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VIRTUE AND HAPPINESS: ESSAYS IN HONOUR OF JULIA ANNAS

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EUDAIMONIA AND PRACTICAL RATIONALITY

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THE issues to be discussed here revolve around the relations of practical rationality (*phronēsis*) to happiness (*eudaimonia*). In particular, the thesis is that accepting a theory of morality which takes *eudaimonia* as its starting-point can resolve a long-standing puzzle about practical rationality which plagues the two most common theories of it. The place to begin is with the puzzle itself, and for that we can find its first explicit presentation in the final chapter of Henry Sidgwick's *The Methods of Ethics*.[1] It is here, at the culmination of this magisterial and thoroughly exhausting book, that he comes to the conclusion that there is a 'fundamental dualism of practical reason'. The dualism he finds is that he thinks, in the end, that it is no less reasonable to find 'self-love' rather than 'conscience' as the 'ruling principle' for our practical decision-making. He makes sense of this by attending to a distinction between 'the right' and 'the good', noting that the sacrifices which morality may ask us to make in its name may be the 'right' thing for us to do even though they are not 'good' for our self-interest. From a purely rational point of view, morality or the general point of view can neither trump nor be trumped by selfish egoism.

It is perhaps perplexing that Sidgwick himself was perplexed at 'the extent to which [this] view has perplexed even those . . . critics who have understood it' (p. xx). With all due respect to Sidgwick,

[1] H. Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics*, 7th edn. (Indianapolis, 1981). Except where noted, references are to this edition.

one might wonder how a result like his could fail to be perplexing to a moral philosopher. It is tantamount to saying that it is not just very difficult but downright impossible for morality to justify itself in the face of rampant egoism ('it would seem necessary to abandon the idea of rationalising it [morality] completely', 506). It is unfortunately only on this, the penultimate page of that long, long book that Sidgwick tells us he does not find in himself an intuition telling him that the 'performance of our duty will be adequately rewarded and its violation punished'. Yet, he says, we desire this to be true and think it ought to be. This 'ought' is not 'strictly ethical' but rather 'expresses the vital need that our Practical Reason feels of proving or postulating this connexion of Virtue and self-interest, if it is to be made consistent with itself' (ibid.). The passage continues,

For the negation of the connexion must force us to admit an ultimate and fundamental contradiction in our apparent intuitions of what is Reasonable in conduct; and from this admission it would seem to follow that the apparently intuitive operations of the Practical Reason, manifested in these contradictory judgments, is [*sic*] after all illusory. (ibid.)[2]

Putting aside the oddity of practical reason having 'vital needs' which it 'feels', it might be hard to imagine a more perplexing philosophical result than that practical rationality, even at its best, with full knowledge of all the facts and without any procedural or deliberative error, is either self-contradicting or illusory. This is like being told that the most rational thing to do is to both take and not take your umbrella out with you. One is left wondering why the derivation of such a contradiction, at the very end of the book, did not leave Sidgwick wondering if this result constituted a *reductio ad absurdum* of his method of doing ethics.

Sidgwick thinks we should not be shocked by this 'fundamental dualism of practical reason' because he says it is at least as old as Butler, who was no new news even in Sidgwick's day, and was present in many of Butler's predecessors in an inchoate form.[3] Butler says the schism is between 'self-love' and 'conscience', and while

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[2] This quotation comes from the seventh edition. In the third edition (1884) the phrasing is clearer but the implication, perhaps, even more perplexing: 'For, if we find an ultimate and fundamental contradiction in our apparent intuitions of what is Reasonable in conduct, we seem forced to the conclusion that they were not really intuitions after all, and that the apparently intuitive operation of the Practical Reason is essentially illusory.'

[3] See Sidgwick's *Outlines of the History of Ethics* (Indianapolis, 1988). For a discussion of Sidgwick's sometimes heavy-handed take on the modern moral philoso-

the terms have changed, we are still stuck with this split today. It eventually led Elizabeth Anscombe to call for a rejection of 'morality' in favour of a discussion of the virtues, and it drew Michael Stocker to talk about the schizophrenic break that exists between the reasons our moral theories tell us we have and the values by which we actually live. It led Bernard Williams to call 'morality' a 'peculiar institution', as well as to a substantial literature on morality as having to be either 'alienating' or 'self-effacing', a literature which has found Julia standing up for virtue in ways that we shall return to below.[4]

Now, what many of these contemporary philosophers are telling us to do away with is a particular conception of 'morality', a peculiarly modern conception of it, one which Anscombe sees as having its roots in religion. In a more recent study Terence Irwin has argued that the problem derives more precisely from Scotus' rejection of Aquinas' eudaimonism.[5] But before we get to that, and to a possible resolution of this dualism, it is worth noting how clearly the problem infects the two main modern theories of practical rationality, namely the Humean and the Kantian. In some ways this will be reinventing Sidgwick's wheel, but before we turn to the view of practical rationality which emerges out of eudaimonism, it will be helpful to keep the problems of the alternatives in full view.

The Humean view of practical rationality[6] is that it is exhausted by its instrumentality. If it is not 'contrary to reason to prefer the destruction of the whole world to the scratching of my finger' (416), if reason is indeed the 'slave of the passions' (415), then from the point of view of practical reasoning alone, it cannot be more or less reasonable to do the moral thing in preference to the self-interested thing, or vice versa. It is not that there are no good reasons to be

phers who are relevant to this matter see W. Frankena, 'Sidgwick and the History of Ethical Dualism', in B. Schulz (ed.), *Essays on Henry Sidgwick* (Cambridge, 1992), 175–98. For a different interpretation of the dualism see D. Brink, 'Sidgwick and the Rationale for Rational Egoism', ibid. 199–240.

