universally true that things are what they are not by will but by nature." ' This passage from *EIM* i 2.1 contains no explicit reference to the *Euthyphro*; nor does the context. Hence Passmore's claim that Cudworth 'points out' the derivation of his argument from the *Euthyphro* is puzzling. The significance of Cudworth's argument is discussed by Tulloch, *RTCP* ii 284–90 (who underestimates the force of the argument), and Prior, *LBE* (who attaches it too closely to Moore's argument about the naturalistic fallacy). See §815.

[43] Cudworth quotes the *Euthyphro*, in his Sermon before the House of Commons: 'Now I say, the very proper character and essential tincture of God himself is nothing else but goodness. Nay, I may be bold to add, that God is therefore God because he is the highest and most perfect good: and good is not therefore good, because God out of an arbitrary will of his would have it so. Whatsoever God doth in the world, he doth it as it is suitable to the highest goodness; the first idea and fairest copy of which is his own essence. Virtue, and holiness in creatures, as Plato well discourseth in his Euthyphro, are not "therefore good because God loveth them", and will have them be accounted such; but rather, "God loveth them because they are in themselves simply good". Some of our own authors go a little further yet, and tell us; that God doth not fondly love himself, because he is himself, but therefore he loveth himself because he is the highest and most absolute goodness: so that if there could be any thing in the world better than God, God would love that better than himself: but because he is essentially the most perfect good; therefore he cannot but love his own goodness, infinitely above all other things.' (Sermon to House of Commons = Patrides, *CP* 102. I have used inverted commas where Cudworth uses italics, apparently indicating an intended quotation or paraphrase.) Shorey, *PAM* 201, notices the connexion with Plato: 'Another fundamental Platonic trait in Cudworth is his insistence on the sovereignty of ethics and the autonomy of the moral law. Against many mediaeval and Renaissance thinkers he reaffirms in substance the principle of the *Euthyphro* (10a ff) that right is right not because God loves it or wills it but God wills it because it is right and the whole of his *Immutable Morality* and many passages of his *True Intellectual System of the Universe* are in effect reiterations of Plato's faith that morality is of the nature of things, and his assurance that the moral law is as certain as the existence of the island of Crete (*Laws* 662b).'

[44] He quotes and criticizes Descartes's attempt to safeguard immutability: '[Descartes:] 'I do not think that the essences of things, and those mathematical truths which can be known of them, are independent on God; but I think nevertheless that because God so willed, and so ordered, therefore they are immutable and eternal'; [Cudworth replies] which is plainly to make them in their own nature mutable.' (*EIM* i 3.3 = H 24) On Descartes's voluntarism and the eternal truths see Bolton, 'Universals' 197; Descartes, *Replies* vi = AT vii 432–6; Letters to Mersenne, 15 April, 27 May 1630 = AT i 143–54. Cf. Ockham, §396.

Cudworth argues, therefore, that if F-ness and rightness are identical, it follows that if x changes from being F to being not-F, x ceases to be right. Conversely, if it is not the case that if x changes from being F to being not F, then x ceases to be right, it follows that F-ness and rightness are not identical. In the latter case, rightness is immutable in relation to F-ness. To see what Cudworth means by claiming that morality is eternal and immutable, we need to find the range of properties in relation to which it is immutable.

Does this range include all properties, so that moral properties are absolutely immutable? Such a broad range would rule out necessary connexions between any one moral property and any other. If it is necessarily true that good is what ought to be chosen by a rational agent, and that the right is what is required by impartial reason, good and right are mutable in relation to these other properties. If they were not mutable even to this extent, they would be absolutely simple.[45]

Cudworth, however, does not seem to affirm their absolute simplicity. Asserting the mutability of right and wrong, in his view, is parallel to asserting the mutability of the nature of a circle or a cube.[46] He takes his opponents to hold something more than the trivial thesis that we might decide (or God might tell us) to apply the name 'cube' to something spherical. He takes them to believe that the same thing would still be the nature of a cube even though its essence would be being spherical. If he believed that the nature of a cube is immutable in relation to everything, he would infer that it would not change even if the nature of sides and right angles changed; but he does not infer this.[47]

The extent of immutability is relevant to the question of Cudworth's agreement with Suarez. The claims about intrinsic morality, about non-contradiction, and about immutability, reflect Suarez's views as well. But Suarez maintains that intrinsic morality consists in actions that are appropriate to rational nature. He explains appropriateness to rational nature teleologically, as Aquinas does, with reference to one's final good. He must, therefore, recognize some limits on the logical immutability of moral properties; they do not depend, as Ockham sometimes suggests they do, on God's continuing to exercise his unqualified power in the same ordered power, but they depend on human nature remaining the same, and hence on human happiness remaining the same. Moral properties are therefore mutable in relation to human nature and human happiness.

The reference to happiness is not alien to Cudworth; we have seen that the desire for happiness has a central role in explaining rational action, though its relation to the hegemonicon is left obscure. Similarly, the connexion between claims about happiness, rational nature, and moral properties is left obscure. If we notice Cudworth's obscurity, we can identify some central questions that arise in the treatment of immutability by Clarke, Balguy, Butler, and Price.

Once we raise this question about Cudworth, we must also raise a question about Whewell's attempt to divide moralists of this period into supporters and opponents of

[45] Cf. Price, §814.

[46] 'For though the names of things may be changed by any one at pleasure . . . yet that . . . the self-same body, which is perfectly cubical, without any physical alteration made in it, should by this metaphysical way of transformation of essences, by mere will and command be made spherical or cylindrical; this doth most plainly imply a contradiction, and the compossibility of contradictions destroys all knowledge and the definite natures or notions of things.' (*EIM* i 3.4 = H 25)

[47] On the issue about immutability see §§678–9.

'independent' morality. He puts Cudworth firmly on the 'independent' side, and he is clearly justified by Cudworth's opposition to Hobbesian voluntarism. But it is not clear what degree of mutability is allowed by Whewell's notion of independence.[48] Though he takes Cudworth to claim that goodness is an 'absolute and inherent quality' of actions, he does not make it clear what such a claim implies. Must a believer in independent morality claim that moral goodness is absolutely independent of every other property, and hence absolutely simple? Or is it independent and absolute if it depends only on rational nature? Suarez believes that moral goodness is intrinsic to actions, but is not a non-relational property of an action; it implies a relation of the action to rational nature.

Cudworth defends Suarez's belief in intrinsic morality; but Suarez holds that belief as part of a naturalist account of moral properties. Cudworth does not make it clear whether this version of naturalism makes morality eternal and immutable in the sense he intends. In Clarke, Price, and Reid, the belief in intrinsic morality is separated from naturalism, whereas Butler maintains the connexion asserted by Suarez. It is difficult to place Cudworth in this sequence.

Still, this obscurity about naturalism does not affect his main objection to legislative theories of morality; for naturalist and non-naturalist theories of intrinsic morality agree that morality is non-legislative. Legislative theories take moral properties to be mutable in relation to legislative acts, whereas, in Cudworth's view, moral properties are not mutable in this respect. The legislative theory is no more plausible, he suggests, than the claim that we can decide that a triangle will no longer have three sides. Since the nature of a triangle is not mutable in relation to legislative acts, we have no reason to suppose that moral properties are mutable in relation to legislative acts.[49] To suppose that moral properties are mutable, then, is to suppose a manifest contradiction.[50]

548. Legislation and Morality

A supporter of a legislative theory might object that Cudworth's argument begs the question. Admittedly, we might agree that white, equal, and so on have essences that are immutable in relation to legislation, and that someone who claimed to decide that from now on whiteness is going to be the darkest colour would be claiming something contradictory, since he would be claiming that the colour that is essentially lightest is no longer lightest. But those who hold a legislative view of moral properties deny that the essence of moral properties is equally immutable in relation to legislation. The property of being legal or fashionable is clearly not immutable in relation to laws or fashions. The concept is immutable, since 'legal' always means (let us say) 'permitted by the laws currently in force', but the properties

[48] Whewell contrasts two schools: '. . . those who held that goodness was an absolute and inherent quality of actions, of whom was Cudworth; and those who did not venture to say so much, but derived morality from the nature of man and the will of God jointly; and so doing, introduced more special and complex views' (*LHMPE* 52). See §520.

[49] 'Now things may as well be made white or black by mere will, without whiteness or blackness, equal and unequal, without equality and inequality, as morally good and evil, just and unjust, honest and dishonest, debita and illicita, without any nature of goodness, justice, honesty.' (*EIM* i 2.1 = H 17 = R 120)

[50] Cf. Suarez's claims about immutability, *Leg.* ii 13.2.

of legal actions that make them legal vary with the laws. Why not suppose that morality is parallel to legality in this way?

Cudworth does not directly consider a property such as legality in comparison with right and wrong. Nor does he give any reason for believing that there cannot be any properties or concepts whose conditions for exemplification essentially mention beliefs, rules, customs, or conventions. But he asks whether moral properties are or are not among the properties that involve conventions. A legislative or conventionalist account might appeal to the fact that in some cases legislation seems to create right and wrong; a law prescribing driving on the right rather than the left makes it wrong to drive on the left and obliges us to drive on the right. Might we not understand all moral rightness and obligation in the same way? Cudworth's argument proves too much, if it implies that—contrary to fact—no legislation affects what is right or wrong.

He answers that, even in cases where legislation makes an action right or wrong, legislation alone does not create right and wrong. If it is wrong for me to drive on the left in the USA, then (1) the legislator has prohibited it, and (2) it is right to obey the legislator.[51] The second condition depends on what is right in itself, apart from any legislation. The rightness of obedience cannot itself be the result of legislation or command; for if the legislator commanded us to obey him, that command itself would have no moral authority unless it were already right to obey the legislator.[52]

Hence, the attempt to create moral obligation simply from commands involves a vicious regress. A command telling us that we are obliged to obey the orders of the commander cannot create the obligation to obey them. For anyone can issue commands of this sort, but they impose an obligation on us only if the commander has the authority to issue them. This authority cannot come from a further command to treat a commander as authoritative; for the commander issuing that command would create an obligation only by having the authority to issue it. Hence not all obligation can be entirely the result of commands.

A comparison with promises clarifies the role of authority prior to commands. A's promise to B creates an obligation for A not simply because A has made the promise, but because it is already true that we are obliged to keep promises.[53] Similarly, B's giving A an order imposes an obligation on A to carry out this particular order only if B is a legitimate commander with

[51] 'For though it will be objected here, that when God or civil powers command a thing to be done, that was not before obligatory or unlawful, the thing willed or commanded doth forthwith become obligatory; that which ought to be done by creatures and subjects respectively; in which the nature of moral good or evil is commonly conceived to consist. And therefore if all good or evil, just or unjust be not the creatures of will (as many assert) yet at least positive things must needs owe all their morality, their good and evil to mere will without nature: Yet notwithstanding, if we well consider it, we shall find that even in positive commands themselves, mere will doth not make the thing commanded just or obligatory, or beget and create any obligation to obedience; but that it is natural justice or equity, which gives to one the right or authority of commanding, and begets in another duty and obligation to obedience.' (*EIM* i 2.3 = H 18 = R 122)

[52] 'And if it should be imagined, that any one should make a positive law to require that others should be obliged, or bound to obey him, every one would think such a law ridiculous and absurd; for if they were obliged before, then the law would be in vain, and to no purpose; and if they were not before obliged, then they could not be obliged by any positive law, because they were not previously bound to obey such a person's command.' (*EIM* i 2.3 = H 18–19 = R 122)

[53] 'As for example, *to keep faith and perform covenants*, is that which natural justice obligeth to absolutely; therefore upon the supposition that any one maketh a promise, which is a voluntary act of his own, to do something which he was not before obliged to by natural justice, upon the intervention of this voluntary act of his own, that indifferent thing

the proper authority that A has already recognized independently of being told to recognize it by B.[54] So far from command creating all obligations of morality, it could not create any unless there were some obligations antecedent to any command.[55]

Some aspects of right and wrong, therefore, are mutable in relation to legislation, because they presuppose the existence of immutable rightness and wrongness determining whether or not it is right to obey a legislator or this particular legislator. If something can become right by being legislated, something else is non-legislatively right and wrong. A purely legislative theory, therefore, is self-defeating.

This argument assumes that any obligation created by a command must depend on some prior obligation to obey a command. Cudworth does not consider the distinction suggested by Suarez, between obligations created by commands and non-obligatory duties prior to commands. We might use Suarez's distinction to undermine Hobbes's attempt to found obligations simply in commands, by claiming that obligations (in Suarez's narrow sense) presuppose intrinsic rightness and wrongness (distinct from obligation). Perhaps, indeed it would have been better if Cudworth had observed Suarez's distinction, instead of using 'obligation' indiscriminately to refer to every sort of moral requirement. Suarez's position allows us to agree with Hobbes's view that the expression of the will of a superior, embodied in a command, introduces a distinctive type of moral requirement. We might agree with Hobbes this far, and still agree with Cudworth's argument to show that some moral requirement precedes any obligation generated by a command.

549. Cudworth and Plato

Cudworth's combination of an attack on Protagorean subjectivism with an attack on theological voluntarism raises a question about Plato; is Plato influenced by anything like Cudworth's argument for the immutability of moral properties?

Concern with mutability is clearly relevant to Plato's treatment of moral properties. According to Heracleitus and Protagoras, good and just are mutable, because the changing character of different circumstances or different conventions wholly determines the goodness or justice of different actions. In Plato's view, this belief in flux is true to some extent, but basically false. It is true, insofar as 'the many justs', the different sensible properties that embody justice in different situations, undergo flux; paying back what you have received is sometimes just, sometimes unjust. But justice itself does not change according to circumstances or conventions. Plato agrees with Cudworth insofar as he argues that the

promised falling now under something absolutely good, and becoming the matter of promise and covenant, standeth for the present in a new relation to the rational nature of the promiser, and becometh for the time a thing which ought to be done by him, or which he is obliged to do.' (*EIM* i 2.4 = H 19–20 = R 123) On Scotus and promises see §382.

[54] 'And that is not the mere will of the commander, that makes these positive things to oblige or become due, but the nature of things; appears evidently from hence, because it is not the volition of every one that obligeth, but of a person rightly qualified and invested with lawful authority.' (*EIM* i 2.4 = H 21 = R 124)

[55] Cf. Price's discussion of obligation, *RPQM* 106. See §818. Smith cites Cudworth's criticism of Hobbes with qualified approval, at *TMS* vii 3.2.4–5 (318–19). See §786. Some of Cudworth's criticisms of obligations created simply by commands are relevant to Hart's discussion of legal obligation in *CL*, ch. 5 (though Hart is more sympathetic to a positivist solution, he endorses the criticisms of a Hobbesian theory). Hart and Hobbes are discussed by Hampton, *HSCT* 107–10.

Protagorean and Heracleitean view makes moral properties mutable, contrary to our belief that they are immutable.

This point about mutability does not apply exactly to the divine legislator. It is easier for Plato than for Cudworth, since he can fairly appeal to disagreements among the gods; if morality were simply a matter of divine legislation by gods who disagree, moral properties would vary among different gods, just as they vary among different human legislators. Plato, however, also anticipates the problem as it arises for monotheists, since Socrates waives the point about disagreement among the gods, and asks whether piety is adequately defined as what all the gods love (*Eu*. 9d). This makes the problem similar to Cudworth's, since there is no question, for Cudworth or his opponents, of God's actually changing his mind.

Cudworth, however, presses the question about divine legislation further than Plato does. In the *Euthyphro* Socrates easily gets Euthyphro to agree that the gods love what is pious because it is pious. The mediaeval discussion shows that Euthyphro need not have conceded Socrates' point so readily. Voluntarists maintain that right actions are right because they are commanded. They therefore force Cudworth to make clear a point that Plato takes for granted in the *Euthyphro*.

Cudworth's argument against the legislative theory helps to explain why both the *Euthyphro* and the *Phaedo* discuss questions about explanation. According to Cudworth, what makes it just to drive on the left is the fact that this legislator has commanded it and it is just to do what this legislator commands. We would give the wrong explanation if we said that it is just to drive on the left because it is driving on the left—for that is often unjust. We would also give the wrong explanation if we said that it is just to drive on the left because it is commanded; for not every command ought to be obeyed. These two wrong explanations, as Plato says in the *Phaedo*, refer to properties that are present no more in just than in unjust actions. To find the right explanation, we have to appeal to the immutable property of justice.

It is sometimes puzzling that Plato argues for non-sensible forms by appealing both to flux and change in sensibles and to features of correct explanations. Cudworth's discussion makes it easier to see the connexion between Plato's different points. In particular, we can see that the appeal to explanation is fundamental. Flux is relevant because we cannot appeal to mutable properties to explain what makes something immutably right. Cudworth's argument against the legislative theory shows why Plato is entitled to insist on an explanatory property that is not in flux; unless we recognize such a property, we cannot explain why it is right to obey a command (for instance) in the cases where it is right.

550. Cudworth and Hobbes

Cudworth refutes any legislative theory that concedes that something makes it right to obey a commander in the cases where it is right.[56] This concession forces a purely legislative theory into a vicious regress. But perhaps Hobbes can avoid the concession. If he claims that right is determined by what the sovereign commands, he need not allow any further

[56] On Hobbes's view of obligation see §487.

question about whether it is right to obey the sovereign. According to Hobbes, it should be neither right nor wrong to obey the sovereign.

Cudworth replies that Hobbes cannot avoid a further question about the rightness of obeying the sovereign. Hobbes agrees that the mere fact of A's commanding B does not by itself create any obligation on B; if I meet a perfect stranger in the street and order him to hand over his money to me, he is not obliged to obey me. Authoritative commands—those that oblige—are different from commands issued by someone without authority. To distinguish the obligatory from the non-obligatory commands, we have to ask whether it is right to obey the commander; and so we raise the question that Hobbes seeks to avoid.

In Hobbes's view, however, Cudworth is wrong about the difference between a non-obligatory and an obligatory command. According to Hobbes, a command imposes an obligation if and only if the commander creates a sufficient motive. He creates the motive if he can attach a credible threat of punishment for violation of the command. Hence Hobbes can distinguish obligatory from non-obligatory commands without conceding that if a command imposes an obligation, obedience to the commander must be right.

Such a reply to Cudworth fits Hobbes's general view that to be obliged is to have a desire strong enough to move us to do the action we are obliged to do. This is why Hobbes believes that the winning side in a war imposes valid obligations on the losing side, insofar as it has the superior power. We have no obligations to obey anyone's commands in the state of nature; for, since no one has the power to compel us, no one can produce in us a strong enough desire to obey the command.

A theological voluntarist might answer Cudworth in the same way. If what is right is what God commands, no further reason explains why it is right to obey God's commands. Admittedly, we need some reason to obey God's commands rather than the commands of just anyone who chooses to issue idle commands. But the Hobbesian answer is available to the theological voluntarist too. According to this view, our reason may be that we love God[57] or we fear him; love or fear gives us an obligation insofar as they provide a motive, but they do not require any further claim about the rightness of obeying the command. This is a voluntarist answer, and perhaps a Calvinist answer. Cudworth regards the Calvinist emphasis on the inscrutable and totally sovereign will of God as the result of a voluntarist conception of the will, and he believes that such a conception undermines any moral reason for obeying God. In his view, the voluntarist cannot give a satisfactory account of the goodness of God.[58]

[57] On the love of God as the basis of obligation see §398 on Ockham.

[58] One sign of the influence of Cudworth's opposition to voluntarism is John Edwards's sermon, *EIRGE*, delivered at Cambridge in 1699, against theological voluntarist views. Edwards speaks, as Cambridge Platonists speak, of God as having ideas in mind and giving them to us. Most of his argument is not about how right and wrong are distinct from the divine will, but about how they are innate; hence much of his sermon deals with arguments of Locke, Selden, and others against innateness. He argues for universality and innateness from the regret and remorse of wrongdoers, from the tendency to conceal wrongdoing, and to the tendency to offer excuses for it. He uses his claims about innateness to argue against extreme Calvinist views of the total depravity of human beings; he quotes Calvin in his support. (His Calvinism apparently caused conflict with the post-Restoration master of his college; see *ODNB* sv.) But his acceptance of naturalism against voluntarism becomes clear in his arguments against the power of dispensation from the requirements of morality. He claims that Roman Catholics allow the Pope to dispense from moral obligations, and he attacks this view as immoral: 'Judge whether they do not ascribe more to their great Pontiff than can be attributed to God himself: for certainly it is so far from being in the power of any man to alter the natural and moral law, and to take away the

The claim that our obligation to obey commands rests on a non-moral basis raises a possibility that Cudworth does not properly take into account. Cudworth is less careful than Suarez, since he assumes, with Vasquez, that the moral basis for obeying an obligation must itself be an obligation. Suarez rejects this assumption; he agrees with Hobbes to the extent of holding a legal and imperative conception of obligation, but he recognizes a non-obligatory basis in intrinsic right and wrong. Culverwell suggests a modification of Suarez's position, suggesting that obligation rests on some intrinsic basis, but a non-moral basis.[59] Hobbes and the theological voluntarist exploit this possibility. We avoid an infinite regress of obligations and commands if we recognize an intrinsic (in Suarez's sense), but non-moral, reason for accepting an obligation.

But this voluntarist answer does not defeat Cudworth's main point. Hobbes distinguishes idle commands from those that we have some reason to attend to. But he does not, in Cudworth's view, draw the distinction that we need to draw. Hobbes has simply pointed out that we have a sufficient motive for obeying a command if the commander has enough power. But we normally distinguish this case from the case where we think the commander has the authority to command. It is often reasonable to believe that A has the power, but lacks the authority, to compel B to comply, or that A has the authority and lacks the power.

Since these two features of a commander are separable, authority cannot be the same as power.[60] Since Hobbes's account of obligation cannot distinguish authority from power, it is mistaken. Hence we should identify the proper authority as the one whom it is right to obey; rightness does not consist simply in being commanded by a commander backed by a sanction.

Hobbes might be expected to reject this claim about the nature of authority. For, in his view, a civil authority is created by authorization. We authorize the sovereign by submitting our wills and judgments to his will and judgment.[61] This requirement of authorization might be understood in two ways: (1) Authorization is simply permission and acquiescence; the only difference between authorized and unauthorized domination is the fact that the authorized ruler has been accepted. (2) Authorization is the product of a promise and so creates a moral reason for obedience independent of anyone's power to compel obedience.

Neither understanding of authorization suggests a good answer to Cudworth's objections. (1) If the first is assumed, we can distinguish a case in which we acquiesce in someone's domination from a case in which we believe someone is entitled to our obedience; only the second case implies a real moral obligation to obey him. (2) If the second understanding is assumed, Hobbes traces the obligation to obey back to the obligation to keep a promise, and so he still needs to explain that obligation. If he claims that it is a moral obligation independent of any commonwealth and independent of concern for my self-preservation, he concedes Cudworth's main point. If he claims that the obligation is simply

obligation of it, that it is not within the verge of divine power itself. It is the decision of the famous Grotius . . . God himself cannot change this law of natural goodness, he cannot make that which is intrinsically evil to be no evil. And the reason is, because he would not be God, for his nature would be changed . . .' (21). Among others he attacks (22) the 'great Gallic philosopher' (presumably Descartes).

[59] See §558.

[60] Once Cudworth's objection is developed in this way, it becomes Butler's distinction between power and authority.

[61] On authorization see §494.

the result of concern for my self-preservation, he faces the previous objection that actions motivated by this sort of concern are different from actions that involve respect for genuine authority.

551. Obligation, Reason, and Motive

Even if Cudworth is right so far, the force of his argument is limited. If we distinguish submission to someone's superior power from recognition of someone's authority to command us, Hobbes is wrong to identify obligation with submission to superior power. He can still, however, claim that he captures all that is intelligible in our conception of obligation and authority. For though we might think we have some basis for obeying a command besides recognition of the sanction attached to it, we have no such basis, if Hobbes is right.

This reply to Cudworth's objections requires us to choose between different interpretations of Hobbes's general aim of reducing normative concepts and properties to psychological ones. He claims that a statement about an obligation is simply a statement about what we are motivated to do in the circumstances. Such a reduction might include three different claims: (1) He provides an analysis of the relevant moral concepts, claiming that his psychological concepts are the same concepts. (2) He provides an account of the relevant moral properties, claiming that they are identical to the psychological properties he describes. (3) He argues that there are no moral properties, and proposes that we speak of psychological properties instead.

Cudworth's objections show that it is difficult to maintain the first claim; we distinguish moral obligation from the motives created by fear and self-preservation, in ways that a Hobbesian account of the concepts does not allow. Still, Hobbes might maintain the second claim; he might argue that though our distinctively moral concepts embody some errors, they nonetheless pick out those properties and features of situations that he describes in psychological terms. We suppose that we have moral obligations to obey the law, to seek peace, to keep promises, and (in general) to obey the laws of nature; Hobbes believes that we are correct to believe all this, though wrong to believe that these obligations are different from motives created by fear and self-concern. Since Hobbes believes that the obligations he recognizes are close to the moral obligations we normally recognize, though not coextensive with them, he maintains the second claim. Even if he does not capture the concepts we use to refer to moral properties, he might still identify the properties themselves, avoiding the errors implied by our ordinary concepts.

Do Cudworth's criticisms refute Hobbes's claim to identify moral properties? If moral properties are those whose existence explains something's being morally right and wrong, the nature of moral properties is reflected in the sorts of moral reasons and explanations that can be given by appeal to them. To see whether Hobbes identifies moral properties, then, we need to look for cases in which something seems to be morally right or wrong but Hobbes cannot explain how it is right or wrong. If there are enough of these cases and they seem to be important enough in our basic beliefs about morality, Hobbes has not identified moral properties.

Whether or not this conclusion disturbs Hobbes, it apparently ought to disturb theological voluntarists. For they do not normally seek to reduce the area within which we can recognize moral obligation. Hobbes might not mind if he were convinced that his theory tends to undermine our antecedent conviction that we have moral reasons for obeying a sovereign. But theological moralists ought to mind if they undermine our conviction that we have moral reasons for obeying God; the point of divine command theories is to explain, not to undermine, our moral convictions.

Cudworth's attacks on Hobbes are not conclusive; they often rest on questionable interpretations of Hobbes, and when Hobbes is correctly interpreted, he has an answer to the criticisms. Still, the criticisms point to a central difficulty in Hobbes's position, and a correct interpretation of Hobbes only makes the difficulty clearer. Hobbes tries to reduce normative claims (about what we ought to do and have reason to do) to psychological claims that are grounded in Hobbes's account of action and motivation. Cudworth's criticisms raise reasonable objections to this attempted reduction.

The scope of this argument is broader than the controversy with Hobbes. Cudworth's examination of legislative accounts makes clear a difficulty in any reductive account of moral properties that identifies them with non-moral properties—those that can be applied without raising any further questions requiring moral assessment. Cudworth attacks Hobbes's legislative theory by presenting Hobbes with what we may call an 'open question'. But he does not rely on a purely semantic open question such as we find in Price and Moore.[62] He does not argue that we can doubt without explicit self-contradiction whether what a stronger party commands is right. He claims to find an open moral question; for he argues that we have good moral reasons for regarding some further property as the proper basis for our judgment that a command is right. To see whether this is so, it is not enough to consult our linguistic intuitions about what is trivial, nearly tautologous, or self-contradictory; these tell us only whether we have found an open semantic question. To identify an open moral question, we need to rely on our moral judgment, to see whether we seem to have some reasonable basis for judgment in specific counterfactual circumstances (e.g., where the party giving the commands has no legitimate authority).

Cudworth argues, then, that Hobbesian sufficient conditions for placing us under a moral obligation do not close the question about whether we really are morally obliged. If Hobbes says that rightness consists in being legislated, we can raise a reasonable question about whether a particular legislator legislates rightly. If we try to answer this question by appeal to a further legislator, we face a vicious regress. Hence we must recognize some non-legislative standard of rightness. It is right to obey a commander only if the commander has a moral right to obedience; this further question is not settled by the fact that the commander issued a command.

Recognition of this open question rests on a claim about explanation. Cudworth argues that if what a legislator commands is right, that is not because it has been commanded, but because it has been commanded by a legislator with the appropriate authority; hence commands alone do not explain why an action is right. This diagnosis of the explanatory failure of a positivist account of moral properties applies equally to theological voluntarism.

[62] On open questions see §§661, 812.

Moral properties are mutable only in relation to the nature of things, not in relation to anyone's judgments or beliefs or desires. To make them mutable in relation to anything other than the nature of things is to fail to explain what makes actions right and wrong.

To say that moral rightness consists in being willed by God is to make it mutable in relation to the will of God. But we can see that it is not mutable in this respect. For if nothing about the nature of things were different, but the will of God were different from what it is, God would will what is wrong rather than what is right. If God were to will injustice and hatred rather than justice and love, and nothing were different about the nature of human beings and their environment, God would will wrong actions rather than right ones. Since we can recognize that what God willed in these conditions would be wrong, we can see that being right does not consist in being willed by God.

Cudworth's argument does not show that voluntarists are inconsistent if they simply deny his counterfactual supposition and affirm that if God willed something different, that would be right. Ockham sometimes expresses this view.[63] If Cudworth objects that this voluntarist position fails to capture the explanation that we provide by appeal to rightness, voluntarists might reply that rightness does not provide the sort of explanation he supposes; it does not really mention the aspect of the nature of things that makes an act of will right or wrong.

This voluntarist reply to Cudworth rejects some intuitive beliefs about rightness and its explanatory role, in order to maintain a basic principle about divine freedom and sovereignty. It thereby treats metaphysical and theological claims as absolutely fundamental in relation to moral claims, so that it first fixes the metaphysical and theological basis and then accepts or rejects moral claims that do or do not fit this basis. In accepting this hierarchy, it affirms a foundationalist rather than a holist account of morality and metaphysics. Cudworth's view, on the contrary, might be defended as an expression of a holist attitude to morality and metaphysics. In his view, meta-ethics ought to respect those intuitive beliefs about morality and about the explanatory role of moral properties that a voluntarist view has to override.

Cudworth's objection to Hobbes's claims about the legislator is a special case of this general point about immutability and explanation. A voluntarist claims that a legislator or commander can create rightness and wrongness, without any prior moral basis of legitimate authority. Cudworth objects that we can recognize the difference between a command's being backed by overwhelming force and its being morally justified, and that in the first case we do not think it necessarily includes moral obligation. A defender of Hobbes might answer that though we think we see this difference, there really is no difference. To take this view is to reject the intuitive beliefs that make the difference clear to us in the cases that Cudworth describes. From Cudworth's point of view, the Hobbesian position is bound to be mistaken about what makes it right, when it is right, to obey the commands of an authority.

Cudworth's argument, therefore, is powerful, even if it does not convince all possible opponents. It appeals to reasonable assumptions about the explanatory character of moral properties, and to reasonable assumptions about the appropriate method for moral theory in relation to metaphysics. It shows that anyone who wants to revise moral theory in a

[63] See §396.

Hobbesian or a theological voluntarist direction must pay a price. The price is steep enough to raise legitimate questions about whether the assumptions underlying the revision are as plausible as they might at first have seemed. For this reason, his argument is a source of important objections to anti-objectivist views. He applies it to Hobbes and to theological voluntarism. His successors apply it to moral sense theories.

41

LOCKE AND NATURAL LAW

552. Disputes about Scholastic Naturalism

This chapter is chronologically anomalous and its title may be misleading. It discusses Sanderson and Culverwell, writing in the 1640s, before the publication of Hobbes's *Leviathan* in 1651, but it also considers Locke's *Essay*, which reached its fifth edition in 1706, just after Locke's death in 1704. It discusses both Locke's essays on natural law, which belong to the 1660s, and his *Essay*, which first appeared in 1690. This period of nearly 60 years also includes some of the works of Hobbes, Spinoza, Pufendorf, Cumberland, and Cudworth. A more exact chronological arrangement, therefore, would place different sections of this chapter in their historical relation to the chapters on other 17th-century writers.

The chronological anomaly is defensible, however, if it allows us to appreciate a debate in English moral philosophy about Scholastic naturalism. Locke's views are intelligible if we connect them not only with Hobbes, but also with Cudworth and with others who reflect on Scholastic claims about reason, will, and morality. The reflexions of Sanderson and Culverwell on natural law form part of the intellectual background to Cudworth as well as to Locke, and so they might reasonably have been considered in the chapter on Cudworth. But since the connexions, both intellectual and probably also historical, between Culverwell and Locke are especially instructive, it is useful to consider Locke's views on the law of nature immediately after considering Culverwell's.

The special difficulties about Cudworth increase the possible chronological anomalies. He probably knew of the general position set out by Culverwell, and even of Culverwell's presentation of it, since Culverwell was his contemporary in Cambridge. It is more difficult to place him in relation to Locke. Cudworth's main work on morality was not published until 1731, but we have reason to believe that Locke was influenced by his reading of some of Cudworth's unpublished work.[1] It may be helpful, then, to compare Locke with Cudworth.

This comparison with Cudworth will be easier if we abandon chronology further. If we follow the order we have used with Hobbes, Cudworth, and earlier philosophers, and begin with moral psychology before discussing normative moral theory, we have to begin with Locke's later work, the *Essay*, and proceed to his earlier and unpublished works on natural

[1] See §555.

law. Our composite account of Locke's position, therefore, may not describe anything that Locke believed at any one time. Still, if these cautions are understood, and we do not take this chapter to present an intellectual biography of Locke, we will find some connexions in Locke's thought that are quite relevant to our main questions.

553. Locke, Hobbes, and Cudworth

Locke's views on moral psychology and morality set out from Hobbes's rejection of Scholastic doctrines of the will and the basis of morality. If we are intellectualists about will and reason, as Aquinas is, we have a good reason to accept a naturalist doctrine about natural law and the will of God; for if the divine will follows the divine intellect in accepting moral truths that do not depend on the divine will, we do not reduce God's freedom. If, however, we are voluntarists about will and intellect, we have good reason to be voluntarists about God and the natural law; for the naturalist position will seem to us to deny freedom to God.

Hobbes rejects both intellectualism and voluntarism in favour of his anti-rationalist account of the will. His revised moral psychology inclines him towards some voluntarist claims about the natural law; he does not believe that God recognizes any rational principles that are independently right, or that we can see to be right independently of God's commanding them. We see reason to observe them because of God's irresistible power and the sanctions that God imposes. But God's actual commands are also rules of our self-preservation that we can see reasons to obey apart from the divine will. Hobbes's position, therefore, contains elements of both naturalism and voluntarism.

In opposition to Hobbes, Cudworth maintains a position much closer to intellectualism in moral psychology and to naturalism in moral theory. Though we have seen that he claims to reject Scholastic views of the will, his own position is quite close to Scholastic intellectualism. His moral doctrine is even closer to Scholastic naturalism. He maintains that the obligations of eternal and immutable morality are not the products of divine will.

It is useful, though no doubt too simple, to understand both Locke's moral psychology and his moral theory as an uneasy and unstable compromise between Hobbes and Cudworth. The main outlines of his views seem Hobbesian, but the qualifications that he introduces bring him closer to Cudworth, and therefore to the Scholastic position. The Hobbesian outlines are more influential; they explain Shaftesbury's judgment that Locke struck 'the home blow' for Hobbesian principles.[2] But the qualifications show why one might not be content with the Hobbesian outlines.

554. Reason and Will

Hobbes's predominant view asserts that ends are set by desire apart from reason, and that the function of practical reason is to find instrumental means to the ends pursued by desire.[3]

[2] For Shaftesbury's judgment see §608.

[3] I say this is Hobbes's 'predominant' view because he also makes broader claims about reason. See §478.

His sentimentalist successors largely agree with him. Not all of them, however, explicitly endorse all of Hobbes's position. Further questions arise from their treatment of the will.

Some of the questions can be traced through Locke's discussion. He begins by claiming that recognition of the greater good does not move us to action.[4] Here he rejects an extreme intellectualist view that the mere belief that x is better than y moves me to choose x over y. We might prefer the moderate intellectualist view that some desires moving us to action depend essentially on practical reason, and hence on beliefs about the good. According to this view (held by Aquinas), we would not be rational agents if we lacked these desires, constituting a will.[5]

Locke rejects this moderate intellectualist view as well. He does not merely insist that knowledge without desire is insufficient for action. He also holds an anti-rationalist conception of desire as 'an uneasiness of the mind for want of some absent good' (*EHU* ii 21.31 = R 174). An 'uneasiness' is some desire independent of reasoning about the good. Any exercise of practical reason influencing our desire presupposes some desire, not formed by practical reason, for some end. In each action our end is pleasure, forming our conception of good; our ultimate end is happiness,[6] which is an extreme of pleasure.

The identification of the ultimate end with happiness agrees verbally with Aquinas. But Locke rejects Aquinas' view of the character of happiness and its role in explaining desire. Aquinas regards happiness as ultimate because it is universal; it is not a specific end that excludes the pursuit of other things for their own sake. Hence, our pursuit of happiness for its own sake does not yet give us any specific goal of our desire. On these points Locke disagrees, since he treats happiness as pleasure. If we pursue pleasure as our only ultimate end, we do not pursue types of actions or states of character for their own sake, since these other things cannot be components of pleasure in the way they can be components of happiness (as Aristotle and Aquinas understand happiness).[7]

In identifying happiness with extreme pleasure, rather than simply with pleasure, Locke recognizes that 'pleasure' and 'happiness' are not synonyms. But he suggests that the difference is simply a difference of degree, so that our desire for happiness simply manifests our desire for maximum pleasure. If we desire pleasure as our ultimate end, we cannot desire actions and states of character for their own sake; for these other things cannot be parts of pleasure, though pleasures can be parts of happiness.

Locke does not think it necessary to argue for the identification of happiness with pleasure, but takes it for granted. If we suppose that—contrary to extreme rationalism—motivation

[4] 'It seems so established and settled a maxim by the general consent of all mankind, that good, the greatest good, determines the will, that I do not at all wonder, that when I first published my thoughts on this subject, I took it for granted; and I imagine, that by a great many I shall be thought more excusable for having then done so, than that now I have ventured to recede from so received an opinion. But yet upon a stricter inquiry, I am forced to conclude, that good, the greater good, though apprehended and acknowledged to be so, does not determine the will, until our desire, raised proportionately to it, makes us uneasy in the want of it.' (*EHU* ii 21.35 = R 175)

[5] On intellectualism and rationalism see §§256, 391.

[6] 'If it be further asked, what it is moves desire? I answer happiness and that alone. Happiness and misery are the names of two extremes, the utmost bounds of which we know not . . . But of some degrees of both, we have very lively impressions, made by several instances of delight and joy on the one side; and torment and sorrow on the other; which, for shortness sake, I shall comprehend under the names of pleasure and pain. . . . Happiness then in its full extent is the utmost pleasure we are capable of, and misery the utmost pain.' (*EHU* ii 21.41–2 = R 176–7)

[7] This question about components of happiness also arises in Mill, *U*, ch. 4.

and action presuppose desire for an ultimate end, and we suppose—contrary to moderate rationalism—that this ultimate end must be some specific object of desire independent of reason, then pleasure seems the most obvious candidate for ultimate end.[8]

This hedonist conception of the ultimate end is easier to accept if we do not distinguish moderate from extreme rationalism. Equally, it is easier to reject moderate as well as extreme rationalism if we have already identified pleasure as the ultimate object of non-rational desire. It is difficult to say whether hedonism or anti-rationalism comes first in Locke's argument. Each claim supports the other, but both are open to dispute.

555. Freedom[9]

Locke's views on rational desire affect his views about freedom. They both underlie several points of agreement with Hobbes and support some of his objections to Hobbes.[10] He uses Hobbesian arguments to show that we cannot intelligibly attribute freedom or unfreedom to the will, and that we act freely as long as we act on our desires rather than being forced by external pressure (*EHU* ii 21.23 = R 170).[11] He agrees with Hobbes and Hutcheson that action depends ultimately on some non-rational impulse, which Locke calls 'uneasiness'. Apparently, then, he ought to say that action is the result of the strongest desire, so that the greater uneasiness always determines our action.

Locke, however, suggests that this appeal to strength of desire is too simple. We can 'suspend' the execution of our desires; we consider whether it is really good or bad to satisfy them, and we try to decide which ones it is better on the whole to satisfy.[12] This is 'not a fault, but a perfection of our nature' (47). Here we find freedom that is no less genuine than the sort of freedom that implies indeterminism. Determination in itself is no obstacle to freedom.[13]

[8] Cf. Hobbes, §478.

[9] On Locke's and Cudworth's views on freedom and autonomy see Darwall, *BMIO*, ch. 6.

[10] On some of these points Locke agrees with Cudworth. This is not surprising if Passmore, *RC* 93, is right to suggest that Locke was acquainted with Cudworth's views.

[11] 'Concerning a man's liberty, there yet therefore is raised this farther question, Whether a man be free to will? which I think is what is meant, when it is disputed whether the will be free. And as to that I imagine, that willing, or volition, being an action, and freedom consisting in a power of acting or not acting, a man in respect of willing or the act of volition, when any action in his power is once proposed to his thoughts, as presently to be done, cannot be free. The reason whereof is very manifest: For it being unavoidable that the action depending on his will should exist or not exist: and its existence or not existence, following perfectly the determination and preference of his will; he cannot avoid willing the existence, or not existence of that action; it is absolutely necessary that he will the one, or the other; i.e. prefer the one to the other; since one of them must necessarily follow; and that which does follow follows by the choice and determination of his mind, that is, by his willing it; for if he did not will it, it would not be.... But the act of volition, or preferring one of the two, being that which he cannot avoid, a man in respect of that act of willing is under a necessity, and so cannot be free; unless necessity and freedom can consist together, and a man can be free and bound at once. This then is evident, that in all proposals of present action, a man is not at liberty to will or not to will, because he cannot forbear willing: liberty consisting in a power to act or to forbear acting, and in that only.' (*EHU* ii 21.22–4)

[12] 'For the mind having in most cases, as is evident in experience, a power to *suspend* the execution and satisfaction of any of its desires, and so all, one after another, is at liberty to consider the objects of them, examine them on all sides, and weigh them with others. In this lies the liberty man has;... in this seems to consist that, which is (as I think improperly) called *free will*.' (*EHU* ii 21.47 = R 179)

[13] 'This is so far from being a restraint or diminution of freedom, that is the very improvement and benefit of it; it is not an abridgement, it is the end and use of our liberty; and the farther we are removed from such a determination,

The capacity for 'suspension' and rational consideration raises a difficulty for Hobbesian simple compatibilism. It conflicts with Hobbes's view that all action caused by desire is equally free; for someone who acts on passion without the reflexion that Locke describes is less free than someone who acts as a result of rational reflexion. And so a Hobbesian compatibilist account of action deprives us of a type of freedom that is morally significant. Locke implies that, within a compatibilist account of freedom, rationally determined actions are freer than others.[14]

We might think that Locke's views about suspension are easily combined with simple Hobbesian compatibilism. A simple compatibilist can easily admit that rational reflexion tells us whether a proposed action will achieve our end. The result of this reflexion may guide our action by exciting a strong enough desire.

It is difficult, however, for a simple compatibilist, and for Locke, to explain how we examine competing desires and weigh one of their objects against another. Locke argues that when we recognize that there is more to be said for choosing x than for choosing y, we also recognize that it is more reasonable to choose x rather than y, and that in choosing x we choose the better. He therefore recognizes some special connexion between reason and the choice of the better.[15] If we choose the better, we do not simply choose on the basis of instrumental reasoning; for we also rely on instrumental reasoning in choosing the means to satisfy an incontinent desire.

Sentimentalism faces this difficulty even if we accept Locke's identification of good with pleasure. He can say that when reason judges that x is on the whole better than y, it simply judges that x promotes our overall pleasure in life as a whole more effectively than y promotes it. Instrumental reason, however, is equally involved, in showing us what is instrumental to satisfying an incontinent desire. Since Locke insists that our desire for maximum overall pleasure is not our strongest desire on every occasion, he cannot say that we will always act on the judgment about what maximizes overall pleasure.

Why, then, is it more rational to act on this prudent desire (the one for maximum overall pleasure) than to act on the incontinent desire? Contrary to a Hobbesian account, practical reason seems to tell us which end it is more reasonable to pursue; hence it does not seem to be confined to deliberation about instrumental means to some end that appeals to us independently of reason. The same question arises for Hobbes in his attempts to connect practical reason with judgments about the future.[16]

Locke, therefore, raises serious objections to Hobbes's position. He recognizes the existence of rational desires for the better, which do not allow a sentimentalist analysis. These desires cast doubt on the sentimentalist account of freewill and of the virtues; for if the sentimentalist conception of virtue does not make rational desire primary, it seems to undermine freewill.

the nearer we are to misery and slavery. . . . Nay were we determined by any thing but the last result of our own minds, judging of the good or evil of any action, we were not free.' (*EHU* ii 21.48 = R 180)

[14] 14 Hence Hume has to deny Locke's comparative claim in order to maintain a Hobbesian view of freedom. See §741.

[15] 'If to break loose from the conduct of reason, and to want the restraint of examination and judgment, which keeps us from choosing or doing the worse, be liberty, true liberty, mad men and fools are the only freemen; but yet, I think, no body would choose to be mad for the sake of such liberty, but he that is mad already.' (*EHU* ii 21.50 = R 181)

[16] See Hobbes, §478.

Though Locke develops the moral psychology of Hobbes in the direction in which later sentimentalists develop it further, he also suggests some reasonable doubts about it. These doubts influence the views of Butler, Price, and Reid. Hence, both sentimentalist and rationalist accounts of action develop suggestions by Locke.

556. Disputes on Natural Law

Hobbes assumes that the non-rational desire presupposed by practical reason is the desire for one's own pleasure. Free and deliberate action consists simply in action aimed at one's own pleasure, If, then, morality has any reasonable claim on an individual, it must also maximize one's own pleasure. Moral properties, therefore, must be the sorts of properties that we will attend to when we become aware of them in relation to our desire for pleasure and the absence of pain. In Hobbes's view, actions that promote our self-preservation meet this condition, since he assumes that we desire a greater long-term pleasure over a lesser one.

Locke accepts Hobbes's hedonist starting-point. His anti-rationalism about motivation and action presumes a non-rational desire for an end, and he agrees with Hobbes in identifying this end with pleasure. Hobbes's next step is to reduce moral principles to counsels of self-preservation. But Locke does not follow Hobbes on this point. For Locke's views on these questions about the foundations of morality we can rely not only on the brief discussion in the *Essay* but also on the earlier treatment in his *Essays on the Law of Nature*. In both structure and content this early work fits into Scholastic debates on natural law. Though it is not clear how much of it Locke still accepts when he puts forward the views in the *Essay*, it is worth discussing in its own right and because it may throw some light on the moral doctrine of the *Essay*.

Locke's account of moral properties arises from the dispute between voluntarists and naturalists about natural law. According to Suarez's 'intermediate' position (as Suarez describes it), some aspects of natural law are independent of the divine legislative will and some depend on it. Natural law is law, and imposes an obligation, insofar as it depends on the divine will, whereas the rightness and wrongness of the acts that it prescribes and prohibits are features of the nature of things in themselves, apart from the divine will. Emphasis on one side or another of Suarez's position results in a more strongly voluntarist or naturalist account.

Grotius accepts the naturalist side of Suarez's position, and Cudworth agrees with him. It is difficult to say whether Grotius goes further than Suarez in maintaining that obligation and law, as well as rightness, belong to the nature of things apart from the divine will. It is clearer that Cudworth goes beyond Suarez on this point, and reverts to Vasquez's view that obligation, as well as duty, belongs to nature and not primarily to will. Cudworth's view is shared by Maxwell and Clarke.

The voluntarist side of Suarez holds that, since the natural law is genuine law, and since law presupposes a command, the natural law, as such, expresses God's legislative will and command. This claim about law does not lead Suarez very far in a voluntarist direction, because he does not take the moral principles prescribed by the natural law to depend on the will of God.

This view that some aspects of the natural moral law, distinct from its status as law, are independent of will and command, whereas its strictly legal aspects depend on will and command, is accepted by several 17th-century moralists. Their degree of commitment to voluntarism depends on their characterization of the aspects, or parts, or preconditions, of morality that are independent of will and command. None of them accepts Ockham's view that what accords with right reason and human nature is itself the result of God's legislative will. Even Hobbes, who goes furthest in a voluntarist direction, believes that what fits human nature is independent of God's legislative will; that is why the laws of nature are counsels of self-preservation. But Hobbes does not believe that God commands obedience to these natural laws because they preserve human society; the commands are not an exercise of God's benevolence or of God's care for creation, but of God's power.

Culverwell, Locke, Cumberland, and Pufendorf reject this part of Hobbes's view; they agree that in some way God necessarily chooses to command observance of the natural law that preserves human society. On this point they agree with Suarez. They differ from Suarez, and from one another, in their views about whether the element of natural law that is independent of command and will is also morality. None of them defends Suarez's combination of naturalism (about right and wrong) and voluntarism (about obligation and law). As we will see, some of the distinctions that he draws make some of the issues between voluntarists and naturalists clearer than the partisans of each side make them. The failure to use Suarez's distinctions may result from the fact that Culverwell and Cudworth do not understand him completely, and the fact that their successors do not seem to be aware of his discussion.

557. Sanderson

Sanderson's lectures on the obligation of conscience do not mention Suarez, but they discuss some of the issues about natural law that Suarez raises. Sanderson is generally sympathetic to the Aristotelian tradition in ethics, and to natural reason as a source of moral truth independent of the Scriptures.[17] He appeals to mediaeval sources and arguments.[18] Like Hooker, he defends this view about natural reason against those who insist on explicit Scriptural authority for any principle or norm binding on Christians. But he is closer than Hooker to voluntarism.[19] His voluntarist tendencies result partly from his emphasis on

[17] Walton, 'Life of Sanderson' = *Sermons* i 50: 'This minister [a friend of Sanderson] asked the bishop what books he studied most, when he laid the foundations of his great and clear learning? To which his answer was, that he declined reading many books; but what he did read were well chosen, and read so often that he became very familiar with them; and told him they were chiefly three, Aristotle's Rhetoric, Aquinas's Secunda Secundae, and Tully, but chiefly his Offices, which he had not read over less than twenty times, and could at this age repeat without book.'

[18] Sanderson shares Selden's attitude to the use of 'Popish' sources: 'Popish books teach and inform what we know; we know much out of them; the fathers, church story, schoolmen; all may pass for popish books and if you take away them: what learning will you leave? . . . Those puritan preachers, if they have anything good: they have it out of popish books, though they will not acknowledge it for fear of displeasing the people. He is a poor divine that cannot sever the good from the bad.' (Selden, *TT* 23) ' . . . without school divinity a divine knows nothing logically, nor will be able to satisfy a rational man out of the pulpit . . . The study of the casuists must follow the study of the schoolmen, because the division of their cases is according to their divinity . . . ' (*TT* 80) As an example of school divinity Selden mentions Scotus.

[19] On Hooker's conception of natural law and his rejection of voluntarism see §414. Gibbs in Hooker, *LEP* (ed. Hill), vi 97–108, 483, exaggerates the differences between Hooker's view and Aquinas' conception of law. It is difficult to see a

obligation. Unlike Suarez, he is not clear on the relation between obligations and oughts, and so it is difficult to say how far he goes towards voluntarism.

In Chapter 4 of *On the Obligation of Conscience* he discusses the rule that guides conscience. He claims first that obligation comes primarily from the command of God, which is the only thing that properly obliges (4.5–6). Correct reason is a secondary rule (4.12). Though it is secondary to the Scriptures in authority, it is also independent of them, so that it guides those who do not know, or do not accept, the Scriptures. In one way it is even prior to the Scriptures; for we need something apart from the Scriptures to identify the moral principles in the Scriptures. Since the Scriptures combine moral precepts with purely ceremonial and judicial precepts, and since they do not tell us which ones are the moral precepts, we need natural reason to say what makes some principles morally required.[20]

The 'innate light' for practical reason comes from the natural law, which moves us to live according to nature as rational beings (4.24). To support this claim from the Scriptures, Sanderson cites the standard passage from *Romans* (4.12, 24). In allowing that the natural law requires us to live in a particular way, Sanderson seems to concede that its principles constitute moral requirements apart from any divine legislation. They depend on the will of God as creator, since beings with our nature would not exist without God's choosing to create us; but they do not seem to depend on divine legislation, since they would still (we might suppose) be moral requirements for us even if God had not also ordered us to obey them.

Sanderson does not say exactly what he thinks on this question. For he maintains that the provisions of natural law are also a law imposed by God, thereby producing obligation. In connecting law with an obligation imposed by a command of the legislator, he agrees with Suarez. It is more difficult, because of the brevity of his discussion, to say whether he also agrees with Suarez's view that God's commands necessarily agree with the intrinsic morality that belongs to actions by their nature independently of divine commands. In speaking of action in accordance with nature, Sanderson may be taken to recognize intrinsic morality independent of obligation (as he conceives it); but he does not emphasize it. His failure to emphasize it may reflect his legislative approach to conscience.

Sanderson's silence on intrinsic morality weakens some of his arguments against those who recognize no moral principles apart from divine commands. He argues that we cannot even use the Scriptures intelligently if we do not rely on moral judgments and principles that are not explicitly announced in the Scriptures (4.16–17). This argument would have been stronger if he had insisted that moral principles are commanded by God because of their intrinsic rightness. If that is true, and if some intrinsic rightness is accessible to natural reason, we ought to be able to recognize at least some elements of morality without having to resort to explicit divine commands. While Sanderson may have this point in mind against his opponents, he does not make it clear.

sharp difference between Hooker's 'non-authoritarian' conception of law and Aquinas' conception. Gibbs speaks of 'the traditional idea of a superior imposing his will on inferiors and the coercive sanctioning of the imposition of that will by reward and punishment' (97–8). Aquinas' account of the essential features of law is non-authoritarian in the same sense.

[20] He cites *Leviticus* 9:16, where precepts of different types come in sequence, with no indication of the difference. See §204.

558. Culverwell and Suarez

Culverwell discusses more fully some of the issues that Sanderson implicitly raises; his discussion is especially helpful because it refers explicitly to Suarez. Culverwell is sometimes described as an early Cambridge Platonist, but his sermons published in *On the Light of Nature* do not express a specifically Platonist position.[21] He mentions and discusses Plato among other ancient, Patristic, and Scholastic sources, but does not give him a special place. He defends some aspects of Scholastic naturalism, and especially of Suarez's version of it, against a voluntarist interpretation of Calvinism. He is a Calvinist himself; he opposes both Arminians and Antinomians, and argues that Calvinist views on nature and grace do not rule out, but support, reliance on natural law and natural reason.[22] Though Culverwell's work was presumably known to Cudworth, it did not persuade Cudworth to make similar concessions to voluntarism. It is relevant to Locke's view of the role of divine commands in morality.

Culverwell is not an extreme voluntarist holding the position of Selden or (in some respects) Hobbes. He takes himself to agree with Suarez about the natural goodness and badness, or 'convenience' and 'disconvenience' of things. This aspect of morality is independent of God's legislative will.[23] But, as Suarez and Sanderson argue, a divine command is necessary for genuine moral obligation; the 'height and perfection of a law' depends on a divine command. Culverwell claims that, according to Suarez, natural goodness, without divine commands, imposes a 'natural obligation', but not a moral obligation, to pursue it.[24] Morality and moral obligation depend on a law, and hence a divine command.[25]

[21] Culverwell was a Fellow of Emmanuel with Cudworth and Whichcote in the 1640s. Against the view that Culverwell is a Platonist see *LN* xi–xii; Schneewind, *IA* 58n2 (though *ODNB* still describes him as a Platonist). The combination of naturalism and Calvinism is also found in John Edwards; see §550.

[22] Against Arminians see *LN* 14, 187.

[23] 'So that grant only the being of man, and you cannot but grant this also, that there is such a constant conveniency and analogy which some objects have with its essence, as that it cannot but incline to them, and that there is such an irreconcilable disconvenience, such an eternal antipathy, between it and other objects, as that it must cease to be what it is before it can come near them.' (*LN* 55)

[24] 'This Suarez terms a natural obligation, and a just foundation for a law; but now, before all this can rise up to the height and perfection of a law, there must come a command from some superior power, from whence will spring a moral obligation also, and make up the formality of a law.' (*LN* 55)

[25] Some of the reasons that move Culverwell and others to introduce divine commands are expressed by Selden. In his view, only the command of a superior makes actions honesta and officia as well as useful (*JNG* i 4, pp. 46, 50, 52–3). Without commands we lack the relevant sort of moral necessity: 'Pure, unaided reason merely persuades or demonstrates; it does not order, nor bind (obligat) anyone to do their duty (officium), unless it is accompanied by the authority of someone who is superior to the man in question . . . ' (*JNG* i 7, pp. 92–3) 'When the Schoolmen talk of recta ratio in morals, either they understand reason as 'tis governed by a command from above, or else they say no more than a woman, when she says a thing is so, because it is so, that is, her reason persuades her it is so. The other acception has sense in it. As take a law of the land, I must not depopulate; my reason tells me so. Why? Because if I do, I incur the detriment.' (*TT* 115–16) Selden infers that morality and religion are inter-dependent: 'They that cry down moral honesty cry down that which is a great part of religion, my duty towards man. . . . On the other side, morality must not be without religion, for if so it may change as I see convenience. Religion must govern it. He that has not religion to govern his morality is not a dram better than my mastiff dog. So long as you stroke him and please him and do not pinch him, . . . he's a very good moral mastiff, but if you hurt him, he will fly in your face and tear out your throat.' (*TT* 83) Similarly, he doubts whether the natural law can be distinguished from the divine: 'I cannot fancy to myself what the law of nature means, but the law of God. How should I know I ought not to steal, I ought not to commit adultery, unless somebody had told me, or why are these things against nature? Surely 'tis because I have been told so. 'Tis not because I think I ought not to do them, nor because you think I ought not, if so our minds might change; whence then comes the

This account misunderstands Suarez on natural and moral obligation.[26] Suarez says that natural law presupposes a natural duty (debitum), to which it adds a natural obligation. By this he means that it is natural as opposed to civil, but not that it is natural as opposed to moral. Contrary to Culverwell, Suarez allows no obligation without law, and no natural obligation without moral obligation; natural obligation is natural because it is the moral obligation imposed by natural law. He distinguishes duty (debitum) from obligation, and makes duty independent of law. Law is not necessary for morality. Though law introduces a moral obligation, it does not introduce moral duties.

The error in Culverwell's summary of Suarez may be expressed in two ways. (1) If he intends to follow Suarez's use of 'obligation', he is wrong to suppose that Suarez recognizes any obligation independent of the will of an imposer who imposes the obligation by a command. (2) If he uses 'obligation' in a broader sense, matching Suarez's use of 'duty', he is wrong to suppose that Suarez recognizes no moral obligation in nature.

Perhaps the second description of Culverwell's error is more accurate. English moralists tend to use 'obligation' more broadly than Suarez uses it, so that 'obligation' applies where 'duty' and 'ought' apply.[27] This broad use of 'obligation' is intelligible, but it may lead us to misunderstand Suarez; for 'obligation' (in the broad English sense) includes both duties (as he describes them) and the proper subset of duties that he calls obligations.

559. Culverwell and the Character of Morality

Culverwell's misunderstanding of Suarez reflects his own views about the necessary conditions for morality. He accepts Suarez's alleged view that non-moral natural obligations are independent of law, but he believes (again supposing that he follows Suarez) that morality requires law, because morality requires moral obligation, and reason cannot bind (oblige) us without reference to the will of God. In acknowledging my action as morally wrong, I acknowledge that it is liable to punishment. If I did not take its wrongness to imply the transgression of a divine command, I would not, according to Culverwell, take it to be liable to the sort of punishment that I ought to accept as justified.[28]

His argument is open to doubt. Culverwell argues that without a divine command I could not regard any of my actions as deserving punishment at all. But why is this? If I understand that action contrary to rational nature is contrary to the good of human society, I can explain why a human society ought to have the power to punish such action; hence I can explain

restraint? From a higher power. Nothing else can bind. I cannot bind myself (for I may untie myself again) nor an equal cannot bind me (we may untie one another). It must be a superior, even God almighty.' (*TT* 69–70) For discussion of Selden see Sommerville, 'Selden'.

[26] See Suarez, *Leg*. ii 9.4, quoted and discussed at §437. [27] See §818.

[28] 'But what are the goodly spoils that these men expect, if they could break through such a crowd of repugnancies and impossibilities? The whole result and product of it will prove but a mere cipher; for reason, as it is now, does not bind in its own name, but in the name of its supreme Lord and Sovereign, by whom reason "lives and moves and has its being". For if only a creature should bind itself to the observation of this law, it must also inflict upon itself such a punishment as is answerable to the violation of it; but no such being would be willing or able to punish itself in so high a measure, as such a transgression would meritoriously require, so that it must be accountable to some other legislative power, which will vindicate its own commands, and will by this means engage a creature to be more mindful of its own happiness than otherwise it would be.' (*LN* 53)

why action contrary to rational nature deserves punishment. If wrong action also violates a divine command, it is more wrong than it would have been if it did not violate a divine command; but even without a divine command it would not be (as Culverwell suggests) a 'mere cipher'.

Suarez does not offer Culverwell's argument to show that morality requires law; for it rests on assumptions that he rejects. Suarez does not believe that morality requires divine commands. He agrees with Culverwell's view that moral offences would be, in one important respect, less grave, and that we would lack one important reason for avoiding them, if we ignored the legislative and punitive will of God. But this point of agreement does not warrant Culverwell's conclusion.

Culverwell also claims that without a divine command the natural law is a 'mere cipher' because not everyone is moved to obey it on all occasions.[29] This claim proves too much. A divine command and a threat of divine sanctions do not always move everyone to obey the natural law; that is why we need human law with a threat of more immediate sanctions. But Culverwell would destroy his own position if he were to agree that the natural law depends on human commands. To avoid agreeing to this conclusion, he must apparently abandon the argument against naturalism that relies on motivation. Suarez is well advised to avoid this argument, since it raises greater difficulties than it solves.

Culverwell now qualifies his objection to naturalism, by allowing that recognition of intrinsic (but non-moral) rightness influences our action. Even without any divine command, we can recognize intrinsic goodness, and this recognition affects our motives and actions, because of the inherent attractiveness and beauty of the right (honestum).[30] Without commands and obligations, we can still be attracted to some actions and repelled by others, without recognizing any requirement to be attracted and repelled. Perhaps obligation introduces the requirement to choose some actions and avoid others, irrespective of whether or not we are attracted or repelled. Mere awareness of natural rightness and wrongness does not explain the distinctively necessitating element of moral right and wrong. To explain that element, according to Culverwell, we must introduce divine commands.

Culverwell's argument seems to include both metaphysical and psychological (or perhaps epistemological elements). His metaphysical claim asserts that without divine commands intrinsic goodness and rightness lack the element of necessity that is essential to moral rightness. His psychological claim asserts that awareness of intrinsic goodness and rightness lacks the sense of necessity that is essential to a moral judgment, and that this sense of necessity comes from awareness of divine commands.

[29] 'For though some of the gallanter heathen can brave it out sometimes in an expression, that the very turpitude of an action is punishment enough, and the very beauty of goodness is an abundant reward and compensation; yet we see that all this, and more than this, did not efficaciously prevail with them for their due conformity and full obedience to nature's law; such a single cord as this will be easily broken.' (*LN* 53–4) Culverwell alludes to *Eccl.* 4:12, which Warburton applies to make a similar point; see §875.

[30] '. . . there is such a magnetical power in some good, as needs must allure and attract a rational being; there is such a native fairness, such an intrinsical loveliness in some objects, as does not depend on an external command, but by its own worth must needs win upon the soul; and there is such an inseparable deformity and malignity in some evil, as that reason must needs loathe and abominate it. Insomuch, as that if there were no law or command, yet a rational being of its own accord, out of mere love, would espouse itself to such an amiable good, it would clasp and twine itself about such a precious object; and if there were not the least check or prohibition, yet in order to its own welfare, it would abhor and fly from some black evils that spit out so much venom against its nature' (*LN* 54).

We might agree with Culverwell's metaphysical and psychological claims about intrinsic rightness even if we do not agree about the role of divine commands. From the metaphysical point of view, we may say that the distinctive necessity belonging to morality cannot belong to intrinsic rightness; for the necessity of morality is essentially imperative, and so has to depend on will and command, which do not belong to intrinsic rightness. The attempt to build imperativity or 'to-be-done-ness' into states of affairs independent of will involves a mistaken projection of states that can only belong to wills.[31] If we believe in divine commands, we can believe in objective imperativity, because the relevant commands are independent of human wills and choices. If we do not appeal to divine commands, we have to regard the imperative aspect of morality as a feature of human wills, not of the facts they are directed towards.[32]

From the psychological view, we might defend Culverwell by saying that a moral judgment cannot simply consist in a statement about an objective state of affairs. To bind us to action it must motivate us appropriately, through the acceptance of some imperative. It is not enough, therefore, if we simply assert that someone commands us to act; we must accept the command and apply it to ourselves.

If Culverwell had correctly described Suarez's reason for separating natural law from intrinsic rightness, we might have credited Suarez with recognition of the distinctive necessity that belongs to morality. But no such credit is due to Suarez. He does not believe that we can recognize intrinsic rightness without recognizing a requirement (debitum). Suarez takes it to include rational necessity, and hence to support natural duties (debita) in the absence of any obligation (as he understands it). In his view, the rational necessity of natural duties depends on their relation to what is suitable for rational nature. He does not claim that a moral judgment necessarily includes motivation. Hence he does not share Culverwell's metaphysical and psychological assumptions. His claim that natural law requires divine commands, because obligation requires divine commands, is a narrow claim about the distinctive kind of reason given by obligation, in Suarez's narrow sense. He takes obligation, in this narrow sense, to be inessential to morality.

Culverwell's attempt to express the difference between intrinsic rightness and obligation does not capture Suarez's position; it rejects one of his central claims. Though Culverwell believes he expounds Suarez, his exposition incorporates voluntarist assumptions, alien to Suarez, about morality, obligation, compulsion, and command. These voluntarist assumptions conflict with Suarez's basic division between intrinsic morality and natural law. The assumptions are more prominent and explicit in Hobbes, Locke, Cumberland, and Pufendorf; they all abandon Culverwell's unsatisfactory compromise, and prefer a more thoroughly voluntarist position that rejects intrinsic rightness.

560. Parker

Samuel Parker's defence of natural law, in his *Demonstration of the Divine Authority of the Law of Nature*, reveals conflicting tendencies similar to those we have found in Culverwell.[33] He

[31] See Mackie, *E* 40. [32] Suarez on gerundives and imperatives; §442.
[33] Parker's treatment of obligation receives Waterland's approval. See §869.

complains that not much progress has been made in the study of the law of nature, and that Grotius and Pufendorf have not grasped the most important aspects of it.[34] He believes Cumberland has the right conception of the basis of natural law; he seeks to make this conception clear without Cumberland's abstruseness and difficulty. But it is not clear that he adheres to the voluntarist elements of Cumberland's view.[35]

Sometimes Parker argues that we need a demonstration of the existence of God and knowledge of God's designs, if we are to support claims about the obligation of natural law. An appeal to our moral conceptions and our presumed recognition of an inward law is too insecure and unreliable (*DA* 5); Parker seems to agree with Culverwell's suggestion that without divine commands we have a 'mere cipher'. But he also claims that as long as we 'act sincerely and meditate impartially upon the nature of things', we can find out our duty (*DA* 9).

He often repeats both of these claims, but he does not reconcile them. He asserts that the existence of God is necessary for obligation.[36] But when he argues against Hobbes's view that there are no moral obligations in the state of nature, he takes facts about the human condition and human nature to require respect for property.

His claims are consistent if he agrees with Culverwell, Cumberland, and Pufendorf in claiming that without a divine command some courses of action are unreasonable, and others are rationally appropriate, but no action is morally right or wrong because none is obligatory.[37] But he also seems to allow obligations and morality independent of divine commands. He speaks of right reason requiring something, and about the extent and limits of its obligation, on the assumption that it imposes some obligation (*DA* 39). Similarly, an obligation follows from the principle of seeking the public good (*DA* 40). Nature, not only God, is a source of obligations.[38] Even if obligation includes the necessity of acting in accordance with a law, Parker does not infer that we must assume a divine legislator. He believes that our recognition of x's being necessary for happiness can be source of obligation to x for us (*DA* 60). Though God adds sanctions, or 'enforcements', to laws, they would apparently still be laws without these enforcements (*DA* 63).

[34] 'Even Grotius himself has so far mistaken it, as to suppose it obligatory without the supposition of a Deity. Pufendorf has indeed of late harped upon its right definition in general, but has neither described its particular branches nor demonstrated any of the grounds and reasons of its obligation.' (*DA* viii)

[35] Cumberland is not entirely free of ambiguity. See §532. Tyrrell, *BDLN*, Ep. Ded., criticizes Parker for insufficient acknowledgment of Cumberland, and for having 'fallen very short of the original from whence he borrowed it, both in the clearness as well as choice of the arguments or demonstrations, and in the particular setting forth of those rewards and punishments derived (by God's appointment) from the nature of men and the frame of things'.

[36] 'For if there were no God, 'tis certain we can be under no obligation; but if there be one, and if he have so clearly discovered his will in all the effects of his providence, he has done all that can be required to establish it into a law, and declare it a matter of our duty.' (*DA* 23)

[37] '. . . though we should remove the divine providence out of the world; yet not withstanding the right or at least the necessity of propriety [i.e. property] would arise from the natural constitution of things; which will direct every man to confine his desires to his appetites, and when he has his own share of happiness to content himself with its enjoyment, and not to disturb himself or defraud his neighbours without increasing his own felicity . . . ' (*DA* 37).

[38] '. . . nature, and God by nature, informs mankind of these great and fundamental duties of justice and morality; their knowledge is so obvious as to make their obligation unavoidable.' (*DA* 42) '. . . it is as natural to it [sc. the mind of man] to act suitably to the condition of its nature, as it is to all other creatures to follow the instincts and appetites of theirs; . . . so is man inclined to act rationally by that inward assurance he has that he is endued with reason and understanding; and that alone is sufficient to bring an obligation upon him without any other express and positive command' (*DA* 42–3).

But despite these apparent concessions to naturalism, Parker reasserts his initial claim that God is the source of all moral obligation. Since God is the author of all the causal relations in the world, we can judge from the good effects of some actions and the bad effects of others what the will of God is; and all our obligation depends on this will.[39] Perhaps he has in mind the role of God as creator, rather than legislator; in that case he may make Pufendorf's mistake of assuming that insofar as God created beings who have moral duties to God, God is the legislator who creates obligations by legislation.[40]

Parker combines these two roles of God in his account of why divine commands introduce obligation. His answer appeals to rewards and punishments both in this life and after death.[41] We can see some reason to follow the laws of nature in their natural consequences in this life; these facts about the world manifest God's creative will. But they are not enough, because (in his view) we have no obligation to be virtuous unless virtue infallibly assures our happiness (86). We would secure the relevant obligation if the Greek moralists were right to believe that virtue is sufficient for happiness or for the most important parts of it (88–9). But Parker disagrees with the Greek moralists. His argument against them assumes a broadly hedonistic conception of happiness, which leads him to misunderstand the Stoic and the Aristotelian and Platonic position. Clarke and Balguy agree with Parker's conception of happiness, and hence with his assertion that Greek moral philosophy cannot assure the appropriate connexion between virtue and happiness.[42] Having rejected these Greek views, he argues that virtue can secure happiness only in an afterlife, and that therefore we are obliged to be virtuous only if we are assured of an afterlife in which virtue results in happiness. According to this view, morality is obligatory not simply because God commands the observance of certain principles, but because God both commands them and attaches sanctions to them.

In taking obligation to rest on divine rewards and punishments, Parker seems to hold a more extreme position than he sometimes holds. He argues against Hobbes that we can see reasons for being virtuous if we reflect on human nature and the human condition, and that these reasons introduce obligations independent of belief in God and an afterlife. In his attempt to show the importance of Christian belief for sound morality, Parker seems to attack some of the grounds for obligation that he has recognized.

Parker's views about the afterlife commit him to a rather extreme version of theological voluntarism. We might argue, as Pufendorf does, that morality requires laws, and therefore

[39] 'So that the natural trains and results of things being laid and formed by his providence, when they thrust themselves upon the observation of our senses or our minds, they only inform us . . . upon what rules and principles he has established the government of the world, and by consequence instruct us how to behave ourselves suitably to his will in all our designs and actions. So that it is past all controversy that whatsoever force the law of nature carries along with it is derived upon it purely by virtue of the divine authority. And therefore they cannot pass any proper obligation upon any of his creatures, but only such as are capable of knowing that they proceed from himself, in that all their obligatory power depends purely upon that supposition . . . ' (*DA* 71) The antecedent of 'they' is not clear, but probably 'the laws of nature' should be understood.

[40] On creation and legislation see Suarez, §432; Pufendorf, §566.

[41] 'And now this concernment of the divine providence in our actions being taken into the consideration of our affairs, as it resolves the total obligation of the law of nature into the will of God, so it backs and enforces it with the most powerful and effectual sanctions in the world, viz., the pleasures or torments of conscience, or the judgment of a man's mind upon his own actions in reference to the judgment of God; and this of all things has the most irresistible influence upon every man's happiness or misery.' (*DA* 72)

[42] On Balguy and Clarke see §673.

requires a lawgiver; but that argument still leaves open questions about why we ought to obey the lawgiver. Parker seems to imply that only one answer is open to us: we have to obey the laws of nature as divine commands, because God has attached rewards and punishments to them. This purely instrumental attitude to morality is open to the objections that Shaftesbury directs against some orthodox Christian moralists. It is also open to objections that Parker suggests; for he argues against Hobbes that we have non-instrumental reasons to care about morality.

Parker's discussion, therefore, usefully presents some conflicting lines of thought. On the one hand, he rejects the voluntarist position that he attributes to Hobbes. He attacks Hobbes on grounds that rely on Grotius' naturalism. On the other hand, he believes that Grotian naturalism leaves too small a role for God in the foundation of moral obligation. He does not reconcile these views. His position supports Shaftesbury's contention that some orthodox defences of moral obligation concede too much to Hobbes.

561. Locke's Voluntarist Account of Natural Law

Locke's *Essays on the Law of Nature* are more careful than Parker's work, but they also display conflicting reactions to the naturalism of Suarez and Grotius.[43] Locke accepts Suarez's claim that natural law expresses facts about what is appropriate (conveniens) to rational nature, and that these facts do not depend on God's legislative will (*ELN* 198).[44] But obligation requires divine commands, because the natural law is a genuine law. To be a genuine law, it must declare the will of a superior, it must prescribe what is to be done and not to be done, and it must oblige (obligare) (*ELN* 110–12). The natural law meets all these conditions.

How much morality, if any, is left if we set aside divine commands? Suarez believes that the foundation of natural law is intrinsic rightness and wrongness, duty, and sin. Culverwell recognizes intrinsic rightness and wrongness, but he gives them a quasi-aesthetic interpretation that is alien to Suarez. Locke seems to see even less place for natural rightness without obligation. If we are not under an obligation, our only reason for action is self-preservation (sui ipsius cura et conservatio). If that is our only reason, virtue is no longer a duty (officium), but a mere advantage (commodum), and the right is reduced to the advantageous (nec homini quid honestum erit nisi quod utile). If we feel like disregarding the law of nature, it will not be blameworthy (crimen), though it may be disadvantageous (*ELN* 180).[45]

[43] On the influence of Culverwell and Suarez see *ELN* 36–43.

[44] 'Hence, this law of nature can be described as being the decree of the divine will cognizable by the light of nature, indicating what is and what is not fitting (conveniens) or unfitting to rational nature, and for this very reason commanding or prohibiting.' (*ELN* 111)

[45] 'Since there are some who trace the whole law of nature back to each person's self-preservation and do not seek its foundations in anything higher than that love and instinct by which each single person embraces himself and, as much as he can, seeks to be safe and unharmed, . . . it seems worth our labour to inquire what and how great is the obligation of the law of nature. For if the source and principle of all this law is the care and preservation of oneself, virtue would seem to be not so much a human being's duty (officium) as his advantage (commodum), nor will anything be right (honestum) except what is useful to him; and the observance of this law would be not so much our task (munus) and duty (debitum) to which we are obliged by nature, as a privilege and an advantage, to which we are led by utility, to such an extent that, whenever it pleases us to claim our right (ius) and give way to our own inclinations, we can certainly disregard and transgress this law without blame (crimen), though perhaps not without disadvantage.' (*ELN* 180–1)

Contrary to Carneades, Locke argues that advantage and disadvantage are an inadequate basis for justice. Carneades' view has never convinced anyone with any consciousness of humanity and any concern for social existence.[46] Duties (officia) do not arise simply out of one's own advantage; in fact many virtues are disadvantageous, since they benefit others at our own expense.[47] Since different people's advantages conflict, it is impossible to aim at everyone's advantage at the same time.[48]

Locke's argument seems to neglect a possibility that Suarez allows. For Locke seems to suggest that if obligation (proceeding from the command of a superior) is set aside, all that is left is advantage. Since advantage is an insufficient basis for duties, Locke assumes that we need the command of a superior. But his assumption is unjustified, if we allow natural intrinsic rightness (honestas) as well as natural advantage.[49] Both Suarez and Culverwell allow natural rightness, though they disagree about whether it can support duties. Locke does not discuss their disagreement, because he seems to reject their shared belief in natural intrinsic rightness. Hobbes, Cumberland, and Pufendorf all reject intrinsic rightness. Though Locke does not endorse their position explicitly, he seems to agree with it.

If a divine command is necessary for obligation, what difference does it make? Locke answers that a law is 'vain' or 'pointless' (frustra) if it is not backed by a threat of punishment (*ELN* 174); this is why the existence of God and the immortality of the soul are necessary for the existence of natural law. We might suppose, then, that natural law obliges us because of God's power, which makes the threat of punishment credible. This is Hobbes's position. Parker agrees with this element in Hobbes, despite his opposition to Hobbes on other points. Locke also seems to agree with Hobbes.

562. Morality and Pleasure

Locke's voluntarism about natural law fits the account of action and motivation that we considered earlier. His examination of natural law supports the moral outlook of the *Essay*, where he describes the morally good and evil as conformity to a law that offers pleasure as a reward for obedience and pain as a penalty for disobedience.[50] He prefers this view to the Hobbist view, and the view of the 'old philosophers', the Aristotelians who believe in intrinsic morality, and take immorality to consist in violations of the dignity of human nature. Against these views Locke asserts that morality is based on divine commands and

[46] 'Such an unjust opinion as this, however, has always been opposed by the sounder part among mortals, in whom there was some sense of humanity, some concern for society.' (*ELN* 204–5)

[47] 'But the obligation of other laws does not depend on this foundation [sc. utility]; for if you run through the duties of the whole of human life, you will find none that has arisen from utility alone and that obliges simply from the fact that it is advantageous, since many virtues, including the greatest, consist only in this, that we benefit others at our own expense.' (*ELN* 206–7)

[48] 'But if the private utility of each person is to be the foundation of this law, it will necessarily be broken, since it is impossible to attend to the utility of all at the same time.' (*ELN* 210–11)

[49] Darwall, *BMIO* 42, reproduces this unjustified assumption in passing from 'utilitas' to 'interest' and 'good'. Advantage is not the only possible element of interest and good; we may also recognize the bonum honestum.

[50] 'Morally good and evil then, is only the conformity or disagreement of our voluntary action to some law, whereby good and evil is drawn on us from the will and power of the law-maker; which good and evil, pleasure or pain, attending our observance, or breach of the law, by the decree of the law-maker, is that we call reward and punishment.' (*EHU* ii 28.5 = R 183)

sanctions.[51] Conformity to divine law is 'the only true touchstone of moral rectitude' (*EHU* ii 28.8 = R 185); the other laws that Locke recognizes, the civil law and the law of reputation, may be mistaken in their rewards and punishments, but the divine law is always right.[52]

Though Locke accepts Hobbes's basic claims about motivation, he disagrees with Hobbes about how morality appeals to the desire for pleasure. Hobbes believes the laws of nature can be shown to promote self-preservation even without reference to divine commands. He offers his two indirect arguments—from morality to preservation of the commonwealth and from preservation of the commonwealth to self-preservation—to connect morality with self-preservation and hence (according to Hobbes's views on motivation) with one's own pleasure.

It is not clear where Locke disagrees with Hobbes. He believes that divine sanctions are necessary for morality because he does not assume, as Hobbes does, that divine laws prescribe actions that we would see to be advantageous for us in any case. He ought, then, to question at least one of Hobbes's two indirect arguments, but it is not clear which of them he doubts. Since he assumes it is possible to secure one's own advantage by violating moral rules, he may accept the argument that Hobbes ascribes to the fool. He regards morality as a way of securing the public interest, but not of securing everyone's interest.

He even argues that it would be unreasonable to expect God to command us to do anything that we would have sufficient reason to do anyhow; he thinks such a command would be superfluous.[53] This argument about superfluity is weak. Divine commands are not superfluous if they add further reasons. Even if they carried no sanctions, the knowledge that God has ordered us to do something would give some people a further reason to do what they have some reason to do already; the addition of sanctions gives yet another reason.

563. A Return to Naturalism?

So far Locke has rejected any intrinsic morality that by itself gives us moral duties (debita) and moral reasons that do not depend on an extrinsic source of obligations. He takes

[51] 'That men should keep their compacts, is certainly a great and undeniable rule in morality. But yet, if a Christian, who has the view of happiness and misery in another life, be asked why a man must keep his word, he will give this as a reason; because God, who has the power of eternal life and death, requires it of us. But if a Hobbist be asked why, he will answer, because the public requires it, and the Leviathan will punish you, if you do not. And if one of the old philosophers had been asked, he would have answered, because it was dishonest, below the dignity of a man, and opposite to virtue, the highest perfection of human nature, to do otherwise. . . . it must be allowed, that several moral rules may receive from mankind a very general approbation, without either knowing or admitting the true ground of morality; which can only be the will and law of a God, who sees men in the dark, has in his hand rewards and punishments, and power enough to call to account the proudest offender.' (*EHU* i 3.5–6)

[52] *EHU* ii 28.14: 'Whether . . . we take that rule from the fashion of the country, or the will of a law-maker, the mind is easily able to observe the relation any action hath to it; and to judge, whether the action agrees, or disagrees, with the rule; and so hath a notion of moral goodness or evil, which is either conformity, or not conformity of any action to that rule: and therefore is often called moral rectitude.' Cf. Schneewind, *IA* 287. Fraser's notes (as usual) try to qualify Locke's commitment to voluntarism here. Fraser cites a letter of Locke's (4 Aug. 1690 = De Beer iv, no. 1309). Locke maintains, as a result of questions by Tyrrell and others (nos. 1301, 1307), that he believes in a natural law, distinct from the will of God revealed in the Scriptures. But he does not qualify his voluntarism about the natural law.

[53] 'It would be in vain for one intelligent being, to set a rule to the actions of another, if he had it not in his power, to reward the compliance with, and punish deviation from his rule, by some good and evil, that is not the natural product and consequence of the action itself. For that being a natural convenience, or inconvenience, would operate of itself without a law. This, if I mistake not, is the true nature of all law, properly so called.' (*EHU* ii 28.6 = R 184)

obligation to come from divine commands supported by sanctions. He assumes that we can reasonably ask why we ought to follow the requirements of morality, and that we have no reasonable answer to this question until we appeal to divine commands. Why, then, ought we to obey divine commands?

We might expect that Locke would agree with Hobbes's answer to this question. Hobbes appeals to God's power. Since God is capable of effective reward and punishment, we have good reason to obey God's commands, whatever they tell us to do. But in the *Essays on the Law of Nature* Locke is not satisfied with this answer. We are required in conscience to obey God (in his view), apart from any rewards and punishments that make obedience advantageous (utile, commodum). Locke agrees with Cudworth's objection to Hobbes, and argues that we are morally required to obey only a command that comes from a legitimate commander, who has 'power and dominion' (*ELN* 184).[54] To explain the nature of this dominion, Locke distinguishes disobedience to a legitimate ruler from disobedience to the orders of a pirate or robber. In the second case, conscience approves our exercise of our right (ius) in consulting our own safety; but in the first, it condemns our violation of the right of another (*ELN* 184). In Locke's view, God is a legitimate commander who is entitled to command.

Why, then, is God entitled to command? Locke seems to see that if we ought to obey God's commands simply because God commands us to, we face the infinite regress that Cudworth urges against Hobbes.[55] The moral basis of God's right to command cannot itself lie in God's command. Locke, therefore, argues that since God is supreme over us and we owe (debere) everything to God, it is proper (par) for us to live by the command of God (*ELN* 186).

This requirement of propriety cannot simply be a fact about God's power. If it is to explain why we ought to obey God's legislative will, it cannot be simply a product of this same legislative will. Hence the requirement to obey God seems to be based in facts about our nature. According to Locke, it is inseparable from the nature of human beings that they are required (teneri) to love and worship God and to fulfil the other things that are appropriate (convenientia) to rational nature (*ELN* 198).

If a principle based on natural appropriateness is the moral basis of our obedience to God's commands, the obligation of the law of nature rests on a principle of natural morality. This cannot be simply a principle of natural utility; for that might require submission to a pirate or robber no less than to a legitimate ruler. If we are required in conscience to obey God, obedience is required by natural rightness (honestas), and therefore by a principle of natural intrinsic morality.

If Locke allows this moral principle requiring obedience to God, he should also recognize other principles of natural morality that we are required (teneri) to observe. Though he does not speak, as Suarez does, of natural duties (debita) in these cases,[56] they must be duties,

[54] 'Since nothing else is required to impose an obligation but the dominion and just power of the one who commands and the disclosure of his will, no one can doubt that the law of nature obliges human beings. In the first place, since God is supreme over everything and has such right and command (ius habet et imperium) over us as we cannot have over ourselves, and since we owe our body, soul, and life—whatever we are, whatever we have, and even whatever we can be—to him and to him alone, it is proper (par) that we should live according to the prescription of his will.' (*ELN* 186–7)

[55] See §539 (Maxwell), 548 (Cudworth), 576 (Pufendorf).

[56] He uses 'debitum naturale' at 180, where Von Leyden cites Culverwell and Suarez.

if they are to include some moral basis for obedience to God. Here, then, Locke implicitly agrees with Suarez's distinction between natural morality and the obligation that results from divine command.

Locke, therefore, faces a conflict. When he argues that divine commands provide the only foundation for morality, he agrees with Culverwell and Pufendorf in rejecting natural morality.[57] But he also demands a moral basis for obedience to divine commands, and so apparently has to accept natural morality.[58] Hence his attitude to natural intrinsic rightness is inconsistent, because he refuses to accept the implications of a consistently voluntarist account of the legitimacy of laws and legislators.[59] He raises a difficulty that the critics of Pufendorf expose more clearly.[60]

Intrinsic morality holds this tenuous, but indispensable, place in the *Essays on the Law of Nature*. The same is true in the *Essay*. Even though the *Essay* moves away from the Scholastic framework of the earlier work towards an explicitly Hobbesian position, Locke still maintains that our reason for obeying God depends on something more than our recognition of God's irresistible power.[61] Our recognition of God's right as creator and the recognition of God's goodness and wisdom seem to give us two reasons, apart from God's power, for obeying God.

This remark seems difficult to reconcile with Locke's claim that God would not command us to do actions we could see a reason to do anyhow; for if God commanded no such actions, could we maintain our belief in God's goodness and wisdom? If Locke were right, our belief in God's wisdom and goodness would have to be wholly independent of any views we might form about the tendency of the actions that God actually commands and forbids.

If we believe God has a right over us, and that God exercises that right with wisdom and goodness, we cast doubt on Locke's claim that moral rectitude consists wholly in observance of divine commands. For he implies that it consists at least partly in the recognition of these further facts about God, and therefore in the recognition of further facts about moral rightness beyond divine command. Here as in his earlier work, Locke argues that morality cannot rest solely on servile fear of God, and so he assumes some intrinsic morality. This aspect of Suarez's theory has not disappeared entirely from Locke's *Essay*.

It is difficult, however, to see how Locke can consistently allow intrinsic morality within his moral outlook. Given his hedonist account of motivation and value, some connexion with pleasure and pain is necessary for reasons and motives. If moral properties were entirely divorced from the prospect of pleasure and pain, they would be irrelevant to our action. Since Locke rejects Hobbes's natural connexion of moral rightness with pleasure and pain, he has to assume an artificial connexion through divine commands. This focus on hedonic

[57] Von Leyden, *ELN* 39, suggests that Pufendorf may have influenced Locke. Cf. Schneewind, 'Locke' 208–15.

[58] Ibid. 54–8, suggests that Locke offers two accounts of the nature of law and its binding force. He does not consider whether the so-called 'voluntarist' account may not rest on the 'naturalist' account, because of Locke's view about the moral basis for obedience to God.

[59] Ibid. 51, argues that Locke holds an inconsistent combination of voluntarism and intellectualism. Colman, *JLMP* 38–47, objects reasonably to some of Von Leyden's arguments, but does not explain how Locke's claims about God's authority are consistent with a voluntarist position.

[60] On Pufendorf see §580.

[61] 'That God has given a rule whereby men should govern themselves, I think there is no body so brutish as to deny. He has a right to do it, we are his creatures; he has goodness and wisdom to direct our actions to that which is best; and he has power to enforce it by rewards and punishments . . . ' (*EHU* ii 28.8 = R 185)

consequences has no place for natural rightness as Suarez conceives it; for natural rightness by itself has none of the relevant connexions to pleasure and pain. Locke recognizes a place for natural rightness in his discussion of God's right and God's wisdom. But if he is right to recognize such a place, the rest of his views about pleasure, value, and morality are open to question.

These views on ethics are not developed at great length in Locke's *Essay*. But they are worth considering, because they bring out clearly the attractions of a Hobbesian position, even for a philosopher who rejects it. Locke presents some clear choices and difficulties that face a philosopher who accepts a Hobbesian account of action and wants to avoid a Hobbesian conception of morality. His views on action and on morality are an unsatisfactory and inconsistent combination of Hobbesian views with some Scholastic naturalist views on natural law and intrinsic morality. Though he goes further than Culverwell goes towards Hobbes, he retains enough of Culverwell's naturalism to cast doubt on the Hobbesian aspects of his position.

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PUFENDORF

564. Pufendorf on Morality and Law

When Barbeyrac praises Grotius as the pioneer in the theory of natural law, the standard against which he compares Grotius is the doctrine of Pufendorf. His comparisons of Grotius and Pufendorf argue that their two positions agree in substance. We have found some reasons to question his interpretation of Grotius. It will be useful to examine Pufendorf's views, and then to consider Barbeyrac's reasons for claiming that Grotius and Pufendorf agree.

Barbeyrac's view of Grotius and Pufendorf appears to differ from Pufendorf's view of his relation to Grotius. For Pufendorf rejects the naturalist position that he ascribes to Grotius. He rejects intrinsic rightness, and claims that whatever is right is right only because it is imposed by divine command. On this point he agrees with Cumberland (whom he cites). But he departs further than Cumberland departs from Grotius and the Scholastic position, by rejecting Grotius' use of natural sociality as a basis for the evaluation of political society.

In rejecting these two elements of Grotius' position Pufendorf comes closer to Hobbes's view. He disagrees with Hobbes in believing that moral rightness is irreducible to advantage, and therefore is imposed by divine law. But he follows Hobbes in denying that natural properties include any intrinsic moral rightness that is irreducible to advantage. To a limited extent, Hobbes believes in intrinsic moral properties, since he believes that the moral virtues are simply those states that promote self-preservation as means to peaceful and commodious living. But he does not believe that rightness (honestas) consists in anything beyond advantage (commodum); on this point Suarez, Grotius, Cumberland, and Pufendorf all disagree with him.

Pufendorf also agrees with Hobbes in rejecting Grotius' belief in natural sociality as the basis of a commonwealth. To show that the only legitimate moral demand on a commonwealth is the requirement to preserve peace, and that we need a commonwealth in order to preserve peace, he disagrees with Aristotle, the Stoics, the Scholastics, and Grotius. According to these defenders of natural sociality, facts about human nature itself, and not simply about competition, aggression, and self-preservation, make political life appropriate for human beings. Since Pufendorf agrees with Hobbes in rejecting the Scholastic appeal to

natural sociality, he has to decide how far he accepts the rest of Hobbes's views about the moral basis of political society.

These claims of Pufendorf might encourage us to conclude that he is really a disciple of Hobbes, and that his disagreements with Hobbes about morality and divine commands are relatively superficial.[1] This is not the conclusion that Pufendorf and Barbeyrac draw from the comparison with Hobbes; they both regard Pufendorf's position as a reasonable alternative to Hobbes's views. We should try to see whether they are right about the significance of Pufendorf's disagreements with Hobbes.

565. Pufendorf's Voluntarism

Pufendorf affirms voluntarism as part of his argument about 'the certainty of the disciplines that deal with morals' (*JNG* i 2).[2] He rejects the view of (allegedly) most of his predecessors, who are misled by Aristotle into believing that moral science is necessarily uncertain. In his view, it is capable of demonstration.[3] Moral entities are imposed by God, but we do not rely on any special revelation of the divine will to know about them.[4] Natural law is natural in the epistemological sense, since we know its requirements innately. But it is not natural in the metaphysical sense; it consists essentially in divine commands, not in facts about our nature. The certainty of moral principles is secured by the fact that they are imposed by a wise and benevolent God in view of the needs resulting from the human condition.[5]

In this statement of his position Pufendorf does not simply affirm that the natural law depends on the legislative will of God. On this issue Suarez and Pufendorf agree against the naturalist view of Vasquez (perhaps followed by Grotius). Suarez believes that the aspect of the natural law that creates 'obligation' (as Suarez understands it) depends on divine commands. Pufendorf's denial of any right and wrong independent of God's legislative will goes further than Suarez goes in the direction of voluntarism; he rejects Suarez's and Grotius' belief in intrinsic rightness and wrongness (honestas and turpitudo) apart from any imposition.[6]

Pufendorf rejects Suarez's view on the role of natural goodness and badness in moral goodness and badness. Suarez derives morality from natural goodness and badness, so that rightness and wrongness are properties of actions promoting or harming the common good of rational agents. Suarez, therefore, takes divine commands to be necessary for natural law, but not for moral rightness. Pufendorf takes them to be necessary for moral rightness as well.

[1] See Palladini, *SPDH*.

[2] I cite the 1688 edn. of *JNG*. It includes references to Cumberland, added in the 1684 edn. See Tuck, *NRT* 160n. 'K' indicates Kennett's translation, which I have sometimes altered.

[3] Cf. Locke, *EHU* iii 11.16.

[4] On Pufendorf and autonomy see Darwall, 'Autonomy'; Haakonssen, 'Protestant'.

[5] 'For the introduction of a number <of moral entities> was demanded by the very condition of a human being, which was assigned to him by the greatest and best Creator, in accordance with his goodness and wisdom. And so these, at any rate, cannot at all be called unsure and unstable.' (*JNG* i 2.5)

[6] The naturalist view: '. . . that some things in themselves, apart from any imposition, are right or wrong, and these constitute the object of natural and everlasting right, whereas those things that are right are wrong because the legislator willed, come under the heading of positive laws' (i 2.6).

Pufendorf presents several different arguments against intrinsic morality: (1) Naturalism denies the appropriate sort of freedom to God. (2) It is wrong about which properties belong to nature apart from will. (3) It is wrong about the nature of moral obligation and its connexion with the command of a superior. If we take these arguments in order, we can identify the main questions that he raises.[7]

566. Nature, Creation, and Divine Freedom

In Pufendorf's view, naturalists believe in some principle independent of, and co-eternal with, God, restricting God's freedom, because they believe in natural rightness and wrongness apart from God's will. Their position is theologically unsound, since God created us by the exercise of free will, and God was free to do otherwise than create us with this nature. Nothing can be good or bad by intrinsic necessity, apart from the pleasure and the imposition of God.[8] When we speak of natural rightness and wrongness, we do not refer to anything independent of the will of God; we simply refer to what is required by the natural condition that the Creator has freely given to us.[9] Human beings with their nature are creatures of God, and so the nature of right actions depends on God's will as creator.[10] A naturalist position makes the existence of human beings with their nature independent of God's will as creator, but Grotius has overlooked this unwelcome result of naturalism.[11]

The view that Pufendorf attributes to naturalism is more extreme than the view of mediaeval naturalists, Suarez and Grotius. All of these naturalists distinguish the creative from the legislative will of God. The voluntarists Scotus and Ockham maintain that, for some aspects of morality, rightness depends essentially on a legislative act of God beyond creation. Suarez is justified in taking voluntarism to assert that the legislative will of God is essential to rightness and wrongness. Against this voluntarist position, Suarez defends naturalism; he claims that once God has created us, no further divine legislative act is needed for some actions to be right and others wrong, because rightness and wrongness are intrinsic to certain actions (in the appropriate circumstances) insofar as they are fitting or unfitting to rational nature. If some creatures have rational natures, some actions are right and others wrong, without any further legislation. The laws that God gives for creation are (as Suarez puts it) 'indicative' rather than 'prescriptive'.[12]

While we may regret that Pufendorf does not follow Suarez by marking the difference between God's creative will and God's legislative will, we might think this does not matter.

[7] Schneewind, *IA* 121–2, takes the first of these arguments to express Pufendorf's main concern.

[8] Boyle and Leibniz discuss questions related to this claim. See §586.

[9] 'And truly, as for those who would establish an eternal rule for morality of the actions without respect to the divine injunction or constitution, the result of their endeavours seems to us to be the joining with God Almighty some coeval extrinsical principle, which he was obliged to follow in assigning the forms and essences of things. Besides, it is acknowledged on all hands, that God created man, as well as everything else, according to his own free will. From whence it evidently follows that it must needs have been his power and pleasure to indue this creature with whatever kind of nature his wisdom thought fit. And how then should it come to pass that the actions of mankind should be vested with any affection or quality proceeding from intrinsical and absolute necessity, without regard to the institution and to the good pleasure of the Creator?' (i 2.6 = K 17)

[10] Grotius on creation; §465.

[11] Unde adparet, non satis expendisse hanc rem Grotium, i 2.6.

[12] On Suarez see §425.

Do the Scholastic naturalists concede the essential point to him once they allow that human beings with their nature depend on God's creative will?

The difference between God's creative and legislative will matters for this purpose, because dependence on God's creative will does not distinguish moral rightness and wrongness from other features of the natural world. Pufendorf intends to distinguish moral properties from other properties of natural subjects, events, and processes; but God's creative will and indicative law are present in every part of creation alike. Morality is legislated no more than any other feature of the natural world is legislated; all alike depend on the creative will and indicative law of God, but it does not follow that any of them depend on the prescriptive and legislative law of God.

Dependence on God's creative will does not refute a naturalist belief in 'eternal and immutable' morality. The claim that 'morality' depends on the divine will might mean that it depends on the divine will whether or not any creature behaves morally; this follows from the Christian doctrine of creation. But it does not imply the further claim that what morality is for any creature depends on the divine will. If the principles fixing what is morally right for different creatures do not depend on divine acts of will, the content of morality does not depend on the divine will, even if the existence of these creatures depends on the divine will. And so, even if the existence of human beings for whom justice is good depends on the divine will, it does not follow that the fact that their good requires justice also depends on the divine will. Naturalists are right to argue that Christian doctrines about creation do not affect their claims about the independence of morality.[13]

If, therefore, Pufendorf simply asserts that created things depend on God's creative will and indicative law, he has not refuted the naturalism of Suarez and Grotius.

567. Nature and Imposition

Some of Pufendorf's arguments, however, go beyond the claim that creation implies dependence on the divine will. He allows that some properties belong to nature apart from divine 'imposition', and argues that moral properties are not among them. The properties that he takes not to be imposed are the result of creation; hence imposition implies some further act of the divine will beyond creation. Here he recognizes the distinction between creation and legislation, even though he overlooked it in accusing naturalists of recognizing a principle independent of God and of restricting divine freedom.

To separate natural from imposed properties, Pufendorf distinguishes nature itself from the further properties imposed on nature by the divine will. He argues that nature itself consists simply in bodies in motion, and their effects on one another. No morality can be found simply in movement, and application of physical power; hence rightness and wrongness do not belong to nature in itself, but are imposed.[14] The properties that belong to

[13] Contrast Korkman, *BNL* 183–229.

[14] 'So that in reality all the motions and actions of men, upon setting aside all law both divine and human, are perfectly indifferent: And some of them are therefore only said to be honest or dishonest because that condition of nature which God has freely bestowed on man strictly enjoins the performance or the omission of them. Not that any morality inheres of itself, and without all law, in the bare motion; of the mere application of natural power: And therefore we see beasts

nature in itself are those recognized by physical science. Since right and wrong are not among these properties, they do not belong to nature in itself, and therefore they are imposed.

This contrast between moral and purely natural properties relies on a division that has strongly influenced modern meta-ethics.[15] It implies that a post-Aristotelian scientific view of nature rules out the Aristotelian view that normative, and especially moral, properties are parts of nature in itself. The anti-Aristotelian view is summarized in the claim that values 'are not part of the fabric of the world'.[16]

Are the properties recognized by physical science the only ones that belong to nature in itself? Many biological and medical properties fail this condition for belonging to nature in itself; but it does not follow that they are imposed. Drinking sea water is unhealthy for cattle; this fact is not part of physics, but it does not seem to be the result of legislation. Apparently, then, facts about the welfare of human beings may also be natural rather than imposed.

Pufendorf accepts this argument. He agrees that the properties defining natural benefit and harm to human beings precede divine legislation. Natural goodness is distinct from moral goodness (as Cumberland argues[17]), and natural goodness is not imposed.[18] From the creation of human beings it follows that certain things are naturally good and bad for them. Hence 'prudential properties' (concerned with benefit and harm to oneself) belong to nature and are not imposed on it.

These remarks about the natural and non-imposed character of prudential properties cast doubt on the argument to show that moral properties are imposed. For since prudential properties are natural, but are not explicitly recognized in a physicist's description of matter in motion, the absence of moral properties from such a description does not show that moral properties are imposed and not natural.

One might answer that though the physicist's description of the world does not explicitly mention prudential properties, it nonetheless implicitly includes them. The unhealthiness of sea water for cattle is a non-imposed natural property, even though physics does not explicitly mention it as such; for it is wholly constituted by the properties recognized by physics.[19] Nothing more than the sorts of properties recognized by physics, in the appropriate combination, is needed to yield the fact that sea water is unhealthy for cattle, even though such facts are not the concern of physics. Hence no further properties besides those recognized by physics are needed in order to yield prudential properties.

If we accept this argument, however, we cannot be sure that moral properties are imposed. At first it may seem obvious that the worldview of physical science has no room

every day doing such things without fault or sin, in committing which man would have been guilty of the highest wickedness.' (i 2.6 = K18)

[15] On moral entities see Schneewind, *IA*, 120; Korsgaard, *SN* 21–7, esp. 27: 'The legislator is necessary to make *obligation* possible, that is, to make morality normative'.

[16] Mackie, *E* 15. [17] On Cumberland see §530.

[18] 'But . . . since God Almighty hath been pleased to create man, a being not possibly to be preserved without the observation of this law, we have no manner of reason or colour to believe that he will either reverse or alter the law of nature, so long as he brings no change on human nature itself; and so long as the actions enjoined by this law do by a natural consequence promote sociality, in which is contained all the temporal happiness of mankind . . . and therefore supposing human nature and human affairs to be fixed and constant, the law of nature, though it owed its original institution to the free pleasure of God, remains firm and immovable.' (ii 3.5 = K 122, altered)

[19] One might also speak of unhealthiness being 'realized' in properties recognized by physics. The relevant conception of realization is discussed by Shoemaker, 'Realization' (in connexion with mental properties).

for rightness and wrongness. But if it has room for healthiness and unhealthiness, it may also have room for moral properties; for these may be constituted by facts about what is healthy or unhealthy, or in other ways good and bad, for rational agents. The constitutive relation between physical properties and healthiness suggests a way of explaining how rightness and wrongness might be natural and non-imposed properties.

Even if we can conceive how rightness and wrongness might be natural because they are somehow constituted by physical properties, it does not follow that they are natural. Some difference between natural goodness and moral goodness may exclude moral goodness from the natural world. We have shown only that the absence of moral properties from a physicist's description of the world does not make them non-natural or imposed entities.

To defend Pufendorf's claim that moral properties are imposed, we also need to show that (as later defenders of his claim have said) they are 'queer' entities.[20] They are queer, relative to the scientific world-view, if they have characteristics that a scientific world-view gives us no reason to expect. If, for instance, morality required us to believe that some particular things can be wholly in two places at once, but the scientific world-view gave us no grounds for believing that any particular can be in two places at once, morality would require us to believe in queer entities.

This example suggests that queerness might be understood in two ways: (1) One might regard an entity as queer relative to a given science if that science gives us no positive reason to believe in such things. One might agree that moral properties are queer in this weak sense; but many other things are also queer in this sense, and still belong to the natural world. Since physics gives us no reason to recognize the properties recognized by medicine, these properties are queer relative to physics. If moral properties are queer only in this weak sense, they may still be part of nature. (2) Alternatively, one might regard an entity as queer relative to a science only if that science gives us positive reason to disbelieve in such things, or to believe that they are impossible. Queerness in this strong sense would be a more serious objection to an alleged entity; the existence in the natural world of such queer entities would introduce serious tensions into our scientific theories. One theory would tell us that the world is radically different from what another theory tells us it is like, since one theory tends to rule out entities of the sort that another theory accepts.

These remarks about queerness may clarify Pufendorf's arguments about moral entities. To show that they are not natural properties, he needs to show more than that they are queer in the weak sense that his argument about nature and motion has supported. The arguments for queerness in a stronger sense depend on closer attention to the essential characteristics of moral properties.

568. Natural v. Moral Goodness

Pufendorf argues that prudential goodness is natural, but moral goodness is imposed. He no longer tries to exclude morally good and bad actions from nature simply because they are not

[20] Mackie, *E* 38, describes the metaphysical part of the 'argument from queerness' in this way: 'If there were objective values, then they would be entities or qualities or relations of a very strange sort, utterly different from anything else in the universe'. Mackie does not intend to rule out the possibility of finding good reasons for recognizing queer entities; see §606.

merely physical movements, since he agrees that prudential properties belong to nature, even though they do not belong to mere physical movements (in the sense previously discussed).

Moral goodness differs from non-moral goodness because morality is imposed on some human actions through law (i 2.6). God's creation of us makes certain actions expedient or inexpedient for us, given our nature, but not thereby right or wrong. We cannot derive morality from our nature as rational animals; for if we consider reason without reference to law and moral norm (legis seu normae moralis), it is simply more efficient in supplying our natural needs. If we try to find what is fitting for rational nature, we simply find that instrumental reasoning is fitting, and this has nothing to do with morality. Hence the Scholastic claim that morality consists in what is fitting for rational nature is mistaken. Until we take account of law, we cannot find morality in human actions any more than the blind can see colour (i 2.6).[21]

Pufendorf here agrees with Suarez and Grotius that actions are beneficial and harmful to human beings apart from legislation. Hence he agrees with Grotius that Stoic claims about conciliation (ii 3.14) are both true and important.[22] But they refer only to natural goodness, and not to moral goodness; the natural benefits and harms of human actions do not place them in the area of morality.[23] Giving a cup of water to an innocent person dying of thirst is beneficial to a human being and has natural goodness, but it is morally indifferent unless someone has legislated it. To show that natural goodness is not sufficient for moral goodness, Pufendorf observes that actions may be naturally good even if they are not voluntary, and even if they are not done by human beings at all; no such actions are morally good.

This observation, however, does not support Pufendorf's legislative thesis. We may well agree that moral goodness and badness in actions requires not only the appropriate property in the action itself, but also the appropriate property in the agent. Since the human good is the good of a rational agent, it is intelligible that the actions that primarily promote this good are voluntary actions for which the agent is appropriately held responsible. Moreover, the fact that we are rational and responsible agents makes it possible for us to be obliged to action by legislation. None of this implies that actions can be morally good only if a legislator has prescribed them.

569. Morality, Obligation, Law, and Command

Pufendorf agrees with naturalists about the content of morality, insofar as he derives its provisions from facts about human nature and what is harmful or beneficial to it (ii 3.13–15).[24]

[21] 'For if we considered reason as uninformed with the knowledge and sense of law, or of some moral rule, it might perhaps even in this condition furnish man with the faculty of acting more expeditiously and more accurately than beasts, and might assist the natural powers by an additional shrewdness or subtlety. But that it should be able to discover any morality in human actions, without reflecting on some law, is equally impossible as that a man born blind should make a judgment on the distinction of colours.' (i 2.6 = K 18)

[22] Pufendorf quotes Cic. *F.* iii 5 and other Stoic texts (and Barbeyrac adds further passages).

[23] 'But this very natural goodness and badness of actions in themselves does not at all place them in the area of morals.' (i 2.6)

[24] As Barbeyrac says (note 1 on ii 3.14), 'The very name of natural right shows us that the principles ought to be deduced from the nature of man, as many of the ancients have acknowledged'. He quotes Cic. *Leg.* i 5; Marcus Aurelius × 2.

But he denies that these facts alone constitute morality. To explain where a naturalist account of moral properties fails, he asserts: (1) The relevant deontic concepts—right, wrong, duty, and so on—presuppose some reference to a norm and a law. (2) A law requires a command by a superior. On the second point, he follows Suarez. But on the first point he follows Selden against Suarez.[25]

Pufendorf does not defend himself on the first point, but his claim needs defence. To say that right and wrong (honestum, turpe) presuppose some norm (norma) or (as Suarez puts it) some rule (regula) is plausible. But to assert without argument that this rule must be a law is to overlook a distinction that Suarez maintains.

If one believed that Suarez is too rigid in separating laws from rules and norms in general, one might accept Pufendorf's first point. Selden says that the distinction of good and evil, or rightness (honestas) and wrongness (turpitudo), comes from 'right' (ius). One might agree with this claim, but still deny that moral properties require legislation; that is why Vasquez, for instance, asserts that not every ius is a lex.[26] But if we accept Pufendorf's first point, so understood, we will not immediately accept his second point. For if we take 'law', 'norm', 'right' (ius), and 'rule' to be equivalent, we agree with Aquinas' view (sometimes) that none of these requires any command by a superior.

Pufendorf's two claims, therefore, undermine each other. They are consistent, but it is difficult to see a good reason for accepting both of them in the sense that Pufendorf intends. Reflexion on Vasquez and Suarez suggests that the best argument for accepting either of them is an equally good argument for rejecting the other.

If we ignore the broad use of 'law', and so concede Pufendorf's second point, the issue turns on Suarez's naturalist claim about rightness and wrongness, also accepted by Grotius. According to Suarez, actions are right and wrong, and we have a duty to perform and omit them, because of their own nature (in relation to rational beings), apart from any law. Pufendorf disagrees; even if we do not rely on any human law in regarding actions as right and wrong, we nonetheless (in his view) rely on a divine law.

Why should we agree with Pufendorf on this point? Against his view Suarez claims that God imposes the natural law only by commanding actions that are right and wrong in themselves. The counterfactual supposition used by Gregory of Rimini, Suarez, and Grotius to show that we would recognize intrinsic morality apart from beliefs about the existence of God or God's concern for human good and harm raises a reasonable doubt about Pufendorf's legislative thesis.

570. The Errors of Naturalism

Pufendorf defends his legislative view by arguing that naturalism is inconsistent. If we were to recognize intrinsic morality antecedent to any law, we would be committed, in his view,

[25] 'For since (1) rightness (honestas)—or moral necessity—and wrongness are characteristics of human actions, arising from agreement or disagreement with a norm or a law, and since (2) law is a command of a superior, it is not clear how rightness or wrongness could be understand before law and in advance of imposition by a superior. As Selden says: "From right (ius) the distinction of good and evil, or wrong and right (honestum) is produced in actions. From this there arises in persons obligation (obligatio) and requirement (debitum) to fulfil a duty (officium)." ' (i 2.6; reference numbers added)

[26] On Vasquez see §429.

to these inconsistent claims: (1) All obligation is imposed by a superior. (2) If A's action is morally good or evil, A is obliged to do or refrain from the action.[27] (3) Actions are morally good or evil apart from legislation. (4) Hence we are obliged, apart from legislation, to do or avoid them. (5) Hence not all obligation is imposed by a superior.

A naturalist, however, need not accept all these claims. If we agree with Suarez, we accept the first, but not the second. If we agree with Vasquez, we accept the second, but not the first. As we have seen, it is not clear which position Grotius takes, and so it is not entirely unfair for Pufendorf to suggest that Grotius is committed to both (1) and (2). He is right to maintain that the acceptance of both steps conflicts with the belief in intrinsic rightness and wrongness. But both Suarez and Vasquez offer Grotius ways to preserve intrinsic rightness. Since naturalists have good reasons for rejecting either (1) or (2), they can avoid the inconsistency that Pufendorf ascribes to them.

Pufendorf replies that naturalists avoid an inconsistency only if they argue in a circle. In his view, Grotius is committed to these claims: (i) Natural law prescribes the good and prohibits the bad. (ii) 'Good' is to be understood here as 'morally good' (honestum). (iii) 'Morally good' is to be defined as 'what is prescribed by natural law', or as involving obligation, which in turn involves a reference to law. (iv) Therefore claim (i) simply says that natural law prescribes and prohibits what it prescribes and prohibits.[28] We ought to avoid this circle by rejecting the naturalist interpretation of the claim that the natural law prescribes the good and prohibits the bad. The naturalist understands 'good' as 'morally good', but, because of (iii), this affirmation of intrinsic morality involves us in a circle. We must therefore take the naturalist (in claim (i)) to say that natural law prescribes the natural good, which is only prudentially and not morally good. Pufendorf follows Cumberland in favouring this interpretation, which denies intrinsic morality.[29]

But is Pufendorf entitled to the claim in (iii), that moral goodness must be defined by reference to a law? Suarez's discussion of intrinsic morality rejects this claim. Pufendorf's objection relies on a legislative conception of moral goodness; but since the naturalists reject this conception, their account of natural law is not circular.

571. Self-Interest v. Morality

So far, then, Pufendorf's arguments for his legislative conception of morality rest on unsupported assumptions about conceptual connexions between morality, obligation, law, and commands. But he also argues in support of these assumptions, to show that morality involves a distinctive sort of reason that requires a command.

[27] This seems to be what is meant in 'nam bonum et malum morale involvit respectum ad personam, quae istam actionem edit' (i 2.6, quotation from Osiander).

[28] '... if the definition of natural law is to be founded on that necessary honesty or turpitude of some actions, it must be always perplexed and obscure, and must run around in an unconcluding circle, as will appear to any man who considers the definition laid down by Grotius [i 1.10.1]. And Dr Cumberland excellently remarks [5.9] that in defining the law of nature, when we use the word Good, we must mean natural and not moral good; since it would be the highest absurdity to define a thing by such terms as suppose it to be already known; [those very terms being derived as consequences from it, and depending on it as to their own evidence and certainty]' (ii 3.4 = K 122). The bracketed clause is Kennett's addition.

[29] Cf. Cumberland, discussed in §532.

He clarifies his conception of morality by opposing Grotius' view that natural rights (iura naturalia) would have some place even if God did not exist. Without God the dictates of reason could not have the 'force' (or 'significance', vis) of law, since that presupposes a superior. Grotius claims that even without God there would be a natural right (ius). Pufendorf infers that Grotius believes there would be natural law (lex) even if God did not exist.[30]

Pufendorf ascribes to Grotius the extreme naturalist position defended by Vasquez and rejected by Suarez. Pufendorf does not explicitly distinguish this extreme position from the moderate naturalist position of Suarez, that actions would still be right and wrong (honestum, turpe) even if God did not exist. But he implicitly rejects moderate naturalism; for he cites Cicero's remark that mutual trust and justice would perish if we abandoned belief in gods. He recognizes that we might observe the provisions of the natural law 'from a view of advantage' (intuitu utilitatis), just as we take medicines for the sake of health. He allows this basis for action even in the absence of any divine command. But he does not believe that this suffices for mutual trust and justice. Contrary to the naturalists, natural properties include prudential properties, but not moral properties.

Pufendorf takes a step towards naturalism, by maintaining that moral principles require only those actions that are already required by our natural good. In prescribing morality, divine law prescribes actions that we can already see reason to do. This naturalist claim about the content of morality is common to Hobbes, Suarez, and Grotius. But they believe it for different reasons, because they have different views about whether natural goods include moral good (honestum) that is irreducible to the pleasant and the advantageous. Hobbes believes that (1) moral good is reducible to the naturally advantageous, and so he believes that (2) the content of morality is simply what is naturally advantageous. Suarez and Grotius, however, believe that (3) natural properties include irreducible moral properties, and so they believe that (4) the content of morality goes beyond the advantageous.[31]

Pufendorf does not agree entirely either with Hobbes or with Suarez and Grotius. He agrees with Hobbes about (2), but not about (1). He agrees with Suarez and Grotius in rejecting (1), but disagrees with them about (3). Since he agrees with all of them that the content of morality is determined by natural good, and he holds Hobbes's narrow view of the content of natural good, he also holds Hobbes's view that morality consists only of principles prescribing what is advantageous for the sake of peace. He does not allow that the honestum is part of the natural good antecedent to divine commands. But he believes, against Hobbes and with Suarez and Grotius, that moral properties are irreducible to natural

[30] '. . . to give these dictates of reason the force and authority of laws, there is a necessity of supposing that there is a God, and that his wise providence oversees and governs the whole world, and in a particular manner the lives and the affairs of mankind. For we cannot by any means subscribe to the conjecture that Grotius starts . . . that the laws (iura) of nature would take place, should we (as we cannot without the most horrid impiety) deny either the being of God or his concern with human business. For, should any wretch be so horribly senseless as to maintain that wicked and absurd hypothesis in the rankest way . . . the edicts of reason could not rise so high as to pass into a condition of laws (legum), in as much as all law supposes a superior power.' (ii 3.19 = K 141–2) 'But to make these dictates of reason obtain the power and dignity of laws, it is necessary to call in a much higher principle to our assistance. For though the usefulness and expediency of them be clearly apparent, yet this bare consideration could never bring so strong a tie on men's minds but that they would recede from these rules whenever a man was pleased either to neglect his own advantage or to pursue it by some different means which he judged more proper, and more likely to succeed.' (ii 3.20 = K 143)

[31] Cf. Suarez's comment on the Incarnation, §438.

advantage. Since he disagrees with the naturalist account (in (3)) of how this is so, he must give a different account.

His account relies on assumptions about reasons or about motivation. Though the advantage of following a dictate of natural good is clear, human beings will act against this dictate if they are induced to act against advantage, or if they think they see greater advantage in acting some other way. A dictate of natural good acquires the necessary binding force only from the will of God. Pufendorf agrees, therefore, with Hobbes about the content of morality, but not about its essential motive. He believes that the Hobbesian motive of self-preservation is insufficient for morality. He argues: (a) Calculation of advantage is not the appropriate basis for morally good action. (b) Hence, consideration of natural good is not the appropriate basis for morally good action. (c) The only appropriate basis comes from divine law.

This argument is open to naturalist doubts. Suarez and Grotius believe the first claim; for though they take morally good action to depend on considerations of natural good, they deny that such considerations are confined to considerations of advantage. In their view, reasons of pleasure and advantage are not the only reasons derived from natural good. Hence they deny Pufendorf's second claim.[32]

572. Natural Goodness v. Natural Morality

It is somewhat difficult, therefore, to see where Pufendorf argues against naturalism. He simply asserts that morality requires legislation and command, and that natural properties are prudential, but not moral. It is not clear why he believes that we can give a naturalist account of non-moral goods, but not of morality. If he had denied that natural goods fix the content of morality, and had found morality in divine commands unrestricted by nature, he might have said that nothing can be inferred from human nature about the content of a true morality. But that is not what he says. For, in his view, all that Suarez says about appropriateness to nature is true, and necessary for morality. According to Pufendorf, all the facts about nature that Suarez takes to be moral facts are simply facts about mutual advantage; moral facts require the addition of divine commands.

Pufendorf's argument implies that Scholastic claims about appropriateness to nature fit the pleasant and the useful, but not the honestum (the morally right). When Suarez speaks of the honestum, he speaks of actions that are appropriate for rational nature without necessarily being advantageous. What is advantageous for me is instrumentally beneficial for some end that I already recognize. But in choosing the honestum, I recognize that it is part of my good to act in accordance with standards that refer to a common good distinct from my self-confined good.

[32] If one identifies moral good with a certain kind of natural good, one may do this for eudaemonist reasons, as Aristotle, Aquinas, and Suarez do, taking moral goods to be those that make a specific sort of contribution to one's own happiness. But even if one rejects this eudaemonist account of moral goods, one may still resist Pufendorf's claim (2); for one may recognize natural moral goods whose goodness can be explained without reference to the agent's happiness. To agree with Pufendorf about (2), we must believe, as Scotus does, that moral considerations necessarily go beyond any natural good. Scotus believes this because he believes that moral considerations are rational and impartial in ways that no natural good can be.

Aquinas and Suarez find the basis for moral rightness and justice in this common good, determined by the nature of human beings as rational and social animals. This aspect of human nature makes it appropriate to form communities in which individuals regard one another as proper objects of concern for their own sake, and not simply as means to one's own self-confined ends.[33] According to this naturalist view, the recognition of these facts about human beings gives us sufficient reason to pursue the honestum as part of our own good, and hence to accept morality. If these claims about nature and rational agency are correct, neither the advantageous nor the honestum depends on divine commands.

Grotius accepts this naturalist view. He combines the Aristotelian appeal to the social nature of human beings with Stoic claims about conciliation (*oikeiôsis*), and forms his own view of natural human sociality.[34] He agrees that acceptance of human sociality is a sufficient basis for the acceptance of natural rightness. Cumberland agrees with him, except that he takes facts about human sociality to make it rational, not morally right, to pursue the common good.[35]

In claiming that natural good is confined to pleasure and advantage, Pufendorf agrees with Hobbes against Aquinas, Suarez, and Grotius about what can be justified by appeal to nature. But it is difficult to see why Pufendorf agrees with Hobbes. One might reject natural morality because one denies that appeals to nature support claims about human good; but Pufendorf does not deny this. On the contrary, he appeals freely to nature as a source of prudential reasons; if he gave up these appeals, he could not explain why God is good to us in commanding us to obey these particular principles.

Pufendorf's position on natural good, therefore, is consistent, but unstable. Once he concedes the natural character of prudential properties, he has no good reason to deny the natural character of moral properties. If he is right to deny the natural character of moral properties, he apparently ought to reject any appeal to nature to explain prudence. Instead of saying that appeals to nature support reasons of advantage, but not moral reasons, he should say that appeals to nature do not support reasons at all. The only source of reasons supporting practical principles—he ought to say—is desire for some end. If human beings in their natural state want self-preservation, they have reasons of advantage; but the reasons come from their desires, not from their nature, since they do not remain in the absence of the relevant desire. This is Hobbes's position (or one of his positions) about reasons and natural goods.

But it is not Pufendorf's position. He could not accept it without serious damage to his whole outlook. That is why his position is unstable. His anti-naturalist account of morality does not give a good reason for rejecting natural morality while accepting natural prudence. Hence he needs to reject natural prudence as well as natural morality. To reject natural prudence is to take Hobbes's predominant view about reasons; the full implications of this view commit us to a Humean account of practical reason.

Though Pufendorf does not give convincing reasons for being a naturalist about prudence and a voluntarist about morality, we may find his position appealing. For some people doubt whether appeals to human nature could justify moral principles, even though they allow appeals to nature to justify concern for the longer-term as well as the shorter-term future,

[33] On Aquinas see §339. On Suarez see §449. [34] On Grotius see §466. [35] On Cumberland see §532.

concern for one's bodily health, mental development, and so on. In the latter cases, it does not seem implausible to claim that facts about our nature give us reason to aim at certain ends, whether or not we actually care about them. It is not so obvious that this is true of the ends characteristic of morality.

Naturalist defences of morality argue that the extension of natural reasons to morality is correct, even if it is not obvious. Grotius sums up these defences of morality in appealing to Aristotelian and Stoic claims about the natural sociality of human beings. If these claims are reasonable, we ought not to take Pufendorf's step towards Hobbes's and Hume's conclusions.

573. Divine Law as a Source for Morality

But suppose that we agree with Pufendorf's views about the sorts of reasons that can be grounded on natural good, and we agree that these are insufficient for moral reasons. Does his account of moral principles as divine law backed by sanctions cope with the relevant features of morality? To see whether he satisfies the demand that he thinks naturalists cannot satisfy, we should consider the distinctive sort of reason introduced by divine commands, and then ask whether that is a moral reason.

According to Suarez, divine commands give us a reason derived from the fact that a superior has expressed his will about what we are to do. This is God's function as a legislator, as distinct from a teacher making clear to us what we ought (in any case) to do. We should therefore follow the natural law not only because—as Suarez believes—it prescribes intrinsically right actions, but also because God wills and commands that we are to follow it. Divine commands give us a moral reason because it is already right to obey divine commands. Since this moral reason requires antecedent intrinsic morality, not all morality depends on divine commands.

Let us concede to Pufendorf that if we simply consider natural goodness, apart from any reference to divine commands, we will act only on self-interested concerns. Why should the introduction of divine commands change that? If our attitude to natural goods is self-interested, why should we expect that our attitude to God's commands will be less self-interested? An appeal to God does not seem to offer an escape from purely self-interested motives.

Perhaps Pufendorf simply means that people will have strong enough motives to follow moral principles only if they treat them as divine commands. If he means this, two answers are possible: (1) People ignore the commands of God from the motives that also lead them to ignore the dictates of natural good and evil. (2) Even if divine commands are needed to provide stable motives that deter us from violating natural law, this is irrelevant to the dispute with naturalists. For they might agree with Pufendorf's claim about motivation, while still believing that moral goodness is intrinsic to actions conforming to human nature.

574. The Form of Moral Requirements

One might argue that these claims about motivation are beside the point, and that commands are relevant not because they appeal to certain motives, but because they have a certain

form. Facts about natural goods, we may argue, have the wrong form for moral facts; they simply specify what we need to achieve certain ends. Legal requirements have a different form; they do not say 'Drive on the right if you want to avoid a fine', but tell us without qualification to drive on the right. In this respect we might say that legal requirements have a categorical rather than a hypothetical form.[36]

This is the respect in which moral principles may seem more similar to legal requirements than to facts about natural goods. For we do not expect moral principles to say 'Do not steal if you want to keep out of prison' or 'Do not steal if you want to act appropriately to rational nature'; they simply tell us not to steal (etc.) without qualification. Since they are similar to laws, we may infer that they are laws. But since they are not merely human laws, they are divine laws.

If this is what Pufendorf means, he holds a natural law theory of morality, in the sense we have discussed.[37] He gives priority to law, since he makes morality consist essentially in laws validly enacted by a legitimate authority.[38] A rule of morality is valid insofar as God has commanded it. Moral obligations differ from counsels of prudence because they contain an element of necessity that we cannot release ourselves from, just as we cannot release ourselves from obligations that are validly imposed on us by the law. This conception of morality explains why naturalism is mistaken; the requirements fixed by suitability to rational nature lack the appropriate sort of necessity.

This objection would be cogent, if requirements of nature had the form of hypothetical imperatives, so that they explicitly referred to our preferences and desires; in that case we could release ourselves from them by simply changing our preferences. But Pufendorf does not show that this is the form of a natural requirement (naturale debitum), as Suarez understands it. If intrinsic morality consists of requirements of rational nature, naturalists need not concede that it lacks the non-hypothetical necessity that Pufendorf ascribes to moral principles.

575. The Authority of Divine Legislation

Perhaps, then, Pufendorf is no better off than a naturalist in accounting for the form of moral principles. But a naturalist may also argue that Pufendorf is worse off. For the comparison of moral principles with laws should not only account for the necessity and unqualified character of moral principles; it should also ensure the legitimacy of the authority imposing the necessity. In the legal case, legitimacy cannot be established by reference to the laws that are commanded; hence, in the moral case, the legitimacy of the moral authority cannot be established by reference to the moral laws that it commands.

How, then, can it be established? The parallel with law is not entirely helpful. Conditions for legitimacy of a legal authority are partly moral; no vicious circle is involved if we are trying to explain legal, not moral, authority. If, however, we find that the conditions for

[36] This distinction is not the same as Kant's division between categorical imperatives and hypothetical imperatives. Kantian hypothetical imperatives need not be either imperative or hypothetical in form, and hence the imperatives just mentioned might still be hypothetical, according to Kant's division.

[37] On morality as natural law see §455. [38] On this 'jural' conception see §457.

the legitimacy of a moral authority are partly moral, we are in worse difficulties. These principles authorizing the authority cannot themselves be legal commands; if they were, they would take us into a vicious regress. If they are moral principles, not all moral principles are commands of a lawful authority.

This argument—derived from Cudworth and Maxwell—suggests that Pufendorf has to recognize intrinsic morality. If God is to be an authoritative legislator, a principle of intrinsic morality must require obedience to this legislator. If not all moral principles are commands of a divine legislator, we may argue for further principles of intrinsic morality.[39]

576. Pufendorf v. Hobbes on Legitimate Rulers

This argument for naturalism has assumed that a morally legitimate authority rests on a moral basis. But we might reject that assumption, as Hobbes does. In his view, God is a legitimate legal authority because God has power to compel us to obey, on pain of punishment. Fear of God's superior power causes us to accept God's rule over us; the legality of God's commands is established not by any further moral principle, but simply by the fact that God makes them known to us in the standard way. Hobbes does not hold a pure natural law theory, since he also claims that the natural laws whose observance is commanded by God are counsels of prudence, and that this fact makes them moral rules. But his test for God's being a legitimate ruler and legislator is simply divine power.

Cudworth objects that Hobbes's test for legitimate authority is too weak, because it does not distinguish the orders of a tyrant from the laws of a legitimate authority.[40] Pufendorf agrees with Cudworth's objection, and attacks Hobbes for resting obligation simply on power and fear (*JNG* i 6.9–17).[41] An obligation presupposes a just basis for our accepting the limitation of our liberty by the superior who imposes the obligation.[42] We are obliged to look on God not simply with servile fear, but also with veneration (*EJU*, Def. 12, §1); we recognize not only his power, but also his goodness. We should love him as the author and giver of every good (*DOH* 1 4.6).

If Pufendorf demands a just basis for accepting God's rule over us, he seems to force himself into an infinite regress or into a contradiction. He faces an infinite regress if it is just to accept God's rule only because God commands us to accept it; this command will itself need a just basis, which will require a further divine command, and so on. He contradicts himself if this just basis for accepting God's rule is a principle of morality prior to any divine command; for any such principle shows that not all morality rests on divine commands.

577. A Non-moral Basis for Morality?

Pufendorf might avoid this dilemma (or we might avoid it in a revised version of his position) by arguing that 'just reasons' (iustae causae) for accepting God's rule are not moral reasons,

[39] For a similar argument see Cockburn in §876. [40] See Cudworth, §548.

[41] Pufendorf discusses Hobbes, *Civ.* 15.5.

[42] 'Obligations are laid on human minds properly by a superior, that is, by such an one who not only hath sufficient strength to denounce some evil against us upon non-compliance, but hath likewise just reasons (iustae causae) to require the retrenching of the freedom of our will by his own pleasure (arbitrio).' (i 6.9 = K 63)

but appropriate reasons in a more general sense. If he takes this view, he avoids Hobbes's account of legitimacy, but he does not endorse moral conditions for legitimacy. A purely procedural account of law rests on a moral foundation for legitimacy (we may concede), but a purely procedural account of morality rests on a non-moral foundation for legitimacy.

Cumberland seeks this sort of foundation in his claims about practical reason. As rational agents, we are concerned for the common good of rational beings, and when we recognize that God legislates for this common good, we see good reason to observe God's commands. But this is not a moral reason, since, in Cumberland's view, legislation is necessary for morality. Pufendorf lacks Cumberland's doctrine of impartial practical reason; he suggests that apart from divine commands practical reason simply pursues one's own advantage. Can he offer some other non-moral basis for the legitimacy of divine legislation?

He may suggest that we find this non-moral basis if we reflect on the nature of God, as discovered by natural reason. We respond with love and reverence, not because our response fulfils an obligation God lays on us, but simply because God evokes these attitudes. Kindness and benevolence in another may evoke such reactions without any mediating belief that I am obliged to respond in this way to the other person.[43]

But is this an appropriate reason for accepting God as a legitimate ruler? We might accept someone else's instructions because we are grateful to them or we love them; these responses are not based on moral judgments (we may grant to Pufendorf). But such responses do not imply that the person to whom we are grateful (say) is a legitimate moral legislator. Hence they do not seem to support Pufendorf's conception of God as a moral legislator. If we are to treat someone as a moral legislator, it is difficult to avoid reliance on moral judgments.

Sometimes Pufendorf seems to appeal to a more overtly moral basis for accepting God as legislator. He demands that we love God for his goodness, so that we obey him out of admiration for his goodness, not simply out of gratitude for his beneficence to us.[44] This demand seems to introduce a moral judgment about God. For we do not simply admire God's imposition of these laws on us, or God's own observance of them. The mere fact of being a legislator or of observing one's own laws does not justify admiration for someone's goodness. Nor can we simply be moved by a desire to show our appreciation of the benefits God has conferred on us. The fact that you have benefited me does not justify me in doing whatever you want me to do from a desire to repay you or to show my appreciation. If you save me from being murdered, that does not justify me in murdering someone else just because you ask me to.

If gratitude to God is to be a suitable foundation for moral obligations and duties, we must act out of a warranted belief that God can be trusted to ask us to do right rather than wrong actions, and that therefore obedience to God is an appropriate way to show our gratitude. But this belief cannot simply be the belief that God is an almighty legislator who has created us; it presupposes that God prescribes actions that can (at least sometimes) be

[43] Schneewind, 'Pufendorf' 145–6, discusses this attempted solution.

[44] The inadequacy of an appeal to gratitude, even within Pufendorf's system, is remarked by Palladini, *SPDH* 56–62, who also notices that the mere fact of God's having created us should not, according to Pufendorf, establish God's right to rule. Saastamoinen, *MFM* 105–10, replies that Pufendorf does not appeal to any independent idea of justice to find a 'just cause' for God to rule, but derives our idea of justice from our idea of God. According to ii 1.3, we do not apply 'justice' to God with its ordinary sense.

seen, on distinct grounds, to be morally right. In that case we appeal to intrinsic rightness and wrongness, which Pufendorf claims to have repudiated.[45]

These questions about legitimacy reveal a basic difficulty in Pufendorf's attempt to treat morality as a type of law, satisfying a purely procedural condition for moral validity. If moral considerations affect the legitimacy of a moral legislator, morality does not consist only of the laws imposed by a legitimate moral legislator. If we defend Pufendorf by appealing to non-moral conditions for legitimacy, the defence seems inadequate; we seem to need moral conditions that cannot be derived from commands.

Pufendorf, then, seems to be open to the objections that Cudworth raises against Hobbes. Kant summarizes these objections in claiming that positive law presupposes natural law.[46] We might not agree with Kant's claim that the ground of the authority of a legislator of positive law must be moral, and therefore must be part of natural law. But his claim is plausible if we consider a legislative theory of the natural moral law itself; the non-moral grounds that Pufendorf offers do not vindicate the authority of a moral legislator. Hence at least one natural law cannot itself be valid simply because it has been legislated by a divine legislator. This is why Kant, while conceding that we may call God a legislator, denies that God is the author of the moral law.

578. Divine Commands as a Substitute for Morality

Pufendorf need not accept this objection to his legislative conception of moral rightness. He could reply in the way in which Hobbes could reply to Cudworth. Hobbes might concede that we think our moral judgments rest on something more than fear of punishments imposed by human or divine sanctions; but he might still argue that they actually rest on nothing more. If we cannot find a morally acceptable basis (by his opponents' standards), we should abandon our initial assumptions about morality. Similarly, Pufendorf might claim that our obedience to God does not rest on moral reasons, but simply on the causal and psychological effects of our awareness of God's power and beneficence, and our dependence on him. He might claim to be retaining all that can reasonably be maintained of our initial assumptions about morality.

It is more difficult, however, for Pufendorf than for Hobbes to try this revisionary approach to morality. For he does not accept Hobbesian psychology. Nor does he question the initial assumptions about morality that he takes himself to share with his opponents. For he assumes that morality involves some sort of norm, rule, and obligation, and hence imposition by a superior. Without these connexions his argument collapses; he assumes that if we reject them, we are not talking about morality, but about some other sort of belief and practice.

He therefore relies heavily on conceptual claims about the nature of morality, as opposed to (for instance) prudence; his arguments are futile if the conception of morality that he relies on is eccentric. But he seems to violate basic beliefs about morality if he claims

[45] Hutcheson argues in this way for the insufficiency of gratitude, *SMP* ii 3, 266, quoted at §645.

[46] See Kant, *MdS* 224.

that the authority of a moral legislator rests on a non-moral basis—fear or gratitude or a combination of them. He seems not to have explained morality, but to have recommended that we replace it with something else.

Perhaps Pufendorf ought to accept this consequence. He would have a consistent position if he claimed that nothing has the properties that we attribute to morality. He might concede that it is part of the concept of morality that it rests on natural rightness and wrongness, which provide a basis for determining the legitimacy of a legislator. If there is no natural rightness and wrongness, there is no morality. It is sensible (he might argue) to replace moral principles with divine commands resting on non-moral conditions for legitimacy. We argued that Hobbes would hold a more consistent and less easily refuted view if he claimed to be replacing morality rather than describing or explaining it. The same is true of Pufendorf; in this respect as in others, he is closer to Hobbes than he would prefer to be.

We have no reason, however, to replace morality with Pufendorf's position, unless we believe he has exposed some error in a naturalist conception of morality. His attacks on naturalism do not show that a naturalist who agrees with Suarez and Grotius faces serious difficulties. His attempt to formulate an alternative to naturalism seems to face more serious difficulties, especially if it implicitly relies on naturalist claims that do not fit into his theory.

579. Grotius on Nature and Contradiction

Grotius agrees with Cudworth and with Suarez in believing that a voluntarist conception of divine commands and morality leads to further unwelcome results besides those we have already noticed in Pufendorf. In their view, the voluntarist position implies that God can make contradictions true. According to voluntarists, cruelty is wrong because God forbids it; hence, if God were to command it, cruelty would be right, and in that case a contradiction would be true. But this result is impossible; just as God cannot make twice two something other than four, God cannot make something that is intrinsically wrong not wrong (Grotius, *JBP* i 1.10.5).[47]

Pufendorf rejects this argument. He replies that the impossibility of making twice two something other than four is that twice two and four are identical and differ only in description. No such impossibility can be found in actions that conflict with the natural law. The naturalist may be accused of an error in evaluating the counterfactual, (1) 'If God were to command deliberate killing of innocent people,[48] then this deliberate killing (which is wrong) would be right'. The naturalist reads (1) as (2) 'If God were to command deliberate homicide, it would be both right and wrong'. But (2) does not follow from (1), because the crucial clause 'which is wrong' is the aspect of deliberate homicide that is supposed to be changed in the counterfactual supposition; we cannot legitimately hold it fixed in evaluating

[47] Grotius; §465.

[48] It would be shorter simply to use 'murder'. But since it might be argued that murder is essentially wrongful homicide, the use of this term might appear to result in a sound but trivial argument.

the counterfactual. We would be entitled to hold it fixed only if we could not identify deliberate homicide without its being wrong. The supposition that deliberate homicide is not deliberate is unintelligible; but the supposition that it is not wrong is not unintelligible in the same way.

The argument about contradiction might appear to be more effective if we substituted 'vice' for 'deliberate homicide'. For (we might argue) the supposition that vice is not wrong is unintelligible, and therefore the supposition that God could make vice right is self-contradictory. Though this is true, it does not really help naturalism. For voluntarists need not say that God could make vice right; they need only say that he could command actions—e.g., deliberate homicide, taking pleasure in the infliction of pain—that are actually wrong, and then these actions would be right.

Pufendorf's objections are effective against a superficially tempting defence of naturalism by appeal to contradiction. We may confuse the trivial result that God cannot make things both right and wrong with the non-trivial result that God cannot make things right that are actually wrong. One might reasonably attribute to Clarke some arguments that misconstrue trivial results as non-trivial, and one might fairly criticize Cudworth for failing to distinguish the two sorts of result.[49]

It is less clear, however, that Pufendorf answers Suarez's argument, which both Grotius and Cudworth seem to have in mind. Suarez argues as follows: (1) Deliberate homicide is morally bad because it conflicts with rational nature. (2) God cannot change the facts about what conflicts with rational nature. (3) Therefore God cannot change this fact making deliberate homicide bad. (4) Hence, if God makes deliberate homicide not bad, God makes it simultaneously bad and not bad.

Suarez tries to establish the relevant sort of contradiction not by appealing to the alleged internal inconsistency of 'deliberate homicide is not bad', but by appealing to the conflict between this claim and the needs of rational nature. The voluntarist supposes that God can change deliberate homicide from being wrong to being right without changing rational nature; the naturalist claims that this supposition is self-contradictory, given the connexion between wrongness and rational nature.

This argument may be accused of begging the question in favour of naturalism. For the first step asserts that conflict with rational nature is what makes deliberate homicide bad. A voluntarist does not accept this step, but affirms instead that God's prohibition is what makes deliberate homicide bad. Hence Pufendorf maintains that nothing is right or wrong before it is made so by a law.[50] In the face of this voluntarist claim, the argument about contradiction is neither the mistake that Pufendorf alleges nor an independent argument against voluntarism.

Voluntarists might take different views about where the naturalist argument about contradiction goes wrong. Ockham sometimes seems to suggest that it is within God's unqualified power to make deliberate homicide accord with correct reason. In that case God's creation of human beings with this nature still leaves God free to prescribe actions that conflict human nature, or else it leaves God free to make deliberate homicide accord

[49] Cudworth; §547. Clarke; §619.

[50] 'We have already shown in our former book [i 2.6] that no actions are in themselves required or illicit (debita aut illicita) before they are made so [sc. required or illicit] by some law.' (ii 3.4 = K 121 altered)

with human nature.[51] Whichever view Ockham takes, God is free to make it no longer true that deliberate homicide is wrong without making a contradiction true.

580. Divine Freedom and Natural Goodness

These voluntarist answers, however, do not seem to be open to Pufendorf. For he rejects the Ockhamist view, and prefers the account of divine freedom that Cajetan and Suarez maintain in defence of naturalism. He argues that, while God was free to create or not to create human beings, he could not both have created them and imposed a different natural law on them; the Ockhamist supposition 'clearly involves a contradiction'.[52]

Here Pufendorf relies on Grotius' conception of a contradiction as conflict with rational nature. If Ockham says it is possible for deliberate homicide to be contrary to rational nature and yet not morally bad, Ockham affirms (according to Pufendorf) the possibility of a contradiction.[53] If God had created a species with duties (officia) contrary to the actual principles of natural law, he would not have created a social animal, but a different species. In creating the human species, God thereby created an animal for whom not all actions ought to be indifferent, and thereby (eo ipso) constituted a law for this species. The contradiction in Ockham's view lies in the combination of these two claims: (1) The species for whom deliberate homicide would be required would be the human species. (2) The human species is essentially the species of social beings for whom deliberate homicide is bad.

Pufendorf believes, therefore, that Grotius is committed to a more voluntarist position than he acknowledges, because of his claims about divine freedom. But he also believes that his own voluntarist thesis avoids any commitment to a conception of morality as simply the product of arbitrary divine choice. Not only is Grotius, according to Pufendorf, less of a naturalist than he supposes; Pufendorf, according to himself, is also less of a voluntarist than some earlier voluntarists have been.

It is puzzling, however, that Pufendorf uses this argument against Ockham; for the claim that a species for which deliberate homicide is not wrong could not be the human species seems to undermine Pufendorf's legislative account of morality. If the creation of human beings is the creation of animals for whom not every action ought (deberet) to be indifferent, the existence of human beings itself implies some natural duties (debita, officia); and so duties do not all depend on divine legislation.[54]

[51] See Ockham, §395. [52] 'non obscure contradictionem involvere', ii 3.4.

[53] 'For although God was not obliged by any necessity to create man . . . yet when he had once decreed to create him a rational and a social animal, it was impossible but that the present natural law should agree to him; not by an absolute, but by an hypothetical necessity. For should man have been engaged to the contrary performances, not a social animal, but some other species of barbarous and horrid creature had been produced. Notwithstanding all which, it remains for a certain truth, that antecedently to the imposition of any law, all actions are indifferent. For by decreeing to create man, that is, to create an animal whose actions ought (deberent) not all to be indifferent, God immediately constituted a law for him [sc. man].' (ii 3.4 = K 121 altered)

[54] The close connexion that Pufendorf recognizes between human nature and the provisions of the natural law is still clearer in his treatment of dispensations. 'Therefore we cannot properly call it a dispensation of the law of nature, when a man by express command from heaven, executes God's right upon other men, merely as his instrument. . . . None, I believe, can be so simple as to imagine that when the object is changed, or the circumstances varied, the law itself suffers alteration.' (ii 3.5 = K 123) Following Aquinas, Suarez, Grotius, and Cumberland, he denies that God can dispense from the natural law, for just the reasons given by the naturalists.

581. What Sort of Voluntarist is Pufendorf?

We might reply on behalf of Pufendorf that the argument against Ockham does not rule out every sort of voluntarism.[55] Perhaps nothing is morally wrong without a divine command, but still the human species could not exist unless deliberate homicide was morally wrong. These claims are consistent if it is not possible for God to create human beings and not to prohibit deliberate homicide. The resulting position is still voluntarist, since it maintains, against Suarez and Grotius, that deliberate homicide would not be wrong unless God had prohibited it.

The claim about God's necessary will separates this view from the more extreme voluntarism of Ockham and Hobbes. In Hobbes's view, nothing about the divine will and morality makes it necessary for God to command the observance of the principles that preserve human society and individual human beings; that is why God's commanding it is an exercise of divine power rather than divine benevolence. Contrary to Hobbes, Pufendorf takes God's choice of principles to be necessary.[56]

But how are we to understand the necessity of God's choosing to prohibit deliberate homicide among human beings? Pufendorf cannot answer that God sees that deliberate homicide is intrinsically wrong and therefore prohibits it. Cumberland answers that God is essentially rational, and therefore necessarily aims at the common good of rational beings; but Pufendorf does not endorse Cumberland's views about reason and the common good. In his view, God is aware of the non-moral badness (i.e., disadvantage) of deliberate homicide, and necessarily prohibits it for that reason. Instead of saying, as Cumberland says, that God is essentially rational and therefore benevolent, Pufendorf seems to say that God is necessarily benevolent, but for no further reason.

This conception of divine benevolence raises further questions for Pufendorf. It commits him to identifying morality with benevolence. Maxwell argues effectively against Cumberland, as Butler argues against utilitarianism, that benevolence is not the whole of morality. If he is right, a benevolent God cannot be guaranteed to legislate all and only what is morally right.

But if we leave aside this question about the relation between benevolence and morality, Pufendorf still needs to explain the relation of benevolence to God's freedom and God's essence. If God is contingently benevolent, so that benevolence is an aspect of God's ordered power, subject to changes resulting from the exercise of God's unqualified power, God is free not to be benevolent. In that case, if God had not been benevolent, but had commanded human beings to act contrary to their rational nature, would such action have been right? If Pufendorf believes that right and wrong depend on divine legislation, he must answer Yes. But then it cannot be essential to morality that it requires what accords with rational nature, and Pufendorf is back to an Ockhamist view that he rejects.

Apparently, then, Pufendorf needs to say that God is not free not to command actions that accord with rational nature. How, then, can Pufendorf maintain that God is still genuinely free? Aquinas and Suarez have an answer to this question, relying on their view that certain

[55] Korkman, *BNL* 183–229, distinguishes Pufendorf from an extreme voluntarist by saying that he is not a voluntarist at all, but holds a divine command theory.

[56] On this version of voluntarism see §604.

things are intrinsically right, given the nature of human beings. The fact that God is not free not to do what is intrinsically right does not reduce God's genuine freedom; for it is not a diminution of freedom to recognize truths about what one ought to do and what it is best to do, any more than it is a diminution of freedom to recognize truths about the world. God's knowledge of the truth and willing of the good are aspects of his perfection. Pufendorf, however, does not agree that God is guided in legislating by truths about what it is right to do, since there are no such truths apart from God's legislation. Must he not admit, therefore, that God's freedom is limited? The refusal to recognize natural rightness and wrongness raises difficulties for his attempt to safeguard divine freedom. He claims that naturalists cannot reconcile their doctrine of intrinsic morality with divine freedom;[57] but it seems more difficult to reconcile divine freedom with the version of voluntarism that would support Pufendorf's objections to Ockham.

He might answer these questions about freedom by asserting that God is essentially benevolent, and that action in accordance with one's essence is not a limitation on one's freedom. But then he needs to explain why God is essentially benevolent. This is explicable from a naturalist point of view; benevolence is an aspect of God's perfection because it is required by intrinsic rightness. But it is more difficult to see how God's essential benevolence is to be explained from a voluntarist point of view, without reference to intrinsic rightness. Pufendorf does not explain why God would not be God without benevolence, since benevolence does not seem to be among God's perfections.[58]

It is not clear, then, that Pufendorf has found a plausible version of voluntarism that avoids the aspects of naturalism and Ockhamism that he rejects. Though his position might be made consistent, it is difficult to defend on the basis of any plausible conception of a divine legislator. Once he rejects the naturalist view that God legislates on the basis of intrinsic morality, it is difficult to find a credible account of why God necessarily prescribes just those principles that naturalists ascribe to intrinsic morality.

582. Divine Freedom, Creation, and Legislation

Pufendorf, however, does not believe that it is difficult to reconcile his views about morality and nature with his legislative account of morality. Sometimes he removes any difficulty by relying on the broader notion of 'legislation' that we have seen in his discussion of creation. He claims that in the very act of creation God at the same time constituted a law for human beings (ii 3.4, quoted above), and therefore morality can be understood as the result of divine legislation.

This claim about creation, however, does not help Pufendorf's legislative thesis about morality. The only sort of law that follows from the act of creation is the sort that Suarez calls indicative law, including every sort of norm or rule. Suarez denies that law in this broad sense is genuine law; for if it were genuine law, it would be trivially true, given Suarez's view of rightness, that rightness presupposes law. When Pufendorf claims that rightness

[57] See §566. [58] A similar question arises about Hutcheson's treatment of God's benevolence. See §662.

presupposes law, he does not mean the claim in the trivial sense; hence facts about creation do not by themselves vindicate him.

Pufendorf's tendency to speak of law in both narrower and broader senses helps to explain why he sometimes rejects Grotius' position, but sometimes suggests that Grotius really agrees with him. Though he sometimes rejects Grotius' argument to show that voluntarism gives God the power to make contradictions true, he sometimes seems to endorse this argument. He recognizes that Grotius takes the relevant contradictions to result from the relation of some actions to 'nature using sound reason' (*JBP* i 1.10.5) and 'rational and social nature' (i 1.12.1).[59] The reference to sound reason, in Pufendorf's view, refers to the law of sociality that the Creator enjoined on human beings. Grotius must admit that human beings receive their rational and social nature not from immutable necessity, but from God's pleasure; hence they must have received the morality of actions that fit or do not fit human beings, as rational and social, from God also.

This is a puzzling argument; for it implies that the legislative account of morality is irrelevant to Pufendorf's essential claims. All that he shows by appealing to God's pleasure is that the existence of human beings with rational and social natures depends on God's creative will. But none of the naturalists whom he attacks denies this claim about dependence; since on this point they are orthodox Christians, they agree that God's creative will determines what sorts of agents exist.

Pufendorf's argument is intelligible if we recall his disputable assumption that naturalists must admit some principle external to God that limits God's freedom.[60] Perhaps he assumes that their claims about what God cannot do commit them to some restriction of God's freedom as creator. This assumption needs some defence. In any case, recognition of the point that Pufendorf insists on about God's freedom as creator falls far short of acceptance of his claims about morality and legislation.

We have found, therefore, that Pufendorf defines his relation to naturalists about morality in two ways. (1) Sometimes he agrees with them in recognizing natural goods, but disagrees with them in excluding moral goods from natural goods; that is why he thinks morality requires additional legislation. (2) He agrees with them in recognizing natural morality, but he thinks that this proves his legislative thesis if we agree that God created human beings. These two claims are inconsistent, since the first denies natural morality, and the second accepts it.

Pufendorf does not believe he is inconsistent, because he uses 'law' and 'legislation' equivocally. The first claim contrasts moral properties, which depend on legislation, with natural properties, which do not. But the second claim takes law to embrace all the properties that are required by the indicative laws of creation. The difference between these two claims about nature and legislation marks the difference between the voluntarist and the naturalist view of morality. According to the naturalist, nothing needs to be added to created nature for moral properties to exist; according to the voluntarist, divine legislation has to be added. Pufendorf's different conceptions of law and legislation sometimes lead him into

[59] In understanding Grotius this way Pufendorf undermines his objection to the argument about contradiction, which (as we have explained) does not apply to the explanation of 'contradiction' that he attributes to Grotius here.

[60] See §566.

disagreement with naturalism; but sometimes he represents the naturalist view as though it were his own (because of his broad use of 'law' for indicative law).

583. Sociality and Society

Questions about Pufendorf's attitude to naturalism affect his claims about nature in his social philosophy. He accepts some of the appeals to human nature that the naturalists use as the basis for their account of societies and states; but he rejects the naturalist claims that would separate his position from Hobbes's claims about the moral basis of the commonwealth.

He maintains that naturalist principles, abstracted from the will of God, provide counsels of advantage with no moral force. But once we know that God commands us to preserve and to develop rational human nature, these naturalist principles can be used to support moral principles. He therefore takes over Grotius' Stoic principle of 'sociality', and takes this to provide a moral basis for the formation of communities with their own moral principles.

In taking sociality to be a central aspect of human nature, apart from any society, Pufendorf departs consciously from one of Hobbes's basic assumptions. In Hobbes's view, if we do not presuppose a government that secures peace for us, the rule of self-preservation has absolute priority, and no other aspect of human nature has any practical standing except insofar as it promotes self-preservation. Self-preservation is the ultimate and dominant end; in this respect, it corresponds to happiness, as Aristotle and Aquinas conceive it. Since Hobbes rejects the Aristotelian view that the ultimate end includes more than self-preservation, the other laws of nature oblige only in foro interno in the state of nature.

Pufendorf agrees with Cumberland in rejecting this view about human nature in the state of nature.[61] Human beings are not only naturally concerned for their own safety, but also naturally social; hence other principles besides self-preservation have moral standing in the state of nature. As Clarke sees, this does not imply that we are required to neglect self-preservation in the state of nature; but it implies that we are required to act on social principles even if they do not promote self-preservation, as long as they do not undermine it.[62] Pufendorf takes the neglect of natural sociality to be one of Hobbes's major errors about the state of nature.

He therefore rejects, as Grotius does, the argument of Carneades seeking to prove that utility is the origin of justice (*JNG* ii 3.11–12). He agrees with Grotius in appealing to the social aspect of human nature.[63] This is the aspect that Hobbes forgets in his account of the

[61] On Cumberland see §535. Pufendorf cites him in the discussion of sociality at ii 3.15.

[62] Clarke on Hobbes; §629.

[63] 'This then will appear a fundamental law of nature, every man ought, as far as in him lies, to promote and preserve a peaceful sociableness with others, agreeable to the main end and disposition of human race [sic] in general. For by sociableness we do not here mean a bare readiness or propension to join in particular societies, which may possibly be formed on ill designs, and in an ill manner; as the confederacies of thieves and robbers; as if it were sufficient only to join ourselves with others, let our intentions be what they will. But by this term of sociableness we would imply such a disposition of one man towards all others, as shall suppose him united to them in benevolence, by peace, by charity, and so, as it were, by a silent and a secret obligation.' (ii 3.15 = K 137)

state of nature.[64] Pufendorf acknowledges[65] and endorses Cumberland's detailed critique of Hobbes's view that it is rational for people in the state of nature to behave to one another in ways that keep them in a state of war.

584. The Limits of Sociality

If we rely on natural sociality, we do not confine evaluation of a state to its success in keeping the peace. If we take communities, including political communities, to be appropriate means for fulfilling human nature, including its rational and social aspect, we can rely on other criteria for assessing the moral acceptability of a state apart from its success in defending us from aggression.

This is the basis of Suarez's argument against Machiavelli's case for putting the state beyond moral criticism. He also appeals to natural sociality in arguing that the subject's obligation to obey the ruler has limits, even if the ruler does not actually threaten the subject's life. This is the basis for Suarez's qualified defence of rebellion and tyrannicide, applied especially to England under James I.[66]

Grotius' attitude to this appeal to nature is cautious. He uses it, as Suarez does, to argue against the view that there is no place for considerations of right and justice in the state of nature, and especially in relations between states (*JBP*, Prol. 25). To this extent, he agrees with Suarez against Machiavelli. But he rejects Suarez's use of the argument from nature to support rebellion.[67] He recognizes the right to refuse to obey orders to act unjustly, but denies any right to depose a ruler who rules badly. He limits the right of rebellion (i 4.8), though he allows it in extreme circumstances (i 4.7.4).

Grotius' position, therefore, exemplifies Hobbes's charge that naturalist Aristotelian conceptions of the role of the state are dangerous (from his point of view), since they leave room for criticism, and, in some circumstances, for rebellion on the basis of this criticism. Hobbes's complaint applies to Suarez, and, to a significant though lesser degree, to Grotius.

Pufendorf takes a further step away from the aspects of naturalism that disturb Hobbes. He believes that human beings are naturally social, and therefore he recognizes a natural basis for communities, but he halts any appeal to social human nature when he reaches civil society. Though human beings are naturally social, they are not naturally political.[68] Hence we cannot justify or understand or criticize political society by considering how well

[64] 'For since the natural state of man includes the use of reason, we must by no means separate from it those obligations which reason tells us we lie under. And because every man may discover it to be most for his own interest and advantage so to manage his behaviour as to procure rather the benevolence than the enmity of others; he may easily presume from the likeness of nature, that other men have the same sentiments about the point as himself. Therefore it is very foul play, in describing this imaginary state, to suppose that all men, or however, the greatest part of them do act with disregard and defiance to reason, which is by nature constituted supreme directress of human proceedings; and such a state cannot, without the highest absurdity, be called natural, which owes its production to the neglect or the abuse of the natural principle in man.' (ii 2.9 = K 114)

[65] In a footnote to this paragraph. See Cumberland, §535.

[66] See Suarez, §451.

[67] See *JBP* i 3.9.1; i 4.1.3.

[68] '. . . allowing him a natural desire of society, since this may be gratified by the primary societies already described, this infers not his desire of civil society, any more than his general love of employment bespeaks his affection for that of a scholar in particular.' (*JNG* vii 1.3 = K 625)

or badly it fulfils the natural sociality of human beings. The social aspect of human nature can only justify smaller communities, such as families, voluntary associations, and so on. It cannot be used to justify civil society.

This distinction between the merely social and the civil is supported by an examination of Aristotle's remarks on human beings as political animals. Pufendorf correctly points out that some of these remarks do not refer specifically to the state, and therefore do not support Aristotle's claims about the specifically political nature of human beings.[69] But his criticism of Aristotle is incomplete. In the *Ethics* (in the passage quoted by Pufendorf) Aristotle claims that the complete good requires fellow-citizens (*politai*) as well as family and friends. Pufendorf does not comment on this claim; he speaks as though Aristotle had mentioned only family and friends. Aristotle recognizes the difference between the city and other sorts of community, and argues that the functions peculiar to a city are necessary to fulfil human nature. These arguments in *Politics* i and iii are not answered by Pufendorf.

In restricting the appeal to sociality, Pufendorf accepts part of Hobbes's conception of the moral basis of the state. His view about the state is more Hobbesian than we might have predicted from his views about sociality and from his criticism of Hobbes's neglect of sociality in the state of nature. He takes the function of the state to be limited by the demands of security, which is needed to remedy the evils that result from the blind impulses of individuals in the state of nature.[70] The provision of security against these evils is the only function of the state; no further basis for evaluation or criticism of a state is recognized. By abandoning the critical aspects of naturalism, Pufendorf avoids Hobbes's criticisms of appeals to nature.

On this point, as in his treatment of divine commands and natural law, Pufendorf abandons some, though not all, naturalist claims. He takes the demands of human nature to be relevant to natural law, but insufficient for morality. He takes human sociality to be important for understanding elementary human societies, but not for understanding the moral basis of the state.[71] Pufendorf's partial rejection of naturalism brings him closer to Hobbes. His reasons for abandoning some aspects of naturalism are not convincing, in the light of his moral and theological premisses.

It is not surprising that Pufendorf both appeals to natural human sociality and strictly limits his appeal. For we have noticed that Grotius' belief in natural sociality is the basis for

[69] 'But now his affection for civil government can never be inferred from the bare desire of company; since this . . . may be equally gratified by primary societies, such as may well be supposed without admitting a commonwealth. So again, the Philosopher proves man to be a political creature from the reason of speech, which else had been assigned to him to no purpose; whereas the use of speech is not confined to a commonwealth; men having lived and conversed together long before the institution of government. In like manner is to be understood that passage in his first book of Ethics to Nicomachus: "That good may deserve the name of perfect, which appears to be sufficient; and that we call sufficient, which answers not only to the wants of a single man in a solitary life, but those of our parents, our wife, our children, our friends and fellow subjects, . . . because man is by nature a political creature." And yet, there is room for the several relations of parents, children, wife, and friends, without supposing a commonwealth.' (vii 1.3 = K 626)

[70] On Hobbes see §492.

[71] Saastamoinen, *MFM* 82–94, argues that Pufendorf's case for civil society is not egoistic, based on individual benefit, but theocentric; we have to do what is needed to fulfil God's intention to have human beings live a distinctively human life in society. This view brings Pufendorf closer to Grotius (except for the necessity of appealing to God's intention).

his belief in natural morality. If Pufendorf completely endorsed Grotius' belief, it would be difficult to reject natural morality. If, however, he completely rejected Grotius' belief, he would lose his main ground for disagreement with Hobbes. The limited endorsement of natural sociality makes Pufendorf's position unstable at the crucial points. This instability is yet another sign of the difficulty that Pufendorf faces in maintaining his voluntarism against the main objections urged by naturalists.

585. Influence of Pufendorf

Pufendorf's position deserves careful study not only for its contribution to the long debate about naturalism and voluntarism, but also because of its influence on later moral philosophy. It was influential in Scotland, partly because Gerschom Carmichael published an annotated edition. Since Carmichael was a professor in Glasgow, his edition helped to make *De Officio Hominis* a textbook in Glasgow, where Hutcheson became familiar with it.[72] Carmichael's notes suggest general agreement with Pufendorf, especially on the main questions about the relation between morality and divine commands.[73]

Pufendorf's work was also widely used in England. Some of the specific evidence of its use comes from the accounts of Dissenting academies (where Butler, Price, and Godwin received their education).[74] Samuel Palmer recalls that the books studied in the academy he attended included Suarez in metaphysics, and in ethics Hereboord (the main textbook), More, Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus (with Simplicius), Solomon, and 'the moral works of the great Pufendorf'.[75] Philip Doddridge mentions Grotius and Pufendorf as a principal source of the ethics that he learned in his academy.[76] He includes Pufendorf in a list of books recommended to John Wesley as suitable reading for young preachers. Though he recommends Hutcheson only with reservations, he does not qualify his commendation of Pufendorf.[77]

Among his English and Scottish readers Pufendorf does not seem to have received any explicit criticism of the voluntarist foundations of his theory. Some of them are sympathetic to voluntarism. But even among those who oppose voluntarism, no one attacks Pufendorf

[72] On Hutcheson see §676.

[73] In Suppl. i. Carmichael represents the natural law as God's instructions to us for our happiness. He takes divine commands to be necessary for genuine morality: 'But in order for any human action or its omission to be a moral act and thereby imputable to a human being as good or evil, in accordance with what has been said above, a law must be added, prescribing or forbidding that action' (§13). This law has to come from the divine will.

[74] See Lincoln, *SPSIED,* esp. 83.

[75] Bogue and Bennett, *HD* ii 80–1.

[76] 'Our ethics are interwoven with pneumatology and make a very considerable part of it. They are mostly collected from Pufendorf and Grotius, and contain no very surprising discoveries, but seem to be built on a very rational foundation, and comprise a great deal in a few words.' (Doddridge, *Corr.* i 43) 'Our ethics were a part of pneumatology. The principal authors whom Mr Jennings referred to were Grotius and Pufendorf. But, upon the whole, I know of no book which resembles it [sc. our ethics?] so much, both in matter and method, as Wollaston's Religion of Nature Delineated.' (*Corr.* ii 469)

[77] 'For ethics, Whitly and Carmichael's edition of Pufendorf's De Officio Hominis, to which Hutcheson's ethics may be added, which is an elegant piece, though some of his principles are not in my judgment good, as he goes on the foundation of the necessitarian scheme.' (*Corr.* iii 484–5)

as an influential defender of voluntarism. German critics are more explicit on this point, and Pufendorf defends himself against them in his controversial works.[78] Some of the right questions are raised by Leibniz, who defends the aspects of Scholastic ethics that Pufendorf rejects. We may therefore turn to the ethical position that is the basis for Leibniz's critique of Pufendorf.

[78] See §587.

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LEIBNIZ: NATURALISM AND EUDAEMONISM

586. Scholasticism

Leibniz defends some aspects of the naturalist position against voluntarism. His defence is worth comparing with the arguments of Suarez, Grotius, and Pufendorf. His naturalism in theology and in the foundations of ethics is part of an overall outlook that revives an Aristotelian and Scholastic point of view, by combining naturalism with eudaemonism and with a teleological conception of morality.[1]

Modern philosophers were too hasty, according to Leibniz, in rejecting the Scholastic outlook. 'The incomparable Grotius' was right to say that there is gold in the rubbish of the monks' barbarous Latin (*Theod.*, Prelim. Disc. = G vi 53 = H 77). Modern critics have unjustly attacked Aristotelian teleology, and Aristotelian attempts to understand human nature with reference to the natural and immanent ends of human beings. Boyle and Pufendorf accuse naturalist views of setting up a principle that is independent of God.[2] Belief in a free and sovereign God appears to rule out, as a restriction on God's freedom, any inherent goals in natural substances.

Leibniz argues that this modern criticism of Aristotelian views misunderstands divine freedom and natural goals. In 'On nature itself', he turns the theological argument back on his opponents; they diminish God's creative power if they deny that God has created substances that are capable of initiating their own goal-directed movements. If we agree that God creates substances that are sufficiently complex to have natures and ends, we have some reason to agree that their nature also fixes what is good and right for them.[3]

[1] Leibniz's scanty references to Aristotle are discussed by Mercer, 'Ethical knowledge'. Though she emphasizes the Platonic aspects of his epistemology, she recognizes his Aristotelian conception of nature (146–7). This conception helps to explain some of the main tendencies of his moral outlook.

[2] On Boyle see §481. Pufendorf on divine freedom; §566.

[3] 'If the law set up by God does in fact leave some vestige of him expressed in things, if things have been so formed by the command that they are made capable of fulfilling the will of him who commanded them, then it must be granted that there is a certain efficacy residing in things, a form or force such as we usually designate by the name of nature, from which the series of phenomena follows according to the prescription of the first command.' ('On nature itself' §6 = G iv 507 = L 501) Leibniz's conception of nature is compared briefly with the outlook of the Cambridge Platonists by Cassirer, *PRE* 150–4.

Leibniz suggests that his opponents' view tends towards the occasionalism of Malebranche.[4]

This dispute in natural philosophy helps to explain why Pufendorf opposes naturalism on behalf of divine sovereignty; he applies Boyle's general objections to a teleological view of nature to the particular claims of naturalists about right and wrong. Leibniz answers this theological attack on a teleological conception of nature.

Though Leibniz's thoughts on questions in moral philosophy are brief and scattered, his outlook is quite systematic. Moreover, it is familiar to Kant—at any rate, in its Wolffian form—as a representative of the traditional naturalist point of view.[5] But he may not present the traditional eudaemonist view in its most plausible form. He connects naturalism and eudaemonism with some doctrines that are absent from Aquinas and Suarez, and that might reasonably arouse Kant's suspicion.

587. The Reformation

Leibniz's sympathy towards mediaeval Scholasticism is relevant not only to philosophy but also to his theological outlook. In his comments on the Lutheran Reformation, he acknowledges Luther's antagonism to Aristotle, including Aristotle's ethics. But he points out that this is not the only Lutheran attitude to Aristotle. He cites the favourable reference to Aristotle's ethics in the most conciliatory of early Lutheran documents, the *Apology*, of which Melanchthon was a principal author. As we might expect, Leibniz commends Melanchthon's general attitude to Aristotelian philosophy.[6]

In his view, the moderate outlook of Melanchthon is a suitable model for an enlightened Christian philosophical position. Pufendorf attacks those Lutheran theologians who defend naturalism by appeal to Suarez, whom (he alleges) they regard as equal to the Apostles.[7] He suggests that naturalism belongs to the mediaeval Scholastic outlook that has been discarded in theology and philosophy. Since Leibniz believes that the Scholastic outlook does not deserve to be wholly discarded, he agrees with those who take a Lutheran and a naturalist outlook to be compatible.

This sympathy towards mediaeval Scholasticism also influences other aspects of Leibniz's attitude to contemporary divisions among Christians. In discussion with Bossuet, he suggests

[4] Leibniz believes his opponents have to say: '. . . things do not act but . . . God acts in the presence of things and according to the fitness of things, so that things are occasions, not causes, and merely receive but never effect or produce' ('Nature' §10 = G iv 509 = L 502).

[5] See Schneewind, *IA*, ch. 22. Wolff's role as intermediary between Leibniz and Kant is discussed by Beck, *EGP* 256–75. Schmucker, *UEK*, ch. 1, esp. 42–7, describes the importance of Wolff in forming the early stages of Kant's moral philosophy.

[6] 'But at last he [sc. Luther] curbed his vehemence and in the *Apology for the Augsburg Confession* allowed a favourable mention of Aristotle and his *Ethics*. Melanchthon, a man of sound and moderate ideas, made little systems from the several parts of philosophy, adapted to the truths of revelation and useful in civic life, which deserve to be read even now.' (*T*, Prelim. Disc. §12 = G vi 57 = H 81)

[7] In *ES* Pufendorf discusses an argument for naturalism by Zentgraf, who cites Suarez in his support; see *GW* v 209.19–30. He remarks that for Zentgraf the name of Suarez is 'par Apostolis nomen'. Zentgraf was a Lutheran theologian; on his critique of Pufendorf see Palladini, *DSSP* 217–21.

that differences between Protestants and Roman Catholics are not irreconcilable.[8] Leibniz's conviction about the possibility of reconciling the Protestant and Roman positions on fundamentals presupposes that neither side is properly charged with the errors that the other side urges against it, so that the mutual anathemas are not deserved. On this point he is about three centuries ahead of his time.

588. Egoism and Eudaemonism

Leibniz revives the eudaemonism of Aristotelian ethics. He accepts it as a psychological doctrine; hence he claims that we always pursue our own good, and that allegedly incontinent action is really the result of ignorance of our good. Sometimes he appears to be a psychological egoist, and even a hedonist. He understands happiness (felicity) as 'a lasting state of pleasure'.[9] He understands love in the same way, but he allows it to include 'disinterested' love, which nonetheless is inseparable from one's own pleasure.[10]

This conception of disinterested love allows Leibniz to endorse the pursuit of virtue for its own sake. He approves of most of Shaftesbury's attitude to morality and the moral motive. In his view, non-mercenary love is possible insofar as the happiness of those in whose happiness we take pleasure becomes a part of our own happiness. If we find pleasure 'in' the good of another, the happiness of others turns into our own happiness.[11]

This position shares some of the obscurities of Shaftesbury's position. It is not clear whether Leibniz's claims about happiness rest on hedonist assumptions or not. Indeed, he seems to raise some difficulties for a strictly hedonist account of happiness. If happiness consists entirely in pleasure, we can find pleasure 'in' some object only insofar as the object is a source of pleasure, but not something valued for its own sake. In this sense, an Epicurean hedonist can find pleasure 'in' the pleasure of another.[12] But this construal of 'pleasure in'

[8] '. . . these differences would be still less considerable than some of those which are tolerated within the Roman Church, such as for example, the point concerning the necessity of the love of God, and the point of probabilism. . . . If, however, the matter were treated as it should be, I believe that the Protestants would one day be able to explain their views concerning dogma more favourably than seems at first . . . ' (Letter to Bossuet, 18 Apr. 1692 = Foucher de Careil i 344–5 = R 189). Leibniz's proposals for reunion are discussed by Jordan, *RC*. See esp. ch. 6 on the correspondence with Bossuet.

[9] R 83 = 'Felicity', in Grua, *TI* ii 579. Cf. *NE* i 2.4; i 2.9 (perhaps less hedonist).

[10] 'To love is nothing else than finding one's pleasure (I say pleasure, and not utility or interest) in the good (bien), perfection, happiness of another; and thus, though love can be disinterested, it can nonetheless never be detached from our own good, into which pleasure essentially enters.' (R 19 = to Bossuet, 6–16 Oct. 1698 = Foucher de Careil ii 199)

[11] 'I find it well said, . . . that true virtue must be disinterested, that is to say, as I interpret it, that one ought to be brought to find pleasure in the exercise of virtue, and disgust in that of vice, and that this should be the aim of education.' ('Judgment on Shaftesbury', R 196 = Dutens v 34 (Letter 11)) 'Our [own] good is no doubt the basis of our motives, but quite often we find not only our utility but even our pleasure in the good of another; and in this last case there is precisely what ought to be called disinterested love . . . ' (R 197) 'Love (amare sive diligere) . . . is rejoicing in the happiness of another, or, what amounts to the same thing, converting (adsciscere) the happiness of another into one's own. With this is resolved a difficult question, of great moment in theology as well: in what way non-mercenary love is given, which is separated from hope and fear, and of all regard for utility. In truth, those whose utility delights us, they are the ones whose happiness turns into (ingreditur) our own happiness; for since things that please us are desired for their own sake.' ('Codex Iuris Gentium' = Dutens iv 295 = L 421–2 = R 171)

[12] On Epicurus see §159.

does not explain how the happiness of others could 'turn into' our own happiness. However important your pleasure may be in causing my pleasure, this causal role does not make it either the whole or a part of my pleasure.

Alternatively, if I take pleasure in something as the essential object of this pleasure, the object is not simply causally related to the pleasure, but internally connected to the value of the pleasure itself. If this is what Leibniz means, he cannot consistently identify good exclusively with pleasure; for I identify my good with pleasure in this specific object, on the assumption that this object is intrinsically appropriate, and hence valuable in its own right.

The obscurity in Leibniz's views about pleasure and happiness infects his attempt to clarify them with an example. We may find it pleasant to look at a beautiful painting, apart from any further gain; when this disinterested pleasure takes a person as its object, it becomes (in his view) pure love.[13] In distinguishing our attitude to things not capable of happiness from our attitude to persons Leibniz recalls Aristotle; our attitude to non-agents does not include a concern for their interests, since they have none, but is simply a concern for their preservation for us (*EN* 1155b27–31). But if we grant this difference, we may still be puzzled by Leibniz's remark about the painting. Paintings and jokes may be sources of pleasure by themselves, apart from any further instrumental benefit, but Leibniz does not seem to treat our attitude to the painting as parallel to our attitude to the joke. In contrast to a joke, he seems to suggest that we attribute some non-instrumental goodness to the painting, apart from the fact that we find pleasure in it; we find pleasure in it because of this non-instrumental value. But if this is what he means, he does not always hold a hedonist view of happiness.

Perhaps, then, Leibniz really means that happiness consists in pleasure taken in appropriate activities and states. If this is what he means, it is more intelligible to regard the object of the pleasure as part of one's happiness. Hence it is more intelligible to regard the good of another person as a part of one's own good.

Though Leibniz recognizes the possibility of love for another person for the other's own sake, and hence of non-mercenary love, he does not identify this with purely disinterested love. He avoids the Quietist conception of pure love, as Fénélon describes it. According to Quietism, love of God ought eventually to renounce all considerations of self-interest, so that genuine love of God excludes any concern for one's own interest, or perfection, or salvation. Bossuet argues against Fénélon that disinterested love, understood in this way, is neither possible nor desirable. Leibniz takes Bossuet's side in this controversy.[14] He rejects any disinterested love that is separated from one's concern for one's own good. But his composite view of happiness allows love of another to be essential to one's own

[13] 'And just as the contemplation of beautiful things is itself pleasant, and a painting of Raphael affects a person who has understanding, even if it brings him no gain, so that some image of his love remains in his eyes and in his pleasures; so also, when the beautiful thing is capable of happiness, the affection passes over into true love.' ('Cod. Iur. Gent.' = Dutens iv 295 = L 422 = R 171)

[14] '. . . This is the controversy about whether love which is disinterested, and seeks the well-being of the beloved, nevertheless depends upon the impulsion toward one's own well-being. . . . I should answer that whatever is pleasant is sought for itself, as opposed, that is, to what is useful to the good ends of producing the well-being of another. . . . the impulse to action arises from a striving towards perfection, the sense of which is pleasure, and there is no action or will on any other basis. . . . Nor can anyone renounce (except merely verbally) being impelled by his own good, without renouncing his own nature' (Pref. Mantissa Cod. Iur. Gent. = L 424). On Quietism see §§529, 611, 717.

good, and not simply instrumental to it; in this sense, Leibniz believes in disinterested love of God.

He complicates his views about motivation and reason still further by describing pleasure as the 'sense' of perfection. Here he suggests that perfection is the end and pleasure is just the sign of our having achieved it. If this is what he means, he avoids a purely hedonist conception of the ultimate end, and thereby allows a more intelligible notion of disinterested concern. His modifications of hedonism help to explain why Leibniz is sympathetic to traditional eudaemonism, which treats disinterested concern for another as part of one's own good. He shares this sympathy with Shaftesbury, and so endorses some of Shaftesbury's defence of unselfish moral attitudes.

But he stops short of endorsing Shaftesbury's claim that virtue promotes happiness in the present life.[15] He objects to philosophers' arguments about virtue and happiness on the ground that they are not effective enough among most people.[16] Leibniz speaks as though he were pointing out some flaw in the argument about virtue and happiness in this life. But he seems to point out only that people find the argument difficult to believe. He does not explain why an appeal to God and to divine rewards and punishments would be the only cogent argument for the claim that virtue always promotes happiness. He seems to suggest that this appeal is more likely to weigh with most people.

Leibniz might intend to object that Shaftesbury's claim is too restricted to be very useful. If we identify happiness with pleasure, virtue promotes our happiness only if we find enough pleasure in being virtuous; but if we happen to be unmoved by that sort of thing, virtue does not (according to this argument) promote our happiness. In that case Shaftesbury's argument applies only to people who already take pleasure in virtue; but they do not need to be convinced by an argument to show that virtue promotes happiness. For the people who need an argument, Shaftesbury's argument is useless.

This objection to Shaftesbury rests on a subjectivist and hedonist conception of happiness. But it is not clear that Leibniz accepts this conception of happiness. He implicitly agrees (for the reasons we have mentioned) that our happiness consists in what is really good; if some or most people find it difficult to recognize what is really good for them, that does not affect the fact that it is good for them. He also agrees that one can find one's own good in the good of others; this is not because everyone finds more pleasure in the good of others, but

[15] 'But that we ought to hold this life itself, and all that makes it desirable, second to the great advantage of others, so that it behooves us to bear the greatest pains for the sake of others—this is beautifully prescribed by philosophers rather than firmly demonstrated (magis pulchre praecipitur a philosophis quam solide demonstratur).' (G iii 388 = R 173 = L 423)

[16] 'For the dignity and glory, and our mind's sense taking pleasure in virtue (animi sui virtute gaudentem sensus), to which they appeal under the names of honestas, are certainly goods of thought or the mind, and indeed great ones. But they are not such as to prevail over all men, or over all the bitterness of evils, since not all men are equally moved by the imagination, especially those who have not grown used to the weighing of virtue or the cherishing of goods of the mind, ... In order really to establish by a universal demonstration that everything honourable is beneficial, ... we must assume the immortality of the soul and the ruler of the universe, God.' (G iii 388 = R 173 = L 423) 'One can say that this serenity of spirit, which finds the greatest pleasure in virtue and the greatest evil in vice, that is, in the perfection and imperfection of the will, would be the greatest good of which man is capable here below, even if he had nothing to expect beyond this life. For what can be preferred to this internal harmony, this constant pleasure in the purest and greatest, of which one is always master and which one need never abandon? Yet it must also be said that it is difficult to attain this disposition of spirit and that the number of those who have achieved it is small, most men remaining insensible to this motive, great and beautiful though it is.' (R 58 = L 569–70)

because those who recognize worthwhile pleasures in the appropriate objects take these pleasures in their own genuine good, which includes the good of others. If disinterested love (as Leibniz understands it) promotes one's own good, the disinterested pursuit of virtue should promote one's own good. This is nonetheless true even if virtue does not yield greater pleasure than any other way of life, according to some neutral measure of quantity of pleasure. Shaftesbury's case seems to rely on arguments and assumptions that Leibniz endorses; and so Leibniz does not explain why Shaftesbury is wrong.

If Leibniz concedes this point to Shaftesbury, he need not withdraw his claim that divine rewards and punishments are important. Even if they are not necessary to make virtue promote one's happiness, they may provide significant further reasons for believing this claim, and especially for believing that virtue does not require a long-term sacrifice of happiness. Shaftesbury agrees on these points. But it does not follow that divine rewards and punishments are needed to demonstrate that virtue promotes happiness.

This comparison of Leibniz's claims about disinterested love with his objections to Shaftesbury suggests that he has not explored the implications of his various views on pleasure and happiness. His opposition to Shaftesbury seems to reflect a hedonist and subjectivist conception that does not account for all of Leibniz's claims and arguments about happiness. His arguments seem to bring him closer to the Aristotelian position on this question than his objections to Shaftesbury might would suggest.

589. The Right and the Just

Leibniz's conception of one's good as involving one's own perfection allows concern for the good of others for their own sake. He believes that one's own good also requires such concern for the good of others. This is the basis of goodness and beneficence.[17] These connexions between goodness, perfection, and justice imply that if we have a true conception of our own good, we also seek the good of others for its own sake. This is why enlightened concern for the perfection of the intelligent substance that is myself leads to concern for the perfection of intelligent substances generally.

Why does Leibniz believe that concern for one's own perfection results in concern for the perfection of others? Perhaps he assumes that one's conception of one's own perfection is non-egocentric from the beginning. My concern for myself, on this view, is concern for my perfection simply as the perfection of an intellectual substance; hence any other intellectual substance will appear to me to have the same claim on my concern. Alternatively, he may assume that my conception of my own perfection may be egocentric, but a proper understanding of this perfection requires me to engage in the activities that extend my concern to others. This is the strategy of Aristotle and Aquinas, who take friendship and intellectual love to mediate between self-concern and concern for others. They argue that an egocentric concern for my own perfection as a rational being leads to the co-operative

[17] 'Justice is nothing but what conforms to wisdom and goodness combined. The end of goodness is the greatest good. But to recognize this we need wisdom, which is merely the knowledge of the good, as goodness is merely the inclination to do good to all and to prevent evil. . . . we may ask what is the true good. I reply that it is merely whatever serves the perfection of intelligent substances.' (R 50 = L 564)

activities that require non-instrumental concern for others. It is not clear whether Leibniz accepts this argument.

His account of the basis of concern for others in concern for their perfection affects his account of justice. While he accepts traditional 'nominal definitions' of justice, he argues that we find its real essence only by understanding it teleologically.[18] A nominal definition might be negative, defining just actions as those that are not open to reasonable complaint by others. But this definition does not show us what would be a sound basis for reasonable complaint, or why a good person sees a reason for acting justly. To answer these further questions, we need to recognize the basis of justice in love for others and in concern for their perfection.

Leibniz, therefore, describes justice as 'the charity of the wise'.[19] It is the expression of love for others, aiming at the proper end of such love, which is the perfection of intellectual substances. This is the right way to conceive justice, because it is the right way to understand the rational basis of concern for others. Since this basis rests on a true conception of self-interest, Carneades is wrong to believe in a conflict between justice and self-interest.

The connexion of justice with charity means that we cannot separate justice from beneficence. Justice does not consist simply in refraining from harm, and it does not leave other virtues to confer positive benefits on others. On the contrary, if the Golden Rule gives the content of justice, justice includes beneficence, since we would reasonably want others to be beneficent to us, and not simply to avoid harming us.[20] Leibniz argues that we are not simply required to refrain from harm, but also to prevent harm to another if we can easily prevent it.[21] Moreover, we are required not only to prevent harm, but even to benefit another, if we can easily do it (R 55 = L 567–8). If we refuse to provide this benefit, the other person can reasonably complain. We can see that other people would reasonably complain of us, if we notice that we would think it reasonable to complain of them if we were the

[18] 'Everyone would agree, perhaps, on this nominal definition—that justice is a constant will to act in such a way that no person has reason to complain of us. But this is not enough unless the method is given for determining these reasons. Now I observe that some people restrict the reasons for human complaints very narrowly and that others extend them. There are those who believe that it is enough if no harm is done to them and if no one has deprived them of their possessions, holding that no one is obligated to seek the good of others or prevent evil for them, even if it should cost us nothing and give us no pain.' (R 53–4 = L 566)

[19] '. . . justice is the charity of the wise man, that is, a goodness towards others which ought to conform to wisdom. And wisdom, in my opinion, is nothing but the knowledge of happiness. . . . we have a right to learn the reasons which . . . <anyone> has for being what he calls just, in order to see whether these same reasons will not bring him also to be good and to do good.' (R 54 = L 567) 'By moral . . . I mean something equivalent to natural for a good man, for . . . we should believe we are incapable of doing things which are contrary to good morals. A good man is one who loves all men, so far as reason permits. Therefore, if I am not mistaken, we may most fittingly define justice, which is the virtue governing that affection which the Greeks call philanthropy, as the charity of the wise man, that is, as charity which follows the dictates of wisdom. So the assertion attributed to Carneades, that justice is the highest folly because it bids us consider the interests of others while neglecting our own, is based on ignorance of its definition. Charity is universal benevolence, and benevolence is the habit of loving or of cherishing. But to love or to cherish is to find pleasure in the happiness of another, or what amounts to the same thing, to accept the happiness of another as one's own' (R 171 = L 421).

[20] At *MdS* 386 Kant describes the pursuit of one's own perfection and the happiness of others as duties of virtue, as opposed to right. His division between duties of virtue and of right seems to affirm a division that Leibniz rejects.

[21] 'Would one not hold him for a bad man and even for an enemy if he did not want to save us in this situation? I have read in a travelogue of the East Indies that a man being chased by an elephant was saved, because another man in a neighbouring house beat on a drum, which stopped the beast; supposing that the former had cried to the other to beat [the drum], and that he had not wanted to out of pure inhumanity: would he not have had the right to complain?' (R 54–5) Loemker omits this example.

victims in a similar situation. We would think it unreasonable if others were to refuse to benefit us when the cost to them would be trivial and the benefit to us would be large, simply because they did not feel like it or because they wanted us to suffer.[22]

In this reasoning about when a complaint would be reasonable, Leibniz relies on the Golden Rule as a guide to the requirements of justice. He answers the objection that the rule requires the judge not to sentence the criminal, since the judge would not want to be sentenced if she were in the criminal's position.[23] Leibniz argues that we should not apply the Golden Rule simply by putting ourselves in one other person's position, but by considering the results of being all the people affected by the action. A proper application of the Golden Rule requires the judge to sentence the criminal, and requires unequal distribution of profits in a partnership.[24]

Leibniz makes a good case for refusing to confine justice to abstention from harming. But he does not explain his reasoning from the Golden Rule in any detail. It seems to be open to Butler's objection that utilitarianism allows unfair treatment of one person simply for the benefit of others.[25] Leibniz's example of punishment might suggest this result. If I put myself in the position of A, B, and C and recognize that the proposed action would harm A, but benefit B and C, does it follow that I would want it done if I were in B's and C's position, but would not want it done if I were in A's, so that the action turns out to be just? If this is how Leibniz argues, he must assume that in applying the Golden Rule, I take a purely self-interested point of view. Such reasoning seems to justify cutting up one person for spare-part surgery on five others, or killing one innocent person to encourage others not to break a law.

If Leibniz intends this interpretation of the Golden Rule, he assumes that it requires some quantitative calculation of overall benefits and harms. In that case, his perfectionism and his teleological conception of charity and justice lead him into utilitarianism. He does not try to defend this conclusion against the objection that it may violate the requirements of justice to the individual.

One might, however, apply the Golden Rule differently. If I am proposing to imprison or execute an innocent person as a scapegoat, Leibniz might ask me to recognize that this innocent person has something to complain about, because I can see that I would have something to complain about if I were the innocent victim. I would resent being made a scapegoat. If, however, I were guilty of a crime, I would not resent being punished for it; I would prefer not to suffer the harm of punishment, but I would not claim to have any basis for resentment.

[22] 'We may say, then, that justice, at least among men, is the constant will to act as far as possible in such a way that no one can complain of us, if we would not complain of others in a similar situation. From this it is evident that when it is impossible to act so that the whole world is satisfied, we should try to satisfy people as much as possible. What is just thus conforms to the charity of the wise man.' (R 56–7 = L 568)

[23] Cf. Kant's discussion of the Golden Rule, *G* 430.

[24] 'The judge must put himself not only in the place of the criminal but also in that of the others whose interest lies in the crime being punished, and he must determine the greater good in which the lesser evil is included. The same is true of the objection that distributive justice demands an inequality among men ... Put yourself in the place of all and assume that they are well informed and enlightened. You will gather this conclusion from their votes: they will regard it as fitting to their own interest that distinctions be made between one another. For example, if profits were not divided proportionally in a commercial society, some would not enter it at all, and others would quickly leave it, which is contrary to the interest of the whole society.' (R 56 = L 568)

[25] Butler; §702.

The appeals to the Golden Rule and to possible complaints suggest two different questions that Leibniz might be asking: (1) If you are a purely self-interested agent in each of the relevant positions, do you think the proposed action benefits or harms you? (2) If you apply your sense of legitimate bases for complaint to each person's position, what do you say? In some cases the two questions might support the same conclusion, as they do in Leibniz's case of deserved punishment. But sometimes they seem to support different conclusions, as they do in cases of scapegoats.

The interpretation of the Golden Rule suggested by the second question gives more plausible answers, since it does not lead to the violations of justice that seem to be allowed by the first question. But the second question does not provide an independent test of justice; for legitimate bases of complaint and resentment presuppose some views about justice, rather than explaining them by some independent principle. The function of the second question is to separate these views about justice from any possible distorting effects of our own interest and our own point of view. The first question, by contrast, offers an independent test of justice. But the test that it offers seems to lead to unjust results.

Leibniz's appeals to the Golden Rule and to the possibility of legitimate complaint anticipate later applications of these tests both by utilitarians and by their opponents.[26] His discussion is too simple, since he does not suggest that his tests for justice need interpretation, or that any questions can be raised about their implications.

The questions that arise about Leibniz's test for justice also raise doubts about whether justice can be identified with the charity of the wise, as he understands it. If charity is to be understood as generalized concern with human interests, it does not seem to be the same as justice. For charity, so understood, seems to lead to a utilitarian conclusion, through the first interpretation of the Golden Rule. Justice, however, seems to stop short of this utilitarian conclusion. Leibniz is right to say that justice is not confined to refraining from harm, and so cannot be distinguished from charity on that basis, but he is wrong to infer (if he means to infer this) that justice is simply generalized benevolence.

This objection does not show that justice is not the charity of the wise; for it may be unfair to Leibniz to identify charity with generalized benevolence, understood as a strictly utilitarian outlook. One might reply that love of other people includes concern for their rights and obligations as individual persons, and so it should make us responsive to complaints founded on convictions about fairness. In describing God's outlook as impartial love for persons, we do not imply that God is indifferent to justice, or that God is ready to impose extreme harm on some simply to benefit others. Similarly, if justice is the charity of the wise, and charity is not concern for maximum total welfare, justice is not utilitarian concern either. But if considerations of fairness and justice regulate charity, an understanding of charity is not entirely prior to an understanding of justice. Hence the account of justice as the charity of the wise may be circular.

Leibniz's remarks on justice and charity are suggestive, but inconclusive, since they do not examine these questions that they inevitably raise. He neither endorses a purely utilitarian conception of charity nor distinctly repudiates it. He leaves this issue about divine and human benevolence for others to discuss.

[26] Cf. Hare, *MT*, chs. 5–6.

590. Naturalism v. Voluntarism

Leibniz often rejects a voluntarist account of the basis of moral principles, for theological, metaphysical, and moral reasons. Though he writes in ignorance of Cudworth's *Eternal and Immutable Morality*, his statement of the issue and of the reasons for naturalism is close to Cudworth's.[27] He formulates the issue in the *Euthyphro*, and, for Cudworth's reasons, takes Socrates' side.[28] Leibniz claims that Lutheran ('our') theologians all reject voluntarism, and most Roman and Reformed (Calvinist) theologians reject it, on both Scriptural and philosophical grounds.[29] If Leibniz is right, his report indicates that Lutheran theologians reject the voluntaristic elements in some of Luther's remarks.[30] He rejects Pufendorf's claim to be defending an orthodox Lutheran position.

In Leibniz's view, the voluntarist position 'would destroy the justice of God'.[31] A correct conception of God must rest on a belief in the divine perfections. These perfections must be recognized as perfect for some other reason than the fact that they belong to God (*T*, Pref. = H 53, 59). We must not defend God's dealings with human beings by arguing that he is above justice, or that his superior power automatically makes his actions just (*T* = H 95). Like Cudworth, Leibniz connects voluntarism with the views of some of Socrates' opponents in the Platonic dialogues. Where Cudworth mentions Protagoras, Leibniz mentions Thrasymachus, revived by Hobbes (R 47 = L 562).

Voluntarism, according to Leibniz, makes justice 'arbitrary', whereas the opposed view makes it part of the nature of things, and no more dependent on will than arithmetic is (R 49 = L 563). In the light of views such as Cumberland's and Pufendorf's, more needs to be said to show that these two views exhaust the possibilities. A moderate voluntarist argues that God has reasons for preferring one law over another, and that these reasons rest on facts about human beings, but still they are not moral principles until they are affirmed by God's will. Leibniz's discussion suffers from his failure to consider this argument to show that not all voluntarist views make justice arbitrary.

Nonetheless, it is difficult to escape some version of his objection. Even if we grant that, as Pufendorf supposes, God's commands agree with (roughly speaking) natural good, we still need an explanation of why this is so. Does God command freely or necessarily? If God is free, by his unqualified power, to command something else, and (by hypothesis) is not guided by what is objectively right, it does not seem unfair to regard God's choice as arbitrary. Alternatively, if God commands necessarily, what is the source of the necessity? If

[27] Leibniz knew Cudworth's *TIS*, which suggests a naturalist view about the goodness of God at, e.g., ch. 5 §5 = iii 461.

[28] 'It is generally agreed that whatever God wills is good and just. But there remains the question whether it is good and just because God wills it or whether God wills it because it is good and just; in other words whether justice and goodness are arbitrary or whether they belong to the necessary and eternal truths about the nature of things, as do numbers and proportions. The former opinion has been held by certain philosophers and by theologians, both Roman and Reformed. But the Reformed theologians of today usually reject this teaching, as do also all our own theologians and most of those of the Roman church as well.' (R 45–6 = L 561)

[29] 'All our theologians, therefore, and most of those of the Roman church, as well as the ancient Church Fathers, and the wisest and most esteemed philosophers, have favoured the second view, which holds that goodness and justice have grounds independent of will and force.' (R 46 = L 562)

[30] See §412.

[31] 'Common conception of justice' = R 46 = L 561.

(by hypothesis) it is not the objective rightness of the action, but a psychological necessity in God, the choice of this action over others still seems arbitrary.[32]

591. The Errors of Pufendorf's Voluntarism

Leibniz does not think highly of Pufendorf in general, and the judgments in his letter 'Opinion on the Principle of Pufendorf' are directed to his short work *De officio hominis*. Since he does not carefully examine Pufendorf's fuller statement of his case in *J De iure naturae et gentium*, he sometimes distorts Pufendorf's position or overlooks some complications in it. Some of his questionable claims are attacked by Barbeyrac in his defence of Pufendorf. Barbeyrac's comments give us an opportunity to consider the merits of each side in this dispute about natural law.[33]

Leibniz attacks Pufendorf's view that obligation requires a superior, so that there are no moral requirements without the command of a superior. After remarking that this would commit Pufendorf to Hobbesian views about the state of nature and about the possibility of international law, Leibniz considers the obvious reply. Pufendorf claims to avoid a Hobbesian conception of the state of nature by arguing that moral requirements are not, as Hobbes supposes, obligations imposed by a state, but obligations imposed by God. The state of nature is a state in which we have no superior, but, since God always commands obedience to the moral law, we are never in a state of nature. We may pass over questions about whether Pufendorf and Leibniz give a fair account of Hobbes's position. Even if Pufendorf improves on Hobbes on this point, Leibniz still believes that Pufendorf's voluntarism is open to objection.

His first objection mentions Grotius' 'etiamsi' clause, but does not explain the point clearly.[34] As he describes Grotius' view, even without reference to God care for one's own well-being would create a natural obligation. But he does not explain what he takes Grotius to mean by 'well-being'. We might take him to suppose, as Barbeyrac does, that Grotius recognizes only prudential, not moral, reasons, in abstraction from God. If this is what Leibniz means, he plays directly into the hands of Pufendorf and Barbeyrac. Alternatively, we might intend 'well-being' in the broader sense intended by Grotius, so that it does not embrace simply the pleasant and the advantageous, but also includes the morally good. In that case, his appeal to Grotius implies opposition to voluntarism. But he does not defend it fully enough to give any argument against the voluntarist position.

He states a second objection more carefully, arguing that voluntarists cannot give an acceptable account of the goodness of God. If divine justice is simply the product of the

[32] See Ward's discussion of voluntarism, *NG* 71–110, discussed in §604.

[33] Schneewind, 'Barbeyrac', Saastamoinen, *MFM*, and Korkman, *BNL,* discuss Barbeyrac's criticism of Leibniz. Korkman is the most sympathetic to Barbeyrac. Buckle, *NLTP* 60–4, defends Pufendorf against Leibniz's criticism: 'It could perhaps be said that, for Pufendorf, the will of a superior, without just reasons, is only coercion; while just reasons, without the will of a superior, are only reasons for law, but not law itself' (61). This feature of Pufendorf's position, however, does not answer Leibniz's questions about why it is honestum to obey God's commands.

[34] 'Indeed, not to mention that which Grotius justly observed, namely that there would be a natural obligation even on the hypothesis—which is impossible—that God does not exist, or if one but left the divine existence out of consideration; since care for one's own preservation and well-being certainly lays on men many requirements about taking care of others . . . ' (R 71)

divine will, God is not essentially just.[35] If we recognize that God is essentially just, and we do not simply mean to define 'just' as whatever God wills, we must recognize eternal truths about justice that are not products of the divine will. If Pufendorf denies these independent eternal truths in the case of justice, he ought also to maintain that God creates all the eternal truths, as Descartes did; he has no good reason to single out truths about goodness and justice (R 71–2).

Pufendorf might regard this as an unfair criticism. It ignores his arguments for distinguishing moral properties from others, and hence for avoiding voluntarism in relation to all the eternal truths. In his view, the properties that belong to matter in motion belong to nature itself. We need not treat physical properties as the result of divine imposition; the imposed properties are the ones that do not belong to nature itself.

This argument about the difference between natural and moral entities is inconsistent (as we have seen) with Pufendorf's claim that his voluntarism about morality follows from the recognition of God's freedom in creation. Hence it creates as many difficulties for Pufendorf's overall position as it resolves. But if we ignore these broader difficulties, does the treatment of moral entities offer a plausible reply to Leibniz on eternal truths?

To answer this question, we need to evaluate Pufendorf's reasons for refusing to include moral properties among the properties of 'nature itself'. If he were to refuse to treat any teleological properties—about goals, welfare, good, or health—as properties of nature itself, he would disagree with Leibniz over the general questions about nature that Leibniz discusses in 'On Nature Itself'. But in fact Pufendorf does not disagree with Leibniz on these broader issues in natural philosophy. For he allows prudential properties as part of nature; he could not retract this view without destroying his account of the content of natural law.

If, therefore, Pufendorf is to reply convincingly to Leibniz, he needs a good reason for drawing the sharp distinction he draws between prudential and moral properties, and for treating moral properties alone as the products of divine legislation. We have found reason to doubt Pufendorf's arguments for his sharp distinction.

592. Pufendorf's Legislative Account of Morality

According to Leibniz, Pufendorf's claims about the necessary connexion between morality and legislation betray a misunderstanding of the status of morality. Virtuous people do not need to regard their action as required by any act of legislation.[36] Reference to law may be necessary to move those who are reluctant to act virtuously, but it is not appropriate for the

[35] 'Neither the norm of conduct itself nor the essence of the just depends on <God's> free decision, but rather on eternal truths, objects of the divine intellect, which constitute, so to speak, the essence of divinity itself; and it is right that our author is reproached by theologians when he maintains the contrary; because, I believe, he had not seen the wicked consequences which arise from it. Justice, indeed, would not be an essential attribute of God, if he himself established justice and law by his free will.' (R 71)

[36] 'Thus he who acts well, not out of hope or fear, but by an inclination of his soul, is so far from not behaving justly that, on the contrary, he acts more justly than all others, imitating in a certain way, as a man, divine justice. Whoever, indeed, does good out of love for God or of his neighbour, takes pleasure precisely in the action itself (such being the nature of love) and does not need any other incitement, or the command of a superior; for that man the saying that the law is not made for the just is valid. To such a degree is it repugnant to reason to say that only the law or constraint makes a man just . . . ' (R 72)

virtuous. Leibniz alludes to a Scriptural passage commonly used in Lutheran argument to contrast the outlook of the Christian with the outlook of those moved by fear of the law.[37]

Leibniz seems to be unfair to Pufendorf here, by running together different claims: (1) If something is morally right, it must be required by an act of legislation. (2) If we are morally virtuous, we must regard morally right actions as required by an act of legislation. (3) If we are morally virtuous, we must perform morally right actions out of fear of the legislator. The criticisms of Pufendorf attack the third claim, but Leibniz does not show that Pufendorf is committed to it; it does not follow from either of the first two claims.

But Leibniz's objection suggests a fair question. If Pufendorf does not accept the third claim, why is an act of legislation needed? We might grant, and we might concede that Leibniz has overlooked, some element of compulsoriness in morality. When Leibniz says that a virtuous person does the right actions out of love for God or his neighbour, he does not seem to give an adequate account of the virtuous person. I might do many things out of love of actions or people without regarding them as required by morality. In taking them to be part of morality, I recognize that they do not depend on my preference; I am required to form my preference by these demands. In that respect—we might say on Pufendorf's behalf—I ought to look on them as a matter of law rather than choice or liking.

But to agree with Pufendorf on this point is not to agree that we must look on right actions as products of legislation. To recognize an action as required and non-optional, I need not believe that anyone has legislated it. To agree with Pufendorf we would have to overlook Suarez's distinction between the due (debitum) and the obligatory (in his narrow sense). We could correct Leibniz's neglect of the compulsory element in morality, and the recognition of compulsoriness in the moral consciousness, without accepting Pufendorf's claim that the compulsoriness of morality must arise from legislation.

Leibniz alludes to this issue; he argues that Pufendorf's views on necessity overlook the fact that moral situations themselves can present us with practical necessities without reference to any law.[38] But despite this plausible objection to a purely legal conception of moral necessity, Leibniz concedes Pufendorf's restriction of duty to what is prescribed by law (R 73). It is not clear what this concession means, however. Does Leibniz also agree with Pufendorf's claim that law requires an act of legislation by a superior? If he agrees on this point, he seems to give up a basic point to Pufendorf.

Though Leibniz's position is stated too briefly to be clear or convincing, it suggests a fair criticism. If Pufendorf claims that the specific necessity characteristic of legislation is essential to morality, and that other sorts of necessity or compulsoriness are insufficient,

[37] 'But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully, as knowing this, that law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and unruly, for the ungodly and sinners.' (*1Tim.* 1:8–9) In commenting on this passage Aquinas explains the sense in which just people are not under the law: 'It would seem that not all are subject to the law. For those alone are subject to a law for whom a law is made. But the Apostle says (*1Tim.* 1:9): "The law is not made for a just person." Therefore the just are not subject to the law. . . . This argument is true of subjection by way of coercion: for, in this way, "the law is not made for the just person": because "they are a law to themselves," while they "show the work of the law written in their hearts," as the Apostle says (*Rm.* 2:14–15). Consequently the law does not have a coercive force on them as it does on the unjust.' (*ST* 1–2 q96 a5 obj1 ad1)

[38] 'Nor is Chapter 2, part 4 [of Pufendorf's *DOH*] correct in saying that he who recognizes no superior cannot be constrained by necessity: as if the very nature of things and care for one's happiness and safety did not have their own requirements; and many things which are ordained by reason itself in order that, following the guidance of our best nature, we will not attract evil to ourselves, or come to lose the good.' (R 73)

what feature of legislation is relevant? A distinctive feature of legislated necessity is the fact that it is imposed on us by someone, so that it represents someone's demands on me. Why should this be distinctive of morality?

We can try different answers to this question: (1) Other people's demands impose a distinctive sort of requirement, and the virtuous person must recognize this. (2) Legislation represents the demands of a superior, who deserves respect and obedience. (3) Legislation comes from a legislator who imposes sanctions.

None of these answers vindicates Pufendorf. The first two seem to be self-defeating. For if he means that the demands of other people or of a superior create a special sort of requirement, he seems to rely on further assumptions: (a) We can distinguish legitimate from illegitimate demands. (b) We can distinguish the sort of superiority that creates moral authority. (c) We already acknowledge a moral requirement to listen to the legitimate demands of others or of a superior. All of these assumptions defeat Pufendorf's purpose because they appeal to some moral requirement antecedent to any legislation. Hence Pufendorf cannot consistently rely on any of these three assumptions.

Since this objection shows that Pufendorf cannot give either of the first two answers to Leibniz's objection, he is left with the third, making morality consist in the arbitrary will of a legislator supported by sanctions that provide the reason for obedience. But we might reasonably doubt whether the threat of a sanction is either necessary or sufficient for morality or for moral virtue. It is difficult to refute Leibniz's suggestion that Pufendorf relies on a perverse conception of morality and of moral virtue.

593. Barbeyrac's Defence of Pufendorf on the Content of Morality

Barbeyrac believes that Leibniz's attack on Pufendorf is misguided because it ignores Pufendorf's account of the content of morality. According to Leibniz, Pufendorf's rejection of naturalism commits him to the view that God exercises arbitrary power. For if God does not necessarily will what is right independently of the divine legislative will, God's choice to enjoin these laws on us rather than others must (according to Leibniz) be an arbitrary choice, in the sense that it does not rest on any knowledge that it is better to enjoin these laws than to enjoin any others.[39]

Barbeyrac correctly objects that Leibniz has failed to acknowledge two points on which Pufendorf repudiates Ockhamist claims about God's unqualified power: (1) The content of the natural law is fixed by natural good and harm. (2) God can neither act nor want to act unjustly (Pufendorf, *DHC* 459). From these two claims it follows that God's imposition of these laws is not an exercise of 'arbitrary will' (volonté arbitraire, 458), but an expression of God's necessary goodness and justice. Barbeyrac needs both of these claims. If the first were true without the second, God would be free to impose some different law with a different

[39] Barbeyrac's answer to Leibniz appears in Pufendorf, *DHC* 429–95. See Schneewind, 'Barbeyrac'; *IA* 250–9; Buckle, 'Voluntarism' 110–14. Barbeyrac refers to Leibniz as an anonymous writer in the body of his essay, but names him on the title page.

content, and the provisions of that law would be morally right. But Barbeyrac interprets the second claim in such a way that God necessarily chooses justice, with its specific content fixed by natural good.

Here Pufendorf and Barbeyrac come close to acceptance of the naturalist view that the content and existence of the natural law do not result from God's legislative will. If we claim that God cannot choose to act unjustly, either this claim says simply that God's choosing something makes it just, or it implies that something is just independently of his choosing it. In the first case, the necessity of God's choosing just action still allows the divine will to be arbitrary; hence Barbeyrac must admit that something is just independently of God's choosing it. But such an admission conflicts with the claim that nothing is right independently of God's legislation.

But perhaps Pufendorf and Barbeyrac do not mean this. Perhaps they mean that the content of the natural law is fixed independently of God's legislative will, but its character as morality depends on God's legislation. This legislation, however, is necessary; it is not an exercise of God's free will. The attempt to replace arbitrary will with necessary will raises further objections. For Barbeyrac cannot say that God's choice of laws aimed at natural goods is necessary because God necessarily chooses the right; for if he said that, he would admit that right is independent of God's choice, and so he would concede the whole point to Leibniz. But if it is a mere psychological necessity, not based in rational necessity, it does not seem less arbitrary in the relevant sense.

Barbeyrac's defence of Pufendorf on this point is therefore open to question. He is right to accuse Leibniz of not taking account of everything that Pufendorf says and of over-simplifying his position in ways that make it easier to refute with well-worn anti-voluntarist arguments. As Barbeyrac sees, Pufendorf modifies the voluntarist position in ways that escape criticisms that apply to Ockhamist voluntarism. But these modifications do not result in a defensible alternative to Leibniz's naturalism. Either they collapse into naturalism or they are open to a modified version of the naturalist objections to Ockham.

594. God's Right to Rule

Barbeyrac sees a further unfairness in Leibniz's claim that Pufendorf is inconsistent in his claims about the relation of God to morality. On the one hand, Pufendorf claims that morality requires divine legislation. On the other hand, he claims that we should not treat God simply as a Hobbesian sovereign whose right consists simply in superior power to coerce us; we should also recognize that God has 'just cause' for his justified claim to power over us (R 73). Leibniz objects that Pufendorf's claims are inconsistent; if we have just cause to obey God, some moral obligation is antecedent to divine legislation, and it does not all depend on divine legislation. This objection relies on one of Cudworth's objections to Hobbes; if we need to distinguish legitimate from illegitimate rulers in order to identify authoritative legislators, not all standards of legitimacy are products of legislation.[40]

[40] See Cudworth, §548.

Pufendorf has a way out of this objection only if the 'just cause' for God's rule is non-moral. This may be what he has in mind; if we deny that God's superiority rests simply on superior force, a moral basis is not the only alternative. We may also recognize someone as superior out of gratitude, love, admiration, or reverence, none of which necessarily rests on recognition of moral rightness. Leibniz's objection, then, is too simple.

But it may nonetheless be basically correct. For the non-moral attitudes that we have mentioned do not seem to provide a sufficient basis to show that God is an appropriate moral authority, or that his will could produce moral rightness. To be moved to obey someone out of gratitude, admiration, and so on is not to have any basis for believing that their commands will be morally right; and action exclusively from such motives is not the action of a morally virtuous person.

It is difficult to see, therefore, how any non-moral explanation of 'just cause' could provide a morally appropriate basis for obedience to God. Any moral explanation faces Leibniz's objection that it makes Pufendorf's position inconsistent. A fuller examination of Pufendorf's position shows that Leibniz is careless in his interpretation, but nonetheless sees the essential weakness in Pufendorf.

He adds a pertinent question about what Pufendorf takes force to contribute to moral obligation. He suggests that Pufendorf has not worked out the relation between force and the reasons that hold independently of force.[41] Sometimes Pufendorf seems to say that obligation requires a superior because a superior introduces force; but he also insists that we are required to obey God independently of the Hobbesian reasons based on God's power and on force. Hence Pufendorf seems to allow that the moral reasons supporting God's right to rule are independent of divine sanctions. Though the sanctions provide a further motive to obey, they do not in themselves provide an additional moral reason to obey, and so they do not explain the moral character of our obedience to the laws that are backed by sanctions. Hence Pufendorf has failed to explain the character of the moral reasons that he presupposes in arguing that we are required to obey God. He looks in the wrong direction for an account of the distinctive features of morality.

595. Barbeyrac's Objections to Eudaemonism

Barbeyrac not only defends Pufendorf against Leibniz's attack, but also attacks the point of view from which Leibniz criticizes Pufendorf. Part of his defence of voluntarism relies on his arguments to show that naturalists cannot capture the distinctive features of morality. He believes that naturalists who take nature without divine legislation to be sufficient for morality hold an impoverished conception of morality. Since divine legislation introduces the morally right (honestum), a naturalist must reduce everything to pleasure and advantage. To show that Leibniz does this, Barbeyrac attacks his eudaemonism.

[41] The steps of Leibniz's criticism are difficult to follow in detail, but his conclusion raises a fair question: 'Supposing, for example, that a sick Christian fell into the power of a Turkish doctor, by whom he was compelled to practise salutary precepts that he already knew for some time, but which are now strengthened by necessity (necessitate armatis). If he were given an opportunity to escape, would he be obliged to temperance more than he had been before his imprisonment? One or the other, then: either reasons oblige prior to force, or they do not oblige any longer when force ceases.' ('Pufendorf' = Dutens iv 282 = R 75)

Barbeyrac over-simplifies the questions about eudaemonism. Both Aquinas and Suarez deny his assumption that eudaemonism subordinates everything to one's own advantage and pleasure; for they regard the right (honestum) as distinct from the advantageous (commodum), but regard both as promoting the agent's ultimate good. In overlooking this feature of the eudaemonist position, Barbeyrac weakens his defence of Pufendorf against the objections of Leibniz. Though Leibniz, as we have seen, tends to represent his eudaemonism as though it were hedonism, he does not consistently do this; and if he did, he would misrepresent the possibilities open to a eudaemonist.

To show that eudaemonists reduce the good to the pleasant and the useful, Barbeyrac alleges that Leibniz overlooks the distinction that 'the wise pagans' have drawn between the right (l'honnête) and the useful (l'utile) (445). In his view, Leibniz's account of motivation reduces all value to the useful. Whether or not this is true of Leibniz, it is clearly false of the traditional eudaemonist position that Leibniz seeks to defend. Like many others, Barbeyrac fails to acknowledge that traditional eudaemonists claim to distinguish the right and the advantageous without abandoning eudaemonism.[42] Some argument is needed to show that they are wrong.

Let us, however, concede to Barbeyrac that concern for morality cannot be explained by reference to concern for one's own ultimate good. Why should we not reject eudaemonism, but believe in intrinsic rightness, recognizing that some reasons derived from natural good and evil are distinct from reasons of advantage? An appeal to natural good and evil does not necessarily confine itself to what is good and evil for me, and so it does not necessarily confine itself to self-interested reasons (narrowly understood). Pufendorf gives us no reason to believe that only a divine command could introduce a different sort of reason.

This objection gains force from Barbeyrac's objection to Leibniz's eudaemonism. According to Barbeyrac, the wise pagans, in contrast to Leibniz, recognized the honestum as distinct from the advantageous. How did they do this? Barbeyrac and Pufendorf believe that the distinctive feature of moral goodness is its dependence on a divine command. If, then, the wise pagans recognized moral goodness, must they not have recognized the dependence of morality on laws and divine commands?[43] But this was not part of their conception of morality. If Pufendorf is right, then Barbeyrac is wrong to allow that the wise pagans recognized the honestum.

His claim is nonetheless plausible; perhaps he simply means that when the ancients speak of the honestum, they recognized reason independent of considerations of one's own interest. But if this is what it takes to recognize the honestum, divine commands do not seem to be necessary for morality. Barbeyrac's praise of the wise pagans conflicts with his acceptance of Pufendorf's necessary conditions for morality; he would be well advised to abandon Pufendorf's view.

Barbeyrac's account of the honestum exposes a central issue in views of morality. Suarez follows a traditional naturalist view in supposing that, since the honestum is independent of the divine legislative will, moral goodness is independent of it too. Culverwell tries to

[42] Reid is also obscure on this question; see §§854–5.

[43] Barbeyrac does not deal with this aspect of ancient moral philosophy in chs. 27–8 of his 'Morality', which discuss the Stoics and Cicero. He criticizes the Stoics for taking virtue to be sufficient for happiness without reference to rewards in the afterlife. Given his views about the importance of moral goodness, it is not clear that this criticism is altogether fair.

avoid this inference; he suggests that to recognize the honestum is to recognize something appealing and attractive in its own right, but not to recognize the rational necessity that belongs to morality. Cumberland agrees with Culverwell in recognizing intrinsic perfection worthy of pursuit, but he denies that this is sufficient for the honestum.[44] Pufendorf agrees with Suarez in identifying the honestum with the morally good, but he disagrees with him in taking moral goodness to require law. While Barbeyrac agrees with Pufendorf on this point, he undermines his position by allowing that the wise pagans could recognize the morally good without recognizing divine commands. He could retreat from this position to Culverwell's position, but, if he did that, he would weaken his argument against Leibniz.

596. Barbeyrac's Argument from Obligation

To support his claim that naturalists cannot consistently recognize the distinctive character of the honestum, Barbeyrac argues that they cannot capture moral obligation. In the naturalists' view, obligation must rest on one's own reason. But this view cannot account for the fact that obligation must be imposed on us. For our reason is simply ourselves, and we cannot impose an obligation or duty (dette) on ourselves (473).[45] Hence, the maxims of reason, however much they may conform to the nature of things, carry no obligation until our reason has discerned God as its source; only the will of God can produce a genuine obligation (473–4).[46]

This argument about the source of obligation rests on the questionable assumption that an obligation must be imposed through some act of imposition; that is why Barbeyrac assumes that if naturalists reject God as the imposer, they must claim that they impose the obligation on themselves. But self-imposition, he suggests, is an idle performance; for obligation must be imposed on us irrespective of our own wishes, whereas something we impose on ourselves depends precisely on our own wish to impose it or to release ourselves from it. Whereas we cannot release ourselves from a genuine moral obligation, we can always release ourselves from something we impose on ourselves. Hence imposition on oneself cannot create genuine obligation.

We might dispute the assumption that we can always release ourselves from what we impose on ourselves. If we make a promise, we cannot release ourselves from it, but do we not impose it on ourselves by voluntarily making the promise? Barbeyrac might fairly reject this example. Though I freely undertake to do x, by promising to do x, I do not impose on myself the obligation to do x; for I am obliged to do x only if I am obliged to keep my

[44] Cumberland; §532. Culverwell; §558.

[45] Barbeyrac cites Seneca's remark, at *Ben.* v 8, that one cannot be one's own debtor, which, however, Seneca does not use to draw Barbeyrac's conclusions. The same argument about self-imposed obligations is used by Warburton; see §875.

[46] According to Schneewind, Barbeyrac's voluntarism rests on his belief in the incommensurability of moral and prudential justification and motivation: 'Like Pufendorf, Barbeyrac offers no positive account of the inherent strength of duty, or of how awareness of "the beauty of virtue" (*Devoirs,* p. 447) can motivate us. But he is quite insistent that the motivation cannot come solely from reason's awareness of the nature of things. Reason is, in the end, only ourselves reasoning; and "no one can impose on himself an indispensable necessity of acting in such and such a manner". What I impose I can remove. Necessity holds only if I cannot at my own pleasure escape from it. If I can release myself there is "no true obligation" (*Devoirs,* pp. 472–4). Only the command of another imposes necessity.' (Schneewind, 'Barbeyrac' 188)

promises, and that is not an obligation I impose on myself. Hence Barbeyrac is right to reject any appeal to self-imposed obligation.

But this argument damages naturalism only if naturalism implies that imposed obligation is the only possible source of moral requirements. Suarez rejects Barbeyrac's assumption. He distinguishes indicative from prescriptive law, and argues that only prescriptive law introduces moral necessity by imposed obligation. Morality and moral necessity require only indicative law; they involve duties (debita) that are not imposed. Barbeyrac assumes that if obligations are imposed, duties (dettes) are also imposed; but he is not entitled to rely on this assumption in arguing against Suarez. If he argues against naturalists who agree with Cudworth in identifying duty and obligation, he is not entitled to assume that obligations are imposed.

If we state Suarez's doctrine, but use Cudworth's broad conception of obligation, we claim that some moral necessity involves obligations that are not imposed. A voluntarist may now ask where obligations come from if they are not imposed. According to a naturalist, our own reason discerns and conforms to the nature of things, but it does not impose any obligation arising from the nature of things. Our reason must recognize the obligation; but, according to the naturalist, the nature of things itself makes it true that we are obliged to act a specific way. No one imposes the obligation on us.

To answer this defence of naturalism, Barbeyrac might argue that the alleged obligation existing in the nature of things does not constitute a genuine obligation until we impose it on ourselves; for until we do that, it has no influence on our actions, and obligation implies some sort of motivation. But this internalist assumption about obligation and motivation undermines Barbeyrac's claims no less than it undermines naturalist claims. If he accepts internalism, must he not say that our recognition of the will of God, rather than the will of God itself, imposes the obligation on us? If he refuses to say this, and distinguishes—quite reasonably—the existence of the obligation itself from our recognition of it, he should allow the same distinction to the naturalist.

597. Leibniz v. Traditional Eudaemonism

Our discussion of Leibniz and Barbeyrac shows that Leibniz's eudaemonist and naturalist position is defensible against voluntarist objections. Leibniz does not present a full statement and defence of his ethical outlook, but he says enough about it to suggest that it deserves to be taken seriously.

Leibniz's remarks on ethics justify his claim to defend the insights of Scholastic philosophy. But he does not simply repeat traditional eudaemonism. We have seen that some of his arguments go beyond the views of Aristotle and Aquinas. His main innovations are these:

(1) We have sometimes found it difficult to distinguish his eudaemonism from hedonism. Though a consistent hedonist position undermines his claims about self-love and the love of others, he is not careful to avoid hedonism.

(2) His eudaemonism is combined rather awkwardly with an appeal to perfection as an end, and it is not clear how the two principles fit together. Aquinas introduces perfection as an aspect of one's ultimate good, and so combines eudaemonism and naturalism with

perfectionism. It is not so clear that Leibniz does this. The fact that his conception of the good sometimes tends towards hedonism makes it even more difficult to see how perfection and happiness are connected. A conception of happiness closer to Aristotle's makes the connexion easier to grasp. Sometimes, however, Leibniz's principle of perfection seems rather similar to one of Clarke's principles of fitness—as though it were intended as a principle that we can just see to be correct, without reference to our nature as rational agents.

(3) He assumes that the appropriate extension of eudaemonism is some maximizing concern; at least he neither examines nor rejects this assumption. Hence his claims about justice and charity may easily suggest a utilitarian conception of the morally right.

It is useful to pick out these features of Leibniz's position, for two reasons: (a) They are not features of Aristotle's or Aquinas' position. (b) Kant criticizes them severely (in the form in which he knows them from Wolff and his successors).[47] It is not surprising if Kant believes that his arguments against these aspects of Leibniz's position also refute the traditional eudaemonist position, or if readers of Kant believe this. But if we are right about the differences between Leibniz's position and the traditional eudaemonist position, we ought not to suppose, without further argument, that Kant's objections to the Leibnizian position apply to the traditional eudaemonist position.

Equally, we ought not to assume that Leibniz's particular interpretation of the eudaemonist position is mistaken, simply because it seems to lead to conclusions that face powerful Kantian objections. Perhaps traditional eudaemonism really justifies these conclusions, or perhaps it is so vague that it cannot justify any specific conclusion on the questions that Leibniz discusses. But it is worth noticing that these controversial features of Leibniz's position in moral psychology, the metaphysics of perfection, and normative ethics, have no basis in traditional eudaemonism.

[47] See Schneewind, *IA*, ch. 22. On the development of Kant's critical ethics in relation to his predecessors see Schmucker, *UEK*, ch. 5.

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PUFENDORF AND NATURAL LAW

598. Barbeyrac's Attempt to Assimilate Grotius to Pufendorf

Though Leibniz's attacks on Pufendorf from a naturalist point of view do not convince Barbeyrac to abandon Pufendorf's position, naturalist arguments influence Barbeyrac's interpretation of Pufendorf. He believes that once we understand Pufendorf, we will see that he already captures the plausible elements of the naturalist position, so that naturalist criticisms are beside the point. For this reason Barbeyrac believes that Grotius is the pioneer who makes some progress towards the position that Pufendorf articulates fully. Now that we have examined both Grotius and Pufendorf, we can return to Barbeyrac's argument to show that they basically agree, and that they together achieve an important advance in moral theory.

This synthesis of Grotius and Pufendorf is historically influential and philosophically significant. As we will see, it persists in later moral theories that reject extreme voluntarism, as Pufendorf does, but retain a voluntarist account of obligations and moral requirements. Since we have considered some reasons for believing that Pufendorf's position blends naturalist and voluntarist elements in an incoherent combination, it is worth examining Barbeyrac's synthesis. Even if it requires some modification of Pufendorf, it might remove the grounds for taking Pufendorf to be incoherent. If it succeeds on this point, Barbeyrac has gone some way towards defending his claim to combine Grotius and Pufendorf. Even if he deserves more credit for the synthesis than he gives himself, and Pufendorf deserves less than Barbeyrac gives him, it would be important if such a coherent synthesis could be found.

The different aspects of Pufendorf's position on nature and morality help to explain Barbeyrac's confidence that Pufendorf and Grotius really agree on the main questions about natural law. His belief in their agreement underlies his estimate of Grotius as the pioneer of an enlightened theory of natural law. If he had recognized that Grotius maintains the naturalist view that Pufendorf rejects, he could not have treated Grotius as a defender of Pufendorf's position. He would have had to admit that on this basic point Grotius had not cleared himself from the 'vulgar prejudices' (as Barbeyrac describes them) of the Scholastics. Pufendorf believes that Grotius accepts these vulgar prejudices, and so he develops his position by contrast with Grotius. Barbeyrac, however, believes that Pufendorf and Grotius agree more closely than we might gather from Pufendorf's comments.

To reconcile Grotius with Pufendorf, Barbeyrac re-interprets passages that appear to commit Grotius to a form of naturalism rejected by Pufendorf. He argues that they can reasonably be interpreted in a sense that favours Pufendorf's voluntarism. An example of his treatment of Grotius is his interpretation of Grotius' 'etiamsi' clause. Grotius claims that there would still be right and wrong even if there were no God. Since Pufendorf criticizes Grotius for defending this claim, it seems difficult for Barbeyrac to argue that Pufendorf and Grotius really agree.

Barbeyrac, however, takes the appearance of disagreement to be misleading. He suggests that Grotius' really wants to say that even if there were no God and no divine legislation, things would still be naturally good and bad.[1] Grotius (as Barbeyrac interprets him) exaggerates this correct claim by asserting that without divine legislation there would be moral facts (iustum, ius, honestum, turpe), but this is an exaggeration of his main point that there would still be prudential facts.

If Barbeyrac were right to say that Grotius really means only that there would be prudential facts without divine legislation, and does not really believe there would also be moral facts, he would indeed have reconciled Grotius' view with Pufendorf's voluntarism. But he gives us no reason to believe that Grotius does not mean what he says.

599. Barbeyrac's Attempt to Assimilate Pufendorf to Grotius

We may be surprised that Barbeyrac relies on this apparently forced and arbitrary interpretation of Grotius to reconcile him with Pufendorf. But we will be less surprised if we notice that he also interprets Pufendorf so as to fit Grotius' views. He endorses Grotius' view that the right is what conforms to rational and social nature. As Barbeyrac sees, this account of the right frees Grotius from Pufendorf's charge of circularity.[2] Barbeyrac supposes that it also distinguishes Grotius' position from the Scholastic view, which involves the circle that Pufendorf mentions. It is difficult to see the difference that Barbeyrac alleges; Grotius simply refers briefly to what Aquinas and (especially) Suarez discuss at length.

