

ISTANBUL TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY ★ GRADUATE SCHOOL

**ACTION-GUIDING VIRTUE ETHICS: THE INDISPENSABILITY OF
PRACTICAL WISDOM AND EUDAIMONIA**

Ph.D. THESIS

İkbal BOZKAYA

**Department of Political Studies
Political and Social Thoughts PhD Program**

MARCH 2021

ISTANBUL TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY ★ GRADUATE SCHOOL

**ACTION-GUIDING VIRTUE ETHICS: THE INDISPENSABILITY OF
PRACTICAL WISDOM AND EUDAIMONIA**

Ph.D. THESIS

İkbal BOZKAYA

(419142002)

Department of Political Studies

Political and Social Thoughts PhD Program

Thesis Advisor: Assoc. Prof. Geoff BOVE

MARCH 2021

İSTANBUL TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ ★ LİSANSÜSTÜ EĞİTİM ENSTİTÜSÜ

**EYLEM KILAVUZLUĞU SAĞLAYAN ERDEM ETİĞİ: PRATİK BİLGELİK
VE EUDAIMONİA KAVRAMLARININ ZORUNLULUĞU**

DOKTORA TEZİ

İkbal BOZKAYA

(419142002)

Siyaset Çalışmaları Anabilim Dalı

Siyasal ve Toplumsal Düşünceler Doktora Programı

Tez Danışmanı: Doç. Dr. Geoff BOVE

MART 2021

İkbal BOZKAYA, a Ph.D. student of ITU Graduate School with the student ID 419142002, successfully defended the dissertation entitled “ACTION-GUIDING VIRTUE ETHICS: THE INDISPENSABILITY OF PRACTICAL WISDOM AND EUDAIMONIA”, which she prepared after fulfilling the requirements specified in the associated legislations, before the jury whose signatures are below.

Thesis Advisor : **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Geoff BOVE**
Istanbul Technical University

Jury Members : **Assistant Prof. Dr. Barry STOCKER**
Istanbul Technical University

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sandrine BERGÈS
Bilkent University

Assistant Prof. Dr. Kerem EKSEN
Istanbul Technical University

Assoc. Prof Dr. Mariusz TUROWSKI
University of Wroclaw

Date of Submission : February 9, 2021
Date of Defense : March 15, 2021





*For Gwyn, my great-souled partner
And for all women who pursue their own path despite everything*



FOREWORD

The world is experiencing incredible changes, some of which are for the worst, and some still make today better than yesterday or fifty years ago. We are individuals who have different values and dreams and we pursue happiness in so many different ways. Our happiness and wellbeing are so intimately connected to each other because of the life form we have as human beings. As ancient Greeks argued, we can form opinions about the life of individuals by looking at the *polis*, or in other words the laws and institutions of the society. *Polis*, with just laws and institutions, is a place where just individuals flourish. A society which distributes wealth in a fair way, considering the capriciousness of fortune in people's lives, is a place where benevolent, generous individuals are raised. Decay and corruption in institutions are always destined to spread the corruption to individual souls. If vice becomes the currency of ethos in the city, then it is no wonder why some people will travel to earthquake regions to loot, some people will lie to get ahead, and some will be consumed by greed at the expense of others. I believe that in this atmosphere where polarizing, irresponsible, self-centered, greedy leaders and governments predominate the world, virtue is our hope. In the midst of insanity, in order to stay sane and be at peace with oneself, to maintain integrity, virtue ethics provides a helpful insight for how to develop a virtuous character, and how to build morality from within with its focus on the agent. I think it is essential to see what virtue ethics can offer in terms of guiding our actions through an old-new ethical perspective where development of good character, focus on what kind of person to be, harmony of reasons, emotions, and motives and lastly one's life as a whole are central. In this work, I try to address the objection that virtue ethics cannot provide action-guidance and I argue that eudaimonistic virtue ethics offers us a helpful alternative for how to become a good person.