[4] G. E. M. Anscombe, 'Modern Moral Philosophy', *Philosophy*, 33 (1958), 1–19; M. Stocker, 'The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories', *Journal of Philosophy*, 73 (1976), 453–66; B. Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Cambridge, Mass., 1985); P. Railton, 'Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality', *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 13.2 (1984), 134–71.

[5] T. H. Irwin, 'Scotus and the Possibility of Moral Motivation', in P. Bloomfield (ed.), *Morality and Self-Interest* [*M&S-I*] (Oxford, 2008), 159–76.

[6] See D. Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford, 1978).

moral, it is that reason has nothing to do at all with why people are moral or not. Reason alone is not in the position of telling us whether or not to be moral; presumably, practical reasoning is not even in the position of giving us reasons to live according to the dictates of practical reason. Be that as it may, reason, taken in isolation, is not capable of contradicting itself, as we find it in Sidgwick's hands, but neither can it provide any sort of 'connexion' between duty and inclination or morality and self-interest. If we are not inclined to morality or if we find ourselves equipped with Gyges' ring, or find ourselves in a situation in which we may not be harmed, then the 'artificial virtue' of justice has no purchase on us, it is 'useless'.

As Hume says:

Were there a species of creatures intermingled with men, which, though rational, were possessed of such inferior strength, both of body and mind, that they were incapable of all resistance, and could never, upon the highest provocation, make us feel the effects of their resentment; the necessary consequence, I think, is that we should be bound by the laws of humanity to give gentle usage to these creatures, but should not, properly speaking, lie under any restraint of justice with regard to them, nor could they possess any right or property, exclusive of such arbitrary lords. Our intercourse with them could not be called society, which supposes a degree of equality; but absolute command on the one side, and servile obedience on the other. Whatever we covet, they must instantly resign: Our permission is the only tenure, by which they hold their possessions: Our compassion and kindness the only check, by which they curb our lawless will: And as no inconvenience ever results from the exercise of a power, so firmly established in nature, the restraints of justice and property, being totally useless, would never have place in so unequal a confederacy.[7]

Granted, those who are so endowed with the 'natural virtues', such as kindness and gentleness, will be kind and gentle. But to those not naturally virtuous, justice in such cases is useless and there is no reason for them not to act as 'arbitrary lords' over those weaker than they. The practical reasons Hume gives for not being a Sensible Knave are all due to its general imprudence, but there is nothing intrinsically wrong with it, it is simply that those who are kind and gentle would disapprove. If we feel no inclination at all to be moral or just, if, for whatever reason, we lack an 'ingenuous nature' (*Enquiry* 82) and easily attain a 'satisfactory review of our conduct',

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[7] D. Hume, *Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals* [*Enquiry*], ed. T. L. Beauchamp (Oxford, 1998), 18.

and if what one truly and deeply values are the 'worthless toys and gewgaws' (ibid.) and the 'feverish, empty amusements of luxury and expense' (ibid.), then there is nothing irrational whatsoever in thinking as follows:

That *honesty is the best policy*, may be a good general rule; but is liable to many exceptions: And he, it may, perhaps, be thought, conducts himself with most wisdom, who observes the general rule, and takes advantage of all the exceptions. (Hume, *Enquiry*, 82)

Now, perhaps those with more sympathy for Hume than I will say that I am not being fair to him or to us humans, who in Hume's view are by and large, but certainly contingently, fairly sympathetic creatures. Indeed, I admit to finding Hume to be the most perplexing of moral philosophers in that it is obvious that his own inclinations seem to lead him to a strong condemnation of vice and an espousal of all the 'agreeable virtues' while he simultaneously tells us that there is no real reason whatsoever to be virtuous and to avoid vice, other than non-rational inclination. As was noted with regard to Sidgwick above, this is to give up the game of justifying morality to those who are immoral or to those, like Glaucon and Adimantus, who are willing to be moral but want there to be good reasons for it. It is as if Hume thinks he can satisfactorily respond to Butler's opposition of conscience to self-love by saying that self-love may incline towards conscience, though there are no reasons for it to be so inclined and of course it need not. It is licence to be immoral for all those who are inclined to be and are clever enough to get away with it.

If Hume's conception of practical reason is immune to the sort of contradiction which plagues Sidgwick, it is only because Hume eviscerates practical reason to the point where it lacks sufficient content to admit of dualism. Of course, our inclinations can contradict one another, and straightening them out is perhaps the business of empirical psychology, if it is the business of anything at all. In any case, it is not the business of practical rationality: reason, for Hume, is simply not in a position to help us figure out what to do in those cases in which our inclinations towards morality seem to contradict other inclinations which are self-interested. In general, morality is subordinated to non-rational inclination.[8]

[8] I am indebted to Michael Gill for discussions on what I say about Hume here; if there are errors that remain, they are my own. I thank Scott Lehmann for reminding me that there will always be immoral people who are beyond the reach of morality, for whom becoming moral is a psychological impossibility.