[1] 'Mr de Couverin, the translator of Grotius, explains these words, but something obscurely, and seems also to mistake him, telling us, that he maintains, that man's natural light, without any star of God, would carry a man in a most efficacious manner to seek good and avoid evil, by all means possible, in obedience to that law only which reason prescribes, and with the execution of which conscience is charged. I suspect that Grotius never designed to express himself with so much philosophical exactness, and that there is [a?] little rhetoric in that passage, if the sense being rightly understood has that meaning, that the maxims of the law of nature are founded upon the condition of mankind, and necessarily contributing to the advantage of every one, will not cease to take place, and be practised outwardly in some measure, although no Deity be acknowledged; but then they can't be looked upon as duties, nor can be put into practice, but upon the assumption of some interest or vain-glory.' (Barbeyrac on Tufendorf, *JNG* ii 3.19)

[2] 'Our author [sc. Pufendorf] proves this in his Apology, §19, thus, If we demand of them who define the natural law so, What things are the matter of this law? They'll answer, Such as are honest or dishonest in their nature. If we again ask them, What are those? They can answer nothing else, than that they are the matter of the natural law. This makes well for the schoolmen. But can't we speak something here in the behalf of Grotius? I own, that the notions of this great man are not sufficiently cleared and freed from vulgar prejudices: But I am very much mistaken, if he has not found out the truth, and can't explain his notion so, that when the thing is searched to the bottom, the difference between him and our author will prove a verbal dispute only. The right of nature, says Grotius, . . . [Barbeyrac quotes *JBP* i 1.10.1; see §464] . . . So that it is no circle, for if you ask Grotius whence comes that necessary honesty or baseness of the actions commanded or forbidden by the law of nature, he'll answer you, From the necessary agreement or disagreement with a reasonable and social nature.' (Barbeyrac on Pufendorf, *JNG* ii 3.4 (122 K))

Here Barbeyrac admits, or at least concedes, the truth of Grotius' account of moral goodness. He implicitly abandons Pufendorf's and Cumberland's objection that moral goodness presupposes a reference to law. 'Agreement with rational and social nature' needs some further explanation. One might suspect that it cannot be fully explained without reference to what is right for rational and social beings, or what they ought to do, or need to do. But that sort of circularity among moral concepts is not necessarily vicious; and in any case it is different from a reference to law.

Though Barbeyrac offers the correct explanation of Grotius' meaning, in opposition to Pufendorf's explanation, he nonetheless asserts that Grotius really agrees with Pufendorf. He believes that both Grotius and Pufendorf escape the circle that (allegedly) follows from the Scholastic view, and so he assumes that Grotius is not open to Pufendorf's criticisms. He infers that the difference between Grotius and Pufendorf is only verbal, because Grotius accepts Pufendorf's main point. Since Grotius refers to natural sociality, which depends on the will of God, he admits that moral goodness depends on the will of God, which is the voluntarist position.[3]

It is difficult to see how this attempt to reconcile Grotius with Pufendorf could be consistent with Barbeyrac's explanation of Grotius' 'etiamsi' clause. He tries to interpret that clause so as to avoid admitting natural morality, because he agrees that Pufendorf does not believe in natural morality. But now he agrees that Grotius believes in natural morality, and he claims that Pufendorf also believes in natural morality. After assimilating Grotius to Pufendorf, he now assimilates Pufendorf to Grotius; his two claims seem to involve ascribing inconsistent positions to Pufendorf.

For his assimilation of Pufendorf to Grotius Barbeyrac might fairly claim support from Pufendorf. For Pufendorf also tries to assimilate Grotius' position to voluntarism by appeal to these claims about creation. Barbeyrac follows him in identifying (sometimes) God's creative will with God's legislative will.[4] This identification explains why Pufendorf asserts that any reference to God as creator is an admission of the truth of his voluntarist thesis. His assertion gives a misleading picture both of Scholastic views and of Pufendorf's view. Every orthodox Christian thinker, including Aquinas, Vasquez, Suarez, and Grotius, agrees that human beings with rational and social natures exist because of God's will, and not because of some necessity that is independent of God. But to say that the morality of actions proceeds from God in this way is not to concede Pufendorf's legislative thesis. Indeed, Pufendorf admits this point when he agrees that prudential facts depend on God's creative will, but do not imply moral facts.

The importance of sociality is suggested by Barbeyrac's inconsistent arguments for reconciling Grotius with Pufendorf. According to his first argument, facts about human nature, including sociality, require the observance of moral principles; this fits voluntarism because human nature is the result of creation, and hence of the divine will. According to the second argument, Grotius really means that concern for advantage, but not concern for the right, is

[3] 'He [sc. Grotius] seems to acknowledge also, with our author, that this necessity is not absolute and independent upon the will of God. . . . This right, I say, although it flows from the internal principles of man (i.e. from the conditions of the human nature) may nevertheless, and that with reason, be attributed to God, because he has implanted such principles in us. I will now leave it to any man, whether the commentators upon Grotius have not mistaken his sense, and if when he speaks of honest or dishonest actions, he does not mean them in the same sense that our author allows them . . . ' (Barbeyrac on Pufendorf, *JNG* ii 3.4 = K 122)

[4] Cockburn discusses this issue. See §876.

justified without reference to divine commands. These arguments accurately represent two inconsistent tendencies in Pufendorf. On the one hand, he retains naturalist claims about sociality, since these claims help to vindicate God's goodness to us in issuing the commands that he actually issues; he is good to us because he commands us to do what fits our nature. On the other hand, he sees that if he concedes the naturalist claims about natural sociality, he has no reason to deny that pursuit of the right, as well as the expedient, is justified without reference to the will of God.

Pufendorf needs to decide in favour of Barbeyrac's second argument. The first really abandons voluntarism; only Pufendorf's confusion about God's creative and legislative will conceals this fact from him. The second argument rests on the controversial claim that facts about human nature justify action for the sake of the expedient, but do not justify action for the sake of the right.

The identification of creation with legislation underlies Barbeyrac's argument to show that Pufendorf recognizes natural rightness and wrongness. He agrees with the naturalist view that human nature itself makes some actions naturally right and others naturally wrong. This position seems to conflict with the voluntarist thesis about legislation and morality. But Barbeyrac, following some of Pufendorf's remarks, denies any conflict; indeed, he argues that we concede the voluntarist thesis once we concede that nature depends on God as creator. In speaking of God's role as creator he speaks of 'the laws which God hath imposed on us as creator', as though these were the laws that Pufendorf takes to be necessary for the truth of voluntarism.[5] But this explanation of natural law does not help Pufendorf. For if he refers only to the laws that follow from the fact that God has created us with this nature, he needs no further legislative action by God.

600. Barbeyrac's Modern Theory of Natural Law

Barbeyrac's assimilation of Grotius and Pufendorf is instructive, therefore, because it develops an argument in Pufendorf far enough to expose a basic difficulty in Pufendorf's position. Though Pufendorf attacks the naturalism of Grotius, he also tries to assimilate it to his own position; these two views of Grotius depend on Pufendorf's two views about legislation. When Barbeyrac assumes that creation implies legislation, he reconciles (as he supposes) Grotius with Pufendorf by abandoning voluntarism.

This dubious element in Barbeyrac's interpretation of Grotius and Pufendorf is the basis of his history of natural-law theory. He places Grotius at the head of the natural-law tradition

[5] 'To remove all equivocations, and leave no place for cavil, we ought to observe, that we must own things honest or dishonest of themselves, or in their own nature. 1. By way of opposition to human appointment, as the agreements or opinions of men. 2. In respect of the subject, with relation to which they are thought so. As for example, there are some acts which agree to God no way, i.e., which he can't do without derogating from his perfection, and so contradicting himself. There are actions also, which of themselves agree, or disagree with the human nature, in our present state. But if we understand that an action is honest, or dishonest in its own nature, without any relation to the appointment of God, or the laws which God hath imposed upon us, by our creation, in that sense the proposition is false.' (Barbeyrac on Pufendorf, *JNG* i 2.6 = K 17n) Barbeyrac cites ii 3.4–5, and *ES* 5.7 = *GW* v 168–9, where Pufendorf rejects intrinsic honestas insofar as it implies that 'Deus, eiusque voluntas a prima origine moralitatis excluduntur'. But his defence of his position does not distinguish the creative and the legislative aspects of God.

because he separates him from the Scholastics; this separation assumes falsely that Grotius differs from Scholastic naturalism in his explanation of intrinsic morality. In separating Grotius from the Scholastics, Barbeyrac assimilates him to Pufendorf, by his questionable interpretation of both Grotius and Pufendorf.

Barbeyrac's history has encouraged the view that modern moral philosophy marks a sharp break from Scholasticism, and that a modern theory of natural law, beginning with Grotius, is distinctive of the modern outlook. This view about modern natural-law theory has no plausible basis. On the main points Grotius accepts Scholastic naturalism. Barbeyrac does not show that he is a pioneer of the modern natural-law tradition.

He might more plausibly have argued that Grotius and Pufendorf continue the debate between naturalism and voluntarism whose main lines are clearly drawn by Suarez. Grotius belongs on the naturalist side of the debate. Hobbes, Locke, Cumberland, and Pufendorf, in different respects and to different degrees, defend voluntarism. Barbeyrac supports Pufendorf's attempts to defend a voluntarist position that accommodates plausible naturalist views about the natural basis of morality; but his arguments rest on misunderstanding and confusion.

An examination of Pufendorf's doctrine of natural law helps to explain why Barbeyrac regards natural law theory as a revolution in moral philosophy. Pufendorf comes much closer than Ockham or Scotus comes to a purely procedural conception of morality as law. Both Scotus and Ockham recognize some natural aspects of morality, and so they do not need a non-moral basis for the legitimacy of a moral legislator. Pufendorf goes further, since he recognizes only non-moral goods in nature, and takes moral right and wrong to be products of legislation. He thereby gives natural law priority in morality, because it is not subordinate to the ultimate human good, or to natural rightness and wrongness. Hence, Pufendorf's theory lives up to Barbeyrac's advertisement of natural-law theory as a significant innovation in moral theory. The difficulties that arise in Pufendorf's position suggest that the innovation is not an advance.

601. Burlamaqui on Pufendorf

Some of the weaknesses in Pufendorf's position, as explained by Barbeyrac, are identified in Burlamaqui's comments. Burlamaqui agrees with Pufendorf's view that law requires a prescription by a superior (*PNL* 78), and that this feature of laws distinguishes them from counsels; while counsels are drawn from the nature of things, laws also require commands (79). Hence the 'laws' recognized by naturalists are simply counsels. But though Burlamaqui follows Pufendorf here, his attempts to expound and to modify Pufendorf's position reinforce doubts about whether Pufendorf and Barbeyrac hold a consistent position.

According to Pufendorf,[6] laws express only the end of the legislator, whereas Burlamaqui claims that law has a double end, relative both to the sovereign and to the good of the subjects.[7]

[6] *JNG* i 6.1.

[7] '. . . it would be doing injustice to the sovereign to imagine that he thinks only of himself, without any regard to the good of those who are his dependents. Pufendorf seems here, as well as in some other places, to give a little too much into Hobbes's principles' (Burlamaqui, *PNL* 100).

He follows Pufendorf in believing that a connexion to law constitutes the moral goodness, as opposed to the merely natural goodness, of actions (114). But he describes moral properties in the way Suarez describes intrinsic morality; we discover them by rational reflexion on what our nature requires.[8] Hence we learn about morality through a moral sense, as Hutcheson supposes (145), but also through reason (150). The foundation of natural law is human nature (157). One important aspect of nature is sociability.[9] Unlike Pufendorf, Burlamaqui takes natural sociability to be a foundation of the state as well as of smaller societies.

Burlamaqui emphasizes the non-arbitrary character of God's commanding observance of the natural law. The natural and necessary differences in actions explain why God commands some rather than others (184).[10] On this basis we can answer the standard question about whether an action is just because God commands it, or the other way round. Since justice is obedience to the command of a superior, justice depends on God's command; but since God commands only what is reasonable in itself, God's commands require some prior reasonableness in nature.[11]

But what is the character of this prior reasonableness? If Burlamaqui accepts the voluntarist elements in Pufendorf, he ought to say that the reasonableness antecedent to divine commands is merely prudential and not moral. Pufendorf and Cumberland believe that we must say this to avoid a vicious circle in defining moral properties. Burlamaqui, however, does not follow them. He agrees with Barbeyrac in denying that Grotius is committed to any vicious circle, and on this basis he defends Grotius' 'etsi daremus' clause (217). He argues that Grotius' account of natural morality is non-circular, because it appeals to rational and social nature, and not to any legislation.[12] Moral qualities (honesty and turpitude) do not essentially depend on legislation.

Burlamaqui's remarks confirm our suggestion that Barbeyrac's defence of Pufendorf exposes the basic conflict in Pufendorf's views; the conflict is even clearer in Burlamaqui's concessions to Grotius. Sometimes he seems to take Pufendorf's view that the natural basis for divine commands is not natural morality, but only natural prudential goodness; that is why moral goodness requires divine commands. But if Burlamaqui consistently stuck to this

[8] He explains this in his description of natural law: '. . . a law that God imposes on all men, and which they are able to discover and know by the sole light of reason, and by attentively considering their state and nature' (126).

[9] 'Ethic writers have given it the name of sociability, by which they understand that disposition which inclines us to benevolence towards our fellow creatures, to do them all the good that lies in our power, to reconcile our own happiness to that of others, and to render our particular advantage subordinate always to the common and general good.' (169)

[10] 'To conceive it [sc. natural law] therefore as depending on an arbitrary will would be attempting to subvert it, or at least it would be reducing the thing to a kind of Pyrrhonism; by reason we could have no natural means of being sure that God commands or forbids one thing rather than another.' (185)

[11] 'A thing is just because God commands it; this is implied by the definition we gave of justice. But God commands such or such things, because these things are reasonable in themselves, conformable to the order and ends he proposed to himself in creating mankind, and agreeable to the nature and state of man.' (223) 'Tis so much the more necessary to admit these two sorts of obligation and morality, as that which renders the obligation of law the most perfect, is its uniting the two species; being internal and external both at the same time. For were there no attention given to the very nature of the laws, and were the things they command or prohibit not to merit the approbation or censure of reason; the authority of the legislator would have no other foundation but that of power; and laws being then no more than the effect of an arbitrary will, they would produce rather a constraint properly so called than any real obligation.' (215)

[12] 'Here I can see no circle: For putting the question, whence comes the natural honesty or turpitude of commanded or forbidden actions? Grotius does not answer in the manner they make him; on the contrary, he says that this honesty or turpitude proceeds from the necessary agreeableness or disagreeableness of our actions with a rational and social nature.' (187)

view, he would not agree with Grotius on natural moral goodness without divine legislation. When he demands divine commands in addition to natural goodness and badness, it is not clear whether he relies on Pufendorf's argument (that morality needs laws and commands) or on Suarez's argument (that natural law, but not morality, needs them).

It is easy for Burlamaqui to fall into this ambiguity, because Pufendorf and Barbeyrac also fall into it. Sometimes they speak as though they appealed only to God's creative will; in that case they would recognize natural and intrinsic morality. Sometimes they take God's legislative will to be essential to morality; in that case they reject intrinsic morality. Burlamaqui does not see the conflict between his support of Pufendorf and his defence of Grotius, because he accepts two inconsistent elements of Pufendorf's view of natural law and natural morality. The conflict between these two elements becomes still clearer in the efforts of Barbeyrac and Burlamaqui to expound Pufendorf's views.

602. A Defence of Voluntarism: Fundamental v. Formal Morality

These conclusions about Pufendorf deserve to be borne in mind if we consider the later influence of his views on Roman Catholic moral theology. We may find such an influence surprising in the light of his objections to Scholastic views. We have seen that he is right to contrast his position with some Scholastic views, and especially with the views of Aquinas, Vasquez, and Suarez. But his views are much closer to those of Scotus, Ockham, and Biel, and so we might expect this side of Roman Catholic thought to be more sympathetic to Pufendorf's voluntarism.

Suarez's treatment of natural law and intrinsic morality exercises an uneven influence on later Roman Catholic moral theology. The clearest sign of his influence is the acceptance of his claim that natural law is genuine law requiring a divine legislator. Aquinas does not endorse this claim; his understanding of the sense in which the natural law is law allows the existence of a law without a legislator.

Aquinas' understanding of the legal character of the natural law persists in some later Roman moral theologians. According to Alphonsus Liguori, the natural law states what is to be done and avoided.[13] He states natural precepts in gerundive form. He does not suggest that if it is a precept of a law, it must present itself as the command of a legislator. Alphonsus rejects some voluntarist accounts of the content of natural law; he implies that, in contrast to positive law, it is not laid down by the free will of God or man.

This conception of natural law is not accepted in all later Roman sources. Its opponents do not endorse extreme voluntarism, which might reasonably be taken to encourage

[13] 'A natural precept, or precept of natural right (ius), is a dictate or a judgment of our reason, by which, through the light impressed on us by the author of nature, we settle what is to be done and what is to be avoid. For example: good is to be done, evil is to be avoided. From this general precept particular precepts are derived—e.g., God is to be worshipped, no one is to be injured, and in fact all the precepts of the Decalogue (except for the circumstances of the Sabbath) and many others. A positive precept or precept of positive right, is one that has been laid down by the free will of God or of human beings and depends on it—e.g., the precept about baptism, the Lenten fast, etc.' (Alphonsus Liguori, *TM* i, Tract. 2, ch. 1 §102 = p. 69)

Jansenist errors about morality and God. But for those who tend to sympathize with Scotus, Pufendorf's version of voluntarism might seem attractive, since it combines some elements of naturalism with a firmly voluntarist conception of morality. In 1860 W. G. Ward remarks that many Roman Catholics believe that some form of voluntarism is the most appropriate position for a Roman Catholic to hold.

His remark is confirmed by the *Syllabus Errorum* of Pope Pius IX (1864), which supports voluntarism without explicit endorsement of it. The Pope condemns a threefold error about morality, which (a) denies that moral laws need a divine sanction, (b) denies that human laws ought to conform to the natural law, and (c) denies that they derive their obligatory force from God.[14] The Pope presents these three claims as part of a single error, but they appear to be separable. One might believe the first claim while rejecting the second, if one accepts an account of natural law that does not necessarily imply a divine legislator. Rejection of the second claim does not require acceptance of a divine legislator.

Leo XIII's account of the natural law officially corrects the error condemned by his predecessor. He emphasizes the natural character of the natural law in saying that human reason itself commands and forbids. But he also seems to present human reason as expressing itself in an imperative form that presupposes a divine source of the commands.[15] Fifty years later, Pius XII reaffirms these claims about morality and the natural law.[16]

A more recent official Roman discussion does not explicitly mention natural law, but it relies on St Paul's remark about being a law to oneself. It speaks of conscience as a means of access to a law written in the human heart by God, but it does not discuss the way in which the law presents itself, or has to present itself in order to count as morality or as natural law.[17] It does not emphasize the imperative character of the law as requiring a divine legislator; nor does it follow Alphonsus in asserting that moral right and wrong are independent of the free will of God. The difference between morality and divine positive law is not explained.

The statements of the three popes on natural law affirm some version of voluntarism, but it is not clear what version they have in mind. One might argue that, strictly speaking, they only affirm voluntarism about moral laws, and do not reject the possibility of intrinsic morality. If this is what they mean, their position would be consistent with Suarez's division between morality and natural law. It is doubtful, however, whether the popes mean to

[14] (a) Morum leges divina haud egent sanctione, (b) minimeque opus est, ut humanae leges ad naturae ius conformentur aut (c) obligandi vim a Deo accipiant. (Denz. §2956; reference letters added)

[15] 'Such a law is, first among all, the natural law, which is written and engraved in the minds of individual human beings, because it is human reason itself, commanding to do right actions and forbidding to sin. But this prescription of human reason cannot have the force of law unless because it is the voice and interpreter of a higher reason to which our mind and our freedom must be subjected. For since the force of law is this, to command duties (officia) and to ascribe rights (iura), it depends entirely on authority, that is, on a genuine power (potestas) to fix duties and to set out rights, and also of attaching a sanction to its commands by rewards and punishments. Now all these things clearly cannot be found in a human being, if as his own supreme legislator he were to give himself the norm for his actions. It follows, therefore, that the natural law is the eternal law itself, implanted in those who use reason, and inclining them towards the required (debitum) action and end; and this is the eternal reason itself of God the creator and ruler of the whole world.' (Denz. 3247, Leo XIII, *Libertas Praestantissimum*)

[16] 'This natural law rests on God as its foundation, the almighty creator and father of all things, and also the supreme and most perfect legislator and the wisest and most just judge of human actions. Once the eternal Deity is rashly rejected, then the principle of all rightness (honestas) collapses and falls, and the voice of nature is silent or gradually weakens . . . ' (DS 3781, Pius XII, *Summi Pontificatus*, quoted by Mahoney, *MMT* 82)

[17] See *Gaudium et Spes* §16, in Alberigo et al., *COD*. Quoted in §206.

allow the possibility of morality that is independent of divine commands. Pius XII affirms that if the existence of God is denied, the principle of all rightness (honestas) also collapses. Similarly, the other two popes would have failed to discuss an important and pertinent question about morality and God if they believed that their remarks allowed the possibility of intrinsic morality. They may reasonably be taken to affirm the voluntarist position that Ward takes to be widespread among Roman Catholics.

The version of voluntarism that is endorsed by the popes and opposed by Ward may be explained more clearly by reference to the division between fundamental and formal morality. Ward finds this in some of the Scholastic writers (from the 17th and 18th centuries) whom he cites as supporters of voluntarism. These writers distinguish two sets of facts and properties relevant to morality: (1) Fundamental morality: we grasp this when we grasp what is good and bad for human beings because of their nature. These facts about human nature are independent of divine legislative will. God could not have created human beings for whom murder was good. (2) Formal and complete morality: this includes obligation, which requires divine legislation. Since divine legislation is needed for formal and complete morality, merely fundamental morality does not give us morality.

In recognizing intrinsic goodness and badness apart from legislation, the Roman writers show that they do not separate facts from values, or 'is' from 'ought'. For they allow that facts about human beings, their nature, and circumstances, suffice for (we might say) prudential facts, and for true judgments about what promotes human welfare and about what we ought to do, from the prudential point of view. These prudential facts are the subject matter of ancient ethics. But since these facts are not sufficient for true moral judgments, natural goodness lacks an essential ingredient of morality. It gives us only fundamental morality, because it does not include the legislative element that is needed for formal morality.

603. What is Fundamental Morality?

To understand what 'fundamental morality' means, we need to distinguish two sorts of 'fundamentals' or 'foundations': (i) We might claim that knowledge of an earlier period of history is the necessary, or the best, foundation for learning about a later period, because it is a prerequisite for understanding the later period; but it does not by itself give us knowledge of the later period. (ii) We might claim that if we get a first class degree in philosophy, we have grasped the fundamentals of philosophy. In that case we have actually learned philosophy, not just a prerequisite to philosophy, even though we have not learned the whole of philosophy.

Roman Catholic writers take 'fundamental morality' to be fundamental only in the first sense. It falls short of formal morality because it lacks the form, the essential characteristic, of morality. It is the foundation on which morality is built, and hence a prerequisite for morality, but not morality itself. Without divine legislation things would be intrinsically good and bad, and hence there would be prudential facts and prudential reasons; but nothing would be morally good or bad, or morally right or wrong, without divine commands.[18]

[18] 'Or, nous pouvons être assurés qu'un tel ordre moral existe dans l'exemplarisme divin, répondant à la nature même des choses, et avant toute intervention de la volonté de Dieu. Rien qu'en considérant la nature raisonnable ordonnée vers

'Fundamental sins', therefore, are intrinsically bad, because they are inappropriate to rational nature. Hence they have 'to-be-prohibitedness' (prohibenditas), and demand prohibition. But they are not wrong (inhonesta) or sins without a divine prohibition.[19]

This division helps to clarify the relation between these later Roman writers and the positions of Suarez and Pufendorf. Where Suarez speaks of intrinsic morality, Gonet speaks of fundamental morality, which is only the basis of morality and not yet genuine morality.[20] Fundamental morality is independent of the divine will, but obligation depends on the divine will; here Gonet recalls Suarez. But Gonet's formulation includes an element of voluntarism that goes beyond both Aquinas and Suarez. In claiming that without divine law lying would not be morally bad 'formally and completely', he implies that 'fundamental morality' is really just the foundation on which morality is built rather than the fundamentals that belong to morality (the first rather than the second conception of 'fundamental' that we distinguished above). Without divine legislation things would be intrinsically good and bad, but not morally good or bad, and hence not right or wrong. Though Gonet derives some of his position from Suarez, his eventual position coincides with Pufendorf's.

The influence of this moderate voluntarist position, and some of the difficulties that arise in making it clear, can be noticed in the brief presentation in textbooks. Rickaby accepts Suarez's naturalism insofar as he recognizes natural good and evil; God could not have created human beings for whom murder was good.[21] But he argues that obligation

le vrai et vers le bon, ou encore la marche normale de la société humaine, on saisit facilement la nécessité et l'existence d'un ordre moral, droits et devoirs réciproques, parce que ce sont là des relations essentielles de la nature raisonnable, laquelle, sans ces relations, serait un tissu des contradictions. C'est là ce que les théologiens thomistes appellent la moralité considérée *initiative et fundamentaliter*. Mais ces relations essentielles, dont notre esprit saisit la nécessité et existence, manqueraient de fondement et de caractère obligatoire, s'il n'existait pas un être qui soit le prototype, l'idéal de l'ordre auquel tout homme doit se conformer, s'il veut demeurer dans la moralité: prototype idéal, à la fois cause exemplaire—et d'abord cause exemplaire—et cause efficiente, transformant, en le rendant obligatoire, le bien *rationnel* en bien formellement *morale*. En bref, la morale naturelle ne se réduit pas à des commandements divins. Au lieu de rapporter, comme Descartes le fait, les essences en général a la volonté divine "Leibniz a vu la vérité en faisant de *l'entendement* divin le lieu des essences, et du *vouloir* divin la source des existences . . . Si donc on nous pose cette question: le fondement du devoir est-il en Dieu, oui ou non? nous répondons: il est en Dieu comme en son dernier support, mais son support immédiat est l'ordre des relations, l'ordre des fins." Mgr Hubst *Carême 1891, 4e conférence*. Cet ordre des relations et des fins trouve lui-même son fondement en Dieu, mais à ne connaître que le support immédiat de la moralité qu'il constitue, on n'est pas encore lié par la conscience de l'obligation, mais on peut en soupçonner l'existence. . . . [Omitted passage quoted in n22 below.] Cette position sauvegarde à la fois le caractère rationnel de la morale naturelle et en même temps son fondement divin, tout en éliminant les excès du volontarisme. Sauvegarder le caractère rationnel de la morale naturelle tout en montrant le fondement divin, ce n'est pas, quoiqu'on ait dit, ouvrir les voies à la constitution d'une morale laïque, c'est-à-dire d'une morale sans Dieu.' (*DTC* xv.2, col. 3317)

[19] 'Do those things that are intrinsically bad formally have the character of sin or <in other words> of moral badness and wrongness (inhonestum) because of opposition to a prohibiting law, or instead because of unfittingness to rational nature? On this point they more commonly teach that these things are only fundamentally sins because of unfittingness to rational nature, and that they have only to-be-prohibitedness (prohibenditas), or <in other words> a demand that they be prohibited. But they have the formal character of sin because of violation of a prohibiting law, so that for that reason they would lack formal badness if they were not prohibited, whether it were possible for them not to be positively prohibited by God, or impossible—which latter view I take to be truer, with Suarez . . . against Ockham and others.' (Domenico Viva, *In propos. 48 et 49 Innocent. XI*. no. 1, quoted by Ward, *ONG* 459) Viva was an Italian Jesuit (1648–1726).

[20] 'Toute cette doctrine est résumée par Gonet en cette proposition: Si enim lex aeterna, subindeque omnes aliae leges tollerentur, mendacium non esset malum morale nec peccatum formaliter et completive (voilà le "moral"), sed fundamentaliter et initiative, quia esset contrarium naturae rationali (voilà le "rationnel") et ex sua natura aptam, ut prohiberetur a legibus, si ponerentur. *De Vitiis et Peccatis*, n.66; cf. Salamanticenses, ibid. disp. vii, dub 1, n.11.' (*DTC* xv.2, col. 3317)

[21] 'As it is not in the power of God to bring it about, that the angles of a triangle taken together shall amount to anything else than two right angles, so it is not within the compass of Divine omnipotence to create a man for whom it

requires an imperative, and that Kant is mistaken in trying to find the imperative within the individual agent. A genuine command requires a commander distinct from the subject of the command, and so it requires divine commands.[22] Hence we have to distinguish an 'initial and fundamental obligation' from 'an obligation formal and complete', which requires a divine command. These remarks mark Rickaby's agreement with Pufendorf against Suarez. He does not acknowledge any moral oughts without laws and commands.[23] Hence he does not agree with Suarez's belief in intrinsic morality. 'Fundamental obligation' includes no oughts and therefore allows no genuine morality.[24]

The question about whether genuine morality requires obligation and command introduces more than a verbal dispute about the extent of morality. Our answer to the question determines whether anyone who is doubtful about the existence of an external legislator should be equally doubtful about the existence of moral oughts and duties. Suarez answers that morality is independent of an external legislator. Pufendorf disagrees with him. The Roman Catholic writers who contrast 'fundamental' with 'formal and complete' morality go further towards Pufendorf than, from Suarez's point of view, they ought to go.

Anscombe's diagnosis of modern moral philosophy, therefore, emerges naturally from this modern Roman view. She takes morality to require a concept of 'ought' and obligation that implies legislation. Those who believe in divine legislation are justified in using moral concepts. Those who do not believe in divine legislation will find that they use moral concepts they cannot justify, since they reject the beliefs that these concepts presuppose; hence they would be better off if they stuck to 'fundamental' and incomplete morality.[25]

shall be a good and proper thing, and befitting his nature, to blaspheme, to perjure himself, to abandon himself recklessly to lust, or anger, or any other passion. God need not have created man at all, but He could not have created him with other than human exigencies. . . . The denial of this doctrine in the Nominalist and Cartesian Schools . . . Still less are moral distinctions between good and evil to be set down to the law of the State, or the fashion of society. Human convention can no more constitute moral good than it can physical good, or mathematical or logical truth.' (Rickaby, *MP* 113–14)

[22] 'Kant . . . contends . . . that the Categorical Imperative, uttered by a man's own reason, has the force of a law, made by that same reason; so that the legislative authority is within the breast of the doer, who owes it obedience. This he calls the autonomy of reason. It is also called Independent Morality, . . . The doctrine is erroneous, inasmuch as it undertakes to settle the matter of right and wrong without reference to external authority; and inasmuch as it makes the reason within a man, not the promulgator of the law to him, but his own legislator. For a law is a precept, a command: now no one issues precepts, or gives commands, to himself. To command is an act of jurisdiction; and Jurisdiction . . . requires a distinction of persons, one ruler, and another subject. . . . If this [sc. Kant's view] were true, there would be no sin anywhere except what is called philosophical sin, that is, a breach of the dignity of man's rational nature . . . A man may transgress and sin, in more than the philosophical sense of the word: he may be properly a law-breaker, by offending against this supreme Reason, higher and other than his own. . . . apart from God we shall prove certain acts wrong, and other acts obligatory as duties, philosophically speaking, with an initial and fundamental wrongness and obligation. In the present section we have proved once for all, that what is wrong philosophically, or is philosophically a duty, is the same also theologically. Thus the initial and fundamental obligation is transformed into an obligation formal and complete.' (*MP* 116–17)

[23] The full notion of what a man *ought*, is what he *must do under pain of sin*. Sin is more than folly, more than a breach of reason. . . . he is not his own master; he is under law . . . ' (*MP* 116)

[24] The position of *DTC* and Rickaby is similar to that of Cathrein, *PM*, ch. 5. His account of obligation agrees with Suarez against Vasquez and Kant. But he seems to agree with Leo XIII and *DTC* in rejecting the possibility of 'lay' morality. Here he seems to go beyond Suarez. It is not clear whether his position is consistent, since he also seems to attribute intrinsic honestas to actions without reference to the divine will. Perhaps he means that without obligation derived from divine command such honestas lacks normativity, and fails to provide the right sort of reason for action. This is similar to Culverwell's position.

[25] On Anscombe see §459.

We have argued that mediaeval Scholasticism does not support this modern Roman Catholic view; we can align Aquinas and Suarez with the modern Roman view only by misinterpretation. But even if this is true, the modern Roman view may still be correct about the nature of morality. To show that it is correct, we need to see what, if anything, is wrong with the naturalist account of morality that we have ascribed to the Scholastics.

We now find that the modern Roman position converges with Barbeyrac's position in a surprising way. Though the two positions disagree about the source of the jural conception of morality, they agree in accepting the jural conception. The view that Barbeyrac attributes to modern theorists of natural law is just the view that the modern Roman view ascribes to the Scholastic tradition. But we have found that Barbeyrac is right to deny that the jural conception is the Scholastic conception.

The modern Roman position, then, accepts Pufendorf's central distinction (on which he agrees with Cumberland) between natural goodness and morality, takes obligation to be necessary for morality, and takes divine legislation to be necessary for obligation. Pufendorf takes himself to defend a Lutheran position against earlier and contemporary Scholastic writers, but his position commends itself to later Roman Catholic writers.[26]

604. Defence of Naturalism

In our discussion of Pufendorf, we found that his voluntarism faces serious objections when it seeks to explain how God is an authoritative legislator whose commands deserve to be obeyed. How far do later Roman writers answer these objections? The naturalist side of the argument is supported by Ward, who argues that Roman Catholics are permitted to believe in 'independent morality' if they think a cogent philosophical case can be made for it, and that in fact a cogent case can be made. In speaking of 'independent morality', Ward agrees with Whewell, who treats theological voluntarism as a version of dependent morality.[27] Since Ward notices that many Roman Catholics believe that voluntarism is the only tenable position for them to hold, he believes it is worthwhile to collect evidence from the 17th-century Scholastics and from later Roman sources to show that no valid ecclesiastical authority prohibits Roman Catholics from believing naturalism if they take it to be rationally superior.[28] Since his book appeared in 1860, a few years before Pius IX's *Syllabus* (1864), Ward does not try to reconcile his defence of naturalism with the Pope's endorsement of voluntarism about natural law.

[26] '. . . it is remarkable that some of his expositions remind us of the works of modern Catholic authors. He himself, however, was always emphatic in his profession of pure Lutheranism and never appealed to the views of Catholic authors.' (Simons, in Pufendorf, *JNG*, tr. Oldfather, 17a)

[27] On Whewell see §522.

[28] At *NG* 429–90 Ward presents a long series of Roman Catholic authorities defending what he calls 'independent morality' (using Whewell's expression): 'Certain Catholics . . . are under the impression, that there is some overwhelming amount of theological authority for the thesis, that all moral obligation proceeds from God's command. The first and principal part of this section then will be devoted to establishing the contradictory of this. I will show that so considerable a number of the greatest Catholic writers oppose themselves to any such thesis that at all events any Catholic who may regard it as opposed to reason has the fullest liberty of denying it' (429). I know most of his authorities only from the long quotations he gives (he does not always give precise references to their works).

Ward's defence of naturalism deserves the praise it receives from Mill.[29] In defence of naturalism he adduces cogent arguments from Suarez as well as Vasquez.[30] He underestimates the extent of mediaeval support for voluntarism; Ockham is the only mediaeval writer whom he acknowledges as a voluntarist, and he does not discuss Scotus. But he emphasizes the mediaeval and Catholic sources of naturalism in order to refute the absurd suggestion of Dugald Stewart that naturalism is a Protestant innovation.[31] Stewart's view (in which he agrees with Barbeyrac) that mediaeval philosophers are not worth discussing does not seem to rest on knowledge of their actual views. As his Roman Catholic critics point out, he does not even seem to remember Pufendorf's attack on the Scholastics for having maintained naturalism.[32] It is reasonable of Ward to attack Stewart's completely mistaken account of mediaeval views.

Against all voluntarist views, he argues that the Church recognizes 'moral' or 'philosophical' sin which consists simply in acting against rational nature.[33] It thereby recognizes that action against rational nature is wrong in its own right, apart from any divine command. Independent morality consists in right action, which is in accord with rational nature, and wrong action, which is contrary to it. Ward argues that the recognition of independent morality conflicts with the view that 'moral obligation implies the command of a superior' (450).

This presentation of the dispute about independent morality seems to overlook a distinction drawn by Suarez. According to Suarez, morality is not sufficient for natural law, because natural law includes obligation, and therefore depends on command and legislation. Hence his doctrine of independent morality is consistent with the view that moral obligation implies the command of a superior, if 'obligation' is used in Suarez's narrow sense. From

[29] Mill expresses his respect for Ward's argument, in *ESWHP*, ch. 10 = *CW* ix 164–5n: '. . . a book the readers of which are likely to be limited by its being addressed specially to Catholics, but showing a capacity in the writer which might otherwise have made him one of the most effective champions of the Intuitive school. Though I do not believe morality to be intuitive in Dr Ward's sense, I think his book of great practical worth, by the strenuous manner in which it maintains morality to have another foundation than the arbitrary decree of God, and shows, by great weight of evidence, that this is the orthodox doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church.' Mill's reference to the 'arbitrary decree' of God misunderstands Ward's target. Ward sees clearly that most of his opponents reject the Ockhamist view (as he understands it) that morality results from God's free choice.

[30] Ward, *NG* 71–111. [31] On Stewart see §462.

[32] Ward quotes from Perrone's comment on Stewart (430): 'This teaching [sc. voluntarism] was the master-stroke of Pufendorf, which he in turn derived from his parent Luther. Following him, all these Protestant jurists vigorously ridicule and attack the scholastic teachers because they maintain intrinsic distinction between moral goodness and badness founded in the very essences and nature of things, and because they defend an eternal law in God, independent of the free will of God. And so we cannot sufficiently wonder how a Scottish philosopher of great reputation among recent philosophers, Dugald Stewart, in the preface that he wrote for the first supplementary volume to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, could ascribe this glory to Melanchthon, on the ground that he was the first of all to teach that the distinction between moral goodness and badness is derived not from revelation, but from the intrinsic nature of things. . . . Was this very doctrine not previously common to practically all the scholastics? And was not the contrary opinion, which does away with moral distinctions altogether, preached by Luther and his followers? See how Protestant prejudices could so far mislead Stewart, a philosopher, and in other ways a commendable one!' In stressing the Protestant sources of voluntarism, Perrone seems to commit the opposite error to Stewart's and to underestimate the strength of mediaeval voluntarism; 'practically all (omnibus fere) the scholastics' is rather an over-statement.

[33] He cites (450) the definition by Alexander VIII: 'A philosophical or moral sin is an action unfitting to rational nature and to correct reason. A theological and mortal sin, however, is a free transgression of a divine law.' (DS §2291). Though this definition introduces the condemnation of a proposition, Ward argues that the definition itself is not part of what is condemned, but an accepted view on the basis of which the condemnation was issued.

Suarez's point of view, then, Ward has confused the issues in dispute, by maintaining that independent morality precludes the view that obligation rests on command.[34]

It would have been useful if Ward had noticed and used Suarez's distinction between duty and obligation. For if he had drawn the distinction clearly, he could have asked his voluntarist opponents what they meant in claiming that moral obligation depends on divine commands. The voluntarist claim may appear appealing because it contains a true claim (as Suarez supposes) about obligation; but this true claim does not justify a voluntarist account of morality and moral duties in general.

In defence of Ward, one might reasonably argue that his opponents do not seem to confine themselves to the narrow claim about obligation that Suarez accepts. The papal documents we have discussed seem to maintain a broader claim about the basis of morality. Similarly, the division between fundamental and formal morality does not concede the possibility of moral duty and moral rightness apart from legislation. Against these opponents Ward might fairly claim to be denying what they assert when he claims that moral obligation does not require divine commands. Though he misses an opportunity to clarify the opponents' position, and thereby to identify its mistake, he does not misrepresent it. Both he and his opponents seem to assume a broad sense of 'obligation' covering all moral oughts and duties.

Part of Ward's argument consists in the exposition of naturalism, to show that it is a viable alternative to voluntarism. Another part maintains that naturalism is preferable, because it offers reasonable answers to questions that voluntarism cannot answer so reasonably. For this purpose, he sets aside the extreme voluntarist view that morality consists in conformity to the free commands of God. He attributes this view to Ockham, and rejects it, agreeing with the Scholastic writers who believe it is repugnant to a reasonable conception of God and morality.[35] But he also contests the moderate voluntarist view that morality consists in conformity to the necessary commands of God. This view cannot fairly be accused of identifying morality with the arbitrary will of God, but Ward believes that it is still open to serious objection.

Moderate voluntarism concedes that God is not free to command injustice and cruelty. But how, Ward asks, can it explain why God is not free? We can understand why lack of freedom to violate necessary truths is not an improper restriction on divine freedom; for we take it to be essential to the divine intellect to grasp these necessary truths unalterably, and we would not take it to be a divine intellect otherwise. But this explanation is not available to voluntarists, since they deny that the wrongness of cruelty and lying is a necessary truth grasped by the divine intellect apart from the divine legislative will. Since, according to voluntarism, the wrongness of wrong actions is not intrinsic, but depends on their being violations of God's commands, we still do not understand why these commands are necessary exercises of God's legislative will.

Ward sets out this objection to the moderate voluntarist view by considering Viva's account of 'fundamental sins'.[36] According to Viva, they are (i) intrinsically bad, because they are inappropriate to rational nature, and hence (ii) worthy of being prohibited or

[34] On Ward on Suarez see §437.

[35] This is the version of voluntarism that Mill has in mind in his repudiation of Mansel's account of divine goodness, at *ESWHP*, ch. 7 = *CW* ix 103.

[36] See §603.

demanding prohibition, but (iii) not really wrong (inhonesta) or sins without a divine prohibition, but also (iv) necessarily prohibited by God. In the fourth point, Viva rejects the Ockhamist position that it is possible for God not to prohibit those actions that are in fact morally wrong; he does not concede that God might have made murder, theft, and cruelty right. But Ward suggests that Viva's voluntarism deprives him of a justification for his claim that intrinsically bad actions have 'deservingness of prohibition' (prohibenditas). Why do they deserve prohibition if they are not intrinsically wrong? If one claims that naturally bad actions deserve prohibition precisely because they are intrinsically bad, do we not concede that it is intrinsically wrong to permit them? Viva answers this question by rejecting naturalism, but still maintaining that permission for intrinsically bad actions would be incompatible with God's holiness. Ward pertinently asks why this permission would be incompatible with God's holiness, unless the actions that would be permitted were intrinsically wrong in advance of being prohibited.

Ward's objections to Viva's moderate voluntarism are not original; they revive Cudworth's objections to Hobbes and Leibniz's objections to Pufendorf. All these criticisms maintain that voluntarists need some non-legislative morality if they are to say what they need to say about divine legislation. Cudworth argues that we need to explain how God is an authoritative legislator, and that we cannot explain this unless we suppose it is right to obey God. But how can it be right to obey God unless what God commands is right, independently of what God commands? Moderate voluntarists do not argue that God's authority requires or allows him to start with a blank cheque. On the contrary, they argue that God's necessary holiness requires approval of intrinsically good actions.

605. The Persistence of Voluntarism

These difficulties that face moderate voluntarism suggest that the division between fundamental and formal morality does not refute naturalist criticisms of voluntarism. On the contrary, it simply revives Cumberland's and Pufendorf's views about divine legislation and morality. Pufendorf accepts moderate voluntarism in order to avoid the extreme voluntarism of Hobbes; but it does not give him a satisfactory position. Ward's discussion shows how the modern Roman position reproduces the weaknesses in Pufendorf's position.

We might, then, be surprised that moderate voluntarism has been so tenacious, and has even been accepted in modern Roman Catholic statements on moral questions, despite the fact that it departs from the traditional Catholic position of Aquinas and Suarez by accepting some of Pufendorf's most questionable claims. How are we to explain this rather puzzling development? Some answers are worth considering.

First, Aquinas' position is not completely clear. One might take him to support the modern Roman position if one supposed that he takes natural law to depend essentially on the divine legislative will. We saw that this was Farrell's interpretation of Aquinas, and that it tends to obscure the reasons for ascribing a naturalist position to Aquinas.

Second, it is easy to misinterpret Suarez's position, and therefore easy to overlook his agreement with Aquinas on the essential points about naturalism. Since he claims that obligation and natural law require divine legislation, we may take him to affirm voluntarism

about morality, if we overlook his distinction between duties and obligations. Alternatively, if we notice his naturalism about morality without natural law, we may (following Farrell) suppose that naturalism about morality is a deviation from Aquinas' position. In fact he deviates from Aquinas about necessary conditions for natural law, not about necessary conditions for morality. But since even Ward misunderstands Suarez on these questions, it is not surprising that Suarez's naturalism about morality receives less attention than it deserves. Moderate voluntarists may well suppose that they are following Suarez in separating fundamental from formal morality; they do not notice that he recognizes formal and complete morality without divine legislation.

Third, the 19th- and 20th-century popes are especially concerned to defend the place of Christian theism in morality and to refute the error (as they understand it) of moral thinking that omits any reference to God. This concern might be satisfied in different ways, but one might argue that voluntarism does most to satisfy it; if morality itself refers essentially to divine legislation, we cannot abandon reference to a divine legislator without abandoning morality itself. One might dispute whether this extreme claim about God and the basis of morality is the best way to fulfil the aims of these popes; Aquinas avoids the extreme claim, but he certainly does not take theism to be irrelevant to morality.

Fourth, even those who do not share the aims of the popes may believe that they are right to connect morality with legislative will. Pufendorf's claims that moral duties involve obligations and commands, and that one's own will cannot provide the relevant obligation, may seem plausible, even if we do not agree with the ways in which Pufendorf exploits this claim. Similarly, we might claim that the modern Roman position is right to connect morality with obligation and with legislation, even if we do not draw all the Roman conclusions about divine legislation.

If these four points help to explain the persistence, and even the advance, of voluntarism within Roman Catholic Scholastic moral philosophy and theology, we may helpfully return to them when we consider the persisting voluntarist trend in 18th-century English moral philosophy.

But, whatever we say to explain the persistence of voluntarism, we seem to need some explanation apart from its philosophical merits. Once the alternative presented by Suarez is clearly understood, naturalism about morality seems to have clear philosophical advantages over voluntarism. These advantages are clear to Leibniz, but his criticism of voluntarism is too brief and careless, as Barbeyrac shows, to expose all the difficulties that arise for a defender of voluntarism. Ward's defence of naturalism convincingly argues both from Catholic philosophical tradition and on broader philosophical grounds. His defence casts serious doubt on the decision of the three popes to go as far as they go in acceptance of voluntarism.

606. Mackie's Defence of Pufendorf

The modern Roman Catholic version of voluntarism relies on the claim that moral oughts require obligations and commands. We might accept this claim even if we are not theists, on the ground that this is the only way to explain the necessity that seems to belong to moral principles. To see why some elements of this position might seem plausible, we may

turn to modern defenders of Pufendorf's claim. Two 20th-century philosophers have tried to answer this question, by arguing that a divine-command theory of morality deserves to be taken seriously, and that it does better than other views in capturing the special force of moral requirements. Their arguments are especially instructive because they draw opposite conclusions from them. Mackie believes that since there would be real moral facts only if there were divine commands of the right sort, and since there are no appropriate divine commands, moral judgments are not true. Adams believes that since moral facts require divine commands, and moral judgments are true, we have a good reason to believe in divine commands. Does Mackie or Adams give a good reason for agreeing with Pufendorf about the role of divine commands in morality?

Mackie agrees with Pufendorf's claim that moral properties are not part of the natural world that we understand through the physical sciences; Mackie expresses this point by claiming that moral entities are 'queer'.[37] He does not mean to rule out the logical possibility of objective values. He suggests that there would be objective values within a specific theological framework (which he rejects). Theological moralists might argue that God created human beings with a specific good; this would be an objective fact, but not an objective value. Objective values, however, enter with 'objective prescriptivity', which results from divine commands.[38]

This suggestion that divine commands introduce objective prescriptivity and objective values might be held to capture Pufendorf's view that morality depends on divine commands; without divine commands there are only descriptive truths embodying no objective prescriptions. Suarez insists that without divine commands there are only 'indicative' facts, and that divine commands are needed for genuine prescriptions, but he believes that the right sorts of indicative facts are sufficient for moral facts. Pufendorf and Mackie agree against Suarez that genuine moral principles must be prescriptive.

Pufendorf and Mackie, therefore, may both accept this argument: (1) Moral rightness exists if and only if there are objectively prescriptive truths.[39] (2) If there are no divine commands, there are no objectively prescriptive truths. (3) Hence, if there are no divine commands, there is no moral rightness, and moral nihilism is true. (4) If, however, there are divine commands (with the right content), there are objectively prescriptive moral truths, and hence there is moral rightness.[40]

[37] See §567.

[38] 'It might be that there is one kind of life which is, in a purely descriptive sense, most appropriate for human beings as they are—that is, that it alone will fully develop rather than stunt their natural capacities and that in it, and only in it, can they find their fullest and deepest satisfaction. It might then follow that certain rules of conduct and certain dispositions were appropriate (still purely descriptively) in that they were needed to maintain this way of life. All these would then be facts as hard as any in arithmetic or chemistry, and so logically independent of any command or prescriptive will of God, though they might be products of the creative will of God, which, in making men as they are, will have made them such that this life, these rules, and these dispositions are appropriate for them. But, further, God might require men to live in this appropriate way, and might enjoin obedience to the related rules. This would add an objectively prescriptive element to what otherwise were hard, descriptive truths, but in a quite non-mysterious way: these would be literally commands issued by an identifiable authority.' (*E* 230–1)

[39] These truths must have the right content; neither Pufendorf nor Mackie endorses the extreme voluntarist thesis that any logically possible commands by God would thereby constitute moral rightness.

[40] Mackie may not agree entirely with Pufendorf about the role of divine commands. He may, for instance, believe that it is a purely empirical fact that there are no objective values apart from divine commands, whereas Pufendorf might believe (if he were to confront the question) that this can be known a priori.

To accept this argument, we must agree that morality requires objective prescriptivity. and that divine commands secure precisely this objective prescriptivity. But Mackie's different remarks about objective prescriptivity make it difficult to agree on both points at once: (1) He suggests that objective values both give us knowledge of what to do and cause us, through our recognition of them, to try to do it; our recognition by itself ensures correct action.[41] (2) His second clarification of objective prescriptivity turns to Kant's notion of a categorical imperative. A categorical imperative rests on a reason that is independent of any desire of the agent that would be satisfied by acting on the imperative.[42] Mackie takes his denial of objectively prescriptive entities or truths to be the denial of categorical imperatives.[43] If he takes objectively prescriptive entities to require the internal connexion between knowledge and motivation that he attributes to Plato's Forms, he must also take categorical imperatives to involve reasons that we cannot recognize without being motivated to act on the imperatives. (3) In his discussion of categorical imperatives, Mackie sees that an imperative, understood as a simple command in the imperative mood, need not be an objectively prescriptive categorical imperative. If the command presupposes that the agents addressed have some specific desire or inclination, it is really a hypothetical imperative.[44] (4) His next clarification of objective prescriptivity rests on partial acceptance of a non-naturalist analysis of some moral terms in some of their uses. The non-natural element indicates the action-guiding aspect of the alleged objective value, and hence introduces objective prescriptivity.[45]

But do divine commands introduce objective prescriptivity? Mackie's most stringent test for objective prescriptivity requires an internal connexion between knowledge of objective values and motivation to follow their prescriptions; it must be logically impossible to know them and not to act on them. Divine commands fail this test; for it is logically possible to know that something has been commanded by God without wanting to do anything about it.

Even if the demand for a categorical imperative does not require such a tight internal connexion, divine commands do not automatically count. As Mackie agrees, commands might presuppose different sorts of motives or desires in the person commanded. The mere

[41] 'Conversely, the main tradition of European moral philosophy from Plato onwards has combined the view that moral values are objective with the recognition that moral judgments are partly prescriptive or directive or action-guiding. Values themselves have been seen as at once prescriptive and objective. In Plato's theory the Forms, and in particular the Form of the Good, are eternal, extra-mental entities . . . But it is held also that just knowing them or "seeing" them will not merely tell men what to do but will ensure that they do it, overcoming any contrary inclinations.' (23) Mackie makes it clear that the causal role of 'seeing' does not require the co-operation of desires; it is supposed to be causally sufficient by itself.

[42] 'A categorical imperative, then, would express a reason for acting which was unconditional in the sense of not being contingent upon any present desire of the agent to whose satisfaction the recommended action would contribute as a means—or more directly . . . ' (29)

[43] 'So far as ethics is concerned, my thesis that there are no objective values is specifically the denial that any such categorically imperative element is objectively valid. The objective values which I am denying would be action-directing absolutely, not contingently . . . upon the agent's desires and inclinations.' (29)

[44] 'Indeed, a simple command in the imperative mood, say a parade-ground order, which might seem most literally to qualify for the title of a categorical imperative, will hardly ever be one in the sense we need here. The implied reason for complying with such an order will almost always be some desire of the person addressed, perhaps simply the desire to keep out of trouble.' (28–9)

[45] ' . . . the description "non-natural" leaves room for the peculiar evaluative, prescriptive, intrinsically action-guiding aspects of this supposed quality' (32).

fact that divine commands are commands, and therefore are imperatives of some kind, does not make them categorical imperatives.

What, then, makes them categorical imperatives? Two answers seem possible: (1) God can be relied on to command us to observe principles that are (whether or not God commands them) categorical imperatives. (2) Since it is a categorical imperative that we ought to obey God's commands, God's commanding us to act in various ways presents us with categorical imperatives, and hence introduces objective prescriptivity.

Neither of these answers supports Mackie. The first answer admits categorical imperatives apart from God's commands. The second answer presupposes at least one categorical imperative apart from God's commands—the requirement of obedience to God. In either case, God's commands cannot be the only source of objective prescriptivity, but presuppose that some principle other than a divine command is objectively prescriptive.

For this reason, Mackie's development of Pufendorf's position does not help Pufendorf. Mackie suggests a reason for believing that divine commands introduce the normativity of morality, because they ground the specifically moral 'ought'. But this is not an adequate reason. If we believe that divine commands are necessary for morality because they introduce moral normativity, we face two objections: (1) If normativity is understood as objective prescriptivity, we have quite good reason to doubt whether morality really needs to be normative after all. It is not clear that morality requires the internal connexion that Mackie describes between knowledge and motivation. (2) If morality requires objective prescriptivity, divine commands do not give us morality, because they do not give us objective prescriptivity.

We might infer, therefore, that Pufendorf is better off without the defence that Mackie offers through his appeal to objective prescriptivity. But this inference is open to question. If Pufendorf does not mean to claim that divine commands introduce categorical imperatives, he does not show that divine commands themselves are the source of morality. Apparently, we need some categorical reason, independent of divine commands, for following divine commands. This basis belongs to intrinsic morality, as Suarez understands it. Alternatively, Pufendorf might deny that we have a categorical reason for obeying divine commands, and so might agree that our basis is prudence, fear, or gratitude; but in that case he fails to show that he does any better than other people in capturing the distinctive features of morality. He does not refute Suarez's claim that the basic principles of morality belong to intrinsic morality, and are inherently indicative, rather than prescriptive.

607. Adams's Defence of Pufendorf

A different defence of Pufendorf is offered by Robert Adams, who agrees with him in claiming that genuine obligations are the result of divine commands. This claim, as we have seen, might be taken to be simply Suarez's claim; and indeed Adams cites Suarez (cautiously) in his support.[46] But his position is a defence of Pufendorf rather than of Suarez, because Adams's concept of obligation is broader than Suarez's on the crucial point.

[46] Adams, *FIG* 251n5.

According to Adams, obligation coincides with moral rightness and wrongness.[47] His concept of obligation is the broad concept that connects the obligatory with the required and the compulsory, rather than the narrow impositive concept that we found in Suarez. Since obligation, understood broadly, extends to the various moral properties that Suarez takes to be antecedent to divine commands, Adams must agree with Pufendorf's view that intrinsic goodness and badness are antecedent to divine commands, but moral rightness and wrongness depend on divine commands.

This description of Adams's relation to Suarez disagrees with Adams's view of Suarez. Adams quotes Suarez's remark that divine commands presuppose intrinsic honestas and turpitudo in the actions. He takes this remark to refer only to intrinsic goodness, not to moral rightness and wrongness; hence he translates 'honestas' and 'turpitudo' as 'honourableness' and 'shamefulness', rather than by 'rightness' and 'wrongness'.[48] On this point he differs from Pufendorf, who denies any intrinsic honestas and turpitudo antecedent to divine commands. Adams seems to agree with Culverwell's interpretation of Suarez, which treats honestas and turpitudo as intrinsically attractive and repulsive features antecedent to divine commands. According to Adams, these features constitute natural goodness and badness, but they do not constitute moral requirements.

Adams argues as follows that obligations need divine commands: (1) Obligations involve social requirements that are the basis of justified praise and blame, guilt, and shame. (2) These social requirements depend on the demands that other persons actually make, not simply on those that they are entitled to make.[49] (3) Such requirements would be too variable and alterable unless they expressed divine commands.[50] (4) Therefore moral requirements express divine commands.

For present purposes, we may concede Adams's first premiss, and accept a tight connexion between moral requirements, social requirements, and inter-personal attitudes. To accept all this is to agree that moral requirements depend on facts about human society and especially about human nature in society—the sorts of facts that Grotius describes as 'sociality'. One might reasonably claim that these facts are the basis of the moral requirements that Suarez calls 'duties' (debita). Adams's second premiss, however, is open to doubt. It does not seem obvious that what I owe to people, or what I am required to do for them, always and essentially depends on what they actually demand of me or on what someone else actually

[47] '['Right'] can have ... a strong sense in which a right action (or perhaps more often *the* right action) is one that it is *wrong* not to do. For that reason it is commonly clearer to speak of an action as permissible, in the former case, or *obligatory*, in the latter case ... I will generally speak of the part of ethics that we take up at this point as the realm of "moral obligation" (or simply of "obligation") ... ' (Adams, *FIG* 231–2)

[48] *FIG* 251n5, quoting Suarez, *Leg*. ii 6.11 (quoted at §441n45). I am pursuing Adams's line of thought for its intrinsic interest, without meaning to suggest that he necessarily subscribes to it all. He also says that Suarez 'is less thoroughly a divine command theorist of the nature of obligation than Cumberland, Pufendorf, and Locke'. In my view, this claim is false, if 'obligation' is understood in Suarez's impositive sense, but true if it is understood in Adams's broad sense.

[49] 'If we are thinking about the nature of obligations, and about the reasons we have to comply with possible demands, it matters that the demand is actually made. It is a question here of what good demands other persons do in fact make of me, not just of what good demands they could make. The demand need not take the form of an explicit command or legislation; it may be an expectation more subtly communicated; but the demand must actually be made.' (*FIG* 245–6)

[50] *FIG* 247–8. I have over-simplified here. Adams says he is not ruling out other ways of avoiding the problem of variability, but the way he chooses is a natural move for a theist. He regards this as a 'more powerful theistic adaptation of the social requirement theory' (248). I take him to mean that it is more powerful than a non-theistic explanation of the relevant social requirements.

demands on their behalf. It seems to depend on what they need, or on what they are entitled to, apart from anyone's actual demands.[51]

Adams seems to sympathize with this objection, since he also refuses to allow obligations to depend on actual demands of actual human agents. That is why he affirms his third premiss. But if we see some force in the objection, why should we not reconsider the second premiss, rather than draw Adams's conclusion?

Adams's view is not as extreme as Pufendorf's, since he does not take the scope of obligation to be the scope of morality. He is willing to allow that it would be morally good and admirable to give a cup of water to an innocent person dying of thirst, but he does not believe it could be morally required unless someone actually demanded it of me. This is difficult to see. If I deliberately poured the water on the ground, other people would justifiably censure me whether or not they believed that someone was demanding that I give the water; and I would appropriately feel guilty about what I had done whether or not I believed that someone was making this demand. The salient facts here seem to be that the dying innocent person needed the cup of water and that I could easily give it to him.[52]

Adams, therefore, does not give us a good reason to agree with Pufendorf against Suarez on the basis of moral requirements. When Suarez recognizes intrinsic honestas and turpitudo, he thereby recognizes intrinsic moral rightness and wrongness. Similarly, Pufendorf believes that if there is no intrinsic morality, there is no intrinsic honestas and turpitudo. According to Suarez, intrinsic honestas and turpitudo are also the basis for duties (debita), sins (peccata), and blameworthiness (culpa). Suarez disagrees with Adams's view about the source of moral requirements; Adams's arguments ought not to persuade us that Suarez is mistaken.

This basic disagreement between Suarez and Pufendorf—even in the improved version of Pufendorf offered by Adams—does not imply that divine commands do not matter in an account of the moral requirements that actually apply to us. Suarez evidently attaches moral importance to the requirements that result from divine legislation. But divine commands, in his view, do not have the specific moral importance that they would have if they were the source of moral requirements. The recent defences of Pufendorf's voluntarism should not change our previous conclusion that Ward gives some good reasons for preferring naturalism.

[51] One might agree that what people actually demand is indeed morally relevant, not for the reason Adams gives, but because there are moral reasons—though not always decisive ones—to respect people's actual demands.

[52] Leibniz offers some examples (for a different purpose) that illustrate this point well. See 'CCJ' = R 54–5. See §589.

45

SHAFTESBURY

608. Platonist, or Sentimentalist, or Both?

Shaftesbury is the first to use the terms 'moral sense' and 'moral realist'. Since later believers in a moral sense, Hume and Hutcheson, reject moral realism, we may be surprised that Shaftesbury uses both terms to describe his own position. His philosophical allegiances also seem to lead him in different directions. On many points he agrees with Locke, but he also draws extensively on Platonic and Stoic sources. We may wonder whether he combines these different influences into a consistent position.

These different strands in Shaftesbury have led to different views about where he stands, and about which of his moral doctrines are the most significant or fundamental. Some later critics treat him as the first sentimentalist. Hutcheson is the first of these critics; he designs his *Inquiry* as a defence of Shaftesbury's principles.[1] The principles he defends are disinterested affection and a moral sense—two prominent themes in Shaftesbury's defence of the moral outlook.

Following Hutcheson's lead, Martineau regards Shaftesbury and Hutcheson as the representatives of 'aesthetic ethics'.[2] This position includes the metaphysical claim that the object of moral judgment is not external reality, but some state of oneself. That is why the judgment of conscience does not involve the mind's 'submission to the truth of external things'. Aesthetic ethics also includes the epistemological claim that moral judgment belongs to emotion not to reason, so that the right is known because it is felt.

Selby-Bigge takes a similar view of Shaftesbury, since his collection prints works by Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, and Butler as 'three principal texts of the sentimental school' (Pref., p. vi).[3] Sidgwick's appreciative account of Shaftesbury does not mention Platonism or realism. In Sidgwick's view, Shaftesbury's *Characteristics* marks 'a turning-point in the history of English ethical thought', because he is 'the first moralist who distinctly takes psychological experience as the basis of ethics' (Sidgwick, *OHE* 190).

[1] See Hutcheson's title page, quoted in §632.

[2] 'Whether the term which they emphasize is the moral sense or disinterested affection, they seek their key to the judgments of conscience in some form of inward emotion, and not in the mind's submission to the truth of external things; so that the right is not . . . felt because it is known, but known because it is somehow felt.' (Martineau, *TET* ii 485–6)

[3] On Selby-Bigge's view of Butler see §712.

We form a different picture of Shaftesbury, however, if we attend to the influence of Cambridge Platonism and of Stoicism.[4] Whewell emphasizes this influence in treating Shaftesbury as an early supporter of 'independent morality' and in treating Shaftesbury's realism to be part of the defence of this position.[5] Since Hutcheson supports Shaftesbury, Whewell takes Hutcheson to be another defender of realism and independent morality.

These different elements in Shaftesbury suggest a complex picture of his relation to Locke. He was a pupil of Locke, and remained an admirer. But the tendency of Locke's moral philosophy is sharply opposed to Platonist views; for Locke agrees with Hobbes's psychological egoistic hedonism and theological voluntarism. Though Shaftesbury agrees with Locke in general about the reasonable character of Christianity, and about the folly of opposing natural reason to revelation, Locke's moral position outlook seems to agree with the 'orthodox' Christian outlook that Shaftesbury deplores.

Shaftesbury seems to maintain a Platonist metaphysics of morality together with a Lockean epistemology and moral psychology. On the one hand, he defends the reality of moral properties, apart from the will or preferences of agents, and the reality of moral virtue, apart from self-confined desires. These two claims constitute his 'moral realism'. On the other hand, he seems to follow Locke's views about the basis of knowledge and motivation; knowledge is based on the senses, and motivation on non-rational desire rather than reason. How can we be confident that the sensory basis of cognition, as Locke understands it, will support the belief in the independent reality of moral properties?

Shaftesbury's position, therefore, includes different elements that might seem attractive to different people. In distinguishing these different elements, we will see why both Hutcheson and Butler might reasonably claim to defend central elements in Shaftesbury's position.

All of his critics and interpreters agree that he criticizes Hobbesian egoism. We may usefully begin with the criticisms that mark points of agreement with later sentimentalists; then we can ask whether he also criticizes Hobbes from a Platonist direction, and whether these criticisms fit a sentimentalist outlook.

609. The Sense of Right and Wrong

According to Shaftesbury, we are immediately aware of moral goodness and rightness; we do not come to believe actions are right, or that people are good, as a result of considering whether they promote someone's pleasure. We approve of them from an unselfish point of view that considers the public interest.[6] Those who are appropriately sensitive to moral goodness have more than a tendency towards benevolent actions; they also have the capacity to reflect on this tendency and to 'take notice of what is worthy or honest; and make that notice or conception of worth and honesty to be an object of his affection' (*ICV* i 2.3 = K 173).

[4] Platonist and Stoic influence is emphasized by Passmore, *RC* 96–100; Walford, Introd. to *ICV*, p. xv; Rivers, *RGS* ii 94.

[5] On independent morality see §520.

[6] '. . . we call any creature worthy or virtuous, when it can have the notion of a public interest, and can attain the speculation or science of what is morally good or ill, admirable or blameable, right or wrong' (*ICV* i 2.3 = K 173). References to Shaftesbury cite the relevant treatise followed by the page in Klein's edition of *Char*., cited as 'K'.

Shaftesbury seems to intend this description to fit both the virtuous moral agent and the sound moral judge of moral agents (including oneself).

This recognition of moral properties may be compared to sense-perception. Conscience expresses itself in judgments about the rightness of this or that action, as well as in the grasp of general principles. Both aspects of conscience are often immediate, not involving any explicit reasoning and derivation. Hence they may be described as a sense of right and wrong.[7] Shaftesbury uses such expressions to refer to these immediate reactions to particular situations.[8]

A different basis for belief in a moral sense is the assimilation of moral to aesthetic awareness. We have found this assimilation in Culverwell, who describes natural rightness (honestas) and wrongness (turpitudo) as proper objects of admiration and disgust; he regards them as appealing and repellent, apart from any narrow self-interest. Aesthetic responses offer a useful parallel to moral reactions in being both immediate and disinterested. If we find something beautiful, appealing, repulsive, or disgusting, we do not seem to be recording a conclusion we have reached on the basis of any reasoning; nor do we seem to be reporting on our own interest. The disinterestedness of our appreciation of beauty suggests how we might appreciate moral goodness and badness in a similarly disinterested way. According to Shaftesbury, we recognize beauty and charm in moral as well as natural objects apart from any views about our own interest (*Misc.* 5, ch. 3 = K 466). Ancient moralists who speak of the *kalon* might be taken to rely on this parallel between aesthetic and moral reactions; Shaftesbury treats their remarks as evidence of the parallel.[9]

The comparison between a moral sense and the sense of beauty helps to explain why virtuous people refuse even to consider certain kinds of questions. Shaftesbury compares the question 'Why be honest in the dark?' with the question 'Why keep yourself clean if no one can smell?' In the second case, he answers that he would not care to associate with someone who needed to ask himself this question and did not take it for granted that he should keep himself clean. The appropriate reaction to not keeping clean is not reflective, but aesthetic—an immediate sense of disgust. Similarly, virtuous people are not those who can always explain why we should be honest in the dark and therefore always act honestly; they would not dream of asking the question. To be a virtuous person is to be repelled by the very

[7] 'There is in reality no rational creature whatsoever, who knows not that when he voluntarily offends or does harm to anyone, he cannot fail to create an apprehension and fear of like harm, and consequently a resentment and animosity in every creature who observes him. So that the offender must needs be conscious of being liable to such treatment from every-one, as if he had in some degree offended all. Thus offence and injury are always known as punishable by every-one; and equal behaviour, which is therefore called merit, as rewardable and well-deserving from every-one. Of this even the wickedest creature living must have a *sense*. So that if there be any further meaning in this *sense* of right and wrong; if in reality there be any *sense* of this kind which an absolute wicked creature has not; it must consist in a real antipathy or aversion to *injustice* or *wrong,* and in a real affection or love towards *equity* and *right,* for its own sake, and on the account of its own natural beauty and worth.' (*ICV* i 3.1 = K 178)

[8] '. . . there must in every rational creature be yet further conscience, namely, from sense of deformity in what is thus ill-deserving and unnatural and from a consequent shame or regret of incurring what is odious and moves aversion.' (*ICV* ii 2.1 = K 209) 'A man who in a passion happens to kill his companion relents immediately on the sight of what he has done . . . If, on the other side, we suppose him not to relent or suffer any real concern or shame; then either he has no sense of the deformity of the crime and injustice, no natural affection, and consequently no happiness or peace within: or if he has any sense of moral worth or goodness, it must be of a perplexed and contradictory kind' (*ICV* ii 2.1 = K 209–10). On Shaftesbury's use of 'moral sense' see Rivers, *RGS* ii 124; he uses the expression rarely in the text, but sometimes inserts it in the marginal summaries.

[9] Cf. Maxwell's reference to the *kalon kagathon* as the 'beauteous-beneficial', §539.

thought of taking this question seriously as though it needed an answer in particular cases (*Sens. Comm.* 3.4 = K 58). 'The sense of right and wrong', therefore, captures Stoic claims about the fine.[10] Shaftesbury agrees with the Stoics' appeal to the immediate recognition and admiration of actions and characters that benefit others or promote a common good, independently of any benefit to the agent.[11]

Shaftesbury claims, then, that we are aware of moral rightness and wrongness by some sort of quasi-aesthetic sense that includes some pleasure sufficient for motivation. Our 'inward eye' distinguishes fair and foul in actions and characters no less than in other beautiful and ugly objects. Disputes about what is fair and foul presuppose that we have some conception of the relevant qualities; otherwise we could not identify the area of dispute.[12] Our ordinary moral sentiments of gratitude, resentment, pride, and shame presuppose some conception of the relevant moral qualities that are the proper objects of the sentiments. To explain the connexion between sentiment and principle, Shaftesbury alludes to the Stoic doctrine of 'preconceptions' or 'anticipations' (*prolêpseis*); he claims that we have 'a natural presumption or anticipation on which resentment or anger is founded' (*Mor.* 3.2 = *Char.* ii 419 = K 329).[13] This natural 'presumption' embodies an implicit principle that guides our sentiment, and attention to the sentiment reveals the underlying principle.[14]

The aesthetic character of the moral sentiment does not compromise the objectivity of moral properties or the rationality of moral principles. Shaftesbury accepts the Stoic doctrine of the honestum as what deserves praise in its own right, apart from whether it is actually praised.[15] He advocates the cultivation of moral taste and a sense of moral appropriateness that will be as keen as the cultivated person's sense of the appropriate and suitable in clothes, or paintings, or music, because he believes that this sense of appropriateness will make us aware of moral facts, and especially of the admirable characteristics of actions and characters that are concerned for others. The sense of moral appropriateness is not a substitute for grasp of the right principles, but it is an essential support for it; if our sentiments diverge sharply from the actions enjoined by our principles, they will counteract the effect of our principles.[16]

[10] This connexion with the Stoic doctrine is clear from the section on the beautiful (sub-heading: '*To kalon*') in Shaftesbury's *PR* 244–52.

[11] Cf. Cic. *Off.* i 14–15.

[12] 'No sooner are actions viewed, no sooner the human affections and passions discerned . . . than straight an inward eye distinguishes and sees the fair and shapely, the amiable and admirable, apart from the deformed, the foul, the odious or the despicable. How is it possible therefore not to own that as these distinctions have their foundation in nature, the discernment itself is natural and from nature alone? . . . Even by this [sc. disagreement] it appears there is fitness and decency in actions since the fit and decent is in this controversy ever presupposed.' (*Mor.* 3.2 = K 326–7)

[13] On Stoic preconceptions see §165.

[14] In *PR* 214–20 Shaftesbury discusses *prolêpseis*, which he translates as 'natural concepts'. The chapter begins with references to Epictetus on preconceptions.

[15] 'Is there no natural tenor, tone, or order of the passions or affections? No beauty or deformity in this moral kind? Or allowing that there really is, must it not, of consequence, in the same manner imply health or sickliness, prosperity or disaster? Will it not be found in this respect, above all, that what is beautiful is harmonious and proportionable, what is harmonious and proportionable is true, and what is at once both beautiful and true is, of consequence, agreeable and good?' (*Misc.* 3.2 = K 415) A footnote quotes Cicero's account of the fine ('per se ipsum possit iure laudari') at *Fin.* ii 45. The aesthetic aspect of the *kalon* and honestum is explored at length in *PR* 244–52 (referring to Epictetus on the aesthetic and the moral aspect of the *kalon*, at 246).

[16] 'Thus, we see, after all, that it is not merely what we call *principle* but a *taste* which governs men. They may think for certain, "This is right or that wrong"; they may believe, "This is a crime or that a sin", "This punishable by man

610. Moral Motivation, Virtue, and Happiness

In arguing for a moral sense Shaftesbury intends a claim about motivation as well as judgment. We are not only capable of judging from an impartial point of view, but also capable of acting on this point of view. Awareness of cruelty or injustice moves us to action because it is cruelty or injustice, whether or not it affects our own interest. This capacity for action on disinterested motives conflicts with Hobbes's psychological hedonism.

In the light of this affirmation of non-egoistic motivation, some readers have been surprised by Shaftesbury's discussion of our 'obligation' to virtue. This term often causes confusion in the British moralists; but in this context Shaftesbury explains himself by identifying our obligation with our 'reason to embrace it' (*ICV* ii 1.1 = K 192).[17] He answers this question by explaining why virtue promotes the agent's happiness. He does not directly say that this is the only reason we could have for embracing virtue; but since he suggests no other reason, he seems to assume that a sufficient reason for being virtuous must at least include a warranted belief that virtue promotes one's happiness.

We might be surprised that Shaftesbury mentions only this reason for being virtuous, after what he has said about the disinterested character of the moral sense.[18] Martineau voices this disappointment strongly; he suggests that after affirming the possibility of disinterested motivation, Shaftesbury reverts to a self-interested hedonist outlook.[19] Martineau cites the remarks about the moral sense in order to show that Shaftesbury recognizes a basis of moral goodness that is independent of any appeal to self-interest. A virtuous person is one who regards the moral properties of actions as the sources of sufficient reasons in their own right. Why, then, should some reason based in self-interest be needed?

Shaftesbury's acceptance both of a disinterested conception of a moral sense and of a self-interested defence of morality should not surprise us as much as it surprises Martineau. We need only recall the structure of eudaemonist ethical theories. If we understand the pursuit of happiness as the pursuit of rational structure and harmony in our different activities, it is reasonable to examine the contribution of virtue to happiness.

Still, Martineau would be right to say that asking this question conflicts with the disinterested appreciation of virtue, if Shaftesbury were suggesting that virtue maximizes pleasure. Is this what Shaftesbury means? We can certainly find passages where Shaftesbury seems to accept Locke's moral psychology, including his hedonist conception of happiness.

or that by God''; yet, if the savour of things lies cross to honesty, if the fancy be florid and the appetite high towards the subaltern beauties and lower order of worldly symmetries and proportions, the conduct will infallibly turn this latter way.' (*Misc.* 3.2 = K 413)

[17] On the use of 'obligation' see §818. For Shaftesbury's use cf. *Mor.* ii 1 = K 255 ('an enlarged affection and sense of obligation to society'); *Sens. Comm.* iii 1 = K 51 ('It is ridiculous to say there is any obligation on man to act socially or honestly in a formed government and not in that which is commonly called the state of nature').

[18] Cf. John Brown's comments, §867.

[19] 'The idea of obligation, in the form of an ultimate authority, intuitively known, after being affirmed and justified, is again lost: the question being raised, ''What underlies this bottom of all?'' ''where are the credentials of this power which legitimates itself?'' If it is disappointing to find this question asked, it is still more so to hear the answer, viz. that what binds us to the right is the balance of personal happiness it brings us;—an answer at which the independent base of virtue suddenly caves in, and the goodly pile that seemed immovable is shifted on to the sands of hedonism.' (Martineau, *TET* ii 508)

Sometimes he seems to be an anti-rationalist about motivation and action.[20] He argues that the choice of one end over another, in cases where instrumental reasoning cannot decide the issue, must be the outcome of the different impacts of desires of different strengths. It is not clear, however, whether he believes that every desire must be the outcome of some prior non-rational desire focussed by instrumental reasoning. Hutcheson commits himself to this aspect of anti-rationalism, but Shaftesbury does not go so far.

His attitude to hedonism is also imprecise. He distinguishes the virtuous person from the straightforwardly calculating hedonist who considers, as Hobbes's 'fool' does, whether this or that virtuous action will promote his own interest. To reject the attitude of the fool, however, is not to reject one's own pleasure as a ground for pursuing the virtues in general. And Shaftesbury seems to rely on a hedonist assumption. In his view, happiness 'is generally computed' from pleasures or satisfactions (*ICV* ii 2.1 = K 201).

He agrees with Cumberland that virtuous people's outlook does not subordinate the common good to their own pleasure. In his view, the affection for the public interest is a source of pleasures.[21] These pleasures arise partly from sympathetic participation in the pleasures of others (*ICV* ii 2.1 = 202 K), and partly from reflexion on and approval of our own benevolent attitudes. This reflective conscience is distinct from fear of punishment, even of divine punishment; someone who observes the requirements of morality simply from the fear of divine punishment lacks a necessary condition for conscience (*ICV* ii 2.1 = K 207).[22]

This is a hedonist defence of virtue only if Shaftesbury means that the social and sympathetic pleasures enjoyed by a virtuous person are greater than those enjoyed by others, as estimated from a neutral point of view. The virtuous person, on this view, gets more pleasure than the vicious person, just as we get more pleasure from savouring each bite of a well-cooked dish than we get from bolting it down without tasting it properly.

Shaftesbury, however, does not seem to intend his claims about pleasure to be understood in this way.[23] He suggests that it is trifling to say that pleasure is our good, because 'will' and 'pleasure' are synonymous. To say that we do what we please, or that we aim at our pleasure, simply means that we choose what we think eligible. In asking where we should seek our pleasure, we are asking what is really eligible; we should be asking how to distinguish good from bad pleasure (*Mor.* 2.1 = K 250–1). If we identify happiness with pleasure, we are saying that our good consists in doing what we like; but since our preferences and likings change, identification of our good with the satisfaction of our preferences makes our good variable and unstable (*Sol.* 3.2 = 138–9 K).

Sometimes, therefore, Shaftesbury argues that our happiness consists not simply in achieving our preferences and likings, but in achieving our good. A true conception of

[20] 'It has been shown before, that no animal can be said properly to *act*, otherwise than through affections or passions, such as are proper to an animal . . . Whatever, therefore is done or acted by any animal as such, is done only through some affection or passion, as of fear, love, or hatred moving him. And as it is impossible that a weaker affection should overcome a stronger, so it is impossible but that where the affections or passions are strongest in the main, and form in general the most considerable party, either by their force or number; thither the animal must incline: and according to this balance he must be governed, and led to action.' (*ICV* ii 1.3 = K 195–6)

[21] '. . . the natural affections, duly established in a rational creature, being the only means which can procure him a constant series or succession of the mental enjoyments, they are the only means which can procure him a certain and solid happiness' (*ICV* ii 2.1 = K 201).

[22] Butler on conscience and divine punishment; §717. He agrees with Hutcheson (§636).

[23] Cf. Hutcheson's attack on hedonism, which may be partly directed at Shaftesbury. See §633.

our interest shows that expression of concern for others is a vital part of our interest. Opponents of this claim about virtue and happiness rely on a narrow conception of interest and happiness that obscures the real questions.[24]

We can clarify the issue about happiness once we recognize that a person's good is not to be defined simply by reference to the satisfaction of desires. As Shaftesbury puts it, the good does not depend entirely on 'fancy', because 'there is that in which the nature of man is satisfied, and which alone must be his good' (*Mor.* iii 3 = *Char.* ii 436 = K 335). In the light of our conception of human nature, we can see which passions are suitable to us, and find an appropriate 'balance of . . . passions', constituting 'beauty and decorum' in one's internal states (*Mor.* ii 4 = *Char.* ii 294 = K 277). Contrary to Hobbes, we find that society and the aims and affections that support it are natural to human beings. The pleasures that belong to social sentiment are part of a human being's happiness not because they are greater than any other pleasures, but because of their role in the human good.[25]

Since the good appropriate to human nature consists in the right internal order of self-regarding and other-regarding sentiments and passions, happiness comes from within and not from outside a person (*Mor.* iii 2 = K 335). Non-moral goods benefit us only if they are used properly. The moral good, by contrast, is good in its own right; it is most agreeable in itself, and preferable to all these external goods (*Mor.* iii 2 = K 332). The awareness of good order in one's own nature is the source of a higher enjoyment than we receive from other sources (*Mor.* iii = K 331).

These aspects of Shaftesbury's account of the human good suggest that his references to pleasure fall short of hedonism. A hedonist defence claims that virtue is the best policy for an agent who takes his pleasure as his ultimate end, because virtue, apart from any further result, is the source of the greatest pleasure.[26] Since we have sympathetic feelings, and since we find pleasure both in the satisfaction of our sympathetic feelings and in the awareness of their satisfaction, the virtues that express and satisfy these sympathetic feelings are the best means to maximum pleasure. This argument fits some of Shaftesbury's remarks on virtue and happiness, but it does not fit the passages where he subordinates the pursuit of pleasure to the pursuit of one's genuine good.

Sidgwick notices some of the variations in Shaftesbury's claims about happiness, and claims justifiably that he seems to incline in different passages towards both a hedonistic and a non-hedonistic conception of a person's good. But Sidgwick does not justify his conclusion

[24] 'Now if these gentlemen who delight so much in the play of words, but are cautious how they grapple closely with definitions, would tell us only what self-interest was, and determine happiness and good, there would be an end to this enigmatical wit. For in this we should all agree, that happiness was to be pursued, and in fact was always sought after; but whether found in following nature, and giving way to common affection; or in suppressing it, and turning every passion towards private advantage, a narrow self-end, or the preservation of mere life; this would be the matter in debate between us. The question would not be "Who loved himself, or who not", but "Who loved and served himself the rightest, and after the truest manner".' (*Sens. Comm.* 3.3 = K 56) Similarly, after explaining why one separates concern for the interests of others from one's own interest, Shaftesbury replies that 'to be well affected towards the public interest and one's own is not only consistent but inseparable' (*ICV* ii 1.1 = K 193).

[25] '. . . we may with justice surely place it as a principle, 'that if anything be natural in any creature or any kind, it is that which is preservative of the kind itself, and conducing to its welfare . . . If any appetite or sense be natural, the sense of fellowship is the same' (*Sens. Comm.* 3.2 = K 51).

[26] This is the view that Brown attributes to Shaftesbury. See §867.

that Shaftesbury's predominant view of happiness is hedonistic.[27] This conclusion ignores the places where Shaftesbury criticizes a hedonist account of a person's good; such criticism implies that Shaftesbury sometimes rejects hedonism, not just that he sometimes speaks in non-hedonist terms.

If Shaftesbury were a hedonist, his position would be unstable. His claim about the virtuous person's pleasure might be understood as a purely causal and psychological claim, that being virtuous produces a larger quantity of the same sort of feeling of pleasure that everyone seeks. If that is what he means, his claim about the virtuous person involves the empirical claim that the virtuous person gets more pleasure on the whole than Hobbes's fool could get.

This empirical claim is open to doubt. The fool need not leave his sympathetic feelings completely undeveloped, and so he need not entirely forgo the pleasures of the virtuous person. But he can control these feelings enough to take advantage of the prospect of cheating when it seems to offer especially large rewards. This strategy seems at least as good as Shaftesbury's strategy, if the question is to be decided by a neutral measure of quantity of pleasure.

Alternatively, Shaftesbury might mean that virtuous people gain more pleasure from being virtuous because they value it most; the good of others, as such, is the object, not merely the cause, of a virtuous person's pleasure.[28] In that case, we can value something for some other feature besides its pleasure. Shaftesbury implicitly departs further from hedonism than he explicitly acknowledges.[29]

But if Shaftesbury simply measures an agent's pleasure by reference to the agent's own values, he does not show that the virtuous person is better off than others who gain what they value most. If virtuous people are really better off than other people, their judgment about the value of virtue must be correct, and our account of a person's good must make the truth of this judgment relevant to well-being. In that case, we accept a non-hedonist account of what is actually valuable, not simply a non-hedonist account of what an agent can value. Shaftesbury seems to recognize this point when he discusses the human good. In claiming that the human good includes the satisfaction of the social affections, he does not claim that by satisfying these affections we gain more pleasure, or that people always or often care most about satisfaction of these affections. He claims that these are the affections that deserve to be satisfied.

On this issue, therefore, Shaftesbury is closer to Platonism than to Locke. Though many remarks suggest that he takes Hobbes's and Locke's view on virtue and happiness, the main tendency of his position agrees with the Greek moralists whom he cites with approval. His account of our 'obligation' to virtue is expressed as a claim about enjoyment, but it is really an argument for the position of the Greek moralists, that virtue is a part of the human

[27] 'In the greater part of his argument Shaftesbury interprets the "good" of the individual hedonistically, as equivalent to pleasure, satisfaction, delight, enjoyment. But it is to be observed that the conception of "Good" with which he begins is not definitely hedonistic; "interest or good" is at first taken to mean the "right state of a creature" that "is by nature forwarded and by himself affectionately sought" . . . Still, when the application of this term is narrowed to human beings, he slides—almost unconsciously—into a purely hedonistic interpretation of it.' (Sidgwick, *OHE* 185n)

[28] On object and cause see Plato §53; Aristotle §95; Butler §688.

[29] Green, *CW* i 323–5, discusses Shaftesbury's views on pleasure and self-interest unsympathetically, but not altogether unfairly.

good, correctly conceived. A Lockean interpretation of Shaftesbury is easy and attractive; it leads Hutcheson to his defence of Shaftesbury. But closer inspection shows that it does not capture Shaftesbury's position.

Admittedly, some of Shaftesbury's remarks are imprecise, so that it is not easy to see what he thinks about why morality is reasonable. In appealing to happiness he agrees with Cudworth, who also gives some sort of primacy to the desire for happiness. He also agrees with the Stoics, who believe that we achieve our happiness by fulfilling our nature. Since Shaftesbury follows traditional eudaemonism and naturalism on these questions, it is not surprising that Leibniz generally approves of his position.[30]

But what does he take to be the connexion between our reason for pursuing morality and our inclination to be moral? Does he believe that we have reasons, independent of inclination, to strengthen inclinations that favour morality? Or does he believe that if our inclinations favouring morality weakened, we would have less reason to pursue morality? The choice between these two views determines how far Shaftesbury goes in accepting rationalism about reasons and naturalism about the human good. We might reasonably expect him to favour the naturalist answer that takes reasons to be distinct from strength of desire; for he normally claims that human happiness depends on human nature, not that it depends on human desires. But he does not seem to reach a clear view about the nature of our reasons to favour morality. This is the basis of Butler's objection to Shaftesbury. Since Butler sympathizes with Shaftesbury's naturalism, he notices the place where Shaftesbury fails (in Butler's view) to recognize the implications of a naturalist defence of morality.[31]

611. Platonism, Realism, and Voluntarism

We may now turn to some aspects of Shaftesbury's position that display his Platonist outlook even more clearly. His first publication was his preface to the *Select Sermons* of Whichcote. As Shaftesbury presents him, Whichcote opposes the tendencies in Christian theology that dismiss natural reason, and especially the natural reason that recognizes moral goodness independently of the Christian revelation. Whichcote agrees with Cudworth in opposing the 'modern theologers' who treat moral goodness as simply the product of the divine will, without any further basis in the nature of reality.[32] Shaftesbury follows the Platonists in regarding the theological voluntarist position as both philosophically unsound and theologically dangerous.

He also agrees with Cudworth's view that theological voluntarism repeats the errors of Hobbes's combination of egoism and positivism. He supports Cudworth's criticism of Hobbes by attacking Hobbes's psychological egoism. His attack on Hobbes also opposes the tendency of theologians to represent morality simply as a means to rewards in the afterlife. The theologians suppose they have answered Hobbes if they replace a human will with a divine will as the source of moral right and wrong, and if they replace this-worldly rewards of virtue with other-worldly rewards. Voluntarism and egoism encourage the same basically mistaken attitude to morality.

[30] On Leibniz see §588. [31] On Butler see §677. [32] See Cudworth, quoted in §546.

To explain the errors of voluntarism, Shaftesbury examines the legislative view of moral properties, according to which actions are morally good or bad only insofar as they are determined to be so by legislation.[33] This view has infiltrated orthodox divinity as well (*Sens. Comm.* 3.4 = K 57). It is attractive to those who regard the moral outlook as a potential rival to a theological view that regards God as absolutely sovereign (*Mor.* ii 2 = K 262). If the demands of some independent morality limit what it is possible for God to do, God does not appear to be absolutely sovereign. And if these demands can be known by natural reason, divine revelation is not the only source for knowledge of God.

Shaftesbury describes both Hobbesians and theological voluntarists as 'nominal' moralists, as opposed to moral 'realists'.[34] This use of the mediaeval contrast between realism and nominalism recalls Cudworth's assimilation of Hobbes to Ockham.[35] In calling his opponents 'nominal' moralists Shaftesbury does not mean that they deny the reality of moral distinctions; since they believe in the reality of human or divine legislation, they also believe in the reality of the distinctions marked by this legislation. But they are nominalists because they do not believe that moral properties belong to things by their own nature. To be a realist, as opposed to a nominalist or conceptualist, about universals is to believe that things fall into natural kinds because of what they are in themselves, and not because anyone's names or concepts classify them as they do. Similarly, a moral realist believes that moral properties belong to good and bad actions, agents, and so on, in their own right, not because of their relation to any legislative will.

According to Shaftesbury, the legislative view is bad philosophy and bad theology. His opponents mistakenly suppose that if they take a servile and flattering attitude to God apart from any belief in divine moral attributes, they honour God. Shaftesbury answers that they do not honour God appropriately unless they recognize God's inherent goodness, as measured by standards of goodness distinct from any divine command (*Sens. Comm.* 2.3 = K 46).[36] If they make moral goodness depend on divine legislation, the

[33] 'That all actions are naturally indifferent; that they have no note or character of good or ill in themselves; but are distinguished by mere fashion, law, or arbitrary decree.' (*Sol.* 3.3 = K 157) 'He [sc. Hobbes] did his utmost to show us that "both in religion and morals we were imposed on by our governors", that "there was nothing which by nature inclined us either way, nothing which naturally drew us to the love of what was without or beyond ourselves" . . . ' (*Sens. Comm.* 2.1 = K 42)

[34] 'For 'tis notorious that the chief opposers of atheism write upon contrary principles to one another, so as in a manner to confute themselves. Some of them hold zealously for virtue, and are realists in the point. Others, one may say, are only nominal moralists, by making virtue nothing in itself, a creature of will only or a mere name of fashion.' (*Mor.* ii 2 = K 262) 'For being, in respect of virtue, what you lately called a realist, he endeavours to show that it is really something in itself and in the nature of things; not arbitrary or factitious (if I may so speak), not constituted from without or dependent on custom, fancy, or will; not even on the supreme will itself which can no-way govern it; but being necessarily good, is governed by it, and ever uniform with it. And, notwithstanding he has thus made virtue his chief subject and in some measure independent on religion, yet I fancy he may possibly appear at last as high a divine as he is a moralist.' (*Mor.* ii 3 = K 266–7)

[35] On Shaftesbury and mediaeval voluntarism cf. Whewell, *LHMPE* 88. Passmore, *RC* 98, suggests that Shaftesbury's use of 'factitious', with the parenthesis recognizing that it may be found unfamiliar, indicates the influence of Cudworth. This is one of Cudworth's favourite words. As Passmore notes, *OED* cites as the first to use the word in the sense of 'arbitrary' (but this 'sense' does not seem sharply distinct from the first sense, for which an instance is quoted from Sir Thomas Browne in 1645).

[36] On Shaftesbury's realism see Norton, *DH* 33–43, and Winkler, 'Realism' 192. Winkler points out that Shaftesbury connects realism especially with the affirmation of the reality of disinterested affections, and that therefore Hutcheson might claim to accept this aspect of realism in rejecting Hobbes's view of motivation. However, Shaftesbury seems to intend a realist position that goes beyond Hutcheson's claims about the relation of the moral sense to moral properties.

voluntarists are no better than those who make morality the result of legislation or convention.[37]

To show that we need these distinct standards, Shaftesbury argues that if we attribute moral goodness to God, and we do not believe that God can make contradictions true, we must reject voluntarism.[38] In his view, the voluntarist must believe both that (1) justice prohibits punishment of one person for the crimes of another, and that (2) if God were to punish one person for the crimes of another, that would be just. Hence the voluntarist must say that (3) if God were to punish one person for the crimes of another, God would make the same action both just and unjust. Hence in saying that God acts justly in punishing one person for the crimes of another, we say that God acts justly and unjustly, and hence we 'say nothing' or 'speak without a meaning'.[39]

A voluntarist might reply that Shaftesbury misunderstands the relation between the categorical claim in (1) and the counterfactual in (2). In (1) we refer to what is just, according to God's ordered power. In (2) we refer to what would be just if God had not exercised absolute power in the way God has in fact exercised it, but had made it just to punish one person for the crimes of another. This is how Scotus exploits Anselm's claim that what God wills is necessarily just.[40] If this is a legitimate reply, Shaftesbury does not demonstrate that voluntarists are committed to the truth of contradictions.

But if voluntarists try this answer to Shaftesbury, they need to explain what they mean in claiming that God is just or that God's decisions are just. If we entirely separate justice from the traits and actions that involve fairness, reciprocity, respect for desert, and so on, we are not claiming what we might initially have appeared to be claiming in saying that God is just; it is not clear that we ascribe any definite moral property to God at all.

Voluntarists would be better off, therefore, if they denied that God is essentially just. By an exercise of absolute power God chooses to be just, but not because it is better to be just than to be unjust; if God had chosen differently, it would have been better to be unjust than to be just. This is a consistent position that avoids Shaftesbury's objection about contradiction. Has he any other argument against this position?

His argument against theological voluntarism is part of his general discussion of the relation between morality and religion. He relies on his argument for a moral sense. Since

[37] '. . . fashion, law, custom or religion . . . may be ill and vicious itself, but can never alter the eternal measures and immutable independent nature of worth and virtue' (*ICV* i 2.3 = K 175). Cf. Hutcheson, §636.

[38] '. . . whoever thinks there is a God and pretends formally to believe that he is just and good, must suppose that there is independently such a thing as justice and injustice, truth and falsehood, right and wrong; according to which he pronounces that God is just, righteous, and true. If the mere will, decree, or law of God be said absolutely to constitute right and wrong, then are these latter words of no significancy at all. For thus if each part of a contradiction were affirmed for truth by the supreme power, they would consequently become true. Thus if one person were decreed to suffer for another's fault, the sentence would be just and equitable. And thus, in the same manner, if arbitrarily, and without reason, some beings were destined to endure perpetual ill, and others as constantly to enjoy Good; this also would pass under the same denomination. But to say of any thing that it is just or unjust, on such a foundation as this, is to say nothing, or to speak without a meaning' (*ICV* i 3.2 = K 181). On Hutcheson's use of this argument about contradiction see Balguy, §660.

[39] This is one of the passages cited by Prior, *LBE* 18 (see §815), as examples of anticipations of Moore's argument about the naturalistic fallacy. But it makes a different point from the one that Prior suggests. Shaftesbury's claim that voluntarists would speak 'without a meaning', or that the words would be 'of no significancy' rests wholly on his claim that they are committed to the truth of a contradiction, not on the claim that 'God wills what is right' would be meaningless if 'right' meant 'what God wills'.

[40] On Scotus see §381.

we have a natural sense of right and wrong apart from any religious beliefs, we cannot accept the voluntarist's counterfactual claims without violating our intuitive judgments about morality. According to the voluntarist, it is possible for these intuitive judgments to be grossly mistaken; for rightness consists in conformity to the will of God, and the qualities we intuitively recognize as right are right not in themselves, but only because they conform to the will of God. In that case, we commit ourselves to lie, cheat, and deceive if those actions conform to the will of God. We do not conceive the goodness of God as consisting in conformity to distinct standards of goodness; we conceive it simply as consisting in God's following his own will.

This argument does not show that the voluntarist position is inconsistent, but it shows that religious morality, as voluntarists conceive it, departs sharply from intuitive moral convictions. We have to say that injustice and cruelty are wrong not because of what they are in themselves, but because they are contrary to the divine will; facts about unjust actions, their agents, and their victims do not settle whether these actions are right or wrong. Shaftesbury is justified, therefore, in suggesting that acceptance of voluntarism tends to undermine intuitive convictions about injustice and cruelty.[41] Theological voluntarism does not claim that malignity and so on are morally good qualities, but it requires us to be prepared to recognize them as good qualities even if nothing about the agents and victims of the relevant acts and dispositions were to change.

If goodness is distinct from what is approved by the legislative will of God, the appropriate attitude to God is love of his goodness, not hope of reward and fear of punishment (*Mor.* 2.3 = *Char.* ii 271 = K 268). We ought to learn about the nature of virtue and merit before we learn about the goodness of God and the rewards for virtue (*Mor.* 2.3 = K 271). If we rely on our moral sense, we become capable of a disinterested love of God.

Shaftesbury acknowledges that aspirations towards disinterested love of God have aroused the suspicion that they involve irrational fanaticism.[42] The French Quietists give disinterested love a bad name, because they reject the self-interested attitude, arguing that we ought to love God entirely without reference to thoughts of our own salvation.[43] The demand for

[41] 'But if . . . he comes to be more and more reconciled to the malignity, arbitrariness, partiality, or revengefulness of his believed Deity, his reconciliation with these qualities themselves will soon grow in proportion; and the most cruel, unjust, and barbarous acts will, by the power of this example, be often considered by him not only as just and lawful, but as divine, and worthy of imitation.' (*ICV* i 3.2 = K 181)

[42] 'Though the disinterested love of God be the most excellent principle, yet, by the indiscreet zeal of some devout well-meaning people, it has been stretched too far, perhaps even to extravagance and enthusiasm, as formerly among the mystics of the ancient Church, whom those of latter days have followed. On the other hand, there have been those who, in opposition to this devout mystic way, and as professed enemies to what they call enthusiasm, had so far exploded everything of this ecstatic kind as in a manner to have given up devotion; and in reality have left so little of zeal, affection, or warmth, in what they call their rational religion, as to make them much suspected of their sincerity in any. For, though it be natural enough for a mere political writer to ground his great argument for religion on the necessity of such a belief as that of a future reward and punishment; yet it is a very ill token of sincerity in religion, and in the Christian religion more especially, to educe it to such a philosophy as will allow no room to that other principle of love; but treats all of that kind as enthusiasm, for so much as aiming at what is called disinterestedness, or teaching the love of God or virtue for God or virtue's sake.' (*Mor.* 2.3 = K 268) Maxwell quotes and endorses this passage; see §539. On enthusiasm see §529.

[43] On Quietism see §717. On its influence in 18th-century England see Duffy, 'Wesley'. Quietism influenced some important English Protestants in the 18th century, e.g., William Law and John Wesley. Duffy comments on the late 17th century: 'At the end of the century the "Quietist" writers, Fénélon and Madame Guyon, became something of a Protestant cult in England as elsewhere, having a profound and on the whole destructive influence on the emergent school of half-baked Protestant mystics' (2). Duffy mentions an approving reference to Fénélon by Wesley (16). This

completely self-forgetful motivation appears fanatical, both in religion and in morality. But we ought to avoid the excessive reaction of the defenders of 'rational religion' who assert that disinterested moral approval is neither possible nor desirable.[44] If we do not recognize God as a proper object of moral admiration, our attitude to God is the servile fear that undermines morality.

612. Realism and the Irreducibility of Morality to Self-Interest

Our discussion of Shaftesbury's attack on voluntarism has revealed two aspects of the position that he calls 'realism'. He opposes it not only to the legislative thesis that moral properties depend on will and legislation, but also to the reductive thesis that reduces the moral motive to the desire for one's own pleasure. Hence he regards Hobbes as a merely nominal moralist both because of his voluntarism and because of his egoism. Similarly, he accuses theological voluntarists not only of denying that moral facts are independent of God's legislative will, but also of denying the possibility of disinterested morality.

Shaftesbury believes that Locke has encouraged both aspects of nominalism. While most people reject Hobbes's moral views, they do not see that Locke endorses Hobbes's basic principles, and so makes it easier for other people to accept them. Locke argues illegitimately from his rejection of innate ideas to the conclusion that there are no natural moral properties that we naturally recognize.[45] Shaftesbury rejects Hobbes's and Locke's assumption that an adequate defence of morality must connect morally good action with some further source of pleasure beyond itself—either (as in Hobbes) some further advantage to the agent in this life or (as in Locke) some further advantage in the afterlife.

We might suppose that Shaftesbury is simply confused in treating his opposition to voluntarism and his opposition to egoism as parts of one 'realist' doctrine. His two claims seem quite separable. Apparently we might be metaphysical realists about moral properties, taking them to be independent of legislation, while still supposing that we pursue morality

sympathy with Quietism fits Wesley's doubts about rationalist ethics. See Rivers, *RGS* i 224, on Wesley's objections to Clarke and Butler: 'It were to be wished that they were better acquainted with this faith who employ much of their time and pains in laying another foundation, in grounding religion on "the eternal fitness of things", on "the intrinsic excellence of virtue" and the beauty of actions flowing from it—on the reasons, as they term them of good and evil, and the relations of beings to each other' (Sermon 17). According to Wesley, if this morality corresponds with the Scriptures, it simply creates unnecessary perplexity, and if it does not correspond with them, it is dangerous and misleading. A different strand in Wesley's outlook appears in his attack on Hutcheson; he is especially appalled by Hutcheson's emphasis on the importance of disinterested motives, especially in his objections (shared with Shaftesbury) to the grounding of morality in the hope of reward from God. See Rivers, *RGS* i 230.

[44] Berkeley implicitly accuses Shaftesbury of endorsing the enthusiasm of the French Quietists (see §717), because of his emphasis on disinterested moral motivation. Berkeley compares the Quietists to the Stoics who 'have made virtue its own sole reward, in the most rigid and absolute sense' (Alc. 3.14 = *Works* 136). Cf. §180n27.

[45] 'It was Mr Locke that struck the home blow, for Mr Hobbes's character and base slavish principles of government, took off the poison of his philosophy. 'Twas Mr Locke that struck at all fundamentals, threw all order and virtue out of the world, and made the very ideas of these (which are the same as those of God) unnatural and without foundation in our minds. . . . Thus virtue, according to Mr Locke, has no other measure, law, or rule than fashion and custom: morality, justice, equity, depend only on law and will: and God indeed is a perfect free agent in his sense; that is, free to any thing, that is however ill: for if he wills it, it will be made good; virtue may be vice, and vice virtue in its turn, if he pleases. And thus neither right nor wrong, virtue nor vice are any thing in themselves; nor is there any trace or idea of them naturally imprinted on human minds.' (*Letters to a student* 77–8 = *PR* 403–4. Partly quoted by Whewell, *LHMPE* 88)

for the sake of our own interest. Might we not say that moralists such as Suarez who are both realists and eudaemonists accept one part of Shaftesbury's 'realism' without the other?

We might explain Shaftesbury's combination of the metaphysical with the motivational thesis by regarding them as two sides of his attack on opponents who are both voluntarists and egoists. If we think moral goodness is what God approves of, we have no reason to care about moral goodness beyond our reason to care about what God approves of. Christian writers opposed to enthusiasm suggest that our reason to care about what God approves of is egoistic; the only rational ground for doing what God approves of is the prospect of reward and punishment.

But even if Shaftesbury's conception of realism is excusable as a reply to opponents who are both voluntarists and egoists, is it nonetheless confused in treating two separable views as aspects of a single realist position? Perhaps something further can be said in his defence. If we are realists about moral properties, holding them to be independent of will and legislation, we must also hold them to be irreducible in certain ways. If some people think moral goodness is purely instrumental goodness promoting the agent's pleasure, they may claim to be moral realists insofar as they think moral goodness is a real property of things. Still, they do not recognize the distinct reality of moral properties in contrast to pleasure-promoting properties. We therefore have a good reason for denying that Hobbes's belief in real pleasure-promoting properties makes him a moral realist, even though he claims that they are moral properties.

Suarez, by contrast, is a moral realist even though he is a eudaemonist, because he recognizes the moral good (the honestum) as a distinct sort of good besides the pleasant and the advantageous (dulce and utile). His belief in 'intrinsic' moral goodness recognizes moral goodness as a further property besides pleasure and advantage. He therefore passes both of Shaftesbury's tests for being a moral realist. Though Shaftesbury does not explain why a single realist position requires the rejection of both voluntarism and Hobbesian egoism, he has a good reason for his view. He is entitled to criticize those whom he calls the 'modern Epicureans' because they reduce social sentiments to selfish ones (*Sens. Comm.* iii 3 = K 55). Those who degrade 'honesty' (i.e., moral goodness)[46] by making it only a name are the selfish moralists (*Sens. Comm.* iii 4 = K 58). These moralists treat the difference between the honest person and the knave as simply a matter of instrumental calculation (*Sol.* i 2 = K 78).

This connexion between the metaphysical and the motivational sides of Shaftesbury's realism tends to support his claim that his theological voluntarist opponents are egoists. If all moral distinctions rest on the legislative will of God, it is difficult to see how obedience to God's legislative will could have any moral basis. This does not imply that a disinterested love of God is impossible; for moral attitudes are not the only disinterested attitudes. Shaftesbury goes too fast, therefore, in suggesting that his opponents who derive morality from the legislative will of God cannot allow a disinterested love of God. Nonetheless, his position is defensible. For if they deny any moral basis for obedience to a legislative will, they remove the main reason one might offer for taking disinterested love for God to be appropriate.[47]

[46] Shaftesbury uses 'honesty' with the broad sense of 'honestas'.

[47] Cf. Pufendorf, §577.

If, then, disinterested love (apart from the influence of sanctions) for God is the morally appropriate basis for obedience to divine commands, not everything that is morally appropriate is the product of legislation. If disinterested love is appropriate only because of legislation, we can still ask why we should obey that legislation. The demand for non-mercenary love of God is much more reasonable on the realist assumption than on the voluntarist assumption.

Shaftesbury, therefore, deplores the tendency to combine a purely legislative theory of morality with a purely external account of obligation (taking it to depend on rewards and punishments). In seeking some natural basis for morality, he rejects some versions of orthodox Christianity. Some of his remarks suggest that he rejects orthodox Christianity altogether, and not merely some versions of it; and his opponents take his unorthodox views to be a ground for rejecting his view of morality.[48] But his views about morality and its sanctions do not seem to be unorthodox in themselves. He insists that belief in post-mortem rewards should be a secondary motive to virtue, but he agrees that it is an appropriate motive in its proper place. He argues that belief in a conflict between virtue and happiness in this life cannot be reconciled with sound theism, because it would imply doubts about the goodness and providence of God. For similar reasons he agrees with the belief in post-mortem rewards for virtue.[49]

Though Shaftesbury does not allow the prospect of rewards and punishments, in this life or the next life, to be the sole or primary motive for virtue, he allows it an important role. In his view, virtue contributes to happiness, and thereby lays the foundation of distributive justice in the world; but it is only a foundation, and we are right to look for the completion of the building in the afterlife.[50] The disinterested recognition and love of virtue provides an argument for an afterlife and for a God who matches virtue to happiness. Contrary to the modern theologians who appeal exclusively to the legislative will of God, the realist view does not threaten the truth of Christian doctrine. Shaftesbury sketches a defence that is

[48] Berkeley, *Alc.* 3.14 = *Works* 136, attacks Stoics, Quietists, and Shaftesbury all together as dangers to Christian morality: 'The Stoics, therefore, though their style was high, and often above truth and nature, yet it cannot be said that they so resolved every motive to a virtuous life into the sole beauty of virtue, as to endeavour to destroy the belief of the immortality of the soul and a distributive providence. After all, allowing the disinterested Stoics (therein not unlike our modern Quietists) to have made virtue its own sole reward, in the most rigid and absolute sense, yet what is this to those who are no Stoics? If we adopt the whole principles of that sect, admitting their notions of good and evil, their celebrated apathy, and, in one word, setting up for complete Stoics, we may possibly maintain this doctrine with a better grace; at least it will be of a piece and consistent with the whole. But he who shall borrow this splendid patch from the Stoics, and hope to make a figure by inserting it into a piece of modern composition, seasoned with the wit and notions of these times, will indeed make a figure, but perhaps it may not be in the eyes of a wise man the figure he intended.' See also Balguy's objections to Shaftesbury, §668.

[49] '... whoever has a firm belief of a God, whom he does not merely *call* good, but of whom in reality he *believes* nothing beside real good, nothing beside what is truly suitable to the exactest character of benignity and goodness; such a person believing rewards or retributions in another life, must believe them annexed to real goodness and merit, real villainy and baseness, and not to any accidental quality or circumstances ... These are the only terms on which the belief of a world to come can happily influence the believer. And on these terms, and by virtue of this belief, man perhaps may maintain his virtue and integrity even under the hardest thoughts of human nature, when either by ill circumstance or untoward doctrine he is brought to that unfortunate opinion of virtue's being naturally an enemy to happiness in life. This, however, is an opinion which cannot be supposed consistent with sound theism' (*ICV* i 3.3 = K 189–90).

[50] 'For, if virtue be to itself no small reward and vice in a great measure its own punishment, we have a solid ground to go upon. The plain foundation of a distributive justice and the order in this world may lead us to conceive a further building.' (*Mor.* 2.3 = K 270)

developed more fully, and with more specific reference to orthodox Christianity, by Clarke and Balguy.[51]

613. The Moral Sense as Support for Realism

In the light of Shaftesbury's realism, we may reconsider his belief in a moral sense. It is relatively easy to see why he uses the moral sense to support the motivational aspect of realism; our direct reaction to moral goodness and badness moves us to act on these features of actions and people, without calculating their effects on our interest. But how does it support the metaphysical aspect of realism?

According to Shaftesbury, our intuitive conviction that moral properties are real and irreducible has an epistemological basis in the way we are aware of moral properties. When we claim that right and wrong are intrinsic qualities of things, independent of any legislation, we can legitimately appeal to the sense of right and wrong that is directed to actions and characters themselves, irrespective of any legislation that may prescribe them.[52] The regularity and constancy of our immediate awareness of right and wrong give us reason to believe that they belong to the nature of things and are not products of legislative will, human or divine.

These claims about a moral sense allow objective moral properties. If we are immediately aware of them, they may still be aspects of fitness to rational nature, as Suarez supposes. Shaftesbury's suggestion that we have a natural sense of the honestum might indicate that he agrees with Suarez's conception of the nature of moral properties.

Belief in a moral sense conflicts with realism, however, if we hold a Lockean conception of a sense and its objects. According to Locke, or one common interpretation of Locke, senses whose objects are secondary qualities do not tell us about objective features of the world, but only about our own ideas. If Shaftesbury accepts a Lockean conception, his belief in a moral sense commits him to claims about moral knowledge that conflict with metaphysical realism about moral properties. But belief in a moral sense does not by itself require Lockean epistemological claims. As Reid points out later, belief in a moral sense does not push us towards realism or anti-realism until we decide how we are to conceive the relevant sort of sense.[53]

Hutcheson makes up his mind on this question, by accepting a Lockean conception of a sense, and therefore rejecting realism about moral properties.[54] But Shaftesbury does not commit himself to this Lockean doctrine, and so he does not take his claims about a moral sense to conflict with realism.

[51] See Balguy, §668.

[52] 'However false or corrupt it [sc. the mind] be within itself, it finds the difference, as to beauty and comeliness, between one heart and another, one turn of affection, one behaviour, one sentiment and another; and accordingly, in all disinterested cases, must approve in some measure of what is natural and honest, and disapprove what is dishonest and corrupt.' (*ICV* i 2.3 = K 173) Shaftesbury attributes this natural tendency to disinterested approval to the moral sense: 'As to atheism, it does not seem that it can directly have any effect at all towards the setting up a false species of right or wrong. For, notwithstanding a man may through custom, or by licentiousness of practice, favoured by atheism, come in time to lose much of his natural moral sense, yet it does not seem that atheism should of itself be the cause of any estimation or valuing of anything as fair, noble, and deserving, which was the contrary.' (*ICV* i 3.2 = K 179–80)

[53] On Reid see §842. [54] See Hutcheson, §642.

614. The Moral Sense and Mutability

Even apart from Locke's views about senses and their objects, belief in a moral sense raises difficulties for realism if we take moral properties to be essentially what the moral sense approves of. This view implies that approval by the moral sense constitutes rightness, so that if there were no moral sense, nothing would be right or wrong, and if our moral sense were to change, moral rightness and wrongness would change with it.

Shaftesbury's failure to maintain these metaphysical claims about the moral sense is not simply a sign of his theoretical imprecision. His limited use of a moral sense makes his Platonist metaphysics of morality consistent with his epistemology. Since he does not take moral properties to be essentially those that are grasped by the moral sense, he does not claim that if our moral sense changed, right and wrong would change. He treats the moral sense as our means of access to properties that exist independently of it. He introduces the natural sense of right and wrong to argue that even false religious beliefs cannot take away our sense of right and wrong actions existing in their own right apart from legislation, inducements, or threats (*ICV* i 3.1 = K 179).

If Shaftesbury took approval by the moral sense to constitute moral properties, he would undermine his realism and his arguments against voluntarism. He would be subject to the argument that he aims at the theological voluntarists. In his view, we recognize God's will as morally perfect because we regard moral properties as distinct from what God approves. Similarly, we recognize that someone's moral sense is right because we believe in moral properties that are distinct from what the moral sense approves. Balguy uses this argument effectively against Hutcheson's belief in a constitutive relation between the moral sense and moral properties.[55] But it does not affect Shaftesbury, since he treats the moral sense as a sign of objective moral properties, not as their metaphysical basis. His defenders are right to argue that he does not make moral rightness (the honestum) depend on its being approved. Though Berkeley criticizes him on this point, the criticism rests on misinterpretation.[56]

He seems, therefore, to leave open the logical possibility of a clash between what we approve of and what is really right. Realism implies that our moral sense—even an idealized sense (in which the idealization does not include a reference to real moral qualities)—does not constitute moral rightness; hence it is logically and metaphysically possible for it to be wrong. But if we have no access to any other means of knowing moral properties, we cannot

[55] Hutcheson; §643.

[56] Wishart, *Vindication*, severely criticizes Berkeley on this point, urging ironically that Berkeley could not have written *Alciphron* because of its gross errors. Among these errors are Berkeley's misinterpretation of Shaftesbury on the honestum: 'But what man who had but tasted of these fountains [sc. the ancients] could have been capable of attempting to palm upon us such an account of their sentiments concerning the *to kalon*, the pulchrum and honestum, the moral beauty, as he has given us from a single detached word or two of Plato and Aristotle? From which he would bear us in hand, that there was no moral beauty independent of the actual esteem and applause (of the opinion) of our neighbours, or of profit or pleasure; nay, that the very notion of the honestum, according to them was what was actually commended, or was pleasant and profitable, merely because Aristotle says what is beautiful is *epaineton*, laudable; and Plato says, what is beautiful is pleasant or profitable, This is such an account of the sentiments of the ancients concerning the honestum, the moral beauty, as many a clever schoolboy who has never learned a syllable of Greek is capable of confuting out of his Tully, Off. i. Honestum: quod etiam si nobilitatum non sit, tamen honestum sit, quodque vere dicimus, etiamsi a nullo laudetur, laudabile esse natura. Et De Finib. Lib. 2. Honestum id intelligimus, quod tale est ut, detracta omni utilitate, sine ullis praemiss fructibusque, per se ipsum possit iure laudari.' (26–7) Stewart, 'Critic' 7, ascribes this anonymous work to Wishart on the basis of a shorthand copy in Wishart's papers.

correct our moral sense (except within limits that assume the reliability of the moral sense). If, then, it were mistaken, we could not know this. How, then, do we know that it is not mistaken now? Realism plus a moral sense theory seems to encourage scepticism.

This argument needs more careful consideration. One ought not to dismiss a theory simply because it leaves some room for scepticism; every realist theory does that. But Shaftesbury is in a stronger position if he believes that the moral sense is not our only means of access to moral properties in the world. If he believes we can correct our moral sense by reason, he can answer critics who ask why we ought to trust our current moral sense, but ought not to trust our moral sense if it began to approve of injustice and cruelty. Shaftesbury's metaphysical and epistemological claims about moral reality and the moral sense raise these questions that he does not pursue.

The limited scope of Shaftesbury's claims about the moral sense helps to explain the debate among his successors. Hutcheson takes a step that Shaftesbury does not take, by defining moral goodness as essentially what is approved by the moral sense. He takes the moral sense to be disinterested, and therefore he supposes that he defends Shaftesbury. This interpretation of the moral sense and its relation to moral goodness is also Berkeley's interpretation of Shaftesbury, and it is the basis for Berkeley's criticism.[57] But Hutcheson overlooks the fact that he defends only the motivational part of Shaftesbury's realist doctrine, and that he undermines the metaphysical part. Balguy points out this consequence of Hutcheson's modification of Shaftesbury; he shows that Hutcheson's position exposes him to Shaftesbury's argument against theological voluntarism.[58]

615. Shaftesbury as a Source of Sentimentalism and Realism

Our discussion of Shaftesbury shows why it is unwise to be firmly attached to a division between rationalism and sentimentalism, or to Whewell's division between independent and dependent morality. A short way to describe his position is to say that he maintains realism and sentimentalism; but this short description is misleading, since he does not formulate his position clearly enough to help us to decide exactly where he stands on some of the main issues.

Some of his explicit defenders emphasize the metaphysical and Platonic side of his position. Among these is Richard Fiddes, who connects Shaftesbury with Malebranche's theological naturalism, treating their views as an answer to voluntarism and to doubts about the reality of moral properties. In the Preface to his *General Treatise of Morality*, Fiddes defends some of Shaftesbury's position against attacks by Mandeville. He especially discusses Mandeville's arguments against Shaftesbury's defence of the objectivity of moral distinctions. He rejects Mandeville's arguments based on variation in customs between different societies, arguing that such variations are irrelevant to questions about objectivity. In defining the part of

[57] See Berkeley, *Alc.* 3.5 = *Works* 120: '[Moral beauty] . . . is rather to be felt than understood—a certain *je ne sais quoi*. An object, not of the discursive faculty, but of a peculiar sense, which is properly called the *moral sense*, being adapted to the perception of moral beauty, as the eye to colours, or the ear to sounds.' The following discussion of Shaftesbury's conception of the *kalon* assumes that it is simply beauty. See Rivers, *RGS* ii 157. See also §632.

[58] Balguy on Hutcheson; §653.

morality that is invariant, Fiddes defends naturalism against theological voluntarism: basic principles of morality are those of primary obligation, and these are commanded because they are good, not good because they are commanded.[59]

In contrast to Fiddes, Hutcheson develops the psychological side of Shaftesbury's argument. He believes he defends Shaftesbury's realism by insisting on the irreducibility of moral properties and sentiments to Hobbesian self-interest. He relies on Shaftesbury's defence of the moral sense against Hobbesian egoism, and formulates his account of the metaphysics and epistemology of morality on the basis of a Lockean account of the moral sense. This account requires the rejection of the metaphysical independence of moral properties from beliefs, sentiments, and legislation, and so abandons one aspect of Shaftesbury's realism.

If we accept Shaftesbury's metaphysical realism about moral properties, we should not accept all of Hutcheson's views about the moral sense; for we should not take the reactions of a moral sense to be constitutive of moral properties. Since Shaftesbury is not clear about the metaphysical relation between moral rightness and approval by the moral sense, he does not make it clear what role he intends for the moral sense. But he does not commit himself to the claims that would conflict with his realism.

Shaftesbury's position as a whole is primarily realist and naturalist; his remarks about the moral sense do not introduce the aspects of sentimentalism that conflict with realism. Though Hutcheson develops one aspect of Shaftesbury, he does not capture the central elements of Shaftesbury's position. Butler and Price come closer than Hutcheson to an expression of Shaftesbury's main doctrines.

[59] '. . . those [sc. subjects of morality] under the first distinction [sc. primary obligation] arise from the immutable reason and order of things, and do not depend even upon the will of the supreme legislator, but are founded in those eternal and essential perfections of his nature whereby his will itself is regulated; and which, in the natural order of our ideas, are therefore antecedent to his will; such things as are not merely good by virtue of his command, or of any circumstances wherein man may accidentally be placed; but such as are commanded because they are absolutely good and under all circumstances, in their own nature' (Fiddes, *General Treatise*, p. lviii). Hence, for instance, pride (as involving false judgment) and hatred of God are always wrong. Fiddes's general position is more metaphysical and less naturalist and psychological than Shaftesbury's. He has less to contribute to understanding the basis for moral realism on non-theological grounds. Following Malebranche, he rests the basis of moral right in recognition of the perfection of God and of God's purposes for the universe. On this support he finds action appropriate to human beings to lie in a combination of their perfection and their happiness.

46

CLARKE

616. Cudworth and Clarke

Clarke sets out his moral theory in one of his major works on natural theology.[1] He addresses those who reject the Christian revelation because it cannot be vindicated by reason. In his view, the basic principles of morality are evident to reason, apart from any appeal to revelation, and these moral principles make it reasonable to believe in the Christian revelation. His success depends on revealing the rational grounds of 'the unalterable obligations of natural religion', which we discover through our moral judgments. To reveal these grounds he defends some elements of a naturalist position against the view of those who claim 'that there is no such real difference [sc. between good and evil] originally, necessarily, and absolutely in the nature of things' (*DNR* = H ii 609 = *R* 227).

This description of Clarke's argument suggests correctly that he supports Cudworth's doctrine of eternal and immutable morality. He defends Cudworth's position against the Hobbesian reduction of morality to counsels of narrow prudence and to positive law, and against the voluntarist explanation of morality as an expression of God's legislative will.

Is this similarity to Cudworth evidence of influence? Cudworth's *Eternal and Immutable Morality* was not published until 1731, 26 years after Clarke's Boyle Lectures. None of the major moralists before Price seems to have read Cudworth's book; Price acknowledges it generously.[2] Cudworth's arguments are not adequately reflected in More's *Enchiridion Ethicum*. Despite Cudworth's annoyance at More's allegedly borrowing from Cudworth's

[1] Clarke's Boyle Lectures of 1704–5 are printed in Hoadly's edition with a single title: *A Discourse concerning the Being and Attributes of God, the Obligations of Natural Religion and the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Revelation, in answer to Mr Hobbes, Spinoza, the Author of the Oracles of Reason, and other Deniers of Natural and Revealed Religion, being Sixteen Sermons* . . . . The title of the first eight sermons (from 1704) is *A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God, more particularly in Answer to Mr Hobbes, Spinoza, and their Followers, Wherein the Notion of Liberty is Stated, and the Possibility and Certainty of it Proved, in Opposition to Necessity and Fate, being the Substance of Eight Sermons* . . . . This work is cited as *DBAG*. The following eight sermons (or rather their 'substance', from the sermons of 1705) are cited as *DNR*. This work has its own title page, with the title *A Discourse concerning the Unchangeable Obligations* . . . *Revelation* (omitting 'in answer to . . . '). This is also the title at the beginning of the discourse. The running head for this discourse is: 'The evidences of natural and revealed religion'. One of the Scriptural mottoes on the title page of *DNR* is *Is*. 5:20: 'Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter' (H 579). This motto fits Clarke's criticism of Hobbes.

[2] See Price, §802.

unpublished work on ethics, More does not give a clear picture of the best parts of Cudworth's meta-ethical argument.[3]

Still, Cudworth's ethical views may have influenced philosophers of quite different doctrinal tendencies who may not have read the whole book. His views on will and freedom may have affected Locke's revisions of the *Essay*.[4] Shaftesbury was acquainted with the views of Cambridge Platonists, and they probably influence his rejection of voluntarism about ethics and divine commands, and his insistence on disinterested appreciation of the morally right and admirable (honestum) for its own sake.[5] Similarly, Clarke was educated in Cambridge, and acquainted with Platonist views. His ethical theory shows the influence of Cudworth's ideas, whether or not they come from Cudworth himself.[6]

It becomes more difficult, but also less important, to estimate the extent of Cudworth's influence once we notice that he is not the only possible source of the views defended in *Eternal and Immutable Morality*. We noticed that he draws on Scholastic sources that were also available to his contemporaries and may have influenced them directly or indirectly. Study of Shaftesbury shows us that many of the realist aspects of Cudworth's position might be reached by reflexion on Stoicism. This is not at all surprising, since Stoicism is one source of the Scholastic position upheld by Suarez, who in turn influences Cudworth. We might, then, argue that the points of agreement between Cudworth and Clarke result either from the influence of Cudworth or from the independent influence of Scholastic or Stoic arguments. From the philosophical point of view, the important point is to see the connexions between Clarke's position and the naturalist doctrines we have mentioned.

Clarke, however, does not defend all the aspects of Scholastic naturalism that Cudworth accepts. He goes beyond Cudworth in a rationalist direction. In his view, moral properties can be grasped by reason without any reference to human nature or human ends. In claiming that they are grasped by reason, he reaffirms the traditional naturalist view. But in claiming that a true description of the relevant facts need not refer to nature, he affirms rationalism without naturalism. His position lacks the teleological elements of Cudworth's view and of Cudworth's Scholastic and Stoic sources. Does Clarke's non-naturalist rationalism present the best part of Cudworth freed from unhelpful accretions? Or does it leave out an important part of Cudworth's view and thereby reach a less plausible view?

617. Natural Law and Obligation

Clarke affirms that laws of nature are obligatory without reference to any divine command. He refers to Socrates' argument against Euthyphro, and uses it against a voluntarist account

[3] On Cudworth and More see Passmore, *RC* 16–17.

[4] See Passmore, *RC* 91–6.

[5] Shaftesbury and Platonism; §§608, 611.

[6] Passmore, *RC* 100–1, denies any strong influence of Cudworth on Clarke and, argues that the influence of Whichcote and Cumberland is more significant. He points out that Clarke might reasonably be anxious about being identified with the position of Cudworth, whose orthodoxy was suspect, as Clarke's was (see §869). Moreover, Clarke was sympathetic to modern tendencies in science, and might be expected to find Cudworth's metaphysical outlook old-fashioned. Though Passmore is right to emphasize Clarke's respect for Cumberland (whom Clarke often quotes), he does not comment on the two striking respects in which Clarke departs from Cumberland, in rejecting both (1) a legislative conception of obligation, and (2) the identification of benevolence with morality. Sharp, 'Cumberland', also emphasizes Clarke's debt to Cumberland without recognizing these important disagreements. See below §617.

of natural law.[7] To show that the natural law is prior to any will or command, he cites a catena of Stoic passages, especially from Cicero.[8] Following Cicero, he insists that natural law describes what is praiseworthy whether or not it is actually praised. Since actual praise does not determine the content of natural law, actual will cannot determine it either; hence it is not up to a human or a divine legislator to change what is right or wrong.[9]

These claims constitute a position that Shaftesbury calls 'realist'.[10] They separate Clarke from the voluntarist aspects of Cumberland's position. Clarke does not openly disagree with Cumberland, however. Instead, he quotes Cumberland selectively, choosing a passage in which Cumberland denies that the natural law is arbitrary or mutable. Following Cumberland, Clarke asserts that God's goodness constrains the scope of divine willing.[11] But he neither mentions nor discusses the voluntarism in Cumberland's views on obligation.[12]

Clarke maintains his selective approval of Cumberland in his discussion of moral goodness. He claims that everyone who has any just sense of the difference between good and evil must acknowledge 'that virtue and goodness are truly amiable, and to be chosen for their own sakes and intrinsic worth' (H ii 628 = R 248). He quotes a similar remark from Cumberland.[13] But Clarke draws Shaftesbury's conclusion, that this intrinsic goodness constitutes morality. He does not even mention Cumberland's view that without an imperative law mere amiability constitutes neither moral goodness nor obligation. He implicitly rejects Cumberland's view that obligation lies in the act of the person imposing the obligation.[14] He agrees with Cudworth, and with Maxwell's criticism of Cumberland, in taking obligation to lie in facts

[7] 'As this law of nature is infinitely superior to all authority of men, and independent on it, so its obligation, primarily and originally, is antecedent also even to this consideration, of its being the positive will or command of God himself . . . As in matters of sense, the reason why a thing is visible is not because it is seen, but it is therefore seen because it is visible, so in matters of natural reason and morality, that which is holy and good . . . is not therefore holy and good because it is commanded to be done, but is therefore commanded of God because it is holy and good.' (H ii 626 = SB 507) In a footnote Clarke cites the relevant passage from the *Euthyphro*, and criticizes Ficinus' translation.

[8] These quotations are omitted by R and SB. R omits all the quotations in Clarke's footnotes. SB's selective treatment of quotations gives the wholly misleading impression that Clarke quotes hardly anyone besides Hobbes and Cumberland.

[9] 'This is that law of nature, which being founded in the eternal reason of things, is as absolutely unalterable, as natural good and evil, as mathematical or arithmetical truths, as light and darkness, as sweet and bitter: the observance of which, though no man should commend it, would yet be truly commendable in itself.' (H ii 626) At 'mathematical . . . ' Clarke quotes Cic. *Leg.* i 45: 'For just as true and false, consequence and contrariety are judged by their own character (sua sponte) and not by the character of anything else, so also constant and steady reason in life, which is virtue, and likewise inconstancy, which is vice, <are judged> by their own nature'. At 'observance . . . ' he quotes Cic. *Off.* i 14 'which [sc. the honestum] we truly say is praiseworthy by nature, even if it is praised by no one'. SB and R both omit the passage in which Clarke refers to Cicero.

[10] See Shaftesbury, §611.

[11] 'To this law, the infinite perfections of his [sc. God's] divine nature make it necessary for him . . . to have constant regard. And (as a learned prelate of our own has excellently shown,) not barely his infinite power, but the rules of this eternal law, are the true foundation and the measure of his dominion over his creatures. . . . ' (H ii 627 = R 247). Clarke quotes from Cumberland, *LN* 7.6–7 = P 671–4. Cumberland's influence on Clarke is discussed by Sharp, 'Cumberland' 384–7 (who does not remark on the most important differences).

[12] Price endorses Clarke's naturalist view of obligation, *RPQM* 118. See §818.

[13] At H ii 628n Clarke quotes from Cumberland, *LN* 5.42 = P 265, quoted in §535. This occurs in Cumberland's discussion of the agreement among ancient moralists who claim that virtue is choiceworthy in itself as the most important part of happiness. Clarke does not mention Cumberland's view that this feature of virtue is insufficient for its having moral goodness, which depends on being part of a law commanded by God. Cumberland alludes to this part of his view in the context, arguing that the ancients should have seen that since the virtues have this feature, they must have had this reward annexed to them by the first cause, who must therefore have commanded observance of them. But he does not repeat his normal view that they have moral goodness only because of this relation to a divine command.

[14] See Cumberland, §532.

about right and wrong apart from any act of obliging or any motive created in the person obliged.[15]

This is the extreme naturalist view of obligation, as Suarez understands it. Vasquez accepts this view in claiming that the natural law, understood simply as objective rightness and wrongness, implies obligation.[16] Clarke follows Vasquez, in opposition to the voluntarist view of Culverwell, Locke, Cumberland, and Pufendorf, that both morality and obligation require imperative law. He does not explain why he prefers the extreme naturalist view to the moderate naturalist view of Suarez (and perhaps Grotius). Suarez argues that obligation depends on imperative law, but moral facts, properties, and duties (debita) depend only on natural facts.

Clarke agrees with Cudworth in treating 'obligation' as interchangeable with 'duty'. In affirming a naturalist, as opposed to a voluntarist, position about morality and the divine will, he speaks indifferently of duty and obligation.[17] Apart from all divine or human legislation, there is a difference between good and evil, and some things are more fit and appropriate than others. These naturally fit and good things include an obligation. To show that things have an obligatory power, nothing more needs to be shown, in Clarke's view, than that they are good and reasonable and fit to be done in themselves.[18]

One might argue, on Suarez's behalf, that Cudworth and Clarke over-simplify the relevant questions, and obscure some arguments for voluntarism. Voluntarists are right, according to Suarez, to argue that a prescriptive law introduces a new moral relation of imposed obligation; they are wrong to assume that moral rightness and moral duty depend on imposed obligation. In his view, we cannot see why voluntarists are wrong about moral rightness until we see why they are right about obligation. If we do not draw the relevant distinctions, we do not see the difference between prescriptive law, which imposes moral requirements, and indicative law, which reveals them.

But if Clarke's position is over-simplified, that does not seem to affect his main point. Despite his favourable references to Cumberland, he does not agree with Cumberland's view that imposed obligation is necessary for morality. In affirming that obligation follows from facts about nature rather than will, he neither accepts nor rejects the substance of Suarez's view of obligation, but he accepts the substance of the naturalist view of morality.

618. Eternal Fitnesses

Clarke agrees with Cudworth in believing that the law of nature and the moral properties it involves are eternal and immutable. He takes these properties to be eternal and necessary

[15] This is one issue on which Clarke is closer to Cudworth than to Cumberland.

[16] On Vasquez see §427.

[17] '. . . these eternal and necessary differences of things make it fit and reasonable for creatures so to act; they cause it to be their duty, or lay an obligation upon them, so to do; even separate from the consideration of these rules being the positive will or command of God; and also antecedent to any respect or regard, expectation or apprehension, of any particular private and personal advantage or disadvantage, reward or punishment, either present or future; annexed either by natural consequence, or by positive appointment, to the practising and rejecting of these rules' (H ii 608 = R 225).

[18] 'Some things are in their own nature good and reasonable and fit to be done; such as keeping faith, and performing equitable compacts, and the like; and these receive not their obligatory power, from any law or authority; but are only declared, confirmed and enforced by penalties, upon such as would not perhaps be governed by right reason only.' (H ii 611 = R 228)

fitnesses in things that result from their eternal and necessary relations.[19] These eternal fitnesses are the grounds of obligations on us apart from any positive will or command of God.

Clarke believes that the recognition of eternal relations between things commits us to the recognition of eternal fitnesses in their relations as well. Just as 'the properties which flow from the essences of different mathematical figures, have different congruities or incongruities between themselves' (H ii 608 = R 226), certain acts are fitting to the essences and relations of the different things involved. When we grasp the essence of squares and circles, for instance, we can understand that the squaring of a circle is incongruous for the square and the circle, even though this has not always seemed obvious.

Clarke offers a list of moral principles that embody fitnesses. Since God is infinitely superior to us, it is fit for us to honour, worship, obey, and imitate God. It is fit for God to govern the universe 'according to constant and regular ends' and to do what is best for the whole creation, rather than to design the misery of the whole. Similarly, in relations among human beings, benevolence is more fit than universal destructiveness;[20] it is more fit to treat one another justly than to consider only one's own advantage; and more fit to preserve the life of an innocent person than to kill him or to let him die without any reason or provocation (H ii 609 = R 226).

These claims about fitness are familiar. Suarez takes the morally right (honestum) to be what is fitting (conveniens) for rational nature, and we might take Clarke to have the same sort of fitness in mind. His mathematical example of truths that 'flow from the essence' of a given figure suggests that judgments about fitness rest on an account of the nature of the agent who does the fit or unfit action. His examples of actions fit for God suggest the same basis for judgments of fitness. God's infinite superiority to us implies (Clarke may suggest) that benevolent motives must guide God, and that motives that might interfere with benevolence can have no place.

Clarke combines this claim about the source of eternal fitnesses with a claim about our knowledge of these fitnesses; he believes that they are perfectly evident to an unprejudiced subject. In speaking of what is clear 'in the nature of the thing itself', Clarke seems to mean that simple inspection of the relevant proposition convinces us of its truth. Someone who denies that there is light while he is looking at the sun fails to recognize something that is as obvious as anything could be.[21] If someone entertains doubt on this point, it is pointless to argue with him, or to try to convince him on any question that depends on the evidence of

[19] 'The same necessary and eternal different relations, that different things bear to one another; and the same consequent fitness or unfitness of the application of different things or different relations one to another; with regard to which, the will of God always and necessarily does determine itself, to choose or act only what is agreeable to justice, equity, goodness and truth, in order to the welfare of the whole universe; ought likewise constantly to determine the wills of all subordinate rational beings, to govern all their actions by the same rules, for the good of the public, in their respective stations.' (H ii 608 = R 225)

[20] 'In like manner; in men's dealing and conversing one with another; it is undeniably more fit, absolutely and in the nature of the thing itself, that all men should endeavour to promote the universal good and welfare of all; than that all men should be continually contriving the ruin and destruction of all.' (H ii 609 = R 226)

[21] 'These things are so notoriously plain and self-evident, that nothing but the extremest stupidity of mind, corruption of manners, or perverseness of spirit, can possibly make any man entertain the least doubt concerning them. For a man endued with reason, to deny the truth of these things; is the very same thing, as if a man that has the use of his sight, should at the same time that he beholds the sun, deny that there is any such thing as light in the world; or as if a man that understands geometry or arithmetic, should deny the most obvious and known proportions of lines or numbers,

the senses, just as there is no point in arguing about geometry with someone who rejects its basic assumptions.[22]

It is not clear why judgments about what is fit in itself should have this degree of evidence. Perhaps Clarke is combining two conceptions of fitness 'in itself'. (1) In saying that things are fit in themselves or in their own nature, he is opposing the view that their rightness depends on divine or human legislation or on their promotion of some further end—maximum utility, for instance. (2) But he also seems to mean that their rightness belongs to them entirely without reference to anything else; it resides simply in the character of an action, taken by itself.

This second conception of fitness may be interpreted so as to support Clarke's epistemological claim. For if we grasp 'the character of an action, taken by itself' simply by grasping the concept of the action, anything that 'flows from the essence' follows necessarily from the concept. Hence, anyone who clearly grasps the concept of the relevant action thereby grasps what flows from its nature.

619. Clarke v. Naturalism

These two conceptions of fitness 'in itself' are not equivalent. We can see the difference between them if we compare earlier versions of naturalism with Clarke's position. From the point of view of Aquinas and Suarez, some actions are fitting for rational nature in their own right, apart from any legislative will. Hence we attribute 'intrinsic rightness' to them, but we do not imply that they are self-evidently fit for rational nature. To show that self-preservation is fit for rational nature is, according to Aquinas, quite easy. It is also a basic fact that human beings are social animals, but the implications of this fact are not immediately obvious. Some argument about the human good is needed before we can see how justice and friendship are fitting for rational nature.

The teleological argument favoured by Aquinas and Suarez does not fit Clarke's view that we ought to be able to see the rightness of benevolence simply by considering what it is. In their view, we must consider how benevolence fits into other aspects of human nature. We cannot simply consider benevolence by itself, but we must also consider its relation to human nature.

Clarke's idea of intrinsic morality may be defended by appeal to Cudworth's demand for eternal and immutable morality. If the rightness of sparing the life of an innocent person is immutable, it belongs to the action simply insofar as it is sparing the life of an innocent person. If it depended on some further facts about the agent or the beneficiary of the action, it could change from being right to wrong if these further facts changed; hence its rightness would not be immutable. If it is to be immutably right, the mere fact that it is sparing the life of an innocent person must be the sole and sufficient basis of its rightness. Though Cudworth does not connect immutability with the intrinsic character of an action in exactly Clarke's terms, Clarke might intelligibly claim to capture Cudworth's implicit position.

and perversely contend that the whole is not equal to all its parts, or that a square is not double to a triangle of equal base and height.' (H ii 609 = R 227)

[22] Ross, *FE* 52–4, is sympathetic to Clarke and Price on fitness.

Clarke, therefore, agrees with Suarez and Cudworth insofar as he relies on claims about intrinsic morality, fitness to nature, and immutability, and explains these claims in opposition to a legislative conception of morality. He departs from them, however, in supposing that intrinsic and immutable morality is intrinsic to actions themselves, without reference to their relation to agents of a certain kind.

This understanding of intrinsic morality is connected—whether as cause or as effect—with an epistemological tendency that is prominent in Clarke, but not in Cudworth and Suarez. He wants to show that the principles of intrinsic morality are not only right in themselves, but also known in themselves, and known beyond any possibility of reasonable doubt. This does not follow from the claim that the rightness of actions is intrinsic to the actions themselves. When Aquinas speaks of truths that are known 'in themselves' or of cases in which the predicate is present in the subject, he does not mean that the relevant truths are obvious on inspection, or that they are evident facts about the meaning of terms.[23] Clarke seems to add an epistemological claim that is intended to expose the error of doubters such as Hobbes.

These aspects of Clarke's views on intrinsic morality suggest how he accepts parts of Suarez's and Cudworth's position, but nonetheless alters it significantly. Teleology is present in Suarez's naturalism no less than in Aquinas' naturalism; hence, Suarez's claims about morality as fitness to rational nature include a teleological element that is absent from Clarke's claims about eternal fitnesses. Clarke offers no account of rational nature that might make it reasonable to claim that one or another action is fitting to rational nature.

Clarke, therefore, abandons Suarez's naturalism.[24] Cudworth stands between Suarez and Clarke on these issues. He does not speak of fitness as they do, and so he does not make it clear whether he takes the immutability of morality to require the strong immutability demanded by Clarke or the more qualified immutability allowed by Suarez.

These three moralists explain claims about morality by appeal to some notion of contradiction, but they understand 'contradiction' in different ways that match their conceptions of fitness. Suarez explains the sense in which God would be making a contradiction true if he were to change moral rightness and wrongness. Given the facts about rational nature and the fact that, necessarily, right and wrong are what accords with and conflicts with rational nature, a change in right and wrong, without a corresponding change in human nature, would make it true that the same action both is and is not in accord with rational nature. To make the killing of innocent persons cease to be wrong is not contradictory in itself, but it leads to a contradiction, given the facts about rational nature, about killing, and about rightness.[25] Cudworth also speaks of contradiction, but he does not explain so clearly where the contradiction lies. Clarke resolves the obscurity in Cudworth, but he does not return to Suarez; he asserts a direct contradiction between the idea of killing an innocent person and the idea of moral rightness, similar to the contradiction between having angles adding up to 200 degrees and being a triangle. This version of an appeal to contradiction, as opposed to the naturalist version, is effectively criticized by Pufendorf.[26]

[23] See Aquinas, §309. [24] Contrast Finnis, *NLNR* 42–8.
[25] Suarez on contradiction; §441. [26] See Pufendorf, §579.

Fitness and contradiction, therefore, according to Suarez, are three-term relations, involving an action, an essence, and human nature. Being innocent and being deliberately killed are incompatible, because they do not fit the requirements of human nature, and in particular do not fit the social aspects of human nature, which require us to refrain from harming others (except in circumstances specified by the requirements of human nature). According to Clarke, the relevant relations have only two terms; they involve the action and the essence that it contradicts. Since a triangle essentially has angles adding up to 180 degrees, a triangle with angles adding up to 200 degrees contradicts this essence. Since an innocent person is one who has a right not to be killed, the rightness of deliberate killing of the innocent contradicts the essence of innocence.

In contrast to Suarez and Cudworth, therefore, Clarke separates rationalism and objectivism from naturalism. He agrees with naturalism insofar as he rejects voluntarism and a legislative conception of moral rightness, and therefore accepts intrinsic morality. Moreover, he believes that intrinsic morality can be grasped by rational reflexion on the objective facts about agents and actions. But he seems to have a more restrictive conception of the facts and the reflexion that are relevant. He replaces deliberation about the goal-directed nature of rational agents with inspection of the inherent character of acts apart from their context and their ends.[27]

620. The Metaphysics and Epistemology of Eternal Fitnesses

It is difficult to separate metaphysics from epistemology in Clarke's conception of eternal fitnesses, and it is difficult to say which is prior to which. He seems to connect two controversial doctrines: (1) He explains the sort of contradiction and fitness relevant to naturalist ethical claims by appeal to logical and conceptual relations. (2) He explains our grasp of logical and conceptual relations by appeal to self-evidence and obviousness.[28] The first move is disputable, but not surprising, since the appeal to contradiction can be clearly and intelligibly explained by reference to mathematical entities. The second move is initially appealing, since it seems to show that an opponent who denies claims about fitness is simply failing to see something that should be obvious to any mind free of confusion.

But this apparent advantage of Clarke's conception of fitness has severe costs. Three disadvantages are especially evident: (1) Clarke makes it difficult to explain how there could ever be reasonable dispute or uncertainty about what is morally right. His explanation of fitness through immediacy makes it look as though moral disputes must always result from

[27] Passmore, *RC* 102, compares Clarke with Cudworth: 'Neither Cumberland nor Clarke after him felt Cudworth's difficulty in working out a theory of immutable morality within a theological framework; for their ethics is legislative through-and-through. Thus, in Clarke, what is eternal and immutable is a system of duties, not the goodness of a certain way of life.' Passmore's second sentence is correct, but his first sentence is mistaken about Clarke. For Clarke repudiates (without drawing attention to the fact) the view of Cumberland (and Pufendorf; see §565) that obligation and moral rightness depend on divine legislation. On this point he follows Cudworth and (once allowance is made for different concepts of obligation) Suarez. The disappearance of the teleological element, and hence of the appeal to goodness that Passmore mentions, cannot be explained by Clarke's acceptance of a legislative conception of obligation. Instead, we need to appeal to his epistemology.

[28] On the tendency to identify conceptual truths with introspectively obvious truths see Bennett, *LBH* 247–9.

gross confusion or irrationality. The naturalist explanation of fitness by appeal to nature at least shows why it might sometimes be difficult to answer moral questions. (2) As Clarke understands the obvious, it seems rather uninformative. If we ask what is wrong with deliberately killing innocent people, Clarke seems to answer that the meaning of 'innocent person' includes a reference to the wrongness of deliberately killing them. Hence the answer to our question will be that it is wrong to kill an innocent person because an innocent is one whom it is wrong to kill. If we want to know why it is wrong to kill a person who has done us no wrong, Clarke's appeal to the definition of innocence does not answer our question. (3) The appeal to obviousness suggests that the appeals to fitness and to nature are idle; the recognition of obviousness seems to provide all the explanation that Clarke takes to be available.

Some moral disputes might be settled by the means Clarke offers. If, for instance, we wonder whether murder is wrong, we might simply be forgetting that the concept of murder is the concept of an unjustifiable homicide. Moreover, significant and complex moral disputes might turn on conceptual issues—if answers to conceptual questions may be difficult to find. Clarke's particular understanding of conceptual issues, however, seems to ensure that the only truths he can offer about fitness will be trivial and uninformative.

When Clarke replaces fitness to rational nature with bare fitness, it is difficult to see that a claim about fitness explains or justifies the claim that an action is morally right. Reference to fitness does not seem to introduce any further feature that might support the judgment about rightness. Clarke's conception of fitness may lead us in the wrong direction, if we try to explain it through self-evidence. For the most plausible explanation of the self-evidence that he attributes to judgments of fitness treats them as purely conceptual judgments. We may well find that this is too restrictive a conception of moral judgment.

Disagreements among later rationalists about appeals to fitness highlight this difficulty in Clarke's position. While Balguy defends fitness as a morally relevant and significant feature that makes actions right, Adams appeals directly to the immediate judgment that actions are right and wrong, without trying to explain this through fitness and unfitness.[29]

621. The Content of Moral Judgments

Clarke believes that we can grasp eternal fitnesses partly because he is sure that we agree on basic moral principles and that we recognize them as describing appropriate and fit conduct. He believes that the strongest argument against his position is 'the difficulty there may sometimes be, to define exactly the bounds of right and wrong', and the different views that have been held on these questions in different historical periods and in different societies. He offers an analogy with colours. Though two colours may blend into each other so gradually that we cannot say definitely where one begins and the other ends, we can nonetheless agree that there is a clear difference between red and blue, or white and black. Similarly, the recognition of difficult or indeterminate cases in morality should not persuade us that we cannot recognize a clear distinction between right and wrong.[30]

[29] Adams; §665.

[30] 'But as, in painting, two very different colours, by diluting each other very slowly and gradually, may from the highest intenseness in either extreme, terminate in the midst insensibly, and so run one into the other, that it shall not be

The basic principles require us to honour and to obey God, to deal with everyone equitably, as we desire that they will deal with us, and to preserve ourselves to perform these other duties. Anyone who rejects these principles is no less irrational than someone who rejects basic arithmetical principles about addition.[31] We are not necessitated to observe moral principles, because we have free will and because we are liable to passions that distract us from a clear grasp of these principles. But the effect of these passions is to make us 'endeavour . . . to make things be what they are not, and cannot be' (H ii 613 = R 232). When we clearly consider basic moral principles and understand them, we cannot help but assent to them in conscience; this is what St Paul means in speaking of our being a law to ourselves.[32]

In some of these cases we can perhaps see why Clarke thinks the denial of a basic principle involves a contradiction. Perhaps he thinks it is part of the concept of God that God deserves honour and obedience from creatures like us. Similarly, he might argue that if we both accept a duty and reject the necessary means to carrying out we do not really believe that it is a duty. But it is more difficult to find such an account of the principle of equity. If I want to harm others for my advantage and want them to benefit me for my advantage, my will does not contradict itself.

To reach a contradiction in cases such as this one, we have to begin from a different starting point, drawing on Cumberland's claims about the impartiality of practical reason.[33] If I claim that it is reasonable for me, as a rational agent, to treat other rational agents, as rational agents, without regard for their interests, but unreasonable for others, as rational agents, to treat me, as a rational agent, without regard for my interests, then I contradict myself. I begin from claims about how it is reasonable for one rational agent to treat another, but then I contradict these claims in different cases, even though I have already agreed that the principles apply to all rational agents.

possible even for a skilful eye to determine exactly where the one ends, and the other begins, and yet the colours may really differ as much as can be, not in degree only but entirely in kind, as red and blue, or white and black: so, though it may perhaps be very difficult in some nice and perplext cases (which yet are very far from occurring frequently), to define exactly the bounds of right and wrong, just and unjust, and there may be some latitude in the judgment of different men, and the laws of divers nations, yet right and wrong are nevertheless in themselves totally and essentially different, even altogether as much, as white and black, light and darkness.' (H ii 611 = R 229)

[31] 'He that wilfully refuses to honour and obey God, from whom he received his being, and to whom he continually owes his preservation, is really guilty of an equal absurdity and inconsistency in practice, as he that in speculation denies the effect to owe any thing to its cause, or the whole to be bigger than its parts. He that refuses to deal with all men equitably, and with every man as he desires they should deal with him, is guilty of the very same unreasonableness and contradiction in one case, as he that in another case should affirm one number or quantity to be equal to another, and yet that other at the same time not to be equal to the first. Lastly, he that acknowledges himself obliged to the practice of certain duties both towards God and towards men, and yet takes no care either to preserve his own being, or at least not to preserve himself in such a state and temper of mind and body, as may best inable him to perform those duties, is altogether as inexcusable and ridiculous, as he that in another matter should affirm one thing at the same time that he denies another, without which the former could not possibly be true; or undertake one thing, at the same time that he obstinately omits another, without which the former is by no means practicable.' (H ii 613 = R 232)

[32] 'For no man willingly and deliberately transgresses this rule, in any great and considerable instance, but he acts contrary to the judgement and reason of his own mind, and secretly reproaches himself for so doing. And no man observes and obeys it steadily, especially in cases of difficulty and temptation, when it interferes with any present interest, pleasure or passion, but his own mind commends and applauds him for his resolution, in executing what his conscience could not forbear giving its assent to, as just and right. And this is what St. Paul means . . . ' Clarke now quotes *Rm.* 2:14–15. (H ii 615 = R 234).

[33] Cumberland; see §533.

Perhaps, then, we could formulate a principle of equity that would be contradicted by the sort of outlook that Clarke has in mind. But this is a relatively uninteresting result. My rejection of a principle of equity involves me in self-contradiction only if I already accept a principle of equity. But why must anyone who rejects a principle of equity also accept it? Clarke would have an answer to this question if he could show that in recognizing someone as another person, and hence a possible victim of unfair treatment for my own advantage, I must also recognize the other as having a right to equitable treatment. But how can he show this?

He sometimes suggests that we inevitably judge from an impartial and equitable point of view. This point of view appears most clearly in our judgments of other people. Sometimes we set aside our special interest in an action, and we examine it impartially, taking the moral point of view. Even if we pretend that the impartial point of view has no authority for our actions, we acknowledge its authority when our own interests are not involved. Why, asks Clarke, should we suppose that it loses authority when it appears to conflict with our own interest? No reason can be given, from the impartial point of view, to show that the impact on my interest should matter so much.[34]

In reply to Clarke's question one might ask why one should suppose that my interest does not make all the difference. To understand this question, we need to understand the force of 'why one should suppose'. Does this 'why' ask for a reason from the impartial point of view, or a reason from my self-interested point of view? Or can we identify some third point of view? This question underlies the argument that leads Sidgwick to affirm an ultimate dualism of practical reason.[35] Clarke does not pursue the questions that arise about his principle of equity.

Even if we agree with Clarke's view that we necessarily accept some principle of equity, we might doubt whether it has any significant moral content. He does not explain how more specific moral principles might emerge from this impartial point of view. Some of his remarks, however, suggest that he intends to derive them from impartiality. He claims that the principle of equity requires us 'so to deal with every man, as in like circumstances we would reasonably expect he should deal with us' (H ii 619 = R 241). He does not say simply that we should treat others as we would prefer them to treat us; for our preferences may themselves be self-centred and warped. He requires us to take an impartial view of our own desires as well.

622. Benevolence

Clarke does not rely on equity alone to derive positive moral content. He also recognizes 'universal love or benevolence', which requires us to aim at the greatest good we are capable

[34] 'But the truth of this, that the mind of man naturally and necessarily assents to the eternal law of righteousness, may still better and more clearly and more universally appear, from the judgment that men pass upon each other's actions, than from what we can discern concerning their consciousness of their own. For men may dissemble and conceal from the world, the judgment of their own conscience; nay, by a strange partiality, they may even impose upon and deceive *themselves*; (for who is there, that does not sometimes allow himself, any, and even justify himself in that, wherein he condemns another?) But men's judgments concerning the actions of *others*, especially where they have no relation to themselves, or repugnance to their interest, are commonly impartial; and from this we may judge, what sense men naturally have of the unalterable difference of right and wrong.' (H ii 616 = R 237)

[35] See Sidgwick, *ME*, concluding chapter.

of achieving for everyone.[36] His first argument seeks to derive this principle from the fitness of aiming at the greater rather than the lesser good. But he does not explain why this good consists in achieving the welfare of persons (rather than some good to which their welfare is not essential). His second argument is derived, as he remarks, from Cicero's account of the Stoic doctrine of conciliation.[37] This begins from the natural human desire and need for society, and appeals to the reasonableness of extending society until it includes everyone.[38]

Clarke does not point out the possibility of deriving a principle of benevolence from the obligation to prudence combined with the obligation to equity.[39] If we rationally wish to promote our own interest, and we recognize that what is rational for us to want for ourselves is equally rational for others to want for themselves, an appeal to equity justifies the extension of benevolence to everyone. Clarke's explicit argument appeals to the principle of equity to justify universal benevolence, but he does not appeal to the rationality of prudence. This may be because he treats the principle of prudence as derivative from other duties, not as a rational principle in its own right. Here Butler improves on him.[40]

Some aspects of Clarke's position are quite similar to Cumberland's. They both recognize a benevolent God who aims at the welfare of the whole universe. Indeed Clarke maintains that the fact that morality promotes the universal welfare is both obvious in itself and a clear proof that morality is in accord with the will of God (H ii 621). He cites Cumberland in his support.[41] Moreover, they both reject Hobbes's attempt to reduce the natural basis of the laws of nature to mere counsels of narrow prudence.[42]

Still, Clarke disagrees with Cumberland—more sharply than he makes clear—on some central issues. We have already seen that he rejects Cumberland's voluntarism about morality and about obligation, and affirms that eternal fitnesses create obligations apart from any divine or human will. He also rejects utilitarianism more clearly than Cumberland rejects it. The eternal fitnesses that Clarke recognizes cannot all be captured by the principle of utility. In explaining why he rejects utilitarianism as a general account of morality, Clarke makes his conception of eternal fitnesses clearer.

[36] 'For if (as has been before proved) there be a natural and necessary difference between good and evil, and that which is good is fit and reasonable, and that which is evil is unreasonable to be done, and that which is the greatest good, is always the most fit and reasonable to be chosen: then, as the goodness of God extends itself universally over all his works through the whole creation, by doing always what is absolutely best in the whole, so every rational creature ought in its sphere and station, according to its respective powers and faculties, to do all the good it can to all its fellow-creatures.' (H ii 621)

[37] Conciliation; §166. Clarke refers to Cic. *Fin.* v 65.

[38] 'Wherefore since men are plainly so constituted by nature, that they stand in need of each other's assistance to make themselves easy in the world, and are fitted to live in communities, and society is absolutely necessary for them, and mutual love and benevolence is the only possible means to establish this society in any tolerable and durable manner, and in this respect all men stand upon the same level, and have the same natural wants and desires, and are in the same need of each other's help, and are equally capable of enjoying the benefit and advantage of society: 'tis evident every man is bound by the law of his nature, and as he is also prompted by the inclination of his uncorrupted affections, to look upon himself as a part and member of that one universal body or community, which is made up of all mankind, to think himself born to promote the public good and welfare of all his fellow-creatures, and consequently obliged, as the necessary and only effectual means to that end, to embrace them all with universal love and benevolence . . . ' (H ii 622)

[39] See Sidgwick's comments on Clarke, *ME* [1] 360.

[40] Butler on prudence; §686.

[41] He quotes Cumberland, *LN* 1.15 = P 312: '. . . the truth of moral philosophy is founded in the necessary connexion between the greatest happiness human powers can reach, and those acts of universal benevolence, or of love towards God and man, which is branched out into all the moral virtues'.

[42] See Schneewind, *IA* 312, 317, 320, citing Sharp, 'Cumberland', 386–7.

He gives a central place to benevolence, which he conceives in a way that allows a utilitarian interpretation. In his view, love requires that 'we endeavour, by an universal benevolence, to promote the welfare and happiness of all men'. God shows the same benevolence towards us. In this description of benevolence Clarke recalls Cumberland's view that practical reason aims at a common good; like Cumberland, Clarke does not say whether this should be understood in utilitarian quantitative terms.

Utilitarianism, however, does not capture Clarke's view of rightness and fitness as a whole. He recognizes principles connected with justice, and takes them to limit the application of the utilitarian principle. It would be difficult for him to avoid this position, given his moral epistemology. For his rationalism rests on intuitive convictions that certain kinds of actions and relations are fit and reasonable in themselves. We have to reject such convictions if we treat the principle of utility as the supreme moral principle. Hence the believer in eternal fitnesses had better not be a utilitarian.

Clarke believes, for instance, that it is fit and reasonable in itself to keep a promise, show gratitude to a benefactor, avoid pain to an innocent person, and so on. But if the principle of utility is supreme, we may have to violate these principles of fitness; breaking promises, violating ties to particular people, overriding the rights of the innocent, may all be needed to maximize utility. Even if utility will not in fact require us to override these principles, a utilitarian has to deny that the relevant actions are fit and reasonable, and so morally obligatory, in themselves; they are reasonable only if they fit into an indirect utilitarian argument.

Since Clarke rejects a utilitarian explanation of the rightness of actions that he regards as fit in themselves, he argues that the general or common good is not the only basis for obligation. Another basis rests on the demands of equity, which requires that 'we so deal with every man, as in like circumstances we would reasonably expect he should deal with us' (H ii 619 = R 241). Since he is not a sentimentalist, Clarke sees no need to explain how the reciprocity connected with equity has any basis in our sentiments.

Equity and benevolence seem to be distinct. The characteristic of equity is reasonableness plus impartiality between myself and each other person, whereas the characteristic of benevolence is concern for the welfare of every other person. If, for instance, I would reasonably not want someone else to do what a benevolent person would do in my interest, then the rule of equity imposes some limit on the practice of benevolence.

Clarke does not say whether universal benevolence aims at maximizing the quantity of good irrespective of its distribution. If this is the aim of benevolence, it may clash with equity. It is not clear why I would 'reasonably expect' someone else to treat me unequally simply because unequal treatment would increase the total happiness. Nor does Clarke suggest that reasonableness should be assessed purely by utilitarian criteria. Apparently, then, equitable treatment might conflict with maximizing utility.

Clarke agrees that on the whole the good of the universal creation coincides with what is right, and that God wills virtue to be rewarded by happiness. But he rejects an appeal to utility as the criterion of rightness. He mentions three features of utility: (1) It is sometimes very difficult to tell what maximizes utility. (2) Public utility varies from society to society. (3) Public utility must be judged by the governors of each particular society. In contrast,

the moral law has none of these features.[43] Clarke adds specific objections to the breaking of promises on utilitarian grounds, pointing out that these breaches of faith may have bad consequences (H ii 630–1). Without directly criticizing Cumberland, he implicitly anticipates Maxwell's explicit criticisms of Cumberland's neglect of non-teleological moral principles.

A sophisticated utilitarian might try to answer Clarke's objection about consequences. Hutcheson's indirect utilitarian defence of more specific principles and traits suggests that we need not face the uncertainties of calculating utility on every occasion on which we have to decide what it is right to do.[44] But one may doubt whether the indirect utilitarian defence succeeds, if it is applied to the specific rules and traits that Clarke takes to be clearly right.

Clarke's second and third objections raise the most important issues. He does not merely mean that it is unwise to rely on something as difficult to discover and as variable as public utility. He means that we know moral principles lack features that they would have if they were really maxims for the promotion of utility. Moral requirements are clear and uniform in some cases where the demands of utility are obscure and variable. If a utilitarian view were correct, we would need to answer some complicated questions about utility before we could know that a certain type of action is morally right; but we do not need to answer all these questions. Even if the answers would eventually favour our moral principle, the fact that we do not need them shows that the principle is not based on predictions about utility.[45]

Indirect utilitarianism does not entirely overcome this objection. Even if it avoids the difficulty of facing obscure and difficult questions about particular actions, it faces similar questions about rules and character traits. If our reason for accepting certain specific rules or virtues is clear independently of our beliefs about their contribution to utility, Clarke's objection stands.

The objection raises a serious question about one defence of a utilitarian account of morality. Sometimes utilitarians suggest that if they can give plausible arguments to show that recognized moral rules tend to maximize utility, they have vindicated a utilitarian position. In suggesting this, utilitarians imply that extensional equivalence between utilitarianism and recognized principles provides a sufficient defence of utilitarianism. If Clarke is right, however, extensional equivalence is not enough. If our reason for accepting the moral principles is independent of utility, mere extensional equivalence would not show that our moral principles are utilitarian, or that the principle of utility is the supreme moral principle.

Clarke need not claim that all moral requirements are always clear, or that utility is never relevant to questions of moral rightness. He has a strong case if he can show that moral

[43] 'Others have contended, that all difference of good and evil, and all obligations of morality, ought to be founded originally upon considerations of public utility. And true indeed it is, in the whole; that the good of the universal creation, does always coincide with the necessary truth and reason of things. But otherwise, (and separate from this consideration, that god will certainly cause truth and right to terminate in happiness;) what is for the good of the whole creation, in very many cases, none but an infinite understanding can possibly judge. Public utility, is one thing to one nation, and the contrary to another, and the governors of every nation, will and must be judges of the public good, and by public good, they will generally mean the private good of that particular nation. But truth and right (whether public or private) founded in the eternal and necessary reason of things, is what every man can judge of, when laid before him. It is necessarily one and the same, to every man's understanding; just as light is the same to every man's eyes.' (H ii 630 = R 251)

[44] See Hutcheson, *SMP* 66, 85, discussed in §647.

[45] Cockburn emphasizes these anti-utilitarian aspects of Clarke's theory in her attack on Rutherforth. See §876.

principles are sometimes clear independently of considerations of utility. If he is right about this, the utilitarian criterion is not the correct criterion of morality.

This argument is another version of Cudworth's objection to Hobbes. Cudworth rejects the view that (1) the true principles of justice are those commanded by the sovereign, and (2) are true because they are commanded by the sovereign. Clarke argues against the view that (3) the true principles of morality maximize utility, and (4) are true because they maximize utility. Both Cudworth's pair and Clarke's pair of claims recall the pair of claims about piety and what the gods love that are discussed by Socrates and Euthyphro. Just as Cudworth argues that the truth of the first claim does not imply the truth of the second, Clarke argues that the truth of the third does not imply the truth of the fourth. Indeed, he argues that the third may be true, but the fourth is false.

Clarke does not refute utilitarianism, but he identifies a question that a utilitarian has to answer. A true moral theory should offer not only a criterion that identifies morally right actions, but also an account of the property that makes them right. Clarke argues that utilitarianism fails in the second task because we can see that the right-making property of right actions is a property that would still make them right even if they did not maximize utility.

A utilitarian might argue that we are simply wrong in supposing that true moral principles would still be true if they did not maximize utility. Clarke points out, however, that it may be difficult for a utilitarian to support this claim. A utilitarian theory has to appeal to some of our moral beliefs and convictions against others; indeed, it seems plausible because it relies on our strong convictions about the goodness of benevolence. But if it violates our strong convictions about the sort of property that makes right actions right, we may reasonably ask whether our convictions about benevolence ought to override our convictions about right-making properties.

Though Clarke offers this strong argument against utilitarianism, he does not consider an obvious utilitarian reply. He concedes that morality prescribes universal benevolence; but if universal benevolence must aim at maximum utility, how can the requirements of morality be clear independently of questions about utility?

Clarke might try different replies to the utilitarian: (1) He might concede the utilitarian point for benevolence, but deny it for equity, and claim that equity sometimes overrides benevolence. (2) He might deny that benevolence aims at maximum utility.

The first reply is hazardous.[46] For if utilitarian considerations take such a firm hold on one aspect of morality, they may cast doubt on Clarke's claim that some crucial moral principles are clear independently of benevolence. We might doubt whether equity really overrides benevolence; and Clarke does not face this question. It might be better to challenge the utilitarian analysis of benevolence,[47] and to argue that benevolence does not imply the additive attitude to welfare that the utilitarian assumes.

Clarke's case would be stronger if he had relied on this defence. If he accepts the utilitarian analysis of benevolence, he concedes one apparently important area of our moral attitudes to utilitarianism. But he ought not to concede this as being obvious without argument, since

[46] Cf. Butler's treatment of benevolence, §698.

[47] Hutcheson (*IMGE* 3 §4 = L231 = R 331) traces his use of 'benevolence' to Cumberland. But we have found reason to doubt whether Cumberland is a utilitarian; see §535.

the utilitarian interpretation of benevolence is open to question. If utilitarians reject our actual attitude of benevolence in favour of a more utilitarian attitude, they owe us some further argument.

623. Moral Principles and Motivation

Our comparison of Clarke with Suarez and Cudworth has shown that Clarke relies on claims about immediacy in the metaphysics and epistemology of intrinsic morality. In his view, eternal fitness is a property of actions in themselves, apart from their relations to ends or to human nature, and it can be known immediately, by inspection of the actions themselves apart from these further relations. He lays a similar emphasis on immediacy in his account of how moral properties are relevant to motivation and action. According to Aquinas and Suarez, the relevance is mediated; rational agents pursue their ultimate end and what they take to promote it, and intrinsic morality promotes this end through its connexion with human nature and human good. This indirect connexion is less clear, but apparently still present, in Cudworth. He may accept the eudaemonist framework of Scholastic ethics; even if he does not, he suggests that the hegemonicon regards moral rightness as a consideration to be considered along with other considerations bearing on action. He does not suggest that the bare awareness of moral rightness is sufficient to explain acting on it.

Clarke, however, takes bare awareness to motivate us. He believes that the simple grasp of a moral principle motivates a well-ordered will to choose the right action. A sound understanding necessarily grasps the true moral principles, and a sound will necessarily acts on them.[48] We need no special explanation, involving some non-cognitive element, of why someone's will follows principles of morality; that is just a fact about a well-ordered will. We need an explanation only when the will goes wrong.

In saying this Clarke rejects psychological hedonism; he denies that an action becomes intelligible only by being traced back to a desire for pleasure. The hedonist argues that the non-hedonist stops with a brute fact; and the non-hedonist replies that this allegedly brute fact is no less intelligible than the desire for pleasure. Clarke defends his rationalism about motivation in the same way. In his view, no further desire should be introduced to explain why a well-ordered will adheres to the true moral principles. The sentimentalist offers a further explanation, in claiming that some specific desire or sentiment is characteristic of the well-ordered will. Clarke suggests that the further explanation sought by an anti-rationalist is no better than the further explanation for moral motivation sought by a hedonist. If we stop with a non-hedonist desire, why not stop with motivation without desire?

This argument from parity raises a large question about the assumptions that underlie the whole dispute between rationalists and sentimentalists. The two sides seem to differ partly about when and why it is appropriate to end explanations by appeal to brute facts. But how is this dispute to be resolved? If we stop with brute facts, how do we tell that one is intrinsically

[48] 'And by this understanding or knowledge of the natural and necessary relations, fitnesses, and proportions of things, the *wills* likewise of all intelligent beings are constantly directed, and must needs be determined to act accordingly; excepting those only, who will things to be what they are not and cannot be; that is, whose wills are corrupted by particular interest or affection, or swayed by some unreasonable and prevailing passion.' (H ii 612 = R 230)

more intelligible than another? Even if we are not psychological hedonists, we may think it is arbitrary to stop with Clarke's brute facts about motivation. The stopping point should not be arbitrary; we want some better reason for regarding a certain motive as characteristic and appropriate for morality than the mere claim that it is no more unintelligible than others that have been picked.

In this sharp contrast between pure rationalism and hedonist anti-rationalism about motivation, eudaemonism deserves consideration, though Clarke does not consider it. The point of eudaemonism is not to trace all desires to some single type of desire that is taken to be intelligible in itself; on this point it differs from hedonism. Its point is to make one motive intelligible by its connexion with other motives in the pursuit of a final good. A similar conclusion about justification is worth considering. A hedonist account of the basis of morality claims to show not only how morality is psychologically possible, but also that it is rationally justifiable, since it promotes a genuine good. A non-hedonist account of moral motivation seems to leave a reasonable question unanswered, if it does not show how it is reasonable to act on the motives of the virtuous person. Clarke seems to leave unanswered an important question that both hedonists and non-hedonist eudaemonists try to answer.

624. Against Hobbes: Morality and the Right of Nature

So far we have discussed Clarke's account of the basic principles of morality in the light of his metaphysical and epistemological claims. We have left out of account his defence of his belief in eternal fitnesses against the voluntarist position that he attributes to Hobbes. Though it may be misleading to separate Clarke's positive views from his critical discussion of opponents, it may also be useful. For if we decide that Clarke's criticisms of Hobbes are plausible, we should not at once infer that they support his own conception of moral principles.

Clarke agrees with Cudworth in using Suarezian arguments against voluntarism to attack Hobbes. Some of the questions that he intends to answer with his own account of moral properties are clearer from his criticism of Hobbes. Cudworth argues that Hobbes's legislative view of morality forces him into a vicious regress; but, as we saw, Hobbes might avoid a vicious regress of legislation based on morality based on legislation if he claims that legislative morality has a non-moral basis. Clarke attacks this answer by arguing that we have moral obligations in situations where, according to Hobbes, we have none. If Cudworth is right, Hobbes must acknowledge at least one moral obligation in the state of nature, and hence prior to any legislation—the obligation to obey a legitimate legislator. If Clarke is right, Hobbes must recognize many obligations prior to legislation. Clarke tries to show that (1) Hobbes admits moral obligations in the state of nature, and (2) Hobbes gives no good reasons for denying such moral obligations.

In support of his first claim, he considers Hobbes's remarks about the right of nature. According to Hobbes, it is not wrong, but morally permissible, for me to kill you if that is necessary for my preservation. In killing you I exercise the right of nature.[49] But how,

[49] For Hobbes's account of the right of nature as a liberty see *L.* 14.1, quoted in §484.

asks Clarke, can Hobbes speak of a 'right of nature', and hence recognize a morally justified liberty, without assuming that some moral principles apply to the state of nature? For if I have a moral right to do x, I am morally protected in doing x, and you would be wrong to prevent me from doing x.[50] How, then, can Hobbes claim that people have rights in the state of nature, while denying that there is anything that it is morally right or wrong to do?

If Hobbes were clearly using 'right' so as to mean 'moral right', so that it implies some moral protection for some liberty, Clarke would be justified. But Clarke has imported moral content that Hobbes does not intend. For Hobbes identifies the right with a liberty, which is simply the absence of external impediments. His explicit use of 'having a right', therefore, does not imply that the liberty in question is morally justifiable. In his explicit sense of 'right', we have a right to preserve ourselves in the state of nature, if we are not overcome by superior individuals or groups. We have the right because we are free, and we are free simply insofar as we are not prevented. But this sort of right does not imply that other people are morally obliged to leave me alone, and Hobbes does not recognize any such obligation.

If Hobbes sticks to this non-normative conception of the right of nature, he must allow this right to extend beyond self-preservation. If our right to kill for self-preservation simply means that nothing prevents killing for self-preservation in the state of nature, it is equally true that there we have a natural right to kill and torture just for fun. Clarke points out that Hobbes is committed to this broad conception of the right of nature.[51] But in fact Hobbes does not allow as broad a right of nature as he would have to allow if he stuck to a non-normative sense of 'right'.[52] In picking out the right of self-preservation and remaining silent about the other natural rights that follow from his non-normative sense of 'right', he seems to restrict the scope of rights in ways that his theory does not justify.[53] If he restricts our rights because he believes we have a morally justified or blameless liberty to pursue the means to our self-preservation, but no such liberty to behave with wanton cruelty, he recognizes moral constraints in the state of nature.[54]

Hobbes might reply, however, that in speaking of rights, he is referring to what is allowed by right reason, but right reason is purely prudential, referring to the agent's own interest. If the only rational considerations applying in the state of nature are prudential considerations, Clarke has not shown that moral considerations apply in the state of nature. Clarke is right, therefore, to criticize Hobbes's appeal to the right of nature, but his criticisms do not force Hobbes to recognize morality in the state of nature.

[50] 'For instance; if every man has a right to preserve his own life, then it is manifest I can have no right to take any man's life away from him, unless he has first forfeited his own right, by attempting to deprive me of mine. For otherwise, it might be right for me to do that, which at the same time, because it could not be done but in breach of another man's right, it could not be right for me to do: which is the greatest absurdity in the world.' (H ii 631 = R 253)

[51] '... if there be naturally and absolutely in things themselves, no difference between good and evil, just and unjust; then in the state of nature, before any compact be made, it is equally as good, just and reasonable, for one man to destroy the life of another, not only when it is necessary for his own preservation, but also arbitrarily and without any provocation at all, or any appearance of advantage to himself; as to preserve or save another man's life, when he may do it without any hazard of his own. The consequence of which, is; that not only the first and most obvious way for every particular man to secure himself effectually, would be (as Mr Hobbes teaches) to endeavour to prevent and cut off all others; but also that men might destroy one another upon every foolish and peevish or arbitrary humour, even when they did not think any such thing necessary for their own preservation' (H ii 609–10 = R 227).

[52] On Hobbes's use of 'right' and on the right of nature see §484.

[53] On drunkenness and cruelty see §484.

[54] Pufendorf, *JNG* i 6.10, also criticizes Hobbes effectively on the right of nature.

625. Morality and Self-Preservation

But Clarke offers an objection that replies to this appeal to prudence. He argues that Hobbes cannot plausibly claim that the only rational constraint on behaviour in the state of nature is prudential. In Clarke's view, we recognize moral obligations in the state of nature. We give them some weight, even if they do not guide our conduct in the same way as they would in a more stable situation.[55]

Hobbes argues: (1) Some ordinary moral rules do not bind us when they impede self-preservation. (2) Therefore, they are not binding in the state of nature, in which they impede self-preservation. (3) Therefore, the only rational principles binding us in the state of nature are principles of self-preservation. Clarke points out that Hobbes's first claim does not justify the second or the third; it shows only that ordinary moral rules do not bind us in the state of nature on occasions when they impede self-preservation. But even in the state of nature, observance of ordinary moral rules does not always impede self-preservation; when it does not, we are obliged, for anything that Hobbes has shown, to observe them.

Hobbes may acknowledge the considerations mentioned by Clarke, since he does not treat the right of nature as a right to do immoral actions that are not justified by appeal to self-preservation. Why should he refuse to allow that we have a natural right to amuse ourselves in every way, however immoral, that neither advances nor threatens our self-preservation? He seems to agree, at least implicitly, with Clarke's view that the obligation to observe moral rules is still in force whenever it does not impede self-preservation.

Hobbes points out that we take some ordinary moral rules to be in abeyance in the state of nature because observance of them might threaten self-preservation. Clarke answers that the peculiar dangers of the state of nature modify our ordinary moral obligations, but do not cancel moral obligations that do not impede self-preservation. If moral considerations matter even in the state of nature, and even when they are not means to self-preservation, they are not simply rules derived from self-preservation.[56] If Hobbes were right, some actions would be morally indifferent that, in our ordinary view, are not indifferent.

626. Moral Obligations in the State of Nature

Clarke argues further that Hobbes must recognize moral obligations in the state of nature, if he is to justify the formation of a state. If we all killed and tortured whenever we felt like it, the result would be the destruction of humanity. The sort of obligation that Hobbes must assume to get us out of the state of nature is the very sort whose existence he denies.[57]

[55] 'Nay, I believe, there is no man, even in Mr Hobbes's state of nature, and of Mr Hobbes's own principles; but that if he was equally assured of securing his main end, his self-preservation, by either way; would choose to preserve himself rather *without* destroying all his fellow-creatures, than *with* it; even supposing all impunity, and all other future conveniencies of life, equal in either case ...' (H ii 616 = R 236)

[56] In some places Hobbes seems to come close to agreement with Clarke. See *EL* 16.8 on 'accommodation' to others (this seems not to allow a purely psychological sense of 'obligation'); 17.10 on obligation in foro interno; *Civ*. 3.27 (and n.).

[57] 'Which being undeniably a great and unsufferable evil; Mr Hobbes himself confesses it reasonable, that, to prevent this evil, man should enter into certain compacts to preserve one another. Now if the destruction of mankind

Hobbes, therefore, picks and chooses arbitrarily among the laws of nature, claiming that some of them do not oblige in foro externo outside the commonwealth, whereas the law enjoining us to seek peace obliges us in the state of nature, since it is the basis for the social compact. Hobbes has no good reason to single out this one law of nature.[58] Clarke takes Hobbes to assume that observance of the other laws of nature is obligatory if their observance does not impede self-preservation, and that therefore self-preservation cannot justify the aggression of the person who has not yet suffered aggression. And so he argues that Hobbes must recognize moral obligations that he professes to reject.

Clarke's argument is effective if Hobbes is arguing from the moral wrongness of the state of war to the moral obligation to form a commonwealth. The moral judgment about the badness of the state of war implies, as Clarke points out, a judgment about the badness of unprovoked aggression in the state of nature. To show that we have a moral obligation to seek peace, we need to recognize moral obligations that are not reducible to counsels of self-preservation.

Similarly, according to Clarke, Hobbes's attempt to rest the foundation of the commonwealth on a covenant requires recognition of moral obligations that Hobbes professes to deny. Clarke assumes that Hobbes wants the covenant to impose some moral obligation, and he argues that it cannot do this unless we already recognize some obligation, apart from the covenant itself, to keep covenants.[59] Just as Cudworth argues that a command cannot itself create the obligation to obey commands, Clarke argues that a promise cannot create the obligation to keep a promise.

This argument presupposes that Hobbes argues for the commonwealth on moral grounds. We might take him to argue that morality demands peace so that the other demands of morality can be properly fulfilled. To say this is to express a moral demand that Kant identifies with the postulate of public right.[60] Such a demand implies that some moral obligations apart from counsels of self-preservation already hold in the state of nature.

by each other's hands, be such an evil, that, to prevent it, it was fit and reasonable that men should enter into compacts to preserve each other; then, before any such compacts, it was manifestly a thing unfit and unreasonable in itself, that mankind should all destroy one another. And if so, then for the same reason it was also unfit and unreasonable, antecedent to all compacts, that any one man should destroy another arbitrarily and without any provocation, or at any time when it was not absolutely and immediately necessary for the preservation of himself.' (H ii 610 = R 227)

[58] 'Now if men are obliged by the original reason and nature of things to seek terms of peace, and to get out of the pretended natural state of war, as soon as they can; how come they not to be obliged originally by the same reason and nature of things, to live from the beginning in universal benevolence, and avoid entering into the state of war at all? He must needs confess they would be obliged to do so, did not self-preservation necessitate them every man to war upon others: but this cannot be true of the first aggressor; whom yet Mr Hobbes, in the place now cited, vindicates from being guilty of any injustice: and therefore herein he unavoidably contradicts himself.' (H ii 632–3 = R 255)

[59] '. . . if the rules of right and wrong, just and unjust, have none of them any obligatory force in the state of nature, antecedent to positive compact; then, for the same reason, neither will they be of any force after the compact, so as to afford men any certain and real security; (excepting only what may arise from the compulsion of laws, and fear of punishment, which therefore, it may well be supposed, is all that Mr Hobbes really means at the bottom.) For if there be no obligation of just and right antecedent to the compact; then whence arises the obligation of the compact itself, on which he supposes all other obligations to be founded?' (H ii 634 = R 257).

[60] 'If you are so situated as to be unavoidably side by side with others, you ought to abandon the state of nature and enter, with all others, a juridical state of affairs.' (Kant, *MdS* 307)

627. The Role of Self-Preservation in Morality

Clarke shows that Hobbesian counsels of self-preservation cannot cover all the moral properties we recognize; for we recognize moral obligations that cannot be reduced to counsels of self-preservation. Hobbes himself seems to recognize them, if he believes we have moral reasons for getting out of the state of nature and into a commonwealth.

Clarke defeats one argument that might seem to support Hobbes. We might well be attracted to Hobbes's general position because we agree with him in supposing that the existence of a stable commonwealth makes an important difference to our moral obligations. Hobbes argues as follows: (1) One salient feature of the state is its monopoly of the use of force. (2) Moral obligations differ inside and outside the state. (3) The state's monopoly of the use of force explains the different moral obligations it generates, since it raises the price of aggression and increases the rewards for non-aggression. (4) Therefore the state is needed to give me a reason to follow morality.

Clarke answers Hobbes by accepting the first three claims and rejecting the fourth. He offers a different defence of the state's monopoly of the use of force. Compulsion removes temptations to violate moral obligations, but it does not necessarily create the obligations that would otherwise be easy to violate.[61]

The existence of a state may also imply new obligations. Perhaps, for instance, I ought to be ready to commit myself more unreservedly when I know that other people will be compelled to keep their part of the bargain.[62] But recognizing these facts about compulsion does not make compulsion necessary for obligation.[63] Hobbes's insistence on compulsion shows us one reason why a state is necessary to fulfil some moral demands, but it does not tell us as much as he supposes about the nature or basis of these demands. Apparently, then, people in the state of nature still have reason to act on moral principles, even though circumstances may dictate that they will not act in the ways they would act in a state. To show that we have no moral obligations in the state of nature, Hobbes needs some further argument besides the arguments that Clarke refutes.

628. Prudential Obligation

Hobbes might answer this criticism by a route that Clarke suggests for him. Clarke recognizes that the 'obligatory force' that Hobbes ascribes to covenants may be simply 'what may arise from the compulsion of laws and fear of punishment'.[64] Fear of punishment suggests a prudential reason for keeping a covenant, and Hobbes may claim that the only sort of reason he recognizes is a prudential reason. In the state of nature, he may claim, our only obligations are non-moral. If the laws of nature are simply counsels of self-preservation,

[61] 'It is true, men by entering into compacts and making laws, agree to compel one another to do what perhaps the mere sense of duty, however really obligatory in the highest degree, would not, without such compacts, have force enough of itself to hold them to in practice; and so compacts must be acknowledged to be in fact a great addition and strengthening of men's security.' (H ii 632 = R 254)

[62] Hobbes on assurance; §485. [63] Mackie, *HMT* 14, 40, defends Hobbes.

[64] See H ii 634 = R 257, quoted in §626.

self-preservation gives us the only principles that guide our behaviour in the state of nature and justify our attempts to get out of the state of nature.

This claim that the only obligations in the state of nature are prudential cannot be justified by appeal to ordinary moral convictions; as Clarke has shown, we recognize obligations independent of self-preservation, even if we are not required to fulfil them when they conflict with self-preservation. How can Hobbes show that we are mistaken in allowing such obligations? Even if we set aside specifically other-regarding moral considerations, might we not recognize other reasons to act in ways that would improve our lives? Some of these other reasons, distinct from reasons of self-preservation, might apparently give us reasons for actions independent of self-preservation in the state of nature, and for attempts to escape from the state of nature.

Hobbes is right to reject all these sources of obligation, if he shows that all obligation requires motivation, and that the only possible form of motivation rests on beliefs about self-preservation and the means to it. In that case, the obligation to join in making a compact must be an actual motive in each person in the state of nature; it must mean that each person has a strong enough desire in the state of nature to join in making the compact and to stick to it. If obligation results from practical reasoning, it emerges from instrumental reasoning about the means of satisfying one's currently strongest desire.

These assumptions about motivation belong to Hobbes's account of human nature, which he defends before he raises any questions about obligations in the state of nature. His account of human nature allows him to reject the claims about obligation in the state of nature that Clarke urges against him. Hobbes claims that if the nature of human action is clearly understood, moral disputes will be settled. In this case moral disputes arise because of the erroneous belief that we have moral obligations in the state of nature; the error in this belief is exposed by Hobbes's views on obligation and motivation.

629. Prudential Obligation and Hobbesian Motivation

But if Hobbes appeals to his account of human nature in order to answer Clarke, he exposes himself to further objections. For the claims about human nature that answer Clarke are difficult to defend.

Hobbes claims that self-preservation is the basis of all obligation in the state of nature. This is because he treats obligation as motivation, and takes the desire for self-preservation to be our strongest motive. Agents in the state of nature, however, do not seem to follow the demands of prudence, as Hobbes understands them. He describes deliberation as the result of anticipating various future pleasures and pains; the outcome of this process is motivation by the prospect of pleasure and pain that is psychologically most compelling. Hobbes does not justify his claim that the prospect of maximum long-term pleasure will always be most compelling; in fact such a claim conflicts with his belief in the possibility of incontinence.

Hobbesian psychology has to make room for Hobbes's apparent admission that people are sometimes moved by competitive motives even contrary to the demands of prudence and

self-preservation. This admission gives us a further reason for doubting whether deliberation will reach the results that it has to reach if Hobbes is to treat claims about obligation as predictions about the results of deliberation.

If Hobbes's account of deliberation applies to the state of nature, how can he predict that agents will be moved to make and to keep the compact that sets up the commonwealth? To show that they will have the appropriate motives, Hobbes needs to argue that my desire to make and observe the compact is stronger than my desire to gain something for myself by deceiving people into laying down their arms, and stronger than my desire to protect myself against the possibility that they will think they can gain something for themselves by deceiving me. Even if I would be better off if I and everyone else could make and observe the compact, it is unlikely that everyone could be expected to see this or to keep it in mind constantly enough to allow the institution of a commonwealth.

Clarke is right, then, to suggest that if Hobbes were willing to reduce any normative force in the obligation of keeping promises to purely psychological inducements,[65] he could avoid reliance on a moral obligation whose existence he denies.[66] But this Hobbesian reply would be unsatisfactory. Hobbes rejects moral obligations in the state of nature, because he reduces normative statements to statements about actual feelings and desires. But this reduction of normative statements undermines some of his normative claims.

Defenders of Hobbes might reject Hobbes's reductive claim about normative statements in general, and might allow that prudential obligations are normative because they contain reasons that are not reducible to desires. Then they might tell Clarke that the principles that he interprets as moral principles are really prudential principles. Such a defence of Hobbes would not claim that statements about prudential obligation are really statements about motivation; but it would support Hobbes's claim that in the state of nature, and therefore in the construction of the commonwealth, the only obligations are prudential. Would this be a good defence of Hobbes's central claim?

Such a defence has to explain why normative prudential principles are acceptable in the state of nature while normative moral principles are not. If we confine ourselves to the claim that self-preservation takes priority in the state of nature, Clarke has already answered us; for he has pointed out that morality makes room for self-preservation without losing its normative force. But if we go further, and claim that moral principles give good reasons only if they are derived from prudential principles, we must defend that claim. Hobbes defends it by arguing that prudential principles describe our actual overriding desires in the state of nature, whereas moral principles do not. But here he relies on his reduction of the normative to the psychological.

If, therefore, we abandon that reduction, how can we reject Clarke's reasons for claiming that, even in the state of nature, we have moral obligations that are irreducible to the requirements of self-preservation? It is not easy for a Hobbesian to escape Clarke's criticisms, if they are suitably developed, and if the costs of the Hobbesian replies are made clear.

[65] Inducements need not involve punishment. See §493.

[66] Hume tries to avoid this objection to Hobbes; see §769.

630. The Significance of Clarke's Criticism of Hobbes

Clarke's discussion of Hobbes argues effectively against a voluntarist account of moral obligations, against Hobbes's reduction of moral to prudential obligation, and against his further reduction of obligation to motivation. But does it argue so effectively for Clarke's own view that morality consists in eternal relations of fitness that can be grasped intuitively from an understanding of the relevant concepts?

We can see some reasons for doubting Clarke's view if we ask ourselves why his criticisms of Hobbes are plausible. For example, we may agree with him that in the state of nature we have moral obligations independent of self-preservation. Even if we cannot reasonably be expected to ignore the demands of self-preservation, we can reasonably be expected to treat other people with some consideration for their interests in circumstances where we neither gain nor lose anything by it. The moral obligation or permission to preserve ourselves does not include a moral permission to violate moral principles that do not affect our self-preservation. If we find Clarke's arguments plausible on these points, we can readily explain why they are plausible, by pointing out that even in the state of nature people benefit from considerate treatment by others. Our needs and interests are similar in some ways both inside and outside a commonwealth that has the power to coerce.

This explanation suggests that facts about human nature and human needs are relevant to the presence of moral obligations. Since nature and needs are constant, in these respects, in the state of nature and in a commonwealth, moral obligations are constant too. The differences that Clarke recognizes between moral obligations within and outside a commonwealth also suggest the same view of the basis of these obligations. When he suggests that behaviour leading to the destruction of mankind is a clear evil (H ii 610), he suggests that good and evil are relevant to the benefit and harm of human beings.

If we are convinced by this explanation of the moral obligations that Clarke recognizes in the state of nature, we may doubt his account of the character of moral principles. He suggests that it is fit in itself to keep promises and to show gratitude to benefactors. He might make this uninterestingly true by making the relevant obligation part of the definition of 'promise' and 'benefactor'; but if he defends himself in this way, he invites us to ask why we should recognize such things as promises and benefactors (as he defines them). His discussion of Hobbes suggests that obligations belong to promises and to benefactors because of their relation to human nature and needs. In that case, the keeping of promises is not really fit 'in itself'; it is appropriate to human nature and needs.

Clarke does not reject this naturalist account of the basis of moral obligations. In his discussion of benevolence and universal love, he first offers an explanation that relies on the inherent fitness of seeking the greater good, but then, as we saw, he appeals to Stoic views on nature and conciliation.[67] These are naturalist views, and Clarke speaks here of the natural constitution and needs of human beings. He does not see that this account of moral obligations conflicts with his claims about the inherent fitness of certain actions. Butler

[67] See H ii 622, quoted in §622.

contrasts a naturalist position with the a priori rationalism of Clarke. Butler's naturalism is all the more plausible in the light of Clarke's tendency to rely on it.[68]

631. Rationalism v. Naturalism in Clarke

Clarke's tendency to naturalism suggests a possible answer to objections that would otherwise confront his account of moral properties. It is not very satisfactory to be told that certain actions are evidently fit, if we are not told how to defend this claim about fitness. Clarke answers that the only objectors will be those whose minds are grossly perverted or deluded. But if the only sign of their alleged perversion or delusion is their rejection of the allegedly self-evident judgments of fitness, it does not seem altogether plausible to dismiss their objections.

Moreover, the application of Clarke's moral epistemology to these disputes exposes a more basic difficulty in his appeals to fitness. His attempt to explain such appeals by his mathematical examples suggests that those who dispute his claims about rightness overlook basic conceptual truths. But if this is what he means, he seems to imply that we cannot intelligibly formulate moral disputes about, say, the truth of utilitarianism. If utilitarianism is true, it must be a conceptual truth. Those who claim, for instance, that what is right does not always promote utility must be claiming that what always promotes utility does not always promote utility. Conversely, if utilitarianism is false, those who claim that rightness is what promotes utility must be claiming that some property that necessarily diverges from what promotes utility is what promotes utility. We might suppose, however, whichever side of the dispute about utilitarianism we favour, that our opponents are mistaken without contradicting themselves, and that we need to offer more than trivial conceptual truths if we are to answer them.

One might argue that this is an unfair objection to Clarke, because it assumes that conceptual truths are trivial, and so could not be the subject of a complex moral dispute. The assumption is indeed false, but it does not result in unfairness to Clarke, since he accepts it. The same assumption underlies his assumption that people who make moral errors are parallel to those who deny that a triangle has two right angles. If he gives up the assumption about the obviousness of conceptual truths, he also needs to revise his views about how we can be aware of fitness, and, more generally, his claims about the place of self-evidence in moral knowledge.

Not all of Clarke's argumentative strategies are limited by his explanation of fitness. He tries a more plausible strategy when he compares those who reject basic judgments of fitness with those who reject basic sensory judgments. The error that people make if they deny that there is light while they are looking at the sun is a crippling error, since anyone who denies this will be unable to count anything as evidence for asserting anything. Similarly, someone 'who would in good earnest lay it down as a first principle, that a crooked line is as straight as a right one' (H ii 609 = R 227) could not draw any distinction between crooked

[68] Butler and Clarke; §678.

and straight. If, then, some people rely on arguments from the senses, but are willing to reject basic sensory judgments, we can convict them of inconsistency.

Clarke could convict his opponents of a parallel inconsistency if he could show that while they reject the moral truths he puts forward, their own arguments depend on the acceptance of truths that are no more certain than the ones he defends against them. This is one line of argument that Clarke uses against Hobbes. He argues that Hobbes has to rely on some moral judgments that apply in the state of nature, and that he cannot consistently both do this and deny the basic truths that Clarke puts forward.

Similarly, if utilitarianism can be shown to conflict with this impartial point of view on claims of right, Clarke's opposition to utilitarianism does not rest simply on the dogmatic claim that some true judgments of fitness conflict with utilitarianism. These judgments rest on the point of view on ourselves that underlies our relations with others as objects of praise, blame, resentment, indignation, and so on. This is a sketch of an argument developed by Butler and Kant. But as soon as we try to support judgments of fitness in this way, we remove their self-evidence and their immediacy; fitness has to be assessed by reference to the sorts of relations and contextual facts that Clarke normally excludes. Some of his most interesting claims about knowledge of specific moral principles raise difficulties for his more general epistemology and metaphysics of morality.

Because Clarke fails to examine his appeals to self-evidence any further, he fails to present a clear alternative to sentimentalism. By appealing simply to claims of self-evidence, he leaves himself open to the objection (urged by Hutcheson against Burnet's defence of Clarke) that what strikes a rationalist as self-evident is simply what appeals to the moral sense, and that rationalists misrepresent their affective reactions as the conclusions of some purely rational argument. Clarke has no good defence against this objection unless he goes beyond a mere appeal to self-evidence. He needs to show why the appearance of self-evidence is a reasonable one, and why there are some rational grounds for believing that the appearance is correct in one or another case. But if we show these things, we find that an appeal to self-evidence is unhelpful. Clarke's position, then, is unstable; but it offers some room for a more thorough criticism of sentimentalism resulting in a more systematic and more convincing alternative. His remarks on Hobbes suggest that this alternative requires a more favourable attitude to naturalism than Clarke normally displays.

Comparisons between Clarke and the naturalism of Cudworth and Suarez reveal ways in which Clarke—consciously or not—carries out his aim of saving what he regards as essential in the anti-voluntarist conception of morality that opposes Hobbes, without incorporating what he might regard as Scholastic accretions that obscure its main point. This attitude to ethics offers a useful parallel to his attitude to the dogmas of Christianity. In Clarke's view, the essential features of Christianity are more convincing when they are set out without some of the traditional doctrines; hence many regarded him as unsound or equivocal on the doctrine of the Trinity, for instance. In transforming the anti-voluntarist belief in intrinsic morality into a rationalist rather than a naturalist position, he might well suppose he is doing a similar service to moral understanding.

One might agree with Clarke in supposing that the replacement of naturalism by a more unqualified rationalism is a desirable simplification of the Scholastic and Suarezian position; it seems to serve Clarke's announced purpose of making the basis of morality clear beyond

doubt or cavil. Aquinas and Suarez make judgments about rightness depend on some quite complex and disputable judgments about human nature and the human good. These, however, are the sorts of judgments that Hobbes disputes. One might infer, therefore, that our moral judgments are secure and certain even when these judgments about natures and ends are open to doubt; hence, from Clarke's point of view, it is better to exhibit the clarity and certainty of judgments about intrinsic morality, freed of the disputes that might arise about natures and ends. Apparently, we should not have to agree with Aquinas or Suarez or Cudworth about natures and ends in order to be assured of the truth of judgments about intrinsic morality.

This is a reasonable defence of Clarke, especially given his aim of refuting Hobbes. But it succeeds only if Clarke has found a satisfactory account of the epistemological and metaphysical basis of judgments of intrinsic morality. If his non-naturalist claims about fitness raise more difficulties than we raise with teleological judgments about fitness to rational nature, he has not improved on Suarez. Indeed, he does not seem to have avoided naturalism at all. We have seen that some of the most plausible aspects of his critique of Hobbes and of his explanation of benevolence rely on naturalist claims that do not fit Clarke's metaphysics and epistemology of morality.

These questions will concern us further in discussing Balguy, Price, and Reid, who develop and defend Clarke's rationalism in more detail, and examine some of the objections about moral knowledge, motivation, and justification that seem to arise for Clarke. They will also concern us in discussing the sentimentalists who take the difficulties in the rationalist programme to show that moral principles are not grasped by reason at all, and in discussing Butler and Kant. For Butler believes Clarke goes too far in rejecting naturalism; the restoration of some aspects of traditional naturalism is Butler's answer to sentimentalism. Kant's objections to rationalism are similar to Butler's in some important ways that are not completely obvious. Once we see these similarities, we can more easily see the ways in which Kant's answers to the objections do and do not differ from Butler's return to traditional naturalism.

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HUTCHESON: FOR AND AGAINST MORAL REALISM

632. Hutcheson's Aims

Hutcheson believes, as Cumberland and Shaftesbury do,[1] that Hobbes's position undermines morality.[2] He agrees with Shaftesbury and Clarke in rejecting Cumberland's and Locke's view that morality consists in laws imposed by divine commands.[3] In his view, we can understand moral obligation without reference to any law, by understanding our approval of benevolence. This approval is disinterested; Hutcheson rejects attempts to defend morality within the limits of a hedonist psychology. But he also rejects Clarke's account of moral judgment and motivation as aspects of rational understanding grasping the fitness of things and properties. He reaches his own position by reflexion on his objections to Clarke.[4] Hence he rejects the extreme rationalism of Clarke by insisting on a role for both reason and desire in moral motivation and justification.

In the *Inquiry*, therefore, Hutcheson supports Shaftesbury rather than Clarke. He undertakes to defend the principles of Shaftesbury against Mandeville, and to present the ideas of moral good and evil according to the views of ancient moralists.[5] He argues that

[1] On Shaftesbury see *IMS* 160, 174 (= SB 447); *IMGE* 4.4, L 141 = SB 139. I cite *IMGE* by the original sections and by pages of Leidhold's edition (L), which indicates the changes in Hutcheson's later editions. These changes were sometimes considerable. SB follows the second edition, R the third. I cite *IMS* by pages of Peach's edition, and *SMP* by original sections and pages. Rivers, *RGS* ii 154–64, describes the influence of Shaftesbury on Hutcheson. Berkeley's description of the moral sense in *Alc.* fits Hutcheson at least as well as it fits Shaftesbury (cf. §614). Berman, *AF* 4, suggests that Berkeley had Hutcheson in mind, and points out that in the 4th edn. of *IB* (= L 208–9) Hutcheson replies to Berkeley.

[2] On the popular exploitation of Hobbesian views in support of immoral conclusions see Mintz, *HL*, ch. 6.

[3] 'If any one ask, can we have any sense of obligation, abstracting from the laws of a superior? We must answer according to the various senses of the word obligation. If by obligation we understand a determination, without regard to our own interest, to approve actions, and to perform them; which determination shall also make us displeased with our selves, and uneasy upon having acted contrary to it; in this meaning of the word obligation, there is naturally an obligation upon all men to benevolence; . . . So that no mortal can secure to himself a perpetual serenity, satisfaction, and self-approbation, but by a serious inquiry into the tendency of his actions, and a perpetual study of universal good, according to the justest notions of it.' (*IMGE* 7.1 = L 176 = R 346)

[4] See Leechman in *SMP*, Pref. p. iv.

[5] The full title of the first edition (1725) is: 'An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue; in Two Treatises, in which the Principles of the late Earl of Shaftesbury are Explained and Defended against the Author of *The Fable of the Bees*: and the Ideas of Moral Good and Evil are established, according to the Sentiments of the Ancient

Shaftesbury's views about morality do not justify the objections that Shaftesbury and his followers raise against Christianity. Hutcheson believes Shaftesbury is right to defend the possibility of disinterested moral judgment and moral action, and he supports Shaftesbury's position by appeal to the ancients.[6] In speaking of 'the ancients' Hutcheson, like Shaftesbury, especially has in mind the Stoics, in whom he maintained a life-long interest.[7]

Hutcheson defends Shaftesbury by rejecting all attempts to reduce moral judgments to calculations of self-interest. Against reductive views that treat moral judgment as the result of instrumental reasoning, he argues that some moral judgments are immediate judgments of a moral sense. This argument defends Shaftesbury's 'moral realism' (though Hutcheson does not use Shaftesbury's phrase). Shaftesbury follows traditional naturalists in claiming that the morally right (the honestum) is really distinct from the pleasant (dulce) and the advantageous (commodum, utile). Hutcheson is also a realist on this point.

The *Inquiry* also describes the content of our moral judgments. Hutcheson takes the basis of moral judgment to be utilitarian. His utilitarianism helps his anti-reductionism. For it is especially clear that utilitarian principles cannot be reduced to self-interested principles. If we are ultimately, and not just instrumentally, committed to utilitarian principles, our commitment is fundamentally disinterested. This utilitarian side of Hutcheson's position goes beyond Shaftesbury and Cumberland, but Hutcheson might reasonably claim that it offers a further defence of their position.

This picture of Hutcheson, derived from the *Inquiry*, matches part of Whewell's assessment of him. Whewell treats him as a defender of 'independent' morality. This view of Hutcheson is reasonable, insofar as these aspects of his position seem similar to Butler's views. Sometimes, indeed, Hutcheson emphasizes his agreement with Butler. In his late *System of Moral Philosophy*, he accepts or adapts several of Butler's claims about conscience and moral judgment.[8] Several of his arguments against the reductive aspects of Hobbes's moral psychology are similar to Butler's. Whewell therefore, places Hutcheson among the 'moral realists' who support Cudworth and Clarke, taking morality to be independent of legislation, will, and private advantage.[9]

Moralists, with an Attempt to introduce a Mathematical Calculation in Subjects of Morality' (L 199). This is followed by a quotation from Cic., *Off.* i 4 (including the remark that the honestum is praiseworthy even if it is not praised). On Shaftesbury and Mandeville see Kaye, in Mandeville, *FB* i, pp. lxxii–lxxv.

[6] 'It is indeed to be wished that he had abstained from mixing with such noble performances some prejudices he had received against Christianity; a religion which gives us the truest idea of virtue, and recommends the love of God and of mankind as the sum of all religion. How would it have moved the indignation of that ingenious nobleman, to have found a dissolute set of men, who relish nothing in life but the lowest and most sordid pleasures, searching into his writings for those insinuations against Christianity, that they might be the less restrained from their debaucheries, when at the same time their low minds are incapable of relishing those noble sentiments of virtue and honour, which he has placed in so lovely a light! Whatever faults the ingenious may find with this performance, the author hopes nobody will find anything in it contrary to religion or good manners . . . The chief ground of his assurance that his opinions in the main are just is this, that as he took the first hints of them from some of the greatest writers of antiquity, so the more he has conversed with them, he finds his illustrations the more conformable to their sentiments.' (*IMGE*, Pref. = L12)

[7] Scott, *FH* 246–54, emphasizes (indeed exaggerates) Hutcheson's closeness to Stoicism. On Hutcheson's teaching of Stoic texts see Ross, *LAS* 54.

[8] The subscribers to *SMP* include: Balguy of St John's College, Cambridge; two John Maxwells (one MA, one DD); Thomas Reid, Esq.; Adam Smith. A large proportion of the subscribers seem to be Irish and Scottish. On Hutcheson and Butler see §714.

[9] On Whewell see *LHMPE* 94–9 and §§520–1. Norton has revived Whewell's view, without mentioning Whewell. See §643.

Whewell's view of Hutcheson is open to question, however, insofar as Hutcheson is a utilitarian, and so makes morality 'dependent' on universal pleasure. Whewell takes opposition to utilitarianism to be one mark of independent morality, but he does not discuss Hutcheson's elaborate statement of utilitarianism. He is right to connect Hutcheson's defence of immediate and disinterested moral judgment with independent morality, though he argues that the introduction of a moral sense tends to compromise a defence of independent morality. Before we ask whether Whewell is right, it will be useful to discuss the position of the *Inquiry*.

633. Psychological Hedonism

Hutcheson follows Shaftesbury in rejecting Hobbes's psychological hedonism. He denies that the desire for one's own pleasure is the only ultimate non-rational desire, and so he rejects Hobbes's view that both exciting and justifying reasons are ultimately derived from the desire for one's own pleasure. But he believes Shaftesbury does not go far enough. He argues that Shaftesbury's attempt to allow unselfish virtue within hedonist assumptions is not a defensible view of the relation between morality, desire, and pleasure.[10] To derive our unselfish motives from our desire for pleasure, we have to reflect on the remote and indirect consequences of our actions and motives. Such a reflexion, aided by the arguments of Cumberland and Pufendorf, might vindicate the cultivation of benevolence, but Hutcheson believes it is a wildly implausible explanation of our actual benevolent outlook. We do not need to be convinced by the conclusion of any complex prudential reasoning in order to feel and to approve benevolent motives.[11]

The next line of defence for psychological hedonism claims that moral goodness appeals to us not because its remoter consequences appear pleasant, but because it appears pleasant in its own right, apart from its consequences. Hutcheson answers that this hedonist argument is self-defeating, because our pleasure in virtuous action needs to be explained by an antecedent concern for virtuous action.[12] Pain in the absence of a desired object and pleasure in our success in getting it are the by-products of our desire for the object itself; they are not the objects of the desire.[13] Though moral sentiments often cause pain and uneasiness, this

[10] On Shaftesbury's view see §610.

[11] 'Some moralists, who will rather twist self-love into a thousand shapes, than allow any other principle of approbation than interest, may tell us, that whatever profits one part without detriment to another, profits the whole, and then some small share will redound to each individual; that those actions which tend to the good of the whole, if universally performed, would most effectually secure to each individual his own happiness; and that consequently, we may approve such actions, from the opinion of their tending ultimately to our own advantage. . . . But must a man have the reflexion of Cumberland, or Pufendorf, to admire generosity, faith, humanity, gratitude? Or reason so nicely to apprehend the evil in cruelty, treachery, ingratitude? Do not the former excite our admiration, and love, and study of imitation, wherever we see them, almost at first view, without any such reflexion; and the latter, our hatred, contempt, and abhorrence?' (*IMGE* 1.4 = L 93–4 = SB79)

[12] Against the claim 'That virtue perhaps is pursued because of the concomitant pleasure', he objects: 'To which we may answer, first, by observing that this plainly supposes a sense of virtue antecedent to ideas of advantage, upon which this advantage is founded; and that from the very frame of our nature we are determined to perceive pleasure in the practice of virtue, and to approve it when practised by our selves, or others.' (*IMGE* 2.8 = L 110 = SB 103)

[13] 'It would be absurd to say that this joy in the success was the motive to the desire. We should have no joy in the success, nor could we have had any desire, unless the prospect of some other good had been the motive. This holds in all

feature of them does not support hedonism; for we would not be uneasy unless we objected, on some non-hedonist ground, to the situation that makes us uneasy. That is why we respond to our uneasiness by trying to get rid of the situation we object to, not by trying to remove our uneasiness at it. We do not, for instance, try to remove our uneasiness at someone's distress by trying to care less about it; instead, we try to remove their distress.[14] Our moral sentiments include pleasure and pain in certain situations, but they do not aim primarily at pleasure and the absence of pain.[15]

Hutcheson objects fairly to an aspect of Hobbes's and Locke's position that may appear to persist at some places in Shaftesbury.[16] He defends Shaftesbury's predominant position and eliminates any concessions to hedonist egoism. He accuses Hobbes and Locke, as opponents of Scholasticism, of introducing worse confusions than the Scholastics ever introduced, by their attempts to reduce unselfish motives to desires for one's own pleasure.[17]

In opposing indirect hedonism and egoism, Hutcheson also attacks Shaftesbury's other opponents, the theological moralists who try to explain moral motivation by appeal to the desire for rewards and punishments. He argues that such motives cannot explain our admiration for morally good action. If we believed that virtuous people act entirely from the desire for further rewards after death, we would admire them no more than we admire people who do the right actions only for the sake of more immediate rewards.[18] Following Shaftesbury, he allows mixed motives, if the moral motive is sufficient for morally right action and the desire for reward is simply a further incentive.[19] He opposes both the French Quietists and Mandeville, who argue from the prevalence of mixed

our desires, benevolent or selfish, that there is some motive, some end intended, distinct from the joy of success, or the removal of the pain of desire; otherways all desires would be the most fantastic things imaginable, equally ardent toward any trifle as towards the greatest good; since the joy of success and the removal of the uneasiness of desire would be alike in both sorts of desires.' (*SMP* i 3.2, 42 = SB 471) Similar remarks on egoism appear at *SMP* i 2.4, 23; i 3.4, 45; i 3.6, 50. Hutcheson's argument against hedonism is developed more fully and more carefully by Butler, whose influence is clear here and elsewhere in *SMP*; see §715.

[14] 'If our sole intention, in compassion or pity, was the removal of our pain, we should run away, shut our eyes, divert our thoughts from the miserable object, to avoid the pain of compassion, which we seldom do: nay, we crowd about such objects, and voluntarily expose ourselves to pain . . . ' (*IMGE* 2.8 = L 111 = SB 104) See §810.

[15] Hutcheson attacks the Cyrenaics and Epicureans, *SMP* i 7.16, 148.

[16] See Shaftesbury, §610.

[17] 'Whatever confusion the schoolmen introduced into philosophy, some of their keenest adversaries seem to threaten it with a worse kind of confusion, by attempting to take away some of the most immediate simple perceptions, and to explain all approbation, condemnation, pleasure and pain, by some intricate relations to the perceptions of the external senses. In like manner they have treated our desires and affections, making the most generous, kind and disinterested of them to proceed from self-love, by some subtle trains of reasoning, to which honest hearts are often wholly strangers.' (*NCPA*, Pref. = Garrett 4) Just as the rationalists try to abandon the division between intellect and will, egoists try to explain away the division between self-regarding and other-regarding affections.

[18] 'But that the approbation is founded upon the apprehension of a disinterested desire partly exciting the agent is plain from this, that not only obedience to an evil deity in doing mischief, or even in performing trifling ceremonies, only from hope of reward or prospect of avoiding punishment, but even obedience to a good deity only from the same motives, without any love or gratitude towards him, and with a perfect indifference to the happiness or misery of mankind, abstracting from this private interest, would meet with no approbation.' (*IMGE* 2.4 = L 222)

[19] 'Secular rewards annexed to virtue, and actually influencing the agent further than his benevolence would, diminish the moral good as far as they were necessary to move the agent to the action, or to make him do more good than otherwise he would have done; for by increasing the interest . . . to be subtracted, they diminish the benevolence. But additional interests which were not necessary to have moved the agent, such as the rewards of a good being for actions which he would have undertaken without a reward, do not diminish the virtue.' (*IMGE* 7.9 = L 188–9 = SB 181) On Shaftesbury and Balguy on mixed motives see §§612, 669.

motives to the rarity of genuine virtue.[20] Still, simple desire for rewards cannot constitute a morally admirable motive by itself; our admiration presupposes some disinterested motive.[21]

634. Prudential Hedonism

Hutcheson believes that psychological hedonism is false, because it gives a false account of other-regarding action. But, in contrast to Shaftesbury, he also rejects the traditional eudaemonist view that one's happiness may include actions and states of character. He accepts prudential hedonism—the identification of one's own good and one's own happiness with pleasure.[22] For a prudential hedonist, self-interested reasoning is about ways of maximizing pleasure; any aims that do not aim at maximizing my pleasure do not aim at my happiness or my good.

Prudential hedonism, however, does not seem plausible without psychological hedonism.[23] It seems arbitrary to identify one's own good with pleasure, and to ignore the objects apart from pleasure that we recognize as possible objects of pursuit. Hutcheson does not explain why he accepts prudential hedonism. He argues that our moral sentiments and moral sense are not expressions of desires for our own pleasure, and he infers that they are not self-interested desires. He assumes that psychological egoism collapses with psychological hedonism. Similarly, he assumes that the supremacy of the desire for one's own happiness would imply the supremacy of a selfish desire.

This assumption makes it difficult for him to understand the eudaemonism of the ancient moralists. He interprets it in two different ways: (1) He suggest that eudaemonists recognize unselfish desires not arising from self-love, but 'subject' these desires to the selfish desire for one's own pleasure.[24] (2) He suggests that the ancients treat the desire for one's own happiness as the starting-point of action, from which we may develop desires that are not focussed on happiness. In his support he appeals to their views on friendship and on patriotism.[25]

He acknowledges that eudaemonist views, whichever way we interpret them, do not deny unselfish desire and action. But he still assumes that their conception of the ultimate end is selfish. He overlooks the possibility that some of the ends of unselfish affections are parts of perfection and happiness, not simply means to it; for he assumes that if the 'kind'

[20] On Mandeville see Kaye in *FB*, pp. lii–lvii; cxxiv–cxxviii. Kaye's account of Mandeville's opponents does not distinguish (i) those who deny that a virtuous person can have any non-moral motive for a virtuous action from (ii) those who deny that a non-moral motive by itself is insufficient for virtue. Since Kaye speaks as though both classes held the first view, he gives the impression that most moralists held a more rigorous view than they really held. Some moralists, however, seem to accept Mandeville's conception; see §669.

[21] Here Waterland disagrees with Mandeville. See §872.

[22] On Shaftesbury see §610.

[23] Sidgwick, *ME* i 4, rejects psychological hedonism, but in Book ii and in iii 14 he defends prudential hedonism.

[24] 'Or shall we deny any original calm determination toward a public interest; allowing only a variety of particular ultimate kind affections; not indeed arising from self-love, or directly aiming at private good as their natural termination, and yet in all our deliberate counsels about the general tenor of our conduct, subjected, in common with all the particular appetites and passions of the selfish kind, to the original impulse in each one toward his own perfection and happiness? This last seems to be the scheme of some excellent authors both ancient and modern.' (*SMP* i 3.6, 51)

[25] *IMGE* 3.15 = L 237.

affections are subordinate to happiness, they are subordinate to an essentially selfish end. He maintains that moral sentiments are independent of our desire for our own happiness; but, given the possibility of non-hedonistic eudaemonism, his argument against psychological hedonism does not rule out every egoist account of the basis of morality.[26]

635. Arguments for a Moral Sense: Against Egoism

If moral reasons are not derived from self-interest, they must provide sufficient reasons by themselves, without reference to any more ultimate reasons. Our recognition, for instance, that this action promotes the public good must provide—in conjunction with the relevant desire—a reason for doing it, without appeal to any further self-interested consideration. But a simple desire for the good of others for their own sake does not make someone morally good. Even if such a desire is entirely non-self-regarding, we could have it without approving of our action. It is characteristic of a morally good person, however, to approve of this desire, whether in himself or in someone else; that is the essentially reflexive element of morality. To make a moral judgment on an action is not simply to add another desire to our initial desire to do the action; it is to express the view that this desire is right and appropriate for an agent in these circumstances.

A rationalist might accept these arguments. If promotion of the public good is a sufficient justification and admits no further justification, perhaps reason recognizes this justification.[27] Similarly, the reflexive character of moral judgment may result from rational recognition of the appropriate desire.[28]

Hutcheson, however, believes that his arguments against psychological egoism also refute rationalism. Our moral judgments do not rest on reasoning about consequences because they do not rest on reasoning at all; they are too immediate to be the product of reasoning. If we had to depend on reason, our moral judgments would be wavering and unreliable. God's goodness provides us with a moral sense, so that we are not left to work out the right actions by our limited rational capacities.[29] If we are as acute as Cumberland and Pufendorf, reflexion on our own advantage will lead us to the actions that the moral sense approves; but the moral sense, directly approving benevolent actions, reaches the same conclusion more immediately and reliably.[30]

[26] Cf. Kemp Smith, *PDH* 35–8.

[27] Reid rightly points to this gap in the argument from the limits of justifying reasons to the existence of a moral sense. See Reid, *EAP* v 7 = H 675b = R 939, criticizing Hume, who at this point relies on Hutcheson's argument.

[28] Butler and Reid agree with Hutcheson on the reflexive character of moral judgment. But they do not infer that moral judgments are not a product of reason. See §§715, 842.

[29] 'The weakness of our reason, and the avocations arising from the infirmities and necessities of our nature are so great, that very few men could ever have formed those long deductions of reason, which show some actions to be in the whole advantageous to the agent, and their contraries pernicious. The author of nature has much better furnished us for a virtuous conduct than some moralists seem to imagine, by almost as quick and powerful instructions as we have for the preservation of our bodies.' (*IMGE*, Pref. = L 9)

[30] 'For, even upon the supposition of a contrary sense, every rational being must still have been solicitous in some degree about his own external happiness: reflexion on the circumstances of mankind in this world would have suggested, that universal benevolence and a social temper, or a certain course of external actions, would most effectually promote the external good of every one, according to the reasonings of Cumberland and Puffendorf; while at the same time this perverted sense of morality would have made us uneasy in such a course, and inclined us to the quite contrary, viz.

This argument for the moral sense as opposed to reason, directly addresses only those opponents who identify reason with strictly self-interested calculation. [31] Hutcheson assumes that moral properties can be matters for rational judgments only if they are found to promote one's self-interest.[32] But his observations on the immediacy of moral judgments could also be used against opponents who treat them as the product of non-egoistic reasoning. Hutcheson legitimately insists that any adequate account of moral judgments has to explain their immediacy.

But this requirement does not rule out all rationalist views known to Hutcheson. The appeal to immediacy does not seem to count against Clarke's views. For Clarke does not believe that moral judgments are rational because they are the conclusions of complex calculations of self-interest, or because they depend on any other complicated process of reasoning. As he points out, many mathematical and logical judgments appear to be immediate, but do not seem to belong to a sense.

Since the *Inquiry* considers only egoism as a viable alternative, Hutcheson tends to speak as though we must believe in a moral sense if we are to allow disinterested action. This is how he presents the issue in his early essay on Mandeville. According to Mandeville, all apparently virtuous action is really self-interested, resulting from the desire for one's own pleasure or for some means to it.[33] Hutcheson answers by defending 'kind affections' and a moral sense, without distinction.[34] We might suppose, therefore, that belief in a moral sense commits us only to recognition of disinterested action. But Hutcheson intends more than this; he also means to assimilate moral judgments to the senses rather than reason.

He connects the immediacy of moral judgments with their passivity. We seem to receive them from external reality just as we receive ideas of sensory qualities.[35] We might, then, take

barbarity, cruelty, and fraud; and universal war, according to Mr. Hobbes, would really have been our natural state; so that in every action we must have been distracted by two contrary principles, and perpetually miserable, and dissatisfied when we followed the directions of either.' (*IMGE* 7.12 = L 196 = SB 186)

[31] 'This moral sense of beauty in actions and affections may appear strange at first view. Some of our moralists themselves are offended at it in my Lord Shaftesbury; so much are they accustomed to deduce every approbation or aversion from rational views of private interest . . . ' (*IMGE*, Pref. = L9)

[32] Cf. Grove's argument for a basic sentiment of benevolence, §878.

[33] See Mandeville's attack on allegedly disinterested action: 'There is no merit in saving an innocent babe ready to drop into the fire; the action is neither good nor bad, and what benefit soever the infant received, we only obliged our selves; for to have seen it fall, and not strove to hinder it, would have caused a pain, which self-preservation compelled us to prevent: nor has a rich prodigal, that happens to be of a commiserating temper, and loves to gratify his passions, greater virtue to boast of, when he relieves an object of compassion with what to himself is a trifle.' (*FB* i 56(Kaye) = R 270)

[34] 'Suppose the scheme of almost all moralists except Epicureans to be true; "that we have in our nature kind affections to different degrees, that we have a moral sense, determining us to approve them whenever they are observed, and all actions which flow from them; that we are naturally bound together by the desire of esteem from each other, and by compassion; and that withal we have self-love or desire of private good." What would be the consequence of this constitution, or the appearances in human nature? All men would call those actions virtuous which they imagine do tend to the public good: where men differ in opinions of the natural tendencies of actions, they must differ in approbation or condemnation; they will find pleasure in contemplating or reflecting on their own kind affections and actions; they will delight in the society of the kind, good-natured, and beneficent; they will be uneasy upon seeing or even hearing of the misery of others, and be delighted with the happiness of any persons beloved; men will have regard to private good as well as public; and when other circumstances are equal, will prefer what tends to private advantage. Now these are the direct and necessary consequences of this supposition; and yet this penetrating swaggerer, who surpasses all writers of ethics, makes those very appearances proofs against the hypothesis.' (*TL*, Letter 6, 119–21)

[35] 'We must . . . have other perceptions of moral actions, than those of advantage; and that power of receiving these perceptions may be called a moral sense, since the definition agrees to it, viz., a determination of the mind,

belief in a moral sense to support moral realism. Hutcheson argues, following Shaftesbury, that we have a sense of right and wrong that cannot be extinguished by a theoretical commitment to egoism.[36] Even if we try to be Hobbesians, we have to admit that we immediately recognize and approve of moral goodness in people and actions.

Not every sort of sensory awareness, however, includes detection of external reality. Hutcheson argues that beauty is an idea 'raised in us' by objects (*IB* 1.9 = L 23), to which nothing similar in the objects corresponds. If we recognize beauty in an object we are aware of objective properties of it, such as order, symmetry, and proportion; but though these properties give us the idea of beauty, they are not the beauty in the object.[37]

A subjectivist analysis would cast doubt on part of Shaftesbury's defence of his 'moral realist' view that moral properties are aspects of reality and not simply creations of our minds through choices, desires, or legislation. The *Inquiry* does not show what Hutcheson thinks about this part of Shaftesbury's position. He does not discuss the conflict between Shaftesbury's aims, which he shares, and the result he has reached.[38] One might argue that

to receive any idea from the presence of an object which occurs to us, independent on our will.' (*IMGE* 1.1 = L 90 = R 307; cf. *Passions* §1 = R 356) 'These determinations to be pleased with certain complex forms, the author chooses to call senses; distinguishing them from the powers which commonly go by that name, by calling our power of perceiving the beauty of regularity, order, harmony, an internal sense; and that determination to approve affections, actions, or characters of rational agents, which we call virtuous, by the name of a moral sense. '(*IMGE*, Pref. = L 8–9) 'The quality approved by our moral sense is conceived to reside in the person approved, and to be a perfection and dignity in him: approbation of another's virtue is not conceived as making the approver happy or virtuous or worthy, though 'tis attended with some small pleasure.' (*IMGE* 1.8 = L 218 = R 314)

[36] Turnbull defends Shaftesbury by similar arguments, defending belief in a moral sense against 'nominal moralists' (as Shaftesbury calls them): 'On the one hand, if there be no such sense in our make, virtue is really but an empty name; that is, the fitness or approveableness of affections, actions, and characters in themselves is an idle dream that hath no foundation, but advantage or interest is all that we have to consider or compute in our determinations. But, on the other side, if there be really a sense of beauty, fitness, or agreeableness in affections, actions, and characters in themselves, independently of all other considerations, then it plainly follows that we are made not merely to consider our private good, or what quantity of external safety, ease, profit, or gratification an action may bring along with it; but to rise higher in our contemplation, and chiefly to inquirewhat is fit and becoming, agreeable, laudable, and beautiful in itself.' (*PMP* 134). In support of his belief in a moral sense Turnbull (138–9) cites Cicero on natural law (quoted in §197). Cf. §715.

[37] '. . . by absolute or original beauty, is not understood any quality supposed to be in the object, that should of itself be beautiful, without relation to any mind which perceives it: For beauty, like other names of sensible ideas, properly denotes the perception of some mind; so cold, heat, sweet, bitter, denote the sensations in our minds, to which perhaps there is no resemblance in the objects that excite these ideas in us, however we generally imagine that there is something in the object just like our perception' (*Beauty* 1.17 = L 27). This discussion of beauty appears in the first treatise in *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*. The second treatise is *An Inquiry concerning the Original of our Ideas of Virtue or Moral Good*. It has nothing similar to the remarks about beauty in the treatise on beauty. Hence it is not clear whether Hutcheson accepts a subjectivist analysis of moral goodness parallel to his analysis of beauty.

[38] Doddridge sees this difference between Hutcheson and Shaftesbury, and takes Shaftesbury to be closer to the rationalist position of Balguy (which Doddridge favours): 'It may be observed by the way, that though Lord Shaftesbury uses many expressions which Dr Hutcheson has adopted, yet it seems that he in the main falls in with the [rationalist] account given above; since he considers virtue as founded on "the eternal measure and immutable relation of things", or in other words as consisting "in a certain just disposition of a rational creature towards the moral objects of right and wrong." ' (*Course* i 190 [1794 edn.].) Doddridge refers to Shaftesbury, *ICV* i 2.3 = K 175, quoted in §611. These differences between Shaftesbury and Hutcheson are obscured in the brief treatment by Fowler, *SH* 183–200, who emphasizes the similarities without considering the significant differences. His emphasis partly results from his attention to the features of Shaftesbury that are close to Hutcheson: 'The analogy drawn between beauty and virtue, the functions assigned to the moral sense, the position that the benevolent feelings form an original and irreducible part of our nature, and the unhesitating adoption of the principle that the test of virtuous action is its tendency to promote the general welfare, or good of the whole, are at once obvious and fundamental points of agreement between the two authors' (183). Similarly, Fowler's chapter on Shaftesbury (102) does not discuss the metaphysical aspects of Shaftesbury's moral realism (though

if his account of the moral sense reaches a subjectivist conclusion, one ought to consider whether (i) something is wrong with his account of a sense, or (ii) he has applied this account wrongly to the moral sense, or (iii) he is wrong to claim that we are aware of moral properties by a moral sense. If we reject the first and second possibilities, and we believe that a realist position is plausible, we may find the third possibility attractive. The *Inquiry* does not pursue these questions any further. Though Hutcheson seems to commit himself to a subjectivist account of the moral sense, he does not develop such an account.