I would like to thank my supervisor Geoff Bove for his feedback, his encouragement and support, and for bearing the crooked system with me as well as for the feasts he threw for many people over the years. He is a true embodiment of Dionysus. I also would like to thank Barry Stocker for his challenging feedback and his continental outlook that kept me on my toes at all times. I also want to express my gratitude for Sandrine Bergès for her helpful, intriguing and very kind feedback. She is an exemplar of the virtue of care. I would like to thank my other jury members Kerem Eksen and Mariusz Turowski for their questions and insightful comments during my defense. I must also thank the academics I met in "Virtue, Skill and Practical Reason" conference and 3rd Annual SWIP-TR conference, especially Frans Svenson, Jason Kawall, Richard Hamilton, Roopen Majithia for their comments and questions; Hatice Nur Erkızan and Özlem Duva for their conversations and Saniye Vatansever for her hospitality, encouragement and her contagious joy. Special thanks to Ivan Soll for giving me the chance to study at University of Wisconsin-Madison. I am indebted to the academics who participated in 'the Greeks' reading group for their intellectual vigor and professional collaboration; it reminded me of the true nature of academia. Especially, I wish to thank Paula Gottlieb and Emily Fletcher for creating an

atmosphere of intellectual open-mindedness and challenging yet tensionless discussions.

I would also like to express my gratitude for my research assistant colleagues Verda Bingöl, Görkem Giray, Gizem Mater, Mehmet Okan and Yavuz Erdihan for their friendship and also for helping me prepare for my defense. I owe special thanks to Verda Bingöl for being a great friend, for helping me submit the hard copy of my dissertation while I am continents away.

An earlier version of Chapter 3 was published in Turkish as “Christine Swanton’un Çoğulcu Erdem Etiğine Bir Bakış” in *Dokuz Eylül Journal of Humanities* 6:1, 2019, pp. 280-299. I would like to thank the anonymous referees for their feedback on it. I also owe thanks to the anonymous reviewer of my article “The Importance of *Eudaimonia* for Action-Guiding Virtue Ethics” which is forthcoming in *The Journal of Value Inquiry*. I should thank Istanbul Technical University Graduate School of Arts and Social Sciences which is merged with ITU Graduate School for funding me for the conferences I attended.

I have come to understand very well the importance of community and its transformative role by experiencing the crippling dysfunctionality and decaying quality in universities throughout my graduate studies. I would like to thank those nameless people for teaching me vice. They showed me what to steer away from. And I hope that what the future holds is better for those who are committed to education, knowledge, virtue and freedom.

Finally, I would love to thank my chosen family, my husband Gwyn for his kindness, support, and his intellectual profundity that always broadens my horizons.

March 2021

İkbal Bozkaya
(Research Assistant)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
FOREWORD.....	ix
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	xi
SUMMARY	xiii
ÖZET.....	xv
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Thesis Question and The Main Argument of the Dissertation.....	1
1.2 Synopsis of Chapters.....	2
1.3 Definitions and Themes	6
2. THE RESURGENCE OF VIRTUE ETHICS AND ACTION-GUIDANCE	
OBJECTION	13
2.1 The Resurgence of Virtue Ethics	13
2.2 Action-Guidance Objection from Its Infancy to Its Sophisticated Persona	18
2.3 Virtue Ethics as an Alternative Normative Theory.....	27
3. EUDAIMONIST VIRTUE ETHICS.....	33
3.1 A Brief Introduction to the Central Concepts of <i>Eudaimonia</i> , Practical Wisdom and Virtue and Their Relationship.....	34
3.2 Aristotelian Outline for Eudaimonist Virtue Ethics.....	36
3.3 Hursthouse’s Fine-Tuning to Eudaimonist Virtue Ethics	38
3.3.1 Virtuous agents and their relation to virtuous actions.....	39
3.3.2 <i>Tu Quoque</i> response: Rejection of mathematical model of decision-making	43
3.4 Objections to Eudaimonist Virtue Ethics	47
3.4.1 Circularity objection.....	47
3.4.2 “Right but not virtuous” objection	51
3.4.3 “Virtuous but not right” objection.....	55
4. PLURALIST (TARGET-CENTERED) VIRTUE ETHICS	59
4.1 The Nature of the Virtue	59
4.1.1 The field or fields of virtue	61
4.1.2 Modes and bases of moral responsiveness/acknowledgement.....	62
4.2 The Target of a Virtue: Swanton’s Account of Rightness	65
4.2.1 Multidimensional features of targets.....	67
4.2.2 Overall virtuousness.....	73
4.3 A Critical Outlook.....	75
5. SENTIMENTALIST (AGENT-BASED) VIRTUE ETHICS	85
5.1 Right Action: Expression of Admirable Inner States.....	85
5.1.1 Positioning agent-based virtue ethics.....	86
5.1.2 Right action and the virtuous motive	88
5.2 Problems of Agent-based Virtue Ethics	91
5.3 Admirability of Virtues: Intuitive Justification for Agent-based Virtue Ethics	98