Kant takes on board the duality of inclination and morality and marks it with the deepest of possible ontological distinctions. Inclinations for him are empirical phenomena. They are based in our animal nature and take pleasure and pain as their basic values. All considerations of happiness are derived therefrom, so there is a sense in which Kant is actually a hedonist about happiness, except that for him happiness has no moral value whatsoever as a result of its hedonic ground. Practical rationality and hence morality ought not to be subordinated to something that is not, at bottom, rational or objective, since these command us with an authority which is not merely hypothetical or subjective. Since all inclinations are hypothetical, they are not suitable as a foundation for rationality of any kind. Practical rationality must have a categorical basis, and so Kant looks outside the empirical world, subjective and non-rational as it is, to the noumenal world wherein he locates the rational self. Here, he finds his objectivity and a categorical, rational basis for morality. The principals of morality are supposed to be derived from *pure* practical reasoning, derivable *a priori*, without appeal to anything contingent, empirical, or subjective. (I stress the word 'pure' here for reasons that will emerge below.)

And yet, we are still left with morality battling against our inclinations. Kant may identify our true self or our deep self with our rational, noumenal minds, but he does not try to deny that we are embodied, and so he leaves us to train our wills to subordinate our inclinations to rationality *per se*. Practical rationality may be subjugated to inclination, but it ought not to be and cannot be if our wills are to be good. 'But,' we might ask, 'what of happiness?'[9] Am I really to take my own happiness to be of no more value than a stranger's happiness when I view matters from the standpoint of perfectly impartial reason, *sub specie aeternitatis*? May not what counts towards my happiness figure in my reasoning to at least some little degree simply because it counts towards my happiness? Sure, as long as there is nothing moral at stake. And when morality is in play, Kant certainly takes there to be duties to oneself: he places

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[9] Note, I do not talk about 'well-being' because, as the term is used by philosophers generally, it is defined independently of morality and then the question is pursued as to what its relationship with morality is. 'Happiness' is not so technically loaded, and can be understood neutrally as our goal without building in or leaving out any substantial content. For more on this 'formal' conception of *happiness* see, of course, J. Annas, *The Morality of Happiness* (New York, 1995). For a related formal sense of 'morality' see n. 14 below.

a high value on self-respect and dignity, and we typically think of these as being somehow related to our happiness. Nevertheless, for Kant, the reasons to act on our self-regarding duties, to look after our self-respect and dignity, are categorical. For him, it would be irrational to act for the sake of our everlasting, unending happiness when the cost of this would be not fulfilling the most trivial of moral obligations. This is Kant's uncompromisingly absolute moralism, and perhaps it is uncharitable to interpret him or anyone in so rigid, literal, and exceptionless a fashion. Still, it is fair to say that, for Kant, it is not the case that the value of our happiness may be trumped within our moral deliberations by purely rational considerations, but rather that our happiness *qua* our happiness has no place at all in our moral deliberations; if our happiness is incompossible with the happiness of others, the deliberation about what to do must nevertheless be made with full impartiality.[10] The alienation of morality from self-interest ought to be complete, despite the fact that we may never be able to know whether or not we have succeeded in our deliberations at making it so.

Still, Kant acknowledges that our happiness is a goal that each of us necessarily has. Our rational self ought to be alienated from and superior to our happiness even though this seems practically pathological for human beings to be similarly alienated from their happiness. And so, we are again left bifurcated. Hume subordinates morality to inclination and Kant subordinates inclination to morality. Stalemate. Given that these are, fairly undisputedly, the two most important philosophers of the modern period, and that it has taken us until the end of the twentieth century to begin to move past them, it may be that it is not only Sidgwick but modern philosophy as a whole that is perplexed, if it is truly so hard for us philosophers to find such results perplexing.

As is often the case when ancient Greek philosophy is anywhere in the picture, the way forward is back, and it will be instructive, I hope, to turn at this point to the origins of the schism in the philosophy of practical rationality. As noted above, Anscombe locates the relevant conception of 'morality' as having arisen through religious

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[10] Again, this is assuming that morality is in play. In, say, a fair competition for a job I can, *ceteris paribus*, place my own happiness above the happiness of others who are also applying and try as hard as I can to get the job. It is only when moral considerations become salient that impartiality kicks in. I thank Rachana Kamtekar for discussion of this point, though I do not think I have persuaded her to read Kant as I do.

belief, while Terence Irwin locates it specifically in Scotus' rejection of Aquinas' eudaimonism. To jump to Irwin's conclusion, this rejection occurs because Scotus thought that '[i]f happiness were our supreme end, we would not be free to choose justice over our own advantage, and we would not be free to love God above all else'.[11] On Scotus' radically astringent view, moral action requires *pure* motivation untarnished *in any way* by inclination. Moral motivation must be pure and as such defined independently of anything having to do with our own happiness. In so far as our motives to act are 'mixed' with anything having to do with our own happiness, they are not moral motives.

There is much to say by way of criticism of Scotus' view, from theological, logical, and purely moral points of view. If I may hazard, tentatively, a few remarks of a theological kind, and assuming that a God of the Judaeo-Christian variety exists, why on earth should we think that God would want us to be so alienated from ourselves, our very flesh and bone, that we ought to divorce ourselves from what will bring us happiness in order to be closer to him? This is the sort of fanaticism that gives rise to hair shirts and self-flagellation. And while some might, perhaps, find God through such penance, surely it is the mark of fanaticism and hubris to think that the denigration of the body is the only true path to spiritual wisdom. Neither the Jews nor Jesus preach asceticism. If there is a God, there is no reason to think that he would want us to hate our bodies and despise our humanity, given that we are assuming it was his blessing to us to be born into this world, in this all-too-human form, in the first place.