636. Voluntarism and Divine Commands

Hutcheson follows Shaftesbury in rejecting the views of Hobbes and Mandeville that treat morality as the outcome of decisions or conventions or practices.[39] According to Hobbes, morality accords with human nature only in the specific circumstances of the commonwealth. Hutcheson argues that even when circumstances do not make morality beneficial for us (conceiving our benefit in a self-confined sense), morality is still in accord with human nature.

Hutcheson answers Hobbes by appealing to our actual desires and motives, and specifically to sympathy and benevolence, to show that, apart from our selfish advantage, we still have a motive that is strong enough to move us to act morally. He accepts Hobbes's view about what makes something natural; for he argues that we often have a predominant desire to do what is morally right, even apart from any further benefit we gain from it.

Since morality has this natural basis, theological voluntarists are wrong to identify moral rightness with conformity to the divine will or divine legislation.[40] God's arbitrary will and inclination does not make it right to do what promotes the good of humanity. Voluntarism gives a false account of moral knowledge and motivation. In order to know what is morally right, we ought not to ask simply what God requires; nor ought we to act simply out of a desire to conform to divine commands. We should rely on our moral sense, and on unselfish motivation.

Since voluntarism is mistaken, we should also recognize a natural law antecedent to any positive legislation by God or by human legislators. The first principles of natural law are eternal and immutable, and natural law imposes obligations even in the state of nature.[41] Nor are they the result of the arbitrary choice of God and the exercise of divine power. God does not create goodness by arbitrary will; God is necessarily good, and therefore benevolent.

Fowler alludes to them at 89: 'actions being denominated good or just, not by the arbitrary will of God, but in virtue of some quality exiting in themselves').

[39] Mandeville is most plausibly taken to understand morality as the result of evolving conventions and practices, rather than deliberate decisions and artifices. See Kaye in *FB* i, pp. lxiv–lxvi.

[40] 'The primary notion under which we approve is not merely a conformity to the divine will or laws. We seriously inquire about the moral goodness, justice, rectitude, of the divine nature itself, and likewise of his will or laws; these characters make up our common praises of them. They surely mean more than that his will or laws are conformable to themselves. This we might ascribe to an artful impure demon. Conformity to his nature is not conformity to immensity, eternity, omnipotence. 'Tis conformity to his goodness, holiness, justice. These moral perfections then must be previously known, or else the definition by conformity to them is useless.' (*SMP* i 4.3, 56)

[41] *SMP* ii 3.11, 273; ii 4.1, 281.

Hence God approves of some actions rather than others because they benefit humanity.[42] God's goodness ultimately explains our having our moral sense; for since it is good for humanity that we are benevolent and approve benevolence, God, being benevolent, gives us a moral sense that approves of benevolent action.[43] Hutcheson combines Shaftesbury's opposition to voluntarism with his own views about the moral sense and benevolence.

637. Reason, Desire, and Action

Though Shaftesbury anticipates Hutcheson in speaking of a moral sense, his remarks on the sense of right and wrong do not deny that moral judgment is rational; they simply seem to assert that we have some immediate and disinterested grasp of moral goodness. But Hutcheson goes further than Shaftesbury on this point; for he intends his doctrine of a moral sense to refute a rationalist account of moral judgment. We might suppose that he simply means his anti-rationalism to rule out an indirect egoist account of moral judgment. Perhaps he means only that moral judgment is not based on reasoning about good consequences for oneself. If that is all he means, he does not exclude the possibility that moral judgment is based on, or incorporates, some different exercise of reason. But he never recognizes this possibility. The reason for his failure to recognize it becomes clear in the *Illustrations*, where he expands his account of the moral sense in relation to some of Hobbes's and Locke's views on action and motivation.[44]

Hobbes's account of morality rests on his moral psychology, and in particular on his conception of practical reason. He denies that practical reason is the source of any distinctive ends; its only function is to find means to ends that are independently fixed by non-rational desires.[45] Locke and Hutcheson develop this Hobbesian view. We have found it useful, in discussing both the mediaeval disputes and the dispute between Hobbes and Bramhall, to distinguish intellectualism (the view that action depends primarily on intellect rather than will) from rationalism (the view that action depends on passion rather than rational will). Aquinas is a moderate intellectualist, but also a rationalist, whereas Scotus is both a voluntarist and a rationalist. Hobbes's discussion does not distinguish the two positions, and on this point Locke and Hutcheson follow him.

[42] '... "Could not the Deity have given us a different or contrary determination of mind, *viz*. to approve actions upon another foundation than benevolence?" It is certain, there is nothing in this surpassing the natural power of the Deity. But as... we resolved the constitution of our present sense of beauty into the divine goodness, so with much more obvious reason may we ascribe the present constitution of our moral sense to his goodness. For if the Deity be really benevolent, or delights in the happiness of others, he could not rationally act otherwise, or give us a moral sense upon another foundation, without counteracting his own benevolent intentions.' (*IMGE* 7.12 = L 195–6 = SB 186) Cf. *IMP* 20: God in his goodness has given us a moral sense approving of general good or what is beneficial to the system. '... and the nature of virtue is thus as immutable as the divine wisdom and goodness. Cast the consideration of these perfections of God out of this question, and indeed nothing would remain certain or immutable.'

[43] Hutcheson emphasizes benevolence among God's attributes, and infers that we have to attribute something like the moral sense to God: '... if we can in any way reason concerning the original nature from what we feel in our own, or from any of our notions of excellency or perfection, we must conceive in a Deity some perceptive power analogous to our moral sense, by which he may have self-approbation in certain affections and actions...' (*SMP* i 9.5, 174–5)

[44] *IMS* was published in 1728, after the second edition of *IMGE* (1726).

[45] This may not be Hobbes's consistent position; he sometimes seems to suggest that prudence is especially characteristic of practical reason. But the anti-rationalist position is his predominant view. See §478.

Hutcheson begins his argument by defending a more moderate position than Hobbesian anti-rationalism. At first he only rejects the extreme intellectualism that makes reasonable action proceed from reason entirely without desire.[46] So far he agrees with Locke. Locke, however, assumes that extreme intellectualism is the 'received opinion', perhaps because he does not distinguish intellectualism from rationalism (which one might indeed take to be a received Scholastic opinion).[47] Hutcheson disagrees with him on this historical point. He claims to support the Scholastic opposition to extreme intellectualism. Authors of 'confused harangues' about motivation by reason alone have shown their historical ignorance.[48]

He claims that desire as well as reason is necessary for action, and that desire is needed for us to aim at an end. In claiming that the ends of action cannot be derived from reason without desire, he believes he follows Aristotle.[49] According to Aristotle, thought by itself moves nothing; the thought that initiates motion must be 'thought for the sake of some end' (*EN* 1139a35–6), which requires desire. Similarly, Aquinas asserts that our cognitive capacity does not move us without desire as intermediary.[50] According to Hutcheson, those who claim that virtue belongs wholly to reason ignore the Scholastic division. The extreme intellectualist claim about virtue is inconsistent with eudaemonism, which assumes an original desire, not derived from reason, for happiness as ultimate end.[51]

In speaking of 'confused harangues' Hutcheson may refer to Clarke and others who believe that the mere awareness of eternal fitnesses moves us to the appropriate action. Clarke's theory of action, no less than his epistemology and his meta-ethics, departs from the Scholastic position, in order to achieve immediacy and certainty. If Hutcheson reasserts the Scholastic view, he does not hold Hobbesian anti-rationalism. The Scholastics distinguish rational will from non-rational passion, but Hobbes rejects that distinction.

[46] 'We have indeed many confused harangues on this subject telling us, "We have two principles of action, reason and affection or passion, the former in common with angels, the latter with brutes. No action is wise, or good, or reasonable, to which we are not excited by reason, as distinct from all affections ..." ' (*IMS* 122) Different varieties of rationalism are helpfully discussed by Wallace, 'Reason'.

[47] Locke; §554.

[48] 'Writers on these subjects should remember the common divisions of the faculties of the soul. That there is (1) reason presenting the natures and relations of things antecedently to any act of will or desire, (2) the will, or *appetitus rationalis*, or the disposition of soul to pursue what is presented as good and to shun evil. Were there no other power in the soul than that of mere contemplation, there would be no affection, volition, desire, action. . . . Both these powers are by the ancients included under the *logos* or *logikon meros*. Below these they place two other powers dependent on the body, the *sensus* and the *appetitus sensitivus*, in which they place the particular passions. The former answers to the understanding and the latter to the will. But the will is forgot of late, and some ascribe to the intellect not only contemplation or knowledge but choice, desire, prosecuting, loving.' (*IMS* 122. Cf. R 357n.) In the penultimate sentence 'the former' might refer to reason and 'the latter' to appetitus rationalis, or (more probably) 'the former' might refer to sense and 'the latter' to sensitive appetite (so that 'answers to' means 'corresponds to' rather than 'belongs to').

[49] 'But are there not also exciting reasons, even previous to any end, moving us to propose one end rather than another? To this Aristotle long ago answered "that there are ultimate ends desired without a view to any thing else, and subordinate ends or objects desired with a view to something else." . . . But as to the ultimate ends, to suppose exciting reasons for them would infer that there is no ultimate end but that we desire one thing for another in an infinite series.' (*IMS* 123; cf. 227)

[50] See *ST* 1a q20 a1 ad1, and §256.

[51] 'They tell us that "virtue should wholly spring from reason", as if reason or knowledge of any true proposition could ever move us to action where there is no end proposed, and no affection or desire towards that end. These gentlemen should either remember the common doctrine of the schools, or else confute it better; that the *prohairesis* which is necessary in virtuous action is *orexis bouleutikê*; and that virtue needs not only the *logon alêthê*, but the *orexin orthên*. . . . ' (*IMGE* 3.15 = L 236) The second sentence is from Hutcheson's footnote, which continues with other Aristotelian references.

638. The Rejection of Rationalism

Hutcheson, however, rejects both moderate intellectualism, and rationalism. He follows Locke in holding that action depends on our having desires for ends that are independent of practical reason. He argues that to avoid an infinite regress of ends in explaining actions, we must recognize basic, non-rational instincts that rest on no further reasons.[52] This argument goes beyond Scholastic moderate intellectualism; for a moderate intellectualist might agree that all action requires desire, but still maintain that reasoning about the good produces the appropriate sort of desire. Though Hutcheson explicitly attacks only extreme intellectualism, his conclusions conflict with both moderate intellectualism and rationalism.

Hutcheson's conception of the relevant options casts doubt on some of his claims about Aristotle and the Scholastics. He relies on Aristotle's claim that deliberation is confined to means to ends, and ends are the objects of wish.[53] He infers that, in this Aristotelian scheme, the most ultimate ends must be taken for granted in any deliberation. And so he concludes that the desire for the highest end, happiness, is not the product of practical reason. All this is a reasonable interpretation of Aristotle. But Hutcheson goes wrong in his claim that the desire for happiness is a non-rational impulse or instinct or, as Locke puts it, 'uneasiness' that is prior to practical reason. In his view, it is a particular instinct, not essential to rational agency.

This is not the Aristotelian view of the desire for happiness. According to Aquinas, the ascription of such a desire is equivalent to the ascription of rational desire to an agent. It is not a particular desire or instinct on a level with a liking for oranges rather than apples. It is the structural feature of other desires that makes them all desires of a rational agent. To have a desire for one's own happiness is to be disposed to pursue each of one's desires to the right degree, so that it does not impede the appropriate satisfaction of other desires. Practical reason, therefore, does not merely find some means to satisfy a non-rational desire that is prior to practical reason. It discovers the nature of happiness by finding the appropriate degree of satisfaction for different desires. In holding this view, Aristotle and Aquinas take a moderate intellectualist view of the relation of reason, will, and desire.

Hutcheson, however, treats happiness as though it were a contingent fact that this is the end of all our desires. He treats extreme intellectualism and his own anti-rationalism as the only options to consider. Both Hutcheson and Locke fail to distinguish extreme from moderate intellectualism, and intellectualism from rationalism, because they look at the traditional view in the light of assumptions that they share with Hobbes.[54]

[52] 'Thus ask a being who desires private happiness or has self-love, "What reason excites him to desire wealth?". He will give this reason, "that wealth tends to procure pleasure and ease". Ask his reason for desiring pleasure or happiness. One cannot imagine what propositions he could assign as his exciting reason. This proposition is indeed, true, "There is an instinct or desire fixed in his nature determining him to pursue his happiness". But it is not this reflexion on his own nature, or this proposition, which excites or determines him, but the instinct itself.' (*IMS* 123) 'In the first place the understanding, or the power of reflecting, comparing, judging, makes us capable of discerning the tendencies of the several senses, appetites, actions, gratifications, either to our own happiness, or to that of others, and the comparative values of every object, every gratification. This power judges about the means or the subordinate ends: but about the ultimate ends there is no reasoning. We prosecute them by some immediate disposition or determination of soul, which in the order of action is always prior to all reasoning; as no opinion or judgment can move to action, where there is no prior desire of some end.' (*SMP* i 3.1, 38)

[53] Hutcheson appeals to Aristotle's claims about decision and deliberation, *IMS* 129.

[54] Cf. Hume, §735.

Since Hutcheson assumes that the ultimate end is the object of a non-rational instinct prior to all practical reason, he rejects the traditional conception of happiness as the ultimate object of rational desire. If the desire for happiness is not a distinctively rational desire, happiness cannot be, as Aristotelian eudaemonists suppose, a composite of objects of rational desire. Hutcheson agrees with Locke and Hobbes in substituting a hedonist conception of happiness for the traditional conception.

He approves of the definition of happiness that he attributes to the Old Academy and the Peripatetics: 'constant activity according to the highest virtue in a prosperous course of life' (*IMP* 56). The ancients, in his view, call this the supreme good. Hutcheson agrees with their account for hedonist reasons; he treats it as an account of the source of pleasure and contentment. But he does not agree with Locke and Hobbes in replacing the Aristotelian conception of an ultimate good with a psychological hedonist view that derives all motivation from the desire for one's own pleasure. In his view, motivation must be traced back either to self-love, aiming at our private happiness, or to a special sense or instinct that leads us, as agents and as critics, to take a special interest in benevolence.

The nature of this instinct is not clear. If it moves us because we tend to take pleasure in other people's benevolence, has Hutcheson avoided a hedonist conception of the ultimate end? To understand this aspect of his position, we need to examine his views of motivation more closely, to see how his claims about benevolence and the moral sense fit into his theory.

639. Exciting Reasons and Justifying Reasons

According to Hobbes, deliberation proceeds by anticipation of different degrees of pleasure arousing desires of different strengths, until we reach the last appetite, which moves us to the action. Hutcheson does not treat deliberation as mere anticipation. He marks different roles for reasons and deliberation by distinguishing exciting reasons from justifying reasons: (1) p is an exciting reason for S to do x if and only if p is a truth showing a quality in x exciting S to do x. (2) p is a justifying reason for S to do x if and only if p is a truth showing a quality in x engaging our approbation.[55]

This division might suggest that exciting reasons are those that move me to action, and hence explain my action, and justifying reasons are those that justify it.[56] We can speak of reasons in two contexts: (a) Sometimes we ask 'What is [or was] your reason for doing that?'. We seek an explanation of your action that identifies what motivated or excited you to act. The correct answer is the one that describes what actually moved you. (b) But if we ask 'Why should I do that?' or 'What reason is there to do that?' we do not seek a report on

[55] 'When we ask the reason of an action, we sometimes mean, "What truth shows a quality in the action, exciting the agent to do it?" Thus, why does a luxurious man pursue wealth? The reason is given by this truth, "Wealth is useful to pursue pleasures". Sometimes for a reason of action we show the truth expressing a quality engaging our approbation. Thus the reason of hazarding life in a just war is that "It tends to preserve our honest countrymen or evidences public spirit." The reason for temperance and against luxury is given thus, "Luxury evidences a selfish base temper." The former sort of reasons we will call exciting and the latter justifying. Now we shall find that all exciting reasons presuppose instincts and affections and the justifying presuppose a moral sense.' (*IMS* 121; cf. 227)

[56] Hence his distinction seems quite close to Raz's distinction between 'guiding' (= justifying) and 'explanatory' (= exciting) reasons (Raz, ed., *PR* 2–4). See also Smith, *MP* ch. 4.

anyone's actual motive; we seek a justification that could be offered, to provide (let us say) a normative reason.[57]

This distinction appears in the contrast between predicting and deciding. Others may predict what I will do by knowing about the motives that influence me in these circumstances; they rely on knowledge of the reasons that move me. But normally when I ask 'What am I going to do?' I mean 'What am I to do?', a deliberative rather than a predictive question; I look for normative reasons rather than explanatory reasons. I might raise a similar deliberative question by asking 'What do I want?' or 'Do I want that?'. Despite their grammatical form, these questions normally ask for reasons to want one thing rather than another, and so ask for normative reasons. We may have a good normative reason to act, but remain unmoved by it. Equally, a particular reason may have moved us act, but we may see that it gave us no good reason for acting, and so does not justify our action.

Though these are distinct types of reasons, it is not an accident that they are both called 'reasons'. A motivating and explanatory reason appears to justify us to some degree, and a normative reason is capable in some circumstances of motivating us. Still, a motivating reason may not justify us adequately, and an adequate justification may not move us to act.

The division between the two types of reasons becomes even clearer if we recognize external reasons—states of affairs that constitute good reasons for A to do F, even though A's doing F neither satisfies A's desires nor would satisfy them in appropriate counterfactual circumstances.[58] A's needs and A's welfare, for instance, provide good external reasons for A to do F even though they do not satisfy A's actual or counterfactual desires. We can recognize a division between explanatory and normative reasons without also agreeing that some normative reasons are external reasons; but if we recognize external reasons, we must take some normative reasons to be even less closely connected to desires than internal normative reasons are.

According to Hobbes, recognition of sufficient reasons for my action is simply awareness of sufficient motives for doing it, and deliberation is simply the awareness of successive desires resulting in the strongest desire.[59] But if we recognize normative reasons, these are the basis for deliberation and action. If, for instance, we recognize that the contribution of an action to the public good is a good reason for doing the action, the normative reason may become our motivating or explanatory reason. To recognize this consideration as a good normative reason is to recognize that it ought to be our motivating reason; but it was a good normative reason whether or not we recognized it or acted on it. A desire is rational, then, insofar as it responds to the weight of normative reasons that we recognize in the course of deliberation. If we have rational desires, we respond to apparently better reasons, and do not simply register the comparative strength of desires.

[57] Hutcheson also discusses justifying and exciting reasons at *SMP* i 4.3, 57.

[58] The appropriate counterfactual circumstances are those that can be specified without circularity, so as not to include 'if A were to recognize the appropriate external reasons'. On external reasons see §268.

[59] If he recognized normative reasons, he would introduce Butler's distinction (anticipated by Cudworth; see §548) between authority and power. In Butler's view, the principle with greater authority is the one that tells us the reasons that make it reasonable to do x rather than y. See §683.

Hutcheson, however, does not accept this account of rational desire, because he does not recognize normative reasons. As he understands justifying reasons, they exist only if I actually approve of something; hence, if I have justifying reasons for benefiting others without regard to myself, I have a moral sense.[60] A search for justifying reasons, as Hutcheson conceives them, is not a search for normative reasons. In looking for normative reasons for an action, we examine the pros and cons of the action itself. But in looking for Hutcheson's justifying reasons, we examine our sentiments to see whether the proposed action arouses a feeling of approval. Since justifying reasons require actual feelings of approval, they move us to action by themselves, so that we sometimes act without exciting reasons.[61]

Sometimes we might reflect on ourselves and our actions in this way. If A asks 'Do I really like B?', A may be asking a question that is to be answered by introspection and recollection; perhaps A will discover on reflexion that A finds B entertaining and charming, but does not really like B. But deliberative questions are not normally like this; they do not normally ask for an accurate report on one's feelings of approval, but for an assessment of the proposed action, on the assumption that one's feelings of approval ought to respond appropriately to the assessment. Hutcheson leaves out this aspect of deliberation and normative reasons.

He does not disagree radically, therefore, with Hobbes's view of motivation and practical reason. For he supposes that the recognition of a reason—exciting or justifying—is simply the recognition that something arouses a particular sort of non-rational desire or sentiment that was present apart from the recognition of this sort of reason. Deliberation, therefore, proceeds by the awareness of desires or sentiments aroused by different considerations that are presented to us. This conception of deliberation prevents us from recognizing distinctively rational desires. Hutcheson's account of reasons matches his anti-rationalism about desire and reason. In his view, the recognition of reasons is simply the recognition of considerations arousing desires. He accepts the most controversial feature in Hobbes's account of deliberation.

640. Freewill

The claim that ends are not the objects of distinctively rational desires explains Hutcheson's view on freewill, and especially his opposition to rationalist views. The rationalist Balguy argues that if we are moved wholly by non-rational desires for ends, we do not act freely and responsibly; he assumes that merit requires freedom, and freedom requires the capacity for

[60] 'When we ask the reason of an action, we sometimes mean the truth which excites the agent to it by showing that it is apt to gratify some inclination of his mind . . . At other times by the reason of actions we mean the truth which shows a quality in the action of any person engaging the approbation either of the agent or the spectator or which shows it to be morally good.' (*IMS* 226–7) ' . . . what reason makes us approve the happiness of a system? Here we must recur to a sense or kind affections' (*IMS* 129).

[61] 'If this being have also public affections, what are the exciting reasons for observing faith or hazarding his life in war? He will assign this truth as a reason, such conduct tends to the good of mankind. Go a step further, why does he pursue the good of mankind? If his affections be really disinterested, without any selfish view, he has no exciting reason; the public good is an ultimate end in this series of desires.' (*IMS* 228) No further reason can be given to move us to be concerned about the good of mankind; that is an ultimate concern moving us to action.

rational motivation.[62] Hutcheson answers that non-rational desire is the basis of all action,[63] so that if freedom really required motivation by reason rather than non-rational desire, no action could ever be free. Even if action on 'mere election' without any reason to choose one or another option were possible, it would be morally insignificant, and not a candidate for merit.[64]

Hutcheson believes that his opponents must assume that acting freely is acting without a reason, because he takes 'acting without a reason' to cover three different cases: (1) Choosing x over y without seeing something to choose between x and y. (2) Choosing x over y without desiring x as better than y. (3) Choosing x over y without having a stronger non-rational desire for x. These different cases are relevant to different disputes with different opponents.[65] A voluntarist such as Scotus or Ockham who does not reduce the will to a passion argues that all three types of choice are possible, but an intellectualist such as Aquinas denies the possibility of the first sort of choice. With qualifications, Aquinas also denies the possibility of the second sort of choice; the qualifications depend on the role he assigns to election in incontinent action.[66] But he affirms, as Balguy affirms against Hutcheson, the possibility of the third sort of choice. From either a voluntarist or an intellectualist point of view, free action requires the determination of action by something other than the superior strength of a non-rational desire.

All these views assume that we can avoid acting on our strongest non-rational desire. But, according to Hutcheson, if we could avoid this, we could thereby choose x over y for no reason and on the basis of no recognized difference between them—the first of the three alleged possibilities mentioned above. Since Hutcheson rejects the first possibility, he thinks he is entitled to reject the second and third also. His sentimentalist view traces actions back to impulses and passions rather than to rational choice, but it does not (in his view) threaten freedom. He rejects only the alleged freedom that requires action without a sufficient motive.

This conception of freedom relies on Hutcheson's analysis of action and motivation, which will not persuade anyone who disputes his views on freedom. If we allow distinctively rational motivation, we will deny that we must always act on our strongest non-rational motive. We may allow that we act on our 'strongest' desire, if we take 'strength' to include

[62] 'Some will not allow any merit in actions flowing from kind instincts. "Merit", say they, "attends actions to which we are excited by reason alone, or to which we freely determine ourselves. The operation of instincts or affections is necessary, and not voluntary; nor is there more merit in them than in the shining of the sun, the fruitfulness of a tree, or the overflowing of a stream, which are all publicly useful." ' (*IMS* 165) On Balguy see §657.

[63] 'Now we endeavoured already to show, "that no reason can excite to action previously to some end, and that no end can be proposed without some instinct or affection." What then can be meant by being excited by reason as distinct from all motion of instincts or affections?' (*IMS* 165–6)

[64] 'Then determining ourselves freely, does it mean acting without any motive or exciting reason? If it did not mean this, it cannot be opposed to acting from instinct or affections, since all motives or reasons presuppose them. If it means this, "that merit is found only in actions done without motive or affection, by mere election, without prepollent desire of one action or end rather than its opposite, or without desire of that pleasure which some suppose follows upon any election by a natural connexion" then let any man consider whether he ever acts in this manner by mere election, without any previous desire. And again, let him consult his own breast whether any such kind of action gains his approbation?' (*IMS* 166–7) The first sentence above seems to suggest that all action has an exciting reason. This conflicts with Hutcheson's view that when we act on a justifying reason we act without an exciting reason. His claims are consistent if we take 'motive or exciting reason' to be alternatives, not equivalents, and take motives to be justifying reasons.

[65] On different Scholastic positions see §§390–1.

[66] Aquinas on incontinence; §295.

the strength of reasons as well as the non-rational force of desires.[67] But if we understand 'strength' so broadly, it allows action on the desire supported by stronger reasons against a more forceful non-rational desire, contrary to Hutcheson's view.

According to Aquinas and others, the capacity to act on apparently stronger reasons is essential for freedom. If human action rested on a non-rational passion aiming at the ultimate end, it would not be free, but in fact it is free because the desire for the final good is not a non-rational passion. Hutcheson ignores this account of freedom. It depends on a rationalist account of rational will and desire, but he does not recognize rationalism as an option distinct from extreme intellectualism and from his own anti-rationalism. Since he does not refute a rationalist account of freedom, he does not show that questions about freedom are irrelevant to morality.

641. Anti-rationalism and the Moral Sense

Anti-rationalism about reason and desire supports Hutcheson's moral epistemology. In the *Inquiry* it is difficult to see why he ascribes moral judgment to a moral sense, and why he prefers this view to a non-egoist rationalist account. In the *Illustrations*, however, he recognizes Clarke's rationalism as a third option besides his position and the egoism that he has rejected in the *Inquiry*.[68] He rejects this third option, because he believes that anti-rationalism about motivation also requires anti-rationalism about moral judgment. Rational beliefs alone cannot produce either exciting or justifying reasons. Non-rational affections must be presupposed; they explain why our belief that something promotes the public good makes a difference to our action. Since Clarke is an extreme rationalist and intellectualist, he assumes that the rational recognition of fitnesses ensures the right motivation. But since Hutcheson rejects the extreme intellectualist assumptions, he also rejects rationalism about moral judgment.

He does not consider the possibility that moral judgments belong to reason, but are insufficient for motivation. He assumes that a moral judgment must motivate; every time we make a moral judgment that we ought to do a particular action, we must be moved (to some extent) to do that action. He therefore assumes an internal logical connexion between accepting the truth of a moral judgment and being motivated to act on it.

Why should we admit this internal logical connexion? Could we not make a moral judgment about an action, and so cite a normative reason for it, without having any feeling of approbation? Hutcheson answers that moral judgments include awareness of obligation, and since awareness of obligation to do x is awareness of a motive for doing x, moral judgment requires awareness of motivation.[69] He assumes that obligation implies some type

[67] Reid speaks of 'animal strength' and 'rational strength'; see §832.

[68] 'There have been many ways of speaking introduced, which seem to signify something different from both the former opinions. Such as these, that "morality of actions consists in conformity to reason, or difformity from it:" that "virtue is acting according to the absolute fitness and unfitness of things", or agreeably to the natures or relations of things, and many others in different authors. To examine these is the design of the following sections; and to explain more fully how the moral sense alleged to be in mankind, must be presupposed even in these schemes.' (*IMS* 119 = R 359).

[69] 'When we say one is obliged to an action, we either mean, (1) that the action is necessary to obtain happiness to the agent, or to avoid misery, or, (2) that every spectator, or he himself upon reflexion, must approve his action, and disapprove his omitting it, if he considers fully all its circumstances. The former meaning of the word obligation presupposes selfish affections, and the sense of private happiness; the latter meaning includes the moral sense.' (*IMS* 130)

of necessity or compulsion, and that the only relevant type of necessity is some necessity in the motives of the person obliged or in the moral judge.

This assumption about necessity and motivation is doubtful. Hutcheson does not consider, as Suarez and Cumberland do, the imposer as the source of obligation. Nor does he consider the rationalist view that the source of the relevant kind of necessity lies in what we are obliged to do, in the obligatory state of affairs itself. [70] But the rationalist view is plausible, since we have good reason to regard the necessity of obligation as a feature of normative reasons rather than motives. Rational deliberators consider the reasons favouring different options, and they act on the reasons that seem best. The reasons that present obligations are those that present the relevant sort of necessity; rational deliberation recognizes this necessity. The appropriate motivation, then, is a response to the recognition of the necessity contained in obligation, but the obligation does not consist in the motivation. According to this picture, we distinguish three elements: (1) the reasons that constitute the obligation, (2) the recognition of the obligation, and (3) the motive resulting from the recognition. Hutcheson, however, seems to collapse the three elements into one.

To explain Hutcheson's treatment of obligation and motivation, we may recall the influence of Hobbes's conception of deliberation. According to Hobbes, deliberation does not include the recognition of reasons and necessities apart from one's desires, but it is a sequence of anticipatory desires elicited by the prospects of pleasure resulting from the different options. Hutcheson's analysis of justifying and exciting reasons also takes deliberation to be a sequence of anticipatory desires. Hence he takes the recognition of reasons to include desire.

Hobbes's understanding of deliberation is part of his reduction of normative facts to psychological facts. Hutcheson disagrees with the specific reduction that Hobbes attempts, since he rejects the reduction of benevolence and moral approval to selfish desire. But he still takes each normative fact to be about a mental state of the subject. Since moral judgments state a reason for acting and an obligation to act, Hutcheson assumes that they describe our motivation.

His internalism about moral judgment and motivation, therefore, rests on his analysis of reasons. From the plausible assumption that connects obligation with reasons he infers an internal connexion between obligation and motives. The connexion between moral judgment and obligation seems to him to require an internal connexion between moral judgment and motives. His Hobbesian account of deliberation makes it difficult to avoid the aspects of a Hobbesian account of obligation that connect obligation with awareness of motivation.

642. A Subjectivist Account of the Moral Sense

Hutcheson defends anti-rationalism and internalism in the *Illustrations*, not in the *Inquiry*. They help him to explain and to support an anti-realist conception of the moral sense.

[70] This is Cudworth's and Clarke's view of obligation. Suarez agrees with it, except that he takes the intrinsic necessity to belong to duty (debitum) rather than to obligation (as he conceives it). His view also provides an account of moral requirements that dispenses with Hutcheson's assumptions about motivation.

In saying that a sense involves reception of an idea he does not mean that every idea we receive corresponds to some genuine feature of the object itself. 'Perceptions' that are 'proper ideas of sensation' do not present any external reality; for, though they are signs of some external reality, the reality need not resemble them.[71] Since objects themselves are not (for instance) coloured, our ideas of secondary qualities do not present actual qualities of the objects; secondary qualities are ideas caused by objects, not qualities in objects themselves.

Similarly, the moral sense is aware of the moral goodness of an action, which is not a feature of the action itself. Hutcheson distinguishes three aspects of a benevolent action: (1) the agent's action; (2) the beneficiary's reaction to the agent's action; (3) the spectator's reaction to the agent's action and to the beneficiary's reaction. The third aspect—the spectator's reaction to the agent and to the beneficiary—involves a feeling of approbation, and this reaction makes it appropriate to speak of a moral sense.[72] The feeling of approval corresponds to the idea of colour in the case of sight.

A moral judgment, therefore, is similar to a sensory judgment because it refers both to the external world and to the state of the person making the judgment. The colours we attribute to external objects are 'only perceptions in our minds, and not images of any like external quality' (*IMS* 163).[73] In seeing that bodies are red, we see external bodies; but all we are aware of is their effect on us. Since Hutcheson takes this view of the nature of secondary qualities, he takes his comparison of moral judgment to a sense to imply that moral judgments do not reveal objective moral properties of external objects.

Since we may not share Hutcheson's view of the senses, belief in a moral sense does not require this subjectivist conclusion about moral properties. We might defend a more objectivist account of senses and secondary qualities, and hence a more objectivist conclusion about moral properties. We might claim, for instance, that the colour we are aware of is the property of objects that causes such-and-such sensations in us (in most people, or in normal perceivers). This property is relationally defined, since the definition includes a mention of certain sensations; but it does not depend on the existence of such sensations. If, for instance, we ceased to exist, the property that causes such sensations in us would still exist; hence things would still be red even if there were no perceivers to perceive them. Similarly, the

[71] 'These sensations, as the learned agree, are not pictures or representations of like external qualities in the objects, nor of the impression or change made in the bodily organs. They are either signals, as it were of new events happening to the body, of which experience and observation will show us the cause; or marks, settled by the Author of Nature, to show us what things are salutary, innocent, or hurtful; or intimations of things not otherways discernible which may affect our state; though these marks or signals bear no more resemblance to the external reality, than the report of a gun, or the flash of the powder, bears to the distress of a ship.' (*SMP* i 1.3, 5)

[72] 'These three things are to be distinguished, 1. The idea of the external motion, known first by sense, and its tendency to the happiness or misery of some sensitive nature, often inferred by argument or reason, which on these subjects, suggests as invariable eternal or necessary truths as any whatsoever. 2. Apprehension or opinion of the affections in the agent, inferred by our reason: so far the idea of an action represents something external to the observer, really existing whether he had perceived it or not, and having a real tendency to certain ends. 3. The perception of approbation or disapprobation arising in the observer, according as the affections of the agent are apprehended kind in their just degree, or deficient, or malicious. This approbation cannot be supposed an image of any thing external, more than the pleasures of harmony, of taste, of smell. But let none imagine, that calling the ideas of virtue and vice perceptions of a sense, upon apprehending the actions and affections of another does diminish their reality, more than the like assertions concerning all pleasure and pain, happiness or misery.' (*IMS* 163–4 = R 371)

[73] This view is 'Lockean' according to Hutcheson's interpretation of Locke, whether or not it is actually Locke's. Winkler, 'Realism' 180, discusses Locke's view of secondary qualities, and Hutcheson's understanding of it, and shows how this understanding supports an anti-realist account of Hutcheson.

moral sense is (on this view) aware of the properties of actions and people that cause the reaction of disinterested approval; though these properties are relationally defined, their existence does not depend on our reacting as we do.

Hutcheson agrees that a moral judgment involves some belief about an objective property of some external object—the benevolence of the agent. Ought he not, then, to say that this benevolence itself is the moral goodness that we recognize through the moral sense? It is not implausible (even if it is over-simplified) to claim that morally good agents are good insofar as they are benevolent, and that the goodness we ascribe to them is benevolence. It seems far more implausible to claim that the goodness we ascribe to agents is an idea in our minds; this does not seem to be what we praise them for when we praise their benevolence as the whole or a part of their moral goodness.

Hutcheson rejects the objectivist answer for a good reason, given the rest of his position. For if benevolence were moral goodness, we could judge that an action is morally good, by judging that it is benevolent, and still be indifferent to it. In that case, the moral goodness would not include any obligation, as Hutcheson understands obligation. Since moral goodness includes obligation, and obligation is psychological necessity, moral goodness includes some psychological necessity. The moral judge who ascribes goodness to the agent recognizes an obligation, and hence a motive. Since obligation and motive belong to the judge, the moral goodness that we ascribe to the action must really be a feature of the judge rather than of the action itself.

We can see this difference between benevolence and moral goodness from another point of view, if we appeal to the division between justifying and exciting reasons. Benevolence is one of the affections or instincts that may be exciting reasons, but it does not by itself constitute a justifying reason. Moral goodness is a justifying reason, and so it must be the idea in the judge's mind, not the benevolence in the agent.

Hutcheson, therefore, is a subjectivist because he is an internalist about moral judgment and motivation. He is an internalist because he takes moral goodness to include obligation, takes obligations to include reasons, and reduces reasons to motives. Hence his anti-rationalism about reason and desire supports his subjectivism about moral properties. He does not thoughtlessly import a Lockean conception of sensory qualities into a position that might support realism about moral properties. He needs a subjectivist account of moral properties to maintain his anti-rationalism and its consequences. His interpretation of necessity, obligation, and reasons underlies his discussion of justifying reasons. Justifying reasons must be features of actual desires; hence, if morality provides justifying reasons, moral properties must belong to our desires and feelings, not to the external reality that we react to.

The anti-rationalist theory of motivation underlies different aspects of Hutcheson's position that might seem initially separable. In his criticism of Clarke, he rejects (1) Clarke's rationalism about motivation, (2) his rationalism about moral judgment, and (3) his realism about moral properties. We might think that if we agreed with Hutcheson on the first point, we could still agree with Clarke on the other two points, and that if we agreed with Hutcheson about ascribing moral judgment to a moral sense, we could still be realists about moral properties. In the *Inquiry* it is not clear why Hutcheson prefers his belief in a moral sense to Clarke's rationalism. The *Illustrations*, however, clarifies Hutcheson's version

of anti-rationalism about reasons. If we believe—as Clarke believes—that recognition of moral properties includes recognition of obligation, we must also, given Hutcheson's view of obligation and reasons, attribute moral judgments to a moral sense, and accept a subjectivist account of moral properties.

Hutcheson's anti-realist interpretation of the moral sense, therefore, emerges from the assumptions about deliberation, reasons, and motivation that he shares with Hobbes, in opposition to Cudworth and Clarke. On this issue, Hume sees the implications of Hutcheson's position.[74]

643. The Rejection of Realism

We can now distinguish the aspect of Hutcheson's position that supports 'moral realism' or 'independent morality' from the aspect that rejects these positions.

He agrees with Shaftesbury in regarding morality as something distinct and independent, because it is not reducible to self-love. Morality is real because we have distinct and irreducible sentiments that favour morality, and we do not construct them out of self-love. On this point, Hutcheson concludes that Shaftesbury is right and Hobbes is wrong.

But acceptance of this degree of realism about morality does not induce Hutcheson to accept the independent reality of moral properties; he takes their existence to require the appropriate reaction in a spectator or judge. He believes this because he believes Hobbes's reduction of obligation to motivation and he believes that something's having a moral property imposes an obligation. He therefore denies that moral goodness and badness are independent of human sentiments and reactions, just as Hobbes denies that they are independent of commands.[75]

When Shaftesbury defends a 'realist' position against 'nominal moralists', he rejects both Hobbesian egoism and Hobbesian voluntarism; but it is not always clear that he distinguishes these two Hobbesian claims. It is not surprising, therefore, that Hutcheson might take himself to be defending Shaftesbury's whole position even though he actually defends only one part of it and rejects one part of it.

The differences between the *Inquiry* and the *Illustrations* do not show that Hutcheson consciously changed his mind. In the earlier work, the discussion of beauty affirms the subjectivist view that the later work affirms about the moral sense. Hutcheson may have held the same view all along. Still, the earlier work is consistent with Whewell's view that

[74] See Hume, §785.

[75] Norton, *DH* 62–6, does not distinguish these two questions about realism. He often speaks of Hutcheson's being a realist about 'virtue', by which he means that Hutcheson rejects the reduction of moral virtue to self-interest. But he also speaks as though this position implied that Hutcheson is not a 'subjectivist'. Norton argues: 'To suppose, as Kemp Smith does, that Hutcheson was a moral subjectivist is to include him among that group of moral sceptics that he sought to refute, and contravenes fundamental aspects of his work' (69). In speaking of moral scepticism Norton refers to the egoism of Hobbes and Mandeville, He mistakenly supposes that opposition to their view implies opposition to subjectivism. But, contrary to Norton, to recognize the reality of distinctively moral sentiments and feelings is not to recognize moral properties independent of these moral sentiments and feelings; and in this sense Hutcheson is not a moral realist. See Winkler, 'Realism'. Norton's description of Hutcheson would actually be a more accurate description of Shaftesbury (whom Norton describes, more accurately, in similar terms at 33–43). Norton's interpretation of Hutcheson is refuted by Radcliffe, 'Subjectivism'.

Hutcheson defends Shaftesbury's moral realism. Having examined the *Illustrations*, we can see that Whewell is also right to claim that Hutcheson tends to undermine his defence of realism. In the later work Hutcheson does not defend a realist position, but analyses moral judgments as judgments about the actual mental states of agents. His position on reasons, motivation, and the moral sense aligns him with Hobbes on the main issues that separate Hobbes from the rationalists. He does not try to reduce morality to facts about what promotes one's own pleasure; but his rejection of Hobbes on this point requires only a comparatively small modification in the basic Hobbesian position. Hence his later work departs from Shaftesbury in ways that also depart decisively from moral realism.

Hutcheson's explication of the moral sense requires anti-realism, since he claims that the goodness we are aware of is a feature of our reactions, not of external reality. He could have avoided this anti-realism, by identifying the moral goodness with a power of the object rather than a reaction of the spectator. What difference would it make if we modified his conception of the moral sense in this way? Would it be a small modification that would affirm realism without rationalism?

If we have correctly explained the connexions between Hutcheson's different views, anti-realism about moral properties does not rest primarily on his conception of a sense. It rests on his views about obligation and motivation, which in turn rest on his views about necessity and reasons. If the moral rightness of an action includes the obligation to do it, this rightness is a feature of the agent rather than of external reality. And so any attempt to revise his position would have to reject much more than his conception of a sense; it would also have to reject his views about reasons and obligation. These views show how deeply Hobbesian assumptions influence Hutcheson, even in his arguments against Hobbes.

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HUTCHESON: FOR AND AGAINST UTILITARIANISM

644. Benevolence and Utilitarianism

After arguing that we approve moral goodness in its own right, and not as a means to our own advantage, Hutcheson asks what sorts of actions and characters we approve of from the moral point of view. The answer will tell us what moral goodness consists in. In the *Inquiry* he begins from the claims of Cumberland and Shaftesbury about the general good and the common good. He argues that moral principles are impartial: they are not concerned differentially with the good of some people rather than others, but with the good of all those affected. He takes a teleological view of morality, as both Cumberland and Shaftesbury do. Following Cumberland, but not Shaftesbury, he holds an instrumental version of a teleological view; moral rules and principles are to be observed not for their own sake, but for their causal consequences. He goes beyond both Shaftesbury and Cumberland in holding a maximizing conception of the end to be achieved: the end is the maximum total quantity of good, however it is distributed. By these steps Hutcheson transforms Shaftesbury's and Cumberland's views into a utilitarian outlook.

Hutcheson is not entirely original in accepting a version of utilitarianism. Hobbes's view is broadly utilitarian, insofar as he reduces morality to the 'laws of nature', a set of principles for promoting the security of the commonwealth. This analysis of moral principles captures a central element in morality, insofar as it implies that moral principles essentially aim at some end broader than the good of the agent. Their essential aim explains the merely apparent conflict between morality and self-interest in the commonwealth, and the real conflict between them in the state of nature. In the right circumstances, we will have a self-interested concern to observe rules promoting the public good; otherwise Hobbes could not justify our observance of them.

Cumberland's position is not precisely utilitarian. He argues that moral principles are those that promote the common good of rational agents, and therefore are endorsed by benevolent agents. He and others who reject Hobbesian hedonistic egoism, for Shaftesbury's or for Hutcheson's reasons, also reject Hobbes's third reason for accepting a utilitarian account, and so they need to support moral principles by appeal to some other reason or motive.

Cumberland appeals to benevolence, which includes disinterested concern for the good of others, not restricted to any particular group of other people.

This conception of the basis of morality may appear especially Christian. The view that the whole moral law can be summed up in the requirement to love God and one's neighbour may appear to imply that all moral attitudes can be resolved into forms of benevolence. Cumberland begins his treatise by quoting the second 'great commandment' and St Paul's claim that love is the fulfilling of the law.[1] To love one's neighbour as oneself seems to imply an impartial concern with the interests of different people without discrimination; and this impartial concern seems especially characteristic of benevolence. Hence Cumberland makes benevolence the universal virtue, controlling the others. Hutcheson agrees with him (*IMGE* 3.6 = L 231 = R 331).

Moreover, benevolence seems to fit Hutcheson's belief in the moral sense. For benevolence results from sympathetic pleasure and pain provoked by the pleasures and pains of others, without reference to any further advantage to the agent. Hence it seems to appeal to the moral sense. Hutcheson understands different moral rules as particular expressions of benevolence.

But though benevolence appears to be the right sentiment to support utilitarianism, this appearance may be misleading. For the extent and direction of the benevolence that people actually feel does not seem to extend to utilitarian morality. Even though benevolence is not inherently restricted in the way that, say, parental love or friendship or loyalty to a group is, we may still feel it for some people and not for others; it need not be impartially directed towards the benefit of everyone affected by our actions.

Hutcheson recognizes this difficulty, since he distinguishes different attitudes that might be identified with benevolence. Some of these are discriminatory, directed to some particular people to the exclusion of others, rather than to other people generally. But, in his view, we approve most strongly of the benevolence that seeks to maximize utility.[2] This is 'the calm desire of good, and aversion to evil, either selfish or public, as they appear to our reason or reflexion', in contrast to 'the particular passions towards objects immediately presented to some sense'. The benevolence that we most approve of is not an impulse of (say) generosity or kindness, but a calm desire that does not manifest itself in immediately-felt impulses.[3]

[1] See *LN*, title page. Cumberland quotes *Rm*. 13:10 and *Mt*. 22:37–40.

[2] '. . . to understand this more distinctly, it is highly necessary to observe that under this name are included very different dispositions of the soul. Sometimes it denotes a calm, extensive affection, or good-will toward all beings capable of happiness or misery: sometimes, 2. a calm deliberate affection of the soul toward the happiness of certain smaller systems or individuals; such as patriotism, or love of a country, friendship, parental affection, as it is in persons of wisdom and self-government; or, 3. the several kind particular passions of love, pity, sympathy, congratulation' (*IMGE* 3.6 = L 231 = R 331).

[3] 'Thus nothing can be more distinct than the general calm desire of private good of any kind, which alone would incline us to pursue whatever objects were apprehended as the means of good, and the particular selfish passions, such as ambition, covetousness, hunger, lust, revenge, anger, as they arise on particular occasions. In like manner our public desires may be distinguished into the general calm desire of the happiness of others, or aversion from their misery upon reflexion; and the particular affections or passions of love, congratulation, compassion, natural affection. These particular affections are found in many tempers, where, through want of reflexion, the general calm desire are not found; nay, the former may be opposite to the latter, where they are found in the same temper. Sometimes the calm motion of the will conquers the passion, and sometimes it is conquered by it. Thus lust or revenge may conquer the calm affection towards private good, and sometimes are conquered by it. Compassion will prevent the necessary correction of a child, or the use of a severe cure, while the calm parental affection is exciting towards it. Sometimes the latter prevails over the former.

Moreover, it is not just any calm desire of good that is contrasted with particular passions, but the calm desire for the good of humanity in general.[4]

Our moral sense, then, approves especially of this universal form of calm benevolence. The benevolence of the Good Samaritan was not restricted to people he already knew or had some previous connexion with; we approve of his attitude because it extends to everyone equally. Attention to such cases suggests that our moral sense approves of the impartiality that is characteristic of utilitarian morality.[5] We should not, then, try to rest utilitarianism on a rationalist basis, as Cumberland seems to do. On the contrary, it fits the anti-rationalist belief in a moral sense.[6]

If we grant that our moral sense approves of the impartial aspects of utilitarianism, should we also grant that it approves utilitarian maximizing? Utilitarian morality aims at maximum total good, summed over all the people concerned, irrespective of its distribution. To show that our moral sense approves of this outlook, we may point out that if A gave a large gift to charity that A could easily afford, we would approve of A's action more than we would approve of B's action, if B were in similar circumstances to A, but gave a small gift to charity, and wasted the rest of the money that could have been given to charity. Such cases show that we approve of greater rather than lesser beneficence. Hence, Hutcheson argues, they show that the moral sense approves of the maximizing aspect of utilitarianism.

We might think Hutcheson faces a difficulty in the fact that our moral sense also approves of narrower attachments and of beneficence directed to one's family, or friends, or associates, without reference to broader utilitarian considerations. He answers this apparent difficulty by arguing that utilitarian reasons can be given for our approval of both narrower and wider attachments to the good of others. Agents are more virtuous if they prefer to benefit 'unrelated' people rather than (say) to return benefits to people who have benefited them.[7] But causing harm to 'related' people is worse than causing it to unrelated ones, because someone who cannot even treat friends decently is less likely to develop the expanded benevolence that is characteristic of morality.[8] When we discriminate morally between people who produce the same amount of good or evil by a particular action, we are guided

All this is beautifully presented in the 9th book of Plato's *Republic*. We obtain command over the particular passions, principally by strengthening the general desires through frequent reflexion, and making them habitual, so as to obtain strength superior to the particular passion.' (*Passions* 2.2 = Garrett 31–2, 209 = R 357)

[4] 'Again, the calm public desires may be considered as "they either regard the good of particular persons or societies presented to our senses; or that of some more abstracted or general community, such as a species or system". This latter we may call universal calm benevolence.' (*Passions* 2.2 = Garrett 32 = R 357)

[5] 'Our moral sense, though it approves all particular kind affection or passion, as well as calm particular benevolence abstractedly considered; yet it also approves the restraint or limitation of all particular affections or passions, by the calm universal benevolence. To make this desire prevalent there above all particular affections, is the only sure way to obtain constant self-approbation.' (*Passions* 2.2 = Garrett 33 = R 357)

[6] Hume disagrees with Hutcheson on this point. See §768.

[7] 'In equal moments of good produced by two agents, when one acts from general benevolence, and the other from a nearer tie; there is greater virtue in the agent who produces equal good from the weaker attachment, and less virtue, where there is the stronger attachment, which yet produces no more.' (*IMGE* 7.9 = L 190 = SB 181)

[8] 'But the omission of the good offices of the stronger ties, or actions contrary to them, have greater vice in them, than the like omissions or actions contrary to the weaker ties; since our selfishness or malice must appear the greater, by the strength of the contrary attachment which it surmounts. Thus, in co-operating with gratitude, natural affection, or friendship, we evidence less virtue in any given moment of good produced, than in equally important actions of general benevolence. But ingratitude to a benefactor, negligence of the interests of a friend, or relation; or returns of evil offices, are vastly more odious, than equal negligence, or evil offices towards strangers.' (*IMGE* 7.9 = L 190 = SB 181)

by utilitarian criteria even if we do not notice them; the attitudes we praise more are those likely to produce more good on the whole. Hence the degrees of our approval match the tendency of different traits of character to promote the public good.[9]

How is the public good determined? Hutcheson believes that universal calm benevolence takes a maximizing point of view, and is therefore indifferent to the particular recipients of good and evil. If one action benefits two people I know and another benefits, to the same degree, three people I do not know, universal benevolence prefers the second action. It is also indifferent to the distribution of happiness, and considers only the quantity of happiness resulting from an action.[10] This quantitative conception of public good would have no hold on our moral sentiments unless we were disposed to favour the benevolent attitude that takes this purely quantitative attitude towards the production of good and evil.[11]

Since, therefore, we approve of extended benevolence, we approve of the utilitarian position.[12] Even if we do not initially recognize that we accept utilitarianism, reflexion shows that our moral attitudes presuppose utilitarianism. Since the moral sense approves calm benevolence, we accept the maximizing utilitarian principle. This principle allows us to co-ordinate the demands of ordinary rules and virtues, since we can resolve conflicts between these demands if we have the necessary information about the balance of pleasures and pains.[13]

While Hutcheson insists on the supremacy of the affection towards the universal happiness, he recognizes some mitigation, though not justification, of departures from it. We allow mitigation in cases where some generally admirable trait causes deviation from utility in a particular case.[14] Our attitude is understandable, since we usually do not think about how

[9] '. . . calm good-will towards a small system is lovely and preferable to more passionate attachments; and yet a more extensive calm benevolence is still more beautiful and virtuous; and the highest perfection of virtue is an universal calm good-will towards all sentient natures. Hence it is, that we condemn particular attachments, when inconsistent with the interest of great societies, because they argue some defect in that more noble principle which is the perfection of virtue' (*IMGE* 3.8 = L 233).

[10] 'In comparing the moral qualities of actions, in order to regulate our election among various actions proposed, or to find which of them has the greatest moral excellency, we are led by our moral sense of virtue to judge thus; that in equal degrees of happiness expected to proceed from the action, the virtue is in proportion to the number of persons to whom the happiness shall extend . . . and in equal numbers, the virtue is as the quantity of happiness or natural good . . . So that the action is best, which produces the greatest happiness for the greatest number.' (*IMGE* 3.8 = L 125 = R 333) 'Here also the moral importance of characters, or dignity of persons may compensate numbers; as may also the degrees of happiness or misery: for to procure an inconsiderable good to many, but an immense evil to few, may be evil; and an immense good to few, may preponderate a small evil to many.' (*IMGE* 3.9 = L 125 = R 343)

[11] In the 2nd edn. of *IMGE* 3.11 = L 128 = SB 126, Hutcheson sets out six axioms 'to compute the morality of any axioms', expressing them in algebraic formulae. In the 3rd edn., L 234–5 = R 335, he reduces the axioms from six to four and deletes the algebraic formulae. He says that in the fourth edition he removed some mathematical expressions 'which, upon second thoughts appeared useless, and were disagreeable to some readers' (Pref. to 4th edn. = L 201).

[12] 'This increase of the moral beauty of actions, or dispositions, according to the number of persons to whom the good effects of them extend, may show us the reason why actions which flow from the nearer attachments of nature, such as that between the sexes, and the love of our offspring, are not so amiable, nor do they appear as virtuous as actions of equal moment of good towards persons less attached to us. The reason is plainly this. These strong instincts are by nature limited to small numbers of mankind, such as our wives or children; whereas a disposition, which would produce a like moment of good to others, upon no special attachment, if it was accompanied with natural power to accomplish its intention, would be incredibly more fruitful of great and good effects to the whole.' (*IMGE* 3.10 = L 127 = SB 124)

[13] 'In such cases, we should not suppose contrary obligations, or duties; the more important office is our present duty, and the omission of the less important inconsistent office at present, is no moral evil.' (*IMGE* 7.9 = L 191 = SB 181)

[14] 'And yet when some of these narrower kind affections exceed their proportion, and overcome the more extensive, the moral deformity is alleviated in proportion to the moral beauty of that narrower affection by which the more extensive is overpowered.' (*SMP* ii 2.3, 243)

to promote the general happiness, but we take it for granted that particular benevolent actions promote it.[15] Some of our narrower affections, both loves and hates, are natural and acceptable on this utilitarian presumption.

Hutcheson concedes, then, that most people's sentiments are non-utilitarian in some aspects. But he does not treat these non-utilitarian aspects as objections to his utilitarian analysis of the moral sense. He treats the utilitarian principle as the single supreme principle of morality that is endorsed by the moral sense.

645. Utilitarianism and Natural Law

The moral primacy of benevolence supports Hutcheson's account of the traditional doctrine of the laws of nature, and helps him to answer the questions in dispute between voluntarists and naturalists. He agrees with Shaftesbury's defence of naturalism, and affirms that the proper foundation of right is God's infinite goodness and wisdom. The moral requirement to obey God rests on the recognition of God's goodness, and not simply on gratitude for the benefits God has given us.[16] Gratitude alone does not justify obedience to God; the fact that a gangster has done me a good turn does not justify me in doing whatever he asks me to, and, similarly, gratitude warrants obedience only if we have reasonable independent assurance of God's goodness.

This comment on gratitude answers Pufendorf's attempted defence of voluntarism. Pufendorf rejects Hobbes's apparent view that our only reason for obeying God's commands is fear of punishment; the alternative he offers is gratitude for God's benefits. Hutcheson replies, quite reasonably, that, unless we know more about the divine will, gratitude is no better than Hobbesian fear as a basis for genuine morality. Justified obedience to God rests on recognition of God's goodness, and hence on the approval by our moral sense of God's moral sense. Since our moral sense is utilitarian, God is a utilitarian, guided by the requirements of universal maximizing benevolence.[17]

This utilitarian principle supports the Scholastic naturalist view that natural law specifies what is suitable for human nature. Since what is suitable for human nature is whatever maximizes utility, the laws of nature are rules for the maximization of utility.[18] Cumberland's view that the laws of nature promote the common good of rational

[15] '. . . we have this just presumption, that by serving innocently any valuable part of a system, we do good to the whole' (244).

[16] 'But benefits alone, are not a proper foundation of right, as they will not prove that the power assumed tends to the universal good or is consistent with it, however they suggest an amiable motive to obedience.' (*SMP* ii 3.7, 266). Cf. Pufendorf, §577.

[17] Hutcheson's belief in benevolence as God's only basic moral attribute seems to have been formed early in his life. Around 1719, after his return to Ulster from Glasgow, some members of his congregation objected, on Scriptural grounds, to a sermon of his that tried to reduce God's moral attributes to benevolence. See Scott, *FH* 20–1. In 1737 (Adam Smith's first year as an undergraduate in Glasgow) Hutcheson was prosecuted for heresy by the Presbytery of Glasgow 'for teaching to his students, in contravention of his subscription to the Westminster Confession, the following two false and dangerous doctrines: 1st, that the standard of moral goodness was the promotion of the happiness of others; and 2nd, that we could have a knowledge of good and evil without and prior to a knowledge of God' (Rae, *LAS* 12–13; cf. Scott, *FH* 83–4). On Smith on God's benevolence and justice see Balguy, §662; Butler, §701.

[18] '. . . the proper means of promoting the happiness of mankind by our actions, which is the same thing with inquiring into the more special laws of nature' (*SMP* ii 1.1, 227). '. . . let us recollect how it is that we discover the special laws of

agents is correct, if we take the common good to be maximum utility. The maximizing aspects of utility have no clear basis in Cumberland, but Hutcheson takes them for granted.

The utilitarian explanation of the laws of nature implies that, despite their apparently non-utilitarian and exceptionless character, they have exceptions. Even if exceptions are not explicitly stated, we must be ready to recognize them on utilitarian grounds.[19] Similarly, utility is the basis of rights, since utilitarian principles determine and limit the scope of specific rights.[20]

The utilitarian explanation of the laws of nature, and the rejection of voluntarism, support Hutcheson's answer to those critics who claim that we have moral reasons for accepting some specific moral rules without exceptions. He rejects the argument of 'some divines', and in particular Berkeley, for strict observance of moral rules because of our ignorance of utility.[21] Hutcheson argues that if we refrain from utilitarian reasoning to find exceptions to the common laws of nature, we must also forgo the reasoning that allows us to find these 'ordinary rules or laws of nature' in the first place.[22]

One might take Hutcheson to offer a direct utilitarian reply to Berkeley's argument. Berkeley argues for an indirect utilitarian attitude to the rule of obedience to the established government; Hutcheson seems to answer that this indirect argument rests on an unreasonably pessimistic assumption about our ignorance of consequences. But Hutcheson accepts some indirect utilitarian arguments; they support his claims about rights, and they offer useful utilitarian answers to apparent counter-examples.

646. Objections to Hutcheson's Utilitarian Arguments[23]

Does Hutcheson show that we implicitly approve the utilitarian principle, or that we have good reason to revise our moral judgments in a utilitarian direction? He relies on two claims

nature. We have no universal precepts enunciated by God, in words, binding us in all cases where God does not by words declare some exceptions. The laws of nature are inferences we make, by reflecting upon our inward constitution, and by reasoning upon human affairs, concerning that conduct which our hearts naturally must approve, as tending either to the general good, or to that of individuals consistently with it' (*SMP* ii 17.2, 119).

[19] Cf. Suarez's treatment of alleged 'exceptions' to natural law, §§444–5. His treatment is non-utilitarian, but might be adapted to utilitarian arguments.

[20] 'A man hath a right to do, possess, or demand any thing, "when his acting, possessing, or obtaining from another in these circumstances tends to the good of society, or to the interest of the individual consistently with the rights of others and the general good of society, and obstructing him would have the contrary tendency".' (*SMP* ii 3.1, 253) 'For the ultimate notion of right is that which tends to the universal good; and when one's acting in a certain manner has this tendency, he has a right thus to act.' (*SMP* ii 3.7, 266) In the first passage, one clause ('or to the interest . . .') allows some non-utilitarian considerations. But neither passage allows any net sacrifice of utility for a non-utilitarian reason.

[21] 'They argue as if certain propositions had been ingraved by God on some pillars, telling us what we are to do in all possible cases . . . and ordering us to commit the event to God, without reasoning about it, while we keep to the letter of the law. Nay, some tell us that "we know not all the remote effects of actions: such as appear to us of good tendency may in the whole have pernicious effects; and those may have good effects in the whole which appear to us of the most hurtful tendency. . . ." ' (*SMP* ii 17.6, 128) See Berkeley, *PO*. Hutcheson might also refer to Butler. On Berkeley and Butler see §§699–701.

[22] 'For 'tis only by our reasonings, about the tendencies of actions, and these sometimes pretty remote, that we arrive at these conclusions which we call the ordinary laws of nature.' (*SMP* ii 17.6, 129)

[23] Blair, 'Hutcheson's moral philosophy', is a generally appreciative discussion that raises some useful critical points. Blair contrasts Hutcheson with Clarke in terms that recall Butler's contrast between two methods of moral philosophy

that need to be distinguished: (1) Universal calm benevolence is free of any exclusive or discriminatory attitude that is irrelevant from the moral point of view to the distribution of good. (2) It is free of any non-maximizing discriminatory attitude to the distribution of good.

Hutcheson moves quickly from the first claim, that benevolence is in some way impartial, to his conclusion in the second claim, that it seeks to maximize the good without any further demands on its distribution. His examples support the first claim; for many people, including non-utilitarians, would agree that some differences between possible beneficiaries are morally irrelevant. We may agree, for instance, that a doctor ought to be impartial between different patients with the same needs, and ought not to prefer the richest, or most intelligent, or those most like herself. But we may not agree that she ought to take a maximizing point of view in deciding how to treat different patients with the same needs (for instance, by cutting up the less socially useful people for spare-part surgery on the more useful people). Since it is not clear that impartial benevolence supports the maximizing utilitarian outlook, Hutcheson's argument is incomplete.

Approval of utilitarian benevolence, therefore, does not result in approval of the traits and outlooks that we actually approve of. If we try to cultivate the optimific traits and outlooks (those that have the best prospect of maximizing utility), perhaps we should cultivate some traits that make us less concerned with our obligations to 'related' people, so that we grasp the maximizing considerations. In that case, our beliefs about what maximizes utility may diverge from our beliefs about particular attachments.

Hutcheson should allow this possibility, since he does not show that the particular traits we approve of are those that maximize utility. If our tendencies to approve diverge from utilitarian benevolence, he believes our approval needs to be modified. But it is not clear that our moral sense approves utilitarian modifications.

647. Indirect Utilitarianism

Hutcheson does not discuss this apparent gap between the moral sense and utilitarianism. Sometimes he does not acknowledge that any consideration except the public good affects

(12–13; cf. §678). According to Blair, Shaftesbury gives a eudaemonist answer to the question 'Why be moral?', but Hutcheson rejects it (15–16), because he rejects the primacy of the desire for happiness. Blair's main criticism concerns the demanding character of utilitarianism (18–20). He denies that what we most approve of from the benevolent utilitarian point of view counts as our duty: 'To devote ourselves to death for our country; to sacrifice our own happiness to that of the public; are acts of high disinterested benevolence, which receive the greatest approbation from the moral sense, but are by no means accompanied with that sense of strict duty that attends justice, truth, fidelity, observance of compact, and those other humbler virtues that are primary and essential to society. To them we feel ourselves indispensably obliged; but are not conscious of such an obligation with respect to universal disinterested benevolence; which is indeed considered as the heroism, or sublimity of virtue, which every man's mind approves and admires; but which is not bound upon us by the authoritative sanction of duty, in so strong a manner, as the other virtues just now mentioned. . . . In general, we may observe, concerning the strain of this part of our author's philosophy, that it represents virtue rather in the light of a beautiful and noble object, recommended by the inward approbation of our minds, than as a law dictated by conscience; and may be thought to be calculated rather for making virtuous men better, than for teaching the bulk of mankind the first principles of duty.' It is not clear whether Blair thinks duty is based on non-utilitarian principles or is a subset of what utilitarian benevolence demands.

our judgment about the morality of actions.[24] He takes 'our late debates about passive obedience' to have considered only what course of action would best promote the public good. He does not confront the objection, urged by Maxwell and by Butler, that it is possible to pursue the public good by morally impermissible means, and so he does not allow that some moral questions are distinct from questions about how to promote the public good.

He implicitly answers this objection, however, by arguing that one can explain apparently non-utilitarian judgments on indirect utilitarian grounds. The fact that our moral sense approves of non-utilitarian attitudes is consistent with a utilitarian account of our moral sense, if we promote utility by acting on non-utilitarian attitudes. Our non-utilitarian motives strengthen our attachment to the courses of action that promote utility.[25] The cardinal virtue of justice, as recognized by the ancients, often appears to conflict with utility. But we can see, on closer examination, that its utilitarian basis explains its primacy among the virtues.[26] A similar utilitarian account explains why the other traditional cardinal virtues are virtues.

This account of apparently non-utilitarian principles is not immediately convincing. According to Price, it does not entirely convince Hutcheson, because he does not stick consistently to his utilitarian analysis. Price draws attention to Hutcheson's acknowledgment of our immediate approval of justice and veracity, in addition to our approval of them for their consequences.[27]

Hutcheson might try a utilitarian explanation of his remarks on immediate approval in order to answer Price's objection. Perhaps our approval of justice does not depend on a calculation of its consequences here and now; still, the formation of this attitude of immediate approval towards a just action is justified only by our approval of the consequences of the general observance of justice.

[24] 'Again, that we may see how love, or benevolence, is the foundation of all apprehended excellence in social virtues, let us only observe, that amidst the diversity of sentiments on this head among various sects, this is still allowed to be the way of deciding the controversy about any disputed practice, *viz.* to enquire whether this conduct, or the contrary, will most effectually promote the public good. The morality is immediately adjusted, when the natural tendency, or influence of the action upon the universal natural good of mankind is agreed upon. That which produces more good than evil in the whole, is acknowledged good; and what does not, is counted evil. In this case, we no other way regard the good of the actor, or that of those who are thus enquiring, than as they make a part of the great system.' (*IMGE* 3.3 = L 118 = SB 112)

[25] This utilitarian explanation of ostensibly non-utilitarian moral virtues and rules is sketched in *IMGE*, but developed more fully in the later *SMP*.

[26] 'The course of life therefore, pointed out to us immediately by our moral sense, and confirmed by all the just consideration of our true interest, must be the very same which the generous calm determination would recommend, a constant study to promote the most universal happiness in our power, by doing all good offices as we have opportunity which interfere with no more extensive interest of the system; preferring always the more extensive and important offices to those of less extent and importance . . .' (*SMP* i 11.2, 222)

[27] '[He] has acknowledged that we *immediately* approve of private justice as well as of veracity, without referring them to a system or to public interest. But I know not well how to reconcile with this his general method of treating the subject of justice and rights, and particularly his saying, in the same chapter, that the ultimate notion of a right is that which tends to the universal good.' (Price, *RPQM* 161n) Price also (137–8n) cites Hutcheson's *SIMP* on veracity as suggesting an exception to utilitarianism: 'Veracity and faith in our engagements, besides their own immediate beauty thus approved, recommend themselves to the approbation and choice of every wise and honest man by their manifest necessity for the common interest and safety.' (*SIMP* 167) The English version softens the contrast between non-utilitarian and utilitarian approval that appears more sharply in the Latin: 'Veritas autem et fides non solum sua propria nobis se commendant pulchritudine, mendacia vero et fraudes sua nos turpitudine offendunt; verum et manifesta communis utilitatis ratio ad veritatem et fidem, tamquam communi saluti necessarias, bene sanos invitabit . . .' (*MPIC* 135)

648. Indirect Utilitarianism and Indirect Egoism

An indirect utilitarian defence raises a question about Hutcheson's overall position. For it suggests that we might also try an indirect egoist explanation and defence of our moral judgments. Hobbes seems to accept both indirect utilitarianism and indirect egoism, without exploring either position. In both cases the indirect analysis avoids implausible claims about the explicit content of particular moral judgments, while maintaining the regulative role of the general egoist or utilitarian outlook.[28]

Hutcheson's view is worth comparing with Hobbes's view, because, on the one hand, Hutcheson defends indirect utilitarianism more explicitly, but, on the other hand, he rejects indirect egoism, claiming that we approve things unselfishly without reference to consequences for our own advantage. An indirect egoist might answer that we do not think about our own advantage when we approve things morally, but nonetheless our unselfish approval is justified and supported by consideration of our own advantage. Though Mandeville is wrong (on this view) to deny that we have unselfish motives, he would be right to affirm that our ultimate motives are selfish. If Hutcheson accepts indirect utilitarianism, should he not also accept this indirect egoist argument? If he should, his acceptance of indirect utilitarianism subverts his whole argument about the moral sense.

In answer to indirect egoism, he might deny that our moral approval is concerned with our own advantage, even if considerations of advantage might support it. Even if things changed so that our moral approval did not work to our advantage, we would retain it. This counterfactual judgment reflects the fact that our moral approval is not guided by considerations of advantage. The mere fact that our moral attitudes are advantageous to us does not show that advantage explains or sustains them.

This is a reasonable reply to indirect egoism, but it raises two difficulties for Hutcheson: (1) The counterfactual argument assumes that our moral approval essentially relies on certain reasons. If it were a simple favourable feeling that does not consider one's own advantage, it would not be inherently selfish, but it would not be inherently unselfish either. Whether or not our moral approval is unselfish depends on the considerations that it takes as reasons for approval. Hence it must be essentially open to specific sorts of reasons and not to others. It must have a rational structure that does not easily fit Hutcheson's conception of the moral sense. (2) If we reject an indirect egoist account of the moral sense, can we not offer analogous arguments against indirect utilitarianism? Hutcheson might deny the analogy, since he argues that we respond to utilitarian considerations in our moral reasoning. But he does not show that we rely on the maximizing aspects of utilitarianism. Even if an indirect utilitarian defence of our moral attitudes might be given, it may not explain our attitudes.

Price notices this parallel between egoism and utilitarianism.[29] His argument against egoism is quite similar to Hutcheson's, but he believes that the same sort of argument undermines Hutcheson's utilitarianism. Though his argument does not do justice to indirect utilitarianism, it raises serious questions about Hutcheson's whole system.

[28] On Hobbes see §504.

[29] See Price, *RPQM* 136, discussed at §822.

One of these questions arises from a dilemma about the moral sense. On the one hand, if Hutcheson emphasizes the comparison with a sense, and hence takes the moral sense to be simple approval, without essential reference to specific reasons, he makes it easier to defend both the indirect utilitarianism he accepts and the indirect egoism he rejects. On the other hand, if he emphasizes the dependence of moral judgment and approval on specific reasons, he makes it easier to refute both the indirect egoism he rejects and the indirect utilitarianism he accepts.

How should he clarify or amend his position? If moral approval essentially depends on certain kinds of reasons for approval, it differs from an ordinary sense in this respect, and the comparison with a sense is correspondingly less useful. A more plausible conception of moral approval seems to make it easier for Hutcheson to maintain his opposition to egoism, but more difficult for him to maintain indirect utilitarianism.

This conclusion is surprising. For Hutcheson's comparison of moral approval with sensory awareness is intended to support his argument against egoism. He believes that if he shows our reaction to moral good and evil is immediate, and hence independent of complex calculations about advantage, he refutes an egoist analysis. But his discussion of indirect utilitarianism suggests that immediacy does not help his argument against egoism as much as he supposes. To resist an indirect egoist analysis of the moral sense, he needs to give the moral sense more rational structure.

649. How does the Moral Sense Support Utilitarianism?

How much does it matter whether Hutcheson can show that the moral sense accepts utilitarian morality? We have assumed that if ordinary moral judgments diverge from utilitarianism, that is a serious objection to his argument for utilitarianism. But some utilitarians do not believe it is a serious objection. One defence of utilitarianism against objections derived from ordinary moral convictions maintains that the principle of utility is a rational principle. Balguy and Butler distinguish rational benevolence from non-rational passions that might lead us to favour other courses of action. In their view, we need to correct our passions so that we align them with the utilitarian principle.[30] We can resolve conflicts between our initial convictions and the utilitarian principle if we train our passions to follow reason.

Hutcheson's anti-rationalism precludes this defence of utilitarianism. He believes that the misconceived contrast between reason and desire, as rationalists describe them, points to the real division between calm and passionate motions. This division captures, in his view, the division that Plato and Aristotle have in mind in distinguishing parts of the soul by appeal to psychic conflict.[31] Hutcheson does not recognize the good-dependence of desires

[30] This is not the whole of what Balguy and Butler think about utility. See §§664, 700.

[31] 'The difference between the calm motions of the will and the passionate, whether of the selfish or benevolent kinds, must be obvious to any who consider how often we find them acting in direct opposition. Thus anger or lust will draw us one way; and a calm regard, either to our highest interest, the greatest sum of private good, or to some particular interest, will draw the opposite way . . .' (*SMP* i 1.7, 12) In a footnote Hutcheson refers to Plato and Aristotle. See Hume, §735.

of the rational part, as Plato and Aristotle understand them, since his account of motivation precludes good-dependent desires. Calm and reflective desires, his substitute for rational desires, are the source of impartial benevolence.[32]

The utilitarian outlook, therefore, is the moral outlook because utilitarianism expresses benevolence, and the moral sense approves of benevolence. We can correct any non-utilitarian judgments by reminding ourselves that we ought to be trying to take the most benevolent view possible, and that this commits us to consideration of utility.

How should we understand the claim that benevolence is what the moral sense approves of? We might take it in two ways: (1) From our beliefs about morality we might conclude that the basic moral principle is benevolence. Then we might notice that we have the sort of sensory awareness and approval of benevolence that suggests we have a moral sense; if this were not what it approved, it would not be a strictly moral sense. (2) We might define a moral sense as the sensory awareness and approval we feel towards the actions and characters of human agents, considered from a disinterested point of view. Having shown that we have such a sense, we then ask what it approves of and we find that it approves of benevolence.

These two accounts of the relation between benevolence and the moral sense imply different views about the resolution of possible conflicts. According to the first view, our argument about the character of morality shows that the moral point of view is benevolent before we consider whether we have a moral sense or not. Approval of benevolence is a necessary condition for being a moral sense, and we know a priori that the moral sense approves of benevolence. If, then, we are inclined to make moral claims that conflict with those of utilitarian benevolence, we can legitimately reject them on the ground that they do not accurately reflect our moral sense, which approves of benevolence. But if we accept the second view of benevolence and the moral sense, we cannot deal with conflicts in this way. Our belief that the moral sense approves of benevolence is simply empirical, and liable to be falsified by further evidence of what the moral sense (defined independently of approval of benevolence) approves of.

In the *Illustrations* Hutcheson takes this second view, assuming a purely empirical connexion between benevolence and the moral sense. Moral properties are taken to imply obligation, and hence to imply motivation. The properties approved of by the moral sense are simply those that in fact give us justifying reasons; and these have to be states of the agent, according to Hutcheson's subjectivism. According to this view, benevolence is not moral goodness; it is the property that is shown by empirical evidence to arouse our feeling of approval, on which moral goodness depends.

This subjectivist analysis of moral properties requires a utilitarian moralist to claim that all true utilitarian judgments are true predictions about what the moral sense will approve of. We cannot claim to have some other access to what is really right, in the light of which the apparent reactions of the moral sense could be corrected, or shown not to be genuine reactions of the moral sense. The utilitarian believes that the moral sense, as Hutcheson describes it, endorses utilitarianism.[33] For since moral reasons and motives rest primarily on our sympathetic feelings towards the pleasures and pains of others, a survey of more people

[32] See Hume on calmness, §738.

[33] According to Stephen, *HET* ii 60, 'Hutcheson uses two standards—the public good, and the approval of the moral sense—and uses them indifferently, because he is convinced of their absolute identity. In his discussion of particular

suffering the same degree of pain or pleasure, or of the same number of people suffering a higher degree of pain or pleasure, results in more intense pain and pleasure. And if our moral sense approves of the benevolence that consists in these sympathetic feelings, it will approve of the desire to achieve the maximum total good. Hence the moral sense will approve of utilitarian benevolence.

But these claims do not secure Hutcheson's conclusion. If two situations differ only in these quantitative respects, we will prefer the one that achieves greater pleasure. But these are not the only features of situations that might affect our sympathetic feelings and our tendency to approve of them. May we not be moved by narrower attachments, or by some specific injuries to specific people, even if they conflict with utilitarian benevolence? Even if utilitarian benevolence is one object of the moral sense's approval, it may not be the only object; for, as Hutcheson agrees, benevolence does not always overcome other passions.[34] In that case, our moral sense may not always agree with benevolence. If other-regarding motives distinct from utilitarian benevolence sometimes influence us, our moral sense might sometimes approve of their influence. If normal observers sometimes approve utilitarian benevolence, but often approve some action or attitude that does not maximize utility, then moral rightness sometimes maximizes utility, but sometimes does not.

Hutcheson might argue that a particular person's moral sense is mistaken if it disagrees with utilitarianism, and that it ought to be adjusted to the utilitarian outlook. The comparison of the moral sense to ordinary senses allows some correction. Particular sensory reactions can be corrected by appeal to the reactions of normal perceivers in normal conditions.[35] Similarly, the reaction of one person's moral sense on one occasion can be corrected by reference to the reactions of the normal spectator on this sort of occasion.

But Hutcheson's theory leaves only limited room for correction. The moral sense is aware of objective properties—the tendency of an action to promote the public good, and the disposition of the agent to promote it. But these properties are not the moral goodness of the action, because the moral goodness is not an objective property of the action, but a feature of the observer's reaction to it. We cannot, then, correct one person's moral sense by reference to objective moral properties that it aims to detect, since there are no such properties for it to detect; we must correct it by reference to the normal observer. For similar reasons, the 'normal' observer cannot be the one who actually detects the relevant objective moral properties; normality must be understood without reference to any beliefs about the objective properties to be detected.

Correction by reference to normal observers may not favour utilitarianism. Their reactions to conflicts between utilitarianism and less universal attitudes (as Hutcheson considers them) are likely to vary, both between different people and in the same person between different occasions. Hence the appeal to the normal observer yields no clear decision. We might

problems, the moral sense passes out of sight altogether, and he becomes a pure utilitarian.' Stephen does not discuss the questions that might arise in trying to defend the 'absolute identity' of the two standards.

[34] 'It is well known, that general benevolence alone, is not a motive strong enough to industry, to bear labour and toil, and many other difficulties which we are averse to from self-love. For the strengthening therefore our motives to industry, we have the strongest attractions of blood, of friendship, of gratitude, and the additional motives of honour, and even of external interest.' (*IMGE* 7.8 = L 186 = SB 180)

[35] For references and discussion see §659 on Balguy.

claim that only the observers who approve of utilitarianism are the normal and healthy ones; but in that case we would presuppose the truth of utilitarianism. If we appeal to the truth of a particular theory to correct our moral sense, we undermine a basic assumption of Hutcheson's theory, since we measure the moral sense by an external moral standard.

If Hutcheson refuses to correct our moral sense by an external moral standard, his defence of utilitarianism commits him to the empirical claim that normal spectators approve of the utilitarian solution of any conflict between utilitarian benevolence and less universal or non-maximizing moral attitudes. But this empirical claim is doubtful.

650. A Conflict between Hutcheson's Normative Ethics and his Meta-ethics

These questions about utilitarianism raise a general difficulty for Hutcheson's sentimentalism, and more generally for his treatment of normative judgments. He treats statements about obligations and rightness as predictions about how normal observers react. He cannot consistently say that normal observers ought to be corrected, or that they ought to take moral distinctions more seriously than they do; for these ought-judgments are also predictions about the reactions of normal observers.

Even if we agree with the reactions of normal observers, Hutcheson's theory prevents us from giving the natural interpretation of our agreement. We are inclined to suppose that if we believe our moral sense is usually right, or that we ought to follow it, we accord authority to the moral sense because it conforms to some standard external to it. But Hutcheson's account of moral judgments as statements about the reactions of the moral sense[36] prevents us from evaluating the moral sense in this way.[37]

Utilitarianism, therefore, both seems attractive from a sentimentalist point of view and raises objections to it. If we believe that morally good and bad action results from benevolence, aiming at the pleasure of others, we may suppose that the best action results from the most extensive benevolence aiming at maximum pleasure. If we did not suppose that some sentiment has to be the basis of morally right action, this argument for utilitarianism would not seem plausible; but if we are convinced by Hutcheson's anti-rationalism about motivation, benevolence seems to be the most plausible sentiment to treat as the basis of morally good action. Once we see that better actions seem to result from more extended benevolence, the utilitarian conclusion seems plausible.

This conclusion about the moral agent, however, commits Hutcheson to the further claim that the enlightened moral judge with the correct moral sense is the one who approves of benevolence, and approves of it more the more widely it is extended. If moral judges lack this utilitarian reaction, Hutcheson faces a difficult choice. To safeguard the utilitarian approach in normative ethics, he needs to abandon sentimentalist meta-ethics. If he retains

[36] Here as before, I have understood Hutcheson to be a cognitivist, treating moral judgments as statements. Frankena, 'Moral sense', argues that he is a non-cognitivist.

[37] For rationalist criticisms of Hutcheson on this point see §§656, 812.

his meta-ethics, he casts doubt on a utilitarian account of moral goodness. Some normal judges will approve of utility (we may grant), but others will not. Hutcheson's utilitarian analysis of virtues, rights, and laws of nature may well be a true report of what he approves of. But he cannot claim that this necessarily gives a reason for others to approve of the same things; whether they have a reason or not depends on how they react.

Sidgwick believes that for these reasons Hutcheson cannot adequately defend the objective truth of utilitarianism. In Sidgwick's view, a proper rational defence of utilitarianism, or any other objective moral principle, depends on acceptance of a rationalist account of moral judgments, in contrast to Hutcheson's sentimentalism. He suggests that on this point Hume drew the logical conclusion from Hutcheson's position, and so made people aware of the dangerous consequences of sentimentalism.[38]

Sidgwick wrongly suggests that only Hume's endorsement of Hutcheson's sentimentalism made the implications of Hutcheson's position clear. As we will see, Balguy and Burnet (not to mention Butler) already criticize Hutcheson's sentimentalism for its subjectivist tendencies; they do not need Hume to point out the implications of Hutcheson's position. But Sidgwick is right about the philosophical issue that Hutcheson raises. If we try to defend utilitarianism without sentimentalism, we raise doubts about the sentimentalist assumptions that make utilitarianism seem attractive in the first place.

651. The Significance of Hutcheson's Position

Hutcheson is the first modern moralist to try to work out a systematic theory covering the whole area of moral philosophy, including moral psychology, meta-ethics (the metaphysics of moral properties and the epistemology of moral judgment), and normative ethics. While Hobbes, Cudworth, Shaftesbury, and Clarke have something to say on all these topics, Hutcheson expounds and defends an explicit theory whose different parts are meant to support one another. In his view, his anti-rationalism supports his belief in a moral sense, which in turn supports his utilitarianism.

We have considered Whewell's assessment of the cumulative significance of Hutcheson's position, as a defence of Shaftesbury's moral realism. We have found that while this assessment fits Hutcheson's early work, it does not fit the *Illustrations*, which goes beyond Shaftesbury in a subjectivist direction. This subjectivism in turn raises difficulties for Hutcheson's utilitarian arguments.

This side of Hutcheson makes it easier to see why, as Sidgwick remarks, Hume claims to follow Hutcheson against the rationalists, especially in his views about the role of the

[38] '. . . the attempt to exhibit morality as a body of scientific truth fell into discredit, and the disposition to dwell on the emotional side of the moral consciousness became prevalent. But thus the objectivity of duty, with which its authority is bound up, fell out of view, without its being perceived how serious the loss was: for example, we find Hutcheson, in intention most orthodox of moral professors, innocently asking, "why the moral sense should not vary in different human beings, as the palate does". When, however, the new doctrine was endorsed by the dreaded name of Hume, its dangerous nature, and the need of bringing again into pre-eminence the properly intellectual element of the moral faculty, was clearly seen: and this work was undertaken as a part of the general philosophic protest of the Scotch school against the empiricism that had culminated in Hume' (*ME* [1] 91). Sidgwick modifies and shortens the passage in later editions; see [7] 104.

sentiments, feelings, and passions in moral judgment, motivation, and justification, and in the constitution of moral facts.[39] Hutcheson appears closer to Hobbes, Locke, and Cumberland than to Cudworth and Clarke. He tries to remove the most offensive aspects of Hobbes's views about morality. But Hume's development of Hutcheson's sentimentalist claims brings Hutcheson closer to Hobbes than he wants to be.

The position that Hume thinks he sees in Hutcheson may not be Hutcheson's position. Hutcheson might not agree with Hume about the implications of his position, or might not welcome these implications if he were convinced that they followed from his position. Still, Hume's judgment on Hutcheson is not idiosyncratic; he agrees with Hutcheson's rationalist critics. Burnet, Balguy, and Price argue that Hutcheson is committed to one of the worst features of voluntarism, because his view implies that moral judgments are arbitrary and baseless. In contrast to Whewell, they argue that Hutcheson's appeal to the moral sense does not support moral realism and independent morality, but undermines it.

We might reasonably interpret Hume as conceding these implications that the rationalists draw from Hutcheson's position, but then arguing that these implications do not refute the position. Both Hutcheson and his rationalist critics take these objections to be fatal, if they are warranted; hence Hutcheson defends himself against them. Hume argues that they are not fatal; they simply point out the facts about morality that we have to live with.

Hutcheson's position seems, at first sight, impressively systematic; but closer attention suggests that it is incoherent. His main difficulties arise from several sources: (1) He appeals to the immediacy of the moral sense to refute indirect egoism; but he seems to defend utilitarianism by indirect arguments that seem to offer equal support for indirect egoism. Hence his case against egoism and his case for utilitarianism seem to undermine each other. (2) His anti-rationalism supports his appeal to a moral sense, but his subjectivist conception of the moral sense undermines his utilitarianism.

These difficulties do not show that a moral sense theory is mistaken, or that utilitarianism is mistaken, or that one cannot hold both theories at once. But they suggest that we should question Hutcheson's case for holding both at once. His successors hold different views about where he has gone wrong, and about which elements of his position should be retained or rejected.[40]

652. Fielding, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson

Hutcheson develops, but also modifies, Shaftesbury's opposition to voluntarism, by presenting a sentimentalist account of disinterested concern. He is not the only reader who believes that Shaftesbury maintains a sentimentalist position. Fielding's novels convey, as contemporary readers saw, a similar interpretation of Shaftesbury, and a defence of the position that Fielding ascribes to him. Though we have no reason to believe that Fielding knew Hutcheson's work, he is worth mentioning to show how one might develop Shaftesbury's position, and why critics objected to the views that they traced to Shaftesbury.[41]

[39] See esp. *Letter from a Gentleman*, discussed in §751.

[40] On Hutcheson and Butler see §714.

[41] Harrison, *HFTJ*, ch. 6, compares Fielding with the moral philosophy of his time: he perhaps underestimates the connexion between Fielding and the sentimentalist interpretation of Shaftesbury.

This attitude to Shaftesbury is evident in *Tom Jones*.[42] Moral reflexions in the novel begin from two opposed and unacceptable theoretical positions defended in the frequent disputes between Squire Allworthy's two companions, Square and Thwackum. Square accepts Clarke's belief in eternal and immutable fitnesses that have been evident to rational people at all times; he often appeals to the ancient Stoics in his support. Fielding supports the critics of Clarke who argue that his eternal fitnesses are too vague to offer any definite practical advice. Square manages to appeal to them to justify all sorts of dubious and self-serving conduct, so that, whatever he feels like doing, he has an eternal fitness to support or to excuse him. Thwackum, by contrast, is a theological voluntarist, a parody of the position that Berkeley defends in *Alciphron* against Shaftesbury's belief in a moral sense.[43] He regards Square's outlook as merely pagan. In his view, morality requires the relentless and rigid enforcement of the duties allegedly derived from the Decalogue, and especially the duties of obedience. Thwackum is a sadist, who is only too pleased to appeal to morality for the infliction of pain; hence he particularly emphasizes Scriptural justifications for a belief in hereditary guilt that will license punishment of Jones.

The most conspicuous product of the joint efforts of Square and Thwackum is their pupil Blifil. He learns enough from them to find excuses and pretexts for his own selfish and treacherous hypocrisy. He becomes incapable of genuine love and friendship, as Sophia Western sees when her aunt tries to arrange a marriage between them. Blifil's pious and canting hypocrisy agrees in its conclusions with the open cynicism of Mrs Western.

We might take Fielding to present generous feelings as the appropriate moral outlook that avoids the faults in rationalism and theological voluntarism. But this view is too simple. For he presents some people moved by generous feelings who are still misguided overall. Squire Western is generous to some degree. He loves his daughter Sophia, and he forms warm and friendly feelings towards Jones. But when Sophia tries to oppose his plans for her, he lashes out at her; he never stops to think about whether her interests coincide with his plans. Similarly, his friendly feelings to Jones count for nothing as soon as he finds out that Jones is interested in Sophia and so presents another obstacle to his plans. He does not understand other people, and so has no conception of how their happiness might not fit with their use to him.

Many people share Squire Western's thoughtless and unstable generous feelings. Fielding often displays the thoughtless and fickle judgments and sympathies of 'public opinion'; though the public is often an impartial observer, to the extent that its interests are not directly involved, it is by no means a judicious spectator. People flit from one judgment to the opposite on the slightest impetus. They condemn someone ignorantly, but as soon as he gets what they thought he deserved, they feel exaggerated compassion for him. Malice, envy, and credulity encourage damaging gossip that harms innocent victims. Though Fielding does not suggest that people are incapable of disinterested and sympathetic judgments, he suggests that their sympathies are thoughtless and easily distorted.

[42] Published in 1749. The only relevant comment on Shaftesbury's moral philosophy is in ch. 2, where Square mentions Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations* and 'the great Lord Shaftesbury' as authorities for the view that pain is not evil because it is not morally unfit. Dudden, *HF* 679, remarks that Fielding 'appropriated much of the substance of his [sc. Shaftesbury's] philosophy, which he reproduced with some modifications in unphilosophical terms'.

[43] On Berkeley see §614.

In contrast to these people, Allworthy and Jones both display goodness. Since they are different, Fielding avoids suggesting that only one sort of outlook or behaviour can embody goodness. But it is not completely clear where their goodness lies. In both cases it coexists with obvious imperfections. Allworthy tolerates the endless arguments between Square and Thwackum, and does not entirely dismiss either point of view. He is guided by generous feelings that both of them lack, though his judgments, especially in relation to Jones, are erratic—especially if he listens too much to his advisers.

If Allworthy's faults result from his listening too carefully to bad advice, Jones's faults result from impulsiveness that he would have corrected if he had thought about it. Fielding suggests that his failings are relatively minor, and receive unjustified condemnation; though they are open to blame, the blame ought to be balanced by recognition of his overriding merits and his scrupulous conscience. Both Allworthy and Jones show disinterested sympathy with others, and both are loyal and reliable even when the costs to them are severe; on this point they are different from the people with generous but fickle impulses. Though they both make mistakes with serious consequences, the mistakes do not make their character less reliably good and admirable.[44]

How do they manage this, and why are they admirable for doing it? Our admiration implies that the virtuous person is not simply the one whose natural generous impulses are not corrupted by false theories; that description does not separate the virtuous person from Squire Western. Goodness requires some regulation of selfish impulses by steady and discerning generous sentiments. But it is difficult to see how these sentiments can be steady and discerning in the appropriate way if they are not formed on appropriate principles that have some basis beyond their appeal to our sentiments. We might say that Fielding prefers a morality of sentiments and virtues over a morality of principles. But these divisions do not seem completely accurate; he seems to accept some morality of principles, without saying what the principles are or where they come from.[45]

It is reasonable to attribute Fielding's views to the influence of Shaftesbury. The views that we can reasonably derive from his novels, and especially from *Tom Jones*, correspond to the views he expresses in his explicitly ethical essays.[46] Fielding captures one side of Shaftesbury, the side captured by Hutcheson. He represents the importance of disinterested love of virtue, in contrast to the instrumental calculation of how virtuous action promotes one's selfish interest. But Shaftesbury takes this love to be appropriately directed towards 'eternal fitnesses' grasped by reason. We might say roughly that Hutcheson and Fielding grasp one side of this position and Clarke grasps the other. Perhaps this is unfair to Fielding, since he avoids any naive commendation of generous feelings as a guide to moral character; but he does not say much about the principles that might support the appropriately educated

[44] Coleridge points out Fielding's emphasis on character as opposed to mere correct behaviour: 'If I want a servant or mechanic, I wish to know what he does;—but of a friend I must know what he is. And in no writer is this momentous distinction so finely brought forward as by Fielding. We do not care what Blifil does;—the deed, as separate from the agent, may be good or ill; but Blifil is a villain;—and we feel him so from the very moment he, the boy Blifil, restores Sophia's captive bird to its native and rightful liberty.' (*Marg*. ii 693) Dudden, *HF* 683–4, cites and discusses Coleridge's remark.

[45] On this comparison between Thwackum, Square, Blifil, and Western see Harrison, *HFTJ* 28–34, who points out that Fielding does not accept an anti-intellectual view that would regard Western as expressing a sound moral outlook.

[46] See Dudden, *HF* 272–5.

generous feelings. He does not consider Hutcheson's utilitarian answer to this question, and such an answer would be difficult to fit into Fielding's praise of uncalculating sympathy.

The sentimentalist side of Fielding is the side that impresses some 18th century critics. In the view of Johnson's biographer Hawkins, Fielding represents the harmful tendencies of contemporary novels.[47] These books begin with Richardson's *Pamela*, but Fielding provokes Hawkins's sharpest criticism.[48] He attacks Sterne for the same sentimentalist tendencies.[49] In saying that Fielding gives us Shaftesbury 'vulgarized', Hawkins may recognize that he does not give a complete picture of Shaftesbury's position; but he does not say what has been left out.

Hawkins's criticism is unspecific. In suggesting that the sentimentalists leave out a 'sense of duty', 'obligation', and 'virtue upon principle', he leaves room for both rationalist and voluntarist answers. Until the relevant notions are explained more clearly, it is not clear whether rationalists or voluntarists can provide what is missing in the sentimentalist outlook.[50]

[47] 'They were mostly books of mere entertainment that were the subjects of this kind of commerce, and were and still are distinguished by the corrupt appellation of novels and romances. Though fictitious, and the work of mere invention, they pretended to probability, to be founded in nature, and to delineate social manners.' (Hawkins, *LJ* 213)

[48] 'He was the author of a romance entitled "The history of Joseph Andrews" and of another, "The foundling, or the history of Tom Jones", a book seemingly intended to sap the foundation of that morality which it is the duty of parents and all public instructors to inculcate in the minds of young people, by teaching that virtue upon principle is imposture, that generous qualities alone constitute true worth, and that a young man may love and be loved, and at the same time associate with the loosest women. His morality, in respect that it resolves virtue into good affections, in contradiction to moral obligation and a sense of duty, is that of lord Shaftesbury vulgarized, and is a subject of most excellent use in palliating the vices most injurious to society. He was the inventor of that cant-phrase, goodness of heart, which is every day used as a substitute for probity, and means little more than the virtue of a horse or a dog; in short, he has done more towards corrupting the rising generation than any writer we know of.' (214)

[49] 'Of the writers of this class or sect it may be observed, that being in general men of loose principles, bad economists, living without foresight, it is their endeavour to commute for their failings by professions of greater love to mankind, more tender affections and finer feelings than they will allow men of more regular lives, whom they deem formalists, to possess. Their generous notions supersede all obligation; they are a law to themselves, and having good hearts and abounding in the milk of human kindness, are above consideration that bind men to that rule of conduct which is found in a sense of duty. Of this new school of morality, Fielding, Rousseau, and Sterne are the principal teachers, and great is the mischief they have done by their documents.' (218)

[50] On Hawkins see Kaye in Mandeville, *FB* i, pp. xxii–xxiii.

49

BALGUY: A DEFENCE OF RATIONALISM

653. Hutcheson and Rationalism

Hutcheson's *Inquiry* provoked intelligent criticisms from rationalists who agreed with Clarke. An exchange of letters between Hutcheson and Gilbert Burnet in 1725 encouraged Hutcheson to write the *Illustrations* (published in 1728).[1] Balguy published his criticism of the *Inquiry* in his *Foundation of Moral Goodness*, in 1728. His further thoughts appear in Part II of the *Foundations* (1729).

Balguy not only criticizes Hutcheson, but also tries to defend Clarke's rationalism against criticisms. Hutcheson argues for his sentimentalism partly by presenting it as the only plausible alternative to Clarke's rationalism, and by claiming that the rationalist can give only false or uninformative answers to the main questions that concern the moralist. Balguy answers that Clarke's appeal to motivation by reason is preferable to Hutcheson's theory of desire and action, and that Clarke's analysis of moral judgment as rational recognition of eternal fitnesses is both true and informative.

The later stages in the defence of rationalism and sentimentalism need to be considered in the discussion of Price and Reid on the one side, and Hume on the other. Some of the disputes between Hutcheson and Balguy allow us to see why the later versions of rationalism and sentimentalism develop as they do.

Balguy's criticism is especially useful because it raises a basic question about the consistency of Hutcheson's position. Hutcheson's early work sets out to defend Shaftesbury's realism against Hobbesian egoism and theological voluntarism. As we have seen, he introduces the moral sense to express his rejection of any egoist and instrumentalist accounts of moral judgment. But he also defends a sentimentalist account of the moral sense in opposition to Clarke's rationalism. Balguy argues that the realist and the

[1] See Hutcheson, *IMS*, Pref. The sequence of editions of works by Hutcheson and his critics is this: 1725: *IMGE*, ed.1. 1726: *IMGE*, ed.2; Butler, *Sermons*, ed.1. 1728: Letters between Hutcheson and Burnet; *IMS*, ed.1; Balguy, *FMG*, Part I, ed.1. 1729: *IMGE*, ed.3; Balguy, *FMG*, Part II; Butler, ed.2. 1730: *IMS*, ed.2. 1731: Balguy, *FMG*, Part I, ed. 2. 1733: Balguy, *FMG*, Part I, ed.3. 1734: Balguy, *TMT*. 1736: Butler, ed.3. 1738: *IMGE*, ed.4. 1742: *IMS*, ed.3. Beiser, *SR* 314–19, discusses the dispute between Hutcheson and Balguy and Burnet.

sentimentalist sides of Hutcheson's position conflict, and that we can see the basic conflict by examining Hutcheson's relation to voluntarism. Since Hutcheson sets out to refute voluntarism, he has reason to reconsider his position if Balguy shows that it is open to the basic objections that—as Hutcheson and Balguy agree—make voluntarism morally unacceptable.

654. Free Will and Reason

Hutcheson follows Hobbes in accepting a simple compatibilist account of freedom, claiming that we act freely if we are determined by our own desires. Simple compatibilism fits anti-rationalism about motivation. If we claim that we are free only if we are moved by distinctively rational desires, we commit ourselves, in Hutcheson's view, to denying the reality of freedom, because there are no distinctively rational desires.

Balguy criticizes this sentimentalist view. He agrees with Hutcheson's objections to libertarian accounts of freedom that identify free action with action on no sufficient motive. But he notices that Hutcheson takes these objections to imply the impossibility of action that is not the result of non-rational instinct.[2] Balguy believes that if Hutcheson were right on this point, we could not justify ordinary judgments about merit, which presume rational motivation, as opposed to non-rational motivation by instinct.[3] Internal determination of actions does not ensure the sort of freedom that is relevant to moral merit and demerit; hence the sentimentalist account of motivation fails to identify this freedom. Since some sort of rational motivation is necessary for freedom, motivation by sentiment, as the sentimentalists understand it, is insufficient for freedom.

Can the idea of motivation by reason be made more intelligible than Hutcheson supposes? Balguy suggests that recognition of the intrinsic merits of a course of action may move us to action, without any further appeal to a non-rational instinct.[4] If we are rational agents, we can be moved by the merits of a course of action; that claim is no less intelligible and explanatory than the anti-rationalist appeal to a prior non-rational instinct.[5]

[2] See the different formulations distinguished in §637.

[3] 'Now I readily grant that there is no merit in acting without any motive or reason. On the other hand, it may be affirmed that neither is there any merit in actions to which the agent is driven by natural instinct. . . . But determining ourselves freely to act and to do what appears conformable to reason, is making the best use of both faculties that we possibly can.' (*FMG* i = *TMT* 93 = SB 574)

[4] 'He wants to be informed what are the motives, inducements, or exciting reasons for the choice of virtue, and what the justifying reasons of our approbation of it. He seems to think these questions are not to be answered upon the scheme I am defending: let us then try whether this difficulty be not surmountable without the help of those instincts which he has introduced for that purpose.—What is the reason exciting a man to the choice of a virtuous action? I answer, his very approbation of it is itself a sufficient reason, wherever it is not over-ruled by another more powerful. What can be more just, what more natural, than choosing of a thing that we approve, and even choosing it for that very reason?—But why then do we approve? Or what justifies our approbation of it? I answer in one word, necessity. The same necessity which compels men to assent to what is true, forces them to approve what is right and fit. And I cannot but wonder, that our author should demand a reason for the one more than for the other. In both cases the mind necessarily acquiesces, without regarding or considering the effects or tendencies of either.' (*FMG* i = *TMT* 81 = SB 559)

[5] 'Our author's question amounts plainly to this: what does a reasonable creature propose in acting reasonably? Or what is it that induces his will to take counsel of his understanding? As if this were not the very essence of a rational action! The question therefore might as well have been put thus: what is it that induces a man to be a rational agent, when he has it in his power to be otherwise?' (*FMG* i = *TMT* 83 = SB 562)

Balguy suggests that motivation by recognition of merits is distinctive of morality; but he could have argued that it is possible in non-moral cases too. His main point is a fair objection to Hutcheson. On behalf of Hutcheson one might say that simply citing a belief is not enough to explain an action, and that we explain an action better if we cite both a belief and a suitably connected non-rational desire. Balguy suggests that it is no less explanatory to cite a belief in the intrinsic merits of a course of action. To be a rational agent is to be capable of acting on the recognition of intrinsic merits.

The claim that we are rational agents with this capacity is no less informative than the claim that we are creatures with the sorts of instincts that Hutcheson recognizes. This is a reasonable answer to Hutcheson, even if it is not decisive. It effectively answers the claim that only an anti-rationalist can explain action. The anti-rationalist explanation may still be preferable to the rationalist's appeal to intrinsic merits of a course of action; but Hutcheson's arguments do not show why it is preferable. Hume is right to believe that Hutcheson's position needs some further defence than Hutcheson provides.

If Balguy is right to object to Hutcheson's anti-rationalism about motivation, he is also right to object to his analysis of free will. For one might reasonably argue that the capacity to act on the apparent merits of different courses of action, and not simply to be moved by one's strongest non-rational desire, is essential to the freedom that is relevant to praise and blame. Hutcheson's attempt to dissolve questions about freedom by taking all determination by desire to imply freedom is open to objection.

If Balguy's criticisms are justified, they might be taken to show that Hutcheson needs to go further than he actually goes in his defence of anti-rationalism. He claims to respect and to support the common view that moral motivation is an expression of freedom, and is therefore open to praise and blame. But perhaps he ought to claim that common sense is confused in its claims about freedom. Common sense assumes that morality in some way expresses freedom because it involves motivation by reason; but this assumption rests—according to the sentimentalist—on a mistaken view about practical reason.[6] Still, even if a sentimentalist might take this more sceptical attitude to freedom, Balguy still shows that Hutcheson's actual attitude is unsatisfactory; the arguments that Hutcheson offers neither support common views on freedom nor prove that rationalist views are less explanatory than Hutcheson's anti-rationalism.

655. The Moral Sense and Motivation: Hutcheson and Burnet

Hutcheson's account of reason and action, together with the assumption that recognition of moral rightness and wrongness guides our action, supports his belief in a moral sense. He argues that if we are obliged, we must have some feeling that motivates us to do what we are obliged to do. This non-rational feeling is the moral sense, and an action's rightness consists in its being approved by this moral sense.

[6] Hume perhaps tends towards this view when he suggests that questions about the connexion between morality and praiseworthiness and blameworthiness are the product of 'verbal disputes'. But he does not make it clear how far he has to go in rejecting common-sense views. See §726.

We might disagree with this claim for different reasons: (1) We might accept Hutcheson's strong internalist assumption—that the recognition of moral rightness implies a motive for acting rightly—but maintain rationalism about motivation, claiming that no non-rational desire is needed to make our recognition of rightness practically effective.[7] (2) We might reject internalism and deny that recognition of rightness by itself moves us to action.

Hutcheson's rationalist opponents seem to be tempted by both answers. Sometimes Clarke affirms the first claim, but qualifies it by restricting it to someone who is not perverted. He sometimes concedes, therefore, that in a sufficiently perverse person recognition of rightness is not internally connected with motivation, but some further state is needed if he is to be moved to act rightly. Clarke may not concede, however, that a further state is needed in the person of sound mind. He may suggest that we need no further explanation of why a person of sound mind acts as he does on recognizing moral rightness; we need the further explanation only for the perverse mind.[8]

Burnet sometimes maintains an externalist version of rationalism, accepting the second rationalist answer rather than the first. In his view, we can conceive someone making the right moral judgments while lacking the affections that would cause a favourable feeling towards these judgments.[9] Burnet does not deny the existence or the general correctness of a moral sense, but he denies that it is necessary for making true moral judgments. He argues that we can recognize that an end and an action are reasonable from the moral point of view without thereby having any favourable feeling towards them.

Hutcheson replies that Burnet's appeal to the reasonableness of one or another end is empty.[10] An end is not reasonable in its own right, but only in relation to some further end for which we have an antecedent desire. Similarly, we cannot judge an end reasonable except relatively to a further desired end. Hence judgments about reasonableness must depend on a further desire; hence we need a moral sense.

To show that an end cannot be reasonable in its own right, Hutcheson argues that it is always appropriate to ask 'What makes it reasonable?'. To say that nothing makes it reasonable, or that it makes itself reasonable, is uninformative. To say what makes it reasonable, we always have to say that it appeals to us on the basis of some further end we care about. In the case of morality, the relevant further end is the public good, which appeals to our moral sense. The mere claim that something is reasonable in itself is an appeal to an alleged brute fact.

[7] See Price, §819. [8] See Clarke, §623.

[9] '... the reasonableness of the ends of moral agents does not depend on their conformity to the natural affections of the agent nor to a moral sense representing such ends as amiable to him, but singly on their conformity to reason. Reason would always represent the end in the same manner to the rational agent, whatever his affections or inward sense of amiableness were. And supposing a being framed so as to have only selfish affections and yet to be endued with a faculty of reasoning, such a being, if he employs that faculty, must see it to be highly unreasonable that his private interest or pleasure should take place to the destruction of the interest or pleasure or all other beings like himself, though for want of kind affections he would be void of any collateral disposition to act in that manner which to his understanding must necessarily appear reasonable. Nay, such a being would perceive his natural affections to be very unreasonable affections' (Burnet in Hutcheson, *IMS* 218).

[10] 'Now what are the justifying truths about ultimate ends? What is the truth by conformity to which we approve the desire of public good as an end or call it a reasonable end?' (*IMS* 229)

Burnet and Balguy reply that some reasons must be taken as ultimate, since we cannot show their reasonableness by appeal to further reasons. Similarly (according to Clarke and Burnet) no further reason can be given for accepting a mathematical axiom, but we do not infer that mathematical judgment requires a further contribution from the affections. On the contrary, mathematical judgments consist in recognizing axioms as ultimate reasons and in reasoning in accordance with them. It is equally appropriate to recognize ultimately reasonable moral principles and to judge in accordance with them. If they are ultimately reasonable, no more ultimate reasons can be given to show that they are reasonable; but it does not follow that we must appeal to some further non-rational desire. Balguy agrees that if I recognize a moral principle as ultimately reasonable, I will normally want to act in accordance with it; but he claims that the desire results from the recognition, and does not explain it.[11]

If a defender of Hutcheson objects that Balguy is appealing to a mere brute fact, not further explained, Balguy might answer that Hutcheson also appeals to a brute fact—a non-rational desire and a tendency to act on that desire. Can we not ask why we should act on that desire? The question 'Why should I?' suggests that we are looking for some further reason that Hutcheson fails to provide.

In this dispute about brute facts the anti-rationalist complains that the rationalist cannot say why we act on what we see to be ultimately reasonable. The rationalist complains that the anti-rationalist cannot say why we should act on basic non-rational desires for ends. The anti-rationalist, therefore, complains about the rationalist's failure to provide a motivating reason, whereas the rationalist complains about the anti-rationalist's failure to provide a normative reason. At first sight, both complaints seem reasonable. Balguy's discussion shows that Hutcheson's assumptions about explanation and reasons do not define all the legitimate questions that can be raised.

656. Balguy on Reasons and Motives

In these criticisms of Hutcheson Balguy and Burnet make claims about reasons and reasonableness that presuppose that we can recognize a normative reason (answering the 'Why should I?' question) without having some antecedent desire to do what we see the normative reason to do. Hutcheson rejects this presupposition about reasons, and offers his own conception of reasons. In reply to Burnet he argues that reasons must be either exciting or justifying reasons, both of which rely on affections (*IMS* 226–7). Balguy argues against Hutcheson on this point, denying the connexion that Hutcheson alleges between justifying reasons and motivation.

[11] 'We find our minds necessarily determined in favour of virtue. But I presume such a determination is not antecedent, but consequent to our perceptions of this amiable object. Even the desire of natural good seems to be in reality no instinct, though commonly called and reputed such. Our affections indeed for particular objects are manifestly instinctive, as it was requisite they should; but I see no need of supposing a previous determination of the mind, either to natural good in general, or to moral. As soon as either comes to be perceived, it necessarily determines the mind towards itself. But this determination being consequent to perception, is, if I mistake not, improperly called instinct. It is indeed affection, but that affection, I suppose, is produced in the mind, not antecedently planted in it.' (*FMG* i = *TMT* 92–3 = SB 573)

To show that a justifying reason does not require a further sentiment, Balguy argues that we can recognize merit in an action without thereby approving of it. The recognition of merit is the ground for approval, but is not reducible to approval.[12] According to Balguy, Hutcheson's definition of merit reduces the normative aspect of praiseworthiness—the fact that it provides a reason for praise—to the non-normative fact that it is actually praised. If Hutcheson were right, we could not distinguish qualities that deserve praise from those that receive praise but do not deserve it.

Hutcheson complains that Balguy's definition of merit by reference to worthiness of praise is useless, because it simply provides a synonymous term. We want something more informative than the nearly tautological claim than merit is worthiness,[13] but Balguy's definition fails to provide the 'explication' that we expect from a definition. Hutcheson rejects accounts that identify moral goodness with 'conformity of affections and actions to truth, reason, true propositions, reason of things'. To distinguish moral goodness from true belief in general, we need to add something about conformity to how things ought to be, and this addition simply reintroduces goodness instead of explaining it.[14] Rationalists, therefore, ought to accept his appeal to a moral sense, once they recognize that their accounts of moral goodness do not give an appropriate explication. If we explain 'good', 'ought', 'worthy', 'fit', and 'obligatory' through one another, we have got no further towards an explication. An explication ought to introduce simpler concepts that can be grasped without grasping the normative concepts that we are trying to explicate.

Sentimentalists are right to object that if we can say nothing more about praiseworthiness than that it merits praise, we have not got very far. But the rationalists need not immediately agree that we should seek reductive explications that include only simpler concepts, and only non-normative concepts. For if we can explain one normative concept through accounts that introduce several others, we may say something informative about the connexions between different concepts, without eliminating normative terms. Rationalists might reasonably have pointed out that the sentimentalists overlook this third option beside mere synonymies and reductions.

[12] '...to his query concerning the meaning of the words *merit* or *praiseworthiness*; I answer, that they denote the quality in actions which not only gains the approbation of the observer, but which also deserves or is worthy of it. Approbation does not constitute merit, but is produced by it; is not the cause of it, but the effect. An agent might be meritorious, though it were in the power of all other beings to with-hold their approbation, he might deserve their praise, though we suppose him at the same time under an universal censure' (*FMG* i = *TMT* 59 = R 442).

[13] 'Let those who are not satisfied with either of these explications of merit endeavour to give a definition of it reducing it to its simple ideas and not, as a late author has done, quarrelling with these descriptions, tell us only that it is deserving or being worthy of approbation, which is defining by giving a synonymous term.' (*IMS* 165 = R 373) On this issue about definitions see also Price, §812; Reid, §845.

[14] 'These characters belong to every true judgment. Virtue and vice equally conform to moral truth, in so far as we discern truth about them. But when we add further restrictions, our account becomes empty. 'Tis said that these moral truths intended are only such as show what actions are good, what we are obliged to do, what ought to be done. These words mean no more than the word moral goodness; and then the definition is no better than this, "the moral goodness of an action is its conformity to such true propositions as show the action to be good"; or, "good actions are such about which 'tis true that they are good". In general, all descriptions of moral goodness by conformity to reason if we examine them well, must lead us to some immediate original sense or determination of our nature. All reasons exciting to an action will lead us to some original affection or instinct of will; and all justifying reasons, or such as show an action to be good, will at last lead us to some original sense or power of perception.' (*SMP* i 4, 56–7)

But even if Balguy's account is merely synonymous, it is still informative. For if it is correct, it shows that being praised is not the same as being worthy of praise, and hence it refutes an explication that reduces being worthy of praise to being praised. Moreover, since the recognition of a justifying reason includes the recognition of something deserving approval, it is different from a feeling of approval.[15] If we identify it with a feeling of approval, we obscure the basis on which we approve. We approve an action because we see a good justifying reason for it, not because we have a feeling of approval.[16]

If we distinguish justifying reasons from feelings of approval, we can ask whether the recognition of a justifying reason for doing x is sufficient for being motivated to do x. Hutcheson's answer to this question is Yes, since he identifies the reason with the feeling of approval. Balguy is free to answer No, since his account of justifying reasons allows a possible gap between recognizing the reasons and being moved to act on them. But he answers Yes; in his view, action follows approval, and approval follows recognition of justifying reasons.[17]

This claim must be qualified to recognize a possibility that Balguy mentions: the will may exercise its capacity to rebel against the conclusion that reasonably necessarily assents to. Like Clarke, he allows this possibility, but he has some difficulty in explaining it. Though he agrees that the will sometimes rebels against rational assent, he still assumes that rational assent is normally sufficient for action, without any further approval by the will.

He overlooks, therefore, the possible position that would combine his account of justifying reasons with Hutcheson's account of exciting reasons. Perhaps he would reject such a position because it implies that rational assent always needs some non-rational impulse to produce action. Even if some opposed non-rational impulse might interfere with the normal operation of rational assent, it does not follow that its normal operation depends on a favourable non-rational impulse; it follows only that no interfering impulse is present. Balguy might reasonably observe that we often seem to act on the basis of our belief that we have a good reason to do what we try to do. If Hutcheson replies that we must nonetheless have some further non-rational impulse favouring the rational course of action, why should we agree? Either he argues illegitimately from the absence of interfering impulses to the presence of favouring impulses, or he takes his general anti-rationalist account for granted in order to dismiss apparent counter-examples. Though Balguy's discussion is rather brief,

[15] 'Internal obligation is a state of the mind into which it is brought by the perception of a plain reason for acting, or forbearing to act, arising from the nature, circumstances, or relations of persons or things. . . . The reasons of things are to men, in respect of practice, what evidence is in speculation. Assent in the one case, and approbation in the other, are equally and irresistibly gained; only there is this difference, that the will has power to rebel, and the understanding has not.' (*FMG* i = *TMT* 68–9 = R 450)

[16] For criticism of Balguy on obligation see Price, *RPQM* 114. See §818.

[17] 'What is the reason exciting a man to the choice of a virtuous action? I answer, his very approbation of it is itself a sufficient reason, wherever it is not overruled by another more powerful. What can be more just, what more natural, than choosing of a thing that we approve, and even choosing it for that reason? But why then do we approve? or what justifies our approbation of it? I answer in one word, necessity. The same necessity which compels men to assent to what is true forces them to approve what is right and fit. . . . Virtue being intrinsically worthy and excellent, fails not to produce a real affection for itself, in all minds that attentively consider it; it not only makes itself approved, but admired; not only admired, but loved, by those that contemplate it in a proper manner: and the better any one is acquainted with it by contemplation and practice, the more amiable it becomes, and the higher his affection rises. Is it then to be wondered, that rational beings should choose what they love, or, in other words, embrace an object of their affections?' (*FMG* i = *TMT* 81–2 = R 453)

it suggests reasonable doubts about the view of action and motivation defended by Hobbes, Locke, and Hutcheson.

657. Moral Judgment v. Moral Sense

To strengthen his case against sentimentalism, Balguy tries to explain how Hutcheson came to suppose that approval depends on some sentiment. He distinguishes the recognition of the beauty (pulchrum) in actions from the recognition of their rightness or fitness (honestum). Though he concedes (without actually agreeing) that the recognition of beauty varies according to different people's sense of beauty, he denies that the recognition of rightness varies in the same way.[18] In his later reflexions Balguy withdraws this concession on beauty. In his view, the qualities that Hutcheson takes to arouse beauty as an idea are really those that constitute beauty in the objects.[19] But he recognizes that Hutcheson's view is a tempting conception of beauty, and he argues that moral goodness is not to be understood by analogy with beauty (as Hutcheson understands it).[20]

Balguy argues against the conjunction of Hutcheson's two claims: (1) To be morally good is to be approved of by the moral sense. (2) The moral sense approves of benevolence. Hence he believes that he refutes Hutcheson if he can show that moral goodness consists in something other than benevolence. One might argue that this objection does not refute Hutcheson's first claim. But it is difficult to see what he could easily substitute for benevolence. Though the moral sense is not benevolence itself, but an attitude towards benevolence, it is similar to benevolence in being a disinterested pleasure at people's welfare. This pleasure is the basis for our approval of disinterested concern in others. Hence it is fair of Balguy to attack the conjunction of Hutcheson's two claims by attacking the second claim.

He argues that sometimes we recognize moral goodness in others without ascribing benevolence to them and without exercising our own moral sense. George and Louis produce the same amount of good, but George does it out of benevolent feelings and Louis does it from a sense of honour and duty. These two rulers rule two communities equally well, but George rules over his extended family, whereas Louis rules over complete strangers. In this case, according to Balguy, George acts from his benevolent affection, whereas Louis acts as he does because it is right, without any particular benevolent feeling (since he does not even know most of the people whom he rules).[21] In such cases, we not

[18] *FMG* i §5 = *TMT* 60–1 = R 443–4.

[19] He rejects the view that beauty and order are 'not real and absolute in themselves, but merely relative to our faculties, and . . . resulting entirely from the constitution and accommodation of a certain internal sense', so that they 'consist wholly in an arbitrary agreement between the objects and the sense' (*DR* 16 = *TMT* 225). Balguy's views on beauty are discussed by Kivy, *SS*, ch. 7.

[20] A sentimentalist analysis of beauty may appear plausible, if we suppose it is impossible to judge something beautiful without finding it attractive or agreeable. But even if we suppose this about beauty, we should reject (in Balguy's view) an analogous conception of moral goodness. Recognizing that an action is right is not the same as finding it attractive; hence the moral sense has no constitutive role in moral rightness.

[21] 'In the former case, a great share of the merit would be placed in the account of natural affection, commonly so called. In the latter, excepting the weaker attachment of common humanity, we discover nothing but pure virtue, and a sense of honour and duty. . . . And if instead of small governments, large and populous kingdoms could have

only attribute moral goodness to an agent who has no inclination in favour of it, but we actually attribute greater virtue to the agent who acts on the basis of recognizing rightness, apart from any inclination.[22]

These claims about the agents whose actions and characters are judged imply conclusions about the judges. If Kurt is the judge considering the actions and characters of George and Louis, does Kurt judge on the basis of approval by the moral sense? Balguy answers No, because Kurt recognizes that Louis acts out of some motive other than benevolence. Kurt recognizes this without any sensory reaction to benevolent affections. Hence Kurt's judgment that Louis acted rightly and has a good character does not consist in Kurt's favourable feeling towards Louis's benevolent affections. Hence Hutcheson's claims about the moral sense are wrong.

Balguy's objection does not depend on all his claims about George and Louis. It is enough for his purposes if we agree that our judgments about the comparative goodness of two agents are to some degree independent of our beliefs about the extent of benevolent affection in each. In such a case, the judgment about the goodness of the agents cannot be simply our feeling of approval of their degree of benevolent affection.

Hutcheson might disallow such counter-examples on the ground that they violate his internalist constraint on moral judgment. In his view, an attribution of goodness that is not a reaction of approval towards benevolence would not imply the relevant motivation in the judge; hence it could not be moral judgment. Rationalists may choose either of two replies: (1) They might simply deny the internalist constraint, and claim that moral judgment ascribes a property to an agent that may or may not arouse a favourable feeling in the judge. (2) Clarke and Balguy argue that in the normal person, in the absence of interfering factors, recognition of what is rationally required or appropriate produces the appropriate motive. If this is true of the moral judge, we can explain why Hutcheson's internalist constraint might appear true, even though it is false. For the real connexion between moral judgment and motivation, in the normal person, is not conceptual (part of what it means to be a moral judgment), but it is still necessary; normal rational agents and judges could not be indifferent to moral considerations that present demands of reason.

Hutcheson's internalist constraint, then, does not seem so clearly true that it disqualifies Balguy's examples of moral goodness and moral judgment without benevolent affections and a moral sense. Balguy argues plausibly that our ordinary moral convictions recognize possibilities that Hutcheson overlooks. Hutcheson might answer that our ordinary moral convictions are mistaken about the nature of moral goodness and of moral judgment. Our belief in the purely rational goodness of Louis and the purely rational judgment of Kurt rests on assumptions about reason that Hutcheson believes he has undermined. But he relies on questionable views about practical reason. He points out the obscurity of rationalist claims about reason and about the properties grasped by moral judgment; but he does not show that anti-rationalism is the right answer.

been supposed thus circumstanced, the different merit of the legislators would still have appeared in the same light.' (*FMG* i = *TMT* 57 = SB 534)

[22] 'To do good solely from a love of moral rectitude, without any natural impulse or incitement, seems to me the most perfect goodness that we are capable of framing any idea of; and as such, ought, I think, to be constantly ascribed to the supreme being.' (*DR* 10 = *TMT* 219)

658. Morality as an End

Balguy opposes Hutcheson's account of reasons and motives partly because he believes that it gives us a false view of possible reasons for concern with moral goodness. He agrees with Hutcheson's rejection of a purely instrumental account of morality as a means to fulfilling self-confined aims; hence he agrees that morality is to be chosen and pursued for its own sake. But he disagrees about how this is possible. Hutcheson infers that since we would have no reason to choose morality unless it satisfied some antecedent affection, we have a sense that approves benevolence for its own sake; that is the justifying reason for morality. Balguy believes that this explanation reflects a mistake about how we can choose moral goodness for its own sake. For Hutcheson still makes it subordinate to some prior affection that moves us without reference to moral goodness, so that it is not moral goodness itself that we really care about.

Balguy argues that the reasonableness of morality is the source of our affection for it, and is not derived from some prior affection.[23] Hutcheson reverses the right order of reasons and explanation insofar as he requires some affection that is prior to morality and gives us our reason to pursue it.[24] For a morally virtuous person, the requirements of morality are the source of distinctive reasons, and not derived from prior reasons.[25]

To represent the distinct place of morality in establishing reasons, Balguy suggests that Hutcheson makes moral reasons insufficiently stable. If they depended on our moral sense, we would lose them if our moral sense were to change. But this conclusion is mistaken, for in fact the reasons would remain and we would become worse by failing to recognize them.[26]

[23] 'And in respect of the divine laws, what is it that convinces us that they are just, and holy, and good? Is it their conformity to a certain disposition which we suppose in the deity? On the contrary, is it not a perception of the intrinsic reasonableness of them, and their tendency to the public good? If we impartially consult our ideas, I am persuaded we shall find that moral goodness no more depends originally on affections and dispositions, than it does on laws; and that there is something in actions, absolutely good, antecedent to both.' (*FMG* i = *TMT* 49 = SB 529)

[24] 'What I contend for at present, is, that without regarding or thinking of the pleasure it may yield, we esteem virtue or moral rectitude upon its own account; that our affection for it, is not an instinctive determination, but raised and produced in the mind by the intrinsic worth and goodness of the object. Most other objects are therefore good, because they are adapted to our faculties, or our faculties to them. But truth and virtue are good in themselves, and necessarily appear so to all beings capable of perceiving them: their excellence is not borrowed or adventitious, but inherent and essential: they reflect not a foreign light, but shine like the sun, with their own proper rays and native lustre.' (*FMG* i = *TMT* 79 = SB 556)

[25] 'I affirm and maintain, that though moral good greatly promotes natural good, it is moreover in itself an absolute good. What proof can we give of the absolute goodness of pleasure, but that we approve of it, upon its own account, and pursue it for its own sake? The same proof we have of the absolute goodness of virtue, which, considered by itself, and abstract from every other thing, necessarily extorts our approbation, and appears worthy of our choice. Our approving and admiring it antecedently to those satisfactions which flow from it, is an undeniable proof of its absolute and inherent worth.—And as virtue is absolute good, as well as pleasure, so that it is of a different and superior kind, evidently appears from this single consideration; that whereas natural objects are only therefore good, because they gratify; moral objects therefore gratify, because they are good. Natural good is mere gratification. In moral good there is gratification likewise, and that of the best and noblest kind; but it is the consequence of original and essential goodness. The correspondence or congruity between natural objects and their faculties, is arbitrary and mutable; between moral objects and their faculties, necessary and immutable.' (*FMG* i = *TMT* 89–90 = SB 570)

[26] 'He grants, (speaking of virtue) that the lovely form never fails to raise desire, as soon as it appears. But this desire, according to his notion, is only an instinctive affection, suited and accommodated to its object. And even this object, virtue itself, which he calls a lovely form, appears, I think, in his representation, far less lovely than it really is. For he has represented this loveliness, not as absolute and necessarily inherent, but as factitious and communicated. According to him, suppose but the moral sense inverted, and then vice, as we now call it, becomes the lovely form. But surely

On this point Balguy believes the Stoics are right.[27] Though they are wrong to suppose that moral virtue is the only good, they have seen that morality is a source of non-derivative reasons.

These claims about virtue help to explain what Balguy means in saying that virtue is good 'in itself' and that sentimentalism does not show that it is good in itself.[28] To say that it is good in itself is not only to say that it is good non-instrumentally; everything that, apart from its consequences, satisfies an antecedent desire meets this condition. Virtue is good in itself because it is good without reference to anything external to it; hence its goodness is not relative to any affections that it satisfies.[29]

It is not completely clear, however, what Balguy's condition allows and what it excludes. He is right to object to Hutcheson's view that the value of virtue is derived from approval by the moral sense; that view overlooks the fact that we expect morality to form our ends, and not simply to promote or to achieve ends that we already pursue. But does he also mean, for instance, that virtue cannot be worth choosing for any features that we can describe in non-moral terms? Does he, for instance, deny that the value of virtue might consist in its fulfilling the human function or being in accord with human nature? That seems to depend on whether these properties belong to virtue itself, or are simply coincidental to it. Since Balguy does not answer these questions, his demand that we value virtue for itself does not isolate the theories that respect his demand from those that do not. Nonetheless, his demand casts reasonable doubt on a sentimentalist theory.

659. How is the Moral Sense Corrigible?

In claiming that Hutcheson fails to show how moral virtue can be valued for itself, Balguy attacks not only Hutcheson's anti-rationalist moral psychology, but also his epistemology and metaphysics of morality. Hutcheson's account of the moral sense maintains an internal connexion between moral judgment and motivation. It also includes an epistemological claim, that moral judgment is not a kind of rational belief and judgment, and a metaphysical

this is a misrepresentation of virtue, the excellence of which is not precarious nor derived, but essential, absolute, and independent.' (*FMG* i = *TMT* 80 = SB 557)

[27] 'Thus it is with right reason, or moral good. It shows indeed how to proceed in our inferior pursuits, and gives weight to our least actions; but at the same time it raises our minds to higher contemplations, and presents itself to our view, as an object of supreme worth, and unrivalled perfection. So great and splendid did this good appear to some of the ancient philosophers, that it dazzled their eyes, and overpowered their senses. All inferior objects vanished before it, and they could find no good in anything else. But as it is not true, that virtue is the only good: so much less is it true that there is no intrinsic goodness in it; or that it is not worthy to be pursued for its own sake.' (*FMG* ii 11 = *TMT* 128)

[28] 'For in virtue there is an inherent worth, an objective perfection. It is essentially good in it self, and has no dependence on any agents, or any faculties. As such, it is upon its own account, and for its own sake, worthy to be chosen and pursued by moral agents, who cannot but acknowledge and admire its intrinsic excellence.' (*FMG* ii 11 = *TMT* 129–30 = SB 724)

[29] 'But let us suppose virtue and interest neither in conjunction nor opposition; or let us suppose a man in possession of all his desires. Would it, upon this supposition, be wrong and foolish in him, to perform several actions, merely because he saw them to be just, fit, reasonable, virtuous? If it would, the consequence must be, that the same action may be right and wrong, reasonable and unreasonable at the same time. I mean, not in different respects, but upon the whole, which is a manifest contradiction.' (*FMG* ii 10 = *TMT* 127)

claim, that moral properties are not features of the actions and people to whom we seem to ascribe them, but are ideas in our minds. Hutcheson derives this denial of externality from his conception of a sense and its objects. But even if he did not deny the externality of moral properties, his conception of the moral sense would commit him to a further metaphysical claim about stability and objectivity. In claiming that moral goodness is essentially what is approved by the moral sense, he implies that any change in our moral sense would also be a change in what is morally right.

Burnet and Balguy appeal to claims about corrigibility that Cudworth uses against Hobbes.[30] Cudworth argues that obligation cannot be reduced to commands, because it is open to us to ask whether the commander has the appropriate authority and a command cannot establish its authority simply by commanding. Burnet uses this argument against Hutcheson's conception of the moral sense. In his view, we are justified in relying on the reactions of the moral sense only insofar as we have some reason to believe that it captures moral rightness. Hence we have to face a real question about moral rightness that is not answered by simply recording the reaction of the moral sense. Since we face such a question, moral rightness is antecedent to the moral sense, not constituted by the reactions of the moral sense.[31] The moral sense is corrigible in principle by reflexion on whether it accurately represents the properties it purports to represent.[32]

Hutcheson answers that he can readily allow the moral sense to be corrigible in the same way as other senses are corrigible. The fact that sight is corrigible does not show that colours are not essentially the objects of a sense. Similarly, the moral sense is corrigible, but moral properties are essentially the objects of a sense. We can correct a particular sense on a particular occasion by taking a closer look, or by reference to how things generally look to that sense. We can even correct one person's senses by reference to how things generally look to normal perceivers. The moral sense is corrigible in the same way. When we learn more about the effects of an apparently benevolent action, for instance, our initial feeling of approval may change to a feeling of disapproval. And if we find we are eccentric in our

[30] On Cudworth see §548. On Balguy and Burnet see Winkler, 'Realism' 190, on the 'inverted moral spectrum'. The questions that they raise are relevant to dispositional theories of value, such as those discussed by Smith, Lewis, Johnston, 'Dispositional'. Wright, 'Values' 8–9, briefly discusses the objection that 'if some practice stops having a certain sort of moral effect on us—not because of any change in its manner, circumstances, or other effects, but because *we* change—a dispositional account of moral qualities has no option . . . but to construe that as a change in the moral status of the practice, even if our preferred description of the case would invoke the ideas of improved or deteriorated moral discrimination.' Wright thinks this objection can be answered by an appropriate description of the kind of subject whose dispositions are being considered. He mentions (9n) that one might say that moral rightness is a property that provokes our actual reactions (as opposed to those that it would provoke if we were to change). This suggestion is explored by Lewis, 'Dispositional' 127.

[31] 'The perception of pleasure, therefore, which is the description this author has given of the moral sense, seems to me not to be a certain enough rule to follow. There must be, I should think, something antecedent to justify it and to render it a real good. It must be a reasonable pleasure before it be a right one or fit to be encouraged or listened to.' (*IMS* 204)

[32] 'Thus, as deriving virtue merely from natural affection, implies it to be of an arbitrary and changeable nature; our judging and approving of it by a moral sense implies the same: forasmuch as this sense, as well as that affection, might possibly have been quite contrary to what it is at present; or may be altered at any time hereafter. Accordingly our author grants, there is nothing in this surpassing the natural power of the deity. But I humbly apprehend he is mistaken; and that it is no more in the power of the deity to make rational beings approve of ingratitude, perfidiousness, &c. than it is in his power to make them conclude, that a part of any thing is equal to the whole.' (Balguy, *FMG* i = *TMT* 62 = SB 538)

approvals, we can correct them by reference to the moral sense of other people. Though we can correct our moral perceptions, moral properties are essentially the objects of a moral sense.[33]

Hutcheson is right to say that sometimes we correct a sense by reference to the perceptions of healthy or normal perceivers, even though we take the object of the sense to depend essentially on their reactions. Hence we might say that some jokes are not really funny, because they strike some people, but not most people, as funny. We do not imagine that we are pointing out some feature of a joke that is independent of the reactions of hearers. If we originally found the joke funny, we may not find it less funny when we recognize that it is not really funny, because it affects other people differently from how it affects us. This sort of corrigibility raises no difficulty for Hutcheson.

But this is not the only way we can correct the senses. Even if we took colours to be in some way relative to the usual perceiver, we would not need to endorse Hutcheson's account. We might say that red is essentially the property that causes such-and-such reactions. Our definition would be relative to certain reactions, but the continued existence of the colours themselves would not depend on the continued existence of the perceivers with these reactions.[34] A key that is made to open a lock of a specific shape may still exist even if there is no lock with that shape. Hence we need not infer that the continued existence of colours depends on the reactions of perceivers.

Nor is it clear that we take the objects of sense to be relative to the usual perceiver. When we correct one person's perception of colour by reference to the perceptions of 'normal' and 'healthy' perceivers, we take the 'healthy' perceiver to be not the usual perceiver, but the perceiver who is best at detecting actual redness (whatever we take this to be). If most people were a little colour-blind to differences between red and green, we would not infer that the colours of red and green traffic lights are the same. We rely on the judgments of the people we take to be better at detecting red and green. Hence we believe that colours exist apart from particular perceivers, or the most usual type of perceiver. We rely on this belief when we correct some perceivers, and when we take some to be better than others.

But whatever we think about ways of correcting the ordinary senses, the moral sense seems to be open to corrections that conflict with Hutcheson's conception. A correction of

[33] 'We do not denominate objects from our perceptions during the disorder, but according to our ordinary perceptions, or those of others in good health. Yet nobody imagines that therefore colours, sounds, tastes, are not sensible ideas.' (*IMS* 163 = R 371) 'Our reason often corrects the report of our senses about the natural tendency of the external action and corrects rash conclusions about the affections of the agent.' (*IMS* 164 = R 371) 'But must we not own, that we judge of all our senses by our reason, and often correct their reports of the magnitude, figure, colour, taste of objects, and pronounce them right or wrong, as they agree or disagree with reason? This is true. But does it then follow, that extension, figure, colour, taste, are not sensible ideas, but only denote reasonableness, or agreement with reason? Or that these qualities are perceivable antecedently to any sense, by our power of finding out truth? Just so a compassionate temper may rashly imagine the correction of a child, or the execution of a criminal, to be cruel and inhuman: but by reasoning may discover the superior good arising from them in the whole; and then the same moral sense may determine the observer to approve them. But we must not hence conclude, that it is any reasoning antecedent to a moral sense, which determines us to approve the study of public good, any more than we can in the former case conclude, that we perceive extension, figure, colour, taste, antecedently to a sense. All these sensations are often corrected by reasoning, as well as our approbations of actions as good or evil: and yet no body ever placed the original idea of extension, figure, colour, or taste, in conformity to reason.' (*IMS* 134–5 = R 365)

[34] See Hutcheson, §642.

someone's judgment compares it with the judgment of good moral judges, not simply with usual moral judges. Moreover, we assume that good judges are good because they detect the relevant properties. Hence the moral properties exist independently of the reactions of good judges; if they did not, good judges would not detect them. Moral properties, therefore, are not essentially what the moral sense approves of.

We might also suggest, on behalf of the rationalists, that moral properties are different from the objects of the senses in a further way that Hutcheson does not notice. Even if we deny that sensory properties depend on being perceived, or on the existence of a particular type of perceiver, we might argue that they are essentially sensory. If they were not in some way capable of being perceived by the senses, they would not be (we might say) the properties they are. If a property lacked even this connexion to sight, we might conclude that it is not colour. This, however, does not seem to be true of moral properties. For moral goodness seems to be defined by reference to agents and actions, not by reference to the sensory reactions of spectators and judges. If it is essential to colour, sound, and so on that they can be immediately grasped by a special sense, moral properties seem to be disanalogous in this respect, and do not seem to be essentially sensory properties.

Burnet and Balguy argue that we are justified in accepting the reactions of our moral sense to the extent that we believe, for reasons not derived wholly from the moral sense, that it detects moral properties that are not essentially dependent on it. Since we can assess the correctness of our affective reactions by principles that are not derived wholly from these reactions, moral judgment does not seem to be simply the concern of the moral sense. Hutcheson allows that moral judgments are corrigible, and argues that his theory allows for the relevant sort of correction. If he is wrong, a defence of sentimentalism needs to show that the rationalists are wrong about the extent to which we can correct the moral sense.

660. Balguy, Hutcheson, and Euthyphro

If Hutcheson were right to take moral properties to depend essentially on the moral sense, moral rightness would change if our moral sense were to approve different things. The moral sense theory, therefore, does not make morality 'eternal and immutable' in Cudworth's sense. Cudworth attacks Hobbes for making morality mutable in relation to decisions of legislators. Balguy develops Cudworth's argument by applying it to the moral sense. He argues that Hutcheson makes morality inappropriately mutable just as Hobbes does.[35]

This may seem an unfair attack on Hutcheson. For he follows Shaftesbury and (without knowing it) Cudworth in defending the natural character of morality against those voluntarists who make it depend on law, artifice, or convention. In Hutcheson's view, 'our first ideas of moral good depend not on laws'. For when we ask whether laws are just, we are not asking simply whether they are laws; and when we ask whether what God wills is just we

[35] Balguy had no direct access to Cudworth's work before the first publication of *FMG* i in 1728. But he could have derived his argument from reflexion on Clarke.

are not simply asking whether God wills it. We cannot reasonably ask whether God wills what God wills, but we can reasonably ask whether what God wills is just.[36]

Hutcheson observes that voluntarist writers try to reassure us by asserting that since God is good, what God wills is also good, so that we need not worry about whether what God wills might be bad. He remarks that this assertion, as defenders of voluntarism intend it, depends on the non-voluntarist belief that being good consists in something more than in being willed by God; for the voluntarist reassures us only if we take 'God's will is good' to say more than that God's will is God's will. The same objection holds if a voluntarist tries to reassure us by asserting that since God is good, God wills what God ought to will. These claims are reassuring only if we understand 'ought' in ways that are inconsistent with the theological moralist's explanation.[37] Hence the reassurance that voluntarists offer is reassuring only if it is understood so as to conflict with voluntarism.

Balguy acknowledges that Hutcheson presents these arguments against voluntarism.[38] But he believes that, even if Hutcheson tries to avoid voluntarism, sentimentalism repeats the central errors of voluntarism, and is therefore open to Cudworth's objections against Hobbes.[39] For it seems that a reasonable question can be asked about whether what the moral sense approves is good. In asking this question, we are not asking whether the moral sense approves what it approves. The latter question is easily answered, but the question we want to ask is not so easily answered.

The same objection can be expressed through Cudworth's argument about mutability. According to the sentimentalist, what is morally right is right insofar as it appeals to our actual sympathetic and benevolent feelings. What is right would change, therefore, if these feelings changed. If we make morality mutable in this way, we distort the character of moral principles and our reason for observing them.[40] In this objection, Balguy adapts Socrates'

[36] 'But to call the laws of the supreme Deity *good* or *holy* or *just*, if all goodness, holiness, and justice be constituted by laws, or the will of a superior any way revealed, must be an insignificant tautology, amounting to no more than this, 'that God wills what he wills. Or that his will is conformable to his will'. It must then first be supposed that there is something in actions which is apprehended absolutely good ...' (Hutcheson, *IMGE* 7.5 = L 181 (and n17) = R 351) For discussion see Price, §811.

[37] 'The writers ... who deduce all ideas of good and evil from the private advantage of the actor, or from relation to a law and its sanctions, either known from reason, or revelation, are perpetually recurring to this moral sense which they deny; not only in calling the laws of the Deity just and good, and alleging justice and right in the Deity to govern us; but by using a set of words which import something different from what they will allow to be their only meaning. Obligation, with them, is only such a constitution, either of nature, or some governing power, as makes it advantageous for the agent to act in a certain manner. Let this definition be substituted, wherever we meet with the words, ought, should, must, in a moral sense, and many of their sentences would seem very strange; as that the deity must act rationally, must not, or ought not to punish the innocent, must make the state of the virtuous better than that of the wicked, must observe promises; substituting the definition of the words, must, ought, should, would make these sentences either ridiculous, or very disputable.' (*IMGE* 7.4 = L 180 = R 350)

[38] 'I am as unwilling, as our author can be, that virtue should be looked upon as wholly artificial. Let it by all means be represented as natural to us; let it take its rise, and flow unalterably from the nature of men and things, and then it will appear not only natural but necessary.' (Balguy, *FMG* i = *TMT* 46 = SB 527)

[39] 'Our author ... has made the following observation, that our first ideas of moral good depend not on laws, may plainly appear from our constant inquiries into the justice of laws themselves; and that not only of human laws, but also of the divine. What else can be the meaning of that universal opinion, that the laws of God are just, and holy, and good? Very right. But I wonder much this sentiment should not have led the author to the true original idea of moral goodness. For after we have made such inquiries, do we find reason to conclude, that any laws are good, merely from their being conformable to the affections of the legislator?' (*FMG* i = *TMT* 48–9 = SB 529)

[40] '... it seems an insuperable difficulty in our author's scheme, that virtue appears in it to be of an arbitrary and positive nature; as entirely depending upon instincts, that might originally have been otherwise, or even contrary to

challenge to Euthyphro and Cudworth's challenge to voluntarism, in order to show that Hutcheson has not escaped the basic objection.[41]

This adaptation of the argument against voluntarism assumes that facts about our approval are not relevant to an action's changing from being right to being wrong. If God's changing his mind makes no difference to the facts that determine rightness and wrongness, why should a change in our mind make a difference? The basic objection to voluntarism assumes that the facts relevant to rightness and wrongness are facts about human beings, their nature, and their environment, not facts about anyone's attitude to these things. If this objection defeats voluntarism, it should, as Balguy sees, defeat sentimentalism as well.

661. Hutcheson and Open Questions

To see whether Balguy is right to use Cudworth's arguments about mutability and open questions against Hutcheson, we need to distinguish two ways of understanding the claim that an alleged definition leaves an open question: (1) A semantic open question. When Shaftesbury and Hutcheson suggest that substitution of 'willed by God' for 'good' in 'Good is what is willed by God' reduces a non-tautologous sentence to a tautology, they might be observing that 'good' and 'willed by God' do not mean the same. (2) A moral open question. When Cudworth claims that Hobbes's account of right as what the legislator wills leaves a question open, he means that it leaves open a reasonable moral question, and so does not give a satisfactory account of what rightness consists in, which would be a satisfactory explanation of what makes things right.[42]

We might defend Hutcheson by relying on the difference between these two types of open question. Perhaps Balguy's objection proves only that the moral sense theory creates a semantic open question about 'right' and 'approved by the moral sense', so that we cannot claim that 'right' means 'approved by the moral sense'. But the moral sense theory is not intended—Hutcheson might reply—as an account of the meaning of moral terms, and so the presence of semantic open questions raises no difficulty for it.

But if Hutcheson relies on this defence, he raises a doubt about his objection to theological voluntarism. He seems to say that he has identified a semantic open question (when he says that substitutions would make the sentences either ridiculous or very disputable). But why should theological voluntarists not reply that they do not intend to analyse the meaning of moral terms, but to give an account of what moral rightness consists in? Semantic open questions do not necessarily undermine such an account.[43]

Hutcheson does not attack theological voluntarism simply because he thinks it gives the wrong analysis of the meaning of 'good' and 'right'. He does not intend to concede that it may be a correct account, for all he has said, of what moral goodness and rightness consist in. If he has given a reason to reject voluntarism as an account of moral goodness, he should

what they are now, and may at any time be altered or inverted if the Creator pleases. If our affections constitute the honestum of a morality, and do not presuppose it, it is natural to ask, what it was that determined the Deity to plant in us those affections rather than any other?' (*FMG* i = *TMT* 46–7 = R 438).

[41] See Clarke, §617. [42] On this distinction see §815.

[43] See Adams's defence of theological voluntarism in 'Wrongness'.

take the open questions he has raised to be moral, and not merely semantic. His position is consistent if he maintains that his attack on voluntarism identifies moral open questions, whereas Balguy's attack on him identifies only semantic open questions.

But are Hutcheson's open questions about voluntarism so different from Balguy's open questions about sentimentalism? If Hutcheson rejects theological voluntarism, he agrees that counterfactuals such as 'If God commanded us to kill innocent people for fun, it would be right to kill them for fun' raise legitimate doubts about the voluntarist position. They raise such doubts if we consider a case where nothing about the innocence of the people or the value of their life is different, and only God's attitude to these things is different. If we doubt whether what is right and wrong would change, we assume that rightness and wrongness depend on facts about the victims, their killers, and their environment, not on someone's attitude to these facts. But once we understand our doubts, we seem equally justified in asking similar questions about such counterfactuals as 'If the moral sense approved of killing innocent people for fun, it would be right to kill them for fun'. In this case also, all the morally relevant facts are the same, and someone's attitude to them is the only different feature of the case.

Balguy has a reasonable ad hominem objection, therefore, to Hutcheson, given Hutcheson's use of open questions. It is more than an ad hominem objection, however, if the assumptions underlying Balguy's appeals to open questions are reasonable.

662. Divine Goodness: Bayes and Grove

Hutcheson argues that theological voluntarism cannot give a plausible account of God's moral attributes.[44] Against the voluntarist view, he affirms that God is essentially benevolent. Since we know this about God, we also know that it is not an accident that we have the moral sense that we have. Our approval of benevolence results from God's benevolent choice to give us a moral sense that approves of actions promoting our greatest good.

Hutcheson's claims about God provoke a controversy between Balguy, Bayes, and Grove about whether God acts out of rectitude (Balguy), benevolence (Bayes), or wisdom (Grove) (114).[45] Bayes defends Hutcheson's position, on the ground that it offers the only clear account of the divine nature. He complains that appeals to divine rectitude are too vague unless they are explicated by further attributes of God (*DB* 8). We cannot appeal to divine justice to show that divine benevolence is limited by other moral criteria; for justice needs a utilitarian analysis (10). Similarly, it is unhelpful to appeal to fitness, as Clarke and Balguy do; for fitness has to be fitness for some end. If (as Bayes supposes) utilitarian benevolence provides the only suitable end, Balguy does not offer a genuine alternative to a utilitarian account (14). If we attribute non-utilitarian aims to God we make God's aims unknowable (18), and we introduce untenable distinctions. Bayes argues that we cannot reasonably

[44] The voluntarist seems to be forced to say that God's goodness consists in the fact that God wills whatever he wills, since all goodness consists simply in being willed by God. Even if God cares about the sorts of things we regard as morally good, that is simply a fact about God's will; God does not will them because they are good, since their goodness is nothing more than God's willing them. Hutcheson rejects the conclusion that whatever God willed, it would be good.

[45] See Balguy, *DR*; Bayes, *DB*; Grove, *WFSAD*.

distinguish just punishment from punishment aiming at good consequences (49), and that we cannot distinguish good order in the universe from general happiness. Similarly, Balguy's suggestion that God aims at objective beauty in the universe is misguided, since there is no objective beauty. Balguy confuses beauty itself with the cause of beauty, as if one were to say that heat is the 'intestine motion of particles of bodies', when one really means that this motion is the cause of heat (43).

In reply to Bayes's defence of Hutcheson both Grove and Balguy deny that God's moral nature consists entirely or primarily in utilitarian benevolence. Grove's argument for divine wisdom is directed against voluntarism and anti-rationalism as well as utilitarianism. He claims that if we attribute moral perfections to God, we must also ascribe rightness and wrongness to actions independently of God's choosing them.[46] He also rejects Hutcheson's claim that, since the choice of ends depend on affection rather than reason, God's wisdom consists simply in the knowledge of means, not in the choice of ends. Hence Grove rejects Hutcheson's views on exciting and justifying reasons (18).[47] He agrees with Balguy in believing that Hutcheson's conception of benevolence as a psychological necessity for God is no better than the Cartesian ascription of arbitrary choice to God.[48] A voluntarist cannot explain the difference between God's right and God's power, and hence cannot resist Hobbes's argument for deriving God's right from God's power.[49] Those who accept extreme Calvinist views find themselves in this Hobbesian position.

Those who believe that God's choice of moral principles results from necessary divine benevolence cannot, in Grove's view, explain how either God or human agents choose their actions freely, or how vicious people are responsible for their vice. Vicious people, like God, follow their inclinations; how can they help it if their inclinations are different from God's? They cannot be expected to act so as to change their inclinations, since such action would have to proceed from their present inclination (*WFSAD* 96).

One difference between naturalists and voluntarists may be expressed in the question whether obedience to God is prior to imitation of God. Grove argues against Warburton that imitation is prior.[50] The priority of imitation implies that we recognize the wisdom of God in preferring actions that are right in themselves, so that we accept the divine law.

[46] 'That there are different moral kinds of action, some fit, others unfit to be done, some becoming, others unbecoming the supreme being, and this independently of his choosing or willing them, is as evident, as that there are moral perfections and excellencies belonging to the divine nature.' (Grove, *WFSAD* 1)

[47] 'As certainly . . . as all the ways of God are wise and righteous and good, they are the result of wisdom and not of unguided inclinations. The same wisdom that discovers the reasonableness of one end, one scheme, one method to another, is inducement enough to a being in whom there is the most perfect rectitude of nature, to prefer that end, that scheme, that method in all his works.' (*WFSAD* 19)

[48] He quotes at length from Descartes, *Reply to Sixth Objections* §6, who argues that omnipotence of God implies complete indifference between alternative options. Grove's argument is quite similar to Cudworth's, though it might equally be derived from Clarke (*WFSAD* 23–5).

[49] 'And if there be no difference between physical and moral power, or between mere power and right . . . we have then no absolute security that God will not thus act [sc. damn his innocent creatures]; and how much better, I pray, is the sovereignty ascribed by some to the most excellent of all beings than this monstrous, this boundless right of Hobbes? For my part, I cannot see wherein they differ; since each, like a vast abyss, swallows up without distinction everything that is thrown into it. In all likelihood, Hobbes had never thought of that absurd notion, or would have been ashamed to broach it, if the then reigning systems in divinity had not given authority to that and several other parts of his wild scheme of religion, morality, and politics.' (*WFSAD* 26)

[50] 'Imitation is prior to obedience. My reason for asserting this is, that to obey God presupposes our having made a right use of our intellectual powers and faculties, the result of which is a conviction that God hath given us a law which

Doddridge favours the views of Balguy and Grove over the utilitarianism assumed by Bayes's argument for God's necessary benevolence.[51] His conclusion is similar to Butler's view that benevolence is not the only relevant moral attribute of God. Doddridge believes God is perfectly good or benevolent, insofar as God 'promotes the happiness of others so far as it is fit to be promoted' (*Course* 111). The qualification rejects the attribution of a maximizing utilitarian attitude to God.

It would be consistent to agree with Doddridge and Grove about the divine nature against voluntarists and sentimentalists, and still to accept utilitarianism; for one might argue that a perfectly reasonable agent will accept utilitarianism. Cumberland holds that God rationally chooses to promote the common good because this is the reasonable end; and one might defend a parallel claim about utility. Hutcheson's rationalist opponents, however, deny that practical reason supports utilitarianism; Balguy, Butler, Doddridge, and Price all maintain that practical reason imposes some limits on the pursuit of maximum utility. In defending utilitarianism on rationalist grounds Sidgwick accepts a position that his 18th-century predecessors consider and reject.[52]

663. How Sentimentalism Agrees with Voluntarism

Hutcheson's theory implies that God is good insofar as our moral sense approves of his character and actions. This account of God's goodness implies that if our moral sense were to change and no longer approve benevolence, God would no longer be good. This result seems even more surprising than the voluntarist claim that if God were to will that we act cruelly rather than kindly, kindness would no longer be good. Instead of making our goodness depend on God, the sentimentalist seems to make God's goodness depend on ours.

Hutcheson might answer that though this change in us is logically possible, God's goodness prevents it. For God, out of goodness towards us, has given us a moral sense that approves of benevolence, and God will not change his mind. This defence leads Balguy to ask why God maintains his goodness. He raises this question in discussing Hutcheson's account of how God's goodness explains the uniformity of the moral sense. According to Hutcheson God is benevolent, and necessarily communicates to us the moral sense that is best for human beings.

Balguy objects that this account of God's goodness makes God's goodness a mere fact of God's nature that is independent of God's wisdom, and hence implies that God is not free.[53]

we are bound to obey, and a resolution to obey it. Now in this right use of our faculties, we evidently imitate the supreme of all beings who constantly exerts his most perfect knowledge and power after the most perfect manner.' (*WFSAD* 101)

[51] 'It seems that a virtuous mind may be as easy, in considering God as a being of universal rectitude, as if we were to consider him as a being of unbounded benevolence: nay it seems, that in some respects the former will have the advantage; as it is impossible for us confidently to say, what will be for the greatest happiness of the whole; but on the other hand, we may naturally conclude that rectitude will on the whole incline God to treat the virtuous man in a more favourable manner than the wicked.' (Doddridge, *Course* 117) Cf. §877.

[52] See Sidgwick, *ME*, p. xx ('a utilitarian on an intuitional basis').

[53] 'But will not that disposition, and that principle in the Deity, which are supposed to correspond to our natural affections, and moral sense, certainly incline him universally to communicate and continue that same sense to all rational

We might think this is a dangerous objection for Balguy to raise; for he does not believe it is possible, given the nature of God, for God to approve of what is evil. Does he not also deny that God is free? If so, his charge against Hutcheson rebounds on him. Balguy, however, might fairly answer that God's recognizing a truth that is not subject to his will is not a limitation on his freedom. Given the nature of God, God chooses freely to act according to true principles of right. But if God is necessitated by a fact about his nature independent of his judgments of truth and right, he is not free.

From the rationalist point of view, Hutcheson's position implies that the ends God achieves in the world do not reflect God's wisdom, since, according to the sentimentalist, wisdom and reason do not apply to the choice of ends. But if we reflect on the wisdom and goodness of God, we must—according to the rationalists—include the ends that God achieves in creation.[54] If, as Hutcheson implies, these ends are not the result of God's wisdom in choosing, God is no wiser in choosing to benefit the creation than he would be in choosing to torture his innocent creatures.[55]

It would not help Hutcheson to answer that God is free not to communicate his moral sense to us. For then Balguy might reasonably ask why God chooses to communicate it. Hutcheson cannot say that God sees that this is the right thing to do, since what is right (according to Hutcheson) is simply what is approved by the moral sense. It must, then, be an arbitrary choice by God.

These arguments seek to show that Hutcheson cannot answer the charge of arbitrariness and positivity by appealing to God; he cannot say that the moral sense is reliable because God has given it to us out of his goodness. If God's goodness is simply God's having the qualities that God's moral sense approves, the resort to God simply pushes the arbitrariness back a step. If, however, this is not the right account of God's goodness, goodness is not simply what elicits the approval of the moral sense.

On the ground that he has chosen, Balguy's objections are powerful. Hutcheson would be well advised to deny him this ground. Balguy assumes that moral properties cannot be arbitrary or mutable in certain ways, because we can give a further reason, in the nature of the properties themselves, for judging the moral sense to be right or wrong. Hutcheson

agents? I answer, that this being the ground or foundation of the supposed demonstration here spoken of, must itself be antecedently proved: . . . Now there is no way to secure this fundamental point, but by showing that such a disposition in the Deity is strictly necessary. And this, I presume, is not possible to be shown. To suppose the benevolence of the Deity strictly necessary is to resolve all his proceedings and dispensations into absolute fatality.' (*FMG* ii 21 = *TMT* 163)

[54] Balguy, *DR* 10.

[55] 'Ends are either ultimate or subordinate. Ultimate ends determine themselves, as being necessarily approved. The ultimate end of the deity in all his acts of creation and providence, I humbly suppose to be moral good. Every thing is to be referred to this, and resolved into it. Why did he at first produce the universe? Why does he still preserve and cherish it? Why replenish it continually with variety of good? Because he sees it to be absolutely right and fit so to do. Or in other words, because the purest and most perfect reason directs him to it. Though therefore reason, or intelligence, considered as an attribute, do not make this end; yet it discovers it to be, what it really is in it self, an absolute, essential, and necessary good; and by consequence, the true ultimate end not only of the supreme being, but of every moral agent.' (*FMG* ii 25 = *TMT* 172 = SB 732) Grove agrees with Balguy: 'That there are different moral kinds of action, some fit, others unfit to be done, some becoming, others unbecoming the supreme being, and this independently of his choosing or willing them, is as evident, as that there are moral perfections and excellencies belonging to the divine nature.' (*WFSAD* 1) 'As certainly . . . as all the ways of God are wise and righteous and good, they are the result of wisdom and not of unguided inclinations. The same wisdom that discovers the reasonableness of one end, one scheme, one method to another, is inducement enough to a being in whom there is the most perfect rectitude of nature, to prefer that end, that scheme, that method in all his works.' (19)

might reply that Balguy's assumption is unjustified. Since the only intelligible account of moral properties makes them dependent on the reactions of the moral sense, our view that they are non-arbitrary and immutable in certain ways turns out to be unjustified.[56] Balguy's assumptions, we might say, are question-begging, since a defender of a moral sense theory has no reason to concede them.[57]

If this reply is open to Hutcheson, Balguy's argument about mutability and about open questions is not a conclusive refutation of sentimentalism. Still, the reply raises a further doubt. For if a moral sense theory implies radical conclusions about mutability, are the reasons for accepting such a theory so cogent that they justify us in overturning the convictions that conflict with the theory? Hutcheson can hardly answer this question by dismissing the objections based on claims about mutability. For he relies on the same objections in arguing against voluntarism. Hence he cannot reasonably dismiss Balguy's objections as question-begging, since they rely on open questions that Hutcheson takes seriously.

664. Rationalism and Utilitarianism

Balguy is sympathetic to Hutcheson's utilitarianism, though he does not entirely endorse it; but he argues that sentimentalism does not offer a satisfactory defence of utilitarianism. Within Hutcheson's position the passion of benevolence connects sentimentalist meta-ethical theory with utilitarian normative theory. It is a non-rational passion that provides both exciting and (indirectly) justifying reasons; if we act on it and approve of it, we conform to the utilitarian standard. Balguy rejects this view of benevolence, arguing that the moral principle of benevolence is not a passion, but a rational principle.[58]

This rational principle is 'calm, universal benevolence'. In calling it calm and universal Balguy follows Hutcheson, who recognizes that the benevolence required by utilitarianism is not the confined sentiment that we are familiar with. But Balguy argues that utilitarian benevolence, a completely impartial commitment to maximizing the general good, is not simply the result of our particular passions of benevolence. Not only do sentimentalism and utilitarianism fail to support each other; they actually conflict.

Balguy does not object to Hutcheson's account of the content of utilitarianism. In particular, he does not distinguish Cumberland's conception of the common good of rational beings from Hutcheson's maximizing conception that allows us harm one person in order to raise the total good. He speaks of a universal good that 'includes' the private good

[56] This is the conclusion Hume draws. See his letter in Greig, *LDH*, no.16, quoted in §759.

[57] We might cope with some objections about mutability by introducing a rigid designator. We might say that what is right is what is approved of now or at some other fixed time or place, and say that what is right remains the same even if people's moral sense differs over time. (See Lewis, §659 above.) But it is difficult to see what would justify picking on one time rather than another. The introduction of a rigid designator seems to imply that we (or any others introduced by the rigid designator) are incorrigible about what is morally right.

[58] 'It cannot, I think be denied, but that calm, universal benevolence, in praise and preference of which our author often speaks, is more owing to reason and reflexion than natural instinct, wherever it appears. And supposing us naturally void of public affection, I doubt not but reason and reflexion would raise such a benevolence as this, in considerate minds.' (*FMG* i = *TMT* 78 = SB 555)

of every individual.[59] He might intend to express Cumberland's conception of a common good, which would require us to aim at the good of every individual, and would prohibit the sacrifice of one individual to another. But it is not clear that Balguy means this. He may mean simply that we calculate the total good by summing the goods and evils of all individuals involved. This way of understanding the universal good is Hutcheson's way; it does not prohibit, but even requires, the sacrifice of some people's good as a means to a higher total. Balguy does not say why this is a reasonable end for morality.

In recognizing a rational principle of benevolence Balguy agrees with Clarke, who regards benevolence as one aspect of what is fit and right. He describes the pursuit of universal good as the 'primary dictate' of right reason. We might assume that the primary dictate is the supreme principle, from which other principles are derived or to which they are subordinate. This, however, is not Clarke's view. Clarke claims that our moral convictions are immediate; they rely on features of a specific situation itself, rather than on calculations, direct or indirect, about consequences. Similarly, Balguy believes that relations of fitness are not confined to the utilitarian principle, and that they impose non-utilitarian requirements. A solitary agent's reasonable treatment of his own needs and desires would display moral virtue, even if no one else stood to benefit.[60]

Balguy takes a non-utilitarian position on divine goodness and rectitude. Against Hutcheson and Bayes, he affirms that God is moved by other considerations besides benevolence. These include the intrinsic beauty of the universe, and considerations of justice and retribution that cannot be reduced to utility. God seeks a proportion between virtue and happiness that is distinct from a desire to maximize utility. Balguy does not consider how far these principles are compatible with utility, or how one ought to resolve conflicts between them. He assumes that justice guides God to act in ways that do not maximize universal happiness; that is why Bayes criticizes him for implying that God cannot be relied on to pursue the primary aim of maximizing our happiness.[61]

665. What is Fitness?

To show that we have a reasonable case for accepting moral principles that conflict with utility, rationalists ought to say what makes it fit, and therefore right, to keep a promise or

[59] 'The primary dictate of right reason is that every moral agent intend the good of the whole, or aim at universal good. In this universal good the private good of every individual is included.' (FMG i = *TMT* 100 = SB 581)

[60] 'But I presume there is other merit besides this, in the discharge of what we may call self-duties. Were any man supposed alone, without any fellow-creatures in the universe; would there be no merit, no moral goodness, in the highest improvement of his faculties, and the exactest government of his appetites and inclinations? Though he conformed all his actions to the rules of right reason; checking every desire, and denying himself every gratification inconsistent therewith; would there be nothing laudable, nothing meritorious in such a conduct as this? On the contrary, would it not be very acceptable to the deity, and procure the man his approbation and favour? Why then, and upon what account would it be thus acceptable? I suppose it will be answered, as the man was hereby better fitted for the discharge of those duties which were owing to his maker. But surely it must be granted, that his maker would be incapable of receiving the least benefit from such a conduct. What advantage therefore, or natural good the man proposed, must terminate in himself, and be directed accordingly. But prior to this view must be supposed his regard to moral good. Those acts of praise, adoration and thanksgiving, which were offered by him to the creator, must primarily and immediately flow from a regard to the intrinsic reason and rectitude of the thing, which is moral good . . .' (*FMG* i = *TMT* 98–9 = SB 579)

[61] Bayes, *DB* 18.

to show gratitude to a benefactor. Clarke sometimes seems to rely on a purely conceptual connexion; he suggests that the concept of a benefactor makes gratitude a fit response, because a benefactor is one who benefits in a way that makes gratitude appropriate.[62] This explanation makes our judgments about fitness dependent on prior judgments about rightness or appropriateness, and so it does not help us to identify obligations independent of utility; the utilitarian simply needs to say that if gratitude is not appropriate on utilitarian grounds, the person who has conferred a benefit is not a real benefactor.

Balguy endorses Clarke's appeal to fitnesses, and takes these fitnesses to be relative to the nature and circumstances of things.[63] He sometimes tries to do better than Clarke's purely conceptual explanation of fitness. He suggests that the Golden Rule suggests a principle of fitness that makes it fit to relieve a person in distress. Relief of distress fits the person in distress because he is similar to me in the relevant respects, and I would think it reasonable for someone to help me in distress.[64] What is fit for a human being depends on the nature of human beings in contrast to non-rational animals.[65]

Bayes follows Hutcheson in criticizing the rationalist appeals to fitness as empty. In his view fitness can only be fitness to some end. We cannot, therefore, speak of God as doing what is fit for the nature of human beings without asking what end it is supposed to be fit for. We get plausible answers, according to Bayes, only if we suppose that God does what is fit for the happiness of human beings, which is Hutcheson's position.[66] Grove rejects this criticism

[62] On Clarke see §§618–19.

[63] '. . . Morality of actions consists in conformity to reason, and deformity from it. That virtue is acting according to the absolute fitness of things, or agreeably to the natures and relations of things. That there are eternal and immutable differences of things, absolutely and antecedently; that there are also eternal and unalterable relations in the natures of the things themselves; from which arise agreements and disagreements, congruities and incongruities, fitness and unfitness of the application of circumstances to the qualifications of persons, &c' (*FMG* i = *TMT* 66 = SB 542).

[64] 'Or, supposing us void of natural compassion, as well as benevolence; might we not possibly be induced to attempt the relief of a person in distress, merely from the reason of the thing, and the rectitude of the action? Might we not, by considering the nature of the case, and the circumstances of the sufferer, perceive some fitness, some reasonableness in an act of succour? Might not some such maxim as that of doing as we would be done unto, offer itself to our minds, and prevail with us to stretch out a helping hand upon such an occasion?' (*FMG* i = *TMT* 50 = SB 530)

[65] 'There is likewise a wide difference between the nature of rational creatures, and that of brutes; and between the nature of brutes, and that of inanimate things. They require therefore respectively a suitable treatment. To treat men in the same way we treat brutes, and to treat brutes in the same way we do stocks and stones, is manifestly as disagreeable and dissonant to the natures of things, as it would be to attempt the forming of an angle with two parallel lines. I would not call such a conduct acting a lie, because that is confounding objective and subjective truth, and introducing needless perplexities. I would not call it a contradiction to some true proposition, because that neither comes up to the case, nor is a way of speaking strictly proper; but I would call it a counter-action to the truth, or real natures of things.' (*FMG* i = *TMT* 72–3 = SB 550) In *FMG* ii 8 Balguy argues that infliction of pain is 'directly repugnant to the nature of the object' (*TMT* 122), without any reference to an internal sensation of the agent. 'It is as contrary to nature, and to the truth of things, as to give a thirsty man poison instead of drink. It is contrary to the nature of the object, because he naturally desires indolence and pleasure, and shuns pain. It is contrary to the nature and circumstances of the agent, because he being rational, must act unnaturally whenever he acts unreasonably.' (123) 'To give pain without cause to an innocent person, is an action highly irregular and disorderly, because there is a visible and odious disagreement between action, agent, and object. And upon the same account it is counteracting the truth of things.' (124) In these passages Balguy denies that fitness is always relative to some further end outside the fit or unfit action. But he also introduces some teleological element into fitness, in speaking of the nature of the victim. His explanation of fitness comes closer to Butler's naturalism. See §678.

[66] 'When therefore we say that God is in all his actions governed by the reasons and fitness of things, we must, I think, mean, if we would understand ourselves, that (1) he is moved to every action by a regard to some good and valuable end . . . This seems to be the only notion we have of a wise and reasonable action . . . Thus, for instance, if you suppose with me that (2) the view by which the divine being is directed in all his actions is a regard to the greatest good or happiness of the universe, then the moral rectitude of God may be thus described, viz., that it is a disposition in him to

of fitness, arguing that the deliberate infliction of undeserved pain is unfit for an innocent person, apart from any further end that the agent inflicting the pain might have in mind.[67]

While Balguy and Grove defend, and try to explain, Clarke's appeal to fitness, William Adams tries to defend rationalism without reference to fitness.[68] In his view, an appeal to the truth and fitness of things is either an unhelpful repetition of the claim that some things are objectively right, or a misleading way of trying to explain it. Fitness and conformity to truth can be found in all sorts of knowledge, prudence, and skill, but none of these is concerned with what is morally right.[69] Clarke's conception is therefore too wide to capture the distinctive feature of moral rightness. Virtue has to be understood as 'conformity to what reason dictates as right, not what it teaches for true' (*NOV* 34). The idea of right is 'a simple uncompounded idea, and consequently cannot be explained but by example' (*NOV* 62).

In Adams's view, we can distinguish truth from falsity, at the most basic level, only by perception; and this is the only way we can distinguish right and wrong. Facts about rightness can be explained only by further facts about rightness that must themselves be immediately grasped. While moral perception is different from any sort of sense, it has a basic status analogous to that of some sensory judgments.

Adams's objection to fitness would be questionable if it were directed against Aquinas and Suarez. For they try to say something about rational nature, to support their claim that rightness and wrongness can be understood as fitness and unfitness to rational nature; whether or not they succeed, they try to fill the gap that Adams mentions. It is more difficult, however, to defend Clarke against Adams's objection. The claim that we recognize rightness by recognizing bare fitness (as opposed to fitness to rational nature) does not seem to add much to the claim that we simply recognize rightness. Adams, anticipating Price, suggests that the core of the rationalist position is better expressed in claims about rightness than in claims about fitness. But his objections to Clarke might reasonably suggest a different conclusion; perhaps Clarke has an unhelpful account of rightness because his conception of fitness excludes teleological aspects of human nature. This is Butler's conclusion.

666. Adams on Utilitarianism

Adams's confidence in basic judgments of rightness without reference to fitness encourages him to state a clearer position on utilitarianism than Balguy states. Though Balguy accepts non-utilitarian judgments about fitness, he does not emphasize possible conflicts with utilitarianism. Adams, however, agrees with Maxwell's criticism of Cumberland in explicitly rejecting the public good as is the basis of moral virtue or of its obligation.[70] Utilitarianism

promote the general happiness of the universe.' (Bayes, *DB* 14, reference numbers added.) Bayes passes from a broadly teleological interpretation of fitness in (1) to a more definitely utilitarian interpretation in (2).

[67] Grove, *WFSAD* 27.

[68] '. . . when virtue is said to consist in a conformity to truth, in acting agreeably to the truth of the case, to the reason, truth, or fitness of things, there is, if not inaccuracy, yet something of obscurity in the expression' (Adams, *NOV* 32–3). He proceeds to argue that the relevant kind of fitness has to be understood as moral rightness, which therefore cannot be understood by reference to fitness.

[69] Adams does not consider the explanation of fitness offered by Suarez, and defended by Butler. See §716.

[70] On Maxwell see §536.

breaches St Paul's prohibition on doing evil that good may come (*NOV* 29–30), because it allows the possibility of actions that we know to be wrong for the sake of maximizing the good.

This objection is stated rather briefly, so that it is not clear what Adams is assuming about utilitarianism. If he means that every utilitarian position will prescribe wrong actions for the sake of utility, he does not take proper account of Hutcheson's strategy in his *System of Moral Philosophy*. Hutcheson argues that when we look at utility more closely, we can see that some of the rules, for instance those prescribing rights, promote utility in the longer run, even though they violate it in the shorter run. If, however, Adams means that utilitarianism allows the possibility of acting wrongly for the sake of utility, and that a true account of morality cannot allow this possibility, Hutcheson does not refute him.

Sometimes Adams concedes that the practice of virtue generally promotes greater happiness. But he argues that this fact about virtue does not vindicate utilitarianism. If utilitarianism were true, the truth of a given moral principle would be as certain or uncertain as the truth of the claim that its observance promotes utility. But since the truth of a principle is sometimes certain while the truth about its contribution to utility is open to question, the truth of the principle cannot be grounded in contribution to utility.[71] This is a legitimate argument to show that utilitarianism gives the wrong account of why true moral principles are true.

Adams's sharp criticism of utilitarianism is more explicit than the attitude of Clarke and Balguy. The rationalists claim that we have immediate knowledge of what is fit and reasonable. They cannot apply the utilitarian analysis to our moral judgments without undermining the claim to immediate rational insight. This is all the clearer if we agree with Balguy against Adams in believing that the notion of fitness can be usefully explained. Any plausible explanation of this notion seems to give us some reason to suppose that fitness for maximizing happiness is not the only relevant form of fitness.

667. A Plausible Defence of Rationalism?

Now that we have examined some of the disputes between Hutcheson, on the one side, and Clarke and Balguy, on the other side, we may pause to ask what these disputes suggest about the prospects for the sentimentalist and the rationalist positions.

The rationalist arguments in Clarke and Balguy seek to expose the philosophical, moral, and theological inadequacy of both voluntarism and sentimentalism. In particular, Balguy argues that Hutcheson's attempt to counter theological voluntarism by appeal to sentimentalism is unsuccessful. These rationalist criticisms are often telling; they expose serious difficulties in sentimentalist attempts to reduce moral judgments and moral properties to something more easily understood within sentimentalist assumptions.

The sentimentalist position seeks to connect three views: (1) Anti-rationalism about reason and action. (2) Utilitarianism as a normative theory. (3) Reduction of obligation to

[71] 'But this connexion is not necessary, nor in many particular cases certain; and the foundation of virtue cannot be anything that is precarious and contingent.' (*NOV* 30)

feeling and sentiment. Though it is possible to believe one of these views without the others, a theorist who believes one finds the others more immediately plausible. Conversely, rationalists tend to attack all these aspects of the sentimentalist view. They argue that a sentimentalist account of moral properties, moral motivation, and moral rightness does not fit what we seem to know about morality.

Balguy's criticism of Hutcheson convinces not only Butler and Price, but also Hume. For Hume implicitly agrees that Hutcheson cannot combine his sentimentalist objections to Clarke with his realist defence of Shaftesbury, because his sentimentalism conflicts with realism. Butler and Price argue that in the face of this we should give up sentimentalism, but Hume decides to give up realism instead. His decision changes the terms of the debate. Balguy takes it for granted, quite fairly, that Hutcheson accepts his arguments against voluntarism and the realist assumptions they rely on. Price and Reid cannot take these points for granted against Hume.

Is it reasonable to take these points for granted? The rationalists deny that what is morally right and wrong is determined either by the commands of a ruler legislating for the public interest or by the affective reactions of a spectator. In their view, we can know that some actions are right and wrong apart from these conditions, and our knowledge gives us a basis for judging both commands and affective reactions as sometimes right and sometimes wrong. So far the rationalists might claim that they are not relying on any abstruse theory, but simply appealing to familiar features of moral judgment that their opponents cannot explain. But they raise difficulties for themselves once they try to explain how we know these moral truths. The obscurity of their explanations may provoke doubts about whether there is really anything to be explained.

Clarke modifies traditional naturalism about fitness to rational nature. He intends his appeals to fitness to secure the immediacy and certainty of our grasp of moral principles, and hence to assure us of the existence of the appropriate moral facts. In response to questions about Clarke's notion of fitness, Balguy tries to give it more content, and in doing so seems to introduce some appeal to facts about human nature; these facts cast doubt upon the immediacy and certainty of moral judgments that claim to recognize fitnesses. Adams takes a different direction, by abandoning any effort to explain the content of basic moral judgments by appeal to fitness. These developments of Clarke's position suggest that his moral epistemology is open to serious objections.

This obscurity in moral knowledge, as the rationalists conceive it, may suggest that they have no good reason for attributing genuine moral knowledge to us at all. This is Hume's conclusion. The necessity of defending rationalist claims against Hume explains why moral epistemology and meta-ethics are so prominent in Price and Reid. When we understand their defences of rationalism, we can see why Kant looks for a different sort of defence.

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BALGUY AND CLARKE: MORALITY AND NATURAL THEOLOGY

668. Balguy on Morality and God

Rationalism is important for Balguy because it allows him to explain how God is good, and why we can expect the moral demands of God to be morally right. Since basic moral principles are accessible to reason, and since a rational agent who grasps these principles will also be moved to act on them, God, being a rational agent, knows basic moral principles and acts on them. Being wise and just, God also wants us to act on them; hence God enjoins action on the principles that commend themselves to natural reason.

If this argument succeeds, however, it seems to present Balguy with a difficulty. In his defence of intrinsic morality that is accessible to natural reason, he has to explain why he does not make Christianity superfluous to morality. In explaining himself, he defends Clarke both against Christians who impugn his Christianity and against Deists who criticize him for failure to embrace Deism. His 'Second Letter to a Deist'[1] replies to Matthew Tindal's *Christianity as Old as the Creation*.[2] Tindal argues that if Clarke puts Christian morality on a secure rational basis, he makes Christianity morally unnecessary. Why turn to Christianity for moral insight or teaching, if we can already get it from the eternal fitnesses grasped by reason?

This line of thought leads some people to claim that Grotius 'secularizes' morality.[3] But Tindal's objection applies more broadly to moralists who would not normally be regarded as 'secular', such as Aquinas and Suarez. They do not believe that their claims about the rational basis of intrinsic morality make Christian belief morally unnecessary. It is useful to compare their defence of their position with the role that Balguy sees for Christianity.

He argues that, though Clarke takes the basic principles of morality to be contained in the natural law and to be knowable by reference to natural reason, revelation is still needed both to make moral principles more widely known, and to provide a further incentive to obey them. For these reasons natural reason does not make revelation superfluous.

[1] *TMT* 271–343.

[2] In his epigraphs Tindal quotes from St Paul on the Gentiles who are a law to themselves, and from Clarke's lectures.

[3] On Grotius see §§462, 464.

For similar reasons, Balguy rejects Shaftesbury's objection—as Balguy conceives it—to orthodox Christianity. According to Balguy's account of Shaftesbury, the appeal to divine sanctions threatens morality, because it encourages us to act on self-interest rather than benevolence.[4] This account does not seem to do justice to Shaftesbury's position.[5] According to Shaftesbury, some Christian opponents of 'enthusiasm' and the self-forgetful love of God react too strongly, by appealing exclusively to rational calculation of rewards and punishments. This attitude to disinterested motives seems to Shaftesbury to destroy morality, including Christian morality. But he does not deny that an appeal to rewards and punishments, in a secondary place, is permissible and appropriate.

Balguy may not be quite fair, then, in picking Shaftesbury as a target for his criticism of Deism. But he is justified in examining the Deist view that rational morality is all that Christianity has to offer.[6] To refute the Deist, Balguy considers someone who is benevolent, but at first does not believe in God or an afterlife. He argues that if such an agent becomes convinced of the truths he previously rejected, we have no reason to suppose that his benevolent impulses will thereby be weakened.[7] The Deist gives no reason for believing that the motives produced by divine sanctions necessarily undermine the motive of benevolence.

669. Morality, Motivation, and Self-Interest

This answer deals effectively with the Deist, but it raises a broader difficulty for Balguy's conception of morality and motives. On the one hand, his answer to the Deist presupposes

[4] At *TMT* 9 Balguy quotes from Shaftesbury, *ICV* i 3.3 = K 184: 'Nor can this fear or hope . . . consist in reality with virtue or goodness if it either stands as essential to any moral performance or as a considerable motive to any act, of which some better affection ought alone to have been a sufficient cause. . . . [I]n this religious sort of discipline . . . the principle of self-love, which is naturally so prevailing in us, being in no way moderated or restrained but rather improved and made stronger every day by the exercise of the passions in a subject of more extended self-interest, there may be reason to apprehend, lest the temper of this kind should extend itself in general through all the parts of life. For, if the habit be such, as to occasion in every particular, a stricter attention to self-good and interest, it must insensibly diminish the affections towards public good, and introduce a certain narrowness of spirit.' (Balguy's quotation does not exactly match Klein's text.) Balguy comments: 'Whether by this the author did not mean to show or insinuate the inconvenience and damage that virtue sustains from the future and invisible motives of religion, let the reader judge. My business is to show, if I can, that these apprehensions are groundless; and that in some cases a strict attention to self-good is of great service to the public.' Balguy does not quote the following discussion where Shaftesbury considers the benefits that we may gain from hope of future rewards and belief in providence. This hope and belief inhibits the growth of passions that might interfere with the operation of the 'sense of right and wrong'. Shaftesbury allows an appeal to future reward that promises the appropriate kind of pleasures: '. . . if by the hope of reward be understood the love and desire of virtuous enjoyment, or of the very practice and exercise of virtue in another life; the expectation or hope of this kind is so far from being derogatory to virtue, that it is an evidence of our loving it the more sincerely and for its own sake. Nor can this principle be justly called selfish; for if the love of virtue be not mere self-interest, the love and desire of life for virtue's sake cannot be esteemed so.' (*ICV* i 3.3 = K 187) His position, then, seems more qualified than Balguy allows.

[5] On Shaftesbury see §612.

[6] In his 'First Letter to a Deist' Balguy defends the appeal to divine sanctions: '. . . though interest can never enter into the nature and constitution of virtue, yet why may it not be allowed to accompany and stand beside her. Notwithstanding all that has been granted, I can see no reason why virtue and the rewards of virtue must needs be separated and set at variance.' (*TMT* 7)

[7] '. . . however the new motives may operate, they cannot hinder the efficacy of the old one. Whatever good they may produce over and above (as indeed much may be expected from their conjunction with the former principle), yet still the benevolence being supposed the same in degree must, I think, remain the same in force and influence' (*TMT* 8).

that virtuous motives and self-interested motives may coincide in a virtuous person.[8] On the other hand, he seems to deny that we could remain virtuous if we begin to do virtuous actions on self-interested motives, in addition to the properly virtuous motives that we already have.[9] For he argues that the presence of a self-interested motive subtracts from the worth of the action to the extent that it influences the agent. In saying this Balguy seems to undermine his answer to Deism.

Perhaps this objection is too hasty. Balguy does not believe that human beings in their present condition are capable of the complete disinterestedness that would constitute perfect virtue and that belongs only to God. Perhaps, then, he could reply to Shaftesbury that divine sanctions simply replace some previous self-interested motive that concurred with benevolence. But it is difficult to make this claim seem plausible. The belief in divine sanctions seems to make the motive of self-interest stronger than it was before, so that, if we follow Balguy's rule, we must apparently subtract its increased force from the estimate of the virtue of the agent.

Balguy's acceptance of the principle of subtraction seems to play into the hands of Mandeville, whose claims about the impossibility of genuine virtue rely on this principle. Mandeville's cynical attitude to moral virtue seems irrelevant to a reasonable conception of a moral virtue, but it seems relevant to Balguy's claims.[10] Why, then, should Balguy expose his position to this sort of objection?

He defends his principle of subtraction by offering two examples. (1) A mother rescues her drowning child 'in the transports of her fear, grief, and tenderness'. (2) A brave soldier is challenged to a duel without having given any offence, but 'conscientiously and resolutely refuses to fight' despite 'many vile reproaches, insults, and outrages' (*FMG* ii 35 = *TMT* 193). In Balguy's view, the virtue and moral merit of the two actions 'will bear no comparison'; the second action is clearly superior to the first on these points.

But these examples do not support the principle of subtraction. The mother in the first example acts solely from the motives that he mentions, whereas the soldier in the second example does not act simply from shame, or fear of punishment, in refusing to fight a duel. If, therefore, the mother lacked these specific emotions, no rational convictions would move her to save her child. If that is the intended description of the case, our comparative judgment rests on the mother's lack of these rational convictions, not on the soldier's lack of non-rational incentives. Hence our judgment does not support the principle of subtraction.

To justify the principle of subtraction, we would need to suppose that both the soldier and the mother have an equal tendency to act 'conscientiously and resolutely', and that they differ only insofar as the mother's instinct agrees with her conscientious motive and the

[8] 'The perfection of moral goodness consists in being influenced solely by a regard to rectitude and right reason, and the intrinsic fitness and amiableness of such actions as are conformable thereto.' (*TMT* 33)

[9] He seems to accept this consequence of his position, when he discusses the concurrence of reason and instinct: '. . . however actions may be mixed or compounded, as flowing from the united principles of reason and instinct, I cannot but suppose that the worth of such actions is in proportion to the share of influence which reason has in the production of them. The force of the natural impulse, whatever it amounted to, must, I think, be subtracted in the estimate' (*FMG* ii 35 = *TMT* 192). On addition and subtraction in the understanding of motives see also Aquinas, §287; Smith, *TMS* vi 2.3.13, 303, who wrongly attributes the principle to Hutcheson (see Raphael and Macfie's note), but correctly (§16) rejects it; Ross, *RG* 170–3.

[10] On Mandeville see §633.

soldier's instinct disagrees with it. But if we describe the example in this way, is Balguy's judgment right? The soldier's action may be a clearer proof of his moral character, but his action seems to have no more merit than the mother's.

Tipping Silvester and William Adams have good reasons to object to the principle of subtraction. They notice the difficulty it raises for Balguy's defence of appeals to divine sanctions. Silvester argues that agreement between reason and non-moral instincts and motives does not subtract from the merit of an action. If we act on rational benevolence, the presence of other motives—both self-interest and non-rational benevolent instincts—is often appropriate, and they often support the moral motive.[11]

Adams sometimes seems to come close to acceptance of Balguy's principle of subtraction.[12] He seems to rely on subtraction when he suggests that God is not virtuous, because God has no difficulties to overcome. Since God's moral purpose coincides completely with God's other purposes, the principle of subtraction requires us to deny virtue to God. But this conclusion does not satisfy Adams. For he also claims that virtue does not consist in the conquering of difficulties, but in having the power to conquer them; since God has this power, God has virtues.

This claim about God undermines the principle of subtraction. Since a second, concurrent motive does not necessarily diminish our power to act on the first motive alone, it does not necessarily diminish our virtue, and therefore the principle of subtraction must be false. This conclusion is much more plausible than Balguy's. It would allow him to answer Shaftesbury better than he actually does.

670. Obligation and Revelation

Balguy defends Clarke's view that principles of right hold independently of the will of human beings and of the divine will. We discover them apart from revelation, and our confidence in them increases our confidence in revelation.[13] To deny the rational foundation of morality is to deny the integrity of the 'volume of nature'; but revelation cannot stand in the absence of natural principles.[14]

[11] 'Such benevolence is indeed a kind of prejudice on the side of goodness; but there must always be something of reason in its acts, which would be like those of a judge, who being prepossessed in his opinion of the right of a case, should determine for a party without weighing minute particulars. His action would go upon the general principle of doing right, though it would not be in all points strictly regular.' (Silvester, *MCB* 7)

[12] '. . . [W]hatever good we do [sc. from instincts] and not from reason, so far is lost of the merit and virtue of the action. In prospect as the motives to duty are stronger, a stricter conformity to right will be necessary to give a proof of equal virtue in the agent' (Adams, *NOV* 15–16). In speaking of 'motives' here Adams has in mind non-moral motives.

[13] 'The two volumes of nature and grace are so divinely perfect; contain so much true beauty, and solid worth; that in order to be thoroughly admired, they can want nothing more than to be well understood. And moreover they correspond so strictly, and tally so exactly in numberless respects, and are so peculiarly fitted to illustrate, unfold, and enforce each other; that nothing can redound more to the credit and esteem of either, than a nearer contemplation of both.' (*TMT*, Pref., p. xxix)

[14] 'To aim at the subversion of revealed religion, in order to promote the credit and authority of either natural religion, or morality; seems to me like pulling down a noble and beautiful structure, merely to lay open the strength of its foundations. On the other hand, to promote the establishment or advancement of revelation, by weakening the obligations of reason and morality, appears to me just such an undertaking as it would be to undermine a fabric, with a view to support and strengthen it.' ('Law of Truth' = *TMT* 370–1)

Balguy argues that if we reject natural reason as a source of moral obligation, we cannot explain how religion could oblige our consciences.[15] From divine sanctions we can derive motives causing us to obey God's will, but these cannot show us that it is morally right to obey God's will. Balguy comments that if Hobbes thought God's power by itself implied right, 'he must, I think, have laboured under the greatest confusion of ideas that ever befell any understanding' (391).

For similar reasons Adams argues that divine sanctions do not by themselves have 'the nature of obligation', so that acting from them does not by itself constitute virtue (*NOV* 25–6). Adams assumes that virtuous agents must recognize some other reason for doing what they do apart from the fact that they are commanded to do it or inclined to do it; they must also recognize that they have some reason to follow this commander's command, because the commander has some right to obedience, or that they have some reason to follow this instinct, because it deserves their attention.

671. Maxwell on Reason and Revelation

A further defence of a position similar to Balguy's and Clarke's on rational morality and revelation appears in Maxwell's two introductory essays in his translation of Cumberland, 'from both which the usefulness of revelation may appear'. In the first essay, 'Concerning the city or kingdom of God in the rational world and the defects in heathen deism', Maxwell tries to take a middle position between those who regard post-mortem rewards and punishments as all-important and those who dismiss them from consideration.[16] He agrees with Cumberland's emphasis on the good resulting from virtue in this life, but he argues (and Cumberland does not deny) that future rewards are also relevant.

His second essay, 'Concerning the imperfectness of the heathen morality', examines some aspects of Greek moral philosophy, to show that the ancients are right about some things, but still full of errors that make revelation necessary.[17] His survey of Greek ethics seeks to show how far natural reason could take people already damaged by sin and without the help of grace. Maxwell deals with the question that concerns Clarke and Balguy, and

[15] 'But if the obligations of reason are disowned, and looked upon as mere philosophical fancies, and abstract shadows, I see not, for my part, how any religion can be valid.' (*TMT* 400)

[16] 'I would not be misunderstood here, as if I thought "That human affairs were so disorderly as not clearly to show plain marks of a governing providence". To say "that the present moral appearances are all regular and good" is false. But "that there is no moral order visible in the constitution of nature" is equally false. The truth seems this, "moral order is prevalent in nature; virtue is constituted, at present, the supreme happiness, and the virtuous generally have the happiest share of life." The few disorders, which are exceptions to this general proposition, are probably left to us as evidences or arguments for a future state.' ('Kingdom of God' §3 = P 29) Maxwell proceeds to quote with approval from Shaftesbury, *Mor.* ii 3 = K 270.

[17] At the end of the essay, Maxwell states his general aim: '... there seems [sic] to me to be two opposite extremes into which men have run. Some cry up reason, and the light of nature, at such a rate, as to think them alone sufficient guides, in consequence of which they think all revelation useless and unnecessary; ... Others, with a mistaken view of magnifying revelation and faith, undervalue and vilify reason and the light of nature most immoderately, as if they were no proper guides at all, nor fit to be trusted in divine matters and the truths of God. But if that were the case, how should we ever come to the knowledge of God at all? So it is plain St Paul thought, by the passages just now quoted from him.' ('Heathen' = P 231–2) The last sentence refers to *Rm.* 1:20.

asks whether acceptance of natural law makes revelation useless.[18] He argues that a proper appreciation of the moral truths included in natural law only makes the need for revelation clearer.

The Stoics receive the fullest discussion.[19] Maxwell notices especially the cosmic aspect of Stoic ethics, and praises the Stoics for it.[20] But he attacks their dismissal of the fear of death,[21] and their doctrine of indifferents. He suggests a modification of their position, allowing preferred indifferents to be goods. The modified Stoic position makes it reasonable to see imperfections in our happiness in this life and to hope for complete happiness in an afterlife.[22] Maxwell also rejects the Stoics' pursuit of freedom from passion (*apatheia*), and accuses them of arrogance.[23] He dismisses Epicurus briefly,[24] and does not discuss Aristotle's ethics in any detail.

This examination of Greek ethics introduces Maxwell's discussion of pagan virtues. He agrees that the actions of the heathen are sinful.[25] But he maintains that their virtues are nonetheless genuine virtues, within these limits.[26] In particular, he attributes to the ancients an appreciation of moral value for its own sake.[27] The pervasively sinful character of heathen actions does not prevent this grasp of morality.

Maxwell seeks to show, as Clarke and Balguy do, that a defence of Christianity does not require complete dismissal of pagan morality and moral philosophy. In particular, it does not require us to take the dangerous course of ridiculing all reasons or motives for morality that are accessible to those who do not know the specific rewards and punishments offered by Christianity. Maxwell argues that this course is dangerous, because it erodes the necessary moral basis for appreciation of Christian claims about God.

[18] 'After all these considerations, let any impartial man judge, whether a revelation was useful or necessary for the reformation of mankind. No, says the modern deist; for the light and law of nature, natural religion, and morality are sufficient, as they have been laid down by Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Epictetus, M Antoninus, and others among the ancients; by Grotius, Pufendorf, Crellius, Sharrock, Wilkins, Cumberland, Clark, Wollaston, and others among the moderns.' ('Heathen' = P 228)

[19] See 'Heathen' §§1–11 = P 68–91. [20] 'Heathen' §2 = P 70.

[21] 'Heathen' §4 = P 73: 'they ridicule the fear of death, explode the laudable custom of burying the dead, and of mourning for them; all of which is absurdly unpopular and irreligious. Nor could the world be governed if all men entertained a persuasion that death, and consequently the execution of criminals, is no penal evil, no evil at all, as the Stoics suppose.'

[22] 'But, in order to rectify their philosophy of good and evil, it ought to be considered that good things are of two kinds. For some things are good, as constituent parts of our true perfection and happiness of life, and these we call the end. Other things are good, as conducive thereto, and these are called the means. In the first notion, the good things commonly so reputed (life, health, honour, plenty, etc.) cannot be evils, considered in the nature of an end; and the evils commonly so reputed (death, sickness, infamy, penury, etc.) cannot be good. In the second notion of means, the evils, commonly so reputed, may be good, and the good things, commonly so reputed, may be evils; and usually are, not helps, but hindrances to our true perfection and happiness in a future state.' (§5 = P 75–6)

[23] §§7–10 = P 78–87. According to Maxwell, 'Instead of sober morality, they deal much in superlative extravagancies . . .' (§9 = P 82).

[24] He cites Bishop Parker in order to 'dispatch' the Epicureans in a few words, §12 = P 91. [25] See p. cxxxvi.

[26] See P 193–4. He quotes Augustine, *CD* v 19 (see §233); Article 13 of the *English Articles*; and *Rm.* 2:15.

[27] 'A third principle of laudable practices is a respect for worth and virtue; honesty and duty, justice, and equity, reason and ingenuity, civility, decency, and order, and a like respect for ourselves, our own perfection and felicity, without any regard to God or holiness. For, as there is a human-social virtue, which is on this side the holy-social, so there is a regard for worth and virtue, honesty, reason, and justice, which is on this side true holiness and godliness. The pagans practised the virtues which they teach, "*fugiendae turpitudinis causa*" (Cic. *Tusc* ii), to shun that which is base and shameful, "*tou kalou heneka*", (Aristotle, *Ethic. Nicom.* passim) because it was just and good, virtuous or honest. Their maxim was "*honestum per se expetendum*", that which is virtuous is self-desirable, and some of them have said "a feast is nothing else but the doing of one's duty" (Orig. *c. Cels* viii, p. 392).' (P 197)

672. Christian Virtues

These arguments make it reasonable for Balguy to argue that his rejection of voluntarism does not threaten Christian orthodoxy, and that in fact his voluntarist opponents are open to much more serious theological objections. To this extent he reaffirms Aquinas' position. We may be surprised, however, by the omission in Balguy of a further aspect of Aquinas' moral theology.

Once Aquinas has described the acquired moral virtues, he describes the various contributions of grace—infused moral virtues, gifts, theological virtues, and so on, and he discusses their contribution to the moral life. The *Secunda Secundae* describes the requirements of the moral virtues, from the point of view of grace. When we acquire grace, for instance, we acquire the virtue of charity, which differs from ordinary friendship insofar as it causes us to love God, and to love our neighbour for God's sake. Aquinas, then, might reasonably accept Balguy's picture of nature and grace as foundation and superstructure.[28] But he believes that the superstructure includes virtues, and specifications of virtues, that go beyond the virtues studied by moral philosophy.

This aspect of Aquinas' ethics is difficult to discern in Clarke and Balguy. In his 'Second Letter to a Deist', Balguy considers the two claims 'that the law of nature is perfect and unchangeable' and 'that all men are naturally capable of discerning it' (*TMT* 276). He argues that from these two claims we cannot legitimately derive the Deist conclusion 'that the Gospel is needless, and all revelation superfluous' (277). His answer would have been easy to defend if he had agreed with Aquinas' view that a Christian life includes infused as well as acquired virtues and that the infused virtues exceed natural reason. Balguy, however, does not answer in this way.

Most of Balguy's defence of Clarke consists in pointing out that human beings have a defective grasp of the truths contained in natural law, because of their proclivity to various vices. The Deist asks: 'Can the law of nature be clear, and the light of nature dim?' (300). Balguy replies quite convincingly that even if the law of nature is clear in itself, it may still be obscure to people who are negligent or inattentive or distracted. This distinction between the clarity of the law and the weakness of our grasp of it makes revelation intelligible, as Balguy claims. We can understand—if we already understand why God allowed our understanding to weaken—why God would reveal to us principles that we could grasp without revelation, but are unlikely to grasp firmly and clearly. God not only reveals these principles to us, but also makes us aware of the divine command that we observe them, and of the sanctions that support the command.[29] Revelation reinforces what we already know, or encourages us to act on it, or makes up for our defective grasp of what it is open to us to grasp by reason.

Balguy does not seem to suggest that revelation adds any virtues to those that we already know, or that it imposes obligations on us that we could not justify by natural reason. God appears primarily as a legislator reinforcing demands with sanctions. God does not appear as an object of love who might be the focus of the virtue of charity. If this account of Balguy's position is fair, he leaves out an important element in the Christian approach to morality.

[28] On this metaphor cf. §§356, 417.

[29] Cf. Aquinas on the Decalogue, ST 1–2 q99 a2 ad 2, discussed in §319.

Silvester supplies Balguy's omission through his discussion of 'moral' and 'Christian' benevolence. He distinguishes the Christian virtue from the moral virtue partly by its different obligations; the Gospel both requires a more universal love than ordinary moral virtue requires and requires a special sort of love of one Christian for another (*MCB* 10). These distinctive obligations refer to God as the primary object of love; the image of God is present in every human being, but other Christians have a closer similarity to God than non-Christians have. To support his claims about the love of God and the love of other people, Silvester appeals to Aquinas and to Calvin.[30] In contrast to Silvester, Balguy seems to allow no distinctively Christian virtues.

Perhaps this objection to Balguy is unfair.[31] For he argues that neither Cicero nor any other ancient author grasped the 'sublime' part of morality, whereas 'there is either a real sublime in Christian morality, or something still greater' (293). If the Christian revelation includes a sublime aspect of morality, it seems to go beyond the reinforcement of truths that are known already.

But what is the extra element in Christian morality? Balguy might mean either of two things: (1) The ancient philosophers could have grasped Christian morality by the natural reason they had, had they been more attentive or less blinded by vice. (2) They could not have grasped Christian morality, since it cannot be grasped without the Christian revelation. The second view is Aquinas' view; it does not suggest that the failure of non-Christian moralists is simply a failure to do their work properly. Balguy, however, seems to endorse the first view, but not the second. While he claims that Christian morality is sublime, he does not suggest that its specifically Christian character is derived from Christian theology.

This particular obscurity in Balguy's position might be explained by the apologetic context. He is arguing with a Deist, not preaching to Christians, and so he might prefer not to appeal to any distinctively Christian virtues. This explanation is not completely satisfactory, however. If Balguy had believed in distinctively Christian virtues, he would have had a much clearer and more decisive answer to the charge of superfluity. He does not entirely dispel the impression that he presents Christianity as ordinary rational morality supplied with rewards and punishments.

673. Reason and Revelation in Moral Understanding

How successful is Balguy's defence of Clarke's attitude to revelation? From Aquinas' point of view, much of what Clarke claims is quite acceptable. He has convincing reasons for

[30] *MCB* 15 cites Aquinas *ST* 2–2 q25 a1, and Calvin, *Inst*. iii 7.6 ('... we remember not to consider the badness of human beings, but to look upon the image of God in them, which cancels out and effaces their offences, and with its beauty and worth attracts us to love and embrace them.').

[31] He argues that for the heathen the light of nature was insufficient '... for bringing mankind to that standard of duty which belongs to their nature, and that state of perfection whereof they are capable'. ('Second Letter' = *TMT* 291). The philosophers did not reach this standard: '... not one of them was master of an adequate, perfect rule of life; not one of them has given us grounds to conclude, that he had a clear perception of that entire system of relations, or moral truths, which constitute human duty.' (*TMT* 292) If Cicero had rewritten the *De Officiis* in the light of the Gospel, 'how would such a work appear, in comparison with his *Offices*? As much superior, I doubt not, in every unprejudiced eye, as his *Offices* are to school-boys' themes, or the prattle of children.' (*TMT* 292)

insisting that the law of nature is not the creation of any will, even the divine will, and that its obligations are eternal and immutable. We can legitimately examine Christianity to see whether it meets the demands of the rational morality that we have reason to accept apart from the Christian revelation. To show that the principles he accepts appear reasonable apart from Christianity, Clarke appeals to the testimony of the Greek philosophical tradition, and especially to Stoicism. He does not make revelation superfluous, since he does not claim that unaided reason could have discovered all the truths revealed by revelation. But natural reason is expected to endorse in retrospect the truths discovered by revelation; the revealed truths are supposed to be 'agreeable' to reason.[32]

We might understand 'agreeable' in two ways: (1) Clarke takes a moderate view of the role of natural reason, if 'agreeable to' simply means the same as 'consistent with'. If natural reason restricts the scope of revelation in this way, it refutes the view of Tertullian that Christianity can oblige us to believe doctrines that seem clearly absurd or repugnant from the point of view of natural reason. (2) He takes an extreme view of the role of natural reason if 'agreeable to' means that natural reason must, from its own resources, find a sufficient basis for agreeing with revelation. According to this extreme view, revelation has a purely heuristic or suggestive role in discovery; it is similar to the teacher of arithmetic who gives learners a hint that allows them to find an answer that is defensible independently of any hint they may have been given.

These two accounts of the role of natural reason and revelation do not exhaust the possibilities. Aquinas, for instance, does not confine himself to the moderate claim, but he stops short of the extreme claim. Clarke, however, does not clearly reject the extreme view that natural reason must eventually be able to satisfy itself of the correctness of Christian claims.

The extreme view affects our conception of Christian virtues. Clarke claims that pagan moral precepts are 'improved, augmented, and exalted to the highest degree of perfection' (267) in Christian moral teaching. But who is to judge the improvement, augmentation, and so on? Clarke seems to suggest that the moral precepts of the Gospel must be shown to be reasonable from the natural point of view.[33] He seems to claim that all Christian moral precepts recommend themselves to 'unprejudiced' reason once we consider them more carefully. Hence the Christian creeds and sacraments, as well as Christian moral teaching narrowly conceived, can be defended as ways of promoting moral reform.[34]

If Clarke goes this far, he seems to imply that Christianity may be superfluous for some people. Even if the Christian revelation was historically necessary, why could a rational

[32] 'The necessary marks and proofs of a religion coming from God, are these. First, that the duties it enjoins be all such as are agreeable to our natural notions of God; and perfective of the nature, and conducive to the happiness and well-being of men; and that the doctrines it teaches be all such, as, though not indeed discoverable by the bare light of nature; yet, when discovered by revelation, may be consistent with, and agreeable to, sound and unprejudiced reason.' (*DNR*, Prop. ix = H ii 673)

[33] 'These precepts, I say, are such as no unprejudiced philosopher would have been unwilling to confess were the utmost improvement of morality, and to the highest degree perfective of human nature.' (*DNR*, Prop. x = H 675)

[34] '...those positive and external observances (the two sacraments) which are instituted in the Christian religion as means and assistances to keep men stedfast in the practice of those great and moral duties which are the weightier matter of the law' (Prop. x = H 675). This is followed by description of baptism as a rite of admission and the Eucharist as a rite of commemoration. 'All the credenda, or doctrines... have every one of them a natural tendency, and a direct and powerful influence, to reform men's minds and correct their manners.' (Prop. xiii = H 680)

student of Christianity and moral philosophy (such as Clarke himself) not find a basis in 'unprejudiced reason' for all essential Christian moral precepts, and hold on to them because of their rational grounds, without their Christian grounds? Perhaps most people cannot grasp these rational grounds, or cannot stick to their principles in times of difficulty and temptation, without the support of religious dogma. But why suppose that everyone needs this extra support? Moreover, even if everyone needs religious support, it may not give us the support we need if we once recognize that it has only the supportive role that Clarke allows it.

Some of Clarke's views about the Stoics are relevant here (H 645–6). In his view, a belief in the afterlife is morally necessary once we recognize that God's approval of virtue and disapproval of vice is not completely manifested in this life, where virtue does not always result in happiness. If we deny the afterlife, then, we are committed to downright atheism. Clarke believes that this argument fails if the Stoics are right to identify virtue with happiness; for, if they are right, we suffer no loss of happiness in this life that needs to be made up in an afterlife. He agrees with the Stoics that 'virtue is truly worthy to be chosen, even merely for its own sake, without any respect to any recompense or reward' (H 646), but he rejects the rest of the Stoic position:[35]

His objection to the Stoic position relies on the identification of happiness with feelings of pleasure; Clarke assumes without argument that when the Stoics speak of happiness, they must be referring to a feeling of satisfaction. He points out reasonably that such a feeling of satisfaction may co-exist with severe pain, if the rest of one's life is going badly, and that it is difficult to explain why one is not losing some happiness in that case. This objection, however, rests on a misunderstanding of the Stoic position; Clarke does not recognize that the Stoics regard virtue as identical to happiness, not as a means to a feeling of satisfaction that is identical to happiness.[36] Since Clarke does not show that the Stoics are wrong on this point, he does not show that they are logically required to admit an afterlife.

If Clarke believes that it is difficult to stick to virtue without the assurance of an afterlife, we might think he takes a rather circuitous route to stiffen the resolve of virtuous people. Rather than require them to believe the whole Christian religion, even in Clarke's minimal version, might it not be better to educate them to focus more firmly on the value of virtue in its own right? His claims about what is and is not psychologically realistic seem disputable.

This objection to Clarke does not answer all his arguments for connecting morality with belief in an afterlife. He argues more plausibly that future rewards are an appropriate addition to the moral motive, though they neither replace it nor dilute it.[37] Even if we could

[35] 'But it does not from hence follow, that he who dies for the sake of virtue is really any more happy than he that dies for any fond opinion or any unreasonable humour or obstinacy whatsoever; if he has no other happiness than the bare satisfaction arising from the imagination of his resoluteness in persisting to preserve his virtue, and in adhering immoveably to what he judges to be right; and there be no future state wherein he may reap any benefit of that his resolute perseverance.' (Prop. iv = H 646)

[36] Some excuse for Clarke's interpretation is provided by the Stoic doctrine of *eurhoia*. See §182.

[37] 'For though virtue is unquestionably worthy to be chosen for its own sake, even without any expectation of reward, yet it does not follow that it is therefore entirely self-sufficient, and able to support a man under all kinds of sufferings, and even death itself, for its sake, without any prospect of future recompense.' (H 629 = R 249) 'Men never will generally, and indeed 'tis not very reasonably to be expected they should, part with all the comforts of life, and even life itself, without expectation of any future recompense. So that, if we suppose no future state of rewards, it will follow that god has endued men with such faculties, as put them under a necessity of approving and choosing virtue in the judgment of

be sufficiently motivated to follow morality without reference to future rewards, the future rewards support morality by removing objections to it.

Still, Clarke does not give a completely convincing reason for his belief that an enlightened moralist still needs Christian doctrine. He might give the impression that Christianity is necessary only for people in whom the rational motive to morality is weak. This impression may be unfair to Clarke, but closer attention to his argument does not entirely dispel the impression.

Clarke's argument, then, is open to objections from the point of view of an orthodox Christian who believes that Christianity prescribes virtues that are not completely accessible to natural reason. Balguy's defence of Clarke's position does not remove these objections. Balguy explains the relation of nature and grace through the metaphor of foundations and superstructure, but his use of the metaphor is misleading in this case; for he does not seem to recognize a superstructure of Christian virtue built on intrinsic rational morality.

Balguy speaks of Bishop Hoadly's outlook in the same way, arguing that the bishop has been concerned with the fundamentals, and not the 'circumstantials', of both natural and revealed religion (*TMT*, Dedic.) Hoadly was accused of reducing Christianity to a minimal position that, in order to seem rationally acceptable, abandoned some distinctive and vital elements of the Christian position. Balguy's account of the two volumes of nature and grace seems to be open to the same accusation. From the point of view of morality at any rate, the second volume encourages moral improvement by commands and sanctions, but it does not seem to contribute any distinctive insight into morality and its requirements.

It is reasonable, then, for orthodox Christian opponents of Clarke to be dissatisfied with his explanation of the connexion between rational morality and Christian morality. As we will see, Waterland and Butler express some of the objections that might be raised.[38] Should this dissatisfaction spread to Clarke's and Balguy's defence of rational morality as a foundation for Christian morality? The eventual results of such dissatisfaction are visible in (for instance) Kierkegaard's sharp division between the outlook of rational morality and the Christian outlook; in his view, the Christian revelation imposes demands that do not simply go beyond rational morality, but are basically opposed to it. If Clarke and Balguy bring Christian virtues too close to ordinary moral virtues, they raise a question about whether one can defend Aquinas' claim that a Christian superstructure rests on the rational foundation.

their own minds, and yet has not given them wherewith to support themselves in the suitable and constant practice of it.' (H 630 = R 250)

[38] On Waterland and Butler see §869.

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BUTLER: NATURE

674. Butler's Aims

Butler's sermons are intended 'to explain what is meant by the nature of man, when it is said that virtue consists in following, and vice in deviating from it; and by explaining to show that the assertion is true' (P13). He says that this claim about nature is the view of the ancient moralists; they believe that vice is 'more contrary' to human nature than torture and death are.[1]

In the comparative 'more contrary' Butler suggests that torture and death are to some degree contrary to nature.[2] He therefore attributes to the ancients a doctrine of degrees of naturalness, and hence a graded conception of nature, according to which torture and death are indeed contrary to nature, but less contrary than vice is. These remarks about the ancients recall the Stoics, and especially passages in Cicero that assume a graded conception of nature.[3]

[1] 'That the ancient moralists had some inward feeling or other, which they chose to express in this manner, that man is born to virtue, that it consists following nature, and that vice is more contrary to this nature than tortures or death, their works in our hands are instances.' (P 13) I cite Butler from Bernard's edition (containing the *Sermons* in vol. i and the *Analogy* in vol. ii). The sermons are cited by roman numeral (or 'P' for the Preface) and paragraph. 'D' refers to the 'Dissertation of the nature of virtue' appended to the *Analogy*.

[2] Cf. iii 2, quoted in §703.

[3] 'For a human being, therefore, to take something from another, and to increase his advantage by the disadvantage of another human being, is more contrary to nature than is death or poverty or pain or the other things that can happen to our body or to external things.' (Cic. *Off.* iii 21) 'Further, if someone wrongs another to gain some advantage for himself, either he supposes that he is not acting against nature, or he estimates that death, poverty, pain, or even the loss of children, kin, or friends, is more to be avoided than an act of injustice against anyone. If he supposes he is not acting against nature by wronging human beings, how is one to argue with him, given that he altogether takes away humanity (hominem) from a human being? But if he estimates that, while such a course is indeed to be avoided, the other things—death, poverty, pain—are much worse, he is mistaken in estimating that any defect (vitium) belonging to the body or to fortune is more serious than vices (vitia) of the soul.' (Cic. *Off.* iii 26)

In his note on P 13 Bernard cites Diogenes Laertius vii 87 and Cic. *Off.* iii 21, and adds: 'Yet it must be observed that by the precept "Follow nature" Butler meant something widely different from the Stoic interpretation of that precept. The Stoics meant by it a wise obedience to the laws of the universe; Butler means obedience to the system of *human* nature, which amounts, in practice, to a following of conscience as its most important and distinctive constituent. The *formula Stoicorum*, in its original import, was far more nearly akin to the ethical principles of Clarke and the rational school of moralists than to those of Butler.' (Bernard's phrase 'formula Stoicorum' is misleading about the syntax of *Off.* iii 20, where 'Stoicorum' depends on 'rationi disciplinaeque' rather than on 'formula'.) Bernard is right to mention the similarity of Stoic views to Clarke, but wrong to suggest that the Stoics and Clarke are not interested in human nature; see §630.

Though naturalism about virtue is characteristic of ancient moralists, it is not the unanimous view of modern moralists. Some simply reject it, while others regard it as trivial and useless, even if it is true (P 13).[4] Butler argues that critics reject or dismiss the Stoic formula because they misunderstand it. If the critics had understood it correctly, their criticisms would be justified. To show why they are wrong, we have to interpret claims about human nature correctly.

Though the *Sermons* are brief, they state or presuppose positions on many issues in moral psychology, meta-ethics, normative ethics, and moral theology.[5] The appeal to nature constitutes a distinctive position in all these areas. A correct account of human nature, in Butler's view, not only vindicates the truth and importance of Stoic naturalism, but also supports it against the three main rival positions that Butler considers: extreme rationalism, sentimentalism, and Hobbesian egoism. It may be helpful, therefore, to sketch some of the relevant controversies and Butler's resolutions of them.

675. Hobbes on Nature and Morality

A proof that morality is natural would refute Hobbes's position. Hobbes's moral and political theory rests on an account of human nature, but he takes this account to refute the view that morality is natural. He rejects the Aristotelian claim that a human being is naturally a political animal.[6] He argues that human beings, in contrast to some other species of animals, need explicit agreements backed up by force in order to maintain a society. Society does not come naturally to human beings, both because they compete for scarce goods and because they struggle for superiority.[7] According to some of Hobbes's remarks, a person's good essentially consists in the awareness of superiority to other people, but does not essentially consist in, for instance, co-operative relations with other people.

Hobbes believes that purely psychological and environmental facts about human nature help to explain why human beings in the state of nature need morality and law; that is why he begins *Leviathan* with an account of human nature and desires. Given human nature, we have a sufficient reason and motive for accepting morality. But morality is not natural; we need it only because it removes some obstacle to achieving our goal, not because it is actually a part of the goal we aim at. We need morality because other people interfere with our own satisfaction, and morality helps to prevent this interference. If we could as effectively achieve the ends achieved by morality in some other way, we would have no reason to prefer morality. Morality is desirable for each individual not because of her own nature, but because of the unwelcome results of other people's behaviour.

[4] Quoted in §678.

[5] Pattison's appreciation of Butler's *Analogy* applies equally to the *Sermons*: 'The objections it meets are not new and unseasoned objections, but such as had worn well, and had borne the rub of controversy, because they were genuine. And it will be equally hard to find in the *Analogy* any topic in reply, which had not been suggested in . . . the preceding half century . . . Its substance are the thoughts of a whole age, not barely compiled, but each reconsidered and digested.' ('Thought' 75) See also Rivers, *RGS* i 183.

[6] Hobbes on Aristotle; see §481. On Hutcheson and naturalism see §§714, 716. Hume discusses Hutcheson in his letter of 17 Sept. 1739 = Greig No. 13 = R 631, quoted in §728. On final causes and design cf. Kames, *EPMNR*, Part 1, Essay 2, ch. 1 = Moran 24–6 = SB 910–12.

[7] See *L*. 17.7–8, quoted in §491.

Hobbes's claim clarifies a view that Butler opposes, and hence clarifies the view that he wants to defend. Butler wants to show that being moral has a closer connexion with our nature than Hobbes thinks it has. Given the sort of being that I am, I have good reason, in Butler's view, to prefer morality even if other people are not likely to interfere with me. That is why a better account of human nature should support a better account of why morality is worth having for each human being.

An appeal to facts about human nature appears to undermine morality, since it seems to justify a version of self-confined egoism that casts doubt on the rational basis of morality. Hobbes defends morality by his reduction of morality to prudence and by the assumptions that support his answer to the fool. Others find these defences of morality unconvincing. Just as Descartes raises sceptical doubts that seem more compelling than his answers, so Hobbes raises sceptical doubts about morality that seem more compelling than his attempted vindication of morality against these doubts.

Naturalism, then, has a dialectical role. Butler recognizes that appeals to human nature are used against morality, and so he seeks to refute his opponents by using a form of argument that they also accept. He agrees that the appeal to nature is legitimate, but believes that it justifies conclusions that refute critics of morality.

676. Sentimentalism and Naturalism

Butler is not the first to defend morality against Hobbes by appeal to nature. He follows Shaftesbury and Hutcheson in trying to show that human nature itself, rather than the specific circumstances of our environment, supports morality. Hutcheson's inaugural lecture 'On the natural sociality of human beings' shows how close Hutcheson and Butler are on this question.[8] Hutcheson's thesis marks his agreement with Grotius against Pufendorf and Hobbes.[9] He includes favourable references to the Stoics, reflecting his normal sympathetic attitude to them.[10]

Hutcheson opposes the position of Pufendorf, who restricts the natural to the pleasant and the expedient (§22), and so he defends the naturalist claim of Suarez and Grotius that moral rightness (honestas) is also natural. He takes the dispute between Pufendorf and the naturalists to turn on whether human beings have natural benevolent desires (§24). If they have, then, in his view, morality is in accordance with human nature, and the anti-naturalist position is refuted. Hutcheson, therefore, takes his doctrine of a moral sense to vindicate naturalism.[11] Morality is natural because it is the product of a natural sentiment; it is not

[8] See Hutcheson, *HN*. The lecture was delivered and published in 1730, four years after the first edition of Butler's *Sermons*.

[9] The lecture takes up an aspect of Pufendorf's position that Gerschom Carmichael had drawn to Hutcheson's attention. See §454.

[10] Prevailing attitudes to Stoicism in the Scottish Enlightenment are discussed by Stewart, 'Legacy'.

[11] 'Our moral sense shows this [sc. universal calm benevolence] to be the highest perfection of our nature; what we may see to be the end or design of such a structure, and consequently what is required of us by the author of our nature; and therefore if anyone like these descriptions better, he may call virtue, with many of the ancients, "vita secundum naturam", or acting according to what we may see from the constitution of our nature, we were intended for by our Creator.' (Hutcheson, *NCPA*, Pref. = Garrett 8)

simply devised as a means to secure some end that would appeal to us even if we had no moral attitudes. Since this is how he understands the natural character of morality, Hutcheson often contrasts his view with the claim that morality arises from reason; by 'reason' he means instrumental reason.

Many of Butler's claims about nature might be taken to support a sentimentalist account of morality. In his first sermon he endorses Hutcheson's claim that human nature includes not only self-interested but also moral attitudes. He mentions benevolence (i 6), particular passions (i 7), and reflexion (i 8). The principle of reflexion is the principle by which we approve or disapprove of our passions, propensions, and actions; and Butler identifies this principle with conscience.[12]

He claims, then, that the sentimentalist is right about the extent of human motives, against Hobbes's egoism.[13] He disagrees about the character of our moral attitudes, rejecting Hutcheson's view that they consist in a non-rational moral sense. But on other points we might suppose that he agrees with Hutcheson. It is not surprising that Hutcheson endorses some of Butler's arguments, and in his later work takes the moral sense to incorporate some of the features of conscience, as Butler conceives it.[14]

677. The Error of Sentimentalism

But despite these points of agreement with Hutcheson, Butler believes that the sentimentalists offer an inadequate conception of human nature. If human nature were simply a collection of the motives and dispositions recognized by sentimentalists, Hutcheson would be right.[15] But Butler rejects this account of human nature. At first he confines himself to 'the partial inadequate notion of human nature treated of in the first discourse' (P 21); hence he does not treat either self-love or benevolence as superior to the particular passions. Nor does he at first introduce reflexion or conscience as a superior principle, nor explain what its superiority and authority consist in.[16]

[12] 'This principle in man, by which he approves or disapproves his heart, temper, and actions is conscience; for this is the strict sense of the word, though sometimes it is used so as to take in more.' (i 8)

[13] 'Mankind has various instincts and principles of action, as brute creatures have; some leading most directly and immediately to the good of the community, and some most directly to private good. . . . The generality of mankind also obey their instincts and principles, all of them; those propensions we call good, as well as the bad, according to the same rules; namely, the constitution of their body, and the external circumstances which they are in. Therefore it is not a true representation of mankind to affirm, that they are wholly governed by self-love, the love of power and sensual appetites: since, as on the one hand they are often actuated by these, without any regard to right or wrong; so on the other it is manifest fact, that the same persons, the generality, are frequently influenced by friendship, compassion, gratitude; and even a general abhorrence of what is base, and liking of what is fair and just, takes its turn amongst the other motives of action.' (P 18–21)

[14] See also §714.

[15] '. . . Brutes in acting according to the rules before mentioned, their bodily constitution and circumstances, act suitably to their whole nature. . . . Mankind also in acting thus would act suitably to their whole nature, if no more were to be said of man's nature than what has been now said; if that, as it is a true, were also a complete, adequate account of our nature' (P 22–3).

[16] 'This faculty is now mentioned merely as another part in the inward frame of man, pointing out to us in some degree what we are intended for, and as what will naturally and of course have some influence. The particular place assigned to it by nature, what authority it has, and how great influence it ought to have, shall be hereafter considered.' (i 8)

To expose the weakness in the sentimentalist position, Butler refers to an argument of Shaftesbury's, which rests on an inadequate conception of nature.[17] According to a sentimentalist view, someone who lacks a strong enough preference to choose virtue over vice thereby also lacks any sufficient reason to choose virtue. Hutcheson holds this view no less than Shaftesbury. The sentimentalists do not mean simply that such a person will not be aware of any reason to be virtuous. They mean that he also has no such reason.

In Butler's view, the sentimentalists are wrong to hold this view, because their account of human nature is incomplete. For practical as well as theoretical reasons, we need to insist on the 'reflex approbation or disapprobation' of conscience.[18] From the sentimentalist point of view, conscience is just one of the motives that make up our nature. We have reason to follow it just to the extent that it is stronger than other motives; but if other motives are stronger, Shaftesbury and Hutcheson believe we have reason to follow those motives. They do not take account of the special character of conscience.

If sentimentalists make reasons depend on the comparative strength of different motives, they need not endorse our acting on cruel or lazy or spiteful motives if they are strongest. If we prefer action on the moral motive, we will want to encourage people to strengthen their tendency to act on their approval of humanity rather than on cruelty. Butler objects that if sentimentalists are right, we cannot justifiably say what we might reasonably want to say about the outlook of humanity. For we cannot say we have any reason to prefer humanity, apart from our preference for it. Nor can we claim that it is especially natural to act on our humane sentiments; whether it is natural or not depends on whether these sentiments are stronger. Butler wants an account of nature that allows us to ascribe the appropriate authority to conscience, and so to defend the claims that sentimentalists cannot defend.

[17] 'The practical reason of insisting so much upon this natural authority of the principle of reflexion or conscience is, that it seems in great measure overlooked by many, who are by no means the worse sort of men. It is thought sufficient to abstain from gross wickedness, and to be humane and kind to such as happen to come in their way. . . . The not taking into consideration this authority, which is implied in the idea of reflex approbation or disapprobation, seems a material deficiency or omission in Lord Shaftesbury's Inquiry concerning Virtue. He has shown beyond all contradiction, that virtue is naturally the interest or happiness, and vice the misery, of such a creature as man, placed in the circumstances which we are in this world. But suppose there are particular exceptions; a case which this author was unwilling to put, and yet surely it is to be put: or suppose a case which he has put and determined, that of a sceptic not convinced of this happy tendency of virtue, or being of a contrary opinion. His determination is, that it would be *without remedy*.' (P 25–6) Shaftesbury uses this phrase in his discussion of the moral effects of atheism: 'Now as to atheism, though it be plainly deficient and without remedy in the case of ill judgment on the happiness of virtue, yet it is not, indeed, of necessity the cause of any such ill-judgment.' (*ICV* i 3.3 = K 189, cited by Bernard)

[18] 'But it may be said, "What is all this, though true, to the purpose of virtue and religion?. These require, not only that we do good to others when we are led this way, by benevolence or reflexion happening to be stronger than other principles, passions, or appetites, but likewise that the whole character be formed upon thought and reflexion; that every action be directed by some determinate rule, some other rule than the strength and prevalency of any principle or passion. . . . it does not appear that there ever was a man who would not have approved an action of humanity rather than of cruelty; interest and passion being quite out of the case. But interest and passion do come in, and are often too strong for and prevail over reflexion and conscience. . . . does not man . . . act agreeably to his nature, or obey the law of his creation, by following that principle, be it passion or conscience, which for the present happens to be strongest in him?" ' (ii 3)

678. Naturalism and Rationalism

Butler's claim that sentimentalism cannot explain why we have a reason to follow conscience against other motives is not new. The same objection underlies Balguy's criticism of Hutcheson. We might expect, then, that Butler would support rationalism against sentimentalist naturalism.

His favourable comments on Clarke's rationalism reflect his early interest in Clarke's philosophy and natural theology. But his early interest also led him to some sharp criticisms of Clarke's natural theology. He also refrains from endorsing Clarke's approach to moral philosophy.[19]

He compares Clarke's rationalism with his own naturalism.[20] He grants that the rationalist argument 'seems the most direct formal proof, and in some respects the least liable to cavil and dispute'. The 'seems' and 'in some respects' mark possible reservations. If it were intuitively certain that, for instance, benefaction requires gratitude, that would indeed be a direct formal proof, and it would put the moral principle beyond cavil and dispute. But Clarke's alleged proof of such principles does not seem convincing enough to exclude cavil and dispute. Butler's naturalism implies that moral truths cannot be proved without reference to facts about human nature.

This disagreement with the rationalists may appear to expose Butler to a rationalist objection to Hutcheson's naturalism. According to Balguy, our having a natural tendency to approve morality does not explain what morality consists in or why we ought to follow it. If people are predominantly right-handed, it does not follow that we ought to be right-handed; if they changed to being predominantly left-handed, being left-handed would not thereby become better than being right-handed. If nature is nothing more than a natural tendency of this type, a proof that morality is natural does not clarify the character of morality.

To avoid this objection to the sentimentalist appeal to nature, extreme rationalists avoid any appeal to nature. Sentimentalists make morality appear mutable in a respect that falsifies its character. To preserve immutability, the rationalists sever morality from human nature altogether, and claim that it consists solely in eternal relations of fitness.[21]

Butler recognizes that rationalists object to naturalism. He mentions Wollaston's criticism of appeals to nature that are simply appeals to the strength of particular desires.[22] According

[19] The letters between Butler and Clarke on the existence of God are in Bernard, i 311–39. Letters on moral questions are at 331–9.

[20] 'One begins from inquiring into the abstract relations of things; the other from a matter of fact, namely, what the particular nature of man is, its several parts, their economy or constitution; from whence it proceeds to determine what course of life it is, which is correspondent to this whole nature. In the former method the conclusion is expressed thus—that vice is contrary to the nature and reason of things; in the latter, that it is a violation or breaking in upon our own nature. Thus they both lead to the same thing; our obligations to the practice of virtue; and thus they exceedingly strengthen and enforce each other. The first seems the most direct formal proof, and in some respects the least liable to cavil and dispute; the latter is in a peculiar manner adapted to satisfy a fair mind; and is more easily applicable to the several particular relations and circumstances in life. The following discourses proceed chiefly in this latter method. The three first wholly.' (P 12–13) Cf. Hume, §731 on rationalism and naturalism.

[21] See Cudworth, §547.

[22] '. . . there were not wanting persons, who manifestly mistook the whole thing, and so had great reason to express themselves dissatisfied with it. A late author of great and deserved reputation says that to place virtue in following nature, is at best a loose way of talk. And he has reason to say this, if what I think he intends to express, though with

to this criticism, an appeal to nature is either empty, if it says no more than we would say by mentioning the desire, or misleading, if it suggests that acting on good reasons is simply acting on our predominant desires.

679. Butler's Version of Naturalism

In reply to this rationalist criticism of appeals to nature, Butler argues that both sentimentalists and rationalists have the wrong conception of nature. He seeks to defend the view 'that virtue consists in following, and vice in deviating from it' (P 13). Since this is the view of the ancient moralists, he seeks to clarify their conception of nature. He does not believe that the traditional appeal to nature is genuinely obscure, but he believes that people who are accustomed to speaking of nature as modern moralists speak of it need to grasp the difference between their conception and the traditional conception.[23]

The traditional conception of nature marks the difference between the 'partial inadequate notion of human nature' that Butler assumes in the first Sermon and the more adequate notion that he introduces in the second Sermon (ii 4). If the partial inadequate notion were all that there is to nature, it would be ridiculous for the ancient moralists to claim that deviation from nature is vice; hence we should suppose they have something different in mind.[24]

To see what they have in mind, Butler distinguishes three senses of 'nature' and 'natural'. Two of them are familiar from the debates between Hobbes, the sentimentalists, and the rationalists. We might take 'natural' to mean (i) in accordance with some natural impulse or other, or (ii) in accordance with one's strongest natural impulse (ii 5–6). These two senses capture Hobbes's appeals to nature. Hobbes looks for an account of human nature that identifies the basic moving forces that explain all the varied and complex movements and

great decency, be true, that scarce any other sense can be put upon those words, but acting as any of the several parts without distinction, of a man's nature happened most to incline him' (P 13). For Wollaston's objection see R 291. See also Adams's doubts (§665) about whether Clarke's appeal to fitness adequately grasps the sorts of facts that are described by moral truths.

[23] 'Now a person who found no mystery in this way of speaking of the ancients; who, without being very explicit with himself, kept to his natural feeling, went along with them, and found within himself a full conviction, that what they laid down was just and true; such an one would probably wonder to see a point, in which he never perceived any difficulty, so laboured as this is, in the second and third Sermons . . . But it need not be thought strange, that this manner of expression, though familiar with them, and, if not usually carried so far, yet not uncommon amongst ourselves, should want explaining; since there are several perceptions daily felt and spoken of, which yet it may not be very easy at first view to explicate, to distinguish from all others, and ascertain exactly what the idea or perception is. . . . Thus, though there seems no ground to doubt, but that the generality of mankind have the inward perception expressed so commonly in that manner by the ancient moralists . . . yet it appeared of use to unfold that inward conviction, and lay it open in a more explicit manner than I had seen done.' (P 13)

[24] 'Now all this licentious talk entirely goes upon a supposition that men follow their nature in the same sense, in violating the known rules of justice and honesty for the sake of a present gratification, as they do in following those rules when they have no temptation to the contrary. And if this were true, that could not be so which St Paul asserts, that men are by nature a law to themselves. If by following nature were meant only acting as we please, it would indeed be ridiculous to speak of nature as any guide in morals; nay, the very mention of deviating from nature would be absurd; and the mention of following it, when spoken by way of distinction, would absolutely have no meaning. For did ever any one act otherwise than as he pleased? And yet the ancients speak of deviating from nature as vice, and of following nature so much as a distinction, that according to them the perfection of virtue consists therein. So that language itself should teach people another sense to the words *following nature* than barely acting as we please.' (ii 4)

tendencies of a human being. Morality, in his view, depends on facts about human nature, but it is not natural. Hutcheson's naturalism also relies on these two senses of 'natural'. In his view, virtue is natural because it is based on one of our natural sentiments, benevolence, and therefore excites the approval of the moral sense. Wollaston assumes the same sense of 'natural' in criticizing sentimentalist appeals to the natural.

Butler, however, does not believe that naturalism commits us to the errors of sentimentalism. He therefore seeks to isolate the sense of 'nature' and 'natural' that is relevant to the claim that virtue consists in following nature. A third sense of 'nature' and 'natural' introduces a connexion between nature and system.[25] When we study some system, we try to understand it as a whole, and to grasp the point of each part in it. Butler gives the example of a watch, insisting that we do not understand it unless we grasp 'its conduciveness to this one or more ends', which are the ends of the system as a whole.[26]

This point of view on the watch allows us to understand some claims about its nature. We can say both (a) that the nature of a watch is to tell the time, and (b) that it is natural for watches to run fast or slow, break down, etc. The second of these statements fits the first two senses of nature just described. But the first fits neither of them exactly. It is a claim about the system as a whole; its different bits and pieces constitute some organized whole in which they have a particular part to play; and the watch goes against its nature when it is (as we say) 'out of order'.

This first claim about the watch explains Butler's claim about human nature, by clarifying his third sense of 'nature' and 'natural'. The properties that belong to x's nature belong to x as a whole system, and not simply to its parts, and doing F is natural for x if F is required by x as a whole rather than simply a part or aspect of x. This explanation clarifies the claim that virtue is in accord with our nature and vice is contrary to it.[27] Even if vice is natural in one of the first two senses, it is not natural in the third sense.[28]

The third sense of 'natural' relies on a teleological conception of a system and its needs. This conception may be clear enough when we consider an artifact with a known design; for the designer of the watch sets the end for which the system is made. To apply this pattern directly to human beings, we have to assume that they are also artifacts designed for some purpose. Butler certainly believes that human beings are designed by God (ii 1). But his

[25] On nature and system cf. Aristotle, §77; Hobbes, §483.

[26] 'Whoever thinks it worth while to consider this matter thoroughly, should begin with stating to himself exactly the idea of a system, economy, or constitution of any particular nature, or particular any thing: and he will, I suppose, find, that it is an one or a whole, made up of several parts; but yet, that the several parts even considered as a whole do not complete the idea, unless in the notion of a whole you include the relations and respects which those parts have to each other.... Let us instance in a watch—Suppose the several parts of it taken to pieces, and placed apart from each other: let a man have ever so exact a notion of these several parts, unless he considers the respects and relations which they have to each other, he will not have any thing like the idea of a watch. Suppose these several parts brought together and anyhow united: neither will he yet, be the union ever so close, have an idea which will bear any resemblance to that of a watch. But let him view those several parts put together, or consider them as to be put together in the manner of a watch; let him form a notion of the relations which those several parts have to each other—all conducive in their respective ways to this purpose, showing the hour of the day; and then he has the idea of a watch.' (P 14)

[27] 'Thus nothing can possibly be more contrary to nature than vice, meaning by "nature" not only the several parts of our inward frame, but also the constitution of it.' (P 15)

[28] 'Man may act according to that principle or inclination which for the present happens to be strongest, and yet act in a way disproportionate to, and violate, his real proper nature.' (ii 10)

ethical argument does not rely directly on this theological premiss; and so he tries to explain his claims about nature and system without appeal to design.[29]

If we treat something as a system rather than simply a collection, we imply that its different traits achieve results that are not only consistent, but also harmonious and mutually co-operative. Consistency requires that different traits do not regularly conflict and do not undermine one another. Harmony requires them to co-exist in such a way that their results support one another. Co-operation requires more active steps to achieve harmony, so that one trait not only supports or facilitates another, but strengthens and helps it.

In claiming that human beings have a nature, Butler claims that we constitute systems of this sort. We discover our nature by looking at a human being to see how the different elements constitute a single system. We grasp the system in human nature not by looking at the several passions and motives in themselves, but from considering their relations.[30]

680. Is Human Nature a System?

What, then, do we discover by looking at the relations between different passions and affections? Do we think of ourselves as simply a collection of impulses, so that none of our impulses belongs to our selves any more than another does? Or can we draw any distinction parallel to the one that Butler draws in the case of the watch?

Some intuitive views seem to support Butler. If a doctor says 'You need an operation', and explains that we need it in order to remove a cancerous growth, we do not disagree on the ground that it would be better for the cancerous growth, taken by itself, to keep growing instead of being killed. Or if I say 'I need to exercise more', the part of me that enjoys being lazy does not need the exercise, but I may still need it. In both cases, we confirm Butler's suggestion that we recognize some difference between the requirements of the system as a whole and the requirements of particular parts of it. We think of ourselves as selves that have some definite aims and interests distinct from a mere collection of the motives, desires, and impulses that constitute us.

But even if we tend to speak in Butler's way, are we speaking loosely? To show that we are not, Butler tries to say what is involved in acting naturally, in his third sense. To see that human nature is a system, we need to understand the role of superior principles in our action; this is the feature of human nature that sentimentalists have left out.[31]

[29] Millar, 'Following nature' and 'God and human nature', discusses Butler's teleology. Millar relies on claims about the causal origin of the different traits that Butler calls natural. His discussion shows how such claims may lead Butler into difficulties.

[30] 'It is from considering the relations which the several appetites and passions in the inward frame have to each other, and, above all, the supremacy of reflexion or conscience, that we get the idea of the system or constitution of human nature. And from the idea itself it will as fully appear that this our nature, that is, constitution, is adapted to virtue, as from the idea of a watch it appears that its nature, that is, constitution or system, is adapted to measure time.' (P 14)

[31] 'But that [sc. the sentimentalist account] is not a complete account of man's nature. Somewhat further must be brought in to give us an adequate notion of it; namely, that one of those principles of action, conscience or reflexion, compared with the rest as they all stand together in the nature of man, plainly bears upon it marks of authority over all the rest, and claims the absolute direction of them all, to allow or forbid their gratification: a disapprobation of

Butler claims that 'reflexion' or 'conscience' is a superior principle in human nature. If we simply treat it as one motive among others, we ignore its superiority. Even if we were to claim, falsely, that it is always or usually our dominant motive, we would not have recognized its superiority. We have to acknowledge a superior principle as having authority, and not simply strength.

If we conceive a self as a system governed by superior principles, we can understand the naturalism of the ancients.[32] Consideration of the needs and connexions of the different parts of the system of human nature explains why pain is contrary to nature. But to understand how the unnaturalness of pain differs from the unnaturalness of injustice, we must grasp the difference between superior principles and other principles.

Butler introduces two claims about superior principles: (1) Human nature includes superior principles, those that rely on authority rather than strength. (2) Human nature is a system insofar as it is governed by superior principles. The second of these claims seems to go beyond the first. Since superiority does not imply greater strength, our motives might include superior principles that do not govern us, and we might be inclined to say that they ought not to govern us because they make our lives chaotic; the mere fact that they claim authority does not show that we ought to listen to their claim. But though these are two distinct claims about superior principles, Butler takes them to be closely connected; he believes that once we understand what superior principles are, we also see that we act in accordance with our needs as whole systems only insofar as we act in accordance with superior principles.

Butler's diagnosis of the error of the sentimentalists shows that his conclusion is not to be treated as an analytic truth; the meaning of 'natural' or 'in accordance with our nature' is not to be given by 'in accordance with a superior principle'. Rather, when we understand the meaning of 'in accordance with nature' and of 'superior principle', we recognize the synthetic truth that acting on superior principles is in accordance with nature. To act in accordance with nature is to act in accord with the requirements of ourselves as whole systems.

reflexion being in itself a principle manifestly superior to a mere propension. And the conclusion is, that to allow no more to this superior principle or part of our nature, than to other parts; to let it govern and guide only occasionally in common with the rest, as its turn happens to come, from the temper and circumstances one happens to be in; this is not to act conformably to the constitution of man: neither can any human creature be said to act conformably to his constitution of nature, unless he allows to that superior principle the absolute authority which is due to it.' (P 24)

[32] 'Thus nothing can possibly be more contrary to nature than vice; meaning by nature not only the *several parts* of our internal frame, but also the *constitution* of it. Poverty and disgrace, tortures and death, are not so contrary to it. Misery and injustice are indeed equally contrary to some different parts of our nature taken singly: but injustice is moreover contrary to the whole constitution of the nature. If it be asked, whether this constitution be really what those philosophers meant, . . . I have no doubt, but that this is the true account of the ground of that conviction which they referred to, when they said, vice was contrary to nature. And though it should be thought that they meant no more than that vice was contrary to the higher and better part of our nature; even this implies such a constitution as I have endeavoured to explain. . . . They had a perception that injustice was contrary to their nature, and that pain was so also. They observed these two perceptions totally different, not in degree, but in kind: and the reflecting upon each of them, as they thus stood in their nature, wrought a full intuitive conviction, that more was due and of right belonged to one of these inward perceptions, than to the other; that it demanded in all cases to govern such a creature as man.' (P 15–16)

681. The Law of Our Nature

Butler connects this naturalism with belief in natural law. He follows Stoic precedents, by recalling the passage in *De Officiis* that suggests the graded conception of nature.[33] Both Cicero and Butler assume that the law of nature is not simply about rational agents, but also available to rational agents.

Though Butler does not mention natural law, he introduces it, as Clarke does, by appeal to St Paul's claim that human beings are by nature a law to themselves (*Rm.* 2:15).[34] Aquinas cites this passage as a Scriptural warrant for including a doctrine of natural law in Christian moral theology. Luther and Calvin, among many others, agree with Aquinas.[35] Butler agrees with them in taking St Paul to claim both that rational agents are a law to themselves and that conscience is the means of recognizing the content of the law.[36] We are by nature a law to ourselves because of two connexions between law and nature: (1) It is part of our nature to be guided by law, since guidance by law is one of our natural principles. (2) In being guided by law, we act in accordance with our nature.

Butler sees these connexions between law and nature because he identifies guidance by law with acting on superior principles. A proper understanding of our nature shows that it is natural to us to act on superior principles. If we act on superior principles, we are guided by conscience, and the actions required by conscience are those that accord with our nature.

Is Butler entitled to both of these connexions between nature and law? Even if it is natural to follow superior principles, we might not immediately agree that these principles grasp what is natural for us to do. In claiming that guidance by superior principles implies guidance by conscience, and that we act naturally when we act on conscience, Butler relies on assumptions that need defence.

In Butler's view, a grasp of his claim that we are a law to ourselves reveals the error in sentimentalist naturalism.[37] Contrary to Shaftesbury, he takes the authority of conscience or reflexion to give us a sufficient reason for preferring morality, irrespective of any beliefs

[33] 'And this follows even more from the reason of nature, which is divine and human law. If anyone is willing to obey it (and all will obey it who want to live in accord with nature), he will never act so as to seek what belongs to another and to take for himself what he has taken from another.' (Cic. *Off.* iii 23)

[34] Cf. Clark, *DNR* = H ii 615.

[35] See §412.

[36] 'The apostle asserts that the Gentiles *do by NATURE the things contained in the law*. . . . He intends to express more than that by which they *did not*, that by which they *did* the works of the law; namely, *by nature*. . . . [T]here is a superior principle of reflexion or conscience in every man, which distinguishes between the internal principles of his heart, as well as his external actions; which passes judgment upon himself and them; pronounces determinately some actions to be in themselves just, right, good; others to be in themselves evil, wrong unjust . . . It is by this faculty, natural to man, that he is a moral agent, that he is a law to himself. . . . This prerogative, this *natural supremacy*, of the faculty which surveys, approves or disapproves the several affections of our mind and actions of our lives, being that by which men are a law to themselves, their conformity or disobedience to which law of our nature renders their actions, in the highest and most proper sense, natural or unnatural.' (ii 8–9)

[37] 'The practical reason of insisting so much upon this natural authority of the principle of reflexion or conscience is, that it seems in great measure overlooked by many, who are by no means the worse sort of men. . . . The observation, that man is thus by his very nature a law to himself, pursued to its just consequences, is of the utmost importance; because from it it will follow, that though men should, through stupidity or speculative scepticism, be ignorant of, or disbelieve, any authority in the universe to punish the violation of this law; yet, if there should be such authority, they would be as really liable to punishment, as though they had been beforehand convinced, that such punishment would follow.' (P 25, 29) These two passages are separated by Butler's argument against Shaftesbury, on which see §714.

about rewards or punishments. The law that we find in ourselves also tells us what is naturally suitable for us, and so we have an obligation to obey it because it is 'the law of our nature' (iii 5).

682. The Difference between Naturalism and Rationalism

Butler's presentation of his position suggests that it is different from both Hutcheson's and Clarke's positions. If his argument succeeds, he vindicates part of the traditional view that he alludes to in his remark on the ancient moralists; both Aristotelians and Stoics regard human nature as a source of moral reasons that do not depend on desires.

Balguy's criticisms of Hutcheson make it clear why rationalists do not appeal to human nature to explain the essential features of moral goodness. The sentimentalist view implies that morality is mutable in relation to facts about human nature. To preserve morality from this sort of mutability, the rationalists sever morality from human nature, and claim that it consists solely in eternal relations of fitness (as Clarke, followed by Balguy, expresses it).

In arguing that a reference to nature is essential to a correct account of virtue and vice, Butler rejects the rationalist attempt to explain virtue without reference to nature. He claims that the naturalist approach 'is in a peculiar manner adapted to satisfy a fair mind; and is more easily applicable to the several particular relations and circumstances in life'. It rests on premisses that an unprejudiced reader must accept, since we all have to recognize that there is such a thing as human nature.[38] Once we recognize its structure, we can see that morality conforms to this structure. Even if we are sceptical about Clarke's abstract and eternal relations of fitness and unfitness, we cannot deny the truths about human nature that we assume in our daily life and in our understanding and guidance of ourselves. Butler claims that these truths are sufficient to support a convincing account of the nature and justifiability of morality.

This form of naturalist argument helps us to decide whether rationalism and naturalism are compatible. Butler argues for two claims: (1) Living virtuously accords with human nature. (2) To live virtuously is to live in accord with human nature. He is right to say that a rationalist might agree with the first claim, and that therefore rationalism and naturalism are complementary. But his second claim conflicts with rationalism, because it implies that morality is mutable in ways in which Clarke seems to deny. Even though morality is not mutable in relation to our feelings of sympathy (as Hutcheson supposes), it is mutable (according to Butler) in relation to human nature. For if morality consists in living in accord with nature, it follows that if human nature were to change, morality would change too. Hence morality cannot consist entirely in eternal relations of fitness that are independent of facts about human nature.[39] If rationalists disagree with Butler on this point, his naturalism

[38] It may be worth comparing this form of argument with the strategy of Butler's later *Analogy*. In that work he claims to proceed from familiar facts about the 'constitution and course of nature' ('Advertisement', p. xvii Bernard) to conclusions about the divine government of the world. In the *Sermons* he proceeds from familiar facts about human nature to conclusions about the moral government of the individual.

[39] On mutability cf. Suarez, *Leg.* ii 13.2, quoted in §441. On Hume's neglect of the difference between Clarke and Butler see §§744, 747.

is not consistent with the view that morality consists in eternal and immutable relations of fitness. This conclusion seems to conflict with his initial suggestion that his argument and Clarke's are complementary. Though Clarke does not go as far as Wollaston goes in dismissing claims about human nature, Wollaston captures some of the spirit and motivation of Clarke's account of eternal and immutable morality. Clarke differs from Cudworth and Suarez in avoiding any essential appeal to judgments about human nature and the human good. He wants moral judgments to be certain and evident apart from the uncertain support (as Wollaston suggests) of judgments about nature. If Wollaston has correctly expressed the reservations about appeals to nature that inform Clarke's position, Butler reverts to a position that is close to Suarez's naturalism, and apparently incompatible with Clarke's claims about fitness.

Butler's suggestion that naturalism and rationalism are compatible is more intelligible, however, if we contrast both positions with the sentimentalist naturalism that Balguy attacks. If a rationalist agrees that facts about human nature are eternal and immutable in the relevant sense of being independent of changes in human inclinations and choices (other than those that are essential to human nature), Butler's naturalism is compatible with rationalism.

The distance between Butler and Clarke is even smaller if, as we suggested, Clarke relies on naturalist claims.[40] In arguing against Hobbes and in accepting the Stoic doctrine of conciliation, Clarke introduces claims about human nature and the human constitution. He does not see that these claims are inconsistent with the extreme rationalist position that Wollaston develops from him. If Butler sees the naturalist elements in Clarke, and notices that Clarke does not explain his use of them, he is right to explore an alternative to voluntarism and sentimentalism that includes a systematic account of nature.[41]

Butler maintains, against Wollaston, that an appeal to nature makes morality eternal and immutable in the appropriate way, by being independent of human inclinations. If he shows this, he answers Balguy's objections to Hutcheson, and Wollaston's suggestion that any naturalist theory faces the same objections. To see whether Butler has a distinctive position, as opposed to a collection of dubiously consistent positions, we should try to understand his naturalism.

Butler's case rests on his account of a superior principle and of the instructions that are issued by specific superior principles. He admits that his claim is 'somewhat abstruse' (P 17), and his attempt to clarify it (P 18–24) is rather compressed. It will be helpful to set it out in more detail.

[40] See Clarke, §630.

[41] Doddridge agrees with Butler in accepting both an appeal to fitness and an appeal to nature. See §877.

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BUTLER: SUPERIOR PRINCIPLES

683. What is Superiority?

Butler explains his conception of superiority by appeal to the difference between mere power or strength and authority. Authority belongs to the lawful government, even if it happens that a tyrant or brigand has greater power. The lawful authority has the right to command and we have reason to obey it, even if in fact we do not or cannot always obey it.[1]

Butler appeals to the contrast between power and authority in order to emphasize the normative character of superior principles; this is their claim to motivate us by something other than their psychological strength. If there were no superior principles, we would have to suppose 'that there was no distinction to be made between one inward principle and another but only that of strength' (ii 16).

We often draw some distinction between authority and strength. For we often recognize that we have or had reason to do x rather than y, whether or not we had a stronger desire to do x than to do y. The greater strength of desire is one ground for claiming that we had such a reason, but not the only one. Often we recognize a better reason for doing x even when we recognize a stronger desire to do y.

We can draw Butler's distinction if we consider an agent deliberating, and asking 'Why should I do this?'. In these cases we are asking for a reason to do x rather than y. Even though I may ask myself 'What do I want?', or 'Which do I prefer?', this may not simply be a question about what my current preferences actually are. If I ask 'What do I believe?' or 'Do I believe that?', I am not usually asking for further information about my current beliefs; I am usually trying to make up my mind, by considering what it is reasonable to believe. Since belief aims at truth, I answer the question about belief by asking what is true.[2] Similarly, questions about what I want often seek some reason for wanting one thing rather than another, because these desires aim at the good, at what it is reasonable to want.

Butler suggests that in some cases we have a reason for doing x rather than y simply because we want to do x more than we want to do y. Here the relevant principle is just

[1] 'All this is no more than the distinction, which every body is acquainted with, between *mere power* and *authority:* only instead of being intended to express the difference between what is possible, and what is lawful in civil government; here it has been shown applicable to the several principles in the mind of man.' (ii 14) Cf. Cudworth on Hobbes, §548.

[2] See C. Taylor, 'Agency' 36 (on 'articulation'); Moran, *AE* 38–42.

strength. Sometimes, however, our reason for doing x rather than y is our belief that y is better than x, not simply that we feel like doing y rather than x. We decide on the basis of strength when we choose, e.g., between red wine and white wine, or we decide to go to one film rather than another; in that case we ask 'Which do I prefer?'. In other cases, however, we deliberate by considering the merits of different courses of action, not by registering our preferences. If I am angry at someone for having, say, got a job I wanted, my strongest desire at first may be to express my resentment in some way, but it may strike me that I have no good reason to take it out on my rival. In this case I do not simply register the comparative strength of my desires; I modify their strength by what Butler calls 'reflexion' on the merits of different courses of action.

Reid points out that Butler's distinction is too simple.[3] In cases where we appear to decide simply by consulting our stronger inclination, we may still be guided by the merits of the different options. Often we consider their merits and decide that both are acceptable, so that it is all right to go by our stronger inclination. Normally it is all right to choose Granny Smith apples over Golden Delicious simply because we prefer the taste; but if we discovered that Granny Smiths were dangerous to health, we would no longer think it all right to be guided by our taste. Reid's point is also relevant to cases where we falsely believe we ought not to follow our stronger inclination. Perhaps, for instance, we have been told we should always drink white wine rather than red wine with fish, and so we follow this rule even though we much prefer red wine to white. If we learn that it is quite all right to drink red wine with fish, we learn that it is all right to follow our preference. Reid's correction of Butler actually strengthens Butler's case, since it shows that judgments of merit are relevant even in some cases where we do not explicitly refer to them.

684. Superior Principles as Sources of External Reasons

Butler's argument for the distinction between power and authority rejects Hobbes's attempt to reduce practical reason and deliberation to a contest of countervailing psychological forces.[4] Hobbes's analysis dissolves the apparent distinction between the strength of desires and the weight of reasons. Butler replies, quite reasonably, that a plausible account of desire and deliberation cannot do without this distinction. If Hobbes were right, we could not decide after reflexion on our action that we have done what we most wanted to do, but failed to do what we had the best reason to do. Since we sometimes reach this conclusion on our actions, Hobbes's analysis is inadequate.

But how far beyond Hobbes does Butler's distinction take us? We might argue that we acknowledge the difference between power and authority even if we allow only internal reasons. Perhaps some desires are based on the weight of reasons rather than mere strength of desires; but might the weight of reasons not be derived from desires? Perhaps we have reason to satisfy one occurrent desire over another if and only if the satisfaction of the first desire promotes the satisfaction of more of our desires in the long run. In choosing between our occurrent desires we are moved by the weight of reasons, but the reasons themselves

[3] See Reid, *EAP* ii 2 = H 534b, discussed at §829. [4] See Hobbes, §470.

are derived from the comparative strength of our different desires, not from any external standard.

This argument does not eliminate external reasons. The proposed principle for judging between occurrent desires seems to be open to reasonable doubt. For if I consider the overall satisfaction of my desires in the long run, I may conclude that I have no good reason to satisfy some of them in accordance with their strength. I may, for instance, see that I have reason to acquire a desire for x and to eliminate a desire for y, because I take x to be better than y. If I foresee that it will take me some time to carry out this change in my desires, I may foresee that for a long time my desire for y will be stronger than I think it ought to be and my desire for x will be weaker. If I were to be guided by the comparative strength of my desires during this time, I would pay more attention than I should to the desire I am trying to eliminate, and less attention than I should to the desire I am trying to acquire or strengthen. The purely 'internal' principle of satisfying my stronger long-term desires is itself open to rational criticism. Hence we cannot identify the rational criticism of desires with criticism in the light of long-term desires.

This argument does not show that we have external reasons, but only that we deliberate on the assumption that we have external reasons. In criticizing our actual and predicted desires, we assume that we can rely on reasons for preferring one to another; and we take these reasons to be distinct from any facts about actual or predicted preferences. If there are no external reasons, or none that we can reasonably believe we have found, our deliberation cannot work in the way we suppose it works. To vindicate our conception of deliberation, we need to show that we have reasons of the sort that we think we rely on.

Butler's argument about power and authority, therefore, answers Hobbes by showing that we take ourselves to be open to external reasons. It shows that a plausible account of deliberation, correcting Hobbes's attempt to reduce deliberation to an interplay of psychological forces, requires us to recognize reasons that are not reducible to facts about the satisfaction of actual or predicted desires. In defending this conclusion, Butler highlights an important feature of deliberation and practical reason. His point is not new; he makes explicit a point that is presupposed by the Aristotelian and Scholastic conception. Reid makes clear the significance of Butler's argument.

Butler's conception of a superior principle separates him not only from Hobbes, but also from the sentimentalists. In distinguishing authority from strength, he grasps a point that Hutcheson blurs in his discussion of justifying and exciting reasons. Awareness of a justifying reason, in Hutcheson's view, is simply the awareness, arising from reflexion, of a feeling of approval of the action or person that we have reflected on.[5] Hutcheson suggests that 'actions done without motive or affection, by mere election, without prepollent desire of one action or end rather than its opposite' (*IMS* 166) are either impossible or morally insignificant. He reduces awareness of a better reason for choosing x rather than y to awareness of a stronger desire for x.

Balguy notices this weakness in the sentimentalist view, insisting that merit or praiseworthiness is not what is approved, but what deserves approval.[6] Butler generalizes and

[5] Hutcheson's view is therefore rather similar to Frankfurt's view about second-order desires, in 'Freedom'. Butler's criticism is similar to the objections by those critics of Frankfurt (e.g., Watson, 'Agency') who insist on evaluation as opposed to mere higher-order desires. Cf. §639 on Hutcheson.

[6] On Balguy see §656.

strengthens Balguy's objections. He sees that the awareness of merit may not coincide with any inclination to do what we regard as having greater merit. If we are guided by authority, we are looking for the best reasons to act, not simply trying to find which actions excite our sentiment of prospective approval. In claiming that human nature includes government by superior principles, Butler reasserts the Aristotelian claim that a human being is a rational agent who deliberates and chooses on the basis of external reasons.

685. Why Do We Need Superior Principles?

To explain why we must recognize superior principles, Butler offers a sort of transcendental argument, seeking to show that they are necessary for the recognition of something that we cannot rationally refuse to recognize.[7] We could not have reason to give up the belief that some things deserve approval more than others; for it would be absurd to believe that any two actions that a human being can do (and are therefore in accordance with nature in either of the first two senses) equally deserve approval. He claims that we face this absurd result if we do not recognize a claim to superiority and authority distinct from the strength of a desire.

If we recognize no superior principles, we lose any basis for drawing distinctions between the worst and the best actions. If I freely do x, I act on my strongest desire for x; if strength is the only basis for approval, I must approve any action that anyone does; but clearly I do not. If we do not distinguish authority from strength, we cannot explain why we should think it is better to do x rather than y, or that there is reason to do x rather than y, in cases where x and y are equally natural in the first two senses. Butler's transcendental argument draws our attention to the absurdity of abandoning normative judgments altogether.[8]

Butler suggests that we cannot really live without recognizing superior principles. If we simply try to live by following the desire that we register as strongest, we will find we cannot do that. We might suppose we can, but only because our views about what is better influence the relative strength of our desires. If this were not so, and we simply acted on whatever desire happened to be stronger at any particular time, we would have no tolerable life at all.

If we do not believe that superior principles guide action, we have no reason to suppose that they guide belief; we must abandon the formation of beliefs on the basis of better reasons. In that case, we have to explain, as the Greek Sceptics try to explain, how we can live simply on the basis of appearances. The Stoics argue that the Sceptical position leads to 'inaction' (*apraxia*).[9] The sources do not always make it clear what the Stoics think the Sceptic is incapable of. But the most plausible Stoic argument points out that though the Sceptic is capable of goal-directed movement, as a non-rational animal is, Scepticism

[7] A transcendental argument says roughly: (1) We cannot have sufficient reason to give up p. (2) We cannot accept p without accepting q. (3) Therefore we must accept q. The exact sense of the modal terms in these claims needs quite a bit of explanation.

[8] 'If there be no difference between inward principles but only that of strength, we can make no distinction between these two actions, considered as the actions of such a creature; but in our coolest hours must approve or disapprove them equally; than which nothing can be reduced to a greater absurdity.' (ii 17)

[9] Plutarch, *Col.* 1122a–f. See §139.

removes the possibility of acting on reasons. That is why Scepticism makes a human life impossible, so that Sceptics are mistaken in claiming to follow everyday life. The Stoics are urging the absurdity, as Butler puts it, of equal approval and disapproval of any two actions.

One passage in Sextus considers this Stoic use of Butler's argument about absurdity. The dogmatists argue that if a tyrant threatens the Sceptic with a choice between doing something evil and being killed, then either the Sceptic will refuse to do the evil action or he will do as he is told to avoid torture. In either case he will show that he thinks one course of action better than another, and will assent on the basis of that conviction (Sextus, *M* xi 164).[10] Sextus answers that the Sceptic does not make up his mind by considering the goodness or badness of what he does; he simply follows the appearance that strikes him more strongly.

The Stoics need not deny that this sort of response is logically possible. They might reasonably urge that it is nonetheless 'absurd', as Butler puts it, because it deprives the Sceptic of the resources that everyone uses to decide such cases. The Sceptic will have to go in one direction or the other without the benefit of the evaluative comparison that we normally rely on. If it is part of a human life to be capable of acting on evaluative comparisons that may alter the strength of our desires, the Sceptic deprives us of a human life. This dispute between Stoics and Sceptics supports Butler's claim that we cannot abandon the distinction between power and authority in our choices.

686. Self-Love as a Superior Principle

So far we have expounded the concept of a superior principle, and the necessity of acknowledging superior principles, without saying which principles are superior, or why it is natural to act in accordance with any superior principles or with the specific ones that Butler recognizes. So far we have assumed only that a superior principle is one that claims authority, because it claims to rely on the weight of reasons; we have seen why Butler believes it would be 'absurd' to claim to live without such principles. But the account we have relied on so far counts more principles as superior than those that Butler regards as superior. He relies on a narrower account of superior principles than the account we have relied on. Someone who decides on the basis of rational reflexion that it is always better to deny satisfaction to all of his immediate impulses, as far as possible, has a superior principle resting on some rational evaluation rather than merely on strength of desires; but he will not act naturally if he always acts in accordance with this superior principle. Perhaps Butler believes that this alleged superior principle is not really superior, because it cannot really be defended by appeal to thorough rational evaluation; it must turn out to rest on some irrational prejudice at some stage. But it will be easier to understand the course of his argument if we allow that this foolishly ascetic principle is a superior principle, and then ask how many correct superior principles there are.

Butler does not assume that every principle that claims authority is a correct superior principle. Correct superior principles are those that appeal to genuinely authoritative

[10] Discussed in §140.

considerations, and are supported by the real weight of reasons. Once we recognize what a correct superior principle must be like, our next task is to find the correct superior principles.

Butler applies his claims about nature, system, and superior principles to reasonable self-love.[11] He argues that self-love is a superior principle distinct from particular passions, and that it is natural to act in accord with self-love. These claims are relatively uncontroversial, but it is not superfluous for Butler to defend them. For though most people may agree with them, they may not agree with them for the right reasons. Once we see why self-love is a superior principle, and why it is natural to act on self-love, we will also see what is wrong with some views about the conflict between self-love and morality.

To show that self-love is a superior principle, Butler distinguishes it from the particular passions that pursue specific external objects. A passion pursues its objects 'without distinction of the means by which they are to be obtained' (ii 13). This may lead to a conflict between two appetites in cases where the objects of one 'cannot be obtained without manifest injury to others' (ii 13). Reflexion decides in favour of one course of action rather than the other, by considering which is better.

This reflexion expresses rational self-love, insofar as it expresses our conception of ourselves as more than a collection of episodes of desire. The fact that satisfaction of one desire conflicts with satisfaction of another would not interest us if we did not care about the joint product of satisfying the two desires. We are temporally extended selves, and these selves partly consist in our plans for ourselves; hence we are concerned about the different aspects of ourselves in the present, and about their development in the future. Self-love differs from particular passions in being concerned with the self as a continuant that includes a number of affections. To express this self I have to recognize reasons to make decisions that conflict with one or another present passion, and I have to recognize the possibility of conflict between the weight of reasons and the strength of particular impulses.[12]

Butler assumes that if we were guided exclusively by strength, we would satisfy particular passions without pursuing our own interests. None of the particular passions provides us with a view of what our whole self needs. Since we regard ourselves as whole selves, not just as collections of passions and desires, we must evaluate one passion against another, to see whether the satisfaction of one will damage our whole selves. Since we cannot secure our interests as extended selves if we simply rely on the comparative strength of desires that we register at a particular time, we must consider not only what we happen to care about most now, but also what our future interest requires. If we recognize ourselves as something more than collections of passions, and hence as having concerns that go beyond the satisfaction of this particular desire now, we must acknowledge superior principles that rely on authority rather than mere strength.

[11] I will take 'reasonable' to be understood in what follows. An explanation and defence of the term 'self-love' in Butler's sense is offered by Whewell: ' . . . it seems to be not inapt to describe that state of mind in which we regard ourselves as external and detached objects of solicitude, and provide for our own well-being as we would do for that of a friend whose passions we can resist, and whose future and permanent good we try to secure, without losing our calmness of feeling and clearness of view' ('Preface' in Mackintosh, *DPEP*, p. xvi).

[12] If we are psychological egoists, we will regard this possibility as purely logical; but we still must recognize Butler's distinction.

To see what Butler assumes about the connexion between self-interest and superiority, we may ask what would follow if they were not connected.[13] Two of his assumptions can be identified if we consider some logically possible alternatives that Butler ignores: (1) Suppose that we had some particular passion that was magically correlated with our good as whole selves, so that whatever this passion favoured would coincide with what a rational and well-informed bystander would say was best for us. In that case we would not need any superior principle to make our particular choices. Butler assumes that our situation is non-magical in this respect. (2) Suppose that our superior principles were totally incompetent, so that we never gave ourselves the practical advice that a rational bystander would give us, and we never took the view of our previous conduct that a rational bystander would take. If we noticed that things were going badly in this way, we might be well advised to give up acting on superior principles. Butler assumes that we do not suffer such gross incompetence.

Though Butler does not discuss either of these imaginary situations, they actually support his claims about superior principles. For how could we discover the magical success of some particular passion, or the gross incompetence of our superior principles, without some exercise of the sort of reasoning that belongs to superior principles? If we are even to discover the limitations of our superior principles, we must recognize their authority.

687. Self-Love and Nature

Butler believes that when the reflexion of rational self-love conflicts with our particular passions, it is obvious that reflexion should be obeyed, and that this is obvious 'from the economy and constitution of human nature', irrespective of the comparative strength of the relevant desires. Self-love is a superior principle, requiring us to consider ourselves as whole selves rather than mere sequences of impulses. When we act in accord with reasons applying to us as whole selves, we act in accord with our nature. These reasons are external, since they depend on facts about our nature, not on facts about our desire to act in accord with our nature. On this point Butler commits himself to the conception of reasons that is rejected by Hobbes and the sentimentalists.

This argument relies on Butler's third sense of 'nature', since it claims that we act naturally in acting on the reasons that apply to us as whole selves. It is reasonable to identify our nature with the nature and essential characteristics of our selves, taking our selves to be extended, including a number of desires, and embodying some concern for a rational ordering of particular desires. According to this conception of human nature, being a rational agent of the sort who attends to rational self-love is part of the nature of a human being. If we denied this, we would be neglecting the systematic element in human nature.[14] If we were

[13] Butler considers some relevant possibilities at *Anal.* i 3.18. He considers some circumstances in which we would not benefit from having reason. His conclusion is: '. . . reason has, in the nature of it, a tendency to prevail over brute force; notwithstanding the possibility it may not prevail, and the necessity, which there is, of many concurring circumstances to render it prevalent'.

[14] 'Thus the body is a system or *constitution*; so is a tree; so is every machine. Consider all the several parts of a tree without the natural respects they have to each other, and you have not at all the idea of a tree; but add these respects,

to neglect the role of superior principles, we would be thinking of a human being as a mere collection of episodes of desire and satisfaction; whatever we described in such terms would not be human agency or human nature.

This conception of nature and the natural explains why it is natural to act on self-love. A rash and self-destructive action is unnatural not because we act against self-love, considered as an impulse, but because we act against self-love as a rational principle concerned for the self as a whole. Self-love is not simply a passion on the level of other passions and desires that might strike us. Its outlook results from reflexion on the merits of satisfying one or another particular passion, and so it expresses a superior principle. Since self-love takes account of our interests as agents with a future to take care of, it is needed to safeguard the interests of our nature as a whole. And so our nature as a whole requires us to follow rational self-love.[15]

Butler's argument is clearer if we distinguish two points that we learn from consideration of rational self-love: (1) The attitude of rational self-love shows us that we regard a rational agent as having a nature in Butler's third sense, because a rational agent is composed of a system of desires and aims extending across time, and is not merely a collection. (2) This same attitude shows us that it is natural to act on this superior principle.

Though we derive both these points from considering the fact that self-love takes a holistic point of view on the agent, they are distinct points. If we could recognize that we care about ourselves as whole systems, but we could not think of what to do to promote our interests as whole systems, we would learn that we have a nature without learning what sort of principle we must follow in order to act naturally. If we could recognize that self-love aims at our interest as whole systems, but we supposed that it is deluded in assuming that we are whole systems, then we would also have failed to find a natural course of action.[16] We must agree that we learn both things about self-love, in order to accept Butler's argument to show that it is natural to act on self-love.

Self-love does not create our nature, as though it were true only from the point of view of self-love that we have a nature. Nor is it purely external to our nature, in the way that someone else's practical reason might be. If I think about how to achieve your interest, I think of you as a system independently of my reflexion on your interest. But I do not think of myself in the same way. Part of the system that I discover in myself through the exercise of practical reason in my own interest is the fact that my nature includes concern for myself and my interest. Among the various elements of my nature that rational self-love considers is itself.

This account of self-love captures a Stoic view about the relation of nature to practical reason. When the Stoics speak of living 'in accord with nature', and claim that reason allows

and this gives you the idea. The body may be impaired by sickness, a tree may decay, a machine may be out of order, and yet the system and constitution of them not totally dissolved. There is plainly somewhat which answers to all this in the moral constitution of man.' (iii 2n)

[15] 'Is it that he went against the principle of reasonable and cool self-love, considered merely as a part of his nature? No: for if he had acted the contrary way, he would equally have gone against a principle of his nature, namely, passion or appetite. But to deny a present appetite, from foresight that the gratification of it would end in immediate ruin or extreme misery, is by no means an unnatural action; whereas to contradict or go against cool self-love for the same of such gratification, is so in the instance before us.' (ii 11)

[16] In that case self-love would be like a politician offering to consider the 'national interest' of several groups of people who happen to be geographically contiguous, but have nothing else in common. Cf. Aristotle, *Pol.* iii 9.

us to do this, they mean that reason is an 'artificer of impulse';[17] its task is to arrange and to regulate impulses that are natural (in Butler's first two senses) so that they achieve a system, and so reveal that we have a nature (in Butler's third sense). But they also believe that practical reason is itself part of the nature we try to conform to; human nature is essentially rational nature, and therefore rational guidance is to be valued for its own sake.

Butler does not assert that reasonable self-love explicitly considers our nature. My judgments about what is in my longer-term interest are not (or need not be) de dicto judgments about what is natural. But they are de re judgments about what is natural, because the outlook of self-love takes account of those features of me that in fact constitute my nature. Self-love favours an action as natural once I have considered how it affects the interests of the self as a whole, as present and future, and as consisting of more than a collection of unordered desires. If I deliberate correctly, the action I choose was natural before I ever deliberated; it already accorded with correct self-love. Correct self-love does not create naturalness, but results from my discovery of it; I discover it, by discovering its impact on the self as a whole.[18]

One might dispute Butler's claim to have proved that one ought to follow self-love over particular passions. Even if one granted that it is unnatural to violate self-love, why does that make it wrong? These questions will seem reasonable from a sentimentalist point of view; for, according to Hutcheson and Hume, I have no overriding reason to do x unless my strongest desire is to do x or for something to which doing x is a means. Butler answers this doubt about his argument by appealing to the distinction between authority and power. Once we recognize that we rely on this distinction, we see that the question about what we ought to do is to be answered by finding what we have an authoritative reason to do, not by comparing the strength of our desires. The authoritative reason comes from self-love.[19]

If Butler has given good reasons to believe that acting on reasonable self-love is natural, what difference should that make to a moral agent? A belief in the naturalness of an action does not seem to be necessary for prudential motivation. Reasonable self-love acts on the reasonable belief that this action is good for me, but (for all Butler has said) does not seem to act on the belief that the action is natural.

Still, recognition of the natural character (in the third sense) of prudent action is practically relevant. I recognize that it is reasonable to care about my longer-term interest even when it conflicts with my desire for some more immediate satisfaction. But what is reasonable about it? A mere preference for deferred satisfaction or a groundless preference for satisfaction twenty years from now over satisfaction two years from now does not by itself seem reasonable. When we reflect more carefully, we discover that the reasonable action is the one that fulfils the desires and needs of myself as a whole; it is because I extend into the future, not because there is something inherently better about delayed satisfaction, that it is sometimes reasonable to delay satisfaction. Though it might not have been obvious to me from the start that I care about my nature and about the naturalness of my action, reflexion

[17] See Diogenes Laertius vii 86–7, quoted at §176.

[18] See Sturgeon, 'Nature' 330–1. In his view, self-love differs from conscience in not thinking about the naturalness of actions. But the sense in which this is true or false for self-love also suggests the sense in which it is true or false for conscience. See §707.

[19] See further Hume, §738; Reid, §831.

on familiar cases of prudence makes it clear to me that I have good reason to care about naturalness—indeed that naturalness is the source of prudential rationality. This discovery helps us to understand the character of prudence; Butler also claims that it helps us to understand the character of morality, and helps us to see why we have reason to follow conscience when it prescribes the morally right course of action.

688. Psychological Hedonism

If Butler is right so far, he has raised one important objection against Hobbes. His distinction between strength and authority of desire conflicts with Hobbes's reductive account of practical reason as a process of registering the comparative strength of different desires. Moreover, since he understands self-love as a superior principle, and claims that acting in accordance with self-love is natural, he rejects Hobbes's defence of psychological hedonism; for he does not treat self-love as simply a particular passion aiming at one's own pleasure. Still, we might suppose that all this makes no difference to Hobbes's moral argument. Indeed, we might say that if self-love is the only superior principle, Hobbes's psychological hedonism is vindicated, even if not for Hobbes's reasons. Butler replies that, even if self-love is the only superior principle, Hobbes's psychological hedonism is false.

Hobbes makes four claims: (1) Every action of mine is motivated by the prospect of my pleasure. (2) Self-love seeks my maximum pleasure. (3) Every action is motivated by self-love.[20] (4) Hence every action is motivated by concern for my maximum pleasure. These claims are to some extent independent. We could accept the third, as a eudaemonist does, without necessarily being hedonists and accepting the fourth. And we could agree that some desire for pleasure always moves us, without agreeing that the desire to maximize our pleasure always overrides any other desire.

Butler, however, does not seem to see that these claims are independent. He seems to argue against Hobbes as though the refutation of hedonism implied the refutation of the whole Hobbesian position. This is perhaps a fair ad hominem reply to Hobbes, who does not see that different parts of his position need independent defences. Still, Butler's failure to see the different questions involved in a discussion of Hobbesian egoism exposes a weakness, as we will see later, in his own views about self-love.

Butler seems to think that Hobbes's hedonist thesis is not only empirically false, but logically impossible. In Butler's view, each 'particular passion'—hunger, thirst, revenge, gratitude, and so on—aims at its proper object (being fed, having thirst relieved, etc.), not at the pleasure that results from achieving the object. We take pleasure in achieving the object in question, but we would not get this pleasure unless we desired the object apart from any prospect of pleasure.[21] If, then, I take pleasure, in x, there must be some feature F of x such that (1) I take pleasure in x qua F, and (2) my desiring x qua F precedes and explains

[20] Does Hobbes hold the position Butler attacks? See §476. Even if Hobbes holds a less extreme position than Butler ascribes to him, Butler's objections cast doubt on the more moderate theses that some interpreters find in Hobbes.

[21] 'That all particular appetites and passions are towards external things themselves, distinct from the pleasure arising from them, is manifested from hence; that there could not be this pleasure, were it not for the prior suitableness between the object and the passion.' (xi 6)

my taking pleasure in x. Hence I am pleased, for instance, when I have eaten and am full because (1) I want to be full for its own sake, and I have achieved that desire, and (2) I am pleased that (1) is the case.

This analysis of pleasure supports an argument against psychological hedonism:

(1) We take pleasure in F because we want to satisfy our desire for F.
(2) We want to satisfy our desire for F because we care about getting F for its own sake.
(3) Hence, if we take pleasure in F, we care about F for its own sake.
(4) Hence if we take pleasure we care about something other than pleasure for its own sake.

This conclusion conflicts with the claim that the only thing we care about for its own sake is pleasure.

Butler's analysis, however, does not seem to fit all desire and pleasure. If I am given a taste of vodka without knowing what it is, and I enjoy it, it does not follow that I wanted to taste vodka for its own sake. On the contrary, if I find out that it is vodka, I may be disgusted by the thought of tasting vodka, and not want to taste it at all for its own sake; but I still may want to taste it because I enjoy the taste.

Butler suggests that action requires some source other than the conscious desire for pleasure. If I simply contemplated the objects in the world and had no incentive to act one way rather than another, I would not know which would give me pleasure, and I would never get started. But this point does not secure Butler's conclusion. I may have some instinctive tendency to do some things rather than others, before I consider any prospect of pleasure from them; or other people may force me to act. As a result of these other stimuli, I notice that I enjoy some things rather than others, and hence I may go after those things again. Butler's question, 'How can you ever get started?', can be answered without abandoning any of the psychological hedonist's case or accepting Butler's alternative. He has not shown, then, that psychological hedonism is logically impossible.

This fault, however, does not cripple Butler's argument against psychological hedonism. Even though he does not show that it is logically impossible, he undermines our reason for taking it seriously, if he shows that we take it seriously because of an error about pleasure and desire. His argument against psychological hedonism assumes that all pleasure involves taking pleasure in x qua F, and hence desiring F for its own sake, apart from any pleasure in x. This is a stronger assumption than he needs. If some, though not all, pleasures presuppose our valuing something other than pleasure, psychological hedonism is false.

To identify the sort of pleasure that supports Butler, we may distinguish three cases: (1) I simply find a taste pleasant, no matter what I know about (say) the wine that has the taste; in this case I am pleasantly surprised if I learn that the wine came from New York rather than from a chateau in Burgundy. (2) My pleasure is 'belief-dependent', but not 'value-dependent'. I especially enjoy wine from Chateau Supreme, and if I discover that the wine I have just enjoyed comes from New York rather than Chateau Supreme, I am disappointed, and enjoy it less; the surprise is unpleasant rather than pleasant. But I nonetheless acknowledge that my taste for Chateau Supreme is just a taste; I do not imagine it is non-instrumentally good to have this taste, irrespective of whether I enjoy it. (3) My pleasure is 'value-dependent'. I may be especially pleased that you did

something for me because I thought it was a spontaneous expression of friendship. In that case I will be much less pleased when I find that your action had some ulterior selfish motive. I show that I value expressions of friendship apart from the pleasure I take in them.[22]

The mere existence of belief-dependent pleasures does not refute psychological hedonism. Hedonists may claim that belief-dependent pleasures rest on beliefs that ultimately rest on further beliefs about what will give me belief-independent pleasure. But it is more difficult to answer Butler if we allow value-dependent pleasures; for in this case our explanation of the pleasure presupposes belief in the non-instrumental goodness of something other than pleasure and hence refutes the claim that we regard only pleasure as non-instrumentally good. A hedonist needs to show that apparent beliefs in non-instrumental goodness are really only beliefs in instrumental goodness, so that (in the case just mentioned) we take pleasure in friendship only because we believe it is instrumentally good as a source of pleasure that is not value-dependent. But why should we believe hedonists about this, if we are not hedonists already?

Butler's attack on psychological hedonism fails to refute it outright, but it raises a formidable objection. He shows that some apparent evidence for hedonism is really evidence against hedonism, since some pleasures are value-dependent. Hedonists can explain away this evidence only by offering an implausible analysis of value-dependent pleasures. By showing what a hedonist is committed to, Butler suggests good grounds for rejection of hedonism.

689. Different Conceptions of Self-Love: Hedonism v. Holism

Butler believes that his refutation of psychological hedonism also refutes psychological egoism—the view that all my actions are motivated by self-love. This is because he relies on a narrow conception of self-love. In his view, self-love, my concern for my own interest, aims at my own happiness, understood as my own pleasure. This is how he distinguishes one's 'general desire of his own happiness' from one's particular affections.[23]

But his further claims about self-love seem to conflict with the claim that it aims at pleasure. He notices that self-love presupposes a capacity for reflexion and self-awareness. I have to be aware of myself as an agent with a number of desires and with some capacity to regulate my pursuit of their objects. If I reflect suitably on my interest, I form a conception

[22] Cf. Hutcheson, §633, on pleasure and desire. On belief-dependence see Price, §804. On Aristotle's discussion of similar questions about pleasure see §§88, 95. On Epicurus' hedonism see §156. The dispute between Butler and Hobbes recalls the dispute between Aristotle and Epicurus.

[23] 'The former proceeds from or is self-love, and seems inseparable from all sensible creatures who can reflect upon themselves and their own interest or happiness, so as to have that interest an object to their minds . . . The object the former pursues is somewhat internal—our own happiness, enjoyment, satisfaction . . . The principle we call "self-love" never seeks anything external for the sake of the thing, but only as a means of happiness or good; particular affections rest in the external things themselves. One [sc. self-love] belongs to man as a reasonable creature reflecting on his own interest or happiness. The other [sc. particular passions], though quite distinct from reason, are as much a part of human nature. That all particular appetites and passions are towards external things themselves, distinct from the pleasure arising from them, is manifested from hence; that there could not be this pleasure, were it not for that prior suitableness between the object and the passion . . . ' (xi 5–6; cf. xi 7, 9)

of appropriate action for myself that is based on self-love, not simply on the instinctive or impulsive or unreflective pursuit of the objects of particular desires.

Butler also believes that my interest, or good, or welfare, is not some end that I can achieve without achieving the objects of my particular desires and affections. That is why the idea of someone who is well-off and happy, but has completely failed to achieve any of his particular aims and desires, is self-contradictory.[24] If self-love wholly 'engrosses' us, in such a way that we totally neglect the pursuit of the objects of our particular desires, self-love defeats its own ends.

It does not follow, however, that self-love aims at my own pleasure, as opposed to external objects. In speaking of the 'enjoyment of those objects . . . ' Butler might simply be using 'enjoyment' in the sense of 'achieving or satisfying a desire'. But even if he takes it to imply pleasure, he shows only that the enjoyment of achieving my goal is part of my ultimate end, not that my end is nothing more than enjoyment. If self-love seeks my good and my interest, it values both the achievement of my desires and the value-dependent pleasure that I take in that achievement. Hence Butler should not say that self-love values pleasure alone. On the contrary, since (as he agrees) the pleasure it values is value-dependent, it cannot value pleasure alone.

Butler, therefore, does not justify his claim that self-love values nothing external for the sake of the thing itself, but values an external thing only as a means to pleasure. If value-dependent pleasure in (say) having friends rests on our valuing friendship for its own sake, self-love values the objects of desire for their own sakes. In claiming that self-love aims only at pleasure for its own sake, Butler underestimates his case against psychological hedonism. A fuller statement of his case would perhaps have made clear to him what he ought to say about self-love.

Butler's conception of a superior principle suggests a further objection to the conception of self-love that appears in his remarks on psychological hedonism and egoism. If self-love concentrates on pleasure, it resembles particular passions. To be superior to them, it has to consider the proper proportion between the satisfaction of one desire and of another. It cannot do this if it considers only pleasure; for, as he agrees, pleasure is not the only thing I have reason to value.

690. Self-Love, Pleasure, and Happiness

Sidgwick sees that Butler's hedonist conception of self-love is puzzling enough to need explanation. To explain it, we should, in his view, notice that earlier English moralists normally accept two assumptions: (1) Happiness is to be identified with pleasure. (2) The agent's own good—the object of self-love—is to be identified with the agent's happiness. Either of these claims, taken by itself, might be taken as a trivial analytic truth; but they cannot both be trivial, since the conclusion that (3) one's own good is to be identified with one's own pleasure does not seem to be trivial. Perhaps the fact that the first and second

[24] 'Happiness or satisfaction consists only in the enjoyment of those objects which are by nature suited to our several particular appetites, passions, and affections.' (xi 9)

claims both seem trivially true, taken individually, makes people believe that the third claim is also trivially true. But, as Sidgwick remarks, the third claim surely needs some argument.

Sidgwick cites Butler's account of self-love to support his claim that the English moralists accept a hedonist conception of happiness.[25] Butler's argument about the difference between pleasure and the objects of particular passions suggests that he tacitly accepts the identification that Sidgwick attributes to him. But, surprisingly, he does not argue for it. A hedonist conception of happiness is not surprising in Hobbes, who rejects the Greek and mediaeval conception of the highest good. But it is more surprising that so many of Hobbes's successors neither examine nor challenge this part of his view. Cumberland and Cudworth take happiness and the ultimate good to be distinct from pleasure, but they do not make this point a major theme of their elaborate criticisms of Hobbes.[26] Hutcheson rejects Hobbes's psychological hedonism, but does not reject his subjectivism about happiness and the human good. Given the role of Aristotle's conception of the good in his account of the virtues and of our reasons for being virtuous, we should expect the acceptance of the Hobbesian rather than the Aristotelian position to make some significant difference to some aspects of moral theory.

The acceptance of Hobbes's hedonist conception of happiness is especially surprising in Butler, since the argument to show that self-love is a superior principle is considerably weakened if its object is confined to one's pleasure rather than to one's overall good. It might seem plausible to identify one's overall good with one's pleasure, if we accepted a hedonist account of motivation; but Butler rejects any such account. Price follows Butler in claiming both that self-love is a rational principle and that the object of one's self-love is simply happiness, conceived as pleasure.[27]

Butler's position differs sharply from the Greek sources that underlie his naturalism. He draws freely on the Stoic conception of human nature as a system guided by rational principles, one of which is directed to the agent's own good. The Stoics do not accept a hedonist account of one's own good; nor do any other Greek moralists except (as Sidgwick remarks) the Cyrenaics and Epicureans. Against this background Butler's hedonist conception of self-love is surprising. He agrees with Hobbes, Shaftesbury (perhaps not always),[28] and Hutcheson, and so damages his own position. He would have benefited from considering Cudworth's and Cumberland's views on happiness, which are closer to Scholastic, and hence to Greek, eudaemonism than to the hedonist view. Since Butler overlooks these views, his conception of happiness is over-simplified in ways that affect his arguments about self-love and other superior principles.[29]

[25] 'We have, in fact, to distinguish self-love, the "general desire that every man hath of his own happiness" or pleasure, from the particular affections, passions and appetites directed towards objects other than pleasure, in the satisfaction of which pleasure consists.' (Sidgwick, *OHE* 192) In adding 'or pleasure' as a gloss on 'happiness', Sidgwick introduces a claim that Butler does not explicitly endorse.

[26] See §§533, 543. [27] See Price, §805. Contrast Reid, §836.

[28] On complications in Shaftesbury's position see §610. Green, *Introd.* ii §24, 335–6, criticizes Butler's view of happiness: 'Neither Butler nor Hutcheson can claim to have carried the ethical controversy much beyond the point at which Shaftesbury left it. Each took for granted that the object of the "self-affection" was necessarily one's own happiness, and neither made any distinction between living for happiness and living for pleasure.'

[29] Sidgwick comments that Hutcheson falls into the hedonist account despite remarks that seem to conflict with it: 'It is worth noting that Hutcheson's express definition of the object of self-love includes "perfection" as well as "happiness"; but in the working out of his system he considers private good exclusively as happiness or pleasure.' (*OHE* 202n)

691. Psychological Egoism

Rejection of Butler's hedonist analysis of self-love casts doubt on his objections to psychological egoism. He might be rejecting either or both of two claims: (1) The sole and sufficient motive for all my actions is self-love. (2) Self-love is a necessary motive for all my actions. He does not properly distinguish these two claims; and though he has arguments against them both, he does not seem to see that they need different answers.

Butler's point about being 'engrossed' by self-love casts doubt on the first egoist thesis. If we thought that self-love could replace every other desire, Butler would be right to say that domination by self-love, so conceived, is self-defeating. Moreover, if we thought that nothing except the object of self-love is to be valued for its own sake, we would still defeat our aims; for self-love values the achievement of objects that we value for their own sake apart from self-love.

But these objections to engrossing self-love do not refute the second egoist thesis. For, according to this thesis, self-love alone need not be the motive of every action. We may value revenge, say, or friendship for its own sake, and our desire for it may be a motive for some of our actions. The egoist adds that we would not pursue this object of this desire on this occasion if we did not also believe that it would promote our overall good. Since we regard our good as the right combination of the ends of particular affections, we do not cease to value this object for its own sake if we also believe that its pursuit promotes our good.

Butler's refutation of hedonism does not touch this egoist thesis. He needs to argue that concern for our own interest does not regulate all our desires. Two different arguments are worth trying: (1) We may reject self-interest for something inferior. We have irrational desires, which we pursue despite knowing that it is bad for us. We pursue a grievance against someone, for instance, even though we know that the grievance is unjustified and that we will only harm ourselves. (2) We may reject self-interest for something superior. We act on moral motives, if we believe that this is rational action (and hence not included in the first exception to psychological egoism) that is independent of self-love.

Scotus argues for both sorts of exception to the psychological egoist assumption, and Butler agrees with him.[30] He recognizes the first exception by distinguishing self-love as a rational principle from the various 'instincts and principles of action' that human beings share with non-rational creatures (P 18). He also recognizes the second exception. For he thinks that after conscience makes its decisions, self-love may reflect on these decisions when we 'sit down in a cool hour' (xi 20), to see whether or not they benefit us. Even if self-love always endorses the actions chosen by conscience, this endorsement of self-love is distinct from the deliberation underlying the judgment of conscience.

Butler may have good reasons for rejecting psychological egoism as well as psychological hedonism; we need to examine his reasons in considering his claims about conscience and self-love. But he does not make it clear that different arguments are needed to refute egoism from those that refute hedonism; for he does not steadily maintain his view of self-love as a principle of rational prudence. To the extent that he regards self-love as a desire for pleasure, he tends to confuse the issue about egoism with the issue about hedonism.

[30] On Scotus see §§360–1, 363.

692. Self-Love and the Passion of Benevolence

Butler's account of the superiority of self-love, and of the difference between self-love and the particular passions, supports one of his aims in the *Sermons*, even before he introduces the special features of morality and conscience. One might argue that morality necessarily conflicts with human nature, on these grounds: (1) Morality requires benevolence—the love of one's neighbour—and benevolence requires concern for others. (2) We act in accord with nature by following self-love. (3) Self-love conflicts with concern for others. (4) Therefore acting in accord with nature conflicts with morality. This is Hobbes's view of the state of nature; to remove the conflict between morality and one's nature, one must be in the circumstances in which benefiting others instrumentally benefits oneself.

Hutcheson answers this argument by conceding the first and third premisses and rejecting the second. He argues that, since we have particular passions distinct from self-love, and since these include 'kind affections' concerned with the good of others, it is natural to act on these as well as on self-love. Butler objects to this defence of kind affections because it concedes too much to the critic of morality. Hutcheson agrees that morality conflicts with self-love. In order to show that, nonetheless, it is natural to act on morality, he has to identify natural action with action on one's strongest desire. This conception of the natural relies on the second sense of 'natural', which Butler takes to be inadequate for the defence of the naturalist thesis about virtue. Since Hutcheson's defence rests on strength of desire rather than on authority, it should be rejected.

Contrary to Hutcheson, Butler believes that a proper grasp of the nature of self-love casts doubt on assumptions that suggest a conflict between self-love and morality. Self-love is a superior principle; it reflects on the particular passions and supervises them. Morality requires benevolence, and benevolence requires concern for others even against my private interest—that is to say, against the passions that are entirely self-centred. But it does not follow that morality conflicts with self-love. For self-love frustrates itself if it does not allow the satisfaction of the particular passions that have objects distinct from the object of self-love. It must also regulate the pursuit of the particular passions, since otherwise they may be bad for me. Self-love does not necessarily conflict with our desire for, say, food, or physical security, or other people's esteem. Admittedly, each of these desires may on some occasions be taken to excess, if it interferes disastrously with our other aims. But we have no reason to reject such desires altogether.

Butler's argument against the selfish interpretation of self-love assumes that self-love is a superior principle, trying to harmonize and order the particular passions that have their distinct objects. Self-love would not be doing its work if it ignored our particular passions. To adapt one of Butler's political metaphors, the ignoring of some particular passions would be like trying to reconcile the interests of different people by expelling or not counting some people. Though self-love is distinct from particular passions and regulates them, it does not necessarily conflict with them.

This point about the particular passions applies to benevolence. Insofar as benevolence is a particular passion, it generates no special or necessary conflict with self-love. If we desire the good of others, our good consists partly in the satisfaction of that desire, no less than in the satisfaction of our other desires; there is no special conflict between benevolence

and self-love. Admittedly, self-love may (for all we have seen so far) sometimes conflict with benevolence; but the same is true of every other desire that concerns self-love.[31] No good argument for suspicion of benevolence can rest on features of it that are equally features of any particular passion. An opponent of benevolence might point out that because benevolence is concerned with the interest of another, and not with my own interest, it sometimes conflicts with self-love. But this aspect of benevolence does not by itself show that a self-interested person has any special reason to be suspicious of benevolence; for any particular passion may sometimes conflict with self-love, but a self-interested person who rejected all particular passions would also frustrate self-love.[32]

In this defence of benevolence, Butler assumes that the object of self-love is the agent's pleasure, rather than the achievement of the objects of the particular passions. To show the connexion between self-love and benevolence, he appeals to the pleasures resulting from being benevolent (xi 14–15). He argues that, since benevolence is one source of pleasure, self-love has no special reason for rejecting benevolence.

This hedonist conception of self-love weakens Butler's case. If self-love simply seeks pleasure, from whatever source it may come, it apparently does not care whether we get the pleasure from one or another source. Hence self-love might apparently be satisfied by a sufficiently intense pleasure achieved from the pursuit of some of our particular affections rather than others. The opponent of benevolence might argue that, for some people at any rate, more intense pleasures may be gained from non-benevolent passions, and that these may leave no room and no need for the satisfaction of our benevolent desires.

In some places Butler seems to take this objection to be relevant; for he defends himself by arguing that benevolence offers the degree and type of pleasure that might suit someone seeking to maximize pleasure (xi 15). But this is not the best reply that he can offer. A better reply would rely on two other aspects of self-love: (1) The pleasure that we gain from achieving the aim of self-love is value-dependent pleasure. Hence self-love values the objects of our desire for their own sakes, not merely as a means to pleasure. (2) Self-love is a superior principle, aiming at the achievement of our desires in their proper proportion. If benevolent desires are among those that, in their proper proportion, suit our nature, reasonable and enlightened self-love endorses them.

Butler's conception of self-love is difficult to understand. For though he believes it aims at our good, he also suggests that self-love may so 'engross' us that we fail to achieve our good.[33] But if self-love is concerned with my good and my interest, which are fixed by our nature, enlightened self-love will secure my good; for it will secure, as far as it can, the satisfaction of our particular passions in the proportion that is required by our good. If we

[31] 'But that benevolence is distinct from, that is, not the same thing with self-love, is no reason for its being looked upon with any peculiar suspicion; because every principle whatever, by means of which self-love is gratified, is distinct from it; and all things which are distinct from each other are equally so.' (xi 11) 'This being the whole idea of self-love, it can no otherwise exclude good-will or love of others, than merely by not including it, no otherwise, than it excludes love of arts or reputation, or of anything else. Neither on the other hand does benevolence, any more than love of arts or of reputation, exclude self-love.' (xi 11)

[32] See, e.g., xi 11, 19.

[33] 'Self-love then does not constitute *this* or *that* to be our interest or good; but, our interest or good being constituted by nature and supposed, self-love only puts us upon obtaining and securing it. Therefore, if it be possible that self-love may prevail and exert itself in a degree or manner which is not subservient to this end, then it will not follow that our interest will be promoted in proportion to the degree in which that principle engrosses us and prevails over others.' (xi 9)

spent so much time thinking about our own interest that we neglected the pursuit of those goods in which our good consists, we would not be guided by enlightened self-love, but by erroneous self-love. We cannot be so engrossed by enlightened self-love that we neglect the pursuit of the goods that enlightened self-love tells us to pursue for the sake of our good.

If, therefore, we reject a hedonist conception of self-love on Butler's behalf, we can argue more effectively than he argues for his claims about self-love and benevolence. The right policy for self-love requires a fair consideration of the objects of all the particular passions. We have no special reason to leave benevolence out of this consideration, if we appeal simply to features that benevolence shares with all the other particular passions.

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BUTLER: NATURALISM AND MORALITY

693. Benevolence as a Passion and as a Rational Principle

So far we have seen how Butler applies his naturalist doctrine to moral psychology, to answer the sentimentalist analysis of reasons and motives, and so to undermine some misguided views about the conflict between self-love and benevolence. He might be right about all this, however, and still be wrong in his main claim that virtue is living in accord with nature. To defend his main claim, he needs to show that his conception of nature also provides a plausible account of morality. Even if we agree that the superior principle of self-love prescribes natural actions, we still need to be convinced that some superior principle both prescribes moral virtue, and thereby prescribes natural actions.

We might expect Butler's account of benevolence to answer this question; for he introduces it in Sermon xi to answer those who believe that morality and self-love conflict. He answers some objections to the authority of morality. Many people assume that morality requires benevolence and that benevolence is bound to conflict with self-love. Butler believes that this assumption rests on the errors that he corrects in his account of self-love and the particular passions. Once we see these errors, we see that self-love and benevolence need not conflict, and so we can reject the claims about morality that imply the conflict.

This argument vindicates morality, however, only if (1) morality requires only what the passion of benevolence moves us to do, and (2) the outlook of self-love determines what is natural, because self-love is not only a superior principle, but the supreme principle. Butler accepts neither assumption.

For some of Hobbes's opponents, and especially for Hutcheson, benevolence is the foundation of morality and the moral virtues. According to this view, an argument to show the reality of benevolence is necessary for the defence of the virtues, as Hutcheson conceives them, against Hobbes. But if, as Hutcheson assumes, benevolence and our approval of it are sufficient for moral rightness and obligation, rightness and obligation vary in accordance with the relative strength of the benevolent passion in different people. Hutcheson tries to guard himself against this result by tying moral requirements to the normal agent and judge,

but he still leaves morality exposed, as Balguy argues, to changes in the outlook of normal agents and judges.[1]

Butler agrees with Balguy's criticism of Hutcheson's account of benevolence. In contrast to Hutcheson, he speaks of benevolence in two distinct ways. On the one hand, benevolence as a passion is one of the particular affections, involving a desire for the good of another for the other's sake. On the other hand, it is a principle that to some extent is analogous to self-love.[2] It is not simply a collection of benevolent impulses, but something more like a rational principle, directed towards the good of society. A rational principle is the only plausible basis of the claim that benevolence is the sum of virtue.[3]

By distinguishing the passion from the principle, Butler accepts Balguy's position in contrast to Hutcheson's. Though Hutcheson takes benevolence to endorse an impartial, utilitarian attitude,[4] it is difficult to see how he can also claim that his benevolence is a passion, even a passion in a normal person exposed to the appropriate information. For benevolence seems to differ in different people; some are more impartial than others, and it would be rash to claim that the normal agent will invariably take the utilitarian point of view. Butler seems to agree with Balguy in taking benevolence to involve a rational principle that is not to be identified with the reaction of the normal agent.[5]

Still, though Butler distinguishes the passion from the principle of benevolence, he does not take the principle to be independent of the passion. On the contrary, he takes the reality of the passion to vindicate the principle. In his introduction of benevolence he suggests that any extent of the passion 'points out what we were designed for, as really as though it were in a higher degree and more extensive' (i 6). We might doubt this claim. Why does the fact that people naturally tend to care about the interests of their parents, or children, or particular friends, or about particular people's sufferings, prove that a rational concern for the good of others in general is natural (in Butler's third sense) to human beings? Butler's claim seems even less plausible if the rational principle of benevolence may sometimes conflict with the passion of benevolence. If I think about the good of others in general, I may have to restrain

[1] See Balguy, §659.

[2] '. . . there is a natural principle of benevolence in man, which is in some degree to society what self-love is to the individual. And . . . if there be any affection in human nature the object and end of which is the good of another—this is itself benevolence or the love of another. Be it ever so short, be it in ever so low a degree, or ever so unhappily confined, it proves the assertion, and points out what we were designed for, as really as though it were in a higher degree and more extensive' (i 6).

[3] 'Thus, when benevolence is said to be the sum of virtue, it is not spoken of as a blind propension, but a principle in reasonable creatures, and so to be directed by their reason, for reason and reflexion comes into our notion of a moral agent. And that will lead us to consider distant consequences, as well as the immediate tendency of an action. . . . Reason, considered merely as subservient to benevolence, as assisting to produce the greatest good, will teach us to have particular regard to these relations and circumstances, because it is plainly for the good of the world that they should be regarded. . . . All these things must come into consideration, were it only in order to determine which way of acting is likely to produce the greatest good. Thus, upon supposition that it were in the strictest sense true, without limitation, that benevolence includes in it all virtues, yet reason must come in as its guide and director, in order to attain its own end, the end of benevolence, the greatest public good.' (xii 27)

[4] See Hutcheson, §644.

[5] Is benevolence a third superior principle, besides self-love and conscience? This is denied by McPherson, 'Development'; Jackson, 'Refutation'; Frey, 'Self-love'. They argue that benevolence is treated as a particular passion. This conception of benevolence does not give appropriate weight to the passages in which Butler treats benevolence as the foundation of utilitarian morality. The view that it is a superior principle is defended by Raphael, 'Conscience' 237–8; Grave, 'Foundations' 75 (who appeals to the conclusion of Sermon i); Penelhum, *Butler* 31–5. See also McNaughton, 'Benevolence'.

my desire to benefit this particular person at the expense of another for whom I have no passion of benevolence (for instance, my child at the expense of a stranger's child).

To show that benevolence as a principle completes benevolence as a passion, Butler needs to show that the passion is directed not only to people with whom we have some prior relation, such as parents, children, and friends, but also to the good of particular individuals whose sufferings we become aware of. The Good Samaritan helped a particular individual with whom he had no previous connexion. If benevolence extends this far, then Butler might argue it is also reasonably extended to people we have not met; for if we happen to see or meet A and do not happen to see or meet B, but we know that A and B are in equal need, we have reason to extend our benevolence equally to each of them.

The extension of benevolence might be compared to the rational extension of a particular passion. I might initially be fond of eating the wrong food, but once I realize that tofu is both tasty and nutritious, I may come to enjoy eating it, and form an appetite for it that I did not have before. This modification of a particular passion seems to require the intervention of rational self-love, connecting my particular passion with the concerns of the whole self, and modifying them in the light of these concerns. This appeal to nature and to the needs of the whole self explains the modification of a passion by a rational principle. Some parallel intervention by a rational principle seems to be needed to explain how the passion of benevolence grows into the principle of benevolence.

What rational principle could intervene? It cannot be the principle of benevolence whose origin we are trying to understand. To claim that the relevant principle is self-love is to insist on a closer connexion between self-love and benevolence than Butler characteristically recognizes. The only relevant superior principle seems to be conscience, which we have not yet examined.

694. Self-Love and the Principle of Benevolence

These questions about the development of benevolence from a passion to a principle raise a question about Butler's defence of benevolence in Sermon xi. That sermon seems to argue within the limits of Sermon i, which deliberately refrained from relying on the authority of conscience or reflexion, and simply treated it as one aspect of human nature among others. These limits confine Butler's argument, at that stage, to the resources used by sentimentalist defences of morality. Similarly, his defence in Sermon xi does not go far beyond what a sentimentalist might offer. Though he recognizes that benevolence is more than a particular passion, his defence treats it as a particular passion.[6] The defence is legitimate, if the objection against benevolence is simply the fact that it requires us to pursue the good of others. Butler shows that this feature of benevolence does not show that benevolence conflicts with self-love.

[6] 'The short of the matter is no more than this. Happiness consists in the gratification of certain affections, appetites, passions, with objects which are by nature adapted to them. . . . Love of our neighbour is one of those affections. This, considered as a virtuous principle, is gratified by a consciousness of endeavouring to promote the good of others, but considered as a natural affection, its gratification consists in the actual accomplishment of this endeavour. . . . Thus it appears, that benevolence and the pursuit of public good hath at least as great respect to self-love and the pursuit of private good as any other particular passions, and their respective pursuits.' (xi 16)

But we could agree with Butler on this point and still wonder whether the degree of self-sacrifice required by the principle of benevolence might not conflict with self-love. We might agree that self-love frustrates itself if it frustrates our benevolent inclinations, given their actual strength. But the role of conscience does not depend on the actual strength of any motive.[7] The argument of Sermon xi does not seem to consider this aspect of a superior principle. Admittedly, the mere fact that conscience prescribes benevolent action does not show that it necessarily conflicts with self-love; but it is still possible, for all Butler has shown in this sermon, that the degree of benevolence prescribed by conscience conflicts with self-love.

We must, then, inquire further into Butler's view of conscience and morality before we can see why he thinks moral virtue is natural. To grasp his view of moral virtue, we must see how it is related to benevolence; this will help us to understand what principles conscience accepts.

695. Conscience as the Generic Principle of Reflexion

To grasp Butler's views on conscience and morality, we need to survey his different uses of 'conscience' at different points in the *Sermons*. In the Preface and the earlier sermons, he tends to mention 'reflexion' or 'conscience' or both together in a generic sense, referring to the superior principle. An irrational passion is said to conflict with 'reflexion and conscience' (P 14, ii 3). Conscience is 'the principle in man by which he approves or disapproves his heart, temper, and actions' (i 8; cf. P 9 on approbation). This reflexive attitude, assessing different passions by considering weight of reasons rather than strength of desire, matches Butler's characterization of a superior principle in general. Similarly, he speaks of the 'superior principle of reflexion or conscience', which has natural authority as distinct from strength (ii 8). He begins Sermon iii by claiming to have established the supremacy of 'the one superior principle of reflexion or conscience'

In these passages Butler identifies guidance by conscience with guidance by a superior principle. He attaches a very broad sense to 'conscience', so that to act on one's conscience is simply to act on a superior principle. 'Reflexion' (P 24, 25) or 'reflex approbation' (P 26) is his generic term for a superior principle. Sometimes he identifies it with conscience without suggesting that there is any other superior principle.

But when he states his position in more detail, he recognizes self-love as a superior principle distinct from conscience.[8] When he identifies conscience with the supreme principle, he recognizes distinct and independent superior principles. If he did not recognize them, his claim that conscience is supreme would be trivial; for there would be no other superior principle that could rival it.

To explain how acting on 'reflexion or conscience' is natural, Butler does not consider moral judgments directly. Instead he considers a rash action that someone undertakes against

[7] 'And the conclusion is, that to allow no more to this superior principle or part of our nature, than to other parts; to let it govern and guide only occasionally in common with the rest, as its turn happens to come, from the temper and circumstances one happens to be in; this is not to act conformably to the constitution of man: . . . one may determine what course of action the economy of man's nature requires without so much as knowing in what degrees of *strength* the several principles prevail, or which of them have actually the greatest influence.' (P 24)

[8] Readers disagree about whether Butler also recognizes benevolence as a superior principle. See §693.

the principle of reasonable self-love. He takes it to be clear that in acting against self-love one violates one's nature, and so he infers that reasonable self-love is a superior principle.[9] He attributes to self-love the sort of authority he has previously attributed to 'reflexion or conscience'.

Butler claims that we can recognize the superiority of self-love 'without particular consideration of conscience' (ii 11). In this claim he uses 'conscience' in a narrower sense than he had in mind in speaking of 'reflexion or conscience'. The argument about self-love was intended to prove the supremacy of the 'faculty which surveys, approves, or disapproves' (ii 9), which is 'reflexion or conscience'. But we cannot prove the superiority of self-love without particular consideration of the faculty that surveys and approves; for self-love is shown to be precisely an expression of that faculty. Reasonable self-love is not distinct from conscience, if conscience is understood as reflex approbation in general; on that understanding of conscience, reasonable self-love is simply a manifestation of conscience. Hence the conscience that is not considered must be conscience in a more specific sense. When Butler explicitly sets aside 'particular consideration of conscience', he signals the fact that he intends to treat conscience as one among a number of superior principles.[10]

Immediately after this passage that distinguishes self-love from conscience Butler returns to speaking of 'reflexion or conscience' (ii 12) in a generic sense that does not distinguish conscience from reasonable self-love. He believes he has made it clear that reflexion or conscience is 'manifestly superior and chief, without regard to strength' (13); but he argues only that it is superior to 'the various appetites, passions, and affections' that do not necessarily follow authority. He does not mention the superior principle of reasonable

[9] '. . . it is manifest that self-love is in human nature a superior principle to passion. This may be contradicted without violating that nature; but the former cannot. So that, if we will act conformably to the economy of man's nature, reasonable self-love must govern. Thus, without particular consideration of conscience, we may have a clear conception of the *superior nature* of one principle to another; and see that there really is this natural superiority, quite distinct from degrees of strength and prevalency' (ii 11).

[10] Darwall, *BMIO* 255–61, discusses these passages on self-love and conscience. He explains them by suggesting that 'Butler may not actually believe that one principle *can* be superior to another independently of their relation to conscience' (255). This claim is trivially true if 'conscience' is used in the generic sense I have described, so that it includes every principle relying on authority rather than strength. Darwall, however, also seems to intend the non-trivial thesis that results if we substitute the specific sense of 'conscience', so that conscience is one superior principle among others. Darwall suggests that any superior principle distinct from conscience (in the specific sense) is superior because of authorization or endorsement by conscience. In support of his view Darwall cites ii 8. Here Butler mentions the passion of benevolence as part of human nature, and goes on to discuss other passions: 'Yet since other passions, and regards to private interest, which lead us . . . astray, are themselves in a degree equally natural, and often most prevalent; and since we have no method of seeing the particular degree in which one or the other is placed in us by nature; it is plain the former [sc. benevolence and similar natural dispositions], considered merely as natural, good and right as they are, can no more be a law to us than the latter. But there is a superior principle of reflexion or conscience . . .'. This passage cannot be evidence that reasonable self-love is not a superior principle; for the principles that Butler contrasts with conscience do not include reasonable self-love, but only include 'regards to private interest', which are not said to be reasonable; Butler denies that any of these principles are superior at all. This is Darwall's reason for affirming the non-trivial claim that every superior principle is superior by being authorized by specific conscience. This claim faces an objection in ii 11, where Butler speaks of reasonable self-love as superior 'without particular consideration of conscience'. Darwall (273) emphasizes 'particular' here, and appeals to the argument of ii 10, which he calls a reductio. He explains ii 11: 'There is, I think, a perfectly good explanation of why he would have said just this if he believed what he says in the reductio, namely, that the natural superiority of any principle at all is equivalent to the authority of conscience'. This explanation, however, does not support Darwall's claim, which is about specific conscience; for his account of ii 10 is correct only if it refers to generic conscience. Taylor, 'Features', perhaps (286) anticipates Darwall's view about conscience as the only source of the authority of other principles. He says that conscience is the only source of imperatives, i.e., of 'oughts', as opposed to judgments of probability.

self-love. Butler assumes that the only principle that is guided by rational authority is reflexion or conscience (14).[11] To deny the 'natural supremacy of conscience' (16) is to recognize no difference between inward principles, 'but only that of strength' (16, 17).

The assumption that Butler relies on here (that only conscience expresses rational authority) is false, if he takes conscience to be distinct from reasonable self-love; for he has just pointed out that self-love is a superior principle. If this is true of self-love, Butler is wrong to claim that if conscience—understood as distinct from self-love—were not naturally supreme, there would be no difference between inward principles but only that of strength; for if we had reasonable self-love, we would have a superior principle that relies on authority.

Butler avoids this obvious objection to his argument, if he does not treat conscience as distinct from self-love. If conscience is the generic 'reflexion or conscience', the principle of reflex approbation in general, it is not distinct from reasonable self-love; self-love is simply one particular manifestation of this general principle. Given this generic notion of conscience as reflex approbation, Butler is right to claim that if we had no conscience we would have no reflex approbation, and therefore no superior principles.

This shift from a generic conception of conscience (as the principle of reflexion underlying any superior principle) to a specific conception (of a superior principle distinct from reasonable self-love), and back to a generic conception, does not destroy Butler's argument, unless he takes his argument for the supremacy of generic conscience to prove the supremacy of specific conscience (the principle that takes the moral point of view, in contrast to the view of reasonable self-love). He has not yet argued for the superiority of specific conscience.

696. Conscience as a Specific Superior Principle

In Sermon iii Butler clarifies the distinct place of specific conscience as a superior principle. He begins with generic conscience, by claiming to have established 'the natural supremacy of reflexion or conscience' (iii 1), and takes this to imply that 'mankind hath the rule of right within himself' (iii 5). This rule of right is the generic principle that relies on authority (iii 2). Butler now asks about our obligation to attend and to follow this rule of right. His first answer is that it is the law of our nature; as he has shown in the argument about self-love, superior principles both express our nature (as rational agents) and take account of our nature (by exercising foresight for the needs of a human being as a system).[12] But he now considers an objector who asks why we should follow the law of our nature if it requires us to act against our interest.[13] He therefore considers the possibility of a superior principle that conflicts with self-love.

[11] Butler says that 'that principle by which we survey, and either approve or disapprove our own heart, temper, and actions, is . . . to be considered . . . as being superior, as from its very nature manifestly claiming superiority over all others'. This is a general description of a superior principle. But he immediately infers that this principle is identical to conscience: ' . . . insomuch that you cannot form a notion of this faculty, conscience, without taking in judgment, direction, superintendency' (ii 14).

[12] 'But allowing that mankind hath the rule of right within himself, . . .' (iii 5, quoted in §706).

[13] 'However, let us hear what is to be said against obeying this law of our nature. And the sum is no more than this: "Why should we be concerned about anything out of and beyond ourselves? If we do find within ourselves regards to others, and restraints of we know not how many different kinds, yet these being embarrassments, and hindering us from

Butler argues that the objection rests on a false estimate of the conflict between self-interest and 'duty' (iii 8) or 'virtue', because 'self-love . . . does in general perfectly coincide with virtue' (8). When we consider not particular sacrifices imposed by duty, but the course of our life as a whole, even confining ourselves to the present life, we have no good reason to affirm a conflict between duty and interest.

We might understand Butler to claim that the supreme principle is self-love, and that we decide whether an action is natural for us by deciding whether it is in our interest. But this is not his position. At the summary at the end of this sermon, he maintains that natural action must accord with a superior principle. He acknowledges both reasonable self-love and conscience as superior principles (iii 9).[14] He does not argue that the superiority of any superior principle implies the supremacy of conscience; for both reasonable self-love and conscience are superior principles, and conflict with either of them makes an action unnatural. Since they are both superior, and both sources of natural action, any action recommended by conscience and rejected by reasonable self-love would be, to that extent, unnatural. Butler allows the logical possibility of a conflict between self-love and conscience, and deals with it by arguing that it is not a practical possibility that needs to concern us.

697. Does Conscience Support Morality?

This development in Butler's account of conscience in Sermons ii–iii is not surprising; for he tries both to explain the concept of a superior principle and to defend his view of which principles are superior. For the first purpose it is reasonable to speak of 'reflexion' without discrimination, but for the second purpose it is necessary to distinguish different superior principles. Though the generic description of conscience in terms that seem to apply equally to self-love makes Butler's exposition obscure, it does not necessarily betray confusion. For though he recognizes that distinct superior principles belong to generic reflexion or conscience, he does not believe that specific conscience is simply one superior principle among others. On the contrary, specific conscience fully realizes the superiority that is present to some degree in all superior principles. Once we recognize the obligation to follow reflexion and generic conscience, we must also recognize the obligation to follow the principle that most fully realizes the superiority of generic conscience, and hence we must recognize the obligation to follow specific conscience.

This claim about more and less complete realizations of superiority needs some clarification. The degree of superiority of a principle may be assessed by the extent to which it relies on reasons rather than strength of desires, and by the number of relevant considerations it takes into account. Measured by these standards, conscience is the supreme principle of reflexion because it satisfies the generic conception of a superior principle to a higher degree than any other does.

going the nearest way to our own good, why should we not endeavour to suppress and get over them?" Thus people go on with words, which when applied to human nature, and the condition in which it is placed in this world, have really no meaning.' (iii 6–7)

[14] Quoted and discussed in §703.

If this is Butler's view of the relation between generic and specific conscience, it should clarify some of Butler's questions and tasks. We need to find an initial description of conscience that allows us to understand the questions Butler is asking and what he needs to prove in order to answer them. We may ask whether these are analytic truths: (1) Conscience is separate from self-love. (2) Conscience approves of morality. (3) Conscience is supreme.

The first claim is false for generic conscience, but analytically true for specific conscience. If the only superior principle were self-love, apparently reflexion (i.e., generic conscience) and self-love would be identical. In that case, self-love would be supreme and we would have disproved the supremacy of specific conscience.

Butler takes the third claim to be synthetic, and to need argument. It is less easy to decide about the second claim; is argument needed to show that conscience and morality agree? If he were convinced that morality is utilitarian, but that conscience is the source of the judgments about fairness that conflict with utilitarianism, he would have to recognize a disagreement between conscience and morality. But he does not seem to contemplate this possibility. He relies on conscientious judgments as a means of access to our moral judgments, and assumes that our moral theory must conform to these judgments.

We can clarify Butler's position if we consider Sidgwick's reasons for believing that Butler's claims about conscience, reason, and nature, are tautological. According to Sidgwick, Butler takes conscience to be essentially reasonable. Since he claims it is natural to live according to conscience, he claims that what is natural is living according to reason. But he believes that living according to reason is living according to nature; hence he simply says that it is natural to live according to nature and reasonable to live according to reason.[15]

This argument is too hasty. Butler claims that specific conscience necessarily prescribes the principles of morality, not simply those of reasonable self-love. Hence his claim that it is natural and reasonable to live according to specific conscience implies that living in accord with one's rational nature as a whole requires living in accord with moral reason. Butler conceives specific conscience as essentially reasonable, but he does not assume it is to be identified with the whole of practical reason; it is moral reason.

Butler's main questions, therefore, are these: (1) Does generic conscience (i.e., the general principle of reflexion) include specific conscience (i.e., the principle that approves of morality)? (2) Is it natural (i.e., in accord with the requirements of the whole nature of an individual) to act in accord with specific conscience? (3) Is specific conscience also supreme (and hence superior to self-love)?

If Butler's claims about morality and nature are correct, a correct account of morality should show how morality is in accord with nature, understood as involving the requirements

[15] Sidgwick argues: 'Butler assumes with his opponents that it is reasonable to live according to Nature, and argues that Conscience or the faculty that imposes moral rules is naturally supreme in man. It is therefore reasonable to obey Conscience. But are the rules that Conscience lays down merely known to us as the dictates of arbitrary authority, and not as in themselves reasonable? . . . [Butler] expressly adopts the doctrine of Clarke, that (a) the true rules of morality are essentially reasonable. But if (b) Conscience is, after all, Reason applied to Practice, then Butler's argument seems to bend itself into the old circle: (c) "it is reasonable to live according to Nature, and it is natural to live according to Reason." ' (*ME* 378; reference letters added). Sidgwick's move from (a) to (b) is open to question. The argument requires (b) to be a statement of identity; that is how (c) becomes an uninformative circle. But (a) does not justify taking (b) as a statement of identity.

of the whole system of human desires and capacities. We have already seen how Butler argues that prudence is natural. To see how he thinks morality is natural, we must see, first of all, how he understands the content of morality. His answer to this question may support his claim that morality is natural.

698. Benevolence and Morality

Sermons xi–xii show that Butler takes conscience to be closely connected with benevolence, because he takes morality to be closely connected with benevolence. We might, then, rashly identify conscience with rational benevolence. If that is Butler's view, he agrees with Cumberland against Hutcheson, and either rejects or ignores the objections raised by Balguy and Maxwell against the identification of the moral outlook with benevolence.[16]

Butler examines benevolence and morality when he preaches on St Paul's claim that 'if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself' (*Rm.* 13:9). Butler takes this to mean that 'to love our neighbour as ourselves includes in it all virtues' (xii 25). He identifies love of one's neighbour with the principle rather than the passion of benevolence.[17] This rational principle is devoted to the public good and to the production of the greatest good.[18]

Is Butler right to identify love of one's neighbour with concern for the public good? At the end of Sermon xii he takes non-utilitarian aspects of morality to constitute 'cautions and restrictions' (xii 31) on St Paul's claim that love of one's neighbour includes the whole of morality. He reaches this conclusion because he believes that love of one's neighbour is benevolence, and that benevolence is concern with the public good. That is why Paul implicitly advocates promotion of the public good.

Butler seems to concede too much to the utilitarian, because of a questionable claim about the passion and the principle of benevolence. The passion is transformed and made rational by extending its scope from particular people (family, friends, acquaintances) to concern for other people in general, until it reaches the outlook of the Good Samaritan. But Butler takes the Good Samaritan's concern to be concern for the public good, whereas the two types of concern seem different. The Good Samaritan is concerned equally with anyone in distress, not simply with people for whom he feels an antecedent passion of benevolence. But the fact that his concern is impartial and general does not imply that he weighs one person's benefits and harms against another in order to achieve the maximum public good.

[16] Sidgwick, *ME* 86n, suggests that Butler's views changed on this matter: 'In the first of his Sermons on Human Nature . . . he does not notice, any more than Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, any possible want of harmony between conscience and benevolence. A note to Sermon xii, however, seems to indicate a stage of transition from the view of the first Sermon and the view of the Dissertation'. (In *ME* [1] 70n he does not mention Sermon xii.) Sidgwick's claim is unpersuasive insofar as it relies on Sermon i, which explicitly takes no account of superiority among the principles that constitute human nature.

[17] 'Thus, when benevolence is said to be the sum of virtue, it is not spoken of as a blind propension, but as a principle in reasonable creatures, and so to be directed by their reason; for reason and reflexion comes into our notion of a moral agent.' (xii 27)

[18] See xii 27: 'which way of acting is likely to produce the greatest good'.

We might even go further in an anti-utilitarian direction, and say that love of individual people should make us unwilling to sacrifice one for the sake of many. The story of the Good Samaritan would be quite different if he were to consider whether his effort would be better spent on saving the life of the unknown victim (who, for all he knew, might have been unlikely to do much for the public good) or on some benefit to other people who were more likely to advance the public good. Hutcheson's utilitarianism seems to require the Samaritan to choose the second option;[19] but we might object that such a choice misses part of the point of the demand for love of the individual people who are our neighbours. It is at least as easy to take St Paul's principle in an anti-utilitarian as in a utilitarian direction.

Butler takes the love of one's neighbour to be part of the 'school of discipline' for our particular affections and attachments. In the prayer that concludes this sermon, he implies that the development of particular affections into universal love prepares us for the eventual perfect love of God as the source of all goodness.[20] As we acquire benevolence, we come to love goodness in the form of benevolence, and so we come to love the perfect goodness of God.[21] But this universal aspect of benevolence seems to be distinct from its concern for the public good as opposed to (say) just treatment of individuals.

Butler's assumption that St Paul advocates promotion of the public good shows how far he is influenced by utilitarianism. For he might well have argued that St Paul refers to concern for particular people and their interests and rights, and that such concern is an aspect of our moral sense that underlies our concern for justice and excludes purely utilitarian policies. He could have used a legitimate Scriptural argument to support his own efforts to display the non-utilitarian elements in morality. The utilitarian assumes that benevolent concern for individuals supports a utilitarian maximizing policy. Butler does not challenge that assumption. He shows how deeply the utilitarian assumption is entrenched, even in a moralist who might be expected to question it.

699. Indirect Benevolence and Morality: Berkeley's Argument

Butler qualifies and restricts St Paul's claim by mentioning the various ways in which rational benevolence resists or restrains the operations of the passion of benevolence, and even the operations of a direct concern with the public good. He mentions the importance of friendships that involve discrimination between people, uncertainty of judgments about the public good, the importance of laws and so on (xii 27). In these ways benevolence has to proceed indirectly, if it is not to frustrate its own end. The need for indirectness recalls Butler's arguments about self-love and the particular passions.

[19] This claim needs to be qualified to allow for rule utilitarianism in Hutcheson. See §647.

[20] 'O Almighty God, inspire us with this divine principle; kill in us all the seeds of envy and ill-will; and help us, by cultivating within ourselves the love of our neighbour, to improve in the love of Thee. Thou hast placed us in various kindreds, friendships, and relations, as the school of discipline for our affections: help us, by the due exercise of them, to improve to perfection; till all partial affection be lost in that entire universal one, and thou, O God, shalt be all in all.' (xii 33)

[21] 'Thus, to be righteous, implies in it the love of righteousness; to be benevolent, the love of benevolence; to be good, the love of goodness; whether this righteousness, benevolence, or goodness be viewed as in our own mind or another's, and the love of God as a being perfectly good is the love of perfect goodness contemplated in a being or person.' (xii 33)

An argument for this indirect benevolence is presented and defended more fully by Berkeley in his sermon, 'Passive Obedience'.[22] The point of this sermon is to oppose a doctrine of limited obedience to authority. This doctrine is often defended by appeal to a utilitarian argument about the consequences for the public good. Berkeley replies that utilitarian reasoning favours not limited obedience and selective disobedience, but invariable passive obedience. This doctrine does not require us to obey immoral instructions (such as those that the Thirty gave to Socrates); disobedience to these instructions is permissible, as long as we are willing to accept the penalties.[23]

Berkeley begins from the belief in laws of nature, and asks how we are to find out what they prescribe. He does not consider the Scholastic appeal to fitness to rational nature or Clarke's views about fitness.[24] He assumes without argument that happiness, understood as pleasure, is the basis for finding good and evil (5). We seek our own happiness; we find it in agreement with the divine will, because it is our eternal interest to agree with God's eternal will (6). Since God is impartially benevolent, it is in our interest to follow the utilitarian principle that God accepts (6).[25]

The laws of nature, then, aim at maximizing utility, because that is what God aims at.[26] Berkeley agrees with Cumberland's consequentialist account of the laws of nature,[27] but not with Cumberland's view that it is inherently rational to aim at the common good. Berkeley's position is more favourable to voluntarism (though without a definite commitment). He does not suggest that we would have any reason to be utilitarians if God's being a utilitarian did not make it in our interest to share God's aims.

If we share God's aim of maximizing utility, we would be ill-advised to be direct utilitarians, acting on our calculation of the consequences of particular actions. Such calculations are often difficult and fallible, and since different people disagree about their results, direct utilitarianism leads to discord. To avoid this bad effect, we need to be indirect utilitarians, relying on general rules. Hence natural law does not consist only of the single principle of maximizing the good; it also includes the general rules that we are obliged to observe without exception in order to maximize the good (8–12). Since utility requires us to obey them without exception, the fact that in some circumstances observance of them has bad results does not remove our obligation to obey them.[28]

Why, then, should we suppose that passive obedience rather than limited obedience is the rule that we ought to follow? Berkeley's answer shows why Hobbes would be

[22] Since Berkeley delivered this sermon in 1712, Butler might have known it. It is helpfully discussed by Broad, 'Morals'.

[23] 'The fulfilling of those laws, either by a punctual performance of what is enjoined in them, or, if that be inconsistent with reason or conscience, by a patient submission to whatever penalties the supreme power hath annexed to the neglect or transgression of them, is termed loyalty . . .' (3) I cite the sections in *Works*.

[24] Clarke's Boyle Lectures were published in 1706, and so Berkeley could have known them.

[25] '. . . . antecedent to the end proposed by God, no distinction can be conceived between men; that end therefore itself, or general design of Providence, is not determined or limited by any respect of persons. It is not therefore the private good of this or that man, nation, or age, but the general well-being of all men, of all nations, of all ages of the world, which God designs should be procured by the concurring actions of each individual' (7).

[26] 'These propositions are called "laws of nature" because they are universal, and do not derive their obligation from any civil sanction, but immediately from the Author of nature himself.' (12)

[27] See §535 for reasons for doubting whether Cumberland is a utilitarian.

[28] 'And, notwithstanding that these rules are too often, either by the unhappy concurrence of events, or more especially by the wickedness of perverse men who will not conform to them, made accidental cause of misery to those good men who do, yet this doth not vacate their obligation . . .' (13)

well advised to rely on an indirect utilitarian defence of his laws of nature. Berkeley does not suggest (as Hobbes sometimes seems to) that every act of disobedience is likely to lead to the evils of anarchy and should therefore be avoided. But he argues that permission for limited obedience will lead to these evils, and so should be rejected. Loyalty (consisting in passive obedience) is a virtue because of the 'miseries inseparable from a state of anarchy' (15–16). Since it would be so difficult to determine case by case whether disobedience would be expedient, we ought to have an invariable rule to be observed without calculation in particular cases (19). On this ground Berkeley rejects any argument to show that our agreement to obey the law is conditional on (say) the good behaviour of the rulers, and so he affirms that even if the rulers behave badly, the duty of obedience remains (23).

This argument for strict observance of general rules supports, in Berkeley's view, different attitudes to positive and negative rules. Only the negative precepts of natural law carry absolute obligation, because it is always possible to obey the negative commands without exception (26, 32), and no negative precept may be violated for the sake of observing a positive precept (35).

Once he has argued that acceptance of utilitarianism does not justify calculation of consequences in particular cases, Berkeley answers those who argue from the public good to a doctrine of limited obedience. They wrongly apply the utilitarian criterion to particular actions; but they ought to restrict its application to rules, and they ought to observe the rules without the exceptions that would be warranted by calculation in particular cases.[29]

Berkeley's general point is stronger than his application of it to the question about obedience. He does not show that the general aim of maximizing utility requires an absolute rule of passive obedience rather than a rule of selective obedience. He relies heavily on arguments about anarchy, uncertainty, and co-ordination; but it is not clear that he weighs their bad effects accurately against the bad effects of non-resistance to bad regimes. But whether or not we agree with him on this question, we may agree that he has found a possible defence of utilitarianism against some intuitive objections. We may be too hasty in assuming that our acceptance of general rules that make no mention of utility counts against the truth of utilitarianism. If we are indirect utilitarians, we may even find it easier to justify these non-utilitarian general rules, by showing that their observance, without regard to utility, is the best way to maximize utility.

We might, then, take Berkeley's indirect utilitarianism to lie behind Butler's remarks about restrictions on benevolence. Berkeley explains why the utility of accepting the utilitarian principle alone will be lower than the utility of accepting subordinate principles that we refuse to break even for reasons of utility. If this is what Butler has in mind, his restrictions on benevolence might be taken to clarify, rather than refute, the claim that benevolence is the whole of morality.

[29] 'In framing the general laws of nature, it is granted we must be entirely guided by the public good of mankind, but not in the ordinary moral action of our lives. Such a rule, if universally observed, hath, from the nature of things, a necessary fitness to promote the general well-being of mankind: therefore it is a law of nature. This is good reasoning. But if we should say, such an action doth in this instance produce much good and no harm to mankind; therefore it is lawful: this were wrong. The rule is framed with respect to the good of mankind; but our practice must be always shaped immediately by the rule. Those who think the public good of a nation to be the sole measure of the obedience due to the civil power seem not to have considered this distinction.' (31)

700. Objections to Indirect Utilitarianism

Indirect utilitarianism, however, does not seem to account for all the restrictions on benevolence that Butler accepts. Sometimes he accepts a sharper distinction between benevolence and virtue (xii 31n; D 8). Clarke argues that, though morality and utility, suitably understood, coincide, they are distinct, and morality is not mutable in accordance with utility.[30] Butler follows him on this question. For he mentions some duties (for instance, fidelity, honour, strict justice, xii 31n) that specify moral virtues, but 'are abstracted from the consideration of their tendency'.

What sort of abstraction has Butler in mind? If he meant simply that we do not think directly about the public good when we decide to follow these moral principles, his abstraction is consistent with utilitarianism. For Berkeley's reasons, we might argue that utilitarianism requires abstraction from considerations of utility in decisions about particular cases. But this does not seem to be the sort of abstraction that Butler intends; for he has already recognized that the utilitarian position leaves room for some indirectness, and he takes these cases (fidelity and so on) to introduce a new question. He seems to mean that in these cases the relevant rules have no indirect utilitarian justification, and we do not accept the rules because we believe they have some non-apparent indirect utilitarian justification. Hence the characteristic motives of virtue are different from benevolence; even if we believe that indirect utilitarianism supports a given virtue, that belief does not explain our belief that it is a virtue.

Butler may seem to weaken his case against utilitarianism when he mentions the possibility that the good of the creation is the 'only end of the Author of it' (xii 31n), and that the author of nature proposes no end to himself but the production of happiness (D 8). We might infer, as Hutcheson does, that since God has given us our moral sense, the rules that it endorses promote the general good that God intends. If we believe that God is a utilitarian, we might argue that moral rules have an indirect utilitarian justification that is not apparent to us, but is apparent to God, and that this is our reason for accepting the rules.[31] We will accept this argument against Butler if we accept Berkeley's case for indirect utilitarianism.

Butler, however, does not affirm that God's only end is the general good and his moral character 'merely that of benevolence'—he concedes this only for the sake of argument.[32] He agrees that if the premiss about God's benevolence is true, God has given us moral rules that have a utilitarian defence. But this defence is nothing to us as moral agents. Our reason for disapproving of injustice does not depend on its effects on general happiness; the production of happiness is a coincidence that may matter to God but does not give us our primary moral reason.[33] Berkeley's indirect utilitarianism does not answer this claim about

[30] See Clarke, *DNR* = H ii 630, discussed in §622.

[31] Hutcheson, *SMP* i 256, criticizes Butler's *Anal.* on punishment. See also §645 (his reply to the argument from ignorance of utility to acceptance of non-utilitarian rules).

[32] Broad, *FTET* 81, and McPherson, 'Development (2)' 10–11, go too far in suggesting that Butler thinks God is or may be a utilitarian. Butler does not assert that this is possible; he simply concedes for the sake of argument that it is possible. His concession allows him to claim that he has good reason to deny that it is possible. Broad's view that Butler takes God to be a utilitarian is rejected by Grave, 'Foundations' 85–6, who argues that it conflicts with the attribution of justice to God.

[33] 'And therefore, were the Author of nature to propose nothing to himself as an end but the production of happiness, were his moral character merely that of benevolence; yet ours is not so. Upon that supposition, indeed, the only reason of his giving us the above-mentioned approbation of benevolence to some persons rather than others, . . . must be, that he

moral reasons; for he simply assumes egoism and voluntarism as the basis of morality, and so does not consider the possibility that some moral principles have a non-utilitarian basis, even if a utilitarian can also defend them.

Butler's argument reveals an ambiguity in questions about what makes right actions right. If his hypothesis about God were true, utility would make right actions right by being the causal origin of the presence of right actions in the world and of our true judgments about which actions are right. How, then, can Butler deny that, on this supposition about God, utility would make right actions right?

To see why he might have a good reason, we may consider a parallel explanation of physics. Suppose that God recognizes that it will maximize utility if we understand the causal processes and laws of the physical world, and we act on that knowledge. Even so, it does not follow that the properties we grasp when we understand physics are the properties that maximize utility. Or suppose that the Nobel Foundation infallibly rewards the scientists who find the true theories with Nobel Prizes; it still does not follow that winning the Nobel Prize makes someone's theory true, even if it is an absolutely reliable symptom of truth. Butler believes that an appeal to God's utilitarian outlook to support a utilitarian moral theory would make a similar mistake. We ought not to argue directly from facts about the causal origin of our moral judgments to conclusions about the character of right-making properties.

To explain why utility, in Butler's view, is not the right-making property, we might argue that facts about utility are not always the only relevant facts, or the decisive facts, that bear on whether an action is right. If we tried to be physicists or historians (on the supposition of a utilitarian God) by asking what belief will maximize utility, we would not understand which facts matter for a physical or historical understanding. Similarly, acquaintance with our moral judgments shows us that we do not believe that utility is all that matters, or that it is always decisive.

An indirect utilitarian might answer Butler on two points: (1) Though admittedly we do not always take utility to be all that matters, we are mistaken. (2) The analogy with physics does not work; for Butler agrees that in morality utility sometimes matters, and even that it is sometimes decisive, whereas utility never matters in physics (we may suppose).

The first answer does not refute Butler. Utilitarians cannot afford to reject our judgments of relevance, but must take them to be correct sometimes. If they could not rely on such judgments, they would undermine their grounds for thinking that utility matters. Berkeley assumes that indirect utilitarianism allows us to explain the appearance of our accepting non-utilitarian rules. But if utilitarians admit that we have non-utilitarian as well as utilitarian judgments about moral relevance, they need to show that our non-utilitarian judgments are somehow less reliable than our utilitarian judgments. Butler argues that we have no reason to prefer our utilitarian judgments. Sidgwick argues that common sense is 'unconsciously utilitarian', but Butler disagrees; even if we know about the balance of utility, we do not take that to decide all the questions that arise.

foresaw this constitution of our nature would produce more happiness, than forming us with a temper of mere general benevolence. But still, since this is our constitution, falsehood, violence, injustice, must be vice in us, and benevolence to some, preferably to others, virtue; abstracted from all consideration of the overbalance of evil or good, which they may appear likely to produce.' (D 8) Butler should agree that if we believe the rules have an indirect utilitarian justification, that will give us a further reason to approve of them; his point is that such a reason is not necessary for us to have a sufficient reason. He has more to say on human ignorance in Sermon xv 14.

The second answer fails for similar reasons. If we attach some weight to the judgments that favour utilitarianism, we need some reason for discounting the judgments that favour non-utilitarian considerations. A utilitarian would be unwise to discount them simply because they are non-utilitarian; for such discounting would affect utilitarian judgments as well, unless we take the truth of utilitarianism to be settled without reference to common sense. If utilitarians argue from common-sense judgments, they are open to Butler's objections. If they do not argue from common sense, they need to show that their preferred method is preferable to argument from common sense.

701. Divine Goodness and Divine Benevolence

Butler's arguments about divine goodness and moral rightness take a position in the debate that Cumberland and Hutcheson begin. Both of them identify God's goodness with benevolence. Maxwell disputes Cumberland's view. Balguy and Grove agree with Maxwell; they reject the arguments of Hutcheson and Bayes to show that God's moral character is simply benevolent.[34] Butler agrees with Balguy and Grove. Against Hutcheson he argues that the moral sense includes non-utilitarian elements. Hence we have one good reason to believe that God's moral goodness includes non-utilitarian elements of goodness. This reason might be outweighed if we had strong theological grounds for believing that God is benevolent and has no moral characteristics distinct from benevolence. But theological and Scriptural arguments suggest that God is just and merciful towards individuals, not simply benevolent towards the whole human race.[35]

Butler relies on these arguments to show that God's moral government of the world is concerned with virtue and vice for their own sake, and not merely with maximum happiness. In the chapter of the *Analogy* to which the *Dissertation on Virtue* is appended, he insists that we recognize God as just, not merely concerned with happiness.[36] He does not categorically rule out the possibility of discovering, if we knew enough about what would maximize happiness in the universe, that God's character is 'simple absolute benevolence'. But he does not agree that arguments from reason or revelation support this conception of God. On the contrary, he takes these arguments to suggest that God has moral qualities distinct from benevolence. He even claims that we have no clear conception of what benevolence would imply, let alone of its being morally acceptable, if it were not constrained by veracity and justice.[37]

[34] On Balguy and Grove see §662. [35] On Hutcheson see §645.

[36] '. . . perhaps divine goodness, with which, if I mistake not, we make very free in our speculations, may not be a bare single disposition to produce happiness; but a disposition to make the good, the faithful, the honest man happy. Perhaps an infinitely perfect mind may be pleased with seeing his creatures behave suitably to the nature which he has given them . . .' (*Anal.* i 2.3). 'Some men seem to think the only character of the Author of nature to be that of simple absolute benevolence. . . . There may possibly be in the creation beings, to whom the Author of nature manifests himself under the most amiable of all characters, this of infinite absolute benevolence; for it is the most amiable, supposing it not, as perhaps it is not, incompatible with justice; but he manifests himself to us under the character of a righteous governor.' (*Anal.* i 3.3) Price, *RPQM* 83n, quotes the first of these passages.

[37] 'And it [sc. virtue] has this tendency, by rendering public good an object and end, to every member of the society; . . . by uniting a society within itself, and so increasing its strength; and, which is particularly to be mentioned, uniting it by means of veracity and justice. For as these last are principal bonds of union, so benevolence or public spirit, undirected, unrestrained by them, is, nobody knows what.' (*Anal.* i 3.19) This follows the passage on superior principles, discussed in §686.

702. Fairness, Responsibility, and Non-utilitarian Morality

While the *Sermons* show that Butler rejects utilitarianism, only the *Dissertation* makes his reasons clear. These reasons convince Price, who appeals to Butler's arguments against the reduction of morality to benevolence.[38] The *Dissertation* is especially useful because Butler appeals not only to common beliefs about morality, but also to general features of morality that help to clarify his view of conscience and of the connexion between conscience and morality. These are the basis of his anti-utilitarian arguments.

He begins with the difference between authority and strength. Hutcheson's account of moral approval and disapproval overlooks the authoritative character of these sentiments; they do not simply express our favourable feelings or unfavourable feelings, but also claim to be based on the merits of the people and the situation. Butler cites Epictetus as the source of his remarks on the 'approving and disapproving faculty'; he understands this expression as capturing his doctrine of superior principles, as explained in Sermons ii–iii.[39]

In opposition to Hutcheson, Butler distinguishes a rational judgment from favourable feeling. We might feel distressed or upset that someone caused us harm, but we would not make an unfavourable moral judgment unless we thought he had violated some principles that we think he could reasonably be expected to accept. If we decide to drive the wrong way on a one-way street just to save a few minutes, we may be distressed at colliding with a truck coming round a corner, but we can hardly blame the truck driver for anything. We blame people only by appeal to principles that we think we can reasonably expect them to accept.[40]

This observation that moral judgment expresses a superior principle, not simply a feeling of approval, does not refute utilitarianism. But it raises a pertinent question for the utilitarian: how do the rational standards on which the superior principle of conscience relies favour utilitarianism? Cumberland assumes that the rational point of view attends only to the good consequences of actions. Butler looks more closely at the standards defining the outlook of conscience, and finds that they do not support consequentialism, and hence do not support utilitarianism. He therefore agrees with Maxwell's criticism of Cumberland.[41]

In making a moral judgment we assume the agent's responsibility for the action. Butler brings this out clearly in distinguishing punishment from beneficial preventive action.[42] Someone merits blame on the assumption that he is responsible for the relevant action or

[38] See Price, *RPQM* 131, quoting from D 8.

[39] 'That which renders beings capable of moral government, is their having a moral nature, and moral faculties of perception and of action. Brute creatures are impressed and actuated by various instincts and propensions: so also are we. But additional to this, we have a capacity of reflecting upon actions and characters, and making them an object to our thought; and on doing this, we naturally and unavoidably approve some actions, under the peculiar view of their being virtuous and of good desert; and disapprove others, as vicious and of ill desert. That we have this moral approving and disapproving faculty, is certain from our experiencing it in ourselves, and recognizing it in each other. It appears . . . from our natural sense of gratitude, which implies a distinction between merely being the instrument of good, and intending it: from the like distinction, every one makes, between injury and mere harm, which Hobbes says, is peculiar to mankind; and between injury and just punishment, a distinction plainly natural, prior to the consideration of human laws.' (D1) A footnote refers to Epictetus.

[40] An appeal to reasonable expectations of acceptance and rejection is explained in Scanlon, *WWO*, ch. 5.

[41] As we saw in §535, Cumberland is not a utilitarian, but some of the questions that arise about his view arise about utilitarianism as well.

[42] 'For if, unhappily, it were resolved that a man who, by some innocent action, was infected with the plague should be left to perish lest, by other people's coming near him, the infection should spread, no one would say he deserved this treatment. Innocence and ill desert are inconsistent ideas.' (D 3)

state. Since our moral judgments appeal to desert, merit, and appropriateness, rather than to the strength of our reactions, they presuppose responsibility. Since these judgments about blameworthiness are different from utilitarian judgments about what maximizes the good, the utilitarian judgments do not capture our moral judgments.

Butler also believes that some moral principles are obligatory apart from considerations of utility. Certain acts are owed to individuals, and agents are praiseworthy or blameworthy for actions or omissions apart from the effects on utility.[43]

Butler does not draw attention to any common feature of these different exceptions to the utilitarian principle. Hence, he might be taken to hold the pluralist intuitionist view defended by Price and Reid.[44] This view recognizes a number of ultimate principles none of which is supreme, and none of which provides any systematic reasoned basis for deciding conflicts among principles.

But Butler may not intend a pluralist position. Though he does not insist on any common feature of the exceptions to utility, he suggests one. For each case involves reciprocity and equality. If we were asked to explain the principles we rely on in the judgments that Butler mentions, we might say that these are fair principles for evaluating both ourselves and others. We would rightly resent being treated badly simply because we had harmed other people, if the harm was either justified or unavoidable. We do not merely apply these judgments to other people; we also expect to have them applied to ourselves, and we apply them to ourselves in considering whether we deserve blame.

Restraint on self-sacrifice is one aspect of fairness that is fundamental in morality, but not fundamental in utilitarianism. Another aspect of fairness, however, goes beyond restraint of self-sacrifice. Butler's remarks on punishment imply that some moral attitudes are retrospective, rather than purely prospective; they consider what individuals have done in comparison with what they could reasonably have been expected to do. Principles that restrained self-sacrifice, but lacked the appropriate retrospective elements, would not be morally acceptable, because fairness to individuals requires retrospective treatment.

These claims about the content of morality matter for two of Butler's further claims: (1) Morality is to be identified with living in accord with nature. (2) Conscience approves of morality. If morality were identical to the requirements of utilitarian benevolence, he would have to prove these two further claims by connecting nature and conscience with utilitarianism. But since he does not accept utilitarianism, he has to connect nature and conscience with moral principles including the non-utilitarian elements we have mentioned. Does he make his task easier or harder by rejecting utilitarianism?

703. Self-Love, Benevolence, and Conscience

To understand some of Butler's claims about nature, morality, and superiority, we should return to his rather complex views on self-love and benevolence. Self-love is superior to

[43] 'The fact then appears to be, that we are constituted so as to condemn falsehood, unprovoked violence, injustice, and to approve of benevolence to some preferably to others, abstracted from all consideration, which conduct is likeliest to produce an overbalance of happiness or misery.' (D 8) This passage is quoted with approval by Ross, *FE* 77–9, who describes Butler as 'the most sagacious, if not the most consistent or systematic, of the British Moralists'.

[44] On Price and Reid see §§822, 851.

the passion of benevolence; for benevolence towards particular persons 'may be a degree of weakness, and so be blameable' (P 39). When the passion of benevolence conflicts with self-love, self-love has authority and ought to prevail.

It is not so easy to say what Butler believes about self-love and the rational principle of benevolence. The sort of conflict that arises between self-love and the passion of benevolence also seems to arise between self-love and the principle of benevolence. Rational devotion to the public good may involve neglect of one's own good; Butler sees possible conflict between benevolence and other moral virtues (D 8), and the reasons that persuade him of these conflicts can be used to show that there are conflicts with self-love. Moreover, he recognizes a moral duty to take care of one's own interest (D 6); might not this duty on some occasions override the demands of benevolence?

Butler does not seem to claim that self-love is superior to benevolence in all circumstances. Apparently, then, self-love should sometimes restrain benevolence, but benevolence should sometimes restrain self-love. How are we to decide which should prevail?

Sometimes Butler seems to imply that self-love should always prevail, because it is superior to benevolence.[45] As we have seen earlier, he recognizes self-love and conscience as the two superior principles, and he does not mention benevolence as a third. Moreover, he claims that an action is unsuitable to our nature if it violates either of the two superior principles.[46] If, then, self-love rejected an action, and benevolence were the only principle supporting it, we would be acting unnaturally if we performed it.

Butler implies, therefore, that self-love is superior to the principle of benevolence. If these were the only two rational principles in our nature, it would be appropriate to regulate the demands of benevolence by appeal to self-love. As Butler argues, this does not mean that we would not be benevolent, but only that we would avoid the blameworthy degree of benevolence that requires unreasonable self-sacrifice. Self-love, then, is superior to the principle of benevolence, in its own right.

It does not follow, however, that we ought never to sacrifice our interest to do what benevolence requires. For on some occasions conscience may favour the benevolent action over the prudent action, and on such occasions we ought to follow conscience. If we follow it against self-love, we act unnaturally to some degree, insofar as we violate the superior principle of self-love. But we nonetheless act naturally on the whole, because conscience considers what is and is not suitable to my nature as a whole, whereas self-love considers only a part of my nature.

[45] Frey, 'Self-love', defends this view.

[46] 'Reasonable self-love and conscience are the chief or superior principles in the nature of man, because an action may be suitable to this nature, though all other principles be violated; but becomes unsuitable, if either of these are.' (iii 9) It is not clear what possibility Butler envisages in the 'because' clause. He might have either of these two in mind: (1) An action is natural if and only if either self-love or conscience endorses it. (2) An action is natural if and only if both endorse it. In the 'but becomes . . .' clause he accepts a further claim: (3) If either self-love or conscience opposes an action, the action is unnatural. If he believes both (1) and (3), an action that is endorsed by one superior principle and opposed by the other is both natural and unnatural. Butler excludes this possibility if he accepts two other claims: (4) Conscience approves only virtuous action. (5) Actions are virtuous if and only if they are natural, and vicious if and only if they are unnatural. Butler clearly accepts (4). But does he accept (5)? He has a reasonable alternative: (6) Actions are virtuous to the extent that they are natural and vicious to the extent that they are unnatural. According to (6), naturalness and unnaturalness allow degrees, so that an action that is contrary to nature (to some degree) may still be, all things considered, natural; for it may violate one superior rational principle but be endorsed by another. The context favours (6), by allowing degrees of naturalness.

In appealing to this graded conception of nature, Butler sums up his argument in Sermon iii. He begins the sermon with the suggestion that things may be to some extent contrary to nature, but in accordance with nature all things considered.[47] Butler's conception of nature allows some things to be contrary to important aspects of our nature, but less contrary to our nature as a whole than their opposites would be. Similarly, he speaks of the nature of man 'as respecting' himself only and as respecting society (i 4). These two aspects of nature mark two ways in which something could be natural or unnatural.[48]

If, then, we are sometimes justified in following benevolence against self-love, this is not because benevolence prescribes it, but because conscience requires us to follow benevolence. Hence we are really following conscience, not benevolence. We choose the most natural action by following conscience, which approves the actions that suit our nature as a whole.

704. Non-utilitarian Morality as a Source of Natural Action

To see why Butler thinks the actions approved by conscience are natural, we must attend to the content of morality. If utilitarianism were correct, then, in Butler's view, we ought to identify morality with benevolence and concern for the public good. We would thereby identify morality with a self-sacrificing outlook that treats an individual person as a means to maximizing the total good. Since conscience takes the moral point of view, it would coincide with the rational principle of benevolence, if utilitarianism were correct. Even though the concept of conscience would be different from the concept of rational benevolence, their advice would necessarily coincide.

If Butler accepted this view of morality, his claims about conscience and nature would imply that my nature as a whole requires this maximizing attitude. But he neither affirms nor defends this conclusion. He takes benevolence to be a natural passion, and supposes that it is natural to satisfy it to some degree; but these claims do not support utilitarian benevolence. Since he eventually rejects utilitarianism, he takes the outlook of conscience to be non-utilitarian; hence he takes natural action to be guided by non-utilitarian principles. Do the specific non-utilitarian principles that Butler endorses make it more plausible to claim that the actions prescribed by conscience are natural?

To see why these actions are natural, it is relevant to notice that the non-utilitarian elements in Butler's theory endorse self-love at some important points. Butler believes that it is blameworthy to be too little concerned for one's own good and too ready to sacrifice it for the good of others.[49] Often we need not insist on the moral badness of

[47] 'Thus, when it is said by ancient writers that tortures and death are not so contrary to human nature as injustice—by this, to be sure, is not meant that the aversion to the former in mankind is less strong and prevalent than their aversion to the latter, but that the former is only contrary to our nature considered in a partial view, and which takes in only the lowest part of it, that which we have in common with the brutes; whereas the latter is contrary to our nature considered in a higher sense, as a system and constitution contrary to the whole economy of man.' (iii 2)

[48] See also i 14–15, referring to different parts of our nature.

[49] 'It deserves to be considered, whether men are more at liberty, in point of morals, to make themselves miserable without reason, than to make other people so; or dissolutely to neglect their own greater good, for the sake of a present lesser gratification, than they are to neglect the good of others, whom nature has committed to their care. It should seem, that a due concern about our own interest or happiness, and a reasonable endeavour to secure and promote

imprudence, because we often have ample non-moral reasons for being prudent. Still, morality, and not only self-interest, rejects imprudence. It not only endorses proper self-concern, but also rejects those principles that would appeal only to someone who lacked proper self-concern.

The acceptance of proper self-concern makes a difference to our moral judgments. The sacrifice of one person simply to promote the greater good of others is a course of action that reasonably self-concerned people would refuse on their own behalf. Aristotle remarks that the brave person is not the one who is always ready to sacrifice his life, but the one who is ready to sacrifice it for an appropriate cause. In the same spirit, Butler's exceptions to unrestricted maximizing benevolence protect legitimate self-concern against demands for self-sacrifice.[50]

This feature of morality shows why, in one respect, it does not conflict with nature, since it protects those natural requirements that self-love prescribes. But some further reason is needed to explain why the aspects of morality that go beyond self-love are also natural.

One feature of self-love may help to show why agents who recognize self-love as a superior principle in them also have reason to recognize a further principle as superior to self-love. Self-love is essentially fair between the different passions and interests that it has to consider. If we extend Butler's political comparison, we might say that legitimate government by self-love seeks to give the fair and appropriate place to each special interest going with each particular passion, without allowing itself to be dominated by whichever passion can shout most loudly in support of its demands. If one passion is restrained, the restraint is justified by the legitimate interests of the other passions. Rational self-love is impartial between them; it is not biased by the strength of one particular passion.

Similarly, Butler might reasonably claim, conscience deals fairly with the claims of the different individuals whose interests are involved in a situation that concerns it. It is not biased by partiality to oneself, or by a self-sacrificing attitude that considers only the desires of other people. As Clarke suggests, it is characteristic of conscience to take an impartial view of all the people whose interests are involved. To ignore the point of view of conscience would be parallel to ignoring some of our particular passions and interests simply because others are stronger. Just as all the interests relevant to the decision made by self-love are real interests of the self, so all the people relevant to the decisions made by conscience are real persons with claims equal to my own.

Hence, according to Butler, if we acknowledge the reality of other people, the only appropriate point of view to take towards them is the point of view of conscience. A particular passion, according to Butler, has no reason to complain of enlightened self-love. Similarly, the particular agent has no reason to complain about the treatment he is given in relation to other people, if the proper principles of morality are observed.

it, . . . is virtue, and the contrary behaviour faulty and blameable; since, in the calmest way of reflexion, we approve of the first, and condemn the other conduct, both in ourselves and others. This approbation and disapprobation are altogether different from mere desire of our own, or of their happiness, and from sorrow upon missing it. . . . prudence is a species of virtue, and folly of vice: meaning by *folly,* somewhat quite different from mere incapacity; a thoughtless want of that regard and attention to our own happiness, which we had capacity for.' (D 6)

[50] This protection for legitimate self-concern may be compared with Rawls's demand for 'mutual disinterest' and his discussion of benevolence, *TJ* 127–9.

705. Why is Conscience Supreme?

Butler's case for the natural character of conscience depends on our being convinced that conscience, rather than self-love, is supreme. We may wonder why the supreme principle should be the one that treats other people as equals. Why should we not regard other people as competitors for scarce resources, with each of us trying to promote his own interest irrespective of the interests of the others? According to this view, self-love is the supreme principle prescribing natural action. Butler's view implies that we can see why we should accept the supremacy of conscience, once we consider the reasons for taking the point of view of self-love. Unless we accept the outlook of self-love, we abandon the distinction between authority and strength; we abandon any view of ourselves as rational, temporally extended, agents. The result of abandoning conscience would be analogous; we would cease to treat other people as people who deserve things, and cease to claim that we deserve anything from them.

Butler needs to show, then, that we essentially regard ourselves in certain ways that turn out, on reflexion, to involve recognizably moral relations to others. If, for instance, we essentially regard ourselves as appropriately treated in certain ways, or as deserving certain kinds of treatment, and not simply as wanting it in our own interest, our nature essentially includes more than self-love recognizes. Butler insists that the recognition of character and responsibility, and the correlative recognition of desert, are essential to the moral point of view (D 2–3). They are essential elements of human nature. If we evaluated ourselves and other people only from the point of view of self-love, we would ignore an essential feature of ourselves. Our failure would be no less grave than the failure to think of ourselves as temporally extended and as more than a mere collection of passions.[51]

This line of thought might reasonably be extended in a direction that would support Butler's claim. To forgo evaluation by any principles applying to ourselves and others, and to forgo beliefs and sentiments connected with resentment, gratitude, praise, blame, desert, and so on, would be to curtail radically the normal expressions of our nature. To consider myself as a whole, as a system constituted by the relation of my desires to superior principles, I must consider myself as taking these attitudes to myself in relation to others. This is why I act in accordance with my nature in taking the principle embodying these attitudes as the supreme principle; that principle is conscience. If I treat myself as a whole self, I cannot confine my non-instrumental concern to myself.

The character of Butler's argument is still easier to grasp if we see the connexion between his account of superior principles and Plato's account of justice in the soul. Butler's use of the political notions of authority and power relies on one part of Plato's political analogy.[52] Butler applies the analogy to self-love, arguing that it reaches a fair arrangement of the various particular passions, because it is guided by rational evaluation that attaches the appropriate value to each of them. If we accepted the guidance of self-love but rejected the guidance of conscience, we would allow superior principles only a partial influence over us, and so would express our nature as rational agents only in one aspect of our lives.

[51] The Sermon on resentment (viii) is also relevant in this connexion.

[52] Whewell and Gladstone on iii 1 note the parallel with Plato.

This argument assumes that self-love treats different passions fairly, and integrates their satisfaction in some way that recognizes their legitimate claims. This is a quasi-political conception of self-love. By thinking of self-love in this way, we can argue that it considers incompletely the sorts of claims that conscience considers completely. We might wonder, however, why self-love should not be as 'complete' as conscience in its consideration of other people's claims, but still fail to draw the conclusion that conscience draws. Why should self-love not treat other people's interests in the way it treats the particular passions, modifying and integrating them so as to satisfy my own interests? This self-centred conclusion is not the outlook of the supreme principle that Butler recognizes. But why should this self-centred principle not be supreme?

To close off this possibility, Butler must insist on the essential difference between particular passions and other people. Though we can speak of particular passions as having legitimate claims to satisfaction, they do not themselves put these claims forward as deserving satisfaction; all the claims of desert come from self-love on behalf of this particular rational agent. Other people, however, are rational agents, and make claims that involve considerations that they put forward on their merits; they have the same relation to their particular passions that I have to mine.

This fact about other people implies that if I am to consider the merits of a particular course of action that involves them, I have to recognize them as sources of possible legitimate claims about the merits of this course of action. If I considered my own particular passions in this way, I would mistakenly treat them as though they were people. But if I did not recognize others as sources of possible legitimate claims, I would mistakenly treat them as though they were mere collections of passions or interests.

If this distinction between particular passions and other people is warranted, Butler need not agree that the supreme principle is the self-centred principle that treats other people as means to my own interest. In his view, I do not completely guide my own actions by a principle that carries authority until I treat other people fairly, by a principle whose merits they are also rationally required to accept. Though my self-centred principle considers other people, it does not consider them as agents with legitimate claims; it does not rely, therefore, on considerations of authority rather than strength when it prefers my own interest to their interest.

This attempt to develop Butler's case for the supremacy of conscience requires a good deal of speculation that goes beyond anything he says. Some of the speculation has a much firmer basis in Kant. But it is not simply a Kantian import into Butler. It relies on his conception of a superior principle as resting on authority rather than power, and on his rejection of utilitarianism on grounds connected with praise, blame, responsibility, and justice. Conscience acknowledges other people as sources of legitimate claims. This involves a certain sort of equality, since I regard myself as having legitimate claims against them, insofar as I conceive myself as being rightly subject to praise and blame from them.

706. The Obligation to Follow Conscience

Since Butler has these reasons for claiming that conscience prescribes natural action by prescribing non-utilitarian morality, he is entitled to appeal to the natural character of

conscience in order to explain why we should obey it. He considers someone who asks about our obligation to obey conscience.[53] This questioner agrees with (e.g.) John Clarke that the only proper sense to be attached to 'obligation' is some psychological necessity derived from a sanction imposed by a law.[54] A related question might be raised by Hutcheson, who agrees with Butler in recognizing obligation independent of law, but still identifies obligation with a type of motivation.

Butler answers by claiming that we are a law to ourselves apart from any imposed law or sanction. In opposition to both John Clarke and Hutcheson, and in agreement with Samuel Clarke, he takes obligation to require authority, as distinct from psychological strength. Hence, when he claims that conscience carries its own authority with it, and therefore carries its obligation with it, he identifies obligation with the presence of reasons as distinct from motives. He does not mean that conscience infallibly creates a desire to conform to it, but that it is a superior principle that prescribes natural action.

We might infer from this passage that Butler takes obligation to imply awareness of a moral requirement, and that he takes approval by conscience to constitute the obligatory character of an action. This inference would be mistaken. The obligation comes from the fact that in acting in a specific way we follow 'the law of our nature'. Because our following the principles endorsed by conscience accords with our nature, approval by conscience is the mark of an obligation—of a sufficient reason to act as conscience requires.

Butler's argument for the claim he says he has 'proved' is the fact that human beings, in contrast to non-rational animals, are rational agents governed by superior principles. At this stage, then, he appeals to the generic character of conscience as the principle of 'reflexion'. To show that following conscience is natural, he emphasizes the holistic aspect of nature.[55] He relies on the argument at the end of Sermon ii for the supremacy of generic conscience, the general principle of reflexion. It applies to specific conscience only if specific conscience 'adjusts, manages, and presides over' other impulses and principles so as to fulfil the nature of the whole.

This function of conscience must be distinguished from the related, but more limited, function of self-love. For self-love also takes a holistic point of view, adjusting different impulses for the sake of my own interest. But this outlook does not take account of all the

[53] 'But allowing that mankind hath the rule of right within himself, yet it may be asked, "What obligations are we under to attend to and follow it?" I answer: it has been proved that man by his nature is a law to himself, without the particular distinct consideration of the positive sanctions of that law; the rewards and punishments which we feel, and those which from the light of reason we have ground to believe, are annexed to it. The question then carries its own answer along with it. Your obligation to obey this law, is its being the law of your nature. That your conscience approves of and attests to such a course of action, is itself alone an obligation. Conscience does not only offer itself to show us the way we should walk in, but it likewise carries its own authority with it, that it is our natural guide; the guide assigned us by the Author of our nature: it therefore belongs to our condition of being, it is our duty to walk in that path, and follow this guide, without looking about to see whether we may not possibly forsake them with impunity.' (iii 5)

[54] On John Clarke see §865.

[55] 'Every bias, instinct, propension within, is a natural part of our nature, but not the whole: add to these the superior faculty, whose office it is to adjust, manage, and preside over them, and take in this its natural superiority, and you complete the idea of human nature.' (iii 2) '[Nature] . . . is the inward frame of man considered as a system or constitution; whose several parts are united, not by a physical principle of individuation, but by the respects they have to each other; the chief of which is the subjection which the appetites, passions, and particular affections have to the one supreme principle of reflexion or conscience. The system or constitution is formed by and consists in these respects and this subjection.' (iii 2n)

considerations that we can see to be relevant from the holistic point of view. It reasons as though the effect on my private good were the overriding consideration, but in fact this is not the overriding consideration. Self-love concentrates on a proper subset of the considerations that matter. We would be wrong, then, if we thought that self-love estimates all the relevant considerations at their proper value.

Butler adds a further comment on the obligation to follow conscience, in his discussion of Shaftesbury.[56] According to Shaftesbury, a strong inclination to virtuous action combined with severe doubt about whether virtue is one's own interest would leave one 'without remedy', because one would have strong inclination both to choose virtue and to choose vice. In Butler's view, this conclusion rests on the sentimentalist error that is exposed by a correct understanding of the superiority of conscience.

If conscience approves a course of action that appears to be against my interest, it follows that the choice of this action is approved from the point of view of my nature as a whole. Since my nature as a whole includes the part of my nature that is the concern of self-interest (i.e., the aspects of my nature that concern my private good), the legitimate claims of self-interest have already been considered, and I have discovered that I have overriding reason to choose the action despite the apparent cost to my own interest. It would therefore be unreasonable to reject this course of action for the sake of my own interest.[57]

Butler's argument highlights the most important aspect of his claims about conscience. He does not claim that Shaftesbury is wrong about how strong a motive results from the recognition of moral obligation. He argues that Shaftesbury is wrong to suggest that a discussion of obligation should consider only the comparative strength of different motives. If we grant that conscience is a supreme principle, with the moral content that Butler attributes to it, we cannot also be in doubt about whether it creates an overriding reason to follow it. This overriding reason follows from Butler's account of supremacy.

Butler moves more quickly than he should in claiming that conscience, as he conceives it, prescribes natural action. It claims supremacy, because moral principles profess to tell us the legitimate extent of self-interested action. But whether this claim is correct depends on whether the moral principles accepted by conscience are those that fulfil human nature. We have considered how Butler might compensate for his over-hasty argument by explaining how morality fulfils human nature.

707. Why Does it Matter Whether Conscience is Natural?

Butler's argument is meant to show that the actions prescribed by conscience are natural, from the point of view of my nature as a whole, and that therefore conscience is the supreme

[56] See P 25–6, quoted in §677.

[57] 'But the obligation on the side of interest really does not remain. For the natural authority of the principle of reflexion is an obligation the most near and intimate, the most certain and known: whereas the contrary obligation can at the utmost appear no more than probable . . . the greatest degree of scepticism which he thought possible will still leave men under the strictest moral obligations, whatever their opinion be concerning the happiness of virtue. . . . Take in then that authority and obligation, which is a constituent part of this reflex approbation, and it will undeniably follow, though a man should doubt of every thing else, yet, that he would still remain under the nearest and most certain obligation to the practice of virtue; and obligation implied in the very idea of virtue, in the very idea of reflex approbation.' (P 26–7)

principle. This is an argument about what the moral theorist can discover by reflexion on nature and on the principles of morality. It is not an argument about what the moral agent considers.

In this respect, conscience is similar to self-love. For rational self-love considers (roughly speaking) the multiplicity of my present desires and the effect of my present desires on my future good. In doing so it chooses the natural action, because of the sort of thing I am; but an agent moved by correct self-love need not be thinking about nature. Similarly, conscience considers me in relation to other people from the appropriately impartial view; it need not think about nature in taking this view, but the actions it prescribes are natural because of the sort of thing I am. Hence it pursues natural action de re, but not de dicto.

Butler does not suggest, therefore, that virtuous people ask whether an action is natural before they decide whether to do it. They ask whether it promotes the public good, whether it is just or fair, whether it shows a blameworthy degree of imprudence, and so on. These are the properties of actions that Butler mentions in the Dissertation. Philosophical examination shows that action on these considerations fulfils human nature, and that therefore acting on conscience is natural.[58]

Does this mean, however, that Butler's argument about the natural character of conscience has no practical significance? It vindicates the views of the ancient moralists who identify virtue with acting in accord with nature, and so it refutes those modern moralists who deny any special connexion between morality and nature. A full study of human nature helps us to understand why morality has the content that it has. But does this discovery about the content of morality give us any further reason for choosing the moral point of view?

To answer this question, it is useful to return to the connexion between promoting one's own interest and fulfilling one's nature. Though we may not initially suppose that we care about fulfilling our nature, we discover that fulfilling our nature is a reasonable goal, because that is what we value (when we think about it) in promoting our own interest through reasonable self-love. Reflexion on self-love shows us that the fulfilment of our nature is worth pursuing in its own right, not simply as a means to fulfilling self-love. Hence the discovery that acting on conscience fulfils our nature gives us a reason to prefer the actions prescribed by conscience.

708. The Harmony of Self-Love and Conscience

This explanation of the supremacy of conscience and of the analogy between conscience and self-love helps us to appraise some objections to Butler's overall position. After labouring to understand and to defend his argument for the supremacy of conscience, we may be surprised to find that he also argues for the harmony of conscience and self-love. Sidgwick infers that Butler has no good argument for regarding conscience as superior to self-love, and that his argument for the general harmony between self-love and conscience reveals some

[58] Sturgeon, 'Nature', develops some of the awkward consequences for Butler of supposing that (i) conscience decides on an action by considering whether it is natural, and (ii) it decides whether an action is natural by considering whether it is already favoured by some other superior principle than conscience. Even if Butler accepted (i), he need not accept (ii); but we have insufficient grounds for attributing either (i) or (ii) to him.

doubt or confusion on the issues. This is why Sidgwick argues that Butler's real insight is the discovery of a 'duality' in practical reason.[59] He believes that Butler recognizes two ultimate principles and has no good argument for attributing priority to one over the other. This verdict on Butler influences Sidgwick's views on the nature and limits of practical reason.

Sidgwick's verdict overlooks Butler's reasons for believing that conscience, rather than self-love, is supreme. Butler recognizes one 'regulative and governing faculty'. We have seen that he speaks of reflexion or conscience in both the generic and the specific sense. Generic reflexion includes both self-love and conscience, but these are not just two unconnected applications of practical reason. Within this generic principle of reflexion or conscience, specific conscience is supreme. It is not confined to self-love, but neither is it entirely separate from self-love; it takes to a reasonable conclusion the sort of reflective reasoning that self-love applies only to a restricted range of the questions that can be answered by practical reason. That is why (as Butler implies in answering Shaftesbury) the legitimate claims of self-love are already included in the considerations that matter to conscience. Since conscience is superior to self-love, Butler does not treat self-love as a supreme principle incorporating the demands of morality.[60]

We may be surprised, then, that he does not abandon, but actually affirms, the claim that morality and self-love must agree.[61] Sidgwick takes him to affirm that self-love is a rational principle not subordinate to conscience. This, in his view, is why Butler believes that a course of action approved by conscience must still be examined from a different rational point of view, to see whether it meets all the relevant standards of rationality.[62] Is this

[59] 'Butler's express statement of the duality of the regulative principles in human nature constitutes an important step in ethical speculation; since it brings into clear view the most fundamental difference between the ethical thought of modern England and that of the old Greco-Roman world,—a difference all the more striking because Butler's general formula of "living according to nature" is taken from Stoicism, and his view of human nature as an ordered polity of impulses is distinctly Platonic. But in Platonism and Stoicism, and in Greek moral philosophy generally, but one regulative and governing faculty is recognized under the name of Reason—however the regulation of Reason may be understood; in the modern ethical view, when it has worked itself clear, there are found to be two,—Universal Reason and Egoistic Reason, or Conscience and Self-love.' (*OHE* 197–8) Sidgwick on Scotus and Butler; see §368.

[60] On Aquinas and the superiority of self-love see §365.

[61] '. . . there can no access be had to the understanding but by convincing men that the course of life we would persuade them to is not contrary to their interest. It may be allowed, without any prejudice to the cause of virtue and religion, that our ideas of happiness and misery are of all our ideas the nearest and most important to us; that they will, nay, if you please, that they ought to prevail over those of order, and beauty, and harmony, proportion, if there ever should be, as it is impossible there ever should be, any inconsistence between them: though these last too, as expressing the fitness of actions, are as real as truth itself. Let it be allowed, though virtue or moral rectitude does indeed consist in affection to and pursuit of what is right and good, as such; yet, that when we sit down in a cool hour, we can neither justify to ourselves this or any other pursuit, till we are convinced that it will be for our happiness, or at least not contrary to it' (xi 20).

[62] Sidgwick, *OHE* 196. After quoting the 'cool hour' passage Sidgwick continues: 'That the ultimate appeal must be to the individual's interest was similarly assumed in Shaftesbury's argument . . .'. His account of Butler is defended by Frankena, 'History' 183; 'Concepts' 184. Similarly, Green, *IHTHN* 327–8, takes Butler to affirm the supremacy of self-love in this passage and in iii 9. Wilson and Fowler, *PM* 63n, claim that Butler introduces a conflict into his position: 'This passage, which places self-love on even a higher level than conscience, appears to me to be plainly inconsistent with Butler's predominant conception of benevolence and self-love as co-ordinate principles of our nature, both alike being regarded as under the supreme governance of conscience or reflexion'. McPherson, 'Development (1)', takes Butler to maintain the supremacy of self-love in the *Sermons* (in contrast to the *Analogy*); he argues that Butler takes self-love and conscience to be identical, and maintains that ' "productive of happiness" may be regarded as the *ground* of rightness' (327). He thus concludes that Butler is an 'egoistic eudaemonist' (330). This view would bring his position somewhat closer to that of the Greek moralists. McPherson's attribution of eudaemonism to Butler is rejected by Raphael, 'Conscience' 236; Grave, 'Foundations' 83–4.

the right way to understand the reflexion 'in a cool hour' that takes the point of view of self-love?

Butler does not suggest that self-interest is an appropriate motive for virtuous action, since virtue consists in 'affection to . . . what is right and good, as such'. Nonetheless, he allows a defence of virtue that appeals to self-interest. To understand the role of this defence, we should notice that the appeal to self-love is a concession ('let it be allowed . . .') made for the sake of argument. It does not state Butler's view of the proper role of self-love.[63] It simply points out that many people will ask what they have to gain from being virtuous, and that the defender of virtue has no reason to be afraid of this question.[64]

Belief in a conflict between self-love and conscience results, in Butler's view, from mistaken assumptions about the character of self-love. In arguing against these assumptions, he does not concede that self-love is superior to conscience, or that the authority of conscience must be defended by appeal to self-love. On the contrary, he claims that the proof of the naturalness of conscience is itself sufficient proof that we have reason to follow it (iii 5).[65] He relies on this proof in pointing out Shaftesbury's error. We recognize the error once we see how confused it would be to suppose that we could recognize the supremacy of conscience and still think that self-love gives us a conflicting obligation. In this context, Butler's argument for the general, though not universal, coincidence of conscience and self-love is meant to undermine one objection that people commonly urge against conscience. He does not agree that he needs a proof of the coincidence if he is to give us a sufficient reason to follow conscience.

709. The Legitimate Claims of Self-Love

Sidgwick's interpretation, however, may appear more plausible once we notice that Butler, in his own voice and not by way of concession, claims that an appeal to self-interest is the only way of gaining 'access to the understanding'. He does not criticize the tendency of most people to look at their lives from the point of view of self-love. On the contrary, he assumes that we ought to approach even the most enlightened understanding through self-love. He advocates this approach even though he insists on the reality of moral facts, constituted by relations of fitness.

We might argue that Butler is referring to the possibility of access to the understandings of other people who are not convinced of the authority of conscience. Once we are convinced of this authority, why should we still appeal to self-love to justify us in the pursuit of what is right and good as such? This attempt to restrict Butler's appeal to self-love would be an unjustifiably extreme reaction to Sidgwick's view. Butler's view on the nature and relation of conscience and self-love makes it reasonable to appeal to self-love in support of conscience.[66]

[63] The concessive reading is supported by the long sentence 'It may be allowed . . .', where Butler makes it clear that he is 'allowing' several things. See Sturgeon, 'Nature' 338; Broad, *FTET* 80.

[64] Rivers, *RGS* i 85–6, describes a similar approach to the benefits of religion among latitudinarian writers. See also McAdoo, *SA* 173–5, who correctly emphasizes the connexions between Anglican writers and traditional eudaemonism.

[65] Broad, *FTET* 80–1, does not do justice to Butler on this point.

[66] White, 'Conscience and self-love', argues that Butler's appeal to self-love arises from a concern with motivation, and the belief that conscience and recognition of moral rightness provide too weak a motive. Taylor, 'Features', treats

For a successful defence of the harmony of self-love and conscience supports the claim that it is natural to follow conscience. We will be more readily disposed to allow that the attitudes connected with morality are central aspects of our nature, if we are not also disposed to believe that they conflict with self-interest.

Butler's conception of human nature treats it as a system, rather than a mere collection of traits. It is a system because its different features, impulses, and principles include mutual harmony, and co-operation. Rational self-love is natural because it introduces co-operation into a series of impulses and propensities that would otherwise be liable to conflict and mutual frustration. If conscience is natural, it should introduce co-operation between self-love, its subordinate impulses, and the further considerations that are relevant when we consider our relations to other people. A sharp conflict between self-love and conscience would imply that two superior principles tend to impede, or even to undermine, each other. Human nature might form a system under the guidance of self-love, and a system under the guidance of conscience, but if the two systems tended to clash, we would have reason to doubt whether they constituted a single system.

Butler takes our aims, motives, and principles to constitute a system under conscience. But his case for this claim is weaker if they also constitute a system under reasonable self-love, and this system conflicts with conscience. His belief in the natural character of conscience is more plausible if self-love and conscience agree. If we thought that some action violating morality would be in our interest, we might be inclined to suspect that our moral concerns are dispensable, non-essential aspects of ourselves. Butler's argument for the harmony of self-love and conscience neither blurs the distinctness of the two principles nor compromises the supremacy of conscience.

710. Different Conceptions of Self-Love

This stage in Butler's argument revives a question that we raised in discussing his views about self-love and benevolence. We noticed that he relied on a narrow hedonistic conception of self-love, and that this was the basis for his claim that self-love does not care about the objects of first-order desires for their own sakes. This is the conception of self-love that he has in mind in the discussion of the harmony of self-love and conscience. He assumes that when self-love considers whether we should act on conscience, it simply considers the possible yield of pleasure, contentment, and so on. This is why he thinks that someone who chooses morally virtuous action for self-interested reasons is following the Epicurean policy, and does not take the 'religious or even moral institution of life' (P 41). This person does not choose virtuous actions for their own sakes, and so cannot act from the virtuous motive.

This claim assumes that self-love does not care about actions for their own sake, but only for their resulting pain or pleasure. But this view of self-love casts doubt on Butler's claim about the harmony of self-love and conscience. For different people find different

the passage on the cool hour as ad hominem (296: 'dialectical concession to the audience'). He appeals to the passage on Shaftesbury in the Preface, which asserts obligation from conscience independent of self-love. These views of the passage on the cool hour both underestimate the significance of Butler's naturalism.

things pleasant and painful. Why expect that adherence to conscience will maximize each person's pleasure?

Price and Sidgwick agree with this criticism of Butler, and infer that he ought not to have maintained the harmony of self-love and conscience.[67] But the doctrine of harmony is neither an optional extra in Butler's position nor a mere persuasive device for commending morality to those who do not accept it for better reasons. We have seen that it is also part of Butler's defence of the natural character of conscience and morality.[68] If Butler abandoned the doctrine of harmony, he would seriously weaken his naturalism as well. Price and Sidgwick see this, and so they abandon Butler's naturalism when they abandon his doctrine of harmony.

But we might strengthen Butler's overall position if we questioned his narrowly hedonistic conception of self-love. In accepting this conception he departs sharply from the naturalism of the ancient moralists. According to Aristotelian eudaemonism, happiness is the composite human good, and self-love is directed towards this good. This Aristotelian conception justifies the claim that self-love is a superior principle. Self-love takes the point of view of myself as a whole only if its aims include whatever is worth pursuing for its own sake. A holist conception of nature requires a holist conception of self-love. This conception of self-love underlies Aquinas' claims about the desire for happiness. Butler's naturalism about self-love, therefore, seems to require Aristotelian eudaemonism, rather than Butler's hedonist conception of self-love.

Butler, however, also departs from Aristotelian naturalism by separating conscience from self-love; his hedonistic conception of self-love makes it easier to justify this separation. If he accepted an Aristotelian conception of self-love, could he still avoid Aristotelian eudaemonism about conscience?

The narrow conception of self-love that Butler needs in order to make conscience external to self-love recalls Scotus' separation of the affection for justice from the affection for advantage.[69] However, he differs sharply from Scotus; for Scotus connects only the affection for advantage with nature; he attaches the affection for justice to reason and freedom as opposed to nature. In Scotus' view, the rejection of eudaemonism requires the rejection of naturalism. Butler retains naturalism, and, though he rejects eudaemonism, he retains the doctrine of harmony. The difficulties that he faces in retaining the doctrine of harmony tend to support Scotus' view that naturalism and eudaemonism need each other.

In contrast to Scotus, Aquinas rejects the narrow conception of self-love. In his view, any attempt to oppose self-love to the other-regarding virtues rests on a mistake about the character and objects of self-love. Enlightened self-love, in his view, does not value one's own self-confined good above the good of others. One the contrary, once our self-love is enlightened, we will love God more than ourselves.

Aquinas' broad conception of self-love vindicates Butler's claims in Sermon xi about self-love and benevolence. But how does it affect Butler's reasons for taking conscience to be superior to self-love? Does Butler still see some important feature of conscience that cannot be subordinated even to extended self-love as Aquinas conceives it?

Aquinas ought to agree with Butler's claim that conscience is distinct from self-love. The considerations that weigh with conscience are those that make an action morally right.

[67] Cf. Price, §805; Sidgwick, *ME* 501–2. [68] Cf. Reid, §856. [69] On Scotus see §§364, 368.

Aquinas and Suarez recognize these considerations in their discussion of the honestum. Considerations of my own happiness do not necessarily appear in the deliberation that is required for identifying the morally right action; and, since a virtuous person takes the rightness of an action as a sufficient reason for doing it, virtuous people do not need to consider their own happiness in deciding what to do, when moral questions are involved.

It does not follow, however, that conscience weighs reasons that are entirely outside the scope of self-love. Butler sometimes suggests that self-love considers only my own private good—that is, the good for me in abstraction from any concern for the good of others. Conscience, by contrast, considers the legitimate claims of other people, and treats my private good as only one of the considerations that matter in identifying the morally right action. This view of the relation between conscience and self-love presupposes a narrow view of self-love.

Against Butler one might argue, on Aquinas' behalf, that enlightened self-love accepts the claim of conscience to regulate the relations between oneself and others, and even accepts its claim to override the conclusions that self-love would have reached without reference to conscience. Self-love has good reasons to accept the claims of conscience, on the strength of this argument: (1) Self-love takes a holistic view of my interest, referring to my nature as a whole; that is why action on self-love is natural. (2) My nature as a whole requires me to accept the place that conscience accords to the legitimate demands of other people, since my nature requires me to regard myself as a responsible agent making legitimate demands on them. (3) Therefore, enlightened self-love also accepts this prescription of conscience.

This defence of Aquinas' position is stronger if we accept Butler's case for the second claim. He makes it clearer than Aristotelian naturalists do why the point of view of conscience deserves to be practically overriding from the naturalist point of view. Though the argument we have offered is a defence of Aquinas' views about self-love and morality, the premisses are Butler's. The holistic conception of self-love does not fit what Butler says about the relation of self-love to conscience, but it fits his views about the natural character of self-love. Hence, Butler ought to accept the defence of Aristotelian eudaemonism.

Acceptance of Aristotelian eudaemonism requires some revision in Butler's doctrine of the supremacy of conscience, but does not require him to abandon this doctrine entirely. From the Aristotelian eudaemonist point of view, conscience is supreme insofar as it is the overriding guide to action, but self-love is supreme, insofar as it is the principle that decides on the overriding guide to action. Perhaps one might say that conscience is supreme from the practical point of view, but self-love is supreme from a higher-order deliberative point of view.

This account of the relation of self-love and conscience suggests a defence of Butler's claims about their harmony. It does not rest on a narrow conception of self-love. Hence it does not make morality simply a device (from the point of view of self-love) for securing one's own independently determined interests.

711. Questions about Butler and Aristotelian Eudaemonism

This defence of Aristotelian eudaemonism tends to show that Butler's main claims about self-love and conscience are more plausible, and constitute a stronger case for naturalism,

without his narrow conception of self-love, and without the specific argument for the supremacy of conscience that depends on the narrow conception of self-love.

The defence may be over-simplified, however. Perhaps it overlooks part of Butler's case for the separation of conscience from self-love and for the supremacy of conscience. Perhaps an assessment from the point of view of self-love gives a different sort of weight to moral considerations from the weight we would give them from the point of view of conscience; for perhaps part of our nature requires a degree of commitment to morality that we might rationally follow even if it conflicts with the other goals that appeal to fully-informed self-love. In that case there would still be some point in claiming that conscience has grounds, based on appeal to our nature as whole selves, for overriding the arguments of self-love.

Butler does not clearly decide between two accounts of why self-love and conscience agree. One picture treats conscience as, in a sense, subordinate to self-love, from the point of view of self-love. According to this picture, self-love is concerned with the agent's private interest above all; but it sees that this interest is best secured by allowing the place to conscience that conscience demands for itself on moral grounds. We can reach this conclusion when we see that the attitude characteristic of conscience is a central part of my nature as a rational agent, and therefore a central element in a true conception of myself and my interest.

A second picture treats conscience as superior to self-love, even from the point of view of self-love. According to this picture, self-love does not place one's private interest above everything, but simply demands fair and appropriate treatment for it, both in relation to one's particular passions and in relation to the demands of other people. Self-love acknowledges the authority of conscience if it recognizes that conscience treats it fairly. We might take this conception of self-love to underlie the demand to be shown that morality 'will be for our happiness, or at least not contrary to it'. Perhaps the second possibility is satisfied if conscience rejects unjust treatment of my claims in relation to the claims of others.

An analogy to illustrate these two conceptions of self-love might be drawn from two sorts of relations between different authorities. In co-operation between independent states, each side must be assured that co-operative action promotes its own private interest. In relations between subordinate and superordinate authorities, a less stringent demand is normal. A provincial government in a federal system, for instance, does not accept each federal law only if it is in the interest of the province, but it expects not to be treated unfairly, and to have its legitimate interests satisfied, by federal legislation as a whole. If self-love is this sort of subordinate authority, it can look out for private interests without asserting the deliberative supremacy of its own point of view.

It is difficult to say which of these pictures of self-love is closest to Butler's intentions. It is therefore difficult to say what the point of view of self-love really considers and what moves it. The obscurities in his view of self-love result in obscurities about the attitude of self-love to the demands of conscience.

Butler does not offer much argument to show that the point of view of conscience on ourselves—as agents who deserve a certain kind of treatment and regard ourselves as entitled to demand it—is rationally inescapable in the way that the point of view of self-love is. Argument of this sort is needed to show that conscience is natural and supreme. Even though Butler's treatment is sketchy, it is worth mentioning the connexions that he

sees between moral judgment, conceptions of desert and responsibility, and conceptions of oneself. The connexions are quite suggestive and important in themselves, and they are even more important because Kant develops some of them.[70]

These arguments draw our attention to features of conscience and moral attitudes that Aristotelian eudaemonists do not explore as fully as Butler explores them. Do they constitute an objection, or a supplement, to Aristotelian eudaemonism? If moral attitudes are central in rational agents' enlightened conception of themselves, it seems plausible to claim that they are central in any reasonable conception of one's own happiness; for happiness—as Aquinas understands it—involves concern for oneself and for one's perfection. The more convincing detail we provide in support of Butler's position, the better a case we make for incorporating it within Aristotelian eudaemonism. This conclusion is worth emphasizing about Butler, since it is worth bearing in mind when we consider Kant. Kant departs further than Butler departs from Aristotelian eudaemonism, since he rejects the naturalist account of virtue and the harmony of self-love and conscience. But we need to ask whether the reasons that should persuade Butler to accept Aristotelian naturalism apply in some form to Kant as well.

[70] Kant's discussion of morality and the highest good (*KpV*, Bk. ii, ch. 2) is relevant to Butler's questions about the supremacy of conscience.

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BUTLER: IMPLICATIONS OF NATURALISM

712. Different Views of Butler

Now that we have examined Butler's claims about nature and morality, we can consider their implications for the moral controversies that form the background for the *Sermons*. Butler intends his naturalism as a normative and as a meta-ethical doctrine. We saw earlier that he does not align himself with sentimentalists or rationalists, but claims to defend a naturalist position that is not exposed to the criticisms that, in his view, undermine a sentimentalist version of naturalism. How far does he describe and defend this version of naturalism?

Different critics have taken surprisingly different views of Butler's eventual position and of its relations to other views. In discussing Hutcheson and Balguy we examined some of the contrasts that Selby-Bigge and Whewell draw in their different divisions between schools of moral philosophers. Butler offers us a further opportunity to see how different philosophers take different issues to be connected.

Selby-Bigge places him in the 'sentimental school', perhaps because of his appeal to nature and his view that the operations of conscience involve both the understanding and the heart.[1] The references to nature seem to distinguish him from the rationalists Clarke and Balguy and to align him with Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, whom Selby-Bigge classifies as sentimentalists. The view of conscience that Selby-Bigge imputes to Butler also aligns him with sentimentalists. He suggests that, for Butler, the authority of conscience consists in its reflective character; and that the reflective favour of conscience constitutes rightness.

This interpretation has some contemporary support. Selby-Bigge refers appropriately to Kames's criticism of Butler's view about authority, He also claims, less plausibly, that Price criticizes Butler in the same way.[2] If this is the right view of Butler, his position is a variation on Hutcheson's. Hutcheson seems to understand Butler in this way, and hence uses some of Butler's ideas in developing his own position.[3]

Selby-Bigge recognizes that this classification does not cope with everything Butler says. He suggests that the way Butler states his position 'looks almost like a sop to the

[1] See §719. [2] See §720. [3] See §715.

intellectualists' (*BM* i, p. xlvi).[4] But this does not lead him to question Butler's place among the sentimentalists; it simply leads him to treat Butler as an ambiguous and reticent sentimentalist.[5]

Whewell, however, treats Butler not as a sentimentalist, but as an 'unsystematic' moralist who recognizes a 'moral faculty' without describing it in as much detail as Hutcheson does (*LHMPE* 108). Butler, in his view, avoids technical expressions for our moral capacities. Among the non-technical phrases that Whewell takes to be equivalent, he mentions 'man's being a law to himself', 'a difference in kind among man's principles of action, as well as a difference in strength', 'an internal constitution in which conscience has a natural and rightful supremacy' (*LHMPE* 108–9). Still, he takes Butler to be a defender of 'independent' morality. As evidence he cites some of the same phrases about superiority and authority.[6] He concludes, therefore, that Butler really belongs with Cudworth and Clarke, and expresses their position unsystematically.[7]

These differences of opinion about Butler may simply show that Butler is reticent and ambiguous, but they may also point out some difficulties in the options that interpreters consider. If a sentimentalist is one who attributes some important epistemic role to sentiments as well as to rational judgment, we might have a good case for placing Butler with the sentimentalists. But if sentimentalism involves the claim that moral rightness is constituted by the approval of some sentiment, emotion, or moral sense, Butler is not a sentimentalist. Whewell is right to treat him as a defender of independent morality, and to emphasize his criticisms of Shaftesbury on authority.

A more extreme version of Whewell's view emphasizes the points on which Butler agrees with Clarke, especially in his rejection of voluntarism and acceptance of intrinsic fitness. The *Sermons* (on this view) presuppose Clarke's position, without stating it at length. On this view, Butler does not take the view that Selby-Bigge and Kames attribute to him, of taking moral rightness to be constituted by the reflective approval of conscience, but believes that

[4] On Selby-Bigge's and Darwall's view see §720.

[5] A note on the Dissertation in Angus's edition (320–1, partly quoted by Gladstone) offers a summary of Butler's relation to other moralists: 'Butler's reasoning in this chapter has very much the character of Dr Reid's "philosophy", giving the instinctive principles of our nature a greater prominence than has often been given them by metaphysicians ... He admits, with Clarke, that the distinction between right and wrong is eternal, and that the distinction is founded on the fitness of things, but with characteristic wisdom he seeks the evidence of this distinction and one foundation for it in human nature. ... His account of the origin of the idea of merit, and of its connexion with a reflex sense, is probably taken from Shaftesbury ... By giving prudence a place among the virtues, he opposes Hutcheson, allows whatever of truth is to be found in Hobbes's system, and explains it. ... Benevolence he reckons a most important virtue, and yet denies, against Leibniz, that all virtue is resolvable into it. In his doctrine of a moral sense he agrees substantially with Hutcheson, his contemporary. ... he gives an idea of the "fitness of moral acts"; an idea more practical at all events than that of Clarke. ... [He] answers by anticipation the theory of Bentham, that virtue is a regard for the happiness of others, as the dissertation throughout answers the theory of Paley.' The most serious error in Angus's account is the assimilation of Butler to Hutcheson. He is vague about the relation between Butler's naturalism and Clarke's rationalism. He is right to emphasize the connexion between Butler and Shaftesbury, and Butler's opposition to utilitarianism (which he discusses further at 331).

[6] On Whewell cf. §520.

[7] 'These notions so steadily adhered to—of a difference of kind; a peculiar constitution of man in which each faculty and motive principle has its place; a nature which determines what ought to be as well as what is; relations which are seen and apprehended as manifest by contemplation of the conceptions which they involve—are the proper characters of the school of independent morality, and show how justly Butler, notwithstanding some vagueness, and perhaps some vacillation of expression, is taken as one of the principal philosophers who have upheld that side of the great antithesis of opinion on the foundations of morals.' (Whewell, *LHMPE* 111)

conscience perceives eternal fitnesses and applies this perception to our other motives and principles.[8] According to this view, Butler holds the position that Whewell ascribes to him, but he does not hold it 'unsystematically'; he simply does not parade the views of Clarke, which he nonetheless accepts.

These different views of Butler may be the result of his own inexplicitness and brevity, or they may reflect genuine ambiguities in his position. It may not be Butler's fault, however, if critics find him difficult to classify. They may be asking the wrong questions, or looking for the wrong things in Butler. He cannot be accused of inexplicitness in saying what he is trying to do. He rejects both Wollaston's attempt to discard an appeal to nature and Shaftesbury's attempt to explain moral authority within a sentimentalist framework. If we look beyond Cudworth to Suarez and to Aquinas, we see the connexion between Butler's own intellectual environment and the ancient moralists whose position he seeks to defend. We can now try to see what this form of naturalism implies about the meta-ethical questions that divide sentimentalists from rationalists.

To decide about the implications of Butler's naturalism, it will be useful to return briefly to Butler's arguments against Hobbesian and sentimentalist views about nature and morality, to see what meta-ethical position he arrives at by defending his version of naturalism against these opponents.

713. Butler and Hobbes on Nature

Butler's most explicit attack on Hobbes rejects Hobbes's psychological hedonism, in order to question the basis of Hobbes's belief that we have no reason to be moral unless it is in our interest. But even if Butler proved that, contrary to Hobbes, it is psychologically possible for us to care about morality apart from our self-interest, we might still agree with Hobbes in thinking we have no reason to care about morality apart from our self-interest. A positive defence of morality against Hobbes needs to show that we have some reason that Hobbes overlooks for being concerned about morality even when the state does not make it advantageous for us.

Butler uses his conception of nature against Hobbes's view that morality is not natural for human beings and becomes rational only in a commonwealth. In Butler's view, the facts about nature that appear in Hobbes's argument are relevant only to the first and second senses of 'nature'. Once we grasp the third sense, we see that it is natural to follow the appropriate superior principles. Self-love is an appropriate superior principle, and so we have reason to follow self-love. Since the considerations about nature that support the naturalness of self-love also support the naturalness of conscience, Butler concludes that we have the same reason to follow conscience as we have to follow self-love.

This argument is dialectically effective against Hobbes. For Hobbes agrees that we have reason to follow self-love; but, in Butler's view, he does not give a good account of what that reason is, since he mistakenly relies on a purely psychological conception of strength of desires. He therefore has to endorse the implausible reduction of claims about reasons to

[8] See Penelhum, *B* 10–11. He argues that Butler accepts Clark's position, and simply refrains from appealing to it.

predictions about the strength of desires. In fact our reason for following self-love is the fact that self-love is a superior principle that prescribes natural action. Once we see the correct explanation of our reason for following self-love, we see that we cannot consistently agree with Hobbes in thinking we have reason to follow self-love unless we also admit that our nature gives us just the same sort of reason to follow conscience.

714. Butler and Sentimentalism

In rejecting the reduction of all motives to the selfish pursuit of one's own interest, Butler agrees with Hutcheson. It is not surprising that Hutcheson often draws on Butler in his later work.[9] Butler also agrees with Hutcheson in not endorsing the extreme rationalism of Clarke and Balguy.[10] But his argument about nature implies that Hutcheson repeats some of Hobbes's mistakes. Hutcheson agrees with Butler in identifying natural actions and states teleologically and holistically, by reference to the requirements of a human being as a whole.[11] But his argument to show that benevolence is natural does not stick to this conception of nature; he argues only that benevolence arises by nature, and is not derived from the pursuit of the expedient. This claim relies only on Butler's first and second senses of 'natural', and does not take account of the third sense.

Butler's account of human nature assigns an important place to practical reason, both in prudence and in morality, that sharply distinguishes his view from the sentimentalist position. He differs from sentimentalists insofar as he argues from facts about human nature, as opposed to facts about human feelings and sentiments. In his view, facts about nature are relevant because they provide reasons independent of the actual desires of particular human beings. He therefore rejects Hobbes's view of practical reason, and Hutcheson's view of justifying reasons.

The difference between Butler's position and the sentimentalist position on these issues is summed up in his criticism of Shaftesbury for failing to grasp the essential features of the authority of conscience (P 26). Shaftesbury does not hold a purely sentimentalist view on this question; for on several points he anticipates Butler's appeal to nature. Nonetheless, Butler identifies a central difference between Shaftesbury (at least in some of his remarks) and a traditional naturalist view. Shaftesbury tends to argue as though our reason for preferring virtue over vice is the more strongly favourable feeling we acquire towards it when we recognize what it is. This assumption underlies his description of the case 'without remedy'. We may doubt whether Shaftesbury would accept the implications of his position, as Butler describes them, but Butler is justified in objecting that Shaftesbury fails to distinguish the authority from the psychological strength of conscience. Criticisms of Butler's objection to Shaftesbury simply make clear the point that Butler objects to.[12]

[9] On Hutcheson see §633. Butler's influence is present in *SMP* at, e.g., i 61, 74, 101, 256.

[10] On the different contrasts drawn by Butler and Hume see §§727–8.

[11] Hutcheson, *HN* §§7–9. On Hutcheson and naturalism see §636.

[12] Part of Wishart's defence of Shaftesbury (see §614) consists of an attack on Butler both for unacknowledged borrowings from Shaftesbury and for the misinterpretation that underlies the objection to Shaftesbury on authority. 'A memorable instance of this kind [sc. of injustice to Shaftesbury] we have in the Reverend Mr Butler, who, after he

Butler argues that when we understand virtue better, we do not simply find that we feel like following it; we see that it deserves to be followed. Contrary to Shaftesbury's view, the authority of conscience consists not in the fact that people tend to feel favourable to it, but in the fact that conscience provides reasons that deserve to be followed in preference to other reasons.[13] To defend this disagreement with Shaftesbury, Butler needs an account of justifying reasons (as Hutcheson calls them) that makes them independent of sentiment.

715. Hutcheson v. Butler on Conscience

Some of the differences between Hutcheson's and Butler's versions of naturalism appear more clearly from Hutcheson's attempt to fit Butler's doctrine into sentimentalism. He notices that, according to Butler, conscience is supreme insofar as it is a 'principle of reflexion' that reflects on the other principles that we act on, and either approves or disapproves of them. In his *Introduction to Moral Philosophy* Hutcheson identifies this principle with the moral sense. He claims that conscience, or the moral sense, is the most divine of the senses, that it is disinterested, and that is directed to the general good.[14] He connects the moral sense with reflexion and approval. If it is capable, as it seems to be, of reflecting on, and reacting to, other practical principles, it is supreme in relation to them.

If we recall the origin and grounds for Hutcheson's doctrine of the moral sense, it is easier to see why he might suppose he could readily incorporate Butler's views, and why other people might tend to assimilate his position to Butler's. In his earlier work Hutcheson takes himself to be defending Shaftesbury's 'moral realism', which he interprets as the doctrine that we are capable of disinterested approval of moral goodness apart from any belief about our own interest. If we use 'moral sense' simply to name our capacity to recognize and to approve this moral goodness, those who disagree with Mandeville and Hobbes believe

had plumed himself up in the borrowed feathers of Lord Shaftesbury and published a volume of curious and elaborate discourses, under the title of Sermons, wherein it may be evident to anyone who reads both, that he has borrowed almost all his light and discoveries from him, without ever making the least acknowledgment to him, has in a second edition published a preface, in which he has misinterpreted him in the grossest manner, and so as it is hard for any man to help thinking the misrepresentations to be wilful and designed.' (*Vindic*. 82–3) In answer to Butler, Wishart simply cites passages on the psychological strength of conscience; 'How clearly and elegantly does Lord Shaftesbury show that the checks and reproofs of one's own conscience are naturally stronger than his sense of the greatest shame and odium from others?' (86) Wishart tries to strengthen his defence by appealing to Shaftesbury's remarks on the moral sense: 'Does he not, in the Inquiry concerning Virtue, show how natural and essential to our frame a moral sense is? Which, as it has a respect to our own actions, is the same thing with conscience, or the foundation of it.' (87) By assimilating conscience to the moral sense (as Shaftesbury understands it) Wishart introduces a further element of obscurity in Shaftesbury's position, and fails to answer Butler's main point. Rivers, *RGS* ii 167, comments on Wishart's attack on Butler. Price, *RPQM* 190n (quoted in §802) agrees with Butler's objection to Shaftesbury.

[13] On Shaftesbury see §610. Adams, *NOV* 17–18, states this distinction of Butler's briefly: 'I am not here speaking of the force and efficacy of this principle, but of its authority and pre-eminence . . . and we are, even when we desert her service, obliged, in spite of ourselves, to acknowledge her authority as a law written in our hearts . . . '

[14] 'That this divine sense or conscience naturally approving these more extensive affections should be the governing power in man, appears both immediately from its own nature, as we immediately feel that it naturally assumes a right of judging, approving, or condemning all the various motions of the soul; as also from this that every good man applauds himself, approves entirely his own temper, and is then best pleased with himself when he refrains not only the lower sensual appetites, but even the more sublime ones of a selfish kind, or the more narrow and contracted affections of love toward kindred or friends, or even his country, when they interfere with the more extensive interests of mankind and the common prosperity of all.' (Hutcheson, *IMP* 23)

in a moral sense. From this point of view George Turnbull, an admirer of Shaftesbury, treats both Hutcheson and Butler as defenders of Shaftesbury, and therefore as exponents of the moral sense. In his view, the differences between rationalists and sentimentalists are simply disagreements about what to call the moral sense, and not about its existence. His position is reasonable if he uses 'moral sense' simply to indicate what opponents of Hobbes all recognize.[15]

This appeal to Butler is instructive because it tries to capture Butler's notion of superiority and supremacy by reference to higher-order attitudes.[16] Martineau argues, indeed, that Hutcheson's later views of the moral sense adopt Butler's position.[17] Hume also takes Hutcheson's claims about the superiority of the moral sense to agree with Butler; he argues that this concession to Butler does not fit Hutcheson's general view.[18]

But Martineau and Hume over-estimate the degree to which Hutcheson agrees with Butler. Though he goes some way towards acceptance of Butler's view of conscience, he stops short on one crucial point. In Butler's view, superior principles essentially appeal to authority rather than mere strength. If conscience is supreme, it is also most authoritative. If it has authority to decide the questions it decides, it appeals to considerations that take legitimate precedence over the considerations that lower principles appeal to. One might infer that a supreme principle, so understood, must be a rational principle. But Hutcheson rejects that inference. He does not treat the moral sense as rational.

Similarly, Hutcheson disallows rational correction of the moral sense. His opponents assume that it is corrigible by reason, and so they infer that the supreme principle, superior to a moral sense, is a rational principle. Hutcheson concedes corrigibility, but denies that

[15] Turnbull defends belief in a moral sense to 'such philosophers as do not deny the thing, but seem to quarrel with the name . . . ' (*PMP* 124). ' . . . it is no great matter for the name, if the thing itself in question be acknowledged. And it certainly is by all, who acknowledge the difference between good and evil; however they may choose to express that difference by calling it truth, reasonableness, fitness, or by whatever other appellations. For if there is truth, fitness, or reasonableness in actions with regard to us, it is perceivable by us; and if we perceive it, we are capable of perceiving it; that is, we have the faculty requisite to perceiving it, or which enables us to perceive it' (125). He allows that this capacity may be described in rationalist terms as reason perceiving fitnesses; 'But moral sense, moral taste, moral discernment, or moral conscience, well express it; and seem to be the properest phrases in our language to answer to those used to signify the same determination in our nature by ancient philosophers.' (128) He refers, as Reid (a pupil of Turnbull's) does later, to ancient sources that mention a 'sensus decori et honesti'. See §§635, 842. Turnbull is discussed by Rivers, *RGS* ii 179–80.

[16] Some of the difficulties faced by Hutcheson's strategy are parallel to those faced by Frankfurt's account of freedom, in 'Freedom'.

[17] 'In the "System" he calls the "moral sense", in the very heading of the chapter devoted to it, "the *faculty* of perceiving moral excellence, and its supreme objects". [*SMP* i 4, 53 (*Concerning the Moral Sense*)] I need not point out that the subjective "sense", or passive susceptibility to a certain "pleasure" relative to men has here become an objective "faculty" or active apprehension of "an *independent quality* immediately perceived in certain affections and actions consequent upon them" (as he shortly afterwards expresses it). [*SMP* i 4, 58] From a form of sensibility we are handed over to a cognitive power; and instead of a special "pleasure" to be received, we have a mental energy to be put forth. Still more marked is this feature, when he says that the "faculty" carries in its very nature the prerogative of commanding and controlling the other powers, appreciating as it does a quality superior to any with which the others have to do. [*SMP* i 4.6, 61] Here surely we hear a voice in tune with the deep authoritative tones of Butler, rather than with the soft and winning tenor of Shaftesbury.' (Martineau, *TET* ii 536–7) Martineau's second reference appears to be inexact. Hutcheson speaks of the moral sense as 'a natural and immediate determination to approve certain affections and actions consequent upon them; or a natural sense of immediate excellence in them, not referred to any other quality perceivable by our other senses or by reasoning' (*SMP* i 4.4, 58). He does not use 'independent quality', though 'not referred to . . . ' might be taken to imply it.

[18] For Hume's criticism of Hutcheson's *IMP* on conscience see §779.

reason corrects. He argues by analogy, pointing out that theoretical reason is wrong if it judges hastily or on insufficient evidence, but we still use reason to correct reason, by reconsideration. Similarly, the moral sense corrects and regulates itself.[19] According to Hutcheson, Butler's phenomenological tests for identifying conscience as the supreme principle pick out the moral sense; they do not require a rational principle.

Hutcheson assumes that Butler must establish the supremacy of conscience by phenomenological tests. To interpret Butler this way is to over-emphasize his appeal to reflexion and to under-emphasize his appeal to authority. An authoritative principle demonstrates its right to override lower principles, by appealing to the superior weight of the reasons it appeals to, not to the psychological strength of the desires it appeals to. This understanding of authority makes it difficult to see how a feeling of approval could be authoritative.

It is not surprising that Hutcheson overlooks this aspect of Butler's view of supremacy; for it rests on the division between power and authority, which has no place in Hutcheson's conception of reasons. His conception of justifying reasons differs from Butler's conception of authoritative principles on precisely the point that distinguishes their views about supremacy. The difference between Butler's position and Hutcheson's is summed up in Butler's criticism of Shaftesbury for failing to grasp the essential features of the authority of conscience (P 26).

Both Hume and Price notice that Hutcheson's position on authority is unsatisfactory. In Hume's view, the concession to Butler is a mistake. In Price's view, Hutcheson is right to agree with Butler, but wrong to suppose that the moral sense meets Butler's conditions for an authoritative principle.[20] Both critics argue, from their opposite points of view, that Hutcheson can restore consistency to his position only by moving either to a more rationalist or to a more anti-rationalist view.

716. Normative Naturalism v. Rationalism

Though Butler accepts rationalist criticisms of sentimentalist naturalism, he does not agree with extreme rationalist claims about the immutability of right and wrong. For if he is right about morality and nature, right and wrong would change if what is required by a human being as a whole system were to change. In his view, what is right is right because it is required by a human being as a whole system. On these points, Butler is right to claim that he affirms a traditional conception of nature and morality. It is the conception affirmed by Suarez.

These naturalist claims as they stand are not very clear, because 'required' is not clear. But Butler explains what the relevant sorts of requirement are, by introducing his general idea of a superior principle and his specific claims about the correct superior principles that

[19] 'This moral sense from its very nature appears to be designed for regulating and controlling all our powers. This dignity and commanding nature we are immediately conscious of, as we are confident of the power itself. Nor can such matters of immediate feeling be otherways proved but by appeals to our hearts. . . . It does not estimate the good it recommends as merely differing in degree . . . But as we immediately perceive the difference in kind, and that the dignity of enjoyment from fine poetry, painting, or from knowledge is superior to the pleasures of the palate, were they never so delicate; so we immediately discern moral good to be superior in kind and dignity to all others which are perceived by the other perceptive powers.' (*SMP* i 4.6, 61)

[20] See Price, *RPQM* 215n, discussed in §816.

he recognizes. Since the requirements he defends rely on authority rather than on strength of desire, they are distinct from Hutcheson's claims about nature.

We might mark this difference between Butler's and Hutcheson's naturalism by saying that Hutcheson is a purely psychological naturalist, but Butler is a normative naturalist. Normative naturalism does not seem to be subject to the open question argument derived from Cudworth.[21] This argument challenges Hobbes's legal conception of moral rightness by pointing out that we can raise a reasonable moral question about whether a legislator has the right to legislate, and that the answer to this question requires judgments about rightness that is not the product of legislation. Similarly, as Balguy argues against Hutcheson, we can reasonably ask whether the moral sense judges correctly, and we appeal to some rightness independent of the judgment of the moral sense. But, in Butler's view, no further reasonable question of this sort arises about the rightness of what is appropriate to nature. The normative element expressed by 'appropriate' leaves no room for the sort of question that Balguy raises about Hutcheson.

If this is the difference between Butler's and Hutcheson's naturalism, does Butler improve on Hutcheson? Is his normative naturalism empty, or question-begging, or does it commit him to uselessly circular accounts of moral properties? The desire to avoid emptiness and circularity is one of Hutcheson's reasons for favouring purely psychological naturalism. When Balguy offers accounts of normative properties that do not reduce them to purely psychological properties, Hutcheson complains that non-reductive accounts are uninformative; they are 'mere synonymies' that do not 'explicate' moral properties.[22]

The dispute between Hutcheson and Balguy is relevant to Butler's normative naturalism. If we accept Hutcheson's objections to Balguy, we may argue that Butler's normative naturalism leads him back to Clarke and Balguy; for perhaps he offers us only the empty and uninformative accounts of moral properties that we find in Clarke and Balguy. Perhaps Butler's version of naturalism is simply a circuitous route to accounts that share the non-explanatory features of rationalist accounts of moral properties.

This conclusion, however, overlooks an important difference between Butler and the rationalists. Even if Butler's naturalism fails to provide a non-normative 'explication' of moral properties, it makes morality more mutable than it appears to be in the rationalists' view. In their view, gratitude is the appropriate and fitting response to a benefaction, and we can see this simply from consideration of the definitions of these actions and attitudes themselves.[23] To deny that benefaction requires gratitude is parallel to denying that being a triangle requires having internal angles adding up to two right angles.

The epistemological and metaphysical implications of these rationalist claims are different from the implications of Butler's claims. According to Butler, rightness and wrongness rest on the requirements of human nature as a system. To know what these requirements are, we cannot simply attend, say, to the relation of benefactor and beneficiary. We need to attend to the further facts that we discover in considering a human being as a system. These

[21] On Cudworth see §551. [22] See Hutcheson, *IMS* 165 = R 373, quoted in §656.

[23] See Balguy, *FMG* i = *TMT* 66 = SB 542–5, quoted in §665. It is sometimes difficult to be sure how far Balguy differs from Butler, since he speaks of the 'nature' of the agent or recipient in a morally good or bad action. But he seems to mean (for instance) the agent's nature as a benefactor or the recipient's as a beneficiary—i.e., the bare fact that one is a benefactor and one a beneficiary—rather than their nature as human beings.

further facts are not purely non-normative psychological facts; they are those that Butler appeals to in arguing for the naturalness of self-love and conscience. They show that we have some conception of human nature as a system that justifies self-love and conscience. Normative naturalism, therefore, is not simply Clarke's rationalism in disguise.

But if we vindicate Butler on this point, we might doubt whether Clarke's rationalism and Butler's normative naturalism provide complementary lines of argument. Agreement with Butler seems to require disagreement with Clarke, since Butler implies that morality is mutable in relation to some facts that, according to Clarke, are not sources of mutability.

This contrast between Butler and Clarke, however, may be too sharp to fit everything Clarke says. For Clarke does not say exactly what the eternal fitnesses have to fit. Sometimes he speaks of fitting the nature of the agent and the action; Balguy also explains the relevant type of fitness in this way. It is excusable for Butler to attack Wollaston without attacking Clarke; for Wollaston commits himself much more firmly than Clarke and Balguy commit themselves to a narrow construal of fitness that does not involve reference to human nature.

This assessment of Butler's relation to Clarke suggests a conclusion about Butler's relation to Cudworth. If Butler's account of morality does not introduce the open questions that Balguy takes to be introduced by Hutcheson's account, Butler shows that we can accept Cudworth's argument without accepting Clarke's and Balguy's extreme rationalism. This conclusion is useful, since we might reasonably find Cudworth's argument more plausible than the extreme rationalist conclusions that Clarke and Balguy claim to draw from it.

Butler, therefore, is neither a sentimentalist nor a rationalist nor an unsystematic moralist. His acceptance of traditional normative naturalism places him in an intermediate position between Hutcheson and Clarke; or perhaps one ought to say that it puts him outside the dispute between them, since he denies their common assumption that a naturalist account must be sentimentalist. As Suarez's position shows, a philosopher might intelligibly believe both that moral properties are eternal and immutable in relation to will, command, sentiment, and legislation, while believing that they depend on facts about rational nature. This is a distinctive position, not a mere amalgam of fragments gathered from rationalism and sentimentalism.

717. Voluntarism

Butler further defines his relation to Clarke, on the one side, and Hutcheson, on the other, by his attitude to voluntarism about God and morality. Issues about voluntarism mark one central area of dispute between Hutcheson and his rationalist critics, because of an alleged inconsistency in his position. Hutcheson rejects the sort of voluntarism that identifies morality with the content of divine commands, but he also claims: (1) What is right is right because it appeals to our moral sense. (2) We have a reason to do what is right because it appeals to our moral sense.

According to Burnet and Balguy, these claims commit Euthyphro's error; for they imply that what is right would be different if our moral sense were to change and everything else about us and the world were to remain the same. Burnet and Balguy argue that Hutcheson's sentimentalism inherits the faults of theological voluntarism, making morality

subject to inappropriate variations. Though Hutcheson seeks to avoid voluntarism, he commits himself, according to these rationalist critics, to the most serious voluntarist error.

Butler embraces a naturalist position, holding that moral rightness and wrongness are independent of divine legislation. In the *Analogy* he affirms naturalism without discussing it at length, since he is reluctant to engage in speculation about the divine will and intellect.[24] He takes naturalism to be the general view of both ancient and modern moralists.[25] In reply to the objections that appeal to divine dispensations from the moral law, he defends the naturalist view that the command to plunder the Egyptians (for instance) does not constitute divine permission to do wrong. The fact that God has commanded in this case an action that would have been wrong had it not been commanded makes the action no longer wrong. Hence the recognition of these possibilities does not undermine belief in immutable morality.[26]

[24] '. . . I am far from intending to deny, that the will of God is determined by what is fit, by the right and reason of the case; though one chooses to decline matters of such abstract speculation, and to speak with caution when one does speak of them. But if it be intelligible to say that it is fit and reasonable for every one to consider his own happiness, then fitness of action, or the right and reason of the case, is an intelligible manner of speaking. And it seems as inconceivable, to suppose God to approve one course of action, or one end, preferably to another, which yet his acting at all from design implies that he does, without supposing somewhat prior in that end, to be the ground of the preference; as to suppose him to discern an abstract proposition to be true, without supposing somewhat prior in it, to be the ground of the discernment. It doth not therefore appear, that moral right is any more relative to perception, than abstract truth is: or that it is any more improper, to speak of the fitness and rightness of actions and ends, as founded in the nature of things, than to speak of abstract truth, as thus founded' (*Anal.* i 6.12n).

[25] 'I . . . have omitted what I think true, and of the utmost importance, because by others thought unintelligible, or not true. Thus I have argued upon the principles of the fatalists, which I do not believe: And I have omitted a thing of the utmost importance which I do believe, the moral fitness and unfitness of actions, prior to all will whatever; which I apprehend as certainly to determine the divine conduct, as speculative truth and falsehood necessarily determine the divine judgment. Indeed the principle of liberty, and that of moral fitness, so force themselves upon the mind, that moralists, the ancients as well as moderns, have formed their language upon it.' (*Anal.* ii 8.11) See also ii 5.6: '. . . it is by no means intuitively certain, how far these consequences could possibly, in the nature of the thing, be prevented, consistently with the eternal rule of right, or with what is, in fact, the moral constitution of nature.' Bernard (ii 117n) refers to Cudworth and Clarke, See Clarke, *DBAG*, Prop. xii = H 571: 'Further: that there is a fitness or suitableness of certain circumstances to certain persons, and an unsuitableness of others, founded in the nature of things and in the qualifications of persons, antecedent to will and to all arbitrary or positive appointment whatsoever, must unavoidably be acknowledged by everyone who will not affirm that 'tis equally fit and suitable, in the nature and reason of things, that an innocent being should be extremely and eternally miserable, as that it should be free from such misery. There is therefore such a thing as fitness and unfitness, eternally, necessarily, and unchangeably in the nature and reason of things.' Cf. *DNR*, Prop. 1 §3 = H 612: 'And now, that the same reason of things, with regard to which the will of God always and necessarily determines itself to act in constant conformity to the eternal rules of justice, equity, goodness and truth; ought also constantly to determine the will of subordinate rational beings, to govern all their actions by the same rules, is very evident.' H 613: 'Originally and in reality, 'tis as natural and (morally speaking) necessary, that the will should be determined in every action by the reason of the thing, and the right of the case; as 'tis natural and (absolutely speaking) necessary that the understanding should submit to a demonstrated truth.' Cf. Shaftesbury, *Inquiry* i 3.2, quoted in §611.

[26] 'Indeed there are some particular precepts in Scripture, given to particular persons, requiring actions, which would be immoral and vicious, were it not for such precepts. But it is easy to see, that all these are of such a kind, as that the precept changes the whole nature of the case and of the action; and both constitutes and shows that not to be unjust or immoral, which, prior to the precept, must have appeared and really have been so: which may well be, since none of these precepts are contrary to immutable morality. If it were commanded, to cultivate the principles, and act from the spirit of treachery, ingratitude, cruelty; the command would not alter the nature of the case or of the action, in any of these instances. But it is quite otherwise in precepts, which require only the doing an external action: for instance, taking away the property, or life of any. For men have no right to either life or property, but what arises solely from the grant of God: when this grant is revoked, they cease to have any right at all in either: and when this revocation is made known, as surely it is possible it may be, it must cease to be unjust to deprive them of either. And though a course of external acts, which without command would be immoral, must make an immoral habit; yet a few detached commands have no such

The *Sermons* do not discuss the question of voluntarism directly. But Butler affirms his view in the sermon on the love of God. He alludes to the 'enthusiastic' view that the love of God should be entirely disinterested and self-forgetful, so that any thought of the benefits one gains from the love of God is entirely out of place, and incompatible with the proper love of God. This attitude of the French Quietists provokes a sharp reaction from other Christian moralists, who believe that the self-forgetful attitude advocated by Quietists is psychologically impossible and morally dangerous.[27]

An extreme reaction to Quietism is an attack on any disinterested love of God as mere fanaticism or (as Butler's contemporaries describe it) 'enthusiasm'. The opponents of enthusiasm about the love of God sometimes suggest that the safest and most rational attitude to God and morality is to regard God simply as the imposer of morality, and as the source of rewards and punishments for the observation and violation of it.[28]

Butler agrees with Shaftesbury and Maxwell in rejecting this extreme opposition to enthusiasm about the love of God.[29] He believes that, just as benevolence and self-love can and should co-exist, so also the disinterested love of God can and should co-exist with self-love directed to God. The rejection of disinterested love of God is an extreme reaction that reduces religion to purely self-interested calculation.[30] The disinterested love of God is legitimate and appropriate, both from a religious and a moral point of view; it is no less appropriate than love of a good moral character and of a human being who embodies it. Any sound moral outlook includes this reasonable and disinterested love.[31]

Butler's rejection of voluntarism separates him both from enthusiasm and from its opponents. For each side in the dispute has some tendency towards voluntarism about morality. On the one side, exclusive emphasis on the self-forgetful love of God, irrespective of anything else we value, may incline us to ignore any moral basis for the love of God. On the other side, emphasis on the legitimacy of self-interest may incline us to treat

natural tendency.' (*Anal.* ii 3.13) Bernard ad loc. criticizes Butler's position rather unfairly. Gladstone ad loc. suggests that 'violence offered by order of law may help to illustrate Butler's meaning'. He defends Butler more fully at *SSWBB* 37–40. On morality and divine commands cf. §869 (Waterland and Butler).

[27] On Quietism see §§611, 864. [28] See Waterland, §872.

[29] Cf. Maxwell's appeal to Shaftesbury, §§539, 611.

[30] 'Everybody knows, . . . that there is such a thing as having so great horror of one extreme as to run insensibly and of course into the contrary; and that a doctrine's having been a shelter for enthusiasm, or made to serve the purposes of superstition, is no proof of the falsity of it: . . . It may be sufficient to have mentioned this in general, without taking notice of the particular extravagances which have been vented under the pretence or endeavour of explaining the love of God; or how manifestly we are got into the contrary extreme, under the notion of a reasonable religion; so very reasonable as to have nothing to do with the heart and affections, if these words signify anything but the faculty by which we discern speculative truth.' (xiii 1)

[31] 'By the love of God I would understand all those regards, all those affections of mind which are due immediately to Him from such a creature as man, and which rest in Him as their end. . . . And they may all be understood to be implied in these words of our Saviour, without putting any force upon them: for He is speaking of the love of God and our neighbour as containing the whole of piety and virtue. It is plain that the nature of man is so constituted as to feel certain affections upon the sight or contemplation of certain objects. Now the very notion of affection implies resting in its object as an end. And the particular affection to good characters, reverence and moral love of them, is natural to all those who have any degree of real goodness in themselves. This will be illustrated by the description of a perfect character in a creature; and by considering the manner in which a good man in his presence would be affected towards such a character. He would of course feel the affections of love, reverence, desire of his approbation, delight in the hope or consciousness of it. And surely all this is applicable, and may be brought up to that Being, who is infinitely more than an adequate object of all those affections; whom we are commanded to love with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind. . . . there is nothing in it enthusiastical or unreasonable.' (xiii 2–3)

morality simply as the product of divine commands with sanctions attached. Butler rejects both these views. We avoid enthusiasm if we ground love for God in awareness of God's moral perfection, as understood by reference to standards of moral perfection that we do not accept simply because of the love of God. We have to reject voluntarism if we are to understand the righteousness of God and to find a morally acceptable basis for love of God.[32]

Once we grasp the right basis for the love of God, we can also see that it no more excludes self-love than concern for moral goodness excludes self-love. Disinterested love of God is possible and desirable, just as disinterested love of other things is possible and desirable, if self-love itself is not to be frustrated.[33] But the disinterested love of God is not fanatical or irrational, if it rests on the disinterested love of moral goodness in its own right.

Butler's brief references to voluntarism show that he takes his position to be controversial, and he believes that if he engaged in this controversy, he would stray from his main purpose in the *Analogy*. He might well have the same reason for avoiding the controversy in the *Sermons*, since a discussion of it would raise questions not only about meta-ethics, but also about God's intellect, will, freedom, and goodness. A discussion of voluntarism would distract him from the practical and pastoral aims of the *Sermons*.

But he does not take the issues about voluntarism to be irrelevant or practically unimportant. He takes the falsity of voluntarism to be extremely important, since naturalism underlies his whole explanation of the love of God. In claiming that God 'cannot' approve anything except what is right 'in itself' Butler raises the metaphysical questions about divine freedom, creation, and intrinsic morality that Suarez discusses at length.[34] He endorses the naturalist position of Suarez that is familiar to him from Clarke. To understand the *Sermons*, it is useful to keep in mind Butler's clear position on this issue.

718. Naturalism, Constructivism, and Realism

Butler's rejection of voluntarism agrees with Hutcheson's explicit position. According to Balguy, however, Hutcheson's sentimentalist account of moral properties leaves him with a voluntarist position. Is Butler open to the same criticism? The difference between

[32] '. . . suppose that they had a real view of that "righteousness, which is an everlasting righteousness"; of the conformity of the Divine will to the law of truth, in which the moral attributes of God consist; of that goodness in the sovereign Mind, which gave birth to the universe . . . ' (xiv 14).

[33] 'Some degree of goodness must be previously supposed; this always implies the love of itself, an affection to goodness: the highest, the adequate object of this affection, is perfect goodness; which therefore we are to love with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength. "Must we then, forgetting our own interest, as it were go out of ourselves, and love God for his own sake?" No more forget your own interest, no more go out of yourselves, than when you prefer one place, one prospect, the conversation of one man to that of another. Does not every affection necessarily imply that the object of it be itself loved? If it be not it is not the object of the affection. You may, and ought if you can, but it is a great mistake to think you can love or fear or hate anything, from consideration that such love or fear or hatred may be a means of obtaining good or avoiding evil.' (xiii 13)

[34] 'God cannot approve of any thing but what is in itself right, fit, just. We should worship and endeavour to obey him with this consciousness and recollection. To endeavour to please a man merely, is a different thing from endeavouring to please him as a wise and good man, i.e. endeavouring to please him in the particular way of behaving towards him, as we think the relations we stand in to him and the intercourse we have with him require.' (MS note of Butler's, printed in Bernard ii 305)

Hutcheson's psychological naturalism and Butler's normative naturalism raises a question about their metaphysical claims about the nature of moral properties.

Hutcheson's version of naturalism rejects objectivism, since it asserts that moral properties turn out not to be features of external reality, if 'external' implies independence of the judgments and reactions of moral judges. They are relational properties, and one term of the relation is the actual reaction of a judge's moral sense. Butler opposes this claim about the moral sense. His opposition becomes clearer when he explains his view of conscience.

This difference from Hutcheson, however, still leaves Butler two options: (1) Hutcheson is right to reject objectivism, but wrong in his description of the subjective term of the relation involved in moral properties. Instead of saying that the reactions of the moral sense constitute the rightness of actions (states of character, etc.), Hutcheson ought to have said that the reactions of conscience make actions right. (2) Contrary to Hutcheson's position, rightness is agreement with human nature. Human nature consists essentially in the rational and reflective aspects of human beings, but facts about human nature are not constituted by the reactions or judgments of moral judges. On the contrary, good moral judges are the ones who detect these facts that exist apart from their reactions.

It may be difficult to decide which of these positions Butler affirms against Hutcheson. In either position facts about human beings as rational and reflective agents are relevant. But they are relevant in different ways. According to the first view, the relevant facts are those about human beings as moral judges, because their judgments constitute moral properties and moral truths. According to the second view, however, the relevant facts are not constituted by moral judgments; truths about us as moral judges are simply a subset of the truths about us as rational agents, and these truths as a whole constitute the moral facts.

The first of these positions is a form of constructivism. If Butler accepts it, he follows Hutcheson in rejecting Clarke's realism. If, however, he accepts the second position, he agrees with Clarke in taking moral facts and properties to be independent of our moral judgments. Normative naturalism, on this view, differs from rationalism in its view about which external facts are moral facts, and therefore about the properties in relation to which moral properties are mutable. But it agrees with rationalism in regarding them as external facts.

Butler's views about superior principles, morality, and conscience help us to decide where he stands on this metaphysical issue. A decision on this issue is important not only for understanding Butler, but for understanding Kant; for similar issues arise in trying to fix Kant's position in relation to rational intuitionism and sentimentalism.

Butler's introduction of his position supports the realist against the constructivist interpretation. For he introduces it as a version of the naturalism that he ascribes to the ancient moralists. He is right to ascribe naturalism to the ancients; he might equally have ascribed it to Aquinas and to Suarez.[35]

Naturalism, as Suarez presents it, is a realist rather than a constructivist position. He makes this clear by his treatment of the claims that (1) the good is the desirable, and (2) the right is what accords with correct reason. He believes that both of these claims are correct, if suitably understood, but they give incorrect accounts of what makes things good or right

[35] It is not such an accurate picture of Scotus' or Ockham's position. See §§384, 395.

in the constitutive ('formal') sense. He argues (following Cajetan) that rational desire desires the good because it is good, and that this is the direction of explanation that makes clear the relation between good and desirability; he clearly rejects the reduction of goodness to desirability (understood non-normatively). Similarly, he argues that the correctness of correct reason consists in its grasping facts about rational nature that are independent of the reasoning that grasps them (though they are not independent of the rationality that is displayed in this reasoning). He thereby rejects the reduction of rightness to what is grasped by correct reason (non-normatively understood, without mention of its grasping the right).[36]

If Butler and Suarez agree in accepting the claim that virtue is living in accordance with nature, do they interpret the claim in the same way? The fact that Suarez takes it to be a realist claim, and spells out the realist aspects of it, suggests the right questions about Butler. If Butler appears to accept the asymmetries that Suarez accepts (desirable because good; grasped by correct reason because fitting for rational agents), we have some reason to attribute a realist version of naturalism to him.

He seems to accept Suarez's asymmetries. For he agrees with Suarez in rejecting a voluntarist account of the relation between rightness and the divine will. He contrasts voluntarism with belief in 'the fitness and rightness of actions and ends, as founded in the nature of things'.[37] This way of stating the alternative to voluntarism may remind us of Clarke; but it also fits the naturalist position that (we have argued) Butler maintains in opposition to Clarke (whether or not he clearly recognizes this opposition). Constructivism does not fit a belief in rightness as founded in the nature of things rather than the will of an agent; it is difficult to see how an opponent of voluntarism could reasonably be a constructivist.[38] Admittedly, Butler may not agree, or he may not see that his acceptance of naturalism rather than voluntarism is difficult to reconcile with constructivism. Still, his naturalism gives us a reason for ascribing to him a view of rightness similar to the one that Suarez accepts.

719. Conscience, Reasons, and Motives

Butler's conception of conscience requires him to express a view on the dispute between rationalists and sentimentalists about the connexion between moral judgment and motivation. His view is rather carefully balanced between the opposing views, and it is sometimes difficult to see where he stands. If we can grasp his position, we will also be able to see its bearing on the issue about realism. For one of Hutcheson's reasons for rejecting realism is his internalism about moral properties, moral judgment, and motivation. We need to see whether Butler asserts or assumes any internalist doctrine.

Conscience is a prescriptive principle, parallel to self-love. Neither principle is simply the recognition of the relevant truths about practice. Just as self-love includes a desire for one's happiness, conscience includes the desire to express one's nature as a whole. Moreover, conscience accepts the requirements of morality, since it sees that they can be justified with

[36] On Suarez see §§438–9. [37] *Anal.* i 6.12n, quoted in §717.

[38] See the sympathetic treatment of voluntarism in Korsgaard, *SN* 21–7, partly quoted in §567.

reference to my nature as a whole. This implies: (1) If x is morally right, anyone has a reason to do x. (2) If S recognizes that x is morally right, and S is a conscientious person, S recognizes that S has a reason to do x. (3) If S recognizes that x is morally right, and S is conscientious, S has a desire to do x.

But this does not imply that an action cannot be right, or cannot be seen to be right, by an agent who lacks a motive for doing the action. Rightness, therefore, is not an inherently motivating property. Those who have a corrupt conscience might recognize that an action is right without seeing that they have a reason to do it, and without any desire to do it. Hence the analogues of (2) and (3) are false in the case of such people.

Since I can have a reason I do not recognize, (1) is true even of people who have a corrupt conscience. Such people, like everyone else, have a reason (noticed or not) to act in accordance with their nature; since morality is in fact (though they do not recognize it) natural, they have a reason to act morally. Such a view rests on Butler's claims about the connexion between morality and human nature. But it does not imply any special epistemological view about the character of moral properties. Butler does not accept Hutcheson's internalist assumption that a moral property, or the recognition of it, is inherently motivating.[39]

Butler clarifies his views on internalism, in his account of the moral faculties (at the beginning of the Dissertation). Though people agree that we have 'a moral nature and moral faculties of perception and action', they differ about the nature of these faculties and their relation to knowledge and sentiment.[40] He emphasizes that we expect someone's moral outlook to include both understanding and emotion, and to extend to practice as well as theory. In using the terms 'sentiment' and 'perception', he may have deliberately chosen terms that could be used both for cognitive and for affective states.[41] Elsewhere he describes 'moral understanding' as 'as well including a practical sense of virtue, as a speculative perception of it'.[42]

Butler may intend his formula to echo a remark of Aristotle's.[43] In discussing election (*prohairesis*) Aristotle says that it is properly described as 'desiring reason or intellectual

[39] Contrast Mackie, *HMT* 39, 48, 55.

[40] 'It is manifest great part of common language, and of common behaviour over the world, is formed upon supposition of such a moral faculty, whether called conscience, moral reason, moral sense, or divine reason; whether considered as a sentiment of the understanding or as a perception of the heart, or, which seems the truth, as including both.' (D 1)

[41] We ought not to suppose that Butler takes 'sentiment' to be especially proper to emotion, so that his formula is deliberately paradoxical. A simple survey of the excerpts in SB suggests a rather general use of 'sentiment'. It is commonly used by Hutcheson in ways that certainly include affective states. But Shaftesbury, Balguy, and Price, for instance, regularly use it for cognitive states. Price provides an especially striking example of Butler's very phrase: 'No one can avoid owning that he has the idea of unsuitableness; (that is, a sentiment of wrong) in the application of eternal misery to innocence. Let him, if he can, find out a reason for denying it to be a sentiment of his understanding, and a perception of truth.' (*RPQM* 129) Butler may have meant by the phrase just what Price means by it. Cf. §819. Whewell, ad loc. in *BTSHN*, absurdly suggests emendation of the text to reverse 'sentiment' and 'perception'. Beattie and Reid criticize Hume for his non-cognitive use of 'sentiment'; see §842, and Rivers, *RGS* ii 301–2. On Butler's doctrine see Raphael, 'Conscience' 230–1; Taylor, 'Features' 299.

[42] *Anal.* i 5.14. Bernard cites this passage in his note on the passage quoted from Diss.

[43] An allusion to Aristotle is suggested by Bernard: 'Butler's words are carefully chosen, and are intended to indicate the complexity of conscience, which is partly intellectual, partly emotional. If it be called a sentiment, it must not be forgotten that it is a sentiment of the *understanding*; if it be called a perception, it is still a perception of the *heart*. Aristotle's definition of the faculty of moral choice is closely parallel . . . ' Bernard goes on to cite *EN* 1139b4–5. (He may misunderstand Butler's use of 'sentiment'; see above.)

desire' (*EN* 1139b4–5). The echo is not exact; for Aristotle is speaking of the origins of moral action, not of the faculty of moral judgment. Still, the two questions, about the origin of action and the origins of moral judgment, are not easily separated. For in Hutcheson and Hume the combination of an anti-rationalist view of motivation and justification with an internalist view of the connexion between moral judgment and motivation leads to an anti-rationalist view of moral judgment.[44] They believe that desire, as opposed to reason, is the source of motivation; they assume that the making of a moral judgment necessarily motivates the agent to act on it; and so they infer that the making of a moral judgment involves some desire or emotion.[45]

Butler is non-committal about rationalism and internalism. He speaks of moral reason and moral sense together, not making it clear which aspect he takes to be primary; and he speaks of moral understanding as including a practical sense of virtue. It is easy to see why anti-rationalists and internalists might think Butler is leaning in their direction.

Butler's remarks, however, suggest to Price that Butler holds a rationalist position, and that he takes the affective aspects of our moral outlook to result from our moral judgment, the cognitive aspects. The fact that we are capable of being moved by our moral judgments does not imply that the moral judgments themselves include the relevant feelings. Though Butler's phrase about conscience combines the cognitive and the affective aspects more closely than Price's adaptation of his phrase does, it does not imply the inseparability of moral judgment from affective reactions. In the conscientious person they are closely connected; just as our belief that something is wrong immediately provokes a feeling of rejection, so also the feeling of unease or distaste helps us to discover that something is wrong. But that is all consistent with recognizing the possibility of true moral judgments that do not include affective reactions. Butler does not affirm or suggest a necessary connexion between moral judgment and motivation; and so he does not accept a crucial premiss in Hutcheson's and Hume's arguments against rationalism.[46]

720. Constructivism and Realism

Conscience approves of morality, and specifically of the content of the moral virtues. Butler seeks to prove that virtue is acting in accordance with our nature, relying on two claims: (1) Conscience approves of virtue. (2) Doing what conscience approves of is in accordance with our nature.

Which of these claims is a matter of definition, and which is a substantive claim, needing more argument than simple clarification of the relevant concepts? It is especially difficult to

[44] I intend to use 'internalism' with the sense defined by Frankena (following Falk), in 'Obligation' 49–50. It indicates a conceptual connexion between seeing that one has an obligation (or, even more strongly, having an obligation) and having a motive for doing what one sees one has the obligation to do.

[45] This is Hume's argument in *T* iii 1.1, 5–10. Hutcheson's position is more complicated (*IMS* i, 121–2). But his claim that justifying reasons must actually excite our approbation (and not simply give us reasons for approbation) commits him to some form of internalism about moral judgment and motivation. He asks, e.g., '. . . what reason makes us approve the happiness of a system? Here we must recur to a sense or kind affections' (129). This reference to affection is not directly connected to action (as it is in Hume), but it is at least connected to motivation. Cf. §639.

[46] See Hutcheson, §641; Hume, §745.

decide whether claim (1) is intended as a definition of virtue. It might be taken two ways: (a) What makes something virtue is the fact that it is approved by conscience (understood in some way that does not involve reference to virtue). (b) Conscience approves of something that (on independent grounds) constitutes virtue. If (b) is meant, is it a necessary or a contingent truth about conscience? Would it be conscience if it did not approve of morality?

We have already found reasons to answer No to the last question.[47] Butler seems to believe that conscience is the superior principle that necessarily takes the point of view of morality. Someone who had no moral beliefs would have no conscience. Someone who has mistaken moral beliefs has a mistaken, or perhaps corrupt, conscience. But this aspect of conscience does not settle the more important question about whether morality is reducible to what conscience approves of.

The reductive claim expresses Hutcheson's view that moral goodness is what our moral sense approves of. This is the constitutive claim that our approval is what makes it moral goodness. When we recognize the moral goodness or badness of an action, we recognize the benevolence or malevolence of the agent and the pleasure or pain of the recipient, but these would not be morally good or bad if we did not approve or disapprove of them. Only our approval or disapproval makes them good or bad.

Does Butler hold the anti-realist view that moral rightness is simply what our conscience approves? If he does, his dispute with Hutcheson rests simply on the difference between his conception of conscience and Hutcheson's conception of a moral sense. Alternatively, does he take conscience to recognize things that are right and wrong independently of this recognition, so that the recognition does not make things right or wrong?

In the *Dissertation* Butler suggests that we have some idea of what actions reveal virtue and vice, independently of knowing whether they are or are not approved by conscience. Moreover, this view fits his initial statement of sympathy with the views of Clarke, and his unambiguous repudiation of voluntarism as an account of morality and the divine will.[48] Constructivism is the equivalent of voluntarism at the human level; once the proper outlook of conscience is defined without reference to the fact that conscience grasps what is morally right, the morally right is defined as what is grasped by conscience. This view conflicts with 'the fitness and rightness of actions and ends, as founded in the nature of things',[49] and with Butler's objections to the purely psychological naturalism of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson.

A constructivist interpretation of Butler's claims about conscience is consistent with some of his remarks about conscience. It is not surprising, then, that Hutcheson takes over Butler's claims about the supremacy of conscience, and uses them to describe the moral sense. His *System of Moral Philosophy* shows how a psychological naturalist might try to incorporate some of Butler's views within a constructivist position; for (according to Hutcheson) the moral sense has the reflective supremacy that Butler takes to be the hallmark of conscience.[50]

[47] See §697. [48] See §717.

[49] *Anal.* i 6.12n, quoted in §717. Butler also approves claims about fitness at S xi 20.

[50] A constructivist interpretation of Butler is defended by Darwall, *BMIO*, ch. 9. See esp. 279. In discussing a passage in which he takes Butler to reject Clarke's intuitionism, Darwall comments: 'This . . . suggests he thinks that *normative* ideas refer to no order that is independent of the exercise of autonomous practical reason (conscience) itself.' If 'the exercise of' were omitted, the resulting claim would be similar to the position I have attributed to Butler. 'The exercise of' suggests that Darwall intends a constructivist interpretation. A similarly procedural interpretation of Butler is favoured by Schneewind, 'Use'; but contrast *IA* 353.

A variation of Hutcheson's constructivism might substitute a rational procedure for the reactions of the moral sense. This is approximately the form of constructivism favoured by Kant, according to some views of his position.[51] Butler, however, does not hold this view. If he held it, his meta-ethical position would be inconsistent, since he rejects the assumptions that constructivism shares with voluntarism and with psychological naturalism. It is more reasonable to conclude that he takes conscience to grasp moral truths whose truth does not consist in their being grasped by conscience.

Some relevant questions about the interpretation of Butler's position arise from Kames's criticism. Kames takes the moral sense to be unanalysable and immediate, not susceptible to reductive analysis. He criticizes Butler on the assumption that Butler offers a reductive analysis. In his view, Butler defines morality as what conscience approves of.[52] He criticizes Butler on the ground that this reductive and anti-realist account does not capture the distinctive character of the moral sense.[53] Kames argues that to find an adequate account of the moral sense we must add to Butler's claims about the authority of conscience a specific claim about the source of authority—that we perceive the action to be our duty. Since we must mention the perception of our duty in an account of authority, we cannot find a reductive account of duty by appeal to the authority of conscience.

Kames's criticism underlies Selby-Bigge's treatment of Butler as a sentimentalist.[54] He takes Butler to claim that rightness consists simply in being approved by the reflective faculty of conscience. He agrees with Kames's criticism of Butler on this point (xlii, xlvi).

Whewell raises legitimate questions about the view defended by Kames and Selby-Bigge. He rejects a constructivist account of Butler, in denying that Butler makes conscience 'the ultimate criterion of right and wrong' (*Three Sermons*, p. xiii). In Whewell's view, conscience is a faculty in the same sense as reason is one: 'a power by exercising which we come to discern truths, not a repository of truth already collected in a visible shape' (p. xiv).

We can confirm Whewell's interpretation of Butler by considering what sorts of things conscience approves. Butler describes them in two ways: (1) They are just, fair, and benevolent actions, which tend to promote the common good of society, and to maintain the appropriate relations of desert, responsibility, and equality, between individual agents.

[51] See Rawls, *LHMP* 236.

[52] 'Dr. Butler, a manly and acute writer, hath gone farther than any other, to assign a just foundation for moral duty. He considers conscience or reflexion "as one principle of action, which, compared with the rest as they stand together in the nature of man, plainly bears upon it marks of authority over all the rest, and claims the absolute direction of them all, to allow or forbid their gratification." And his proof of this proposition is, "that a disapprobation of reflexion is in itself a principle manifestly superior to a mere propension."' (Kames, *EPM*, ch. 3, 33 (Moran) = SB 931) Thomas Johnson also attributes a sentimentalist position to Butler; see §866.

[53] '... the authority of conscience does not consist merely in an act of reflexion. It arises from a direct perception, which we have upon presenting the object, without the intervention of any sort of reflexion. And the authority lies in this circumstance, that we perceive the action to be our duty, and what we are indispensably bound to perform. It is in this manner that the moral sense, with regard to some actions, plainly bears upon it the marks of authority over all our appetites and passions. It is the voice of God within us which commands our strictest obedience, just as much as when his will is declared by express revelation' (Kames, *EPM*, ch. 3, 34 (Moran) = SB 931).

[54] 'It is in Butler that the sentimental school really reaches its climax. He is indeed careful not to commit himself to any decision between the claims of reason and sense ... but it is impossible not to treat his theory as intimately related to the speculation of Hutcheson, who indeed in his last work ... evidently has taken a good deal from Butler. Man as an organic whole consists not only of parts, but of parts interrelated under a reflective faculty, which is endued not only with power or attractiveness but with authority. ... To act according to human nature is to fall in with the system imposed by this authority ...' (SB i, p. xliv)

(2) These sorts of actions are those that fulfil human nature; we can see this by considering the 'social nature of man',[55] insofar as it includes both benevolence and the outlook connected with responsibility and fairness.

Neither of these two features of morally right actions is imposed or constituted by the approval of conscience. Conscience is supreme only because it identifies and prescribes actions with these properties. As we would expect from Butler's rejection of voluntarism, he agrees with those who defend intrinsic morality.

[55] The title of Sermon i.

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HUME: NATURE

721. The Experimental Method

Hume's *Treatise* is 'an attempt to introduce the experimental method of reasoning into moral subjects' (title page). Hume recognizes that moral philosophy cannot always make the deliberate experiments that advance other inquiries.[1] We cannot always create the situation in which we can observe the effect that we are interested in.[2] In this area we must find a substitute for deliberate experiments by acquiring 'experiments' in Hume's wider sense—a broader acquaintance, based on observation and reading, with human behaviour and reactions in different situations. Moral philosophy, therefore, should rest on the study of human nature, which Hume calls the 'science of man' (*T*, Introd. 4).

Is this claim about the nature of moral philosophy important or controversial? If it means only that moral philosophy should rest on facts about human beings, we might think it is commonplace. Even rationalists such as Clarke agree that information about these facts is necessary for applying moral principles, even if the principles are independent of facts about human nature. Other philosophers see a closer connexion between morality and human nature. Aristotle, Aquinas, Hobbes, and Butler (for instance) claim that moral principles depend essentially on facts about human nature; they seem to agree with Hume.

But Hume does not merely claim that facts about human nature are relevant to moral theory. He also claims that the science of man can decide all the important questions in moral philosophy.[3] If he means that a purely experimental science can settle all the questions of moral philosophy, he disagrees with many others who take human nature to be fundamental

[1] 'Moral philosophy has, indeed, the positive disadvantage, which is not found in natural, that in collecting its experiments, it cannot make them purposely, with premeditation, and after such a manner as to satisfy itself concerning every particular difficulty which may arise.' (*T*, Introd. 10) I cite the *Treatise* (*T*), by book, part, section, and paragraph, from Norton and Norton's edn. I cite the *Inquiries* (*IHU* and *IPM*, the latter sometimes cited simply as *I*) by section and paragraph from Beauchamp's edns. The relations between *T* and *I* are discussed by Selby-Bigge, Introd. to edn. of *I*, fairly criticized by Laird, *HPHN* 237–41.

[2] 'But should I endeavour to clear up after the same manner any doubt in moral philosophy, by placing myself in the same case with that which I consider, 'tis evident this reflexion and premeditation would so disturb the operation of any natural principles, as must render it impossible to form any just conclusion from the phenomenon. We must therefore glean up our experiments in this science from a cautious observation of human life, and take them as they appear in the common course of the world, by men's behaviour in company, in affairs, and in their pleasures.' (*T*, Introd. 10)

[3] 'From this station we may extend our conquest over all those sciences, which more intimately concern human life, and may afterwards proceed at leisure to discover more fully those, which are the objects of pure curiosity. There is no

in moral philosophy. For the science of man, as Hume conceives it, seems to be simply a 'descriptive' (in a sense that needs explanation) account of human behaviour and its causes. Some naturalists do not believe that this is the whole basis of moral philosophy. They take moral philosophy to derive an account of reasons for acting one way rather than another from a theory of human nature. But they do not regard the underlying theory of human nature as purely descriptive—purely 'experimental' in Hume's sense. We might summarize their view by saying that they take their theory of human nature to be inherently normative, because it contains claims about goods and reasons.

A brief statement of Hume's disagreement with other theorists of human nature might say that he rejects the normative aspects of an account of human nature. Since he takes the science of man to settle all the main questions in moral philosophy, he rejects the claims of moral philosophy to be an essentially normative discipline. This division between a 'normative' and an 'experimental' discipline needs to be clarified further, but it suggests the point of Hume's ambitions for a purely experimental science of human nature.

His predecessors in moral philosophy are mistaken, then, to suppose that moral philosophy includes more than this experimental study. They do not take a purely 'experimental' view of moral philosophy, because they regard information about human psychology and behaviour as material for an irreducibly normative discipline. In their view, moral philosophy does not simply describe universal or frequent tendencies, but examines them in the light of principles about how they ought to be.

The normative pretensions of previous moral philosophy appear to Hume to be misguided. But why does he think so? In claiming that the science of man allows us to 'conquer' the sciences that more intimately concern human life, he might mean that the experimental study of human nature provides a basis for better-founded normative claims about how human beings ought to be. Alternatively, he might mean that experimental study conquers moral philosophy by expelling the normative element that is distinct from experimental study. We need to see which of these two views expresses Hume's claim about the significance of experimental moral science.

722. The Experimental Method as a Source of Scepticism and a Reaction to Scepticism

In claiming to follow the experimental method, Hume connects his discussion of morals, in the third book of the *Treatise*, with the discussion of the understanding and of the passions in the first two books, though he also takes it to be somewhat independent.[4] Since all three books claim to follow the same method, some questions that arise about the use of this method in Book i may also be raised about Book iii.

The experimental science of human nature casts doubt on various claims to knowledge, and hence arouses sceptical doubt. Various philosophical and common-sense claims to

question of importance whose decision is not comprised in the science of man; and there is none, which can be decided with any certainty, before we become acquainted with that science.' (*T*, Introd. 6)

[4] Book iii 'requires not that the reader should enter into all the abstruse reasonings' of the first two books (*T*, advertisement to Bk. iii).

knowledge imply empirical claims about our impressions and ideas, and about our capacities to form certain kinds of beliefs. The experimental method shows us that these claims are false or groundless. This is the method of the main epistemological inquiries of Book i; it tells us by 'experiment' whether we have any capacity to acquire the sort of knowledge that we must have if some of the theories of other philosophers are true. In Hume's view, an appeal to our available means of forming beliefs reveals no rational basis for various claims to knowledge. On these claims to knowledge Hume reaches a sceptical conclusion.

Sometimes he speaks as though his arguments for scepticism affect philosophical theories rather than common sense. His account of causation undermines claims to knowledge of hidden powers, necessary connexions in the world, and a law of universal causation. A sceptical conclusion about these claims may not appear to undermine our ordinary claim to know that if we light this match and put it on our bare hands, we will burn ourselves.

Sometimes, however, Hume attacks the basis of common-sense beliefs. His discussion of induction seems to affect the rational basis of all our beliefs about 'matters of fact'. His argument about personal identity seems to attack not only metaphysical theories of personal identity, but also the belief that I am the same person through the normal changes in my mental states. Similarly, the sceptical discussion of the senses casts doubt on both the vulgar belief and the more circumspect (as Hume supposes) philosophical belief in external objects. Hume takes his scepticism to be pervasive, since it shows that our beliefs about causes and effects and our beliefs about external objects undermine each other (i 4.7, 4). But we cannot give up either of these sets of beliefs.

If Hume's premisses seem to lead by valid arguments to absurd conclusions, ought we to doubt the truth of his premisses? Hume does not think so. In his view, sceptical philosophy and common sense are in permanent tension. Sceptical arguments encourage him to reject all beliefs.[5] Common life does not refute the sceptical arguments, but it weakens their influence. Since we have to act, we cannot (he claims) maintain complete suspension of belief.

Still, sceptical philosophy changes our attitude to our common-sense beliefs. If we are sceptics, we recognize that we hold our ordinary beliefs because they are entrenched and we cannot easily get rid of them, not because we think the evidence warrants them.[6] This is not our normal attitude—before we become sceptics—to our everyday beliefs. If we agree with Hume that sceptical arguments undermine the justification of everyday beliefs, we cannot turn our back on sceptical conclusions when we engage in the activities of everyday life.

A sceptical point of view does not undermine every impulse to philosophical inquiry, but it changes the character of the inquiry. If we are sceptics, we ask psychological rather than normative questions. Instead of asking what is morally good or bad, we ask what causes us to judge one thing good and another bad.[7] We no longer pursue philosophy in

[5] 'I am ready to reject all belief and reasoning, and can look upon no opinion even as more probable or likely than another.' (i 4.7.8)

[6] 'In all the incidents of life we ought still to preserve our scepticism. If we believe, that fire warms, or water refreshes, 'tis only because it costs us too much pains to think otherwise. Nay, if we are philosophers, it ought only to be upon sceptical principles, and from an inclination, which we feel to the employing ourselves after that manner.' (i 4.7.11)

[7] 'I cannot forbear having a curiosity to be acquainted with the principles of moral good and evil, the nature and foundation of government, and the cause of those several passions and inclinations, which actuate and govern

the hope of discovering basic truths about reality, but it may still satisfy our curiosity on these psychological questions. Since these are questions for the science of human nature, that science does not finish its work when we have reached the sceptical conclusion; unlike Sextus' sceptical method, it does not eliminate itself with everything else that it eliminates.[8]

The experimental method allows us to construct this science of man that makes no claims about ultimate reality, and does not go beyond the ordinary claims of common life. Even if we are sceptics about the objective truth of claims about the world, our scepticism does not spread to claims about our propensities and tendencies. For the relevant claims belong to the science of human nature, which survives Hume's sceptical doubts.[9]

Is Hume entitled to assume that the 'pre-sceptical' science of human nature that we use to argue for sceptical conclusions is the same science as the 'post-sceptical' science that investigates the questions that survive sceptical conclusions? In his view, the pre-sceptical and the post-sceptical science are the same, because each is an empirical investigation of human abilities. Past philosophers have told us that we can know the world as it really is; in order to know it, we need certain cognitive capacities. The pre-sceptical science of human nature assures us that we lack these capacities, so that it is futile to seek knowledge of the world as it really is. But since the science of human nature tells us about our capacities, we can continue asking about our capacities even when we realize we cannot learn about the world as it really is. The psychological investigation of human capacities—both pre-sceptical and post-sceptical—is not a normative inquiry, and it does not try to answer normative questions about whether we are justified in believing in causes, or necessary connexion, or an external world.

This description shows that the science of man is insufficient for Hume's sceptical conclusions. In Book i his case for scepticism depends on his claims about the cognitive capacities we need in order to acquire knowledge of the world as it is. He claims, for instance, that if we are justified in believing that causal connexions in the world are more than constant conjunctions, we need an impression of necessary connexion in the world. Psychological inquiry shows us (in his view) that we have no such impression. But some argument going beyond psychological inquiry is needed to show that we need such an impression if we are to believe justifiably in causation. Such argument seems to belong to metaphysics and epistemology. Hence the discipline that Hume practises in order to reach sceptical conclusions does not seem to be the purely psychological science of human nature that answers his post-sceptical questions.

The purely psychological science of human nature, therefore, cannot assure us that the only questions worth asking are those that this science of human nature can answer. To convince ourselves to restrict our questions to the science of human nature, we need arguments in metaphysics and epistemology. Questions that can be raised

me. I am uneasy to think I approve of one object, and disapprove of another; call one thing beautiful, and another deformed; decide concerning truth and falsehood, reason and folly, without knowing upon what principles I proceed.' (i 4.7.12)

[8] See Sextus, *P* i 206; §138.

[9] 'Human nature is the only science of man; and yet has been hitherto the most neglected.' (i 4.7.14)

about these arguments are not answered by inquiries in the science of man, as Hume conceives it.

Moreover, we might well suppose that epistemological and metaphysical arguments spread sceptical doubt to experimental science. For experimental science deals with causal relations, relies on induction, and examines relations between external objects and human minds. Why should we not doubt its possibility if we accept Hume's sceptical doubts about causation and so on? We might answer that experimental science does not concern itself with the causal connexions that are open to sceptical doubt. Even if this answer preserved experimental science from doubts about causation, it would be difficult to defend an analogous answer about induction and the external world. But in any case Hume does not offer this answer even about causation; for he agrees that the search for objective causal connexions is inseparable from empirical inquiry.[10] He cannot, then, claim that his sceptical doubts do not apply to experimental science.

To reconcile experimental science with scepticism, he claims that we can concede the cogency of the sceptical argument without doing anything about it. Even if we admit that, strictly speaking, the science of human nature is based on illusions and errors, we do not worry about this sceptical conclusion when we are engaged in our experimental science. But if this is Hume's view, the post-sceptical experimental science is not exactly the same as the pre-sceptical science that we relied on to support sceptical doubts. For in our pre-sceptical phase we do not admit that, strictly speaking, our experimental science is based on illusions, whereas we admit just this about our post-sceptical experimental science. The pre-sceptical science claims to reach justified conclusions about the real world, whereas the post-sceptical science makes no such claims.