Logically, one must point out the invalidity in thinking that a person who starts out with a position in which their own personal happiness is their supreme end cannot end up in a place in which they love something else more than their own happiness without having made any mistakes in practical reasoning. (Kant certainly did not make this mistake.) Maturation alone may allow for such a transition. Nor is it the case that mature adults who take their own happiness as their organizing principle or final end and are reasoning well are thereby incapable of pursuing that end through valuing something else even more than their happiness: such, it might be argued, is what proper parenting is all about, or what it means to have something in one's life that is 'worth dying for'. And this need not involve any sort of

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[11] Irwin, 'Scotus and the Possibility of Moral Motivation', 163.

self-effacement of one's values whatsoever. Rather learning to value something more than one's own happiness may be part of a process of self-actualization: one learns to identify oneself with something that one sees oneself as a part of and yet has greater value than one's own happiness. If I identify myself as ϕ and yet I am only a proper part of ϕ, then without contradiction I may value ϕ more than I value myself, and indeed I may do so in a pure and completely unselfish way. This *may* involve a transcendental logic, but it is simply invalid for Scotus to conclude that eudaimonism alone keeps one from loving God, or peace, or one's children in a way which is made 'impure' by selfish thoughts about one's own happiness.

And finally, from a moral point of view, we engage themes that Julia, in particular, has addressed a number of times concerning whether or not eudaimonism is egoistic.[12] Agreeing with her, it is false to think that taking one's own happiness as one's supreme or final end means that one may not choose morality over self-interest. Of course, this might be impossible on a hedonistic understanding of 'happiness'. But surely, Scotus could not possibly have thought of Aquinas as a hedonist! Scotus must simply have held the quite false view that one cannot be a eudaimonist and think that there is anything in the world worth dying for, as if taking one's happiness as one's final end implies that one is stuck thinking of oneself as the single most important thing in the universe. In fact, whether or not being a eudaimonist keeps us from choosing morality over self-interest will depend entirely on what we take 'morality' to require of us and what we take to be in our self-interest. What is crucial is that there is no reason to think that these are intrinsically or necessarily at odds, since it is possible for me to take being moral as being in my self-interest. It is as if Scotus is saying that if I care most about what makes me happy, I cannot choose to feed my starving children before I choose to feed my own starving body. It seems likely that he made the slip, noticed first by Butler (of all people!), of conflating a care for my happiness with a care for whatever it is that makes me happy.

As a purely descriptive matter, my values, or what I think is good and what I think is bad, will be what actually determines my behaviour when decisions involving morality must be reached (weakness of will aside). If I value money, fame, and power more than

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[12] See e.g. her 'Virtue Ethics and the Charge of Egoism', in Bloomfield (ed.), *M&S-I*, 205–22.

morality, then I will certainly think I am making a sacrifice that diminishes my happiness when I do not cheat in circumstances in which I can get away with it. But if I adopt values that take morality to be more important than money, fame, or power, then morality does not ask me to make a 'sacrifice' (scare quotes needed) that diminishes my happiness in its name, if what I have to 'forgo' are stolen money, unearned accolades, or the ability to control the lives of other people.[13] If, say, I were to adopt Stoic values, such that I thought that virtue is sufficient for happiness and that my being virtuous just is my being happy, then it would be something like a category mistake to claim that I am able or unable to choose, for example, justice over my own happiness, since *ex hypothesi* being just partly constitutes my being happy. The point is not limited to the Stoics, however, but applies to any eudaimonist who takes *dikaiosunē* (justice) to be one of the virtues (at least partly) constituting *eudaimonia*.

Note that this does not entail the intuition that Sidgwick longs for, namely that good people will have good things happen to them and bad people will have bad things happen to them and not vice versa. This would obtain only if life were fair, but I am supposing that we all learnt that it is not around the time we learnt to pull up our own socks, as Julia likes to say. It implies only that I am fully capable of taking my happiness to be the final, supreme end of my life while simultaneously finding things in the world which I think are more valuable than my happiness. If I, as a eudaimonist, find X to be something worth dying for, be it liberty, God, or my children, this does not mean that I sacrifice my values or my happiness when I die for the sake of X since, given my values, I value dying for the sake of X above continuing my life. It means that, given the circumstances, dying for the sake of X is preferable to failing to live up to my values. Do I enjoy giving up my life for the sake of X? No, but presumably this is the case whenever life forces me to choose the lesser of two evils: I never enjoy choosing an evil; nevertheless, sometimes there is no choice. Does this interfere with my happiness? Well, leaving Stoicism aside for the moment, it is presumably woe unto me, the stuff of tragedy—at some level the

[13] Compare with N. Badhwar, who writes, 'the premise is that if a person *identifies* with values she regards as more important—if these values are embodied in her central dispositions of thought, emotion, and action—*then* her greatest interests will be identical with these values' ('Altruism vs Self-Interest: Sometimes a False Dichotomy', *Social Philosophy and Policy*, 10 (1993), 90–117 at 105).

answer is yes. But given the unfortunate alternatives life presents to me, we can still say I choose the one that leaves me with as much happiness as possible, that I incur the smallest possible loss to my happiness.