Perhaps Hume might reject these claims about pre-sceptical and post-sceptical experimental science. He might say that the experimental science is just the same whether or not we are sceptics; our pre-sceptical and post-sceptical phases affect our epistemological attitude to experimental science, not the outlook of experimental science itself. But it is difficult to defend this division between the science and our epistemological attitude to it. Our experience, as we understand it, of boiling kettles and bare hands placed on them convinces us of claims, based on experience, about the causal relations between boiling kettles and burnt hands. We cannot separate conviction on the basis of experience, taken to be of objects and causal relations, from common-sense beliefs or experimental science. A post-sceptical science needs to replace these beliefs with an outlook that persists after sceptical scrutiny; this outlook does not include conviction on the basis of evidence taken to support the conviction. The scope of Hume's scepticism prevents him from separating experimental science from sceptical attitudes.

[10] 'Nothing is more curiously enquired after by the mind of man, than the causes of every phenomenon; nor are we content with knowing the immediate causes, but push on our enquiries, till we arrive at the original and ultimate principle. We would not willingly stop before we are acquainted with that energy in the cause, by which it operates on its effect; that tie, which connects them together; and that efficacious quality, on which the tie depends. This is our aim in all our studies and reflexions: And how must we be disappointed, when we learn, that this connexion, tie, or energy lies merely in ourselves, and is nothing but that determination of the mind, which is acquired by custom, and causes us to make a transition from an object to its usual attendant, and from the impression of one to the lively idea of the other?' (*T* i 4.7.5)

723. The Experimental Method and Scepticism in Moral Philosophy

These questions about the science of human nature may affect the discussion of the passions and of morality in the second and third books of the *Treatise*. In these books Hume does not defend scepticism about morality; he does not suggest that if we compare the claims of morality with our capacities, as we learn about them through experimental science, we will raise sceptical doubts about morality. But it seems puzzling that he does not suggest this; for moral philosophy seems to offer opportunities for scepticism analogous to those we find in metaphysics and epistemology.

The opportunities are most obvious in Hume's negative arguments about reason and passion and about moral objectivity. Rationalism and objectivism, the two positions that he rejects, imply that moral judgments express knowledge of an objective reality. Clarke claims a priori knowledge of 'eternal fitnesses' that exist independently of our beliefs and preferences. Any other objectivist position that attributes moral properties to external reality itself is also open to sceptical doubts. Hume believes that, once we consider our reasoning capacities and the character of our moral judgments, we can see that we lack the sort of access to objective moral properties that we would need if we were entitled to make objectivist claims. Experimental science of human nature shows us that we lack the capacity to find eternal fitnesses, just as we lack the capacity to find objective causal relations.

The refutation of these objectivist philosophical theories of morality does not, in Hume's view, imply any doubt about morality itself. On the contrary, we may find it reassuring and clarifying to recognize that our moral judgments do not collapse in the face of a refutation of philosophical theories that profess to find some deeper foundation for them. Since the theories are controversial, it is a good thing that our moral judgments do not rely on their truth.

But are common-sense moral convictions independent of philosophical theories, or invulnerable to sceptical criticism? We cannot be sure in advance that they do not rely on assumptions that are refuted through the experimental method. In Book i Hume argued that common-sense views, not only philosophical views, about external reality are subject to sceptical doubt. The same might be true about some moral convictions.

Hume even seems to entertain the possibility of this sceptical doubt about morality. He believes that common sense holds that objects are really coloured. Philosophy shows that this belief is false. Moral philosophy shows that moral properties are similar, in this respect, to secondary qualities. If common-sense beliefs and forms of expression suggest that we initially believe in the objective reality of secondary qualities, do they not suggest that we also initially take moral properties to be objective? If they suggest this, Hume's argument seems to undermine both philosophical theories and common sense.

If common-sense views about morality commit us to claims about objectivity that Hume refutes, we have no reason to believe that anything is right or wrong. What difference might this make? Hume believes that the sceptical argument about secondary qualities makes no practical difference.[11] But his account of the impact of scepticism does not fit this judgment.

[11] 'Vice and virtue, therefore, may be compared to sounds, colours, heat and cold, which, according to modern philosophy, are not qualities in objects, but perceptions in the mind.' (*T* iii 1.1.26, quoted more fully in §758)

Once we are sceptics, we stop thinking of our beliefs as warranted; we just notice that 'it costs us too much pains to think otherwise', because our beliefs are entrenched and stubborn. But this is not our pre-sceptical attitude to our beliefs about the physical world. Nor is it our attitude to our moral beliefs before we confront Hume's arguments on moral properties. We do not at first believe murder is wrong and consideration for others is right simply because it costs us too much pains to think otherwise; or at least we do not believe that this is why we hold these beliefs.

If sceptical argument either persuades us that this has always been the basis of our moral beliefs, or causes us to hold them only on this basis, it seems to deprive us of a reason that we thought we had for taking our moral beliefs seriously. If we hold them only because it costs us too much pains to think otherwise, why should we prefer them over strong desires that conflict with them? Should we not expect changes in beliefs about the status of our moral beliefs to affect our moral beliefs, and hence our moral practice?

This is part of the rationalist case against Hutcheson. Balguy argues that sentimentalism implies unacceptable mutability in moral goodness. Though this is a philosopher's objection, it includes a claim about morality; for Balguy claims that our convictions about morality imply the falsity of sentimentalism. One might argue the other way, that if sentimentalism is true, these ordinary convictions about morality are false.

Hume does not believe that scepticism undermines ordinary moral convictions; for he believes, contrary to Balguy, that ordinary convictions do not include the beliefs that are undermined by his sceptical arguments against other philosophers. Changes in beliefs about the status of moral beliefs do not, in Hume's view, affect moral beliefs or their practical significance. But if he is wrong on this point, his sceptical arguments may damage morality more than he recognizes. Such damage would be unwelcome to Hume, since he takes himself to be explaining and supporting moral convictions by revealing their true principles.

We might express Hume's position in terms drawn from 20th-century philosophy, by saying that he treats moral philosophy as a strictly second-order inquiry, with no implications for first-order morality.[12] Epistemology and philosophy of science, we might say, are second-order inquiries; they do not seek to vindicate or refute particular scientific theories in the way a scientist would, but they investigate the epistemological and metaphysical status of these theories. If, for instance, scientific knowledge presupposes the existence of unobservable entities, but we are convinced on philosophical grounds that there can be no such things, we are not advising scientists to stop doing what they are doing; we are simply rejecting false accounts of what they are doing. Even if the scientists themselves, in their avocation as philosophers of science, believe these false accounts, that does not matter to them as practising scientists.

But though we can form a rough idea of the difference between first-order and second-order inquiries from such examples, it is difficult to make the division precise in ways that would support the original claim that second-order conclusions do not affect first-order practice. We can ride bicycles or paint pictures without knowing any theories about bicycles or about perspective or about aesthetics, and these theories might be purely second-order. But the division is not always so clear. Geologists seem to believe that the earth has existed

[12] See Ayer, 'Language'; Mackie, *E* 16–19. On related questions about scepticism and 'insulation' see §141.

for millions of years; they seem to believe in the equal reality of their present observations and of past ages of the earth that cannot be observed. If they came to disbelieve in the objective reality of unobservables, they would have to reject their belief in the past ages of the earth. The belief that they are describing a real past may be regarded as a second-order claim, since it is a claim about the nature of their activities rather than simply a description of them. But it seems to be part of the scientific investigator's view, not simply a belief of the theorist who studies the investigator. And if investigators really ceased to hold this belief, it is not clear why their practice might not be affected.

It is at least as difficult to distinguish first-order morality from second-order moral philosophy in a way that would prevent second-order conclusions from affecting first-order convictions. If we are discussing the behaviour of people in another culture, or in the past, I might say: 'What they did was not wrong, because no one in their culture (none of their contemporaries) thought it was wrong.' You might answer: 'Whether or not anyone thought it was wrong, it was wrong; what's right or wrong doesn't depend on anyone's opinion.' We seem to have engaged in a moral discussion about the rightness or wrongness of someone's action. But the discussion includes expressions of different views about the objectivity of rightness; and a change of mind on this question might lead to a different moral judgment about actions.

It is not surprising that morality includes convictions about the status of our moral convictions. For we assert moral claims on the assumption that they matter, and we can reasonably be expected to say why they matter. If we decide there is nothing to be said for any of them, and they all simply reflect how we have been brought up or the social circles we have moved in, we may change our mind about how much to insist on our moral views, or about what we ought to do to improve them, or about whether they can really be improved. Whether or not Balguy is right to say that morality presupposes a certain kind of immutability, he has good reasons for saying that some claims about objectivity belong to morality, not merely to philosophers' views about morality.

Hume's claim that he applies the science of man to moral subjects is therefore more puzzling than it initially appears. In Book i of the *Treatise*, the questions that are open to the science of man, and the attitudes that are open to us when we consider its conclusions, depend on the conclusions of sceptical arguments. In the later books of the *Treatise* Hume does not mention the impact of scepticism on his pursuit of the science of man. But he offers sceptical arguments on ethics, and it is worth our while to ask whether these arguments affect moral beliefs and practices. Though Hume seems to believe (if we go by his remark on secondary qualities) that metaphysical claims do not affect morality, it is not clear that he can reasonably separate second-order from first-order claims as sharply as he wants to.

724. Errors of the Ancient Moralists

Some of Hume's views about the scope and use of the science of man are clearer if we consider some of his remarks on his predecessors. His explicit references to other philosophers do not cover all the influences on him, but they are a useful starting point.

In a letter that describes his early philosophical development, Hume criticizes the ancient moralists for inattention to human nature. He claims that their views on virtue and happiness rest on groundless assumptions and prejudices, rather than on acquaintance with the relevant experimental details. He proposes, therefore, to pursue the study of human nature with the aim of deriving the whole of moral philosophy from it.[13]

What specific cases might support Hume's claim that the ancients do not attend to human nature? Perhaps he means that, for instance, the Stoics would not have identified virtue with happiness if they had known more about human psychology.[14] Because of their claims about virtue and happiness, they demand a humanly impossible degree of detachment from external goods. Even if some detachment is possible, perhaps it does more harm than good, by weakening morally desirable impulses as well.[15]

But even if this is a defensible criticism of the Stoics, it does not support Hume's general verdict on the ancients. For some ancient critics attack the Stoics for their inattention to human nature.[16] Hence these critics agree with Hume on the relevance of human nature. Moreover, the Stoics themselves have quite a lot to say about human nature, the passions, and human action. They do not agree with Hume on these topics, but they attend to facts about human nature. Chrysippus, Seneca, and Epictetus study our natural reactions to recognized goods and evils, in order to argue that we need different reactions that bring us closer to living a life that accords with nature. Both the Stoics and their critics attend to human nature, though they have different accounts of what nature requires.

Hume might answer that simply talking of what one conceives as 'human nature' is not the attention to human nature that he recommends. Some Greek claims about human nature are not purely predictive, non-normative claims about human constitution or behaviour, but include a normative component. Butler recognizes this feature of ancient conceptions of nature in his own third sense of 'nature', which refers to the requirements of a system as a whole. As Butler says, this third sense tells us what the Stoics have in mind in claiming that virtue consists in living in accord with nature.

Hume's division between the 'experimental' and the 'hypothetical' outlook applies to the normative conceptions of nature that we find in ancient moral philosophy in mind; his attack on the ancients applies no less to Butler.[17] If this is at least part of what Hume means in claiming that ancient moral philosophy is 'hypothetical', he is right about the difference between himself and the ancients.

[13] 'I found that the moral philosophy transmitted to us by antiquity laboured much under the same inconvenience that has been found in their natural philosophy, of being entirely hypothetical, and depending more upon invention than experience. Every one consulted his fancy in erecting schemes of virtue and of happiness, without regarding human nature, upon which every moral conclusion must depend. This therefore I resolved to make my principal study, and the source from which I would derive every truth in criticism as well as morality.' (To George Cheyne, March 1734 = Greig ed., i #3. Quoted by Kemp Smith, *PDH* 16)

[14] This criticism of the Stoics is suggested in Hume's essay, 'The Sceptic'.

[15] See 'Sceptic' §37: 'Another defect of those refined reflexions, which philosophy suggests to us, is, that commonly they cannot diminish or extinguish our vicious passions, without diminishing or extinguishing such as are virtuous, and rendering the mind totally indifferent and unactive.'

[16] This is one point of the criticism of the Stoics in Cic. *F.* iv 26–9.

[17] Perhaps the Sceptics are an exception. Though Hume is influenced by them, he does not discuss them among the ancient moralists.

725. Achievements of the Ancient Moralists

Hume agrees with Hobbes in rejecting the theories of the ancient moralists and their development by mediaeval Christian moralists. But, in contrast to Hobbes, he does not discuss the Aristotelian and Thomist position in any detail. Hobbes treats ancient and Christian mediaeval views as a single position to be rejected; his view is rather similar to Luther's view that the mediaeval Church has corrupted Christian morality by trying to reconcile it with Greek moral philosophy. Hume's attitude is more similar to Machiavelli's view that the 'monkish' mediaeval moralists have corrupted the sound morality of pagan antiquity.[18]

In this contrast between healthy paganism and the errors introduced by mediaeval Christianity, Hume anticipates Hegel and Nietzsche. But he differs from them about where to find the healthy paganism. Hume finds it in Hellenistic ethics, and specifically in Cicero's account of it. He shows very little acquaintance with the ethical views of Plato and Aristotle.[19] Hegel goes further back, and finds the true Hellenic spirit in Plato and Aristotle. Nietzsche goes back still further, because he believes that Socrates and Plato are already infected with the errors of the Jewish spirit; he turns to pre-Platonic Greek thought for the true Hellenic spirit. The fact that those who want to contrast the pagan with the Christian spirit cannot agree about where to draw the line between them suggests that it is difficult to draw a satisfactory contrast.

Some of the ancients are right, in Hume's view, about the nature and extent of the virtues.[20] He is a 'great admirer' of Cicero; he relies on Cicero's catalogue of virtues, even though he believes that the Stoic moral theory from which Cicero derives his catalogue is hopelessly hypothetical. Perhaps he believes that Cicero's catalogue does not really depend on Stoic moral theory. But if Cicero has a correct catalogue of the virtues, and if such a catalogue depends on accurate experimental science of human nature, how can ancient moralists fail to regard human nature?

Hume tries to reconcile his claims about the unsound and hypothetical character of ancient moral philosophy with his approval and use of the ancient moralists. In his view, the ancients anticipate his view that the virtues are not rational conditions. Their official endorsement of rationalism conflicts with their actual appeal to taste and sentiment. Their abstract theory reflects the mistaken view that moral principles are purely rational, but the descriptions of the virtues reflect an unacknowledged appeal to taste and sentiment.[21] This appeal to sentiment is the aspect of ancient philosophy that Hutcheson revives in his anti-rationalism.[22]

In treating the ancients as anti-rationalists Hume may be influenced by Hutcheson's appeal to Aristotle's claims about reason and desire. But Hutcheson does not say, as Hume says,

[18] See §403.

[19] He refers to Aristotle's *Ethics* at *I* 8.9; App. 4.12 ('We need only peruse the titles of chapters in Aristotle's *Ethics* to be convinced . . .'). He mentions Plato in App. 4.20.

[20] See the Letter of 17 Sept. 1739, quoted in §726. On Hume's use of Cicero see Laird, *HPHN* 242–3 (whose list of parallels, however, is not very convincing).

[21] 'The ancient philosophers, though they often affirm, that virtue is nothing but conformity to reason, yet, in general, seem to consider morals as deriving their existence from taste and sentiment.' (*I* 1.4)

[22] See *LG* 30, quoted in §751.

that the ancients hold an official rationalist position that conflicts with anti-rationalism about will and passion.[23] Hutcheson may also be influenced by the fact that actual discussions of virtues refer to tastes, sentiments, and emotions.

Hume's reasons for taking the ancients to be implicit anti-rationalists are as unconvincing as Hutcheson's reasons for taking them to be explicit anti-rationalists. One might identify virtue with control by reason while still recognizing the importance of training one's sentiments and emotions. If Hume had known the ethical works of Aristotle and Aquinas, he would have found that they give an important place to the emotions, and that Aquinas discusses the emotions in some detail. Such attention to the emotions does not conflict with the view that the moral virtues require subordination of the emotions to will and practical reason.

Hume's claims about what the ancients say and mean are brief, but significant; they sketch some of the main features of his own position. He suggests that if we practise the science of man, we will take an experimental approach to human nature, we will be anti-rationalists about action and virtue, and we will abandon the normative pretensions of moral philosophy, both in our claims about human nature and in our claims about the virtues.

726. The Ancients v. the 'Divines' on Voluntary and Non-voluntary Virtues

Hume draws one of his sharpest contrasts between the ancients and the 'monkish' writers in discussing the claim that the moral virtues are voluntary states. He believes that this claim reflects ignorance of the experimental method. It introduces an unprofitable dispute that can be resolved by attention to facts about human nature. In Hume's view, the ancients are right to avoid this dispute, because they do not separate moral from non-moral virtues. A dispute about which virtues are strictly moral is purely verbal. No significant issue rests on a sharp division between genuine moral virtues and other qualities that we may find attractive or admirable to some degree.

In taking this position Hume disagrees not only with earlier Christian moralists, but apparently also with Hutcheson. In Hutcheson's view, the distinctively moral virtues must be founded on benevolence, and he criticizes Hume for allowing natural abilities and other non-voluntary states unrelated to benevolence to count as virtues. Hume takes this to be an artificial and misleading restriction of 'virtue'.[24]

[23] Cf. Hutcheson, §637.

[24] 'Whether natural abilities be virtues is a dispute of words. I think I follow the common use of language. *Virtus* signified chiefly courage among the Romans. I was just now reading this character of Alexander the 6th in Guicciardin . . . Were benevolence the only virtue, no characters could be mixed, but would depend entirely on their degrees of benevolence. Upon the whole, I desire to take my catalogue of virtues from Cicero's *Offices*, not from the *Whole Duty of Man*. I had, indeed, the former book in my eye in all my reasonings.' (17 Sept. 1739 = Greig, *LDH* i #13 = R 632) Since Hume is replying to Hutcheson's comments on the *Treatise*, Hutcheson presumably said something in these comments about Hume's conception of the virtues. Hume repeats this criticism in his comments on Hutcheson's *MPIC*: 'I always thought you limited too much your ideas of virtue; and I find I have this opinion in common with several that have a very high esteem for your philosophy.' (10 Jan. 1743, Greig i #19). Cf. §779.

Hume gives two reasons for rejecting the division between moral virtues and other good qualities: (1) Self-regarding as well as other-regarding traits, and excellences of intellect as well as of affection, are often counted as virtues. (2) The distinction between voluntary and involuntary does not separate real moral virtues from other qualities.[25] He cites the ancient moralists in support of his first claim.[26] He also takes them to be indifferent to the voluntary character of virtues.[27] He holds that Christian moralists deny both of his claims, and refers to *The Whole Duty of Man*.[28]

Hume's claim that the ancients are indifferent to the voluntary character of virtues is puzzling. He mentions the fact that they regard some bad self-regarding traits as 'ridiculous and deformed, contemptible and odious', and claims that they believe such traits are 'independent of the will'. And he suggests that they value mental traits that are not in everyone's power. But even if he is right about this, it does not show that the distinction between voluntary and involuntary 'was little regarded' in the moral reasonings of the ancients. Both Aristotle and the Stoics take it to be important to show that it is up to us to be virtuous, and they believe that they can show this for the virtues that they endorse as praiseworthy states of a rational agent.[29] Aquinas agrees with them on this point. In his claims about virtue, passion, and will, he tries more systematically than the ancients try to show how the virtues are voluntary. He defends in detail the claims that Aristotle presents in outline.[30]

Hume's view of the ancient moralists is sharply but not unfairly criticized by Beattie. Though some of his objections and citations are of doubtful value, Beattie points out that Aristotle insists on the voluntary character of virtue.[31] The virtue that Aristotle has in mind is the sort of virtue for which prudence is both necessary and sufficient.[32] Even if these points were not clear in Aristotle, they would be clear in the Stoics.[33] It is puzzling that Hume ignores all this evidence about the views of the ancient moralists.

[25] On Aristotle's views on responsibility and virtue see §§90–1, 99–101.

[26] '... the ancient moralists, the best models, made no material distinction among the different species of mental endowments and defects, but treated all alike under the appellation of virtues and vices, and made them indiscriminately the object of their moral reasonings' (*I* App. 4.11). Hume adds a long passage from the *De Oratore* in which Cicero clearly recognizes both self-regarding and other-regarding virtues (*De Or.* ii 343–4). 'I suppose, if Cicero were now alive, it would be found difficult to fetter his moral sentiments by narrow systems; or persuade him, that no qualities were to be admitted as virtues, or acknowledged to be a part of personal merit, but what were recommended by *The Whole Duty of Man*.' (*I* App. 4.11n) This also seems to be the point of the references to the Romans on courage and Guicciardini's description of Alexander VI (in the letter to Hutcheson just quoted). These examples do not bear on the point about voluntariness.

[27] 'In general, we may observe, that the distinction of voluntary or involuntary was little regarded by the ancients in their moral reasonings; where they frequently treated the question as very doubtful, whether virtue could be taught or not? [A footnote refers to Plato's *Meno*, inter alia.] They justly considered, that cowardice, meanness, levity, anxiety, impatience, folly, and many other qualities of the mind, might appear ridiculous and deformed, contemptible and odious, though independent of the will. Nor could it be supposed, at all times, in every man's power to attain every kind of mental, more than of exterior beauty.' (*I* App. 4.20)

[28] On this work (probably by Richard Allestree) see Rivers, *RGS* i 18–23, ii 299n. Cf. §751.

[29] On Aristotle see §§99–101. On the Stoics see §169.

[30] On Aquinas see §262.

[31] Commenting on Hume's appeal to the titles of the chapters in the *Ethics*, Beattie remarks: 'True; but if our learned metaphysician had extended his researches a little beyond the titles of those chapters, he would have found that, in Aristotle's judgment, "moral virtue is a voluntary disposition or habit; and that moral approbation and disapprobation are excited by those actions and affections only which are in our own power, that is, of which the first motion arises in ourselves, and proceeds from no extrinsic cause." ' (*ENIT* 335–6).

[32] Beattie, *ENIT* 335.

[33] To show that Cicero insists on the voluntary character of virtues, Beattie cites *Fin* v 36, where Cicero mentions 'the great and genuine virtues, which we denominate voluntary', including the cardinal virtues (*ENIT* 338).

Hume might reply that discussions of the *hekousion* and *akousion* in the ancient moralists are not really about 'the voluntary', if we understand belief in the voluntary to commit us to belief in the will and its freedom. Perhaps he understands the voluntary to include an indeterminist conception of the freedom of the will. In that case he might agree with the later critics who have argued that questions about the will and freewill are inventions of Christian moralists who need to identify the traits and actions that determine a person's status in the afterlife.[34] This would be a questionable historical claim, however. Aquinas does not take his claims about the voluntary to rest on an indeterminist conception of freewill; he does not suggest that he departs from Aristotle's views on the praiseworthiness and voluntariness of the virtues. But if Aquinas does not count as a theological moralist by Hume's criterion, that is a reason for doubting Hume's criterion. Hume does not make it clear what question about freedom interests Christian moralists but does not interest ancient moralists.

Hume is right to assert that Christian moralists affirm the voluntary character of virtues, and so deny his second claim. But it is surprising that he takes them to deny his first claim.[35] Christian moralists do not normally deny that intellectual and self-regarding traits are among the virtues; Aquinas recognizes self-regarding moral virtues, and recognizes intellectual virtues, some of which are connected with moral virtues.[36]

Contrary to Hume, therefore, both the ancients and the Christian moralists endorse his first claim and reject his second claim. This attitude to Hume's two claims is consistent, if some intellectual and some self-regarding traits are voluntary. Hume, however, seems to assume that since the ancients accept his first claim, they must accept his second claim, and that since the Christians reject his second claim, they must also reject his first claim.

Why does Hume not consider the possibility of accepting his first claim without the second? One reason may be that Hutcheson disagrees with him on both claims, and so he tends not to distinguish them. But another reason may be his account of the double error of Christian moralists. In his view, we would agree with him about the range of the virtues if we practised the experimental method. But Christian philosophers have not practised it, because theological presuppositions have turned their attention to questions about praise and blame.[37] Christian influence has made the issue about voluntariness seem important, and has warped the scope and character of moral philosophy so as to make this issue unduly prominent.

The experimental method refutes Christian philosophers on this point (according to Hume). The sentiments of praise and blame that we experience extend to self-regarding traits and to non-voluntary states, but the 'divines' simply ignore this observable fact about our sentiments, and they do not bother to fit their theoretical claims to the facts about human nature. Since Hume believes that both the errors he rejects about the scope of the

[34] For this defence of Hume see Williams, 'Voluntary acts'. On doctrines of the will see §§217–18 (on Augustine).

[35] Rivers, *RGS* ii 299–300, notices this feature of Hume's account.

[36] On Aquinas see, e.g., §§291, 313.

[37] 'In later times, philosophy of all kinds, especially ethics, have been more closely united with theology than ever they were observed to be among the heathens; and as this latter science admits of no terms of composition, but bends every branch of knowledge to its own purpose, without much regard to the phenomena of nature, or to the unbiased sentiments of the mind, hence reasoning, and even language, have been warped from their natural course, and distinctions have been endeavoured to be established where the difference of the objects was, in a manner, imperceptible. . . . Every one may employ terms in what sense he pleases; but this, in the mean time, must be allowed, that sentiments are every day experienced of blame and praise, which have objects beyond the dominion of the will or choice, and of which it behoves us, if not as moralists, as speculative philosophers at least, to give some satisfactory theory and explication.' (*I* App. 4.21)

virtues result from failure to follow the facts of experience, he assumes that anyone who disagrees with him on one point will disagree on the other point too.

But if Hume is wrong about the ancients, he undermines his historical explanation of the emphasis on voluntary traits. For if moralists who are not influenced by Christian theology emphasize them, such emphasis cannot be simply a result of Christian influence. He gives us no reason to believe that theological attitudes to morality are responsible for the introduction of concerns about the voluntary character of virtue.

We must postpone a full discussion of Hume's reasons for thinking the divines neglect facts about human nature.[38] But we can make a start by exploring his conception of the experimental method, and in particular his application of it to the understanding of passions and sentiments.

727. Predecessors in the Science of Human Nature

Among Hume's modern predecessors, Hobbes deserves special attention. Though Hume does not discuss Hobbes, he alludes to him prominently. The very title of the *Treatise* recalls Hobbes's work *Human Nature*. The allusion is appropriate, since Hobbes anticipates Hume's ambition of reducing moral philosophy to an experimental and non-normative science of human nature. In Hobbes's view, the moral philosophy of the ancients is misguided, because it does not rest on a true conception of human nature; hence it does not understand the virtues and does not see 'wherein consisted their goodness'.[39] Hobbes tries to set moral philosophy on a firmer footing by starting from an account of human nature that is free of mistaken views in moral philosophy.

Not only does Hobbes anticipate Hume's programme of deriving moral philosophy from the science of man, but he also anticipates many of Hume's specific conclusions. Hume's views on the passions, on free will, on practical reason and deliberation, and on justice, are similar, though not identical, to Hobbes's views. Hume develops both Hobbes's main approach to moral philosophy and many of Hobbes's specific arguments.[40]

Hume, however, does not mention Hobbes in these contexts. Nor does he cite him as a predecessor in applying the experimental science of man to moral philosophy; nor does he list him among those who have made significant advances in moral philosophy.[41] Perhaps Hume's silence about Hobbes reflects Hobbes's continuing unpopularity. To point out that Hobbes had anticipated his approach or his specific conclusions would not be a way to conciliate most readers.

In contrast to Hobbes, Hume cites and praises Butler and Hutcheson as his predecessors. In his published works he does not state any disagreement with either of them, but

[38] See §776. [39] *L*.15.40. See §483.

[40] According to Johnson, Hume was 'a Tory by chance, as being a Scotchman; but not upon a principle of duty; for he has no principle. If he is any thing, he is a Hobbist.' (Boswell, *JTH* = Hill-Powell iv 194 and note; v 272.) Johnson's remark is discussed by Russell, 'Tory'. On Hume's Hobbism see also Russell, 'Hume and Hobbes'; 'Scepticism'; 'Atheism'. (The title page refers to Hobbes's *Elements of Law* and to Spinoza's *TTP*, which alludes to the passage from Tacitus cited by Hume.) Johnson was not the only one who recognized connexions with Hobbes; see the review of the *Treatise* quoted by Mossner, *LDH* 139, and §785.

[41] *IHU* 1.14n (first edition; not in Beauchamp, but in Hendel ed., 23n).

in his letters he recognizes serious disagreements with each of them. His brief remarks on Butler mark some of his main objections to Butler's position. His comments on Hutcheson are fuller, and quite instructive; they show that Hume opposes Hutcheson on some central issues that he does not discuss with specific reference to Hutcheson in the published works. In some cases he refers to non-extant letters of Hutcheson; his references reflect a dispute between two versions of a sentimentalist position. In Hume's view, Hutcheson follows Butler in failing to take a sufficiently experimental approach to human nature.[42]

728. Hume v. Hutcheson and Butler on Nature

Butler begins his *Sermons* with three sermons on human nature, which are presupposed in his arguments about self-love and conscience. Butler argues that morality is natural for human beings as rational agents; he defines an appropriate sense of 'natural', referring to the human system and constitution as a whole, and argues that self-love and conscience both fulfil nature by being rational faculties. He claims that morality is natural, and that it is rational.

In Hobbes's view, we show that morality is rational if and only if we vindicate it by an argument from the specific circumstances described in the transition from the state of nature to the commonwealth. This justification falls short of Butler's aim; for Butler wants to show that morality is justified and appropriate for human nature in any circumstances, not just when it accords with Hobbesian self-interest.

At first sight, Hutcheson and Hume agree with Butler in believing that morality is natural, but reject his belief that morality is rational. They deny that moral judgments and sentiments are simply devices to secure the self-interest of Hobbesian agents; they take morality to have a broader foundation in the operations of human nature and human mental life in general. Hume, agreeing with Hutcheson, accepts Butler's objections to psychological hedonist egoism,[43] and treats Butler's argument as an example of the ways in which philosophical investigation of human nature can lead to a more accurate understanding of the basis of morality.

Hume's sympathy with some of Butler's views helps to explain why he tried to bring his work to Butler's attention. He sought an introduction to Butler, and told a friend that he was 'castrating' his draft of the *Treatise* in order to show it to Butler.[44] He also sent Butler a copy of the published *Treatise*.[45] Butler was reported to have been favourably impressed by Hume's *Essays*,[46] but we do not know whether or how he responded to the 'castrated' *Treatise*, or to the published work, or how the one differed from the other.

[42] On Hutcheson and Hume see §781.

[43] *IHU* 1.14n.

[44] Letter in Klibansky and Mossner, *NLDH* #1. Mossner, *LDH* 112, and Penelhum, *TH* 244, assert that the parts of the *T* that Hume removed were about miracles. But the letter gives no evidence of this. Penelhum and Mossner appeal to the previous paragraph of the letter, which deals with a draft essay on miracles. They infer that (a) this essay was intended to be part of the *Treatise*, and (b) it is the part that Hume excised from the 'castrated' version that he showed to Butler. But Hume says nothing to support either inference.

[45] Letter in Greig, *LDH* i #8.

[46] Klibansky and Mossner, *NLDH* #5 ('I am also told that Dr Butler has everywhere recommended them.').

Hume follows Hutcheson in absorbing some of Butler's views within a sentimentalist position. But he rejects other aspects of Butler's position. In particular, he denies that virtue is natural to human beings.[47] He opposes the natural to the miraculous, to the unusual, and to the artificial, and argues that in none of these senses of 'natural' is virtue natural and vice unnatural.[48] Since these senses of 'natural' include all those that are relevant to naturalism about virtue, Butler's system is unphilosophical.

None of Hume's senses of 'natural', however, fits Butler. For Butler's crucial third sense of 'natural' fits none of Hume's senses. This is the sense that is relevant to Butler's claim that what is natural for a natural organism is what is required by its whole constitution and system, as opposed to each particular part.[49] Butler does not mean simply that virtue is non-miraculous, usual, or non-artificial; hence the fact that these features do not distinguish virtue from vice does not affect Butler's thesis.

Elsewhere Hume notices a sense of 'natural' that is more relevant to Butler. He suggests that Hutcheson appeals to nature in a sense that involves some teleological assumptions. This is a reasonable interpretation of Butler's claims too. But Hume adds, without further argument, the more questionable claim that the relevant teleological claims can be defended only by an appeal to design.[50] For reasons that he gives in his *Dialogues*, he believes that no sufficient empirical case can be made for the claim that natural organisms are designed for some end.[51]

To show that Hutcheson's implicit claim about ends involves him in theology, Hume alludes to the first question in the *Shorter Catechism* ('What is the chief end of man?') and to the answer ('... to glorify God and enjoy him for ever').[52] Hutcheson tries to avoid any appeal to such dogmatic claims by basing morality on nature; but Hume's questions suggest that this attempt fails, because the teleological aspects of nature raise questions that cannot be settled by natural reason.

A teleological sense of 'natural' fits Butler's claim that some things are natural for an organism because they are appropriate for the organism as a whole. But it is a further step to claim that they are appropriate because they promote the activities for which the organism was designed. Perhaps, then, Hume's main objection to Butler claims that Butler's normative conception of the natural relies on an 'unphilosophical' assumption about design. This assumption is the topic of Hume's *Dialogues* and Butler's *Analogy*. Hume objects to

[47] 'Mean while it may not be amiss to observe, from these definitions of natural and unnatural, that nothing can be more unphilosophical than those systems, which assert, that virtue is the same with what is natural, and vice with what is unnatural.' (T iii 1.2.10)

[48] ''Tis impossible, therefore, that the character of natural and unnatural can ever, in any sense, mark the boundaries of vice and virtue.' (*T* iii 1.2.10)

[49] See §679.

[50] 'I cannot agree to your sense of *natural*. It is founded on final causes; which is a consideration, that appears to me pretty uncertain and unphilosophical. For pray, what is the end of man? Is he created for happiness or for virtue? For this life or for the next? For himself or for his Maker? Your definition of *natural* depends on solving these questions, which are endless, and quite wide of my purpose.' (17 Sept. 1739, Greig i #13 = R 631) Hutcheson normally uses 'nature' in a non-normative sense that is quite similar to Hume's. But the conception that Hume questions influences Hutcheson's argument to show that the moral sense is not arbitrary, but actually implanted by God for the good of the human race. See §663.

[51] See Hume, *DNR*, esp. Parts 5–6.

[52] See Schaff, *CC* iii 676. Hutcheson subscribed the Westminster Confession (to which the Shorter and Larger Catechisms were annexed) on taking up his chair in Glasgow; see Scott, *FH* 56.

Hutcheson, as he often does, on a point on which Hutcheson is closer to Butler than Hume thinks Hutcheson ought to be.[53]

Hume is right to believe that both Butler and Hutcheson regard human beings as products of design. It does not follow, however, that a belief in design is needed to support the normative claim that an organism's nature and constitution require one course of action rather than another. Irrespective of beliefs about design, facts about a system and constitution as a whole seem to support claims about what is natural for an organism. We rely on such claims when we say that someone needs to have a tooth extracted or needs an operation.[54] To see how far Hume departs from Butler's naturalistic form of argument, we should consider his views on these claims about needs.

729. Legitimate Appeals to Nature

The *Inquiry* is more conciliatory than the *Treatise* about naturalism. Hume allows that justice is natural, since it tends to arise from the operation of natural human tendencies.[55] If we seek to contrast the natural with the artificial, we must conclude that justice is artificial rather than natural. Still, disputes about naturalness are merely verbal, since justice is also natural in a clear and acceptable sense.

These conciliatory remarks about nature do not mark a difference of substance from the *Treatise*. For, though they allow us to claim that virtues are natural, they do not show that they are distinctively natural; vices might equally be natural in the sense that Hume allows.

Hume goes further towards Butler's position, however, in some of his claims about the moral sense. In the *Treatise* his attack on naturalism about virtue immediately follows his argument to show that the sentiments of morality are natural. According to his account of the senses of 'natural', he need only show that these sentiments are frequently found in human beings. But he says more than this. Though he does not affirm that virtue consists in acting in accordance with nature, he accepts part of the relevant conception of nature. In his view, human beings who have their moral sentiments extirpated and destroyed fall into disease or madness.[56]

Here Hume implicitly acknowledges one clear sense, apart from those he explicitly recognizes, in which an action or condition may be natural or against nature. To say that the removal of some trait is liable to cause disease or madness is not simply to say that the trait is frequent; for many frequent traits might be removed without these effects. In speaking of disease or madness, Hume recognizes that some things are required by, or appropriate for, a human being as a whole system. Disease and madness are not simply infrequent conditions; they oppose the needs of the whole system. What the whole system

[53] The connexion between Hutcheson and Butler is especially clear in Hutcheson, *HN*. See §676.

[54] See Butler, §680.

[55] 'The word natural is commonly taken in so many senses and is of so loose a signification, that it seems vain to dispute whether justice be natural or not.' 'In so sagacious an animal, what necessarily arises from the exertion of his intellectual faculties may justly be termed natural.' (*I*, App 3.9)

[56] 'These sentiments are so rooted in our constitution and temper, that without entirely confounding the human mind by disease or madness, 'tis impossible to extirpate and destroy them.' (*T* iii 1.2.8)

needs is what Butler calls 'natural' in his third sense. Hume, therefore, allows that some things are natural, in Butler's third sense. He even regards the moral sentiments as natural, in this sense.

Hume might reject this argument because it assumes that disease and madness must be understood by reference to the needs of a whole system. If he could replace this holistic and evaluative (because of 'needs') claim with an 'experimental' and purely statistical claim, he would show that truths about health and sanity do not concede the substance of Butler's claims about appropriateness to nature. He might claim for instance that madness and disease are conditions that interfere with aims that most people share, irrespective of their upbringing and environment, and that this is what makes them natural. If he defends this claim, he accepts a version of naturalism, though it is not Butler's version.

730. Nature and Rational Authority

But even if Hume agrees with Butler's claim that some actions are naturally appropriate for a human being, he disagrees about which actions these are. In Butler's view, two claims about naturalness are closely connected: (1) What is natural for a human being is what is appropriate for the whole system that constitutes a human being. (2) For a human being as a rational agent, it is appropriate to act in accordance with superior principles appealing to authority rather than strength. Hume accepts neither of these claims.

Butler's first claim assumes that a human being is a system, as opposed to a collection or aggregate of traits, capacities, and desires. We must recognize this system before we can identify principles that aim at the good of the system as a whole. But some of Hume's other claims commit him to the denial of this belief in a system. According to Hume, a human self is simply a collection of mental states and episodes, no subset of which constitutes the essential or fundamental self. We cannot consider or protect the fundamental persistent characteristics of the numerically identical self, since there is no such self and there are no such characteristics.

Perhaps we ought not to introduce Hume's sceptical arguments about personal identity. He does not suggest that his arguments in moral philosophy presuppose his scepticism about personal identity. On the contrary, he allows that the idea of the self accompanies many passions.[57] But he does not make any of the claims about a person as a system that support Butler's claims about natural action. He may recognize that Butler's view involves claims about the self that are too robust for Hume's position.[58]

Since Hume rejects Butler's claims about the self, he also rejects Butler's precise distinction between rational self-love and the particular passions. Though he accepts a part of Butler's argument in favour of benevolence (*IPM* 9.20),[59] he omits Butler's claim that self-love is

[57] At *T* ii 1.2.2 he speaks of 'self, or that succession of related ideas and impressions, of which we have an intimate memory and consciousness'. Here 'intimate' is needed to distinguish our idea of the self from our idea of a chair.

[58] This issue about the self becomes important in Hume's discussion of prudence and justice; see *T* iii 2.7.5, discussed in §770.

[59] This passage has no parallel in *T*.

concerned with the whole self as opposed to particular objects of desire. The deliberations of self-love seem to assume something like Butler's conception of its aim and object.[60] But Hume's outlook leaves no room for such a conception. He needs to explain self-love with reference to the agent's predominant desires, not with reference to the whole self.[61]

Butler claims not only that self-love is concerned with the whole self, but also that its concern is rational, since it is a superior principle. In calling it rational and superior, Butler means that it not only registers the strength of our desire for x over y, but also considers the reasons that make a good case for preferring x over y. This rational character of self-love explains why it is better at finding natural actions than the particular passions are; if we were to follow our strongest particular passion, we would not find what is appropriate for the temporally extended self as a whole. The appropriately holistic view requires a superior principle. Since conscience has the same rational character, it also finds natural actions. Both self-love and conscience are rational and authoritative principles that find what is appropriate for one's nature as a whole.

Hutcheson and Hume reject Butler's claims about the rationality of self-love and conscience, because they reject his claims about authority of reasons and strength of desires. In their view, the recognition of a reason for doing x is simply the awareness of a desire to do x or of a sentiment in favour of doing x. If self-love and conscience are not distinctively rational, neither prudence nor morality is distinctively rational.

This is why Hutcheson claims that one needs to attribute a moral sense to us to explain why we approve of some actions and characters rather than others. In his view, we would have been no less rational if we had lacked this attitude to morality. Whereas Butler connects rationality with being moved by a superior principle, Hutcheson denies the connexion, since his views about reasons leave no room for Butler's claims about superiority. Nonetheless, Hutcheson follows Hobbes and treats prudence as especially rational.[62] Moreover, though he rejects Butler's view that authority depends on superior reason, he affirms the authority of conscience.

Hume explicitly disagrees with Hutcheson on the authority of conscience;[63] he implicitly disagrees with him on the rationality of prudence. According to Hume, reason does not guide us to act in accordance with human nature. None of the distinctive operations that Butler attributes to self-love is especially characteristic of reason. Hence, it is not distinctively rational to take the point of view of self-love. For Butler, rational self-love has special insight into what is required for the benefit of the system that constitutes human nature. For Hume, there is no such system, and there is no distinctively rational self-love. Even if our nature requires certain kinds of actions, reason gives us no special access to them. In disagreeing with Butler about reason and natural action, Hume relies on his treatment of passion and reason.

[60] See Butler, §686.

[61] Butler sometimes affirms a hedonist account of the aim and object of self-love. Hume might easily suppose that he could agree with this characterization of self-love, and so take over Butler's argument, without seeing that Butler presupposes a conception of self-love for which Hume has no room.

[62] See §637. [63] See §779.

731. Objectivism and Naturalism

This comparison of Hume's experimental approach to human nature with Butler's normative approach clarifies Hume's view of the main options in moral philosophy. He connects his approach with Hutcheson's, and cites Hutcheson's argument for the moral sense as an important discovery about the basis of morality.[64] Hutcheson has refuted Clarke's position, and thereby refuted objectivism.[65] The *Letter from a Gentleman* aligns Hutcheson (and others) with the ancients on one side, against Clarke and Wollaston on the other side.[66]

Hume's summary of Hutcheson distinguishes two positions. (1) The rationalist claims that (a) moral judgments are rational, and that (b) moral truths belong to the 'abstract nature of things' and are not confined to human nature. (2) The sentimentalist claims that (a) moral judgments belong to taste or sentiment rather than reason, and that (b) moral truths are confined to human nature. Hume treats the dispute as a dispute between Hutcheson and an opponent such as Clarke or Wollaston.

This summary of options in moral philosophy is worth comparing with Butler's summary.[67] Like Hume, Butler describes one approach as examining 'the abstract relations of things'; the other approach begins 'from a matter of fact, namely, what the particular nature of man is'. Butler agrees with Hutcheson and Hume in avoiding the first approach, though he does not repudiate it as they do; he pursues the second approach. But he does not agree that the second approach must make morality relative to the 'sentiment or mental taste of each particular being'. It makes morality relative to the nature of human beings, but facts about human nature are not primarily facts about the sentiments and tastes of human beings. Nor does Butler believe that moral judgments are expressions of sentiment and taste. He follows the rationalists in taking them to be rational judgments, though he does not endorse Clarke's view of what they are about.

Hume, in contrast to Hutcheson, does not treat Butler's view as an alternative to the extreme rationalism of Clarke. He rejects Hutcheson's attempted reconciliation of Butler with sentimentalism.[68] Here he is partly right and partly wrong. Hume is right to suggest that Butler's position does not fit sentimentalism. But Hutcheson is right to suggest that Butler's position is different from Clarke's. Hume ignores or overlooks this difference; probably he classifies Butler with Clarke as a theorist about the 'abstract nature of things'. This judgment is based on Butler's non-experimental and normative conception of nature. In Hume's view,

[64] The letter printed in Ross, 'Hutcheson on Hume', describes Hutcheson's initial favourable reaction to *T* i–ii. Hutcheson remarks that he has himself become more sympathetic to an Academic position. He does not reach a definite judgment on Hume's views.

[65] 'That faculty by which we discern truth and falsehood, and that by which we perceive vice and virtue, had long been confounded with each other, and all morality was supposed to be built on eternal and immutable relations which, to every intelligent mind, were equally invariable as any proposition concerning quantity or number. But a late philosopher has taught us, by the most convincing arguments, that morality is nothing in the abstract nature of things, but is entirely relative to the sentiment or mental taste of each particular being, in the same manner as the distinctions of sweet and bitter, hot and cold arise from the particular feeling of each sense or organ. Moral perceptions, therefore, ought not to be classed with the operations of the understanding, but with the tastes or sentiments.' (*IHU* ed. Hendel, 23n) See Kemp Smith, *PDH* 19.

[66] *LG* quoted in §751.

[67] Butler, *Sermons*, P 12–13, discussed in §678.

[68] On Hutcheson and Butler see §715.

the only philosophers who have the appropriate regard for human nature are those whose attitude is purely experimental and non-normative. To go further is to make untenable claims about 'abstract nature'.

Though Hume never, in his published works, argues against Butler by name, these disagreements with Butler are instructive; for Butler's version of naturalism is a plausible alternative to Hume's. We can now consider Hume's argument for an exclusively experimental and non-normative approach to human nature and morality. Butler believes that an examination of human nature supports a division between rational authority and appetitive strength. This division, in turn, supports the grounding of moral principles in rational authority. Since Hume rejects Butler's conception of human nature, he also rejects Butler's argument from nature to rational authority.

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HUME: PASSION AND REASON

732. Aquinas, Hobbes, and Hume on the Passions

To attack views that connect nature, reason, and morality, Hume relies on his account of passion, practical reason, and their relation. He sets out his account of the passions in Book ii of the *Treatise*, before the chapter 'Of the Influencing Motives of the Will' (ii 3.3), which describes the roles of passion and practical reason. This account of the passions influences his discussion both of practical reason and of moral judgment. A comparison with Aquinas' account of the passions, on the one hand, and with Hobbes's account, on the other, highlights Hume's distinctive claims about the passions.

Aquinas emphasizes the relation of passions to desire for the good and to reason. Since he believes that human action on passions is normally voluntary and responsible, and that well-trained passions are essential to virtue and badly trained passions encourage vice, he seeks to explain how the passions are both distinct from and connected with the will and the good. He rejects the Stoic view that passions are false judgments about the good, but he accepts the Stoic claim that they involve desire on the basis of an appearance of some good. 'On the basis of' indicates not simply a causal relation, but also a justifying relation; the desire that belongs to the passion is guided by the appearance of goodness, and if we lose the appearance, we lose that passion. If the passion is connected to an appearance of goodness, it is open to criticism and evaluation. If the appearance is unjustified, the passion is unjustified, and we have reason to get rid of it. The passions are sources of voluntary action because they are subject to the consent of the will, which is moved not simply by an appearance of goodness, but by a belief about the universal good. They are the subjects of virtues because they can be guided by a will that is guided by prudence.

Hobbes and Hume reject Aquinas' description of the passions. Hobbes rejects the Scholastic division between will and passion. He identifies the passions with the various aspects of our motive power.[1] He entitles a chapter on the passions, 'Of the interior beginnings of voluntary motions; commonly called the passions . . . ' (*L.* 6, title). The will is not distinct from the passions; it is simply the 'last appetite, or aversion, immediately adhering to the action, or to the omission thereof'. The will is not essentially responsive

[1] '. . . the power motive of the mind is that by which the mind giveth animal motion to the body wherein it existeth; the acts hereof are our affections and passions . . . ' (Hobbes, *EL* 6.9 = R 2).

to practical reason. Deliberation belongs to every passion; practical reason has no special role in, for instance, prescribing the pursuit of one's long-term good in opposition to one's more immediate impulses. Hobbes, however, does not always draw this conclusion. He treats prudence as the proper exercise of practical reason, prescribing concern for one's longer-term good. The prudent person is the one who deliberates best, by taking account of more consequences, and acts on this deliberation.[2]

Hume agrees with Hobbes in rejecting the division between passion and will. He sees that if we reject this division, we undermine Hobbes's belief in a special connexion between practical reason, will, and concern for one's overall good. Hobbes's belief is a Scholastic remnant, conflicting with the rest of Hobbes's position. Hume removes the conflict.

His analysis of the passions eliminates the aspects of a passion that allow rational evaluation and guidance. Aquinas believes that a passion is tractable because it includes an appearance of the goodness of its object, even though it does not rest on a belief about universal good. Hobbes retains this feature of Aquinas' account, since he takes each passion to involve its distinctive form of appetite or aversion, and therefore its distinctive view of something as good or bad (*L.* 6.2, 7). Hume, however, separates the passion from any appearance of goodness, taking the relation to be purely contingent. This aspect of his analysis explains some of his most surprising claims about the passions and their objects.[3]

733. The Object and the Cause of a Passion

Hume distinguishes the cause from the object of a given passion, and within the cause he further distinguishes the subject and the quality (*T* ii 1.2.6).[4] Since he takes causal relations to hold between 'objects', usually understood as events, we might take the subject (for instance, a house) and its quality (splendour) to be different constituents of the event that is the cause. Perhaps the object is a state of affairs or fact, so that I take pride in, say, the fact that I have a splendid house, or in my having a splendid house.

But when he speaks of the object of a passion, Hume does not refer to anything as complex as a fact or state of affairs. He seems to refer to the particular item in the world to which one's passion is directed. Hence he takes pride and humility to have the same object, oneself.[5] If we identified the cause with the object (as Hume understands 'object'), and distinguished passions by their objects, we would have to say that pride and humility are the same passion, because they have the same object. They are different, however, because they have different causes. Hume does not consider a description of the object of pride as 'something good about myself' or 'the fact that I am suitably connected to something good', or a suitably different description of humility.

[2] See *L.* 6.57, quoted in §473.

[3] Bennett, *SSE* 271, argues that Descartes, but not Spinoza, agrees with Hume in rejecting any cognitive element in a passion.

[4] Kemp Smith, *PDH* 180–5, discusses the object and the cause of a passion.

[5] 'Pride and humility, being once raised, immediately turn our attention to ourself, and regard that as their ultimate and final object; but there is something further requisite in order to raise them: something, which is peculiar to one of the passions, and produces not both in the very same degree.' (*T* ii 1.2.4)

He omits this possibility because he believes that the connexions between a passion, its cause, and its object are contingent features of the passion; we discover them by noticing correlations, not by grasping the necessary properties of a passion. When Hume asks how pride and humility take the self as their object (ii 1.3.4), he treats this as a reasonable question to be answered by empirical inquiry. If we took these passions to be essentially connected to specific objects, we would take such a question to rest on a misunderstanding. If the connexion were essential, a passion would not be pride if it involved no reflexion on oneself as suitably related to something good or admirable. If Hume admitted an essential connexion between pride and oneself, his question about how the self comes to be the object of pride would ask how a necessary connexion comes to be a contingent connexion. Since he is not asking this nonsensical question, he does not take the connexion between pride and oneself to be essential.

On this point he disagrees with Butler, whose analysis of resentment examines the essential character of resentment in order to discover some of our beliefs about justice and injustice. Butler assumes that these beliefs are essential to this specific passion, and that without them it would not be resentment. Similarly, Price argues that each affection 'has its particular end' that is essential to a given passion.[6]

If Butler and Price are right to believe in an internal connexion between passion and object, cause and object are less sharply separated than Hume supposes. Instead of saying that the house and its beauty are the cause of pride and I am its object, we may say that pride is directed towards good features of myself, so that in this case it is directed towards myself owning this beautiful house. 'Myself owning this beautiful house' would describe both the cause and the object of my pride; for the description of the object includes the description of the feature that makes it suitable for pride, and hence gives a reason for me to be proud of it. Though I might say I am proud of myself or proud of my house, a full description says that I am proud of myself as owner of this beautiful house. Similarly, I might say that I am afraid for myself or that I am afraid of a stray bullet, but a full description says that I am afraid of a stray bullet inflicting harm on me.

Since Hume does not recognize this connexion between passion and object, the question that we might find strange—about how pride and humility both have oneself for their object—is reasonable for him. His answer implies that the correlation between pride and its object is empirical.[7] It is a striking fact of experience, he supposes, that we cannot feel pride that is unrelated to ourselves; this fact reveals a constant tendency in human nature. If Hume had believed that it is logically impossible to feel pride unrelated to ourselves, he would not have taken this feature of pride to show something about the empirical tendencies of human beings.

If the relation of pride to oneself is natural and contingent, pride must have some further individuating property that allows the empirical discovery that we have pride only about

[6] Price, *RPQM* 69, explains his position: 'if . . . we desire everything merely as the means of our own good, and with an ultimate view to it, then in reality we desire nothing but our own good, and have only the one single affection of self-love'.

[7] 'Tis evident in the first place, that these passions are determined to have self for their object, not only by a natural but also by an original property. No one can doubt but this property is natural from the constancy and steadiness of its operation. 'Tis always self, which is the object of pride and humility; and whenever the passions look beyond, 'tis still with a view to ourselves, nor can any person or object otherwise have any influence upon us.' (*T* ii 1.3.2)

ourselves. If we had to distinguish pride from other passions by its object, we could not discover that something we already recognized as pride is always directed to oneself. Hume believes, then, that pride has some distinctive nature apart from its causes and objects. The distinctive nature is its introspectible quality. We discover cause and object empirically, because we find by experience that this specific introspectible feeling of pride is invariably associated with these causes and this object.

Hume's views about the individuation of passions, and their logical independence from causes and objects, are even clearer from some of his remarks about love and hatred. In his view, benevolence and anger are only contingently accompanied by love and hatred, 'by the original constitution of the mind' (ii 2.6 6). The relation that actually holds between love and benevolence 'abstractly considered, is not necessary', because the sensations of love and hatred could have existed without any desire, or connected with the opposite desires.[8] This division between the sensation and the desire implies that the sensation is the essential feature of the passion, contingently connected with the desire. This same view explains why passions are only contingently associated with their objects and causes.[9] According to this view, the sensation that we now have when we wish well to other people would still be love if it were conjoined with a desire to harm them or with complete indifference to their interests.

Hume may be right to claim that the sensation is part of the passion. The mere desire to benefit others is not enough for the passion of love, since we might have the desire for various reasons that would not cause the passion. But it does not follow that the desire is inessential to the passion. Hume's claim that the sensation is logically separable from the desire does not justify his claim that the mere sensation is the passion.

734. Passion and Evaluation

What does Hume's analysis of the passions imply for Aquinas' claims about the relation of the passions to will and reason? What Hume has said so far does not exclude some modification of passions by reason.[10] But the role he allows for reason is severely restricted.

Sometimes we decide that we are proud on the wrong occasions. Perhaps, for instance, we see that we ought not to be proud of the ingenuity we have shown in cheating people out of what justly belonged to them. According to Aquinas, we see that our pride lacks the object that is essential to it; pride is directed to our deceptive ingenuity on the assumption that it is good, and so the pride goes away once we abandon the assumption. The rational belief that deceptive ingenuity is nothing to be proud of does not automatically cancel our pride in deceptive ingenuity; for the appearance of goodness may be tenacious even when

[8] 'If nature had so pleased, love might have had the same effect as hatred, and hatred as love. I see no contradiction in supposing a desire of producing misery annexed to love, and of happiness to hatred. If the sensation of the passion and desire be opposite, nature could have altered the sensation without altering the tendency of the desire, and by that means made them compatible with each other.' (ii 2.6.6)

[9] Kenny, *AEW* 22–6, discusses Hume's view that emotions and their objects are only contingently connected. Russell, *FMS*, ch. 6, justly criticizes Hume on this point. Emotions and their objects are discussed by Lyons, *E*, ch. 6. See also Penelhum, *H*, ch. 5; Baier, *PS*, 158–60, 180–1; Reid, §849.

[10] For the moment, I set aside Hume's views about will and reason and concentrate on his views on the passions.

we abandon the belief. Still, the passion itself is open to rational criticism that tends to sustain or to undermine it, because of the internal connexion between the passion and the appearance.

Hume cannot allow this criticism of a passion, if the appearance of goodness is not an essential property of the passion itself, but simply part of the cause. Since beliefs can affect passions, the recognition that I have nothing to be proud of may cause me to abandon the passion.[11] But my recognition does not warrant criticism of my pride, since the belief or appearance of something to be proud of is not essential to the passion. The passion may be modified if we no longer attribute the property we used to attribute to its cause; but this is not criticism of the passion, but simply manipulation of it. Since the appearance of goodness is not part of the passion, an unreasonable or foolish appearance does not make a passion unreasonable or foolish.

735. Reason and Passion: Hume and Hutcheson

Hume's account of the passions, therefore, leaves open the possibility of causal influence, rather than rational criticism and evaluation, by the rational will.[12] But Hume does not exploit this possibility, since he does not separate the rational will from the passions; he argues that the will is a passion, with no essential connexion to practical reason. This is Hume's version of Hobbes's claim that the will is simply the last appetite in deliberation. Hume's version rests on a more precise account of a passion.

Hume takes himself to oppose a widespread view about the role of practical reason.[13] Though he does not mention Hutcheson, he defends Hutcheson's view that neither exciting nor justifying reasons can be derived from reason. But in contrast to Hutcheson, Hume suggests that his view 'may appear somewhat extraordinary' (ii 3.3.4).[14] He presents himself as an innovator challenging a consensus in favour of rationalism. Hutcheson, however, believes that this anti-rationalist view simply reasserts a Scholastic and Aristotelian view against modern rationalists.[15]

In the *Inquiry* Hume does not say he is an innovator.[16] He signals the importance that he attaches to the issue about reason and passion, by introducing it in the very first section of the work, and promising to present his own view of the issue in the course of the work as a whole. He recognizes that he is taking part in a controversy in which each side has

[11] This effect of beliefs on passions is emphasized by Baier, *PS* 158, who refers to Book i.

[12] This point is emphasized by Baier, *PS* 179–80.

[13] 'Nothing is more usual in philosophy, and even in common life, than to talk of the combat of passion and reason, to give the preference to reason, and to assert that men are only so far virtuous as they conform themselves to its dictates . . . On this method of thinking the greatest part of moral philosophy, ancient and modern, seems to be founded; nor is there an ampler field, as well for metaphysical arguments, as popular declamations, than this supposed pre-eminence of reason above passion.' (*T* ii 3.3.1)

[14] Hume's description of his view as perhaps appearing 'extraordinary' misleads Norton, *DH* 100, who takes this to imply that Hume does not derive it from Hutcheson. Hume's silence about his agreement with Hutcheson is parallel to iii 1.1.27, on 'is' and 'ought'. See §751.

[15] See Hutcheson, §657.

[16] Perhaps Hume is better informed than when he wrote *T* ii. Or perhaps (as in *LG*) he wants to show that his view is not outrageous.

already been defended.[17] Shaftesbury is the first modern writer to see the importance of distinguishing the contributions of reason and passion; he agrees with the 'ancient' view (as Hume conceives it) that makes taste and sentiment fundamental.

At the beginning of the *Inquiry*, Hume professes some sympathy for both sides in this dispute. But eventually he reasserts his anti-rationalism. In the first Appendix, he draws his conclusion from the argument of the *Inquiry*, and defends the position of the *Treatise*.[18] He relies on the argument that Hutcheson ascribes to Aristotle.

Hume needs to defend two claims: (1) The source of justifying and exciting reasons is not reason itself. (2) The source is passion. To reach the second claim from the first we must assume that the only two conceivable 'influencing motives of the will' are passion and reason, and that if reason fails, only passion is left. Hume assumes this; he devotes his efforts to a defence of his first claim, and says little to defend the dichotomy that underlies the second claim.[19] The assumptions that support the dichotomy are doubtful. Aquinas, for instance, believes that reason does not move us by itself, but does not infer that passion must be the only mover; for will, as Aquinas conceives it, is neither reason nor passion. If Hume conceives reason broadly, perhaps Aquinas' position fits into his dichotomy; but then we may need to reconsider the soundness of his argument to show that reason does not give us justifying or exciting reasons. What, then, does Hume mean by his first claim, and how does he defend it?

736. The Functions of Reason

To show that reason cannot provide justifying or exciting reasons, Hume claims to describe all the functions of reason, and then points out that these functions do not include exciting or justifying reasons.[20] He allows only two functions: (a) Reason points out that a desire rests on some false supposition, so that I desire x as F (F is x's desirability-characteristic), and reason points out to me that x is not F. (b) Reason points out to me that a desire for x as a means to y rests on a false supposition that x is in fact a means sufficient for y. The second function of reason is an instance of the first, informing me that the object of my desire lacks some feature that I thought it had, and that was the basis of my desiring it. Hume does not imply that whenever reason informs me that I have made a mistake about the properties of x, my desire for x will go away. He implies that if

[17] 'There has been a controversy started of late . . . concerning the general foundation of morals; whether they be derived from reason, or from sentiment . . . our modern enquirers, though they also talk much of the beauty of virtue, and deformity of vice, yet have commonly endeavoured to account for these distinctions by metaphysical reasonings, and by deductions from the most abstract principles of the understanding.' (*I*1.3) For the sentence omitted here, on the ancient moralists, see §725.

[18] 'It appears evident that the ultimate ends of human actions can never, in any case, be accounted for by reason, but recommend themselves entirely to the sentiments and affections of mankind, without any dependence on the intellectual faculties. . . . It is impossible there can be a progress in infinitum; and that one thing can always be a reason why another is desired. Something must be desirable on its own account, and because of its immediate accord or agreement with human sentiment and affection.' (*I*, App. 1.18–19)

[19] Stroud's succinct and lucid discussion, *H*156–66, makes clear the difference in Hume's treatment of the two claims.

[20] 'I shall endeavour to prove first, that reason alone can never be a motive to any action of the will; and secondly, that it can never oppose passion in the direction of the will.' (*T* ii 3.3.1)

I thought x was G, discover that it is not G, but still desire it, then I did not desire x as G.[21]

What sorts of reasons does Hume's argument cover? Hutcheson argues: (1) Reason provides no exciting reason; every action is caused by some desire that is independent of reason. (2) Reason provides no justifying reason: appeal to reason cannot show that one action deserves approval over another (except within the limits fixed by the functions of reason). Hume agrees with Hutcheson on exciting reasons, since he claims that 'reason alone can never be a motive to any action of the will'. He also seems to agree on justifying reasons. His claim that reason 'can never oppose passion in the direction of the will' includes justifying reasons, if 'direction' refers to prescriptions as well as to actual motivation. Moreover, Hume's account of the functions of reason undermines a justifying as well as an exciting role for reason alone.[22] In saying that what reason alone tells us cannot 'concern' us without some presupposed desire, he refers implicitly to justifying reasons. In saying that a desire must be presupposed before the objects of reason are 'able to affect us', he refers to exciting reasons.[23]

If Hume has identified the only two possible functions of reason, he has shown why Hutcheson is right: (1) Reason cannot by itself provide exciting reasons, since the two kinds of reasoning Hume recognizes cannot themselves motivate without some antecedent desire for an end about which reason discovers these facts. Simply discovering that x is F, or that x is a sufficient means to y does not move me to pursue x unless I already care about x's being F or being a means to y. (2) Nor can reason by itself provide justifying reasons; for the information that reason gives does not show that this or that action deserves to be approved. If I find that x is a sufficient means to y, I still have no justifying reason to approve x, unless I already want y. If reason supports my approval of x, I presuppose some prior approval of y, resting on some desire for y as an end or on some approval of y that in turn rests on a desire for some further end.

The narrow scope of reason implies that reason can prescribe neither the choice of an end nor the choice of the best means to an end. If I could book a flight from New York to London on one airline for $600 and on another airline for $700, and the two flights and airlines are otherwise equal, reason, as Hume understands it, is indifferent between them. Hume is right, given his view of the functions of reason, to deny that the preference for efficiency is rational. The choice of the best and most efficient means presupposes some preference for prudence and foresight, but this preference is not based on reason.

Hume rejects the Scholastic division between passion and will, because he does not treat will as essentially rational desire. According to Aquinas, will is rational because it aims at the

[21] In this respect, then, the character of a desire is not transparent to the subject. This lack of transparency is difficult to reconcile with Hume's usual view of impressions. Cf. i 4.2.5.

[22] He may have both roles of reason in mind in his familiar comparison of reason with passion: 'Thus it appears, that the principle, which opposes our passion, cannot be the same with reason, and is only called so in an improper sense. We speak not strictly and philosophically when we talk of the combat of passion and of reason. Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them.' (*T* ii 3.3.4) 'Pretending to an office' might include giving advice or prescriptions in opposition to passion.

[23] 'It can never in the least concern us to know, that such objects are causes, and such others effects, if both the causes and effects be indifferent to us. Where the objects themselves do not affect us, their connexion can never give them any influence; and 'tis plain, that as reason is nothing but the discovery of this connexion, it cannot be by its means that the objects are able to affect us.' (ii 3.3.3)

universal and final good; responsiveness to the believed effects of an action on my overall good makes will a rational desire. Hume does not deny that we might have a desire directed towards our longer-term rather than our shorter-term interest; we must have such a desire if we ever prefer the scratching of our finger to the destruction of the world. But he maintains that this is not a distinctively rational desire.

Hume believes that prudent action results from reasoning about what promotes my good as a whole, together with my overriding desire for my good as a whole. To this extent it is based on reason. But imprudent action may be based on reason to exactly the same extent. An intention resulting from the desire for my overall good and from deliberation about means to satisfy it is rational, if we mean only that it requires some reasoning (as Hume understands it). But such an intention is no more rational than an intention resulting from reasoning about how to satisfy a foolish and transitory desire. If we confine will to long-term desires, it is not distinctively rational. If we extend it to desires based on any reasoning at all, it has no special connexion with any overall good.

It is not contrary to reason, therefore, to prefer the destruction of the world to the scratching of my finger (*T* ii 3.3.6). If I see that x leads to the destruction of the world, and y to the scratching of my finger, I may choose x over y on the basis of this reasoning. The fact that the reasoning in question is not about my overall good does not make it any the less a case of reasoning; hence it does not make the action any less rational in any strict sense. Hume assumes that the relevant sense of 'rational' is 'resting on reasoning', and that the relevant sense of 'contrary to reason' is 'contrary to the conclusion of all reasoning'. This is why both the actions just mentioned are equally rational, and neither is contrary to reason.

Reason, therefore, cannot provide justifying reasons for the pursuit of one end over another.[24] Hume recognizes 'the maxims of common prudence and discretion' that advise us on how to achieve our various ends, by identifying instrumental means to them. But he argues that reason can provide nothing more.[25] The Sceptic claims that reason is incapable of discovering that anything is valuable in itself, and hence of justifying any ultimate ends.[26] He defends his claims about ultimate ends, first from 'diversity of sentiment', and then from the arguments in the *Treatise* about the source of moral distinctions. Hume's discussions of reason and passion and of moral distinctions have the common aim of undermining the conception of the philosopher as a 'cunning man' who can tell us which ends are worth pursuing, independently of whether we already pursue them or not. In denying that the philosopher is a 'cunning man', Hume denies that reason can provide justifying reasons independent of antecedent passions.

[24] This aspect of Hume's position is explored by Korsgaard, 'Instrumental' 220–34.

[25] 'What is it then you desire more? Do you come to a philosopher as to a cunning man, to learn something by magic or witchcraft, beyond what can be known by common prudence and discretion?—Yes; we come to a philosopher to be instructed, how we shall choose our ends, more than the means for attaining these ends; We want to know what desire we shall gratify, what passion we shall comply with, what appetite we shall indulge. . . . I am sorry, then, I have pretended to be a philosopher; For I find your questions very perplexing . . . ' ('Sceptic' §§6–7, = *EMPL*163) On Hume's essays on the Epicurean, the Stoic, the Platonist, and the Sceptic, see Stewart, 'Stoic legacy'.

[26] 'If we can depend upon any principle, which we learn from philosophy, this, I think may be considered as certain and undoubted, that there is nothing, in itself, valuable or despicable, desirable or hateful, beautiful or deformed; but that these attributes arise from the particular constitution and fabric of human sentiment and affection.' ('Sceptic' §8 = *EMPL*164)

737. Objections to Hume on Justifying Reasons

Defenders of the Scholastic conception of the will should answer Hume's claim that reason cannot show one that one end deserves to be pursued over another. In particular they should answer his claim that reason cannot show that pursuit of one's longer-term good is more rational than pursuit of any other end.

To see how cogent Hume's argument is, we may compare it with Butler's claims about reasonable self-love. In his claim about the destruction of the world and the scratching of my finger, Hume rejects Butler's claim that it would be absurd to regard these two courses of action as equally rational.[27] Butler believes that, contrary to Hume, the relevant sense of 'rational' is 'resting on good reasons'. A choice that results from some reasoning may nonetheless be irrational, because it rests on bad reasons, or it may be less rational than another choice, because it rests on less good reasons.[28] Hence prudent action is rational and imprudent action is not.

Self-love is a superior principle, in Butler's view, because it evaluates the satisfaction of desires not by the comparative strength of desires, but by the weight of the reasons that can be given for satisfying one or the other. These reasons consider not only the comparative strength of desires, but also the effect of one or the other action on my overall good.[29] Hence a rational desire is formed by proper consideration of the weight of reasons. It is contrary to reason, therefore, to prefer my lesser good to my greater; such a preference could not be based on proper assessment of the weight of the reasons on each side.

This description of Butler's position rests on some conception of the 'weight' of reasons, which represents Butler's distinction between power and authority. Reid captures the same distinction by speaking of 'animal strength' and 'rational strength'.[30] To recognize this distinction is to reject the analysis of justifying reasons that Hume accepts from Hutcheson. In Hutcheson's view, we have a justifying reason for a given action only if we have an actual motive favouring that action; the recognition of the reason is the recognition of the presence of a motive, and the recognition of a stronger reason is the recognition of a stronger desire. According to Reid's development of Butler's position, this analysis of justifying reasons confuses rational strength (better reasons) with animal strength (stronger desire).

If rational strength differs from animal strength in this way, the recognition of rational strength does not require a stronger antecedent desire for the action favoured by stronger reasons. Hence the recognition of the comparative weight of reasons is a function of reason. Since it is not reducible to the functions of reason that Hume describes, Hume has not described all the functions of reason, and has not shown that reason cannot find justifying reasons independent of passion.[31]

[27] See Butler, *S* ii 17, quoted in §685.

[28] This account of 'less rational' might refer to subjectively good reasons (those the agent thinks good) or to objectively good reasons (those that are good, whether or not the agent thinks so). Whichever way we interpret 'less rational', Hume is open to objection.

[29] See also Reid, *EAP* iii 3.2 = H 580b–581a = R 862.

[30] See Reid, §832.

[31] An alternative defence of Butler might argue that recognition of the weight of reasons belongs neither to reason nor to passion. This defence accepts Hume's narrow conception of reason, but it denies that his division between reason and passion exhausts the possible sources of justifying reasons. The argument that follows can be adapted to support an objection to Hume based on this view.

If Hume is right, Butler's and Reid's conception of what is contrary to reason rests on some error, and the difference between comparative strength of desires and comparative weight of reasons is illusory. He has a good reason for disagreeing with Butler, if he has shown that reason can only trace causes and effects. But has he shown this?

He derives his conclusion about the functions of reason from his view that the understanding is concerned only with demonstrative reasoning or matters of empirical fact.[32] The substitution of 'understanding' for 'reason', and the description of the two functions of the understanding, refer to Book i of the *Treatise*. Hume relies on the assured results of the earlier book in settling the dispute about practical reason. He therefore assumes that reflexion on practical reason will not require us either (1) to re-examine our views about the understanding or (2) to consider whether practical reason has functions beyond the functions of the understanding. In disregarding the first possibility, Hume assumes that his theoretical philosophy is prior to his practical philosophy, and not to be reconsidered in the light of practical philosophy. In disregarding the second possibility, he assumes that theoretical reason is all there is to practical reason. These two assumptions distinguish Hume's method from Kant's.

Hume's assumptions are controversial. From Butler's and Reid's point of view, reflexion on practical reason justifies us in doubting at least one of Hume's assumptions. We need some plausible ground for rejecting Butler's conception of reason before we agree that Hume has described all the functions of reason.

This objection casts doubt on Hume's case for saying that reason cannot by itself provide justifying reasons for action. If reason discovers actions supported by better reasons, and if we have better reasons for pursuing our overall good than for avoiding the scratching of our finger, we act against reason in avoiding the scratching of our finger at the cost of our overall good. If Hume were to answer that justifying reasons all rest on a further desire that is independent of reasoning about our overall good, his argument would be circular.

In defending Butler's position against Hume's we have not argued that Butler is right to claim that self-love is moved by better reasons than those that would move us to prefer a particular passion over self-love. A supporter of Hume might be able to show that Butler is mistaken. But the argument that Hume offers to show that reason cannot be the source of justifying reasons does not defeat Butler's position, since it rests on a contestable claim about the functions of reason.

738. Prudence and Calm Passion

Hume would refute Butler, however, if he could show that what we say and believe about prudence can be understood without any reference to good reasons, and hence without appeal to any function of reason that refers to authority. He does not argue explicitly against Butler's position, perhaps because he does not see that Butler's claims about authority and

[32] 'The understanding exerts itself after two different ways, as it judges from demonstration or probability; as it regards the abstract relations of our ideas, or those relations of objects, of which experience only gives us information. I believe it scarce will be asserted, that the first species of reasoning alone is ever the cause of any action. . . . which leads us to the second operation of the understanding.' (*T* ii 3.3.2)

strength involve the rejection of Hutcheson's analysis of justifying reasons.[33] But he argues implicitly against Butler, through a diagnosis of our tendency to believe that reason supports prudence against imprudence. He argues that our claims about prudence and reason can be explained, though not endorsed, within his account of the role of reason and passion.

In Hume's view, we speak loosely when we describe imprudent action as irrational or unreasonable. We speak as though prudent action appealed to reason alone, because we do not see that it appeals to us only if we have the appropriate calm passion. We make this mistake because we tend to confuse the operation of reason alone with the operation of a calm passion. In the case of prudence, we confuse reason with 'the general appetite to good, and aversion to evil'. This appetite is a non-rational desire; it involves reason no more than any other passion does, but because it is not strongly felt, we do not realize that it is a passion.[34]

It is therefore no more reasonable, strictly speaking, to take the long-term point of view that is characteristic of prudence (*T* iii 2.7.5) than to be imprudent. But our calm passion gives us a tendency to take this point of view that is improperly called 'reasonable'. Since we often take this point of view, we try to counteract our known tendency to act on short-term views.[35] If in January I intend to buy a house in November, and I need $100,000 for a deposit, I do not (according to Hume) think about having the money for a deposit in the circumstances that will obtain in November, since I do not know now what all these circumstances will be. I simply think of having the money available versus being unable to buy the house: and since I prefer being able to buy the house, I deposit the money in an account from which I cannot withdraw it until November. My preference will waver in September, when the sight of a new car costing $20,000 arouses a violent passion that will be stronger than my calm passion for having the money to buy the house in November. But since I did not have this violent passion in January, I was able to make the prudent choice because of my calm passion.

Prudent action, therefore, can be understood without any appeal to a purely rational preference to act on a superior principle; we are simply moved by (a) a calm passion leading us to prefer our longer-term good, and (b) reasoning about what will satisfy that calm passion. In the case of imprudence we have (a) a violent passion, say, to take revenge on someone who has harmed us, and (b) reasoning about how to do it. Both passion and reason are present in both cases, but because the passion in the first case is less obvious, we suppose that in the first case we simply deliberate about what it is reasonable to do, without reference to any actual desire. We are wrong, because we really deliberate about what to do to satisfy our present calm passion.

If I act in the way Hume suggests, am I being prudent? If my future-directed preference is really based on ignorance of my future circumstances, it does not seem prudent to commit myself to the frustration of preferences that may arise in those circumstances. I ought not,

[33] This conjecture is supported by Hume's brief remark on Hutcheson and Butler on authority. See §779.

[34] On the use of calmness to replace an appeal to rational desire, see Hutcheson, §639; Stroud, *H* 163–6; Rawls, *LHMP* 36–50. Sturgeon, 'Passion', is a careful examination of the various roles that Hume allows to reason, in the various ways Hume understands it.

[35] 'When we consider any objects at a distance, all their minute distinctions vanish, and we always give the preference to whatever is in itself preferable, without considering its situation and circumstances. This gives rise to what in an improper sense we call reason, which is a principle that is often contradictory to those propensities that display themselves upon the approach of the object.' (*T* iii 2.7.5)

for instance, to decide in January to make $100,000 unavailable until November, if I have not considered whether in July I will need the money to pay for some expensive but necessary medical treatment. Contrary to Hume, a genuinely prudent decision to tie my hands in the future ought to rest on as much relevant information about the likely future circumstances as I can reasonably expect to acquire. And if the circumstances turn out to be different in important ways from what I expected, it might be foolishly rigid if, in the face of new information about the circumstances, I stuck to my earlier decision. In this case prudence may not require me to tie my hands or to stick to my earlier uninformed decision.

If Hume is right about the role of calm passions, prudent choices for the future depend on ignorance of future circumstances. If I made all these circumstances clear to myself, I might excite violent passions that would overcome the calm passion that underlies my prudent reasoning. His attempt to explain how we can see overriding reason to choose the prudent course of action removes the aspect of prudent action that makes it genuinely prudent. To explain and to undermine our belief that we consider the weight of reasons rather than the strength of desires, Hume concentrates on these cases where I do not know in advance what the prudent choice will cost me in the future. He fails to explain these cases.

He fails even more clearly to explain other cases of prudent choice. Sometimes it is clear to me in advance what the cost of my prudent choice will be; I may be well aware in advance how strongly I will be tempted to waste my money. According to Hume, such prior knowledge should excite a violent passion; hence it should prevent me from believing that the prudent course of action is better, since (in his view) my belief that it is better is simply the belief that it satisfies my currently predominant passion. But this claim of Hume's gives the wrong account of prudence. The more violent a passion I anticipate, and the more confidently I anticipate it, the better reason I have to counteract it in advance, if I am convinced that I will be better off if I do not follow it in the future.[36]

To see what is questionable in Hume's account of prudence, we ought to compare these two judgments: (1) It is rational to pursue my long-term good rather than my short-term satisfaction. (2) Given that I want my long-term good rather than my short-term satisfaction, I will achieve my end if I pursue my long-term good rather than my short-term satisfaction. Hume takes the second judgment to analyse the first. When we speak of what is rational, we presuppose, in his view, that we have only the calm passion favouring my long-term good; if we had a violent passion for a short-term satisfaction, we would also find it rational to pursue that satisfaction.

The second judgment, however, seems to say less than the first, and so seems not to analyse it. When we say that it is rational for me to pursue my long-term good, we imply that this ought to be my overriding desire, and that I am being irrational if it is not my overriding desire; we claim that one end is more rational than another, not simply because it achieves the means to some further end. Butler believes it is rational to pursue my long-term good because I am a creature with a constitution, and not just a collection of impulses. Since my future as well as my present desires belong to me, they deserve to be considered when I decide what to do. If I do not consider them, that is a failure of reason because I fail to take account of everything that deserves consideration in making a decision.

[36] For a similar appeal to distance and abstraction see §761.

If Hume's claim about calm passions does not capture what we say and presuppose when we make claims about prudence and rationality, he does not capture our view of practical reason. His account of the functions of reason is too restricted to explain what we say about the rational course of action and about what we have better reason to do. In his view, we say what we say about prudent action because we overlook the presence of a calm passion. But he is mistaken; for even if we recognize the presence of a calm passion favouring our long-term interest, we do not suppose that a course of action is rational simply because it is founded on reasoning about what satisfies that calm passion. If some people were to lack the relevant calm passion, that would not change the rational course of action for them.

From Hume's point of view, this objection may appear futile, because it assumes a function for reason that is not included in his exhaustive account of the functions of reason. But if he simply asserts that his account is exhaustive, and does not identify some further error in the claims about practical reason that he rejects, his argument should not move opponents who attribute some further function to reason. Since he does not adequately defend his account of the functions of reason, he is unwise to rely on it to support his account of justifying reasons. He would have a good case if he had shown that the justifying reasons we offer are good reasons only if we presuppose the relevant calm passions. But he has not shown this. Though some justifying reasons presuppose antecedent desires in the agent for whom they are good reasons, not all justifying reasons are of this kind.

If this defence of Butler is sound, Hume's view of passion and reason does not justify our ordinary view of prudence. If, therefore, he seeks to present a vindicating reduction of claims about practical reason to claims about Humean reason and calm passion, he fails.

Perhaps, however, he does not intend to offer a vindicating reduction of ordinary claims about prudence; or, even if he intends to offer it, his argument may support a more radical conclusion. He speaks as though he is attacking the theories of prudence offered by rationalist philosophers, rather than ordinary claims about prudence. But perhaps he believes that we—as agents, not just as philosophers examining agency—rely on unjustified claims about reason. Hume's experimental method might lead to a sceptical conclusion by showing that our claims about practical reason ascribe capacities to us that experience shows us we lack.

Experience might show us that we lack the relevant capacity, if we found that we have no rational basis, as the rationalist understands it, for regarding prudence as especially rational. Butler's argument moves from some claim about our nature as agents to a conclusion about what it is reasonable for us to do, and therefore about what we ought to do; and so he argues from 'is' to 'ought'. Hume believes such arguments are illegitimate. Hence, his basic dispute with Butler is about 'is' and 'ought'.

If this is the real basis of the dispute, two questions arise about Hume's argument on 'is' and 'ought': (1) Hume presents this argument in the course of his discussion of whether moral distinctions are derived from reason, but the argument ought not to apply only to moral distinctions. If Butler is wrong, a prudential 'ought' cannot be derived from an 'is' and therefore cannot be derived from reason. Does Hume's argument apply to prudential as well as to moral judgments? (2) If he is to rely on his argument about 'is' and 'ought' in order to refute Butler, that argument should not rest on the conclusion about reason and passion that rests on his claims about the functions of reason. For we have seen that he

has not justified his claims about the functions of reason. If he relies on these claims, his argument against Butler will be question-begging. The argument about reason and passion, taken by itself, does not refute Butler. Has Hume a cogent argument about 'is' and 'ought' that is independent of his conclusion on reason and passion?

739. Can Desires be Unreasonable?

Hume believes that his opponents misunderstand both the functions of reason and the character of a passion. They not only believe that reason has more functions than it has, but also attribute to passions a structure that they lack. If the rationalists are right, reason can oppose a passion and show it to be unreasonable. But according to Hume, no desire can be either inherently rational or inherently opposed to reason. For desires are passions, and passions cannot be inherently either rational or opposed to reason.[37] If a passion were an idea purporting to represent an impression, we could reasonably ask whether it represents its original truly or not; but such a question is inappropriate for a non-representative state.

We might reply that a desire can be reasonable or unreasonable because it has an intentional content; it is a desire for x qua F, on the assumption that being F makes x desirable. A desire for x is unreasonable, then, if x's being F is not a good reason for wanting x. Since desires have content open to rational evaluation, desires are open to such evaluation.

This reply ignores Hume's conception of a passion. He takes a passion to be only contingently connected with any specific object and cause; beliefs are connected with a passion only causally, not logically. If a desire conforms to this model of a passion, the desire for x is a particular sort of sensation provoked by the thought of x, tending to cause us to try to get x. Since it is logically possible for us to have the very same desire irrespective of what we believe about x, no specific belief about x is essential to the desire, and so the desire itself cannot inherit the falsity or irrationality of any belief about x.[38]

Hume has theoretical reasons, therefore, for denying that desires are open to evaluation because of their intentional content. His opponent takes the relation to belief and reason to be part of the content of a desire, but in Hume's view the connexion is simply causal. He agrees that the desire for x tends to be caused by the belief that x exists and has some desired property, in accordance with his distinction between the subject and the quality of the cause of a passion (*T* ii 1.2.6). He admits, then, that passions may be contrary to reason 'in so far as they are accompanied with some judgment or opinion' (ii 3.3.6). But he asserts that desires have only these purely external relations to reason, because he takes desires to be sensations.

[37] 'A passion is an original existence . . . and contains not any representative quality, which renders it a copy of any other existence or modification. When I am angry, I am actually possessed with the passion, and in that emotion have no more a reference to any other object than when I am thirsty, or sick, or more than five foot high. 'Tis impossible, therefore, that this passion can be opposed by, or be contradictory to truth and reason; since this contradiction consists in the disagreement of ideas, considered as copies, with those objects, which they represent.' (ii 3.3.5)

[38] See Stroud, *H* 158–62. Baier, *PS* 160–4, argues that this passage in ii 3.3.5 is 'at the very least unrepresentative' (160) of Hume's standard views about the connexion of passions to beliefs. But her defence of this claim does not take account of the fact that Hume regards the relevant connexions as purely causal and non-essential. Moreover, Hume recalls his conception of the passions as incapable of being contrary to reason, and reaffirms it at a vital point in his argument against rationalism in morals, at iii 1.1.9.

But this appeal to Hume's theory of the passions does not vindicate his claim about evaluation. Reasonable doubts about his theory of the passions encourage doubts about his conception of desires. It is even more difficult to believe that the desire for x is always logically separable from any beliefs about x than to believe that love is always logically separable from benevolence. Hume's opponent, then, may still reasonably maintain that since we desire x as F, our desire is contrary to the weight of reasons if the weight of reasons does not favour F.

If Hume could justifiably reject claims about the weight of reasons, this objection would fail. He could justifiably reject them if he could show that reason has only the functions that he attributes to it. But he has not shown that. In this case also, he has not answered Butler's claims about the functions of reason. His objections to rationalist claims about justifying reasons are not conclusive.

740. Objections to Hume on Exciting Reasons

A refutation of Hume's case about justifying reasons may not damage his case about exciting reasons. For even if reason gives us sufficient justifying grounds for approval, it may still be unable to move us by appeal to these grounds, unless we have some independent desire to act on them.[39] On the rationalist side we might argue that belief that an action is good for me is sufficient by itself to move me to do something about it; no independent desire is needed for me to be moved by the belief that something is or is not good for me.

Against the rationalist Hume might remark that in some cases we find that the belief about my good is not sufficient for me to act on it; I can act incontinently in preferring a known lesser good over a greater. But the rationalist might equally reply that passion by itself does not always provide a sufficient condition; we sometimes act continently by doing what we think better for us even though we have a stronger desire to do what we think is worse.[40] In Reid's view, a conclusion of practical reason has greater rational strength, even if the desire to follow a passion has greater animal strength; sometimes we are moved by rational strength and sometimes by animal strength.[41] Hume might reply that if we act continently, our desire to do the worse thing cannot be stronger; if we do what is better, we must have a stronger desire to do what is better. But why should we accept this reply, unless we already agree with Hume that reason alone cannot provide exciting reasons?

We might agree that there must be some difference beyond the fact that sometimes I fail to do what I believe to be better and sometimes I do it.[42] But why should the difference be a difference in the strength of some passion that is independent of reason? Why not say that the difference in motivation is explained by some difference apart from desire—for instance a difference in people's capacity to make clear to themselves the implications of the rationally compelling case? We have no introspectible evidence of this; but neither have we

[39] In speaking of grounds for approval, I try to distinguish two things that Hutcheson runs together: (a) giving us reasons for approving; (b) motivating us to approve. The examples that Hutcheson mentions in *IMS* 128–9 = R 363 seem to illustrate (a). But in arguing that reason is insufficient for justifying reasons, Hutcheson seems to refer to (b). Cf. §639.

[40] Cf. Aristotle, *De Anima* 433a1–8 (Aristotle's statement of the puzzles about reason and desire).

[41] See Reid, §841.

[42] This agreement relies on a determinist assumption that Reid rejects. See §832.

introspectible evidence of a passion, independent of reason, that favours continent action. Hume introduces calm passions here because they are needed to show that exciting reasons always involve a passion, not because he has any other good reason for introducing them.[43]

Hume makes clear a point that Hutcheson leaves implicit, that he intends to go beyond Aristotle's claim that thought does not move us without desire.[44] In rejecting pure rationalism about motivation Aristotle agrees with Hume that reason by itself cannot move us to action without desire; but he does not say that the desire that needs to be added to reason is desire that is independent of reason. The desire that Aristotle adds to reason is the desire for happiness, which is an essentially rational desire, open to modification through reflexion on the good. This sort of desire presupposes functions for practical reason that Hume denies.

And so Hume's denial that reason provides exciting reasons is more extreme than the apparently similar claims of Aristotle and Aquinas. He does not mean only that reason needs desire before we are moved to action; he also claims that the only source of motivation is desire without reason. In his view, a practical reason cannot modify a desire for an end, because the functions of reason do not apply to desire for ends. His claim about exciting reasons rests on his account of the functions of reason; but we have seen that this account does not refute Butler's position.

741. Passion, Will, and Freedom

The two sections before 'Of the influencing motives of the will' introduce the treatment of the will with a discussion of liberty and necessity. Hume does not explain why he treats this topic just here, except by saying that it 'occurs so naturally in treating of the will' (*T* ii 3.1.2). He mentions that people have attributed liberty, indifference, and spontaneity to the will, and that he proposes to show that the will operates by necessity. It is appropriate to discuss his argument here; for we will see that it rests on his claims about passion and practical reason.[45]

The discussions in the *Treatise* and in the *First Inquiry* differ about the belief in liberty. The *Treatise* appears to accept hard determinism, since it defends a doctrine of necessity and determinism that Hume takes to conflict with a belief in liberty. The *Inquiry* takes a compatibilist position, claiming that liberty, on any reasonable understanding of it, is not ruled out by necessity, on any reasonable understanding of it.[46]

The difference in substance between the two discussions is smaller than these different remarks about liberty might suggest. For the *Treatise* does not say that liberty, as the *Inquiry* understands it, is incompatible with necessity. Nor does the *Inquiry* claim that liberty, as the *Treatise* understands it, is compatible with necessity.

[43] Contrast the favourable assessment of Hume's argument by Harrison, *HME* 6 (often sharply critical of Hume) with the much more critical view of Mackie, *HMT*, ch. 3 (usually more favourable to Hume). The version of a 'Humean' theory of motivation defended by Smith, *MP*, ch. 4, lacks Hume's commitment to the pervasive role of desires that are independent of reason.

[44] See Hutcheson, §637.

[45] Equally, the treatment of reason and passion depends on the deterministic assumption that something explains why I sometimes act on my judgment about what is better and sometimes do not.

[46] Hume's reconciling project is discussed, with special reference to his conception of necessity, by Harris, *LN*, ch. 3.

But this degree of agreement does not make the difference between the two works trivial. The *Inquiry* seems to acknowledge, whereas the *Treatise* does not, that defenders of the doctrine of liberty often have a reasonable view independent of the more extravagant doctrines that Hume rejects. The *Treatise* recognizes this point briefly in suggesting that the liberty of spontaneity does not raise the difficulties raised by the liberty of indifference; indifference, but not spontaneity, commits us to incompatibilism.[47] Hume implicitly acknowledges that one might defend a doctrine of liberty as spontaneity without indifference, but he develops this point only in the *Inquiry*.[48]

Hume's two treatments overlook the view maintained by Aquinas, and to some extent by Cudworth and Locke, that freewill consists in determination by the will, as opposed to the passions.[49] Determination by will is freedom (according to Aquinas) because the will is not determined to one course of action apart from rational reflexion, but is moved by the rational reflexion that chooses among different possible actions. Hume follows Hobbes and Hutcheson in ignoring this alleged difference between will and passion. In listing the different sources of the false belief in freedom, he does not mention Locke's candidate—the capacity to suspend the operation of passions on the basis of rational consideration.

Hume's silence on this role of the will in freedom reflects his views on reason and passion. For he follows Hobbes and Hutcheson in rejecting the division between will and passion. Given his conception of practical reason, he cannot treat will as essentially rational desire. We may desire some overall long-term good, but we have no ground for claiming that this is an especially rational desire, or that it has any special role in freedom. Hume's silence about the standard division between will and passion results from his view of reason and passion; the will is nothing but 'the internal impression we feel and are conscious of' in initiating motion (*T* ii 3.1.2).

Hume is right, therefore, to place his chapters on liberty and necessity next to those on the influencing motives of the will. But they are in the wrong order. His view of the available options for giving an account of freedom presupposes his claims about reason and passion.

742. Responsibility

The rejection of a division between will and passion affects Hume's explanation and defence of compatibilism (in the *Inquiry*) and his conception of an acceptable notion of liberty (in the *Treatise*). Even in the *Treatise*, where he is an incompatibilist about determinism and freedom, he is a compatibilist about determinism and responsibility. In his view, to be responsible is to be an object of moral sentiments, and in particular of praise, blame, gratitude, anger, love, hatred. Determinism does not undermine these sentiments; indeed, we cannot be objects of

[47] 'Few are capable of distinguishing betwixt the liberty of spontaneity, as it is called in the schools, and the liberty of indifference; betwixt that which is opposed to violence, and that which means a negation of necessity and causes. The first is even the most common sense of the word; and as 'tis only that species of liberty, which it concerns us to preserve, our thoughts have been principally turned towards it, and have almost universally confounded it with the other.' (ii 3.2.1)

[48] Stroud, *H* 150–4, criticizes Hume's failure to explain why some people take the liberty of indifference, resting on a belief about alternative possibilities, to be necessary for freedom. He notices that the remarks on theological determinism (*IHU* 8.36) suggest that Hume is vulnerable to an incompatibilist argument.

[49] On Aquinas see §265.

these sentiments unless our characters and dispositions causally determine our actions (*T* ii 3.2.6). Our sentiments are directed at relatively persistent features of an agent's character, on the assumption that these have some reliable causal connexion with actions.

Hume is open to criticism for his claim that actions 'out of character' are not objects of praise and blame. The criticism is especially justified given that he claims to describe our actual reactions, not to tell us what reactions we ought to have. The mere fact of an action's being out of character does not relieve the agent from all praise or blame.

Still, part of Hume's position is reasonable. Some actions that are 'out of character', in the sense of being untypical and unusual for this person, are nonetheless explicable as (for instance) the result of weaknesses in his character that do not usually display themselves, or of a good side in him that he is capable of displaying occasionally. Such an explanation makes it intelligible that this sort of person acts in this way, and it makes praise and blame appropriate. An untypical action that could not be understood in relation to his character would not necessarily be exempt from all praise or blame, but we might reasonably decide that it is less subject to praise or blame than it would be if it were more centrally connected to the agent's character. Hume is right, then, in connecting praise and blame to character and relatively stable traits.

Something similar might be said about his suggestion that change of character removes responsibility for past actions. Normally this is not true. But if we were really convinced that someone had no more of his character in common with his past self than he had with any other random person, we would be reluctant to hold him responsible in the ordinary way for his past actions. We might, indeed, doubt whether, in such a case, we would be really dealing with the same person; such a doubt supports Hume.

If we go this far with Hume, however, we have a good reason to modify his simple demand for a stable condition of the agent. Some of the cases that seem to support his claims about the irrelevance of temporary aberrations are cases in which the agent is overcome by an irresistible desire that does not express his own values and outlook. But if this desire persisted, and the agent could not get rid of it despite his best efforts, the same considerations that would exempt him from responsibility for a short-term aberration would also remove him from responsibility for this long-term flaw; it would be a handicap for which he could not reasonably be blamed. In that case, we are justified in attending to the relation between the action and the agent's evaluative outlook expressed in his actions, including his actions on short-term passions and impulses.

This approach rejects Hume's less plausible claims about actions on temporary impulses, but adopts some of his suggestions about the relation of actions to character. But the approach also re-introduces the division between passion and will that Hume rejects. For the agent's character and values matter for judgments about responsibility because they express the outcome of his rational reflexion about the ends to pursue. If Hume were right about the functions of reason, such rational reflexion would be impossible, and so we would have no reason to focus on the agent's values. According to Hume's view of practical reason, rational reflexion is confined to questions about the reality of objects of passions and about means to ends that appeal to passions. If the desires resulting from such rational reflexion are not distinctively rational, they do not seem distinctively connected with responsibility. According to Aquinas, we are justified in treating the agent's will as the basis of freedom

and responsibility because the ends we pursue are open to rational deliberation that reaches suitable objects of rational desire. Hume rejects this reason for considering the will.

Apparently, then, Hume's attempt to connect responsibility and character would be open to question, if he were right about the scope of practical reason and about the relation between will and passion. It is more plausible if it rests on the division between will and passion that he rejects. This conclusion gives us another reason for reconsidering his views on reason and passion; they cast doubt on his treatment of responsibility.

These difficulties in Hume are relevant to his moral theory. He tries to find the real basis of moral sentiments, not to show that they have no basis in facts about human actions and passions. He takes the same view about moral distinctions. This aim of vindicating moral sentiments is different from his sceptical attitude to our belief in external objects and in personal identity. In the metaphysical cases (he argues) common-sense beliefs are unjustified, but too tenacious to be undermined by sceptical arguments. Has he good reasons for claiming to vindicate our moral sentiments rather than subjecting them to sceptical doubt?

His arguments on reason and passion seem to support a sceptical position on responsibility. His appeals to temporary and permanent features of agents do not support our views on responsibility, because our views rest on a conception of practical reason and the will that Hume rejects. If we agree with Hume's view of practical reason and responsibility, our sentiments of praise and blame may not disappear; they may be stubborn, even if their rational basis is undermined. But we might doubt whether they will or should matter as much to us, if we decide that they rest on false or unjustified presuppositions about will and reason.

Here, then, we might be tempted to draw more sceptical conclusions than Hume draws.[50] His account of practical reason and prudence does not support ordinary claims about prudence, but conflicts with them. Similarly, his views about practical reason cast doubt on our conception of free and responsible agency. Contrary to Hume's intentions, his sceptical attitude to ordinary beliefs about objectivity and personal identity seems to provide a pattern for the attitude that we will take to moral beliefs if we grasp the significance of his arguments.

So far, then, discussion of Hume gives us a further reason to agree with Balguy's judgment on Hutcheson. According to Balguy, Hutcheson would be more sceptical about morality than he is, if he recognized the implications of his arguments. In the case of practical reason and responsibility, this judgment on Hutcheson seems to fit Hume as well. It is worth seeing how many aspects of Hume's position support Balguy's judgment.

[50] On the radical character of Hume's conclusion, cf. the discussion of Hutcheson in §654.

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HUME: ERRORS OF OBJECTIVISM

743. The Two Arguments against Rationalism

In the section 'Moral distinctions not derived from reason', Hume strengthens his defence of Hutcheson. He now defends anti-rationalism not only about practical reason and motivation, but also about morality. His discussion of reason and passion implicitly attacks Butler's views on superior principles and self-love; he now attacks Butler's views on conscience. Butler regards conscience as the expression of reason, as a source of moral requirements, and as a superior principle carrying authority. Hume rejects these claims.

Hume offers two distinct arguments to show that moral distinctions are not derived from reason. The first is his 'practical argument':[1] (1) Reason alone cannot move us to action. (2) But moral distinctions move us to action. (3) Hence moral distinctions cannot be derived from reason. The first step is derived from Hume's argument about the roles of reason and passion (in ii 3.3). Since Hume's defence of his first step is open to doubt, the doubt spreads to the practical argument.

Still, the practical argument is worth considering on the assumption that the first step is acceptable. The first step deals only with exciting reasons, and we might agree with Hume's anti-rationalism about exciting reasons even if we disagree with him about justifying reasons. The practical argument is important if it shows that acceptance of a Humean view of exciting reasons commits us to the rejection of rationalism about moral judgments.

Hume's second argument against rationalism is his 'metaphysical argument':[2] (1) Reason discovers only relations of ideas or matters of fact. (2) Moral truths correspond neither to relations of ideas nor to matters of fact. (3) Hence moral truths are not discovered by reason. Again we may concede the first step to Hume for the sake of argument. In the second step he seeks to show that the moral goodness or badness of an action cannot consist in any fact about the action itself apart from the feelings of the person judging the action good or bad.

The two arguments appear to be independent arguments for the same conclusion. At the end of the second argument Hume adds a further observation about the difficulty of

[1] This is stated briefly at iii 1.1.5–7, and elaborated in 8–16.

[2] This is presented in iii 1.1.17–25, and the main point is stated in 26.

deriving 'ought' from 'is' (iii 1.1.27). It is not clear whether he intends this observation to provide a third argument for the same conclusion, or a summary of one or the other or both of the previous arguments, or an argument for a different conclusion. We can try to answer these questions once we have discussed the two main arguments.

744. Moral Judgments and Motivation: What Does Common Experience Show?

Hume takes his practical argument to undermine every purely cognitive view of morality. He mentions three claims: (1) Virtue is 'nothing but a conformity to reason'. (2) There are eternal fitnesses that 'are the same to every rational being that considers them'. (3) Right and wrong impose an obligation on God as well as on human beings.[3] Hume speaks as though he is considering only views that treat moral judgments as a priori knowledge of 'relations of ideas' (as Hume calls them). Clarke and Price hold such views, but it is not clear that Butler agrees with them. Hume's argument is not confined, however, to conceptions of moral judgments as a priori; it seems to extend to all purely cognitive views (iii 1.1.26). According to such views, we can know that an action is right or wrong by knowing some fact about the world that is not constituted by the thoughts or feelings of the subject who knows.

Against a purely cognitive view of moral properties, Hume appeals to the practical aspect of morality.[4] We believe that 'morals have an influence on the actions and affections' (iii 1.1.6). To see what this belief commits us to, we need to see what Hume means by 'morals', 'morality', and 'moral distinctions'. He might have in mind (1) the properties of rightness or wrongness themselves, or (2) the moral condition—virtue or vice—of a person who acts rightly or wrongly ('a person of good morals'). A purely cognitive view of 'morals' in the first sense does not imply a purely cognitive view of 'morals' in the second sense. Even if moral properties are objects of rational cognition, virtue or vice need not be purely cognitive. The view that virtue is conformity to reason is not a purely cognitive view of virtue; for if a virtuous person's will must conform to reason, such conformity to reason is not a purely cognitive condition. If Hume simply appeals to the practical effects of 'morals', understood as virtue and vice, he does not refute a purely cognitive view of moral properties.[5]

[3] 'All these systems concur in the opinion that morality, like truth, is discerned merely by ideas, and by their juxtaposition and comparison. In order, therefore, to judge of these systems, we need only consider, whether it be possible, from reason alone, to distinguish moral good and evil, or whether there must concur some other principles to enable us to make that distinction.' (*T* iii 1.1.4)

[4] 'Philosophy is commonly divided into speculative and practical; and as morality is always comprehended under the latter division, 'tis supposed to influence our passions and actions, and to go beyond the calm and indolent judgments of the understanding.' (iii 1.1.5)

[5] Hume's use of 'moral distinction' fluctuates between (a) a subjective use, for our way of distinguishing virtue and vice, and (b) a non-subjective use, for the difference between virtue and vice or between moral good and evil. Some passages are ambiguous between the two uses; and this is not surprising, given Hume's view that the difference between moral good and evil is a difference in our sentiments, a distinction that we draw. Here are some examples: 'The merit and demerit of actions frequently contradict, and sometimes control our natural propensities. But reason has no such influence. Moral distinctions, therefore, are not the offspring of reason. Reason is wholly inactive, and can never be the source of so active a principle as conscience, or a sense of morals.' (iii 1.1.10) '. . . if moral distinctions be derived from the truth or falsehood of those judgments, they must take place wherever we form the judgments.' (iii 1.1.13) 'Extinguish all the warm feelings and prepossessions in favour of virtue, and all disgust or aversion to vice: Render men totally

He clarifies his view by giving some examples of the practical influence of morals. He claims that our duties and our moral opinions about justice and obligation influence our actions.[6] These examples are rather disparate. It does not seem obvious that the fact that something is my duty moves me to do it. If I am not aware that it is my duty, or I believe it is not my duty, it does not seem to influence my action. My duty seems to exist independently of my being motivated to act on it. Perhaps, then, Hume means that my belief that something is my duty moves me to do it; his other examples involve moral beliefs rather than moral facts.

Hume's argument against cognitivism, therefore, relies on one of two sorts of connexions between 'morals' and motivation:[7] (1) If he means that duty governs me, he asserts a connexion between the existence of moral properties and motivation. He needs this connexion if his claim about motivation is to defeat an objectivist conception of moral properties. (2) If he means that my awareness of duty governs me, he asserts a connexion between my recognizing the truth of a moral judgment and my being motivated to act on it. According to this view, it is essential to a moral judgment—not to the existence of the property mentioned in the judgment—that it moves the agent to act on it.

Hume is right to say that in common experience moral judgment and action are connected. We generally expect people to act on their moral judgments, and if people say they ought to do something that they do not do, we may infer that they do not really think they ought to do it. To say this is to say that moral judgments are regularly connected to action. In this respect, they do not differ from other judgments about questions that concern us. If I say that I believe the forecast of rain for today is completely reliable, you normally expect me to go out with a raincoat and umbrella; if I deliberately do not take them, you may reasonably infer (in some circumstances) that I do not take the forecast to be completely reliable. Meteorological judgments govern my action.

But this sort of connexion is not enough for Hume's purposes; for it allows a cognitivist account of moral judgments. If we can explain why we are normally concerned about moral questions, we can explain why moral judgments govern our action, even if they are as cognitive as judgments about the weather. To refute a purely cognitive view, Hume needs to argue that moral judgments are different from judgments about the weather because they motivate us by themselves. Is this a matter of common experience?

The task of answering this question is complicated by Hume's discussion of reason and passion. A cognitivist might agree with Hume's view that moral judgments by themselves can motivate us. This cognitivist believes: (1) Moral judgments by themselves motivate us.

indifferent towards these distinctions; and morality is no longer a practical study, nor has any tendency to regulate our lives and actions.' (*I* 1.8) 'Let these generous sentiments be supposed ever so weak; let them be insufficient to move even a hand or finger of our body; they must still direct the determinations of our mind, and where every thing else is equal, produce a cool preference of what is useful and serviceable to mankind, above what is pernicious and dangerous. A moral distinction, therefore, immediately arises; a general sentiment of blame and approbation . . .' (*I* 9.4)

[6] 'And this is confirmed by common experience, which informs us, that men are often governed by their duties, and are deterred from some actions by the opinion of injustice, and impelled to others by that of obligation. Since morals, therefore, have an influence on the actions and affections, it follows, that they cannot be derived from reason; and that because reason alone, as we have already proved, can never have any such influence. Morals excite passions, and produce or prevent actions. Reason of itself is utterly impotent in this particular. The rules of morality, therefore, are not conclusions of our reason.' (iii 1.1.5–6)

[7] This feature of Hume's argument is emphasized and explored by Brown, 'Internalist?', who argues that Hume's account of the moral virtues does not satisfy the specific internalist condition that he lays down here.

(2) Moral judgments are purely cognitive. (3) Therefore purely cognitive states sometimes motivate us. But Hume rejects this cognitivist position, because he believes: (4) Cognitive states can contribute to action only when they are suitably connected to passions that are independent of them. Hence Hume infers: (5) Moral judgments motivate us all by themselves because they imply passions and are not purely cognitive.

Hume's position, then, depends on our being persuaded to accept (4) while still accepting (1), so that we reject (2). But might we not take (4) to be a reason for denying (1) while accepting (2)? Hume agrees that we have the experience of moral judgments moving us to action all by themselves, without any further desire. But he disagrees with rationalists who interpret this experience as the experience of purely cognitive states moving us to action without any non-cognitive state. Hume rejects the rationalist interpretation because he thinks we must always be moved by a passion. When we seem to be moved by moral judgments without any passion, he believes we are really moved by a calm passion distinct from any reasoning.

But if we agree with Hume here, why should we not abandon our original view that we experience moral judgments by themselves moving us to action? Even if action requires passion, how can experience tell us that the relevant passion is part of the moral judgment? Introspection does not seem to be decisive; for if the appearance of a purely cognitive state moving us to action is misleading, might the appearance of a moral judgment by itself moving us to action not be equally misleading? Hume's claims about calm passions cast doubt on introspection; for calm passions tend to escape introspection, but we need to assume them to explain action that (to a rationalist) appears to be explained by reason alone. Hume's view on reason and passions seems to undermine his argument against a cognitivist account of moral judgments. If we agree with his account of reason and passion, we have no reason to trust introspection as much as we need to trust it if we are to agree that moral judgments by themselves move us to action.

Common experience, therefore, does not seem to show that moral judgments alone motivate us. But if it does not show this, it allows a purely cognitive view of moral judgments. Hume uses his conclusion about reason and passion as a premiss of his practical argument. But his arguments about reason and passion suggest that experience does not support the practical argument.

745. Questions about Internalism

Hume would have a more cogent argument to show that a moral judgment 'alone' motivates us if he could show that the appropriate calm passion is not simply a feature of a normal well-trained agent who makes moral judgments, but logically inseparable from every sincere moral judgment. He needs to assert an internal connexion between moral judgments and motivation, so that a moral judgment essentially motivates by itself, and hence it is logically impossible for a sincere moral judgment not to motivate us.[8]

This internalist thesis agrees with Hutcheson's claim that justifying reasons presuppose a moral sense, which implies some motivation in favour of the action favoured by the moral

[8] Falk, 'Ought' 31–3, suggests that 'ought' is ambiguous between internalist and externalist senses.

sense.[9] But a rationalist might reasonably doubt internalism.[10] Clarke asserts that some people 'will things to be what they are not, and cannot be', because they are corrupted by some particular interest or affection. Assent to a theoretical axiom is involuntary, but action on a moral axiom depends on the agent's will (Clarke, *DNR* = H ii 613 = R 232).[11] These claims about connexions between desires and beliefs do not imply either version of internalism. Nor does Price seem to agree with Hume. He accepts an internal connexion between moral judgments and recognition of reasons.[12] But this internalist thesis does not imply an internalist claim about moral judgments and motives.[13] Unless Price agrees with Hutcheson's view that recognition of a reason for doing an action implies a motive for doing it, he need not agree that moral judgments necessarily motivate.[14]

If we distinguish justifying from exciting reasons, we may doubt Hume's internalism about moral judgment and motivation. Some argument is needed to show that we intuitively accept the relevant logical connexion. If we take the connexion to be logical rather than empirical, we should treat 'I knew I ought to do it, but I didn't want to do it' as self-contradictory. But we do not treat it as self-contradictory; we do not assume that the mere knowledge of our duty moves us to act on it. On the contrary, we might answer Hume that only the knowledge of it together with a desire to do our duty moves us to act. Some people seem to be indifferent or hostile to morality, but capable of seeing the truth of moral judgments.

We might defend internalism by appeal to an assumption about sincerity. People's failure to act on a particular moral principle sometimes persuades us that they do not sincerely accept it. If someone is usually scrupulous about not stealing, but has no scruples about taking away the plastic knives and forks that come with a meal on a flight, he probably thinks there is nothing wrong with doing that. But this assumption about sincerity is not always reliable. If we discover that some people are willing to steal when it seems unusually tempting, we may not infer that they are insincere in claiming that it is wrong to steal; they may be doing something they believe to be wrong.

This appeal to intuition is not decisive. It implies the truth of the externalist assumption that it is possible for someone to recognize that a course of action is right, but still have no tendency to do anything about it. This is the alleged possibility that we reveal by imagining people doing what they believe to be wrong. Hume may reply that this alleged possibility is not really possible. When we suppose we imagine such cases, we really imagine people who do not make the relevant moral judgment; they do not sincerely believe it would be right to do what they do not want to do, but they are simply saying the words.[15]

Intuitions about imaginability and conceivability, therefore, may mislead us. If we did not know enough about what a triangle is, we might suppose we could imagine a triangle whose

[9] See Hutcheson, §639. [10] Contrast Brown, 'Internalist?' 75–6, on Clarke.

[11] Balguy rejects internalism for similar reasons. See §655.

[12] '. . . to perceive an action to be right is to see a reason for doing it in the action itself . . .' (Price, *RPQM* 117n).

[13] See Price, §819.

[14] On internalism see Harrison, *HME* 15. Contrast Mackie, *HMT* 54. Mackie claims that internalism expresses 'how moral characterization has been understood throughout the whole history of moral philosophy' (55). He appeals (158n4) to the passages from Clarke and Price considered here.

[15] This is what Hare calls an 'inverted commas' use, at *LM* 171. The conflict between this claim and Hare's acceptance of Moore's Open Question Argument is parallel to the conflict between Hume's practical and metaphysical arguments. See §749.

interior angles add up to 190 degrees; but that would not be a good reason for believing such a triangle is possible, nor would we really be conceiving it. Similarly, a correct account of the relation of moral judgments to motivation may be expected to change our minds about whether it is possible or imaginable for a sincere moral judgment to fail to motivate.

Is Hume's internalism so plausible that it entitles him to dismiss our apparent ability to conceive moral judgment without motivation? Some believe that externalism gives the wrong account of how moral considerations can motivate. If motivation is something beyond the recognition of moral truths, then (it is suggested) we must suppose that morality motivates only when it conduces to the satisfaction of some antecedent desires, by being instrumental to non-moral aims. But to suppose this is to misunderstand the role of moral considerations.[16]

This defence of internalism, however, seems to assume a Humean view about the limitations of practical reason—that we can come to care about some truth that we previously recognize only if we see that it is instrumentally relevant to the satisfaction of our other desires. If we are not convinced by Hume's arguments about practical reason, we need not accept the argument against externalism. If we have a non-Humean conception of practical reason, we can defend externalism without saying that motivation to act on moral judgments presupposes the belief that morality is instrumental to antecedent aims and desires.

Internalism, therefore, does not seem immediately convincing enough in its own right to refute a purely cognitive conception of moral judgments. Moreover, it seems to lose plausibility for someone who reflects on Hume's claims about reason and passion. Just as these claims suggest a diagnosis of alleged experiences of moral judgments motivating us by themselves, they suggest a diagnosis of alleged intuitions favouring internalism. In both cases, we overlook the role of calm passions. Against internalism we may argue that the apparent impossibility of moral judgments without motivation simply reflects the regular presence of the relevant calm passions together with our moral judgments. Hume's earlier argument helps an opponent of his argument about moral judgments and motivation.

Though Hume represents his practical argument as a decisive refutation of a purely cognitive view of moral properties, he relies on controversial premisses, and especially on contentious claims about logical possibility. He does not pursue all these questions, because he relies on some simple observations that 'conscience' or 'a sense of morals' is in some way an 'active principle' (iii 1.1.10), and that 'morals . . . have an influence on the actions and affections'. He supposes that these observations vindicate his specific view of how moral judgments are practical. But since he does not examine these observations closely, he leaves room for doubt about his position.

746. Moral Judgments and Moral Error

Having presented his practical argument, Hume seems to recognize implicitly that his opponents may not accept his premiss about the practical force of moral judgments; for he

[16] This reason for being an internalist is especially clear in Hutcheson, who connects externalism with egoism. See §§634–5 Cf. Smith's defence of internalism, *MP*, ch. 3.

considers possible defences of a cognitive position that do not take moral judgments to be essentially practical and motivating. Cognitivists suggest that an action may be 'obliquely' caused by a judgment that concurs with a passion, and that if this judgment is unreasonable, the action may be called unreasonable too. The action is obliquely caused by a judgment if the judgment contributes to the passion that directly causes the action. Though Hume regards it as 'an abusive way of speaking' to call the action reasonable or unreasonable because it is obliquely caused by a reasonable or unreasonable judgment, he allows this way of speaking, in order to show that it cannot support a cognitive account of moral judgments (iii 1.1.11).

According to Hume, judgments affect passions by informing them about the existence or the properties of the relevant object; if we make a false judgment about the existence of a glass of milk, or if we want a healthy drink and falsely believe that this glass of milk is healthy, our action of trying to get a glass of milk is (in the 'abusive' sense) unreasonable. But the cognitivist gains nothing by appealing to this sort of unreasonableness, since it is irrelevant to the moral properties of the action or the agent.[17] For if the cognitivist were right, errors of moral judgment would have to be these purely factual errors; but purely factual errors are not blameworthy, whereas errors of moral judgment are blameworthy; hence the cognitivist is wrong.

Cognitivists might try two answers to Hume: (1) They might deny his claim that no purely factual errors are blameworthy, even if they agree that he has given a full list of factual errors. His appeal to common sense shows that many factual errors are regarded as innocent; but it does not show that all factual errors, on whatever subject and in whatever circumstances, are blameless. If, for instance, it is easy and important for us to find out some fact, and we do not find it out, we may be blameworthy for not finding it out. (2) They might reject Hume's claim about what reason can find out, and in particular they might deny that reason can only find out about existence and about instrumental means to ends. Aristotle and Aquinas take moral error to be a form of deliberative error about what sorts of actions and states of character promote one's good. For the reasons we have considered, this is not purely instrumental deliberation; but error in such deliberation is error about some fact. Perhaps the Aristotelian view faces difficulties in explaining how this sort of error can be blameworthy; but it need not agree with Hume that an error about a fact is free from blame.

Since these answers are available to a cognitivist, Hume's argument about responsibility does not refute cognitivism.

747. The Character of Moral Facts

After this argument about culpable and non-culpable error, Hume concludes his practical argument (iii 1.1.16). He turns to a metaphysical argument against the belief in 'eternal

[17] '... 'tis easy to observe, that these errors are so far from being the source of all immorality, that they are commonly very innocent, and draw no manner of guilt upon the person who is so unfortunate as to fall into them. They extend not beyond a mistake of fact, which moralists have not generally supposed criminal, as being perfectly involuntary' (iii 1.1.12). On a similar argument in Scotus about factual and moral error see §366.

fitnesses and unfitnesses of things' (iii 1.1.17). He apparently waives his objection about the practical force of morality, and concentrates more directly on the question whether there are any moral properties of the sort that Clarke's and Butler's position requires.[18]

Clarke and Butler defend different versions of a rationalist belief in fitness. For Clarke, the rightness or wrongness follows directly from a description of the action itself, apart from its connexions with human nature; we see from the nature of a promise or a benefaction that fulfilment or gratitude is the right response, and that a broken promise or ingratitude to a benefactor is a contradiction in itself. This conception of the character of rightness and wrongness leads naturally to an attempt such as Wollaston's to make the contradiction clear by reducing wrongness to falsity. Butler's version of rationalism does not rely simply on Clarke's contradictions; that is why Butler rejects Wollaston's view, which avoids Butler's appeal to nature (Butler, P 13 = R 375).[19] Hume's criticisms affect these different versions of rationalism in different ways.

One of his objections attacks the anti-voluntarist view that moral right and wrong are not constituted by anyone's will, and that they equally oblige all rational agents, including God. He believes that the rationalist cannot defend this universal obligation; even if all rational agents knew the relevant principles, it might not motivate all of them, because knowing virtue does not imply conforming the will to it.[20]

This objection is surprising. If Hume allows the possibility of knowing virtue without motivation, he seems to contradict the internalist claims that underlie the practical argument. Perhaps, then, he means 'conforming the will' in a more demanding sense that does not simply imply some motivation, but requires overriding motivation. The objection, so understood, would be consistent with internalism. But it does not seem to damage Hume's opponents. Rationalists have no reason to agree with Hume that universal obligation implies universal motivation, since (as we have seen) they need not accept his internalism about exciting reasons.

If the question about obligation is confined to justifying reasons, it may be an awkward question for Clarke. Why should we be concerned with the abstract relations of consistency and contradiction that Clarke identifies with moral right and wrong? This objection, however, does not apply to Butler, who tries to show how acting on reason is acting in accord with nature.

Hume's second objection concerns the sort of relation that a rationalist must identify with moral rightness and wrongness.[21] He argues that the moral badness of ingratitude cannot consist in a relation between the agents, but must consist in a spectator's reaction to them. We should reject an objectivist answer, because the relation between the ungrateful

[18] On Hume's attack on Clarke see Raphael, 'Rationalism' 24–8. [19] See §678.

[20] ' 'Tis one thing to know virtue, and another to conform the will to it. In order, therefore, to prove, that the measures of right and wrong are eternal laws, obligatory on every rational mind, 'tis not sufficient to show the relations upon which they are founded: We must also point out the connexion betwixt the relation and the will; and must prove that this connexion is so necessary, that in every well-disposed mind, it must take place and have its influence; though the difference betwixt these minds be in other respects immense and infinite.' (iii 1.1.22) Hume summarizes this objection: '. . . we cannot prove a priori, that these relations, if they really existed and were perceived, would be universally forcible and obligatory' (23).

[21] 'This is acknowledged by all mankind, philosophers as well as the people; the question only arises among philosophers, whether the guilt or moral deformity of this action be discovered by demonstrative reasoning, or be felt by an internal sense, and by means of some sentiment, which the reflecting on such an action naturally occasions.' (iii 1.1.24)

person and the victim of ingratitude can be found in other situations that involve nothing morally wrong. The choking of a tree by one of its saplings displays the same objective relations as the murder of a parent by a child; since the latter action is wrong and the former is not, its wrongness cannot consist in an objective fact, but must consist in our reaction to it.

One might reply that since trees are not voluntary agents, their actions are not blameworthy. Hume rejects this reply, arguing that even if the agent is different, the relation is the same, and therefore, according to the rationalist, the wrongness should still be present (iii 1.1.25). This seems an unfair dismissal; it seems arbitrary of Hume to insist that only the relation of killing between parent and child can constitute the relevant relation. One might say that if Hume were right about what constitutes the same relation, he should not stop with animate agents; apparently, 'the same' relation must also hold between inanimate things. If one star comes into being by separating from its 'parent' star, and then collides with the star it came from and destroys it, is the relation between the two stars not the same as the relation between the two plants and between the two human beings? If Hume replies that the relation is relevantly different when animate agents are involved, why should the rationalist not insist that the relation is relevantly different when voluntary agents are involved?

To show the rationalists that they cannot appeal to voluntariness or rationality to constitute wrongness, Hume presents an argument from relations between animals.[22] He argues that if incest is wrong among human beings, it must also be wrong among animals, since it is the same relation, and the fact that human beings are rational cannot be relevant to the wrongness of the action itself. He assumes that the only role for reason in different moral agents is its capacity to discover moral relations that already exist whether or not the agents involved are rational. Hence the fact that the incestuous relation holds between rational agents cannot affect whether it involves moral badness, but can only affect the capacity of the agents to recognize it.

Hume's assumption that reason cannot itself constitute morally relevant relations is dubious. If I deny a mouse the opportunity to learn to read, I do not harm the mouse, and I do not wrong it, if the mouse cannot learn to read; but I harm a human being to whom I deny this opportunity. Similarly, one might deny that a mouse has exactly the same right to life that a human being has, because of some differences between mice and human beings. Hume's assumption that an action that constitutes a wrong, if done by one human being to another, must be equally wrong, if done by one non-human to another, is therefore false in general, and not clearly true in the specific case of incest that he mentions.

But even if Hume's objection rests on a dubious assumption, it may still expose a flaw in Clarke's rationalism. To meet Hume's objection, we need to maintain that the relation of ingratitude that holds between voluntary agents is crucially different from the 'same' relation

[22] 'I would fain ask any one, why incest in the human species is criminal, and why the very same action, and the same relations in animals have not the smallest moral turpitude and deformity? . . . Animals are susceptible of the same relations, with respect to each other, as the human species, and therefore would also be susceptible of the same morality, if the essence of morality consisted in these relations. Their want of a sufficient degree of reason may hinder them from perceiving the duties and obligations of morality, but can never hinder these duties from existing; since they must antecedently exist, in order to their being perceived.' (iii 1.1.25)

that holds between non-voluntary agents. But why should this be, if the wrongness consists in the contradictoriness, rather than in the agents involved in the contradiction? Why should we pick out one instance of contradiction and neglect others? Clarke and Wollaston do not answer this question.

Butler answers the question, however. He does not identify moral properties simply with relational properties of actions; he also appeals to their connexion with human nature as a whole. This connexion makes it reasonable to distinguish relations between voluntary agents from the 'same' relations between other agents. Voluntariness is relevant because voluntary agents are capable of gratitude and of seeing the reasons for it; if they fail to see these reasons, they are culpable. It is appropriate and non-arbitrary to confine rightness and wrongness to the actions of agents who can reasonably be expected to appreciate certain considerations and to guide their actions by them.

This defence of the rationalist might not convince Hume, because he might regard it as an admission of the truth of his sentimentalist position. For he assumes that if our account of rightness and wrongness appeals to features of responsible agents that make them worthy of praise and blame, we must admit that rightness and wrongness are not properties of the agents and their actions in their own right. Hume assumes that if we admit this, we agree that rightness and wrongness consist partly in blameworthy features of the agents, so that rightness and wrongness are constituted by being praised and blamed by spectators. If moral deformity does not consist in purely 'external' features of agents and victims (features that do not include their being rational and responsible agents), it consists in being 'felt by an internal sense, and by means of some sentiment, which the reflecting on such an action naturally occasions' (iii 1.1.24).

Why does Hume assume that these are the only two options? Perhaps he assumes, as Hutcheson does, that if we say people are blameworthy, we mean that they are blamed, and so we take the wrongness of their action to consist in being blamed; we thereby introduce an internal sense and a sentiment. But Hume is not entitled to assume this. For, as Balguy points out against Hutcheson, to say that people are worthy of blame is not to say that they are blamed, still less that I am blaming them.[23] If they are blameworthy, there is a reason that would justify blame, whether or not anyone wants to blame them. Hutcheson might accept Hume's assumption, but a rationalist has no reason to accept it. We might accept it if we had already accepted Hume's argument about reason and passion; but in that case, the present argument simply relies on that earlier questionable argument.

748. 'The Object in Itself'

Hume presents a briefer and clearer objection to the rationalist position. He argues that moral judgments do not result from any possible operation of reason, concerning either relations of ideas or matters of fact (iii 1.1.26). If we consider a wilful murder by itself, without regard to our reactions to it, we cannot identify any property of the murder itself

[23] See §656.

with its moral badness.[24] Hence moral goodness or badness, like beauty, cannot be a quality of external objects.[25]

We might answer that the badness of a murder consists in its being a deliberate and unprovoked taking of the life of an innocent human being, which violates a right of a human being and violates a duty towards other people. Why is this not a description of precisely those features of the action itself that make it morally wrong? Admittedly, some of the properties mentioned are 'moral' properties that are perhaps too closely linked to moral badness to provide the right sort of basis for the moral judgment. But some reason needs to be given to show that such moral properties are not properties of the action itself.

Hume maintains that a complete description of the murder need not mention the properties that are its moral badness. But what is a complete description? From the point of view of the psychologist observing the agent's behaviour, perhaps a complete description can be given without mentioning the fact that deliberate killing of an innocent person is vicious. Similarly, from the point of view of some observers, a 'complete' description of my bodily movements could be given without saying that I am driving a car or steering a boat; the same bodily movements might constitute one or the other action in the right conditions. Still, it is a fact about the external events themselves that I am driving a car or steering a boat.

These examples suggest that a given description of the objective facts may be complete from some points of view and incomplete from others.[26] If a complete description includes everything that needs to be included, the same description may be complete for one purpose, and incomplete for another. Why should we not say that a description of a murder 'in itself' may be complete for the purposes of an insurance company without mentioning the moral badness, but incomplete for moral purposes unless it mentions the moral badness?

Perhaps Hume has in mind a further argument to show that a complete description does not include moral badness. He may argue: (1) If the moral badness of murder is a property of the murder itself, it must be identical to some objective property F-ness (where 'F' is some predicate other than 'moral goodness'). (2) But whatever we choose as F-ness, it is conceivable that two observers agree that murder is F, but disagree about whether it is morally bad. (3) If such disagreement is conceivable, Fness is not identical to its moral badness. (4) Hence no objective property of murder is identical to its moral badness.

This argument begs a question against Price, who does not accept the first premiss. Price agrees with this premiss only if 'complex property' or 'definable property' is substituted in the antecedent for 'property'. With this substitution, Price uses the argument to show that moral properties are simple and indefinable. Hume gives no reason for accepting his

[24] 'Take any action allowed to be vicious: wilful murder, for instance. Examine it in all lights, and see if you can find that matter of fact, or real existence, which you call vice. In which-ever way you take it, you find only certain passions, motives, volitions and thoughts. There is no other matter of fact in the case. The vice entirely escapes you, as long as you consider the object. You never can find it, till you turn your reflexion into your own breast, and find a sentiment of disapprobation, which arises in you, towards this action. Here is a matter of fact; but 'tis the object of feeling, not of reason. It lies in yourself, not in the object.' (*T* iii 1.1.26)

[25] The *Inquiry* offers a similar argument: 'Euclid has fully explained all the qualities of the circle; but has not in any proposition said a word of its beauty.' (App. 1.14). The same example is used in 'Sceptic' §16. Cf. Reid, *EAP* v 7 = H 677 = R 937; Ross, *RG* 120.

[26] See Anscombe, 'Facts'.

first premiss, and so he gives no reason for preferring his account of moral properties over Price's.[27] For similar reasons, Hume's argument might be adapted to support Moore's view that goodness is a simple non-natural property. According to Moore, Hume's first premiss is a mistake that Moore connects with the Naturalistic Fallacy.[28]

If we waive this objection to Hume's first step, and grant that if moral properties are objective, they are also complex and definable, we might still question Hume's third step. Perhaps A and B disagree because B supposes something self-contradictory. In that case, what A believes may still be true, and indeed necessarily true, even if B disagrees with it. Perhaps, then, Hume means to avoid this objection, by claiming that if 'F-ness is badness' can be denied without evident contradiction, F-ness is not identical to badness.

This reply is hardly convincing. Even if it does not appear self-contradictory to suppose that deliberately killing an innocent person is not bad, the deliberate killing may still be the moral badness in the action. We may grant that if two properties are really identical, their identity is necessary, but we need not agree that the necessity is logical necessity.[29]

749. Conceivability and Possibility

But let us concede that if F-ness is badness, 'F-ness is not bad' is self-contradictory. Hume still faces difficulties that raise a wider question about his strategy. He seems to assume that if something appears to be conceivable (murder's not being wrong, for instance), it is conceivable, and is therefore possible.[30] On this point he agrees with Moore's Open Question Argument. Moore maintains that if it does not immediately appear self-contradictory to say that x is F but x is not good, goodness is not F-ness. Both Hume and Moore make it too easy to reject proposed definitions.[31]

Hume's use of this argument is especially surprising in the light of his practical argument. For internalism implies that it is inconceivable, and therefore logically impossible, to judge that doing x is morally right without being moved to do x. If we understood that moral judgments include motivation, we would also understand that what we took to be conceivable is in fact impossible, and therefore inconceivable. If this is a reasonable defence of Hume's practical argument against a claim about conceivability, it suggests an objectivist answer to Hume's metaphysical argument. If we think it is conceivable for something to meet all the conditions for deliberate murder without being bad, we simply show our ignorance of badness.

Hume, therefore, assumes in his metaphysical argument a test for possibility that undermines his practical argument. In the practical argument he assumes that we must

[27] Cf. Price, §814. [28] See Moore, *PE* 72. [29] This point is exploited by Smith, *MP* 25–9.

[30] Stroud, *H* 177–8, argues that Hume faces a difficulty if he claims we can conceive murder without its being wrong: 'But can we really conceive of an act's leading to all that hardship and suffering without its being vicious? Hume must allow that there is a clear sense in which we cannot. According to his theory of human nature, we are so constituted that the contemplation of an act of that kind inevitably leads us to regard it as vicious, so any attempt on our part to conceive of an act with these characteristics without also regarding it as vicious is bound to fail.' Hume might have an answer to this objection. The fact that I cannot think of murder in detail without thinking it is wrong does not mean that I cannot imagine someone thinking of murder without thinking it is wrong; that sort of imaginability seems to meet Hume's normal tests for conceivability when he argues that conceivability implies possibility.

[31] See Moore, *PE* 65.

test and (if necessary) correct intuitions about conceivability in the light of prior judgments about possibility. In the metaphysical argument, however, he assumes that we must form judgments about possibility in the light of prior intuitions about conceivability. Since his assumptions about conceivability and possibility in each case are implicit, he does not see that they conflict. But since they conflict, his practical argument and his metaphysical argument cannot both be sound.

Hume would avoid this dilemma if his practical argument did not rely on the logical impossibility of separating moral judgments from motivation. If he could show that it is simply a well-confirmed empirical generalization that moral judgments motivate by themselves, his practical argument would not rest on a claim about conceivability and possibility that conflicts with the claim underlying his metaphysical argument. We saw, however, that empirical arguments face objections arising from Hume's doctrine of calm passions. He seems to have no easy alternative to an argument from logical impossibility; and therefore he seems to face the dilemma we have described.

750. 'The Object Itself' and Motivation

Hume might try a different objection against the claim that the badness of the murder is a property of the murder itself. He might point out that we could recognize all the properties of the murder itself and still be quite unmoved by them. This argument assumes that the badness of an action must be something that motivates the person making the judgment of badness to condemn the action or to avoid doing it.[32]

This assumption may be present in the parallel argument in 'The Sceptic'. After mentioning Euclid and the circle, the Sceptic considers a mathematician who reads Virgil's *Aeneid* simply to trace Aeneas' journey on a map. Such a reader might understand every Latin word, and might acquire a distinct idea of the whole narrative, without feeling the sentiment that makes us aware of the beauty of the poem.[33] Similarly, a complete grasp of the properties of a murder may not result in the sentiment characteristic of morality.

Hume's argument about the poem seems to assume that we cannot be aware of beauty without feeling the right sentiment.[34] Similarly, he assumes, we cannot recognize the moral properties of an action without being motivated to act. Since we can recognize all the properties of the object itself without being motivated, moral properties are not properties of the object itself.

This interpretation gives Hume the best argument. It offers to explain and to justify the assumption underlying the metaphysical argument. That argument assumes that moral

[32] Stroud, *H* 178–9, interprets the argument about 'the object itself' so that it relies on the practical argument.

[33] 'He knew, therefore, every thing in the poem: But he was ignorant of its beauty; because the beauty, properly speaking, lies not in the poem, but in the sentiment or taste of the reader. And where a man has no such delicacy of temper, as to make him feel this sentiment, he must be ignorant of the beauty, though possessed of the science and understanding of an angel.' ('Sceptic' §17)

[34] This argument might be understood in other ways: (1) The claim that beauty is not an objective property of the poem is a premiss from which we infer that the mathematician knows everything in the poem even without knowing its beauty. (2) The premiss says that he knows everything in the poem, and the conclusion says that beauty is not in the poem. (1) makes the argument useless for proving that beauty is not in the poem. (2) requires us to agree, without being given any reason, that the mathematician knows all the properties in the poem. Neither interpretation provides a good argument.

properties are not among the properties of the object itself, and this assumption is justified because moral properties are essentially connected with motivation, but facts about the object itself could not be essentially connected with motivation. If this is what Hume means, he believes that the practical character of moral judgments gives the basic reason for the failure of objectivism. So understood, the argument closes a gap. We noticed that the metaphysical argument simply assumed that moral goodness could not be a simple objective property, and so left room for Price's view (later revived by Moore). The practical argument closes this gap; a simple objective property would not be essentially connected with motivation, and hence could not be the moral property. Price and Moore can exploit the metaphysical argument to show that goodness is not a complex property describable by some predicate other than 'good', and can still maintain an objectivist conclusion. But they cannot so easily maintain objectivism against the metaphysical argument supported by the practical argument.

Hare's evaluation of Moore helps us to see the role of the practical argument in supporting the metaphysical argument.[35] Price and Moore identify goodness with a simple non-natural property because they take Hume's metaphysical argument (with the first premiss appropriately modified) to show that goodness is an objective property that cannot be identified with any other property. Hare argues that Hume's metaphysical argument (and hence Price's and Moore's argument) against identifying moral properties with ordinary non-moral properties is cogent only because it relies on the practical argument. Once we see this, we see that we cannot reasonably maintain an objectivist account of goodness since (Hare claims) an objective property cannot have the appropriate connexion to motivation. Hare suggests that Moore should not be an objectivist; for Moore's Open Question Argument succeeds because of the practical character ('prescriptivity') of moral judgments, and the practical character rules out objectivism. That is why Hare believes that Moore's rejection of the Naturalistic Fallacy relies on the same basic insight that Hume relies on in his argument against objectivism. Since Moore does not recognize that this is his basic insight, he sticks to an objectivist view. But if Hume intends to rest the metaphysical argument on the practical argument, his account of his argument is similar to Hare's account of Moore.

Since Hume's apparent attempt to rest the metaphysical on the practical argument (in the argument about the poem) is so influential in later meta-ethical argument, we may notice one difficulty that has emerged from our discussion of Hume's claims about conceivability. The internalist claim that moral judgments necessarily involve motivation assumes that non-motivational moral judgments are impossible, and therefore inconceivable, though they appear conceivable. The anti-objectivist claim—that we can know the objective properties of an action without any motivation—assumes that this complete knowledge is conceivable, and therefore possible, because it appears conceivable. Hence the internalist claim relies on a judgment about possibility that is taken to override judgments about apparent conceivability, whereas the anti-objectivist claim relies on a judgment about apparent conceivability to determine possibility. The two mutually destructive claims about conceivability that we noticed in Hume's two arguments now exert their mutually destructive forces within one argument.

[35] See Hare, *LM* 79–93.

This objection to Hume's argument does not rest on a peculiarity of his views about conceivability and possibility. The same objection faces later non-cognitivists who accept both Moore's Open Question Argument and internalism about moral judgments and motivation. Moore's argument relies on apparent conceivability to settle possibility, whereas internalism relies on impossibility to dismiss apparent conceivability. If we ought to rely on the Open Question Argument, we ought to reject internalism; if we ought to accept internalism, we ought to reject the Open Question Argument. This objection is particularly serious for Hare, who relies on internalism to explain the success of Moore's argument.

By anticipating some of the later uses of Hume's arguments, we have seen that he raises questions he does not explore. Since he states them quite briefly and leaves some of the crucial steps implicit, he does not see the conflict in his underlying assumptions. It is easy to suppose that his arguments must be basically right, since they appeal to some plausible suggestions about morality. We may readily agree that morality has some special connexion with motivation and action that distinguishes it from ordinary factual knowledge. We may readily agree that it seems much easier to establish non-moral facts about a situation than to settle moral questions. And we may well find it plausible to combine these plausible suggestions in the further claim that moral judgments are not about objective facts. This line of argument is appealing not only to Hutcheson and Hume, but also to later non-cognitivists who take the practical role of morality to explain why moral judgments cannot be factual judgments about objective properties of things. Since this line of argument is appealing, we may easily suppose that Hume is either right or nearly right in his general views about moral judgments. But it is difficult to make his arguments seem convincing; a little expansion reveals the difficulties that they raise.

751. Anti-realism: Hume and Hutcheson

After Hume has denied that moral judgments are about any matter of fact 'in the object', he says what they are really about.[36] Though we may suppose we attribute some property to the external situation, we are really talking about our feeling of approval or disapproval. The objectivist makes the mistake we would make if we thought that irritating people have a special property of irritatingness that they have independently of whether they irritate other people. But in fact, when we say that an action is right or wrong, we really refer both to the non-moral properties of the action, distinct from its rightness or wrongness, and to our sentiment towards the action.[37]

Hume believes that this account of moral judgment allows us to identify an error he has found 'in every system of morality, which I have hitherto met with' (iii 1.1.27).[38] He

[36] 'When you pronounce any action or character to be vicious, you mean nothing, but that from the constitution of your nature you have a feeling or sentiment of blame from the contemplation of it.' (*T* iii 1.1.26)

[37] 'Morality . . . is more properly felt than judged of, though this feeling or sentiment is commonly so soft and gentle, that we are apt to confound it with an idea . . .' (*T* iii 1.2.1)

[38] MacIntyre, 'Ought' 258–60, appeals to Hume's reference to 'vulgar systems of morality' to argue that Hume is not attacking other philosophical theories, but popular moral views (which MacIntyre illustrates from Allestree [?], *WDM*; cf. §726). But Hume's reference to every system he has ever met with casts doubt on MacIntyre's argument. 'Vulgar' probably just means 'commonly known', so that it includes philosophical theories. In any case, the end of the paragraph

exaggerates; for he is familiar with Hutcheson, and agrees with him about the nature of moral properties, even citing his comparison of moral properties to secondary qualities.[39] Since reflexion on Hutcheson probably influenced Hume's philosophical development, we might expect him to have mentioned Hutcheson here.[40] His silence is less surprising, however, in the light of a similar silence about Hutcheson in the discussion of reason and passion. There too Hume speaks as though he rejected a long-standing consensus on the other side; he does not mention that he agrees with Hutcheson.

In *A Letter from a Gentleman*, however, Hume acknowledges Hutcheson. To the charge that his system saps 'the foundations of morality' (*LG* 18) Hume answers that the charge applies no more to him than to Hutcheson and to the ancient philosophers, since they also recognize the role of sentiments.[41] The reference to Hutcheson is apposite in a letter that answers the charge that Hume's views on morality and religion made him unfit for a university chair in moral philosophy in Scotland. It is especially apposite in the light of Hutcheson's opinion that Hume was unfit for such a chair.[42]

Still, Hume's acknowledgment of Hutcheson is not simply a defence of himself in this particular controversy. He also acknowledges Hutcheson at the beginning of the *First Inquiry*.[43] In attributing sentimentalism to the ancients, he agrees with his suggestion in the *Second Inquiry* that the ancient moralists are sentimentalists in the details of their theory, despite their official rationalism.[44] He may also be alluding to Hutcheson's claim that anti-rationalism about practical reason is the ancient and scholastic view, and that the modern rationalists are innovators.

This passage in the letter confirms what we would gather in any case from the *Treatise*, that Hume means to defend Hutcheson's position. We need not suppose that his failure to mention Hutcheson and his reference to 'all systems' indicate an attempt to conceal

('this small attention would subvert all the vulgar systems of morality, and let us see, that the distinction of vice and virtue is not founded merely on the relations of objects, nor is perceived by reason') shows that Hume intends his argument to undermine the philosophical theories he has been discussing in this chapter.

[39] See Raphael, 'Rationalism'. The comparison with secondary qualities, and its significance for Hume's view of moral properties, are explored in detail by Sturgeon, 'Scepticism'.

[40] Kemp Smith, *PDH*, esp. chs. 1–2, 6, 9, explores the influence of Hutcheson on the development of Hume's views.

[41] 'He [sc. Hume] hath indeed denied the eternal difference of right and wrong, in the sense in which Clarke and Wollaston maintained them, viz. that the propositions of morality were of the same nature with the truths of mathematics and the abstract sciences, the objects merely of reason, not the feelings of our internal tastes and sentiments. In this opinion he concurs with all the ancient moralists, as well as with Mr Hutchinson, Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Glasgow, who, with others, has revived the ancient philosophy in this particular.' (*LG* 30)

[42] On the election to the chair of philosophy in Edinburgh see the letter of 1744, Greig, *Letters* i #24. Hume expresses surprise at Hutcheson's position: 'The accusation of heresy, deism, scepticism, atheism, etc etc etc, was started against me; but never took, being bore down by the contrary authority of all the good company in town. But what surprised me extremely was to find that this accusation was supported by the pretended authority of Mr Hutcheson and even Mr Leechman, who, 'tis said, agreed that I was a very unfit person for such an office. This appears to be absolutely incredible, especially with regard to the latter gentleman. For as to Mr Hutcheson, all my friends think that he has been rendering me bad offices to the utmost of his power . . . What can be the meaning of this conduct in that celebrated and benevolent moralist, I cannot imagine.' One might have expected Hume to be less surprised, given his previous correspondence with Hutcheson. Hume's replies show that Hutcheson had expressed reservations about Hume's lack of warmth towards morality, and had offered Hume advice about toning down some passages in the *Treatise*. See §758. Mossner, *LDH*, ch. 12, describes the election in Edinburgh. Stewart, *KI*, offers a more recent account. He remarks that 'there was a theological agenda to Hutcheson's ethics that is deliberately lacking in Hume, and . . . there was a degree of "self-concern" in Hume's account of moral motivation that would have been anathema to Hutcheson' (12).

[43] See *IHU*, ed. Hendel, 23. [44] See §725.

his agreement with Hutcheson. On the contrary, Hume may simply have refrained from mentioning Hutcheson (as he often refrains from mentioning modern authors) because he expects his readers to be familiar with Hutcheson. It may be worth keeping his agreement with Hutcheson in mind when we consider any difficulties that may arise in interpreting the position that Hume reaches.

752. Is and Ought: Different Interpretations

Some difficulties of interpretation arise in the observation about 'is' and 'ought' that Hume appends to his anti-objectivist conclusion.[45] Other moralists make claims about facts about the world and go on to claim that something ought or not to be done. Instead of speaking of what is, they suddenly go on to speak of what ought to be. How are we entitled to make this transition from what is the case to what ought to be done, from the non-moral properties of things to their moral properties? Hume thinks this question about how we get from 'is' to 'ought' is a devastating question to raise about 'the vulgar systems of morality', and shows us that moral distinctions are not perceived by reason. Readers differ, however, about whether he raises this question in order to show that the transition from 'is' to 'ought' cannot be made, or to show how he can make it though other people cannot.[46]

Hume speaks of the view that 'ought' could be a 'deduction' from other relations that are different from it. This might suggest to us that he is concerned with deductive validity, and asking how 'ought' statements can follow deductively from 'is' statements. But he does not seem to intend such a narrow question.[47] For the paragraph that discusses 'is' and 'ought' immediately follows the paragraph in which Hume claims to show not only that morality does not consist in demonstrable relations 'that are the objects of science', but also that it does not consist in 'any matter of fact, which can be discovered by the understanding' (iii 1.1.26). He implies that moral properties cannot be discovered by reasoning about matters of fact (which, in his view, is not reasoning, strictly speaking).

He therefore attacks not only the cognitivist views of moral properties that take moral knowledge to be demonstrative, but also those that take it to be non-demonstrative knowledge about matters of fact. Since the paragraph on 'is' and 'ought' (27) is so closely connected with this one (26), it applies to the claim that non-deductive inferences about matters of fact grasped by reason can justify moral conclusions.

Hume might be taken to intend any one of these arguments: (1) The transition from 'is' to 'ought' not only 'seems altogether inconceivable' but is indeed altogether inconceivable;

[45] 'I cannot forbear adding to these reasonings an observation, which may, perhaps, be found of some importance, In every system of morality, which I have hitherto met with, I have always remarked, that the author proceeds for some time in the ordinary way of reasoning, and establishes the being of a God, or makes observations concerning human affairs; when of a sudden I am surprised to find, that instead of the usual copulation of propositions, *is* and *is not*, I meet with no proposition that is not connected with an *ought* or an *ought not*. This change is imperceptible; but is, however, of the last consequence.' (iii 1.1.27)

[46] The crucial passage is obscure: 'For as this *ought*, or *ought not*, expresses some new relation or affirmation, 'tis necessary that it should be observed and explained; and at the same time that a reason should be given, for what seems altogether inconceivable, how this new relation can be a deduction from others, which are entirely different from it.' (iii 1.1.27) This immediately follows the passage quoted above.

[47] MacIntyre, 'Ought' 253–4, suggests that Hume uses 'deduction' to refer to any kind of inference.

for if we could make this transition, we would show that moral distinctions are matters of fact grasped by reason. (2) What seems inconceivable is not inconceivable. We can make the transition if and only if we supply the right kind of 'is', referring to the feeling of the spectator. The fact that we need to supply this kind of 'is' shows that the cognitivist position is mistaken.[48] (3) What seems inconceivable is inconceivable. But what seems inconceivable is not every transition from 'is' to 'ought', but the transition from 'is' judgments about God or human affairs to 'ought' judgments. In this instance, the 'ought' expresses some new relation or affirmation that is illegitimate, because the relations from which one claims to derive it are entirely different from it. But 'is' statements about the feelings of the spectator refer to relations that are not entirely different from those referred to in 'ought' statements, and in these cases the transition to 'ought' is legitimate.

It is difficult to decide between these accounts of Hume's challenge, because he leaves some other aspects of his position quite uncertain. It is especially difficult to decide what he includes in 'is' and 'is not'. He should not include all sentences containing 'is' without 'ought'; for if he included them all, he would count 'x is good' and 'x is right' as 'is' judgments. But he does not suggest that the transition from 'It is right for me to do x' to 'I ought to do x' is questionable. Hence, he does not count judgments including 'is good' and 'is right' as 'is judgments'.

But how many other judgments are to be ruled out? What about judgments involving (so-called) 'thick' moral concepts, such as 'This is brave', or 'This is considerate' or 'This is deliberate and unprovoked murder'? One might argue that these are 'is' judgments, and that from them some 'ought' judgments can be legitimately derived (if they are understood as 'ought, some things considered' or 'ought, unless something more important counts against it'). These judgments raise a question parallel to the question that arose from Hume's claim that we can know all the properties of an action in itself without knowing whether it is right or wrong. If he disallows the predicates we have mentioned, by objecting that they allow the derivation of an 'ought' judgment and so cannot be 'is' judgments, he argues in a circle. But if he does not disallow them on this ground, we seem to have found 'is' judgments that give us a legitimate transition to 'ought'.

But let us waive this objection, and assume (contrary to fact) that we can satisfactorily identify the non-evaluative predicates that are allowed to appear in 'is' judgments. Hume may intend a further restriction of 'is'. The only examples of 'is' judgments that he gives are about the existence of a God or 'human affairs'. These are judgments about external objects. They are also judgments about matters of fact, but they are not the only such judgments. When we find a 'sentiment of disapprobation', this is a matter of fact, but 'an object of feeling, not of reason'. Hence some matters of fact are not objects of reason. He has also previously allowed this in saying that morality does not consist 'in any matter of fact, which can be discovered by the understanding' (26). The 'which' clause leaves open the possibility of other matters of fact, and this possibility is actualized in the reference to matters of fact that are objects of feeling.

Here Hume denies that the moral property is a property of, say, the wilful murder itself. But he does not make it clear whether matters of fact that are objects of feeling can be

[48] The first position is Atkinson's in 'Ought', and the second MacIntyre's in 'Ought'.

described in 'is' statements. He commits himself more definitely in his summary of the argument about 'is' and 'ought', when he asserts that the distinction of vice and virtue is not founded merely on the relations of 'objects'.[49] If this assertion states the point of the argument about 'is' and 'ought', we would expect 'is' judgments to be judgments about 'objects'. Now he could hardly deny that it is founded on relations of objects, if 'objects of feeling' count as objects; for he has not denied that moral properties are founded on relations of actions to sentiments. Hence he uses 'objects' in the more restrictive sense that he used in saying that the vice escapes us as long as we consider the object (26). He means 'external objects', in contrast to the 'objects of feeling' that we find when we turn our reflexion into our own breast.

Hume, therefore, seems to identify objective states of affairs with 'objects of reason', 'any matter of fact which can be discovered by the understanding', and 'matters of fact whose existence we can infer by reason'. These are a proper subset of matters of fact. He does not explicitly say whether the proper subset or the whole set is described by 'is' judgments. But if the argument about 'is' and 'ought' shows something about inferences from objective states of affairs to moral conclusions, the 'is' judgments should be about objective states of affairs.

This is still not quite right, however. We might take objective states of affairs to be contrasted with subjective conditions whose existence depends on the mental state of the subject of the condition. But Hume takes some of these subjective conditions to be among conditions that are 'in the object'. For judgments about matters of fact 'in the object' include judgments about 'certain passions, motives, volitions and thoughts' (26). Hence these should also be 'is' judgments.

Perhaps, then, Hume takes 'is' judgments to include judgments about subjective states of subjects other than the subject making the judgment. When I make judgments about other people's mental states, the truth of my judgment does not depend on my thoughts and feelings (though it depends on theirs); hence these are judgments about 'the object' and are 'is' judgments. They are included among the 'is' judgments from which people claim to derive 'ought' judgments. Hume's contrast is intelligible, if 'is' judgments involve the facts of the situation (including the mental states of the agents involved) apart from the reaction of an observer who makes these judgments. While this narrow use of 'is' and this broad use of 'in the objects' may confuse us, it is not surprising. Hume takes the scope of 'is' judgments to be defined by the claims of the 'vulgar systems' that he sets out to refute.

753. Is and Ought: Hume's View

If this is Hume's conception of 'is' judgments, what is his answer to his question about deriving 'ought' from 'is'? We might suppose that he thinks the vulgar systems fail to derive 'ought' from 'is' because they do not set out from the right 'is' judgments; they would derive 'ought' successfully, on this view, if the 'is' judgments included 'is' judgments

[49] 'But as authors do not commonly use this precaution, I shall presume to recommend it to the readers; and am persuaded, that this small attention would subvert all the vulgar systems of morality, and let us see, that the distinction of vice and virtue is not founded merely on the relations of objects, nor is perceived by reason.' (iii 1.1.27)

about the reactions of the subject.[50] This view of Hume's conclusion, however, conflicts with his restriction of 'is' judgments to facts about 'the object' in the sense we have explained.

Probably, then, Hume claims that 'ought' cannot be derived from 'is'. Admittedly, he says only that the derivation 'seems altogether inconceivable', not that it is inconceivable. But he says it seems altogether inconceivable 'how this new relation can be a deduction from others, which are entirely different from it'. He claims that the relation involved in 'is' judgments is entirely different from the relation involved in 'ought' judgments, not merely that it seems entirely different. If he allowed 'is' judgments to include judgments about our reactions, the relations they involve would not be entirely different from those involved in 'ought' judgments. Hence he does not treat judgments about our reactions as 'is' judgments. He confines 'is' judgments to those about objective states of affairs, those that involve 'relations of objects'. His account of moral judgments does not embody a legitimate transition from 'is' to 'ought', since it does not involve a derivation of the 'ought' relation from others that are entirely different from it. The 'ought' judgment is not derived from 'is' judgments alone, but from 'is' judgments plus judgments about our reactions.

But what is the 'ought' judgment? In declaring that moral properties are objects of feeling rather than reason, Hume compares them with the Lockean view (as Hutcheson understands it)[51] that secondary qualities 'are not qualities in objects but perceptions in the mind' (iii 1.1.26). If this parallel is exact, moral properties are also perceptions in the mind. In that case, they are not feelings and reactions, but judgments about them, just as the judgment that something is red is not itself the sensation of red. Since Hume takes a belief to be simply 'a lively idea, related to or associated with a present impression' (i 3.7.5), a moral judgment should be the lively idea associated with the sentiment of approval or disapproval.

If this view is right, Hume takes his discussion of 'is' and 'ought' to show that moral judgments are beliefs with a particular subject-matter, and that they are expressed by statements; they report and describe the spectator's reaction to actions and people.

754. Do Hume's Arguments Support Non-cognitivism?

Some readers, however, have drawn a different moral from the argument, because they take the division between 'is' and 'ought' to mark the division between the descriptive and the evaluative, or between indicatives and imperatives, or between judgments and sentiments. According to this view, Hume argues for a non-cognitivist account of moral judgments, and identifies them with the moral sentiments, not with judgments about them. This section of the *Treatise* has often been cited in the 20th century as an expression of an important insight. According to 'Hume's Law', no moral judgment follows from non-moral judgments, because no imperatives follow from indicatives.[52] Hume, therefore, discovers the logical

[50] This interpretation is suggested by Williams, reported by Hunter, 'Reply' 288–90, and rejected by Flew, 'Not proven' 293.

[51] See Hutcheson, §642.

[52] See Hare, *LM* 29–30.

gap between facts and values. These readers of Hume have taken the basic logical point to be closely connected to Moore's discovery of the naturalistic fallacy, as they understand it, and (in contrast to Moore) have taken it to support non-cognitivism. Since moral concepts and properties are not identical to any natural concepts and properties, we cannot validly derive moral from non-moral judgments.

A non-cognitivist interpretation gains only superficial support from Hume's use of 'is' and 'ought'. We have seen that his use of 'is' in the relevant contexts narrows the range of 'is' judgments to only a subset of statements containing 'is'. When I describe my own feelings, I make a statement, but I do not make one of Hume's 'is' judgments. The fact that he contrasts 'ought' with 'is' does not show that he means to distinguish the imperative from the indicative.

A better argument for a non-cognitivist interpretation rests on Hume's practical argument. This argument succeeds only if moral judgments by themselves are practical. But Hume's argument about reason and passion implies that the only mental items that are practical by themselves are passions. Hence moral judgments must be passions. If judgments about passions are distinguishable from passions, they do not motivate us in their own right. Even if they are simply lively ideas accompanying present impressions, and therefore inseparable from the passions they accompany, they depend on the passions for motivation. The practical argument, therefore, favours a non-cognitivist interpretation.

If this is true, the practical and the metaphysical argument seem to favour different conclusions. The passage on 'is' and 'ought' sums up the metaphysical argument. It concludes that moral judgments are beliefs about one's sentiments, not about objective facts. The practical argument suggests that moral judgments are really not beliefs at all, but sentiments. The difference between these accounts of moral judgments may not be clear to Hume. He argues that 'the vice entirely escapes you, as long as you consider the object' (iii 1.1.26); this is true whichever way he treats moral judgments. But it is not clear whether we make the moral judgment in describing and reporting our sentiment or in feeling it.

It is reasonable, then, for non-cognitivists to claim that Hume has anticipated them, and their claims should not be dismissed as anachronistic.[53] They ought not to claim that Hume is a non-cognitivist, since some of his arguments seem to support a subjectivist descriptive view of moral judgments. But they are right to claim that he offers arguments that support a non-cognitivist conclusion. The argument about 'is' and 'ought' supports non-cognitivism no better than it supports subjectivism, but the practical argument supports non-cognitivism.

The difference between subjectivism and non-cognitivism is probably not obvious to Hume, partly because it is not always clear whether he is discussing moral properties or moral virtues or moral judgments. He sets out from the general claim that 'morals' influence action, and his doctrine seeks to embody this claim by showing that 'morals' essentially include sentiments, so that we miss moral goodness and badness until we attend to our sentiments. But this might be true either because (1) 'morals' are moral judgments, which are essentially sentiments, or because (2) 'morals' are moral properties, which are sentiments, whereas moral judgments are first-person beliefs about these sentiments.

[53] Contrast Stroud, *H* 265n.

Hume's metaphysical argument and his discussion of 'is' and 'ought' favour a subjectivist view, whereas the practical argument favours a non-cognitivist view.

We need not, however, confine ourselves to Hume's arguments against objectivism and rationalism about moral properties and moral judgments. We may be able to understand his views more exactly by examining some details of his positive view of the nature of moral judgments and of their subject matter.

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HUME: THE MORAL SENSE

755. Anti-realism and Sentimentalism

After rejecting cognitivist and objectivist views, Hume maintains that moral distinctions are not derived from reason, but from a moral sense. We must turn our reflexion into our own breast (iii 1.1.26), to our sentiments of approval and disapproval. This reference to our approval and disapproval introduces a moral sense.

This conclusion rests in different ways on Hume's practical and his metaphysical argument. Only the practical argument shows that the moral sense itself makes the moral judgment, because there is nothing to the moral judgment beyond the feeling of approval that belongs to the moral sense. This is Hume's position, if he sees the connexion between internalism and non-cognitivism. He relies on his view that 'morals' influence passions and actions. In saying this he might intend either of two claims: (1) The existence of moral goodness involves someone's having a motive to act on it. (2) The judgment that an action is morally good involves being motivated to do it.

The first view makes goodness something like sound, on the assumption that there are no unheard sounds. It would not be possible, on this view, for an action to be morally good if no one felt approval for it, since this feeling of approval is necessary (according to Hume) for motivation. The second view does not make this claim about moral properties directly, but appeals to the connexion between moral judgments and motivation.

The metaphysical argument also introduces the moral sense. It argues that moral properties do not consist in matters of fact 'in the object', independent of the reactions of the spectator; hence objectivism is false. Moral properties consist at least in part in the feelings of a spectator, and these feelings, in Hume's view, belong to a moral sense. It does not follow, however, from this argument that moral judgments are the reactions of a moral sense. Our grasp of moral properties might be purely cognitive, not involving any feeling of approval; it might be a report of the reactions of observers, either ourselves or other people. If I am both the judge and the observer, my moral judgment reports my feeling of approval, but the judgment may be distinct from the feeling of approval.

We have also noticed a version of the metaphysical argument that relies on the practical argument: (1) If a moral judgment were wholly about a (purported) a matter of fact in the object, it would be logically possible for us to recognize that matter of fact without

being motivated by it. (2) If this were logically possible, moral judgments would not involve motivation. (3) Hence moral judgments cannot be wholly about any property of the object itself. If this is Hume's argument, he assumes that the motivating character of moral judgments is a logically necessary truth derived from the content of the judgments themselves. He cannot agree that it is a contingent truth about the making of the judgments in normal circumstances. This is the version of the metaphysical argument that Hume offers in 'The Sceptic'.[1]

None of these arguments supports the introduction of a moral sense unless Hume is right to suppose that moral judgments are logically connected with a reaction of approval; anything weaker than a claim of logical necessity leaves room for objective and cognitive views of moral judgments. For many judgments with different contents, made in the right conditions, can be used to express a speaker's motives, but the motivation need not be logically connected with the contents of the judgments. 'This aspirin will make my headache go away', said in the right conditions, often indicates a desire to take the aspirin, but it is neither a judgment about my desire nor an expression of desire; it is a statement about the objective causal properties of the aspirin. Similarly, then, a sincere utterance of a moral judgment by normal agents is usually evidence that they are inclined to the appropriate action, but the judgment need not be about their feeling of approval and need not express their inclinations.[2] Many objectivist views can explain why assumptions about approval and motivation are usually plausible, given the specific objective facts that moral judgments are about. Hume's conclusion follows only if we are entitled to assume that the connexion between judgment and approval is logically necessary.

Whichever of these accounts of Hume's arguments is correct, his conclusion rejects objectivism; he denies that moral goodness and badness, rightness and wrongness, consist in any properties that things have independently of the reactions of an observer. A moral property exists only if the observer has the appropriately favourable or unfavourable sentiment in response to it.[3] This is what Hume means in claiming that we cannot find the virtue or vice until we find the relevant sentiment within our own breasts.

Though he rejects objectivism, he does not deny that moral judgments are about objective features of things. If I judge that this benevolent action is right, or that this murder is wrong, I rely on a judgment that this action is benevolent or that action is an unprovoked killing of an innocent victim. But though I make the judgment about the moral property on the basis of these judgments about objective properties of the action and the people involved, my judgment about the moral property does not regard it as an objective property.[4] The moral property exists only if the observer has the relevant sort of response.

[1] See §748.

[2] See further Harrison, *HME* 15; Warnock, *CMP* 36–9 (a short and clear discussion of different ways of explaining the action-guiding force of moral judgments, equally applicable to questions about their motivating force).

[3] This needs to be qualified in the light of what Hume says about the postulated observer; see §§761–2.

[4] Norton, *DH* 120, overlooks this vital distinction. Hence he attributes 'moral realism' to Hume because of 'the view that there are moral distinctions grounded in real existences that are independent of the observer's mind . . .'. He is right in attributing this view to Hume if 'grounded in' means simply that our moral sentiments are excited by these real existences (killing of an innocent victim, e.g.). But to recognize that moral distinctions are grounded in real existences only in this sense is not to be a moral realist. Norton does not face the further question, whether moral properties themselves are (as opposed to being in some sense 'grounded in') real existences; but that is the question one needs to answer to decide whether Hume is a moral realist.

Hume does not mean that goodness or badness consists simply in the feeling of the observer. If he did mean this, his view would have absurd results; one might argue that if this is where the badness of murder is found, I acquire the badness of murder, and so become bad, simply by having a feeling of disapproval.[5] Hume means that the badness of the murder consists in the deliberate killing of an innocent victim and the resulting disapproval by the observer; he does not mean that the badness would exist if the feeling of disapproval existed but no murder had been committed.

756. The Meaning of Moral Judgments

If Hume reaches an anti-objectivist conclusion, what is his conclusion about? Is it about the meaning of moral judgments, and hence about the metaphysical claims that they imply? Or is it about the nature of moral facts themselves? His claim that in making a moral judgment about an action we 'mean' only that we have a sentiment about it does not answer all our questions.[6] For we might take the claim in at least three ways: (1) Moral judgments are statements about the speaker's feelings. (2) Moral judgments are not statements about feelings, but expressions of feelings. (3) When we make moral judgments, we are only talking about (referring to) feelings.

The first view faces a simple objection. If you judge an action to be right, and I judge the same action to be wrong, but I mean that I disapprove of the action and you mean that you approve of it, my judgment that the action is wrong does not contradict your judgment that it is right. But in fact we think the two judgments are contradictory. This is a good reason for supposing that Hume has not given the right account of the meaning of a moral judgment. Our view about when moral judgments contradict each other seems to presuppose that we take them to be judgments about 'the objects themselves', and not about our reactions.

Still, Hume has strong theoretical reasons for accepting this account of the meaning of a moral judgment. For, in his view, the meaning of the constituent terms must consist in some idea that is derived from some impression. What impression can underlie the idea expressed by 'ought' or 'right'? In his view, it cannot be any impression of the external world that is gained by the senses. All that can be left is an internal impression belonging to a passion. Hence, apparently, the meaning of the judgment that an action is wrong is some feature of our own passions.

The difficulty Hume faces here recalls his account of causation.[7] He recognizes that we seem to have an idea of a causal relation 'in the objects' that is more than temporal precedence and constant conjunction. Since this seems to be part of what we mean in speaking of a cause, some idea must correspond to our use of 'cause', and this idea must be derived from some impression. But the only impression Hume can find is our impression of the transition we immediately make from the idea of the first event to that of the second;

[5] See Stroud, *H*181.

[6] 'When you pronounce any action or character to be vicious, you mean nothing, but that from the constitution of your nature you have a feeling or sentiment of blame from the contemplation of it.' (iii 1.1.26)

[7] The comparison between moral judgments and judgments about causation is explored by Beck, ' "Was" '. See also Stroud, *H*176–9.

this is an impression that we mistakenly 'spread on external objects' (i 3.14.23). We have no idea of any necessary connexion in objects, since we have no impression of it.

If meanings correspond to ideas, it is difficult to see how we can mean that causation involves necessary connexion in objects. But we must be able to mean this if we are to say (falsely, in Hume's view) that causation is necessary connexion in objects. This difficulty that Hume faces points to a general difficulty in his attempt to connect meaning with ideas and impressions.

A similar difficulty seems to arise for moral properties. For he has argued that though some people think moral properties exist in objects, they are wrong, because we have no impression of them there. We have an impression of them only in ourselves, when we turn to our sentiments. Hence objectivists about moral properties seem to be similar to believers in objective necessary connexions; they mistakenly spread a feature of our minds on external objects.

But if Hume believes that objectivists spread a feature of our minds on external objects, how can he be right to say that our idea of moral properties is an idea of our own reactions? If objectivists have the false belief Hume says they have, must they not have some idea of moral properties in objects? Their false belief seems to presuppose such an idea, since the false belief seems to mean something, if Hume can contradict it.

Perhaps Hume need not accept this objection. In his view, the spreading of moral distinctions on objects is logically similar to the spreading of pleasures and pains on the objects that cause them. We do not normally spread pleasure and pain on objects; if I take a knife with wet green paint on it and stick it into my finger, I suppose that the green paint has passed from the knife to my finger but I do not suppose that a sharp pain has passed from the knife to my finger. This is because most of us clearly understand a pain as a sensation that cannot belong to a non-sentient object. But since we do not understand our moral ideas so clearly, we find ourselves saying things that are strictly self-contradictory, when we say that actions themselves are right or wrong.

This view that objectivists implicitly contradict themselves might allow Hume to explain why they disagree with his account of moral properties. It leads us into other questions about his conception of meanings and ideas, especially about the extent to which ideas are transparent to their subject.

The second view of what we 'mean' in speaking of moral rightness makes moral judgments into expressions of sentiments, rather than statements about them. This is the non-cognitivist interpretation of Hume's position. We have already considered some of the reasons for and against ascribing this view to Hume. Further discussion of non-cognitivism is better postponed until we come to more explicit statements and defences of it than we can find in Hume. In particular, we will want to consider whether later non-cognitivists are right to suppose that non-cognitivism does better than subjectivism in accounting for features of moral judgment that seem to favour objectivism. They claim, for instance, that non-cognitivism gives a better account of the apparent contradiction resulting from your saying that this action is wrong and my saying it is not wrong. Non-cognitivism implies that we express opposed attitudes towards the action, and that this why our judgments seem to be contradictory. We may well doubt whether this explanation gives non-cognitivism a significant advantage over subjectivism.

These two interpretations of Hume's claim about what we 'mean' both assume that he seeks to give an account of the meaning of moral terms. But the third interpretation is also worth considering, since it rejects that assumption. By 'mean' he may simply mean 'refer to' or 'talk about'. In that case he does not consider the semantics of moral terms, but makes the ontological claim that all we are talking about is our reaction to the action that we say is morally good or bad. We do not identify any further objective property beyond its non-moral properties, because it has no objective moral properties. According to this view, objectivists may have grasped the meaning of moral judgments, but they are wrong about the objective existence of moral properties of things.

This ontological interpretation captures part of Hume's position. Should it be preferred to the interpretation that also ascribes to him a claim about the meaning of moral judgments?

757. An 'Error Theory' of Moral Judgments?

We would have a good reason to prefer the third interpretation if we thought that Hume argues for a sceptical or nihilist conclusion about moral properties. According to this view, the meaning of our moral judgments implies that the objects themselves have moral properties, but, in Hume's view, the implication is false.[8] Objectivists are right about the meaning of moral judgments; hence they are right to say that moral properties, if they exist, are objective properties; but they are wrong to believe that there are any such properties.

One might regard Hume's eventual view of causation as an error theory. If he believes that objective necessary connexion is part of our concept of cause, but there are no necessary connexions, he should conclude that there are no causal connexions, and that we are mistaken in believing there are any. This conclusion does not commit him to giving up judgments about causal connexions; for he does not suppose that we give up, or ought to give up, all judgments that are undermined by sceptical or nihilist philosophical arguments.

It is doubtful, however, whether Hume regards his account of causation as an error theory; probably he does not agree that the concept of cause includes an objective necessary connexion. But his views about personal identity seem to attribute an error to common sense. He does not try to explain how our judgments about the identity of a person through time are true within his theory, but he tries to show how we can be misled into false beliefs (*T* i 4.6.5–7). He does not advise us to give up making the claims and assumptions about identity that rest on false beliefs. He takes our ordinary beliefs to rest on a tenacious error.

Does he hold such a view about moral judgments? He believes some people are wedded to a false assumption about the objectivity of moral properties. And he sees that false assumptions can affect concepts and meanings. He believes that, because of the malign influence of divines who recognize only voluntary states as moral virtues, 'reasoning, and even language, have been warped from their natural course' (*IPM*, App. 4.21).[9] If all the systems of morality Hume has ever met assume the legitimacy of a transition from external

[8] Mackie, *E* 42–6, defends an error theory, and in *HMT* 71–5 attributes to Hume some tendency towards such a theory (while recognizing the imprecision of Hume's actual views).

[9] See §§726, 776.

facts to moral properties, one might expect that language would have been warped by the prevalence of such systems. If it has been warped in this way, our moral concepts are concepts of objective moral properties of external objects, but, since external objects have no objective moral properties, there are no moral properties or facts. In that case, Hume ought to reach a nihilist conclusion.

He does not reach this conclusion, however. Though he acknowledges that the vulgar systems of morality are objectivist, he does not suggest that they are right about our moral concepts. In this respect our moral beliefs are different from our beliefs about personal identity, so that we do not refute them by refuting the belief in objective moral properties. Hume does not argue that if we believe colours are not features of objects, we should take a nihilist view of colours; he assumes that we have discovered the real character of colours. He assumes, then, that it is not essential to a tomato's being red that the redness belongs to the tomato itself. Similarly, he assumes that it is not essential to moral properties to be properties of the external objects themselves. If the first interpretation of what we 'mean' is correct, he holds that it is essential to moral properties to be subjective. If the first interpretation is wrong, he may hold that neither subjectivity nor objectivity is essential to moral properties.

In Hume's view, moral properties are essentially connected to motivation. His conviction is expressed in his internalism. It supports his denial of objectivism. If he had believed that moral properties are essentially both objective and motivational, his argument to show that these two features are incompatible would have shown that there are no moral properties. But since he does not take objectivity to be essential to moral properties, he avoids scepticism and nihilism.

Hume has a strong reason, therefore, not to hold an error theory. In rejecting rationalism and objectivism, he takes himself to reject the errors of philosophers, not the errors of ordinary moral agents and judges. He takes the presumed existence of moral goodness and badness to be part of ordinary life. His task is to find what moral goodness and badness consist in, not whether there are any such things.[10]

A sympathetic reader will consider Hume's degree of success in this task. We may fairly compare Hume's account of moral properties and moral judgments with ordinary conceptions of morality, to see how well it fits them. But we should leave open the possibility of adapting his views to support an error theory, so that his sentimentalism might offer a replacement of morality rather than an account of it.

758. A Correction of Hutcheson

Though Hume is not a nihilist or sceptic, he does not suppose that his rejection of objectivism leaves our other beliefs about morality unchanged. In fact, he believes that the implications of sentimentalism are broader than Hutcheson recognizes. He believes (as the *Letter from a*

[10] Mackie (just cited) holds an error theory, and to that extent disagrees with Hume (though not with Hume as Mackie interprets him). But he agrees with Hume in claiming that his philosophical theory does not undermine first-order morality. It is more difficult for Mackie than for Hume to defend this claim.

Gentleman shows) that his argument about the nature of moral distinctions is a defence of Hutcheson's sentimentalist position; for he takes that to be the only subjectivist option worth considering once objectivist views have been refuted. But Hutcheson does not appreciate all the implications of his sentimentalism, and does not notice how some of them undermine the conciliatory position that Hutcheson takes towards objectivism.

In a letter to Hutcheson, Hume asks for advice about the passage where Hume claims that moral properties lack objective reality, just as secondary qualities do. He wonders whether this passage is 'laid a little too strong', and asks Hutcheson whether it is prudent to publish it in that form.[11] He does not say why he thinks it would be imprudent to state his anti-objectivist doctrine forthrightly; it seems to go no further than Hutcheson has already gone in his comparison of moral properties to secondary qualities.[12]

Hume might reasonably believe, however, that Hutcheson is inexplicit about the subjectivist implications of his position. In his early work Hutcheson defends Shaftesbury's 'realist' position. He does not explicitly abandon that position in *Illustrations*, even though he affirms the subjective character of moral properties. He insists that his position does not question the 'reality' of our moral ideas, any more than it questions the reality of our idea of pleasure. By this he means that the idea of pleasure is a real and distinct idea, even though pleasure is subjective.[13] This sort of 'reality', however, is not the whole of Shaftesbury's moral realism; for Shaftesbury also treats moral properties as objective.[14] Hutcheson does not retain the objectivist element in Shaftesbury's realism, though he does not explicitly reject it either.

Perhaps, then, Hume believes that his denial of objectivism is more explicit than Hutcheson's. He insists that it has little or no influence on practice, because our ideas of pleasure and pain are real, and matter to us. This is a weaker claim than Hutcheson's affirmation of the reality of our moral ideas. Hume may suggest, therefore, that his own statement of his position disavows Shaftesbury's realism more clearly than Hutcheson disavows it. Hutcheson's reassuring remark that he is not denying the reality of moral ideas suggests that someone might suspect that subjectivism undermines morality. Hume's reassuring remark that subjectivism about moral properties has little or no influence on practice seems to be directed at the same sort of suspicion. The suspicion is expressed openly by the opponents of Hume who are cited in *A Letter from a Gentleman*.[15]

[11] 'I must consult you in a point of prudence . . . [Hume quotes part of *T* iii 1.26] Is not this laid a little too strong? I desire your opinion of it, though I cannot entirely promise to conform myself to it.' (Letter to Hutcheson, 16 Mar. 1740 = Greig #16 = R634) The passage from which Hume quotes is this: 'Vice and virtue, therefore, may be compared to sounds, colours, heat and cold, which, according to modern philosophy, are not qualities in objects, but perceptions in the mind: And this discovery in morals, like that other in physics, is to be regarded as a considerable advancement of the speculative sciences; though, like that too, it has little or no influence on practice. Nothing can be more real, or concern us more, than our own sentiments of pleasure and uneasiness; and if these be favourable to virtue, and unfavourable to vice, no more can be requisite to the regulation of our conduct and behaviour.' (*T* iii 1.1.26) On this passage see also §723.

[12] See Hutcheson, §642. [13] See Hutcheson, *IMS* 163, quoted in §642.

[14] This summary conceals some obscurities in Shaftesbury's position. See §612.

[15] '[The author of the *Treatise* is charged] with sapping the foundations of morality, by denying the natural and essential difference betwixt right and wrong, good and evil, justice and injustice; making the difference only artificial, and to arise from human conventions and compacts . . .' (*LG*) 'I come now to the last charge, which, according to the prevalent opinion of philosophers in this age, will certainly be regarded as the severest, *viz.* the author's destroying all the foundations of morality.' (*LG*) Hume continues with the passage on Hutcheson quoted in §751.

759. Hume, Hutcheson, and Voluntarism

Hume's request to Hutcheson concerns the subjectivism and sentimentalism that Hutcheson also affirms. The same doctrine is relevant to Hume's further remark that Hutcheson has given no sufficient reason for accepting naturalism rather than voluntarism about God and morality.[16] Hutcheson rejects Balguy's allegation that sentimentalism implies voluntarism, and so he defends an important element in Shaftesbury's realism. In rejecting voluntarism he agrees with Butler. Hume, however, agrees with Balguy's objection that Hutcheson cannot escape voluntarism about God and morality.[17] Sentimentalism implies that moral properties exist only in relation to spectators with sentiments like ours. Hence they cannot, according to Hume, be assumed to exist in relation to God.[18] Whether or not it is right for God to do anything depends on how God reacts to it. If God's moral sense is different from ours, what is right for him is different from what is right for us. If he has no moral sense, nothing is right or wrong for him.[19]

Hume suggests that Hutcheson should discuss this issue more fully in print only if he thinks he can avoid the agnostic conclusion about God's moral outlook. If, like Hume, he believes the agnostic conclusion is correct, his 'character' (i.e., reputation) and 'situation' (as a professor of moral philosophy expected to support Christian morality) make it unwise for him to publish his views.

One might wonder whether this advice to Hutcheson is a little exaggerated. Certainly, naturalists (about God and morality) such as Balguy believe that we threaten the position of Christian moral theology if we make morality mutable in relation to sentiments. But voluntarists reply that the naturalist position threatens the freedom and sovereignty of God to legislate right and wrong. This voluntarist reply might claim support in some accounts of divine sovereignty, especially in those accounts sympathetic to a Calvinist

[16] 'I wish from my heart, I could avoid concluding, that since morality, according to your opinion as well as mine, is determined merely by sentiment, it regards only human nature and human life. This has often been urged against you, and the consequences are very momentous. If you make any alterations on your performances, I can assure you, there are many who desire you would more fully consider this point; if you think that the truth lies on the popular side. Otherwise common prudence, your character, and situation forbid you touch upon it. If morality were determined by reason, that is the same to all rational beings; but nothing but experience can assure us, that the sentiments are the same. What experience have we with regard to superior beings? How can we ascribe to them any sentiments at all? They have implanted these sentiments in us for the conduct of life like our bodily sensations, which they possess not themselves.' (Grieg #16 = R634) Kemp Smith, *PDH* 202, quotes this passage to show that Hume 'develops his views with a consistency that had not, he declares, been observed by his predecessors'.

[17] See §660.

[18] Blackburn, 'Errors' = *EQR* 153, tries to defend sentimentalism while rejecting voluntarism.

[19] Hume draws out further implications of sentimentalism for theological ethics at Grieg #21, on Leechman. According to Hume, we cannot defend, on a sentimentalist basis, any obligation to love God: 'It must be acknowledged that nature has given us a strong passion of admiration for whatever is excellent, and of love and gratitude for whatever is benevolent and beneficial, and that the deity possesses these attributes in the highest perfection and yet I assert he is not the natural object of any passion or affection. He is no object either of the senses or imagination, and very little of the understanding, without which it is impossible to excite any affection.' Hume's next remarks explain how he understands love to God: 'A remote ancestor, who has left us estates and honours, acquired with virtue, is a great benefactor, and yet 'tis impossible to bear him any affection, because unknown to us; though in general we know him to be a man or a human creature, which brings him vastly nearer our comprehension than an invisible infinite spirit. A man, therefore, may have his heart perfectly well disposed towards every proper and natural object of affection, friends, benefactors, country, children etc, and yet from this circumstance of the invisibility and incomprehensibility of the Deity may feel no affection towards him.'

outlook. Despite Hume's remark that naturalism is the 'popular side', one might expect that voluntarism would be taken seriously in Scotland no less than in England. Hutcheson's views brought him into conflict with ecclesiastical authority not because he was suspected of voluntarism, but because of a view that seems closer to naturalism, that we can know about good and evil before we know God.[20] The difficulties that arise for Hutcheson's sentimentalism do not seem any more serious than those that arise for voluntarism. Why could Hutcheson not exercise 'common prudence' by defending his sentimentalist position by the well-tried arguments that commend voluntarism to some Christian theologians?

Hume, therefore, seems to take a view that many Christian theologians, including many in contemporary Scotland, might be expected to reject, when he suggests that acceptance of sentimentalism undermines Christian moral theology. He is right to point out that a sentimentalist cannot say that God is bound by moral principles simply because God is a rational being. In discussing rationalist views, Hume takes them to hold 'that the measures of right and wrong are eternal laws, obligatory on every rational mind' (iii 1.1.22).[21] But he agrees with Hutcheson's view that (1) if A is obliged to do x, there is some reason for A to do x, and (2) if there is some reason for A to do x, A has some sentiment that favours doing x. Hence God cannot be obliged to do anything without a favourable sentiment. We cannot, therefore, take God to be obliged by moral principles unless we can attribute a moral sense to God.

Hutcheson might be expected to agree with all this, since he believes that God has benevolent sentiments and a moral sense. He believes that since we see that wise provision has been made for the needs of human beings in this world, and since such provision must proceed from a benevolent agent, we must attribute to God a moral sense that approves of this benevolence. Hume has reasons—developed in his critique of natural religion in the *Dialogues*—for objecting to the premisses of Hutcheson's argument, but his objections do not seem to aim specifically at the claim that God has a moral sense. They would apply equally to the claim that God is a rational being who is obliged by immutable moral principles.

Hume has a reasonable point about Hutcheson's position, but it is not exactly the one he emphasizes in his remarks about voluntarism. His reasonable point is that Hutcheson ought not to try to separate himself from theological voluntarists, and therefore ought to accept the arguments of rationalists who argue that his position agrees with the voluntarists in making morality mutable and dependent on God's preferences. That is an unwelcome result for Hutcheson, but Hume argues that it follows from his rejection of objectivism and acceptance of sentimentalism.

760. Objectivist Criticisms of Hume's Sentimentalism

Hume does not believe that these concessions to Balguy on voluntarism also undermine sentimentalism. Balguy and Hutcheson believe that if sentimentalism is committed to

[20] See Hutcheson, §645. [21] Quoted more fully in §747.

voluntarism, we have reason to doubt sentimentalism. Hume answers that voluntarism is simply a consequence that we have to live with.

Hume may be too hasty. For Balguy's argument about voluntarism is simply an application of a broader argument that seems to cast doubt on sentimentalism. This broader argument claims that sentimentalism makes moral facts mutable in ways that we know they are not mutable. We do not believe an action would cease to be right if the only facts that changed were facts about an observer's reactions.[22] If, for instance, the torture of innocent children for pleasure became so common that it no longer shocked observers, though it still hurt the victims just as much, it would not cease to be wrong simply because most people had become more callous.[23] But sentimentalists are committed to claiming that the moral facts change in such a case.

Hume agrees with Balguy's claim that sentimentalism implies this degree of mutability in moral facts and properties. But he does not agree that this casts doubt on sentimentalism. For he does not agree that moral facts and properties are immutable in the way that Balguy suggests. If they appear to us to be immutable, we are mistaken because we have not yet grasped the nature of moral properties. Once we see that moral facts depend on our reactions, we must simply accept their mutability.

This is a good reason for dismissing Balguy's objections only if the grounds for believing sentimentalism are stronger than the grounds for believing in immutability. Does Hume prove this point? His practical argument rests on internalism about motivation; but it is not clear that we are more convinced of internalism than of immutability. His metaphysical argument assumes that we can recognize all the objective facts without recognizing any moral fact; but Balguy might reply that we can equally recognize a change in observers' reactions without recognizing a change in the moral facts.

It would not be enough for Hume's purposes to show that internalism is no less plausible than Balguy's claims about immutability. If his claims and Balguy's claims are equally plausible, we should conclude that both internalism and objectivism are true. If these two conclusions are incompatible, we should conclude that moral facts and properties have incompatible features, and hence we should be nihilists or sceptics. Hume can avoid this conclusion if he can show that his internalist claims are more plausible than Balguy's claims about immutability. But it is difficult to be convinced of this without an explicit confrontation between the two lines of argument.

On this point one might argue that Hume's position is less plausible than Hutcheson's. Whereas Hutcheson tries to show that his version of sentimentalism can accommodate the reasonable intuitions that seem to support objectivism, Hume believes that Hutcheson's conciliatory efforts fail and that one should frankly embrace the sort of mutability that objectivists reject. To show that he is right to do this, he should show that the objectivist intuitions are not as reasonable as they seem.

Here, then, we have found a gap in Hume's argument. To see whether he does anything that might help to fill it, we may consider some of his positive account of the moral sense.

[22] This condition needs to be modified to deal with cases where it might be wrong to offend people, and so something might cease to be wrong if people cease to take offence at it. In this case the observer's reaction is not the only fact that changes.

[23] See §659.

Though he does not pretend to satisfy an objectivist about moral properties, he qualifies his claims about the moral sense so that they allow him to accept, or at least to explain, some objectivist intuitions without drawing objectivist conclusions.

761. Hume's Account of the Moral Sentiment

In Hume's view, moral judgments are, or require, expressions of sentiment, and do not simply describe external facts. Since he has argued that his opponents do not give sufficient conditions for moral judgments, he needs to show that the addition of a sentiment allows him to give sufficient conditions.

Not just any kind of sentiment will do. If we react to actions we believe to be wrong with a sentiment that rests on a belief that the actions are objectively wrong, the analysis of our moral sentiments suggests that we believe in objective wrongness. If this belief in objective wrongness is needed to distinguish moral sentiments from other favourable and unfavourable sentiments towards actions, Hume's account of moral properties conflicts with the account that our moral sentiments favour. This result would not vindicate our moral sentiments, but it would show that they do not support Hume's account of moral judgments.[24]

Hume recognizes that an objection he has urged against the rationalists may be urged against his account of moral judgments and properties. He argued that all the relations taken to constitute eternal fitnesses could hold between non-rational creatures as well, so that these relations are insufficient for moral facts and properties. His opponent now suggests that all sorts of things, including actions of non-rational agents, might provoke the favourable sentiment that, according to Hume, is sufficient for moral right and wrong, and so this sentiment cannot give us sufficient conditions for moral rightness and wrongness (iii 1.2.4).

We might try to defend Hume by replying that the sentiment appropriate to moral wrongness includes the belief that a rational agent has harmed the interests of others. If this belief—or a suitably refined statement of it—is essential to moral sentiment, the sentiments provoked by rocks falling on houses or young trees choking their parents are not moral sentiments. But this reply is not open to Hume. He denies that any belief about the objects of a sentiment is essential to the sentiment, since he holds that connexions between sentiments and beliefs are contingent.[25] The moral sentiment, then, must be distinguished from other passions by its character as a sensation, not by any connected beliefs. It is logically possible for the moral sentiment to be caused by actions of non-rational agents or movements of inanimate objects.

Still, Hume does not believe his position is open to the objection that damages his opponents' position. For he claims that the actions of rational agents produce a distinct sentiment; even though we feel favourable to the results of natural processes, to the behaviour of animals, and to actions of rational agents, the feeling is different in the different cases, just as both music and wine produce pleasures, but pleasures of recognizably different

[24] Broad, 'Moral sense', discusses questions relevant to this criticism of Hume. [25] See §733.

kinds. Given Hume's account of the identity and individuation of passions, the pleasures from wine and from music must be different sensations, with different introspectible characters, one of which is always correlated only with wine and the other with music. Similarly, then, the contemplation of the actions of rational agents produces a phenomenally distinct feeling.

This suggestion faces a difficulty. For contemplation of the actions of rational agents results in many different passions. There seems to be no one passion that results from contemplation, and it is not plausible to identify all the resulting passions with moral sentiment. On contemplating an action I might feel thwarted or jealous or disappointed, and so might be moved to act one way or the other on contemplation of an action or a person. Hume agrees that none of these reactions is a moral judgment. He does not tell us to expand our conception of moral judgment to embrace all these reactions. An account of the moral sentiment should identify a sentiment that we feel in the cases where we naturally judge that something is right or wrong. 'Naturally' has to be added here to take account of Hume's objection to the divines. He does not follow their separation of genuine virtues from traits that we simply look on with favour. But he believes that, if we set aside the divines' conception of morality, we can still identify a class of judgments against which we can test our account of a moral sentiment.

He suggests, therefore, that we make moral judgments whenever we have a disinterested sentiment towards someone's action.[26] A disinterested point of view cannot be part of the sentiment or essential to the sentiment, given Hume's conditions for the identity of sentiments. Hume's claim should be understood as an empirical prediction; if we contemplate human actions while turning our attention away from their effects on ourselves in particular, we have a phenomenally distinctive feeling. This effort of attention may be difficult, and so it may be difficult to recognize the distinctive feeling resulting from disinterested contemplation. But once we get used to the effort of attention, we recognize the distinctive feeling.[27]

But this suggestion still seems to leave us with too many feelings, some of which do not seem to be the moral sentiment. The Emperor Heliogabalus is supposed to have killed Christians because he liked the combination of colours produced by red blood and green grass. If we had seen the results of one of these episodes and had admired the pleasing combination of colours, our reaction would have been quite disinterested, but it would not necessarily involve any moral appraisal at all. Hence, the point of view that causes the moral sentiment cannot be merely disinterested.

[26] '. . . an inanimate object, and the character or sentiments of any person may, both of them, give satisfaction; but as the satisfaction is different, this keeps our sentiments concerning them from being confounded, and makes us ascribe virtue to the one, and not to the other. Nor is every sentiment of pleasure or pain, which arises from characters and actions, of that peculiar kind, which makes us praise or condemn. The good qualities of an enemy are hurtful to us; but may still command our esteem and respect. 'Tis only when a character is considered in general, without reference to our particular interest, that it causes such a feeling or sentiment, as denominates it morally good or evil. 'Tis true, those sentiments, from interest and morals, are apt to be confounded, and naturally run into one another. It seldom happens, that we do not think an enemy vicious, and can distinguish betwixt his opposition to our interest and real villainy or baseness. But this hinders not, but that the sentiments are, in themselves, distinct; and a man of temper and judgment may preserve himself from these illusions' (*T* iii 1.2.4).

[27] Virtue is distinguished by the pleasure 'that any action, sentiment, or character gives us by the mere view and contemplation' (iii 1.2.10).

762. A Common Point of View

Hume answers this objection through a more careful description of the type of disinterested contemplation that he has in mind. He suggests that if we attend to the effects of actions on people's interests, we are moved by 'our sympathy with the interests of society' (iii 3.1.12). When I see you being pleased, I imagine myself being pleased, and I actually feel some of the sort of pleasure that you feel.

But Hume recognizes that this sort of sympathetic pleasure seems too variable to be identified with moral sentiment.[28] Though sympathy is directed to other people's interest, it seems to vary in ways that are inappropriate for moral judgments, since they remain stable while sympathy varies. If A protects B against C's aggression, we regard A's action as right. Our sympathy matches the moral judgment if it is directed towards B and the benefit that B gains from A. But if we think, in the same disinterested way, about C, we sympathize with C's frustration, and so we change our sympathy. But we do not conclude that A's action is both right and wrong, or neither right nor wrong. We attend to B rather than C, and this attention aligns our sympathetic pleasure with the correct moral judgment.

Why do we fix our sympathy on the potential victim rather than on the potential aggressor? We might be inclined to answer that it is because we believe that what A is doing is right and what C is trying to do is wrong, so that we believe B deserves our sympathy and C does not. This answer is not open to Hume, since it makes our sentiments depend on moral beliefs in the way that he tries to avoid. And so he offers a different answer. He suggests that a purely egocentric point of view makes it difficult for us to make up our minds or to have any steady view of the action we consider, because we find that other people contradict our egocentric sentiment. We are most likely to form a sentiment that avoids contradiction if we adapt ourselves to the general attitude to a given situation. In the case we have mentioned, most people attend to the benefit B receives rather than to the harm that C receives, so that we will be least liable to be contradicted if we share the general attitude and sympathize with B rather than C.[29]

This adaptation of our sentiments is similar, in Hume's view, to the correction of our perceptual appearances. Since we recognize that to most people a penny looks round, we judge that it is round, and we tell other people it is round, even if it looks elliptical to us. If we told them it is elliptical, we would be open to continual contradiction, which we avoid by conforming to the general view. We adapt our sympathy in the same way.[30]

[28] '. . . as this sympathy is very variable, it may be thought, that our sentiments of morals must admit of all the same variations. . . . But notwithstanding this variation of our sympathy, we give the same approbation to the same moral qualities. . . . The sympathy varies without a variation in our esteem. Our esteem, therefore, proceeds not from sympathy' (iii 3.1.4).

[29] 'When we form our judgments of persons merely from the tendency of their characters to our own benefit, or to that of our friends, we find so many contradictions to our sentiments in society and conversation, and such an uncertainty from the incessant changes of our situation, that we seek some other standard of merit and demerit, which may not admit of so great variation. Being thus loosened from our first station, we cannot afterwards fix ourselves so commodiously by any means as by a sympathy with those who have any commerce with the person we consider.' (iii 3.1.18)

[30] 'Such corrections are common with regard to all the senses; and indeed 'twere impossible we could ever make use of language, or communicate our sentiments to one another, did we not correct the momentary appearances of things, and overlook our present situation.' (iii 3.1.16)

This intriguing suggestion raises some questions. Some arise from the comparison with perceptual judgments about the external world. One might be inclined to answer Hume that we say the penny is round because we believe it is really round, no matter how it looks to people from a particular point of view. If I say that it looks elliptical to me, and you say it looks round to you, you do not contradict me; I could avoid being contradicted if I stuck to statements about how it appears, however egocentric they might be. I say it is round not because I want to avoid being contradicted by others, but because I want to say what I believe about its real shape. Hume's claims about contradiction do not seem to explain why I say the penny is round.

Something similar is true in the case of sympathy. Hume suggests that we want some constant point of view, to save us the trouble of continually changing our view of the action in the face of different people's egocentric views; these views present so many 'contradictions' to our own view that they loosen us 'from our first station' and leave us in a vacillating condition. But this suggestion is open to doubt; different people's egocentric views do not contradict mine, if they simply report that the same action affects other people differently. Why should I not decide to stick to my initial egocentric point of view? If I tell you I am grateful to A because A did me a good turn, you can understand my sentiment, and we can successfully communicate with each other, even though you do not yourself feel grateful to A. If I approve of A because I recognize that A is useful to me and I sympathetically disapprove of A because A is dangerous to you, my reactions to A do not contradict each other, and neither makes the other less stable. Similarly, if (in the case described above) some people approve of A's protecting B against aggression from C because they sympathize with B, while others disapprove of A's frustrating C because they sympathize with C, their reactions are consistent, and we can share both reactions without any conflict or vacillation.

These objections, however, may presuppose a non-Humean view of sentiments. If beliefs are internal to some sentiments, we can sometimes show that two sentiments are consistent because they rest on consistent beliefs. Hence 'I take pleasure in x because x gives pleasure to B' and 'I find x painful because x causes pain to C' are consistent, and we have no reason to expect that either will tend to displace the other. But Hume believes that the relation between a belief and a sentiment is always empirical and causal. The two sentiments we are to consider must be described independently of the beliefs we have mentioned, and hence we cannot rely on the beliefs to show that the sentiments are not contradictory. We must simply say that in these cases we find x both pleasant and painful.

But if we offer Hume this reply, we face a further question. If we do not make beliefs internal to sentiments, what makes sentiments contradictory? Hume's subjectivism about moral judgments makes it difficult to understand our assumption that if you say an action is right and I say it is wrong, we contradict each other. Since, in his view, you report your favourable sentiment and I report my unfavourable sentiment, neither of us contradicts the other. The same difficulty arises for his claim that sentiments contradict each other in a way that induces vacillation and so causes us to seek a steadier point of view.

Perhaps Hume could defend his main point by abandoning claims about contradiction. Perhaps he could claim instead that sympathy with B (the potential victim who is protected)

and with C (the potential aggressor who is frustrated) are opposed, in that they tend to cancel or to weaken each other rather than to strengthen each other. Similarly, if something that I enjoy doing causes me to feel pride, the pride increases my pleasure, but if it causes me to feel shame, that reduces my pleasure. Perhaps the opposition that we find in these cases supports Hume's argument about sympathy.

This does not seem obvious, however. If we assume opposition rather than genuine contradiction, sympathy with B is opposed to sympathy with C no more than sympathy with B or C is opposed to pleasure caused by music; for this pleasure may also reduce my sympathy by distracting me. To avoid this sort of opposition, I need to attend to the music, or to B, or to C, to the exclusion of other things. I do not seem to need to take some different point of view that causes me to sympathize with B or to sympathize with C or to enjoy the music, to the exclusion of the other passions.

But even if we agree with Hume's claim that we need to resolve 'contradictions' in our sympathies by taking some more generally shared point of view, it is not clear that the sympathy we take from this point of view will be stable, or that it will match our moral judgments. To avoid contradictions, we might sensibly adopt the view of most people around us. But if these people are fickle, so that they incline to sympathize sometimes with B and sometimes with C, we will be no less inclined to shift in our sympathy, though they will not contradict us. If they shift in their sympathy, or if they are more inclined to sympathize with C (the potential aggressor) than with B (the potential victim), their sympathy does not match our moral judgments, and is still not moral sentiment.

763. The Point of View of Humanity

This criticism leads us to consider a different conception of the 'common point of view' that Hume offers, especially in the *Inquiry*. He describes the moral point of view as one that we can all share, irrespective of our private interests; this is the point of view of humanity.[31] Our moral judgments proceed from a sentiment that we all share, apart from our particular perspectives on actions, when we contemplate actions that affect human interests. In virtue of that sentiment, our moral evaluation expresses a common point of view.[32] When we take this point of view, we favour actions that promote the public good.[33] It is a frequent and widespread, and hence natural (in a sense of 'natural' that Hume accepts) fact about human beings that they are susceptible to feelings that are favourable to the public good. These are the feelings that match moral judgments. The relevant 'universal principle of the human frame' is benevolence, giving us 'a cool preference of what is useful and serviceable to mankind' (*I* 9.4).

[31] Selby-Bigge, Introd. to *I*, pp. xxiii–xxviii, argues plausibly that the relative prominence of benevolence and humanity in *I* marks a doctrinal difference from *T*.

[32] '. . . he expresses sentiments, in which he expects all his audience are to concur with him. He must . . . move some universal principle of the human frame, and touch a string to which all mankind have an accord and symphony' (*I* 9.6).

[33] 'If he mean, therefore, to express that this man possesses qualities, whose tendency is pernicious to society, he has chosen this common point of view, and has touched the principle of humanity, in which every man, to some degree, concurs. While the human heart is compounded of the same elements as at present, it will never be wholly indifferent to public good, nor entirely unaffected with the tendency of characters and manners.' (*I* 9.6)

Hume's most plausible account of the moral sentiment is therefore this: (1) When we think impartially about the interests of those affected by an action, we form a distinctive sentiment about it. (2) This sentiment is benevolence, favouring the public good. (3) This sentiment is the moral sentiment; the actions it favours are those we intuitively judge to be right. These are all empirical claims. The first asserts that attention to certain features of an action tends to cause a sentiment. The second asserts that this sentiment tends to cause certain kinds of actions. The third asserts that the sentiment causing these actions is the one we feel when we make moral judgments.

In the first claim Hume describes a common point of view that expresses community and solidarity with other human people. This point of view involves the impartial consideration of the effects of actions on people's interests. We should be able to take this point of view without thinking about fairness, since Hume is trying to find the origin of moral sentiments without presupposing them. The common point of view on a theft, for instance, will recognize the pain suffered by the victim and the thief and by anyone else affected, but will leave out the fact that I or my friend or my enemy is the thief or the victim, or the beneficiary of the theft.

What sentiment do we form from this impartial point of view? It is difficult to see how we can be expected to agree on any one reaction. Perhaps I am more inclined to sympathize with the frustration, or greed, or whatever other motive might lead to theft, and you are more inclined to sympathize with the victim's feelings of loss. Apart from these difference in inclinations, we might have different views about how bad it is for people to lose what they have, compared with failing to get what they want. The fact that each of us takes an impartial point of view does not ensure agreement in our reactions, since we may have different inclinations and non-moral beliefs that affect our reactions.

But perhaps Hume wants us to abstract from these individual differences and to focus exclusively on the pain and pleasure of the thief and the victim. In that case, our reaction depends on whether the pain of the victim is greater than the pleasure of the thief, or the reverse. Perhaps this is why he identifies the common point of view with benevolence, understood as concern for the public good. This seems to be an empirical claim, about the result of taking the common point of view, rather than a description of what constitutes taking the common point of view. But if Hume intends the common point of view to abstract from everything except pleasure and pain, it is close to benevolence, as a hedonist utilitarian understands it.[34]

By introducing benevolence into his account of the moral sense Hume agrees with Hutcheson, but he simplifies Hutcheson's view. Hutcheson confines the moral sense to the moral judge who reacts favourably to the benevolence of an agent; he makes a second-order attitude of approval or endorsement of a sentiment essential to the moral sense. Simple benevolence without this further approval does not involve the moral sense, according to Hutcheson. The further approval is Hutcheson's analogue to the operation of conscience, as Butler conceives it.[35] According to Hume, however, in the passage we have just discussed, the moral sense does not require this second-order element. A benevolent reaction by itself

[34] Contrast Baier, *PS* 205, who argues that one ought to 'appreciate the hedonism, rather than the utilitarianism, of his thinking about ethics'.

[35] See Hutcheson, §§642, 715.

constitutes an expression of the moral sense. Our moral judgment is either this benevolent reaction itself (if Hume is a non-cognitivist) or a report of it (if he is a subjectivist).

764. Can We Isolate Moral Sentiment?

Has Hume found the moral sentiment? We may well doubt whether he has identified just one introspectibly distinct feeling for all and only the actions we regard as morally good. In some cases our reaction of moral approval might be enthusiastic, if the morally good coincides with our interest, or the agent is a friend of ours; in other cases it might be grudging, if the agent is an enemy or if the action harms us; in others it might be entirely neutral, if our interests and affections are quite uninvolved.

Hume admits that the moral sentiment may co-exist with others, but he maintains that with practice we can distinguish it. But even if we agree with him on this point, we may doubt his assumption that it has a distinct introspectible quality that is present on all occasions. It does not seem obvious that an introspectible quality is the common feature of the moral sentiment on all the occasions when it occurs with different tones. All the different reactions—eager, grudging, neutral—express the sentiment of disinterested approval, but not because they all contain the same phenomenally distinctive sensation. They share a certain kind of evaluative belief (or a disjunction of appropriate beliefs); but Hume's theory does not allow a doxastic element to individuate sentiments.[36]

Would Hume do better, then, to abandon his non-doxastic conception of sentiments? If he abandoned it, he would also have to give up some other views that matter to him. If he agreed that beliefs are essential to some sentiments, he would undermine his criticism of the divines, who want to restrict moral goodness and badness to voluntary actions and states. Hume argues against the divines by claiming that we have the same sentiments both towards voluntary and towards non-voluntary states. In this argument he seems to assume that the belief that a state is voluntary cannot be essential to the identity of a sentiment. But this assumption conflicts with the claim that the moral sentiment requires some belief.

Moreover, if Hume were to concede that some evaluative beliefs are essential to moral sentiments, he would leave room for a rationalist reply to his sentimentalism. If the moral sentiment essentially involves evaluative beliefs, why should we not identify moral judgments with these beliefs, and moral properties with the properties that are mentioned in these beliefs? In that case, Hume's attempted alternative to objectivism would apparently presuppose an objectivist account of the beliefs that partly constitute moral sentiment.

He avoids this objection if he affirms that moral sentiment consists simply in a feeling with a distinctive phenomenal character; beliefs cause this feeling, but they are not essential to it. These beliefs, then, are not moral judgments, and the properties they mention are not moral properties, because their relation to moral sentiment is only causal. According to this view, if we judge that an action promotes the public good, but we are not at all moved to favour the action, we have not made a moral judgment, since moral judgment requires motivation.

[36] See Smith's criticism of the moral sense, §789.

765. Moral Judgment Without Sentiment?

But though we might expect Hume to say this, he does not say it. For, in his view, I may learn to judge that something is good from the moral point of view, without the appropriate sentiment. In my moral judgment I say what someone would say who was directly affected by the action, I may not have the same feeling. Even if I have some feeling, I may not have equally strong feelings towards two actions that I judge to be equally wrong. My moral judgment, therefore, is neither the feeling nor a report on it.[37]

Our appeals to a general point of view do not automatically change our passions, 'nor do our passions often correspond entirely to the present theory' (*T* iii 3.1.18). A may agree that B's opposition to A's plans is morally blameless, but may still be angry at B for this opposition.[38] Though reason may favour impartiality, our passions do not always go along with it. Hume explains his mention of reason by arguing the so-called reason opposing our passions is really another passion, 'a general calm determination of the passions, founded on some distant view or reflexion' (iii 3.1.18).

In referring to a distant view, Hume relies on the assumption about calm passion that he uses to explain prudence.[39] When we take a 'distant' view, looking at a situation without reference to our own interest, our calm passions are excited. When we take a 'closer' view, and recognize how our interest is involved, more violent passions are aroused, and so our stronger feelings do not agree with our original calm passion. Hume might reasonably conclude, therefore, that moral judgments express or report the calm passion that is excited by sympathetic consideration of the interests of the people affected.

But this is not his conclusion. He does not say that if we judge that A and B are equally blameworthy, we express an equally strong calm passion towards A and B. Instead he takes our judgment to predict what would be felt in certain circumstances.[40] He therefore seems to abandon his sentimentalism. For he no longer seeks to correlate the stable moral judgment with a stable actual sentiment; the stable judgment is a prediction, not a report, about sentiments.

Some moral judgments, therefore, neither express nor report anyone's occurrent sentiment. They are still about sentiments, since they are predictions about sentiments rather than judgments about objective properties of actions and people. But, as we saw in discussing 'is' and 'ought', Hume counts judgments about other people's subjective states as judgments about what is 'in the object', and therefore as 'is' judgments. His present account of moral judgment seems to imply that moral properties are in the object, and that we can derive 'ought' from 'is'.

If moral judgments are predictions about sentiments, Hume's analysis does not support his claim that when you pronounce the action vicious 'you mean nothing but that . . . you

[37] 'Experience soon teaches us the method of correcting our sentiments, or at least, of correcting our language, where the sentiments are more stubborn and inalterable.' (*T* iii 3.1.16)

[38] 'Here we are contented with saying, that reason requires such an impartial conduct, but that 'tis seldom we can bring ourselves to it, and that our passions do not readily follow the determination of our judgment.' (iii 3.1.18)

[39] See §738.

[40] 'We blame equally a bad action, which we read of in history, with one performed in our neighbourhood the other day: The meaning of which is, that we know from reflexion, that the former action would excite as strong sentiments of disapprobation as the latter, were it placed in the same position.' (iii 3.1.18)

have a feeling or sentiment of blame . . .' (iii 1.1.26). Nor does it fit his internalist claim that moral judgments necessarily motivate the subject who makes them. His predictive analysis implies that his internalist and subjectivist account of moral judgment and moral properties is mistaken.[41]

Hume's account of the causes of moral sentiment even suggests that one might defend a more strongly objectivist account of moral judgments than the one he allows. In his view, the sentiment is aroused by the belief that a particular action is (for example) beneficial to those affected by it. Why should we not take this belief to be sufficient for a moral judgment? Hume's account of the content of the moral judgment seems to show how easily we can separate the making of the judgment itself from the attitude that it arouses in the judge. It is easy, on this view, to see why moral judgments are regularly connected with action; they characteristically express the point of view of humanity and appeal to our benevolent sentiments.

Once we see this, we may doubt whether moral judgments motivate all by themselves, and therefore cannot be derived from reason. For not everyone has benevolent sentiments to an equal degree, and on some occasions some people may have no benevolent sentiments. But they may still believe that this action promotes the public good, and therefore appeals to a benevolent person. Hume seems to have found objective properties that could be identified with moral goodness and badness. And so he seems to have undermined his efforts to show that moral distinctions are not founded in reason.

Hume rejects an objectivist account on the ground that it omits the internal connexion between moral judgment and motivation. But his counterfactual analysis referring to sentiments also omits that internal connexion. Once he has abandoned internalism, it is not clear why we should treat moral judgments as judgments about counterfactual sympathy rather than judgments directly about the properties of actions and people that tend to arouse the counterfactual sympathy.

If, therefore, we examine these details of Hume's account of moral judgment, we reach a different conclusion from the one we reach if we confine ourselves to the practical and metaphysical arguments and to the discussion of 'is' and 'ought'. These initial arguments support his internalism, subjectivism, and sentimentalism. But his account of the moral sentiment, and his substitution of counterfactual for actual sentiment, undermine his case against objectivism. He does not notice this, because he still maintains that moral judgments are about sentiments; he may suppose that this feature of moral judgments satisfies his internalist constraint.

If one believes that Hume's internalism and subjectivism are the most important and valuable aspects of his theory, one might restore consistency to his position by using a device favoured by later non-cognitivists. In cases where Hume admits that we make moral judgments without the appropriate sentiment, we might say that the moral terms in these judgments do not have their normal sense, but we use them in a 'non-standard' or 'inverted commas' sense. This resort to differences of sense would avoid the inconsistency that Hume introduces into his position. Hume might welcome this way to restore consistency, if he

[41] Brown, 'Internalist' 78–87, discusses aspects of Hume that are inconsistent with the internalism assumed in his argument against objectivism.

had noticed his inconsistency. But this move is costly; for it does not seem obvious that motivational and non-motivational uses of moral terms involve different senses. Further discussion of this issue is better postponed until we come to non-cognitivists who try to help Hume in this way.

766. The Possibility of Humean Objectivism

But in any case, a non-cognitivist's appeal to different senses, whether plausible or implausible, may not be the best way to restore consistency to Hume's position. One might be more inclined to emphasize the objectivist elements. Though internalism and subjectivism are prominent in his critical arguments and in his presentation of his own view, something worth considering survives the rejection of these claims. His suggestion that a moral judgment is one 'in which he expects all his audience are to concur with him' (*I* 9.6) correctly implies that moral considerations express a more common point of view than that of one person's interest.

What sorts of considerations are recognized from this common point of view? Hume's account of how we equally blame two actions that excite different sentiments implies that our judgment is a counterfactual judgment about how certain sorts of observers would react. If he offers this as a general account of moral judgments, the subject-matter of moral judgments is the sentiment of the observer taking the common point of view. Alternatively, we might concentrate on Hume's remarks about the actions that such an observer favours—those that promote the public good. These remarks might suggest that the subject matter of moral judgments is the public good.

In either case, Hume's view would be objectivist, insofar as it would make moral judgments true independently of the reactions of a particular moral judge.[42] In the second case, his view would be more strongly objectivist, since it would make them true independently of the reactions of any judge or observer. According to the first view, moral goodness and badness would change if observers taking the common point of view no longer favoured the public good. Whether this is possible or not depends on how the common point of view is to be defined. Is it no longer the common point of view if it ceases to be concerned with the public good? Alternatively, if everyone were to become indifferent to the public good, and were to agree in a general indifference to this aspect of actions, would the same common point of view now approve of something different?

It may be pointless to ask whether one or another of these possible views is Hume's view. His suggestions are not precise or detailed enough to make it clear what he means. And if he made them more precise, he would be more likely to notice the conflict between his non-sentimentalist remarks about the possibility of moral judgments without sentiments and the sentimentalist claims that he relies on in his initial arguments against rationalism and objectivism. The different elements in Hume's claims about moral judgments are instructive because they suggest why different views about the nature of moral judgments are attractive, and why nonetheless one needs to choose between them.

[42] Sharp, 'Hume' 53–6, emphasizes the objectivist tendencies in Hume's appeal to the impartial observer. At 158–9 he suggests that a Humean view might absorb some of Reid's claims about objectivity (see §670).

Our discussion of the position that Hume opposes to the 'vulgar systems of morality' has given us reason to believe that his conception of moral judgment is inconsistent.[43] Three different revisions of Hume leave us with some plausible and influential views: (1) If we take internalism to be most important, we will accept non-cognitivism, as later emotivists and prescriptivists do, sometimes for reasons that they take to be Hume's reasons.[44] (2) If we take Hume to be a subjectivist, we will take moral judgments to describe the sentiments of the spectator or of some class of actual, potential, or ideal spectators. This is the basis of Smith's account of moral judgments as statements about the impartial observer. (3) If we take Hume to oppose theories that separate moral goodness from empirical human feelings, we may take the objectivist utilitarian strand in his discussion to be the one that deserves defence and expansion; that is why Sidgwick treats Hume as a source for his utilitarianism.[45]

The utilitarian is right to emphasize Hume's assumption that the common point of view is a utilitarian point of view aiming at the public good. But one might be doubtful about Hume's reasons for believing that the common point of view underlying morality is utilitarian. Might one argue that the point of view of humanity is non-utilitarian? This issue is especially relevant when we consider Hume's views about the utilitarian and non-utilitarian elements in different aspects of morality.

[43] Garrett, *CCHP*, ch. 9, argues that Hume's account of the development of moral sentiment and moral judgments makes his account consistent. I doubt whether he resolves all the questions that can be raised about the role of sentiment.

[44] See Hare cited in §750. Contrast Stevenson, *EL* 273–6; though he is a non-cognitivist, he takes Hume to be a subjectivist. Laird, *SMT* 17–18, comes closer to ascribing non-cognitivism to Hume.

[45] Stephen, *HET* i 87, also treats Hume as a utilitarian: 'all must admire that the essential doctrines of utilitarianism are stated by Hume with a clearness and consistency not to be found in any other writer of the century. From Hume to J. S. Mill the doctrine received no substantial alteration.'

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HUME: THE VIRTUES

767. Natural and Artificial Virtues

If we accept Hume's account of the moral sense, what account of morality do we commit ourselves to? Hume answers this question by listing the virtues and showing that they are objects of the sentiment that he ascribes to the moral sense. Before we consider his general account of the virtues and of their relation to the moral sense, it is useful to consider some of the specific virtues.

He divides the virtues into natural and artificial, on the basis of his general claim that we value virtuous actions only insofar as they express a virtuous character (*T* iii 2.1.2; iii 3.1.4). If we commend a particular action, it must be because we approve the state of character that it proceeds from, and this state of character must immediately appeal to our sympathetic feelings (those that belong to the principle of humanity) (iii 2.1.6). What state of character, then, appeals immediately to our sympathetic feelings?

Hume believes we cannot answer this question by saying that the virtuous state of character is the one that values virtuous actions precisely because they are virtuous or morally good; for he has already claimed that we value virtuous action only as expressions of a virtuous character. Hence the virtuous person who (supposedly) values virtuous actions simply because they are virtuous must in fact value them because they are signs of virtuous character. But we still do not know why she values virtuous character. If we say that she values it because of the virtuous actions it produces, we proceed in a circle.

Hume offers a way out of this circle of explanation, by introducing a non-moral motive. The virtuous agent must have some motive for doing the virtuous action, apart from the sense of its morality (its moral rightness or goodness); and the tendency to do this kind of action must appeal to morally enlightened judges apart from their sense of its morality.[1] If the agent and the judges could not be moved by these non-moral sentiments, we could not understand either the agent's motive or the judges' grounds for approval.[2]

[1] '. . . no action can be virtuous or morally good, unless there be in human nature, some motive to produce it, distinct from its morality' (*T* iii 2.1.7). See Reid, §850.

[2] See Mackie, *HMT* 76–82. At 78–9 (remarking that Hume conflates two questions), he seems to agree with Reid's criticism.

Different virtues, however, arouse our non-moral sentiments in different ways. The differences mark a division between natural virtues including benevolence, and artificial virtues, including justice.

My act of benevolence belongs to a natural virtue because of three features: (1) My action tends to benefit others. (2) I act out of a desire to benefit others. (3) My motive arouses approval in an impartial and sympathetic observer. Both my desire to help and the observer's reaction of approval are natural reactions to this action; for we have a natural sentiment of benevolence that explains both my desire and the observer's reaction.

In this case we face no difficulty in saying what it is about benevolent action that appeals to us as agents and observers. An act of justice, however, has neither of the first two features. It has the third feature; but this must be explained differently. A simple appeal to benevolence cannot explain our attachment to justice.[3]

768. The Difficulties about Justice

Hume tries to resolve two difficulties arising from Hutcheson's account of justice: (1) The first objection concerns Hutcheson's sentimentalism. Hutcheson rejects Hobbes's self-interested and instrumental explanation of justice, and claims instead that justice appeals to our sentiment of benevolence, which the moral sense approves of. But it is difficult to believe his claim that benevolence, understood as a sentiment involving an immediate reaction to actions and people, could support a utilitarian conception of justice that often acts against the interest of particular people who might be expected to arouse our benevolent sentiment. (2) But even if we could connect benevolence with utility, we would not have vindicated a utilitarian conception of justice. For we recognize just actions that do not promote utility.

These two difficulties in Hutcheson's position provoke two rationalist replies: (1) Balguy and Butler propose an alternative basis for benevolence. They introduce a rational principle of benevolence, and they rely on this principle, not on the sentiment of benevolence, to support moral principles that aim at the public good. (2) But even this rational principle of benevolence does not cover the whole of morality, and in particular does not cover justice. Principles of justice rest on a basis that is distinct from concern for the public good, and therefore cannot be explained by a utilitarian principle.

Hume sees the same difficulties in Hutcheson's position, but he offers an anti-rationalist solution.[4] In his view, benevolence cannot be the source of the just person's motive or of

[3] 'The only difference betwixt the natural virtues and justice lies in this, that the good, which results from the former arises from every single act, and is the object of some natural passion; whereas a single act of justice, considered in itself, may often be contrary to the public good, and 'tis only the concurrence of mankind, in a general scheme or system of action, which is advantageous. When I relieve persons in distress, my natural humanity is my motive; and so far as my succour extends, so far have I promoted the happiness of my fellow-creatures.' (*T* iii 3.1.12)

[4] See Hutcheson, §647; Balguy, §664. Hume criticizes Hutcheson's appeal to benevolence as the basis of justice, in a letter (Greig, *LDH* i #19, p. 47): 'You sometimes, in my opinion, ascribe the original of property and justice to public benevolence, and sometimes to private benevolence towards the possessors of the goods, neither of which seems to me satisfactory. You know my opinion on this head. It mortifies me much to see a person, who possesses more candour and penetration than any almost I know, condemn reasonings, of which I imagine I see so strongly the evidence. I was going to blot out this after having wrote it; but hope you will consider it only as a piece of folly, as indeed it is.' This is another point on which Hutcheson might be expected to find a lack of 'warmth' in Hume.

the observer's reaction; for this particular just action does not contribute to the good of others in the ways that provoke the sentiment of benevolence. Benevolence and humanity, in Hume's view, would often lead us both to do and to approve unjust action.[5] To see how concern for the public good could support justice, we have to look at the larger system of which particular just actions are a part, and we have to see that the system promotes the public good.

This point about benevolence does not clearly bear on the rational principle of benevolence, as Balguy and Butler understand it; for they regard it as a principle that considers the public good impartially and comprehensively, looking at the further as well as the nearer consequences of actions and policies. Hume's point applies only to the sentiment of benevolence as he and Hutcheson conceives it. He tries to overcome the objection to Hutcheson without resort to a rational principle.

In the *Treatise* his argument about justice assumes that we are not concerned for the public interest as such (iii 2.1.11), but only for the interests of individual people, because of the effects of sympathy. Even if every particular just action promoted the public interest, this would not explain our favourable attitude towards it, since we have no favourable sentiment towards the public interest. In the *Inquiry* Hume drops his objection about concern for the public interest; the point of view of humanity that produces the moral sentiment involves concern for the good of society, not just the good of this or that individual.[6]

But the acknowledgment of this concern for the public interest does not undermine Hume's main reason for counting justice as an artificial virtue. He argues that particular just actions do not seem to make any intelligible appeal to our concern for the public interest; for this concern would apparently often lead us to prefer the confiscation of a rich miser's property to benefit the poor, whereas justice requires us to respect the miser's right to his property. Here Hume recognizes the second rationalist objection to Hutcheson, but he does not agree with the rationalists in turning to a non-utilitarian conception of justice. He seeks to resolve the objection by showing how our concern for the public interest becomes attached to just actions that initially appear to conflict with the public interest.

According to the argument against Hutcheson, we cannot explain how our concern for the public interest, all by itself, could move us to take an interest in just actions. Hume argues that we need a two-stage account to resolve this difficulty for a utilitarian view. The first stage identifies our original motive for establishing justice. Here Hume gives a Hobbesian answer, referring to self-interest. The second stage explains our moral admiration for the rules of justice, once they have been established; at

[5] 'But if we examine all the questions, that come before any tribunal of justice, we shall find, that, considering each case apart, it would as often be an instance of humanity to decide contrary to the laws of justice as conformable to them. Judges take from a poor man to give to a rich; they bestow on the dissolute the labour of the industrious; and put into the hands of the vicious the means of harming both themselves and others.' (iii 3.1.12)

[6] See, e.g., *I* 5.45: 'It appears also, that, in our general approbation of characters and manners, the useful tendency of the social virtues moves us not by any regards to self-interest, but has an influence much more universal and extensive. It appears, that a tendency to public good, and to the promoting of peace, harmony, and order in society, does always, by affecting the benevolent principles of our frame, engage us on the side of the social virtues.' Such statements are more frequent and more emphatic than anything in *T*.

this stage Hume gives a non-Hobbesian answer, referring to concern for the public interest.[7]

769. The Origin of Justice

Hume rejects an initially plausible account of the origin of justice that might be ascribed to Hobbes. The observance of principles of justice results from our acting on the law of nature that enjoins the pursuit of peace and non-aggression. Hence we might trace the origin of justice to a promise—a Hobbesian 'covenant'—to refrain from aggression. Hume, however, believes that no appeal to a promise explains the observance of justice. A promise establishes a practice of mutual non-aggression only if we already recognize an obligation to keep the promise; but both the obligation to keep a promise and the recognition of this obligation[8] depend on an antecedent practice or 'convention' of non-aggression. Since the obligation to keep a promise presupposes the convention of non-aggression, it cannot explain the convention.[9]

We might take Hume to mean that we cannot found the moral obligations connected with justice in a promise, because the promise will be irrelevant unless we already recognize an obligation of justice to keep promises. This would be a reasonable point, but it would not be relevant to Hobbes's appeal to a covenant. Hobbes takes the relevant obligation to be prudential; he might argue that prudential obligation is the basis of the obligation to keep a promise, which then introduces moral obligation.[10] Such an argument does not require antecedent recognition of a moral obligation to keep a promise.

But Hume's point bears more directly on Hobbes's appeal to self-interest as the basis of a covenant. I will recognize a prudential obligation to keep a promise to you only if I take it to be in my interest. But I will believe it is in my interest to keep a promise to you only if I already have some reason to believe that you will also keep your promise to me. But how can I form such a belief if I have no previous experience of your keeping promises?

Hume answers that we need an antecedent practice or convention of non-aggression that gives me reason to rely on you. Two people may form such a convention to do their parts in rowing a boat, if the boat needs two people to row it, each of them wants to go to the same place, and neither sees a better way to get there. This convention may precede any promise, because we can establish a convention without having made any promise. We

[7] 'We now proceed to examine two questions, viz. concerning the manner, in which the rules of justice are established by the artifice of men; and concerning the reasons, which determine us to attribute to the observance or neglect of these rules a moral beauty and deformity. These questions will appear afterwards to be distinct.' (*T* iii 2.2.1) 'Thus self-interest is the original motive to the establishment of justice; but a sympathy with public interest is the source of the moral approbation, which attends that virtue.' (*T* iii 2.2.24) On Hume and Hobbes on justice see Sidgwick, *OHE* 205n.

[8] Hume does not explicitly distinguish the obligation from the recognition of it.

[9] 'This convention is not of the nature of a promise: For even promises themselves, as we shall see afterwards, arise from human conventions. It is only a general sense of common interest; which sense all the members of the society express to one another, and which induces them to regulate their conduct by certain rules. I observe that it will be for my interest to leave another in the possession of his goods, provided he will act in the same manner with regard to me. He is sensible of a like interest in the regulation of his conduct. When this common sense of interest is mutually expressed, and is known to both, it produces a suitable resolution and behaviour.' (iii 2.2.10; cf. ii 2.9.9; iii 2.5.1)

[10] See Hobbes, §493.

simply need to be aware of the mutual advantage that depends on co-ordinated action.[11] By seeing this advantage and acting on it, we establish a convention of mutually beneficial, co-ordinated action that requires no initial promise.[12] Rules about non-aggression, the use of language, and the use of money arise from convention in the same way. In all these cases the prudent action for each party individually depends on what the other party does, so that the conduct of the two (or more) parties is inter-dependent. Each of them gets the expected benefit only if both play their part. In these circumstances a mutually beneficial convention develops.

Self-interest, therefore, provides a reason and motive for observing these conventions, even though they may appear to frustrate self-interest. Our desire for possession, for instance, encourages us to grab other people's possessions, but we notice that we would frustrate our desire for possession if we were to indulge it by always grabbing what we can grab from other people, and thereby encouraging them to do the same to us. Hence the desire for possessions also gives us the motive to regulate it.[13] We do not need to introduce any specifically moral concern into the motives of people who establish a system of justice. Hence we have found a motive to produce just actions, 'distinct from their morality', as Hume requires.[14]

770. Hume v. Hobbes on Justice

This part of Hume's account, tracing justice back to self-interest, develops and modifies Hobbes's view of justice.[15] Hume is clearer than Hobbes about the distinct contributions of human nature and external circumstances to the conditions favourable for justice. He notices that complete selfishness is not necessary. He only assumes confined generosity; and he remarks that this would not result in aggression and conflict if we did not have to compete for scarce resources (iii 2.2.5–7). To form the state, we need no formal agreement to lay down our arms; and we need not explain how we can recognize an obligation to keep such an agreement. An appeal to convention explains how the appropriate practices can get started without any prior agreement.

Does Hume resolve the main difficulties in Hobbes? His examples of convention without explicit agreement are persuasive, but how much do they explain? Even if some practices satisfy Hume's conditions for conventions, and grow up without explicit agreements or moral sanctions, this pattern does not seem to fit most actual systems of justice. For these systems involve many individuals in complex interactions; the penalties of cheating may not

[11] 'whatever is advantageous to two or more persons, if all perform their part; but . . . loses all advantage if only one perform . . .' (*I* App 2.8; cf. *T* iii 2.2.10; iii 2.6.6).