All of this really does no more than stand behind Julia when she argues that eudaimonism does not entail egoism. What I would like to point out is that if the 'fundamental dualism of practical reason' is founded upon the supposed impossibility of becoming happy by consistently doing the virtuous thing, it is radically mistaken. We should not think of morality and self-interest as inherently pulling in opposite directions, only definable in terms which make them mutually exclusive. We will do far better, both philosophically and within our own lives, by looking for ways in which morality and self-interest are interdependent, if not so entwined that it makes no sense to try to pull them apart. This is the only way we could even hope to unify practical rationality anyway, and developing these interdependencies will be the best way to stand a chance of ending up with both a happy life and a good will.[14]

The first move to make by way of avoiding a fundamental dualism and of unifying a happy life with moral life is to move away from forms of non-naturalism in morality. If happiness and morality are not to split our minds in two, and if our happiness is tied to our human nature, then our morality must be as well. Therefore, non-naturalism in morality has got to go. And the key premiss of this inference does seem true: human happiness is tied to human nature. (Perhaps this is one thing on which the Greeks, Hume, and

[14] I apologize for making unsupported claims here, but I defend them in *A Theory of the Good Life* (New York, forthcoming). There I take a different route to the same conclusion I read here. In the book, I diagnose the problem leading to the dualism of practical reason as stemming from a faulty conception of morality in which it is seen as a purely social phenomenon, and suggest we adopt what Frankena has called a 'formal' conception of morality. From there I argue that self-respect is necessary for happiness and that self-respect and respect for others are analytically intertwined. For more on the background, see W. Frankena, 'Recent Conceptions of Morality', in H. Castañeda and G. Nakhnikian (eds.), *Morality and the Language of Conduct* (Detroit, 1963), 1–24; for an articulation of this conception that inspired Frankena, see W. D. Falk, 'Morality, Self, and Others', in *Morality and the Language of Conduct*, 25–67, repr. in Bloomfield (ed.), *M&S-I*, 225–50. For further discussion see my entry on 'The Moral Point of View', in H. LaFollette (ed.), *The International Encyclopedia of Ethics* (Hoboken, NJ, forthcoming).

For different sorts of argument which demonstrate connections between morality and self-interest see Badhwar, 'Altruism vs Self-Interest'; J. Hampton, 'Selflessness and Loss of Self', *Social Philosophy and Policy*, 10.1 (1993), 135–65; and T. Hill, Jr., 'Servility and Self-Respect', *Monist*, 57.1 (1973), 87–104.

Kant all agree!) It is hard to conceive of what happiness for us might be in ways that are divorced from our existence as human beings, as members of *Homo sapiens*. Even if, as suggested by Aristotle at the end of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, our happiness is to be found in contemplation or meditation on matters wholly abstract, intellectual, or spiritual, it still seems as if this is a fact about us as humans and not simply a fact about happiness itself or happiness for all possible rational agents. Perhaps if there were some argument showing that happiness for every possible rational agent is to be found in such contemplation, then more would need to be said about it, but in lieu of such an argument (which is not likely to be forthcoming), it seems more reasonable to think that our happiness will be best comprehended by understanding what it is for biological creatures endowed with human nature to flourish or live well. And to avoid dualism, morality should have the same naturalistic source.

So, if we are to limit our investigations of morality and practical rationality to naturalizable phenomena, where are we to look? The answer is obviously 'human nature'. And there are two ways of developing this answer to help us with the current project. The first of these is to get our bearings by identifying some *general characteristics of human nature* which, when they are developed to maturity, yield human beings who are recognizably 'moral' from a common-sense, pre-theoretical point of view. This should point us in the general direction of what counts as good behaviour as opposed to bad. The second is to identify *the sorts of situation which require 'moral choice'* (again from a pre-theoretical point of view), and identify in a rough way which sorts of behaviour count as acting well, or correctly, or excellently in those situations.[15] Were it possible to develop such a picture of morality so that it can recognizably represent what a happy, flourishing human life looks like, an obviously choiceworthy and admirable life, a life that comes to fruition, then we can be said to be on the way to finding the unification of practical rationality for which we are looking.

In the first instance, there is of course a huge literature on the moral characteristics or lack thereof in human nature, where we

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[15] I phrase this in terms of 'moral choice' instead of 'moral thought' or 'moral deliberation', for I want to avoid the issue of having 'one thought too many', as discussed by Bernard Williams in 'Persons, Character and Morality', in Williams, *Moral Luck: Philosophical Papers 1973–1980* (Cambridge, 1982), 1–19 at 17–18. I thank Alexis Elder for her comment here, as well as for many other helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

find, on the one hand, Hobbes's picture of us as fairly brutal creatures while on the other we have Locke's picture that paints us as morally sensitive from the get-go.[16] I do not wish to subscribe to either view, since while I think we are by nature 'moral agents', I do not think, by nature, we are either good or bad moral agents; as Aristotle says, 'the virtues arise in us neither by nature nor against nature. Rather, we are able to acquire them, and reach our complete perfection through habit.'[17] I think we must recognize the plasticity of human nature, its adaptability, and appreciate that whether or not adult humans are morally good creatures will be contingent upon how they develop into the adults they are. Human nature is clearly capable of becoming either moral or immoral, and luckily that is all we really need to get this picture of *morality* going.

Which aspects of human nature should we attend to? Which should we choose to develop if we are to develop a model for a moral human? One general answer that points in the proper direction is to look to our understanding of what is 'humane' behaviour, something, by the way, which I think cannot be understood *a priori* or in terms of pure rationality. (Perhaps this, by itself, belies the reduction of morality to rationality?) I do not pretend to have a theory of what it is to be humane. Nevertheless, I think we all understand well enough what is meant by the word. We find in humanity propensities towards violence, xenophobia, and covetousness. We also find propensities towards peace, hospitality, and generosity. It is normally not very hard at all to discriminate humane from inhumane behaviour or treatment, just as it is normally easy to spot human rights violations. It is easy to see morality falling within the realm of the humane. Perhaps a rough characterization of it would be to see a humane human as someone who is compassionately fair, someone who cares about, and errs on the side of, being kind, forgiving, and merciful. If we value the humane character traits above those that lead humans to violence,

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[16] For a fuller picture of the options see J. Kupperman, *Theories of Human Nature* (Indianapolis, 2010).

[17] *NE* 1103ª24–5, trans. Irwin. While it is hard to deny the Hobbesian egocentricity of childhood, there are also some current findings in empirical psychology which lend credence to Locke's view of things. See P. Bloom, *Descartes' Baby* (New York, 2004), or A. Vaish, M. Carpenter, and M. Tomasello, 'Young Children Selectively Avoid Helping People with Harmful Intentions', *Child Development*, 81.6 (2010), 1661–9.

hatred, or envy, and develop the humane aspects of our nature, then it seems likely that we will end up with more or less moral characters. Many might argue that happiness does not lie in this direction, but even Machiavelli and Nietzsche will agree that this is the direction of morality.

So, in general, we have a naturalistic view of the direction of morality. Morality inclines towards peace and love. This is certainly not a deep truth, but its ground in the natural world as opposed to rationality, and its *a posteriori* epistemology, are controversial enough: it is easy nowadays to imagine science fiction aliens who are fully rational yet whose morality is neither gentle nor forgiving. Still, this is the way it is for us. But to turn now to the question of identifying which sorts of circumstances require moral thought, there is a familiar and well-articulated picture of the moral life that can be drawn directly from human nature which involves the virtues, where each virtue ranges over a type of situation which creatures such as we are bound often to encounter and navigate.[18] And it is in this picture of morality, as it is derived from being well-tempered and self-disciplined with regard to our appetites, courageous in the face of fear, pain, and even death, fair and honest with ourselves and others, and perspicuously wise in the ways of the world, that we can see a unification of moral goodness and human happiness, of a type of growth and maturity that expresses the best and most humane forms of humanity: virtuous or excellent human beings, barring tragedy, will be happy and moral human beings. In this picture, practical rationality does not lead to a bifurcation of the self, but exactly the opposite: *phronēsis* is explicitly a *moral* virtue that, properly developed, will lead us to live as happily as possible for creatures such as us. (It is moral because it is responsible for how, in general, we discern what is of value; more on this below.) And if this is true, it should not just make some sense but should appear naively familiar, something close to a tautology; in fact the claim is built on *a posteriori* knowledge of human nature and the human condition.

It is no accident that the Greeks chose temperance, courage, justice, and wisdom as the 'cardinal virtues'. As noted, each virtue

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[18] See e.g. M. Nussbaum, 'Non-Relative Virtues: An Aristotelian Approach', *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, 13 (1988), 32–53; P. Foot, *Natural Goodness* (Oxford, 2001); P. Bloomfield, *Moral Reality* (New York, 2001); R. Hursthouse, 'On the Grounding of the Virtues in Human Nature', in J. Szaif and M. Lutz-Bachmann (eds.), *What is Good for a Human Being?* (Berlin, 2004), 263–75.

represents the most excellent way of handling situations which quite frequently arise, given the kinds of creature that we are. Were we less social, there might still be a virtue for how 'we' (who would not really be us) engage well together when required, and perhaps there might be other virtues of being 'lone wolves' into which social creatures like us have no insight. Whatever the social virtue for these non-human beings might be in its particulars, it would be very different from our actual *dikaiosunē*, or 'justice'. If we relied on each other less, trust and honesty might not have the same importance that they do in our actual human lives. If we were physically more fragile and easily injured than we actually are, fears and behaviours that would be cowardly if we engaged in them would exhibit what might be called 'proper courage' for these frail non-human beings. Alternatively, were we to have had rock-hard exoskeletons that made physical injury or pain rare, and where death was almost never the result of injury, then 'courage' would again mean something different from what it does. Similarly, were we to be able to live off the sun's energy through some chemical process analogous to photosynthesis, such that we never had to 'eat' as we actually do, then our proper relation to our appetites would also be different, changing what 'temperance' amounts to.

Finally we turn to *phronēsis*. It is question-begging at this point simply to assume that this is what we moderns are talking about when we talk about practical rationality. To see how different things have become, one need only reflect on the fact that *phronēsis* in Latin is *prudentia*, which is our 'prudence'. Even leaving aside modern connotations of being 'a prude', self-interest is often defined in terms of prudence and set against morality as one way of addressing the question 'why be moral?'. The two leading theories of practical rationality, Hume's and Kant's, are each only partial accounts of *phronēsis*. Practical rationality for Hume says nothing about what it is proper to aim at, but only tells us instrumentally how to aim, and this is certainly only a proper part of *phronēsis*. Practical rationality for Kant tells us that it has nothing to do with aiming at all, assuming that all aiming involves merely hypothetical, teleological thought. Practical reasoning on his view enjoins us to act from certain motives, such as duty or respect for the law or ourselves and others, and while this too can be seen as a proper part of *phronēsis*, it is still far from a complete theory of it. It is the incomplete natures of Humean and Kantian theories of practical rationality, highlight-

ing only specific aspects of it to the exclusion of others, that led them
to fragmented pictures of it, ones in which fundamental dualisms
can easily take hold.