[12] 'The actions of each of us have a reference to those of the other, and are performed upon the supposition, that something is to be performed on the other part. Two men, who pull the oars of a boat, do it by an agreement or convention, though they have never given promises to each other.' (*T* iii 2.2.10)

[13] 'It is by establishing the rule for the stability of possession, that this passion restrains itself.' (iii 2.2.14) 'After men have found by experience, that their selfishness and confined generosity, acting at their liberty, totally incapacitate them for society; and at the same time have observed, that society is necessary to the satisfaction of those very passions, they are naturally induced to lay themselves under the restraint of such rules, as may render their commerce more safe and commodious.' (iii 2.2.24)

[14] See §767.

[15] See Hobbes, §495. See Gauthier, 'Contractarian'.

be immediate and obvious, as they are in the case of the two rowers who can move the boat only by their joint efforts, and cheating may often offer me apparent benefits.

The apparent benefits of cheating raise difficulties for Hume and for Hobbes at some of the same points. Before an effective system is established, it is difficult to see how any agreement to 'lay down our arms' could be stable, since any given individual benefits if others lay down their arms and he does not. This is true no less of Humean conventions. Moreover, once a system of justice is working, Hobbes's dispute with the fool raises a more serious question about cheats and free-riders. Even if the existence and general observance of rules of justice benefits me, not every action falling under the rules benefits me. Why, then, should I refrain from cheating when I get the appropriate opportunity?

The answer to this question, in Hume's view, explains the origin of government. Following one line of thought in Hobbes, he traces the necessity for government to our tendency to act on our short-sighted passions.[16] The remedy for the effect of these passions is foresight and the calm passions it provokes. I can see that the long-term benefit to me of a stable system of non-aggression will be greater than the short-term benefit I will gain by cheating. When the opportunity for cheating is imminent, it will excite a violent passion that will be stronger than the calm passion favouring my long-term interest. But before the opportunity is imminent, my calm passion is stronger, and I can act on it by denying myself the opportunity to act on the violent passion that I know will be aroused. This is why Ulysses had himself tied to the mast, or I might pour the whiskey down the sink if I know I will want too much of it. The establishment of governments is a pre-emptive action against violent passions.

Hume seems to believe that pre-emption answers the challenge presented by the free-rider, by distinguishing the short-term from the long-term attitude to the rules and institutions of justice (iii 2.2.24). If free-riders steadily took the long-term view, they would see that they benefit from accepting and observing the rules of a system of justice, and they would take pre-emptive action against themselves.

To see whether this is a good answer to the free-rider, we need to separate two claims: (1) I am better off in the long term if I live under a system of justice that imposes these specific rules on me than I would be if I did not live under such a system. (2) I am never better off in the long term if I break one of these specific rules. Hume has a good defence of the first claim, and so a good argument for pre-emptive action. But a defence of the second claim is needed to answer the free-rider, if an answer must appeal only to Hobbesian motives.

We might come closer to answering the free-rider if we could find an indirect egoist defence of a system that excludes egoistic calculation.[17] We are all better off in certain respects if we habitually follow rules of justice without asking about our interest. A system in which people do not ask this question is more stable, and—in that respect—everyone benefits from it more than they would from a system in which they are always asking about their interest. In the latter system, people may calculate, falsely or truly, that violation of the rules is beneficial to them individually; if their calculations lead them to break the rules, the system will be less stable than the one that excludes egoistic calculation.

[16] For discussion of his account of prudence see §738.

[17] See Gauthier, *MA*, ch. 6, on constrained maximization.

This indirect egoist argument against calculation of self-interest is different from the one that Hume offers. Hume suggests that if I calculate my long-term interest correctly, I will see that it is in my interest to observe rules of justice. Indirect egoists, however, concede that sometimes a true calculation of my long-term interest favours a violation of the rules of justice, but then they argue that we are better off if we avoid this sort of calculation and observe rules of justice. This argument takes Hume's argument a step further.

But the indirect egoist argument does not offer Hume a good answer; it seems to share the basic limitation of his argument. If we grant that rigid observance of rules of justice makes us all better off than we would all be if each of us looked out for her own advantage, it does not follow that I always do better for myself if I form the habit of rigidly following rules of justice even when I would benefit more by cheating. In some conditions I might do better for myself if I were less rigid than other people in adhering to rules of justice. As the indirect egoist claims, I am better off if people in general are not prone to act on self-interested calculations; but if I am a free-rider, I ask why I should always observe the rules of the system that benefits everyone. An appeal to the benefits of the system for everyone does not answer this question.[18]

We may reasonably doubt, therefore, whether Hume's account of the origin of justice completely succeeds. His illuminating discussion of convention and of foresight suggests how a basically Hobbesian account might be made more plausible. But the improvements to Hobbes do not remove the basic difficulties that arise for attempts to find conclusive non-moral reasons for upholding a system of justice.

771. Justice and the Moral Sentiment

But even if these doubts are justified, they may not matter much to Hume's overall argument about justice. For, in contrast to Hobbes, he believes that our approval of justice rests not only on self-interest, but also on a moral sentiment. We approve of justice because of sympathy developed by artifice. Once we have set up a system that benefits everyone, sympathy causes us to respond to the benefits and harms to others and to the public, not merely to ourselves, that result from the observance and violation of rules of justice (iii 2.2.24). This sympathy is a natural reaction to the effects of the rules, though it is strengthened by deliberate artifice and training. Hume has explained why the actions required by a system of justice do not appeal in their own right to our moral sense, since they do not individually promote the good of particular people or the public good. But once a system of justice is working, we see that we benefit by its presence and would be harmed by its absence, and we see that the same is true of everyone. And so our sympathetic feeling is engaged by the system of justice, and attached derivatively to particular just actions and rules (*T* iii 2.2.24; iii 2.6.11).

In the *Inquiry* Hume recognizes a sentiment that is concerned directly with the public good. This is the sentiment engaged by a working system of justice. He appeals to this

[18] As Mackie points out, *HMT* 93, it is even less clear that the particular rules of justice envisaged by Hume would be most in the interest of purely self-interested agents.

sentiment to explain 'why utility pleases'.[19] In opposition to Hobbes, and in agreement with Hutcheson, he maintains that this concern for the public interest is distinct from our concern for our own interest. Both concerns engage us when we approve of justice. According to Hume, we regard justice as a moral virtue because it engages our other-regarding sentiment, which he calls sometimes 'benevolence' and sometimes 'humanity'.

In the light of his argument, what should we say about Hume's initial objection to the claim (accepted by Hutcheson) that benevolence is the basis of our approval of just actions? Earlier, he observed that our benevolence might be engaged by the prospect of distributing the rich miser's possessions rather than by observing the rules of private property. But now he suggests that reflexion on the benefits of the system of justice engages our benevolence on the side of observance of the rules of justice. Should we suppose, then, that our benevolence is engaged on both sides, since we see some benefit to others from redistribution and from the rules of property?

Hume does not suggest this answer; he seems to assume that benevolence will be engaged on the side of upholding the rules of property. When we think about all the benefits resulting from the system of justice, we see that we need to uphold its rules, and so our benevolence supports the maintenance of rights of property. If benevolence responds to these considerations, it must be a utilitarian attitude. But in that case it is puzzling that Hume initially claimed that benevolence would support redistribution rather than the rules of property.

Perhaps Hume's different claims about benevolence are more easily understood by appeal to indirect utilitarianism. He is less clear than Hutcheson about the distinctive character of indirect utilitarianism,[20] but closer attention to it might help his argument in some places. He suggests quite plausibly that if we look at a just action outside any system of justice, it will often seem contrary to the public interest. But a working system of justice changes things in two ways: (1) Within a system of justice (say, a system of rules of property), the particular action that otherwise would not be in the public interest is in the public interest. (2) Within a system of justice, it promotes the public interest to obey its rules whether or not obedience to them is in the public interest in particular cases.

Some cases seem to satisfy the second condition, but not the first. Stealing this loaf of bread here and now might be undetected, set no precedent, etc. Or telling this lie now might have no bad effects and many good ones. Such actions do not tend to undermine the general observance of the rule that prohibits lying and stealing. In these cases it might be better, given the particular situation, to violate the rule of justice. But it might be even better to have a system that prohibits violations in particular cases even when violations would be in the public interest. It is better if witnesses have the habit of telling the truth when they are questioned in court, or if lawyers try to make the best case for their clients, or if doctors focus on the health of their patients rather than on their social usefulness. If we are utilitarians, and we see the difference between these two cases, we will defend a system of justice by an indirect utilitarian argument.

[19] 'Thus, in whatever light we take this subject, the merit, ascribed to the social virtues, appears still uniform, and arises chiefly from that regard, which the natural sentiment of benevolence engages us to pay to the interests of mankind and society.' (*I* 5.43)

[20] In particular, he is less clear than Hutcheson's *SMP*. See §647.

The difference between the two forms of utilitarian argument is parallel to the difference between the two forms of egoist argument that might connect self-interest with a system of justice. We saw that Hume seems to confine himself to the first sort of egoist argument, and does not seem to consider indirect egoism. Similarly, he usually connects justice and utility by a direct argument, arguing that a system of justice makes a particular action promote the public interest. But he sometimes recognizes that the good consequences do not belong to particular actions but to the system of justice that requires these particular actions even when they have bad consequences.[21] Hence he sometimes accepts an indirect utilitarian account of justice, without sharply distinguishing it from a direct utilitarian account. According to the indirect account, our moral sentiment responds secondarily to a particular just action (whether or not it promotes the public interest in the long run) because it responds primarily to the beneficial tendency of the system that enjoins just actions.

772. Natural Virtues

Now that we have considered Hume's account of the moral sentiment underlying our concern for justice, we may return to his initial contrast between the artificial and the natural virtues. Has he shown that we can have no moral concern with a just action considered in itself?

In making this broad negative claim, Hume does not consider the possibility that we might care about equal treatment for relevantly similar actions, or equal responses to equal needs, apart from the benefit or harm to the agents involved. He therefore seems to set aside the deontological considerations that Butler opposes to all attempts to reduce morality to concern for the public interest. Hume seems to think he has disqualified all such considerations through his argument to show that the motive for being just cannot be regard for the justness of the action. He argues that such regard for the justness of the action would require an antecedent regard for the virtue of justice, and this is the very thing we are trying to explain (iii 2.1.9).

Hume's argument, however, does not distinguish the goodness of actions from the goodness of agents.[22] We might say that an action tending to treat people according to what they have done, or to match reward or punishment to the degree of intentional benefit or harm, is good in itself. Hence we might approve the attitude that cares about treating equal cases equally, matching reward and punishment to actions, and so on, because we value these actions. Such a motive constitutes justice, and it is not clear why it should not be a natural object of esteem.

Let us, however, waive these objections to Hume, and concede that we must derive the moral goodness of justice from its relation to some consequences that we approve of. In that case, his point about justice is that our approval has to depend on our views about the system of justice that prescribes this particular just action. If this is right, does it mark a difference between justice and the virtues that Hume regards as natural?

[21] '. . . every particular act of justice is not beneficial to society, but the whole scheme or system' (*T* iii 3.1.13; cf. 12).

[22] Hume's argument is criticized by Rawls, *LHMP* 53–4.

Actions proceeding from the natural virtues sometimes seem to result from consideration of their consequences or of the system of which they form a part. If your child has inherited money, and you do not allow him to spend it immediately as he pleases, but insist on its being saved or invested for his future use, your action is an act of benevolence. But Hume's sympathetic observer might notice that your action causes immediate distress and no obvious immediate benefit to the child. To see that the action is evidence of your benevolent motive, the observer must look at the general facts about people and societies that make this the best thing to do in the child's interest. Some of these facts are of the sort that Hume regards as conventions—arrangements about the use of money to buy commodities, about the accumulation of money from investment, and so on. But even though all this has to be taken into account, your action was benevolent, and evidence of a benevolent character.

If, then, Hume seeks to distinguish artificial from natural virtues on the ground that various social facts and consequences have to be considered if we are to understand the system that makes artificial virtues beneficial, he faces a difficulty. He does not show that justice is any more artificial than benevolence; for the same sorts of facts may be relevant to benevolence.

Hume does not discuss this question about his division, because he illustrates the natural virtue of benevolence with a rather narrow range of examples. He mentions benevolent actions in which, for instance, 'a parent flies to the relief of his child' (*I*, App 3.2), and no particular foresight or understanding is needed. Such examples are misleading, however, because benevolence is not confined to cases where the benefit is obvious. Concern for longer-term benefits does not distinguish the virtue of benevolence from the virtue of justice; it may simply distinguish one sort of benevolent action from another.

Hume's contrast between benevolence and justice may result from his treatment of benevolence as a sentiment that reacts to the immediate appearance of good and harm to others. If he thinks of benevolence as a natural virtue that rests on this sentiment, he might reasonably infer that it ignores consequences. This conception of benevolence makes it plausible to say that just actions often do not appeal to benevolence and unjust actions often appeal to it. But one might doubt whether the spontaneous expression of an unreflective sentiment of benevolence is really a virtue. Butler sees this point, and therefore distinguishes the passion of benevolence from the rational principle. While the consideration of consequences may be alien to the passion of benevolence, it is often necessary for a virtue of benevolence, which rests on the rational principle.[23]

Though Hume does not accept the basis of Butler's distinction, which rests on the division between passions and superior principles, he seems to recognize a type of benevolence that differs from the unreflective sentiment. For he sometimes describes the principle of humanity as benevolence; the benevolence he has in mind here must be sensitive to consideration of consequences. It is more plausible to count this reflective attitude as a virtue than to count the unreflective sentiment. Even if reflective benevolence is not utilitarian, it considers the long-term interest of the person or people who engage our benevolent concern. When

[23] Laird, *HPHN* 220–1, raises some related questions about conflicts in Hume's claims about benevolence.

we are clear about the relevant conception of benevolence, Hume's way of distinguishing natural from artificial virtues seems less convincing.

773. Is Justice an Artificial Virtue?

One might argue on Hume's behalf that these features of benevolence show only that social institutions and practices sometimes affect the demands of benevolence. Nonetheless (one might argue) our natural virtue of benevolence approves some actions apart from any social context, whereas we approve just actions only in the right social context. We approve actions that relieve suffering just because they relieve suffering, not because they belong to a beneficial system, whereas we do not approve rules of property in themselves; we always need to refer to a social context that shows us how they belong to a beneficial system that evokes our approval.

This claim about justice, however, seems open to question. We might concede that specific rules assuring the security of property rest on social institutions and practices, and that justice would not require respect for these specific rules outside a social context. But this does not seem to be true of all just actions. If B does a good turn for A and A returns evil for good, or if C harms A, and A harms the innocent B as well as the guilty C, or if A benefits B and harms C, though they have benefited or harmed A equally, we seem to recognize that A has acted unfairly and unjustly, and we readily disapprove of A's action, outside any social context. Hence we seem to disapprove immediately of some unjust actions in their own right. Different practices and conventions might make different types of actions unfair, but they do not affect the non-conventional injustice of treating equals unequally.

Hume's remarks on promising illustrate this point. We may grant that making a promise requires a convention. If I am to 'give my word' that I will meet you tomorrow, I must be able to say something to make it clear that I am not simply predicting that I will be in the same place as you are at a specific time, but I am treating the fact that I am telling you where I will be as a reason for my being there. The conventions that belong to promising make it clear when you are entitled to rely on my doing what I said I would do because I told you I would do it. If you could reasonably be expected to know that I was simply predicting what I would do, rather than undertaking to do it, you would not be entitled to complain if I did something different, and I would (in this respect) have done nothing wrong by not doing what I said I would do.

This does not prove, however, that the obligations of justice involved in promising are created by convention. The convention-based action of promising would not create an obligation if it were not already wrong to frustrate an expectation about my future action on which another person is morally entitled to rely. Without conventional ways of creating such expectations, it is more difficult to decide when someone is entitled to rely on some specific future action of mine; but the convention does not create the obligation that results from the entitlement.

We have a reason for recognizing non-conventional obligations of justice if we disagree with Hume about which conventions create obligations of justice. We might be inclined

to say that only agreements or conventions formed in just or fair circumstances, for legitimate purposes, and based on legitimate expectations, create obligations of justice. If we are right about this, some non-conventional constraints of justice identify the appropriate circumstances, purposes, and expectations; otherwise we will face an infinite regress of conventions relying on conventions.

Hume believes he can avoid these non-conventional constraints of justice by claiming that all mutually advantageous conventions are just. If he is right, the only non-conventional constraints involve advantage, not justice, and all the obligations of justice result from convention. But his claim is open to doubt, if we can form mutually advantageous conventions that are nonetheless unjust, and therefore do not create obligations of justice. One of Hobbes's covenants suggests this sort of objection against Hume. If you are so powerful that you can credibly threaten me with death if I do not do what you want, and I cannot threaten you in the same way, it may be in my interest to promise to be your slave in return for your protection. Hobbes believes that justice requires me to keep such a promise; but we might reasonably disagree with him, because of the unfair and unjust circumstances that induced me to make the promise. Similarly, then, in similar circumstances, it might be mutually advantageous for you and me to establish a convention so that I serve you in whatever way you please on the understanding (without any explicit promise) that you will not kill me. Hume seems to be committed to the Hobbesian view that this convention creates an obligation of justice; the difference between explicit agreement and convention does not seem to matter for this point.

We might object, therefore, to Hume's position in the way we objected to Hobbes's position. The arrangement does not seem to be just, because the threats resulting from your superior power have made the circumstances of my compliance unjust. Hence I am not morally required to abide by it. This convention does not create an obligation of justice.[24] To determine which conventions are just, we need non-conventional principles of justice. And so not all obligations of justice depend on convention and social context.

Hume sees that he cannot explain obligations of justice by appeal to a promise, because any appeal to a promise would presuppose an unexplained obligation to keep a promise. He thinks he avoids this sort of objection by appealing to conventions rather than promises. But he does not avoid it; for conventions that create moral obligations depend, no less than promises do, on obligations that are prior to conventions. He has not proved, therefore, that the obligations of justice depend wholly on conventions. Since justice involves the fulfilment of legitimate demands and expectations, conventions determine the content of many duties of justice; for conventions create demands and expectations, and morally appropriate conventions create legitimate demands and expectations. But they would not do this unless some duties of justice were prior to conventions.

We may not be convinced, then, by Hume's reasons for believing that justice is an artificial virtue. These reasons depend on an over-simplified conception of a natural virtue, and on some controversial claims about the basis of obligations of justice. Hume relies on a Hobbesian view about the basis of justice, and does not answer all the arguments of Hobbes's successors for recognizing obligations of justice prior to any agreement or convention.

[24] Cf. Hobbes, §§494–5, 505.

774. Justice, Self-Interest, and Moral Sentiment

These questions about Hume's view of justice concern his account of the origin of just practices, and his attempt to explain them without reference to any prior concern for justice. Further questions arise about the moral sentiments that support an established system of justice. At this stage the natural operations of sympathy, together with the artifices of social pressure and moral education, produce a moral sentiment in favour of justice. Once we understand the ramifications and consequences of just institutions, they evoke the sentiment that Hume calls both 'benevolence' and 'humanity', because this sentiment is the one that results from recognition of utility.

We might expect, therefore, that Hume would treat self-interest as simply the origin of justice, not as the permanent basis of justice. If moral sentiment supports a system of justice that originally benefits everyone, but the system evolves so that it no longer benefits everyone but it now maximizes utility, by making some people worse off for the greater benefit of others, will our moral sentiment not still support it? In that case, might a system of justice survive with the support of moral sentiment alone, but without the support of self-interest?

Hume does not consider this possibility. But he seems to rule it out implicitly. For he does not suggest that justice requires me to learn to sacrifice my own interest to the public interest. He grants only that it requires me to sacrifice my short-term interest to the longer-term interest that I recognize when I think about how I benefit from the system of justice. Hence he seems to assume that I am always better off if I observe the rules of justice.

Why should this be a constraint on a system of justice? Hume might give different answers: (1) Hobbes is right to believe that the self-interested motives are basic and overriding, so that it is futile to rest the whole support of institutions on some other motive. (2) Though moral sentiments are no less basic, and may become no less strong, than self-interested motives, they are not sufficient in everyone, or on all occasions, to support a system of justice. (3) It would be irrational to accept just institutions for any non-egoistic reason. (4) Self-interest imposes a moral constraint on the provisions of justice: it is unfair or illegitimate to demand my acceptance of an institution that does not benefit me, but simply uses my contribution to benefit others.[25]

Hume favours the first claim in the *Treatise*. In the *Inquiry*, however, he appeals to the sentiment of benevolence that favours the public interest. He seems to have abandoned the doubts of the *Treatise* about the existence of such a motive. He is not entitled to the third claim, given his views about reason and passion. If it is not contrary to reason to prefer the destruction of the world to the scratching of my finger, it can hardly be irrational to prefer justice over self-interest. Hume's remarks in both works are consistent with the second claim, but he does not argue for it. Nor does he discuss the fourth claim.

Part of the reason for this obscurity in his view is his imprecise conception of the public interest and of utility. We have already noticed that it is not clear how we take the 'common point of view' that Hume regards as the mark of moral sentiment.[26] Similarly, when he

[25] See §§505–6 on a deontological interpretation of Hobbes's egoistic constraints and claims about equality.

[26] See §§761–2.

speaks of concern for the public interest, he might have two things in mind: (1) What is in the public interest is whatever advances the interest of everyone in common, resulting in benefit to each person; we may call this the 'common interest'. (2) What is in the public interest advances the interest of the public taken as a whole, but not necessarily the interest of each person; we may call this the 'total interest'. The two accounts of the public interest differ in their attitude to some action or policy that harms one person simply in order to benefit others to a degree that exceeds the harm to the victim. Such an action or policy advances the total interest, but not the common interest.[27]

Concern for the total interest, as opposed to the common interest, is characteristic of utilitarianism. Hutcheson is an explicit utilitarian because he attributes this maximizing aim to morality.[28] Hume's position is less clear. In the *Treatise* one might argue that he supports utilitarianism, because he explains our concern for the public interest by appeal to sympathy. I notice that the violation of rules of justice is sometimes prejudicial to myself; and so I imagine what other people feel when they are victims of these violations (*T* iii 2.2.24). If I add up all the sufferings of the public, my feeling in favour of the public interest is stronger than my feeling in favour of the interest of any particular people. According to this additive picture, concern for the public interest amounts to concern for the total interest.

The *Inquiry* appeals to a 'common point of view' or 'universal principle of the human frame' (*I* 9.6). It is not clear how far we need to abstract from our individual concerns and interests in order to reach the common point of view that belongs to morality. If we abstract from everything except pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain, no matter whose pleasure or pain it is, we reach the utilitarian outlook that favours the total interest. But we need some further argument to show that this point of view is common to all who contemplate an action without reference to their individual self-interest. If Hume simply defines the common point of view as the utilitarian outlook, he abandons his aim of understanding the moral outlook as the result of a sentiment that we form without antecedent moral convictions.

A different way to describe the common point of view might start from the assumption that we are looking for a point of view that self-interested people could share. Though I abstract from my specific concern for my own interest, I do not abstract from the fact that each person is concerned for their own interest. If, then, we look for a common point of view, we might favour a policy that offers something to everyone; for such a policy promotes everyone's interest, and so may be preferable to a policy that would promote my exclusive interest but would arouse most people's opposition.

If, then, the public interest is simply maximum utility, appeal to the public interest does not obviously 'touch a string to which all mankind have an accord and symphony'. But if the public interest is the common, not the total, interest, the accord and symphony are easier to understand, since the common interest offers something to everyone.

If the public interest is the common interest, the role of self-interest in his account of justice is easier to understand. Though different people might not benefit equally from the common interest, everyone has some reason to favour it, because it offers some benefit to

[27] This does not mean that the common interest requires everyone to benefit to an equal degree from every just policy, but that individual interests impose some limits on the extent to which it is legitimate to harm some to benefit others. Rawls's account of justice (see, e.g., *TJ* §§11–12, 29) tries to say what these limits might be.

[28] See Hutcheson, §644.

everyone, and does not sacrifice any person's interests simply to benefit other people. This policy would offer fair treatment of the interests of different people. Concern with total utility does not respect different people's interests in the same way.

A non-utilitarian principle of humanity does not refute Butler's claim that justice sometimes overrides utility. On the contrary, justice and moral sentiment, so understood, confirm Butler's conception of conscience as a part of human nature. Human nature includes some concern for common humanity—the fair and equal treatment of human beings as such. This feature of conscience helps Butler to explain why conscience has authority, so that we have some reason to obey it, apart from the strength of our desire to obey it. Butler's conception of authority presupposes—falsely, in Hume's view—the possibility of reasons distinct from strength of desire. Nonetheless, Hume helps us to see more clearly the attitude whose claim to authority needs to be justified.

This suggested non-utilitarian analysis of the principle of humanity does not express Hume's predominant view. Still, it is useful to consider the non-utilitarian elements that are suggested by the role he allows to self-interest and by his account of the principle of humanity. These elements make his account more complex than Hutcheson's more purely utilitarian account, and suggest ways in which a non-utilitarian might learn from his discussion of justice.

The non-utilitarian elements in Hume help us to understand the questions about justice and utility that arise for some of his successors. He tries to connect sentimentalism and utilitarianism by combining elements of Hobbes and Hutcheson. Some of his successors are not convinced by this combination.[29]

Price and Reid, following Butler, reject sentimentalism, and so reject the sentimentalist argument for utilitarianism. They believe that their meta-ethical rationalism and their non-utilitarian account of justice confirm each other, and that both views rest on ordinary moral convictions.

Sidgwick accepts some of the rationalists' premisses, but rejects their anti-utilitarian conclusion. He agrees with Butler, Price, and Reid against Hutcheson and Hume, in recognizing non-utilitarian elements in some common-sense morality, including our views about justice; Hume himself tacitly suggests these elements. But Sidgwick believes these non-utilitarian elements are rationally indefensible, and that only the utilitarian view, concerned with the total interest, is rationally tenable.

When Sidgwick confronts this account of morality with Butler's question about the authority of conscience, he finds he cannot explain why conscience, understood as endorsing utilitarianism, should be authoritative. To see whether Sidgwick has drawn the right conclusions from the problems we have raised for Hume, we need to see how far non-utilitarian elements in morality could be rationally defensible.

775. Personal Merit

Hume's discussions of benevolence and justice are two important parts of his examination of the different virtues. This examination leads him to the conclusion that a person's virtues are

[29] Cf. Smith on Hume, §799.

qualities that are useful or agreeable either to the person himself or to others. The utilitarian analysis, therefore, applies only to the virtues that are useful to others.[30]

Hume takes his conclusion to be easy and obvious.[31] We can reach it directly from the general principle that what is valuable is either useful (utile) or agreeable (dulce) and the further evident fact that a person's traits of character may be either useful or agreeable to oneself or to others. In Hume's view, his position represents the natural outcome of our reasoning, whereas other views express systems and hypotheses that pervert the natural course of our reasoning, as the outlook of the 'divines' does.[32]

We can see that Hume's conclusion is not obviously correct, once we notice that his twofold division of the valuable omits, as Hobbes does, the third element of the traditional division—the right (honestum). Perhaps he omits it because he supposes that he can analyse the right into the useful and the agreeable.[33] But if he assumes that, he takes a controversial position that needs some defence.

Perhaps Hume believes that his account of the virtues vindicates his assumption that the valuable includes only the useful and the agreeable. He sets out to describe the different elements of 'personal merit'.[34] In his view, we can give a complete description of these elements without attributing to them any sort of value beyond the two sorts he recognizes. If he is right about this, even those who doubt his initial claim about the twofold division must admit that this division captures our conception of the moral virtues.

To see whether Hume succeeds in this argument, we need to know what he means by asking whether a given trait is part of someone's personal merit. First, he suggests that such a trait makes a person an object of 'esteem and affection' or of 'hatred and contempt'; then he assumes that such a trait implies either 'praise or blame' and may enter into 'panegyric or satire' (*I* 1.10). He recognizes that affection and hatred are inadequate. We can feel these sentiments towards people who benefit or harm ourselves, but we recognize that these are not moral sentiments. To express moral sentiments we have to take the common point of view (*I* 9.6) that we expect others to share with us. Hence the elements of personal merit should be those that provoke affection, esteem, and praise from spectators in general, when each abstracts from his own individual advantage.

[30] Baier, *PS*, ch. 9, discusses virtues that, in Hume's view, focus on what is immediately agreeable, not on maximization over time.

[31] 'It may justly appear surprising, that any man, in so late an age, should find it requisite to prove, by elaborate reasoning, that personal consists altogether in the possession of mental qualities, useful or agreeable to the person himself, or to others. It might be expected, that this principle would have occurred even to the first rude, unpractised enquirers concerning morals, and been received from its own evidence, without any argument or disputation. Whatever is valuable in any kind, so naturally classes itself under the division of useful or agreeable, the utile or the dulce, that it is not easy to imagine, why we should ever seek farther, or consider the question as a matter of nice research or enquiry. And as every thing useful or agreeable must possess these qualities with regard either to the person himself or to others, the complete delineation or description of merit seems to be performed as naturally as a shadow is cast by the sun, or an image is reflected upon water.' (*I* 9.1)

[32] 'And it seems a reasonable presumption, that systems and hypotheses have perverted our natural understanding; when a theory, so simple and obvious, could so long have escaped the most elaborate examination.' (*I* 9.1)

[33] Cf. Hobbes, §477.

[34] 'We shall analyse that complication of mental qualities, which form what, in common life, we call personal merit. We shall consider every attribute of the mind, which renders a man an object either of esteem and affection, or of hatred and contempt; every habit or sentiment or faculty, which, if ascribed to any person, implies either praise or blame, and may enter into any panegyric or satire of his character and manners.' (*I* 1.10)

This would be an unhelpful account of personal merit if we could not identify the relevant attitude in spectators without ascribing correct moral beliefs to them. If the moral virtues are those that are correctly esteemed from the moral point of view, in the light of correct moral beliefs, we cannot find the moral virtues until we find the correct moral beliefs; and so we cannot use the point of view of the spectator to find the correct moral beliefs. Hume takes his account of personal merit to be more informative than this, because he believes he can describe the morally relevant outlook in spectators without ascribing correct moral beliefs to them.

Hume's sentimentalism and his theory of the passions force this belief on him. For if a moral judgment either is or reports a sentiment, and a sentiment conforms to Hume's account of a passion, a moral judgment on a person must be (or report) a passion that is identified by its intrinsic phenomenal quality. No beliefs are essential to a passion; hence no beliefs are essential to the moral sentiment. The traits that constitute personal merit are united by being the objects of a sentiment that is identified by a single phenomenal quality.

776. Hume and the 'Divines' on the Criteria for Virtue

We can illustrate some of the difficulties in these claims about the virtues by returning to Hume's rejection of the view of the 'divines' who take voluntariness to be necessary for genuinely moral virtues. He believes that this view about virtues displays ignorance of human nature, and that we can remove such ignorance by a proper exercise of the experimental method. When he says that his survey of the virtues reflects our natural understanding, and that 'systems and hypotheses' have perverted the natural course of our reasoning, he has the outlook of the divines and their 'monkish virtues' in mind (*I* 9.1, 3).

Hume's experimental method studies our sentiments towards different traits of character we admire, both voluntary and non-voluntary. In his view, we see that our sentiments towards voluntary and non-voluntary traits are the same, and hence we see that the divines are wrong. Hume relies on two claims: (1) If we have the same sentiment towards two traits, either both are virtues or neither is a virtue. (2) We have the same sentiment towards voluntary and non-voluntary traits. The first claim expresses Hume's sentimentalism; for the moment we may concede it and ask about his second claim.

This second claim rejects Butler's view that moral approval and disapproval depend on beliefs about whether an action or trait is voluntary.[35] Butler treats moral approval as a special kind of approval that rests on beliefs about the goodness and badness of people and actions.[36] Our 'moral approving and disapproving faculty' essentially involves beliefs about desert, and so does not simply involve favourable or unfavourable reactions. Our moral sentiments rest on moral judgments that presuppose our ability to evaluate reactions

[35] 'We never, in the moral way, applaud or blame either ourselves or others, for what we enjoy or what we suffer, or for having impressions made upon us which we consider as altogether out of our power; but only for what we do, or would have done, had it been in our power; or for what we leave undone, which we might have done, or would have left undone, though we could have done it.' (Butler, D 2)

[36] '. . . we naturally and unavoidably approve some actions, under the peculiar view of their being virtuous and of good desert; and disapprove others, as vicious and of ill desert.' (Butler, D 1)

and sentiments and to guide them by moral criteria. From Butler's point of view, then, it is reasonable to distinguish a particular kind of approval that he calls moral approval, resting on the application of rational standards, which include the demand for voluntary action.

Hume believes we lack the ability assumed by Butler, so that Butler is wrong to treat moral judgments as essentially involving the application of rational standards of evaluation to our sentiments. Hume's objections to the divines reflect one of his basic objections to his predecessors, that they regard morality as an expression of rational standards that guide sentiments and they regard moral philosophy as a normative discipline that can discover and justify these rational standards. This discipline is irreducibly normative insofar as it claims to discover principles about what we ought to do and have reason to do, and supposes that these principles do not simply describe psychological or social facts that can be fully described without reference to what we ought to do and have reason to do.

According to Hume, then, our sentiments do not follow Butler's rules. We can see this when we observe that we have the same sentiment towards voluntary and non-voluntary virtues. Hume assumes that we can observe this because we can observe phenomenally similar reactions towards these different traits of character. He individuates sentiments in the way in which he individuates passions, referring to their introspectible features. Experimental study of human nature shows that our feeling of admiration for an involuntary excellence is phenomenally similar to our feeling of admiration for a voluntary excellence. Hume infers that the two sentiments are the same, and that the divines have overlooked this introspectibly evident fact.

If Butler were confronted with Hume's objection that we have the same sentiment towards voluntary and non-voluntary virtues and vices, he might reasonably argue that moral applause and blame cast doubt on Hume's claim about the identity of sentiments. If our sentiment towards A rests on the belief that A acted voluntarily, but our sentiment towards B does not rest on that belief, the two sentiments are not the same (according to Butler), even if they are phenomenally similar in other ways. If I find that B's action was an accident resulting from circumstances that B could not reasonably have been expected to foresee, I am not indignant at B, even if I find myself feeling unfavourable towards B.

Apparently, then, Hume is wrong to claim that we have the same sentiments towards non-voluntary actions and states that we have towards voluntary actions and states. All he can claim is that their non-doxastic elements may be phenomenally indistinguishable. The objection that appeals to sentiments seems to rely on a questionable conception of the identity of a sentiment.[37]

But even if we agreed with Hume's view that we have the same sentiment towards voluntary and non-voluntary excellences, why should we also agree that the divines are mistaken to insist that only voluntary traits are virtues? He argues that they have warped reasoning and language from their natural course, by drawing distinctions that are not marked by the phenomenal character of our sentiments.[38] He suggests, therefore, that

[37] See Reid, §849, on moral approval and voluntariness.

[38] '. . . and as this latter science [sc. theology] admits of no terms of composition, but bends every branch of knowledge to its own purpose, without much regard to the phenomena of nature, or to the unbiassed sentiments of the mind, hence

(1) the distinctions marked by our sentiments determine the natural course of language and reasoning, and (2) we ought not to warp language and reasoning from this natural course.

These claims are difficult to evaluate. Which of Hume's senses of 'natural' has he in mind? If it is unusual to mark the distinction that the divines mark, that hardly counts against them; as Hume points out, heroic virtue is 'unnatural' in being unusual. If the divines' distinction involves artifice, that does not count against it either. Perhaps Hume means that our natural reaction is the one that inevitably or usually follows our awareness of a given action or trait. Perhaps we should rely on this reaction because it is pointless to try to get rid of it. The divines, in his view, have engaged in this pointless effort, since they have tried to draw a distinction that our sentiments have refused to acknowledge. It is more sensible to leave our natural reactions as they are. It would be foolish to try to persuade ourselves to give up our belief in external objects, simply because we do not think it is justified; the divines have been trying to persuade us to do something similar, and we are wasting our time if we listen to them.

Hume's form of argument may sometimes be reasonable, but in this case the divines have a reply. They can explain why we might have phenomenally similar reactions to genuine virtues and to some involuntary traits and accomplishments. They can even explain why it is useful and valuable if our sentiments are undiscriminating in this way. Perhaps it is sometimes difficult to decide how far a given trait is voluntary, but we want to encourage it as far as we can, or perhaps our favourable sentiment towards voluntary traits is strengthened if we also favour some involuntary traits. This account might also help to explain some other apparently undiscriminating reactions that might appear to support Hume. We have some feelings of regret at an accident we were causally, but not morally, responsible for; these are among the feelings that we also have when we think we are morally responsible for some harm to another person.[39] Our undiscriminating sentiments might be an appropriate support for discriminations that do not rest on these sentiments.

Hume's analysis of the voluntary raises a further question about his objections to the divines. In his discussion of liberty and necessity, he seems to assume (though he does not explicitly say so) that for an action to be voluntary is simply for it to be subject to praise and blame. In arguing that we are responsible only for actions that proceed from something durable and constant in us, he points out that these are the actions we are praised or blamed for (*T* ii 3.2.6). He does not consider the possibility that the same sentiments might be directed to non-voluntary actions as well. He seems to infer, then, that to be voluntary is to be the object of these sentiments. But against the divines he objects that we have these sentiments indifferently towards voluntary and involuntary actions. This objection is inconsistent with the view that voluntary actions are those towards which we have these sentiments. If Hume's analysis of the voluntary is correct, he agrees with the divines in treating moral virtues and vices as voluntary, since he says they are objects of the sentiments of praise and blame.

Some of Hume's arguments, therefore, rely on some of his own most questionable doctrines, while others seem to create more difficulties for him than they create for his

reasoning, and even language, have been warped from their natural course, and distinctions have been endeavoured to be established, where the difference of the objects was, in a manner, imperceptible' (*I*, App. 4.21).

[39] This point is relevant to Williams's discussion of 'agent regret' in 'Luck'.

opponents. The divines believe that we should rely on the division between voluntary and involuntary to form our sentiments, such as moral praise and blame, as Butler describes them. If we do not accept Hume's purely phenomenal individuation of sentiments, we can recognize distinct moral sentiments without distinct phenomenal features.

777. Objections to Hume's Account

This dispute with the divines suggests a general objection to Hume's method for finding a general account of the moral virtues. Some of his early critics attack his account of the ancients in order to attack his claims about the virtues. Beattie argues not only that the ancients require moral virtues to be voluntary,[40] but also that they are right to require this. He therefore attacks Hume's view that the different virtues surveyed in the *Inquiry* are all equally moral (*ENIT* 320), and Hume's rejection of any distinction between moral and intellectual virtues.

According to Beattie, Hume begs the question in claiming that whatever excites the same kind of disinterested sentiment is equally a virtue (324). Closer consideration shows that a sentiment—identified by Hume's criteria—is not sufficient for a virtue. James Balfour develops this criticism by trying to identify the elements of moral virtue that Hume ignores.[41] According to Balfour, a moral virtue must include a 'habitual purpose or intention to do good to others' (*DNOM* 125); a quality that Hume counts as a virtue is a real virtue only if the useful or agreeable trait is controlled by this intention. Balfour relies on the Socratic and Stoic view (later exploited by Kant) that virtue consists in the good use of other goods; he criticizes Hume for reducing virtues to assets or resources and leaving out the requirement of appropriate use.[42] He argues that Hume is wrong to claim the support of the ancients, and especially of Cicero (131–2). In fact Cicero follows the Stoic scheme of the cardinal virtues, which, according to Balfour, requires different useful and agreeable traits to be used well before they can belong to virtue.

These criticisms suggest that the catalogue of virtues in the *Inquiry* seems natural and plausible to Hume only because he relies on some of his more controversial claims. In supposing that the common feature of the virtues could only be found in our reaction to them, and that the relevant sort of reaction must be some sentiment, identified by its phenomenal character, he presupposes the argument of *Treatise* ii–iii on passion, reason, and the source of moral distinctions. From the start he rules out the possibility of an error theory of the virtues; for he assumes that we cannot identify the virtues on the basis of some criterion or distinction that he has undermined. If common sense assumed that a moral virtue requires practical reason to control passion, Hume's arguments would show that there are no moral virtues, as common sense conceives them. But he does not consider this possibility.

[40] See §726. [41] Balfour, *DNOM*, ch 4.

[42] 'All those qualities, accounted virtues by our author in respect of their utility, are indeed useful; but in what sense? In this only, that they are capable of being put to a good use; but they may be also put to a bad one. Now what is it that determines betwixt these different and contrary effects, and gives the preference to the first? 'Tis virtue, or the virtuous disposition above noticed.' (Balfour, *DNOM* 125–6)

778. Kames and Sentimentalism

Kames's *Essays* express some reasonable dissatisfaction with Hume's combination of sentimentalism and utilitarianism, though Kames does not offer a satisfactory alternative. He agrees with Hume in recognizing a moral sense, but rejects Hume's and Hutcheson's attempt to reduce it to a favourable sentiment directed towards utility. In his view it involves a distinctive and unanalysable kind of approval recognizing the moral goodness of a means or an end (35). He does not claim that morality is to be defined as what the moral sense approves of. He seeks to show that 'the laws which are fitted to the nature of man and to his external circumstances are the same that we approve by the moral sense' (36).

In Kames's view, other philosophers cannot give an adequate account of the sense of duty and obligation without appealing to the distinct sort of approval that comes from the moral sense. He applies this criticism not only to sentimentalists such as Hutcheson, Hume, and Smith (38–40), but also to Butler (42).[43] Some of Kames's criticism of Butler rests, as we saw, on misinterpretation, since he treats Butler as a sentimentalist who simply reduces morality to what conscience approves of.

But this is not the whole of his objection to Butler. He also suggests that Butler's attempt to explain our awareness of moral obligation by appeal to the reflexive character of conscience fails to grasp the compulsory aspect of the sense of duty. Similarly, Kames argues that Clarke's appeal to fitness does not capture the recognition of moral obligation, unless we covertly rely on the moral sense.[44] This argument also commits Kames to the rejection of Price's account of moral judgment. His objection is rather similar to the complaint by Pufendorf and other voluntarists that naturalists cannot give an account of the compulsory character of moral principles. But Kames wisely avoids Pufendorf's appeal to divine commands; he rejects theological voluntarism on the ground that recognition of the goodness of God presupposes an antecedent sense of morality (102).

Though Kames recognizes this irreducible moral sense, not explicable by any further reference to approval or to recognition of rational requirements, he does not suggest that we can grasp the content of morality by simple intuition of moral rightness. On the contrary, he goes quite far in accepting Hume's utilitarianism as an account of the right. He concedes to Hume 'that the end of justice is public utility, and that its merit consists in contributing to that end' (130). He even claims that the utilitarian account of the end of justice is 'a proposition that no mortal controverts, namely, that public good is the sole end of justice' (134). He agrees with Hutcheson in treating benevolence as the foundation of a utilitarian outlook (146). Like Berkeley, Kames uses a providential argument in support of indirect utilitarianism. It is not for us to make judgments about overall utility, but we should leave that to God (whom we assume to be purely benevolent) (137).

Kames's main disagreement with Hume concerns the nature of our judgments and sentiments about justice. He denies that in recognizing something as just we recognize it as promoting utility. Hume's account would fail unless we presupposed some respect

[43] On Smith see §798. On Butler see §720.

[44] 'The doctor's error is a common one, that he endeavours to substitute reason in place of sentiment . . . His only mistake is that, overlooking the law written in his own heart, he vainly imagines that his metaphysical argument is just because the consequence he draws from it happens to be true.' (106)

for property and for fidelity to promises antecedent to any recognition of their benefits to oneself or to others (65). Kames argues effectively against Hume's argument that justice has a place only in the circumstances he describes, and would have no place in the better and worse circumstances that Hume envisages (132).

Kames's total position is not satisfactory. He owes us some explanation of why the moral sense, with the character he ascribes to it, approves of utility rather than some other feature of actions. Within his view, this seems arbitrary and inexplicable. This arbitrary aspect of his position tends to undermine his criticism of Hume's very broad conception of the range of the virtues (140). Kames justly remarks that this broad conception is supported by Hume's broad and ill-defined use of 'approval'. But though Kames believes that moral approval relies on some more definite criteria than Hume allows, he lacks the means to defend this belief, given his failure to describe the outlook of the moral sense. Unless we can say something more than he says, we cannot explain why the moral sense legitimately approves of honesty, disapproves of callousness, and has no particular moral attitude to physical strength or beauty.

Kames objects that if Hume were right, the difference between moral approval and other kinds would be arbitrary, since Hume just makes it a matter of greater or lesser strength. Hume might be willing to embrace this consequence, but Kames is right to suggest that it is an undesirable consequence. To avoid it, he needs to say more about the moral sense. Related difficulties arise from his acknowledgment that the moral sense needs the support of other motives, so that we cannot be required to maximize utility unless we have appropriate motives favouring it.[45] If we do not know why the moral sense approves of what it approves of, it is not obvious what motives we might reasonably encourage in its support.

One part of Kames's criticism of Hume goes too far, in rejecting any analysis of the moral sense. One part does not go far enough, since he uncritically accepts Hume's utilitarian account of the content of morality. Each part of Kames's position tends to undermine the other. A more effective reply to Hume needs a fuller account of the nature of moral judgment that is more plausibly connected with an account of the content of morality. In Kant's view, this is a task that his predecessors have left undone.

779. The Supremacy of Morality

In his account of the virtues, as in the rest of his moral philosophy, Hume claims to analyse our moral convictions, not to undermine them. He attacks rationalist philosophical theories, and argues that our moral convictions do not depend on such unreliable support. Rationalist opponents of sentimentalism claim that sound morality, not just sound moral philosophy, rests on convictions that sentimentalism rejects. Hume follows Hutcheson in rejecting this charge against sentimentalism. His defence of sentimentalism is more limited than Hutcheson's, since he endorses some of the rationalists' claims about the consequences of sentimentalism. But he argues that the truth of these claims has no bearing on morality. The *Inquiry* develops this argument with special emphasis, to show that other moralists

[45] 'Those moralists . . . who require us to lay aside all partial affection and to act upon a principle of equal benevolence to all men, require us to act upon a principle, which has no place in our nature.' (Kames, *EPMNR* 57)

obscure and confuse the natural understanding of morality, which allows us to see it in an attractive light.

Hume's discussion of justice, however, raises a question about how far he supports morality. Moral sentiment supports the demands of justice even if some of them appear to conflict with self-interest; but what have we reason to do in case of apparent conflict between moral sentiment and self-interest? This is the old question about the authority of morality and its claim to supremacy in relation to other practical principles. Hume is dissatisfied with the answers given by his predecessors, and he believes that his answer fits both his sentimentalism and the legitimate demands of morality.

The question about morality and self-interest is the question that Hobbes attributes to the fool. The fool does not see why he should observe moral principles if he will gain significantly by violating them. Hobbes's reply appears to argue unsuccessfully that the fool has good reason, in his own long-term interest, to refrain from self-interested calculation in the situations in which he would see a significant gain in violating principles of justice.[46]

Shaftesbury tries to answer the fool by emphasizing the higher degree of happiness that one gains from the happiness of others. Butler maintains that this sort of defence misunderstands the rational status of conscience. Since conscience expresses rational agency to a still higher degree than self-love does, it has authority over particular passions, as self-love does, and, moreover, has authority over self-love too.[47]

Butler's solution does not satisfy Hume, because it claims for conscience some degree of rational authority, as distinct from psychological strength. Hume's account of reason and morality is meant to undermine such claims to authority. Hutcheson tries to cast the moral sense in the role that Butler assigns to conscience, but Hume observes that Hutcheson overlooks the conflict between sentimentalism and authority.[48] According to Butler, conscience ought to prevail because we recognize it as prescribing what accords with our nature, and we agree that we have overriding reason to do what accords with our nature. Hume believes he has refuted Butler's claims about reason and nature. Hutcheson ought to have rejected them too, once he accepted sentimentalism. We cannot say that we recognize the rational authority of the moral sense, and so have rational grounds for believing that it ought to prevail. The sentimentalist agrees that our moral sense approves of itself on reflexion; but this second-order sentiment cannot be used, as Hutcheson tries to use it, as a basis for a claim to rational authority.

It would be inappropriate for Hume, no less than for Hutcheson, to try to answer Butler's question by arguing that it is always in one's own interest to be virtuous. This

[46] See §503. [47] See §714.

[48] 'You seem here to embrace Dr Butler's opinion in his sermons on human nature; that our moral sense has an authority distinct from its force and durableness, and that because we always think it *ought* to prevail. But this is nothing but an instinct or principle, which approves of itself upon reflexion; and that is common to all of them. I am not sure that I have mistaken your sense, since you do not prosecute this thought.' (To Hutcheson, Jan. 1743 = Greig #19) When Hume says 'I am not sure that I have mistaken' where we might expect '... I have not mistaken', he probably uses 'I am not sure that' as equivalent to 'I doubt that' in Scottish idiom (where it means 'I suspect that'). Kemp Smith, *PDH* 201n, quotes this passage to show that '... there is, on Hume's theory of morals, no such thing as *moral* obligation, in the strict sense of the term. There is, that is to say, no intrinsically self-justifying good that with *authority* can claim approval. The ultimate verdict rests with the de facto constitution of the individual.' Hume is commenting here on Hutcheson, *MPIC*, Bk. i, ch. 1 §16. See §715 for evidence in his *SMP* of sympathy with Butler. Sharp, 'Hume' 164–6, discusses Hume's comment on Butler.

is Hobbes's answer (when the question is asked within a commonwealth); it rests on the special connexion that he recognizes between practical reason and the pursuit of one's own overall interest. In Hume's view, this supposed connexion is a relic of the normative view of practical reason that Hobbes ought to have discarded.

Nonetheless, since agents are in fact often concerned about their long-term interest, it is worth asking how far morality promotes it; that is why Butler defends the harmony of conscience and self-love while still maintaining the supremacy of conscience.[49] Though Hume is not concerned, as Butler is, about claims to authority, he has reason to believe that the degree of harmony or conflict between conscience and self-love is likely to affect the strength of people's motives for acting morally. He therefore has a good reason for examining the relation between the two principles.

In the *Treatise* he does not discuss this question. He gives an account of moral sentiment, and of the natural and artificial virtues. It is easy to see how the natural virtues appeal to the moral sentiment by arousing our sympathy. More argument is needed to show how justice comes to appeal to the moral sentiment. In neither case does Hume consider how far someone concerned for their own interest is likely to promote it by acquiring and exercising the virtues.

780. Self-Approval

Though Hume does not seek to attribute rational authority to the moral sense, he argues that second-order approval will have one of the effects of belief in rational authority, since it will strengthen our attachment to morality. When we study the moral sense and its origins, we present it and its origins to itself, as possible objects of approval or disapproval. Hume argues that since we can derive the moral sense from sympathy, and since the moral sense approves of sympathy, it will approve of itself more strongly once it recognizes that this is its origin.[50] If we discovered that the moral sense originates in deception (as Mandeville supposes)[51] or in resentment of superiority (as Nietzsche supposes),[52] our inquiry into its origins might be expected, in Hume's view, to change our attitude to the moral sense. But once we discover that it arises from sympathy, we confirm our approval of the moral sense, since we approve of sympathy from the point of view of the moral sense.[53]

Hume's defence of the moral sense as self-sustaining in the face of beliefs about its origin is reasonable. His letter to Hutcheson on Butler suggests that this self-approval on reflexion is the part of Butler's claims about authority that a sentimentalist can accept. But he argues that this does not justify Hutcheson in attributing authority to the moral sense in particular;

[49] See §708.

[50] 'But this sense must certainly acquire new force, when reflecting on itself, it approves of those principles, from whence it is derived, and finds nothing but what is great and good in its rise and origin. Those who resolve the sense of morals into original instincts of the human mind, may defend the cause of virtue with sufficient authority; but want the advantage, which those possess, who account for that sense by an extensive sympathy with mankind. According to the latter system, not only virtue must be approved of, but also the sense of virtue: And not only that sense, but also the principles, from whence it is derived.' (iii 3.6, 619)

[51] Mandeville, *FB* i 51.

[52] Nietzsche, *GM* i 10.

[53] Cf. Korsgaard, *SN* 55–66, on Hume and reflexive endorsement.

for, he suggests, this reflexive self-approval is common to all 'instincts' or 'principles'. If this is a fair objection to Hutcheson, it seems to apply equally to Hume's claim about the moral sense and sympathy. If all instincts and principles approve of themselves on reflexion, how do Hume's remarks about the origin of the moral sense tend to support it? Would it not have approved of itself—according to Hume's objection—whatever it had discovered about its origins?

Hume's defence of the moral sense is more convincing than his objection to Hutcheson. It is difficult to see why all instincts or principles must approve of themselves on reflexion. Not every instinct or principle seems to reflect on itself or approve of itself. If I hate my hatred, that is a passion or instinct directed against itself. But it does not seem to be a result of reflexion by hatred itself. I may conclude, from the point of view of self-love or morality, that my tendency to hate is bad and hateful.[54] Alternatively, I may decide that my hatred is appropriate, and therefore come to approve of my hatred; but it is conscience or self-love, not hatred, that approves.

To cope with this objection, we might restrict Hume's claim about self-approval to those instincts or principles that are capable of reflecting on themselves. In that case, he might claim that all these principles approve of themselves on reflexion, so that the self-approval of conscience does not show anything special about it. But this claim is also difficult to accept. For he seems to envisage the possibility that the moral sense might not approve of itself on reflexion. If that were not possible, he would need no argument to show that the moral sense approves of itself. For counter-examples to the claim about automatic approval, we might turn to some feelings of guilt or shame or hatred. If we recognize that these have origins we deplore, we might well disapprove of them.

In that case, self-approval by the moral sense is worth mentioning, since it justifies the expectation that the moral sense will be strengthened by this reflexion more than it would be if it had not approved of itself. This is also Hutcheson's substitute for Butler's claim about the authority of conscience.

It is not clear whether Hume thinks approval of the origin is necessary as well as sufficient for self-approval by an instinct. It does not always seem to be necessary. We might acknowledge that our moral outlook has arisen by a process that we do not entirely approve of. We might, for instance, accept a Freudian account, and disapprove of the process that it describes. Such disapproval need not lead us to disapprove of our current moral outlook; for we might believe that, irrespective of its origins, it is now sustained by beliefs, attitudes, and dispositions that we approve of, even if these are not the only things that sustain it.

Hume also recognizes, however, that though the moral sense approves of itself, we need not approve of the moral sense from every point of view, and we need not always believe we have overriding reason to follow it, given our other motives. But he does not suggest this is a serious difficulty. Those who have a moral sense and disobey it cannot 'bear their own survey'; their disapproval of immorality will keep them in line with the moral sense.[55]

[54] Smith notices this point about self-approval by a faculty. See §798.

[55] 'And who can think any advantages of fortune a sufficient compensation for the least breach of the social virtues, when he considers, that not only his character with regard to others, but also his peace and inward satisfaction entirely depend upon his strict observance of them; and that a mind will never be able to bear its own survey, that has been wanting in its part to mankind and society?' (*T* iii 3.3.6.6) For a comparison of Aristotle and Hume on vice see §111.

This claim is open to question. Occasional, or even fairly frequent, departures from the social virtues do not seem to make us unable to bear our own survey. Why should the moral sense insist on being followed on every occasion? Even if it does, why should we not be able to bear our own survey when we consider the advantages we gain by departing from the social virtues? Moreover, if we are often confronted by the apparent self-sacrifice imposed by morality, we might even become less able to bear our own survey if we find ourselves constantly moved to follow morality. The fact that the moral sense approves of itself does not imply that if we follow the moral sense we will always approve of what we do or of the motives that we act on.

These questions arise from Hume's claims about the strength of the moral sentiment. He acknowledges (*T* iii 3.1.18) that it may not always be strong enough to match our moral judgments. Later on, in his discussion of the connexion between our sentiments and our sense of merit, he suggests that discord between the strength of our sentiments and our judgments does not matter; we can share the general sense of merit and demerit without taking it as seriously as others do.[56] We might reasonably expect that someone could get on quite well with the moral sentiments accepted in society, and share them to some extent, without taking them so seriously that he cannot bear the thought of deviating from the social virtues.

The *Treatise*, then, suggests that self-approval by the moral sense strengthens our tendency to act on it and to disapprove of our failures to act on it. But it does not suggest that the moral sense demands any special place for itself among our other sentiments. Social pressure may cause us to form stronger moral sentiments, but the moral sentiments themselves offer us no reason to prefer them to be stronger than they are.

781. The Philosopher as Anatomist: Hume and Hutcheson[57]

This feature of the *Treatise* helps to explain Hutcheson's reaction to it. In a letter to Hutcheson Hume refers to Hutcheson's judgment that the *Treatise* lacked warmth in the cause of virtue.[58] Hutcheson found that Hume described virtue but did not advocate it. Hume answers that the *Treatise* is strictly an 'abstract inquiry', the work of an anatomist

[56] 'The intercourse of sentiments, therefore, in society and conversation, makes us form some general inalterable standard, by which we may approve or disapprove of characters and manners. And though the heart does not always take part with those general notions, or regulate its love and hatred by them, yet are they sufficient for discourse, and serve all our purposes in company, in the pulpit, on the theatre, and in the schools.' (iii 3.3.2)

[57] Sher, *CU* 168, discusses this analogy, and contrasts it with Hutcheson's outlook. *IMP*, ch. 1, surveys human nature from a practical and teleological point of view, describing it as the work of a benevolent God, and using this description as a protreptic to morality. Compared with this work of Hutcheson's, Hume's *T* might reasonably be said to lack warmth.

[58] 'What affected me most in your remarks is your observing, that there wants a certain warmth in the cause of virtue, which, you think, all good men would relish, and could not displease amidst abstract inquiries. I must own, that this has not happened by chance, but is the effect of a reasoning either good or bad. There are different ways of examining the mind as well as the body. One may consider it either as an anatomist or as a painter. . . . Any warm sentiment of morals, I am afraid, would have the air of declamation amidst abstract reasonings, and would be esteemed contrary to good taste. And though I am much more ambitious of being esteemed a friend to virtue, than a writer of taste; yet I must always carry the latter in my eye; otherwise I must despair of ever being serviceable to virtue. I hope these reasons will satisfy you; though at the same time, I intend to make a new trial, if it be possible to make the moralist and the metaphysician agree a little better.' (to Hutcheson, 17 Sept. 1739, Greig #13 = *R*630)

rather than a painter, because it tries to understand the origin and structure of the virtues rather than to present them in their attractive colours. If he had combined this anatomical study with advocacy of the virtues, he would have introduced extraneous 'declamation' that would be regarded as a breach of good taste.[59]

This answer to Hutcheson is surprising, since Hutcheson was hardly unfamiliar with 'abstract inquiries' or with normal conceptions of good taste, and might not seem to need instruction on these points. Scruples about good taste had not deterred him from including some 'warmth in the cause of virtue' in his abstract inquiries. Hume implies that Hutcheson committed a breach of good taste by combining a description of virtue with advocacy of it. This comment is typical of Hume's remarks on Hutcheson. He is respectful, even admiring, but he suggests that Hutcheson fails to see the implications of his own position.

In reply to Hume, one might argue that no irrelevant declamations are needed. Butler seeks to show that virtue consists in living in accordance with nature, and that we have conclusive reasons, considering human life and human nature, for accepting the principles of morality. Since these are consequences of the true theory of morality, pointing out these consequences is not irrelevant declamation. Hutcheson also believes that the true theory of morality gives us conclusive justifying reasons—as he understands them—for accepting morality.

Within Hume's theory, however, a defence of morality might seem to involve extraneous declamation. Since the theory gives no reason, as Butler or Hutcheson conceives it, for choosing morality in preference to other principles, a defence of morality is not part of the theory. Hume believes that Hutcheson ought to have said this too; his reply to Hutcheson's objection suggests this point obliquely. The suggestion about good taste conceals the point that, from the sentimentalist point of view, advocacy of virtue would have to be a task for rhetoric and declamation, not for philosophical argument. Butler does not add extraneous rhetoric in advocating morality, because he relies on the sort of argument that a sentimentalist believes is unavailable.

The contrast between the anatomist and the painter is drawn from the conclusion of Book iii of the *Treatise*. Hume comments briefly on the attractiveness of virtue, but stops himself, on the ground that it is irrelevant to his anatomical studies. But he does not take his work to be irrelevant or unhelpful to the advocate of virtue. An anatomical drawing is not a rival to a painting and does not make a painting any less appropriate. The fact that we have seen an anatomical drawing does not make a painting of the same figure, covered with flesh and clothing, any less beautiful; indeed, as Hume suggests, the painting may be executed better in the light of anatomical knowledge. Similarly, the advice of the moral theorist can help the advocate of morality to advocate it more persuasively.[60]

[59] Stewart, 'Two species', discusses the significance of Hume's contrast between the anatomist and the painter, with special reference to Hume's relation to Hutcheson and to the context of the *First Inquiry* (and especially Hume's unsuccessful candidacy for the chair in Edinburgh).

[60] 'But I forbear insisting on this subject. Such reflexions require a work a-part, very different from the genius of the present. The anatomist ought never to emulate the painter; nor in his accurate dissections and portraitures of the smaller parts of the human body, pretend to give his figures any graceful and engaging attitude or expression. . . . An anatomist, however, is admirably fitted to give advice to a painter; and 'tis even impracticable to excel in the latter art, without the assistance of the former. . . . And thus the most abstract speculations concerning human nature, however cold and unentertaining, become subservient to practical morality; and may render this latter science more correct in its precepts,

In Hume's view, we will be able to praise and recommend various traits of character more effectively if we know what feature of a trait of character produces our approval. The different virtues will appeal to us more if we see how they respond to our sentiment of humanity, because they are useful or agreeable to the agent or to others, and above all to the public interest.

But this is not the only possible effect of an anatomy. Knowledge of the underlying anatomy may not affect our judgments about beauty. But it may affect some of our judgments about goodness. If we are looking at a spacious, comfortable, and externally well-designed car, and it has performed well on a test drive, we may suppose we have found a good car; but we will change our mind if we learn that the engine is badly designed, the chassis is cracked, and some parts inaccessible to the onlooker have started to rust. In this case 'anatomical' knowledge may change our mind about whether this is a good car.

Similarly, the less obvious features of morality might show that it does not deserve the praise that we think it deserves, or that it does not meet the expectations we form for it. If we have looked at the inner workings of a car, we may be less warm in our praise of it.[61] The moral philosopher might ask whether an anatomical examination of morality warrants a similar decrease in warmth.

Hume's reply to Hutcheson's criticism of his lack of warmth implies that his anatomical inquiries are not the sort that encourage less warmth, but the sort that allow more effective praise of virtue. But we might wonder whether this is so, from the conclusion of the *Treatise*. Though our moral sentiment approves of itself, it is not clear why we should approve of it so strongly that we give it an overriding place. Sentimentalists cannot argue that we have overriding reason to prefer morality unless they can show that morality evokes some dominant passion, or at least evokes some calm passion that prompts us to take pre-emptive action against our more violent passions. But Hume has not shown that the moral sentiment has these effects.

782. The Sensible Knave

In the letter to Hutcheson, Hume acknowledges that the *Treatise* does not display warmth in the cause of virtue. Though he argues that this is not a defect in the *Treatise* given its aims, he promises that he will try again to make the moralist and the metaphysician agree a little better.[62] The *Second Inquiry* he fulfils this promise. At the end of the last section, he discusses

and more persuasive in its exhortations.' (iii 3.6.6) Hume returns to this comparison in the introduction to *IHU*: '. . . one considerable advantage, which results from the accurate and abstract philosophy, is, its subserviency to the easy and humane; which, without the former, can never attain a sufficient degree of its exactness in its sentiments, precepts, or reasonings. . . . The anatomist presents to the eye the most hideous and disagreeable objects; but his science is useful to the painter in delineating even a Venus or a Helen' (*IHU* 1.5)

[61] See further Smith, §801.

[62] Hume altered the text of *T* iii in response to Hutcheson's comments on a draft (Letter in Greig #15, 12 Nov. 1739). We do not know how he altered it, except that he tells Hutcheson: 'I intend to follow your advice in altering most of those passages you have remarked as defective in point of prudence; though I must own, I think you a little too delicate.' (Greig #13, 17 Sept. 1739). The 'prudence' Hume has in mind is caution towards readers who might take offence at his religious or moral views. Moore, 'Hume' 38–9, speculates without evidence on what Hume might have altered.

our ‘interested obligation’ to virtue, by asking whether we are well advised to practise the virtues if we are concerned about our happiness.[63]

He considers this question by introducing a ‘sensible knave’ who raises an objection raised by Hobbes's fool and by Glaucon and Adeimantus in the *Republic*. The knave accepts Hume's arguments to show that society, from which the knave benefits along with everyone else, depends on observance of the rules of justice. He even agrees that it is usually sensible to do what an honest person would do, but he believes that such general rules have exceptions and that an astute person violates the rules on some occasions when violation is his interest. He will not endanger the system of justice from which he benefits, but he will take advantage of the fact that not every violation endangers the whole system.[64]

Hume sees that it is difficult to answer the knave on his own terms. Someone who examines particular just actions to find out whether each one, considered by itself, is in his interest, cannot be satisfied. Hume contrasts such a person with the ‘ingenuous natures’ who would not consider the advantages of injustice worth the price. He suggests that these people are really happier than the sensible knave.[65] Cultivation of the moral sentiment produces antipathy to knavish calculations. This antipathy is confirmed whenever we see knaves being less sensible than they claim to be, and so taking foolish risks that betray their bad character to other people.

We might grant to Hume that honest people, given the preferences and revulsions he ascribes to them, will see no reason to adopt the outlook of the knave. To that extent, the outlook of honest people is stable and self-supporting, in contrast to the attitude that Glaucon and Adeimantus attribute to ‘the many’.[66] But Hume gives no reason to suppose that a sensible knave will be less satisfied with a review of his own conduct.

A similar question arises about Hume's next argument against the knave. He believes that if we consider what the honest person enjoys compared to what even the successful knave enjoys, we will see that the honest person is better off. He enjoys the less expensive pleasures of life, and is satisfied with his own conduct, instead of wearying himself with the feverish pursuit of the expensive pleasures that engage the knave.[67]

This is a plausible reply to anyone who suggests that an honest person will practise honesty only reluctantly, and will envy the knave. Callicles, Glaucon, and Nietzsche suggest, for various reasons, that a morally virtuous person will suffer from envy, regret, or self-hatred. Hume replies that people who have cultivated the preferences of the virtuous person have no reason, given these preferences, to regret being the sort of people they are rather than knaves. But Hume seems to make the same doubtful assumption about the knave that

[63] ‘. . . whether every man, who has any regard to his own happiness and welfare, will not best find his account in the practice of every moral duty’ (*I* 9.2).

[64] ‘. . . and though it is allowed that, without a regard to property, no society could subsist; yet according to the imperfect way in which human affairs are conducted, a sensible knave, in particular incidents, may think that an act of iniquity or infidelity will make a considerable addition to his fortune, without causing any considerable breach in the social union and confederacy’ (*I* 9.2).

[65] ‘Inward peace of mind, consciousness of integrity, a satisfactory review of our own conduct; these are circumstances, very requisite to happiness, and will be cherished and cultivated by every honest man, who feels the importance of them.’ (*I* 9.2)

[66] Glaucon and Adeimantus on the many; see §50.

[67] ‘. . . but above all the peaceful reflexion on one's own conduct; what comparison, I say, between these and the feverish, empty amusements of luxury and expense?’ (*I* 9.2).

others make about the honest person; for he suggests that the knave suffers feverish anxiety and self-hatred. This suggestion seems to presuppose that the knave has the attitude that the honest person would have to knavishness, or that knavishness inevitably leads to the excesses that Hume has in mind. These presuppositions do not seem justified.[68]

The conclusion of 'The Sceptic' is much more cautious about recommending morality. The Sceptic argues, following the outlook of the *Inquiry*, that in the ordinary circumstances of human life the virtues contribute most to one's contentment and ability to enjoy life without too much disturbance.[69] But he qualifies this defence of virtue by arguing that different people's temperaments, passions, and circumstances determine what is valuable for them, so that we cannot make universal and unqualified judgments about what states of character are worth acquiring. If someone is insensible to morality because he lacks the temper and passions that incline people to virtue, the Sceptic has no arguments that might reform him. It is no use to draw the insensible person's attention to the pleasures of being virtuous; for these pleasures are available only to people with a suitable temperament, which he lacks.[70] Hume does not simply mean that we cannot move an insensible person; he also believes we cannot show how he is worse off, whatever he may think about it, than a virtuous person.

The Sceptic reinforces his claims about the absolute dominance of natural temper by rejecting philosophical views—normally Stoic—about how to alter one's views of one's situation and life. If these views are too opposed to one's natural passions and tendencies, either they have no effect or their bad effects are at least equal to their good effects. If, for instance, we follow Stoic advice to cultivate indifference to misfortunes, we equally undermine ordinary attachments to individuals and communities.

Moreover, for some temperaments it may actually be worse to have some virtue than to have none. The abandoned villain is better off than the imperfect person with a sense of shame, because the imperfect person suffers from regret, shame, and guilt that the abandoned villain avoids.[71] While the completely virtuous person has no reason to want to change, it is not clear how many other people have reason to want to be virtuous. The abandoned villain may be no less content with himself than the virtuous person is. People who are neither abandoned villains nor completely virtuous may have a reason to change to one of the extremes; but they have a reason to change to the virtuous extreme only if it is easier than changing to the vicious extreme.

Examination of this essay, together with the *Inquiry*, suggests that, even though Hume displays some of the warmth that Hutcheson had missed in the *Treatise*, Hutcheson might

[68] These questions about the vicious person's attitude to himself are discussed by Plato, in *Republic* viii–ix, and by Aristotle, in *EN* ix 4. See §§59–60, 110–11.

[69] '. . . the happiest disposition of mind is the virtuous; or, in other words, that which leads to action and employment, renders us sensible to the social passions, steels the heart against the assaults of fortune, reduces the affections to a just moderation, makes our own thoughts an entertainment to us, and inclines us rather to the pleasures of society and conversation, than to those of the senses' ('Sceptic' §21).

[70] '. . . he might still reply, that these were perhaps, pleasures to such as were susceptible of them; but that, for his part, he finds himself of quite a different disposition. I must repeat it; my philosophy affords no remedy in such a case, nor could I do anything but lament this person's unhappy condition' ('Sceptic' §29).

[71] '. . . if a man be liable to a vice or imperfection, it may often happen, that a good quality, which he possesses along with it, will render him more miserable, than if he were completely vicious . . . A sense of shame, in an imperfect character, is certainly a virtue; but produces great uneasiness and remorse, from which the abandoned villain is entirely free' ('Sceptic' §54).

still be dissatisfied with the defence of morality that is offered in the *Inquiry*. Hume's defence shows that a sentimentalist can say something better than Hobbes could say in reply to the fool, and it dispels the suspicion that the virtuous person has something to regret, or that one can be attached to morality only as a means to one's own interest in this life or a future life. But this defence is also limited; while it recommends virtue to those who already have a taste for it, it does not explain how anyone else is missing anything by lacking a taste for it.

Hutcheson, therefore, might still reasonably object that Hume's defence fails to support one of our entrenched beliefs about morality. We do not think that morality is worth having only for those with a certain sort of temperament; we think the virtues are for human beings generally. Hume's argument tends to undermine this belief. But he suggests quite plausibly that Hutcheson could not consistently be dissatisfied with Hume's position without being dissatisfied with his own position as well.

783. How to Evaluate Moral Theories: Effects on Moral Practice

If Hutcheson is right to be dissatisfied with Hume's defence of morality, he points to a significant question about the sentimentalist position that they both accept. Hume makes two claims about the practical implications of his moral theory: (1) In judging its truth or falsity, we ought not to be concerned about whether it will have good or bad effects on moral practice.[72] (2) It does not tend to undermine morality; on the contrary, it presents morality in a favourable light.[73] These two claims are consistent, but each is open to doubt.

Hume's first claim is right, if it simply means that we ought not to rule out absolutely the prospect of discovering truths about morality that tend to raise questions about the appropriateness of our commitment to it. But he seems to have in mind the stronger claim that the practical implications of a theory have no proper role in our efforts to decide whether it is true. This claim is surprising, given Hume's attack on the 'monkish virtues' allegedly favoured by his opponents (*I* 9.3). But his account of his method makes his claim intelligible. His theory of morality is part of a science of human nature; the impartial and 'experimental' examination of our capacity for moral judgment and knowledge does not seem to depend on our views about moral practice.[74]

But though this view is intelligible, Hume's actual argument does not vindicate it. For his claims about moral distinctions rely on some intuitive judgments about morality. He assumes, for instance, that we cannot make sincere moral judgments without some motivation to act on them, and that we can assent to any factual judgments about external objects without accepting any moral judgment. Hume takes these intuitive judgments to

[72] 'There is no method of reasoning more common, and yet none more blameable, than in philosophical debates to endeavour to refute any hypothesis by a pretext of its dangerous consequences to religion and morality. (a) When any opinion leads us into absurdities, 'tis certainly false; but 'tis not certain an opinion is false, because 'tis of dangerous consequence. (b) Such topics, therefore, ought entirely to be forborne, as serving nothing to the discovery of truth, but only to make the person of an antagonist odious.' (*T* ii 3.2.3, letters added). In (a) Hume claims only that immoral implications do not make it certain that a theory is false. But in (b) he draws the sweeping conclusion that such implications should never be considered. Cf. *IHU* 8.26.

[73] See *T* iii 3.6.3–6; *I*9.2. See also Ayer, 'Analysis'.

[74] Sturgeon, 'Difference', discusses some questions relevant to Hume's claim.

be introspectively evident judgments about conceivability and possibility. But one might argue that they are to be accepted or rejected in the light of the rest of our conception of morality.

In that case, we have reason to doubt Hume's denial of the relevance of practical implications. For part of our conception of morality is our view about its practical role in relation to other considerations that we take to matter. If, then, an account of morality makes its practical role more difficult to understand, might we not suspect that the theory is false, and might we not re-examine its premisses? Hume would apparently hesitate to present his theory with such vigour if he were convinced that reflexion on it would cause the moral sense to disapprove of itself. This appeal to practical implications is not the narrow pragmatic test that Hume rejects; it seems a reasonable question to raise about a moral theory.

If Hutcheson and Hume are right in their mutual criticisms, the appeal to practical implications presents them with a difficulty.[75] Hutcheson sees that Hume defends morality rather tepidly. Hume implicitly replies that this degree of tepidness is inseparable from a sentimentalist theory. For though such a theory may make virtue seem attractive to those who already have suitable sentiments, and though it may confirm them in preferring virtue over vice, it gives no reason to believe that it is better to be a virtuous person than a sensible knave.

This is not our normal attitude to morality. We do not normally take it to be preferable only from the virtuous person's point of view. We believe that we have reason, whether or not we initially share the virtuous person's preferences, to acquire them. We believe we would be worse off if we were to acquire the preferences of the sensible knave, and not simply because we do not welcome them from our present point of view.[76] If we accepted sentimentalism, we could not believe we had this sort of external reason for preferring morality. Since the belief that we have this sort of external reason is a basic feature of our moral outlook, we have a reason to doubt sentimentalism.

Hume recognizes, and sees that Hutcheson does not recognize, that a sentimentalist must reject this feature of our moral outlook. He believes that his account of reason and passion exposes the basic confusion in any belief in external reasons. But if sentimentalism excludes external reasons, we have a reason to reconsider Hume's account of reason and passion. We may reasonably ask whether it is so persuasive that we ought to stick to it even if we think it undermines our conception of morality.

It is not clear, therefore, that Hume's sentimentalist account of morality is 'a considerable advancement of the speculative sciences' that 'has little or no influence on practice' (*T* iii 1.1.26). He argues that his denial of objectivism saps the foundations of morality no more than Hutcheson's theory saps them. In answer to Hutcheson's doubts about his failure to recommend virtue strongly, he argues that Hutcheson is no better off. But if he is right in this estimate of Hutcheson's position and his own, his conclusions about morality seem more sceptical than he believes they are. They seem to cast doubt not only on philosophical views of morality, but also on some of the beliefs underlying morality.

[75] On Hutcheson and Hume see Sidgwick, *ME* 104.
[76] On preference-independent and external reasons see §259.

But even if Hume conceded this point, he would not concede that his arguments undermine morality itself. In his view, the sentiments supporting morality are too tenacious to be undermined by philosophical argument. We do not stop believing in the external world if we are convinced by a sceptical argument. Similarly, he might argue, the discovery that our moral beliefs are unjustified will not make our moral sentiments go away.[77]

Would he be right to claim that moral scepticism does not undermine moral beliefs and sentiments? He might be right to claim that the sentiments will remain in some form, even in the face of convincing sceptical challenges to their justification. But our attitude to them will not necessarily be the same; if we agree that they are unjustified, we may not take them so seriously. Perhaps the sentiments that would be left if we were to accept sentimentalism would serve some of our purposes 'in company, in the pulpit, on the theatre, and in the schools' (iii 3.3.2), but it might not serve all our present purposes.

We ordinarily believe, for instance, that it is important for everyone to accept morality, not simply because it is convenient for other people, but also because it is the outlook that everyone has good reason to accept. Hence we do not believe we are simply trying to make people fit in with other people's expectations; we also believe they have a good reason to accept these expectations. If we agreed with Hume, we would no longer believe these things. This seems to be a practical implication of his conception of morality, and an implication that we might reasonably take into account if we wonder whether to accept his conception.

784. Hume's Contribution to the Defence of Morality

Though it is fair to emphasize the sceptical side of Hume's moral theory more than Hume emphasizes it, it would be one-sided to concentrate exclusively on it. In his view, he supports morality by freeing it from indefensible doctrines that rationalists maintain in a misguided effort to find rational foundations for morality. Even if he is wrong to claim that morality as a whole is left undamaged by the rejection of rationalism, he might still be right to maintain that sentimentalism explains important elements of morality. The traits and tendencies that develop from our sentiments, by the process that Hume describes, are important elements in the moral virtues, even if they are not the virtues themselves.

A rationalist has good reason to believe that the foundations of morality include the non-rational foundations that Hume identifies. For any plausible theory of morality needs to explain both (1) why morality is as tenacious as it is, and (2) why it does not seem to everyone to rest on a foundation of rational conviction. Hume's account helps a rationalist to answer these questions. Since certain elements of morality can be explained by Hume's explanatory scheme, it is intelligible that a rationalist theory does not appear to be mandatory for a correct understanding of morality. A person's moral outlook does not consist of just one set of beliefs, states, or dispositions that are either present or absent as a whole; in different people, or in the same person at different times, some elements may be stronger

[77] '. . . there is sufficient uniformity in the senses and feelings of mankind, to make all these qualities the objects of art and reasoning, and to have the greatest influence on life and manners' ('Sceptic' §17n).

than others. Hume identifies elements that do not require a rational foundation. He is right to say that they can arise and persist in the absence of rational conviction in the moral agents themselves, and that they can be understood without appeal to a philosophical theory that proves that they are rationally justified.

To say this is not to reject rationalism. For even if we agree that Hume identifies important elements of morality that do not require a rational foundation, we may nonetheless insist that these are only parts, and not the whole, of morality, and that they need to be modified by reflexion on a rational foundation. To grasp the truth in Hume's position is also to recognize its incompleteness.

785. Hume's Reaction to Hutcheson and Hobbes

A useful way to grasp some of the central points in Hume's position is to recapitulate the points of comparison with Hutcheson.[78] We noticed two leading tendencies in Hutcheson: (1) He seeks to defend a position close to what Shaftesbury calls 'moral realism', opposed to the egoist and voluntarist conception defended by Hobbes. (2) He rejects the rationalist defence of this moral realism that appeals to intuitions of fitness, and he replaces it with a moral sense theory.[79] Hutcheson's rationalist critics, Burnet and Balguy, argue that the two sides of Hutcheson's position conflict, because the moral sense theory is subject to the basic objections that refute Hobbes's position.

Hutcheson, therefore, agrees with his rationalist opponents in believing that the objections of Cudworth and Shaftesbury undermine Hobbes's position, and that they identify conditions of adequacy for any moral theory. He disagrees with them insofar as he believes that he can meet their objections to Hobbes without accepting rationalism.

Just as we can see two sides of Hutcheson's position, we can also see two sides of Hume's reaction to Hutcheson: (1) He accepts Hutcheson's anti-rationalism about practical reason and about moral properties and judgments, and accepts a moral sense theory. (2) But he believes that he grasps the implications of such a theory more fully than Hutcheson grasps them, and that they undermine Hutcheson's reply to his rationalist critics.

These two sides of Hume's reaction help to explain why he can reasonably present himself as a follower of Hutcheson despite his sharp disagreements with him. Some contemporaries regarded Hutcheson as a defender of morality and religion and Hume as a dangerous sceptic. They might understandably be surprised and offended by Hume's expressions of agreement with Hutcheson; some modern critics agree with them. But such a reaction does not take proper account of the degree of agreement between Hutcheson's rationalist critics and Hume. Hume follows Balguy and Burnet in their assessment of the implications of

[78] Moore, 'Hume', argues against the common tendency to regard Hume as a follower of Hutcheson. See also Stewart, *KI* 12 (quoted in §751). In his view, 'Hume's moral philosophy was not at all Hutchesonian in origin or inspiration; it derived rather from a tradition of moral philosophy, the substantive Epicurean tradition adopted by Bayle and other modern sceptics, which was opposed by Hutcheson . . .' (53). The denial that Hutcheson inspired Hume is exaggerated; the fact that Hume disagrees with Hutcheson on some important points does not preclude deep Hutchesonian influence. Hume believes that Hutcheson ought to agree with Hume if he were more consistent.

[79] See §632.

Hutcheson's position.[80] Hutcheson rejects their criticisms, but, if Hume is right, the critics expose a conflict in Hutcheson's position.[81]

Hume, therefore, agrees with the attacks of Hutcheson's rationalist critics. But he rejects a point on which Hutcheson agrees with these critics; for he does not believe that Cudworth's and Shaftesbury's criticisms of Hobbes are decisive, and so he does not believe that an acceptable moral theory must avoid the mutability of moral properties that Cudworth finds in Hobbes and Balguy finds in Hutcheson. Hume concludes that Hutcheson is wrong to resist the arguments of his rationalist opponents about the consequences of his sentimentalism, but also wrong to suppose that these arguments need to be resisted; for the consequences are not as damaging as both Hutcheson and Balguy take them to be.[82]

We can see how Hume reaches this assessment of Hutcheson if we recall some earlier points. First, Hume agrees with some of Hutcheson's central claims:

(1) He agrees with Hutcheson's conception of practical reason. Reason provides neither exciting nor justifying reasons, but simply finds means to the satisfaction of desires proceeding from passions. Hence we must reject the traditional division between will and passion, and we must reject any account of freedom and responsibility that relies on this division.

(2) He agrees both with Hutcheson's introduction of a moral sense and with the subjectivist conclusion about moral properties that Hutcheson draws from his claims about the moral sense. In Hume as in Hutcheson, internalism about moral properties and motivation supports subjectivism. Since Hutcheson believes that justifying reasons require a desire resulting from the exercise of the moral sense, and he assumes that a true moral judgment implies the existence of a justifying reason for the person judging, he infers that in correctly judging that I ought to do x, I imply that I have some desire arising from my favourable attitude to x. Hume agrees with this general connexion between moral judgment, moral properties, and motivation, and so he agrees with Hutcheson's conclusion that moral properties are secondary qualities. This conclusion rests on Hutcheson's understanding of Locke's view, which takes secondary qualities to be states of the perceiver, not objective properties of external objects.

(3) He agrees with Hutcheson in rejecting Hobbes's account of justice. Hobbes does not suggest any role for any motive other than self-interest in his account of the social contract, or in his account of the motives and concerns that move us to maintain the commonwealth once it has been founded. Hume agrees with Hutcheson in believing that some sentiment in favour of the public interest must be invoked in a satisfactory account of our attitudes to justice.

The fact that Hume agrees with Hutcheson on these points is not difficult to discover. Hume acknowledges the basic agreement on subjectivism and the moral sense.

The points of disagreement with Hutcheson all follow from these points of agreement:

(4) Hutcheson tries to defend some elements of Butler's position within the moral sense theory. Hume notices that Hutcheson attributes to the moral sense some of the

[80] Anon., 'Review' (*Bibl. Raisonnée*) 9, regrets the fact that Hume does not discuss the views of Burnet and Hutcheson on the moral sense.

[81] Stewart, *KI* 20, also points out that Hume criticizes some aspects of Hutcheson's views that conflict with anti-rationalist versions of Calvinism. See §§645, 759.

[82] Thomas Brown argues in defence of Hutcheson and Hume. See §881.

authority that Butler attributes to conscience as supreme principle. Butler's claims about authority, however, rest on the distinction between power and authority, which Hutcheson undermines by taking reasons to refer to actual desires, rather than to what one ought to desire. Hume sees, therefore, that the approval of our moral sense cannot claim the rational authority that Butler claims for conscience, so that Hutcheson ought not to appeal to Butler's claims about authority and supremacy.

(5) Hutcheson follows Butler in claiming that morality accords with human nature, but Hume argues that Hutcheson is not entitled to Butler's naturalism. Butler's conception of nature includes claims about actions that are appropriate for human beings as whole systems. The relevant conception of appropriateness relies on the assumption that some actions are rationally appropriate, whether or not they are the objects of our predominant desire. Hume argues that Hutcheson is not entitled to rest any claim of rational authority on an appeal to nature, and that therefore he must give up Butler's specific appeal to nature. The only basis for an appeal to nature as a source of rational authority is an overtly theological basis, which confronts Hutcheson with further questions.

(6) Hume makes it clear that he seeks to correct Hutcheson from Hutcheson's own premisses, in his discussion of the moral attributes of God. Moral properties exist only insofar as human beings actually have certain reactions; they do not exist as sources of requirements that human beings ought to respond to whether or not they actually do. Hence we cannot say that human beings ought to conform to moral principles or standards irrespective of how they actually react to them. We introduce an 'arbitrary and positive' character into moral properties (as Balguy says in discussing Hutcheson). A voluntarist claims that nothing is right or wrong apart from acts of will and command, and so makes moral goodness and rightness mutable in relation to will and command. A sentimentalist makes moral goodness and rightness mutable in relation to sentiments of most judges or of the usual judges. This is what Hume means when he says he wishes he could avoid this conclusion about morality, which has often been urged as an objection to Hutcheson.[83] If moral principles have not been shown to have authority for all rational beings, we cannot take God to be bound by them, and so we cannot take them to be antecedent to God's moral sense, if God has one. Even if we could overcome the difficulties that Hume raises for the attribution of a moral sense to God, we would still have to make moral properties mutable in relation to God's moral sense.

(7) Hutcheson relies on the moral sense and on its approval of benevolence to explain why morality includes principles of justice. He gives a utilitarian explanation of principles of justice, and takes utility to be the concern of benevolence. Hume agrees in trying to connect the moral sense with justice, but he rejects Hutcheson's claim that justice rests on benevolence. We cannot explain the tenacity of our rules of justice without appealing to a shared recognition of self-interest. The moral sense enters only when we have fixed some relatively stable rules based on this shared recognition of self-interest.

(8) In reply to Hutcheson's criticism that the *Treatise* lacks warmth in the cause of virtue, Hume claims that his role as an anatomist requires some restraint in warmth. But even when he says something warmer, as he does in the *Inquiry*, Hume does not display the warmth

[83] Letter in Greig, *LDH* #16 = R 634, quoted in §758.

that Hutcheson displays. This is not surprising, since Hume does not suggest that we have any reason to care about the moral virtues if we are not already among those who have ends to which virtuous actions would be means. If our sentiments and passions already dispose us to approve of virtuous actions, we have reason to cultivate the virtues. If we have selfish purposes to which virtuous actions are means, we have reason to cultivate the virtues to that degree. But Hume does not propose any reason that ought to influence people who lack the appropriate antecedent purposes and sentiments. This position ought not to surprise Hutcheson, since it follows from his views about justifying reasons, the moral sense, and the nature of moral properties.

The general tendency of all these disagreements with Hutcheson is the same: Hume argues that because Hutcheson agrees with him as much as he does, he ought also to agree with his criticisms of Hutcheson. In his view, Hutcheson has no escape from the implications of the sentimentalist point of view that Hume points out to him.

Hume's differences from Hutcheson do not bring Hume all the way back to Hobbes. He departs from Hobbes in recognizing an irreducible unselfish sentiment, and in taking this to be essential for explaining our support of morality within an established social order.[84] On this point Hume rejects an aspect of Hobbes that might be called 'scepticism', and so he affirms the reality of moral distinctions. Hence he insists on the reality of unselfish sentiments, in agreement with Hutcheson. This is one issue that both Hume's predecessors, from Shaftesbury onwards, and his contemporaries recognize as a clear mark of division between Hobbes and his opponents, and on this issue Hume is clearly against Hobbes.[85] He supports, as Hutcheson does, one aspect of the position that Shaftesbury calls 'realism'.

But this disagreement with Hobbes helps to support some of Hobbes's basic claims about morality. We might welcome Hume's account of the moral sentiment as offering Hobbes a credible account of our motivation for supporting morality within the commonwealth. Hume supports Hobbes's basic claim that morality deserves our concern only insofar as we have the desires and passions that make moral requirements instrumentally appropriate for us. He abandons Hobbes's residual tendency to speak as though prudence were uniquely rational, and so he develops Hobbes's predominant tendency to attribute a purely instrumental role to practical reason. Hume's anti-rationalism and anti-realism show how some of Hobbes's basic views are more defensible when they are separated from Hobbes's egoism.[86] Johnson may or may not have had good reasons for calling Hume a Hobbist, but his judgment captures part of the truth.[87]

[84] The irreducibility of this sentiment is much clearer in *I* than in *T*. See §763. In the first work, Hume seems more inclined to reduce unselfish sentiment to the operations of sympathy and association. The arguments of Kemp Smith, *PDH* 139–43, against Green to show that Hume is not an egoistic hedonist about the passions are much easier to support from *I* than from *T*.

[85] This is the aspect of Hume's position that Norton, *DH*, ch. 3, has in mind when he represents Hume as a 'common-sense' moralist, and even as a moral 'realist'. See §643.

[86] Anon., 'Review' (*Bibl. Raisonnée*) says of *T* iii: 'It is, as we see it, Hobbes's system presented in a new form. Had this philosopher [sc. Hume] presented it in this manner, I doubt that he would have been welcomed into the world' (10). The reviewer is speaking primarily of Hume's treatment of justice, and does not make it clear whether the same judgment applies to Hume's theory as a whole.

[87] For Johnson's view see §727.

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SMITH

786. The Practical Unimportance of the Epistemology and Metaphysics of Morality

Smith recognizes two main topics of inquiry in moral philosophy: (1) An inquiry into the character of virtue. (2) An inquiry into the faculty that 'recommends' virtue to us.[1] The first topic is the primary concern of ancient moralists; the second is the concern of the moderns. In Smith's view, only the first is of practical importance; the second is a purely theoretical question that makes no difference to practice. This attitude to the second question agrees with Hume's attitude to the epistemology and metaphysics of morals. Hume takes the conception of moral properties as secondary qualities to be 'a considerable advancement of the speculative sciences; though . . . it has little or no influence on practice' (*T* iii 1.1.26). To show that the second question has no practical importance, Smith argues it makes no difference to our judgment about what is right and wrong in particular cases.[2]

It is difficult to agree with Smith about the practical unimportance of his second question. If we are convinced by a sentimentalist theory of the nature of moral judgment, we may find that some common moral judgments do not fit that theory. Must we not either reject these common judgments or reject the theory? If, for instance, we agree with Hume's view that, contrary to the 'divines', moral virtues include some involuntary traits, must we not allow as virtues some traits that the 'divines' disallow? Acceptance of this sentimentalist theory would surely affect some of our particular moral judgments.

But even if Smith were right to say that meta-ethical questions do not affect moral judgments about particular cases of right and wrong action, he would not have shown that meta-ethical questions are practically unimportant. Our judgments about whether it is right

[1] 'First, wherein does virtue consist? Or what is the tone of temper, and tenour of conduct, which constitutes the excellent and praise-worthy character, the character which is the natural object of esteem, honour, and approbation? And, secondly, by what power or faculty in the mind is it, that this character, whatever it be, is recommended to us?' (vii 1.2, 265) I cite *TMS* by book, chapter, section, and page from the edition of Raphael and Macfie (cited as RM).

[2] '. . . I must observe, that the determination of this second question, though of the greatest importance in speculation, is of none in practice. The question concerning the nature of virtue necessarily has some influence upon our notions of right and wrong in many particular cases. That concerning the principle of approbation can possibly have no such effect. To examine from what contrivance or mechanism within, those different notions or sentiments arise, is a mere matter of philosophical curiosity' (vii 3.introd.2, 315).

to tell this lie here and now, or to inflict this undeserved harm on this innocent person in the public interest, are not the only practically important moral judgments. Our conduct does not depend simply on our judgments about which actions are morally right or wrong; it also depends on how much we think morality matters. Hume envisages the possibility of our coming to believe that moral judgments result from a sentiment that we disapprove of on reflexion; Nietzsche's genealogy exploits this possibility. If we were convinced by such a genealogy, might we not take morality less seriously?

The assertion that meta-ethical conclusions are practically unimportant is part of Smith's defence of sentimentalism. Some opponents of sentimentalism claim that it undermines morality. Hume answers that the debate between sentimentalism and rationalism concerns a question of purely theoretical interest, so that a decision in favour of sentimentalism could not tend to undermine morality. Smith adds nothing to Hume on this point.

He believes that moral judgment must be traced back to sentiments, because he agrees with Hutcheson and Hume in believing that moral distinctions are not derived from reason. Like Hutcheson, he accepts some of the rationalist critique of Hobbes, but he believes that Hutcheson has shown that the true points in this critique do not require the acceptance of rationalism. He agrees with Cudworth's argument against Hobbes's positivism, but he believes that Cudworth was wrong to assume that the moral principles prior to law are rational principles. Cudworth's error was excusable, since in his time no option besides reason had been considered.[3] But Hutcheson made the further advances in the science of human nature that settle the issue about reason.[4] In Smith's view, Hutcheson's discussion of the role of reason shows how we can accept what is sound in Cudworth's criticism of Hobbes without embracing rationalism.[5]

If Smith is right to agree with Hutcheson against the rationalists, Balguy is wrong to suppose that Cudworth's argument against Hobbes's legal positivism also undermines Hutcheson's sentimentalism. In that case, rationalist arguments against voluntarism and positivism do not apply to sentimentalism. Hutcheson argues, against Balguy, that he allows the corrigibility of the moral sense. He relies on the parallel with the external senses, and hence allows the correction of one person's sense by reference to the normal perceiver, where 'normal' is understood not normatively but statistically. According to Hutcheson, this degree of corrigibility allows us to reject Hobbesian positivism without embracing rationalism.

Balguy replies that Hutcheson's account of corrigibility does not answer the case against Hobbes. For if moral judgments allow only the sort of correction that Hutcheson describes, we can adjust them to the normal judge's reactions, but we cannot criticize the normal moral judge. But morality (in Balguy's view) is not mutable in relation to the reactions of

[3] '. . . the abstract science of human nature was but in its infancy, . . . before the distinct offices and powers of the different faculties of the human mind had been carefully examined and distinguished from one another. . . . no other faculty had been thought of from which any such ideas could possibly be supposed to arise' (vii 3.2.5, 319).

[4] 'Dr Hutcheson had the merit of being the first who distinguished with any degree of precision in what respect all moral distinctions may be said to arise from reason, and in what respect they are founded upon immediate sense and feeling. In his illustrations upon the moral sense he has explained this so fully, and, in my opinion, so unanswerably, that, if any controversy is still kept up about this subject, I can impute it to nothing, but either to inattention to what that gentleman has written, or to a superstitious attachment to certain forms of expression . . .' (vii 3.2.9, 320–1)

[5] Price, *RPQM* 281–2, writing in 1787, before the last edition of *TMS*, notices Smith's dogmatic anti-rationalism, and looks forward to Reid's *EAP* for argument on the rationalist side.

the normal judge. According to Balguy and Price, we regard the moral sense as correct only if it corresponds to some principles of right and wrong that are independent of it; that is Cudworth's reply to Hobbes's appeal to law as the basis of right.

Hume, in contrast to Hutcheson, rejects the rationalist objections to Hobbes, and so does not believe that sentimentalists need to answer Balguy and Price. Once we examine our moral judgments and the sort of properties they must be about, we can see that there is nothing more to being right and wrong than being approved or disapproved by our moral sense. If we suppose that the moral sense is open to moral appraisal, we are misled. And so, while Hobbes was wrong to appeal to law, he was basically right, and Cudworth was basically wrong. Hume supposes that moral judgments are the result of our accommodation to the reactions of other people and their point of view. Morality has no basis for criticizing our attitudes or for arguing about whether other people's reactions are reasonable and appropriate.

Smith does not comment on this disagreement between Hutcheson and Hume about the 'positive and arbitrary' character of the moral sense (as Balguy puts it). But their disagreement raises another question about practical significance. If we agree with Hume that we have no rational or moral basis for critical evaluation of our moral sense, we may not take morality as seriously as we would take it if we thought we had the sort of critical basis that the rationalists suppose we have. Hume concedes this point to the rationalists. Hutcheson and Smith do not; but Smith does not say what is wrong with Hume's argument against Hutcheson.

Hume's lack of concern about this aspect of his theory may be connected with a feature of his treatment that caught Hutcheson's attention. Hutcheson notices that in Hume's *Treatise* 'there wants a certain warmth in the cause of virtue'. Though Hume suggests that he will try to remedy this in his later writings, and though the *Inquiry* is warmer than the *Treatise*, Hutcheson would probably have reacted to the *Inquiry* in the same way.[6] Smith, however, is warm in the cause of virtue; he does not suggest that reflexion on the nature of moral virtue or of moral judgment will or should lead us to take morality less seriously or to be less warm in its defence. He returns to Hutcheson's position, but he gives no reason for preferring it to Hume's position.

Smith, therefore, is rather complacent in his assurance that disputes between rationalism and sentimentalism are 'a mere matter of philosophical curiosity'.[7] Balguy argues against this claim that sentimentalists can legitimately take morally seriously. Though Hume claims that his sentimentalism 'has little or no influence on practice',[8] he concedes Balguy's points about the positive and arbitrary character of the moral sense. These points suggest that the theoretical dispute may also be significant in practice. By dismissing such questions, Smith overlooks a worthwhile direction of inquiry into the implications of sentimentalism.

787. Arguments for Sentimentalism

Smith's unreasonably dismissive attitude to these questions may result from his conviction that the dispute between rationalism and sentimentalism has been settled. However seriously

[6] See §781. [7] vii 3.introd.2, 315. [8] *T* iii 1.1.26, quoted in §758.

we take morality, we cannot (he assumes) accept Balguy's arguments as good reasons for favouring rationalism; for we already have decisive reasons for accepting sentimentalism. But Smith's reasons for confidence in sentimentalism are open to doubt. His main ground for rejecting rationalism about moral distinctions seems to be his acceptance of a version of internalism about virtue and motivation. In his view, virtue necessarily pleases us, but this effect would not be necessary if our judgment that something is a virtue were a purely rational judgment. If the judgment were purely rational, it would be a contingent fact that virtue pleases some people and displeases others. But since it would be self-contradictory to judge that something is virtuous and not to find it pleasing, moral judgment must include feeling.[9]

It is difficult to accept Smith's claim about the necessary connexion between virtue and pleasure. One might accept some necessary connexion between virtue and desirability, if this means that virtue necessarily deserves to be desired.[10] But this internal connexion does not support Smith. He needs a further internal connexion between virtue and actual pleasure and desire. But what is this connexion? He cannot mean that justice, for instance, is a virtue only if everyone desires it and finds it pleasant. Perhaps, then, he means that A regards justice as a virtue only if A desires it and finds it pleasant.

In reply to Smith, we might suggest that we could recognize justice as a virtue and still be indifferent to it. If Smith seeks to rule this answer out by appeal to a conceptual claim, he is on weak ground. But if he simply means that every virtue must be an object of desire and pleasure to a well-disposed person, anti-rationalism does not follow. For we may answer that a well-disposed person desires justice and takes pleasure in it because justice promotes interests or safeguards rights that every well-disposed person wants to promote or safeguard. We can easily accept this answer while still maintaining a rationalist position about the nature of justice and our knowledge of justice.

Smith would be on stronger ground if he appealed to a different anti-rationalist argument, more clearly presented by Hume than by Hutcheson. According to this argument, reason itself cannot discover appropriate ends, but can only discover instrumental means to ends, and hence cannot be a source of ultimate justifying reasons. If virtues are sources of ultimate justifying reasons, reason cannot discover the virtues. The virtuous person, according to Hutcheson, regards the good of other people as worth pursuing for its own sake; but we cannot discover by reason that the good of others is worth pursuing for its own sake; and so the virtuous concern must result from something other than a discovery of reason. Reid exposes a weakness in this argument for sentimentalism: even if virtue involves a specific belief about ultimate ends, and even if this belief cannot be further justified, it does not follow that it is a sentiment.[11]

[9] '. . . nothing can be agreeable or disagreeable for its own sake, which is not rendered such by immediate sense and feeling. If virtue, therefore, in every particular instance, necessarily pleases for its own sake, and if vice as certainly displeases the mind, it cannot be reason, but immediate sense and feeling, which, in this manner, reconciles us to the one, and alienates us from the other. Pleasure and pain are the great objects of desire and aversion: but these are distinguished not by reason, but by immediate sense and feeling. If virtue, therefore, be desirable for its own sake, and if vice be, in the same manner, the object of aversion, it cannot be reason which originally distinguishes these different qualities, but immediate sense and feeling' (vii 3.2.7–8, 320).

[10] Smith recognizes that the desire for praise is different from the desire to be praiseworthy (iii 2.2, 114), and we might fairly insist on a parallel distinction between the desired and the desirable, taking the desirable to be what is worthy of desire.

[11] See Reid, §848.

Smith, therefore, does not offer convincing direct arguments for Hutcheson's and Hume's anti-rationalism. He is not much concerned with the epistemology and metaphysics of morals, and in these areas he has little to add to Hume.

788. A Descriptive and Causal Theory

On these basic questions about the truth of sentimentalism, we may be disappointed by Smith's arguments. Though his investigation of moral sentiments presupposes sentimentalism, he does not defend his presupposition effectively. But he contributes indirectly to the defence of sentimentalism. He begins from the positive aim of Hume's second *Inquiry*, to 'discover the true origin of morals' (*I* 1.10). Hume offers an 'explication' of benevolence and justice, expecting that this 'will probably give us an opening by which the others may be accounted for'. In the course of examining the different virtues, Hume argues that they are all qualities agreeable or useful to the agent or to others, and that this is the causal origin of our tendency to praise them as virtues. Smith follows Hume in recognizing this causal and explanatory inquiry as a task of the moral philosopher.

Hutcheson and Hume do not complete this task. Hutcheson confines the moral sense to the approval of benevolence. He fails to account for those aspects of our moral judgments that, as Butler sees, go beyond benevolence or even against it; his efforts to incorporate Butler's views about conscience into his own view of the moral sense reveal the conflict between Butler and himself. Hume improves on Hutcheson by partly detaching the moral sense from benevolence. But he attaches it to the approval of utility (now distinguished from benevolence); hence he fails to explain the moral judgments that seem not to be limited to recognition of utility to the possessor of the virtue or to others.[12]

Smith advances this discussion through a fuller constructive account of the moral sentiments than Hume offers. He supports the sentimentalist position by describing sentiments that we might plausibly regard as the basis of our moral judgments. If he offers a descriptively adequate account that traces our various moral judgments to their sources in sentiments, he shows that sentimentalism fits the actual range and variety of moral judgments.

This account of moral sentiments may be valuable even if sentimentalism is false. For even if we do not believe that moral judgments consist basically or entirely in sentiments, we have good reason to believe that they are characteristically connected with sentiments, and that the formation of appropriate sentiments partly forms moral character. Smith may have found an important part of the truth about morality, even if he has not found the basic constituent of moral virtue.

789. Moral Sentiments v. Moral Sense

Though Smith agrees with Hutcheson and Hume in rejecting rationalism, he rejects their arguments for tracing moral judgments to a moral sense. In his view, Hutcheson introduced

[12] The same is true when we add the virtues that Hume explains by agreeableness rather than utility.

a moral sense because he had correctly eliminated reason and self-love as the source of moral judgments, but could not find their source in any other recognized mental capacity; hence he needed some new capacity. He called it the moral sense because he took it to be somewhat analogous to the external senses, and also somewhat analogous to the 'reflex senses' whose operations result from the operations of other senses (vii 3.3.5–6, 321–2).

Smith criticizes Hutcheson on three grounds: (1) We make moral judgments about our moral sentiments themselves. (2) Moral judgments are too various to be expressions of a single sentiment or emotion. (3) Even if we exclude reason and self-interest, other recognized mental capacities can explain moral judgments, and so we do not need a new one.

The first line of criticism is reasonable. It exploits Balguy's objection that the moral sense is corrigible because we apply moral criticism to someone's moral sentiments, on the assumption that they are capable of improvement, and that they reflect moral credit or discredit on a person (vii 3.3.8–10, 322–4). Hutcheson tries to explain some criticisms of a particular agent's moral sense, by reference to the moral sense of the 'normal' observer. But if 'normal' just means 'statistically most frequent', he does not answer Balguy's objection. Smith implicitly agrees with Balguy; for if Hutcheson's appeal to the normal observer refuted Balguy, it would refute Smith too. Can Smith explain the moral criticism of someone's moral sense by reference to something more than Hutcheson's standard of normality?

The second objection to an appeal to the moral sense is more relevant to Hume than to Hutcheson. Though Hume follows Hutcheson in appealing to a moral sense, he does not rely as strongly on an analogy with the other senses. Often he speaks of a certain kind of feeling. Smith is right to suppose that—given Hume's view of feelings—this account of moral judgment requires the relevant feeling to be introspectively similar in all moral judgments.[13] If we were to claim that the identity of the moral sentiment consists in the judgment on which it is based, we would no longer make the moral sense primary; hence Hume assumes that introspective similarity is the common feature of all expressions of the moral sense.[14] Against this assumption Smith points out that the sentiments connected with approval of different kinds of actions and characters vary with the objects of our approval. They have no specific feeling in common.[15]

These two objections prepare for the third objection, which rests on a positive account of moral judgment. Smith rejects any appeal to a distinct moral sense. He regards this notion

[13] '. . . whatever variations any particular emotion may undergo, it still preserves the general features which distinguish it to be an emotion of such a kind, and these general features are always more striking and remarkable than any variation which it may undergo in particular cases. Thus anger is an emotion of a particular kind: and accordingly its general features are always more distinguishable than all the variations it undergoes in particular cases' (vii 3.3.13, 324). Cf. Hume, §761.

[14] 'We do not infer a character to be virtuous, because it pleases: But in feeling that it pleases after such a particular manner, we in effect feel that it is virtuous. The case is the same as in our judgments concerning all kinds of beauty, and tastes, and sensations. Our approbation is implied in the immediate pleasure they convey to us.' (Hume, *T* iii 1.2.3) Part of the next paragraph is quoted in §781.

[15] 'If approbation and disapprobation, . . . were, like gratitude and resentment, emotions of a particular kind, distinct from every other, we should expect that in all the variations which either of them might undergo, it would still retain the general features which mark it to be an emotion of such a particular kind, clear, plain, and easily distinguishable. But in fact it happens quite otherwise. If we attend to what we really feel when upon different occasions we either approve or disapprove, we shall find that our emotion in one case is often totally different from that in another, and that no common features can possibly be discovered between them.' (Smith, *TMS* vii 3.3.13, 324–5)

as an unnecessary innovation.[16] His account of moral judgment is intended to show that the relevant features of moral judgment can be explained without reference to a special sense. In his view, the relevant facts about moral judgment are to be explained by the operation of sympathy. The feeling connected with moral approval varies according to our sympathetic reaction to the trait of character that we approve of.[17] Moreover, we approve of proper approval by another, and disapprove of improper approval. In this case our moral attitude is to be understood as coincidence or opposition between our sentiments and those of the other person. Why, he asks, should the same not be true in every case (vii 3.3.14, 325)?

In these arguments Smith does not draw the extreme conclusion that no sort of sentiment is essential to moral judgment. He believes that the common feature of moral judgments is not the similarity of sentiment, considered in its own right, but the fact that we find the same relation of our own sentiment to the sentiment of another. The common feature is the operation of sympathy.

In opposition to the moral sense theory, Smith claims that the different operations of sympathy give an account of moral judgments.[18] The successive stages in our reactions help us to answer both of the main questions of ethical theory, about which traits are virtues, and about how we judge that they are. A trait is a virtue insofar as it arouses sympathy from different points of view; and we judge that a trait is a virtue insofar as we react to it sympathetically. The close connexion between Smith's answers to these two questions raises even more doubts about his claim that the first is practically important and the second is not.

790. Sympathy and Fellow-Feeling

Though Smith criticizes Hutcheson and Hume for introducing a moral sense, he agrees with their aim of finding a reductive account of moral judgment. His description of the moral sentiments is intended to capture the content and nature of moral judgments. Hence his account is open to objection if the sentiments he describes are either insufficient or unnecessary for some clear cases of apparent moral judgment.

[16] 'Against every account of the principle of approbation, which makes it depend upon a peculiar sentiment, distinct from every other, I would object; that it is strange that this sentiment, which Providence undoubtedly intended to be the governing principle of human nature, should hitherto have been so little taken notice of, as not to have got a name in any language. The word moral sense is of very late formation, and cannot yet be considered as making part of the English tongue.' (vii 3.3.15, 326) Contrast Reid, §842.

[17] 'Thus the approbation with which we view a tender, delicate, and humane sentiment, is quite different from that with which we are struck by one that appears great, daring, and magnanimous. Our approbation of both may, upon different occasions, be perfect and entire; but we are softened by the one, and we are elevated by the other, and there is no sort of resemblance between the emotions which they excite in us. But according to that system which I have been endeavouring to establish, this must necessarily be the case. As the emotions of the person whom we approve of, are, in those two cases, quite opposite to one another, and as our approbation arises from sympathy with those opposite emotions, what we feel upon the one occasion, can have no sort of resemblance to what we feel upon the other.' (vii 3.3.13, 325)

[18] 'First, we sympathize with the motives of the agent; secondly, we enter into the gratitude of those who receive the benefit of his actions; thirdly, we observe that his conduct has been agreeable to the general rules by which those two sympathies generally act; and, last of all, when we consider such actions as making a part of a system of behaviour which tends to promote the happiness either of the individual or of the society, they appear to derive a beauty from this utility, not unlike that which we ascribe to any well-contrived machine.' (vii 3.3.16, 326)

The first definition of sympathy takes it to be 'our fellow-feeling with any passion whatever' (i 1.1.5, 10). The simplest way to understand fellow-feeling is to treat it as a sort of reproduction or copy of the original passion.[19] We assume that passions are contagious; A's awareness of B's feeling a given passion causes A to feel the same passion.

This simple account neglects many cases of fellow-feeling, as Smith sees. If A is aware that B is angry at C, A does not necessarily come to share B's anger. A is also aware of how C suffers from B's anger, and comes to sympathize with C. If A is to sympathize with B or with C, A must have some idea of what has provoked B; for A's evaluation of the occasion for B's anger will affect A's tendency to sympathize with B or with C. In these cases 'sympathy does not arise so much from the view of the passion as from that of the situation which excites it' (i 1.1.10, 12).

Hence we may sympathize with others even if we do not believe they feel any passion about the event that is the basis of our sympathy. If, for instance, A is polite, but B is boorish, and A sees B behaving rudely, A judges that if A were in B's actual situation, A would be embarrassed; this judgment causes A to be embarrassed for B. A's sympathy is directed towards A-imagined-in-B's-situation. A has no fellow-feeling with B's passion, since the boorish B feels no passion.[20]

It is difficult to understand the counterfactual that explains A's imagination of A's embarrassment in B's situation. Ought not A to recognize that if A were in B's situation and were as rude as B, A would not be embarrassed by A's rude behaviour? Moreover, if A would be embarrassed by A's behaving rudely in B's situation, A would not behave as rudely as B is actually behaving. It seems irrational for A to have fellow-feeling for B on the assumption that B shares some passion with A that B evidently does not share.

Smith's explanation suggests that A's being embarrassed by B's rudeness is parallel to a case in which fellow-feeling is more clearly misplaced. If C likes Beethoven and hates jazz, but D has the reverse preferences, it would be irrational for C to feel disappointed for D when D misses a Beethoven concert and to feel frustrated on D's behalf when D sits through a jazz concert. It seems irrelevant that this is how C would feel if C were in D's situation; C's 'fellow-feeling' would be irrational if it rested on this basis. On the contrary, C ought to feel pleased for D sitting through a jazz concert, because C recognizes that D's tastes in music, and therefore D's passions, are different from C's. But in that case one might expect that if the polite A is rational, A will recognize that the boorish B is not embarrassed by B's rudeness, and therefore A will not be embarrassed for B.

Smith sometimes recognizes the appropriate counterfactual basis for fellow-feeling. He sees that sympathy requires not that I consider myself with my feelings in your situation, but I consider myself being you and having the feelings that you have or would have.[21]

[19] 'The passions, upon some occasions, may seem to be transfused from one man to another, instantaneously, and antecedent to any knowledge of what excited them in the person principally concerned.' (i 1.1.6, 11)

[20] 'We sometimes feel for another a passion of which he himself seems to be altogether incapable; because, when we put ourselves in his case, that passion arises in our breast from the imagination, though it does not in his from the reality. We blush for the impudence and rudeness of another, though he himself appears to have no sense of the impropriety of his own behaviour; because we cannot help feeling with what confusion we ourselves should be covered, had we behaved in so absurd a manner.' (i 1.1.10, 12)

[21] '...though sympathy is very properly said to arise from an imaginary change of situations with the person principally concerned, yet this imaginary change is not supposed to happen to me in my own person and character, but in that of the person with whom I sympathize. When I condole with you for the loss of your only son, in order to enter into your grief I do not consider what I, a person of such a character and profession, should suffer, if I had a son, and if that son was unfortunately to die: but I consider what I should suffer if I was really you, and I not only change circumstances with

Hence he seems to imply that A's embarrassment at B's rudeness is a case of irrational sympathy.

But even the more plausible account of the counterfactual basis of sympathy does not seem to cover all cases of appropriate sympathy. Smith recognizes some cases in which sympathy seems appropriate, but seems not to be based on my imagining what you feel: (1) We feel anguish at the sight of people who have lost their reason, even if they seem quite cheerful about it. The counterfactual suppositions on which this anguish is based are inconsistent; I suppose myself suffering terribly if I were aware of myself in that situation, though at the same time I suppose that if I were in that situation I would not be aware of it, and hence would not suffer.[22] (2) A mother feels agony for her child suffering from a disease, even though the child cannot have the fears for the future that explain the mother's anxiety. (3) We feel sorry for the dead because we imagine ourselves both being dead (and so having no consciousness) and being aware of being dead (and so being conscious).[23]

In the third case Smith believes that fellow-feeling is irrational. If so, it seems to be irrational in the first and second cases as well. Ought we not, therefore, to try to discount such fellow-feeling in our deliberation and action? If the conclusions that we might reach on the supposition that a figure is both round and square are not to be taken seriously, it seems equally irrational to act on the supposition that we both have and lack a certain sort of belief or passion. And yet it often seems appropriate to feel compassion for people who have lost their reason, and for young children with fatal diseases. If Smith's analysis is right, these morally appropriate reactions rest on inconsistent suppositions that we should not act on.

To see why such reactions are appropriate, we should distinguish two kinds of 'fellow-feeling'. (1) One kind is a passion in us that corresponds to a passion in the other person. This is the reaction advised by St Paul in 'Rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep'.[24] (2) Another kind is a passion in us that is directed to the other person's situation. Smith recognizes these two passions, but he tries to explain the second by reference to the first, by introducing counterfactual passions that are reproduced in actual passions.

A better account of the second kind of passion might attribute to A the judgment that B's situation is bad, and therefore deserves compassion; the compassion results directly from

you, but I change persons and characters. . . . A man may sympathize with a woman in child-bed; though it is impossible that he should conceive himself as suffering her pains in his own proper person and character' (vii 3.1.4, 317).

[22] 'The anguish which humanity feels, therefore, at the sight of such an object cannot be the reflexion of any sentiment of the sufferer. The compassion of the spectator must arise altogether from the consideration of what he himself would feel if he was reduced to the same unhappy situation, and, what perhaps is impossible, was at the same time able to regard it with his present reason and judgment.' (i 1.1.11, 12)

[23] 'We sympathize even with the dead, and overlooking what is of real importance in their situation, that awful futurity which awaits them, we are chiefly affected by those circumstances which strike our senses, but can have no influence upon their happiness. . . . The idea of that dreary and endless melancholy, which the fancy naturally ascribes to their condition, arises altogether from our joining to the change which has been produced upon them, our own consciousness of that change, from our putting ourselves in their situation . . . It is from this very illusion of the imagination, that the foresight of our own dissolution is so terrible to us, and that the idea of those circumstances, which undoubtedly can give us no pain when we are dead, makes us miserable while we are alive.' (i 1.1.13, 12–13) Smith does not intend to reduce the influence of this 'illusion', since he immediately considers its social utility: 'And from thence arises one of the most important principles in human nature, the dread of death, the great poison to the happiness, but the great restraint upon the injustice of mankind, which, while it afflicts and mortifies the individual, guards and protects the society.' Cf. ii 1.2.5, 71; Griswold, *ASVE* 89.

[24] *Rm.* 12:15. Butler uses this as the text for his fifth Sermon, which Smith recalls inaccurately in i 3.1.1, 43; see RM ad loc.

A's judgment about the facts of B's actual situation, not from A's judgments about what A would feel if A were in B's situation. Our reaction to people who lose their reason, to young children suffering from fatal diseases, and to the dead, is reasonable if it rests on a reasonable judgment about the badness of these situations. We need not also imagine what we would feel in their situations. Hence we need not rely on the inconsistent suppositions that Smith describes.

The difference between passions based on evaluative judgments and passions based on counterfactual passions can be seen more clearly in cases where the two kinds of passions conflict. Suppose that A sees B taking cruel pleasure in causing pain to C, and that A knows both that A also tends to enjoy the pleasures that a cruel person would enjoy and that A is insensitive to pain. Smith's analysis requires A to reflect: 'If I were in B's situation, I would enjoy causing pain to C, and if I were in C's situation, I would not care much about the pain I suffered from B'. According to Smith, then, A will have fellow-feeling for B rather than C. But if A is a moderately good person, this analysis does not fit; for A recognizes that these features of A are not a good reason for denying that B is doing unjustified harm to C. Hence A's sympathy for C rests on A's judgments about the badness of B's cruelty and the severity of C's suffering, not on the feelings that A would have in B's and C's situation. If A is a moderately good person, these evaluative judgments cause A to sympathize with C, not with B.

This explanation of one kind of sympathy conflicts with one of Smith's main aims. For the explanation takes sympathy to rest on prior evaluative judgments, contrary to Smith's aim of explaining evaluative judgments through the operation of sympathy. His reductive account of evaluative judgments does not capture the range of morally appropriate reactions. If his account implies that some morally appropriate actions rest on contradictory assumptions or illusions, the account is open to doubt. Perhaps the doubt is not decisive; we may decide that the illusory character of the suppositions underlying a reaction does not affect the moral appropriateness of the reaction itself. But before we decide this, we may reasonably ask whether Smith's account is so plausible that we have to accept its less appealing implications.

791. A Reductive Account of Approval

These doubts about Smith's account of sympathy, and about his rejection of unreduced evaluative judgments underlying fellow-feeling, suggest further doubts about his account of approval, and his attempt to reduce it to sympathy.

In the cases we have considered, A's feeling does not correspond to B's, but rests on a judgment about A's counterfactual feeling. But in cases where A's feeling and B's agree, Smith claims that A approves of B's feelings.[25] In such cases B's feelings appear to A to be 'just and proper and suitable to their objects', and hence A makes favourable evaluative

[25] 'When the original passions of the person principally concerned are in perfect concord with the sympathetic emotions of the spectator, they necessarily appear to this last just and proper, and suitable to their objects . . . To approve of the passions of another, therefore, as suitable to their objects, is the same thing as to observe that we entirely sympathize with them . . . The man who resents the injuries that have been done to me, and observes that I resent them precisely as he does, necessarily approves of my resentment.' (i 1.3.1, 16)

judgments about B's passions.[26] This is a reductive account of evaluative judgments by reference to sympathy. When A approves of B's feeling, A simply records the fact that A feels the same as B feels. The analysis refers to no evaluative judgment, but only to a judgment about one's present feelings.

Smith recognizes, however, that this analysis is too narrow.[27] I may recognize that a joke is funny, though I am not in the mood to laugh, and that a stranger's mourning is appropriate even though I do not know enough about him, or have not attended enough to him, to be able to share his grief (i 1.3.4, 17–18). In such cases A approves of B's feelings even though A does not feel what B feels, and hence A's and B's feelings do not agree. Smith explains A's approval as a judgment by A about A's counterfactual reactions. The earlier examples we discussed involved the presence of a passion in myself despite its absence in the other (sympathizing with dead people); but approval sometimes involves the presence of a passion in the other and its absence in myself. In this case I judge that I would share your feelings if I considered your situation more closely.[28] Smith suggests that our approval is 'founded upon' our belief about counterfactual sympathy, as though the approval were something more than this belief. But what more could it be? Smith identified approval with awareness of sympathy (i 1.3.1, 16); since he has replaced 'sympathy' with 'conditional sympathy', we would expect the consciousness of conditional sympathy to be the approval itself.

The appeal to conditional sympathy raises questions parallel to those we raised for the claim that judgments about counterfactual passions underlie fellow-feeling. For I might know that, because of some peculiarity of mine, I would not feel sympathy if I were better informed about your situation. I might know that I am a rather cold person, or that I am rather prone to sentimental excesses, and that full information about your situation might result in indifference or in excessive displays of grief or joy. But since I know I have these defects, I might believe your reactions are about right, so that I approve of them. In this case, as in his discussion of fellow-feeling, Smith overlooks the role of evaluative judgments, as distinct from predictions about actual or counterfactual feelings. Hence he does not notice how judgments about my counterfactual feelings in your situation differ from evaluative judgments about your feelings in your situation.

To support his identification of approval with recognition of shared feelings, he relies on a parallel with belief. He argues that we cannot approve of another person's opinions without sharing them, and that therefore the same applies to sentiments.[29] This parallel with belief

[26] Perhaps 'appear' might be taken to refer to a mere appearance of appropriateness that A does not necessarily endorse. But Smith does not seem to recognize any gap between an appearance of appropriateness and the belief that the passion is appropriate.

[27] 'There are, indeed, some cases in which we seem to approve without any sympathy or correspondence of sentiments, and in which, consequently, the sentiment of approbation would seem to be different from the perception of this coincidence. A little attention, however, will convince us that even in these cases our approbation is ultimately founded upon a sympathy or correspondence of this kind.' (i 1.3.3, 17)

[28] '. . . we know that if we took time to consider his situation, fully and in all its parts, we should, without doubt, most sincerely sympathize with him. It is upon the consciousness of this conditional sympathy, that our approbation of his sorrow is founded, even in those cases in which that sympathy does not actually take place' (i 1.3.4, 18).

[29] 'If the same arguments which convince you convince me likewise, I necessarily approve of your conviction; and if they do not, I necessarily disapprove of it: neither can I possibly conceive that I should do the one without the other. To approve or disapprove, therefore, of the opinions of others is acknowledged, by every body, to mean no more than to observe their agreement or disagreement with our own. But this is equally the case with regard to our approbation or disapprobation of the sentiments or passions of others.' (i 1.3.2, 17)

invites two objections: (1) In some cases we can distinguish approval of another's belief from sharing the belief. If you and I have access to different evidence bearing on the truth or falsity of p, I might approve of your belief, as being reasonably based on your evidence, even if I hold a different belief, based on different evidence. (2) But even if Smith is right about some types of belief, beliefs are different from sentiments. If I take your belief that p to rest on conclusive reasons, I must also recognize that these are conclusive reasons for me to believe that p. But the connexion between recognition of reasons and the resulting attitude does not hold in the same way for sentiment; even if I recognize conclusive reasons for abandoning my anger, it does not follow that I abandon my anger. If, then, I take your moderate reaction to an offence to rest on conclusive reasons, I approve your moderate reaction, but I may not have the same reaction.

These objections to Smith's account of sympathy and of approval affect the reductive aspect of his account. He tries to avoid any appeal to evaluative beliefs about the other person, by explaining sympathy and approval as the sharing of sentiments, without reference to evaluative beliefs. His attempted explanation fails; it does not capture the ways in which approval may depart from shared sentiment. Since approval differs from shared sentiment, a correct account of approval has to refer to evaluative beliefs about the object of approval.

792. Approval and Propriety

Smith's discussion of particular cases of shared sentiments and approval exposes a tension in his position. On the one hand, he relies on the analysis of approval as shared sentiment. On the other hand, he also insists that in some cases approval comes apart from shared sentiment, so that we can have one without the other. His second line of argument creates a difficulty for the first, but it does not cause Smith to revise his analysis of approval.

His discussion of the 'propriety' of different sentiments illustrates the first line of argument. He assumes that if I am to induce other people to recognize my sentiments as appropriate for me in my situation, I have to adjust my sentiments to the type and intensity of sentiments that they are ready to feel for me in my situation. Not only must the spectator exercise imagination to find out what she would feel in the agent's situation; the agent must also adjust her feelings to those she expects a spectator to feel. Though we cannot achieve complete harmony of sentiments in this way, we can achieve enough 'for the harmony of society', so that we do not diverge too much in our response to various situations.[30]

Different ways of achieving harmony mark a difference between 'amiable' and 'respectable' virtues. The amiable virtues are those that we approve of by fellow-feeling with the unmodified responses of the other person. Gentleness and kindness involve passions that a spectator readily shares, and therefore endorses. Other virtues however, require some

[30] 'He must flatten, if I may be allowed to say so, the sharpness of its [sc. his passion's] natural tone, in order to reduce it to harmony and concord with the emotions of those who are about it. What they feel will indeed always be, in some respects different from what he feels, and compassion can never be exactly the same with original sorrow; because the secret consciousness that the change of situations, from which the sympathetic sentiment arises, is but imaginary, not only lowers it in degree, but, in some measure, varies it in kind, and gives it a quite different modification.' (i 1.4.7, 22)

adjustment of our original passion to the likely reactions of the spectator. The dispositions to modify passions in these ways are the respectable virtues, the ones that involve self-command.[31] When someone exercises this command beyond the ordinary level, we recognize a virtue of self-command (i 1.5.6, 25).

Smith speaks without distinction of two processes of adjustment: (1) We adjust our sentiments to those that an impartial spectator would approve of.[32] (2) We adjust them to those that an impartial spectator would feel. His account of approval explains why he does not distinguish the two processes. But his examples suggest that the two processes are different, and hence they raise further doubts about his account of approval. If A is resentful at B for B's killing A's children, it does not seem obvious that A ought to be no more resentful than S (an impartial spectator) would be. It is true that A ought to demand no worse punishment for B than S would approve, and also true that A ought not to feel more resentment than S would approve.[33] But this does not mean that A ought to feel no more resentment than S would feel.

Smith admits that S will normally feel a weaker passion, as a result of imagining what S would feel in A's situation, and so he infers that we ought not to demand exact matching of sentiments. But his account of approval implies that if A could adjust A's sentiments so that they agreed more closely with S's, A would thereby be more deserving of S's approval. This is not necessarily so; S might think it appropriate for A to feel more resentment than S would feel, and in that case S would approve of A only if A did not adjust A's sentiments to S's.

Smith points out this appropriate difference between A's and S's sentiments, in order to expose the error in the Stoic position. The Stoics (he supposes) advise us to match our emotions in bereavement to the emotions of the impartial spectator contemplating someone else's bereavement.[34] Smith rejects their advice, arguing that we ought not to feel only the sentiments that the impartial spectator would feel.[35] But this reasonable objection to the (supposed) Stoic position applies equally to Smith's account of adjustment.

The virtue of self-command, therefore, is not the disposition that Smith describes. We ought not always to adjust our sentiments to those an impartial spectator would have in our situation, or those that other people actually have towards our sentiments. Self-command requires us to adjust our sentiments to those an impartial spectator would approve. But

[31] '. . . we admire that noble and generous resentment which governs its pursuit of the greatest injuries, not by the rage which they are apt to excite in the breast of the sufferer, but by the indignation which they naturally call forth in that of the impartial spectator; which allows no word, no gesture, to escape it beyond what this more equitable sentiment would dictate; which never, even in thought, attempts any greater vengeance, nor desires to inflict any greater punishment, than what every indifferent person would rejoice to see executed' (i 1.5.4, 24).

[32] The point of Smith's emphasis on the impartiality of the spectator is explained by Raphael, *IS* 34–6.

[33] This claim about the impartial spectator rests on the assumption, so far unexamined, that this spectator's point of view is the right one for deciding whether actions and passions should be approved.

[34] ' "When our neighbour" says Epictetus, "loses his wife, or his son, there is nobody who is not sensible that this is a human calamity, a natural event altogether according to the ordinary course of things; but, when the same thing happens to ourselves, then we cry out, as if we had suffered the most dreadful misfortune. We ought, however, to remember how we were affected when this accident happened to another, and such as we were in his case, such ought we to be in our own." ' (iii 3.11, 141)

[35] 'The sense of propriety, so far from requiring us to eradicate altogether that extraordinary sensibility, which we naturally feel for the misfortunes of our nearest connexions, is always much more offended by the defect, than it ever is by the excess of that sensibility. The stoical apathy is, in such cases, never agreeable, and all the metaphysical sophisms by which it is supported can seldom serve any other purpose than to blow up the hard insensibility of a coxcomb to ten times its native impertinence.' (iii 3.14, 143)

since Smith analyses approval as shared sentiment, he does not mark the difference between a sentiment that impartial spectators approve of and a sentiment that they share.

793. Sharing of Passions v. Approval of Passions

Smith's treatment of sympathy and approval influences his description of the different passions and the ways in which they can be proper or improper. He describes them in accordance with the general principle that makes sympathy primary; hence he assumes that we judge these passions appropriate insofar as we approve of them, and that we approve of them insofar as we sympathize with them.[36] He relies on two related assumptions: (1) If we cannot easily share a given feeling, we disapprove of it. (2) If we find it easy to share a feeling, we approve of it.

His discussion of romantic love relies on the first assumption. He suggests that the lover's passions are 'but little sympathized with' (i 2.2.1, 31). This is true (we may grant), if we take 'sympathize' in Smith's sense, which requires actually sharing the lover's particular feelings. But inability to share the lover's feelings need not inhibit us in 'fellow-feeling' or in approval. Someone who listens sympathetically to a lover need not share his passion. If we recognize that lovers tend to find love all-absorbing and to be distracted from other things, and we show special consideration to the lover in these circumstances, that is a way of showing sympathy for the lover. To treat the lover's sentiments as ridiculous simply because we do not share them would be unreasonably harsh. This example also suggests that we may treat other people sympathetically because of their passions without approving of the passions. We may think they are misguided in particular attachments, but nonetheless show them special consideration. Neither reaction depends on our sharing or not sharing a particular passion, as Smith assumes.

A similar assumption underlies Smith's claim that we approve of self-command and self-restraint in the display of grief because we cannot share the feelings of those who react more strongly.[37] His explanation omits an aspect of self-command that Aristotle notices; the virtuous person bears misfortune calmly 'not because of insensibility to pain (*analgêsia*), but because he is noble and magnanimous' (*EN* 1100b32–3). As uninvolved spectators we contemplate the misfortune of other people calmly, because we are insensible to the pain of the victims. But if we thought the victims were equally insensible, we would not think they displayed any special virtue, but we might simply think they were callous. On Smith's view, however, the more callous we become towards our own misfortunes or to those of people close to us, the more other people will, and ought to, approve of us.

Perhaps Smith might appeal to the Stoics to show that we are wrong in objecting to this conclusion.[38] He expects us to admire them; but are they not callous, since they are

[36] 'And if we consider all the different passions of human nature, we shall find that they are regarded as decent, or indecent, just in proportion as mankind are more or less disposed to sympathize with them.' (i 2.introd.2)

[37] 'His firmness, at the same time, perfectly coincides with our insensibility. He makes no demand upon us for that more exquisite degree of sensibility which we find, and which we are mortified to find, that we do not possess. There is the most perfect correspondence between his sentiments and ours, and on that account the most perfect propriety in his behaviour.' (i 3.1.13, 48)

[38] See iii 3.11, 141, quoted in §792.

indifferent to their misfortunes? The Stoics, however, are free of passion because they do not think misfortunes are to be taken as seriously as most people take them, since they are not genuine harms to us. If they did think misfortunes are genuine harms, but did not care about them, they would be callous, and would thereby cease to be praiseworthy.[39]

Smith agrees with Aristotle's remark that callousness is not the same as self-command. Self-command presupposes an intensity of feeling that the impartial spectator lacks; nonetheless the impartial spectator approves of this self-command.[40] How are we to understand this approval, however, within Smith's analysis? We might say that the reaction of someone with self-command accords with the 'sentiment'—the evaluative judgment—of impartial spectators, but not with their 'sentiment'—their feeling. But Smith cannot consistently recognize these two senses of 'sentiment'; his analysis of moral judgments into sentiments rather than judgments requires strict adherence to the second sense, referring to emotions as distinct from judgments. Reid sees that Smith uses 'sentiment' in this second sense.[41]

Reflexion on the Stoics may suggest a different reason for approval of self-command. Someone who reacts to misfortune without self-command may easily over-estimate its importance, or may react to it in ways that damage other important aims. If parents grieving for the loss of a child neglected their other children, they would be unduly dominated by their grief. If we think domination by grief is inappropriate, we do not imply that parents ought to imitate the uninvolved spectator who is relatively indifferent to their loss; we recognize that other things besides their grief have a claim on them.

If we think of self-command in this way, we change Smith's emphasis on the reactions of the spectator to an emphasis on the situation of the agent. It is difficult to see how the reactions of someone who has not suffered the loss that a grieving parent has suffered could be a reasonable measure of the grief appropriate for a grieving parent. The judgment of appropriateness should be a judgment about that agent in that situation. By trying to reduce the judgment of appropriateness to similarity of sentiment, Smith transforms a reasonable judgment—that your reaction is inappropriate because your situation demands a different reaction—into an unreasonable judgment—that your reaction is inappropriate because it is not how I would react to your situation. Perhaps this criticism of Smith is unfair; for he observes that a spectator may sometimes approve of other people's reactions without sharing their feelings. But his account of approval does not allow him to take proper account of this observation, since he analyses approval as actual or counterfactual sharing of sentiments.

In contrast to cases where we approve of someone's sentiment without sharing it, Smith also considers cases where we share someone's sentiment but do not approve of it. We tend to sympathize with the prosperity of the rich and powerful, because we imagine ourselves

[39] On the Stoics see §§191–2.

[40] 'Concerning the subject of self-command, I shall only observe further, that our admiration for the man who, under the heaviest and most unexpected misfortunes, continues to behave with fortitude and firmness, always supposes that his sensibility to those misfortunes is very great, and such as it requires a very great effort to conquer or command. The man who was altogether insensible to bodily pain, could deserve no applause from enduring the torture with the most perfect patience and equanimity. The man who had been created without the natural fear of death, could claim no merit from preserving his coolness and presence of mind in the midst of the most dreadful dangers.' (iii 3.44, 156)

[41] Reid, *EAP* v 7 = H 674b–675a. See §842.

sharing the feelings of satisfaction that we (falsely) attribute to people in their situation.[42] Smith notices that this tendency is socially useful, because it supports 'the distinction of ranks, and the order of society' (i 3.2.3, 52), apart from any expectation of benefit from our superiors. But he does not approve of it without qualification; on the contrary, he mentions it as a source of the 'corruption' of our moral sentiments (i 3.3.1, 61). We go wrong because we allow our sympathy for the powerful and prosperous to create respect and admiration for them, even though such respect and admiration should be reserved for wisdom and virtue. Similarly, we treat failure and poverty with the contempt that we should reserve for vice and folly.

In contrast to Hume, Smith does not argue that because we find these qualities agreeable to us, we have a moral sentiment in favour of them. On the contrary, he denies that our sympathy with wealth and power constitutes moral approval of them. A little attention shows us the difference between our sentiments towards wealth and those towards virtue; we corrupt our moral sentiments if we do not attend to the difference.[43] But Smith's view about the nature of approval seems to make the confusion he complains of both difficult to avoid and difficult to criticize. In his view, approval of the rich and powerful simply amounts to sympathy with them, as a result of our imagining what we would feel in their situation and the sympathetic feeling that we have towards that imagined feeling. According to his view of approval, then, we approve of the rich. If our tendency to imagine ourselves enjoying being a film star is unavoidable, our tendency to approve the life of a film star must also be unavoidable; and so the 'corruption' of our moral sentiments is unavoidable as well.

Smith's example illustrates the irrationality of some sentiments that are founded on my imagining my sentiments in the agent's situation. If I am poor, I may correctly believe that if I were rich I would be in a position to satisfy all the desires that I have now, and so I may correctly infer that if I were rich and had all and only my present desires, I would make myself happy. I would be wrong, however, to infer that if I were rich I would be happy; for if I were rich, my desires would also have changed from my present desires, and being rich might not be enough to satisfy the desires I would have then.[44] My error in assuming that a rich person is happy illustrates the error in forming my attitude to someone else's situation by imagining my counterfactual attitudes in the other person's situation.

But even if I am subject to irrational attitudes formed through this imaginative activity, I need not approve of the person for whom I form this favourable feeling. To approve of the person is to make an evaluative judgment about their situation. Smith sees that our imagination may mislead us into approving of things that we ought not to approve of. But

[42] 'When we consider the condition of the great in those delusive colours in which the imagination is apt to paint it, it seems to be almost the abstract idea of a perfect and happy state. It is the very state which, in all our waking dreams and idle reveries, we had sketched out to ourselves as the final object of all our desires. We feel, therefore, a particular sympathy with the satisfaction of those who are in it. We favour all their inclinations, and forward all their wishes.' (i 3.2.2, 52)

[43] 'The respect which we feel for wisdom and virtue is, no doubt, different from that which we conceive for wealth and greatness; and it requires no very nice discernment to distinguish the difference. But, notwithstanding this difference, those sentiments bear a very considerable resemblance to one another. In some particular features they are, no doubt, different, but, in the general air of the countenance, they seem to be so very nearly the same that inattentive observers are very apt to mistake the one for the other.' (i 3.3.3, 62)

[44] As Hare explains it in *MT*, ch. 5, my failure to take account of how my desires would change if I were rich confuses my now-for-then preferences with my then-for-then preferences.

his view of approval makes it more difficult to explain why this process is misleading or avoidable; for he supposes that the mistaken sentiments formed on the basis of imagination constitute approval. His attempt to avoid any reference to evaluative judgment, as distinct from shared sentiments, is the common element in several of his questionable claims about sentiments and approval.

794. Desert

Smith's account of desert rests on his account of approval. In his view, we attribute desert to those towards whom we approve gratitude or resentment.[45] Since approval is sympathy, understood as similarity of sentiment, the sense of desert must also be explained by reference to sympathy. Approval of punishment, therefore, must be a sympathetic feeling towards those who feel resentment towards the offender. If we share the gratitude of the recipients when we imagine ourselves in their situation, we approve of their reaction, and thereby take the agent to deserve reward.

This account seems to be open to counter-examples. If a gangster pleases his wife by giving her an expensive car that he has bought with the money gained by fraud, we might be moved by the gratitude of the wife so that we tend to sympathize with it (in Smith's sense). But might we not still disapprove of the gangster and of his action, and take it to deserve punishment rather than reward?

Smith deals with some counter-examples of this sort by insisting that a judgment about desert requires not only approval of the consequences of the action, but also of the motives of the agent. It is not enough, therefore, to sympathize with the wife's gratitude; we must also approve of the gangster's motive in giving his wife the car. In this case, Smith might argue, we disapprove of the gangster's criminal motive, because we sympathize with the resentment of his victims.

This resort to the agent's motive, however, does not answer the basic objection to Smith's analysis. The gangster's motive is dishonest (since he does not mind buying presents for his wife with the profits of his criminal activities), but nonetheless benevolent towards a particular person. If the bad effects of his criminal actions on other people are relatively indirect (he engages in fraud, but not in murder), we might find it hard not to share the favourable sentiment of his wife (or other beneficiaries of his largesse), and hard to share the imagined resentment of his victims (who might not even know they are being cheated and so might not be resentful). In that case our reaction to his motive, according to Smith's account of approval, is approval, and so we must regard him as deserving of reward.

This account ignores the possibility of recognizing that we sympathize more with the beneficiaries than the victims and so find ourselves sympathizing with the agent's motive, but we still disapprove of it, because we judge the motive to be inappropriate, and therefore judge the agent to deserve punishment. This possibility is not open in Smith's account, given

[45] 'Gratitude and resentment, therefore, are the sentiments which most immediately and directly prompt us to reward and punish. To us, therefore, he must appear to deserve reward, who appears to be the proper and approved object of gratitude; and he to deserve punishment, who appears to be that of resentment.' (ii 1.1.7, 69)

the connexions he sees between judgments of desert, approval, and sympathy. His remarks about the propriety of the agent's motive do not allow judgments of desert to depart from sympathetic reactions. But since our judgments seem to depart from sympathetic reactions, his account does not capture judgments of desert.

The weakness of Smith's account appears in judgments of desert in cases where the agent has killed an innocent victim. Smith has to rely on his previous account of sympathy with the plight of the dead (ii 1.2.5, 70–1). If A has made B suffer, we have some genuine suffering in B to sympathize with, but if A has killed B, B is no longer (we may assume) suffering. Hence we have to imagine the suffering we would feel if we were both dead and subject to the pains we would suffer if we were alive and were (say) being dismembered. Since we attribute this suffering to the dead B, we also attribute to B the resentment that we imagine B feeling, even though we believe B feels nothing of the sort. This explanation of approval through sympathy commits Smith to the view that our belief that A deserves punishment is based on a true belief about B's suffering if B is alive, but on a false belief if B is dead. Why should we not suppose, then, that A is more deserving of punishment if A does not kill B than if A kills B? For since it is easier to sympathize with B if we know B is alive and suffering than if we believe B is dead and incapable of suffering, we apparently ought to sympathize with B more if we believe B is alive than if we believe B is dead. This would be a strange conclusion about desert. Smith implies that our attitude towards the dead is based on a basically inconsistent and irrational exercise of imagination. If we believe our attitudes are consistent and rational, we cannot accept Smith's analysis of approval.

So far we have ignored Smith's restriction of the people whose sympathetic reactions count for determining desert. Sometimes he attributes the relevant sympathetic reactions to 'every reasonable man', and to 'everybody who knows of it' (ii 1.2.3, 70), as though these were the same people. Unless everyone, or every reasonable person, sympathizes with the gratitude of the gangster's wife, we cannot say that the gangster deserves reward.

But how can we tell whether everyone sympathizes with a particular reaction? The sympathetic reactions of other people who know about an offence may vary in accordance with the different beliefs and emotions of these people. Why ought we to follow the reactions of everyone, as Smith suggests, or even of most people? Why not follow the reactions of the people we most often have to deal with, even if other people react differently?

Perhaps Smith is not really thinking of everyone's reaction, but only of the reaction of an impartial spectator. Instead of considering most people, or a specific group of people, perhaps we should consider the reactions of a spectator whose personal concerns and interests are not directly involved with those of the agent or the victim. But this appeal to the impartial spectator does not help us to determine our own reaction. Some spectators who are impartial in this sense may be callous, while others may be especially susceptible to certain kinds of appeals to their emotions. These different impartial spectators will react differently; hence they do not provide a guide for our reactions.

Could Smith answer by substituting the reactions of the 'reasonable man' for those of the impartial spectator? Without some explanation of 'reasonable', we are none the wiser about what his reactions would be. If the explanation includes the reasonable man's tendency to follow correct evaluative judgments, it relies on an account of evaluative judgments that Smith has so far not provided.

795. Justice and the Impartial Spectator

The impartial spectator has a special role in explaining the special attitudes that are connected with justice. If a requirement is part of justice, our performance of it can legitimately be demanded, we can be compelled to perform it, and we are appropriately punished for violating it. Justice requires us to avoid harm to our neighbour, though it does not require us to refrain from vigorous competition, or to be beneficent.[46] The morally significant asymmetry between failure to benefit others and actual harming of them is not clear from the point of view of self-love, but it is clear from the point of view of the impartial spectator. Since an individual wants to adjust his attitude to himself to the attitude of the impartial spectator, he curbs his tendency to look at himself from the point of view of self-love. I recognize that other people will never take me as seriously, in comparison to other people, as I take myself, and my knowledge of their less inflated view of me helps me to take a less inflated view of myself. This change of my perspective on myself helps me to see myself as others see me, and thereby to make the appropriate room for other people in my attitude to myself.[47]

How can reference to the impartial spectator produce this change in perspective? If S is an impartial spectator of A's conduct, S's sympathy or lack of sympathy with A results from S's imaginative placing of S in A's situation. Smith suggests that when S considers A competing against B, and so making B's condition worse relative to A's, S sympathizes with A, but when S considers A injuring B by violating the demands of justice, S sympathizes with B rather than A. S recognizes that if S were in A's position, S would care about A more than about B, and that if S were in B's position, S would care about B more than about A. Hence S is subject to sympathy with A in A's pleasure at getting the better of B, and subject to sympathy with B in B's pain at losing to A. Apparently the relative intensity of A's pleasure and B's pain should determine the sympathy that predominates in S's attitude to A and B. It is not clear why the difference between A's successfully competing against B and A's unjustly harming B determines whether S's predominant sympathy is with A or with B.

Smith's position would be stronger if we also knew that (1) S believes A's injustice to B is a more serious harm than A's succeeding at B's expense, and that (2) S's sympathy is guided by this belief. But if we know only that S is an impartial spectator, we cannot take either of these things for granted about S. Different impartial spectators may have different views about the relative badness of injustice and competitive loss, and may be influenced by their evaluative judgments to different degrees.

[46] 'There can be no proper motive for hurting our neighbour, there can be no incitement to do evil to another, which mankind will go along with, except just indignation for evil which that other has done to us. To disturb his happiness merely because it stands in the way of our own, to take from him what is of real use to him merely because it may be of equal or of more use to us, or to indulge in this manner, at the expense of other people, the natural preference which every man has for his happiness above that of other people, is what no impartial spectator can go along with.' (ii 2.2.1, 82)

[47] 'But though the ruin of our neighbour may affect us much less than a very small misfortune of our own, we must not ruin him to prevent that small misfortune, nor even to prevent our own ruin. We must, here, as in all other cases, view ourselves not so much according to that light in which we may naturally appear to ourselves, as according to that in which we naturally appear to others. . . . When he views himself in the light in which he is conscious that others will view him, he sees that to them he is but one of the multitude in no respect better than any other in it. If he would act so as that the impartial spectator may enter into the principles of his conduct, which is what of all things he has the greatest desire to do, he must, upon this, as upon all other occasions, humble the arrogance of his self-love, and bring it down to something which other men can go along with.' (ii 2.2.1, 82–3)

Why is it important to view ourselves from an impartial point of view, and what does this point of view consist in? Should we adopt it because it adjusts our views to those of others, or because it adjusts our views to reasonable views? These two reasons for adopting it are not equivalent; for whether or not a particular group of other people holds reasonable views depends on how reasonable these people are. It is not clear that their mere impartiality—not taking the interest that we take in our good—makes them reasonable.

If, then, we seek to adjust our sentiments to reasonable views, not simply to the views of others, we need more than impartiality. Admittedly, impartiality is relevant to the just and reasonable point of view, since this point of view is not distorted by self-interest. In speaking of distortion we assume that it is possible to form a true view, and that we can appeal to this true view to correct distortions. Smith is right, therefore, to believe that the impartial spectator, whom he also calls the 'impartial judge' (ii 2.2.4, 85), is important. But impartiality is not enough for reasonableness. Some spectators who are not moved by their own self-interest may nonetheless be misanthropic and malevolent towards the interests of the people they consider; others may be merely indifferent. If the reasonable judge should be impartially concerned for the interests of those affected, disinterested malevolence or indifference does not make us reasonable judges. When Smith assumes that impartial spectators approve of justice and of respect for others, the views he attributes to them do not follow from his account of sympathy and approval.

In Smith's view, however, these objections overlook the fact that our judgments about merit and demerit display precisely the sort of irregularity that we ought to expect if his analysis is correct. We suppose that our approval of other people rests on a general principle about their good or bad intentions; it seems unfair to blame one person more than another if their intentions are the same.[48] But in fact our judgments about praise and blame violate this principle; for some of our reactions do not simply reflect our views about the agents' will and intentions, but are also affected by the outcomes of their intentions. We think more highly (say) of the Duke of Wellington than of some other general who was just as able, but who happened to live in a time of peace between Britain and its neighbours, and we think more highly of Dietrich Bonhoeffer than we think of some other Christian who was just as brave, but who did not live under a tyranny. Similarly, we punish attempted murder less severely than successful attempts, even though the intention to murder may have been just the same.

Smith suggests that his analysis explains why we violate a maxim that we profess to accept. In his view, our tendency to deviate from the maxim that ties praise to intention supports a sentimentalist account of approval, and refutes an account relying on unreduced evaluative judgment. If evaluative judgment determined our approval, we would not deviate from the judgment about praise and intention as often as we actually do. But if shared sentiments determine approval, the 'irregularity' (as Smith calls it, ii 3.introd.6, 93) of our judgments is intelligible. For when we think of Wellington's successes, our sympathy is engaged, and influences our readiness to praise him; conversely, when we think of the

[48] 'To the intention or affection of the heart . . . to the propriety or impropriety, to the beneficence or hurtfulness of the design, all praise or blame, all approbation or disapprobation, of any kind, which can justly be bestowed upon any action, must ultimately belong.' (ii 3.introd.3, 93)

victim of the successful murderer, our sympathy is aroused by suffering, and influences us in blaming the murderer. If the intentions were unfulfilled, there would be nothing to excite our sympathy. Hence (Smith infers) the variations in our judgments about praise and blame reflect the operations of sympathy, rather than adherence to an abstract rational principle.

We need not draw this conclusion. Instead we might doubt Smith's claim that we accept the simple maxim that he mentions. Reflexion on the cases he mentions suggests that 'approbation or disapprobation of any kind, which can justly be bestowed on any action' does not depend entirely on the agent's intention. We might, for instance, distinguish approval of the agent from approval of the agent's actions. We might also suggest some discrimination between different types of approval of the agent for different things; judgments about the character of agents might not always accord with judgments about what should be done to agents on the basis of their actions. We might also want to separate questions about whether praise and blame are justified from questions about when it is appropriate to express praise and blame, or appropriate to express them through the state's mechanisms of reward and punishment. Once we consider action by the state to enforce judgments of merit or demerit, we introduce many epistemic and practical questions that may reasonably affect the application of our evaluative judgments.[49]

These cases need not result from 'irregularity of sentiments'. They may be reasonable exceptions to, or qualifications of, the rule of measuring approval and disapproval by intention. We can see that they are not random or ad hoc exceptions if we consider why they are reasonable provisions. The relevant kinds of approval reflect evaluative judgment rather than irregular sentiments.

If we rely on evaluative judgments, they may guide us to a change of mind about whether a given exception to the rule about intentions is reasonable. As Reid remarks, we learn to distinguish the reactions that are appropriate for responsible agents from those that are not.[50] Children may be angry at tools or animals because they are frustrated or disappointed, and in some circumstances it is difficult for any of us to separate frustration, disappointment, grief, envy, spite, and related emotions from the appropriate reactions to responsible agents. This may explain our failure to distinguish the different degrees of responsibility underlying manslaughter and murder (ii 3.2.8, 103).

In such cases, we may agree with Smith's view that our judgments are influenced by sentiments that are strictly irrelevant to judgments of responsibility. But if we can form judgments that diverge from our sentiments, these judgments are not simply the products of our sentiments. If we have formed these judgments, but our sentiments have not changed to match them, we may find that we do not approve of our sentiments because they do not match our judgments. Approval, therefore, does not consist simply in sharing sentiments.

[49] Smith recognizes some of these: '. . . if the baseness of the thought which had given birth to no action, seemed in the eyes of the world as much to call aloud for vengeance as the baseness of the action, every court of judicature would become a real inquisition. There would be no safety for the most innocent and circumspect conduct. Bad wishes, bad views, bad designs, might still be suspected; and while these excited the same indignation with bad conduct, while bad intentions were as much resented as bad actions, they would equally expose the person to punishment and resentment.' (ii 3.3.2, 105)

[50] See Reid, §849.

796. Being Praised and Being Praiseworthy

Smith does not want his claims about the impartial spectator to suggest to us that all we really care about, or ought to care about, is approval and praise by others.[51] He recognizes that we care about deserving the praise of others and ourselves, not simply about being praised, and he approves of this concern with praiseworthiness.[52] How does desire for praiseworthiness, in contrast to mere praise, fit Smith's views about sympathy and approval?

In his view, our approval is directed towards the character and conduct of others (iii 2.3, 114). When we begin to sympathize with the character and conduct that they sympathize with, we care about having this character and conduct. To identify the appropriate character, we must look at ourselves from the point of view of others.[53] The actual praise of other people confirms that we have been right in our belief about what is praiseworthy, and so it is welcome to us for that reason; but it is praiseworthiness that primarily concerns us. When I sympathize with the sentiments of others, I sympathize with their sentiments as including some belief about the object of their sentiments. If you are gratified by the company of a friend, your pleasure is pleasure in the company of a genuine friend, not in someone who is pretending to be your friend. And so, if I sympathize with your reactions, and I want to be the sort of person you sympathize with, I will approve of being a genuine friend rather than a pretender. Hence if I want the character and conduct that other people sympathize with and praise, I want to be that sort of person, not simply to be praised. In this case my sympathy includes the intentional object (a real friend, a genuinely generous person) of their sympathy.

But Smith does not make it is clear why sympathy with others must extend to the intentional object of their sympathy. People also approve of people who in fact appear to be friends but are not real friends (though they do not approve of them under this description), and so we must apparently sympathize with this reaction to undetected pretenders. If, then, we sympathize with those whom other people sympathize with, why should we not want to be undetected pretenders? It is not obvious from Smith's account why sympathy must lead an impartial spectator to approve of the genuine character rather than the undetected pretender.

Smith concedes this point. He does not maintain that we have some reason to prefer praiseworthiness over praise. He takes it to be a brute fact that we prefer it. The desire to be praiseworthy is more beneficial to society than the simple desire to be praised would be, but individuals themselves are not moved by the good of society; their preference rests on no further reason.[54]

[51] In a letter Smith explains one of his aims in iii 2: 'You will observe that it is intended both to confirm my doctrine that our judgments concerning our own conduct have always a reference to the sentiments of some other being, and to show that, notwithstanding this, real magnanimity and conscious virtue can support itself under the disapprobation of all mankind.' (Letter to Gilbert Elliot = *Corresp*. #40)

[52] 'The love of praise-worthiness is by no means derived altogether from the love of praise. These two principles, though they resemble one another, though they are connected, and often blended with one another, are yet, in many respects, distinct and independent of one another.' (iii 2.2, 114)

[53] 'We must at least believe ourselves to be admirable for what they are admirable. But, in order to attain this satisfaction, we must become the impartial spectators of our own character and conduct. We must endeavour to view them with the eyes of other people, or as other people are likely to view them.' (iii 2.3, 114)

[54] 'Nature . . . has endowed him, not only with a desire of being approved of, but with a desire of being what ought to be approved of; or of being what he himself approves of in other men. The first desire could only have made him wish to appear to be fit for society. The second was necessary in order to render him anxious to be really fit.' (iii 2.7, 117)

If people generally prefer praiseworthiness over praise, what is it that they prefer? We might assume that a praiseworthy action or trait is one that deserves to be praised whether or not it is praised; this is the conception of the honestum that Price derives from Cicero.[55] If we assume this, we assume that other people may be mistaken in the kinds of traits that they select for praise. If we want to be praised for being praiseworthy, we want to be praised for the traits that people ought to praise. Sometimes Smith seems to accept this evaluative conception of praiseworthiness; he describes it by reference to 'what, we imagine, ought to be the judgment of others' and to a 'fair and impartial spectator'.[56] We might suppose that Smith attributes to us a moral judgment about what the spectator ought to judge or about what a fair person would judge. If that were what he meant, reference to the impartial spectator would not give a reductive analysis of moral judgment, since a moral judgment would be part of the analysis.

Smith, however, sometimes presents a reductive analysis. He suggests that we find satisfaction in knowing that we are praiseworthy because we possess the qualities that other people praise, whether or not they actually praise us for having them.[57] If, therefore, people normally select (say) aggressiveness for praise, and they praise me because they mistakenly believe I am aggressive, then, according to Smith, aggressiveness is praiseworthy, but I am praised without being praiseworthy. He does not ask whether people ought to praise or to condemn aggressiveness. Nor does he give us any grounds for deciding this question one way or the other. Hence he distinguishes (1) being praised from (2) being praiseworthy by distinguishing (1) what people actually praise on a particular occasion, given their beliefs about this occasion, from (2) what they intend to praise. His analysis of praiseworthiness is non-normative insofar as it mentions only what people praise and would praise, not what they ought to praise.

797. A Non-normative Account of the Impartial Spectator

Is Smith's account of the impartial spectator equally non-normative? He distinguishes three points of view: (1) The actual views of other people. (2) The outlook of an individual and

[55] See Price, *RPQM* 62, discussed in §819.

[56] 'Whatever judgment we can form concerning them [sc. our own sentiments and motives], accordingly, must always bear some secret reference, either to what are, or to what, upon a certain condition, would be, or to what, we imagine, ought to be the judgment of others. We endeavour to examine our own conduct as we imagine any other fair and impartial spectator would examine it. If, upon placing ourselves in his situation, we thoroughly enter into all the passions and motives which influenced it, we approve of it, by sympathy with the approbation of this supposed equitable judge.' (iii 1.2, 108–9)

[57] '. . . it often gives real comfort to reflect, that though no praise should actually be bestowed upon us, our conduct, however, has been such as to deserve it, and has been in every respect suitable to those measures and rules by which praise and approbation are naturally and commonly bestowed. We are pleased, not only with praise, but with having done what is praise-worthy. . . . The man who is conscious to himself that he has exactly observed those measures of conduct which experience informs him are generally agreeable, reflects with satisfaction on the propriety of his own behaviour. When he views it in the light in which the impartial spectator would view it, he thoroughly enters into all the motives which influenced it. He looks back upon every part of it with pleasure and approbation, and though mankind should never be acquainted with what he has done, he regards himself, not so much according to the light in which they actually regard him, as according to that in which they would regard him if they were better informed' (iii 2.5, 115–16).

fallible spectator, 'the supposed impartial and well-informed spectator . . . the man within the breast, the great judge and arbiter of their conduct' (iii 2.32, 130). (3) The outlook of a properly impartial spectator who is free of these errors. We need to distinguish the second from the third point of view, because the 'man within the breast' is not always a properly impartial spectator. He does not always keep his attention firmly on the praiseworthy, but is sometimes influenced by the actual praise and blame of other people, and so he sometimes identifies the praiseworthy with what is actually praised.[58] In contrast to this judge who is easily confused by what people actually praise, the properly impartial spectator concentrates on the praiseworthy.

The properly impartial spectator approves of the traits that people praise in general and intend to praise in particular cases. Even if generosity is one of the traits that we praise, we may nonetheless praise Croesus for generosity even though he is not really generous; we are taken in by the scale of his charitable contributions and we overlook the fact that he contributes only to causes that advance his own schemes. The truly impartial spectator would not be dazzled by Croesus' multi-millions in gifts, but would see that Croesus really lacks the trait that we praise. Similarly, he would notice that the widow giving her mite is really generous; he would not be misled by the small size of her gift. In this respect, he approves of praiseworthy traits, but not necessarily of traits that on particular occasions are praised by misguided people.

Nonetheless, Smith's account of the properly impartial spectator is basically non-normative. This spectator does not ask himself whether the traits that people generally praise really ought to be praised. He corrects ignorant and weak people who are easily misled about whether someone is really generous. But he does not ask himself if people are generally ignorant or weak in their selection of qualities for praise. He identifies the qualities that people intend to praise, but does not ask whether these qualities ought to be praised. If the moral point of view asks whether these qualities ought to be praised, Smith's impartial spectator does not take the moral point of view.

The limitations in the normative judgments of the impartial spectator raise difficulties for Smith's account of conscience. He identifies approval by one's own conscience with 'the testimony of the supposed impartial spectator' (iii 3.1), and he compares the impartial point of view of conscience, correcting our initial view of our actions, with the perceptual point of view that corrects our initial distorting perspective.[59] This comparison,

[58] 'The supposed impartial spectator of our conduct seems to give his opinion in our favour with fear and hesitation; when that of all the real spectators, when that of all those with whose eyes and from whose station he endeavours to consider it, is unanimously and violently against us. In such cases, this demigod within the breast appears, like the demigods of the poets, though partly of immortal, yet partly too of mortal extraction. When his judgments are steadily and firmly directed by the sense of praise-worthiness and blame-worthiness, he seems to act suitably to his divine extraction: But when he suffers himself to be astonished and confounded by the judgments of ignorant and weak man, he discovers his connexion with mortality, and appears to act suitably, rather to the human, than to the divine, part of his origin.' (iii 2.32, 131)

[59] 'As to the eye of the body, objects appear great or small, not so much according to their real dimensions, as according to the nearness or distance of their situation; so do they likewise to what may be called the natural eye of the mind: and we remedy the defects of both these organs pretty much in the same manner. . . . I can form a just comparison between those great objects and the little objects around me, in no other way, than by transporting myself, at least in fancy, to a different station, from whence I can survey both at nearly equal distances, and thereby form some judgment of their real proportions. . . . In the same manner, to the selfish and original passions of human nature, the loss or gain of a very small interest of our own, appears to be of vastly more importance, excites a much

however, raises a question that Smith does not clearly answer. We view or imagine things from different points of view because we suppose that our current angle of vision is likely to mislead us about the real size and shape of something; hence Smith speaks of 'their real proportions'. But is the same true in the moral case? Smith suggests that we are looking for 'a proper comparison' of other people's interest with our own, and that the impartial point of view leads us to this proper comparison. Does he mean that the impartial point of view, as he defines it, constitutes moral rightness? This is not true of the visual case; we imagine or view things from different points of view because we think they have a real size that we will grasp more readily by taking these different points of view. Similarly, we think we can explain why the different points of view are better at detecting the real size. If Smith means that the impartial point of view is good at detecting what is really right, he needs some argument. It is not obvious that a true prediction of the sentiments of an impartial spectator is a correct judgment of what is really right.[60]

According to Butler, conscience is a superior principle that claims authority; it claims to judge by 'rational' rather than 'animal' strength (as Reid puts it). Smith cannot allow this division between rational and animal strength; his conception of approval dissolves rational strength into animal strength. To approve of someone else's sentiments is to share those sentiments, not to judge that the other person is right. Hence, approval by the impartial spectator must be a sentiment evoked by consideration of the reactions of different people. If approval is a rational judgment about the rightness or wrongness of an action, we might have good reason to stick to it despite other people's disagreement, if we are right to distrust their judgment. But if we take Smith's view, we cannot understand conscience in this way, and therefore we cannot explain why it might be right to disagree with other people's views. Smith's attempt to capture Butler's claims about conscience within his own conception of approval is no more successful than Hutcheson's attempt to capture them within his conception of the moral sense.[61]

more passionate joy or sorrow, a much more ardent desire or aversion, than the greatest concern of another with whom we have no particular connexion. Before we can make any proper comparison of those opposite interests, we must change our position. We must view them, neither from our own place nor yet from his, neither with our own eyes nor yet with his, but from the place and with the eyes of a third person, who has no particular connexion with either, and who judges with impartiality between us.' (iii 3.2–3, 135) Cf. Hume, *T* iii 3.1.16 (discussed in §762), and RM ad loc.

[60] Smith's use of the impartial spectator to perform the functions of conscience is discussed by Raphael, *IS* 36–42.

[61] See §715. See also Stewart, *PAMP* ii 7.2 = Hamilton, 330–1 = Reeder, *OMS* 123: '. . . Mr Smith's theory . . . confounds the *means* or *expedients* by which nature enables us to correct our moral judgments, with the principles in our constitution to which our moral judgments owe their origin. . . . The intention of such expedients . . . is merely to obtain a just and fair view of circumstances; and after this view has been obtained, the question still remains, what constitutes the obligation upon me to act in a particular manner? In answer to this question it is said that, from recollecting my own judgments in similar cases in which I was concerned, I infer in what light my conduct will appear to society; that there is an exquisite satisfaction annexed to mutual sympathy; and that, in order to obtain this satisfaction, I accommodate my conduct, not to my own feelings, but to those of my fellow-creatures. Now I acknowledge that this may account for a man's assuming the appearance of virtue . . . ; but in the important concerns of life, I apprehend there is something more,—for when I have once satisfied myself with respect to the conduct which an impartial judge would approve of, I feel that this conduct is *right* for me, and that I am under a moral obligation to put it in practice.' Stewart is wrong to attribute a hedonist motive to Smith's agent. But he is right to argue that we can recognize the question about rightness as a distinct question from the question about the reactions of the impartial spectator.

798. The Sense of Duty

The section of *TMS* that we have been discussing (Section iii) is entitled 'Of the sense of duty'.[62] Here Smith tries to accommodate the features of moral judgment that may appear to conflict with sentimentalism.[63] He introduces the impartial spectator in order to separate moral judgments from the expressions of feelings that we share with particular other people. The 'man within the breast' is a 'great judge and arbiter' who does not simply follow the reactions of other people. In being guided by this 'great judge', we try to follow the impartial spectator, since this is the point of view we try to achieve, even though a particular person's conscience is liable to be unduly swayed by the views of particular other people.

The impartiality of the great judge helps us to reach the moral point of view, which corrects the errors of our egocentric perspective. Smith improves on Hume's account (in the *Second Inquiry*) of the sentiment of humanity, by distinguishing it from the feeling of benevolence. He notices that benevolence is too weak and too partial to explain our moral judgments. If I think of the suffering of 100 million unknown people, it will affect me less, even if I am benevolent, than the amputation of my little finger. But our moral sentiments are not limited by our benevolence.[64] When we follow the impartial spectator, we act justly and fairly, without inappropriate bias towards the interest of any of the people affected by our action. This is the point of view that Hutcheson mistakenly traced to the sentiment of benevolence. It incorporates the attitudes that persuaded Butler that conscience could not be identified with benevolence.

Reference to the impartial spectator and his reactions explains the origin of moral rules and principles. The spectator does not make moral judgments relying primarily on moral principles or rules, but his sympathy is the both the basis for our moral judgments and the criterion of their correctness. A moral rule is a prediction that this kind of action excites the relevant reactions in an impartial observer.[65]

[62] This section was extensively revised in the 6th edn. of *TMS*. See RM, Introd. 43.

[63] In iii 5.5 Smith distinguishes his view from Hume's claims about reflexive approval: 'Our moral faculties are by no means, as some have pretended, upon a level in this respect with the other faculties and appetites of our nature, endowed with no more right to restrain these last, than these last are to restrain them. No other faculty or principle of action judges of any other. Love does not judge of resentment, nor resentment of love. Those two passions may be opposite to one another, but cannot, with any propriety, be said to approve or disapprove of one another. But it is the peculiar office of those faculties now under our consideration to judge, to bestow censure or applause upon all the other principles of our nature.' Cf. Hume, §780.

[64] 'When our passive feelings are almost always so sordid and so selfish, how comes it that our active principles should often be so generous and so noble? . . . It is not the soft power of humanity, it is not that feeble spark of benevolence which Nature has lighted up in the human heart, that is thus capable of counteracting the strongest impulses of self-love. . . . It is reason, principle, conscience, the inhabitant of the breast, the man within, the great judge and arbiter of our conduct. It is he who, whenever we are about to act so as to affect the happiness of others, calls to us, with a voice capable of astonishing the most presumptuous of our passions, that we are but one of the multitude, in no respect better than any other in it; and that when we prefer ourselves so shamefully and so blindly to others, we become the proper objects of resentment, abhorrence, and execration. It is from him only that we learn the real littleness of ourselves, and of whatever relates to ourselves, and the natural misrepresentations of self-love can be corrected only by the eye of this impartial spectator. . . . It is not the love of our neighbour, it is not the love of mankind, which upon many occasions prompts us to the practice of those divine virtues. It is a stronger love, a more powerful affection, which generally takes place upon such occasions; the love of what is honourable and noble, of the grandeur, and dignity, and superiority of our own characters.' (iii 3.4, 137)

[65] 'It is thus that the general rules of morality are formed. They are ultimately founded upon experience of what, in particular instances, our moral faculties, our natural sense of merit and propriety, approve, or disapprove of. We do not

The process that Smith describes is important in the formation of sentiments, including moral sentiments. He is right to emphasize the significance of our capacity to sympathize with the reactions of others, and especially of others who have no particular favourable emotion towards us. This process allows us to escape from being dominated by the 'moral stupidity' in which (as George Eliot puts it) we take 'the world as an udder to feed our supreme selves'.[66] The capacity to imagine the reactions of others and to react in accordance with their reactions affects our ability to take the moral point of view and to react in accordance with it. But Smith also claims that to take the moral point of view is simply to judge and to react in accordance with the reactions of the impartial spectator. Does he justify this stronger claim?

An answer to this question depends on the description of the impartial spectator. In describing him as impartial, Smith abstracts from the attachment to a particular person or particular people that is characteristic of all of us in some of our reactions. This abstraction, however, does not give us an adequate description of the spectator; he might lack particular attachments, but still might be cruel or callous or thoughtless or ignorant. We have to add, therefore, that he is well-informed and sympathetic to an ordinary degree. Smith suggests that if we leave him with our sympathetic reactions and remove our interested and partial reactions, we have found the moral point of view.

To see whether Smith is right, we need to return to his initial description of sympathetic reactions. No doubt we have some non-moral sympathetic reactions, but these do not seem enough to generate moral judgments. Smith stretches them so that they approach moral judgments, but only because he assumes irrational sympathies—with the sufferings of dead people, for instance—to match the moral judgments that he tries to accommodate. He cannot, within the reductive aims of his argument, explain our sympathy with the dead by appeal to our judgment that it is bad for us to be dead; hence he has to appeal to irrational sympathy based on inconsistent assumptions (that someone is dead and so feels nothing, but yet feels something).

Sympathy as Smith conceives it is different from sympathy as we normally conceive it because it leaves out any moral element. If I sympathize with the sufferings of an innocent victim of a cruel practical joke, my sympathy rests partly on the thought that the victim did not deserve to suffer in this way, and that the practical jokers had no right to do what they did; I do not think simply about what the victim suffers, but also about how the suffering came about. Our ordinary sympathetic reactions seem to be based on judgments about welfare, harm, desert, and fairness; hence they seem to rest on moral rules and principles. Smith cannot allow this sort of sympathy to the impartial spectator; for if the reactions of the spectator rest on moral judgments, they cannot be, as he claims, the foundation of moral rules. But if Smith sticks consistently to non-moral sympathy, he does not explain the scope of our moral judgments.[67]

originally approve or condemn particular actions; because, upon examination, they appear to be agreeable or inconsistent with a certain general rule. The general rule, on the contrary, is formed, by finding from experience, that all actions of a certain kind, or circumstanced in a certain manner, are approved or disapproved of. . . . His detestation of this crime, it is evident, would arise instantaneously and antecedent to his having formed to himself any such general rule. The general rule, on the contrary, which he might afterwards form, would be founded upon the detestation which he felt necessarily arise in his own breast, at the thought of this, and every other particular action of the same kind.' (iii 4.8, 159)

[66] George Eliot, *Middlemarch*, ch. 21 end (Norton 146).

[67] Some similar questions arise about Firth's adaptation of Smith's position in 'Observer'.

The moral limitations of the impartial spectator cast doubt on Smith's implicit answer to Balguy's attack on Hutcheson's sentimentalism. According to Balguy, sentimentalism is open to the objections about mutability that Cudworth urges against Hobbes. In Reid's view, Smith is also open to these objections.[68] If a true moral judgment is a true prediction of the reactions of an impartial spectator, a change in these reactions would make different moral judgments true, and hence would change what is morally right. But we do not believe that if impartial spectators became more callous, or more rational (so that they ceased to sympathize with dead people), moral rightness and wrongness would change too. Smith, therefore, does not answer all Balguy's objections to Hutcheson's attempt to explain praiseworthiness by reference to actual praise. He does not avoid the main charge of eliminating judgments about desert in favour of predictive judgments.[69]

A closely related objection of Balguy's, developed by Price, alleges that Hutcheson fails to capture the character of obligation by reducing it to motivation; the existence of an obligation implies the existence of a reason, but facts about motivation do not by themselves provide the relevant sort of reason. Smith tries to answer this sort of criticism; by devoting a whole section to the sense of duty, he tries to show that his reduction of the sense of duty vindicates our belief in duties and obligations. Nonetheless, the main rationalist criticism still applies. Kames argues that this criticism of Hutcheson and Hume also applies to Smith's use of sympathy.[70] Reid agrees with the criticism.[71] According to Kames and Reid, we take ourselves to be morally obliged insofar as we believe we have a specific sort of reason; our moral judgment (in Butler's terms) has authority.[72]

Smith's distinction between the praised and the praiseworthy is meant to accommodate Butler's claims about authority. But his resources for accommodating them are too limited to answer reasonable criticisms. For we can recognize not only a mere logical possibility, but also a genuine moral question about whether the reactions of the impartial spectator are justified, and whether they ought to be obeyed. Since these reactions are subject to moral criticism, they cannot wholly constitute moral judgment. Smith criticizes Hutcheson's

[68] '. . . it is obvious that according to [Smith's] system there is no fixed standard of virtue at all; it depends not upon our own actions but upon the tone of our passions, which in different men is different from constitution. Nor does it solely depend upon our own passions, but also upon the sympathetic passions of others, which may be different in different persons, or in the same person at different times. Nor is there any standard according to which either the emotions of the actor or the sympathy of the spectator is to be measured; all that is required is that they be in harmony or concord. It is evident that the ultimate measure and standard of right and wrong in human conduct, according to this system of sympathy, is not any fixed judgment grounded upon truth or upon the dictates of a well-informed conscience, but the variable opinions and passions of men. So that we may apply to this system what Cicero says of the Epicurean . . .'. Reid continues by quoting Cic. *Fin.* ii 22. (Reid, 'Sketch' 81). Cf. Ross, *LAS* 192. Reid's criticism of Smith is discussed by Duncan and Baird, 'Reid on Smith', answered by Norton and Stewart-Robertson, 'Reid on Smith'.

[69] On Hutcheson and Balguy see §656.

[70] 'Neither is the author of the treatise upon human nature more successful [sc. than Hutcheson], when he endeavours to resolve the moral sense into pure sympathy. According to this author, there is no more in morality, but approving or disapproving an action, after we discover, by reflexion, that it tends to the good or hurt of society. This would be by far too faint a passion to control our irregular appetites and passions.' (Kames, *EPMNR* ii 3 = Moran32 = SB 927) Kames's reference to the faintness of the moral sense, as Hume and Smith conceive it, does not identify the main issue. A sentimentalist might answer that it is arbitrary of Kames to assume that the moral sense cannot be strong enough to motivate us on enough occasions to ensure good behaviour.

[71] 'I have always thought Dr S-'s system of sympathy wrong. It is indeed only a refinement of the selfish system; and I think your arguments against it are solid. But you have smitten with a friendly hand, which does not break the head; and your compliment to the author I highly approve of.' (Reid, Letter to Kames, 30 Oct. 1778 = H 92)

[72] Kames goes on (Moran 33 = SB 931) to criticize Butler on authority. His criticism is unwarranted. See §720.

appeal to a sense on these grounds, but his resort to a sentiment does not avoid the criticism.

On the main issues about moral reasons and obligation Smith does not advance beyond Hutcheson and Hume. His account of the moral sentiments is more accurate, subtle, and complex than anything they offer. But if we are convinced by the main rationalist objections to Hutcheson and Hume, Smith ought not to change our mind. Balguy, Price, and Reid argue convincingly that a sentimentalist analysis does not capture moral judgment.

799. Utilitarianism

Smith examines the moral sentiments in detail partly in order to show that sentimentalism does not lead to utilitarianism. Hutcheson supposes that the moral sense approves of benevolence, which takes a utilitarian point of view. Hume is more cautious; but sometimes (especially in the *Inquiry*) he brings the sentiment of humanity close to benevolence. Against these views Smith argues that utility is only one object of approval for the impartial spectator. The spectator does not take the view that Sidgwick calls 'the point of view of the universe', which is guided wholly by the demands of practical reason (as Sidgwick understands them).[73]

The self-regarding virtues help Smith to illustrate his point. We value superior reason and understanding for their own sakes, apart from any practical advantage. Similarly, the impartial spectator admires self-command, because he is less prone than we are to be moved by short-term desires.[74] Smith relies on his dubious assimilation of approval to fellow-feeling, arguing from the fact that the spectator does not feel the solicitations of our present appetites to the conclusion that he does not approve of our acting on them. The argument is open to question; for though the spectator does not feel our affection to our immediate family either, he approves of it. Still, Smith's observation suggests a reasonable point closely connected to his previous point about our admiration for superior reason apart from its consequences. The reasonable spectator approves of practical reason for its own sake, and therefore admires the operation of practical reason in someone else's life, apart from any judgment about whether it is useful to the agent all things considered.

Admiration of other-regarding virtues seems to offer equally little support to the utilitarian. Someone who displays self-sacrificing bravery or public spirit may not be concerned about the consequences of the action; indeed, if he asked himself which consequences he preferred, he might well prefer the self-preservation that would result from a less brave or less generous action. Our immediate admiration of him is equally independent of the consequences that

[73] Sidgwick comments on Smith at *ME* 424, 463.

[74] 'The spectator does not feel the solicitations of our present appetites. To him the pleasure which we are to enjoy a week hence, or a year hence, is just as interesting as that which we are to enjoy this moment. When for the sake of the present, therefore, we sacrifice the future, our conduct appears to him absurd and extravagant in the highest degree, and he cannot enter into the principles which influence it. On the contrary, when we abstain from present pleasure, in order to secure greater pleasure to come, when we act as if the remote object interested us as much as that which immediately presses upon the senses, as our affections exactly correspond with his own, he cannot fail to approve of our behaviour: and as he knows from experience, how few are capable of this self-command, he looks upon our conduct with a considerable degree of wonder and admiration.' (iv 2.8, 189–90)

we anticipate; we admire the self-sacrifice for its own sake.[75] If we did not respond at all to the views that other people take of our actions, we could still reflect on utility, but we would be incapable of moral evaluation, since we would lack the appropriate attitudes to our own behaviour and character.[76] The moral point of view necessarily refers to the views of others, even if the others are represented by the judge within the agent.

We may not agree with Smith's claim that moral evaluation is necessarily other-directed in this way. But we might nonetheless agree that if utilitarian considerations matter morally, they matter because they meet some distinct standard of moral appropriateness, not because they themselves constitute the relevant standard. He makes a reasonable case for the view that our moral sentiments do not respond immediately to utility, and that, even on reflexion, they do not respond only to utility. In rejecting a utilitarian analysis of moral sentiment, Smith disagrees with Hutcheson and with Hume.

Nonetheless, Smith agrees on one point with utilitarianism. Though our sentiments themselves do not consider utility, the general tendency of our acting on our sentiments is to promote utility, because of a 'happy adjustment' by Nature.[77] We might understand Smith's reference to Nature theologically, so that he agrees with Berkeley and with the position entertained by Butler, treating God as a utilitarian who has given us non-utilitarian principles to maximize utility. He is inclined to agree, without definitely agreeing, with Hutcheson against Butler that God's character is purely benevolent (vi 2.3, 235–7; vii 2.3.18, 305).[78] Alternatively, he might be referring to some quasi-evolutionary process, according to which some social processes select the reactions that tend to maximize utility. Here, as in his better-known reference to the 'invisible hand', Smith alludes to some co-ordinating mechanism without describing it very precisely.[79]

[75] 'To every bystander, the success or preservation of this other person may justly be more interesting than their own; but it cannot be so to themselves. When to the interest of this other person, therefore, they sacrifice their own, they accommodate themselves to the sentiments of the spectator, and by an effort of magnanimity act according to those views of things which, they feel, must naturally occur to any third person.' (iv 2.10, 191) 'In these and in all other cases of this kind, our admiration is not so much founded upon the utility, as upon the unexpected, and on that account the great, the noble, and exalted propriety of such actions. This utility, when we come to view it, bestows upon them, undoubtedly, a new beauty, and upon that account still further recommends them to our approbation. This beauty, however, is chiefly perceived by men of reflexion and speculation, and is by no means the quality which first recommends such actions to the natural sentiments of the bulk of mankind.' (iv 2.11, 192)

[76] 'He would not be cast down with inward shame at the thought of this deformity; nor would he be elevated with secret triumph of mind from the consciousness of the contrary beauty. He would not exult from the notion of deserving reward in the one case, nor tremble from the suspicion of meriting punishment in the other. All such sentiments suppose the idea of some other being, who is the natural judge of the person that feels them; and it is only by sympathy with the decisions of this arbiter of his conduct, that he can conceive, either the triumph of self-applause, or the shame of self-condemnation.' (iv 2.12, 193)

[77] 'And Nature, indeed, seems to have so happily adjusted our sentiments of approbation and disapprobation, to the conveniency both of the individual and of the society, that after the strictest examination it will be found, I believe, that this is universally the case. But still I affirm, that it is not the view of this utility or hurtfulness which is either the first or principal source of our approbation and disapprobation. These sentiments are no doubt enhanced and enlivened by the perception of the beauty or deformity which results from this utility or hurtfulness. But still, I say, they are originally and essentially different from this perception.' (iv 2.3, 188)

[78] But Smith seems to attribute to God concern for justice for its own sake. See ii 2.3.12, 91. On the passage from earlier editions deleted in the final edition see RM, App. ii. Cf. Hutcheson, §645.

[79] 'The rich only select from the heap what is most precious and agreeable. They consume little more than the poor, and in spite of their natural selfishness and rapacity, though they mean only their own conveniency, though the sole end which they propose from the labours of all the thousands whom they employ, be the gratification of their own vain and insatiable desires, they divide with the poor the produce of all their improvements. They are led by an invisible hand to

Why does he believe that the working of the moral sentiments coincides with the utilitarian principle? The traits that appeal to the impartial observer are beneficial to society in general, insofar as they encourage actions that are likely to benefit many members of society or to forward some common good. But it does not follow that these traits tend to maximize the total good summed over all the individuals affected. The utilitarian claim implies that the virtues approved by the impartial observer do not support values and principles that interfere with maximum utility. The claim is plausible only if indirect utilitarianism can justify friendship, justice, and other traits that tend to diverge from direct utilitarianism. Since Smith does not offer an indirect utilitarian justification, his concession to utilitarianism is premature.

Sidgwick cites Smith's concession in support of his own view that the morality of common sense is unconsciously utilitarian (*ME* 424), and that a clear understanding of common sense supports a preference for utilitarianism. Smith, however, does not agree that we ought to prefer utilitarianism, or that we ought to reform our non-utilitarian rules and principles, if necessary, so that the ideal observer becomes more sensitive to utilitarian considerations. He does not suggest that if we were to discover a conflict between utilitarianism and the virtues he describes, we ought to resolve the conflict by reforming our conception of the virtues to match the utilitarian standard. The reformer's judgment, like all moral judgments, is simply a prediction about the reactions of impartial spectators; hence it cannot take a perspective outside these reactions, and so cannot be used to reform them. If the impartial spectator does not prefer utility over other principles, we ought not to prefer it. Here Smith sticks consistently to the reductive anti-rationalism that is his guiding aim and assumption.

800. Stoicism

Though Smith's argument begins from his question about the source of moral judgment—the question that he takes to be practically irrelevant—it leads him to an answer to the question that he takes to be practically relevant, about the nature of virtue. His conclusions about the nature of virtue may be summarized by a comparison with Stoicism. This is the moral theory that he discusses most fully, and for good reasons. Both the points of agreement with Stoicism and the points of disagreement make clear the main features of his own position.

Smith emphasizes Stoic indifference to external circumstances. In his view, the Stoics hold an adaptive conception of happiness; they take virtue to be sufficient for happiness because it guarantees the appropriate tranquillity in the face of external conditions.[80] He takes the

make nearly the same distribution of the necessaries of life, which would have been made, had the earth been divided into equal portions among all its inhabitants, and thus without intending it, without knowing it, advance the interest of the society, and afford means to the multiplication of the species.' (iv 1.10, 184) See RM ad loc; Smith, *WN* iv 2.9. Cf. Griswold, *ASVE* 319.

[80] 'The never-failing certainty with which all men, sooner or later, accommodate themselves to whatever becomes their permanent situation, may, perhaps, induce us to think that the Stoics were, at least, thus far very nearly in the right; that, between one permanent situation and another, there was, with regard to real happiness, no essential difference: or that, if there were any difference, it was no more than just sufficient to render some of them the objects of simple choice or preference; but not of any earnest or anxious desire: and others, of simple rejection, as being fit to be set

Stoic claims about happiness to imply that we need not take preferred and non-preferred indifferents seriously, since we can adapt ourselves to living without them. That is why the Stoics regard human life as a mere 'two-penny stake'. We play the game not because we care about winning but because we care about playing it well (vii 2.1.24, 279).[81]

This mistaken interpretation of the Stoics incorporates some aspects of the Epicurean conception of happiness as tranquillity (*ataraxia*). It has some excuse, since the Stoics emphasize the undisturbed and 'smooth-flowing' character of the sage's life. But it assumes falsely that the Stoics believe a natural advantage deserves to be taken seriously only if it constitutes or promotes one's happiness. Smith does not attend to the Stoic conception of the life in accordance with nature, which requires the achievement of preferred indifferents. He cites the requirements of nature as though the Stoics ignored them.[82] His misinterpretation reflects his conception of happiness, which he reads into the Stoics.

Having attributed this form of indifference to the Stoics, Smith explains their endorsement of it by reference to the cosmic aspect of their theory. If we attend to the order of the universe as a whole, and recognize that the ups and downs of our life make no significant difference to it, we will see that it is pointless to be anxious about our own insignificant fortunes. We can be confident in cosmic providence to order the universe properly, and can concentrate on the propriety of our own behaviour, which consists in adapting ourselves to the universal order (vii 2.1.21, 277).

Though Smith believes that the cosmic aspect of Stoicism explains Stoic indifference, his account introduces a conflict into the Stoic position. For indifference, in his view, rests on the conception of happiness as tranquillity; and it is not clear how tranquillity is consistent with the Stoics' admitted concern to keep their own character in harmony with cosmic providence. This concern must surely cost them some anxiety, at least before they become sages. For it is not always easy to find the virtuous course of action, or to stick to it in the face of other apparently attractive options. If tranquillity were really our overriding concern, it is not clear why we should attach such importance to our co-operation with providence by becoming virtuous. If we pursue virtue only for the sake of tranquillity, it does not seem the most effective means to that result.

Smith does not see this conflict in the Stoic position as he presents it. Had he seen it, he might have answered that it is a genuine conflict in the Stoic position, not only in his presentation of it. But in order to be convinced on this point, we would have to be convinced by his claims about the role of tranquillity in the Stoic conception of happiness. These claims express Smith's views about happiness, not the Stoics' views.

Smith approves of some aspects of the Stoic position, as he interprets it. He agrees about happiness and tranquillity, and he believes the Stoics are right to look at their actions and characters from an impartial point of view. In this respect they grasp an essential feature of the morality. He disagrees, however, with their attempt to make the cosmic point of

aside or avoided; but not of any earnest or anxious aversion. Happiness consists in tranquillity and enjoyment. Without tranquillity there can be no enjoyment; and where there is perfect tranquillity there is scarce any thing which is not capable of amusing.' (iii 3.30, 149)

[81] Quoted and discussed in §182. The influence of Stoicism on Smith is discussed by Vivenza, *ASC*, ch. 2. She does not discuss the difference between the Stoics and Smith on happiness.

[82] See vii. 2.1.46, quoted below. Smith might be influenced by the appeal to nature against Stoicism in Cic. *Fin*. iv.

view their only point of view. As he argues in opposing a utilitarian account of the moral sentiments, the impartial point of view is not the same as the global and universal point of view; for we can sympathize directly with one victim's sufferings, or admire one brave person's heroic action, without any of the comparisons and weighings that a global and maximizing point of view would require. The Stoic outlook is sometimes useful for helping us to look at ourselves from the impartial point of view.[83]

In appealing to nature and its prescriptions Smith rejects the suggestion that we ought to take the Stoic point of view on ourselves, even if we do not find it easy to do this. He does not believe that moral philosophy ought to criticize the outlook of impartial spectators. They do not adopt a Stoic cosmic attitude to their ordinary concerns, and so we have no ground for attributing a Stoic attitude to the moral point of view.

Nonetheless, the Stoics recognize an important function of morality. Smith believes that Stoic impartiality may help us to cultivate the outlook of the impartial spectator, by helping us to detach ourselves from our self-centred point of view. He rejects the Stoic claim that the impartial outlook should eliminate the self-centred demands of nature, but he agrees that it ought to modify these demands.[84] He does not say how far we ought to go in modifying our emotions in the light of the impartial point of view. He rejects this sort of question, because it introduces a normative element that his theory tries to eliminate.

801. The Importance of Irrational Sentiments

Here as elsewhere Smith rejects a normative conception of moral philosophy that tries to criticize or reform our moral sentiments on rational grounds external to them. Our sentiments are not rational, and in some respects they are even irrational; but he does not advise us to try to change or to eliminate them. His analysis of the moral point of view implies that moral principles are incapable of offering the fundamental rational criticisms that his rationalist opponents claim to offer.

This anti-rationalist tendency, however, is mitigated by another tendency that we have noticed in Smith. He sometimes suggests that our sentiments are not merely non-rational and immune from rational moral criticism, but are also systematically co-ordinated. He claims that 'Nature' organizes them wisely for its own ends, which may not be apparent

[83] 'Nature has not prescribed to us this sublime contemplation as the great business and occupation of our lives. She only points it out to us as the consolation of our misfortunes. The Stoical philosophy prescribes it as the great business and occupation of our lives. . . . By the perfect apathy which it prescribes to us, by endeavouring, not merely to moderate, but to eradicate all our private, partial, and selfish affections, by suffering us to feel for whatever can befall ourselves, our friends, our country, not even the sympathetic and reduced passions of the impartial spectator, it endeavours to render us altogether indifferent and unconcerned in the success or miscarriage of every thing which Nature has prescribed to us as the proper business and occupation of our lives.' (vii 2.1.46, 292–3)

[84] 'The reasonings of philosophy, it may be said, though they may confound and perplex the understanding, can never break down the necessary connexion which Nature has established between causes and their effects. The causes which naturally excite our desires and aversions, our hopes and fears, our joys and sorrows, would no doubt, notwithstanding all the reasonings of Stoicism, produce upon each individual, according to the degree of his actual sensibility, their proper and necessary effects. The judgments of the man within the breast, however, might be a good deal affected by those reasonings, and that great inmate might be taught by them to attempt to overawe all our private, partial, and selfish affections into a more or less perfect tranquillity. To direct the judgments of this inmate is the great purpose of all systems of morality.' (vii 2.1.47, 293)

to us as agents. It is not clear, however, how this observation from the 'speculative' or theoretical point of view should affect the outlook of agents. If we become aware of (say) the utilitarian tendencies of some moral sentiments, we have no moral obligation, from Smith's point of view, to modify our other sentiments to fulfil utilitarian goals; but we also have no reason not to modify them. If, on the other hand, we could not see the hand of 'Nature' in our moral sentiments, should this make any difference to our view of them? Smith's moral theory obliges him to answer No. But the fact that he forestalls the question by assuring us that Nature organizes our sentiments for utilitarian ends suggests that he allows a moral question that his theory ought to disallow.

Some questions about the relation between a purely psychological attitude and a critical attitude to moral sentiments converge in Smith's treatment of the accumulation of wealth and other non-moral goods. He agrees with the Stoics that these are not necessary for happiness, because he imputes to the Stoics his own conception of happiness as contentment and tranquillity. He believes that we sympathize with the rich and powerful because we imagine how happy we would be if we were in their position, and we do not take account of the different desires that we would have if we were in their position (i 3.2.2, 52). Our sympathy is irrational, insofar as it is based on a false supposition, but it is nonetheless socially important.[85] Our deferential tendencies are useful for the order of society, but they go beyond the limits that can be justified by appeal to their utility. But Smith does not advise us to try to replace these deferential tendencies with a degree of subordination that might be more justifiable and might avoid the bad effects of the deferential tendencies. In appealing to 'Nature' he suggests that it would be hazardous to interfere with our sentiments; but in this case it is at least not obvious that 'Nature' maintains the 'wise order' that he attributes to it elsewhere.

The social importance of irrational attitudes explains our sympathy not only for the rich and powerful, but also for the accumulation of wealth. Since it is only a means to happiness, we have good reason to value it only insofar as we attach non-instrumental value to the end that it promotes. Since Smith identifies happiness with tranquillity, he believes that a rational valuation of wealth would lead us to a rather cautious estimate of it, since increased wealth by no means guarantees greater happiness. Strenuous and successful efforts to increase wealth often lead only to disappointment.[86] Nonetheless, we irrationally admire the plentiful means of happiness without making it clear to ourselves how few of these means we actually need.[87] In this case nature's contrivance is wise, since our irrational

[85] 'Upon this disposition of mankind, to go along with all the passions of the rich and the powerful, is founded the distinction of ranks, and the order of society. . . . Neither is our deference to their inclinations founded chiefly, or altogether, upon a regard to the utility of such submission, and to the order of society, which is best supported by it. Even when the order of society seems to require that we should oppose them, we can hardly bring ourselves to do it. That kings are the servants of the people, to be obeyed, resisted, deposed, or punished, as the public conveniency may require, is the doctrine of reason and philosophy; but it is not the doctrine of Nature.' (i 3.2.3, 52–3)

[86] 'Through the whole of his life he pursues the idea of a certain artificial and elegant repose which he may never arrive at, for which he sacrifices a real tranquillity that is at all times in his power, and which, if in the extremity of old age he should at last attain to it, he will find to be in no respect preferable to that humble security and contentment which he had abandoned for it.' (iv 1.8, 181)

[87] 'If we consider the real satisfaction which all these things are capable of affording, by itself and separated from the beauty of that arrangement which is fitted to promote it, it will always appear in the highest degree contemptible and trifling. But we rarely view it in this abstract and philosophical light. We naturally confound it in our imagination

attachment to these means to happiness actually increases the happiness of others.[88] Our irrational sentiments encourage the accumulation of the means of happiness, in the false belief that it increases the happiness of the accumulators. It is socially useful, however, to encourage these irrational sentiments, since the accumulation increases the happiness of others. 'Providence' and the 'invisible hand' are utilitarians.[89]

This link between Smith's moral and economic theory displays some indecision about the role of critical reason. In claiming that 'it is well that nature imposes upon us in this manner', he offers a justification that might appeal to someone who demands a rational defence of our moral sentiments, and takes the rational outlook to be utilitarian. But he does not demand this rational defence. He does not suggest that our moral sentiments would be open to criticism if they could not be represented as the wise contrivances of a utilitarian nature. It is fortunate that our sentiments have good results, but nothing would be wrong with them, in his view, if they did not have these results.

Since Smith does not consider rational criticism of our moral sentiments, he does not consider any revision in our sentiments about wealth and happiness. We might argue that, since we would rather be rich than poor, even if the rich are usually no more contented than the poor, wealth promotes our welfare even if it does not increase our contentment, and so happiness consists in something more than contentment. Though rich people may be no more content than poor people, they usually have opportunities for pursuits that are not open to those who have to struggle for necessities; and so we might suppose that attention to these pursuits will throw some light on our conception of happiness. This argument presupposes that our sentiments have some claim to be rational, and that therefore we ought to find an account of them that makes them reasonably coherent.

Since Smith rejects the presupposition, he concludes that our tendency to admire different ways of life is inconsistent with our conception of happiness. The degree of non-rationality and irrationality that he sees in our moral sentiments results from his initial assumptions about the irrelevance of reason to morality. He does not contemplate any reconsideration of his claims about happiness in the light of our views about which lives we admire.

Smith's comments on the psychological basis of accumulation illustrate the ways in which he nearly transforms moral philosophy into a purely descriptive social science, and the ways in which he falls short of that result. If moral philosophy describes, and does not attempt to justify, our moral sentiments, we have no room to argue that the sentiments favouring accumulation are unjustified. Smith is simply telling us how accumulation happens and why we favour it; he denies that we have any philosophical room to stand back and ask whether

with the order, the regular and harmonious movement of the system, the machine or economy by means of which it is produced. The pleasures of wealth and greatness, when considered in this complex view, strike the imagination as something grand and beautiful and noble, of which the attainment is well worth all the toil and anxiety which we are so apt to bestow upon it. And it is well that nature imposes upon us in this manner. It is this deception which rouses and keeps in continual motion the industry of mankind.' (iv 1.9–10, 183)

[88] 'When Providence divided the earth among a few lordly masters, it neither forgot nor abandoned those who seemed to have been left out in the partition. These last too enjoy their share of all that it produces. In what constitutes the real happiness of human life, they are in no respect inferior to those who would seem so much above them. In ease of body and peace of mind, all the different ranks of life are nearly upon a level, and the beggar, who suns himself by the side of the highway, possesses that security which kings are fighting for.' (iv 1.10, 185) Sidgwick, *ME* 155 n1, draws attention to this passage, remarking that it is 'striking' to find it in the author of *WN*.

[89] The passage just quoted follows the reference to the 'invisible hand', quoted in §799.

we ought to favour it. If moral philosophy confines itself to describing our moral sentiments, and recognizes no further normative task of arguing that our sentiments are justified or unjustified, it becomes a purely descriptive social science. Hume suggests such a conception of moral philosophy; Smith executes it in some detail.

Still, he does not avoid all questions about justification; nature enters to reassure us about the overall results of our moral sentiments. Smith does not always assume that the natural process or result is the morally desirable one; he recognizes that the natural habit of deference goes further than we might prefer it to go. But at crucial points in his argument he combines his purely descriptive account of the operations of our moral sentiments with an appeal to the utilitarianism of nature. Even within a theory that leaves no room for an external critical perspective on our moral sentiments, Smith seems to acknowledge that we look for such a perspective.

61

PRICE

802. Price's Aims

Price's book is suitably entitled a *Review*. He not only examines the main contributions to moral theory since Hobbes, but also surveys the relevant disputes in epistemology. He examines Locke, Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Hume, and comments (briefly, in a later edition) on Smith, Reid, and Paley.[1] He is the first moralist who clearly uses Cudworth's *Eternal and Immutable Morality*. He follows Butler, Clarke, and Balguy on many points, but his historical and philosophical horizon extends beyond them; he uses his first-hand knowledge of Plato and the Stoics to defend the rationalist side of the argument.[2]

Whewell admires Price as a healthy corrective to the decline, as Whewell regards it, in 18th-century English moral philosophy, He praises Price for returning to the defence of 'immutable' and 'independent' morality against Hume and Paley.[3] He comments that Price's views 'seem to me to be capable of being developed into a very valuable correction of the errors of his contemporaries'.[4]

Whewell's attitude to Price is over-simplified. Both of them tend to represent the rationalism of Clarke and Balguy as the only reasonable alternative to Hume. Neither of them clearly recognizes that Butler offers a significant option distinct both from Clarke's rationalism and from sentimentalism. Price takes himself to maintain the position of Butler against the errors of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson. He does not discuss the significant differences between himself and Butler.[5] Still, Price's statement of a rationalist position is

[1] On Paley see §880. See Whewell, *LHMPE* 183; Rivers, *RGS* 171.

[2] Price's connexion with Butler goes back to their education in Dissenting academies. See Thomas, *Price* 12; Thomas, *HM* 9. One of Price's teachers, Vavasour Griffiths, had been a student of Samuel Jones at Tewksbury Academy. Jones's students also included Thomas Secker (Butler's friend, later Archbishop) and Butler. Jones had been a student of Perizonius in Leyden.

[3] 'Hutcheson the Irishman, and Hume the Scotchman, thus seemed to trample on the very ruins of the old fortress of immutable morality, which English moralists had abandoned. But a champion, and a very able one, soon issued from Wales, and did no little to restore the fortunes of the fight. I speak of Dr Price . . . in this work there are, perhaps, the germs of a greater change in the prevalent philosophy of the subject than has yet take place.' (*LHMPE* 182)

[4] According to Schneewind, 'Whewell 1852 does not discuss Price, perhaps because Price was Welsh. Yet in his own moral theory Whewell is closer to Price than to any other predecessor . . . ' (*IA* 385n11). Whewell's comment on Price shows that he is well aware of his debt to him.

[5] After expressing agreement with part of Shaftesbury's account of virtue (see §817), Price adds a general comment: 'His account of virtue in his Inquiry is indeed on several accounts extremely deficient, particularly on account of his

fuller and better defended than Clarke's and Balguy's. Price and Reid help us to understand what can be done for rationalism without traditional naturalism.[6]

803. Psychology and Epistemology

Rationalists and sentimentalists tend to be opposed in moral psychology, meta-ethics, and normative ethics. Sentimentalists believe that sentiment or passion is prior to reason in motivation and in justification, that moral judgment is determined by feeling rather than reason, and that moral rightness consists in the tendency to maximize utility, since this appeals to the benevolent (or sympathetic) agent (or judge). Rationalists tend to take the opposite view on all three questions. Cumberland and Balguy are the rationalists who show most sympathy to utilitarianism, but even they do not endorse it.

Hume draws more extreme conclusions from Hutcheson's anti-rationalism than Hutcheson draws. He rejects Hutcheson's sympathy for Butler's views about nature, and he insists more clearly that the basis of moral philosophy is purely psychological; moral philosophy describes the sentiments of a certain type of observer, and cannot justifiably claim to present reasons that are independent of these sentiments. In reaction to Hutcheson and Hume, Price defends rationalism. Like Hume, he presents his moral philosophy as part of a systematic philosophical outlook; he argues that rationalist ethics gains support from its relation to his general epistemological position.[7]

In contrast to Hobbes, Butler, Hutcheson, and Hume,[8] Price begins not with an account of human nature, but with questions in moral epistemology. His epistemological argument is fundamental; 'if I have failed here, I have failed in my chief design' (3). His most original contribution to moral theory is perhaps his special emphasis on epistemology rather than on psychology. His epistemological emphasis does not abandon moral psychology, but imposes a condition of adequacy on any account of human nature. If our account of human nature leaves us without the capacity to acquire the sort of knowledge that our epistemology tells us we acquire, or if it leaves us with no account of how this knowledge could guide our action, the account has to be revised.

In Hutcheson psychology determines epistemology; for he believes that the sort of moral knowledge that rationalists attribute to us could not influence our actions in the way that moral knowledge plainly does, and so he infers that his moral psychology shows the error in rationalist epistemology.[9] Price seems to reverse Hutcheson's direction of argument. He claims that since the kind of knowledge that clearly guides our action does not fit

limiting virtue so much . . . to the cultivation of natural affection and benevolence, and overlooking entirely, as Dr Butler observes, the authority belonging to virtue and the principle of reflexion' (*RPQM* 190n). He goes on to regret the bad effects of Shaftesbury's prejudices against Christianity. On Butler and Shaftesbury see §§677, 714. I cite *RPQM* from Raphael's edition. Page references without any title refer to this work.

[6] Broad, 'Moral sense' 131, emphasizes the importance of Price's defence of rationalism.

[7] 'I should be sorry that any one should fix this as his judgment, without going through the whole treatise, and comparing the different parts of it, which will be found to have a considerable dependence on one another' (3).

[8] This point applies to Hutcheson's most systematic presentation of his position, in *IMGE*.

[9] This is also Hume's main argument against rationalism in moral philosophy, though he certainly has broader epistemological objections against rationalism.

into Hutcheson's moral psychology, that moral psychology must be wrong. He does not, therefore, discuss the questions in moral psychology very extensively in their own right. In some cases he allows his answers to emerge from his epistemology. But he also relies on Butler's account of human nature, assuming that Butler has done the work for him. It is worth asking whether Price's rationalism is consistent with his reliance on Butler's naturalism.

804. Hedonism and Value

Price approaches questions about self-love and other affections through a general view of affections (69). Affections are distinguished by their objects, and their objects essentially include distinctive ends; curiosity, for instance, is the love of what is new and uncommon, and ambition is the love of fame. Hume includes affections of this sort under the passions, which he takes to be distinguished by their distinctive sensations, connected only empirically with their objects. Price, by contrast, takes a distinctive object and a distinctive end to be internally connected to a given affection. Hence, he claims, psychological egoism—understood as the doctrine that we desire everything simply as a means to our own good—implies that we really have only one affection, self-love.

In affirming this internal connexion between affection, object, and end, Price maintains that pride is necessarily pride in some apparent good, and humiliation necessarily responds to an apparent evil. Hume, on the contrary, takes these connexions of emotions to objects to be contingent. Hence he believes that passions cannot be reasonable or unreasonable, because they do not admit of truth or falsehood. Price takes the more plausible view that passions may be reasonable or unreasonable, and some actually are reasonable.

He uses his account of affections and their objects to support Butler's attack on psychological hedonism (74–6). He argues that any pleasure in obtaining x presupposes a prior affection for x. Since we have an affection for x only if we desire x for its own sake, the pleasure in obtaining x presupposes a desire for x for its own sake; hence we cannot consistently claim that we take pleasure in obtaining the object of our desires and that the only thing we desire for its own sake is pleasure.

Price fails, as Butler fails, to show that every pleasure presupposes an independent desire for its object.[10] But the exaggeration does not defeat Price's main point. If any pleasures are value-dependent, they raise a difficulty for psychological hedonism.

The internal connexions between pleasure and desire, and between desire, object, and end, suggest to Price that a pleasure is internally connected to its object.[11] If our pleasure in friendship is essentially directed towards friendship, pleasure cannot be all we want. If we could gain pleasure equivalent to or greater than the pleasure of friendship, but without friendship, we would still want friendship in addition to this added pleasure.

[10] See Butler, §688.

[11] '. . . nothing can be more proper than to consider; whether, supposing we could enjoy the same pleasure *without* the object of our desire, we should be indifferent to it. Could we enjoy pleasures equivalent to those attending knowledge, or the approbation of others, without them, or with infamy and ignorance, would we no longer wish for the one or be averse to the other?' (75).

Price supposes—at least for the sake of argument—that we could gain some pleasure 'equivalent' to the pleasure we take in friendship. On this supposition, a large enough supply of pleasure of the sort we get from a warm bath might outweigh the pleasure we get from friendship. He might have strengthened his argument if he had questioned this supposition.[12] If we cannot always find an amount of one pleasure that we are willing to substitute for another pleasure, we have reason to believe that we desire the objects of the pleasures for their own sakes, and that therefore pleasure is not the only thing we desire for its own sake.

If hedonism is meant to give us an account of the one object that we aim at for its own sake, the pleasures pursued in different actions cannot be different in kind in some way that would prevent the substitution of a sufficient quantity of one for another.[13] Moreover, 'substitution' must be understood as the replacement of one thing by something else of strictly equivalent value, not simply as its replacement by something that is the best we can find in the circumstances (as when we speak of an 'inferior substitute'). Apparently, however, we cannot enjoy 'the same pleasure without the object of our desire', as Price puts it; the pleasures of different actions and states cannot be strictly equivalent substitutes, so that some quantity of the pleasure of warm baths would be strictly equivalent to the pleasure of friendship. The appeal to pleasure does not reveal just one object of desire that we pursue for our own sake, but as many different kinds of objects as there are types of pleasure.

805. Pleasure, Happiness, and Self-Interest

Price follows Butler not only in his rejection of psychological hedonism, but also in a concession to prudential hedonism, identifying the object of rational self-love with happiness, and identifying this happiness with pleasure. He seems to take the equivalence of happiness and pleasure for granted. When he argues against the view that virtue secures happiness, he contents himself with listing the painful incidents that sometimes result from virtue. Indeed, when he considers (without saying so) the arguments offered by Greek moralists to show that virtue promotes happiness, he does not seem to realize what they have in mind.[14]

In replying to Plato's argument in the *Republic* to show that the just person is always better off than the unjust, Price assumes that Plato means that the just person will gain more pleasure than the unjust person.[15] Plato, however, believes that the just person gets more

[12] This would be an Aristotelian question. See §95. Aristotle's view of pleasure would have strengthened Butler's and Price's objections to hedonism.

[13] This point arises for Mill, in *Utilitarianism*, ch. 2.

[14] 'Though in equal circumstances, it [sc. virtue] has always greatly the advantage over vice, and is alone sufficient to overbalance many and great inconveniences; yet it would be very extravagant to pretend, that it is at present completely, and without exception, its own happiness; that it is alone sufficient to overbalance *all possible* evils of body, mind, and estate; or that, for example, a man who, by *base* but *private* methods, has secured a good estate, and afterwards enjoys it for many years with discretion and credit, has less pleasure than another, who, by his benevolence or integrity, has brought himself to a dungeon or stake, or who lives in perplexity, labour, self-denial, torture of body, and melancholy of mind.' (257) Lecky argues at length in favour of Price's view at *HEM* i 58–66.

[15] Price's objection is partly reasonable, since Shaftesbury (sometimes) and Butler defend the hedonistic thesis, and Price's reply is appropriate for their arguments. Moreover, Plato thinks the just person gets more pleasure than the unjust (this claim is defended in *Rep.* ix; cf. Price 230n).

pleasure because he is happier; and he thinks the pleasure is greater because its objects are better. Plato does not claim that by Price's tests we can discover that the just person gets more pleasure. Price relies on the conception of pleasure and happiness that is assumed by his hedonist opponents, and wrongly applies it to non-hedonist eudaemonist arguments. He agrees with John Brown's objection to Shaftesbury, and hence underestimates the non-hedonist elements in Shaftesbury's position.[16] We have seen that Shaftesbury sometimes defends himself by a non-hedonistic conception of a person's good as defined by rational nature. Price does not see that this is a reasonable way to interpret the claim about virtue and happiness that we find in the Greek moralists.

His attitude to Plato is surprising, in the light of his attitude to hedonism. Even if he were right to understand Plato's or Shaftesbury's claims about happiness as claims about pleasure, he might reasonably have remarked that if they take virtue to be a source of pleasure, they do not necessarily claim that virtue is simply a means to the greatest pleasure. If the greatest pleasure is pleasure taken in the greatest non-instrumental good, we do not refute Plato's claim that virtue promotes the greatest pleasure if we show that the virtuous person does not gain the greatest pleasure, as the non-virtuous person would estimate it. Price's criticism of eudaemonism seems not to take account of the complications resulting from his view of pleasure and its objects.

Price admits that Plato might mean that virtue is of greater 'intrinsic excellence' than vice; but he argues that this true claim about virtue does not show that virtue is more beneficial for the virtuous person.[17] On this point he disagrees with Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics, who all claim that virtue is profitable precisely because they think it is to be chosen for its own sake. They take the good for an agent to include both the useful (utile, commodum) and the morally good (honestum). This connexion between the honestum and the good is especially clear in Suarez's discussion. Price does not recognize this feature of some eudaemonist views. He seems to make Scotus' mistake of supposing that in aiming at our good, we must aim at advantage, understood as a good that belongs exclusively to the agent.[18]

From the eudaemonist point of view, then, Price's objection is ambiguous and unsuccessful. From his point of view, it is clear and decisive, because his hedonist conception of happiness blinds him to the possibility of non-hedonistic eudaemonism, and therefore blinds him to the character of eudaemonist defences of morality.

[16] On Brown see §867.

[17] 'It may, 'tis true, be justly said, that virtue, though in the most distressed circumstances, is preferable to vice in the most prosperous, and that expiring in flames ought to be chosen, rather than the greatest wages of iniquity. But the meaning of this is not, that virtue in such circumstances is more *profitable* than vice (or attended with more pleasure) but that it is of *intrinsic* excellence, and obligation; that it is to be chosen for itself, independently of its utility; and remains desirable and amiable above all other objects, when stripped of every emolument, and in the greatest degree afflicted and oppressed.' (257–8) For non-hedonist eudaemonists, including Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, Aquinas, and Shaftesbury (sometimes), the facts about virtue mentioned in Price's first sentence prove that virtue promotes happiness more than anything else does; and these same moralists appeal to the point he mentions at the end of the passage ('but that it is of intrinsic . . . '). Price, however, seems to intend his remarks to count against the eudaemonist defence of virtue; and his reason is given by the contrast ('But the meaning of this is not . . . ') between choosing virtue for itself and choosing it because it is 'profitable'. If we interpret 'profitable' as referring to instrumental value, the eudaemonists agree with Price about virtue, but do not take this point to count against the eudaemonist defence. If we interpret 'profitable' as meaning simply 'promoting happiness', and assume a non-hedonist conception of happiness, eudaemonist moralists do not maintain the position Price ascribes to them.

[18] On Scotus see §§363–4. Suarez objects to the confusion of conveniens with commodum; see §438.

On this issue a defender of Price might claim that he sees the implications of Butler's position more clearly than Butler sees them. According to Sidgwick, Butler sees the distinction between prudence and morality that is obscured by Greek moralists.[19] But he agrees with eudaemonists in arguing for the harmony of conscience and self-love. Since Butler accepts a hedonist conception of happiness, he apparently ought to accept the fairly simple observations that Price uses to show that there is no reason to expect a general coincidence between virtue and pleasure; hence, apparently, Butler ought to admit that the same observations undermine any claim about the coincidence between virtue and happiness.

Perhaps, however, we ought not to draw this conclusion from Price and Butler. Instead of concluding that Butler should agree with Price in rejecting the harmony of conscience and self-love, perhaps we ought to conclude that both Butler and Price should reject a hedonist conception of happiness. If they pursued the implications of their views about pleasure and goodness, they would have good reason to agree with Butler, against Price, on the harmony of conscience and self-love.

806. Passions v. Affections

We can perhaps confirm these doubts about Price's hedonist conception of happiness if we notice that this conception of happiness raises questions about the claim, accepted by both Butler and Price, that self-love is a rational principle. We have noticed how Butler raises some of these difficulties for himself. Price's position makes them even clearer, as Reid perhaps sees.[20]

Price defends the rational character of self-love by arguing that our desire for happiness cannot be the product of instinct.[21] To suggest that a desire is instinctive, as Price understands the term, is to suggest that we could have been the same sorts of beings as we are but have lacked this particular desire. If, for instance, we tend to prefer the taste of sweet things over sour things, but could have been the sorts of beings that we are without this preference, our preference is instinctive.

On this basis, Price distinguishes affections from passions. Affections are 'desires founded in the reasonable nature itself, and essential to it; such as self-love, benevolence, and the love of truth' (74). They belong to reasonable natures because they are reasonable desires to have, not because they happen to be found in reasonable creatures.[22] A creature would not be reasonable if it did not see the reasons that support such desires and were not moved by these reasons. Affections in this general sense may be strengthened by 'instinctive

[19] See Sidgwick, *OHE* 197–8, quoted in §708.

[20] Cf. Butler, §869, and Reid, §836, on self-love and hedonism.

[21] 'Is then all desire to be considered as *wholly instinctive*? Is it, in particular, owing to nothing but an original bias given our natures, which they might have either wanted or have received in a contrary direction; that we are at all concerned for our own good or for the good of others?' (70)

[22] 'It seems beyond contradiction certain, that every being must *desire* happiness for himself; and can those natures of things, from which the *desire* of happiness and *aversion* to misery necessarily arise, leave, at the same time, a rational nature totally indifferent as to any *approbation* of actions procuring the one, or preventing the other? Is there nothing that any *understanding* can perceive to be amiss in a creature's bringing upon himself, or others, calamities and ruin?' (45)

determinations'; we not only recognize, and act on, the reasonableness of concern for our own interest, but we also have a non-essential feeling that favours it, and this feeling (we might say) gives us a Humean exciting reason that supports the non-Humean exciting reason that belongs to us as reasonable creatures.

Once he has distinguished affections from passions, Price denies that the desire for happiness is simply a passion.[23] Since it is not instinctive, it is a rational principle, and it is contrary to reason to refrain from pursuing happiness, either for oneself or for others (71).

Sometimes Price states too weak a condition for being non-instinctive. We might say that if some desire is necessary to our survival, it cannot be merely instinctive, since we could not have existed if we had been given the contrary desire. This test, however, would generate too many rational principles. Price normally intends the more complex counterfactual claim that we would not have been the same kind of agents if we had lacked the desire in question. If we ask what we would have been like without this desire. and if this question is not really about ourselves, but about some other sort of agent, we have found a desire that is necessary for being a rational agent.

807. Reasonable Self-Love

The abstractions that are required or permitted here are sometimes difficult to decide; some of the difficulties recur in Kant's claims about necessary features of rational agency and its relation to human beings. Still, this is the question that Price seems to intend. The question draws attention to an important aspect of eudaemonism. We might wrongly take a eudaemonist to rely on an empirical, though universal, feature of human beings, that they desire happiness. This is how Kant interprets the desire for happiness.[24] Price rejects this interpretation, because he believes the desire is necessary for a rational agent.

Price's conception of happiness, however, does not fit his claim that the desire for happiness is necessary for a rational agent. The pursuit of happiness does not seem rationally necessary, if happiness and pleasure (as a hedonist understands it) are identified. Unless pleasure is defined so as to imply a necessary connexion between pleasure and the fulfilment of desire, it does not seem obvious that every rational agent must pursue pleasure. Even if we take pleasure to be a by-product of fulfilled desire, it does not seem obvious that rational agents must actually pursue pleasure; why could they not care simply about the fulfilment of their desire and be indifferent about the pleasure resulting from it? Price makes it difficult to see why the desire for happiness expresses a rational principle that is necessary for a rational agent.

His claim about the desire for happiness, however, fits a non-hedonist conception. Aquinas believes that self-love is a rational principle and that desire of one's own happiness is necessary for a rational being. This is not because he thinks we all necessarily pursue pleasure or that

[23] 'The full and adequate account of it, is, *the nature of happiness*. It is impossible, but that creatures capable of pleasant and painful sensations, should *love and choose* the one, and *dislike and avoid* the other. No being, who knows what happiness and misery are, can be supposed indifferent to them, without a plain contradiction. Pain is not a *possible* object of *desire*; nor happiness, of *aversion*.' (70)

[24] See Kant, *KpV* 25–6.

something about pleasure makes it appropriate for pursuit by a human being.[25] He believes that happiness is the proper combination of intrinsic goods, and hence is necessarily suitable for a rational agent. Once we understand rational desire and happiness, we must, in Aquinas' view, agree that rational agents necessarily pursue their happiness. Butler and Price accept Aquinas' conclusion, but rely on a different conception of happiness. Aquinas' conception of happiness gives a better account of rational self-love and its relation to particular passions and desires. Butler and Price neglect non-hedonist eudaemonism, and their neglect weakens their argument.

If we accept hedonism, it is plausible, contrary to Butler and Price, to regard the desire for happiness simply as a non-rational instinct. This is how Hobbes regards it. Hume sees, though Hobbes and Hutcheson do not, that once we regard the desire for happiness in this way, we have no ground for supposing that it is a distinctively rational desire.[26] Though Price rejects Hume's conclusion, he does not see how many of Hume's premisses need to be questioned.[27]

While a non-hedonist conception of happiness supports Butler's and Price's claims about the rational character of self-love, it casts doubt on their attacks on egoism. If we conceive self-love as a concern for the whole self and its aims, it becomes more difficult to assert the superiority of conscience over self-love. From an Aristotelian point of view, self-love accepts the point of view of conscience; the self that accepts conscience is defined by its pursuit of happiness. Self-love seems to be supreme, since it takes the comprehensive view from which the claims of conscience can be recognized and accepted. Once we reject hedonism, and attribute a comprehensive outlook to self-love, we make it a much more plausible candidate for being a supreme principle.

Perhaps Butler or Price could show that this is the wrong way to compare the points of view of self-love and of conscience. Perhaps it can still be argued that conscience is more comprehensive than self-love in a way that justifies its claim to supremacy. Their case for distinguishing conscience from self-love and asserting the superiority of conscience does not rest entirely on their hedonistic conception of happiness. Even without a hedonist account of self-love, we might take the impartial character of conscience to distinguish conscience from self-love. But they need a better argument than they offer.

808. Reason and Will

Price rejects the sentimentalist conception of moral judgment and the anti-rationalist conception of will and action on which it rests. He seems to be a rationalist about motivation in general, not just about morality. He believes that some objects have a 'natural aptitude' to please or displease us.[28] Relying on his distinction between affections and passions, he argues that we have certain desires and reactions not because we are first reasonable beings and then acquire the appropriate affections, but simply because we recognize reasons.

[25] Aquinas believes these things about pleasure, but they do not explain his claims about happiness.

[26] On Hobbes and Hutcheson see §§479, 634.

[27] Reid does better; see §§836–7.

[28] '...a reasonable being, void of all superadded determinations or sense, who knows what order and happiness are, would, I think, unavoidably receive pleasure from the survey of an universe where perfect order prevailed; and the contrary prospect of universal confusion would offend him' (58–9).

Price applies this general claim to the particular case of happiness. To show that our pursuit of happiness is not simply the product of instinct (in his sense), he argues that a being 'purely reasonable . . . would not want [i.e., lack] all principles of action, and all inclinations' (70–1). In fact 'the nature of happiness also would engage him to choose and desire it for *himself*' (71). It is as evident that happiness is better than misery as it is that a whole is greater than one of its parts.[29] No prior desire for happiness explains why a rational agent pursues happiness; the mere knowledge of what happiness is moves us by itself to pursue it.[30]

Price's comparison of 'happiness is better than misery' to 'the whole is greater than one of its parts' does not really clarify his position. The statement about whole and parts is analytic; we will assent to it as soon as we know the meaning of 'whole' and 'part'. The statement about happiness, however, does not seem to be analytic (especially if we accept Price's conception of happiness); and even if it were, Price would not have explained why the belief that something is better for us should be supposed to move us to action by itself.

One might reply that the belief that something is good for us will move us if we are rational agents; this is part of what it is to be a rational agent. This reply might not secure Price's main point, however. If we are rational agents, our desires are responsive to considerations of relative importance and coherence; this order in an agent's desires constitutes, in Aquinas' view, a desire for happiness. It is not clear, then, that Price avoids the ascription of desire to a rational agent who is moved by considerations of what is best. Though the desire for one's own good is not an instinct, it does not follow that the belief that something is good for us moves us by itself. Still, part of Price's position may be defensible; for he would be justified in claiming that, even if we acknowledge the necessity of desire for action, desire does not explain why we act on the belief that something is worth pursuing. Our having a desire to pursue what is worth pursuing simply follows from the fact that we act on this sort of belief.[31]

809. Freewill

Price affirms that responsibility requires self-determination.[32] Agreeing with Cudworth, he claims that we ourselves, and not some causes outside us, are the genuine causes of our actions. This self-determination conflicts with a doctrine of necessity that makes something external to us the only real cause of our actions, in such a way that we are not their causes. But Price does not say very clearly what claims commit us to this sort of doctrine of necessity.

[29] 'It cannot therefore be reasonably doubted, but that such a being, upon a comparison of happiness and misery, would as unavoidably as he perceives their difference, *prefer* the one to the other; and *choose* the one rather than the other for his fellow-beings.' (71) Here Price refers to the choice of happiness for other people, but what he says is also meant to apply to one's choice of happiness for oneself.

[30] Cf. Reid's discussion of Price, §839.

[31] This is how Nagel, *PA* 29–32, understands a consequential desire that follows from our believing that (for instance) something is in our interest and acting on our belief.

[32] 'Determination requires an efficient cause. If this cause is the being himself, I plead for no more . . . In short; who must not *feel* the absurdity of saying, *my* volitions are produced by a *foreign* cause, that is, are not *mine*; I determine *voluntarily*, and yet *necessarily*?' (181–2)

In his view, motives are not 'physical efficients and agents' (211; cf. 183n);[33] they cannot effect our determination, and our judgments are not physically connected with our action (183n).

We might take these remarks in either of two ways: (1) Motives cannot be parts of sufficient causal conditions for our actions, because our actions have no sufficient causal conditions. (2) Even if our motives cause our actions, we are still the causes of our actions. The first interpretation commits Price to indeterminism. The second simply commits him to some account of the cause of our actions that makes ourselves the cause. If such an account can be offered within determinist assumptions, it should satisfy the demands implied in the second claim.

Price seems to recognize that responsibility may not require indeterminism.[34] If a doctrine of necessity can be explained so as to retain his claims about agency, it allows moral responsibility. But he does not say what sort of doctrine of necessity would satisfy him. Hume, for instance, presents a doctrine of necessity that he takes to be compatible with the freedom that is relevant to moral responsibility. But Price does not say whether Hume's version of the doctrine of necessity safeguards responsibility. He might reasonably claim that Hume's view deprives the self and the rational will of an appropriate role in free action.

It is unfortunate that Price comes no closer than Cudworth comes to identifying the crucial errors in the Hobbesian doctrine of necessity. Cudworth's emphasis on the importance of rational motives raises doubts about Hobbes's and Hume's version of compatibilism, since they allow any sort of motive to be equally sufficient for the relevant sort of freedom. Price ought to agree with Cudworth on this point, given the rest of his rationalist view; but he does not make his position clear.

810. The Objectivity of Moral Properties

Since Price rejects sentimentalism about desire and action, he has no reason to favour sentimentalism about moral properties. In his view, it is not only unnecessary for capturing the connexion between morality and action, but also morally inadequate. He argues for a combination of rationalism and realism. He assumes, as Cudworth does, that rationalism and realism are inseparable.

[33] At 183n Price refers to his correspondence with Priestley, published in *FD*. Here he insists especially on the connexion between self-determination and activity: 'This definition implies that in our volitions or determinations we are not acted upon, Acting and being acted upon are incompatible with one another . . . Man therefore would not be an agent, were all his volitions derived from any force or the effects of any mechanical causes.' (*FD* 136). Following Clarke, he distinguishes 'the operation of physical causes' from 'the influence of moral causes'; a moral cause of my doing x does not take it out of my power to do x and not x. Hence (137) 'a benevolent man will *certainly* relieve misery when it falls in his way; but he has the *power* of not relieving it.' He concludes: 'That the causality implied in the views and dispositions of beings is entirely consistent with moral obligation and responsibility: But that all effects brought about by mechanical laws are inconsistent with them.' (143)

[34] 'If, upon examination, any of the advocates of the doctrine of necessity should find, that what they mean by necessity is not inconsistent with the ideas of *agency* and *self-determination*, there will be little room for further dispute; and that liberty, which I insist upon as essential to morality, will be acknowledged; nor will it be at all necessary to take into consideration, or to pay much regard to any difficulties relating to the nature of that influence we commonly ascribe to motives.' (183)

We might question this assumption. For might we not accept rationalism and still believe that our moral knowledge is knowledge of the tendencies of our own reason, rather than knowledge of objective moral properties?[35] Alternatively, might we not reject rationalism and believe that sense, either the ordinary senses or an additional sense, gives us moral knowledge of external reality?[36] Price concentrates on realist rationalism and an anti-realist doctrine of a moral sense because he rejects a moral sense and embraces rationalism.

He allows that if Hutcheson's doctrine of the moral sense asserted only that moral judgments are immediate, it would be innocuous. But it is not innocuous when Hutcheson adds that moral properties have the status of secondary qualities. Price agrees with Hutcheson in believing that secondary qualities are not genuine differences in objects themselves, but simply reflect features of ourselves and our reactions (14).[37] He does not endorse Reid's more robustly realist account of the senses and their objects, and so he does not regard belief in a moral sense as a reliable support for objectivism about moral properties (280–3).[38]

According to Price, moral properties would be objects of a moral sense only if they did not belong to actions and people themselves, but belonged only to our reactions.[39] Hutcheson derives this conclusion illegitimately from the immediacy of moral judgments.[40] In Price's view, we must support the intellectual character of moral judgments and their correspondence to external reality, by rejecting the moral sense.