If we take practical rationality to be *phronēsis*, or a form of
wisdom, then we move towards a more substantial notion, which
can encompass considerations of motive as well as goal, and has
built into it something substantially human, or perhaps, better,
humane.[19] *Phronēsis*, being wise about practical matters of human
life, is a virtue of humanity. We should expect its *logos*, its guiding
principles or inner logic, partly to concern instrumental rationa-
lity, including a general understanding of how things work from a
practical point of view: what makes things tick and what tends to
happen as a result of what. But it will also partly concern motives,
so that we may identify when motives are relevant to doing what
ought to be done. (When it comes to paying back financial debts,
motives are not important; when it comes to trusting others, they
are very important.) Sometimes *phronēsis* will tell us consequen-
tially to let the ends justify the means, and sometimes it will tell
us deontologically to refrain from some action on principle, even
though this may keep us from getting what we would otherwise
or normally most want.

Undoubtedly, our fullest understanding of *phronēsis* will come
from seeing its relations to the other virtues since it underlies all
the virtues, both cardinal and minor, in so far as practical wisdom
aids us in figuring out how to apply principles to cases, as well as
helping in the identification of exceptions to rules. It is the key to
whatever truth is to be found in the 'unity of virtues' thesis. I am
not, of course, in a position to give a fully worked-out theory of
wisdom of any sort.[20] But it is not hard to see how *phronēsis* will fit

[19] For other contemporary philosophers who conceive of practical rationality in
similar ways see W. Quinn, 'Putting Rationality in its Place', in Quinn, *Morality and
Action* (Cambridge, 1994), 228–55; Foot, *Natural Goodness*; J. J. Thomson, *Good-
ness and Advice*, ed. A. Gutmann (Princeton, 2003); and K. Setiya, *Reasons without
Rationalism* (Princeton, 2007).

[20] In my opinion, the best empirical work on wisdom (of which I am aware) has
been done by P. Baltes's 'Berlin Wisdom Paradigm'. In many ways it confirms a
Greek conception of practical rationality/wisdom (though it was not conceived to
test this conception in particular). Baltes *et al*. develop the idea that wisdom is an
'expert system', the purpose of which is to help people navigate through what they
call the 'fundamental pragmatics of life', by which they mean: 'knowledge and judg-
ment about the essence of the human condition and the ways and means of planning,
managing, and understanding a good life. Included in the fundamental pragmat-
ics of life are, for example, knowledge about the conditions, variability, ontogentic

into a happy life. Practical wisdom is the virtue of finding out what is of value, in the most general sense of that term, and what is not of value: it tells us which ends we ought to adopt and which to avoid, and which means we ought to take to our adopted end. It must discern appearance from reality. It must see beyond the merely clever, distinguish the pleasant from the wholesome, as well as what is fun from what is good. It takes there to be nothing intrinsically wrong with cleverness, pleasure, and fun, but knows enough not to give them pride of place. If fools are trapped in error that they do not consider and therefore cannot see, the wise see the world for how it in fact is. And it is not surprising that this perspicacity, when combined with a creative ingenuity and incorporated properly into one's character, will actually become part of one's happiness in a way that foolishness cannot: doing the right thing, in the right way, at the right time, and so doing regularly, with grace and aplomb, is as good a picture of living a happy life as we will ever get.

What is perhaps most surprising in all this is the way in which Sidgwick's problem of practical rationality, as being split between egoism and the general point of view (utilitarianism), has nothing to do with the virtue of *phronēsis* but rather wholly concerns *dikaiosunē*. This is the issue Philippa Foot raised in telling us that moralists were perpetrating a fraud if they could not show us that justice is a benefit to the just person.[21] The problem is not best understood in terms of 'what to do' from the standpoint of practical rationality, but it is rather the problem of how to behave in ways which are respectful both to ourselves and to other people, es-

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changes, and historicity of life development as well as knowledge of life's obligations and life goals; understanding of the socially and contextually intertwined nature of human life, including its finitude, cultural conditioning, and incompleteness; and knowledge about oneself and the limits of one's own knowledge and the translation of knowledge into overt behavior' (P. Baltes and U. Staudinger, 'Wisdom: A Meta-heuristic (Pragmatic) to Orchestrate Mind and Virtue toward Excellence', *American Psychologist*, 55.1 (2000), 122–36 at 124); see also P. Baltes, J. Glück, and U. Kunzmann, 'Wisdom: Its Structure and Function in Regulating Successful Life Span Development', in C. R. Snyder and S. J. Lopez (eds.), *Handbook of Positive Psychology* (Oxford, 2005), 327–47.

[21] Of course, how justice can contribute to one's happiness is a (if not the) central question of moral philosophy. I attempt to answer Foot's challenge in my paper 'Justice as a Self-Regarding Virtue', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 82.1 (2011), 46–64; see also my forthcoming *A Theory of the Good Life*. For the claim about the moralist's possible fraud, from Foot, see 'Moral Beliefs', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 59 (1958–9), 83–104, repr. in Foot, *Virtues and Vices* (Berkeley, 1978), 110–31 at 125–6.

pecially when the going gets tough.²² The problem of the relation
between self and other concerns our social relations, and while there
is indeed a role for *phronēsis* in helping us navigate these relations,
how we value ourselves in general in relation to others, whether
we become arrogant, subservient, or take ourselves to be peers, is
(at least in part) a matter of fairness and for justice to decide—and
not for, shall we say, practical rationality to decide all on its own.
What is important is that we can fully capture the problem Sidgwick
wrestles with without having to split our practical rationality in two.
Put another way, given the sort of creatures we are, the problem is
not a fundamental duality within practical reason, nor some inher-
ent tension between morality and self-interest, but is rather found
in figuring out what to do in those moral situations in which self-
regarding considerations must be balanced against other-regarding
considerations.