He rejects a moral sense theory by rejecting empiricism in general. He argues, for reasons similar to Cudworth's, that many of the ideas that Locke takes to be derived from the senses are in fact derived from the understanding. He claims, for instance, that some ideas about causation are derived from understanding, since the senses give us experience only of succession. While Price agrees with Hume about what we learn from experience, he does not agree with Hume's conclusion about the idea of necessary connexion (25–8). The understanding is the source of its own simple ideas, which are preconditions, not products, of reasoning (40). A moral sense theory is wrong because moral properties are not the sorts of properties that we grasp through a sense.

To prove his point, Price appeals to our intuitive belief that moral properties belong to actions in themselves, not simply to our reactions to them; when we call an action wrong,

[35] On rationalism without realism see §718.

[36] This is the view that Whewell and Norton ascribe to Hutcheson. See §§633, 643.

[37] 'For the term *sense*, which he applies to it, from the rejection of all the arguments that have been used to prove it to be an intellectual power, and from the whole of his language on this subject; it is evident, he considered it as the effect of a positive constitution of our minds, or as an implanted and arbitrary principle by which a relish is given us for certain moral objects and forms and aversion to others, similar to the relishes and aversions created by any of our other senses.' (14)

[38] These notes on Reid were written before the appearance of Reid's *EAP*; see 282 (Note D). See §842.

[39] 'Virtue (as those who embrace this scheme say) is an affair of taste. Moral right and wrong, signify nothing in the objects themselves to which they are applied, any more an agreeable and harsh; sweet and bitter; pleasant and painful; but only certain effects in us.' (15)

[40] 'All that can appear from the objections and reasonings of [Hutcheson] . . . is only . . . that the words *right* and *wrong, fit* and *unfit*, express simple and undefinable ideas. But that the power perceiving them is properly a sense and not reason; that these ideas denote nothing true of actions, nothing in the nature of actions; this he has left entirely without proof. He appears, indeed, to have taken for granted that if virtue and vice are immediately perceived, they must be perceptions of an implanted sense. But no conclusion could have been more hasty.' (42)

we attribute a property to the action itself, not to its effect on us as spectators.[41] He admits that this intuitive belief is open to dispute, since it may be dismissed as the product of false 'objectification', the tendency of our mind to 'spread itself' (as Hume says) on objects (46 #1). In reply he points out the absurdities (as he considers them) that result from the subjectivist position. He uses a version of Cudworth's argument about mutability, claiming that his opponents' view makes moral properties mutable in relation to certain other properties that in fact make no difference to moral properties.[42]

Defenders of a moral sense theory reject this criticism. In reply to Burnet and Balguy, Hutcheson argues that the senses are corrigible, but sensory qualities do not exist independently of our perceptions of them. This defence of the subjectivist position does not answer Price. For if the views of the normal perceiver constitute correctness, moral properties are still mutable, not in relation to any particular perceiver, but in relation to changes in normal perceivers. People in general may become, say, more or less prone to approve compassion, benevolence, or honesty. But these qualities themselves do not become better or worse with these changes in perceivers. Hence, according to Price, sentimentalism mistakes the character of moral properties.

Price argues that if moral properties were mutable in the way that follows from sentimentalism, all actions would be indifferent in their own right.[43] In that case we would have no reason not to alter our reactions so that we did not care about doing what we at present take to be right. Rejection of objective right and wrong removes our reason for resisting any anti-moral tendencies.[44]

Subjectivists resist Price's effort to represent them as enemies of morality. Hutcheson recognizes that our moral reactions have a compulsory character that is inconsistent with the view that we are simply aiming at pleasure and the absence of pain; it is not indifferent whether we have them or not, but we are in some way required to have them.[45] We do not treat them as we might treat feelings of pain that we would rather get rid of. Hutcheson can therefore answer Price by pointing out that our moral outlook ascribes to moral judgments the compulsory character that Price recognizes. We need not believe in objective moral properties, therefore, if we treat our moral judgments as compulsory.

Price, however, need not accept this defence of Hutcheson. The moral sense theorist can show that it is psychologically possible to regard our moral judgments as compulsory. But

[41] 'Or is it no determination of judgment at all, but a species of mental taste? Are not such actions really right? Or is every apprehension of rectitude in them false and delusive, just as the like apprehension is concerning the effects of external and internal sensation, when taken to belong to the causes producing them?' (45)

[42] 'How strange would it be to maintain, that there is no possibility of mistaking with respect to right and wrong; that the apprehensions of all beings, on this subject, are alike just, since all sensation must be alike true sensation? Is there a greater absurdity, than to suppose, that the moral rectitude of an action is nothing absolute and unvarying; but capable, like all the modifications of pleasure and pain, of being intended and remitted, of increasing and lessening, or rising and sinking with the force and liveliness of our feelings?' (47)

[43] ' . . . if no actions are, in themselves, either right or wrong, or any thing of a moral and obligatory nature, which can be an object to the understanding; it follows that, in themselves, they are all indifferent. This is what is essentially true of them, and this is what all understandings, that perceive right, must perceive them to be' (48).

[44] 'If this is judging truly; how obvious is it to infer, that it signifies not what we do; and that the determination to think otherwise, is an imposition upon rational creatures? Why then should they not labour to suppress in themselves this determination, and to extirpate from their natures all the delusive ideas of morality, worth, and virtue? What though the ruin of the world should follow? There would be nothing really wrong in this.' (48)

[45] See Hutcheson, *IMGE* 2.8 = L 111 = SB 104, quoted at §633n15.

this proof (if we concede it) of psychological possibility does not capture the reason we think we have for regarding our judgments as compulsory. Price points out that sometimes we regard our judgment as compulsory because it is constrained by the nature of the objects of our judgment. A purely psychological explanation of why we regard the relevant judgments as non-optional would miss the point; for we regard the non-optional character of the judgment that fire burns wood as the result of a fact about fire. Price argues that in the same way we regard the non-optional character of our moral judgments as the result of facts about right and wrong actions.[46] We do not simply find that we cannot bring ourselves to regard the harming of innocent people as right; we also believe that if nothing changed about the world, we would be mistaken in changing our reaction. Changing our moral judgments at will would be misguided because it would lead us away from being guided by the facts about the actions. The moral sense theorist's explanation gets things the wrong way round.[47]

Even if Price over-simplifies his opponents' position, his criticism is reasonable. Hutcheson does not believe that the moral sense is arbitrary, or that it detects no genuine feature of actions. He believes that it responds to benevolence, and therefore is guided by objective properties of actions. But he does not satisfy Price's demand for an explanation of why the moral sense picks out benevolence. He cannot say that benevolence really deserves approval, because he cannot say that any quality of the action itself really deserves approval, whether or not it is approved. To deserve approval is to be the subject of a justifying reason, which depends (according to Hutcheson) on the reactions of our moral sense.[48]

Price's criticism does not refute sentimentalism, but it shows that sentimentalism does not vindicate our moral judgments. Sentimentalists do not show that our moral judgments rest on the grounds that we take them to rest on. They should admit that they reject our moral judgments and they try to replace them with other judgments that will serve some of the purposes of our moral judgments.

Though Price (like other rationalists) does not attend as he should to the possibility of this defence of sentimentalism, the defence does not completely answer him. He shows that if we are to become sentimentalists, we must modify our initial view of moral judgments more than the sentimentalist initially acknowledges. If we acknowledge this, we need arguments that justify us in discounting the initial credibility of our moral judgments. We must become justifiably more confident in the soundness of sentimentalist arguments against objective moral properties than we are in the conviction that we are right to approve of benevolence because benevolence is really good.

If sentimentalists are held to this standard of proof, their arguments are less plausible. If they were simply explaining why our moral judgments are true or justified, their account would not have to be strong enough to override our initial conviction of the truth of our moral judgments; for it would not compete with that conviction. But if sentimentalism rejects our moral judgments, it competes with our initial conviction, and so assumes a heavier burden of proof.

[46] 'Whatever any thing is, that it is, not by will, or decree, or power, but by nature and necessity. Whatever a triangle or circle is, that it is unchangeably and eternally. It depends upon no will or power, whether the three angles of a triangle and two right ones shall be equal . . . ' (50)

[47] For attempts to avoid this objection see Blackburn, *EQR* 153.

[48] See Hutcheson on justifying reasons, §639.

Price believes that an anti-realist about morality faces a further difficulty, because the arguments for anti-realism about moral properties support anti-realism in other areas as well. Protagoras and other ancient philosophers were right to extend anti-realism from ethics to other areas.[49] Though Price rests his claim about extension on his view that moral principles are self-evident, it need not depend on this epistemological view. Anti-realists deny that facts about right and wrong themselves explain why moral judgments and sentiments of approval are sometimes correct and sometimes mistaken. If we reject realist assumptions about the explanatory role of moral properties, why should we not also (Price asks) reject analogous assumptions in other areas?

This question does not refute anti-realism about moral properties, but it shows that anti-realists may have to pay a higher price than they recognize. Most anti-realists try to maintain moral anti-realism without maintaining anti-realism as a general metaphysical position. We are entitled to do this if the arguments for moral anti-realism are peculiar to moral properties, so that we cannot argue by parity for general anti-realism. As Price remarks, Protagoras believes that arguments against moral realism allow this extension to general anti-realism. If moral anti-realists cannot refute Protagoras on this point, moral anti-realism is more difficult to accept; our reasons for accepting it must be better than our reasons for rejecting general anti-realism.

Price has a reasonable point against moral anti-realism. Many later moral anti-realists have rejected general anti-realism, and so they have supposed that their arguments are peculiar to morality. If, as Price believes, the arguments are not peculiar to morality, part of the strategy of later moral anti-realism is open to doubt.

811. Voluntarism and Moral Properties

In arguing that morality is 'eternal and immutable' (50), because it is not mutable in relation to our judgments, Price agrees with Cudworth. He improves Cudworth's argument by showing how his opponent is committed to accepting the consequences of treating actions as being in themselves morally indifferent. He also agrees with Cudworth in taking the objectivity of moral properties to rule out a voluntarist account of morality and will that would make morality consist in divine commands.

Mediaeval voluntarists deny that the will necessarily chooses the greater apparent good, on the ground that such necessity implies lack of freedom. Hobbes and the sentimentalists reject this libertarian aspect of voluntarism, since they think the will is determined to follow the strongest motive, and that it is not up to the will to decide which the strongest motive will be. But they also reject the rationalist view that there is some good for the will to discover and that the greater apparent good, rather than the stronger desire, explains the choice of the will. On this point Hobbes and the sentimentalists agree with voluntarism

[49] 'And indeed it seems not a very unnatural transition, from denying absolute *moral* truth, to denying *all truth*; from making right and wrong, just and unjust, dependent on perception, to asserting the same of whatever we commonly rank among the objects of the understanding. Why may not he who rejects the reality of rightness in beneficence, and of wrong in producing needless misery, be led, by the same steps, to deny the certainty of other self-evident principles?' (53)

against rationalism. According to Hobbes, the laws of nature are divine laws, dependent on God's will. God does not command what he sees to be antecedently right.[50]

Cudworth argues against Hobbes's attempt to identify what is morally right with what is commanded by a sovereign. We can reasonably ask whether what a commander commands is right or not; we find that in some circumstances it is (if the commander has the relevant authority) and otherwise it is not. The fact that we can raise this question shows that rightness is something independent of the existence of a command by someone with superior power. Price endorses this argument (52, 105–7),[51] and uses it against other accounts of what is morally right and obligatory.

The broader meta-ethical implications of Hobbes's voluntarism about morality are clearer in Hutcheson; for his view about the relation between the moral sense and the quality that it approves of is parallel to Hobbes's view of God's will and the quality that God approves of. He argues that the goodness of a person or action consists in being approved of by the moral sense, and he denies that the moral sense could be wrong by failing to approve of something that is morally good independently of our reactions to it. This implication of the sentimentalist view is even clearer in Hume, who takes variations in our sentiments to establish differences in the qualities that constitute personal merit, and takes the uniformity of our sentiments to establish the uniformity of moral qualities.[52]

Price follows Cudworth in rejecting voluntarism about God and morality. Believing that moral rightness is eternal and immutable, he cannot identify it with the content of a positive law made by God or regard it as wholly dependent on God's will. The voluntarist view is tempting because an act of will can sometimes make an act right that would otherwise be indifferent. If I promise to pay you $5, paying you $5 now becomes right, and not paying it becomes wrong; if a legislature requires driving on the left, driving on the right becomes wrong. These examples, however, do not support voluntarism; for acts of will change the moral status of particular actions only because they presuppose the rightness of keeping promises and obeying laws. If these actions were not right, acts of will could not affect the rightness and wrongness of particular actions in the way they do.[53] Similarly, we ought not to try to explain the whole basis of morality by claiming that the morally wrong is whatever incurs rewards and punishments; for punishment presupposes wrongdoing that deserves punishment whether or not it is actually punished (108). The cases that appear to support voluntarism actually refute it.

In reply to the charge that this position makes morality independent of God in a way that undermines God's omnipotence, Price replies that though morality does not depend on the will of God, it is not independent of God's nature (87), since it is essential to God to be morally good. If morality is independent of God's will, it does not follow that God is

[50] Hobbes also believes that we recognize that the laws of nature are counsels of self-preservation, and therefore choose them as requirements of right reason. This does not make him a rationalist; for they are requirements of right reason only insofar as they fulfil our inclination to self-preservation. See Hobbes, §478.

[51] Price's argument is discussed by Passmore, *RC* 103. See §§546–7.

[52] See §776.

[53] '. . . it is by no means to be inferred from hence, that obligation is the creature of will, or that the nature of what is indifferent is changed: nothing then becoming obligatory which was not so from eternity; that is, *obeying the divine will, and just authority*. And had there been nothing right in this, had there been no reason from the natures of things for obeying God's will; it is certain, it could have induced no obligation, nor at all influenced an intellectual nature as such.' (52)

not omnipotent.[54] God is omnipotent as creator, and this omnipotence does not make facts about right and wrong subject to God's legislation.[55] If moral facts were in God's power, there would be no moral obligation and no moral reasons.

To support this objection, Price explores the consequences of making moral obligation depend entirely on the will of a superior. He asks the theological voluntarists what they say about an atheist or Epicurean; would he 'feel no moral obligation, and therefore be not at all accountable?' (107). His answer to this question, on behalf of the voluntarist, is that the atheist would feel no obligation. Hobbes, Cumberland, Pufendorf, and John Clarke believe that if we abstract from divine commands, we still have some reason to follow moral principles, to the extent that observance of them is useful for securing non-moral goods. But if they are right, we have no distinctively moral reason in such circumstances for observance of moral principles.

This answer exposes the voluntarist to another of Price's objections. If we allow no morality or moral obligation without commands and prohibitions, we make it difficult to see how command and prohibitions alone could introduce moral obligation. Commands and sanctions may affect prudential obligation, but the voluntarists believe that prudential obligation is not moral obligation; for they believe that without commands there is only prudential and no moral obligation. Commands create moral obligations only if they are commands of a commander who is morally entitled to command in this area; hence, in Price's view, they presuppose morality. Pufendorf's appeals to love or gratitude towards God fail to establish the moral legitimacy of obeying God's commands.[56]

Price's conclusions may at first seem too sweeping. Many defenders of the view that morality depends on the divine will do not agree that it depends on any human will; that is why Cudworth deals with divine command theories only after he has dealt with views that identify morality with positive human law. Price, however, argues that if we make morality depend on the divine will, we really make it depend on will in general.[57] Either we say that any will equally creates moral obligation, or we appeal to some morally relevant features of the will of God. The only morally relevant feature of the divine will is the fact that God is especially good at recognizing what is obligatory, or that God has some right to command us. In either case, we recognize something that is right and is not created by God's command.

Price considers a Hobbesian reply.[58] In Hobbes's view, the divine will differs from other wills by being especially powerful and by imposing an especially severe sanction; that is why we have an obligation to obey the sovereign and God, but no obligation to obey just anyone who feels like giving us orders. Price answers that this is not a morally

[54] 'Omnipotence does not consist in a power to alter the nature of things, and to destroy necessary truths (for this is contradictory, and would infer the destruction of all wisdom, and knowledge) but in an absolute command over all *particular, external* existences, to create or destroy them, or produce any possible changes among them.' (50)

[55] On creation v. legislation cf. Suarez, §424; Pufendorf, §566.

[56] See Pufendorf, §577.

[57] 'What an absurdity it is, then, to make obligation subsequent to the Divine will, and the creature of it. For why, upon this supposition, does not all will oblige equally? If there be anything which gives the preference to one will above another; that, by the terms, is moral rectitude. What could any laws or will of any being signify, what influence could they have on the determinations of a moral agent, was there no good reason for complying with them, no obligation to regard them, no antecedent right of command? To affirm that we are obliged in any case, but not in virtue of reason and right, is to say, that in that case we are not obliged at all.' (111–12)

[58] In the last sentence of the passage just quoted ('To affirm . . . ').

relevant reason, and that Hobbes is really saying we have no obligation. He assumes, quite reasonably, that we can distinguish a source of moral obligation from a threat of sanctions if we fail to do what we are told. Threats may be effective, but they do not explain why we recognize the authority as legitimate. This argument shows why an appeal to divine commands cannot provide a plausible basis of moral obligation. A proponent of such views might offer them as a way of understanding the closest thing to moral obligation that we can find.

812. Open Questions

Price has exploited Cudworth's arguments for the 'eternal and immutable' character of morality to argue against both theological voluntarism and sentimentalism. He relies on these arguments to impose general conditions on the adequate definition of a moral property.

The first condition emerges from his attack on Locke's view that rectitude signifies the conformity of actions to rules or laws (of God, or the magistrate, or custom).[59] Locke's account implies that it would be absurd to ask whether a law is right; for a law could be right only if it conformed to a second law, about which the same question would arise, leading to an infinite regress.[60] According to Locke, the question 'Are the laws right?' should not be a reasonable question, since rightness simply consists in conformity to law. In this case the question 'Are the laws wrong?' should be equally unreasonable. Price answers that both questions are reasonable. He relies on this answer to formulate a general necessary condition for an adequate definition: (C1) If definition D makes right and wrong consist in conformity and non-conformity to F, but it is reasonable to ask 'Is F itself right or wrong?', because the answer is not clearly 'neither', then D is unacceptable.

A second condition for an adequate definition emerges from Price's attack on some unacceptable definitions.[61] Whereas the first condition concerned a question raised about the standard of rightness (law etc.), the second concerns a question raised about acting in accordance with the standard. In this case we ask whether it is right (e.g.) to obey a law. If rightness consisted in obeying a law, it would be absurd to ask whether it is right to obey a law; for that question would simply ask whether obeying a law is obeying a law. But Price observes that the question is not at all absurd, and that therefore the definition is unacceptable.

He therefore offers a second condition of adequacy: (C2) If definition D defines right action as doing F, but it is reasonable to ask 'Is doing F right or wrong?', because the answer is not clearly 'right', then D is unacceptable. In the previous case, where Price appealed to

[59] 'From whence it follows, that it is an absurdity to apply *rectitude* to rules and laws themselves; to suppose the divine will to be directed by it; or to consider it as *itself* a rule and law.' (43)

[60] See Cudworth, §548.

[61] 'Right and wrong when applied to actions which are commanded or forbidden by the will of God, or that produce good or harm, do not signify merely, that such actions are commanded or forbidden, or that they are useful or hurtful, but a *sentiment* concerning them and our consequent approbation or disapprobation of the performance of them. Were not this true, it would be palpably absurd in any case to ask, whether it is *right* to obey a command, or *wrong* to disobey it; and the propositions, *obeying a command is right*, or *producing happiness is right*, would be most trifling, as expressing no more than that obeying a command, is obeying a command, or producing happiness, is producing happiness.' (16–17)

(C1), the answer to the question 'Is F right or wrong?' should be 'neither', if the definition is adequate. In the present case, relying on (C2), the answer should be 'obviously right'.

If the two conditions (C1) and (C2) mark two ways in which a definition of a moral property is unacceptable, a definition is acceptable only if questions of the first sort are clearly ill-formed, resting on a misunderstanding, and the answer to questions of the second sort is, as Price says, 'most trifling', a near-tautology. If we have found the standard of rightness, the question 'Is F right?' should be ill-formed, and 'Conformity to F is right' should be as trivially analytic as 'A brother is a male sibling'. Price objects to proposed definitions by pointing out that some questions are reasonable that ought not to be reasonable if the definitions were correct. We may therefore say that he identifies 'open questions'.[62]

Price deploys both sorts of open question in his argument against Hobbes. He deploys them equally, following Burnet and Balguy, in his rejection of Hutcheson's appeal to the moral sense. In this case the two questions to be considered are (1) 'Is the moral sense right or wrong?', and (2) 'Is what the moral sense approves of right?' The first question would not be an open question, if the moral sense theory were right; for the only way to answer it within the moral sense theory would be to appeal to a second moral sense approving of the first one, and then we would face an infinite regress. The first question, then, ought to be ill-formed. The affirmative answer to the second question ought to be trivially analytic.

In Price's view, however, both questions are open. It is sensible, and not absurd, to say that the moral sense is right or wrong, because we can think of further considerations that would determine whether it is right. Similarly, it is not trivial to say that following the moral sense is right. If it is right to follow the moral sense, that is because following the moral sense meets some further condition for rightness, and we accept the moral sense only to the extent that we think it meets this further condition.

Price's use of open questions persuades him that rightness is simple and indefinable. We might expect him to say that every attempted definition of rightness results in an open question. But this is not his view. For he admits that some statements of the form 'It is right to do F' do not result in an open question, but he argues that nonetheless rightness cannot be defined as F-ness, because such statements give us merely synonymous expressions. Simplicity does not imply that every attempted account raises an open question; it only implies that every attempted account going beyond mere synonymies raises an open question.[63]

On this ground he argues that the accounts of rightness offered by Clarke and Balguy do not show that rightness is complex and definable. 'Acting suitably to the nature of things' and so on are useless for defining virtue, since 'they evidently presuppose it' (125). Instead of saying that rightness, fitness, obligatoriness can be defined through each other, Price

[62] Price does not use 'open question', but it is a useful description of his form of argument. It suggests correctly that his argument, on one interpretation, anticipates Moore's argument. On Moore and Price see Raphael, *MS* 1n, 111–15.

[63] 'He that doubts this, need only try to give definitions of them, which shall amount to more than synonymous expressions. Most of the confusion in which the question concerning the foundation of morals has been involved has proceeded from inattention to this remark. There are, undoubtedly, some actions that are ultimately approved, and for justifying which no reason can be assigned; as there are some ends, which are ultimately desired, and for choosing which no reason can be given. Were this not true, there would be an infinite progression of reasons and ends, and therefore nothing could be at all approved or desired.' (41)

believes they are all indefinable and 'convey . . . ideas necessarily including one another' (105).[64]

Here Price imposes a third condition of adequacy on a definition: (C3) If a proposed definition D says that rightness is F-ness, we must be able to understand F-ness independently of understanding rightness. A proper definition must be informative because we understand the definiens independently of the definiendum. According to this condition, rightness may still be indefinable even if many synonymous expressions connect it with other moral properties.[65]

813. Naturalism, Rationalism, and Moral Properties

Price's account of moral properties is intended to defend the anti-voluntarist position that, as we saw, has both naturalist and rationalist elements. In Aquinas and Suarez, naturalism and rationalism support each other; we grasp moral properties by reason, by discovering what is suitable for rational nature. These are the immutable moral properties, not mutable in relation to any legislative will, but mutable in relation to rational human nature. This naturalist element may still be present in the position that Cudworth develops against Hobbes.[66] Clarke appeals to fitness; he emphasizes the rationalist side of the argument against voluntarism, at the expense of the naturalist side.

In contrast to Clarke, Hutcheson emphasizes the naturalist argument against voluntarism, and takes it to support sentimentalism rather than rationalism. Balguy, however, argues that sentimentalism repeats the meta-ethical errors of voluntarism. Butler returns to the traditional combination of rationalism with naturalism, in opposition to Wollaston's defence of Clarke.

In this debate about different elements of Scholastic naturalism, Price supports rationalism without naturalism. He follows the lead of William Adams, who rejects Clarke's appeal to fitnesses. Adams and Price are perhaps influenced by the objections of theological voluntarists who complain that rationalist explanations of fitness are either unhelpfully vague, or misleading (because they imply it is morally wrong to address a French-speaker in English[67]), or collapse into utilitarianism. If the supposed explanation of rightness by fitness is either a bad explanation or a non-explanation, it is better to admit that it is a non-explanation, and that the rationalists were wrong to suppose that the nature of rightness could be explained by appeal to fitness.

Adams and Price conclude that we should simply speak of a perception of rightness, without attempting to ground it in knowledge of any other property. No other property can explain rightness in a way that satisfies the voluntarists. In Price's view, knowledge of rightness is not to be grounded in knowledge of anything else, because rightness is not identical to any other property; no non-synonymous account of the essence of moral rightness can be given.

[64] On 'mere synonymy' as a sign of an unsatisfactory definition see §656. On irreducibility as distinct from simplicity see §845.

[65] On criteria for definition see Thomas, *HM* 47–8. He does not mention C3.

[66] See Cudworth, §547.

[67] See Brown, §867.

From Price's point of view, traditional naturalist accounts of rightness and goodness are no less misguided than sentimentalist accounts. If the right cannot be what is approved by the moral sense, it cannot be what accords with rational nature or what is eternally fit. Price's position is more extreme than anything that Clarke says. It is difficult to say how far it goes beyond what Clarke means, since Clarke does not offer much explanation of fitness. But Price implies that Wollaston and Balguy were wrong to try to explain fitness, and he rejects the position of Butler and of traditional naturalism.

This aspect of Price's position is not completely clear, because of his third condition. For he might claim that Clarke's and Butler's accounts of moral properties do not really raise open questions, because they only offer synonymies, which cannot be understood without understanding the term that is being defined. Clarke and Butler might offer the sort of clarification of moral properties that he thinks possible and desirable. But if this is what he means, his claim about simplicity is true only in a restricted sense, so that moral properties are not definable in simpler terms. They might be complex and definable in many other ways.

In Price's view, appeals to fitness cannot provide a definition of virtue. We need some further account of why it is right to act according to fitness, and then we 'find ourselves obliged to terminate our views in a simple perception, and something ultimately approved for which no justifying reason can be assigned' (127). This does not show that rightness is indefinable. Even if explanations cannot be infinitely long, an appeal to fitness may explain something about rightness. We may understand action better, for instance, by treating it as the outcome of belief and desire, even if our account of belief and desire eventually mentions their relation to action. Instead of saying that the account of action is non-explanatory, we should infer that action, belief, and desire are to be understood through one another. Something similar might be true about fitness, rightness, appropriateness, obligation, and related features of morality. Price's objection is sound only if appeals to fitness are entirely non-explanatory.

To see whether Price is right, we need to distinguish two objections that he might intend: (1) Alleged definitions of moral rightness (etc.) by reference to fitness do not eliminate terms such as 'ought' and 'right'. (2) These alleged definitions do not eliminate moral terms. These two objections are not the same. For even if we cannot explain normative properties by appeal to exclusively non-normative properties (those that can be understood without 'ought', 'right', 'good', and concepts explained through them), we might be able to explain moral normative properties by appeal to non-moral normative properties. Perhaps Clarke and Butler explain the moral through the non-moral, not the normative through the non-normative.

Similarly, Price does not show that appeals to fitness provide no criterion of virtue (127). He assumes that the relevant sort of criterion is one that we could appeal to, in a particular case, to resolve a doubt about whether an action is right. He points out that if we cannot see whether an action is right, it will not help us to ask whether it has the relevant sort of fitness, and so he infers that fitness is not a criterion. But that is not the only sort of criterion one might seek. An appeal to fitness might say what makes a right action right, and in this way provide a criterion, even if we cannot use it in a particular case to settle difficulties in moral judgments.

After raising these objections to appeals to fitness, Price explains the sense in which he thinks they are acceptable. Clarke's is right if he means that moral properties are real, objective properties that can be rationally discovered and recognized.[68] Price seems to reject Clarke's and Butler's further claim, that we understand moral properties better by appealing to fitness or to naturalness. But his reasons for rejecting this further claim rest on a narrow conception of explanation. Our defence of Clarke and Butler against his objections does not show that they provide an explanation; but it identifies more precisely what they need to show in order to meet Price's criticism.

814. Price's Criteria for Definitions

Price's three conditions are supposed to show that the moral properties he discusses are indefinable and simple. He intends to distinguish moral properties from other properties on this point; he does not suppose he has shown that no properties are definable. If, then, his conditions imply that no property is definable, they are open to question.[69]

We may reasonably doubt his conditions, once we apply both the second and the third to a proposed definition. C2 tells us that if rightness is correctly defined as F-ness, then 'F is right' is trivially analytic and does not raise an open question. But C3 tells us that the correct definition of rightness as F-ness would have to be informative, not a mere synonymy in which our understanding of F-ness presupposes some understanding of rightness. We might suspect that any definition meeting the demand for informativeness and independent understanding of the definiens will thereby fail to meet the demand for trivial analyticity that leaves no open question. If this suspicion is correct, Price's conditions for definition are mistaken, since they imply that nothing can be defined.

He might reply that some definitions are informative, because we understand the definiens independently of the definiendum, but they still yield the right trivially analytic consequences that avoid open questions. Perhaps some definitions are of this sort. If we ask the meaning of 'vixen' and are told that a vixen is a female fox, we may understand the definiens independently of the definiendum. If we realize that we are being told the meaning of 'vixen', we may also realize that it is trivially analytic that a vixen is a female fox. Perhaps this sort of definition of a moral property would satisfy Price, since it would conform to both C2 and C3.

This sort of example, however, does not show that all acceptable definitions satisfy C2 and C3. The example of 'vixen' and 'female fox' is untypical for two reasons: (i) We assume that the definition is offered to someone who does not grasp the meaning of the word. Here, it is assumed, we have no previous beliefs involving 'vixen' that might make us competent users of the word without grasping the definition. (ii) There is nothing to being a vixen beyond being a female fox.[70] We have no other beliefs about vixens in the light of which we might find 'This vixen is a female fox' trivial or non-trivial. Neither feature of the example

[68] He believes they express the fact that 'morality is founded in truth and reason; or that it is equally necessary and immutable, and perceived by the same power, with the natural proportions and essential differences of things.' (128)

[69] On Price's arguments about definition see Hudson, *RR*, ch. 1

[70] This ignores metaphorical uses.

applies to proposed definitions of moral properties. In these cases we are not asking to have the word explained to someone who is wholly ignorant of its meaning, and we have many background beliefs against which the consequences of a proposed definition may or may not seem trivial.

In the case of proposed definitions of any properties that differ from our example of 'vixen', anything that meets C3 seems to violate C2. If a definition is informative, it must tell us something more than is obvious to a competent user of the term defined. Price thinks it is obvious that if we can use 'right', 'fit', and so on, we see that they are connected; that is why he denies that a definition that simply exhibits their connexions is satisfactory or informative. But then any informative definition of them seems to raise an open question. Since we do not already know, for instance, that rightness is what maximizes utility (if we did know that, the definition would be uninformative, a mere synonymy), the proposed definition must surprise us, and it will hardly seem 'most trifling' that it is right to maximize utility. In general, until we have thought harder about the meaning of 'F', we may be surprised to be told that 'F' means 'G', and so the question 'Is F G?' still seems open. But this hardly shows that F cannot be defined as G.

For this reason, Price's three conditions exclude so many proposed definitions that they cast doubt on his argument to show that moral properties are indefinable. Apparently we cannot satisfy the demand for both informativeness and triviality at the same time.

815. Meanings and Properties

Before considering how to revise Price's conditions for definition, we may raise a broader difficulty about his whole argument. He sometimes says he is asking about our 'ideas' of right and wrong. We might infer that he is asking about meanings or concepts; and sometimes he is clearly concerned with them (104).[71] Usually, however, he seems to be talking about the properties of rightness and wrongness; for properties belong to actions (for instance) apart from our view of the actions. If properties are, or exactly correspond to, meanings of words, the conditions for 'nominal' definitions of words and concepts will also be conditions for 'real' definitions of properties. But if properties are different from meanings, different questions may arise about the different appeals to open questions.

Price's appeal to open questions recalls Cudworth's argument against Hobbes, and Balguy's arguments against voluntarism and sentimentalism. Cudworth's argument against Hobbes is a development of the argument in Plato's *Euthyphro* about piety and what the gods love.[72] But the relation between Price's arguments and these earlier arguments is not

[71] 'Signify' (16) by itself need not imply a concern with meaning. Cf. Hudson, *RR* 21, who cites Price's use (39) of 'idea' as evidence of interest in meaning.

[72] See Passmore, *RC* 42: 'Cudworth's argument . . . depends upon a certain interpretation of his predecessors. . . . [P]utting the matter in the form which Moore has made familiar, they have asserted, both that "God always wills what is good" is a non-tautological proposition and that to be good simply means to be willed by God.' Rashdall, *TGE* i 136, claims that the indefinability of 'good' 'was taught with sufficient distinctness by Plato . . . , Aristotle, and a host of modern writers who have studied in their school—by no one more emphatically than by Cudworth'. He gives no reference. Prior, *LBE* 18, takes Cudworth's criticism of Hobbes differently: 'This is not quite Professor Moore's point that if obligatoriness is a character which may be significantly predicated of some person's commands, then it cannot

clear. We have seen that open semantic questions and open moral questions lead to different arguments. They also raise different questions about Price.

If Price seeks to raise open semantic questions, we may doubt whether he succeeds.[73] A utilitarian might argue that it is absurd to ask whether it is right to maximize utility, but we do not see this if we are surprised to discover that 'right' means 'what maximizes utility'. Presumably, Price believes that even when we know the meaning of 'F' and have got over our surprise at it, there will still be some genuine open questions, and he may argue that 'Is what maximizes utility right?' is clearly one of these questions. The utilitarian, however, may answer that we believe the question is open only because we have not considered the meaning of 'right' carefully enough. Since there are non-trivial and non-obvious equivalences of meaning, the fact that there is room for dispute does not show that the dispute is not about the meaning of the word.

Suppose, however, that utilitarians concede that Price is right about meaning, and that 'maximizing utility' is not the meaning of 'right'. They might still be right to claim that the property of rightness is the property of maximizing utility, so that maximizing utility is the feature of the world that we refer to when we speak of rightness. Our moral theory tells us that the properties referred to by 'right' and by 'maximizing utility' are in fact the same. We discover (in Locke's terms) the real essence of rightness, and we express our discovery in a real definition.

Price's argument has less force against a proposed real definition than against a proposed nominal definition. Any interesting discoveries of the identity of two properties must rely on facts beyond those that are obvious to those who know the meanings of the words well enough to communicate; otherwise they would not be interesting discoveries, In that case, people who have not learned the relevant facts can raise an apparently open semantic question (e.g., 'Is the Morning Star really Venus?' or 'Is temperature really mean kinetic energy?'). To refute a proposed real definition, he needs to find open moral questions. These are the questions that concern Cudworth.[74]

The difference between Cudworth and Price may be clearer if we attend to different ways of understanding properties. Ross, following Moore, distinguishes the property of rightness itself from the right-making property.[75] This distinction is quite alien to Plato, who takes

just *mean* being commanded by that person . . . The point is rather that it is impossible to deduce an ethical conclusion from entirely non-ethical premisses. We cannot infer "We ought to do X" from, for example, "God commands us to do X", unless this is supplemented by the ethical premiss, "We ought to do what God commands"; and it is quite useless to offer instead of this some additional non-ethical premiss such as "God commands us to obey his commands".' In referring to deduction, Prior takes Cudworth to mean that Hobbes's argument is logically, rather than morally, defective. Darwall, *BMIO* 118n, seems to agree. He remarks that 'Cudworth's argument has an obvious affinity with G. E. Moore's argument that every attempt to define "good" commits the naturalistic fallacy'. He refers without dissent to Passmore's and Prior's interpretations. Prior, 'Eighteenth century' 171–2, offers further evidence to show that some of the earlier moralists have something like Price's and Moore's argument in mind. He mentions Cudworth, *EIM* i 2.1. Cudworth says he is arguing for the reality of moral good on evil 'if they be not mere names without any signification, or names for nothing else but willed and commanded, but have a reality in respect of the persons obliged to do and avoid them'. Prior takes this to imply that Hobbes's position would make sense if 'good' and 'just' simply meant 'commanded'. (See also *LBE* 17.) Cudworth does not seem to be making this concession to Hobbes, however. He assumes, as common ground between him and Hobbes, that 'good' and so on have some meaning distinct from 'commanded'. Price and Moore on open questions are compared by Hudson, *RR* 5–8.

[73] On semantic and moral open questions see §661. [74] See §551.

[75] See Ross, *RG* 10 (the property of rightness v. the right-making characteristic).

the right answer to his question 'What is the F itself that Fs have in common?' to be exactly what makes F things F, or that 'by which' F things are F. While Ross assumes that properties match concepts, Plato does not. If Cudworth's conception of a property is closer to Plato's than to Ross's conception, it is reasonable for him to argue against an account of a moral property by offering moral objections rather than purely conceptual objections. Hence he considers a different type of open question from the one that Price considers. Price's question is relevant to arguments about concepts, but not necessarily to arguments about properties.

If Cudworth's open questions are relevant to definitions of moral properties, we ought to reject Price's condition (C2) requiring a definition to be trivially analytic. A proposed definition 'Rightness is F-ness' ought not to be rejected simply because it does not seem trivially analytic that it is right to do F. The fact that this is not trivially analytic does not show that it creates an open moral question. An open moral question arises when we have good reason to believe that doing F is not right simply by being F.

Is the open moral question any more useful than the open semantic question? It may appear to provide a less readily applicable test than the test Price offers, and its application may appear to be more controversial. This is not clear, however. Price's test for a definition appeals to judgments about self-contradiction and tautology; but these judgments may be controversial, and if we insist on finding uncontroversial tautologies and self-contradictions, we will find it difficult to accept many definitions. By contrast, the open moral question seems to yield plausible results in some cases. If we have some basis for judging that F actions are right or wrong, besides the fact that they are F, F-ness cannot be moral rightness.

The appeal to an open moral question rests on the claim that the property of rightness is the one that explains the various characteristics of right actions; an open moral question about the rightness of F actions shows that F-ness cannot be the relevant explanatory property, since some further property of F actions beyond their F-ness explains why they are right. The appeal to counterfactuals is appropriate, since counterfactual dependence is closely connected with explanation.

We might question appeals to open moral questions. Do they confuse epistemological (or perhaps psychological) questions with metaphysical questions? The fact that we come to know or believe that x is F by recognizing that x is H rather than that x is G does not show that F-ness is H-ness rather than G-ness; for it might still be true that G-ness constitutes F-ness and explains x's being F.[76] Even if we appeal to something other than utility to convince ourselves than an action is right, it does not follow that the property of maximizing utility is not identical to the property of rightness. Berkeley may have this point in mind in his defence of utilitarianism; some have also attributed it to Butler.[77]

This objection shows us that the moral open question should not be used rashly, and that we cannot always decide, without appeal to further moral beliefs, whether it has been used correctly. Still, that does not show it is useless. For though we have to exercise our moral judgment to consider the relevant counterfactuals, it does not follow that we are learning only about our moral judgments. If we have good reason for claiming that if an action were F but not G it would still be right, but it is false that if an action were G but not F it would still be right, then we have a good reason for believing that an action is right because it is F

[76] Cf. R. Adams, 'Wrongness', on divine commands and rightness. [77] See §§699–700.

and not because it is G, and for believing that G actions are right because they are also F, but it is false that F actions are right because they are G.

When Price appeals to open semantic questions, he introduces open questions that do not arise from Cudworth's arguments. Not all of his open questions are relevant to arguments about moral properties, understood as explanatory. Sometimes, however, they are relevant; he appeals to moral open questions, or at least his argument can be recast so as to raise them. In his arguments against divine command theories and moral sense theories, he exploits and generalizes the arguments used by Cudworth and Balguy, and presents a plausible general strategy. He introduces more open questions than we can introduce if we focus on open moral questions. He ought, therefore, to drop C2; he ought not to require an acceptable definition to yield trivially analytic truths of the sort he considers.

He ought also to drop C3; its demand for independent understanding of the definiens seems too strict. He is right to say that if we understand F simply through G and G simply through F, neither helps us to understand the other. But not all circles of understanding need be so small. We may come to understand 'right' better when we grasp its connexions to 'ought', 'obligation', 'duty', 'fitness', and so on.

C3 is even less plausible for real definitions. To apply C3 to moral properties is to insist that a moral property is definable if and only if it is reducible to some non-moral property that has precisely the explanatory role that we attribute to the moral property. This is a very strong reductive claim. We ought not to accept such a condition for specifying the nature of any genuine moral property; and so we have no reason to accept C3 as an appropriate condition on definitions of moral properties. Price does not show, therefore, that moral ideas or moral properties are simple and indefinable. His arguments for this claim rest on his questionable conditions for definition.

To abandon this claim, however, is not to abandon Price's objections to Hobbes and Hutcheson. These objections show not that moral properties are indefinable, but that they are irreducible to the non-moral properties proposed by Hobbes and Hutcheson. The arguments for irreducibility rest on a proper use of an argument about an open moral question. Cudworth helps us to see the part of Price's argument that is worth taking seriously after we reject Price's exaggerated claims.

816. Objections to Sentimentalism

Our reservations about Price's actual argument, and these suggestions about possible revisions of his argument, are relevant to the objection that he raises, following Balguy and Burnet, to Hutcheson's attempt to identify rightness with what is approved of by the moral sense. He argues that Hutcheson's belief in the supremacy of the moral sense over all 'kind affections' is inconsistent with his normal conception of moral approval as a favourable sensory reaction.

Price considers the question 'what ought to be the end of our deliberate pursuit, private or public happiness?', or 'which ought to give way (that is which it is right should give way) in case of opposition, the calm selfish, or the calm benevolent affections?' (217n). In asking this question we acknowledge some point of view superior to both selfish and benevolent

affections; this is what Butler has in mind in speaking of the supremacy of conscience. Price notices that Hutcheson endorses Butler's claims about conscience, and that he applies them to the moral sense, in his *System of Moral Philosophy* (215n). In Price's view, these concessions to Butler conflict with Hutcheson's conception of the moral sense.[78]

Since we can ask whether we ought to follow, and whether it is right to follow, private or public happiness, Hutcheson's account of the nature of moral rightness is mistaken.[79] When we ask whether something is right, we do not take ourselves to be asking what we feel favourable towards. The latter question is answered by a report on our feelings and reactions at the time; but the question we are asking seeks a reason for forming our reactions one way or another.

This application of Price's open question argument presents a fair objection to Hutcheson's theory. It uses Hutcheson's objection to a theological voluntarist account of moral rightness.[80] The objection is not decisive. It shows that the meaning of the question 'What is right?' is not 'How do we react to this or that course of action?', so that a reference to the moral sense does not tell us the meaning of the question. But Hutcheson might still maintain that in fact we are simply consulting our moral sense, though our question suggests that we are doing something else.

Hume implicitly supports this answer to Price's objection.[81] When he says that in making moral judgments about actions we 'mean' nothing more than that we have a favourable sentiment, Hume need not suppose that we believe we are talking about a sentiment. He may suppose that we believe we are talking about the action itself, but we are in error. Hutcheson has good reason to attribute this sort of error to us; for we suppose we are asking about properties of actions and people, not about our own reactions.

Price's objection, therefore, forces sentimentalists to present their theory of moral properties and moral judgments as an 'error theory'. They must argue that Price's question results from an error about the nature and capacity of moral judgment and about the character of moral properties. If they frankly present their theory in this light, his arguments do not refute it. Still, his objections have some force. For if Hutcheson must revise our normal views about the character of our moral judgments in this way, we may ask whether the revision is reasonable.

The revision must be extensive. If we think we can sometimes have good reason to believe that our moral sense ought to be stronger than it is, or that we ought to listen to it more often than we do, our judgments do not seem to fit Hutcheson's view; for it is not clear that they are simply reactions of the moral sense. Hutcheson might say that these judgments rest on an illusion, because no reasons support our judgment about what is right or obligatory, apart from the reactions of our moral sense. But if he says this, he must agree that some of our moral judgments are simply mistaken. He cannot offer any interpretation that makes them true. Price's question forces Hutcheson to admit that he is

[78] See §642.

[79] 'This question, I say, plainly implies, that the idea of *right* in actions is something different from and independent of the idea of their flowing from kind affections, or having a tendency to universal happiness; for certainly, the meaning of it cannot be, which will proceed from kind affection, or which has a tendency to promote universal happiness, following our desire of private or of universal happiness.' (217n)

[80] See §660. [81] See §756.

offering to replace moral judgment with something else, rather than giving an account of our actual moral judgments. Price's open question argument is legitimate, if it is applied without Price's exaggerations.

817. The Evaluation of Character

Price's examination of our attitude to moral character develops a further argument against a sentimentalist account of moral judgment. If Hutcheson's moral sense theory is right, our approval of the character of others consists in a favourable reaction by our moral sense to their benevolence.[82] Price argues that this account of approval leaves out an essential element in moral evaluation of a person. He agrees with Shaftesbury and Butler in claiming that we expect reflexion and rational choice in the genuinely virtuous person.[83] Merely instinctive benevolence, separated from any rational conviction of the value of benevolent action, is not the proper object of moral esteem.[84] Price does not discuss over-determined actions, where both our rational reflexion on what is right and our instinctive benevolence seem to be sufficient to move us to action, so that rational reflexion would have caused us to act even if the instinctive benevolence had not. It is not clear that the presence of instinctive benevolence subtracts moral worth from the action.[85]

Still, Price's main point is plausible. If the moral sense theory were right, disinterested favourable feeling towards another person's benevolent feeling would be moral approval of the other person's character. But Price points out that we draw a distinction between these two ways of looking at another person; character requires more than simple benevolent feeling.[86] Hutcheson's moral sense theory does not give the right account of our conception of moral worth or moral approval.[87] If Hutcheson recognized this, he would have to answer that we are mistaken to suppose we can draw Price's distinction.

Hutcheson does not believe he attributes to us the errors that he in fact attributes to us, if Price is right. Price's criticism, therefore, exposes an important consequence of Hutcheson's theory. Though Price is too quick to assume that this consequence refutes Hutcheson's theory, or the modified version of it that would be needed to respond to his criticisms, he offers a serious objection. For if a theory requires a radical revision of our initial view of the character of our moral judgments, we have to ask whether the arguments underlying the theory are cogent enough to outweigh our reasons for taking the view we take of moral

[82] Price also seems to have Hume in mind, at 189 para. 2.

[83] 'If a person can justly be styled *virtuous* and *praise worthy*, when he never reflects upon virtue, and the reason of his acting is not taken from any consideration of it, intelligence certainly is not necessary to moral agency, and brutes are fully as capable of virtue and moral merit as are we.' (189) He notices that Shaftesbury agrees with him on this point, and quotes from Shaftesbury.

[84] 'But *instinctive benevolence* is no principle of virtue, nor are any actions flowing merely from it virtuous. As far as this influences, so far something else than reason and goodness influences, and so much I think is to be subtracted from the moral worth of any action or character.' (191) Balguy gives a similar argument, to show that Hutcheson has to allow virtue to non-rational animals. See §657.

[85] On this issue about subtraction and addition in motivation see §669.

[86] 'Whenever the influence of mere natural temper or inclination appears, and a particular conduct is known to proceed from hence, we may, it is true, love the person, as we commonly do the inferior creatures when they discover mildness and tractableness of disposition; but no regard to him as a *virtuous* agent will arise within us.' (191)

[87] The point that Price insists is one of the 'verbal disputes' that Hume discusses in *IPM*, App. 4. See §726.

judgments. Once this question is raised about Hutcheson's theory, the theory looks less plausible.

818. Obligation

Price's rejection of voluntarism and his analysis of moral concepts prepare us for his analysis of obligation. He takes this to be the most important concept to explain ('the term most necessary to be here considered', 105), because it underlies fitness and rightness (104–5).[88] Just as Price uses his arguments about open questions to attack both voluntarists and sentimentalists, he defends an objective conception of obligation against the errors that he takes to be common to these other positions. His attack on the sentimentalist position endorses Maxwell's attack on Cumberland's voluntarist reduction of obligation to the necessity imposed by a threat of punishment (114–16n).

According to the sentimentalist, 'obligation' refers to a psychological state; I have an obligation to do x when I have a motive sufficient for me to do x or at least causing me to tend to do x. Balguy the rationalist follows the sentimentalists in accepting a subjective account of obligation as 'a state of the mind into which it is brought by perceiving a reason for action' (114).[89] Price rejects this and all other psychological definitions on the ground that they do not distinguish the objective basis of the feeling of obligation from the feeling itself, and they do not recognize that the obligation is the objective basis, not the feeling.[90]

A true moral judgment, in Price's view, recognizes an obligation that is already there whether or not we recognize it; that is the difference between a genuine obligation and something that we feel like doing or even feel compelled to do.[91] If genuine recognition of

[88] '. . . if no actions are, in themselves, either right or wrong, or any thing of a moral and obligatory nature, which can be an object to the understanding; it follows, that, in themselves, they are all indifferent . . . ' (48). ' . . . there being nothing intrinsically proper or improper, just or unjust; there is nothing obligatory . . . Moral right and wrong, and moral obligation or duty, must remain, or vanish together. They necessarily accompany one another, and make but as it were one idea' (49). 'Obligation to action, and rightness of action, are plainly coincident and identical; so far so, that we cannot form a notion of the one, without taking in the other. This may appear to anyone upon considering, whether he can point out any difference between what is right, meet or fit to be done and what ought to be done. It is not indeed plainer, that figure implies something figured, solidity resistance, or an effect a cause, than it is that rightness implies oughtness (if I may be allowed this word) or obligatoriness.' (105)

[89] See Balguy, §656. On subjective aspects of obligation see also Cockburn, §876. Adams's account of obligation appears similar to Balguy's: ' . . . right implies duty in its idea. To perceive that an action is right is to see a reason for doing it in the action itself, abstracted from all other considerations whatsoever. Now this perception, this acknowledged rectitude in the action, is the very essence of obligation; that which commands the approbation and choice, and binds the conscience of every rational being' (Adams, *NOV* 17). The reference to 'perception' might suggest that obligation is a mental state, but 'rectitude in the action' might suggest a more objective conception of obligation, similar to Price's. At 58 Adams calls obligation a reason for action that 'makes the action a duty'.

[90] 'The meaning of it [Balguy's definition] is plainly that obligation denotes that attraction or excitement which the mind feels upon perceiving right and wrong. But this is the effect of obligation perceived, rather than obligation itself. Besides, it is proper to say that the duty or obligation to act is itself a reason for acting; and then this definition will stand thus: *obligation is a state of the mind into which it is brought by perceiving obligation to act*.' (114)

[91] 'It is not exactly the same to say, it is our *duty* to do a thing; and to say, we *approve* of doing it. The one is the quality of the action, the other the *discernment of that quality*. Yet such is the connexion between these, that it is not very necessary to distinguish them; and, in common language, the term *obligation* often stands for the sense and judgment of the mind concerning what is fit or unfit to be done. It would nevertheless, I imagine, prevent some confusion, and keep our ideas more distinct and clear, to remember, that a man's consciousness that an action ought to be done, or the

obligation essentially recognizes something other than our belief and feeling as a ground for our action, a purely psychological account of obligation is wrong. The state of mind that belongs to obligation should include a characteristic feeling that results from recognition of an obligation that is not a state of mind. Both obligation and the feeling of obligation are unintelligible unless we recognize that the obligation is the basis of the feeling.

The objective conception of obligation conflicts both with sentimentalism and with the legislative conception accepted by voluntarists. According to voluntarists, 'obligation' explains 'right', 'wrong', 'duty', and so on. All of these other moral concepts include a reference to obligation—as Price agrees—and obligation refers to legal imposition. Price rejects this direction of explanation; rightness consists wholly in facts about objective properties of things that are independent of the will of any legislator. Though obligatoriness and rightness imply some law binding us to do what is obligatory and right, this law does not require any legislator. The law results simply from the fact that some things are right, and that therefore we ought to do them.[92]

A moral ought, therefore, contains an obligation and a law without any act of legislation. The relevant type of law is an authoritative binding principle; we discover such a principle by discovering that we have no rational alternative to acting as the principle prescribes. Rightness itself provides us with the relevant sort of principle. This analysis refers to the sort of rightness that Suarez calls 'intrinsic rightness'.[93]

Both sentimentalists and voluntarists have to say that our belief in intrinsic rightness rests on an error. According to sentimentalists, the error is the belief that something external to us is obligatory. Our ordinary way of speaking of colours suggests that the redness of a body is an objective quality of it, independent of our perception; but Hutcheson and Hume believe that Locke has proved that there is no objective redness, and that we are really talking about a state of our consciousness. Something similar, in the sentimentalist view, is true of obligation.[94]

The voluntarist takes the error to be not the belief in obligation that is external to us, but the belief that it is intrinsic to an external state of affairs independently of an act of legislation. Hence voluntarists and sentimentalists agree in rejecting states of affairs that are obligatory independently of anyone's view of them. Price answers both conceptions of obligation by arguing that they make the recognition of obligation unintelligible; for unless we recognize intrinsic obligation, we have no grounds for recognizing obligation, in contrast to inclination, and we cannot explain why legislation has moral force.

Price does not accept—or even consider—the option defended by Suarez, confining obligation to legislation and allowing intrinsic rightness and wrongness without obligation. This option tries to explain why the voluntarist position seems plausible, by allowing that

judgment concerning obligation and inducing or inferring it, cannot, properly speaking, be *obligation itself*; and that, however variously and loosely the word may be used, its primary and original signification coincides with *rectitude*.' (117)

[92] 'From the account given of obligation, it follows that rectitude is a law as well as a rule to us . . . Reason is the guide, the natural and authoritative guide of a rational being. . . . But where he has this discernment, where moral good appears to him, and he cannot avoid pronouncing concerning an action that it is fit to be done, and evil to omit it; here he is tied in the most strict and absolute manner . . . That is properly a law to us, which we always and unavoidably feel and own ourselves obliged to obey . . . Rectitude, then, or virtue, is a law. And it is the first and supreme law, to which all other laws owe their force, on which they depend, and in virtue of which alone they oblige. It is an universal law.' (108–9)

[93] See §437.

[94] Mackie, *E* 39–46, offers an error theory in response to an argument similar to Price's.

legislation introduces a distinct type of moral requirement. But its recognition of intrinsic rightness agrees with Price on the basic issue.

819. Obligation and Motivation

Sentimentalism about obligation rests partly on internalism. An obligation seems to be a reason for action, and reasons are connected to motivation. Since sentimentalists accept the Hobbesian aim of reducing normative properties to psychological properties, they argue that, since obligations are reasons, they are internally connected to motives. Some voluntarists accept a similar internal connexion between obligation and motivation, taking a command by a superior with appropriate sanctions to provide us with a motive for acting on an obligation; this is part of (for instance) Hobbes's and John Clarke's voluntarism.

If this is why sentimentalists and some voluntarists are internalists about obligation and motivation, we might expect Price to be an externalist.[95] Indeed he comes close to externalism; he distinguishes the obligation, which is external to the agent, from the sense of obligation, which is a state of the agent. Though he asserts a close connexion between an obligation and a motive, he does not claim that obligation implies our actually being moved to action.[96] Such a claim would not fit his clear distinction between the existence of an obligation and our recognition of it. Nor would it fit Price's contrasts between his view of obligation and Hutcheson's. According to Hutcheson, 'a person is obliged to an action, when every spectator, or he himself upon reflexion, must approve his action and disapprove omitting it' (116). Price replies that the obligation is what we recognize as the basis of our approval of an action; it is not the approval itself.[97]

[95] Hudson, *RR* 66, criticizes Price's theory for its failure to explain the internal connexion between the acceptance of a moral judgment and assent to an imperative. Hudson proceeds on the assumption (which he takes from Hare, *LM*) that there is an internal connexion that needs to be explained.

[96] 'What, in these instances, produces confusion, is not distinguishing between perception and the effect of it: between *obligation* and a *motive*. All motives are not obligations; though the contrary is true, that wherever there is obligation, there is also a motive to action.' (114) The last sentence, taken by itself, suggests that whenever it is right that A do x, A has a motive to do x. This strong internalist claim would suggest that we can never fail to recognize, and hence to act on, any obligation we actually have. Price thinks basic moral truths are self-evident, but he does not think all moral truths are as transparent to everyone as they would have to be if the strong internalist thesis were correct. Moreover, the strong thesis does not fit the immediately preceding sentence ('What, in these . . . ') When Price says 'there is a motive', he may use motive in the sense in which the police use it in trying to identify people who 'have a motive' to commit a crime. These are people whose interests and circumstances give them reasons to want the victim to be dead; the police do not mean that all such people actually want the victim dead.

[97] 'This account, however, is not perfectly accurate; for though obligation to act, and reflex approbation and disapprobation do, *in one sense*, always accompany and imply one another; yet they seem as different as an *act* and an *object* of the mind, or as perception and the truth perceived.' (116–17) The quotation continues in the previous note. In a footnote explaining 'in one sense' Price appeals to his distinction between absolute and relative virtue, and applies this to his claim about obligation: 'There are then two views of obligation, which, if not attended to, will be apt to produce confusion. In one sense, a man's being obliged to act in a particular manner depends on his knowing it; and in another sense, it does not. Was not the former true, we might be contracting guilt, when acting with the fullest approbation of our consciences: And was not the latter true, it would not be sense ever to speak of showing another what his obligations are, or how it is incumbent upon him to act.' (116n) The obligations of absolute virtue do not depend on an agent's knowledge, but those of relative virtue depend on it. In the relative sense, we are obliged to do what we believe to be obligatory, but in the absolute sense, it is possible to discover that what we believed to be obligatory is something we are not obliged to do at all. Price's claims do not seem entirely relevant to his main point. For even in the relative case

Price's considered view distinguishes three things: (1) I am under an obligation to do x. (2) I recognize that I am under this obligation. (3) I am motivated to do x by recognizing that I am under the obligation. Though he does not always mention all three, he seems to intend to distinguish the existence of the obligation (in (1)) from my recognition of it (in (2)). When he says that obligation and approbation, in one sense, always accompany each other, he appears to mean that recognition of an obligation is always accompanied by motivation; and so he seems to use 'approbation', as Hutcheson does, in a sense that implies motivation.[98] He asserts an internal connexion between knowledge of an obligation to do x and being moved to do x, not between the existence of the obligation to do x and being moved to do x.

He does not take this internal connexion to imply an internal connexion between knowledge of obligation and feeling of obligation. He recognizes that feeling is relevant to moral judgment and motivation, but denies that it is essential to them. In a passage that recalls Butler, he allows a significant role to feeling, but he commits himself to a rationalist position.[99] He thinks moral judgment is primarily a 'perception of the understanding', and that the appropriate 'feeling of the heart' is a consequence of the perception.[100] Price's claim about an internal connexion between recognized obligation and motivation presupposes an internal connexion between obligation and reasons. Someone who maintained that reasonableness gives no reason might well be thought to be inconsistent. But without some further premisses about the connexion between the recognition of reasons and the presence of motives the move from reasons to motives is open to dispute.[101]

820. Obligation and Reason

In clarifying the internal connexion between recognized obligation and motivation, Price claims that being moved by moral considerations is part of being a 'reasonable being'.[102]

the obligation does not consist simply in the consciousness of obligation; the point is that we have an obligation (distinct from our consciousness) to follow our consciousness of obligation.

[98] This view is suggested by a later remark: 'But further, it seems extremely evident, that excitement belongs to the very ideas of moral right and wrong, and is essentially inseparable from the apprehension of them. The account in a former chapter of *obligation* is enough to show this.—When we are conscious that an action is *fit* to be done, or that it *ought* to be done, it is not conceivable that we can remain *uninfluenced*, or want a *motive* to action.' (186) Price cites Cic. *Fin*. ii 45.

[99] 'The truth seems to be that, "in contemplating the actions of moral agents, we have both a perception of the understanding, and a feeling of the heart; and that the latter, or the effects in us accompanying our moral perceptions, depend on two causes. Partly, on the positive constitution of our natures: But principally on the essential congruity or incongruity between moral ideas and our intellectual faculties" ' (62) In a footnote Price quotes from Seneca ('Placet suapte natura . . . virtus', *Ben*. iv 17) and Cicero ('Etiamsi a nullo laudetur, natura est laudabilis', *Off*. i 14) to illustrate his claim about essential congruity. In explaining and (as he may suppose) paraphrasing his claim Price throws more light on what he means: 'It would be to little purpose to argue much with a person, who would deny this; or who would maintain, that the *becomingness* or *reasonableness* of an action is no reason *for* doing it . . . An affection or inclination to rectitude cannot be separated from our view of it. The knowledge of what is right, without any approbation of it, or concern to practise it, is not conceivable or possible.'

[100] The similarity and the difference between Butler and Price are remarked by Mackie, *HMT* 43.

[101] On Hume and internalism see §745.

[102] 'Why a *reasonable* being acts *reasonably*; why he has a disposition to follow reason, and is not without aversion to wrong; why he chooses to do what he knows he *should* do, and cannot be wholly indifferent, whether he abstains from that which he knows is evil and criminal, and *not to be done*, are questions which need not, and which deserve not to be answered.' (187)

We should not, in his view, ask, 'Given the fact that we are reasonable beings, what else needs to be true of us if we are to be moved by moral considerations?'. Given the nature of moral considerations and the nature of reasonable beings, it follows that we will be moved by moral considerations. Just as reasonable beings are necessarily moved by considerations of their happiness, they are necessarily moved by recognized obligations; if they lacked these motives, they would not be reasonable beings.[103]

This claim does not assert an internal connexion between recognized obligation and motivation. It says that the features that make us reasonable beings also include the sorts of motives that cause us to act on our recognition of moral obligation. If moral considerations were addressed to some different sort of being, they would not necessarily motivate.

These remarks, therefore, suggest a connexion between morality, being a reasonable agent, and motivation. If Price intends this sort of connexion, he does not imply either that recognition of obligation motivates independently of desire, or that it includes a desire. He claims only that our being reasonable agents includes having motives that make us susceptible to moral obligations.

If this is Price's view, he does not even imply that every reasonable agent always acts on the recognition of obligation. In his view, no further motive besides those implied in reasonable agency is needed to explain why we act on moral obligations. Some failure of reasonable agency underlies failure to act on moral obligations. But since Price does not believe that every reasonable agent always acts reasonably, he allows that we may fail to act on recognized moral obligations. But he rejects Hume's claim that a person's reasonableness is independent of their acting on moral obligations. His position reflects a dispute with Hume about what can be attributed to practical reason.

Price does not pursue this question further. Since he does not say what feature of rational agency implies a disposition to act on moral considerations, he does not dispel the suspicion that his claim is either trivial or mysterious. His claim is trivial if it says no more than that 'rational' means 'disposed to be moved by moral considerations'. This account of the meaning of the term is eccentric, and it does not tell us how rational agents are moved by morality. If he claims that 'rational' means 'moved simply by the belief that something is morally required', he tells us something about how a rational agent is moved, but he does not convince us that there are any rational agents in this special sense. His claim is obscure, however, if it means that rational agents, as we ordinarily understand them, are moved simply by the thought of moral obligation all by itself. This claim suggests that recognition of moral considerations has some capacity to move us, but throws no light on what the capacity is.

Price would remove the appearance of triviality or obscurity if he could present a plausible account of rational agency that did not assume that a rational agent is moved by morality, and if he could then present a plausible account of morality that showed how it would move a rational agent of the sort previously described. The argument might proceed in these stages: (1) A rational agent (as we can see without relying wholly on our views about moral motivation) must be moved by a characteristic reason. (2) Morality (as we can see by appeal to moral judgments, not simply by appeal to our conception of rationality) appeals to this same characteristic reason. (3) Hence a rational agent must be moved by morality.

[103] On the desire for happiness see §§805, 807.

What, then, is the characteristic reason? Butler tries to answer this question by connecting conscience and morality with nature. Even though moral agents thinking about their obligations do not think about nature, the fact that fulfilment of their obligations is suitable to their nature explains why they have reason to follow morality. Since Price rejects naturalism, he cannot give this explanation of why it is rational to be moved by morality. His moral epistemology discourages any such explanation. For his excessive use of the open question argument leaves no room for a clear account of the reason that is characteristic of morality; and so it is not clear what necessary aspect of rational agency corresponds to a necessary aspect of moral obligation. Price's moral epistemology seems to interfere with his argument about moral motivation.

He does not leave us completely at a loss, however. For though his normative theory is influenced by his epistemological intuitionism, it identifies some characteristics of the moral attitude. In particular, he emphasizes the implicit impartiality and reciprocity of moral principles. Could some account of rational agency show that a rational agent must be moved by principles embodying the appropriate sort of impartiality and reciprocity? Recognition of the gaps in Price's theory might lead us towards a theory such as Kant's.

821. Virtue and Vice

We have seen that Price sometimes seems to suggest that my belief that x is morally obligatory moves me by itself to do x. This is his strongest thesis about obligation and motivation. But we have also noticed that some of his remarks avoid this strong thesis. A more moderate thesis claims that rational agency itself includes the tendency to act on moral considerations, and that failure to act on moral considerations is a failure in rational agency. The strong thesis implies that vicious people are unaware of their moral obligations. According to the moderate thesis, they may be aware of their obligations, but they fail to act on them because of some defect in rational agency.

Price needs to explain how his view explains degrees of virtue and vice, and especially the possibility of progress or regress from one to the other, or from one intermediate state to a better or worse one. He does not claim that the moral motive is always the strongest, or that knowledge of obligations always moves us to act on them.[104] Following Butler's distinction between authority and power, he argues that the supremacy that he attributes to knowledge of moral obligations does not always result in action. He takes incontinence to illustrate strength separated from authority.[105] Once we admit the distinction between authority and strength, we can readily, in Price's view, recognize the possibility of incontinence.

[104] 'It being therefore apparent that the determination of our minds concerning the nature of actions as morally good or bad, suggests a motive to do or avoid them; it being also plain that this determination or judgment, though often not the prevailing, yet is always the first, the proper, and most natural and intimate spring and guide of the actions of reasonable beings . . . ' (188)

[105] 'In other words; we have a *particular tendency or appetite* to *present good*, from whence it happens, that good is far from always affecting and influencing us, in proportion to the apprehended degree of its absolute worth. The view of *present good*, therefore, getting the better of the calm and dispassionate views of our *greatest interest upon the whole*, is only one instance of what happens continually in the world, namely, "blind desire, unintelligent inclination or brute impulse, getting the better of motives and considerations, known by the mind to be of incomparably greater weight".' (194n)

Vice has to be explained differently; for it does not seem so obvious that in this case we know that the virtuous action we reject rests on stronger considerations. Nonetheless, Price speaks of comparative strength in this case too.[106] The vicious person is not simply the victim of overwhelmingly strong desires. On the contrary, he is all the more vicious because he does not act under the influence of overwhelming influences; he seems to choose deliberately not to follow the moral obligation that he recognizes. But what sort of choice can this be, given Price's account of the moral motive? If the vicious person compares his obligations with his immoral preferences, on what basis does he compare them? Price does not say.

Our attitude to virtue is not fixed and unalterable. Price remarks that practice in facing difficulties may strengthen the virtuous motive.[107] But how does this happen? Is it just a natural fact that the more we try, in some sort of non-rational trial of strength, to act on the virtuous motive, the more likely we are to succeed? That is not our normal conception of training and practice. We are inclined to think that if we focus more sharply on the characteristics of the virtuous action and think about them more, we will find that the virtuous action seems more reasonable and attractive. It is not an easy matter to say what we discover about virtuous action when we focus on it in this way; Price gives us no help.

It is clear to Price that deliberately vicious action is more blameworthy than impulsive bad action under the influence of overwhelming desires. Since he thinks that praise and blame rest on the assumption that we are responsible for, and hence the self-determined causes of, the relevant actions, he has to show what is self-determined and responsible about the choice of virtuous and vicious actions. But his account of rational choice and its relation to moral motivation does not answer the question about responsibility.

Some of the difficulties that Price faces would be removed or reduced within a eudaemonist theory of morality and rational choice; in fact the desire to answer some of the questions that Price cannot answer suggests a reason for accepting eudaemonism. Price does not give a fair hearing to eudaemonism, because he connects it with a hedonist doctrine about the nature of happiness. Perhaps he could show that even a eudaemonist theory that is immune to his objections still fails to give the right account of the status of morality.[108] But what he says does not discredit eudaemonism.

822. Objections to Utilitarianism[109]

Price accepts Butler's objections to utilitarianism as a theory of morality as a whole, and develops them further by going beyond Butler's intuitive counter-examples. He takes

[106] 'When an action is reflected upon as evil, but the motives to commit it are very strong and urgent, the guilt attending the commission of it is diminished, and all that can be inferred is, not the *absolute*, but the *comparative* weakness of the virtuous principle, or its inferiority in strength to some other principles.—The more deliberately any wrong action is done, the more wicked it appears to us; because, in this case, reason and conscience have time to gather their whole force, and exert their utmost strength; but nevertheless are conquered.' (202)

[107] 'And though, at first, the virtuous principle may be scarcely able to turn the balance in its own favour, or but just prevail; yet every repeated instance, in which the inward spring of virtue thus exerts its utmost force, and overcomes opposition, gives new power to it . . . ' (205)

[108] Reid tries to refute eudaemonism on the basis of a more accurate understanding; see §854.

[109] Price's anti-utilitarian arguments are discussed by Hudson, *RR*, ch. 4.

Butler's cases to be 'clear and decisive' (131–2), and adds both examples and arguments of his own.

One might suppose that Price's meta-ethical position makes it too easy for him to refute any normative theory. When he relies on logical open questions to refute other views of rightness, he concludes that rightness must be simple and indefinable. If he has already proved this conclusion, has he not proved that rightness is not what maximizes utility? Apparently, he only needs to point out that it is not evidently self-contradictory to assert that it is right to keep one's promises (for instance) even though it does not maximize utility. Moore uses a similar argument against a utilitarian account of good.[110]

If Price appealed to an open semantic question to argue against utilitarianism, he would be mistaken. For the most important utilitarian thesis is not vulnerable to such arguments. If these arguments show anything, they show what is wrong with some accounts of the concepts 'good', 'right', and so on. If utilitarians concede that they are not offering an account of the concept of rightness, they may still claim to be identifying the 'right-making characteristic'.[111]

We might still wonder, however, whether any account of this characteristic could be acceptable within Price's account of the 'idea' of rightness. For if he has shown that our concept of rightness is a concept of something simple and indefinable, how could we show that any definable characteristic is right-making? Our only constraint on the identification of the right-making characteristic is that it must make something have the simple and indefinable property of rightness. But if the resulting property is simple and indefinable, why should we believe that one characteristic rather than another causes, makes, or constitutes it? From this point of view, neither utilitarianism nor any other normative theory seems to satisfy Price's constraints.

This argument overlooks the restrictions on Price's claim that rightness is simple and indefinable. He denies that rightness can be analysed into simpler, independently understood elements that would allow a reductive definition. Though he rejects such an analysis, he allows that we can describe rightness informatively, and that we can connect it with other properties. All these descriptions and connexions give us 'synonymous descriptions' rather than genuine definitions, but they embody necessary truths about rightness. Such descriptions, therefore, may tell us enough about rightness to allow a decision about whether utilitarianism or some other normative theory is correct. Price's claim about simplicity does not disqualify all attempts at normative theory.

His diagnosis of the utilitarian error draws on Butler's treatment of psychological hedonism.[112] Price refuses to confine the issue to questions about whether the actions prescribed by the different virtues actually promote utility. Even if they did not always promote it, the utilitarian could argue that they generally promote it, so that we form 'a habit of considering them [sc. vices] as of general pernicious tendency, by which we are insensibly

[110] See Moore, *PE* 72. [111] See §815.

[112] 'It has been urged against those who derive all our desires and actions from self-love, that they find out views and reasonings for men, which never entered the minds of many of them; and which, in all probability, none attended to in the common course of their thoughts and pursuits.—The same may be urged against those, who derive all our sentiments of moral good and evil from our approbation of benevolence and disapprobation of the want of it; and both, in my opinion, have undertaken tasks almost equally impracticable.' (136)

influenced, whenever, in any particular circumstances or instances, we contemplate them' (135). The question is whether this is the right explanation of the moral judgments we actually make. Even if utilitarians made the same moral judgments as non-utilitarians, that would not vindicate the utilitarian position.

Price does not refute the utilitarian case if he simply observes that we do not consciously think in utilitarian terms. Utilitarians need not attribute explicit utilitarian reasoning to us; but they must argue that we care about utilitarian considerations enough to adapt our moral judgments to them. We answer this utilitarian claim if we show that we would still see moral reasons for acting as we do if we were convinced that no utilitarian defence of our action could be given. These moral reasons may not always be overriding, if utilitarian considerations also contribute to overall rightness. But they refute a utilitarian account of rightness.

Price applies this counterfactual test against utilitarianism. We are often quite unsure about the effects of a particular action or rule on overall utility, but our uncertainty may not make us uncertain about whether it is right or wrong. One of his examples concerns the role of desert in distribution of benefits. In his view, 'vice is of essential demerit; and virtue is of itself rewardable' (81). We have some bias in favour of distributing benefits to the worthy and not to the unworthy, and we take this to be right. Price does not deny that beneficial effects are relevant to distribution; but he argues that they are not the only things that matter. We would still favour distribution according to merit even if we did not consider the utilitarian effects.[113]

Price's argument does not rely on his questionable views about the force of open semantic questions.[114] He does not argue simply that there would be no contradiction in supposing an action right but non-optimific. He argues for the stronger claim that a judgment about an action's being optimific does not settle the question about its rightness; other features of it besides its tendency to promote utility are relevant to its being right or wrong.

In this case, then, Price relies on an open moral question against utilitarianism. Though he appeals to our judgments about what is certain and uncertain, he does not confuse epistemic with explanatory reasons. If rightness is the tendency to promote utility, an enlightened person's certainty or uncertainty about the tendency of an action to promote utility should produce corresponding certainty or uncertainty about whether the action is right.

Should this argument move utilitarians? Admittedly, they need not be moved by the fact that our tendency to believe an action right may persist despite doubts about its tendency to promote utility. Still, they must agree that if we are rational, and take account of our doubts about utility, our conviction about rightness ought to be weakened also. If, then, our convictions about rightness do not change in the way that they would change if we were utilitarians, our moral judgments do not support utilitarianism.

The utilitarian might reply that indirect utilitarianism explains why it is generally beneficial for us to take the non-utilitarian attitude that Price describes. But this reply does not defeat

[113] 'But why right? Not merely on account of the effects; (which in these instances, we are far from taking time always to consider) but immediately and ultimately right; and, for the same reason that beneficence is right, and that objects and relations, in general, are what they are.' (80) On the relevance of this argument to Hutcheson's position see §648.

[114] Similarly, Moore, *PE* 76, does not take the failure of 'analytic utilitarianism' (as we may call it) to imply the failure of normative utilitarianism.

Price's basic objection. For, according to the indirect utilitarian, if we are enlightened about the basis of moral rules (or motives, or traits of character), our attachment to them depends on some conviction about their effects on utility. If Price is right, this utilitarian claim is mistaken.

A utilitarian who agreed with Price so far might argue that any attachment that is independent of utilitarian defences of a moral rule is irrational. Price denies this, but his denial is less convincing given his intuitionist account of moral judgment. For it might seem difficult to distinguish the intuitive and correct conviction of the rightness of non-utilitarian rules from an irrational attachment to them; on Price's view, we can give no further account of what we find rationally compelling about different types of right action.

He might argue, however, that if this is a difficulty for him, it is a difficulty for the utilitarian as well, since we have a good reason to accept the utilitarian principle only if we have an intuition of its rightness. If the utilitarian has to allow one principle grasped by intuition, why not accept the apparent fact that several principles, rather than just one principle, are intuitively compelling? Similarly, if we appeal not to rational intuition, but to what is immediately approved of by a moral sense, we have no reason to claim that our moral sense reacts only to benevolence and utility, and not to several irreducibly different features of right actions and of virtuous people (137).[115]

We might be able to resolve this dispute between monism and pluralism about ultimate principles if we could find a rational basis for accepting utilitarian or non-utilitarian principles, and could show that they do not rest simply on intuition without further support. But we could exploit this possibility only if we revised Price's moral epistemology.

Price suggests how we might show that opposition to utilitarianism is more than irrational stubbornness. Acceptance of utilitarianism would imply drastic revision in our views about rights.[116] We do not suppose that people's rights are conditional on a proof that such rights promote utility; but the aggregative aspects of utilitarianism conflict with the attitudes that underlie our views about rights. Utilitarianism is open to objection because of its aggregative weighing of the benefits and harms to one person against those to other people.[117]

Price suggests that the utilitarian attitude results from treating questions about distribution of happiness among different people as though they were parallel to questions about distribution within a single person.[118] He could have strengthened his objection by remarking

[115] Thomas, *HM* 82–6, discusses Price's objections to utilitarianism in relation to the debate between Bayes, Balguy, and Grove over divine benevolence. See §662.

[116] 'Were nothing meant, when we speak of the *rights* of beings, but that it is for the general utility, that they should have the exclusive enjoyment of such and such things; then, where this is not concerned, a man has no more right to his liberty or his life, than to objects the most foreign to him; and having no property, can be no object of just or unjust treatment.' (159)

[117] 'But besides, if public good be the sole measure and foundation of *property*, and of the *rights* of beings, it would be absurd to say *innocent* beings have a right to exemption from misery, or that they may not be made in any degree miserable, if but the smallest degree of *prepollent* good can arise from it. Nay, any number of innocent beings might be placed in a state of absolute and eternal misery, provided amends is made for their misery by producing at the same time a greater number of beings in a greater degree happy.' (159–60)

[118] 'What makes the difference between communicating happiness to a *single being* in such a manner, as that it shall be only the excess of his enjoyments above his sufferings; and communicating happiness to a *system of beings* in such a manner that a *great* number of them shall be totally miserable, but a *greater* number happy?' (160) Price's views on rights play an important role in his political theory. For instance, Laboucheix, *RPMPPT* 62, connects Price's insistence on the rights of minorities with his political outlook, and especially with his support for the rights of the American colonies.

that the utilitarian does not even have to suppose that more people benefit from harm to fewer people. If it does not matter how pleasure is distributed, more people might justifiably be harmed in order to make fewer people happier, as long as the resulting happiness of the minority would be great enough.

This objection draws attention to a conflict between utilitarianism and intuitive moral judgments. In connecting it with the issue about rights, Price suggests what might be needed to make his objections more than simply intuitive.[119] If he could show that the attitude to inter-personal distribution that resists utilitarian aggregation is a basic feature of our moral judgments, he would have shown that utilitarianism requires the replacement of morality by something else, rather than a mere revision of morality. But he does not develop his criticism far enough to present this general objection.

823. Normative Ethics and Intuition

In Price's view, we need intuition about ultimate moral principles, just as we need it about all ultimate principles.[120] He believes that an appeal to intuition is not a peculiar feature of his normative outlook, but a necessary feature of any normative outlook that seeks to trace its claims about the rightness and wrongness of specific actions to ultimate principles.[121] If it is not a reasonable option to reject intuitionism, it is not a reasonable option to question it simply because it leads to pluralism. We must simply recognize several moral principles and virtues that all rest on equally self-evident foundations, and we must resist any attempt to reduce them to one set of principles. As Price recognizes, this position requires us to admit the possibility of moral conflicts and dilemmas, where the requirements of two virtues cannot both be satisfied in the same situation.

He opposes this outlook to Paley's majoritatian utilitarianism. Price's political views as well as his Arianism may explain Johnson's antipathy to him. Boswell reports: 'I was present at Oxford when Dr Price, even before he had rendered himself so generally obnoxious by his zeal for the French Revolution, came into a company where Johnson was, who instantly left the room' (*LJ*, Sept. 1783 = Hill-Powell iv 238n (but cf. 434).

[119] Rights are central in Price's conception of good government: 'Our first concern as lovers of our country must be to enlighten it. Why are the nations of the world so patient under despotism? . . . Give them just ideas of civil government and let them know that it is an expedient for gaining protection against injury and protecting their rights, and it will be impossible for them to submit to governments which, like most of those now in the world, are usurpations on the rights of men and little better than contrivances for enabling the few to oppress the many.' ('Country' 181)

[120] 'It is on this power of intuition, essential, in some degree or other, to all rational minds, that the whole possibility of all reasoning is founded. To it the last appeal is ever made. Many of its perceptions are capable, by attention, of being rendered more clear; and many of the truths discovered by it, may be illustrated by an advantageous representation of them, or by being viewed in particular lights; but seldom will admit of proper proof.—Some truths there must be, which can appear only by their own lights, and which are incapable of proof; otherwise nothing could be proved, or known; in the same manner as, if there were no letters, there could be no words, or if there were no simple and undefinable ideas, there could be no complex ideas.' (98)

[121] Ross, *FE* 82, defends intuitionism and pluralism: 'The objection that many people feel to Intuitionism can hardly be an objection to the admission of intuition; for without that no theory can get going. The objection rather is that Intuitionism admits too many intuitions, and further that it admits intuitions that in practice contradict one another.' Ross's answer to the first objection is similar to Price's: 'After all, there is no more justification for expecting a single ground of rightness than for expecting a single ground of goodness . . . It is, to my mind, a mistake in principle to think that there is any presumption in favour of the truth of a monistic against a pluralistic theory in morals, or, for that matter, in metaphysics either.' (83)

He argues that the recognition of conflicts does not raise any difficulty for his intuitionism.[122] The existence of some difficult cases does not imply that the principles themselves are not clear and self-evident. Price emphasizes that a moral judgment about an action in a particular case cannot rest on mere inspection, but has to depend on a careful examination of all the aspects of the action that are relevant to its rightness or wrongness.

Nonetheless, conflicts seem to raise a difficulty for Price's intuitionism. For even if we ought not to expect a moral theory to provide a solution for all difficulties, we might expect some answers to questions of priority; but Price seems to force many such questions on us, and to provide no answers. On one way of looking at it, the demands of justice and benevolence often conflict, since goodwill towards someone might often result in some desire to benefit him unjustly. If justice and benevolence are independent and self-evident principles, we ought to have no basis for deciding between their conflicting claims in such cases.

This conclusion may exaggerate the degree of disorder and conflict that we find in our moral beliefs. We need not claim that we can always decide between benevolence and justice, or that there are no genuine dilemmas. Still, we raise a serious difficulty for Price if we agree that it is often clear that we ought not to confer a trivial benefit at the cost of some great injustice. This is a fairly obvious feature of our moral convictions, but how does Price's theory explain it? The self-evident principles that, in his view, tell us that some moral weight is to be attached to justice and to benevolence do not seem to tell us about their comparative weight; if they gave us complete answers to comparative questions, they would be unimaginably complex. Alternatively, Price might seek to add self-evident principles about priority to the self-evident principles prescribing the individual virtues. But this answer seems to multiply the number of self-evident principles beyond credibility.

A more serious objection arises, however. For if we think about why a small favour does not justify a serious injustice, we are not completely at a loss about why this is so. We have some idea of the principles underlying both justice and benevolence, and we can give reasons to justify the conclusion that we reach in this case. We do not argue as we would argue if we believed that each duty rests on nothing more than an intuitive grasp of its rightness.

Price agrees that we often prefer the public good over other considerations.[123] He does not say that in every case where the public interest conflicts with some other moral principle, it ought to override, or even that when it carries considerable weight it must override, but only that in this situation it may override other principles. But in fact we seem to have some basis for identifying situations where the public interest or some other moral consideration ought to override. We can identify them partly because we have some conception of the principles that underlie both our concern for the public interest and our concern for other duties. Would we have access to this large, though sometimes imprecise and untidy, body of moral reasoning if Price's theory were right?

[122] 'The principles themselves, it should be remembered, are self-evident; and to conclude the contrary, or to assert that there are no moral distinctions, because of the obscurity attending several cases wherein a competition arises between the several principles of morality, is very unreasonable.' (168)

[123] 'What will be most beneficial, or productive of the greatest public good, I acknowledge to be the most general and leading consideration in all our enquiries concerning *right*; and so important is it, when the public interest depending is very considerable, that it may set aside every obligation which would otherwise arise from the common rules of justice, from promises, private interest, friendship, gratitude, and all particular attachments and connexions.' (153)

Price might reply that this reasoning is not about the relation between ultimate principles of right, but about whether specific actions have the right-making properties. Though ultimate principles of right must be grasped by intuition, the properties that make actions right may well be complex, and reasoning may be needed to decide whether specific actions have these properties. Intuition tells us that fair and impartial actions are right, but we may need more than intuition to know which actions are fair and impartial.

This distinction between rightness itself and right-making properties does not entirely answer the objection we have raised. If we can argue and reason about when and why the public interest ought or ought not to override considerations of justice or friendship, we seem to have some view about the relations between the relevant principles too. It seems arbitrary to insist that our moral reasoning tells us nothing about the character of rightness itself.

A further difficulty for Price's intuitionism seems to arise from his insistence on a version of the inseparability of the virtues. He argues that the different 'heads' of virtue 'all run up to one general idea, and should be considered as only different modifications and views of one original, all-governing law' (165). Since all the virtues are commanded by the same 'eternal reason', virtue is 'necessarily *one* thing. No part of it can be separated from another' (165). Acceptance of any virtue requires acceptance of them all.[124]

Price's claim is puzzling. In the objective, or (as he calls it) absolute, sense of 'obligation', each virtue imposes the same obligation, and so an objective ground for any one is equally an objective ground for all the others that we know by the same rational intuition. But it is not clear why Price should deny (or whether he means to deny) that we can have a clear intuition of the obligation imposed by one virtue without any intuition of the obligations imposed by the others. His intuitionism does not seem to rule out a complete and perfect intuition of just one virtue.

He would have a much stronger case if he were to argue that the reasons that require us to regard justice as a virtue also require us (say) to regard generosity and temperance as virtues. In that case it would be clear that someone who did not recognize generosity and temperance as virtues would be failing to grasp something essential to justice as well, and might well be said to lack knowledge of it. But this argument suggests that there is some further property that makes all these virtues right and obligatory—something further that should be identified with their rightness. Once we try to say what this feature is, we will have great difficulty in showing that it does not raise the sort of open question that Price takes to refute other attempted accounts of rightness.

Once again Price's intuitionism seems to interfere with a reasonable argument that he offers. Price is rightly concerned to avoid the premature reduction of all moral rightness to utility. But it would be equally premature to suppose that his frequent appeals to intuition are the only reasonable alternative to utilitarianism.

[124] 'He, therefore, who *lives* in the neglect of any one of them, is as really a rebel against reason, and an apostate from righteousness and order, as if he neglected them all. . . . True and genuine virtue must be uniform and universal.' (165)

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REID: ACTION AND WILL

824. Reid's Main Contributions

Price argues against sentimentalism by defending an epistemological position that allows us to know about objective moral properties, not simply about how we react to things that lack moral properties. Reid agrees with him in claiming that we have this sort of moral knowledge. His distinctive contribution is his discussion of questions that are less discussed by Price, on will and action. The most important parts of *Active Powers* concern the topics of Book ii of Hume's *Treatise*, on passion, reason, and will.

Reid's discussion reflects a conviction that he shares with Butler about the importance of moral psychology for the grasp of moral principles. He offers a full account of practical reason, will, and freewill that supports his objections to sentimentalist views in moral psychology. Butler takes moral psychology to be the centre of his argument against Hobbes; and Reid tries to state more systematically the conception of will and practical reason that Butler accepts and that Hutcheson and Hume wrongly reject.

Stewart's memoir mentions that Reid regarded Butler as an antidote to excessive reliance on principles derived from Locke.[1] This favourable estimate of Butler is confirmed not only by the explicit references in *Active Powers*, but also by the general character and tendency of Reid's argument. It is useful to approach Reid's essays by asking what he offers to support Butler's position, and whether he succeeds in his aim of supporting it.

Reid has the advantage of comparing Butler's position with Hume's attack on Butler's naturalism. He often develops his positive views through a detailed criticism of Hume. Since the points on which Reid criticizes Hume are some of the main points on which Hume attacks Butler's naturalism, an examination of Reid's criticisms of Hume will help us to decide how far Hume's criticisms expose fatal flaws in Butler.

[1] 'In his views of both [sc. natural religion and Christianity] he seems to have coincided nearly with Bishop Butler, an author whom he held in the highest estimation. A very careful abstract of the treatise entitled "Analogy" drawn up by Dr Reid, many years ago for his own use, still exists among his manuscripts; and the short "Dissertation on Virtue" which Butler has annexed to that work, together with the "Discourses on Human Nature" published in his volume of Sermons, he used always to recommend as the most satisfactory account that has yet appeared of the fundamental principles of morals; nor could he conceal his regret that the profound philosophy which these discourses contain should of late have been so generally supplanted in England by the speculations of some other moralists who, while they profess to idolize the memory of Locke, "approve little or nothing in his writings, but his errors".' (*Works*, ed. Hamilton i 32b) I refer to Reid's works by pages and columns of Hamilton's edition (H).

825. Will as the Source of Active Power

Reid begins with our awareness of active power in ourselves.[2] We cannot give a 'logical definition' of power that would reduce it to simpler elements, as Locke and Hume try to do (H 514b), but we all recognize active power, because all our 'volitions and efforts' presuppose our attribution of active power to ourselves.[3] Why does he believe this?

A minimal notion of active power might be derived from the general presumption that some internal state of ours makes a difference to what happens to us; I notice this about myself in the first-personal transactions that Reid mentions, and I assume it about others in third-personal transactions. If this were all that Reid meant, however, we would recognize active power in ourselves whenever we noticed that seeing a mouse causes us to jump or thinking about eating oysters causes us to feel ill. But if this were active power, Reid would not ask 'whether beings that have no will nor understanding may have active power' (H 522a, title of ch. 5). His answer to this question is No. In agreement with Locke, he claims that active power requires will.[4]

To see why Reid claims that only will can give us a power to give certain motions to our bodies, we need to stress the active force of 'give'. If we 'gave' motion to our bodies by simply having internal states that are sources of the motion, our seeing a mouse and jumping would 'give' motion to our bodies. But Reid replies that we ourselves do not give this sort of motion. Our intuitive sense of ourselves giving motion rests on an intuitive sense of who we ourselves are. This intuitive sense identifies ourselves with our will.

Reid shares Aquinas' interest in distinguishing activity from passivity, and he agrees with Aquinas in connecting activity with will. Aquinas also tries to clarify the ways in which the passions are modes of passivity, and the ways in which non-rational animals are passive rather than active.[5] He explains these contrasts between activity and passivity by appeal to the rational character of the will, claiming that human beings control their actions through will and reason. The same assumptions underlie Reid's claims about active power. Understanding active power is important for understanding our sense of control over our actions and accountability for them.[6] Reid connects an action's being in our power with its being dependent on our wills. We have effective wills if and only if we have active power.

[2] Reid's views on active power and will are discussed carefully and well by Yaffe, *MA*.

[3] 'All our volitions and efforts to act, all our deliberations, our purposes and promises, imply a belief of active power in ourselves; our counsels, exhortations and commands, imply a belief of active power in those to whom they are addressed.' (H 517b)

[4] '... the only clear notion or idea we have of active power is taken from the power which we find in ourselves to give certain motions to our bodies, or a certain direction to our thoughts; and this power in ourselves can be brought into action only by willing or volition. From this, I think it follows, that, if we had not will, and that degree of understanding which will necessarily implies, we could exert no active power, and consequently would have none ... It follows also, that the active power, of which only we can have any distinct conception, can be only in beings that have understanding and will. Power to produce any effect implies power not to produce it. We can conceive no way in which power may be determined to one of these rather than the other, in a being that has no will' (H 523a).

[5] On passivity in Aquinas see §§243–4.

[6] 'It is of the highest importance to us, as moral and accountable creatures, to know what actions are in our own power, because it is for these only that we can be accountable ...; by these only can we merit praise and blame; ...' (H 523b) 'Every man is led by nature to attribute to himself the free determination of his own will, and to believe those events to be in his power which depend upon his will. On the other hand, it is self-evident that nothing is in our power that is not subject to our will.' (H 524a)

To clarify active power, we need to clarify the relevant notion of the will.[7] An act of will must have an object, 'some conception, more or less distinct, of what he wills. By this, things done voluntarily are distinguished from things done merely from instinct, or merely from habit' (H 531b). In order to will, we must will an action that we believe to be in our power (H 532b). If this claim is taken strictly, it suggests that the agent must have a conception of itself and of its will and of things being up to it.

826. Will and Judgment

What sorts of agents meet these conditions for having wills, and therefore for having active powers? Reid's discussion is complicated by his assumption that will does not require reason and judgment. In his chapter, 'On the influence of incitements and motives on the will' (H 533a), he implies that the will is not essentially rational. First, he sets aside what we do by instinct and by habit, 'without any exercise either of judgment or will' (H 533b). The imputation of an action to an agent requires will.[8] But the intervention of will does not require any judgment or reason; for in some actions 'the will is exerted, but without judgment' (H 533b). An example is our choice of how much to eat; Reid suggests that we are better off if we follow our tastes than if we try to work out the exact amounts and times for ourselves, and he implies that if we follow our tastes we act on will without judgment.

In the explanation of action Reid distinguishes mechanical, animal, and rational principles.[9] While mechanical principles require neither attention nor deliberation nor will, it is not so clear how animal principles differ from rational. Reid believes animal principles lack judgment and reason; since deliberation seems to require judgment and reason, animal principles seem to lack deliberation.[10] Hence Reid seems to imply that they require will without deliberation.

To illustrate will without reason and judgment, Reid mentions conflicts of motives that are not resolved by reason. A soldier may be afraid of certain death on retreating more than of probable death on advancing, and so he advances. A dog may be hungry, but more afraid of being beaten for eating, and so he does not eat, because 'the strongest force prevails'. From these examples Reid concludes that will does not require judgment.[11] These actions also

[7] 'Every man is conscious of a power to determine, in things which he conceives to depend upon his determination. To this power we give the name of *Will*.' (H 530a) '[Will] may more briefly be defined.—The determination of the mind to do or not to do something which we conceive to be in our power.' (H 531a) Since this account relies on our understanding of 'in our power', which takes us back to a notion of power, it is not a logical definition of will.

[8] 'In the strict philosophical sense, nothing can be called the action of a man, but what he previously conceived and willed or determined to do. In morals we commonly employ the word in this sense, and never impute anything to a man as his doing, in which his will was not interposed. But when moral imputation is not concerned, we call many things actions of the man, which he neither previously conceived nor willed. Hence the actions of men have been distinguished into three classes—the voluntary, the involuntary, and the mixed. By the last are meant such actions as are under the command of the will, but are commonly performed without any interposition of will.' (H 543a)

[9] 'There are some principles of action which require no attention, no deliberation, no will. These, for distinction's sake, we shall call mechanical. Another class we may call animal, as they seem common to man with other animals. A third class we may call rational, being proper to man as a rational creature.' (H 545a)

[10] 'They [sc. animal principles] are such as operate upon the will and intention, but do not suppose any exercise of judgment or reason; and are most of them to be found in some brute animals, as well as in man.' (H 551b)

[11] 'Thus we see, that, in many, even of our voluntary actions, we may act from the impulse of appetite, affection, or passion, without any exercise of judgment, and much in the same manner as brute animals seem to act.' (H 534a)

illustrate the operation of will without deliberation.[12] 'Voluntary' actions without judgment seem to be those in which the will is exerted without judgment. According to Reid, then, all voluntary actions involve an exercise of the will, but do not all involve an exercise of judgment.

Non-rational animals, children, and madmen are agents who act voluntarily, but are not accountable for their actions, because either they lack rational judgment or it is not effective in their actions (H 614b).[13] Reid does not say that non-rational animals have wills. But he seems to imply that they have wills, if he allows that children both have wills and act on them.

827. What is a Non-rational Will?

This claim that non-rational agents have wills is difficult to grasp. They have more than mechanical principles of action, in which Reid includes instincts and habits. Their cognitive and affective responses are too flexible to be simply instincts or habits. But why does he not simply ascribe appetites and desires to them? Why must they also have wills?

An appeal to Reid's account of will does not seem to answer this question. If he simply regarded the will as the last appetite in deliberation, as Hobbes does, and if he held Hobbes's view of deliberation, his position would be intelligible. For non-rational agents can have a series of impulses tending in different directions; such a sequence is Hobbesian deliberation. The strongest impulse in this series is the one that we act on; and so that, according to Hobbes, is the will.

We might argue that Hobbes's picture is incomplete, because we need something other than appetites and desires to resolve a conflict between them; this resolution might be the task of the will. Reid rejects any such argument. For he supposes that the comparative strength of impulses is all we need to explain the choice of one option over another; we do not need to assume the 'interposition' of the will.

The ascription of wills to non-rational agents seems to conflict with Reid's account of the conviction that belongs to agents with wills. He argues not only that 'we are efficient causes in our deliberate and voluntary actions' (H 603b), but also that in acting on our will we have this conviction.[14] In his view, the conviction that the effect is in our power is characteristic

[12] 'Our determination, or will to act, is not always the result of deliberation, it may be the effect of some passion or appetite, without any judgment interposed. . . . In such cases we act as brute animals do, or as children before the use of reason. We feel an impulse in our nature, and we yield to it.' (H 539a)

[13] 'But it ought to be observed, that he [man] is a voluntary agent long before he has the use of reason.' (H 558a) 'Animal principles of action require intention and will in their operation, but not judgment.' (H 579b) 'If, therefore, there be any principles of action in the human constitution, which, in their nature, necessarily imply such judgment [sc. of things abstract and general], they are the principles which we may call rational, to distinguish them from animal principles, which imply desire and will, but not judgment.' (H 580a) 'What kind, or what degree of liberty belongs to brute animals, or to our own species, before any use of reason, I do not know. We acknowledge that they have not the power of self-government. Such of their actions as may be called *voluntary*, seem to be invariably determined by the passion or appetite, or affection or habit, which is strongest at the time.' (H 600a)

[14] 'An exertion made deliberately and voluntarily, in order to produce an effect, implies a conviction that the effect is in our power . . . The language of all mankind, and their ordinary conduct in life, demonstrate, that they have a conviction of some active power in themselves to produce certain motions in their own and in other bodies, and to regulate and direct their own thoughts. This conviction we have so early in life, that we have no remembrance when, or in what way we acquired it.' (H 603b)

of acting on our will in general; but he does not suggest that the conviction is present in every action that meets his broader conditions for voluntary action. If a child's actions on passions and appetites are voluntary, the conviction that they are in one's power must go back to very early childhood; but Reid does not actually assert anything as strong as this. He might reply that the conviction that he refers to arises only from action that is not only voluntary, but also deliberate. But that reply seems to conflict with his initial definition of acting on our will; for he took it to involve the conviction that the action is in our power.

Perhaps Reid thinks non-rational agents have the relevant kind of conviction if they seem to make choices that rest on the assumption that one course of action is feasible and another is not. If we could train a chimpanzee to get a banana off a high branch by using a stick, then we took the stick away, and the chimpanzee gave up trying to reach the banana, we might say that previously the chimpanzee thought it was in its power to reach the banana, but no longer thinks so. If this sort of belief is sufficient for the exercise of will, we must allow will to non-rational animals.

But if this is sufficient for the conviction that an action is in one's power, the conviction does not seem to help Reid's argument to show that we have a conviction of an active power in ourselves. The belief that we can ascribe to a chimpanzee amounts only to the belief that one course of action rather than another will succeed. If Reid attributes to children and non-rational animals some stronger conviction that their actions are in their power, the conviction is apparently false; for Reid believes that only free agents perform actions that are strictly in their power.

Reid could point to a conviction that is more suitable for his argument. Some agents form the conviction in some cases that they face alternative courses of action and that it is up to them to choose between them. This conviction includes the conviction that they are not simply passive spectators of a conflict between internal forces. Sometimes I might feel entirely or partly passive; I might wonder how long it will be before the pain of having my tooth drilled makes me shout, or how long I will be able to listen to a lecture without falling asleep. In other cases I believe that I am not just watching the interaction of forces that are out of my control. This belief seems more like a conviction of agency; for I distinguish these cases from cases of sheer or partial passivity.

Such a conviction fits Reid's account of will as 'a power to determine, in things which he conceives to depend upon his determination' (H 530a). Agents with wills recognize that they must make up their minds and 'determine' because the impulses they are aware of do not settle the question of what they should do. Such a view of the will makes it reasonable for Reid to say that impulses and desires 'operate upon the will' (H 551b), and that passion both 'gives a strange bias to the judgment' (H 571a) and 'gives a violent impulse to the will' (H 571b). When passion misleads us, it 'first blinds the understanding, and then perverts the will' (H 573a). The will seems to be distinct from appetites and desires; it is not simply the last and strongest desire in a sequence of desires. When the will is involved, I recognize that I need to decide which of these impulses, if any, I am to follow, and that it is up to me to decide which I follow. This conviction of agency seems quite different from the belief that we might ascribe to the chimpanzee trying or not trying to get the banana.[15]

[15] It is the conviction that is reflected in Aquinas' doctrine of consent. See §252.

828. The Rational Aspect of Will

Some of Reid's other remarks on the will confirm these tendencies to treat a will as requiring judgment and understanding. His contrast between desire and will suggests that the will is rational.[16] Since we can will what we cannot desire, will is not simply a desire, either first-order or second-order. But it is difficult to see how a non-rational agent could act on a will that is different from a desire. Reid, therefore, seems to assume that a will is some sort of rational state.

The connexion between will and imputation also tends to suggest that acting on passion is insufficient for acting on one's will, and hence that non-rational agency does not imply will. When we act on passion, our actions 'are partly imputed to the passion; and if it is supposed to be irresistible, we do not impute them to the man at all' (H 534a). This feature of the passions helps to explain why non-rational animals are not responsible for their actions.[17] Reid implicitly appeals to Butler's notion of a superior principle, without yet having explained it. He suggests that we need superior principles if we are to be accountable for our actions. Imputability and responsibility require judgment in an agent guided by a superior principle.[18] Since accountability follows from having a will and active power, Reid implies that non-rational agents, not being accountable, lack will and active power. Similarly, human beings dominated by passions seem not to be exercising their active power.

Reid seems to accept this claim that will involves judgment and a superior principle; for he connects will with accountability.[19] He believes we act on the conviction that we are accountable for those actions in which we take ourselves to exercise our active powers by acting on our wills. Hence we should apparently take judgment, which is necessary for accountability, to be necessary for will.

One might reasonably suggest, therefore, that the will is moved by superior principles, and that we act on will rather than passion insofar as we are moved by consideration of the weight of reasons instead of simply registering the strength of desires. People who act wrongly under the influence of a strong passion are blameworthy if they ought to have restrained their passion; still, their action is not imputed entirely to them, but partly to the passion. Reid contrasts this case with a case of 'perfectly' voluntary action,[20] suggesting that actions may

[16] 'With regard to our own actions, we may desire what we do not will, and will what we do not desire; nay, what we have a great aversion to. . . . Desire, therefore, even when its object is some action of our own, is only an incitement to will, but it is not volition. The determination of the mind may be not to do what we desire to do.' (H 532a)

[17] 'We conceive brute animals to have no superior principle to control their appetites and passions. On this account, their actions are not subject to law. Men are in a like state in infancy, in madness, and in the delirium of a fever. They have appetites and passions, but they want that which makes them moral agents, accountable for their conduct, and objects of moral approbation or of blame.' (H 534a)

[18] 'Sometimes, however, there is a calm in the mind from the gales of passion or appetite, and the man is left to work his way, in the voyage of life, without those impulses which they give. Then he calmly weighs goods and evils which are at too great a distance to excite any passion. He judges what is best upon the whole, without feeling any bias drawing him to one side. He judges for himself as he would do for another in his situation; and the determination is wholly imputable to the man, and not in any degree to the passion.' (H 534a)

[19] 'Every man is led by nature to attribute to himself the free determinations of his own will, and to believe those events to be in his power which depend upon his will.' (H 524a) 'Every man knows infallibly that what is done by his conscious will and intention, is to be imputed to him as the agent or cause; and that what is done without his will and intention cannot be imputed to him with truth.' (H 524a)

[20] 'But if a man deliberately conceives a design of mischief against his neighbour, contrives the means, and executes it, the action admits of no alleviation, it is perfectly voluntary, and he bears the whole guilt of the evil intended and done.' (H 536a)

be voluntary to different degrees. An action is voluntary to the extent that it proceeds from the will, and it proceeds from the will to the extent that it proceeds from a superior principle, involving consideration of reasons rather than mere registering of strength of desires.

According to this argument, Reid ought to confine will to agents who are capable of acting on superior principles. This account of will seems to give a clearer conception of what it means to have the relevant sort of conviction that an action is in our power. We suppose that the action is up to us because we think about the merits of different courses of action, and our decision on this point determines what we do. This connexion between deliberation and active initiative is familiar in Aquinas.

This restrictive conception of the will gives Reid a strong argument against Hume's conception. He criticizes those philosophers who take the will to include 'not only our determination to act or not to act, but every motive and incitement to action' (H 531a). He thinks this broad conception of will is mistaken.[21] But he seems to invite the same objection to his view, by allowing voluntary action (explicitly) and will (less explicitly) to agents that act on these other conative states.

Reid might answer that this objection misconceives the distinction that he intends between passion and will. He compares it to the difference between advice and the 'determination' that we reach as a result of the advice.[22] One might try to understand the division between motives and determination as the division between the impulses that incline us one way or the other, and the 'decisive' or effective impulse. This is Hobbes's conception of the will as the last appetite. But this minimal understanding of 'determination' does not fit everything that Reid says about the will and about its connexion with the awareness of power. For we could have a 'determining' impulse without any awareness of the action's being up to us, or of our having the power to determine which of our impulses we act on.

To maintain his distinction between passion and will, Reid should argue that the relevant sort of 'determination to act or not to act' results from rational deliberation. He agrees with both mediaeval voluntarists and mediaeval rationalists who distinguish will from passion, and so he rejects the sentimentalist tendency, derived from Hobbes, to assimilate the two. But he faces the difficulties that a voluntarist faces in recognizing the rational character of the will.

Reid might object to our connecting will with rational deliberation; for our will is relevant to actions that are not themselves the immediate product of rational deliberation. But this does not refute the claim that the will involves practical reason and deliberation. For some actions may be voluntary because they are open to the influence of rational deliberation, even though no rational deliberation is engaged in them, and because we consent to them and thereby recognize that they are open to deliberation.[23] Reid believes that this feature

[21] 'It is this, probably, that has led some philosophers to represent desire, aversion, hope, fear, joy, sorrow, all our appetites, passions, and affections, as different modifications of the will; which, I think, tends to confound things which are very different in their nature.' (H 531a)

[22] 'The advice given to a man, and his determination consequent to that advice, are things so different in their nature, that it would be improper to call them modifications of one and the same thing. In like manner, the motives to action, and the determination to act or not to act, are things that have no common nature, and, therefore, ought not to be confounded under one name, or represented as different modifications of the same thing. For this reason, in speaking of the will in this Essay, I do not comprehend under that term any of the incitements or motives which may have an influence upon our determinations, but solely the determination itself, and the power to determine.' (H 531a)

[23] On consent see §827.

of such actions makes them imputable to the agent; and he could give the same account of what makes them voluntary. He need not say that they actually express the agent's will.

829. Reason v. Passion

Some of the difficulties in Reid's position emerge in his comparison of the division between will and passion with the division between reason and passion. He agrees with both common sense and ancient philosophers in separating two parts 'which have influence upon our voluntary determinations'.[24] He takes the rational part to include superior principles, which are the basis of the authority of the rational part. Reid traces Butler's division to the Platonic division between the non-rational and the rational part, which he identifies with a division between *hormê* and *nous* (or the *hêgemonikon*).[25]

Reid does not treat the will as a superior principle. The rational and non-rational parts are sources of different kinds of influence on the will and our 'voluntary determinations' (H 536a). Neither the rational nor the non-rational part is characteristic of, or essential to, the will. On this point his division differs from Aquinas' description of the will as essentially rational desire (appetitus rationalis).[26] But his position does not seem consistent unless he holds Aquinas' view. For he repeats his usual claim about the connexion between judgment and accountability (H 536a). If he takes will to imply accountability, he should take rational judgment to be essential to will.

It is difficult, however to express the essential connexion between reason and will. Reid wants to say that we can act on our will without being guided by the rational part. In such cases we might say that we deliberately refuse to follow the superior principle that we recognize. One might ask how something that is essentially rational could refuse to follow reason.

Reid suggests an answer to this question (though he does not apply it directly to his description of the will). In some cases we seem to choose simply by inclination, as when we choose between cheese and lobster. But he argues that our choice does not result simply from inclination; we correctly believe it is all right to follow inclination because we judge that the two tastes are equally good and that it is reasonable to follow inclination instead of trying to reason about which to prefer (H 534b). Rational judgment tells us how to decide the first-order question about which action to prefer.

An application of this pattern might help to explain how the will, while being essentially rational, can reject reason. We may reach a rational, even if mistaken, conclusion that in this case it is all right to follow passion without reflecting further on the merits of the course of action that our passion inclines us to do. This way of understanding will explains how Reid

[24] 'There is an irrational part, common to us with brute animals, consisting of appetites, affections and passions; and there is a cool and rational part. The first, in many cases, gives a strong impulse, but without judgment, and without authority. The second is always accompanied with authority.' (H 536a) '. . . there is a leading principles in the soul, which, like the supreme power in a commonwealth, has authority and right to govern. This leading principle they [sc. the ancients] called reason. It is this which distinguishes men that are adult from brutes, idiots, and infants. The inferior principles, which are under the authority of the leading principle, are our passions and appetites, which we have in common with the brutes.' (H 588b)

[25] He cites Cic. *Off.* i 101.

[26] See Aquinas §241. Aquinas gets confused when he speaks of the will as rational by participation; see §257.

can distinguish it from the influence of practical reason, but also insist on its connexion with accountability, which requires judgment.

830. Animal v. Rational Principles

Reid's further remarks about the will make his position no less perplexing. He distinguishes mechanical, animal, and rational principles of action. Mechanical principles require no will or intention; animal principles require will and intention, but not judgment; and rational principles require judgment (H 558a, 579b, 580a, 599b). While everyone acknowledges mechanical and animal principles, some philosophers deny any rational principles. Reid sets out to show that we must recognize them. Since animal principles do not require the reason and judgment that are characteristic of human agents, they belong to other animals too (H 551b).

It is particularly difficult to see what he means by claiming that the operation of animal principles requires will and intention. These principles are present in non-rational animals as well as rational; does Reid mean that in non-rational animals will and intention are involved in the operation of animal principles? It is difficult to see why they should be. For in rational agents will and passion are distinct; passions provide motives and can influence the will, but Reid does not believe that they are effective only when will endorses them. If they can move rational agents independently of will, why can they not move non-rational agents in the same way?

When Reid claims that the operation of animal principles involves will, he might not be referring to non-rational agents. He might mean that we normally act voluntarily when we act on animal principles, since normally we are accountable for how we act on animal principles. If we are accountable, will is involved, since will is the source of accountability. But if he has this role in mind for will, he cannot reasonably separate will from judgment; for, as we have seen, he takes accountability to vary with the role of judgment in an action.

Reid's discussion of animal principles corresponds to Aquinas' discussion of the passions, but in one respect it is inferior to Aquinas. Reid ought to explain how animal principles are the source of some of the voluntary actions for which we are accountable. Aquinas explains this by appeal to the consent of the will, understood as essentially rational desire. Reid follows him in taking accountability to require some role for the will, but he does not explicitly describe the will as essentially rational.

831. Superior Principles

We can perhaps clarify some of Reid's views about will and reason if we turn to his explicit discussion of action on rational principles. He follows Butler in ascribing superiority and authority to these principles.[27] Acting on rational principles involves some sort of judgment. But evidently not every sort of judgment will do. If we act on purely instrumental reasoning about ways to satisfy a particular appetite, we do not necessarily act on a rational principle.

[27] 'Thus we see, that, in many, even of our voluntary actions, we may act from the impulse of appetite, affection, or passion, without any exercise of judgment, and much in the same manner as brute animals seem to act.' (H 534a)

We recognize an authoritative principle insofar as we recognize that some consideration apart from the strength of my desire favours one course of action over another. Sometimes one appetite may be restrained by a stronger contrary appetite, as in the earlier example of a hungry dog who leaves his food alone from fear of punishment; the dog does not act on a superior principle.[28] Reid suggests that without superior principles non-rational agents yield passively to the stronger impulse; he returns to the connexion between will and active power. Though he does not say that acting on our will is acting on a superior principle, he attributes the common character of active, rather than passive, reaction to both of them.

Moreover, an authoritative principle tends to provoke self-approval (if we follow it) and shame or remorse (if we violate it).[29] Our reactions to such a principle rest on the considerations that underlie it. Since we think we have some reason to follow it apart from our desire for the end that it enjoins, we have some basis for reproaching ourselves. We do not simply notice that our predominant desire in the past is no longer predominant.

So far Reid follows Butler. He exploits this conception of a superior principle in order to defend a conception of rational self-love that is not explicitly present in Butler. He sees that when Butler speaks of superior principles and claims that they are in accordance with the agent's nature, he is not simply explaining what he means by 'superior principle' or 'nature'. On the contrary, Butler claims that acting on principles that consider value as well as psychological strength fits our nature as temporally extended agents.

Reid points out that superior principles reflect our conception of our good on the whole, which results from our conception of ourselves as temporally extended agents whose good is to be considered. Since we are temporally extended agents, we have interests that cannot be achieved by simply following the stronger current impulse; and so we discover that in our own interest we have to follow principles that rely on authority rather than mere strength.[30] In Reid's view, this account of superior principles and of self-love is not his innovation or Butler's. It captures arguments that lead Greek moralists to recognize an ultimate end that underlies all rational desire.[31]

This comparison with Butler and with the eudaemonism of Aristotle and Aquinas is appropriate, but it does not fit Reid's view of the will. Aquinas presents his theory of the will as a simplifying and unifying account of (1) the difference between will and passion;

[28] 'Do we attribute any virtue to the dog on this account? I think not. Nor should we ascribe any virtue to a man in like case. The animal is carried by the strongest moving force. This requires no exertion, no self-government, but passively to yield to the strongest impulse.' (H 554a) 'One principle crosses another. Without self-government, that is which is strongest at the time will prevail. And that which is weakest at one time may, from passion, from a change of disposition or of fortune, become strongest at another time.' (H 578b)

[29] 'We may resist the impulses of appetite and passion, not only without regret, but with self-applause and triumph; but the calls of reason and duty can never be resisted, without remorse and self-condemnation.' (H 536a)

[30] 'We learn to observe the connexions of things, and the consequences of our actions; and, taking an extended view of our existence, past, present, and future, we correct our first notions of good and ill, and form the conception of what is good or ill upon the whole; which must be estimated, not from the present feeling, or from the present animal desire or aversion, but from a due consideration of its consequences, certain or probable during the whole of our existence. That which, taken with all its discoverable connexions and consequences, brings more good than ill, I call good upon the whole. That brute animals have any conception of this good, I see no reason to believe. And it is evident, that man cannot have the conception of it, till reason be so far advanced, that he can seriously reflect upon the past, and take a prospect of the future part of his existence. It appears therefore, that the very conception of what is good or ill for us upon the whole, is the offspring of reason, and can be only in beings endowed with reason.' (H 580a)

[31] 'I pretend not in this to say any thing that is new, but what reason suggested to those who first turned their attention to the philosophy of morals. . . .' (206 = H 581a) He quotes Cic. *Off.* i 11, quoted in §176n3.

(2) conditions for responsibility; (3) the necessity of the pursuit of happiness. All of these questions are answered by Aquinas' account of the will, because the will is an essentially rational desire that is focussed on the pursuit of the ultimate end that is happiness, and because we are responsible for actions in which our desire for happiness has some causal role.[32] This is not how Reid explains his position. While he takes will to be necessary for responsibility, he does not take it to involve the desire (confined to agents with rational principles) for one's good as a whole. Hence he does not believe that responsibility involves a causal role for this desire. He differs from Aquinas on this point partly because he does not always take the will to be essentially rational.

This disagreement with Aquinas carries a cost for Reid. He agrees with Aquinas in taking the will to be essentially connected with responsibility. But he also takes judgment to be necessary for responsibility. Aquinas agrees on both points, and explains the connexion between them, by taking will to require rational judgment (appropriately understood). Reid does not explain the connexion in this way. By failing to explain it, he leaves obscure the roles of will and judgment in responsibility.

832. Will and Freedom

Some of the obscurities in Reid's conception of the will are easier to explain if we turn to his views about the freedom of the will, which he takes to be incompatible with determinism. His argument for indeterminism rests on our convictions about agency, which he takes to conflict with the truth of causal determinism.

He assumes we have a conviction of liberty as an agent's 'power over the determination of his own will' (599a). But he adds a second condition on freedom, rejecting necessitation.[33] This condition seems to tell us that the relevant power comes only from ourselves. But why should we need this information? If the source of the power is not wholly within ourselves, why should we abandon our claim to have the power?

Reid answers that the two conditions, referring to the possession of the power and to its source, are not really separate; the requirement of power implies the absence of necessitation. He argues that if we have the power to do x here and now, we must have all the means necessary for doing x.[34] If we would not have done x without the occurrence of some event that happened before we were born, we lack the power to do x.[35] Once we

[32] See Aquinas §267.

[33] 'But if, in every voluntary action, the determination of his will be the necessary consequence of something involuntary in the state of his mind, or of something in his external circumstances, he is not free; he has not what I call the liberty of a moral agent, but is subject to necessity.' (H 599b)

[34] 'All that is necessary to the production of any effect, is power in an efficient cause to produce the effect, and the exertion of that power: for it is a contradiction to say, that the cause has the power to produce the effect, and exerts that power, and yet the effect is not produced. The effect cannot be in his power unless all the means necessary to its production be in his power.' (H 603b) 'Were it not that the terms *cause* and *agent* have lost their proper meaning, in the crowd of meanings that have been given them, we should immediately perceive a contradiction in the terms *necessary cause* and *necessary agent*. . . . To say that man is a free agent, is no more than to say, that in some instances he is truly an agent and a cause, and is not merely acted upon as a passive instrument. On the contrary, to say that he acts from necessity, is to say that he does not act at all, that he is no agent . . .' (H 607b)

[35] On Reid's conception of power and its connexion to his indeterminism see Lehrer, *TR* 260–1.

recognize what follows from our being genuine agents and active causes with the power to produce effects, we can see that indeterminism is true.

These arguments about liberty introduce a new element in Reid's views on will and responsibility. So far we have found reasons to ascribe three views to him: (1) According to his broad view, acting on will is necessary and sufficient for accountability. In one place he says that 'the free determinations of his own will' are attributed to the agent,[36] but immediately afterwards he speaks of actions that are 'subject to the will' and 'what is done by his conscious will and intention'[37] as attributable to the agent. (2) According to a more restrictive view, actions are attributable to the agent to the extent that they proceed from will and judgment. These actions are 'perfectly voluntary' and the whole guilt is attributed to the agent (73).[38] (3) According to the most restrictive view, actions are attributable to the agent only if they proceed from will and judgment and are done freely. This is the account of responsibility that Reid defends in his arguments about liberty.

When he defends the most restrictive view, Reid suggests that some actions proceeding from will and judgment may not be attributable to the agent, because they are not free.[39] In order to show that will does not imply accountability, Reid cites actions dependent on will for which the agent is not accountable. From these cases he argues that freedom is an additional condition for accountability, not automatically satisfied by actions dependent on will.

One might reasonably doubt, however, whether in these cases we take a person's action to proceed from his will without accountability. Reid mentions the actions of brute animals, children, madmen, and people acting on irresistible motives (H 614b, 619a). But if we really believe that these motives and emotions are irresistible, we need not agree that when we act on them we act on our will. In such cases we seem to act as non-rational animals do; we are moved simply by the strongest desire (H 534a),[40] where 'strongest' is taken to imply 'animal strength', as Reid explains it (H 611a).[41]

Reid claims that even when we act solely on the strongest animal motive, and when this motive is so strong that we are not accountable for acting on it, our will is engaged. But he does not give a good reason for introducing the will. The will seems to have no distinct explanatory role in the process that Reid conceives as simply an interplay of forces. The mere

[36] Quoted in §825. [37] Quoted in §828. [38] Ibid.

[39] 'If there can be a better and a worse in actions on the system of necessity, let us suppose a man necessarily determined in all cases to will and to do what is best to be done, he would surely be innocent and inculpable. But, as far as I am able to judge, he would not be entitled to the esteem and moral approbation of those who knew him and believed this necessity.' (600b) 'This moral liberty a man may have, though it do not extend to all his actions, or even to all his voluntary actions . . . In the first part of his life, he has not the power of self-government any more than the brutes. The power over the determinations of his own will, which belongs to him in ripe years, is limited . . .' (H 600b) 'I acknowledge that a crime must be voluntary; for, if it be not voluntary, it is no deed of the man, nor can be justly imputed to him; but it is no less necessary that the criminal have moral liberty. In men that are adult and of a sound mind, this liberty is presumed. But in every case where it cannot be presumed, no criminality is imputed, even to voluntary actions.' (H 614b) '. . . we do not conceive every thing without exception to be in a man's power which depends upon his will. There are many exceptions to this general rule.' (H 619a). 'There are cases, however, in which a man's voluntary actions are thought to be very little, if at all, in his power, on account of the violence of the motive that impels him.' (H 619b)

[40] Quoted in §826.

[41] 'They [sc. brute animals] do not appear to have any self-command; an appetite or a passion in them is overcome only by a stronger contrary one. On this account, they are not accountable for their actions, nor can they be the subjects of law.' (H 611b) '[Rational motives] do not give a blind impulse to the will as animal motives do . . . Brutes, I think, cannot be influenced by such motives. They have not the conception of *ought* and *ought not*.' (H 611b)

fact that the process reaches some 'determination' does not show that we need anything more than a Hobbesian 'last appetite'; it does not show that we have the determinative power that Reid ascribes to a will. Hence it is not clear that action on irresistible passions and emotions engages the will; hence these actions do not show that will is insufficient for accountability.

If, then, the will is involved in fewer actions than Reid supposes, his examples do not involve will, and hence they do not show that accountability requires freedom in addition to will and judgment. If we are convinced that will and judgment have the appropriate causal role in someone's actions, we have a good reason for taking the agent to be accountable for the actions.

In speaking of an 'appropriate' causal role for will and judgment, we may appear to be evading the issue that Reid raises, about the character of the appropriate causal role. Still, we seem to be entitled to recognize a causal role for our will and judgment that falls short of freedom, as Reid conceives it. When Reid takes freedom to be a further condition, he suggests that our actions might 'depend on' will and judgment, even if we are not free in performing those actions. But his remarks about will, judgment, and accountability suggest that dependence on will and judgment implies accountability.

833. Why is Freedom Necessary for Accountability?

Reid might answer us by pointing out that we take will to be relevant to accountability because we take it to involve the exercise of active power. But we cannot exercise active power, in his view, if we are necessitated. In claiming that we ourselves are the agents of our actions, we deny that our actions result from a deterministic process that results from events outside us and our will. If our actions resulted from such a deterministic process, the agents responsible for our actions (if any) would be external to us, and we ourselves would not exercise active power (280).

Reid takes seriously the claim that we ourselves are the causes of our actions. He takes it to require a doctrine of agent causation, so that, strictly speaking, the cause of our actions is ourselves, not some event, process, or state in us.[42] Though he recognizes that we use 'cause' in looser senses that do not require the complete causal self-sufficiency of a cause or agent, he believes that the strict sense fits our convictions about our agency, and hence about our accountability.

These claims raise a difficulty for Reid. He admits that we habitually use 'cause' and 'agent' loosely, so that we do not always take them to imply his strict conditions. How, then, does he know that our experience of agency, formed by our deliberate and voluntary action, is a conviction that we are causes in his strict sense, and not only in the looser sense consistent with necessitation?[43]

[42] 'If the person was the cause of that determination of his own will, he was free in that action, and it is justly imputed to him, whether it be good or bad.' (H 602ab) 'To suppose any other cause necessary to the production of an effect, than a being who had the power and the will to produce it, is a contradiction; for it is to suppose that being to have power to produce the effect, and not to have power to produce it.' (H 626b)

[43] This question is connected to Reid's acceptance of a principle of efficient-causal exclusivity, discussed by Yaffe, *MA* 45–7.

It is difficult even to understand Reid's strong conception of power. Some restriction on its apparent scope seems to be needed. We normally suppose that we have the power to move a pen or kick a football. We lack a necessary means, however, for exercising this power unless the pen and the football exist. Their existence may not be in our power; it is not in our power to create all the instruments we use, still less to create them immediately before we use them. In any case, our own existence is presumably a necessary condition of our exercising any power, but it is not itself in our power.

Reid might reply that we do not really have the power to kick a football, but only have the power to move our foot in a particular way or (since the existence of our foot and its connexion to our brain are not in our power) to make a certain kind of choice that can be described without reference to a foot or a football. But his position is actually more complicated. He concedes that there may be intermediary processes of which we are ignorant, coming between our decision to raise our arm and the rising of our arm.[44] His treatment of 'indirect causation' seems relevant to questions about determinism. For here he admits that my responsibility for shooting my neighbour does not depend on my act of will's being sufficient, all by itself, for his being shot. The shooting must somehow appropriately depend on my will. It may be difficult to describe this dependence precisely, but Reid has good reason to claim that we can recognize an appropriate causal connexion that carries accountability.[45]

Why, then, might we not take the same view about the causal sequence that precedes the contribution of my will? If I deliberately will to shoot my neighbour and set in motion the train of events that I believe will result in the shooting, am I not accountable for shooting him, even if I am not the only cause of my deliberate will? Reid suggests, quite reasonably, that we need not be concerned, for purposes of responsibility, about whether other unknown processes intervene between my will and the shooting. Why, then, should we not be similarly indifferent to whether my will is ultimately the outcome of unknown deterministic processes? Even if the ultimate determinant of my neighbour's being shot is some sequence of events in the early history of the universe, that does not affect the fact that my will contributes causally to the shooting.

Reid might reply that our will is taken to fix responsibility only in cases where it is the exercise of the appropriate sort of power. If I want to score a goal, and I am a skilled footballer, but no one will play football, I cannot in these circumstances score a goal. I cannot exercise my ability (as we might call it[46]) to score a goal in the present circumstances unless the present circumstances make it possible for me to do something that leads to my scoring a goal; and so I might say that I lack the power to score a goal.

[44] 'This may leave some doubt whether we be, in the strictest sense, the efficient cause of the voluntary motions of our own body. But it can produce no doubt with regard to the moral estimation of our actions. The man who knows that such an event depends upon his will, and who deliberately wills to produce it, is, in the strictest moral sense, the cause of the event; and it is justly imputed to him, whatever physical causes may have concurred in its production . . . Philosophers may therefore dispute innocently, whether we be the proper efficient causes of the voluntary motions of our own body; or whether we be only, as Malebranche thinks, the occasional causes. The determination of this question, if it can be determined, can have no effect on human conduct.' (H 528b)

[45] We cannot say that the relevant sort of dependence makes my will a necessary condition for my neighbour's being shot, because of cases of over-determination and pre-emption.

[46] Cf. Scotus' treatment of capacity, §269.

But this requirement (that if I am able to do x here and now, circumstances must make it possible to do something that leads to doing x) falls far short of Reid's demand for an absolutely self-sufficient power that depends on no antecedent conditions external to the agent. Why, then, should we ever ascribe to ourselves the sort of absolutely self-sufficient power that he mentions? If we do not think we have absolutely self-sufficient power, his argument from our conviction of power to the truth of indeterminism must collapse.

834. Objections to Reid's Indeterminist Account of Agency

The same objection faces Reid's appeal to our convictions about causation. He argues: (1) We think we are the causes of our actions. (2) A genuine cause must be an undetermined cause. (3) Hence the truth of our conviction in (1) rests on the truth of indeterminism. The weakness in Reid's argument lies in his effort to combine his first two claims. Let us grant the second claim for the sake of argument, and allow that the only genuine cause is an undetermined cause. But is this the sense of 'cause' that properly applies to the common-sense conviction stated in the first claim? In believing that we are causes, do we believe that we are undetermined causes?[47]

Reid admits that we tend to use 'cause' loosely so that it applies to determined (let us call them) 'quasi-causes'. Why, then, should we not suppose that when we believe we are causes, we use 'causes' to refer to quasi-causes? If Reid could show that we hold the views about power and ability that require us to be undetermined causes, he would be entitled to claim that we take ourselves—implicitly at least—to be undetermined causes. But his arguments to show that we attribute absolutely self-sufficient power to ourselves are open to objection.

Reid argues that we have a firm belief in freedom that cannot be uprooted by any doctrine of necessity, even in those who find the doctrine convincing (H 616b, 618a). His observation is a legitimate objection against any 'hard' determinist (someone who combines incompatibilism with determinism). But it is an argument for his indeterminist position only if our conviction conflicts with the truth of determinism. To show that it conflicts with determinism, Reid must rely on the arguments about causation and power that we have previously disputed. He cannot claim the support of common sense and universal conviction for his indeterminist analysis of freedom and power.

He tries to show that some of the beliefs connected with our convictions about freedom are reasonable only if determinism is false. He argues that praise and blame are wrongly directed at human agents if determinism is true, since accountability presupposes power.[48] If determinism were true, reward and punishment would have a purely prospective justification. Since a law was broken, the inducement to keep it must have been too weak; and that is the legislator's mistake. It is misguided to attribute the fault to the lawbreaker.[49]

[47] Rowe, *TRFM*, ch. 4, discusses Reid's views more fully and more sympathetically than I have discussed them.

[48] 'That no man can be under a moral obligation to do what it is impossible for him to do, or to forbear what it is impossible for him to forbear, is an axiom as self-evident as any in mathematics.' (H 621a) Reid's argument on obligation and freedom is examined by Lehrer, *TR* 273–5.

[49] 'We might as well impute a fault to the balance, when it does not raise a weight of two pounds by a force of one pound. Upon the supposition of necessity, there can be neither reward nor punishment, in the proper sense, as these

Reid is right to suppose that obligation and responsibility presuppose that the agent is in some sense the cause of the good or bad action and that in some sense it is possible for the agent to do or not to do the action. But what are the relevant senses of 'cause' and 'possible'? Reid is entitled to rely on our convictions about accountability and obligation only if he can show that they rely on his strongest conditions for causation and possibility. But he has not shown this. Admittedly, we do not blame agents for actions that their beliefs and values seem not to affect, or for actions on beliefs and values that seem to have been formed in the wrong way. But when we praise or blame people, we do not explicitly assume that their choices are not caused by any previous events.[50] We do not try to assure ourselves about the absence of external causation, and we do not change our minds about the agent's responsibility simply because we learn a causal account of the origin of the agent's values.

Indeed, one of Reid's favourite arguments from common sense seems to work against him here. When he discusses intermediate causes (in ascribing responsibility for shooting one's neighbour), he assumes that our knowledge, will, and intention are decisive, and that the causal mechanisms by which they achieve their effects do not matter for purposes of accountability. We might reasonably argue that this is also the point of view of common sense on determinism; we are interested in the role of our will and intention and not in all the processes by which our will and intention came about. Instead of claiming that our intuitive convictions about agency exclude the truth of determinism, Reid would be better advised to claim that they are indifferent to determinism.

835. The Free Will and the Rational Will

Reid's indeterminist conception of freewill seeks to answer the objection (urged by, for instance, Hobbes and Hume) that indeterminism gives an unintelligible account of decision and choice. From the determinist point of view, the introduction of indeterminism implies that on some occasions nothing in particular causes me to choose one way rather than another, and so my choice is unexplained and capricious, contrary to what we expect of a rational agent, let alone of a virtuous agent. Reid answers these objections by arguing that indeterminism does not introduce caprice.

Reid admits that 'rational beings, in proportion as they are wise and good, act according to the best motives' (H 609a); but he thinks this admission raises no difficulties for an indeterminist position. He is right, 'according to' means simply that a good person does what good motives prescribe. But this meaning does not capture our conception of a good person; someone who did what good motives prescribe, but for the wrong reason, would not be a good person. Good agents not only conform to good motives, but also act as they do because of what the good motives prescribe. And how is this 'because of' to be explained except by saying that good agents are causally determined by the prescriptions of good motives? We might support this demand for causal determination by good motives from

words imply good and ill desert. Reward and punishment are only tools employed to produce a mechanical effect.' (H 613a)

[50] Reid does not think choices are uncaused, but he believes they are caused by the agent, not in virtue of any previous event.

Kant's description of the person who acts from duty in contrast to the one who acts merely in accord with duty.[51] If, as Reid argues, no motives causally determine us, we apparently cannot be good agents.

Reid rejects this inference. He argues that we can draw a distinction between capricious and non-capricious action even if we reject determinism for human actions.[52] He suggests that someone who resists animal motives 'when duty requires' is a good person. But apparently the mere conjunction suggested by 'when' does not make someone a good person. We also require a good person to resist animal motives because duty requires. If my recognition that duty requires this action does not explain my doing this action, I am not a good person; but my recognition that duty requires it does not seem to explain my action unless it is a causal determinant of the action. Reid has not explained how the causal claims involved in our judgment of a person's character can be justified without belief in causal determination.

He might argue that the determinist interpretation of common-sense causal assumptions cannot be correct; for surely we can apply common-sense judgments without holding a metaphysical thesis about the truth of determinism? This argument is worth considering, but Reid is not in a good position to press it. Perhaps common-sense moral judgments are flexible in relation to controversial metaphysical theses that do not seem to be explicitly accepted by common sense. But this general principle casts doubt on Reid's attempt to derive indeterminism from common-sense judgments about responsibility no less than it casts doubt on any determinist attempt to argue from common-sense judgments about character.

Reid believes that agents choose the courses of action that make them virtuous or vicious. Why do they do this? An intellectualist account of the will argues that the vicious person has made a mistake about the good, and has chosen some apparent or partial good that appeared to him to be the right way to secure his ultimate good. Reid rejects the determinist assumptions of this view; for he thinks the will must be free to choose for or against the greater apparent good. He agrees that we are accountable for this choice, and therefore we make it freely. To explain how we make the choice, he asks what people will do if they have the freedom that he attributes to them. He assumes that wise people may be expected to choose the greater long-term good over the immediately pleasant.[53] But what justifies this expectation? If the will is likely to pick the pleasant or the overall good, these two objects are likely to seem attractive; but whether they are attractive or not seems to depend on what sorts of considerations actually determine the will. If nothing determines the will, we have no reason to expect that these will be the most likely objects of choice.

Moreover, why is it wise or foolish to choose one or the other option in the situations Reid mentions? A choice shows foolishness in the agent not because it reaches the wrong

[51] See Kant, *G* 397. For the argument that reasons for an action are best understood as causes of the action see Davidson, 'Actions' 693–700.

[52] 'To resist the strongest animal motives when duty requires, is so far from being capricious, that it is, in the highest degree, wise and virtuous. And we hope this is often done by good men.' (H 612b)

[53] 'It may surely be expected, that of the various actions within the sphere of their power, they will choose what pleases them most for the present, or what appears to be most for their real, though distant good. When there is a competition between these motives, the foolish will prefer present gratification; the wise, the greater and more distant good.' (H 612b)

conclusion, but because it rests on some error about what is most important or most choiceworthy. But if Reid is right, ought we to assume that an agent's choice of immediate pleasure in preference to overall good betrays foolishness? If the will were determined by our judgment of what is best, failure to choose what is best would show lack of understanding. But if the will can recognize what is best, and still choose something else, the choice of something else does not seem to be evidence of foolishness. Reid does not seem entitled to his assumptions about wisdom and folly.

He faces these difficulties because he believes we are accountable for our choice of good and bad courses of action only if we freely choose them. If this choice is to be free, it cannot, in his view, be determined by any specific sort of consideration; in particular it cannot be determined by consideration of the greatest apparent good, as the rationalist supposes. But in that case, the choice by the will must rest on no considerations at all. If nothing causes the will to choose the greater good over immediate pleasure, how can the choice be relevant to accountability?

In supposing that an undetermined choice underlies claims about accountability, Reid seems to undermine the conception of choice that allows it to play a role in judgments about accountability. Normally we think an agent's choice matters because we think it is made in the light of considerations, and we suppose that these considerations are the appropriate or inappropriate ones to determine an agent's actions. But a choice that is not based on, or determined by, anything at all does not seem important for judgments about accountability.

Reid has not described a credible alternative to an intellectualist conception of the will. Though he claims that intellectualism cannot explain freedom and accountability, the alternative conception he offers is unsatisfactory. It should prompt us to ask whether the objections to the intellectualist view are as decisive as he thinks they are. Reid's indeterminism is not justified by our beliefs about freedom and responsibility.

If we recognize these objections to Reid's position, we ought not to go to the other extreme and to argue, as Hume does, that the truth of determinism is necessary for judgments about accountability. A reliable and non-accidental connexion between recognizing the appropriate considerations and acting on them may fall short of a deterministic connexion; even if it did not always hold, it might hold reliably enough to support our normal judgments about agents, wills, and characters. Reid does not show how his position fits common-sense judgments about actions and character. He recognizes the importance of reconciling his position with these judgments; indeed, his main objection to his opponents is that they fail in the task of reconciliation. He does not show that his indeterminist position is any better on this point.

These objections to Reid rest on his remarks about will and accountability in the earlier essays (i–iii) before he turns to questions about freedom (in Essay iv). In arguing that common sense commits us to indeterminism, he departs from the description of common sense that he relies on the earlier essay. We have illustrated this point from his different claims about will, judgment, and accountability. His claims about will and judgment in the earlier essays are not completely consistent; but they are clear enough to cast doubt on the incompatibilist claims that he attributes to common sense in Essay iv.

Reid's indeterminism is probably not the only reason for his attempt to separate the will from reason and judgment, but, as in Scotus, his indeterminism and his voluntarism tend to support each other. In offering a voluntarist account of the will, he fails to explain

how acting on our will necessarily differs from acting on our strongest passion. If he had followed Aquinas, and taken will to involve judgment, he would have been able to make clear the sense in which rational agents do not simply act on their strongest passion, even in cases where they choose to act against reason or to ignore reason. This role of judgment in will would also explain why human action is free and why we are accountable for it. These features of Aquinas' view are absent from Reid; instead he defends a voluntarist and indeterminist account of will and responsibility. But his claim that common sense supports voluntarism and indeterminism is not convincing. The convictions that he seeks to enlist in support of his position give stronger support to Aquinas.

836. Self-Love and Happiness

Though Reid does not follow Aquinas in taking the desire for happiness to be the distinguishing feature of a free agent, his conception of it makes it quite suitable for that role. His views about happiness are closer to those of the Greek and mediaeval moralists than to those of his immediate predecessors; he is an exception to the general tendency to accept a hedonist conception of self-love and happiness.[54] He gives a much fairer account of the Greek conception of happiness than we find in his predecessors. He therefore corrects some of Butler's and Price's claims about happiness and one's own good, so that Reid's conception of reasonable self-love is more suitable than Butler's own conception for the role that Butler has in mind for self-love.[55]

In Reid's view, reasonable self-love aims at 'our good on the whole'. Sometimes he identifies this good on the whole with happiness. He discusses the position of the ancient moralists as a position about our good on the whole:[56] In discussing their view, he asks 'How can he be happy, who places his happiness in things which it is not in his power to attain . . . ?' (H 583a). He means that these things do not contribute to our good on the whole.

Reid's other remarks about happiness are easily understood if he identifies happiness with one's good on the whole.[57] He refers to the same thing when he considers the connexion between one's own happiness and the happiness of others. We discover that we are 'social creatures, whose happiness or misery is very much connected with that of our fellow men' (H 584a). It would be difficult to understand these remarks if 'happiness' referred to something narrower than our overall good. Similarly, he speaks of happiness in a remark

[54] Sidgwick comments: 'It is to be observed that whereas Price and Stewart (after Butler) identify the object of self-love with happiness or pleasure, Reid conceives this "good" more vaguely as including perfection and happiness; though he sometimes uses "good" and happiness as convertible terms, and seems practically to have the latter in view in all that he says of self-love.' (*OHE* 228n)

[55] See Butler, §689.

[56] 'It has been the opinion of the wisest men, in all ages, that this principle, of a regard to our good upon the whole, in a man duly enlightened, leads to the practice of every virtue. This was acknowledged, even by Epicurus; and the best moralists among the ancients derived all the virtues from this principle [of a regard to our good upon the whole]. For, among them, the whole of morals was reduced to this question, What is the greatest good? Or, what course of conduct is best for us upon the whole?' (H 582b)

[57] 'We see, indeed, that the same station or condition of life, which makes one man happy, makes another miserable, and to a third is perfectly indifferent. . . . The evils of life, which every man must feel, have a very different effect upon different men. What sinks one into despair and absolute misery, rouses the virtue and magnanimity of another . . . He rises superior to adversity, and is made wiser and better by it, and consequently happier.' (H 583a)

about the superior principle concerned with one's own good. In his view, both our pursuit of our own overall good and our regard for morality reflect rational principles; his statements of this view speak indifferently of regard for our happiness and of regard for our good on the whole.[58]

Sidgwick is right, then, to claim that Reid does not speak of self-love and one's own good in purely hedonist terms. He is wrong, however, to suggest that Reid's view of the object of self-love is vague or inconsistent. Reid seems to conceive it consistently as one's own good, which includes more than pleasure. Sidgwick perhaps supposes that Reid is inconsistent in speaking of the object of self-love sometimes as one's happiness and sometimes as including more than pleasure.[59] Sidgwick finds these remarks inconsistent because he assumes, without any warrant, that Reid uses 'happiness' in a hedonist sense. Reid's view is (for all Sidgwick shows) quite clear and consistent.

Sidgwick's criticism of Stewart's restatement of Reid's position faces similar objections. He mentions Stewart as one of the modern moralists who identify one's own good with happiness, and therefore—Sidgwick assumes—with pleasure. Since Sidgwick attributes a hedonist conception of happiness to Stewart, he argues that Stewart misrepresents the eudaemonism of the ancient philosophers by identifying eudaimonia, as the ancients understand it, with happiness.[60] Sidgwick's criticism would be fair if Stewart accepted a hedonist conception of happiness.[61] But in fact Stewart follows Reid closely; he assumes that 'happiness' means 'good on the whole'.[62]

Stewart's presentation of eudaemonism agrees with his remarks about happiness. He praises Aristotle for rejecting the view that self-love is the source of vice.[63] He then rejects

[58] 'What I would now observe . . . is that the leading, principle, which is called *reason*, comprehends both a regard to what is right and honourable, and a regard to our happiness on the whole.' (H 588b) In speaking of 'our happiness on the whole', Reid refers to what he has described as 'our good on the whole'.

[59] Sidgwick's comment may refer to Reid's claim that 'whatever makes a man more happy, or more perfect, is good, and is an object of desire, as soon as we are capable of forming the conception of it' (204). But we need not infer that Reid takes happiness to exclude perfection; we might equally read the 'or' as meaning 'i.e.'.

[60] 'Thus when Stewart . . . says that "by many of the best of the ancient moralists . . . the whole of ethics was reduced to this question . . . What is most conducive on the whole to our happiness?", the remark, if not exactly false, is certain to mislead his readers. For Stewart always uses "happiness", as most English writers do, as equivalent to "sum of pleasures"; and he uses "self-love", as most exact writers after Butler have done, to denote the impulse which prompts us to seek the greatest amount of such pleasure obtainable.' (*ME* [1] 76n, abbreviated in *ME* [7]) Later Sidgwick comes back to the same criticism: '. . . when "Reasonable Self-love" has been clearly distinguished from Conscience, as it is by Butler and his followers, we find it is naturally understood to mean desire for one's own Happiness: so that in fact the interpretation of "one's own good", which was almost peculiar in ancient thought to the Cyrenaic and Epicurean heresies, is adopted by some of the most orthodox of modern moralists. Indeed it often does not seem to have occurred to these latter that this notion can have any other interpretation.' (*ME* 405) A footnote mentions Stewart as one of the 'orthodox modern moralists' whom Sidgwick has in mind.

[61] Sidgwick claims that Stewart is clearer than Reid on issues about self-love: '. . . he is more definite and consistent than Reid in conceiving as "happiness" that "good on the whole" of the individual which he takes to be the object of the "rational and governing principle of action", which he consents after Butler to call self-love—though he offers some just criticism on the term' (*OHE* 232). Sidgwick has no basis for his claim that Stewart differs significantly from Reid on this point. When Stewart identifies the object of self-love with happiness, he is not disagreeing with, or even clarifying, Reid's view unless he identifies happiness with pleasure.

[62] 'There is another, however, and a very important respect, in which the rational nature differs from the animal, that it is able to form the notion of happiness, or of what is good for it upon the whole, and to deliberate about the most effectual means of attaining it.' Stewart continues by quoting the passage from Cicero's *De Officiis* that Reid quotes for the same purpose. (Stewart, *PAMP* ii 1, p. 212)

[63] Stewart, *PAMP* ii 1.

the opposite view, that virtue is to be reduced to self-love, so that ethics is simply an inquiry into what promotes the agent's happiness.[64] Stewart neither asserts nor suggests that ancient moralists reduce virtue to a means to one's own pleasure. In his statement of their outlook Stewart follows Reid, who uses 'our good upon the whole', where Stewart uses 'happiness'. Both Stewart and Reid identify one's good on the whole with happiness.

Stewart says nothing misleading, therefore, in reporting the Greek moral philosophers as holding that 'the whole of ethics was reduced to the question, what is the supreme good? or, in other words, What is most conducive, on the whole to our happiness?' It is misleading of Sidgwick, however, to suggest that Stewart's remark is misleading. Sidgwick is so convinced that 'happiness' is to be understood in a hedonist sense that he does not see that Reid and Stewart hold a non-hedonist conception of happiness. That is why he claims to find vagueness, obscurity, and misleading suggestions where they are not to be found.

837. Superior Principles and Ends

Reid relies on his conception of superior principles in order to answer people who claim that ultimate ends are simply a matter of taste, and that reason has no role in the evaluation of ends. He considers an argument that begins from an admitted difference in taste—over the taste of lobsters and cheese.[65] Reid answers that it is wrong to say there is no room to apply rational judgment to the question about cheese and lobsters. On the contrary, rational judgment tells us that both tastes are equally good, and that there is nothing wrong if the cheese lover and the lobster lover follow their different tastes. In the case of the life of virtue and the life of pleasure, rational judgment is just as competent as it is the case of cheese and lobster. In this case it says that the two lives are not equally good; we can justly reproach the person who leads the life of pleasure.

Reid points out that when people deny that reason can judge between ends, their favourite example of incompatible tastes really works against them. For in that case they have to appeal to the rational judgment that there is really nothing better about one taste than about the other.[66] The fact that reason delivers this judgment shows that it is competent in such cases; and so such cases give us no ground for concluding that reason is incompetent in cases where it judges that two alternatives are not equally good.

The presence of rational judgments in the choice of ends implies an important modification of Butler's account of action. We might infer from Butler that sometimes we choose between

[64] 'As some authors have supposed that vice consists in an excessive regard for our own happiness, so others have gone to the opposite extreme, by representing virtue as merely a *matter of prudence*, and a sense of duty but another name for a *rational self-love*. This view of the subject was far from being unnatural; for we find that these two principles lead in general to the same course of action; and we have every reason to believe, that if our knowledge of the universe was more extensive, they would be found to do so in all instances whatever. Accordingly, by many of the best of the ancient moralists, our *sense of duty* was considered as resolvable into self-love, and the whole of *ethics* was reduced to the question, *what is the supreme good*? or, in other words, What is most conducive, on the whole to our happiness?' (Stewart, ii 2, 219)

[65] In this case, '. . . it is vain, say they, to apply judgment to determine which is right. In like manner, if one man prefers pleasure to virtue, another virtue to pleasure, this is a matter of taste, judgment has nothing to do with it' (H 534b).

[66] 'Nay, I apprehend that the two persons who differ in their taste will, notwithstanding that difference, agree perfectly in their judgment, that both tastes are upon a footing of equality, and that neither has a just claim to preference.' (H 534b)

alternatives simply on the basis of the comparative strength of our desires; Reid's choice between cheese and lobster seems to be an example in which we simply have to register the comparative strength of our desires. If this were a complete account, our choices in such cases would be no different from the choices of agents without superior principles.

Reid points out that this conclusion is false. In cases where the choice is a matter of taste, a rational agent who has superior principles recognizes that this is so. To recognize that there is nothing to choose between cheese and lobster on rational grounds, and that therefore it is all right to choose either, is an operation of rational judgment. If we are guided by this rational judgment and choose on the basis of our taste for cheese or lobster, we are acting on superior principles no less than when we choose directly on the basis of a superior principle.

Aquinas captures this point in his claim that the desire for happiness is a feature of genuinely human action as a whole. He does not confine it to actions in which there is something to be said for one alternative over the other. In choices where neither option is better than the other, the desire for happiness is still active, by permitting us to choose either. Aquinas and Reid draw attention to the permissive role of superior principles as well as their more direct intervention in our choices.[67]

838. Against Hume on Reason and Passion

Reid's account of a superior principle clarifies his dispute with Hume on the roles of reason and passion in motivation and justification. In his view, the dispute is not simply about words, about whether something that both Reid and Hume recognize is to be called 'reason' or not. In Reid's view, Hume loses an important distinction if he denies that sometimes we act on passions and sometimes on reason. The effect of Hume's view, according to Reid, is to deny the obvious truth that we act on superior principles.[68]

In Reid's view, Hume claims that reason has only the instrumental role of finding means to the ends that we pursue on the basis of passion without reason; Hume therefore ignores an essential function of practical reason.[69] Reid agrees that if Hume has correctly described the functions of reason, Hume wins his case; and so Reid seeks to show that there are distinctively rational principles that provide justifying and exciting reasons not included in Hume's description of reason. The principles Reid has in mind are those that cause us to pursue what appears good for us on the whole and to follow what appears to us to be our duty.

Reid describes our conception of our good as the product of reasoning that considers what is good or bad for us over the whole of our existence. As such, it is clearly the product of reasoning, not available to non-rational animals. Reid takes this to be a traditional view.[70] He claims that when we act on our conception of our good on the whole, we act according to reason, and reason prevails over passion.[71] Hume does not see this point, because he

[67] Cf Aquinas, §248. [68] Reid's argument against Hume is discussed by Raphael, *MS* 160–5.

[69] '. . . some philosophers, particularly Mr Hume, think that it is no part of the office of reason to determine the ends we ought to pursue, or the preference due to one end above another . . . If this be so, reason cannot, with any propriety, be called a principle of action' (H 580a = R 859).

[70] See the passage Reid quotes from Cicero (quoted in §176n3).

[71] '. . . as soon as we have the conception of what is good or ill for us upon the whole, we are led, by our constitution, to seek the good and avoid the ill . . .' (H 581a). 'It appears that it is not without just cause, that this principle of action has

relies on a 'gross and palpable abuse of words'. Hume's claim that there is nothing especially rational about prudence relies on an unjustifiably narrow use of 'reason' and 'rational'. [72]

Hume may seem to have an easy reply. Prudent action (aiming at my good on the whole, as I conceive it) rests on reasoning about my good as a whole. But imprudent action may equally rest on reasoning. It is not contrary to reason to prefer the destruction of the world to the scratching of my finger (*T* ii 3.3.6). If I see that x leads to the destruction of the world, and y leads to the scratching of my finger, I choose x over y on the basis of this reasoning. The fact that the reasoning in question is not about my overall good does not make it any the less a case of reasoning, and hence it does not make the action any less rational in any strict sense.

If Hume is right about this, it is useless to say that we commonly tend to call action based on prudent reasoning rational action, or commonly tend to say that it is based on reason rather than passion, and tend not to say this about action based (in the same sense) on imprudent or positively anti-prudent reasoning. It is true that I have to be a rational agent in order to engage in prudent reasoning; but equally I have to be a rational agent in order to form some crazy desire for some satisfaction I will gain in ten years that will make me miserable for the rest of my life.

Reid might concede this point, but argue that the two cases still differ. In imprudent action, I am guided both by reasoning and by a foolish and irrational desire; in prudent action, I am guided (he might claim) by prudent reasoning, and not by desire. Hume disagrees, claiming that prudent action depends, no less than imprudent action does, on a prior non-rational desire for the end to which reason shows us the means. In the case of prudent action, this non-rational desire is a 'calm passion', and so we do not normally notice it. When we notice it, we can see that prudent and imprudent action have the same types of rational and non-rational antecedents, and that neither is the product of reason alone.

Our overlooking the role of calm passions is the source of all those 'confused harangues' (as Hutcheson calls them) about the superiority of reason. Once we see the source of the error, it seems pointless to appeal, as Reid does, to the common use of 'reason'; for this common use is simply the product of the confused harangues that overlook the role of calm passions. If we concede all this, Hume has won on the point of substance, even if the ordinary use of 'reason' has not yet caught up with his conclusions.

839. Prudence and Reason

Reid, however, should not be satisfied with Hume's reply. Hume's account of the origin of prudent desires and actions appeals to the effect of abstraction and distance in causing me to think of a future event without its attendant circumstances. [73] Abstraction causes me to form

in all ages been called reason . . . [It] not only operates in a calm and cool manner, like reason, but implies real judgment in all its operations. The . . . passions are blind desires of some particular object, without any judgment or consideration, whether it be good for us upon the whole, or ill.' (H 581b = R 863)

[72] '. . . he must include under the passions, that very principle which has always, in all languages, been called *reason*, and never was, in any language, called a *passion*. And from the meaning of the word *reason* he must exclude the most important part of it, by which we are able to discern and to pursue what appears to be good upon the whole' (H 581b).

[73] See Hume, §738.

a desire for a future good, and this desire causes me to follow the prudent course of action. The transitions from one desire to another must be purely causal and psychological, not at all based on justifying reasons. If Hume is wrong about this, his appeal to a calm passion and to instrumental reasoning is not sufficient to explain the role of practical reason in prudence.

One might sometimes suppose that Reid regards the prudent outlook as the result of a purely psychological process.[74] Hume might suppose he could easily accept this, as a purely natural, psychological fact about the empirically observed tendency to pursue our overall good once we have formed the conception of it.

But Reid does not refer to a purely empirical tendency. He suggests, in agreement with Price, that it is essential to rational agents to desire their overall good, and that no special sense or feeling is needed to cause us to act on beliefs about our own good.[75] In Reid's and Price's view, it is irrational to fail to pursue one's own happiness, whether or not we assume a calm passion of the sort Hume recognizes.

Reid and Price over-state their objection to Hume's view of prudence in suggesting that it is strictly self-contradictory for agents to know that something promotes their good and to recognize no reason for pursuing it. But they have good reason to maintain that it is not a mere psychological fact that agents form a desire to do what promotes their overall good. They suggest that it would be irrational to the point of unintelligibility if agents did not recognize their own good as a justifying reason for an action, and if this justifying reason did not sometimes provide an exciting reason.[76]

Reid's conviction of the rationality of prudence rests on the connexion between prudence and awareness of one's past and future.[77] He connects awareness of my existence as a temporally extended agent with awareness of the reasonableness of pursuing my overall good. He assumes that I care about my present desires partly because they are mine, not simply because they are present. For even if the desires are present, the satisfaction of them comes in the future; and if my future self is no concern of mine, why should I bother with my present desires? If, then, I recognize that my self extends through time, and I can take a more detached view of what will satisfy this extended self, my reason for attending to my present desires also seems to give me a reason for attending to my future desires. To deny that there is any such reason, I must either deny the reality of my future self or deny that I have any reason to be concerned about my present desires.

Why not try this second reply, and agree that I have no reason for my self-concern?[78] This seems to be Hume's reply. For he does not deny that we can form a conception of our

[74] 'I observe, in the *next* place, that as soon as we have the conception of what is good or ill for us upon the whole, we are led, by our constitution, to seek the good and avoid the ill . . .' (H 581a)

[75] 'I am very apt to think, with Dr Price, that, in intelligent beings, the desire of what is good and aversion to what is ill, is necessarily connected with the intelligent nature; and that it is a contradiction to suppose such a being to have the notion of good without the desire of it, or the notion of ill without aversion to it.' (H 581a) 'To prefer a greater good, though distant, to a less that is present; to choose a present evil, in order to avoid a greater evil, or to obtain a greater good, is, in the judgment of all men, wise and reasonable conduct . . .' (H 581b) Cf. Price, *RPQM* 45, quoted in §806.

[76] I add 'sometimes' to make it clear that Price and Reid are not committed to the claim that one's own good always provides an exciting reason, or an overriding exciting reason. The use of 'justifying reason' here does not follow Hutcheson's use; see §639.

[77] See H 580b, quoted in §831.

[78] Hume does not consider the first reply, since, for the purposes of his moral philosophy, he does not deny a person's persistence through time. See §770.

overall good and can form a desire for it; he simply denies that it is irrational not to care about one's overall good. If Hume is right about this, we ought to be able to conceive agents who are entirely indifferent to their overall good, but display no other defect that would justify us in calling them irrational. Can Reid show that indifference to one's own good is a symptom of some more basic irrationality?

840. Theoretical and Practical Rationality

Reid does not pursue this broader issue that is raised by his objections to Hume, but it is worth seeing how it might be pursued. Rational believers who discover contradictions in their beliefs try to remove the contradictions by giving up some of the beliefs that lead to the contradiction. In some cases we cannot immediately identify the beliefs to be given up. We may know that the conjunction of q and r implies not-p, and that p seems overwhelmingly plausible, but further investigation may be needed to decide whether to reject q or r. If it mattered to us whether we believe q or r, and it seemed fairly easy to investigate which is true, but we were unwilling to undertake this investigation, and did not change any of our attitudes to q and r as a result of seeing the conflict with p, we would not be rational believers.[79]

But why should we bother to examine our beliefs? The result will be available only to our future selves; if we do not care about their beliefs, why should we bother to try to get rid of the contradictions in our present beliefs? A fairly simple and basic condition for rationality in belief seems to presuppose concern for the states of our future self. This is not surprising, since the decision to modify our beliefs rests on desires for our future beliefs, and so must rest on some sort of prudential consideration.

Contrary to Hume, then, there is something irrational about our seeing no reason to care about our future states; if we saw no reason to do this, we would not respond to the sorts of considerations that a rational believer responds to. When Reid argues that concern for one's overall good is rational, and that indifference to it is contrary to reason, he is not simply quarrelling about the use of a word. He might argue that indifference to my future states reflects a degree of irrationality that would disqualify me from being a rational believer. The feature of practical reason that Reid appeals to is relevant to theoretical reason too; Hume overlooks it when he claims to give an exhaustive account of the functions of reason.[80]

This argument might not move Hume; for it rests on a conception of belief that he may not share. He describes a belief as a lively idea associated with a present impression.[81] This conception of belief leaves us no reason to get rid of contradictory beliefs. According to Hume, we may see overwhelming reasons for believing not-p, but still believe p, and do nothing to try to resolve the conflict. He thinks this happens when we consider the arguments against the existence of external objects, but they do not shake our belief in external objects.

[79] It might be very difficult and time-consuming to decide between q and r; hence it would not necessarily be rational to give up one of them as a result of investigation into their truth. But if we did not give up one of them, it would be rational to rely on them less confidently in cases where it matters which one is true.

[80] Cf Hume, §737.

[81] Reid criticizes this doctrine of Hume's at H 671a; cf. 433b.

Perhaps, then, Hume's account of belief does not imply that the conditions for rational belief include a constraint that exposes the irrationality of ignoring one's future states. But it is doubtful how far Hume could afford to press this objection. For his account of passions and morals is not supposed to rely on his radically sceptical epistemological and metaphysical claims; if it did, he could not even admit that my future states are the states of the person who has these present states. When he is thinking of ordinary beliefs in ordinary contexts (as opposed to the special context of metaphysical and sceptical argument), he cannot dispense with the normal assumption that rational believers try to remove conflicts in their beliefs. Indeed, one part of his account of how we take the moral point of view assumes that we try to avoid contradictions.[82]

If Hume accepts this much, it is fair to argue that agents who are indifferent to the states of their whole selves lack an elementary feature of rational believers. In that case Reid is right, though he does not explain why he is right, to argue that recognition of the reality of our future states is all that is needed to justify concern for them, and that failure to see a reason to be concerned for our good as a whole would be a mark of deep irrationality.

If Reid is right on this point, Hume is wrong, because he has not mentioned all the functions of reason. The recognition that it is rational to pursue my own good is not the result of reasoning about causes and effects in general, or about means to ends in particular. Though imprudent actions may rest on the same sort of causal reasoning that underlies prudent actions, it does not follow that they are as rational as prudent actions.

Reid, therefore, is not merely saying that we call prudent action rational; he is claiming that such action really is rational, insofar as it involves a correct exercise of practical reason that is absent from imprudent action. Hume does not answer this objection to his argument. He cannot fairly assume that his opponents accept his account of the functions of reason, and so have to show that prudent action is more rational, on these terms, than imprudent action is. Reid rejects this assumption, since he rejects Hume's account of the functions of reason.

841. Prudence, Justification, and Motivation

We might defend part of Hume's position by confining Reid's objection to justifying reasons. Perhaps it would indeed be irrational not to recognize my own good as a good reason for action; but, Hume might still answer, this recognition will not provide an exciting reason unless it is subordinate to some independent overriding desire for my own good.

Reid denies that we are determined to action by the strongest motive (H 610a = R 882).[83] First he asks how we are to understand the comparative strength of motives. If a motive's being stronger consists merely in its actual prevalence—in the fact that we act on it—the claim that we act on the strongest motive is trivially analytic. But two other conceptions of strength of motive make it non-trivial to claim that we act on the strongest motive: (1) The 'animal test' measures strength by the conscious effort required to resist a desire. (2) The

[82] See Hume, §762.

[83] This argument against Hume is independent of Reid's indeterminism, and for the moment I have not mentioned the indeterminist aspects of his position.

'rational test' measures strength by considering 'that which it is most our duty and our real happiness to follow' (H 612ab).[84]

Either test of strength shows, in Reid's view, that the strongest motive does not always prevail. For we sometimes act against the motive that is stronger by either test. If Reid's two tests are exhaustive, he wins. Hume needs to show that there is some third type of strength or motivational force that is different from each of Reid's two types, and explains action and motivation.

Hume might argue that unless there is some third type of strength besides Reid's two types, we cannot explain why we sometimes follow the rationally strongest motive and sometimes do not. The difference must lie in some motivational force associated with the rational motive in some cases and not in others; and in these cases we must have some further desire or passion supporting our rational judgment. As we have seen, however, it is not clear why the crucial difference must rest in a passion, as opposed to defective understanding or attention.[85]

Reid's distinction between two types of strength rests on Butler's distinction between authority and power; 'rational strength' simply indicates greater authority. If Hume were correct in supposing that there is nothing distinctively rational about prudence, the distinction between power and authority would disappear. For prudence consists in being moved by the weight of reasons and not simply by the strength of one's desires. If someone just happened to prefer his longer-term over his shorter-term satisfaction because of some irrational tendency to favour the more distant over the more immediate future, he might often choose what a prudent person would choose, but he would not thereby be a prudent person.[86] For the prudent person responds to the case that can be made for one or another course of action, regarding this case as something different from the current strength of non-rational desires in favour of the different courses of action.

In believing that two kinds of motivation differ in this way, we are not making any of the mistakes about reason that Hume identifies. We recognize a type of response that seems clearly rational; it is a different sort of response from the sort that Hume can recognize. According to Hume, we understand prudence simply by recognizing the relevant calm passion. A calm passion, however, is not responsive to the weight of reasons; as Hume conceives a calm passion, it can only respond to the strength of desires. Since Hume allows us no capacity to respond to the weight of reasons, he does not recognize practical rationality. But prudence seems to involve rationality, since it seems no less rational to fit our desire to the weight of reasons than it does to fit our belief to the weight of evidence.

Hume answer this objection by rejecting the theoretical parallel to practical reason; for he might deny that there is any such thing as fitting our belief to the weight of evidence, in contrast to simply following our stronger inclination. His analysis of belief in Book i of the *Treatise* suggests that the division between following the weight of evidence and following the stronger inclination is misconceived. But if Hume has to appeal to this radically sceptical side of his epistemology, Reid wins his main point. Hume does not want his moral

[84] Yaffe, *MA* 118–31, discusses Reid's views on different types of strength.

[85] See Hume, §740. For further discussion, tending to support Reid, see Balguy, §655.

[86] He would agree with a prudent person often, but not always; for prudence does not always involve a preference for the longer-term over the shorter-term end.

philosophy to depend on his radical scepticism, and his case becomes less persuasive if it depends on the epistemological doctrines that are most difficult to accept.

He might try a more moderate reply to Reid by arguing that in the practical case, though not in the theoretical case, we are wrong to distinguish the weight of reasons from the strength of desire; though we seem to see a difference, there is none. If Hume says this, he accepts part of the Hobbesian strategy of reducing normative to psychological properties; though we believe the purely psychological differs from the normative, all we are actually talking about are purely psychological properties involving strength of desire. But if Hume goes this far, his position is more nihilistic than he recognizes; he has to say that our deliberative practice rests on false beliefs and that it could not be expected to survive the discovery of the falsity of these beliefs.

Reid's discussion of Hume, therefore, is not conclusive, because it is, from one point of view, superficial. Because he attacks Hume for disagreeing with common sense and ordinary usage, we might criticize him for failing to grasp the ways in which Hume intends to replace common assumptions and prejudices with a true account based on a sound psychology. This criticism of Reid, however, would be unfair. By making clear the extent of Hume's commitments to scepticism or to nihilism, he shows how extreme a position Hume has to take. Since this is a more extreme position than Hume acknowledges, Reid raises a fair question about whether we ought to accept all the claims that commit us to the implications of Hume's position.

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REID: KNOWLEDGE AND MORALITY

842. Reid's Defence of the Moral Sense

Reid agrees with Price in affirming the intuitive character of moral knowledge, the rejection of psychological hedonism, the irreducibility of conscience to self-love, and the rejection of utilitarianism. But he adds some important arguments to the rationalist position.

In arguing that moral beliefs rest on intuitive first principles that are evident to common sense, Reid relies on his general view that we have no rational alternative to trusting common sense. He does not rely as heavily as Price does on a parallel between moral principles and geometrical principles (though he accepts the parallel). Instead, he takes moral knowledge to be analogous to ordinary perceptual knowledge, believing that the same sort of defence is appropriate in each case.

To this extent it would be misleading to call him a rationalist. Cudworth, Clarke, and Price argue that moral knowledge should be contrasted with ordinary perceptual knowledge of the physical world, and so should be treated as some sort of a priori knowledge of necessary truths, rather than the sort of knowledge we might acquire from a special sense; Reid sees no need to insist on this sharp contrast, and so he recognizes a moral sense.[1]

In taking moral judgments to be expressions of a moral sense, Hutcheson and Hume intend these claims: (1) Moral 'judgments' are immediate reactions, not reached by reasoning and inference from prior judgments and principles. (2) They are sensory and emotional reactions, rather than strictly judgments based on recognition of evidence. (3) They are about the effect of external objects (actions, people, etc.) on us, not about the objects themselves.

These points embody Price's understanding of Hutcheson's position. He sees that Hutcheson reaches these conclusions by supposing these are all features of the senses. According to Hutcheson, we are right to speak of a moral sense because our moral judgments share all these features with sensory reactions. Since Price broadly agrees with Hutcheson's view of a sense, he rejects Hutcheson's belief in a moral sense; he rejects the

[1] Reid's belief in a moral sense is examined by Raphael, *MS* 172–92.

anti-intellectualist epistemology embodied in the second alleged feature of moral judgments, and the anti-realist metaphysics embodied in the third.[2]

Reid, following Price, agrees with Hutcheson's first claim about moral judgments, that they are in some way immediate.[3] He also follows Price in rejecting the inference from immediacy to anti-realism. But he separates himself from both Hutcheson and Price in rejecting their common assumption that to speak of a moral sense is to commit oneself to anti-intellectualism and anti-realism.

One might suppose that Reid is simply arguing for a more generous construal of 'sense' than either Hutcheson or Price allows. He argues, against Smith, that the belief in a moral sense has respectable historical antecedents, and is not a mere invention of the 18th century.[4] Reid's usage agrees with Butler's. For when Butler mentions 'moral sense' as one of the possible descriptions of conscience (D 1), he does not endorse any particular theory of moral judgment, let alone Hutcheson's conception of a moral sense.

Reid, however, is not simply claiming the right to use 'moral sense' as broadly as Butler does. He also believes that Price and Hutcheson are wrong to suppose that a more precise analogy with the senses commits us to anti-intellectualism and anti-realism.[5] In his view, both empiricists and rationalists lack 'just notions of the offices of the external senses', because they attribute too few intellectual functions to ordinary perception. Their conception of the external senses determines their conception of a moral sense; that is why the empiricists attribute moral judgments to a moral sense, and that is why rationalists reject any moral sense.[6]

If we recognize an analogy between the moral sense and the external senses, we need not take the analogy to deny the objectivity of moral properties. Hutcheson's use of the analogy with the senses expresses, according to Reid, a basic error about the senses in general.[7] In calling the senses 'powers by which we judge', Reid means that they allow us to detect actual features of external objects, and that our judgments that external objects have these features are immediate and reliable judgments. Among judgments of the senses he includes the judgment that one sound is loud, another soft, and that synchronous sounds are discordant or concordant (H 590a). These are not purely sensory states, but include beliefs and judgments that inform us reliably about the objective features of external objects. If Price had accepted Reid's conception of a sense, he would have had to qualify his opposition to the moral sense.

Reid sees the same error in his opponents' references to moral 'sentiments'. He takes sentiments to include the operations of reason and judgment.[8] This is a legitimate objection

[2] See Price, *RPQM* 14, quoted in §810. [3] See Price, *RPQM* 42, quoted in §810.

[4] 'Some philosophers, with whom I agree, ascribe this to an original power or faculty in man, which they call the moral sense, the moral faculty, conscience. ... by an original power of the mind, when we come to years of understanding and reflexion, we not only have the notions of right and wrong in conduct, but perceive certain things to be right, and others to be wrong. This name of the *moral sense*, though more frequently given to conscience since Lord Shaftesbury and Dr Hutcheson wrote, is not new. The *sensus recti et honesti* is a phrase not unfrequent among the ancients, neither is the *sense of duty* among us.' (H 589b) Cf. Turnbull's description of the moral sense, quoted in §715.

[5] 'It has got this name of *sense*, no doubt, from some analogy which it is conceived to bear to the external senses. And if we have just notions of the office of the external senses, the analogy is very evident, and I see no reason to take offence, as some have done, at the name of the *moral sense*.' (H 589b)

[6] Smith also rejects a moral sense, on grounds different from Price's. See §789.

[7] 'They are represented as powers by which we have sensations and ideas, not as powers by which we judge.' (H 590a)

[8] 'Authors who place moral approbation in feeling only, very often use the word *sentiment* to express feeling without judgment. This I take likewise [sc. like the similar use of 'sense'] to be an abuse of a word. Our moral determinations

to Hume and Smith. In tracing moral distinctions to a moral sense or to moral sentiments, they offer a reductive anti-rationalist account, showing that these distinctions (i.e., our drawing these distinctions) between right and wrong depend on sense or emotion rather than on reason and judgment. But if they rely on a false account of a sense and a sentiment, they do not succeed in eliminating reason and judgment from moral distinctions.[9]

843. The Errors of Sentimentalism

If we agree with Reid on the role of judgment in the operation of the moral sense, we reject Hume's conclusion that 'morality . . . is more properly felt than judged of' (*T* iii 1.2.1), and that the matter of fact we discover 'is the object of feeling, not of reason' (*T* iii 1.1.26). In taking the moral sense to be parallel to the external senses, Reid denies that we can discover some more immediate object of the senses that is an internal impression, as opposed to the external object that we make a perceptual judgment about. But we do not need to go so far in rejecting the 'way of ideas'. Even if we allow a more immediate object, we might argue that a moral judgment is analogous not to a judgment about an immediate object, but to one of the perceptual judgments that Reid mentions.

From this point of view, belief in a moral sense is reasonable for Reid, who holds the opposite view to Hutcheson's about the objectivity of moral qualities and about the relation of the moral sense to the feeling of approval. In attending to perceptual judgments, Reid also rejects Hutcheson's view of the place of reason and feeling in moral judgments. Hutcheson identifies the moral sense with the feeling of approval, and supposes that the moral goodness we approve is a state that depends on the observer's perception (in accordance with Locke's account of secondary qualities, as Hutcheson interprets it). Reid, however, believes that the moral sense informs us about objective properties; its judgments are the appropriate basis for our feeling of approval, not the feeling itself (H 590ab). He develops the position that Burnet and Balguy maintain against Hutcheson.[10]

Part of Hutcheson's reason for treating moral judgment as the product of a moral sense, and hence as a mode of reaction, is his internalism about moral properties, moral reasons, obligation, and motivation.[11] He believes, plausibly, that something's being right creates a reason and an obligation for agents; but he also assumes that all reasons refer to an actual motive in an agent; and so he concludes that moral properties essentially include an actual motive in the agent. If Reid rejects Hutcheson's anti-realist conception of a sense, he should also reject either internalism or Hutcheson's defence of it.

may, with propriety, be called *moral sentiments*. For the word *sentiment* in the English language never, as I conceive signifies mere feeling, but *judgment accompanied with feeling*. It was wont to signify opinion or judgment of any kind, but of late is appropriated to signify an opinion or judgment that strikes and produces some agreeable or uneasy emotion. So we speak of sentiments of respect, of esteem, of gratitude; but I never heard the pain of the gout, or any other mere feeling, called a sentiment.' (H 674b) Hamilton ad loc. protests that Reid's claim about 'sentiment' is 'too unqualified an assertion'. But Reid's claim agrees with Price, *RPQM* 16 (see Raphael ad loc.). On Butler see §719. Evidence on the use of the term is collected by Brissenden, ' "Sentiment" '. At 106 he supports Reid's observation on Hume's use. On the broad use of 'sentiment', with both cognitive and affective uses see Jones, *HS* 203n12.

[9] Cf. Smith, §791, on the 'sentiments' of the impartial observer.

[10] See §659.

[11] See Hutcheson, §639.

His position on this question is not clear. He seems to accept some sort of internalism.[12] But it is not clear whether he means that it would be self-contradictory to ascribe to someone a moral judgment without the corresponding affection or emotion. Nor does he say whether the relevant connexion between judgment and affection is present in every sincere moral judgment.

He seems to mean, however, that the connexion between moral judgment and affection is not simply a product of early training or of one's social environment. He seems to have a less contingent connexion in mind when he speaks of the 'constitution of our nature'. He suggests that we have not only the capacity to form moral judgments, but also the capacity to make our emotional reactions conform to our judgments of worth; that is why our attitudes of admiration, esteem, and indignation, directed both to others and to ourselves, follow our moral judgments.

Reid's claims rely on one necessary truth about emotions. If we had an emotion that was not guided by moral judgments of worth, that emotion would not be esteem or indignation; for these specific emotions depend on the relevant judgments of worth. It is not the same sort of necessary truth, however, that we have such emotions as esteem and indignation. It does not seem self-contradictory to suppose an agent capable of moral judgment but lacking the capacity to form the corresponding emotions.

In reply to Hume, therefore, Reid does not seem to maintain the connexion between moral judgments and sentiments that constitutes Hume's internalism.[13] He maintains that it is essential to human agency that we have the capacity to form emotions that follow our moral judgments; if we lacked this capacity, our moral judgments would not have the role in human agency that they actually have. Since this is Reid's position, he has no reason to accept Hume's argument from internalism to anti-rationalism and anti-realism. He agrees that the role of the moral sense in human agency requires a connexion with sentiments, but he does not infer that the moral sense is a tendency to have these sentiments. He maintains that it is the capacity to form the relevant sorts of moral judgments.

844. The Errors of Empiricism and Rationalism

Reid therefore believes that previous rationalists were wrong to deny that moral judgments belong to a moral sense. They were wrong because they had the wrong idea of a moral sense, and they had this wrong idea because they assumed too much Lockean empiricism. Moral and perceptual knowledge are sharply distinct only if the empiricists are right about the character of perceptual knowledge. If empiricism leads to scepticism, we ought to reject the first moves that lead us along this sceptical path. Hence we ought to reject the empiricist account of perceptual knowledge. In Reid's view, moral knowledge is not

[12] 'Our moral judgments are not, like those we form in speculative matters, dry and unaffecting, but from their nature are necessarily accompanied with affections and feelings. . . . we approve of good actions, and disapprove of bad; and this approbation and disapprobation, when we analyse it, appears to include not only a moral judgment of the action, but some affection, favourable or unfavourable, toward the agent, and some feeling in ourselves.' (H 592a) '. . . esteem and benevolent regard not only accompany real worth, by the constitution of our nature, but are perceived to be properly due to it; and . . . on the contrary, unworthy conduct really merits dislike and indignation.' (H 592b)

[13] See Hume, §§744–5.

especially controversial. We have good reason to claim knowledge of objective moral facts and properties if we accept a non-sceptical account of perceptual knowledge.

Hutcheson and Hume rely on an empiricist account of perceptual knowledge, in order to defend a parallel account of moral knowledge. The rationalists, assuming that this account of perceptual knowledge is more or less right, insist that moral knowledge cannot be understood in the same way. Reid disagrees more fundamentally with the empiricists, and so need not deny that moral knowledge is similar in important ways to perceptual knowledge.

This criticism is especially effective against Hume, because Hume believes that his rationalist opponents have to make moral judgment mysterious. He argues that we cannot treat it as demonstrative knowledge, and we cannot understand how it could be ordinary perceptual knowledge of matters of fact in the object. Reid accepts Hume's first point, but rejects his second. According to Reid, moral judgment is no more mysterious than ordinary perception. Since we must treat the external senses as involving judgments about features of the objects themselves, we have no reason to reject the moral sense simply because it also involves judgments about features of the external objects.

Reid believes that Hume's *Treatise* embodies the errors that are implicit in the whole empiricist position derived from Locke.[14] In an exchange of letters with Reid, Hume sees that Reid takes him to have articulated the implications of an empiricist position.[15] Reid agrees; and so he claims that a refutation of Hume is also a refutation of apparently more moderate positions that really lead to Hume's conclusions.[16] To refute Hume's scepticism, then, we need to question the apparently plausible principles that constitute the apparently more moderate empiricist position of Locke. If we refute the empiricist principles, we have a firmer basis, according to Reid, for a true account of moral knowledge.

845. Moral Knowledge

Like Price, Reid is a cognitivist and a realist. He also agrees with Price in restricting the definability of moral properties. He does not argue as elaborately as Price does by appeal to an open question argument; but he claims that some basic moral concepts (e.g. 'duty', 'will') cannot be given a 'logical' definition (H 587a). In objecting to proposed definitions of 'duty' he

[14] 'That system [i.e. Hume's] abounds with conclusions the most absurd that ever were advanced by any philosopher, defended with great acuteness and ingenuity from principles commonly received by philosophers.' (H 518a) Reid's claim about Hume and empiricism is supported at length by Green, in *IHTHN*, Part I §5 (pp. 5–6), Part II §20 (pp. 321–2). Hence Passmore, *HI*, 84–5, quite reasonably speaks of the 'Reid–Green' interpretation of Hume. Cf. Kemp Smith, *PDH* 80.

[15] '. . . if you have been able to clear up these abstruse and important subjects, instead of being mortified, I shall be so vain as to pretend to a share of the praise; and shall think that my errors, by having at least some coherence, had led you to make a more strict review of my principles, which were the common ones, and so to perceive their futility.' (Hume, Letter to Reid, 25 Feb. 1763 = Greig 201)

[16] '. . . I shall always avow myself your disciple in metaphysics. I have learned more from your writings in this kind than from all others put together. Your system appears to me not only coherent in all its parts, but likeways justly deduced from principles commonly received among philosophers: principles which I never thought of calling in question until the conclusions you draw from them in the Treatise of human Nature made me suspect them. . . . I agree with you therefore that if this system shall ever be demolished, you have a just claim to a great share of the praise, both because you have made it a distinct and determinate mark to be aimed at, and have furnished proper artillery for the purpose.' (Reid to Hume, 18 Mar. 1763 = Greig 376n4 = H 91)

says we can define it 'only by synonymous words or phrases, or by its properties and necessary concomitants' (H 587a). He makes a similar claim about the definability of active power.[17]

It is easy to see why Reid rejects attempted definitions that simply provide concomitants, such as 'duty is what is in itself laudable, though no man should praise it'.[18] These attempts do not explain what makes duty laudable. He also objects to attempted definitions that provide only synonymous expressions (e.g., 'duty is what we ought to do', or 'duty is what is fair and honest'). Logical definitions must be reductive. We give a reductive account if we define F as G, and we can understand what Gs are without understanding what Fs are. Since he imposes this condition only on logical definitions, Reid's rejection of definitions for moral properties leaves room for definitions that do not meet his strict conditions.[19]

The difference between Reid's conception of synonymy and a more familiar conception becomes clearer once we notice that some definitions stating synonymies—as we would normally suppose—seem to meet his conditions for a reductive definition. We could know what a fox is and what a female is without knowing what a vixen is, and there seems to be nothing more to being a vixen than being a female fox. The same sort of test would perhaps allow more ambitious claims about identity of properties to count as definitions; 'temperature is mean kinetic energy' seems to count. At least, since Reid does not appeal to Price's open question argument, he seems to raise no objection in principle to such an account of a property.

In Reid's view the fact that we cannot give a 'logical' definition of something is no reason for denying the existence of the definiendum.[20] He begins his discussion of active power by arguing that we cannot give a logical definition, but he objects to Hume's inference that we therefore have no idea of power. Hume objects that 'the terms *efficacy, agency, power, force, energy*, are all nearly synonymous; and therefore it is an absurdity to employ any of them in defining the rest' (H 520b).[21] Reid answers that there is nothing absurd about this.[22] We should not be surprised by the failure of logical definition if the definiendum is simple.

This claim about simplicity is not entirely justified. In admitting that our 'definitions' are synonymies and not logical definitions, we do not imply that the definiendum is simple; we may mean that the different elements we introduce in our definition cannot be understood without reference to one another. If the definiendum has an organic structure, the whole cannot be understood without reference to the parts, nor the parts without reference to the whole. Reid, therefore, does not show that the failure of logical, reductive definitions indicates the simplicity of the definiendum. Simplicity need not be the only explanation of irreducibility.

Reid's concentration on simplicity affects his conclusions about the definability of moral properties. Since he takes simplicity to be the only ground of logical indefinability, he argues

[17] See §825. [18] Quoted from Cicero. Cf. §819. [19] On the use of 'synonymy' see §§656, 812.

[20] I use 'definiendum' to avoid deciding whether Reid is speaking primarily of words, concepts, or properties, or of all three indifferently.

[21] Reid quotes (and abbreviates) from Hume, *T* i 3.14.4.

[22] 'Surely this author was not ignorant, that there are many things of which we have a clear and distinct conception, which are so simple in their nature, that they cannot be defined any other way than by synonymous words. It is true that this is not a logical definition, but that there is, as he affirms, an absurdity in saying it, when no better can be had, I cannot perceive.' (H 520b)

from the indefinability of moral concepts and properties to their simplicity; they have no simpler elements that might provide the basis for a logical definition. It would be more plausible to appeal to irreducibility. If different moral concepts can be defined by reference to one another, but cannot be defined reductively through non-moral concepts, they may be complex but irreducible. Perhaps 'ought', 'right', 'obligation', and 'reason' are to be defined by reference to one another, and none of them can be defined without reference to at least one of the others. This explanation of the irreducibility of moral concepts is better than the explanation that appeals to simplicity.

If we detach irreducibility from simplicity, we can also detach Price's and Reid's arguments against logical definitions of moral concepts from their specific epistemological views about simplicity and immediacy. We have good reason to do this if we are doubtful about these epistemological views. The arguments about irreducibility do not depend on intuitionism about moral knowledge.

In saying that the only definitions we can give of duty are mere synonymies, Reid seems to mean that we can give no reductive definition of the kind that we can give (for different reasons) for 'vixen' and for 'temperature'. His view that no such reductive account is possible is defensible, but Reid is not clear about the sort of defence that it might need. The fact that a particular account (for instance a utilitarian account) initially seems unintuitive does not show that it is unsuccessful; many reductive accounts seem unintuitive until we understand the theory that underlies them. We cannot, then, refute reductive definitions just by looking at them without reference to the relevant theory. Reid examines and rejects reductive arguments that would allow us to explain the crucial moral concepts by reference to self-interest, or to the reactions of a particular kind of agent, or to maximization of utility. These arguments need to be considered if we are to evaluate his claims about the sense in which moral properties are indefinable.

Reid claims not only that moral properties are indefinable, but also that basic moral truths are self-evident, not grounded on any further truths. He believes this for foundationalist reasons. In his view all knowledge must have foundations 'on which the whole fabric of the science leans' (H 637a), and which have no further foundation. When a question arises about them, we must appeal not to some further justifying argument, but to common sense (H 637a; cf. 590b–591a).[23] The defence of the analogy between moral knowledge and ordinary perceptual knowledge also makes it reasonable, in Reid's view, to treat both perceptual judgments and moral judgments as foundations.

Even if moral beliefs must have some foundation, the foundation need not be moral beliefs. If the sort of reduction that Reid rejects for moral concepts and properties were possible, a foundationalist might argue that the self-evident foundation for moral beliefs consists in non-moral beliefs. Reid's version of foundationalism rests partly on his argument against reduction.

How are we supposed to find that a principle is self-evident? Reid suggests that if p is self-evident, we ought to find on reflexion that we are more certain about the truth of p than we are about the truth of anything that implies not-p or about anything that might be cited

[23] '. . . the first principles of morals are the dictates of this [moral] faculty; and . . . we have the same reason to rely on these dictates, as upon the determinations of our senses, or of our other natural faculties' (H 592a).

as a defence of p.[24] He believes we ought not to seek any proof of a first principle, since our search may raise unnecessary doubts that would not otherwise have arisen.

Reid's objection to attempts to defend first principles is not convincing. I might find that my belief in p is more confident than my belief in any principle that is used in an argument for p, and so I might still regard it as apparently self-evident. But it is always fair to ask whether I am justified in retaining my confidence in p; though I find that I cannot give up my belief in p, how do I remove any question about whether my confidence does not simply reflect my irrational stubbornness? I might find this question troublesome if p appears to conflict with q and r, which seem quite plausible to me, though less plausible than p.

Our doubts about our attitude to p would be removed or reduced if we could show that in fact q and r support p. We have better grounds for our confidence that p is more certain than our other beliefs if we find that our other beliefs rely on the truth of p. This form of argument defends p by appeal to beliefs that appear less certain than p. Such a defence should not shake our belief in p.

This argument raises doubts about foundationalism in general. For once we ask whether our impressions of greater certainty are reliable in a particular case, we may reasonably consider the relation of a fundamental belief to other beliefs. Once we do that, we imply that an appeal to coherence confers some degree of justification.[25] Reid is right to claim that his foundationalism excludes the sort of defence of basic principles that we have described. But his objection that such a defence raises new doubts is unfounded; instead of rejecting the possibility of such a defence, he should have re-examined his foundationalism.

846. Against Hume on Moral Judgment

Reid defends his cognitivist and realist account of moral judgments in his Chapter 7, 'That moral approbation implies a real judgment', where he discusses Hume's anti-realist and anti-rationalist position.[26] He starts from his disagreement with Hume about the character of a moral judgment. According to Reid, it is a real judgment about the qualities of external objects, and it provides the basis for the feeling of approval to which Hume wants to reduce it. According to Reid, Hume's attempted reduction of judgment to feeling is the product of Hume's general epistemological position.[27] Reid argues that the common belief that reason is the source of moral judgments is correct, and that Hume is wrong to reject it.

The two Humean theses, that (1) reason is not the source of motivation, and that (2) moral 'judgments' are really feelings in the observer, are distinct. We can accept Hume's first thesis without the second, if we reject internalism about moral judgment and motivation; for Hume relies on internalism in his arguments to show that moral distinctions are not

[24] '. . . when we attempt to prove by direct argument, what is really self-evident, the reasoning will always be inconclusive; for it will either take for granted the thing to be proved, or something not more evident; and so, instead of giving strength to the conclusion, will rather tempt those to doubt of it, who never did so before' (H 637a).

[25] Relevant issues are discussed by Brink, *MRFE* 116–25.

[26] Reid's criticism of Hume is discussed by Cuneo, 'Moral' 251–6.

[27] 'Before the modern system of ideas and impressions was introduced, nothing would have appeared more absurd than to say, that when I condemn a man for what he has done, I pass no judgment at all about the man, but only express some uneasy feeling in myself.' (H 670b)

derived from reason. As we have seen, Reid seems—though his position is not clear—to reject internalism.[28] But he does not draw attention to this issue. Hume's second thesis is particularly important for Reid's purposes; for, if we accept it, we lose one reason for believing that rational judgments can move us to action. Reid, therefore, argues directly against Hume's second thesis, independently of the first.

He argues against Hume and Hutcheson that we do not speak of moral judgments as though we identified them with feelings of approbation. He remarks that moral judgments appear to claim truth and falsehood and to be open to contradiction, in a way that separates them from feelings (H 673ab). This sort of argument is useful, though inconclusive. For it forces sentimentalists to admit that they do not give an account of our ordinary conception of moral judgment; they really argue that this conception is mistaken and should be replaced. Once we see that sentimentalists reject the ordinary conception, we can focus on the main question, about where they think the ordinary conception is mistaken.

Hume implicitly supports Reid by his failure to maintain his sentimentalist view consistently. Though he relies on internalism in arguing that moral judgments are feelings or involve feelings, he later agrees that we can make moral judgments without having the feelings that would dispose us to act on them.[29] This change of mind shows that it is difficult to abandon the view that moral judgments are genuine judgments about something other than our own feelings.

847. Against Hume on 'Is' and 'Ought'

Reid relies on some of his epistemology, and especially on some of his claims about the moral sense, in order to shift the burden of proof that Hume tries to place on his opponents. He takes Hume's questions about how we can reach 'ought' from 'is' to express an illegitimate demand for an explanation of 'ought' and 'ought not'. In Reid's view (H 675b–676a), these cannot be explained by a reductive, 'logical' definition, but they can be explained by a 'synonymous' definition of 'ought'. Unless Hume can show that the absence of a reductive definition shows that 'ought' is unintelligible, his objection has no force.

Hume asks why we should infer an 'ought' judgment from 'is' judgments—why, for instance, we should infer from the fact that A killed B without provocation the conclusion that A acted wrongly. Reid does not say how exactly he understands Hume's question. But we might reasonably take Hume to observe that it does not seem analytic that unprovoked homicide is wrong, and then to ask what makes it wrong. Reid seems to understand Hume to ask this question. He answers that the question is illegitimate. Basic moral judgments (e.g., 'harming an innocent person is wrong') are not to be derived from anything more basic, since they are themselves first principles. Since we must eventually come to first principles, we have no reason to reject an appeal to judgments that rest on no further judgments. Hume has not shown why moral judgments should not play this role. If we are foundationalists, our foundation need not be non-moral.

[28] See §843. [29] See Hume, §765.

These arguments show that Hume's doubts rest on controversial assumptions about what needs explanation and what an adequate explanation would have to be like. His assumptions are not neutral between different conceptions of moral judgment. Reid argues that they assume the falsity of the conception of moral judgment that Hume claims to refute.

848. Rightness 'in the Object'

Reid argues against Hume's criticism of the view that moral rightness or wrongness is a quality of the object. If we consider ingratitude, we will never, according to Hume, find its demerit or blame if we just examine the external circumstances themselves.[30] Reid disagrees on this point. But he agrees with Hume that the wrongness of an action produces a sentiment, provided that a sentiment is taken to include a judgment as well as a feeling.

Reid ought not to agree that the property making the action wrong is its tendency to produce a certain judgment in the observer. Such an account of the wrong-making property conflicts with Reid's account of the observer's judgment; for, in his view, the observer's judgment includes the belief that the action itself has some moral property independent of this judgment. And so, even if the wrongness of an action tends to produce a certain effect in an observer, Reid should insist that the wrongness itself consists in the property of the object, not in the tendency to provoke the observer's judgment. He implicitly insists on this point when he speaks of the judgment being true (H 676b). If ingratitude provokes a true judgment of (say) condemnation in the observer, it must have whatever property warrants condemnation; this property, not the tendency to provoke condemnation, is the wrongness of the ingratitude.

Hume believes that this conception of moral judgment is untenable, because no intelligible account can be given of the property that (on the view he rejects) we attribute to the object. According to Hume, we can know all the relevant matters of fact about the object before we raise a moral question about it:[31] Reid argues that if Hume were right on this point, there would be no further room for a judge's understanding to operate after the evidence has been given. As Reid insists, the judge has a further fact to discover—'whether the plaintiff has a just plea or not' (H 677a).

Reid could have strengthened this point by observing that in other cases also, we have to use our judgment to draw a conclusion from available evidence about the nature of a situation. We ask, for instance, whether Tom's doing what he did in Dick's presence constituted making a promise to Dick, and whether what Dick did in Harry's presence

[30] Hume concludes: '. . . this crime arises from a complication of circumstances, which being presented to the spectator, excites the sentiment of blame, by the peculiar structure and fabric of his mind' (quoted by Reid, H 676a). Reid agrees with this account of what makes ingratitude wrong, and disagrees with Hume's reasons for supposing that it supports a sentimentalist analysis of moral judgment. He tries to expose Hume's mistake: 'He could be led to think so, only by taking for granted one of these two things. Either, 1st, that the *sentiment of blame* means a feeling only, without judgment; or, 2dly, that whatever is excited by the particular fabric and structure of the mind must be feeling only, and not judgment.' (H 676b) Reid accepts neither of Hume's assumptions.

[31] 'After these things are known, the understanding has no further room to operate. Nothing remains but to feel, on our part, some sentiment of blame or approbation.' (H 676b–677a)

constituted an insult or a threat to Harry. In such cases, we are not consulting our own reactions; we are asking whether one sort of fact constitutes another sort.[32]

Hume assumes that in the moral case our conclusion or verdict cannot introduce a further fact about the object besides the ones he has mentioned. But he does not justify this assumption. He would have justified it if he had shown that any further fact must be specifiable through reductive definition in non-moral terms; but Reid casts reasonable doubt on whether Hume has shown this.

To show that Hume has no sound basis for his claim that the wrongness of an action cannot be a further fact about it besides the non-moral facts, Reid considers Hume's argument for restricting the range of facts about the object. Hume suggests a parallel between moral goodness and beauty. He argues that 'Euclid has fully explained all the qualities of the circle; but has not in any proposition said a word of its beauty' (*IPM*, App. 1.14); he infers that the moral goodness or badness, like beauty, cannot be a quality of external objects. Reid answers that Euclid concerns himself only with the geometrical properties of the circle, and does not attempt to describe all its properties (H 677ab). Hume's reasons for denying that wrongness is a property of an object show at most that it is not a non-moral property of an object; but Reid correctly challenges Hume's assumption that moral properties, if there are any, are reducible to non-moral properties.

Finally, Reid considers Hume's argument from ultimate ends. Hume argues that since ends cannot be infinitely regressive, some ends rest on no further reasoning, and therefore rest on feeling rather than reason. Reid points out (H 678ab) that this argument moves illegitimately, as Hutcheson does, from foundationalism about ends to sentimentalism about our grasp of ends.[33] If any argument can be made for sentimentalism from the fact that not all ends can be justified by reference to higher ends, it must be a more complicated argument than the one offered by Hutcheson and Hume.

Reid's criticisms of Hume depend partly, but not wholly, on his foundationalism and on his specific views about the nature of the moral sense and the indefinability of moral properties. He sometimes claims that Hume asks for inappropriate explanations through failure to see that some moral judgments are fundamental. But not all of Reid's case against Hume depends on questionable epistemological assumptions. He argues effectively that Hume neglects some reasonable arguments that might be offered for the factual and objective character of moral judgments. On some points, indeed, it may be easier to answer Hume if we abandon Reid's foundationalism for a more holist position. His main objections challenge Hume's assumption that a satisfactory account of moral properties would have to be reductive. Once we see that Reid's rejection of logical definitions leaves us with more room than he recognizes to explain the character of moral properties, we should also find it easier to answer Hume.

849. Approval of Virtue

Following Price, Reid claims that the content of our moral judgments conflicts with sentimentalism. If the moral sense and moral approbation were a special sort of favourable

[32] The point of Reid's objection, therefore, is explained by Anscombe in 'Facts'. See Hume §748.

[33] See Hutcheson, §638; Hume, §736.

feeling, we could not account for the judgments we pass on agents. Many aspects of people might cause a favourable feeling towards them, but only some favourable feelings on certain specific grounds belong to moral judgments about their goodness or badness.

Reid mentions the connexion between moral judgment and voluntariness. Not only must a morally good action be voluntary (H 589a), but it must also result from the right kind of voluntary process.[34] If we accept these constraints on moral approval, we cannot also, according to Reid, accept Hume's account of moral approval.

Reid argues that Hume's account of what we approve is warped by his conception of approval. If moral approval consists simply in some feeling, not in a judgment, what kind of feeling is it? Hume takes it to be distinctive of moral approval that it results 'upon contemplating certain characters or qualities of mind coolly and impartially' (H 651a). Then he asks what qualities in fact provoke this feeling, and he argues that it arises from all the qualities of mind that are useful or agreeable to their possessor or to others (H 651a). The qualities provoking the feeling of approval need not be confined to voluntary states of character and actions. Indeed, the attempt to connect morally good action and character with the voluntary is an error of Christian morality.[35]

If this account of moral virtues were correct, there would be no reason, in Reid's view, to confine them to qualities of mind in particular.[36] But we do not agree with Hume.[37] We recognize many useful and agreeable qualities in other people, and in other animals, without supposing that they have the merit that belongs to moral virtue. Virtue is in fact also useful or agreeable, but this is not the only feature of virtue that we approve of.[38] Hume's description of approval does not account for everything that we actually approve of in virtue.

Reid's objection emphasizes the connexion between his account of moral judgment and his account of the object of moral approval. If moral judgment were simply a feeling of approval, we could hardly limit it to voluntary actions; we have no reason to predict that only voluntary actions and qualities will provoke a favourable feeling.

If we were to reply, in partial defence of Hume, that moral approval is the feeling provoked by useful or agreeable qualities in the circumstances where we believe they are voluntary, we would be abandoning the main point (in Reid's view) of Hume's account of moral judgment. For this belief about the voluntariness of actions and qualities would have to be a constituent of moral approval, and it would limit the conditions in which moral approval is justified. In that case our moral judgment would be a belief about an objective fact providing a basis for the feeling of approval.

Reid's objection, then, identifies a basic difference between his position and Hume's. If Hume conceded Reid's point about the role of voluntariness, he would introduce belief into

[34] '. . . no action can be called morally good, in which a regard to what is right has not some influence. Thus a man who has no regard to justice, may pay his just debt, from no other motive, but that he may not be thrown into prison. In this action there is no virtue at all' (H 598a). In 'some influence' Reid shows that he holds a 'co-operative' rather than a 'subtractive' view. See Hutcheson, §633; Balguy, §669.

[35] See Hume, §726.

[36] 'Nor does there appear any good reason why the useful and agreeable qualities of body and of fortune, as well as those of the mind, should not have a place among moral virtues in this system. They have the essence of virtue; that is, agreeableness and utility, why then should they not have the name?' (H 651b–652a)

[37] See Beattie on Hume, §777.

[38] 'But virtue has a merit peculiar to itself, a merit which does not arise from its being useful or agreeable, but from its being virtue. The merit is discerned by the same faculty by which we discern it to be virtue, and by no other.' (H 652b)

his account of the moral feeling, and so would destroy the whole point of his account. His account of the moral sentiment follows his general view of passions; since the connexion between passion and belief is contingent, the passion cannot be individuated by the presence of a specific belief.[39]

Hume relies on this account of passions and sentiments in opposing the 'divines'. He complains that in the doctrine restricting virtues to voluntary states and actions, 'reasoning, and even language, have been warped from their natural course'.[40] He implies that if our sentiments are guided by some belief about objective facts, so that they would not survive the loss of this belief, we warp our reasoning and language from their natural course. According to Hume, if we have a certain feeling towards (say) tall and handsome people, and we have a phenomenologically similar feeling towards just people, we approve of both sorts of people in the same way. If we were to argue that moral approval of just people rests on the belief that their states are voluntary, and that our approval would not be moral approval otherwise, Hume would answer that we were warping our natural feelings of approval. He rejects any belief-based distinction between phenomenologically similar sentiments. If, then, Hume attempted to meet Reid's objection by restricting moral approval to a sentiment based on belief, he would undermine a central element in his own conception of moral sentiments, and indeed a central element in his conception of the emotions.

Reid claims that the demand for voluntariness is basic; we do not take voluntariness to be a reliable indicator of something that we value for some other reason. We are not concerned with voluntary actions and qualities simply because we think they are the most likely to be stable, and therefore the best basis for predicting that the agent will keep the useful or agreeable traits in question. Hume's attempt to reduce moral approval to approval of the agreeable or useful omits an essential element in moral approval and moral sentiment.

850. Actions and Agents

Once he has explained his view about the object of our moral approval, Reid considers a central puzzle in Hume's account of justice. In Hume's view, 'no action can be virtuous or morally good, unless there be in human nature some motive to produce it, distinct from its morality' (H 648a, 667b). Hume argues that the justice does not consist in the action itself, since we regard actions as just only insofar as they are the sign of a just character. But the agent's reason for acting justly cannot simply be regard for a just character; for we do not know what a just character is unless we understand what a just action is. Hume seems to believe, then, that unless there is some further motive for doing one action rather than another besides the desire to act justly, we have not explained acting justly.[41]

Reid rejects Hume's contention that we cannot take any moral attitude to actions apart from the motives of the agents. If an action relieves the sufferings of a person in distress, then we rightly approve of it. As Reid says, we think it 'ought to be done by those who have the power and opportunity, and the capacity of perceiving their obligation to do it' (H 649a). We can think this about the action even if we think the agent acted from bad motives.

[39] See Hume, §733. [40] Quoted in §726. [41] On Reid's argument see Lehrer, *TR* 241–4.

Indeed, if we did not approve of actions apart from our views about the motive, we would deprive ourselves of an important part of the explanation of our approval of motives. For part of our basis for approval of motives is our approval of the actions that they tend to cause. If our approval of the actions in turn depended on our approval of the motives, we would be caught in a vicious circle. Reid seeks to remove the appearance of circularity by distinguishing formal from material goodness (H 649b–650a). Hume has given no reason for rejecting that distinction.

Hume would be right to say that we praise agents for their actions, and regard the actions as an aspect of personal merit, only because of our belief about the motives of the agents, and that in this respect approval of actions is secondary to approval of agents. But it does not follow that we take all the moral goodness of the action to be merely a sign of goodness in the agent. As Reid suggests, we predicate goodness of the action and of the character in different, though related senses. Hume seems to have confused the issue because he speaks indiscriminately of 'the goodness of an action' and 'the virtue of an action'. Reid suggests, therefore, that we remove any appearance of paradox once we distinguish the goodness appropriately ascribed to an action from that ascribed to an agent.

Perhaps, however, Hume has noticed a different difficulty that he does not distinguish from the one that he describes. Our explanation would go in a vicious circle if we could say only that the just person is the one who does just actions and that just actions are the sort of actions that a just person would do. One or the other of the just action and the just person must be independently specified if we are to understand either just actions or just agents. For similar reasons just people must be able to describe their just actions as more than simply 'what a just person would do'; for we want to explain why just people choose these actions rather than some others, and we must cite something about the actions themselves. Just people are not indifferent to the properties of just actions; nor do they choose just actions simply as means to the exercise of just character.[42]

But we need not infer that, as Hume supposes, just action rests on some motive apart from the sense of its morality. If we suppose that just action requires equal distribution between equally deserving recipients, we need some conception of what equal distribution is and who a deserving recipient is; and a just person needs some conception of these things in order to act as a just person does. But it does not follow that just people must have some further motive for valuing equal distribution apart from the fact that it is just.

We might suggest, therefore, that to be a just person is to be concerned about equal distribution because it is just, and not because of some further benefit that we care about. We may then ask why we should attach moral importance to equal distribution. On this sort of question Reid tends to appeal to intuition when we might reasonably seek some further explanation. But the further explanation need not introduce a non-moral motive for caring about equal distribution.

Reid's main point is sound. A reasonable distinction between the goodness of actions and of agents undermines the general point that Hume wants to derive from considerations about 'the morality of an action'. Perhaps Hume thinks of feelings of approval without differentiation, and does not consider the different sorts of judgments that apply to agents

[42] Hume makes this point in his letter to Hutcheson, referring to Cic. *Fin.* iv. See §726.

and to actions. To distinguish these judgments is to admit, contrary to Hume, that judgments are essential to moral approval. Hume's sentimentalist account of moral approval affects his view on some normative questions.

But even if Reid's account of moral judgment and moral approval is more accurate than Hume's, might the sentiments described by Hume be preferable to those described by Reid? Perhaps Hume has shown that Reid's sentiments are baseless. Even though Hume believes he is describing moral approval, and not replacing it with something else, his position may appear more plausible if it is understood as a form of nihilism rather than reductionism about morality. We have often noticed that a nihilist presentation of Hume's position would be contrary to Hume's intentions, but might be taken to fit his arguments.

If we take Hume to argue implicitly for the abandonment of moral judgments and sentiments in favour of Humean sentiments that do some of the work of moral judgments, we must take the main weight of his argument to rest on (1) his account of the passions and their objects; (2) his arguments about passion and practical reason; (3) his arguments to show that moral judgments are really sentiments rather than judgments and are really about us rather than about the objects. But his arguments for these parts of his theory of morality are open to question; they do not clearly justify the abandonment of moral judgment and approval.

In this as in other cases, we might initially suppose that Reid's answer to Hume is superficial because it rests on common-sense claims that Hume might appear to have undermined. But the more radical Humean arguments that would undermine the common-sense claims are not convincing enough to justify radical Humean conclusions. Reid's criticisms mark weak points in Hume's position.

851. Justice v. Utility

According to Reid, Hume accepts the Epicurean reduction of all considerations of moral goodness to considerations of pleasure and utility; as Reid puts it, he reduces the *honestum* to the *utile* and the *dulce* (H 651ab). Reid recognizes that Hume rejects the Epicurean reduction of benevolence to self-love.[43] Nonetheless he thinks Hume is open to the objection raised against the Epicurean system, that it 'was justly thought . . . to subvert morality, and to substitute another principle in its room' (H 651b). Since Reid takes Hume's account of justice to embody these mistakes about morality, he examines it at length.

Reid attacks Hume's account of the origins of justice in self-interest and his utilitarian account of rules of justice. He argues that (1) our belief that some things are just and that just action is obligatory does not depend on the existence of rules or conventions that are in everyone's selfish interest, and that (2) our belief about what is just and about why just actions are obligatory does not depend on any belief about utility.

When Hume claims that justice is an artificial virtue, he has both these points in mind. For it is difficult to give a convincing utilitarian account of justice (replying to Reid's second point) unless we can tie principles of justice to some appropriate set of rules and

[43] This anti-reductive attitude to benevolence is more prominent in *IPM* than in *T*. See §763.

conventions (replying to Reid's first point). Hume points out that while the utilitarian benefits of benevolence are easily seen (as long as we are not very careful to distinguish immediate from long-term utility), we cannot easily give a parallel account of justice.[44] In order to respond to Butler's objections, he has to appeal to the effects of a system of rules.

None of this implies that the system of rules must benefit each of us individually; but Hume's account of moral judgment makes this conclusion difficult to avoid. For, given this account of the nature of moral judgment, some feeling of approval towards the public interest would be necessary to get a system of justice started, if we do not appeal to self-interest. But what feeling of approval could this be? Hume correctly argues that the feelings of approval that might move us to approve of particular other-regarding actions cannot be counted on to move us to approve of a distant goal such as long-term public interest.[45] Hence the basis of our approval of justice must ultimately be self-interest.

Reid argues against Hume's contention that justice depends essentially on systems of rules. Hume considers only the branches of justice that concern property and contracts. Since the institution of property (or at any rate of some kinds of property) appears to rest on rules or conventions, it is easy to see why the branch of justice concerned with property is also concerned with rules. We might be inclined to believe something similar about contracts (though Reid thinks this would be a mistake). But Reid argues that there are four other areas of justice, to do with injuries to one's person, family, liberty, or reputation, and that Hume has ignored them.[46] We will deny that these other cases of injustice are wrong independently of any rules or conventions, if we agree with Hobbes's view about the dependence of right and wrong on the existence of positive law. Hume does not clearly endorse Hobbes's view; but unless he endorses it, his restriction of justice seems arbitrary.

This is not a purely verbal dispute, about what should be called 'justice'. For if the non-conventional branches of justice neglected by Hume rest on principles that also explain why certain rules about property are just, Hume neglects a non-conventional basis for rules about property.

Reid points to moral sentiments that, in his view, presuppose a sense of justice that would also explain the justice in rules about property. He appeals to the sense of being owed something, and takes this sense to be present in elementary moral sentiments of gratitude and resentment.[47] Reid returns to his critique of Hume's attempt to describe moral sentiments without moral beliefs. If moral approval is to be analysed into sentiments, it must be analysed into distinctively moral sentiments, not into any old favourable feeling. But Reid argues that we cannot identify characteristically moral sentiments without attributing

[44] Hume criticizes Hutcheson's attempt to make benevolence the basic moral sentiment. See §768.

[45] Hume does not seem to think this criticism applies to the sentiment of humanity introduced in *IPM*. But he does not rely on this sentiment as a sufficient basis for justice. See §771. These difficulties help to explain why one might want to rest utilitarianism on a rationalist account of moral judgment, as Sidgwick does.

[46] 'He seems, I know not why, to have taken up a confined notion of justice, and to have restricted it to regard to property and fidelity in contracts. As to the other branches he is silent. He no where says, that it is not naturally criminal to rob an innocent man of his life, of his children, of his liberty, or of his reputation; and I am apt to think he never meant it.' (H 657a)

[47] 'As soon, therefore, as men come to have any proper notion of a favour and of an injury; as soon as they have any rational exercise of gratitude and of resentment; so soon they must have the conception of justice and of injustice; and if gratitude and resentment be natural to man, which Mr Hume allows, the notion of justice must be no less natural.' (H 655b)

specific moral beliefs to the agents who have the sentiments.[48] These sentiments presuppose the belief that other people sometimes do things for us that they owe us as a matter of justice, sometimes go beyond what they strictly owe, and sometimes fail to give us what they owe us. Gratitude is appropriate only when people do us favours beyond what they owe us, and resentment is appropriate only when they fail in something that they owe us. We have some sense of what is owed and due to us independently of all rules and conventions, and this sense does not depend on any conviction about our own interest.

Reid's other appeals to non-utilitarian convictions about justice rest on similar grounds. We are concerned about fairness, reciprocity, and connected features of justice, outside the contexts where Hume finds justice. In the cases where Hume thinks justice does not apply (H 659ab), he overlooks some apparently relevant convictions about justice. If, for instance, conditions of great scarcity require the suspension of ordinary rules of justice and property, the most convincing case for this suspension will show that the suspension is just and fair in the circumstances (H 659b–660a). Similarly, Reid urges, against Hobbes and Hume, that war does not make principles of justice irrelevant.[49]

This argument is limited, since it overlooks, as Reid often does, a more radical reply. Hume's account of justice may not accord with our convictions about justice, but it may still explain them. Perhaps our tenacious attachment to justice irrespective of utility shows why these convictions about justice maximize utility; if we held them less tenaciously, for consciously utilitarian reasons, they would be less stable, and would tend to promote utility less well.

Reid might fairly reply that even this utilitarian effect of our principles does not explain our attachment to justice. Some utilitarians might reply that any attachment to justice that cannot be explained on utilitarian grounds is irrational. Hume cannot give exactly this answer, since he does not claim that the sentiment in favour of utility is especially rational, or that a moral sentiment is open to objection because of its irrationality. In his view, a sentiment that is indifferent to utility will disappear, or at least weaken, in the face of our awareness that it does not promote utility.

852. Utilitarianism and Intuitionism

This dispute between Reid and utilitarians raises more general questions about what to expect from moral theories. We may be dissatisfied by Reid's appeal to intuition and to first principles, especially if his alleged intuitions seem open to question. This dissatisfaction, however, does not undermine his criticism of the utilitarian position. A utilitarian explanation of our moral convictions raises a question about the utilitarian principle itself. Since it cannot be defended on sentimentalist grounds, the utilitarian may appeal instead, as Sidgwick does, to a rational intuition. Perhaps, then, the utilitarian needs Reid's appeal to intuition.

According to Reid, the intuitive status that utilitarians claim for the principle of utility really belongs to a number of moral principles.[50] If our moral convictions cannot all be explained by the utilitarian principle, but can be explained by other principles that are at least

[48] Cf. Butler on resentment, §705.

[49] Cf. Clarke on Hobbes, §626.

[50] Here he agrees with Price. See §822.

as intuitively clear as the utilitarian principle, a non-utilitarian conviction is not necessarily irrational.

We might welcome some argument that takes us beyond these competing appeals to intuition. If we could find some reason for believing that a utilitarian or a non-utilitarian reconstruction of ordinary beliefs has some claim to be a better reconstruction, we would have some more systematic reason for preferring it. Reid's basic epistemological outlook opposes the search for a more general account of basic moral principles. But since the examination of issues in moral theory seems to justify a search for some such general account, perhaps the epistemological outlook that causes Reid to stop the argument where he does should be re-examined. The fact that we would like to go further does not imply that an attempt to go further is bound to succeed. If it fails, Reid's position may be best; perhaps we have failed to do something that cannot be done. But if we see the questions that he leaves unanswered, we have some reason to take some of Kant's questions seriously.

853. Duty and Interest: In Defence of Self-Love

Reid's view of morality is similar enough to Butler's and Price's view to raise similar questions about the relation between interest and duty, and between self-love and conscience. On these issues the three moralists offer different answers.

Butler argues that self-love and conscience are independent principles, and that conscience is superior to self-love, even though they almost always coincide. We have seen that Butler's position may be attacked from two different directions: (1) One might argue against him from a eudaemonist point of view; his argument for the distinctness of self-love and conscience relies on the restricted conception of self-love that results from identifying happiness with pleasure. (2) One might argue that he concedes too much to eudaemonism in arguing that self-love and conscience agree; for the account of self-love that separates conscience from self-love also seems to undermine arguments for the agreement of the two principles.

Price rejects the first objection to Butler, but endorses the second, since he argues against Butler's belief in the general agreement of the two principles. His argument depends on identifying happiness with pleasure, and perhaps even on identifying it with selfish pleasure; he does not take account of the sort of argument that, for instance, Plato offers in the *Republic*.

Reid differs from Price; for he gives a much better account of the conception of happiness that supports the efforts of Greek moralists to reconcile morality and self-interest. He exploits this conception of happiness to argue for the systematic agreement of self-love with morality, in defence of Butler against Price. But he does not accept eudaemonism. He argues, as Butler does, that, despite the coincidence of the two principles, morality is distinct from and superior to self-love.[51] If Reid is right, a plausible conception of happiness does not weaken the case for the independence of conscience from self-love.

Reid's generally favourable attitude to Greek eudaemonism rests on his account of the characteristic Greek conception of happiness. He sees that the Stoics' conception of happiness as our good on the whole, and their arguments about the role of practical reason in reducing

[51] See Butler, §§704–5.

irrational dependence on external goods, underlie their defence of the virtues of character. He attributes the same view, free of Stoic exaggerations, to Socrates and Plato (H 583a). This eudaemonist argument 'leads directly to the virtues of prudence, temperance, and courage' (H 584a).

His attitude to the other-regarding virtues is more complex. He recognizes that a eudaemonist argument offers some defence of them.[52] In fact, he seems to combine two arguments: (1) Since our good consists in satisfying our affections, and since our affections include other-directed affections, satisfaction of other-directed affections is part of our good. (2) Since we are 'social creatures' and our 'happiness or misery' is connected with the circumstances of others, our good consists in fulfilling our nature, and sharing the good of others is part of our nature; hence sharing the good of others is also part of our good.

These two arguments rest on different conceptions of a person's good. The first relies on a conative conception, finding one's good in the satisfaction of desire. The second relies on a naturalist conception, finding one's good in the fulfilment of one's nature. Reid's account of happiness supports the second argument. It is easy to run the two arguments together, if one recognizes that one's natural affections are parts of one's nature. But they are still distinct arguments, since one can satisfy one's natural affections without fulfilling one's nature. If, for instance, our natural affection for our own good or the good of others is not strong enough to direct us to the appropriate pursuit of its object, we might satisfy it without doing enough for our own good or the good of others, and so without fulfilling our nature. This is one of Butler's reasons for distinguishing the rational principles of self-love, benevolence, and conscience from our natural affections.

If the naturalist argument is primary, Reid should appeal to our nature as social creatures. According to this argument, the fulfilment of our nature requires the fulfilment of our capacity to live in societies that involve concern for the good of others for their own sakes. If this is what Reid has in mind, he appeals to the sort of argument that Aristotle and Aquinas offer in defence of friendship.[53]

It is not clear, however, whether he means to endorse such arguments for the social virtues. If he endorses them, he recognizes eudaemonist arguments for the motives and intentions characteristic of the virtuous agent; for he recognizes that the right intention is necessary if we are to judge that the agent is good, and not simply that the action was good (H 649a).[54] But he seems to hesitate on this aspect of eudaemonism. After saying that eudaemonism argues for 'the practice of every virtue', he also agrees that it leads to the virtues themselves (H 638a). But he seems to qualify this agreement, since he adds that the eudaemonist's motive is not the motive of the virtuous person.[55] This contrast

[52] 'And when we consider ourselves as social creatures, whose happiness or misery is very much connected with that of our fellow men; when we consider, that there are many benevolent affections planted in our constitution, whose exertions make a capital part of our good and enjoyment; from these considerations, this principle leads us also, though more indirectly, to the practice of justice, humanity, and all the social virtues. It is true, that a regard to our own good cannot, of itself, produce any benevolent affection. But, if such affections be a part of our constitution, and if the exercise of them make a capital part of our happiness, a regard to our own good ought to lead us to cultivate and exercise them, as every benevolent affection makes the good of others to be our own.' (H 584a)

[53] See §§122, 336.

[54] See also Reid's remarks on the influence of the moral faculty, at H 598a.

[55] 'And though to act from this motive solely, may be called *prudence* rather than *virtue*, yet this prudence deserves some regard upon its own account, and much more as it is the friend and ally of virtue, and the enemy of all vice; and as it gives a favourable testimony of virtue to those who are deaf to every other recommendation. If a man can be induced

between loving virtue for its own sake and loving it for the sake of happiness suggests that Reid does not firmly accept the traditional eudaemonist argument that makes virtue a non-instrumental good that is part of happiness.

854. Duty and Interest: Objections to Self-Love

Though Reid agrees that a reasonable conception of happiness leads us indirectly to the practice of the social virtues, he nonetheless insists that the principle of self-love is defective 'if it be supposed, as it is by some philosophers, to be the only regulating principle of human conduct' (H 584b).[56] What conception of self-love underlies these claims about its defects?

We might suppose Reid simply argues against the view that all our affections are reducible to forms of self-love. Butler ascribes this position to Hobbes, and rejects it. But Reid also seems to deny that self-love is (to use Butler's terms) the supreme practical principle. He argues that 'disinterested regard to duty' is an independent principle not subordinate to self-love (H 584b). Eudaemonism, therefore, is wrong to make self-love superior to every other principle, and thereby to distort the role of conscience.

Reid offers three arguments against the supremacy of self-love: (1) The eudaemonist reasoning that justifies the moral virtues is too complicated for everyone to follow, and will not necessarily move everyone as sharply as a sense of duty moves us.[57] (2) Eudaemonism provides the wrong motive for cultivating the virtues.[58] Our demand for the appropriate motive in the virtuous person conflicts with the supremacy of self-love. (3) The eudaemonist attitude is self-defeating; for if we do not take happiness as our only ultimate end, we will in fact achieve more happiness than if we are eudaemonists.[59]

The first argument maintains that if we all treated moral obligation as dependent on our conception of happiness, many of us would not be appropriately moved by moral obligation. Reid does not dispute the soundness of the eudaemonist argument to show that our overall good requires the moral virtues; he simply argues that it is hazardous to make everyone's commitment to morality depend on acceptance of an argument that most people may not grasp. It is morally desirable, therefore, to find non-eudaemonist grounds that give us sufficient reason to be moral.

to do his duty even from a regard to his own happiness, he will soon find reason to love virtue for her own sake, and to act from motives less mercenary.' (H 638a)

[56] Reid's argument is discussed by Rowe, *TRFM* 125–8.

[57] 'There is reason to believe, that a present sense of duty has, in many cases a stronger influence than the apprehension of distant good would have of itself.' (H 584b)

[58] Yet, after all, this wise man, whose thoughts and cares are centred ultimately in himself, who indulges even his social affections only with a view to his own good, is not the man whom we cordially love and esteem. . . . Even when he does good to others, he means only to serve himself; and therefore has no just claim to their gratitude or affection. Our cordial love and esteem is due only to the man whose soul is not contracted within itself, but embraces a more extensive object: who loves virtue, not for her dowry only, but for her own sake: whose benevolence is not selfish, but generous and disinterested: who, forgetful of himself, has the common good at heart, not as the means only, but as the end . . .' (H 585a)

[59] Reid considers a hypothetical case: 'We may here compare, in point of present happiness, two imaginary characters; the first, of the man who has no other ultimate end of his deliberate actions but his own good; and who has no regard to virtue or duty, but as the means to that end. The second character is that of the man who is not indifferent with regard to his own good, but has another ultimate end perfectly consistent with it, to wit, a disinterested love of virtue, for its own sake, or a regard to duty as an end' (H 585b).

This practical argument does not show that there are grounds independent of happiness for moral obligation; it simply shows that we ought to look for them, and that if we find them, we ought to welcome them. But we may concede to Reid that his arguments about the moral sense show that we have such grounds. Still, agreement on this point does not settle the issue about subordination; for it does not settle how far we have reason to stick to moral obligations when they conflict with other aspects of our good. If we agree that we have some rational grounds independent of our overall good, we may still ask how these grounds are to be compared with our grounds for pursuing other goods. To answer this question, we may still, for all Reid has shown, need to appeal to happiness.

The second argument is more directly relevant to the question about subordination. Even if eudaemonists recognize virtue as a primary element of one's good, they must (in Reid's view) take a 'mercenary' attitude to virtue. What is this mercenary attitude that prevents our valuing virtue at its proper worth? We might understand it in two ways: (1) It is the attitude that values virtue purely instrumentally. (2) It is the attitude that values virtue because of its contribution to happiness. Reid's different remarks suggest that he has each of these views in mind in different places, and that he probably does not distinguish them.

If Reid refers to the first attitude, he is right to say that it is incompatible with the ordinary understanding of a virtuous person. But a eudaemonist need not accept it. For many eudaemonists argue that virtuous action is worth choosing for its own sake, and is therefore a part of happiness; we can value virtue for its own sake and still be eudaemonists. If Reid has the second attitude in mind, he is right to say that eudaemonists are committed to it. But it does not require a purely instrumental approach to the virtues. Reid might believe that our normal attitude to virtue requires a strongly disinterested concern that conflicts with eudaemonism. But he does not justify this belief.

The third argument seeks to present a paradox of eudaemonism parallel to the paradox of hedonism. But it suffers from the obscurity that we have found in the second argument. Reid might mean: (a) We will achieve more happiness if we value virtue for its own sake than if we value it purely instrumentally. (b) We will achieve more happiness if we have a strongly disinterested concern for virtue than we will achieve if our concern is related to our happiness. The first claim is plausible, but does not conflict with eudaemonism. The second claim conflicts with eudaemonism, but is it plausible?

Eudaemonism does not require us to claim that happiness is the only thing worth choosing for its own sake. In fact, some eudaemonists argue that happiness is the ultimate end because it is composed of ends that are worth choosing for their own sakes. Hence we introduce no conflict in our beliefs if we believe both that something other than happiness is worth choosing for its own sake and that happiness is the only ultimate end. Reid would raise a genuine difficulty for eudaemonists if the belief that maximizes happiness is the belief that some particular non-ultimate end would still be preferable to anything else if something else promoted my happiness better. But he has not shown that someone maximizes happiness by holding this belief.

Reid's third objection, then, rests on the sort of misunderstanding that also underlies his second objection. He seems to be wrong about the implications of the eudaemonist claim that happiness is the ultimate end. He seems to suppose that this claim implies a purely instrumental status for other goods; but the eudaemonist has no reason to agree with him.

855. Eudaemonism and the Moral Motive

Reid's criticisms of eudaemonism assume, therefore, that a eudaemonist treats virtues as purely instrumental to happiness in some objectionable sense. He doubts whether a eudaemonist argument, treating self-love as the supreme principle, can justify the virtues, because he doubts whether it can justify our valuing the virtues for their own sakes, as a virtuous person values them. He takes this criticism to apply even to 'the best moralists among the ancients', including the Stoics.[60] But this objection to Stoicism is puzzling, given his other remarks.

Since Reid rejects the supremacy of self-love, he recognizes a distinct superior principle of duty.[61] In his view, the irreducibility of duty is recognized by ordinary people and philosophers of all times and nearly all schools. Reid cites the Greek concept of the *kalon*, rendered in Latin by 'honestum'. He believes, as Price does, that this concept expresses the right and the honourable, and marks the requirements of duty as opposed to interest.[62] The morally virtuous person, according to Reid, recognizes that conscience and the sense of duty constitute an independent and sufficient rational principle. Reid takes the Stoics to acknowledge that the moral motive has this status; they clarify the devotion to duty and the moral motive that Reid takes to be characteristic of the morally good person.[63]

This judgment on the Stoics seems to conflict with Reid's view that they are eudaemonists. He does not say how this apparent conflict is to be resolved. Indeed, in the contexts where he emphasizes the devotion of the Stoics to the honestum, he does not mention that they are eudaemonists. His objections to eudaemonism cast doubt on at least some of his views about the Stoics; for either his claims about the Stoics, or the Stoics' own claims, seem to be inconsistent, and Reid does not try to remove the appearance of inconsistency. If the Stoics are eudaemonists, do they not take the mercenary attitude to virtue that is inconsistent with their devotion to the honestum? But if their position is consistent, Reid's description of their position casts doubt on his criticism of eudaemonism.

[60] 'These oracles of reason led the Stoics so far as to maintain . . . that virtue is the only good . . . This noble and elevated conception of human wisdom and duty was taught by Socrates, free of the extravagancies which the Stoics afterward joined with it.' (H 583a)

[61] '. . . the notion of duty cannot be resolved into that of interest, or what is most for our happiness. Every man may be satisfied of this who attends to his own conceptions, and the language of all mankind shows it' (H 587a)

[62] 'What we call *right* and *honourable* in human conduct, was, by the ancients, called *honestum, to kalon*; of which Tully says, "Quod vere dicimus, etiamsi a nullo laudetur, natura esse laudabile". [Cic. *Off.* i 14.] All the ancient sects, except the Epicureans, distinguished the *honestum* from the *utile*, as we distinguish what is a man's duty from what is his interest. The word *officium, kathêkon*, extended both to the *honestum* and the *utile*: so that every reasonable action, proceeding either from a sense of duty or a sense of interest, was called *officium*.' (H 588a) Stewart follows Reid: 'This distinction [sc. between duty and interest] was expressed, among the Roman moralists, by the words *honestum* and *utile*. Of the former Cicero says, . . . [quotation as above]. *To kalon* among the Greeks corresponds, when applied to the conduct, to the *honestum* of the Romans.' (*PAMP* ii 2, 220) Here Stewart cites Reid in his support, and continues with Reid's comments on different aspects of the *kathêkon*. The passage from Cicero is also quoted (for a different, though related, purpose) by Price, *RPQM* 62. See also Suarez, §438.

[63] 'The authority of conscience over the other active principles of the mind, I do not consider as a point that requires proof by argument, but as self-evident. For it implies no more than this, that in all cases a man ought to do his duty. He only who does in all cases what he ought to do, is the perfect man. Of this perfection in the human nature, the Stoics formed the idea, and held it forth in their writings as the goal to which the race of life ought to be directed. Their *wise man* was one in whom a regard for the *honestum* swallowed up every other principle of action.' (H 597b–598a)

This doubt affects Reid's argument as a whole. He introduces the Stoic conception of the honestum in support of Butler's belief in the distinctness and independence of conscience from self-love. But the Stoics do not seem to support Butler, since they do not separate the honestum from happiness. They recognize that the belief that an action is morally right is different from the belief that it contributes to my happiness. They also agree that belief in moral rightness provides a motive that is distinct from the desire for my happiness. But they do not infer that moral rightness gives me a justifying reason that is independent of any contribution to happiness.

Reid perhaps overlooks this distinction between the character of the moral motive and the justifying reason it provides. He goes too far in claiming that the Stoic sage was someone 'in whom a regard to the honestum swallowed up every other principle of action' (H 589a). The claim that the moral motive 'swallows up' other principles of action is obscure on the crucial point. The Stoics believe that no other principle of action conflicts with the moral motive in the sage. But they do not believe that nothing else matters to sages besides the moral motive; sages also insist that action on the moral motive is the only element in their happiness, and the crucial element in the way of life that they aim at.[64]

Reid might answer that this division between the moral motive and the eudaemonic justifying reason does not make the Stoic position consistent. For he might believe that acceptance of a eudaemonic justifying reason implies a mercenary attitude to virtue, and thereby excludes the right attitude to moral obligation. This answer depends on our accepting Reid's claim—implicit in some of his arguments—that the moral motive is not only distinct from the desire for happiness, but also requires indifference to happiness. But Reid has no good defence of this claim. Hence his case against the supremacy of self-love is not cogent.

856. The Supremacy of Conscience

Reid rejects eudaemonism, and believes that conscience constitutes a rational principle distinct from self-love. He therefore faces Butler's question about which principle is superior, and why. He rejects the opinion that he attributes to some mediaeval mystics, that we should pay no attention to our happiness in this life or the afterlife. This is also the view of the Quietists whom Butler opposes as 'enthusiasts'.[65] Reid takes his objections to the 'mercenary' aspects of eudaemonism to apply to the position accepted by Aquinas. The opposing view he rejects does not say simply that conscience is superior to self-love, but that we should renounce self-love altogether.

Reid agrees with Butler's view that conscience is supreme.[66] He also agrees with Butler's belief in the harmony of self-love and conscience. In his view, the opposition between conscience and self-love is 'merely imaginary', because following our conscience is in fact always for our good.

[64] This is the 'life in accordance with nature', which includes the preferred indifferents as well as happiness.

[65] 'This seems to have been the extravagance of some mystics, which perhaps they were led into, in opposition to a contrary extreme of the schoolmen of the middle ages, who made the desire of good to ourselves to be the sole motive to action and virtue to be approvable only on account of its present or future reward.' (H 598b) On enthusiasm cf. Butler, §717.

[66] '. . . the disinterested love of virtue is undoubtedly the noblest principle in human nature, and ought never to stoop to any other' (H 598b).

The reconciliation of conscience with self-love rests partly on the eudaemonist arguments that Reid has endorsed, even though he has rejected them as a reason for subordinating conscience to self-love. In the present context he especially emphasizes the theological reasons for believing in the harmony of the two principles. Those who believe in God and believe that God rewards virtue with eternal happiness need not consider their own happiness, as long as they follow their conscience in the questions that concern conscience.

Reid does not believe, however, that our only assurance of the harmony of duty and interest is theological. He describes someone who rejects the harmony of the two principles.[67] In agreeing with Shaftesbury's judgment on this case, Reid apparently disagrees with Butler, who rejects Shaftesbury's claim that the case is without remedy.[68]

The disagreement with Butler is, at first sight, surprising. For Butler criticizes Shaftesbury for neglecting the difference between strength and authority. He answers that, once we recognize the rational supremacy of conscience, we have sufficient reason to follow conscience, even if our inclinations or sentiments conflict and our benevolent sentiments are no stronger than our selfish ones. Reid should accept this criticism of Shaftesbury, since he agrees with Butler in insisting on the difference between strength and authority—as he puts it, between animal strength and rational strength.

Still, as Reid sees, Butler's answer to Shaftesbury does not eliminate every possibility of a conflict between conscience and self-love. Reid is considering a different point from the one that Butler considers in answering Shaftesbury. He considers self-love not simply as an inclination or particular passion, but as 'a leading principle' of one's nature. Reid recognizes that Butler's naturalism is difficult to defend without the harmony of self-love and conscience.[69] Denial of their harmony casts doubt on the claim that human nature constitutes a system, and that, as both Reid and Butler insist, action on each of these principles is natural.

If Reid is to show that action on conscience is natural, he needs to rely on the eudaemonist arguments he has given for accepting the content of morality, even though he denies that they capture the moral motive. These are the arguments that a sceptic about the harmony of virtue and happiness has failed to grasp. Reid believes that the sceptic makes a mistake about virtue and happiness that is distinct from the mistake of being an atheist. Reid's position, then, depends on the cogency of these eudaemonist arguments.

In considering the consequences of denying the harmony of duty and interest, Reid faces Sidgwick's dualism of practical reason. Sidgwick believes in a dualism because he thinks that both self-love and conscience claim to be supreme; each claims that it is ultimately reasonable to follow it rather than any other principle. That is why we face a 'fundamental contradiction' (Sidgwick, *ME* 508) in practical reason, not simply an awkward practical conflict on possible particular occasions. If Sidgwick is right about what each principle says, no assurance of their practical harmony removes the fundamental difficulty raised by their contradictory claims about supremacy.

[67] 'Indeed, if we suppose a man to be an atheist in his belief, and at the same time, by wrong judgment, to believe that virtue is contrary to his happiness upon the whole, this case, as Lord Shaftesbury justly observes, is without remedy. It will be impossible for the man to act, so as not to contradict a leading principle of his nature. He must either sacrifice his happiness to virtue, or virtue to happiness; and is reduced to this miserable dilemma, whether it is best to be a fool or a knave.' (H 598b)

[68] See Butler, §714. [69] See Butler, §710.

Reid, like Butler, rejects Sidgwick's dualism; he does not believe that the two principles threaten the contradiction that Sidgwick describes. He asserts that conscience claims supremacy, but he does not assert that self-love claims it. He seems to follow Butler in treating self-love as a superior principle, but conscience as supreme.

If this is his view, should he infer that those who reject the harmony of the two principles face a miserable dilemma? He assumes that they must choose between (as it will appear to them) being a fool and being a knave. But he seems to exaggerate their difficulties. If we accept both principles as superior, we will presumably follow each of them on many occasions—we will neither be purely mercenary nor purely self-denying. We will violate either principle only on those occasions where the demand of the other seems to be especially urgent. We need not think of ourselves as knaves (on the occasions where we decide that the cost to self-love is too great for us to follow conscience) or fools (on the occasions when we sacrifice self-love for the sake of conscience). While Reid is justified in asserting the importance of belief in the harmony of duty and interest, he seems to exaggerate the bad effects of not recognizing their harmony.

857. The Authority of Conscience

If Reid affirms, with Butler, the supremacy of conscience, how does he justify himself? He claims that we can see how conscience is a rational principle, and therefore a superior principle; but why is it supreme? Reid's appeal to self-evidence is too hasty.[70] One ground for judging that we ought to do x is the fact that x is our duty.[71] But, contrary to Reid, this is not the ground that decides whether conscience is superior to self-love. Even if conscience claims that there are moral grounds for preferring morality, it does not follow that moral grounds are to be preferred over purely prudential grounds. The moral ought-judgment needs to be supported by claims about overall reasonableness that go beyond the moral judgment. Reid's argument to show that the superiority of conscience is self-evident is, therefore, dubious. If he appeals to a further self-evident principle that it is reasonable overall to follow conscience against self-love, he relies on intuition to settle a question that seems open to argument, and therefore does not seem to have a self-evident answer.

Can Reid show something more about the character of the moral point of view that would prove that conscience is supreme? One might ask why acceptance of the supremacy of conscience is natural. Something about the content of conscience should show us that in following it we express the systematic character of the different impulses and principles that constitute the nature of rational agents.

Reid suggests a possible partial answer to this naturalist demand. The first principles of morals include a principle enjoining reciprocity—that we should act towards others as we would judge it right for them in the same circumstances to act towards us (H 639a).[72] He justifies this principle by arguing that we recognize its force whenever we are the victims

[70] See H 597b–598a quoted in §855.

[71] Alternatively, we might say that the sense of 'ought' in which it is evident that we ought to do our duty is the moral sense of 'ought'.

[72] Clarke also emphasizes this feature of moral judgment. See §631.

of an offence.[73] Reid suggests that we cannot rationally avoid the impartial application of moral principles. We are ready to apply them to others, and we have no rational basis, if we are honest with ourselves, for refusing to apply them to ourselves as well.

In demanding what we think is owed to us, we do not simply assert that we want something; for we do not resent the refusal to give us what we want unless we believe we deserve or are entitled to it. In believing this about ourselves, we apply a principle that rests on authority, since we appeal to reasons, and not simply to the strength of our desires. Hence the application of these authoritative principles to ourselves commits us to accepting the authority of conscience.

This point about authority might allow a defence of the rational supremacy of conscience. Reid argues that if we accept moral principles in their application to other people, but deny their application to ourselves, we rely on some assumption about what is special about ourselves. But when we think about it honestly, we reject this assumption. This argument presupposes that we rest our claims against others on authoritative principles. Hence we might avoid the conclusion by denying we rely on authoritative principles in our treatment of others; we might claim to be simply asserting our desires against them. Reid assumes that we cannot escape his conclusion in this way, if we admit that we are rational agents who guide our actions by authoritative principles.

Much more needs to be said in defence of this argument. One needs to show, for instance, that morality expresses an impartial and authoritative conception of what people deserve and are entitled to, so that it binds anyone who makes claims against others on the basis of entitlement. Butler briefly defends his view that this conception of morality underlies the exceptions to utilitarianism. Reid's argument will be convincing only if he shows that Butler's view gives an account of the basic principle of morality. Like Price, he sketches an argument that Kant explores more fully.

858. Rationalism v. Naturalism

Reid's defence of a rationalist position against Hume gives us an opportunity to sum up some of the issues in the debate between rationalists and sentimentalists. This debate begins with Hobbes's attack on a traditional view of the relation of morality to human nature. This traditional view is contained in Suarez's defence of Aquinas' general position. Though Suarez does not agree with Aquinas on all the main questions of moral and political theory, he defends some of the main claims that distinguish Aquinas from his voluntarist critics and from Hobbes and his successors.

In Suarez's view, principles of morality (1) describe what is appropriate for rational nature, which is not constituted by anyone's beliefs or desires. He takes this conception to be equivalent to the conception of them as (2) principles of practical reason aiming at the human good. The first claim is more prominent in Suarez, and the second is more prominent

[73] 'It is not want of judgment, but want of candour and impartiality, that hinders men from discerning what they owe to others. They are quicksighted enough in discerning what is due to themselves. When they are injured, or ill treated, they see it, and feel resentment. It is the want of candour that makes men use one measure for the duty they owe to others, and another measure for the duty that others owe to them in like circumstances.' (H 639a)

in Aquinas; but, given the view of rational nature common to Aquinas and Suarez, the two claims agree. Sentimentalists reject the first claim. In their view, morality depends on will or sentiment, or both, not simply on facts about rational nature and what is appropriate for it.

Some rationalists also reject the first claim. They agree that moral principles describe facts not constituted by human choice, will, desire, or sentiment. But Clarke, Price, and Reid reject the connexion between morality and rational nature. In their view, moral principles are true about moral facts that have no essential reference to rational nature; their rightness does not depend on the relation of morality to anything outside it.

In claiming that moral principles describe eternal relations of fitness grasped by reason, Clarke agrees with Suarez. Indeed, Suarez may be Clarke's indirect source, since Clarke is probably inspired by views similar to those of Cudworth, and Cudworth follows Suarez. The essential point that Clarke omits from Suarez is the appeal to rational nature. This element is restored by Butler in his account of morality, which comes much closer to Suarez's account. But Price and Reid follow Clarke in deleting the appeal to nature.

859. Intuitionism v. Naturalism

This difference between the naturalism of Suarez and the rationalism of Clarke, Price, and Reid is epistemologically and metaphysically significant. If true moral principles describe what is fitting for rational nature, we have some basis for argument about moral questions; apparently, we can test a purported moral principle by seeing whether it really fits rational nature. Admittedly, this appearance may be misleading; for we may be unable to reach a sufficiently detailed understanding of rational nature. But at least we seem to have something to argue about.

Once the appeal to rational nature is dropped, we have nothing further to argue about if we ask whether a purported moral principle is true or not. We have to see the answer to such questions by inspection, since we have nothing we can infer it from. It is understandable, then, that the rationalists are also intuitionists about our knowledge of moral principles.

If we separate moral facts from facts about fitness for rational nature, we also deprive ourselves of an apparently reasonable answer to questions about their metaphysical status. If Suarez is right, moral facts may be facts about human beings, or, more broadly, about rational beings. This is not completely obvious; for we might argue that facts about rational beings can be completely stated without any reference to what is fitting for their nature. Suarez does not take this view; he believes that the nature of rational beings determines what is fitting for them, so that an account of all the facts about human nature will determine the facts about fittingness. Whatever metaphysical status we attribute to facts about human and rational nature must also be attributed to moral facts.

Since the rationalists reject this connexion with facts about rational nature, they cannot say anything further about the sorts of facts that moral facts are; hence, they must regard them as sui generis. This metaphysical claim is expressed in their claim that moral properties are indefinable.

Reid provides a fuller and more articulate defence of this position than Clarke and Price provide. He argues, taking up suggestions of Price, that moral truths are not the only ones of

which we must give an intuitionist account. Since empiricism, in his view, cannot account for our knowledge of the external world, and since we have to rely on intuition here too, we cannot reasonably object to an intuitionist treatment of moral knowledge. Reid does not explicitly reject Butler's naturalism, insofar as it supports claims about the superior status of self-love and the supremacy of conscience. But he does not use naturalism against intuitionism.

860. Reasons for Rejecting Naturalism

The rationalists do not make it clear why they reject the naturalist account of moral facts and our knowledge of them. Two reasons are worth considering: (1) We have noticed the broader philosophical and scientific grounds for rejecting an appeal to nature, if nature is taken to include immanent teleology, without reference to the legislative will of God. (2) Balguy's and Price's arguments against Hutcheson suggest that they believe any concession to naturalism is an admission of inappropriate mutability in moral properties, and therefore a concession to the Hobbesian errors exposed by Cudworth.

Suarez follows Aquinas in explaining fitness to rational nature by reference to the ultimate end of a rational agent. Aquinas' eudaemonism connects his account of morality with his account of will and freedom. On this point he differs from the rationalism of Clarke and his defenders. According to Aquinas, pursuit of a final good is not an empirically known feature of rational beings; it is an essential property of rational agents, and it is essential to the freedom that is peculiar to rational agents.

Price and Reid abandon this central role of the final good. They deny that it is essential to freedom; they offer an indeterminist account of freedom that has no essential role for a rational desire for the good. Though Reid stays closer than Butler or Price do to Aquinas' conception of happiness and prudence, he does not rely on the final good for his explanation of the difference between will and passion, or for his explanation of freedom. In contrast to Aquinas, he does not believe that in attributing freedom to rational agents, we attribute the desires and aims that are the basis for the moral virtues.

In rejecting Aquinas' eudaemonism and his account of the will, rationalists seem to be influenced by the similarities between these doctrines and some doctrines of their sentimentalist and voluntarist opponents. If we take happiness to be pleasure, it is clear why acceptance of eudaemonism seems to commit us to Hobbesian claims about the basis of morality. This is why Hutcheson, Balguy, and Price all reject eudaemonism.

This reason for rejecting eudaemonism does not fit Reid, who has a more accurate conception of the ultimate good, as Aristotle and Aquinas conceive it. It still seems to him an inadequate basis for morality. But his reasons for rejecting it are quite weak, in the light of his description of the good and happiness.

Similarly, Reid's objections to Aquinas' explanation of freewill seem to reflect his antipathy to Hobbes's and Hume's versions of compatibilism. In their view, freedom is simply causation by desires rather than external force. Reid objects that this simple compatibilist view fails to recognize some crucial distinctions between will and passion. But he does not refute the more complex compatibilist view that can be derived from Aquinas.

861. Difficulties for Non-naturalist Rationalism

In accepting some elements of the outlook of Aquinas and Suarez and rejecting other elements, the rationalists expose themselves to objections that the naturalist does not face. Perhaps the most serious objection arises from the extent to which the rationalists are committed to intuitionism.

This objection does not rest on the mere fact that they sometimes rely on intuition. Price and Reid reject a single principle of rightness, such as the principle of utility, and recognize the possibility of conflicts among principles that cannot simply be settled by appeal to a supreme principle. This pluralism does not discredit their position.

They are open to more damaging objections for their appeal to intuition as a substitute for an account of the nature of moral facts, and for reasons that might be given for taking morality seriously. They claim that morality involves indefinable properties, sui generis facts, and principles that must be grasped by intuition without any further room for argument, defence, or explanation. These claims tend to undermine part of the rationalists' initial motive for maintaining their position. They believe, reasonably, that a sentimentalist conception of moral principles does not take them seriously enough, since it makes them subordinate to sentiments, and does not recognize their regulative role in relation to sentiments. But if they cannot say what feature of morality gives it a regulative role, they cast doubt on their claim to be vindicating this regulative role of morality.

These considerations suggest that rational intuition of independent sui generis facts is not a satisfactory conclusion for a rationalist to reach. If we find the rationalist position unsatisfactory, we may react in different ways: (1) We may decide that sentimentalism is right after all. (2) We may decide that the appeal to independent facts is mistaken. (3) We may decide that the separation of moral truths from truths about rational agents is mistaken.

The first reaction is open to question; for the rationalists' objections to sentimentalism may still seem cogent, even when the weakness in their position is recognized. The second reaction is justified only if independent facts would have to be the sorts of facts that the rationalists describe. The view that objectivism implies intuitionism has sometimes persuaded opponents of intuitionism to oppose objectivism as well.[74]

But we will not immediately share this second reaction if we consider rationalism against the background of naturalism. The mediaeval naturalist point of view favours the third reaction to the rationalism of Price and Reid. Aquinas' ethical theory is not intuitionist, and it does not treat moral facts as sui generis. The aspects of naturalism that the rationalists reject are the ones that make it unnecessary to introduce the strongly intuitionist aspects of rationalism. When we see this, we ought to ask whether the rationalists are right to reject these aspects of naturalism.

862. Rationalism, Naturalism, and Kant

This summary of the disputes between naturalists, sentimentalists, and rationalists may help to introduce the examination of Kant. For, in ethics as in epistemology and metaphysics,

[74] This line of argument is especially clear in Strawson, 'Intuitionism'.

Kant is dissatisfied both with empiricism and with the rationalism that leads to undefended intuitions. Part of his strategy can be described as an expression of the third reaction; for he takes the connexion between a theory of rational agency and a theory of morality to be much tighter than it appears to be in rationalist conceptions. To this extent he develops a central aspect of Butler's position (despite his ignorance of Butler) that is obscured by Price and Reid (despite their knowledge of Butler).

Still, Kant does not revive mediaeval naturalism; he rejects it even more clearly than the rationalists do. His rejection is implicit; he does not seriously consider the Aristotelian position defended by Aquinas and his 16th-century supporters, and his explicit references to Greek ethics are rather brief and inexact. We will have to examine his reasons for rejecting the naturalist position, and see how far they leave him from the position common to Aquinas and Butler.

This question is connected with a question about the nature of Kant's rejection of rational intuition; does this lead him to a version of the second reaction as well as the third? Some of his views encourage interpreters to believe that his rejection of rationalism includes the rejection of objectivism. We need to see whether this is Kant's position, and whether he has a good reason for regarding it as the most reasonable reaction to the intuitionist aspects of rationalism.

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VOLUNTARISM, EGOISM, AND UTILITARIANISM

863. Voluntarists as Critics

We noticed earlier that theological voluntarism is a persistent feature of English moral philosophy in the 17th and 18th centuries.[1] We might have expected to find it in Scottish philosophy too, given its affinity to some trends in Calvinism, but we do not find it. Probably this is not because it was unpopular in Scotland, but because the major Scottish philosophers belonged to the theological moderates who reacted to Calvinism.[2] Complaints against Hutcheson suggest that some of his opponents may have been voluntarists.[3]

No English moralist sets out a voluntarist position as fully as Pufendorf does. But the English voluntarists are worth examining as critics of rationalism and sentimentalism. John Clarke sets out the main points of criticism. In his view, both Samuel Clarke the rationalist and Hutcheson the sentimentalist leave obscurities and unanswered questions that a voluntarist account removes. He identifies two main flaws in their position: (1) They cannot give a perspicuous account of moral duty and obligation without reference to divine commands. (2) They cannot give a perspicuous account of reasons and motives without an egoistic appeal to God's promises of rewards and punishments.

These voluntarist criticisms are worth discussing partly because they may help us to identify genuine difficulties and obscurities in rationalism and sentimentalism. We might

[1] See §§525–6. Pattison, 'Thought', offers a fairly sympathetic treatment of moral philosophy in conjunction with English theology in the 18th century. At 61–2 he connects developments in moral philosophy with different interpretations of Paul's remark on natural law in *Rm.* 2:14: 'Since the time of Augustine, the orthodox interpretation had applied this verse, either to the Gentile converts, or to the favoured few among the heathen who had extraordinary divine assistance. The Protestant expositors, to whom the words "do by nature the things contained in the law" could never bear their literal force, sedulously preserved the Augustinian explanation . . . The rationalists, however, find the expression "by nature", in its literal sense, exactly conformable to their views . . .' Pattison's contrast misrepresents the position of many Protestant expositors; for evidence of the error in his first sentence see §§226, 412.

[2] Sher, *CU* 57, mentions Witherspoon's satire on moderate ministers in *EC*. The moderates should make sure to know only Leibniz, Shaftesbury, Collins, Hutcheson, and Hume's Essays, and to avoid scriptural and theological learning (*EC* 26). The moderates' 'Athenian Creed' includes the article: 'I believe in the divinity of L. S-y, the saintship of Marcus Antoninus, the perspicuity and sublimity of A-e, and the perpetual duration of Mr H-n's works, notwithstanding their present tendency to oblivion. Amen.' (27)

[3] See the charges brought before the Presbytery of Glasgow, quoted in §645. Voluntarists might have been especially likely to object to Hutcheson, though neither of the two grounds of objection is confined to voluntarists.

sympathize with critics who claim that the rationalists appeal too quickly to 'fitnesses' and related notions that appear to promise some understanding of moral concepts, but really presuppose understanding of them. Similarly, we might doubt whether an appeal to a moral sense explains the distinctive features of moral judgments and moral properties. Rationalists and sentimentalists criticize each other on these grounds; voluntarists are more convinced by the criticisms than by the defences.

We have a further reason for taking voluntarist criticisms seriously. When critics object to obscurity in their opponents' position, they rely on some explicit or implicit views about which concepts or judgments are clear and which are obscure, and on what standards of clarity are appropriate for the subject-matter. The voluntarists' demand for clarity leads them to a reductive analysis of moral concepts and properties to concepts and properties (command, motive, interest) that can be explained and understood without reference to moral properties.[4] Neither rationalists nor sentimentalists meet the standards of clarity that voluntarists demand.

Voluntarists, therefore, raise a useful question about whether we ought to demand this sort of clarity from an account of morality. In this way they anticipate utilitarian criticism of other moral theories. Bentham and Mill believe that utilitarianism is superior to its main rivals in its clarity. Sidgwick is more cautious in his claims, but he basically agrees with Bentham and Mill; he often objects to other theories because their accounts of moral properties are obscure or unhelpfully circular. In the 20th century naturalists and non-cognitivists raise similar objections to non-naturalism. Non-naturalists agree with their critics that their analyses fail to provide certain kinds of clarification, but they disagree about whether that matters.

The English voluntarists maintain three major claims: (1) An imperative account of morality as consisting in obligations imposed by commands. (2) A utilitarian account of the content of morality. (3) An egoist account of moral motivation. These claims are logically separable, but voluntarists pass easily from one to the other. They are especially prone to combine the first claim, about the metaphysics of morality, with the third claim, about moral motivation. They are influenced by the different aspects of obligation, which they take to include both metaphysical and motivational elements.

In trying to treat these different elements separately, we are imposing distinctions that are not easy to mark in the relevant texts. But the distinctions may nonetheless be useful, to point out the different parts of a voluntarist position that one might accept or reject. Though the voluntarists themselves think of them as a package, it is worth noticing that we might accept one thesis without the others. This selective attitude to the voluntarists is characteristic of later utilitarians.

864. Enthusiasm[5]

Voluntarism expresses one widespread reaction to Shaftesbury and the French Quietists who raise questions, from different points of view, about the role of self-interest in the

[4] I speak of concepts and of properties because it is not clear which of them the voluntarists are trying to explain.

[5] See §§611, 717.

Christian outlook. Shaftesbury—according to one interpretation—takes it for granted that Christian morality appeals to self-interest, because it offers the prospect of happiness in an afterlife as the reward for virtue in this life. Since this is the orthodox outlook, he infers that the orthodox outlook is open to moral objections. He argues that, from the Stoic point of view, Christian morality fails to value the honestum for its own sake.

The French Quietists also express doubts about appeals to self-love. They rely on a strict interpretation of Augustine's contrast between self-love and the love of God, and they argue that Christianity requires an entirely self-forgetful love of God in which believers even forget that they achieve their own happiness in the love of God. In contrast to Shaftesbury, they do not agree that the genuinely Christian outlook makes self-love primary; they attack any outlook that gives any place to self-love as a perversion of Christianity.

Despite these differences between Shaftesbury and the Quietists, they share an attitude that English writers attack as 'enthusiasm', a fanatical rejection of normal human motives in favour of an unhealthy degree of self-renunciation. In France Bossuet argues against Quietism by re-affirming the legitimacy of eudaemonism within a Christian outlook.[6] In England a series of critics attack both Quietism and Shaftesbury's version of Stoicism as aspects of the same enthusiastic rejection of self-love.

We might reject the enthusiastic outlook by affirming the legitimacy of both self-love and disinterested motives. This is Butler's position. His Sermons assume the moral appropriateness of self-love and defend the harmony of self-love and conscience. He warns against an extreme reaction to enthusiasm that would deny the reality or moral appropriateness of disinterested motives.

Despite Butler's warning, the English voluntarists accept the extreme reaction, and so reject appeals to disinterested motives. Perhaps they are impressed not only by the dangers of enthusiasm, but also by Mandevile's sceptical doubts about disinterested motives. Mandeville suggests that since true virtue depends on pure and disinterested motives, and since we can usually find some self-interest in the antecedents of allegedly virtuous actions, we may reasonably doubt the reality of true virtue. One might suppose that the safest reply to Mandeville is to concede his point, given his understanding of true virtue, but to deny its relevance. If we can defend morality without assuming disinterested motives, we need not worry about his doubts.

This reply concedes rather a lot to Mandeville. His doubts rest on alleged observations about mixed motives. He generalizes from cases in which someone who gives a charitable gift is also attracted by the thought that he will gain a good reputation for his charity, so that it will be good for business. But such cases show only that sometimes people act from mixed motives. These mixtures do not threaten the reality of disinterested motives; they show only that disinterested motives often co-operate with self-interested motives. Such

[6] Bossuet's eudaemonism is rather severely examined by Ward, *NG*, ch. 3. In 'Instruction' (Pref. §9) Bossuet defends eudaemonism as authentically Christian: 'c'est donc une illusion d'ôter à l'amour de Dieu le motif de nous render heureux' (Calvet 613). He insists that happiness has to be understood to include more than one's own advantage (utilité, intérêt). He acknowledges that Anselm and Scotus have understood happiness as advantage, but argues that they have not lost sight of its broader scope (which includes 'l'honnêteté et la justice') (614). Once we keep the right conception of happiness in mind, we ought to love God as the source of our own happiness, and we should not try to cultivate a purely disinterested love of God (the attitude in which 'on aimerat Dieu, quand par impossible il faudrait l'aimer sans récompense', 617).

co-operation is no threat to the reality of moral virtue, unless we assume that virtue requires wholly unmixed motives. Some moralists, however, including Balguy, assume this about virtue, and so leave themselves open to Mandeville's doubts.[7] Balguy's position makes it easier to understand why voluntarists prefer not to rely on disinterested motives.

865. Obligation and Imperatives

John Clarke's *Foundation of Morality in Theory and Practice* sketches the different elements of the voluntarist position, and shows how they are connected. He defends himself against both Samuel Clarke and Hutcheson, arguing that they both overlook the necessary connexion between moral rightness, duty, divine commands, and self-interest.

According to John Clarke, Samuel Clarke is mistaken in trying to identify moral properties with facts about the nature of things apart from law. John Clarke agrees with Cumberland and Pufendorf in holding that law is the necessary basis of duty.[8] But Samuel Clarke need not disagree. As Gregory of Rimini and Suarez put it, we may find an 'indicative law' in the nature of things, giving us compelling reason to act one way rather than another. This is law in the larger sense recognized by Hooker.[9] Samuel Clarke's appeal to fitness acknowledges this sort of indicative law. To refute Samuel Clarke, therefore, John Clarke needs to show that morality requires an imperative law (as Gregory puts it) and not just an indicative law.

To fix the connexion between morality and imperative law, John Clarke relies, as many English writers do, on his conception of obligation.[10] He argues that since obligation implies motivation, and since 'ought' and 'obliged' are equivalent, morality requires an imperative law supported by sanctions; for this sort of law is needed to create the sort of motive that belongs to obligation. The motivational conception of obligation makes it reasonable to accept both voluntarism and egoism.

Thomas Johnson uses some of Pufendorf's arguments to defend voluntarism.[11] He quotes and endorses Pufendorf's view that obligation, and therefore morality, needs to be imposed by a superior.[12] He takes over Pufendorf's argument against Grotius, claiming that if natural

[7] See §669.

[8] 'Duty is founded in law, and supposes it; for that, and that only, is so called, which is supposed to be required by some law.' (J. Clarke, *FMTP* 9)

[9] See §414 on Hooker; §425 on Suarez.

[10] 'The same may be said of obligation, which, in the sense it always has, I think, in treatises of morality, signifies the necessity a person lies under, to comply with some law, or suffer the penalty denounced against the violation of it. So that obligation implies law too, in the philosophical use of the word, and therefore has no place where there is no law. There is indeed another vulgar acceptation of the word, wherein no reference is had to law, but only to some inconvenience or prejudice, considered as the natural or likely consequence of acting or forbearing to act so or so. . . . It is visible, in the first sense of the word, men cannot be said to lie under any obligation with respect to moral rules, if they are not supposed to be laws, that is, the positive will and command of God. And in the second and vulgar acceptation of the word, under the supposition that the observation of moral rules should be attended with nothing but pain and misery, men would be so far from being obliged to the observation, that they would be obliged on the contrary to the breach and violation of them. What has been said, may be applied to the term Ought; for Ought and Obliged signify the same.' (J. Clarke, *FMTP* 9)

[11] Johnson's essay *EMO* seeks to settle the dispute between Waterland and the supporters of Clarke over the status of moral and positive duties; see §869. He defends Waterland's side of the dispute by arguing for a voluntarist account of morality. Like Waterland, he believes he is on the side of orthodox Christianity, because rationalism leads to Deism (70).

[12] Johnson, *EMO* 8, quotes Pufendorf, *DOH* 2.2.

and social creatures exist only because of the divine will, voluntarism is correct (*EMO* 12). Here he follows Pufendorf and Barbeyrac in misunderstanding the issue about naturalism and voluntarism.[13] But he also argues more pertinently for Pufendorf's view, by maintaining (against Chubb) that a law without a sanction is a law with no obligation, and hence is not a law (48).[14] Samuel Clarke speaks of the laws of nature, but does not take them to be commands imposed by a divine legislator; Johnson argues that Clarke's position is inconsistent.

Johnson also follows Pufendorf in trying to avoid some of the apparently unwelcome moral implications of voluntarism. Though he appeals to God's will as the source of moral principles, he also relies on God's goodness and wisdom (*EMO* 16). These moral properties of God explain why God's only purpose is the diffusion of happiness (19). This assumption about goodness and happiness allows Johnson to combine voluntarism with utilitarianism. He does not consider the implications of ascribing goodness and wisdom to God, and so he does not discuss the difficulties that arise for this version of voluntarism.

866. Objections to Sentimentalism and Rationalism

Rutherforth defends a voluntarist position similar to John Clarke's, in opposition to Shaftesbury's account of morality, as he conceives it. He argues that, contrary to Shaftesbury, a disinterested attitude to other people's good would not be a strictly moral outlook, but would be morally undesirable. If we could cultivate the disinterested benevolence advocated by Shaftesbury, we would be enthusiasts, and would not act on a sense of duty. Though some people may be as disinterested as Shaftesbury claims, their disinterested motives cannot be a basis for morality, because they cannot be a basis for obligation. They cannot be a basis for obligation (according to Rutherforth's motivational conception of obligation), because they do not always ensure sufficient motivation.[15]

Rutherforth has a reasonable objection to the view that disinterested benevolence alone is the necessary and sufficient basis of morality. One might fairly argue that agents who are merely benevolent and are not benevolent on principle are missing some important element of morality. The appropriate explanation of 'on principle' is not easy to find, but it suggests a weakness in a purely sentimentalist analysis of the moral outlook.[16] If Shaftesbury identified morality with benevolence, he would be open to Rutherforth's objection. The objection fits Hutcheson's claims about benevolence, but on this point Hutcheson seems to go beyond Shaftesbury. Butler agrees with the objection to mere benevolence; that is why he distinguishes the passion from the principle of benevolence, and further limits benevolence by the other moral principles that guide conscience.

[13] Cockburn points out this misunderstanding. See §876.

[14] He supports his claim that a law requires sanctions (60) by citing Pufendorf, *DOH* 2.7; Cumberland, *LN*, Proleg. §6.

[15] 'I would have him [sc. the grave moralist] recollect . . . how few instances there are of persons that have really been enthusiasts of this sort, amongst the many who would be thought such: they have certainly been too few to show that this affection is part of the human constitution.' (Rutherforth, *NOV* 110). 'But suppose we had an instinctive approbation of virtue, suppose the reluctance that we feel when we act other than virtuously to be owing to this principle; I see not how this can be made the cause of moral obligation: unless they who think so will grant that the obligation to virtue is quite precarious, and that our true principle of action is a very unsteady one.' (*NOV* 113–14)

[16] Cf. Hawkins on Fielding and Shaftesbury, §652.

Rutherforth, however, assumes that if we reject benevolent instinct as the basis of morality, voluntarism is the only reasonable alternative. Samuel Clarke, Balguy, and Price agree with him that mere benevolence is insufficient for the recognition of a moral requirement, because it leaves out the compulsory element of morality. But they deny, contrary to Rutherforth, that the compulsory element results from a command. In their view it is a rational requirement. Rutherforth rejects appeals to fitness, and equally rejects any supplementary appeals, such as we find in Balguy, to the nature of the agent and the action (*NOV* 138). Rutherforth does not discuss Butler's attempt to understand 'nature' normatively, treating human nature as a goal-directed system. His criticisms assume the conception of nature that Butler objects to in Wollaston. He implies that some of Wollaston's criticisms of naturalism also apply to Wollaston's and Clarke's conception of fitness.[17]

Voluntarists argue, therefore, that rationalist explanations of the rational requirements in morality are obscure, unintelligible, or unhelpful. Edmund Law defends voluntarism by arguing against Clarke's account of rightness as fitness. Law agrees with Bayes[18] in claiming that the idea of fitness that is relevant to morality is fitness for some end. He also believes, as Bayes does, that the only relevant end is happiness. But he seems to differ from Bayes about how happiness is relevant. Bayes introduces happiness to show that we need to explain fitness by reference to utility, the general happiness. Law, however, suggests that actions are right by being fit to promote the agent's interest.[19]

It is not clear why Law believes that the appropriate clarification of fitness leads us directly to egoism, and only indirectly to utilitarianism.[20] He seems to assume, as John Clarke does, that morality obliges and that obligation includes motivation. But he does not go so far as to deny the possibility of choosing virtue for itself. He supposes that we can choose virtue for itself if we mistake the means for the end.[21] The appropriate end is conformity with the will of God. Law seems to believe that this is not only the feature of morally right actions that makes them right, but also the end that the virtuous person ought to have in mind. The virtuous outlook looks on right actions as having no value in their own right and as having value only as means to fulfilling the divine will.

Law does not explain why the virtuous person's only non-instrumental aim should be conformity with the divine will. We might defend his position by arguing that morality essentially obliges and that obligation requires divine commands. If these claims about morality and obligation are right, someone who cares about the morally right as such cares about it as commanded.

[17] Cf. 13 on Wollaston, 146 on Clarke on the fitness of worshipping God.

[18] At King, *EOE*, ch. 1 §3 (pp. 83–8) Law cites Bayes, *DB*, discussed in §662. Cf. Law's note on ch. 1 §3 (p. 51).

[19] In reply to a discussion of abstract fitness Law argues: 'For to say a thing is essentially good or evil, to call it by hard names, and to affirm that it hath a natural turpitude; or, to put a compliment upon it, and call it a moral rectitude, and such like scholastic terms—without offering a particular reason of interest, why we should do the one or avoid the other, is as much as to say, a thing is good for nothing; or it is bad, but we know not why; or it is good or bad, for a woman's reason, because it is . . .' (Law in King, *EOE*, ch. 1 §3, p. 86).

[20] Law may not be disagreeing radically with Bayes. When Bayes defends the utilitarian explanation, he is explaining divine benevolence rather than the fundamental character of morality.

[21] 'If . . . we follow virtue for its own sake, its native beauty or intrinsic goodness, we lose the true idea of it, we mistake the means for the end; and though we may indeed qualify ourselves for an extraordinary reward from God for such a state of mind, yet we do really nothing to entitle ourselves to it . . .' (Law 273), because we do not do it explicitly in obedience to the will of God.

Law's psychological explanation of the choice of virtue for its own sake appeals, as Gay and Hartley do, to association of ideas. He does not suggest that his explanation vindicates the attitude he describes. He believes he exposes a mistake that we should be able to correct once we notice that we have no reason to ascribe non-instrumental value to virtue.

Similarly, Johnson defends voluntarism against an appeal to a moral sense. He does not treat rationalism separately, because he claims that Samuel Clarke and Butler, no less than Hutcheson, are committed to belief in a moral sense (29). He believes this on the strength of Clarke's remark that we feel shame and compunction if we violate a moral obligation and that we are indignant at other people's failure to respect our rights. In Johnson's view, Clarke believes that moral rightness is constituted by these reactions. He ascribes the same subjectivist view to Butler, and so assimilates the rationalist view of Clarke and Butler to Hutcheson's sentimentalism.[22] He therefore supposes he can refute the rationalist view by refuting Hutcheson. He claims to refute Hutcheson by arguing that our valuing moral virtue for its own sake is a result of confusion of the means with the end (37).

Johnson agrees with Law in supposing that when we identify the psychological origin of the belief that virtue has non-instrumental value, we also show that this belief is mistaken and that we ought to avoid it. That is why the ancient moralists who chose virtue for its own sake suffered from an 'enthusiastic' error.[23] Their mistake anticipates the mistake of Shaftesbury, Clarke, and Hutcheson.

867. Fitness and Utilitarianism

A distinct, but closely related, criticism of rationalism claims that Samuel Clarke's appeal to fitness can be given a definite content only through a utilitarian interpretation. According to John Clarke, the natural foundation for obligation consists in fitness to promote human happiness. He follows Culverwell and Pufendorf in allowing some natural fitness, but denying that this is sufficient for moral rightness.[24] He does not ask whether it is contingent or necessary that God commands us to do these naturally fitting actions. This is a difficult question for Pufendorf, who wants to avoid having to say that God commands arbitrarily, but wants to preserve divine freedom in relation to morality.[25]

John Clarke seems to concede that something makes these actions naturally 'fit for practice' apart from divine commands. If we recognize this fitness, we see a good reason for acting on moral principles, though we do not yet recognize them as divine commands. But John Clarke believes that we recognize their moral character if and only if we treat them as divine commands, because only divine commands carry the obligation that is necessary for morality.

[22] For other treatments of Butler as a sentimentalist see §720 on Kames and Selby-Bigge.

[23] The Stoics 'mistook the means for the end . . . and ran into the enthusiastic notion (for such I must call it) of virtue being a lovely form, amiable in itself, and desirable without further end' (Johnson, *EMO* 62).

[24] 'There is, to be sure, a fitness or unfitness in different things or actions to promote the happiness or misery of mankind. . . . And therefore I grant that upon account of that fitness or unfitness, those moral rules, called the laws of nature, suppose there was no God, or that they were not the positive will or injunctions of God, would be good rules of convenience; and very fit for practice, generally speaking; but that they would be, in strict propriety of language, law, obligatory, or matters of duty, I deny.' (J. Clarke, *FMTP* 20)

[25] See Pufendorf, §§576–7.

John Clarke believes that utilitarianism provides the best interpretation of Samuel Clarke's claims about fitness. Given the goodness of God, divine commands specify moral rules that promote the general happiness of human beings.[26] John Clarke assumes, agreeing with Berkeley and Hutcheson, that if God is morally good, and expresses this moral goodness in the moral rules that embody divine commands, moral rules are utilitarian. We assume, therefore, that utility gives us a standard for moral rightness. But while this standard allows us to identify morally right actions, it is not the ultimate standard; for utilitarian rules are correct only because they state divine commands.

Brown and Rutherforth support John Clarke's attack on appeals to fitness apart from utility.[27] They argue that a reference to human happiness answers the questions that rationalist accounts cannot answer. This utilitarian criticism of rationalist views about fitness does not imply either voluntarism or egoism. But both Brown and Rutherforth criticize fitness from a voluntarist and egoist point of view. If there is some sort of intrinsic rightness that we can both recognize and act on, we have a strong case against voluntarism. Brown and Rutherforth believe that once the rationalist account of intrinsic rightness is rejected, we have no plausible alternative to theological voluntarism.

Brown examines Shaftesbury's belief in the intrinsic goodness and admirability of virtue; he correctly takes this to be a predecessor of the appeal to fitness in Clarke, Balguy, and Wollaston, and he finds them all deficient in the same ways. Similarly, Rutherforth raises reasonable questions for Clarke and Balguy; he seeks a clearer explanation of fitness, and especially a clearer account of the specific kind of fitness that is to be identified with moral rightness.

According to Brown, Shaftesbury's aesthetic conception of moral rightness is too vague. The rationalists' conception is either equally vague, or, if it is made more precise, clearly unsatisfactory. When Shaftesbury represents virtue as fine and admirable in itself, he does not say what it is about virtue that is the proper object of this admiration. When the rationalists answer this question by appeal to fitness, they imply that, for instance, it would be wrong to speak to someone in a language he does not understand; this would be treating him (in Wollaston's phrase) as what he is not (SB 740). But this is clearly insufficient for immorality. If rationalists refuse even the degree of clarification that Wollaston offers, their account of the right 'is really no more than ringing changes upon words' (78).

In Brown's view, any attempt to supplement or clarify Shaftesbury or the rationalists introduces a reference to human happiness.[28] Here he moves too quickly. He is right to say that in many cases virtues refer to someone's interest. But it does not follow that they

[26] 'All morality, all the laws of nature, are founded entirely upon the consideration of pleasure and pain, happiness and misery . . . such kind of conduct being enjoined thereby as are [sic] proper to promote the peace, welfare, and happiness of mankind . . . for that reason, and upon account of that tendency only. To assert the contrary is to unhinge morality, contradict nature, and leave mankind in a state of darkness wherein it will be for ever impossible for them to know what they have to do. . . . In this tendency therefore precisely consists the moral good and evil of human actions; that is, their agreeableness or disagreeableness to the will of God. For the law of nature is founded upon the supposition of the divine goodness. From thence we justly conclude that such actions as are necessary or conducive to the peace and happiness of the world, are agreeable to his will, and the contrary displeasing.' (J. Clarke, *FMTP* 16)

[27] J. Brown, *ECLS*.

[28] 'In all these instances, the reference to human happiness is so particular and strong, that from these alone an unprejudiced mind may be convinced, that the production of human happiness is the great universal fountain, whence our actions derive their moral beauty.' (Brown, *ECLS* 130 = SB 741)

always refer to the maximization of total human happiness, as the utilitarian understands it. Brown does not consider the objections that Butler raises to utilitarianism.

In connecting utilitarianism with morality, the voluntarists do not decide between two ways of understanding the connexion; (1) We might argue that since we have reliable convictions about what is morally right, and since utilitarianism is true, our moral convictions should guide us in deciding what promotes utility. (2) Alternatively, we might argue that our convictions about what promotes utility should guide and modify our convictions about moral rightness.

Each of these directions of argument might be appropriate in different circumstances. But unless the second is sometimes appropriate, we will not learn much about morality by connecting it with utility. Mill accuses the theological voluntarists of holding the first view, and therefore of holding a conservative view of utility.[29] His criticism of Paley on this point is justified. But the view of earlier utilitarians is not so clear. If they take the first view, relying on other moral judgments to decide questions about utility, their attitude is 'conservative' insofar as it tends to hold moral convictions fixed in estimates of utility. But it is not necessarily thereby 'conservative' in a social and political sense. If we believe an institution is (say) unjust, this first form of utilitarianism does not allow us to change our mind by reflexion on utility; hence it rejects a utilitarian device for reconciling ourselves to existing institutions. The utilitarian attitude is socially conservative only if it both estimates rightness by utility and estimates utility by the standard of prevailing practices and institutions.

868. Utilitarianism and Egoism

Voluntarists who accept a utilitarian account of morality re-introduce benevolence into their theory, even though they reject Hutcheson's attempt to identify the moral outlook with the benevolent outlook. According to John Clarke, benevolence is God's motive for commanding the observance of these divine commands rather than others. But if God were not benevolent, God's commands would still constitute morality; for as long as divine commands with sanctions are imposed, we are under moral obligation. Even though the utilitarian character of morality reveals God's benevolence, moral obligation consists in having a sufficient motive, and so it rests on one's own interest.[30] The reasonableness and fitness of actions must ultimately refer to one's own good, and therefore to the fact that God will reward us for these actions.[31] Though sometimes morality requires us to prefer

[29] See Mill, 'Whewell' = *CW* × 170.

[30] 'And though the observation of moral rules be never so good, never so beneficial to the world about a man, if he himself receives no advantage, directly or indirectly, in this life or another, from such an observation, it cannot be said to be good for him. Nor can the consideration of other people's being the better for it, be any motive at all to dispose him thereto, so long as he finds his happiness utterly unconcerned in the case, and still the less so, if misery be the unavoidable consequence of such an observation. He that says the contrary will find it incumbent on him to prove that rational beings are obliged (if the word Obligation in this case can have any meaning) to have a greater regard to the happiness of others than themselves, and that absolutely and finally, which it seems impossible and a contradiction to suppose they should. If by good be meant morally good, that term will coincide with duty and obligation, which have already been considered.' (J. Clarke, *FMTP* 11)

[31] 'Whence it is manifest, the terms reasonable and fit have a final reference to the happiness of the agent, with respect to whose actions they are applied, and by consequence nothing can be said to be reasonable or fit for him that is not

the general interest over our own, God makes sure that we do not lose by this.[32] Unless God guaranteed the coincidence between morality and self-interest, we would have no good reason for the sacrifices that morality requires of us.[33]

These claims about morality and self-interest seem to express doubts about the rationality, and even the possibility, of disinterested moral motivation. One might be readier than John Clarke is to allow moral motivation independent of self-interest, and to allow that it is reasonable to act on it, while still insisting that it would be unreasonable to act on it consistently if it tended to destroy our own happiness. This position would be a demand for the reconciliation of moral motives with self-interested motives. Such a demand would be close to Samuel Clarke's and Butler's position. John Clarke, however, seems to take a more extreme position, in making any reason for morally right action depend on self-interested reasons.

John Brown's case for egoism also rests on a conception of obligation as involving motivation. He assumes a hedonist account of motives, and on this basis shows that we can act on no motives or reasons apart from our own happiness, understood as pleasure.[34] Shaftesbury sometimes agrees with this account of motives, according to Brown; for he recommends virtue as being in itself a source of happiness, and therefore admits that nothing can be rationally recommended except as a means to one's pleasure.

In support of this claim Brown quotes Shaftesbury's remarks on self-love.[35] He assumes that Shaftesbury intends a hedonist conception of happiness. Contrary to Brown, however, most of Shaftesbury's views are more intelligible on the assumption that he is a eudaemonist, but not a hedonist. Once this obscurity—not unusual among English moralists—about happiness is removed, it is no longer so obvious that Shaftesbury accepts Brown's psychological hedonism about the relation of virtue to happiness.

Brown concedes that some people find their greatest pleasure in being virtuous, but he does not think this fact is of much use in a defence of virtue. If there are such people,

proper to promote his welfare.' (J. Clarke, *FMTP* 12) It is a mistake to look for a principle higher than self-love, 'since there neither is nor can be any other principle of human conduct than self-love, or a regard to interest in this life or a future' (15).

[32] 'God . . . has enforced on us the preference of the general good before our particular interest at present, by future rewards and punishments, and by that means rendered our compliance with his own disposition and good pleasure, practicable and fitting, which otherwise would have been impossible, or at least highly unreasonable to be expected.' (*FMTP* 18)

[33] 'The only seeming reason that can be alleged is that such an adherence to virtue, though attended with nothing but pain and misery to a man's self, may yet be good for others, may at least have some tendency to the good of the world about him. Very true, but what then? This can be, as the supposition is put, no reason, no motive to a man to act at all. That charity begins at home, is the voice of nature confirmed by revelation. God, who knows human nature best, expects no such conduct from us, as to prefer the happiness of others to our own absolutely and finally, but has made a steady adherence to virtue under all extremities, or the preference of the public to his own private good, in this life, a man's truest interest, by a promise of endless and unspeakable happiness hereafter for it.' (J. Clarke, *FMTP* 22) 'That a man should love his neighbour as himself, is the voice of nature, confirmed by revelation; but that he should love his neighbour better than himself is, I think, the voice of neither, as appearing utterly and absolutely impossible.' (36) For Biblical support he cites *1 Cor.* 15:32; *Heb.* 12:2 (24).

[34] 'And as it hath already been made evident that the essence of virtue consists in a conformity of our affections and actions with the greatest public happiness; so it will now appear that the only reason or motive by which individuals can possibly be induced or obliged to the practice of virtue must be the feeling immediate or the prospect of future private happiness.' (Brown, *ECLS* 107 = SB 748)

[35] See Shaftesbury, §610.

their attachment to virtue is a result of inborn taste and temperament.[36] Those who lack this unusual temperament may approve of Shaftesbury's view when they read it, but may find they are incapable of living up to it.[37] For most people, then, an appeal to external sanctions is the only way to secure compliance with the requirements of virtue. The only sufficiently comprehensive sanctions are those that appeal to rewards and punishments in an afterlife.

869. Waterland on Moral and Positive Duties

These objections to Samuel Clarke's rationalism are philosophical, insofar as they rely on claims about the interpretation of fitness and about the nature of obligation. A distinct series of objections rests on theological grounds, arguing that Clarke's attitude to morality conflicts with orthodox Christianity. Waterland expresses these objections most forcefully.[38] His attack on Samuel Clarke provoked a number of replies, including those by Chilton and Chubb, who defend rationalism against voluntarism.

Waterland rejects Clarke's view that positive duties imposed by God, including those imposed in the Christian sacraments are always subordinate to, and therefore inferior to, moral duties.[39] Against Clarke, he cites Abraham's obedience to God's command; this is a fulfilment of a positive duty, not at all inferior to a moral duty. If we grant that it is a moral duty, then we must grant that some positive duties, which are also moral duties, are to be preferred over other moral duties.[40] According to Waterland, Clarke's preference for natural morality over the positive commands declared in Scripture is a device used by deists in order to attack Scripture, tradition, and orthodox Christianity.[41]

In opposition to rationalism Waterland claims that all moral principles, including those that belong to natural law, are expressions of divine commands. He does not consider the

[36] 'Thus, as according to these moralists, the relish or taste for virtue is similar to a taste for arts; so what is said of the poet, the painter, the musician, may in this regard with equal truth be said of the man of virtue—nascitur, non fit.' (Brown, *ECLS* 193 = SB 769)

[37] 'Thus a lively imagination and unperceived self-love, fetter the heart in certain ideal bonds of their own creating: till at length some turbulent and furious passion arising in its strength, breaks these fantastic shackles which fancy had imposed, and leaps to its prey like a tiger chained by cobwebs.' (Brown, *ECLS* 187 = SB 765)

[38] On Clarke's views see §672.

[39] Waterland claims that, in Clarke's view, positive duties 'have the nature only of means to an end, and . . . therefore they are never to be compared with the moral virtues'. Waterland protests: 'I cannot understand why positive institutions, such as the two Sacraments especially, should be so slightly spoken of. Moral virtues are rather to be considered as a means to an end, because they are previous qualifications for the Sacraments, and have no proper efficacy towards procuring salvation, till they are improved and rendered acceptable by these Christian performances. By moral virtues only we shall never ordinarily come at Christ, nor at heaven, nor to the presence of God: but by the help of the Sacraments superadded, to crown and finish the other, we may arrive to Christian perfection . . .' (Waterland, 'Remarks' = *Works* iv 45)

[40] 'In short, if the love of God be moral virtue, such obedience, being an act of love, is an act of moral virtue, and then there is no ground for the distinction: but if there must be a distinction made, then let one be called moral virtue, and the other Christian perfection, and let any man judge which should have the preference. Indeed they should not be opposed, since both are necessary, and are perfective of each other.' (Waterland, 'Remarks' = *Works* iv 46)

[41] 'If Scripture is once depreciated, and sunk in esteem, what will become of our morality? Natural religion, as it is called, will soon be what every man pleases, and will show itself in little else but natural depravity; for supposing the rules of morality to be ever so justly drawn out, and worked up into a regular system, yet as there will be no certain sanctions (Scripture once removed) to bind it on the conscience, no clear account of heaven or hell, or future judgment to enforce it, we may easily imagine how precarious a bottom morality will stand upon.' ('Remarks' = *Works* iv 48)

view of Suarez that there can be moral duties without obligation and law. He approves of Cumberland's voluntarist account of the basis of morality,[42] and endorses John Clarke's attack on Samuel Clarke's attempt to ground obligation in the nature of things without divine legislation. Without reference to God, he believes, we have rules of convenience, but no morality.

In Waterland's view, naturalism not only fails to give an account of the obligation inherent in morality, but also compromises the supremacy of God. He agrees with Pufendorf's allegation that naturalism sets up a principle extrinsic to God; hence he follows Pufendorf in believing that anyone who understands the implications of recognizing God as creator must accept a voluntarist account of morality. Similarly, he approves of Parker's criticism of Grotius 'for supposing the rules of morality obligatory without the supposition of a Deity'.[43]

Once we recognize that moral principles are the product of divine commands, we can see that they need not take precedence over positive divine commands; Abraham and Mary show that it is sometimes obligatory to obey positive commands rather than moral principles (447). On this basis Waterland rejects the position of Tillotson, who reduces the laws of the first table of the Decalogue to the laws of the second table.[44] According to Waterland, Tillotson has reversed the proper relation of the two tables. Obedience to God comes first, and this should be the basis for the imitation of God through observance of the moral law.[45] The deists go to the opposite extreme from the antinomians who reject the moral element in Christianity; they defend morality as a way of attacking revealed religion.

Waterland's critics urge some of the standard naturalist objections to voluntarism. Chubb argues that obedience to divine law presupposes a moral law that is independent of divine commands. We recognize that this moral law applies to God also, and this is why God's commands are reasonable and not arbitrary.[46] Waterland rejects this argument, and in

[42] 'Every law, properly so called, is moral, is regula moralis or regula morum, a moral rule, regulating the practice of moral agents. But moral law in a more restrained sense signifies the same with natural law, a law derived from God, consonant to the nature and reason of things, and therefore of as fixed and unmoveable obligation as the nature and reason of things is.' (Waterland, 'Sacraments' = *Works* iv 57) 'All obligation arises from some law, and it is the Divine law that constitutes moral good and evil. Things many be naturally good or bad, that is, may have a natural tendency to promote happiness or misery, may be materially good or evil, that is, useful or hurtful, previous to any law: but they cannot be formally and morally good and evil without respect to some law, natural or revealed; for "where no law is, there is no transgression." ' ('Sacraments' = *Works* iv 61)

[43] Waterland, 'Supplement' = *Works* iv 108–12. On Parker see Locke §560.

[44] He quotes from Tillotson: 'What is religion good for, but to reform the manners and dispositions of men, to restrain human nature from violence and cruelty, from falsehood and treachery, from sedition and rebellion?' (Tillotson, Sermon xix in *Works* i 445). Waterland comments: 'The thought is free and bold, and probably in some measure shocking to many a serious reader; who may suspect there is something amiss in it, though it is not presently perceived where the fault lies' ('Sacraments' = *Works* iv 76). Waterland's use of the quotation is not completely fair. Tillotson's point is not that revealed religion is nothing more than morality, but that revealed religion without true morality is worse than atheism: 'Thus to misrepresent God and religion is to divest them of all their majesty and glory. For if that of Seneca be true, that "sine bonitate nulla maiestas", "without goodness there can be no such thing as majesty", then to separate goodness and mercy from God, compassion and charity from religion, is to make the two best things in the world, God and religion, good for nothing' (444). This was a suitable point for a sermon to the House of Commons on 5 November.

[45] 'Sacraments' 462. Cf. Grove, §877.

[46] 'I would likewise observe, as a further consequence of the distinction between moral and positive laws, that if it is the moral law that is the ground of our obedience to positive precepts, as I have before shown; then the obligation of the moral law does not arise from the positive will of God, but from the reasons and fitnesses of things; which we are sensible of, are capable by comparing the aspects, relations, and influences things have on one another, of finding

particular denies that God is obliged to follow moral principles.[47] But he also denies that God's choice of moral principles is an arbitrary exercise of will. He answer's Chilton's objection on this point by insisting that God is necessarily good and trustworthy.[48] He does not say how he can explicate this claim without departing from voluntarism; hence he seems to be open to Leibniz's objections against Pufendorf.[49]

Since Waterland takes morality to imply obligation and divine commands, he believes that those who recognize no divine commands cannot recognize morality either. Hence he takes a strict line on pagan virtue. In reply to Chubb's questions, he asserts that pagan virtue is only 'nominal' virtue.[50] His view about morality and obligation seems to lead him back to Baius' position.[51]

Waterland's discussion of moral principles and divine commands takes an extreme line in answer to the Deist view that reduces the demands of Christianity, and revealed religion in general, to the demands of morality. It is an extreme line insofar as it resorts to voluntarism in its defence of distinctively Christian moral duties against Deism. A few years after the publication of Waterland's essays (in 1730), Butler's *Analogy* (published in 1736) agrees with Waterland in rejecting Deist reductionism, but argues that naturalism does not lead to Deism. In Part II, chapter 1, 'Of the importance of Christianity', Butler argues that Christianity is both a 'republication of natural religion' including natural morality (§4), and a 'revelation of a particular dispensation of Providence' that enjoins new duties (§14). The facts of revelation themselves involve new moral relations apart from commands.[52] Christianity also includes 'positive' duties, those that result from commands. Though these positive duties may be contrasted with moral duties, they nonetheless have moral force, and hence result in moral obligations.[53]

Having argued for distinctive duties that belong to Christianity, Butler nonetheless defends his naturalist account of morality. He argues that if a positive duty were to conflict with a moral duty (i.e., a duty arising from natural morality without any command), the moral duty would take precedence. We have a positive duty when we do not see the reason

out; cannot but approve of when our minds are not corrupted, and think that certain things become us, others are unsuitable to our nature and character; and have not only a speculative, but a practical sense of, and a natural motive to them; are uneasy with ourselves and self-condemned, when we violate these fitnesses, from whence arises the strongest obligation.' (Chubb, *CEOMPD* 17)

[47] Waterland, 'Supplement' = *Works* iv 110. [48] Waterland, 'Supplement' = *Works* iv 114.

[49] Leibniz on Pufendorf; §590. [50] 'Supplement' = *Works* iv 132. [51] Baius; §417.

[52] 'Christianity, even what is peculiarly so called, as distinguished from natural religion, has yet somewhat very important, even of a moral nature. For the office of our Lord being made known, and the relation he stands in to us, the obligation of religious regards to him is plainly moral, as much as charity to mankind is; since this obligation arises, before external command, immediately out of that his office and relation itself.' (Butler, *Anal.* ii 1.16)

[53] 'Moral precepts are precepts, the reasons of which we see: positive precepts are precepts, the reasons of which we do not see. Moral duties arise out of the nature of the case itself, prior to external command. Positive duties do not arise out of the nature of the case, but from external command; nor would they be duties at all, were it not for such command, received from him whose creatures and subjects we are.' (*Anal.* ii 1.21) '. . . positive institutions in general, as distinguished from this or that particular one, have the nature of moral commands; since the reasons of them appear. Thus, for instance, the external worship of God is a moral duty, though no particular mode of it be so. Care then is to be taken, when a comparison is made between positive and moral duties, that they be compared no further than as they are different; no further than as the former are positive, or arise out of mere external command, the reasons of which we are not acquainted with; and as the latter are moral, or arise out of the apparent reason of the case, without such external command.' (ii 1.23)

for the action we are commanded to do; we have a moral duty when we see the reason for the action. In case of conflict, we ought to do what we see a reason to do rather than what we see no reason to do.[54]

In this defence of naturalism Butler implies that Waterland's reaction to Deism is excessive. In Butler's view, the right understanding of the moral force of divine commands rests on a naturalist conception of morality as consisting in principles distinct from divine commands. If we do not recognize such principles, therefore, we cannot explain the source of our obligation to observe the positive duties enjoined by divine commands. Butler's argument about the priority of moral duties to positive precepts seems to conflict with Waterland's appeal to Abraham and Mary, and Butler does not make it clear how his principle of priority copes with these cases where positive precepts seem to be prior. His answer has to rely on his view that such cases—allegedly involving dispensations from moral law—are not really cases of violating moral duty, because the special circumstances of Abraham's action make it no longer a violation of moral duty.[55] Though Butler does not develop the details of an argument against Waterland, his statement of his position suggests how the argument might go.

870. Voluntarism as the Consensus

Some of the arguments we have considered support voluntarism polemically, by arguing that other positions are unsatisfactory. Gay tries a different sort of argument. Instead of attacking other positions for denying voluntarism, he argues that they tacitly accept it, and that therefore voluntarism captures the real sense, as opposed to the superficial meaning, of different moralists.[56] Gay is impressed by the extensional equivalence of different moral systems, and so believes that voluntarism succeeds if it comes out with the same moral conclusions as rationalism.

To see why non-theological accounts of morality seem plausible, we need to see the difference between the criterion and the essence of morality. Gay understands 'criterion' epistemologically, so that the criterion of morality is our means of distinguishing what is morally right from what is wrong.[57] But to find the criterion, we need to know what it is the criterion of, and hence we need to grasp the 'idea' of virtue. According to Gay, this idea

[54] '. . . suppose two standing precepts enjoined by the same authority; that, in certain conjunctures, it is impossible to obey both; that the former is moral, i.e. a precept of which we see the reasons, and that they hold in the particular case before us; but that the latter is positive, i.e. a precept of which we do not see the reasons: it is indisputable that our obligations are to obey the former; because there is an apparent reason for this preference, and none against it. Further, positive institutions, I suppose all those which Christianity enjoins, are means to a moral end: and the end must be acknowledged more excellent than the means. Nor is observance of these institutions any religious obedience at all, or of any value, otherwise than as it proceeds from a moral principle' (ii 1.24).

[55] Butler on dispensations: §717.

[56] 'And if a man interpret the writers of morality with this due candour, I believe their seeming inconsistencies and disagreements about the criterion of virtue, would in a great measure vanish; and he would find that acting agreeably to nature, or reason, (when rightly understood) would perfectly coincide with the fitness of things; the fitness of things (as far as these words have any meaning) with truth; truth with the common good; and the common good with the will of God.' (Gay, *FPV* xxviii = SB 850)

[57] 'The criterion of any thing is a rule or measure by a conformity with which any thing is known to be of this or that sort, or of this or that degree.' (Gay, *FPVM* §1, xxxii = SB 856)

consists primarily in obligatory action for the sake of general happiness.[58] From this idea we can try to discover the criterion of virtue.

Gay agrees with other voluntarists in taking obligation to be the central element of morality. But he does not discuss obligation as an act of the obliger, and hence (according to the voluntarists) as a command. He considers it as a state of the obliged, and so takes it to include motivation. The relevant motivation must be a desire to do what promotes my own happiness. Hence the principles of morality are those that it is necessary for me to follow for the sake of my happiness.[59] Since God is the ultimate source of happiness and misery, moral obligation consists in conformity to the will of God; this, therefore is the primary criterion of virtue.[60] Since God is benevolent, we can assume that God intends the general happiness, and so the general happiness is a secondary criterion of virtue (R 465 = SB 864). Promotion of utility is not strictly essential to morality, but it is reliably connected to morality, given what we believe about the divine will.

Hence theological voluntarism allows us to agree with moralists who regard utility as the basis of morality. They have found a secondary criterion, and this criterion allows them to form reliable views about which actions are morally obligatory. But their views are not counterfactually reliable. On this issue voluntarists agree with Hutcheson and Hume. In the sentimentalist view, morality is what our moral sense approves of, and it is a contingent fact that the moral sense approves of utility. If our moral sense were to change, morally right action would no longer promote utility. Voluntarists take the same view, substituting the divine will for the moral sense.

Gay's argument assumes that we are wrong if we regard utility as the essence of morality, because that account of the essence does not capture the essentially obligatory character of morality. Obligation requires sufficient motivation, and hence—given an egoist account of motivation—requires divine commands supported by sanctions that appeal to one's self-interest.

This account will seem implausible and dogmatic to those who believe in disinterested moral motivation. John Clarke's anonymous critic attacks voluntarism on this ground.[61] The critic argues that self-love needs control, and that benevolence is distinct from, and irreducible to, self-love (22, 27). The critic prefers Hutcheson's position to John Clarke's, though he believes that Hutcheson goes too far (following Shaftesbury) in rejecting a defence

[58] 'Virtue is the conformity to a rule of life, directing the actions of all rational creatures with respect to each other's happiness; to which conformity every one in all cases is obliged: and every one that does so conform, is or ought to be approved of, esteemed and loved for so doing. What is here expressed, I believe most men put into their idea of virtue.' (Gay, *FPVM* §1, p. xxxv = R 462 = SB 860)

[59] 'Obligation is the necessity of doing or omitting any action in order to be happy: i.e. when there is such a relation between an agent and an action that the agent cannot be happy without doing or omitting that action, then the agent is said to be obliged to do or omit that action. So that obligation is evidently founded upon the prospect of happiness, and arises from that necessary influence which any action has upon present or future happiness or misery. And no greater obligation can be supposed to be laid upon any free agent without an express contradiction.' (Gay, *FPVM* §2, p. xxxvi = R 463 = SB 862)

[60] '. . . a full and complete obligation which will extend to all cases, can only be that arising from the authority of God; because God only can in all cases make a man happy or miserable: and therefore, since we are always obliged to that conformity called virtue, it is evident that the immediate rule or criterion of it, is the will of God' (Gay, *FPVM* §2, pp. xxxvi–xxxvii = R 464 = SB 863).

[61] See Anon., *A Letter to Mr John Clarke* . . . 19.

of morality by relation to self-love.[62] John Clarke's position is worse than Hutcheson's because it makes charity and love of one's neighbour impossible by denying the reality of benevolence (34).

871. Association and the Moral Sense

Gay tries to answer such criticisms of voluntarist egoism by conceding something to them. He admits that unselfish motives, as they now are in us, are distinct from selfish motives, but he denies that this gives them any authority distinct from that of selfish motives. He argues that they can be explained by appeal to a doctrine of association (R 477–8 = SB 881–7).

Hartley develops this view further within a general account of association and its physiological basis. He argues that the various associations that build up the moral sense from different occasions of pleasure and pain also account for its authority.[63] Hartley tries, as Hutcheson does, to capture Butler's belief in the authority of conscience, but it is difficult to see how authority emerges from Hartley's genetic account. The variety of associations that lead to the reactions of the moral sense does not show why these reactions have the authority of the whole nature of the person making the judgment.

On the basis of his appeal to association, Hartley rejects any moral sense as an 'instinct' that might have access to 'eternal reasons and relations of things' independently of anything that might be grasped by the senses and association (499). This description of the view he opposes seems to combine an element of sentimentalism (in speaking of an 'instinct') with an element of rationalism (in speaking of eternal reasons and relations), suggesting that Hartley thinks he has disposed of both views at once. But the case he has presented seems more effective against a sentimentalist conception of a moral sense. Butler understands authority by contrasting the weight of reasons with the strength of desires; but Hartley's appeal to association does not capture this feature of moral judgment.

Gay also argues from claims about association to doubts about a moral sense. He admits that Hutcheson is right about the moral phenomena, but he rejects any moral sense that is irreducible to the sense of one's own private advantage. He believes that the moral phenomena are explained if we assume that pleasure and pain are attached to actions not directly related to our own good, because they were originally connected with rewards and punishments, and the pleasure and pain are later attached to the actions without the further rewards and punishments.[64]

One might argue that this associationist explanation really concedes the essential point to Hutcheson, since it concedes that we have disinterested affections, however we got them.

[62] 'It seems to me, that he [sc. Hutcheson] has carried the point of a moral sense too far, and has said too much in behalf of a disinterested virtue, without propounding a needful distinction. And in consequence of carrying these things too far, he appears to pay but a low regard to the Christian motives, taken from rewards and punishments.' (*Letter* . . . 33)

[63] 'This moral sense therefore carries its own authority with it, inasmuch as it is the sum total of all the rest, and the ultimate result from them; and employs the force and authority of the whole nature of man against any particular part of it, that rebels against the determinations and commands of the conscience or moral judgment.' (Hartley, *OM* 497)

[64] 'And this will appear by showing that our approbation of morality, and all affections whatsoever, are finally resolved into reason pointing out private happiness, and are conversant only about things apprehended to be means tending to this end; and that whenever this end is not perceived, they are to be accounted for from the association of ideas, and may properly enough be called habits.' (Gay, *FPVM* xxxi = SB 855)

This is not Gay's view. He believes he has shown that disinterested affections cannot claim any rational authority apart from the selfish affections from which they arise.

Voluntarists, therefore, take different views about the possibility and the moral relevance of disinterested motivation. Some of them doubt whether it is possible; some of these appeal to association to explain why it appears to be possible. Others, however, appeal to association to explain how disinterested motivation is possible, not to deny its possibility. But even those voluntarists who admit the possibility of disinterested motivation deny that it is essential to morality. Since it does not carry the obligation that is essential to morality, we have to look elsewhere; we find the relevant obligation only if we identify morality with divine commands supported by sanctions.

One might wonder whether the voluntarists have conceded too much if they allow the possibility of disinterested motivation. If the obligatory element of morality consists in motivation, might we not argue that for those who have strong enough disinterested motives, moral obligation is found in these motives? In that case moral obligation would be different things for different people with stronger and weaker motives of different sorts.

A voluntarist such as Rutherforth[65] might reply that his objection to disinterested motivation does not refer only to its weakness. Even if we had strong disinterested motives, they would not give us a grasp of morality; for we have to recognize morality as rationally compelling, not simply a matter of disinterested sentiment. This is a reasonable objection to Hutcheson and to Shaftesbury (as Rutherforth understands him). But then one might doubt whether one recognizes the relevant sort of rationally compelling principles if one simply appeals to divine commands. Must we not also regard these as right and reasonable in themselves? A plausible defence of voluntarist objections to sentimentalism seems to lead us back to rationalism.

872. Waterland v. Butler on Self-Love and Benevolence

Gay and Hartley try to accommodate the phenomena of moral motivation within an associationist explanation, so that they can allow a moral motive that at least appears distinct from ordinary self-love. Waterland defends egoism more aggressively; he defends the position of John Clarke against Butler by arguing that nothing is wrong with self-interest as a motive for morality.

He understands self-love as loving oneself in everything and loving oneself most. Self-love itself is neither morally good nor morally bad. The fault in immorality and selfishness is not self-love, but misguided self-love.[66] It would be neither reasonable nor possible to adhere

[65] See §866.

[66] 'Self-love, considered in the general, abstracting from particular circumstances, is neither a vice nor a virtue. It is nothing but the inclination or propension of every man to his own happiness. A passionate desire to be always pleased and well satisfied; neither to feel nor fear any pain or trouble, either of body or mind. It is an instinct of our nature common to all men, and not admitting of any excess or abatement.' (Waterland, 'On self-love' = *Works* v 447) Practical reason relies on self-love: 'Reason and thought hold out the light, and show us the way to happiness, while the instinct of self-love drives us on in the pursuit of it. The latter without the former would be no better than blind instinct; and the former without the latter would be but useless speculation, and dull lifeless theory.' (448) Lecky mentions Waterland among those who believe that 'virtue is simply prudence extending its calculation beyond the grave' (*HEM* i 15).

to virtue and religion if we were going to lose by it on the whole, and there could be no obligation to it.[67] Similarly, Clarke's appeal to fitness does not justify us in rejecting the supremacy of self-interest.[68]

Some of Waterland's remarks are compatible with disinterested action that neither promotes nor harms our interest. In these remarks he does not rule out an Aristotelian and Thomist view about self-love and morality. Sometimes, however, he seems to hold a stronger egoist thesis. He seems to suggest that only divine rewards and punishments make an action morally right, because otherwise nothing would be left but calculation of worldly interest.[69]

Waterland agrees with John Clarke in taking God to be benevolent, but denying that we act from any motive similar to divine benevolence.[70] We follow the rules imposed by a benevolent God because God creates a connexion between observance of the rules and our self-interest, through rewards and punishments in the afterlife. The only reason for observing the requirements of morality is the fact that God has commanded them and has supported these commands with sanctions.

Whewell answers that Waterland has chosen a 'very harsh and repulsive mode of stating that side of the question' (*LHMPE* 129). He questions Waterland's view that there is no genuine morality in just action based on a calculation of narrow self-interest in this life, but there is genuine morality if we calculate narrow self-interest in an afterlife.[71] In reply to such criticisms, Waterland argues that the self-interested attitude he defends is the only rational moral outlook; the view that we should act on anything other than self-love is misguided and irrational.[72] In supposing that virtue consists in a purely instrumental

[67] 'For this would be obliging us to hate ourselves, which is impossible: it would be obliging us to something under pain of being happy upon refusal, and in the hope of being rewarded with misery, which is all over contradictory and absurd; and therefore no obligation.' ('On self-love' = *Works* v 449) Cf. Clarke and Balguy on duty and interest, §673.

[68] 'It is fitting and reasonable and just that a man should love and serve himself, equally at least with others; and it is unfitting, unreasonable, and unjust (were it practicable) for a man to love his neighbour better than himself. There is no wisdom or virtue in being wise for others only, and not for one's self also, first or last; neither can any man be obliged to it.' ('Supplement' = *Works* iv 111)

[69] 'Abstract from the consideration of the divine law, and then consider what justice and gratitude would amount to. To be just or grateful so far as it is consistent or coincident with our temporal interest or convenience, and no farther, has no more moral good in it than paying a debt for our present ease in order to be trusted again; and the being further just and grateful without further prospects, or to be finally losers by it, has as much of moral virtue in it as folly or indiscretion has; so that the Deity once set aside, it is demonstration there could be no morality at all.' (Waterland, 'Supplement' = *Works* iv 114) Whewell, *LHMPE* 134, quotes this passage and comments: 'I do not think a genuine moralist, or even a person of genuine moral feeling, could really assent . . .'

[70] 'But the wisdom and goodness of Almighty God is highly conspicuous in this affair; that whereas the general happiness of the whole rational or intellectual system is what himself proposes as the noblest end, and holds forth to all his creatures; yet since no one can pursue any good but with reference to himself, and as his own particular good, God has been pleased to connect and interweave these two, one with the other, that a man cannot really pursue his own particular welfare without consulting the welfare of the whole. His own private happiness is included in that of the public: and there is, in reality, no such thing as any separate advantage or felicity, opposite to the felicity of the whole, or independent of it.' ('On self-love' = *Works* v 449)

[71] Stephen, *HET* ii 108, criticizes this aspect of Waterland: 'Socrates was not virtuous because he did not do right with a view to posthumous repayment. Rather, it seems, he should be called a fool or a madman.'

[72] 'It may perhaps be objected that this way of resolving virtue makes it look like a mean and mercenary thing, because it is supposed to stand only upon a view to one's own happiness, when it ought rather to be entirely disinterested and above all selfish views. To which I answer, that this way of resolving virtue is just and rational: for what more rational than to pursue our greatest happiness? Or what more irrational than to neglect it, or to praise anything above it? Let some declaim as they please upon disinterested benevolence, we maintain that it is sufficiently disinterested if it contemns all

attitude to virtuous action, Waterland agrees with John Clarke's extreme opposition to any 'enthusiastic' supposition of unselfish motivation.

Perhaps, however, Waterland does not always confine himself to this unrelieved appeal to rewards and punishments. Sometimes he seems to be thinking of the connexion in this life between my happiness and the happiness of others.[73] He might intend an Aristotelian argument, not just an appeal to rewards and punishments.[74] The role of self-interest suggests to Waterland that disinterestedness is not characteristic of virtue. It would perhaps be easier for him to make a convincing case on this point if he did not rely so heavily on a hedonist conception of happiness. He takes this conception of happiness for granted, however, as Balguy often does,[75] in an argument that otherwise draws quite heavily on traditional distinctions between types of self-love.

Waterland sometimes recognizes moral principles of the sort that rationalists also accept. In his sermon 'The duty of loving our neighbour as ourselves explained', he emphasizes that the commandment is not to love our neighbours as much as ourselves; it allows gradations for self, people close to us, people further away, and so on. The sense in which 'as yourself' applies is: 'as you would love yourself in the same circumstances'. We should help a stranger in distress if, when we think about it, that is what we would reasonably want a stranger to do for us in distress.

This argument appeals to fairness, reciprocity, and impartiality as a basis for benevolence. Waterland does not say that these principles have any rational status apart from being imposed by God; but he seems to appeal implicitly to their reasonableness. Some of his remarks might be interpreted so as to agree with an Aristotelian conception of self-love, but that interpretation conflicts with the narrow egoistic doctrines that he sometimes embraces. It is difficult to see how his opposition to Butler could be defended without appeal to the extreme egoism that is open to Butler's objections.

873. Happiness

Brown and Rutherforth agree with Waterland's objections to disinterested moral concern. Though they give a utilitarian account of moral rules, they do not follow Balguy and Hutcheson in recognizing disinterested benevolence that pursues universal happiness for its

narrow, low, or sordid views, and looks only at securing an eternal interest in God. What other foundation of virtue can any man lay, which is not plainly fanciful and chimerical? They may say they follow virtue for virtue's sake: as if virtue were the end, when it is evidently but the means; and happiness is the end it leads to, happiness either of ourselves or others.' ('Supplement' = *Works* iv 115)

[73] 'What happiness can any thinking man propose separate from God, the centre of all happiness? And if man be made a sociable creature, it is vain for him to propose any separate independent happiness from the rest of the kind. Man was designed to live in consort, and to be happy, if so at all, in the mutual friendship and enjoyment of each other. It is the law of their creation, the condition of their being: and therefore any pretended happiness, separate from the common good of mankind, is a mere dream and a delusion, a contradiction to the reason and nature of things.' ('On self-love' = *Works* v 461–2)

[74] On self-love see Aristotle, §124; Aquinas, §336; Scotus, §365.

[75] See Balguy, *FMG* ii 11 = *TMT* 132: '. . . I do not understand how nature can recommend any particular objects to our choice and pursuit, any otherwise than by annexing pleasure to the perception of them. If they have no absolute objective worth, they must have some relative goodness: and what can this be but either pleasure or a tendency thereto?'

own sake. In their view, the only possible basis for obligation is the prospect of one's own happiness.[76] Since Brown accepts psychological hedonism, he infers that 'no affection can, in the strict sense, be more or less selfish or disinterested than another'.[77] Hence there can be no disinterested concern for virtue.

For similar reasons, he finds it difficult to see what Shaftesbury means in recognizing concern for something for its own sake. In Brown's view, love of virtue for its own sake means only that 'we find immediate happiness from the love and practice of virtue without regard to external or future consequences' (SB 749). Brown has some excuse for taking this view. For Shaftesbury does not always make it clear whether he regards pleasure taken in virtue as the result of a conviction of the value of virtue in its own right; to make this clear, we need to attend to Butler's account of the relation between satisfaction of a desire and pleasure taken in it.[78]

Since Brown does not use Butler's distinction, he takes the question about whether virtue leads to happiness to be a predictive question about whether people will in fact find most pleasure as a result of being virtuous. It is intelligible, though incorrect, for a reader of Shaftesbury to interpret the question in this way; Price interprets it in the same way.[79] Traditional eudaemonism understands the question differently. According to the traditional view, which Shaftesbury sometimes accepts, happiness is the human good, which is to be identified with the fulfilment of human nature. To decide whether virtue promotes happiness, we ought not to survey what different people enjoy, but we ought to rely on a true account of the human good and of human nature. This conception of happiness brings us back to some of the questions about fitness that were raised earlier; for if we explain fitness by reference to human happiness, we do not necessarily explain it as a means to pleasure.

874. Voluntarism and Eudaemonism

Brown does not connect this aspect of Shaftesbury with the eudaemonist aspect of Greek ethics. Rutherforth, however, notices the relevance of the Greek moralists; he tries to show that they agree with him that the only possible reason for virtuous action is regard for our own selfish interest. He sees that the Stoics might appear to disagree, since they attribute inherent goodness to virtue. Stoic views are especially relevant because Shaftesbury and Clarke often rely on them to support their own views about disinterested pursuit of virtue, and Butler relies on them to support his view that virtue consists in following nature.

Rutherforth argues at some length, and with appropriate citations of the sources,[80] that the Stoics agree with other ancient moralists in taking happiness to be primary.[81] He seems to assume that the ancients who assert the primacy of happiness agree with him about the primacy of selfish self-interest. When he finds them asserting that virtue is to be chosen

[76] Brown identifies an obligation with a motive: 'a natural motive or obligation to virtue' (*ECLS* 181); 'internal motive or obligation to virtue' (184).

[77] Brown, *ECLS* 163 = SB 751.

[78] On Shaftesbury see §610.

[79] See Price, §805.

[80] At *NOV* 169–88 Rutherforth cites, among other passages, Cic. *Fin.* v 6; Plutarch, *SR* 1070b; Seneca, *Ep.* 118, on agreement with nature; Cic. *TD* iv 15; *Fin.* ii 14 (which he takes to conflict with eudaemonism).

[81] '. . . all . . . seem . . . amidst all their disputes to agree upon it as a thing self-evident and indisputable, that the sovereign good is the principal point in view, or the last end of each action' (*NOV* 169).

for its own sake without regard to consequences, he remarks that these claims appear to conflict with the primacy of happiness. To remove the appearance of conflict, he suggests that the Stoics take virtue to be an immediate means to happiness, even if it does not produce external goods. He assumes that if they are eudaemonists, they must take virtue to be an instrumental means to a feeling of satisfaction.[82] According to Rutherforth's solution, the Stoics claim that virtue is 'the only true enjoyment of man' (193), understood as the only means to maximum pleasure.

These references to the ancient moralists support Rutherforth's criticism of Samuel Clarke's and Balguy's attempt to divorce moral understanding and moral motivation from any reference to one's own ultimate end. Balguy goes so far as to claim that morality is concerned with what is 'good in itself' as opposed to what is 'good for me'.[83] Clarke and Balguy appeal to Stoic sources for this division, but Rutherforth reasonably doubts whether they are entitled to do this, if they reject the eudaemonist framework within which the Stoics place their claims about the morally good and the fine (honestum).

Rutherforth, however, is not justified in taking ancient eudaemonism to confirm his general position. For if a correct conception of one's own happiness has to include regard for virtue as a good to be chosen for its own sake, a correct eudaemonist doctrine affirms the possibility and rationality of unselfish concern for virtue. This objection to Rutherforth is urged, though not clearly explained, in Catharine Cockburn's criticism.[84] She points out that when Aristotle and the Stoics speak of happiness, they have in mind the fulfilment of human nature, and they insist on the social aspects of human nature. She argues, therefore, that Aristotle maintains the supremacy of virtue in one's own good. The eudaemonism maintained by Aristotle and the Stoics does not support Rutherforth, but opposes him.

Given the tendency of Shaftesbury, Butler, and Balguy to assimilate happiness to pleasure, we can see why Rutherforth supposes that Greek eudaemonism supports his selfish theory. He misunderstands Greek eudaemonism partly because his rationalist opponents also misunderstand it. They miss the opportunity to appeal to the ancients in support of their position, and so they encourage Rutherforth to cite the ancient moralists on the wrong side. While Butler supports traditional naturalism, he does not connect it, as he should, with eudaemonism. The controversy between Rutherforth and Cockburn makes clear an issue that ought to have been clear to their predecessors. Reid and Stewart still obscure some aspects of the issue.[85]

875. Warburton's Compromise

Gay's attempt to accommodate other positions in a voluntarist framework concedes only that non-voluntarists have found a secondary criterion of morality, and insists that the

[82] '... Cicero speaks for Chrysippus when he affirms that it is impossible there should be any virtue, unless it is disinterested. But how is this consistent with saying that virtue is not worth our notice if it can be miserable? Or how shall we make his opinions intelligible who at one time maintains that virtue and interest are the very same thing, and at another represents them as quite different, by describing the nature of virtue to be such as will necessarily approve itself to us, even though it should fail of producing our interest?' (*NOV* 189). 'Disinterested' translates 'gratuita', Cic. *Ac.* ii 46.

[83] See §658. [84] See Cockburn, *Remarks* = *Works* i 82–3. [85] See Reid, §854.

voluntarists have found the essence and primary criterion. Warburton makes a more serious effort to combine the elements of truth that he sees in different positions. The objection that voluntarism reduces morality to arbitrary divine commands encourages him to construct a modified voluntarist view that absorbs some elements of rationalism and sentimentalism. In *The Divine Legation of Moses*[86] he recognizes three sources of morality: the moral sense, moral reason recognizing eternal fitnesses, and the will of God (*DLM*, Bk i §§4, 36). He defends this 'threefold cord' against those who try to rest morality entirely on one of the three sources, to the exclusion of the other two (39).[87] In Warburton's bizarre view of the history of ethics, each strand of his threefold cord is found in the ancient moralists. Plato is the patron of the moral sense, Aristotle of essential and natural differences between right and wrong, and Zeno of the arbitrary will of God (*DLM* 42).

We have a moral sense, according to Warburton, insofar as we have a taste for moral goodness and we are repelled by badness. But we cannot say why this taste should be trusted if we cannot say what we detect by it, and why its detection is reliable. Warburton's claim may be defended by appeal to Balguy's criticism of sentimentalism. Agreeing with Shaftesbury and Doddridge, Warburton separates a question about the existence of a moral sense from the sentimentalist conclusion that Hutcheson draws from it.

The questions that we cannot answer by appeal to the moral sense are answered by moral reason, recognizing the difference between goodness and badness. Warburton agrees with the rationalists in recognizing these differences; he does not suggest, as critics of rationalism usually do, that the eternal fitnesses are empty, or do not capture anything of interest to morality.

Nonetheless, Warburton believes that both the moral sense theory and Clarke's rationalism fail to capture moral obligation. He rejects Bayle's view that an atheist can both recognize and fulfil the demands of morality. He agrees with Bayle in allowing that an atheist can have some grasp of morality. What the atheist lacks, according to Warburton, is a grasp of moral obligation, which requires recognition of post-mortem rewards and punishments. This is the aspect of morality that an atheist cannot grasp.[88]

Warburton has different reasons for this claim, though he does not separate them. (1) He suggests that Clarke confuses natural differences with moral (49), because he fails to distinguish the passive character of the understanding from the active character of the will (46). An account of how we recognize the natural difference between good and evil does not explain how our will is guided by it, since the will is a capacity distinct from the passive capacity to recognize the truth. (2) Obligation involves a law (46). Since Hobbes (according to Warburton) did away with a divine legislator, he had no alternative but to make law depend on human legislation (97). But since moral law does not depend on human legislation, we cannot eliminate a divine legislator. (3) Merely natural good—either one's own happiness or the perfection of the universe—cannot yield moral obligation (47–8).

[86] Whewell, *LHMPE* 123–30, discusses Warburton's views and the influence that resulted from their apparently welcome simplification of questions about obligation.

[87] Threefold cord: *Eccl.* 4:12. For Culverwell's use of the same metaphor in a similar context see *LN* 53–4, quoted in §559. Since he recognizes elements of truth in non-voluntarist views, Warburton is willing to write a commendatory preface to Cockburn's defence of Clarke against Rutherforth, even though Cockburn goes much further than Warburton is prepared to go in defence of Clarke.

[88] Cf. Bayle, *HCD* 401 (Clarification I), quoted in §228.

Perhaps Warburton means that it is up to us to be concerned about either of these ends, whereas moral obligation has a compulsory aspect. (4) Moral obligation must be imposed by an obliger who is different from the person obliged. For anyone who can impose an obligation can also release from it; and so, if we could impose an obligation on ourselves, we could also release ourselves (45).[89]

Warburton might have conceded that facts about the nature of things are sufficient for the existence of moral right and wrong, and then argued that divine commands are necessary to make us pay enough attention to these natural facts. On this view, commands would be necessary for moral motivation, but not for the existence of morality. But Warburton does not confine himself to this claim about motivation. He also accepts the metaphysical claim that without obligations and commands we have nothing distinctively moral, as opposed to prudential. This is Culverwell's and Pufendorf's position; Warburton agrees with their view that commands are necessary not only for moral obligation (as Suarez agrees, given his conception of obligation), but also for morality itself. He also seems to connect genuine obligation with sufficient motivation, and so he requires not only a command, but also sufficient sanctions to produce a strong enough motive to be moral.

This introduction of divine commands tries to capture an element of morality that some critics believe we cannot grasp if we identify morality with what Suarez calls 'intrinsic morality' apart from prescriptive laws and commands. We have noticed a similar view in Anscombe's assessment of modern moral philosophy and in modern Roman Catholic moralists who take 'formal', as opposed to merely 'fundamental', morality to require a divine legislator.[90]

Warburton does not consider all the difficulties that arise for his attempt to combine the different strands in his 'threefold cord'. He does not really incorporate Hutcheson's moral sense theory. For Hutcheson's theory seeks to tell us what moral properties are, not simply how we come to know them. If our approval by the moral sense really constitutes the rightness and wrongness of things, Clarke's realism is mistaken. The aspect of sentimentalism that Warburton incorporates is simply the belief in a moral sense.

Warburton's attitude to Clarke's position depends on his answer to questions that arise for Pufendorf and Barbeyrac. It is quite consistent to maintain that actions are right and fit in themselves, but are not morally right or wrong unless God commands them. But it is more difficult to give a satisfactory account of why God commands them. If God simply commands them, not because they are right and fit, God's commands seem arbitrary. But if God commands them because they are right and fit in themselves, rightness and fitness in themselves seem to impose moral requirements on God; hence they do not seem to fall short of morality.

A similar question arises about our obedience to God's commands. If we recognize these as imposing moral obligation, must we not already recognize a moral obligation, independent of commands, to obey God's commands? If obedience to divine commands is intrinsically right, why suppose it is the only case of intrinsic rightness that is independent of divine commands? Alternatively, if obedience to divine commands is not intrinsically right, but if

[89] Barbeyrac uses this argument in answering Leibniz on behalf of Pufendorf. See §596.

[90] See §602.

we obey the commands out of fear, non-moral admiration, or love of God, do we recognize a moral obligation to obey the commands at all?

Warburton does not discuss the difficulties that arise for his voluntarism, given his concessions to sentimentalism and rationalism. While he is right to say that we might combine some elements of the three views that make his threefold cord, he does not show that we can reasonably combine the elements he combines. He does not make it unnecessary to choose between the views that he tries to combine.

876. Cockburn's Defence of Clarke

Defences of voluntarism and egoism provoke some acute replies by Catharine Cockburn' in her remarks on Law, Gay, and Johnson, and in the instructive (though repetitive) series of letters between Cockburn and Thomas Sharp.[91] Cockburn identifies one of the motives of the voluntarists, especially Waterland, when she protests against the charge that rationalism supports Deism.[92] Deists exploit rationalism, arguing that if morality consists in intrinsic facts independent of the divine will, God cannot make any difference to morality. Cockburn argues that this Deist inference rests on a misunderstanding of the implications of Clarke's views on fitness. She protests that her opponents go to unreasonable extremes in their opposition to rationalism and especially to its non-egoistic aspects.

She finds the source of this opposition in the hostility aroused by Shaftesbury's comments on rewards and punishments.[93] Some egoist voluntarists argue that it would be irrational to care about the interests of others if we could not look forward to the prospect of post-mortem rewards (421). Cockburn answers that people who argue for the selfish position 'argue against the common sentiments of humanity', and 'contradict the most natural sentiments of their own minds'.

In her defence of Clarke she tries to clarify some of the concepts that have raised objections. She denies that Clarke conceives fitnesses to be independent of any effects on the happiness of the people involved. The good effects of an action are often a reason for believing that it is fit to be done, and so the connexion between the rightness of an action and its good effects on others is no objection to Clarke's doctrine. Still, she denies that Clarke is a utilitarian. Duties to parents and benefactors do not depend on their good effects on either side; nor do duties to God lapse if happiness is assured.[94]

[91] See Cockburn, *Works* ii 353–460. Price commends these letters at *RPQM* 177 (ch. 8, on absolute v. relative virtue), 233 (ch. 10, on 'foundation of virtue'). These references in the 1st edn. are absent from the 3rd edn. (printed in Raphael's edn.).

[92] Cockburn, *Virtue* = *Works* i 430.

[93] 'And now, because a celebrated author has represented any regard to future rewards as dangerous to virtue, tending to render it selfish or mercenary; those writers must needs have it that without a certainty of future rewards, or without selfish regards, there could be no obligation to virtue, no duty at all.' ('Seed' 143–4) 'This author [Seed], among the rest, tells us, that what would be highly rational, and consequently virtue, upon the supposition of a future state, would be madness, and consequently not virtue, if that were left out of the account. When I first met with this notion, I thought it so singular and extravagant, that it needed only to be taken notice of as such; but I now find it is the common topic of those writers.' (144)

[94] '. . . it sufficiently appears in many places of the Doctor's works, that natural good is to him the criterion of moral good, as it respects ourselves, or our fellow creatures; though reward and punishment is not. . . . But let it here be

She also defends Clarke against those who take him to mean that the fitness of an action is a wholly non-relational property, to be determined by the action itself without reference to its circumstances. She argues that fitness involves a relation between the action and the circumstances, and so may be changed by an alteration in the circumstances.[95] The mere fact that the same action (in one way of understanding it) may be right in some circumstances and wrong in others does not count against Clarke's claim that rightness consists in fitness.

These remarks about fitness and its relation to effects and circumstances help to clarify some of Clarke's remarks on fitness; but they also raise further questions. In Cockburn's view, the welfare of those affected by an action is an important aspect, but not the whole, of fitness; hence she rejects the reduction of fitness to utility (as suggested by Gay). But she does not say why or in what circumstances good consequences do or do not determine the fitness of an action. She seems to need a more detailed conception of the nature of the agents and of the people affected by an action. This defence of a rationalist position seems to lead us back to the naturalism of Suarez and Butler.

Cockburn clarifies her defence of Clarke in her letters to Sharp. Sharp sympathizes with Warburton's aim of reconciling rationalism with voluntarism, and argues that Clarke and Warburton only appear to disagree, because they use 'obligation' and 'foundation of virtue' in different senses. 'Obligation' in the broadest sense is equivalent to 'ought' ('unalienable right'). But Sharp also marks a narrower sense in which 'obligation' implies 'enforcement' on 'reluctancy'. In this sense, obligation requires some motive strong enough to 'enforce' the action we are obliged to do despite our reluctance, and hence it requires a strong enough sanction. In Sharp's view, this is the sense of 'obligation' that is relevant to morality. While he agrees with Clarke in recognizing objective fitnesses, he believes that these are only the basis of moral obligation; they are insufficient for moral obligation, and hence for morality. He reaches a position similar to Culverwell's and Warburton's.[96]

Cockburn agrees with Sharp in recognizing a subjective aspect of obligation. If I am obliged not to commit murder, facts about the nature of murder, including its objective unfittingness, are not enough. I must also perceive it in such a way that I would condemn

observed, that though the fitness of moral actions consists in their general tendency to produce natural good to the objects of them, yet there are particular cases, where the fitness remains, though no natural good should be consequent upon it. Respect to parents, gratitude to benefactors, are always fit in themselves, that is, have a rectitude in them, that makes them fit to be chosen, whether any benefit can accrue from them to either side or not' (Cockburn, *Virtue* = *Works* i 405–6).

[95] 'The mistake of the author of the Essay [sc. Johnson] lies, in supposing, that independent fitnesses (as he affects to call them, though improperly) have no relation to any end, and are not alterable by any change of circumstances. Whereas the fitness of moral actions has always a respect to some end, and is entirely dependent on the nature and relation of things, considered in their various circumstances. The same action may be fit and right in some circumstances of things, which would be unfit in others; for an action is then only morally fit, when it is suitable to the agent, and the object, according to their various relations and circumstances.' (*Virtue* 431–2)

[96] 'Take it in a grammatical sense, and it implies something, that enforces upon reluctancy; and in this sense of it (when used in morality) it should seem most properly founded in the sanctions of rewards and punishments; or in the will of him, who has the power to reward and punish. Take it in a legal sense, and it implies an obliger; and there must be two persons at least, that is, two intelligent agents, or two free wills to create obligation in either of them. And in this view obligation in morals will certainly be founded in the will of God. Take it in a third sense, viz. as an unalienable right, that truth has to be preferred over falsehood, good before bad, by all rational creatures, that can distinguish them; and then its foundation will be in the essential differences of things, and their eternal ratios, fitnesses, etc.' (Sharp in Cockburn, *Works,* ii 368–9)

myself if I committed murder.[97] This is not very satisfactory; it seems to identify obligation with the perception of obligation. Moreover, in saying that the relevant perception 'forces' me to condemn myself if I do what I am obliged not to do, Cockburn seems to pass over the very point that needs to be explained. We need to know how the content of the relevant perception 'forces' us to condemn ourselves for violation. Sharp and Warburton believe that the relevant sort of 'force' comes from a sanction. Cockburn disagrees; but she does not explain that the sort of 'force' she has in mind is the force of (as we say) compelling reasons rather than powerful motives.

In taking obligation to include this subjective and motivational element Cockburn agrees with Clarke and Balguy. They leave it obscure whether they believe an action can be wrong if we have no obligation to avoid it. If they believe that wrongness implies obligation, they imply that wrongness cannot exist unless we perceive the relevant inducement not to act. But if they believe that wrongness does not imply obligation, do they believe that wrongness implies that we ought not to do it? If so, what is the relation between oughts and obligations? The questions raised by this rationalist account of obligation threaten to obscure the objectivist elements of the rationalist account of moral properties. They would clarify their position if they followed Suarez in distinguishing oughts from obligations. Price tries a different clarification, by identifying oughts with obligations and defending a purely objective account of obligation.[98]

Despite the obscurity that results from her claims about obligation, Cockburn's main aim is to show that objective rightness and wrongness are primary in morality, and that therefore morality does not need an external legislator imposing commands and sanctions. To show that this is not simply a verbal dispute about what is to be called 'moral', she argues that voluntarists need her account of oughts and obligations if they are to explain why one ought to obey the divine will.[99] If voluntarists agree that we have a moral obligation to obey God's command because God is just, good, and wise, they concede that these features of a commander give moral reasons for obedience. These moral reasons do not include the fact that God commands us to obey; for the question at issue is why we ought to obey commands.

Cockburn uses the main point of Cudworth's argument against Hobbes. It does not refute voluntarists. They can avoid it by denying that we have moral reasons to obey God. But if they choose this way out, they have to deny that a moral question arises in an area where it plainly appears to arise. It is not surprising that both Pufendorf and Sharp are unwilling to embrace the Hobbesian answer to Cudworth's and Cockburn's objection.

Cockburn supplements her defence of Clarke's conception of obligation with a clarification of his claims about intrinsic rightness and wrongness. Sharp follows Pufendorf in alleging that

[97] The explication that Cockburn offers Sharp is similar to the one she offers in *Remarks* (on Rutherforth), *Works* i 380: 'such a perception of an inducement to act, or to forbear acting, as forces an agent to stand self-condemned, if he does not conform to it'.

[98] See Price, *RPQM* 114, 117, quoted in §818.

[99] 'But I would ask, if the will of God is supposed to be the only foundation of moral obligation, upon what grounds are we obliged to obey his will? I can conceive no other, but either his absolute power to punish and reward; or the fitness of obedience from a creature to his creator. The first of these would bring us down, I fear, to those low principles [sc. of self-interest] the Doctor [sc. Sharp] disapproves; and if that is rejected, the other returns us to that reason, nature, and essential differences of things, into which, I apprehend, all obligation must at last be resolved.' (Cockburn, *Works* ii 359)

if we believe in intrinsic morality (as Suarez describes it), we contradict the Christian doctrine of creation. In his view, Clarke takes moral rightness and wrongness to be 'antecedent' to the divine will. But since the necessary relations of fitness involve agents who would not exist if God had not willed to create them, they cannot be antecedent to the divine will, and so voluntarism is correct. Cockburn answers that Clarke's view does not make intrinsic morality independent of God; she implicitly relies on Suarez's distinction between the creative and the legislative aspects of God.[100] Sharp accepts this explication, and says he had previously misunderstood Clarke on antecedency (386). His misunderstanding repeats Pufendorf's and Barbeyrac's misunderstanding of Grotius.[101]

877. Objections to Voluntarism: Doddridge and Grove

This argument about how moral rightness is not 'antecedent' to the divine will is only one part of the voluntarists' case to show that that their position gives the appropriate place to God in morality. But their case is open to question. Some of the reasons for Christian moralists to oppose voluntarism may be gathered not only from some of the most prominent British moralists—Clarke, Butler, Price, and so on—but also from less well-known writers. The treatises of Doddridge and Grove, used in Dissenting academies, illustrate some of the criticisms of voluntarism.[102]

Doddridge accepts the rationalist view of Clarke and Balguy that moral rectitude consists in acting according to the moral fitness of things.[103] But in contrast to Wollaston, he sees no conflict between this rationalist appeal to fitness and the outlook of the ancient moralists who make virtue consist in living according to nature (120). Here he agrees with Butler.[104]

Since he agrees with Clarke and Butler, he rejects voluntarism, claiming that 'the foundation of virtue and vice cannot depend upon the mere will of any being whatever' (106). He does not believe that naturalism is open to the theological objections that Pufendorf urges against Grotius, and that might especially appeal to a Calvinist critic. He argues, as Cockburn does, that naturalism does not require us to recognize some standard that is prior to God, or to deny God's omnipotence, properly understood.[105] He warns against a rash interpretation of the counterfactuals that naturalists might use to express their position. They ought not to maintain, for instance, that if God were to change his mind, other things

[100] 'But if God created a system of beings, conformably to certain relations and fitnesses eternally perceived by the divine understanding; and if he gave them no other law but what resulted from their nature, discoverable by their natural faculties: Then the query is, whether that law of nature does not itself oblige them to conform to it, before any discovery either by reason or revelation of the will of God concerning it?' (*Virtue* 382) Cockburn explains her point more fully in an appendix (450–5).

[101] See §§566, 582.

[102] Doddridge's book is professedly based on his lectures. Since it does not present itself as an original work in moral philosophy, but as a compendium of received and plausible views (with references to current literature on each topic), it offers some evidence of the diffusion of arguments for and against voluntarism. Grove was also the head of a Dissenting academy. He not only published a systematic treatise on moral philosophy, more elaborate and argumentative than Doddridge's textbook, but also contributed to the *Spectator* on moral questions. Bond in *Spectator* i, p. lxxix, ascribes nos. 588, 601, 626, 635 to Grove.

[103] See Doddridge, *Course* 106.

[104] On Butler see §679.

[105] '. . . it is no more injurious to the divine being to assert that he cannot alter his own sense of some moral fitnesses, than that he cannot change his nature or destroy his being' (Doddridge, *Course* 107).

would continue the same; for if God were to change his mind, he would no longer be God. Doddridge's concerns justify Suarez's care in explaining the appropriate counterfactuals.[106]

This naturalist account of morality supports a similarly naturalist account of natural law. Doddridge argues that the rules of intrinsic morality (as Suarez puts it) are laws of nature apart from the will of God.[107] He agrees with voluntarists who believe, with Pufendorf, that natural law expresses the 'divine will and purpose', but he takes this point to be consistent with naturalism.

Doddridge agrees with the anonymous critic of John Clarke who defends Samuel Clarke.[108] The critic argues that Samuel Clarke speaks legitimately of being 'obliged by the reason of things and the right of the case' (Letter 13). Indeed, Christian moralists cannot do without this aspect of Samuel Clarke's naturalism; for John Clarke does not satisfactorily explain what it means to say that God is just and righteous. A satisfactory explanation relies on some antecedent conception of morality derived from the nature of things themselves.[109]

Doddridge applies his criticism of voluntarism to Hutcheson's sentimentalism. He agrees with Hutcheson on the existence of a moral sense, but rejects Hutcheson's metaphysical claims about the connexion between the existence of moral rightness and approval by the moral sense; hence he argues that the moral sense is not the foundation of virtue. On this issue Doddridge agrees with Balguy's criticism of Hutcheson's tendency towards voluntarism. He argues that Hutcheson's metaphysical thesis about moral rightness goes beyond the views of Shaftesbury that Hutcheson claims to defend. Shaftesbury does not take virtue to be essentially what the moral sense approves of; he takes it to be essentially agreement with the 'eternal measure and immutable relation of things' (121).

Grove takes the same position, attacking voluntarism from both the philosophical and the theological point of view. He begins his *System* with a defence of the usefulness of moral philosophy for a Christian reader. He takes this defence to be necessary because of doubts about the discipline raised by contemporary opponents from different theological perspectives. On the Dissenting side, some treat moral philosophy as 'impiety presented in the form of an art'.[110] On the Anglican side, Butler's opponent Waterland attributes the growth of Deism to the study of moral philosophy.[111] In his view, the various forms of non-voluntarist moral philosophy agree in dispensing with any appeal to the will of God in fixing the nature of morality and the moral motive.

[106] See Suarez, §§424, 428.

[107] 'Those rules of action which a man may discover by the use of his reason to be agreeable to the nature of things, and on which his happiness will appear to him to depend, may be called the law of nature; and when these are considered as intimations of the divine will and purpose, they may be called the natural laws of God.' (Doddridge, *Course* 192)

[108] Anon., *A Letter to John Clarke . . .*

[109] 'Sir, when you are to settle this point, that God is a just and righteous being, must not you have ideas of just and right? And from whence can you have them, but from things as existing in their differences, respects, and relations, with the proper application of them? Now seeing we receive ideas of just and right, from the reason and relation of created things, we may also be very sure, that those ideas belong to the divine being, and that his nature is righteous.' (Anon., *A Letter to John Clarke . . .* 15)

[110] 'impietas in artis formam redacta'. Grove, *SMP* 111, quotes this from Mather, *MM* 39–40: 'As for ethics . . . of that whereon they employ the plough so long in many academies, I will venture to say, it is a vile thing . . . It is all over a sham; it presents you with a mock-happiness; it prescribes to you mock-virtues for the coming at it; and it pretends to give you a religion without a Christ, and a life of piety without a living principle; a good life with no other than dead works filling of it.'

[111] Waterland, 'Sacraments'.

Against these opponents Grove believes that we need moral philosophy to guard against the moral errors that infect some theological outlooks.[112] He has in mind Calvinists who rely on voluntarism to defend absolute predestination and reprobation. Such a defence is different from the one that Calvin offers. According to Calvin, predestination is an exercise of God's hidden wisdom, which we do not understand, but which we would nonetheless see to be right if we were wise enough.[113] Though Calvin believes that what God wills must be right, he does not draw the voluntarist conclusion that nothing apart from the mere fact of willing makes God's willing right.

The voluntarist, however, claims that there is no further fact about the rightness of God's decisions apart from God's willing them, so that God is immune to the possibility of moral evaluation. Grove attacks this view on the ground that voluntarism pays too high a price for exempting God from moral criticism; it deprives us of any room to admire or love God's moral attributes in their own right, apart from the fact that they express God's inscrutable and arbitrary will.

878. Grove on Egoism

Just as Grove rejects voluntarism, he rejects the egoism that the voluntarists use to connect divine commands with motivation and obligation. But he concedes some points to the egoist that blur some of his objections, and separate him from eudaemonism.

He identifies happiness with pleasure, which he calls 'formal happiness'. The sorts of things that Aristotle regards as parts of happiness Grove describes as 'objective happiness'; parts of objective happiness are not parts of happiness itself but simply objects from which we gain our pleasures (*SMP* 63). On this basis he rejects the traditional threefold division of good into the pleasant, the useful, and the morally good (honestum); the first two are enough to cover all goods, and the third is simply one element in the useful (74). Consistently with this view, Grove rejects any non-hedonist conception of the good; for instance, he rejects Cumberland's conception of the good as perfection, because it violates hedonist principles (72).

Though he accepts hedonism, Grove does not accept egoism. In some of his essays in the *Spectator* he defends the reality of disinterested benevolence, on lines similar to Hutcheson's and less precise than Butler's.[114] To disarm critics who appeal to examples of selfishness, Grove argues that benevolence, though part of human nature, is less prominent than we might expect it to be.[115] The influences of society, custom, and education encourage us to develop narrower concerns that inhibit our natural benevolence.[116] Grove argues that the natural 'diffusiveness' of human heart and its benevolent characteristics are inhibited by contingent and removable obstacles, arising from 'an unhappy complexion of body', 'love of

[112] Grove attacks the extreme version of Calvinist doctrines that assumes the 'unworthy idea of the Deity, which in effect leaves out his moral attributes, or most miserably disfigures and misrepresents them' (*SMP* 13).

[113] See Calvin, *Inst.* i 17.2, quoted in §412. [114] *Spectator* v 10–14 (no. 588). [115] *Spectator* v 54–8 (no. 601)

[116] ' 'Tis a property of the heart of man to be diffusive; its kind wishes spread over the face of the creation; and if there be those, as we may observe too many of them, who are all wrapped up in their own dear selves, without any visible concern for their species, let us suppose that their good-nature is frozen, and by the prevailing force of some contrary quality restrained in its operations.' (*Spectator*, no. 601, 54)

the world', and 'uneasiness of mind' resulting from needs or demands or emergencies that seem to make it more urgent to take care of oneself.[117] We tend to place our happiness in zero-sum goods, in contrast to those that grow by being shared.[118] If, however, we could attend to the pleasures that we gain from shareable, non-competitive goods, we would more readily recognize the possibility of disinterested motives.

In this popular essay Grove does not try to reconcile his claims with his hedonism. According to hedonism, benefit to others cannot be itself a part of our good; it must be an instrumental good that causes pleasure in us without any further effect on our selfish interest. He is right to claim that this possibility of 'disinterested' action is open to us even within the hedonist scheme. But this conception of disinterested action leaves out an essential element of genuinely disinterested action, as we normally conceive it, and as Grove conceives it in his *Spectator* essay. For we usually suppose that disinterested concern for the good of others takes their good as our end in its own right, apart from its causal results.

In another essay Grove re-affirms the reality of a sentiment of benevolence that is irreducible to self-love and to practical reason. Human beings are both reasonable and sociable; two principles of action, self-love and benevolence, correspond to this double capacity. Society could not flourish with self-love alone.[119] This argument is quite similar to Hutcheson's claims about reason, self-love, and benevolence.[120] It agrees with him in accepting a purely instrumental view of practical reason, in contrast to Cumberland's view that practical reason prescribes concern for the common good as reasonable in itself, apart from further instrumental benefits. Sentimentalism rests on rejection of Cumberland's non-instrumental view of practical reason.

Whatever he thinks about disinterested action, Grove believes that a virtuous person needs to attend steadily to the ultimate good (*SMP* 79). The Stoics who claim to find their happiness in virtue alone are mistaken; they are misled by their pride and their exaggerated belief in their self-sufficiency (86, 112).[121] In fact no creature can leave us completely satisfied, and so none can be the chief good (92). Grove therefore approves of Plato's view (on a possible interpretation) that the chief good consists in the contemplation of God (94).

He concludes, therefore, that virtue must be directed towards God as its ultimate end.[122] This conclusion does not commit him to theological voluntarism, because the virtuous person seeks God's favour in the belief that God is supremely good, not simply as a source of

[117] He concludes: 'Place the mind in its right posture, it will immediately discover its innate propension to beneficence' (58).

[118] 'If that which men esteem their happiness were, like the light, the same sufficient and unconfined good, whether ten thousand enjoy the benefit of it, or but one, we should see men's good will and kind endeavours would be as universal.' (*Spectator*, no. 601, 56) '. . . virtue . . . grows by communication, and so little resembles earthly riches that the more hands it is lodged in the greater is every man's particular stock' (57). For his example of the light Grove quotes Ennius in Cic. *Off.* i 51, quoted at §195.

[119] 'Reason, tis certain, would oblige every man to pursue the general happiness as the means to procure and establish his own; and yet, besides this consideration, there were not a natural instinct, prompting men to desire the welfare and satisfaction of others, self-love, in defiance of the admonitions of reason, would quickly run all things into a state of war and confusion.' (*Spectator*, no. 588, p. 12)

[120] Hutcheson; §635.

[121] Grove's criticism suffers from lack of attention to the Stoics' views on indifferents.

[122] 'For what men call virtue is either a shoot from religion, being directed by the will of the supreme cause as its rule and measure, and animated by his favour as its ultimate reward, or grows upon other principles, and is nourished by other views. If this latter be understood, it is the shadow of virtue, not the vital substance; it is vanity, or interest, or at best a natural generosity of temper.' (*SMP* 113)

rewards. But it is not clear how Grove reconciles this account of virtue with his recognition of disinterested concern for the good of others. If disinterested concern is necessary for virtue, should the good of others not be at least a part of the ultimate end that the virtuous person pursues? Grove makes this point difficult to express within his position, because of his hedonism about the good.

Grove's argument illustrates the wide appeal of some aspects of the voluntarist position, even to someone who rejects the position as a whole. If we accept hedonism about the good, but we find it difficult to see how pursuit of our own pleasure could lead us directly to the acceptance of morality, we may easily be inclined to rely on some artificial connexion between morality and our own pleasure. Hobbes finds this connexion in the institutions of a particular society; if we think these are not enough, we will find it plausible to appeal to divine rewards and punishments. Grove rejects this conclusion, but his initial concessions to hedonism make his argument less convincing.

879. Tucker and Paley

We have traced some stages in the debates about voluntarism between opponents and defenders of Shaftesbury and Clarke. We may now turn to the later statements of a voluntarist position by Tucker and Paley. These are important links between voluntarism and the utilitarianism of Bentham. Paley's *Principles* is an especially brief, clear, and influential re-statement of the combination of voluntarism, utilitarianism, and egoism that John Clarke, Brown, and Gay all defend. Paley acknowledges a debt to Tucker's unbearably prolix and rambling work; fortunately, he reduces the main lines of argument in Tucker and his predecessors to a reasonable length.[123]

Tucker's argument for utilitarianism rests on a connexion between rightness and good consequences (*LNP* 123–5). He connects rectitude with rules, and denies that rules could be correct in themselves apart from the results of observing them.[124] He argues plausibly that if a rule is right, it rests on some right-making reason, but then he assumes more controversially that an appropriate reason has to refer to the effects of observing the rule.

Having argued that nothing is right in itself, and reduced the right to what produces good consequences, Tucker denies that virtue could be a good in itself (127). His argument rests on the assumption that the mental state of satisfaction is the only non-instrumental good; from this assumption it is easy to infer that virtue must be only a means to satisfaction. He argues that 'the advantage of virtue over vice lies not in the act, but in the consequences' (128). Similarly, he finds the foundation of justice in utility, relying on an argument similar to Hume's (145–6).

[123] I cite Tucker, *LNP*, from Hazlitt's very welcome abridgment, which includes an amusing preface by Hazlitt, warmly commending Tucker. Hazlitt, however, dissents from Tucker's egoism (p. xxi). He suggests (p. xvi) that Tucker is pulled between Locke and Kant on self-love and benevolence. Stephen, *HET* ii 110, also speaks warmly of Tucker.

[124] 'The idea of rules being right in themselves, I conceive arose from our observing that they often grow out of one another, so that we are contented to trace them back a certain way, but do not think it necessary to inquire into the foundation of the more remote and general ones, which we therefore look upon as right in themselves, because we feel their good effects without being at the trouble to inquire into their origin. But no rule is right without a reason that renders it so . . .' (Tucker, *LNP* 125)

He recognizes, however, that appearances do not support the view that benevolence is reducible to selfish motivation, and he criticizes the easy arguments for egoism that argue from the fact that we want to satisfy our desires to the conclusion that all we want is satisfaction for ourselves.[125] He therefore seems to reject (without discussing it in detail) the psychological egoist reduction of benevolence. But he accepts rational egoism; though he allows distinct psychological reality to benevolence, he does not allow it rational authority. He believes it is reasonable for selfish motives to predominate in case of conflict. Plato's example of Gyges' Ring (not so called) appears to Tucker to present a serious problem.[126] A solution to the problem needs to show that the instrumental advantages of morality in the long run outweigh the instrumental disadvantages noticed by Plato.

Tucker tries to explain the fact that some people believe that morality is valuable enough to deserve to be followed despite its disadvantages. He suggests, in agreement with Gay and Hartley, that we pursue morality for its own sake because we have formed a persistent habit that we retain even when we gain nothing by it.[127] But though this is psychologically possible, Tucker maintains that it is irrational.[128] The ultimate defence of morality, and hence the ultimate basis of obligation, has to rest on long-term rewards. Tucker affirms the voluntarist combination of egoism and utilitarianism.

Paley uses Tucker to formulate a clear re-statement of the position of Gay and his successors. He does not try to complicate voluntarism, as Warburton does, in order to meet the objections of sentimentalists and rationalists. He prefers to attack the assumptions that might lead us to doubt the adequacy of the voluntarist account of morality. We will be impressed by anti-voluntarist arguments if we trust our intuitive judgments about the difference between moral requirements and commands backed by threats. But Paley believes that no intelligible alternative to the voluntarist analysis can be offered, and so we should simply reject the relevant intuitive judgments. The supposed obscurity of rationalist claims about disinterested concern and motivation by perception of intrinsic rightness encourages Paley to conclude that the questions raised by rationalists are spurious.

[125] 'Wearing woollen clothes or eating mutton does not make a man sheepish, nor does his looking into a book every now and then render him bookish; so neither is every thing selfish, that relates to oneself.' (Tucker, *LNP* 149)

[126] 'It may be said that if satisfaction, a man's own satisfaction is the groundwork of all our motives; that if virtue and benevolence are recommended by reason only as containing the most copious sources of gratification, then are they no more than means, and deserve our regard no longer than while they conduce to that end. So that if a man should have an opportunity of gaining some great advantage secretly, and without danger to himself, though with infinite detriment to all the world besides, and in breach of every moral obligation, he would do wisely to embrace it.' (*LNP* 155)

[127] 'I knew a tradesman, who, having gotten a competency of fortune, thought to retire and enjoy himself in quiet; but finding he could not be easy without business, was forced to return to the shop, and assist his former partners gratis. Why then should it be thought strange that a man, long inured to the practice of moral duties, should persevere in them out of liking, when they can yield him no further advantage?' (156)

[128] 'Upon the whole, we are forced to acknowledge, that hitherto we have found no reason to imagine that a wise man would ever die for his country, or suffer martyrdom in the cause of virtue. The only way in which we can extend the obligations of virtue to every circumstance that can happen, is by supposing that the end of life is not the end of being; that death is but a removal to some other stage, where our good works shall follow us, and yield a plentiful harvest of happiness which had not time to ripen here.' (159)

He therefore supposes that he has cleared up an unnecessary air of mystery surrounding morality and obligation.[129] His argument implies that there is nothing distinctive about obligation in contrast to being induced. In his view 'a man is said to be obliged when he is urged by a violent motive resulting from the command of another' (ii 2 = R 848). In the case of morality, the commander is God, and the violent motive results from the prospect of reward and punishment.

By taking this view of obligation Paley reverts to the position of Hobbes, and rejects the distinction between obligation and inducement on which Cudworth rests his opposition to Hobbes. In assuming that obligations all rest on the same desire for reward and fear of punishment, he denies that a legitimate or authorized commander or legislator differs from one who is powerful enough to hold out effective threats and offers.

Paley also follows Hobbes in accepting a utilitarian explanation of moral rules. Hobbes connects the laws of nature with the preservation of the state rather than with any more general maximization of the good. Paley follows those who attribute a utilitarian outlook to God, and so he agrees with Gay in making utility a subordinate criterion of morality. He answers the question that Gay does not answer, about our capacity to discern the actions that maximize utility. According to Paley, we promote utility by following the accepted rules and institutions of society.

He does not make a serious effort to show, by appeal to some independent grasp of utility, that these specific rules actually maximize it. Nor does he appeal to a less optimistic view of our capacities that makes accepted moral rules our best guide to the benevolent will of God; this is the view that Berkeley endorses and that Butler suggests, without endorsing it. Paley cuts short all these questions by treating the moral rules he is familiar with as being in general a reliable guide to utility.

After making all these simplifying assumptions, Paley is able to present his moral philosophy in a lucid and concise form. The use of his book as a textbook in Cambridge reflects its success in summarizing the voluntarist side of the 18th-century debate. The book remained popular for many years. It was first published in 1785, and by 1811 it had reached its 19th edition. It remained popular enough in the 1850s to allow the publication of annotated editions. Whately commented from an anti-utilitarian position, and Bain defended the core (as he saw it) of Paley's utilitarianism. Paley's book helped to provoke Whewell's defence of a non-utilitarian rationalist position. Whewell remarks that Paley had been (since 1786)[130] and still was (in 1852)[131] prescribed for study in Cambridge, and that he summed up the theological voluntarist outlook that had been prominent in Cambridge for many years.[132]

[129] 'When I first turned my thoughts to moral speculations, an air of mystery seemed to hang over the whole subject; which arose, I believe, from hence,—that I supposed, with many authors whom I had read, that to be obliged to do a thing, was very different from being induced only to do it; and that the obligation to practise virtue, to do what is right, just, etc., was quite another thing, and of another kind, than the obligation which a soldier is under to obey his officer, a servant his master; or any of the civil and ordinary obligations of human life.' (Paley, *PMP* ii 3 = R 851)

[130] Whewell, *LHMPE* 165: '. . . the principles upon which Paley's book is based, the doctrine that actions are good in as far as they tend to pleasure, and obligatory in as far as they are commanded by a powerful master, had already long been taught in this university [sc. Cambridge], and had undoubtedly taken a strong hold of the minds of men. They had accustomed themselves to look upon it as the only rational and tenable doctrine; and one which was as superior in these respects to the vague and empty doctrines, of loftier sound, which had preceded the time of Locke, as the philosophy of Newton was to that of Aristotle.'

[131] Whewell, *LHMPE*, p. xxv.

[132] On later opponents and defenders of Paley see Le Mahieu, *MWP* 155–62.

880. Whately's Criticisms of Paley

It is useful to survey a few of Whately's comments on Paley. They are not especially original; they recapitulate some of the earlier criticisms of voluntarism that we find, for instance, in Price, who also disapproves of Paley's book.[133] They also agree largely with Whewell's comments on Paley. These criticisms give some idea of the objections that a utilitarian might be fairly expected to answer, and some reasons for thinking that theological voluntarism does not provide the best defence of utilitarianism. Whately believes it is important to discuss Paley critically because of the influence of his book.[134] He especially attacks Paley's theological voluntarism, but he also disapproves of the account of moral obligation and of Paley's utilitarianism, for reasons that go beyond voluntarism.

In Whately's view, theological voluntarism defeats its own ends, for reasons related to those that Socrates urges against Euthyphro.[135] One might defend Paley against this objection. The voluntarist is committed to explaining 'God's will is right and good' as 'God's will is God's will' only if voluntarism offers an account of moral concepts. If it allows a non-voluntarist account of moral concepts, but offers a voluntarist account of moral properties, voluntarists may agree that 'God's will is right' is not a tautology, but still claim that the property referred to by 'right' is being willed by God. But it is not clear that Paley can use this defence; he seems to offer voluntarist analyses of moral concepts.

But even if we allowed Paley this defence against Whately's conceptual argument, it would not answer Whately's main point. If we recommend Christian morality for its moral excellence, our recommendation is more plausible if we appeal to some standard of moral excellence distinct from Christian morality itself. The mere fact that it expresses the will of God is not sufficient for its meeting the appropriate standard for morality. Whately argues that we need a distinct standard of morality, and that the Christian doctrine of God as creator encourages us to look for it.[136] The mere fact that voluntarists attribute more than naturalists attribute to the will of God does not show that voluntarism fits orthodox Christianity better.

Indeed Paley himself, in Whately's view, implicitly concedes some independent criterion of morality.[137] Whately believes that the role Paley allows to moral knowledge without

[133] Price on Paley; *RPQM* 342. Many of Whately's comments are repeated from *ILM*. Prior, *LBE* 100, discusses the meta-ethical implications of some of Whately's arguments.

[134] 'Having long been an established text-book at a great and flourishing university, it has laid the foundation of the moral principles of many hundreds—probably thousands—of youths while under a course of training designed to qualify them for being afterwards the moral instructors of millions. Such a work therefore cannot fail to exercise a very considerable influence on the minds of successive generations.' (Whately, *PMP*, Pref.)

[135] '. . . its inevitable consequence is to derogate from God's honour and to deprive the Christian revelation of part of its just evidence . . . To call the will of God righteous and good, if our original ideas of righteousness and goodness imply merely a conformity to the divine will, is an empty truism. It is in fact no more than saying that the will of God is the will of God; and if we dwell on the excellence of the Christian morality at the same time that we make Christianity the whole and original standard of moral excellence, we are evidently arguing in a vicious circle, and merely attributing to the Gospel the praise of being conformable to the rules derived from itself' (Whately, *PMP* 64).

[136] 'If the author of the universe and the author of Christianity, the giver of reason and of revelation, be, as we contend, the same being, it is to be expected that the declarations of his will which we meet with in revelation should correspond with the dictates of the highest and most perfect reason; and the testimony of the heathen moralists proves that such is the fact.' (*PMP* 66)

[137] Paley, i. 4: '. . . the Scriptures commonly presuppose in the persons to whom they speak a knowledge of the principles of natural justice; and are employed not so much to teach *new* rules of morality, as to enforce the practice of it by *new* sanctions, and by a *greater certainty* . . .' (quoted by Whately, *PMP* 16).

revelation conflicts with Paley's support of voluntarism.[138] Paley might reply that Whately attributes a more extreme position to him than he holds. A voluntarist metaphysics does not require us to deny that people may be partly aware through natural reason of principles that are moral principles because God commands them. People are aware of the principles, but not of what makes them moral principles.

But this reply on Paley's behalf does not completely dispose of Whately's criticism. If we concede natural knowledge of the actions that are morally right, it is difficult not to concede some natural knowledge of the standard of morality as well. Once we concede this, we seem to allow recognition of the relevant standard without reference to divine commands.

We might try to find support for voluntarism in the fact that we sometimes have to take God's word for some action's being right. Whately answers that this sort of trust in God does not support voluntarism.[139] For we can also trust moral advice from other people on similar grounds, without supposing we have no access to any independent standard of morality. The independent standard warrants us in taking their advice when we do not know what to do.

Not only are the arguments for voluntarism weak; its consequences are also unacceptable. Whately particularly objects to Paley's account of obligation as a violent motive.[140] Paley's attempt to explain moral concepts and judgments really changes the subject. Whately implies that Paley is open to the objections that expose the inadequacy of a Hobbesian account of obligation.[141]

If Paley were right about our moral concepts, we would not mark distinctions that in fact we do mark, and we would not agree with the ancient moralists in marking them.[142] Paley's

[138] 'For supposing man a being destitute of all moral faculty, and deriving all notions of right and wrong that he can ever possess, entirely from a consideration of the will of God, and the expectation of reward and punishment in the next world from him, one does not see how those to whom our Scriptures were addressed . . . could have had any notion at all of "natural justice".' (Whately, *PMP* 16) 'He admits that we attribute goodness to the Most High on account of the conformity of his acts to the principles which we are accustomed to call "good"; and that these principles are called "good" solely from their conformity to the divine will. It is very strange that when he was thus proceeding in a circle, this did not open his eyes to the erroneousness of the principle which had led him into it.' (24) Whately comments on Paley, i 9.

[139] '. . . this is from our general conviction that God is wise and good; not from our attaching no meaning to the words wise and good except the divine will. Then and then only can the command of a superior make anything a duty, when we set out with the conviction that it is a duty to obey him' (*PMP* 25; cf. 62).

[140] 'But the most amazing circumstance in that remarkable chapter . . . is the total unconsciousness which the author seems to exhibit of there being anything peculiar or specific in our feeling of moral approbation. He seems to think that, as soon as he has shown that the approval which we bestow upon things because they are useful, may become by habit immediately attached to them, after the perception of their utility has dropped out of the mind, he has done all that could be reasonably expected by his antagonists; or, in other words, he seems to imagine that no one can possibly suppose the emotion which approves the virtue of a man, to differ specifically from that which commends the proportions of a doorway, or the elegance of a tweezer-case.' (*PMP* 30)

[141] 'A planter's slave, for instance, is urged by a violent motive—a very violent motive—to work in the fields at his master's command, and sometimes to assist in flogging his fellow-labourers. But though he is obliged to do this, few, except slave-owners, would call this a moral obligation . . . If it should be said that the master has no just right over him, and is not therefore a rightful "superior", this would be to recognize a moral faculty. But if every one is a superior who has power to enforce submission, the slave-owner is such . . .' (58)

[142] 'And all the ancient heathen writers use words which evidently signify what we call "virtue", "duty", "moral goodness"; which words could not possibly have found their way into the languages of men destitute (as most of them were) of any belief in a future state of retribution, if Paley's theory were correct. It is disproved not by any supposed truth and soundness in the views of the ancient writers, but by the very words they employ.' (*PMP* 62) 'Yet it is an indisputable fact that the ancient heathen did, without the knowledge of a future state, entertain a notion of duty. . . . The fact that they did entertain some is a disproof of the theory in question.' (63)

principles make us unable to distinguish between what is bad because prohibited and what is prohibited because bad (72).[143] To illustrate the fact that moral obligations are independent of acts of will, Whately cites the oath taken by the king to observe the laws; this does not create obligation, but recognizes a pre-existent obligation (121). Paley might reply that these distinctions that we think we draw are spurious, and cannot be explained with sufficient clarity. But this abandonment of moral distinctions needs more argument than he offers for it. He claims to be explaining morality, but he fails.

Paley does not explain in detail how his hedonistic utilitarianism justifies the specific moral rules he defends. Whately suggests that such an explanation would be difficult to give. He does not simply object that hedonistic calculation is likely to give the wrong answers; he also rejects it as morally inappropriate. 'Disgust' at utilitarian answers is understandable if utilitarians believe that calculation of pleasures is the right basis for recognition of moral obligation.[144]

Whately's objections do not settle the issues about voluntarism, They are even less decisive about utilitarianism, which is not his main concern. But they expose some serious difficulties not only in Paley's position, but also in any position that tries to explain moral requirements by appeal to something like Paley's 'violent motive'. Paley's combination of egoistic hedonism with utilitarianism may seem initially appealing, and it certainly seems so to Bentham as well as the theological voluntarists; but Whately exposes some of its flaws.

881. Thomas Brown's Criticism of Paley

Some of the main points of Whately's rationalist criticisms of Paley agree with the objections of Thomas Brown, who attacks Paley on sentimentalist grounds. He affirms the 'original' character of moral reactions, against any reductive account, either egoist or associationist (such as Gay and Hartley offer).[145] But he differs from Hutcheson in rejecting the analogy with a sense (181). Hutcheson's account suggests that moral judgment consists partly in receiving ideas from external reality, whereas Brown believes we only need to recognize the specific feeling of approval, which is only one component of Hutcheson's analysis.

Brown rejects Clarkean rationalism, claiming (as Hutcheson and Hume claim) that it cannot account for the practical aspects of morality. In particular, he claims that reasoning cannot give us a reason or motive to pursue one end rather than another; he accepts

[143] 'You can easily prove, therefore, that when people speak of a knowledge of the divine will being the origin of all our moral notions, they cannot mean exactly what the words would seem to signify; if, at least, they admit at the same time that it is a matter of duty, and not merely of prudence, to obey God's will, and that he has a just claim to our obedience.' (*PMP* 90)

[144] 'And if the pleasures of sense "differ only in intensity and duration" from the pleasures of filial and parental affection, we ought to know how many days of luxurious living are equivalent to the pleasure of saving a father's life, that we may decide rightly when these things happen to come in competition. If utilitarian moral obligation consists in being regulated by such calculations, we cannot be surprised at the disgust with which so many persons speak of the scheme which refers us to the "calculations of utility".' (*PMP* 42)

[145] 'All which a defender of original tendencies to the emotions that are distinctive of virtue and vice can be supposed to assert is that, when we are capable of understanding the consequences of actions, we then have those feelings of moral approbation or disapprobation which . . . I suppose to constitute our moral notions of virtue, merit, obligation.' (Brown, *LE* 120)

Hutcheson's view about the purely instrumental character of reason (64–74). He does not discuss Hume's arguments to show that moral distinctions are not derived from reason (which are quite similar to his own arguments). The aspect of Hume's theory that he selects for discussion is utilitarianism. He disagrees with Hume, arguing that neither the agent nor the spectator is primarily concerned with utility; Hume (he believes) has been misled by the general coincidence between moral sentiment and utility into believing that moral sentiment is essentially utilitarian (Lecture 5).

His examination of Smith (Lectures 8–9) is sympathetic and acute, raising a major difficulty for Smith's derivation of moral sentiments from sympathy. Brown notices that if Smith's derivation is to achieve its aims, the sympathy from which moral sentiment is derived cannot itself contain or presuppose any moral judgment. But he argues that, contrary to Smith, we cannot explain the crucial instances of sympathy unless we suppose that they rest on moral judgment, so that we cannot take this moral judgment to be the product of sympathy. In some cases we do not form sympathetic feelings towards the feelings of others except on the basis of a moral judgment about these feelings; if, then, these moral judgments determine the scope and limits of our sympathy, they do not depend on non-moral sympathy (150).[146]

Though Brown rejects the 'selfish system' for familiar reasons, he keeps his sharpest criticism for the theological voluntarism of Paley, which he regards as an especially degrading form of selfish system because it tells us that God is 'not to be loved, but to be courted with a mockery of affection' (131). He also rejects the other side of Paley's position, his theological voluntarism about moral obligation; he argues on familiar naturalist grounds for the independence of moral sentiment and moral obligation from belief in God (137–42).

Since he defends a sentimentalist position, Brown faces the objections raised by Price and Reid, and repeated by Stewart.[147] Price, following Balguy, rejects sentimentalism on the ground that it makes morality unstable. Brown admits that morality is liable to vary with our sentiments, but does not regard this as an objection to his position. The rationalists point out that moral judgments and properties are liable to counterfactual changes if moral emotions change, but Brown does not think this sort of mutability matters, because the relevant counterfactuals are too remote to concern us.[148]

This seems an over-simple reply to Price's criticism, for two reasons: (1) It is not clear that the counterfactuals are as remote as Brown suggests. It is reasonable to suppose, as Hutcheson admits, that people's actual sentiments vary. Sentimentalists tend to resort to the normal perceiver, but it is not clear that a purely statistical, non-normative, notion of normality gives a satisfactory account of moral properties. (2) Brown rejects voluntarism on the basis of naturalist arguments about the independence of moral sentiments from

[146] Brown summarizes his main objection: '[Smith's theory] . . . would still be liable to the insuperable objection, that the moral sentiments which he ascribes to our secondary feelings of mere sympathy are assumed as previously existing in those original emotions with which the secondary feelings are said to be in unison.' (*LE* 157).

[147] At 188–92 Brown cites Stewart, *OMP*. In §190 Stewart mentions the alleged consequence of Hutcheson's position, that it makes morality arise from an arbitrary relation between our constitution and external objects. Stewart thinks this consequence can be avoided if Reid's conception of a moral sense is substituted for Hutcheson's conception.

[148] 'It is a very powerless scepticism, indeed, which begins by supposing a total change of our nature. We might perhaps have been formed to admire only the cruel, and to hate only the benevolent . . . But if the moral distinctions be as regular as the whole system of laws which carry on in unbroken harmony the motions of the universe, this regularity is sufficient for us while we exist on earth . . .' (*LE* 192)

God's will. This independence is shown by appeal to counterfactuals about mutability. Balguy and Price argue that these objections to voluntarism can be adapted to undermine sentimentalism. Since Brown accepts naturalist arguments against voluntarism, either he needs to show that the same arguments do not defeat his sentimentalism or he needs to give up some of his arguments against theological voluntarism.

Brown's account of morality is a significant development of the sentimentalism of Hutcheson and continued by Smith. He includes some acute criticisms of his sentimentalist predecessors, though he does not show that his position is exempt from the general objections to sentimentalism.

882. Wainewright's Defence of Paley

To illustrate the persistence of Paley's views, it is worth noticing a later defence against his early 19th-century critics, the *Vindication* by Wainewright. In reply to various critics, Wainewright defends the use of Paley's work as a textbook in Cambridge (2), and tries to separate him from such utilitarians as Hume and Godwin (6). He separates him from these utilitarians because Paley's survey of consequences extends to the afterlife, and because Paley refers to utility only when some question arises about the rightness of an action. Wainewright argues that (as Gay puts it, though not using Gay's terms) the will of God is the primary criterion of morality and utility is only a secondary criterion. He also qualifies Paley's utilitarianism by arguing, against Stewart, that he is not an unqualified act-utilitarian, but insists on the importance of observing general rules (9). Similarly, Stewart is unjustified in claiming that Paley assimilates duty to interest; in distinguishing our interest in this life from our interest in the afterlife, he draws the appropriate distinction (28).

On these points Wainewright's attitude is defensive; he admits that the charges against Paley would be damaging if they were true, and so he argues that they are false. On some other points his vindication is more aggressive; he admits the truth of some allegations, but believes that Paley is right to hold the views that the critics reject. His answer to the Euthyphro question seems to favour Euthyphro, since he says that Paley defines right as 'consistency with the will of God' (27). But he also seems to say that Paley takes right to be essentially what maximizes happiness. It is a result of God's creative will that in our circumstances these actions achieve happiness, and hence (Wainewright infers) voluntarists are right to say that what is right depends on the will of God.[149] This formulation seems to reflect the failure to distinguish the creative from the legislative will of God that we have found in Pufendorf and others. Nor do Paley and Wainewright make it clear whether it is necessary or contingent that God chooses the principles that maximize utility.

[149] 'It will scarcely be disputed that no moral laws are framed, and that no actions and dispositions have been enjoined by the Deity, which do not tend to promote the happiness of his intelligent creatures. What is termed the essential difference between right and wrong entirely depends on this tendency to produce happiness or misery: on no other account is the one commanded, and the other prohibited. That some actions and dispositions are productive of human enjoyment, and others of uneasiness and pain, must result from the relations arising from the circumstances in which man finds himself pleased; but as these circumstances could not have any existence if no such being as man had been created, so far the consequent relations may be said to originate with the Creator.' (Wainewright, *VPTM* 78)

Wainewright defends Paley's egoism by appeal to a motivational account of obligation, claiming that any obligation refers to what is necessary for one's own happiness.[150] A further defence relies on an egoist account of justification. Wainewright answers those who criticize Paley for the selfish aspects of his system. He calls Thomas Brown's objections 'extravagant' (115). He answers that the desire for happiness is a perfectly acceptable motive from the moral point of view, and that Kant was wrong to deny this (119). If Paley's position is selfish, Christianity (he claims) is also selfish, since it appeals to rewards in the afterlife (123).

Wainewright's argument suffers from failure to distinguish the appeal to self-interest as one acceptable motive from the exclusive appeal to self-interest. The latter appeal seems to be characteristic of Paley, but not (or not obviously) of Christianity. The critics of Paley whom he attacks object to Paley's reduction of all moral motives to self-interest. This criticism is not answered by the observation that self-interest is one legitimate motive. Wainewright's only concession to critics of the selfish position is the observation that Paley allows virtue to become habitual, without constant reflexion on divine rewards; for this purpose Paley uses Tucker's example of the merchant who still wanted to stay in business after he had retired (117–18). This observation, however, does not meet the main point that Paley's critics urge against him.

The obscurity in this part of Wainewright's argument is easier to understand in the light of his attack on all defences of morality that rely on disinterested motives.[151] He accuses his opponents of favouring Stoicism (142).[152] Though one might suppose that he is only attacking those who reject interest altogether in favour of virtue, he seems to include in his attack those who allow any role to disinterested motives. Hence he accuses Clarke of inconsistency because he appeals both to fitness and to the prospect of rewards in the afterlife.

Though Wainewright does not make much progress towards an answer to the attacks on Paley, or even towards a clear account of the questions in dispute, he makes one suggestive remark about the relation of Bentham's utilitarianism to Paley's. He suggests that Bentham is inconsistent in his views about why we ought to promote utility, and that his most plausible answer to the question relies on Paley's egoism.[153] If Bentham thinks the promotion of

[150] '. . . nothing can be said to oblige us which is not in some way or other necessary to our happiness. The supposition of physical force is of course entirely excluded;—and in what other way can the will be influenced, except through the instrumentality of motives?' (*VPTM* 87).

[151] 'Constituted as the human faculties and affections are at present, to endeavour to persuade the great mass of mankind, or indeed any but visionary speculatists, who never mingle in the business and tumults of the world, that they ought to practise virtue either exclusively for its own sake, or from no other motive than the feeling of approbation which it inspires in the heart, is, I cannot help believing, to the last degree, idle and preposterous.' (*VPTM* 136) In his support Wainewright quotes Berkeley, *Alc.*, Dialogue 3: 'Seized and rapt with this sublime idea, our philosophers do infinitely despise and pity whoever shall propose or accept any other motive to virtue'. This is part of Berkeley's attack on Shaftesbury; see §614.

[152] He quotes with approval La Bruyère, *Caractères*, ch. 11 (De l'homme) §3, on Stoicism. La Bruyère attacks the allegedly unrealistic character of the Stoic doctrine of *apatheia*. (On the Stoics' actual view see §191.) In his view, the Stoics' unrealistic advice is also useless: 'Ils ont laissé à l'homme tous les défauts qu'ils lui ont trouvés, et n'ont presque relevé aucun de ses faibles'. Wainewright believes that the pursuit of disinterested motivation is equally unrealistic.

[153] 'When he [sc. Bentham] describes "the greatest amount of happiness" to be the rule of our conduct, which he does in his first chapter, he so far agrees with Paley; and where he considers it as the sole obligation (chap ii, sect 19), his opinion is very closely allied to that of Hume. His commentators, however, maintain, that the great object he has in view (though it is certainly mentioned in a very summary way, chap. xvii, sect 6 & 7) is to show that every man, by consulting the greatest happiness of the community, adopts the surest method of securing his own. If the truth of Revelation be

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ROUSSEAU

883. Hobbes's Errors

Rousseau's works do not include any treatise on moral philosophy, but they include different sorts of material that is relevant to moral philosophy. Several of his main works are primarily relevant to social philosophy, since they deal with interactions between individuals and different sorts of social contexts.

One of Rousseau's preoccupations arises from his objections to Hobbes. According to Hobbes, the most illuminating way to understand society, and especially the state, is to contrast it with the condition of human beings without society, in the state of nature. When we consider non-social human beings, we can see that each individual needs society, and in particular needs a commonwealth with coercive power, in order to satisfy the desires that we form without any commonwealth. The commonwealth offers peace, which we can see, from the point of view of the state of nature, to be better than the war of all against all that is characteristic of the state of nature.

Rousseau believes that Hobbes's question is illuminating, but not for the reasons that Hobbes supposes. Hobbes's argument succeeds only if the evils removed by the commonwealth are present in the non-social state of nature. But Rousseau believes that they are not present in Hobbes's state of nature. If we follow Hobbes's instructions to begin from a non-social starting point, we will not find the sorts of desires and conflicts that create the war of all against all. Hobbes has attributed to a non-social condition desires and aims that really belong to people in society. This is one common error in appeals to the state of nature.[1] Those who make the error suggest the state as the remedy for a disease that the state has created in the first place.

This may not be a very effective criticism of Hobbes. If Hobbes's argument is to work, he must be right about the predicament of human beings without a commonwealth—that is to say, without a state exercising coercive power in order to secure peace. For the

[1] 'The philosophers who have examined the foundations of society have all felt the necessity of going back as far as the state of nature, but none of them has reached it. . . . all of them, continually speaking of need, greed, oppression, desires, and pride transferred to the state of nature ideas they had taken from society; they spoke of savage man and depicted civil man.' (*DOI*, Introd. §5 = P iii 132 = C 38) At §33 = P 252 = C 52 Rousseau criticizes Hobbes for saying that the human condition in the state of nature is miserable. I cite the *DOI* by paragraphs, and by pages in the Pléiade edition (P) and Cress's translation (C).

purposes of this argument, it would not matter if some of the desires that create the predicament of the state of nature require some form of society. Hobbes is refuted only if these desires presuppose a commonwealth. But Rousseau does not show that, for instance, greed and pride require a Hobbesian commonwealth. He shows at most that they require some form of social relations. We must (let us grant) have enough interactions with other people so that we care about impressing them or showing our superiority to them. But we could apparently interact enough to form these desires without being members of a commonwealth.

To defend Rousseau's objection to Hobbes, we might argue that the forms of society that allow the formation of greed and pride (for instance) must be fairly stable and long-lasting. In that case, one of two things follows. Either (1) Hobbes will say that such societies require a commonwealth, so that Rousseau is right to object that Hobbes relies on desires that require a commonwealth; or (2) such societies do not require a commonwealth, and so Hobbes is wrong to maintain that stable societies require a commonwealth.

The dilemma offered to Hobbes does not necessarily damage his position. He might allow the possibility of societies that are stable enough to allow the formation of greed and pride, but are still not stable enough to guarantee peace. Families, clans, alliances might persist in favourable circumstances without the degree of security that results from the assurance of peace. It is not obvious, therefore, that Hobbes's argument relies on attributing these various passions to completely non-social individuals, without ties to family, friends, or other associates.

One might wonder in any case whether Hobbes's argument essentially depends on the inevitability of 'competitive' desires such as those that Rousseau mentions.[2] This question leads into a series of difficult questions about Hobbes. But at least one line of argument may allow Hobbes to dispense with any essential appeal to such desires. Even if we have moderate desires for food, drink, shelter, and other objects that do not essentially involve a sense of superiority over others, we may be drawn into conflict if they appear to us to be in short supply, or if we see some danger to their continued supply, or if we think other people will form such beliefs. However pre-social we may be, we seem to be liable to these sources of conflict, and hence we have reason to desire the increased security that would come from peace. Even if the fears we might form are irrational, they still undermine security.

This argument might make Hobbes's case for a commonwealth less universal. It would be confined to circumstances of less than complete abundance, and would not apply to circumstances in which no one could see any threat to the supply of resources for satisfaction of their non-competitive desires. But if circumstances of less than complete abundance are frequent enough, Hobbes's argument applies to many instances of the state of nature. Rousseau does not adequately answer this argument by simply observing that people in the state of nature have moderate desires.

This dispute between Hobbes and Rousseau introduces some of Rousseau's reflexions on the state of nature. In one respect, as we have seen, his account of the state of nature

[2] On Hobbes see §491.

is more austere than Hobbes's, since he takes it to be prior even to the elementary forms of society that Hobbes perhaps includes, or might consistently include, in the state of nature. The point of this austere account is not to ask Hobbes's questions about a more exactly described state of nature, but to argue that Hobbes's questions are misconceived. If we consider a wholly non-social state of nature, we find human beings at such a primitive material and mental level that they have none of the needs that are satisfied by the state. Society creates these needs, and does not take them for granted.

884. The Errors of Traditional Naturalism

Rousseau's view of Hobbes's argument separates him from naturalist appeals to human nature as the foundation of a state. Though he agrees with the naturalist tradition, as he finds it in Grotius as well as Burlamaqui, in thinking one ought to begin with human nature, he believes that this tradition proceeds from mistaken views.[3]

According to Grotius, natural right consists in what is appropriate to rational and social nature.[4] Following Aristotle and the Stoics, Grotius assumes that human beings are fundamentally rational and social.[5] The aims and needs that result from these human characteristics belong to the natural basis that explains and justifies the existence of a state. We ought not to try to justify the state by reference to its instrumental functions in providing security; the attempt to find such a justification is the error of Epicurus, followed by Carneades and by Hobbes.

Though Rousseau disagrees with Hobbes's conception of the state of nature, he disagrees even more with the traditional naturalist conception. Hobbes excludes all the alleged aspects of human nature that would impose moral constraints on the character of a commonwealth beyond the demands of peace and security. He takes these Aristotelian constraints to be a source of dispute and faction within a state. Rousseau agrees with him on this point. He believes that the 'rational and social' aspects of human beings do not belong to human nature in its own right, but are the product of society. Like Hobbes, the traditional naturalists take features of human beings that depend on society and treat them as though they were independent of society.

Because he thinks Hobbes and the naturalists include too much in human nature in isolation from society, Rousseau's conception of isolated human nature is quite minimal,

[3] 'For it is no light undertaking to disentangle what is original from what is artificial in man's present nature, and to know accurately a state which no longer exists, which perhaps never did exist, which probably never will exist, and about which it is nevertheless necessary to have exact notions in order accurately to judge of our present state. . . . It is this ignorance of the nature of man that causes such uncertainty and obscurity on the genuine definition of natural right; for the idea of right, says M. Burlamaqui, and still more that of natural right, are manifestly ideas relative to the nature of man. . . . It is not without surprise and scandal that one notes how little agreement prevails about this important matter among the various authors who have dealt with it.' (*DOI*, Pref. §§4–6 = P 123–4 = C 35)

[4] For the inclusion of 'and social' see Grotius, §464.

[5] Grimsley in *SC* 55: 'Rousseau's stress on freedom is linked up with his rejection of the Aristotelian idea that since man is a ''political animal'', politics consist mainly of developing some pre-existent capacity and of constructing the State in accordance with a fixed pattern or model'.

and in particular excludes sociability.[6] He believes the traditional naturalist argument ascribes to nature the sociability that it ought to ascribe to society.[7]

How effectively does Rousseau argue against a traditional naturalist view? We may concede that it would be a mistake to conceive the standard manifestations of rationality and sociability as though they were totally independent of society. But it is not clear how much this point matters. The naturalist may concede that different forms of social life may develop rational and social characteristics to different degrees. The point of naturalism is to claim that those forms of social life that repress these characteristics, or do not allow them a controlling place in human action, are to be rejected, because they are inappropriate for the nature of human beings. It does not matter, for this purpose, that society affects the development or expression of different traits in human beings. The naturalist argument says that not all developments are equally acceptable from the moral point of view, and that the unacceptable ones are unacceptable because they are inappropriate for the nature of the people whose traits are being developed.

To avoid this appeal to naturalist principles, we might argue that the relevant moral criteria are applicable only from a point of view that is the product of a certain kind of social life. If social life has formed us so as to be predominantly rational and social, then (according to this view) we ought to take this point of view in evaluating society. If it has formed us so as to be predominantly creatures of our passions, or indifferent to the interests of others, this formation gives us a different point of view for evaluation of society. None of these points of view can claim to be more appropriate than the others for human beings.

If this objection to naturalism is sound, different forms of society and education are not subject to external moral criticism for the ways they treat the human beings whose characters they affect. They may still be subject to criticism for failing to achieve their own ends. If, for instance, a given society weakens itself because it makes its citizens lazy, selfish, or quarrelsome, it is open to criticism from its own point of view. But it is not subject to any external criticism for its formation of its citizens.

This conclusion is unwelcome to Rousseau. For his major work on education, *Emile*, is devoted to external criticism of current forms of education, on the ground that they rest on errors about human nature, and therefore mistreat people. In his view, the correct education achieves the goal of nature. Our education comes from 'nature, from human beings, or from things' (*Emile* i, P 247 = Bloom 38), and the human contribution ought to fit the character resulting from nature.[8] He seems to agree, therefore, with the naturalist view that some

[6] 'Hence disregarding all the scientific books that only teach us to see men as they have made themselves, and meditating on the first and simplest operations of the human soul, I believe I perceive in it two operations prior to reason, of which one interests us intensely in our well-being and our self-preservation, and the other inspires in us a natural repugnance to seeing any sentient being, and especially any being like ourselves, perish or suffer. It is from the co-operation and from the combination our mind is capable of making between these two principles, without it being necessary to introduce into it that of sociability, that all the rules of natural right seem to me to flow . . .' (*DOI*, Pref. §9 = P 125–6 = C 35)

[7] Derathé, *RSPST* 142–51, has a good discussion of Rousseau's objections to traditional naturalism. At 148 he takes Rousseau to agree that human beings are potentially social (in the 'Confession' in *Emile*; see, e.g., Bk iv = P 596, 600 = Bloom 287, 290); but he does not remark that Rousseau here accepts the basic naturalist claim.

[8] 'Nature, we are told, is merely habit. What does that mean? Are there not habits formed only by force, habits which never stifle nature? Such, for example, are the habits of plants whose vertical direction one obstructs. The plant, once let go free, keeps the direction that one has forced it to take, but still the sap has not changed its course at all, and any new

features of human beings constitute their nature, and that these ought to be some sort of guide for the proper treatment of human beings in society.

His conception of nature seems to raise some difficulties for him. If he simply considers it as a collection of natural tendencies, how can he says that education ought to harmonize with them all? Some of them may conflict, and then we will have to choose. We might choose to make education harmonize with the tendencies that are most rigid, and most difficult to counteract. But that might not be a wise choice. Perhaps some primitive fears are difficult to remove, but we would be wrong to assume that we should be guided by them as far as possible, or that we ought not to cultivate habits that require us to repress them.

To avoid these unwelcome results, Rousseau seems to need something like Butler's conception of human nature as a system including passions that are organized by practical reason. Though this system is not present in a child, the child's capacity for developing the system is a ground for one sort of upbringing rather than another. Similarly, even though human beings manifest this system to different degrees, their capacity for manifesting it is a ground for treating them one way rather than another. Butler, for instance, maintains that we are appropriate objects of resentment, gratitude, and the attitudes connected with responsibility.

Rousseau does not seem to want to deny these claims about human nature as a system. Indeed, it is difficult to understand the progress of education, as described in *Emile*, if he does not take something like this for granted. But if he takes it for granted, he has no good reason for excluding it from the state of nature, as traditional naturalism conceives it.

Perhaps Rousseau rejects traditional naturalism because he supposes that it appeals to pre-social desires and pre-social expressions of human nature. If we remove the influences of society, individual human beings (we may grant) do not manifest the characteristic expressions of a rational and social nature. Hence Rousseau may be right to say that the expression of rational and social nature depends on society, and cannot be presumed in human beings conceived in isolation from society. In this respect, naturalism would make the mistake that Rousseau ascribes to Hobbes.[9]

It would be a mistake, therefore, to try to justify states on the ground that they satisfy desires that can only appear as a result of society and education; for people in the state of nature will lack these desires, and so, to this extent, will not want to enter a state in order to satisfy them. If the state of nature includes only the manifest desires that people are actively trying to satisfy, Rousseau is right (we may concede) to claim that it does not include rationality and sociality.

But traditional naturalists do not deny this. In claiming that human beings have a rational and social nature, they do not mean that every human being isolated from any social

growth the plant may make will be vertical again. It is the same with a man's inclinations; while the conditions remain the same, habits, even the least natural of them, hold good; but as soon as the situation changes, the habit ceases, and the natural returns. . . . Everything should therefore be brought into harmony (rapporter) with these primitive dispositions.' (*Emile*, Bk. i = P 247–8 = Foxley 6–7 = Bloom 39)

[9] 'The mistake of Hobbes is not, therefore, to have established the state of war between human beings who are independent and have become social, but to have supposed that this state is natural to the species, and to have cited it as the cause of vices of which it is the effect.' (SC [1st version] i.217 = P 288) See Grimsley, *SC* 239. As Derathé, *RSPST* 108, puts it, Rousseau thinks Hobbes is right about the state of nature, except in making it natural. Hobbes's account fits man in society: 'Aussi reproche-t-il seulement à Hobbes de l'avoir présenté comme un tableau de l'état de nature, alors qu'elle s'applique parfaitement aux hommes vivant en société'.

influence manifests the explicit desires of a rational and social being. They mean that a human being in such circumstances is nonetheless a rational and social being. The point of appealing to natural rationality and sociality is not primarily to identify desires that seek satisfaction, but to identify the capacities that ought to be developed as part of the system of human nature. Against this naturalist position Rousseau's argument about the absence or weakness of certain desires in the state of nature is irrelevant and ineffective.

Rousseau might, however, answer this defence of traditional naturalism by arguing that human beings have no rational and social nature. To argue for this claim, he would have to show that reason and sociality are not part of a system of human nature, but are a deforming influence on it. If we are too close to other people, it may be bad for our health, if we pick up diseases from them; in this respect it is clear how society has a deforming influence on human nature.[10] If it could be shown that the development of one's rational capacities has an equally deforming influence, we would refute the naturalist claims about reason and nature.

One interpretation of Rousseau's remarks about primitive human beings might indeed support this conclusion about the deforming influence of developed rationality. We might understand his discussion of the origin of inequality to contrast a 'golden age' of non-rational life and activity with the corruptions resulting from the development of society and rationality. If this is what Rousseau means, reason and sociability are not parts of the system of human nature, but deformations of it. In that case, naturalists who appeal to natural rationality and sociality have grasped the reverse of the truth. According to this interpretation, Rousseau is a naturalist who takes human nature as the appropriate basis for the moral order of society, but he rejects the rational and social aspects normally attributed to human nature.

According to a more moderate interpretation, Rousseau believes that the rational aspects of human beings are products of society, but does not claim that they are really deformations of human nature. Such a view rejects any attempt to criticize the ways in which society moulds human beings. If we think the development of rational and social capacities is a good or a bad thing, we are taking a point of view within the outlook of a given society; we are not standing outside it to criticize it. Rousseau's myth of a golden age might be taken as a means of seeing the basic error in traditional naturalism. If we reject the story of original goodness and later corruption by society as a myth, we should recognize the equal unreality of the naturalist story of a fixed human nature that is either fulfilled or frustrated by society.

Naturalist views are a bit too stubborn, however, to be refuted by this sort of argument. For Rousseau can hardly avoid the sort of evaluation that (according to this argument) he wants to deny to the naturalist. Even if we do not take completely seriously his myth of a golden age in which people had simple wants and lived without conflict, one part of his attack on the effects of social life is meant seriously. He believes that society harms us in encouraging the competitive desires that arise with inflamed 'amour propre'. In wanting to excel other people, we try to accumulate wealth and power over them; since society accepts this outlook, it tends to form people who accept it, and so the competitive tendencies of individuals are inflamed still more by society. Rousseau does not treat inflamed amour

[10] Rousseau comments on health and illness at *DOI* i §9 = P 138 = C 42.

propre as a product of society beyond moral judgment; he believes political theory ought to counteract the effects of this attitude. In his view, some aspects of the development of society have harmed both the winners and the losers in the competition resulting from inflamed amour propre.

Rousseau's discussion of inflamed amour propre brings him closer to traditional naturalism. For, in speaking of an inflamed form of amour propre, he allows the possibility of a healthy form that is not subject to the same criticisms. Emile has this healthy form of amour propre, since he wants to be admired by others, but only to a limited extent. He wants to be the strongest and most skilful, because these are advantages whether or not other people value them. He does not care about goods that are goods only because other people value them.[11]

We cannot reject amour proper as a whole, because we cannot regard concern for the good opinion of another as avoidable or undesirable. Rousseau suggests that it arises from love and the desire to be loved.[12] Our desire for love helps to explain why we turn our attention on others, and compare ourselves with them.[13] But the mere fact that we want to excel others in certain respects does not make it inevitable that our amour propre will be insatiable.

Rousseau believes, therefore, that moderate amour propre is healthy, because of its relation to other human motives. An attempt to eliminate all amour propre would have to eliminate all concern for the good opinion of others, and all desire for another person's preferential esteem for oneself over others. But we could not eliminate those desires without eliminating love and friendship involving discriminatory relations between individuals. Rousseau clearly believes that these relations are necessary and appropriate for the good of human beings. He does not regard them as mere necessities, since he does not suggest that we reduce them to the necessary minimum in order to eliminate the dangers arising from temptations to amour propre. He relies on some assumptions about the good of human beings. Hence he relies on some conception of human nature as forming a system. It is difficult to see how he could avoid including reason and sociality in this system.

885. The Growth of Rational and Social Characteristics

Our discussion of Rousseau's objections to traditional naturalism has introduced some aspects of his contrast between the primitive human condition and the later development of society. It will be useful to consider some of the details of this contrast.

[11] 'Although his desire to please does not leave him absolutely indifferent to the opinion of others, he will concern himself with this opinion only in so far as it relates immediately to his person, without concerning himself about arbitrary appreciations that have no law but fashion or prejudice.' (*Emile* iv = P 670 = Bloom 339 = Foxley 304)

[12] 'To be loved, one has to make oneself loveable. To be preferred, one has to make oneself more loveable than another, more loveable than every other, at least in the eyes of the beloved object. This is the source of the first glances at one's fellows: this is the source of the first comparisons with them; this is the source of emulation, rivalries, and jealousy. . . . With love and friendship are born dissensions, enmity, and hate. From the bosom of so many diverse passions, I see opinion raising an unshakeable throne, and stupid mortals, subjected to its empire, basing their own existence on the judgments of others. Expand these ideas, and you will see where our amour propre gets the form we believe natural to it, and how self-love, ceasing to be an absolute sentiment, becomes pride in great souls, vanity in small ones, and feeds itself constantly in all at the expense of one's neighbour.' (*Emile* iv = P 494 = Foxley 175–6 = Bloom 215)

[13] 'And the first sentiment aroused in him by this comparison is the desire to be in the first position. This is the point where love of self turns into amour propre, and where begin to arise all the passions which depend on this one.' (*Emile* iv = P 523 = Foxley 197 = Bloom 235)

In the primitive human condition people differ from other animals by being free and by having the capacity to perfect themselves (*DOI* i §16–17 = G 141). Freedom involves the capacity to acquiesce in impressions or to resist them. Perfectibility involves the capacity to improve one's own condition, and to transmit this improvement to other people. These capacities explain why human beings do not necessarily retain their initial outlook throughout their lives or throughout generations. But these features of human beings do not make rationality or sociality original features of human nature.[14] Hence Hobbes is wrong to claim that people in the state of nature have the vices that in fact come from society.[15] Rousseau assumes that the only source of vice is social, because it results from the competitive outlook that is absent from human beings in the state of nature.

To explain the actions of human beings in their natural condition we must attribute to them love of self (amour de soi), to explain their self-preserving activity. But Rousseau believes we must also attribute pity to them. To explain why he ascribes pity to non-social and non-rational human nature, Rousseau refers to the behaviour of animals—horses who are reluctant to trample living bodies, and so on.[16]

Why does Rousseau believe that in the state of nature human beings have self-love without amour propre? He clarifies his position in distinguishing the two sentiments.[17] Amour propre is absent from the state of nature because 'every individual human being views himself as the only spectator to observe him' (*DOI*, n 15 = P 219 = C 106), and does not regard others as judges of his merit. But why does Rousseau assume this?

Perhaps he is thinking of the parallel with other animals, and assuming that they display no tendency to compare themselves with others. This assumption is difficult to maintain in the face of hierarchies among groups of animals. But perhaps Rousseau means that other animals do not regard others as providing a standard or norm for themselves. But if that is true, it may be because other animals do not regard themselves as acting on a standard or norm at all. Does Rousseau mean, then, that our applying standards to our actions is an effect of society, and absent from the state of nature?

If that is what he means, it is difficult to see how other people could be responsible for the growth of amour propre. If amour propre grows because I want the approval of other people

[14] '. . . it is at least clear, from how little care nature has taken to bring men together through mutual needs and to facilitate their use of speech, how little it prepared their sociability, and how little of its own it has contributed to all that men have done to establish its bonds' (*DOI* i §33 = P 151 = C 51).

[15] 'Above all, let us not conclude with Hobbes that because he has no idea of goodness man is naturally wicked, that he is vicious because he does not know virtue . . . Hobbes did not see that the same cause that keeps savages from using their reason, as our jurists claim they do, at the same time keeps them from abusing their faculties, as he himself claims that they do; so that one might say that savages are not wicked precisely because they do not know what it is to be good; for it is neither the growth of enlightenment nor the curb of the law, but the calm of the passions and the ignorance of vice that keep them from evil-doing . . .' (*DOI* i §35 = P 153 = C 53)

[16] 'There is, besides, another principle which Hobbes did not notice and which, having been given to man in order under certain circumstances to soften the ferociousness of his amour propre or of the desire for self-preservation prior to the birth of amour propre, tempers the ardour for well-being with an innate repugnance to see his kind suffer.' (*DOI* i §35 = P 154 = C 53)

[17] 'Self-love is a natural sentiment which inclines every animal to attend to its self-preservation and which, guided in man by reason and modified by pity, produces humanity and virtue. Amour propre is only a relative sentiment, factitious and born in society, which inclines every individual to set greater store by himself than by anyone else, inspires men with all the evils they do one another, and is the genuine source of honour. This being clearly understood, I say that in our primitive state, in the genuine state of nature, amour propre does not exist.' (*DOI* i, n 15 = P 219 = C 106) Contrast this description of amour propre with Dent, *R* 25.

for my actions, I must already conceive my actions as either deserving or not deserving approval; hence I must already have thought of myself as a judge who could make the relevant judgments about my own actions. In that case, amour propre seems to be present in me without reference to other people; or at least, it presupposes something more than the mere desire for self-preservation that Rousseau attributes to the state of nature.

We might understand amour propre differently, without any reference to judgment by standards. When we recognize that we need other people's help, and that others are a danger to us, we might both want their favourable opinion of us and want to excel them, so that they both honour us and fear us. But these attitudes to others might simply recognize them as possible instruments and possible obstacles to the pursuit of our own aims. If amour propre is the result of these attitudes, it does not necessarily involve self-assessment or attention to assessments by others; it simply involves these things as means of making other people less dangerous to us. This purely instrumental conception of amour propre, however, falls short of what Rousseau seems to intend. He claims that 'it is reason that engenders amour propre' (*DOI* i §35 = P 156 = C 54); amour propre seems to respond to some demand of reason that was present from the beginning.

To confirm this suggestion that the rational basis of amour propre is present from the beginning, we might appeal to Rousseau's claim that in the most primitive condition human beings are free and perfectible (*DOI* i §§16–17 = P 142–3 = C 45). To explain how freedom and perfectibility affect human action, we might appeal to our responsiveness to reasons. We recognize our freedom when we notice that we are inclined to do x, but see better reasons to do y, and therefore choose to do y. Because we can recognize the better course of action, and can act on our recognition, we can take steps towards something better, and to that extent we are perfectible. But this account of freedom and perfectibility implies that we judge our actions by reasons and norms; we see that we ought to act one way, even if we are inclined to act another way. Hence we consider ourselves as 'others' judging our future and past actions. We do not have to wait for other people to impose standards on us by their judgments.

Rousseau's description suggests, therefore, that the state of nature contains more than he acknowledges. It seems to include those aspects of self-assessment that make us responsive to the judgments of qualified judges—whether ourselves or other people. This initial responsiveness to qualified judges seems more important than the mere presence of other people.

A defender of Rousseau might reply that this objection does not affect his general view. We ought to expect that the state of nature will include something that explains why we care about other people's judgment of us; otherwise the growth of amour propre would be difficult to understand. In pointing out the implications of Rousseau's remarks on freedom and perfectibility, we simply explain why human beings in the state of nature are capable of development in the direction that he describes.

It is not so easy to defend Rousseau on this point, however. For his whole account of the state of nature emphasizes the guidance of self-love and pity, without the critical and reflective judgments that are characteristic of practical reason and morality. He supposes that in the state of nature human beings are not rational and social. But if we have correctly interpreted his claims about freedom and about perfectibility, critical rational judgment is

present from the beginning. Once we recognize a standard for judgment external to our immediate inclinations, we can recognize it in other people as well as ourselves. Rousseau's picture of an initial state in which we are guided by unreflective self-love and pity does not seem to fit even the presuppositions of his own account.

The growth of society and culture begins with social contacts, initially casual, but gradually becoming more permanent. People gradually come to pay more attention to other people and to their opinion.[18] But this degree of attention to others does not yet introduce the specific forms of modern society. It still falls short of the inflamed amour propre of modern life.[19] The distinctive aspects of modern society depend on the expansion of desires that makes co-operation and inter-dependence necessary for the satisfaction of our various desires. Since some people can determine the terms of co-operation, co-operation introduces inequality; inequality introduces arrogance, on the one hand, and envy and humiliation, on the other.

Exaggerated amour propre is partly the effect and partly the cause of this development.[20] The desire to be admired by other people encourages us to appear to have the qualities that they admire; hence amour propre encourages deception. Once this cycle begins, it reinforces itself. Amour propre encourages inequality, and inequality inflames amour propre, both in the arrogant winners and in the angry losers.

This cycle of inequality, arrogance, and anger produces the condition that Hobbes identifies with the state of nature. Rousseau suggests that Hobbes is right to regard the state as a way out of the war of all against all. He disagrees with Hobbes in arguing that the war of all against all is not the state of nature, but the product of a development that includes a level of amour propre that was absent from the state of nature.

This disagreement with Hobbes leads Rousseau to question one of Hobbes's assumptions about the difference between the state of nature and the commonwealth. Hobbes seems to assume—though this is not always clear—that conflict in the state of nature results from one's insecure possession of one's share of a limited stock of goods, and that once the state ensures secure possession, the source of conflict will disappear. Rousseau suggests that conflict results not from insecurity alone, but also, and more basically, from the competitive aspects of amour propre. We can find some support for this view in Hobbes also.[21] In that case the foundation of a commonwealth does not ensure the end of the conflict that arose in the state of nature. It removes the tendency towards conflict that arises from insecure possession; but it does not remove the tendency that arises from amour propre, or from the passion that Hobbes calls 'glory'.

[18] 'Everyone began to look at everyone else and to wish to be looked at himself, and public esteem acquired a price; . . . from these first preferences arose vanity and contempt on the one hand, shame and envy on the other . . .' (*DOI* ii§16 = P 169–70 = C 64)

[19] 'Thus, although men now had less endurance, and natural pity had already undergone some alteration, this period in the development of human faculties, occupying a just mean between the indolence of the primitive state and the petulant activity of our amour propre, must have been the happiest and the most lasting epoch.' (*DOI* ii§18 = P 171 = C 65)

[20] 'Here, then, are all our faculties developed, memory and imagination brought into play, amour propre interested, reason become active, and the mind almost at the limit of the perfection of which it is capable. . . . consuming ambition, the ardent desire to raise one's relative fortune less out of genuine need than in order to place oneself above others, instils in all men a black inclination to harm one another, a secret jealousy that is all the more dangerous as it often assumes the mask of benevolence in order to strike its blow in greater safety; in a word, competition and rivalry on the one hand, conflict of interests on the other, and always the hidden desire to profit at another's expense; all these evils are the first effect of property, and the inseparable train of nascent inequality.' (*DOI* ii§27 = P 174–5 = C 67)

[21] See *L*. 17.8 quoted in §491. Derathé, *RSPST* 139–40, compares Rousseau with Hobbes on the role of pride.

Rousseau sees this implication of his emphasis on amour propre, and so he notices that the state further increases inequality, and hence increases the possible occasions for conflict.[22] Rousseau's conception of the state is on this point closer to Plato's than to Hobbes's. He does not represent the state as a complete solution to the disadvantages of the state of nature. It is only a partial solution; for it also increases inequality, arrogance, and competition, and so tends to promote further conflict and instability (*DOI* ii §§47–56 = P 186–91 = C 76–9).

Though Rousseau describes this development as a story of corruption and increasing misery, his account of it is not purely negative. He suggests that if we value the intellectual and moral excellences of developed reason, we cannot consistently reject the amour propre that has produced them. It would be simple-minded to interpret him as proposing, or even wishing for, the abolition of those features of modern society that have increased inequality, amour propre, and conflict. Indeed, one might take him to argue that it is pointless to compare the characteristics of human beings in modern society with some standard of 'human nature' applicable to all societies and all circumstances. If we examine the state of nature, we see how futile and misguided are the arguments both of traditional naturalists and of Hobbes, who all try to assess the legitimacy of states by reference to an irrelevant conception of human nature.[23]

But if Rousseau intends this anti-naturalist conclusion, his argument, conveyed in the quasi-historical narrative, does not support it. If he were right, we ought to be at a loss to say whether the particular social and cultural developments he describes are appropriate or inappropriate for human beings, given their nature. But we do not seem entirely at a loss for an answer to this question. If Rousseau's story is roughly accurate, we may concede that we ought not to draw hasty conclusions from a comparison between the different historical conditions of human beings. We might even concede that some increase in inequality, competition, and amour propre is necessary for the development of mental characteristics that we take to be important in a rational and reflective agent. We might agree with Rousseau's version of Plato's claim that we must look at the 'swollen city', not at the 'city of pigs', to find genuine virtues, as opposed to people who naturally do the right thing without virtue.[24] But the fact that the natural capacities of human beings are most easily seen in a form of social life in which they have been more fully developed ought not to surprise us. Nor should it convince us that these capacities are not really part of human nature.

Rousseau's quasi-historical story raises a question that leads us back to a naturalist outlook. If we grant that inflamed amour propre, competition, inequality, avarice, deception, and so

[22] 'Such was, or must have been, the origin of society and of laws, which gave the weak new fetters and the rich new forces, irresistibly destroyed natural freedom, forever fixed the law of property and inequality, transformed a skilful usurpation into an irrevocable right, and for the profit of a few ambitious men henceforth subjugated the whole of mankind to labour, servitude, and misery.' (*DOI* ii §33 = P 178 = C 70)

[23] 'In thus discovering and retracing the forgotten and lost paths that must have led man from the natural state to the civil state . . . any attentive reader cannot but be struck by the immense distance that separates these two states . . . He will sense that, since the mankind of one age is not the mankind of another age, the reason why Diogenes did not find a man is that he was looking among his contemporaries for the man of a time that was no more. . . . In a word he will explain how the human soul and passion, by imperceptible adulterations, so to speak change in nature; why in the long run the objects of our needs and pleasures change; why as original man gradually vanishes, society no longer offers to the eyes of the wise man anything but an assemblage of artificial men and factitious passions which are the product of all these new relationships, and have no true foundation in nature.' (*DOI* ii §57 = P 191–2 = C 80)

[24] Plato, *Rep*. 372e.

on, have been historically necessary for the expression of rational and social capacities, we may still ask whether they are necessary to sustain and to develop these capacities further. If they are, we may decide that we have to put up with them. If they are not, we may ask whether we can reasonably try to get rid of them or to reduce them. We may grant that if the tendencies to conflict and inequality continue, they will also tend to produce desires that cannot be satisfied without their continuation; but this does not show that we ought or ought not to allow these tendencies to continue.

Rousseau shows, therefore, how we might ask reasonable questions about whether certain kinds of economic, social, and political developments are or are not on the whole harmful to the people whose lives and desires are formed by them. The fact that we can ask these questions shows that we have some conception of what people are like that is distinct from their having the desires that are formed by a given social or political condition. This conception is a conception of human nature.

For these reasons, reflexion on Rousseau's narrative in the *Discourse* may lead us in different directions. On the one hand, Rousseau appears to argue for an anti-naturalist conclusion, rejecting the possibility of external moral criticism of a given form of society. But, on the other hand, he also argues that modern society is in some ways better and in other ways worse than its predecessors. This argument tends to support naturalism, since the judgments about better and worse rest on some conception of human nature, apart from the effects of a particular society. Rousseau's observations, therefore, are more congenial to traditional naturalism than he intends them to be.

886. The Relation of the *Social Contract* to the *Discourse*

The last part of the *Discourse* contains a short account of the origin of states and governments (*DOI* ii §§31–4 = P 177–9 = C 69–70), which Rousseau defends against other people's views. He argues that an agreement to set up the state is a remedy for the ills of the Hobbesian war of all against all. Rousseau believes that the state is both a remedy for these ills and a source of further ills. It appeals to people who 'had too much greed and ambition to be able to do for long without their masters' (*DOI* ii §32 = P 177 = C 69). But in safeguarding possessions and assuring security states also reduce freedom.[25] From the point of view of people suffering from inflamed amour propre and its effects, the state is not wholly satisfactory, but it is the best option in the circumstances.

The *Social Contract*, published seven years later, seems to begin with the situation that the *Discourse* tries to explain.[26] When he dismisses the question of how human beings lost their primitive freedom, he seems to dismiss a question similar to the one he discusses in the

[25] 'All ran toward their chains in the belief that they were securing their freedom; for while they had enough reason to sense the advantages of a political establishment, they had not enough experience to foresee its dangers; those most capable of anticipating the abuses were precisely those who counted on profiting from them, and even the wise saw that they had to make up their mind to sacrifice one part of their freedom to preserve the other, as a wounded man has his arm cut off to save the rest of his body.' (*DOI* ii §32 = P 177–8 = C 69)

[26] 'Man was [or "is"?] born free, and everywhere he is in chains. The one who thinks he is master of others does not avoid being more of a slave than they are. How did this change happen? I do not know. What can make it legitimate? I believe I can resolve this question.' (*SC* i 1.1 = P 352 = C 141) I cite *SC* by book, chapter, and paragraph.

Discourse. There he offers an account not of how the change from primitive freedom to the state did happen, but of how it might have happened. The *Social Contract* does not explicitly raise this question, but Rousseau seems to set it aside together with the question about how the change did happen. In *Emile* his summary of political theory seems to introduce the social contract in order to explain how states could have come about.[27] But this is not the question that seems to concern him in the *Social Contract*. Here he asks about the legitimacy of the condition of subjection that we find in states. If we agree that human beings are born free, we may ask how it could be legitimate to introduce subjection.

Does a Hobbesian account of the state, or the sort of account that Rousseau offers in the *Discourse*, answer the question about legitimacy? These accounts do not commit the error that Rousseau criticizes in the *Social Contract*; for they do not treat the state simply as the result of conquest or superior force. They try to give reasons for accepting it that are not simply reasons for acquiescing in a conquest or for acceding to a threat of force. Rousseau argues that in the circumstances created by inflamed amour propre, the sacrifice of some freedom is reasonable if we are to preserve other freedoms, just as we have an arm cut off to save ourselves from death. This does not seem to be purely prudential legitimacy. One might argue that from the moral point of view it is reasonable, in the circumstances that Rousseau describes, to sacrifice some liberties for the sake of others.

This is how Rousseau seems to conceive the condition for which the social contract is to be a solution.[28] One might take a 'legitimate' solution to be one that improves the situation of conflict and instability in the state of nature, because it is better overall than the state of nature, even if it is worse in some respects. We might call this 'relative legitimacy' or 'legitimacy in the circumstances'. According to this conception, it is relatively legitimate to do x rather than y if, given the circumstances, x and y are the only options and x is better than y.

But this relative legitimacy does not ensure a more demanding sort of legitimacy, which we may call 'legitimacy simpliciter'. If we ought not to have got into the circumstances where we face a choice between x and y, it is possible that neither x nor y is legitimate simpliciter, even though x rather than y may be legitimate in the circumstances. If our acting wrongly leads us into a situation where our only options are all wrong, it does not become legitimate simpliciter to do the least wrong, but only legitimate in the circumstances. If the circumstances are alterable, then perhaps we ought not to do any of the actions that are legitimate in the circumstances, but ought to alter the circumstances.

These simple thoughts about legitimacy affect our interpretation of Rousseau's question about the legitimacy of the state. Does he simply try to show that it is legitimate in the circumstances, given the bad aspects of the state of nature? Or does he believe it is legitimate simpliciter, because it is better in a wider range of circumstances? We might gather from the *Discourse* that we would be better off without the state if we did not suffer from the bad effects of the more primitive forms of social life that are both effect and cause of amour propre. Is this still the view of the *Social Contract*?

[27] See *Emile* v = P 839–40 = Bloom 460 = Foxley 424.

[28] 'I suppose that human beings reached a point where the obstacles to continuing in the state of nature were stronger than the forces that each individual was able to employ in order to maintain himself in this state. This primitive state, therefore, can endure no longer, and the human race would have perished if it had not changed its manner of existence.' (*SC* i 6.1 = P 360 = C 147)

The questions that arise here are similar to those raised by 'remedial' views of virtue and morality. Hume describes the circumstances of moderate scarcity and limited benevolence in which justice is a genuine virtue.[29] Similar limitations in external conditions and in human beings might be obstacles for which other virtues are remedies. The claim that the virtues are remedial is plausible, if it means only that they have this remedial function. It is more controversial if it means that their remedial function exhausts their character as virtues, and that they would not be virtues if the ills that they remedy no longer existed. Similarly, we might ask Rousseau whether we would have to take the state to be illegitimate if we made less pessimistic assumptions about the evils we would face without it.

These questions about what Rousseau means by 'legitimacy' are connected to questions about the point of his argument about legitimacy. Does he intend to decide whether existing states are morally acceptable by deciding whether they meet his conditions for legitimacy? If we find that a particular state is not legitimate, by his conditions, must we take ourselves to be morally obliged, or morally free, to disregard its laws and institutions? Or might legitimacy come in degrees, so that a state might approach legitimacy closely enough to have a moral claim on us?

These questions become important if Rousseau's conditions for legitimacy prove to be demanding, so that all or most actual states fail them. Should we conclude that Rousseau requires us to be anarchists? Or that his conditions are pointlessly strict and irrelevant to social and political reality? Or that his argument about legitimacy serves some other moral or political purpose apart from the condemnation of existing states?

887. Why is a Social Contract Needed?

Rousseau clarifies his demand for a legitimation of the state by his critical review of other people's attempts to answer the question. He seeks to show that (as the title of chapter 5 says) 'we must always go back to a first convention'. We ought to be able to see why the first convention, or social contract, satisfactorily answers a question that other people cannot answer with their alleged sources of legitimacy.

The alleged 'right' of the strongest cannot answer the question about legitimacy because it does not answer a moral question.[30] We do not answer the question about legitimacy simply by showing that it is prudent to accept a state. We answer it only by showing that we have a moral duty. But mere superior force does not by itself create a moral duty. A moral duty arises only when the superior force is exercised legitimately.[31] This is the argument that Cudworth uses against Hobbes to show that the sovereign's superior power or command does not create a right to rule, but leaves open the further question about moral legitimacy.

Any attempt to extend a right of conquest to legitimate the dominion resulting from conquest is equally hopeless. Rousseau argues against this 'right' by pointing out that it

[29] See Hume, *T* iii 2.2.16; *I* 3.1–6. Reid comments at H 659ab. See §851. On a remedial conception of virtue see §326.

[30] 'Strength is a physical power; I do not see at all what morality can result from its effect. To yield to force is an act of necessity, not of will; it is at most an act of prudence. In what sense could it be a duty?' (*SC* i 3.1 = P 354 = C 143)

[31] 'Let us agree, then, that strength does not create right, and that one is only obliged to obey legitimate powers.' (i 3.3 = P 355 = C 144)

would include a right to enslave, and that no such right can be admitted. The position he opposes claims that the relation between master and slave is morally legitimate because it imposes on the slave a moral duty to obey. Rousseau does not directly discuss the view that slavery is legitimate because moral questions are not involved in it. He rejects the moral case for slavery because it assumes simultaneously that the slave is a moral subject (having moral duties) and is not (having no rights).

Why should we not answer him by claiming that a slave has moral duties but no moral rights? Rousseau argues that such a claim conflicts with the essential freedom of a moral subject.[32] One might suspect that Rousseau equivocates on different kinds of freedom here. Elimination of free will would indeed (we may agree) eliminate moral agency at all; we could not have moral relations between two agents one of whom lacked free will, and in particular an agent without free will could not be subject to moral obligation. But the freedom of action denied to a slave seems to be compatible with the free will belonging to a moral agent.

Rousseau might argue that he is not equivocating, because the freedom that is denied to a slave is not simply freedom of action, but also the freedom presupposed by moral obligation. If I am subject to moral obligation, I act on reasons that seem good to me from some degree of rational reflexion, not simply on impulses. But in treating someone as a slave, I do not treat him as an agent who acts on reasons. I hold myself to be entitled to treat him as though he were not moved by rational reflexion at all; for I do not recognize an obligation on me to offer him moral reasons at all, and hence I do not impose any moral obligation on him. Rousseau supports this claim by arguing that the alleged convention establishing slavery is one that moral agents could never find any reason for accepting.[33] If I claim the right to treat you as I like irrespective of any reasons you may recognize, I do not treat you as a subject of moral obligation; hence I cannot coherently claim that you are obliged to accept this treatment.

If this is the right way to understand slavery, Rousseau's argument is plausible. But it does not cope with a defence of something very like slavery. If A tells B that A is so much wiser than B, and B is so weak in relation to A, that B would be better off by agreeing to obey A absolutely, to allow A free use of B's property, control over B's movement, and so on, Rousseau's argument would not work. Nor would it work if A argued that B's ancestors had willed B to A as A's property, and that one always ought to follow the provisions of wills. In such circumstances B would in fact be no freer than Rousseau's slaves. But Rousseau is right to say that this relation between A and B is at least a moral relation. A moral reason is being offered to B, and, if it is a good moral reason, it justifies A's demand for B's obedience; A is not claiming the absolute right to treat B without any reference to reasons that might appear to B to constitute an obligation.

[32] 'To renounce one's liberty is to renounce one's quality of being a human being, one's rights of humanity, even one's duties. There is no indemnity possible for renunciation of everything. Such a renunciation is incompatible with the nature of a human being; and to remove all liberty from one's will is to remove all morality from one's actions.' (i 4.6 = P 356 = C 144–5)

[33] 'The convention, in short which stipulates on one side an absolute authority, and on the other side an obedience without limits is vain and contradictory. Is it not clear that one who has the right to demand everything from another is not engaged to anything in relation to him, and that this exclusive condition, without equivalent, without exchange, implies the nullity of the act?' (i 4.6 = P 356 = C 145)

Once again, Rousseau rejects an unsuccessful account of legitimacy because it fails to explain why a moral duty is present. He does not show that we could not have prudential reasons to accept slavery. He shows that we could not have moral reasons to have ourselves treated as though we had no moral reasons. If that is what slavery involves, the idea of slavery being morally justified is incoherent.

Instead of trying to find the basis of a state in an analogy with conquest, we may appeal to a deliberate act of constituting someone as ruler. In this spirit Rousseau considers Grotius' suggestion that a people can 'give itself' to a king (i 5.2).[34] If this act of 'giving' is a collective decision, we still need to understand how such a decision is possible. If we say that it is possible because we can bind ourselves by a majority vote, we need to explain why a majority vote is binding (i 5.3). It is binding only if we are obliged to accept the result of a vote even when we have voted in the minority. But in what circumstances are we obliged to accept the result of a vote? I am not obliged to act in accordance with the views of a public opinion poll. Nor am I obliged to accept the result of a vote if I am in prison with five guards who all vote for me to stay in prison, and I am the only one who votes for my release.

Rousseau is right to argue that an appeal to a majority vote simply raises further questions about legitimacy. But such questions are not necessarily answered by appeal to a unanimous vote to accept the results of a majority vote. We can also ask why this unanimous vote should be binding. Why should I not be allowed to change my mind and reconsider my vote for the policy of majority voting? I am not morally free to change my mind in this way if my initial vote for acceptance of majority votes was really an irrevocable promise. But why am I obliged to make an irrevocable promise rather than simply to cast a vote for a system that I might want to change in future?

This simple extension of Rousseau's own argument shows that a mere appeal to a unanimous vote does not settle questions about moral legitimacy. We need to say something more about the circumstances or the content of the vote in order to see why we are obliged to follow its provisions even if we change our mind. Even if we convert the vote into a promise, we still do not explain why this particular promise should be regarded as binding. We need to say more about the circumstances in which we make it, or about the nature of what we promise to do.

And so when Rousseau argues (in i 5) that we must always go back to an original 'convention' or agreement, he underestimates the significance of his previous arguments. For he has shown that resort to a unanimous agreement does not answer all his questions. A unanimous agreement does not by itself oblige; we need to say something about what we have agreed to do. But if we agree that an agreement is not sufficient, should we agree that it is necessary? If we consider the content of what we (allegedly) agree to do, may we not find that we are obliged to do these things whether or not we have agreed to do them?

It is not obvious, therefore, from Rousseau's argument why we must resort to a convention. It is clear why the accounts he has discussed require us to go back further in order to find the moral basis of a state. But it is not equally clear that what we must go back to is an original agreement. To see whether Rousseau is right, we need to look more closely at the sort of agreement that he thinks will answer the questions that have so far remained unanswered.

[34] Grotius, *JBP* i 3.8.

888. The Nature of the Contract

In i 6, Rousseau discusses the character of a social contract that will explain the legitimacy of a state. He assumes that we need some concentration of our powers in order to remove the bad features of the state of nature. But how can we legitimately concentrate our powers?[35] We begin from the assumption that an individual owes it to himself to protect and preserve himself, and that he cannot violate this obligation in agreeing to a concentration of powers.

Rousseau argues that we can satisfy this condition only through an association in which an individual 'uniting himself to everyone, nonetheless obeys only himself and remains as free as he was before' (i 6.4). The social contract is meant to satisfy this condition. But why is it a reasonable condition? We might ask some questions about it: (1) Why is self-protection the only aim that deserves to be considered? (2) Why should we insist that each person remain as free as he was before?

The first question might be taken to indicate Rousseau's neglect of natural sociality. If we took the state to fulfil the social aspects of human nature, we would not need to restrict its functions to the protection of all of the constituent individuals. We might recognize that an individual could reasonably consider other aims that are not necessarily instrumental to self-preservation.

This question leads us into the second question. Rousseau seems to defend his claim by arguing that each person's freedom is one of the primary means of his self-preservation, so that it could not be reasonable for him to give it up. But if we ought to consider other things besides self-preservation, might it not be reasonable to consider giving up some freedom in return for some other significant good, especially a good that fulfils our rational and social nature?

Perhaps Rousseau might reply to this objection in the way he replies to defences of slavery, by arguing that in removing freedom we also remove moral agency. But this does not seem to be the sort of freedom that he has in mind in speaking of the freedom that is instrumental to self-preservation. This freedom seems to be the external liberty from other people's instructions, leaving me free to act as I see fit to protect myself. I could surely give up some of this external independence without making myself into something other than a moral agent.

Though Rousseau's argument for the claim that a morally legitimate state must require no sacrifice of freedom is not cogent, perhaps he is alluding to a more general question about freedom. If we follow Hobbes, we may think of the state as a compromise, containing both advantages and disadvantage in comparison with the state of nature, but the best that can be achieved in the circumstances. This is how Glaucon and Adeimantus think of justice, as a compromise between the best but unattainable situation, in which we can commit injustice with impunity, and the worst situation, in which we suffer injustice that we cannot deter or repel.[36] From this Hobbesian point of view, it is unreasonable to insist that when we enter the state we must be as free as we were before. Hobbes's view is just the contrary; we lay

[35] 'Such a concentration of powers cannot arise except from the concurrence of a number of people. But, the power and freedom of each person being the primary means of his preservation, how will he pledge them without harming himself and without neglecting the care that he owes to himself?' (i 6.3 = P 360 = C 147–8)

[36] See Plato, *Rep*. 359a.

down our natural liberty in return for something better. Though Rousseau's reference to self-preservation suggests that he accepts Hobbes's starting point, perhaps he does not really accept it. Perhaps he does not really agree that the formation of a state requires us to give up some liberty worth having, and to accept a lesser liberty in return for some other good. But if this is his view, he has not yet argued for it.

His further clarifications of the claim that freedom is undiminished in the state are also unconvincing. He suggests that the interest of the individual and of the whole cannot conflict, because the whole is nothing more than the individuals composing it (i 7.5). This quasi-ontological argument is not very powerful; it seems quite easy to imagine that some measure would promote the preservation of most people by sacrificing some individuals. Rousseau rules out this possibility only if he relies on his doctrine of the general will, which he develops only later.

It is equally difficult to understand how Rousseau justifies two claims that deny the Hobbesian view of the state as a compromise or bargain. (1) Each individual must surrender all his rights (i 6.6). (2) In surrendering these rights, each individual gives himself to all, and thereby gives himself to no one (i 6.8). The second claim counteracts the impression that we may gain from the first claim, that participation in a social contract involves a significant reduction of freedom.

The argument for the first claim is derived from the need for unity in the state.[37] Rousseau assumes that if individuals reserve rights against the state, there could be no common authority to pronounce on them. But his assumption is difficult to understand. If I retain, for instance, a right to property or to privacy, I might also want to set up laws and agencies to define this right, and to protect the appropriate degree of privacy. But even if Rousseau were right on this point, he would not be entitled to infer that if some things are left to private judgment, everything must be.

It is equally implausible to claim that if everyone equally renounces each right, no one really restricts his freedom or rights, or makes any sacrifice. If each of us has $20, and each contributes $10 to a common fund, no one worsens his position relative to anyone else. But still each of us becomes $10 poorer, and if each of us has to pay $20 for rent, none of us can afford the rent any longer. This may be a misleading analogy for what Rousseau has in mind in speaking of equally giving oneself to all; but he does not explain why it is misleading.

His claim that when we enter a state we are as free as we were before affects his argument for coercion by the state. He allows that an individual may have an individual will different from the general will that he has as a citizen.[38] The general will has the common interest as its object. Each person has the general will insofar as he is a citizen, but this is not his only will. He is not indifferent to the common interest, but he supposes that a little free-riding,

[37] 'For should there be any rights left to individuals, since there would be no common superior empowered to pronounce between them and the public, each person, being his own judge on some point, would soon claim to be judge on all points.' (i 6.7 = P 361 = C 148)

[38] 'His particular interest can speak to him quite differently from the common interest; his absolute and naturally independent existence can make him regard what he owes to the common cause as a free (gratuite) contribution, the loss of which will be less harmful to others than its payment is burdensome for him; and looking on the moral person constituting the state as a being of reason because it is not a man, he would enjoy the rights of the citizen without wanting to fulfil the duties of the subject—an injustice whose progress would cause the ruin of the political body.' (i 7.7 = P 363 = C 150)

offering large benefits to him and only a small harm to the common interest, is sometimes rational for him. In that case the state coerces him, but it does not merely coerce him.[39] The coercion involves forcing him to be free, because it forces him to stick to the terms of the initial agreement.

This claim introduces a new complication in Rousseau's views about freedom. We have seen that he believes the state does not reduce our freedom, since it leaves us as free as we were before. But now he also suggests, in his defence of coercion, that we are freer when we follow the general will than we are in following our individual will. If this were not so, coercing us to follow the general will would not force us to be free; we would be free in any case, if we simply followed our individual will. Forcing us to conform to the general will might not make us less free; but it is not obvious so far why it should increase our freedom.

889. What is the Civil State?

So far Rousseau's efforts to explain why the state is morally legitimate have not been very successful. He has introduced a series of unsupported claims: that one does not become less free, but actually freer, in a state; that as a citizen one has a general will aiming at the common interest; that one gives up all one's rights, but still remains free. But in chapter 8, 'on the civil condition (état)', the point of his argument becomes clearer. Until now he has followed Hobbes in supposing that we view the state as a means of self-preservation. The general will and the common interest, as far as we can gather from what we have been told, are concerned with this particular aim. But in chapter 8, Rousseau shows that this is not his point of view in evaluating the state.

He now attends to the ways in which the state changes and re-directs the individual to justice from instinct and from appetite to reason and morality.[40] Though we lose some advantages that we had in the state of nature, we gain benefits of far greater value. By this Rousseau does not mean what he meant in earlier chapters, that the state is more effective for our self-preservation than we would be without its help. He means that the changes in our outlook resulting from the state are clearly preferable to our previous outlook.

How are we to take this claim? Rousseau defends it from the point of view of someone who has passed from the state of nature to the civil state.[41] We take the point of view of someone looking back to his previous state, and feeling grateful that he is no longer in that old state. But what would be the result of a comparison in the other direction? Do people in the state of nature prefer the civil state to the one they are currently in? It is difficult to see

[39] '. . . whoever refuses to obey the general will will be coerced to it by the whole body. And this signifies just that one will force him to be free; for such is the condition which, giving each citizen to his country, guarantees him against all personal dependence' (i 7.8 = P 364 = C 150).

[40] 'It substitutes justice for instinct in his conduct, and gives to his actions the morality that they previously lacked. It is only then that, the voice of duty succeeding physical impulse and right succeeding appetite, a man, who until now had regarded nothing but himself, sees himself forced to act on other principles and to consult his reason before listening to his inclinations.' (i 8.1 = P 364 = C 150–1)

[41] '. . . if the abuses of this new condition did not often degrade him to a point below the one he has left, he would have to bless without ceasing the happy moment that took him from that old condition for ever, and that made him, from a stupid and limited animal, into an intelligent being and a man' (i 8.1 = P 364 = C 151).

how they could, if they are really 'stupid and limited' animals. If preference is being used as an index of superiority, we have no better reason to say that the civil state is superior to the natural state than to draw the contrary conclusion. We must rely on some other basis for the judgment that one of the two conditions is better than the other.

To see what Rousseau means, we have to recognize an ambiguity in his account of the change that results from the civil condition. He might mean either of two things: (1) Once we have entered the civil condition, we begin a process of education and development that eventually makes us rational persons rather than unintelligent animals. (2) Insofar as we are in a civil condition we are rational persons rather than unintelligent animals. According to the first claim, the civil condition is the environment in which we develop the relevant characteristics. According to the second claim, the civil condition is simply the condition that follows from our being rational agents.

These two claims have contradictory implications. According to the first, we cannot already be intelligent rational agents when we enter a civil state; rational agency must be its product rather than its starting point. According to the second claim, our being in a civil condition already includes rational agency. But though we must choose between the two claims on this question, they are compatible on some other points. For we might agree that rational agency implies the civil condition while still arguing that if we exercise our civil condition by behaving like rational agents, we strengthen our tendency to behave in this way, so that stable and fully developed rational agency may be a product of the civil condition.

To decide what Rousseau means, or what would fit his argument best, we have to face the wider question about how to interpret the historical form of his descriptions of human nature. In the *Discourse* he described the formation of various human traits preceding the state and making it necessary. Some such description seems to underlie the *Social Contract* also. If we take this historical account seriously, we may conclude that there is no definite human nature for which the state is especially appropriate; different forms of social life create the relevant types of human nature, and there is no fixed human nature present both in the social forms preceding the state and in the civil condition.

But we need not take Rousseau to describe a historical development. We may instead take the 'pre-civil' natural condition to be an abstraction from human nature, to show us what human beings would be like without their civil condition. Our civil condition, so understood, is not added to human nature; it is simply the aspect of human nature that makes us capable of relations to others as fellow-citizens.

This second way of understanding Rousseau's historical story makes it easier to see the point of comparing the natural condition with the civil condition. When we compare the two, we see that by being in a civil state, we act as rational and free agents, whereas we do not actualize these aspects of ourselves in the types of action that do not involve the relations that belong to a civil state. This account of the civil state explains why we can reasonably compare it with the non-civil state and judge it better.

Such a defence of the civil state, however, raises a difficulty for Rousseau's argument against traditional naturalism. He suggests that naturalism makes the same mistake as Hobbes makes, in attributing to human nature properties that are really the outcome of historical and social development. But now we have seen that his comparison of the civil

state with the natural state is convincing if and only if we take the civil state to realize the capacities that are already present in human beings, rather than creating a different human nature. In that case, Rousseau has no basic objection to the traditional naturalist claim that political association is appropriate for rational and social nature.

890. What Difference does the Civil State Make?

The civil state, according to Rousseau, differs from the state of nature because it introduces the rule of reason rather than passion. He expresses this contrast in different ways; sometimes he opposes physical impulse (impulsion physique) to duty (devoir), at other times appetite to right (droit), or self-regard to other principles, or inclinations (penchants) to reason, or animal to human being, or the impulse of appetite to obedience to one's own law. These do not seem to be different contrasts. Rousseau's freedom in passing from one to another suggests that he takes them all to express the same basic difference.

What is this basic difference? Rousseau cannot mean, consistently with his other views, that a human being in the state of nature is altogether lacking in practical reason, or simply at the mercy of appetites. If he meant this, he would be rejecting the elaborate and subtle account of the natural condition of human beings, their amour propre, and the development of the Hobbesian state of nature. This account assumes that people have a conception of themselves as mattering to other people, that they want to matter more to them, and that they take steps to increase their significance to others. Nor would it be plausible to claim that a person in this condition is concerned only with himself. Even apart from the other-directed concerns that may arise from amour propre, Rousseau recognizes pity as a primitive impulse that extends an individual's concerns outside herself.

Even if we were to suppose that in the *Social Contract* Rousseau has forgotten or rejected all these claims in the *Discourse*, we have to face another apparent contradiction within the *Social Contract* itself. For the account of the state of nature would be incomprehensible if it did not describe the reactions of rational agents to their circumstances. In the *Social Contract* as in the *Discourse*, people in the state of nature are aware of the dangers they face, and of the prospect of security to be found in the state, and they are capable of taking action to reach the more secure conditions of the state. One has to recognize these aspects of rational agency outside the civil state.

In fact the issues are not so simple. We noticed in discussing Hobbes that the official Hobbesian account of practical reason may not be adequate for the official Hobbesian account of our escape from the state of nature. Hobbes suggests that deliberation and practical reason may be understood as reasoning about how to satisfy our prevalent desire; it is because we have a prevalent desire for security that reason suggests the articles of peace (*L.* 13.14). If this is an adequate account of the state of nature, we can reach the state without actually being guided by reason; we are guided simply by our prevalent desire, and reason has a purely instrumental function. If Rousseau agrees with Hobbes on this point, he can defend his claim that outside the civil state we behave as animals rather than rational agents.

But if this is Rousseau's position, it is difficult to see how he can claim that the civil state makes such a difference. Hobbes believes that even when we are in a commonwealth his

account of practical reason remains true of us. Admittedly, once we are in a commonwealth, private appetite ceases to be the measure of good and evil (*L.* 15.40); but this is simply a demand of Hobbesian instrumental reason, since peace and security require private appetite to cede this function. The basic reason for formulating and for obeying moral principles is our (presumed) overriding desire for peace. Perhaps Rousseau believes we ought not to be convinced by Hobbes's description of the civil state; but if we are not, how can we be convinced by his account of our escape from the state of nature? It is difficult to see how Rousseau could recognize only Hobbesian instrumental practical reason in the state of nature, but genuine control by reason in the civil state.

Here we have a further reason for rejecting a developmental account of Rousseau's claims about the natural and the civil state; he seems to damage his own position if he claims that the civil state is a later stage resulting from our emergence from the natural state. It is more plausible to treat the natural state as an abstraction—what we are left with if we remove the relations that belong to the civil state. Rousseau claims, according to this view, that without the civil state all we have left is Hobbesian agency.

This does not mean that we have to be members of an actual political body in order to be rational agents. Rousseau may be referring to the relations that make us capable of being citizens, and arguing that these relations are necessary for rational agency. If he is right about this, states are appropriate for human beings because they fulfil their rational capacities, not simply because they fulfil the Hobbesian functions of providing peace and security.

891. How does the Civil State Realize Freedom?

What, then, is the distinctive feature of the civil state that justifies Rousseau in claiming that it results in rule by reason rather than impulse? This is not obvious from what he has already told us about the state. We know that it involves the surrender of rights without a decrease in freedom, and the adoption of a general will aiming at the common interest; these features justify the state in forcing us to be free if we do not feel inclined to agree with the general will. Why should we believe that if we live under such a system we are ruled by our own reason?

Rousseau answers this question at the end of chapter 8, in claiming that the civil condition includes moral freedom.[42] We should not regard the civil condition as simply a limitation on freedom. It rests on the principles that a free person chooses, because it rests on principles founded in practical reason rather than in non-rational impulse.

The claim that a significant type of freedom consists in being governed by reason rather than by impulse is plausible and familiar. If we take freedom to require guidance by the will and not simply by inclination, and we take the will to be essentially rational, freedom consists in guidance by practical reason. Rousseau is therefore justified in claiming that if we require someone to act on principles prescribed by practical reason, we are in a certain respect forcing him to be free. We are not forcing him to be free if we simply force him to

[42] '. . . moral freedom, which alone makes a person truly master of himself. For the impulse of appetite alone is slavery, and obedience to the law that one has prescribed to oneself is freedom.' (i 8.3 = P 365 = C 151)

act as he would act if he were guided by practical reason; if we were doing that, we would simply be requiring him to do what a free person, guided by practical reason, would do. Rousseau is wrong if he means to claim that compelling action is forcing to be free. He would be right, however, if he meant that if the state makes it obligatory to be guided by practical reason, it forces us to be free; it obliges us to be guided by principles that may sometimes conflict with our inclination.

But why are we acting on practical reason only if we take the point of view of Rousseau's citizen? We can find a partial and inadequate answer if we return to the Hobbesian element in Rousseau's argument. If we are guided by practical reason, we see that we have good reason to enter a state to avoid the bad aspects of the state of nature; this is not simply a conclusion of instrumental reason following a prevalent impulse. Hence acceptance of the state is characteristic of the outlook of practical reason.

But this does not suffice to make us the sort of citizen that Rousseau has in mind in speaking of the civil state. If we simply treat the state as a means to secure peace, it is not obvious why we should take the point of view of the general will concerned with the common good. I may find it useful to see what the common good requires, if that is the best way to secure peace. But it is not obvious that I will care about the common good for its own sake. If other people are so indifferent or blind to their own interest that they are willing to support the state even if they do not gain from it, that does not matter to me if I care only about the preservation of peace.

Rousseau assumes that the general will concerned with the common interest for its own sake uniquely expresses the point of view of practical reason. Reason, he assumes, treats us all equally as rational agents. This assumption becomes explicit only at the end of Book i.[43] This moral equality is the equality of rational agents. From the rational point of view, rational agency is an appropriate basis for equal treatment.

Why does Rousseau claim this? He might mean that sometimes my inclinations lead me to distort my view so that I act irrationally; and he may infer that any time I prefer myself to someone else, that is because of my own inclinations leading me to act irrationally. This would not be a reasonable inference; for we still need to be convinced that only an irrational inclination could lead me in general to suppose that my own interests matter more than other people's.

He implies that, from the point of view of practical reason, I count for myself as a rational agent; it is my being a rational agent that makes it reasonable for me to treat myself as I do. Hence the rational point of view on myself makes it reasonable for me to treat other rational agents in the same way, and hence to recognize the equality (in this respect) of rational agents.

This interpretation of Rousseau's position makes it easy to see why Kant found some aspects of his views attractive.[44] It does not seem unreasonable to describe Rousseau as implicitly Kantian. But the assumptions he relies on are not exclusively Kantian. We have

[43] 'I will end this chapter and this book with a remark that ought to serve as the basis for the whole social system. It is that in place of (au lieu de) destroying natural equality, the basic compact substitutes on the contrary a moral and legitimate equality for whatever physical inequality nature may have placed among human beings, and that, while being unequal in strength or in intellect, they all become equal through agreement (par convention) and by right.' (i 9.8 = P 367 = C 153)

[44] See Beck, *CKCPR* 200. Beck, *EGP* 489, quotes Kant's remark on Rousseau from Kant, *GS* xx 44. The relation of Kant to Rousseau is discussed by Schmucker, *UEK*, ch. 4.

seen that the connexion between the rational outlook, impartiality, and morality is present in Butler's conception of conscience. The political interpretation of this conception of morality is as old as Aristotle, who describes law as 'understanding without desire'.[45]

Rousseau's description of the civil state, therefore, is not primarily a description of members of a political society, but of members of a moral community. I am in a civil state in relation to other people insofar as I am guided by impartial moral reason in my treatment of myself and others as moral equals. If we all take this point of view, we will consent unanimously to the basic principles that guide our conduct; hence we can agree with Rousseau that we are bound by a unanimous agreement. But unanimity itself is not important. We might equally say that if we all take the appropriate point of view, any one person's deliberation will be authoritative for the actions of all the others, since each person takes the same impartial point of view. It is not the fact that we have made a contract, or that we have all agreed to something, that confers moral legitimacy; it is the fact that the principles that guide us are justifiable from the moral point of view. The civil condition is really the moral condition.

Hence Rousseau's claims about the differences between the state of nature and the civil state do not really vindicate political society, and do not show that it has the effects he describes. If the 'civil' state is really the moral state, he claims that human freedom, involving guidance by practical reason, is realized in the impartially rational view of morality. I am in a civil state in relation to anyone whom I consider from this moral point of view. Rousseau gives us no reason to suppose that this relation requires the distinctive institutions of a state. On the contrary, membership of a state will promote the civil condition, as Rousseau describes it, only in states that are guided by the impartial moral principles that define the civil condition.

This does not mean that the description of the civil condition is useless for answering Rousseau's original question about the legitimacy of states. His argument implies that a state is legitimate when it accords with the moral principles that represent the civil condition defined by the moral point of view. If it is acceptable to all, or to any one, of the people who take the point of view defined by the civil state, a state is morally legitimate.

Since this condition for legitimacy relies on the content of the moral point of view, Rousseau has not told us much about how to establish legitimacy, since he has not told us much about the moral point of view. But he has told us something. If the institutions of a given state can be justified only on the assumption that the interests of some of its citizens matter more than the interests of others, those institutions are morally illegitimate.

Though this test is still vague, it allows us to avoid a misleading suggestion of Rousseau's argument. Sometimes he appears to be specifying the sort of constitution and government that would make a state legitimate. We might imagine, for instance, that a city-state that established its constitution by unanimous agreement and designed the institutions of government according to Rousseau's prescriptions would thereby be legitimate. This appearance is misleading because the formal devices that Rousseau describes do not guarantee moral legitimacy, as he conceives it. Direct democracy, even requiring unanimous votes on some issues, does not make a state legitimate, since some or all of the voters may fail to take

[45] Aristotle, *Pol.* 1287a32 (*nous aneu orexeôs*).

the impartial point of view of morality and some may be too easily persuaded to vote for institutions that cannot be justified from this impartial point of view. The moral conditions for legitimacy are not automatically satisfied by any particular form of constitution; for they require us to choose from the rational and impartial moral point of view that is not guaranteed by any particular constitutional arrangement.

A reasonable interpretation of Rousseau's views on legitimacy should also warn us against treating legitimacy as an all-or-nothing question. In one way, his moral conditions for legitimacy are quite demanding, since they do not allow the automatic endorsement of any particular form of government or constitution. In another way, they are more flexible than (for instance) an endorsement of direct democracy would be. For we might be able to argue that some aspects of a given state are acceptable from a moral point of view, and some are not. If, for instance, a state fails in distributive justice, but achieves a reasonable degree of corrective justice, it may be illegitimate in one respect and legitimate in another. In such a case it may be reasonable neither to endorse it completely nor to regard oneself as free of any moral obligations in relation to it.

We should not necessarily suppose, then, that emphasis on the moral aspect of Rousseau's conditions of legitimacy is bound to make his position more abstract and less practically relevant. This is true in some respects, insofar as the relation between legitimacy and forms of constitution is less clear than he suggests it is. But an emphasis on the moral aspect of his views may also lead to a more realistic and plausible conclusion about the legitimacy of different aspects of different states.

892. How do we Discover the General Will?

We can illustrate this general point about Rousseau by looking more closely at some of his claims about the general will. For they make clear the uneasy relation between 'formal' or 'procedural' and 'substantive' elements in his theory. The 'procedural' elements are those that try to establish moral legitimacy by reference to the ways in which a decision is reached, without reference to any morally substantive assessment of the decision. Though this is a crude division between the procedural and the substantive elements of a decision, it is clear enough to identify some of the different tendencies in Rousseau's position.

Rousseau has introduced the general will in Book i, taking it to aim at the 'common interest' (i 7.6). Each citizen is supposed to have a general will as well as a particular will that may deviate from the common interest. This is an implausible claim if it is taken to mean that each actual member of a state must care about the common interest as well as his particular interest. But a more plausible claim emerges from the explanation of the civil condition. Rousseau means that each person who takes the rational point of view that gives us moral freedom is concerned for a common interest, insofar as each considers each person's interest equally.

This understanding of the general will allows us to see Rousseau's point at the beginning of Book ii, where he traces a consequence of his argument in Book i.[46] He seems to claim

[46] 'The first and most important consequence of the principles so far established is that the general will can alone direct the powers of the state in accordance with the end for which it was instituted, which is the common good. For

that a general will aiming at a common interest is needed for the survival of any society. But such a claim seems exaggerated. Perhaps the survival of a given society requires some fairly large proportion of its citizens not to be strongly convinced that they would be better off in some different form of society that they could achieve, or at least not to be convinced that they are being seriously harmed by the present society; but that condition falls a long way short of Rousseau's claim that a society must pursue a common good, or that (if he means this) that people must believe that it pursues a common good. If his claim is taken as a claim in political psychology or sociology, we have good reason to reject it.

But his claim is more plausible if we interpret it in the light of the argument in Book i (as his first words suggest we should), and take it to be about the character of a morally legitimate community. If it is governed by the impartial rational principles that count each person equally, it will aim at some common interest. The interest must be common, since the moral point of view does not pursue the interest of a given person in particular, but aims equally at the interest of any person. The claim that a state should be governed by a general will aiming at the common interest is a claim about the principles that should govern interactions between moral agents. If we accept this claim, we need not agree that every viable state must meet this condition for moral legitimacy, and we need not agree that we should (for instance) uphold or obey only the laws of states that count as wholly legitimate by this standard.

The discussion of 'whether the general will can err' (ii 3) reveals some of the different aims and tendencies in Rousseau's argument. He begins by affirming that it follows from his previous discussion that the general will is always right, and that it always aims at 'public utility' (ii 3.1). This is true because the general will is simply the will that is defined by the impartial and rational outlook of morality. Rousseau sees that this account of the general will excludes one simple procedural account of it. We might have been tempted to infer, from some remarks in Book i, that unanimous consent guarantees a decision of the general will. But now he rejects that simple way of identifying the general will; for he argues that the will of all is different from the general will and cannot be assumed to agree with it (ii 3.2).

Though the general will is inerrant, it does not guarantee the correct conclusion about what the laws should be.[47] References to 'the people' and 'the public' suggest that some group of people in some specific role or aspect can be identified with the general will. In this spirit Rousseau suggests that we can reach the general will from the will of all by removing the 'pluses' and 'minuses' that cancel out (ii 3.2). He mentions an apparently empirical device for removing the individual pluses and minuses of particular wills. Adequate information and inability to communicate would result in the general will.[48] Factions and smaller groups

if the opposition of particular interests has made the establishment of societies necessary, it is the agreement between these same interests that has made it possible. It is what different interests have in common that forms the social tie; and if there were not some point in which all the interests agree, no society could exist. Now it is solely on this common interest that a society can be governed.' (ii 1.1 = P 368 = C 153)

[47] 'The people of itself always wishes the good, but of itself it does not always see it. The general will is always right, but the judgment that guides it is not always enlightened. . . . Individuals see the good that they reject; the public wishes the good that it does not see. . . . Individuals must be obliged to conform their wills to their reason; the public must be taught to recognize (connaître) what it wishes.' (ii 6.10 = P 380 = C 162)

[48] 'If, when the people, sufficiently informed, deliberated, the citizens had no communication among themselves, from the great number of small differences the general will would always result, and the deliberation would always be good.' (ii 3.3 = P 371 = C 156)

within the state prevent the expression of the general will; to reach the general will, these groups should be eliminated, and each citizen should form his opinion only for himself (n'opine que d'après lui, ii 3.4).

These methods for discovering the general will are subtler than a mere appeal to unanimous consent, but they still face objections. Perhaps Rousseau thinks that if we can discount the influence of factions who influence individual decisions systematically over time, we will find that the merely individual differences over questions of public policy are relatively small and the area of consensus is much wider; perhaps this is what he means by removing the pluses and minuses. But it is difficult to see how this process reaches the general will. Complete information plus isolation from others seems to guarantee only that individual prejudices will dominate our decisions; and if we try to extract the pluses and minuses from individual prejudices, we seem to be left only with shared prejudices. We have no reason to suppose that this process will result in a will that aims at the common interest.

The devices for reaching the general will are more plausible if we take them to be aspects of the impartial point of view of morality. We can think of each person deliberating by himself without communication if we assume that he is taking the impartial moral standpoint. For since this standpoint regards the interests of rational agents equally, I do not need other people to urge me to consider their interests; I consider them already if I take the moral point of view. Factions are dangerous to this sort of deliberation because they induce me to give disproportionate weight to some interests that are closely related to my own. This weight is disproportionate in relation to the demands of morality for equal consideration.

Rousseau's devices are therefore defensible if they are taken to be parts of a description of the general will as the outlook of morality. But they are also less significant than we might at first have supposed. For they identify some secondary features of the general will without mention of its most important aspects. His most important claim about the general will is the claim that it expresses a uniquely rational point of view that is also the point of view of morality, giving equal weight to different people's interests. This claim is implied by the assertion that in belonging to a community guided by the general will we achieve the distinctive freedom that consists in being guided by reason rather than inclination.

We may understand Rousseau's account of the state as a description of a moral community—a community governed by the moral outlook that we may reasonably call Kantian. But his attempts to connect this description with claims about constitutions and forms of government are quite implausible. A fuller understanding of the moral point of view, as he conceives it, is needed to give further precision to his description of the general will.

Rousseau partly, but only partly, grasps this point. His attempts to describe effective methods for finding the general will suggest that he has not entirely given up a purely procedural conception, as though it could be adequately described by a set of restrictions on voting. But the difficulty of seeing what these restrictions imply suggests that he does not think a purely procedural description is good enough. The further moral conditions for a general will remain in the background.

893. The Common Good and the General Will

Since the general will wills a common good, the complexities in Rousseau's conception of the general will reappear in some of his claims about the common good. He is not content to claim that the common good should be defined as whatever the general will wills. In saying that the object of the general will is the common good, he offers some further specification of the general will; hence he can reasonably be asked for some argument to show that the general will, as he conceives it, aims at the common good, as he conceives it.

Rousseau treats the common good as good for each person. We achieve it through actions that result from mutual obligation.[49] The reference to mutuality suggests that not every principle willed by the general will must itself promote the common good; mutual obligation ensures that the services I do for others are balanced by those that others do for me. This reciprocity and balance seems to be necessary to make sure that everyone gains by following the general will.[50]

One might conceive the common good as an equal division of goods between all the individuals involved. If there are not enough goods to go round, this equal division will fall short of what I need for my own good, so that I have to be willing to sacrifice my own good. But Rousseau seems to deny that I will face this choice. Perhaps he simply means that achieving my own good at other people's expense is not a real option for me in the circumstances, so that I do the best I can for myself in willing the common good.

If we explain mutuality in this way, we admit that Hobbes's 'fool' raises a relevant question, in suggesting that, without returning to the state of nature, I can sometimes do better for myself if I do not aim at the common good, but try to benefit myself at other people's expense. Does Rousseau's advocacy of the common good depend on the dubious claim that Hobbes's fool always miscalculates his own advantage?

His explanation of the appeal to self-interest is complex. He argues that self-interest is necessary if the general will is to have its appropriately impartial character.[51] This point rests on his previous claim that each person must include himself and his own interest in the common interest. He seems to argue that because each person aims at his own good, but cannot secure it without securing everyone's good, he can will the general good. If, on the other hand, we were judging something 'alien to us', because alien to our good, we would have no principle of equity.

This is difficult to understand, because we might think that even if our good is included in the common good, the fact that the two goods are not identical implies that the common good is something 'alien' to us. But Rousseau's point about self-interest may not be open to this objection. If I think about my own happiness and about its importance to me, and I

[49] 'The engagements that bind us to the social body are obligatory only because they are mutual, and their nature is such that in fulfilling them one cannot work for others without working also for oneself.' (ii 4.5 = P 373 = C 157)

[50] 'For why is the general will always right, and why do all will constantly the happiness of each of them, except because everyone appropriates to himself this word "each" and thinks of himself in voting for all?' (ii 4.5 = P 373 = C 157)

[51] 'This proves that the equality of right and the notion of justice that it [sc. the general will] produces derives from the preference that each person gives himself, and consequently from human nature; that the general will, in order to be truly such, must be the general will in its object no less than in its essence; that it must set out (partir de) from all in order to apply to all; and that it loses its natural rightness when it tends to some individual and determined object, because in that case, judging about what is alien (étrange) to us, we have no genuine principle of equity to guide us.' (ii 4.5 = P 373 = C 157)

also recall that every rational agent has equal reason to aim at happiness for every rational agent, I will be equally concerned with the happiness of each rational agent. That is why the principles that I accept from this impartial point of view aim at the common good.

If Rousseau takes these features of the moral point of view for granted, he is right to claim that in aiming at the common good I do not necessarily renounce my own happiness; for the common good embraces my own happiness as well as everyone else's. But the fact that I do not necessarily renounce my own happiness does not show that I necessarily achieve it. For even if I aim at everyone's happiness, that may not be achievable; some people's good may require harm to others, and an equal degree of happiness for everyone may prevent anyone from fully achieving happiness. This possibility is especially relevant if everyone's or some people's happiness includes competitive and comparative elements. If, for instance, at least two people's good requires them to excel everyone else in the same respect, what is good for everyone cannot achieve everyone's good, since everyone's good includes the demand that A excel everyone else (including B) and that B excel everyone else (including A).

We might, indeed, expect Rousseau to be particularly attentive to this possibility, since he emphasizes the role of amour propre in generating the conflicts that make it advisable to form a state. If we suppose that we have changed from a primitive condition, so that our good requires the satisfaction of our inflamed amour propre, I must after all sacrifice some element of my good if I am to pursue the common good. Hence the achievement of the common good would not achieve my own good.

Rousseau seems to deny this possibility, since he denies that the social contract implies any renunciation by individuals. We make a profitable exchange, of uncertainty for security, of natural independence for freedom, of power to harm others for protection from harm, of one's own unreliable power to defend oneself for the right that is defended by the state (ii 4.10). The exchanges considered here do not include the objects of amour propre, if these objects are included, it is more difficult to see how the exchange involved in acceptance of the general will is wholly profitable, from the point of view of individuals who have not yet accepted the point of view of the general will.

This difficulty takes us back to our earlier comparison of the *Discourse* with the *Social Contract* on the formation of the state. The *Discourse* suggests a Hobbesian account; we need the state for greater security. But here Rousseau admits that we need it partly because of the effects of our amour propre, which is not entirely checked, and is even given new opportunities to develop within the state. If this is such a prominent motive as Rousseau takes it to be in the *Discourse*, must we not suffer a significant loss in taking the point of view of the general will? For the impartial concern of the general will seems likely to frustrate the outlook of amour propre.

Rousseau has an answer to this objection if he does not take the satisfaction of inflamed amour propre to be part of one's good when one is in the civil condition. We would expect him to say this, given his description of the civil condition. For in the civil condition we replace mere independence with the genuine freedom that consists in being guided by reason rather than impulse. If we take guidance by reason to be a predominant part of one's good, and we take the civil condition to secure this guidance by reason, we can see why acceptance of the outlook of the general will does not imply a sacrifice of any part of one's real good.

But why should we agree that an agent guided by reason will not be influenced by inflamed amour propre? The competitive aspects of amour propre may be traced to a desire to assert oneself in relation to others. This desire to assert oneself may in turn to be traced to a demand for recognition of one's status by others—a demand to be recognized as counting for something.[52] The moral point of view respects this demand for recognition; for it begins from rational self-concern, and accords the same sort of concern impartially to everyone. If we view one another from the point of view of morality, we recognize that each person counts in her own right. We do not need to acquire some competitive advantage in relation to other people in order to count for something in their eyes, or in our own eyes; for our counting for something does not rest on our comparative status, but simply on our status as moral agents.

If Rousseau is right about the outlook of morality, he has a good reason for saying that acceptance of the social contract does not involve renunciation. For, even though the social contract impedes the pursuit of the aims that result from inflated amour propre, it does not involve a genuine loss. For we no longer regard the aims of inflated amour propre as promoting our real good. We now find that the moral point of view includes the appropriate respect for each person. We need not pursue the aims of inflated amour propre in order to secure this respect from other people.

This aspect of Rousseau's position corresponds to Kant's distinction between the predisposition to humanity and the predisposition to personality.[53] The outlook of mere humanity treats practical reason as purely instrumental, and hence does not find in it the source of non-instrumental value in oneself or in others. Rousseau does not explain why the distinctive features of the civil state cancel the effects of inflated amour propre. But he needs to explain this, in order to show why acceptance of the social contract involves no renunciation of genuine goods. An explanation is available to him in the distinctive attitude of the civil state towards practical reason. The civil state is appropriate for people who value the exercise of practical reason for its own sake, and hence value themselves for their own sakes as rational agents. That is why they can claim to pursue a common good in which each person's individual good is achieved. This claim would be false if inflated amour propre rested on a true conception of one's good. But we can undermine the conception of one's good that encourages inflated amour propre, once we discover the value that belongs to us in our own right as rational agents.

The different claims about the state in the *Discourse* and the *Social Contract* represent, therefore, different conceptions of the appropriate relations to others, and of the appropriate conception of oneself and one's value that underlies our relation to others. The *Discourse* develops one strand in a Hobbesian conception of the state. Unlike Hobbes, Rousseau takes inflamed amour propre to be an essential element in human nature, because it results inevitably from one's demand for recognition of one's importance. Hence the state is partly a product of inflamed amour propre, partly a means to avoid its most destructive aspects, but partly also a means to the further expression and satisfaction of amour propre. Rousseau's overall view is on this point less optimistic than Hobbes's view, since he believes that the state removes some sources of conflict and insecurity, but at the same time creates other sources, by offering new opportunities to our competitive motives.

[52] Dent, *R*, ch. 2, discusses some of the different aspects of amour propre.

[53] See Kant, *Rel.* 26.

Though Rousseau does not say so, the state as envisaged in the *Social Contract* rejects inflated amour propre. When we are in the civil condition, we do not regard our own practical reason as purely instrumental, and we do not regard other people as mere rivals. We attribute non-instrumental value to each person as a rational agent. Rousseau's description of these attitudes is combined with, and partly distorted by, his attempt to translate them into specific political institutions and forms of government. The most important claims underlying his political theory are basically moral claims. Though he relies on these claims, he does not defend them; for a defence we have to turn to Kant.[54]

This conclusion shows that Rousseau does not really abandon the naturalist view that takes the state to be justified by its appropriateness to human nature, understood as rational and social. His historical or quasi-historical narrative shows that this is not all there is to human nature, and that both traditional naturalist and Hobbesian accounts overlook the significance of motives that are neither desires for bare self-preservation nor distinctively rational desires. But his account of the civil condition shows that he thinks the outlook of amour propre is not the basis for the correct understanding of human beings and their value. He believes that the civil state is the state that reveals the true nature of human beings as rational agents.

[54] Some connexions between Rousseau and Kant are explored by Cassirer, 'Kant and Rousseau'.

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