   This is not the place to try to address this formidable issue di-
rectly, but I have done so in other work (some cited in notes above),
arguing that if we understand properly the relations which both re-
spect for others and self-respect have to our own happiness, we will
be in a position to see how immorality leads to self-disrespect and
therefore away from happiness. What can be addressed is the re-
lationship between *phronēsis* and *eudaimonia*, between practical ra-
tionality and happiness. And what is important here is the role that
goodness plays in both. For goodness ought to be the lodestone for
practical reasoning as well as what determines the shape of our final
end when understood as happiness. Taking happiness first, there is
nothing implausible at all about the idea that living a happy life is
identical to living the proverbial 'Good Life': a happy human life
is a good human life (eliding the differences between goodness and
excellence). And so, there is a sense in which it makes perfect sense
to say that a happy human being is a good human being and that this
sense of being 'a good human being' can set the normative standard
for how one ought to live. This, of course, amounts to no more than
a virtue theory of what it is to be a good human being who lives well.

   Now, of course, there is another sense in which we must acknow-
ledge with Sidgwick that bad things happen to good people, even
tragically bad things, and with all due respect to the Stoics, it seems
a bit inhuman to think that a person's happiness could or should be
completely insulated from everything that could possibly happen in

²² Cf. nn. 14 and 21 above.

the world. Especially in the case of extreme tragedy, there is some reason to think that being good and being happy can and will come apart from each other. But this does not, in itself, force us to give up on the idea that being a 'good human being' can set the standard for how to live, even in tragic circumstances: it only forces us to acknowledge that being good is sufficient only for us to be as happy as we can possibly be, given who we are and the circumstances in which we find ourselves. This slightly diluted Stoicism neverthe-less retains the high-minded value that the only thing we can do to make our lives go as well as possible is to be as virtuous as possible, while also acknowledging that human beings are not gods, and that what happens in the world we live in actually ought to matter to us, to at least some degree. We are of the world, of the Earth, so to speak. And all this supports the conclusion that, barring tragedy, being happy is being good and a good life is a happy life.

It is also goodness at which our practical rationality ought to aim, just as it is truth at which our belief-forming mechanisms ought to aim. If we value goodness, and guide the formation of our char-acters in relation to what it is to be 'a good human being', taking goodness as the goal of what we are trying to achieve in our lives, then our practical rationality will be (oriented) as it ought to be. It is goodness, we may note, that seems conspicuously absent from Humean and Kantian accounts of practical rationality. In the sense of 'goodness' that we are discussing here, the closest Hume could get to it would be to understand it in terms of our desires, and this makes a mockery of the idea of 'goodness' as any sort of normative standard at all: if anything seems obvious about humanity, it is that our desires need to be trained, controlled, moulded, and tempered before they take goodness as their object. So, clearly, there must be something good about the parts of us which engage in this tem-pering process that it does not seem as if Hume can capture. Kant, of course, begins his *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* with the idea of a 'good will', and this is not a mockery at all, though the notion of 'goodness' in Kant ends up being defined in terms of 'rightness', and 'rightness' then in terms of 'rationality' and so 'goodness' really only comes into Kant's theory of practical ratio-nality in a derivative, indirect, or perhaps it is best to say, an im-practical way: Kant gives no place of standing to the notion of a *summum bonum*, since he sees 'goodness' in this sense as requiring teleological thinking, which he thinks is inapt for morality.

But the notion of 'good will' is something which a eudaimonist may be moved by and can take as a goal. When a will is good, it will will virtue, nobility, and 'the fine' (*to kalon*). When practical rationality is as it ought to be, then the will becomes as good as it can be by being self-directed towards the good. And having a good will means not only that the will is directed towards the good, to the achievement of the good, but also, metaphysically, that the will participates in goodness itself: a good will is, after all, goodness in itself. It is the metaphysics of eudaimonism which will, in the last instance, articulate the relations between goodness, happiness, and practical rationality. Practical rationality so conceived aims at the good and is a proper part of the goodness in the world, and as a virtue, it becomes a proper part of the happiness or the goodness of the life of the person whose will it is. We ought to direct our wills towards the good, and thereby we will direct our lives towards the good. In so far as we are successful, we will live good lives and be good people. Those who are *eudaimones* have achieved their final end, have attained the state to which people ought to aspire. The *eudaimōn*, the happy person, with a will that is good, is tautologically a good person, who also thereby becomes a proper part of the goodness in the world. Striving towards this end is both what we ought to do and the only way for us to be truly happy.

Following Iris Murdoch, we do not need a God to ground morality. Metaphysically, all we need appeal to is the Good.[23] And there is no need to worry about schizophrenia or 'fundamental dualisms' in our life either. All there need be is reverence for the good: this is all we can do to make ourselves happy. The rest, we can only hope, will take care of itself.

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[23] 'On "God" and "Good"', in Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good* (New York, 1971), 45–74.

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