6. REJOINDERS TO HURSTHOUSE: THE IMPORTANCE OF PRACTICAL WISDOM	109
6.1 Revisions to Hursthouse's Account of Right Action	110
6.2 Practical Wisdom (<i>Phronesis</i>): A Guide to Virtuous Living	119
7. THE INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF PRACTICAL WISDOM AND EUDAIMONIA.....	133
7.1 Practical Wisdom and <i>Eudaimonia</i> : Interlocking Themes.....	134
7.2 <i>Eudaimonia</i> : The Ultimate End.....	143
7.2.1 Aristotelian <i>Eudaimonia</i>	143
7.2.2 Contemporary Eudaimonist Virtue Ethicists.....	150
7.3 Returning to <i>Eudaimonia</i> in 21 st Century: Reinterpretation of Aristotelian Naturalism	155
8. CONCLUSION.....	165
REFERENCES.....	169
CURRICULUM VITAE	181



ACTION-GUIDING VIRTUE ETHICS: THE INDISPENSABILITY OF PRACTICAL WISDOM AND EUDAIMONIA

SUMMARY

The goal of this dissertation is to respond to the question whether virtue ethics can provide action-guidance. In order to do so, the work is divided into eight chapters. First chapter introduces the thesis question and the main arguments of the dissertation and provides the synopsis of chapters as well as definition of some terms and themes. The second chapter presents the revival of virtue ethics and action-guidance objection. The following three chapters present different strands of virtue ethics which particularly deal with action-guidance and account of right action. Third chapter presents eudaimonistic virtue ethics by introducing the central concepts such as virtue, practical wisdom and eudaimonia as understood in Aristotle's ethics and focusing on Rosalind Hursthouse's systematic account of eudaimonistic virtue ethics. Fourth chapter explores Christine Swanton's target-centered (pluralist) virtue ethics and discusses the difficulties it bears in terms of locating practical wisdom, and the relations of virtues with each other. Fifth chapter looks at Michael Slote's agent-based (sentimentalist) virtue ethics and discusses the importance of fine inner states in his account of right action, yet emphasizes the failure of accounting for doing the right thing and doing it for the right reasons. Sixth chapter focusses on the revisited eudaimonistic accounts of right action, and argues that practical wisdom is the key notion to understand how virtue ethics can guide action, even of novices'. Seventh chapter argues the interconnectedness of practical wisdom and eudaimonia, and that eudaimonia is indispensable for a virtue ethics to provide action guidance because it gives content to practical wisdom and validates virtues. Eighth chapter provides the general summary of the dissertation and the main arguments.



EYLEM KILAVUZLUĞU SAĞLAYAN ERDEM ETİĞİ: PRATİK BİLGELİK VE EUDAIMONİA KAVRAMLARININ ZORUNLULUĞU

ÖZET

Bu tezin amacı erdem etiğinin eylem-kılavuzluğu sağlayamamasına ilişkin eleştiriye bir cevap üretmektir. Bu amaç doğrultusunda eylem-kılavuzluğu eleştirisine cevap üreten çağdaş erdem etiği çeşitleri incelenmekte ve erdem etiğinin klasik ve antik okuması olan eudaimonistik erdem etiğinin daha iyi bir cevap üretebildiği tartışılmaktadır.

Birinci bölüm tez sorusunu ve tezin ana argümanını tanıtmakla birlikte her bölümün özetini ve tezde kullanılan bazı kavram ve temaların tanımını sunuyor. İkinci bölüm 20. Yüzyılın ikinci yarısında erdem etiği kuramına deontoloji ve yararcılık kuramlarına bir alternatif olarak geri dönülmesini ve eylem-kılavuzluğu eleştirisini ele alıyor. Burada modern ahlak kuramlarının eylem-merkezli ve ikilemleri çözmeye yönelik etik yaklaşımlarının karşısında erdem etiği kuramının öne sürdüğü eyleyen-merkezli, kişinin tüm hayatını konu alan, kişinin saikleri, motivasyonları ve duygularına odaklanan, ahlaki gelişimi ve erdemi merkeze alan etik yaklaşımın farklılığı tartışılmakta. Böylece bu yaklaşımdaki farktan doğan bir sonuç olarak eylem-kılavuzluğunun erdem etiği için farklı olacağının altı çizilmekte. Zira eylem-kılavuzluğu eleştirisinin altında yatan normatif kuramlara dair bazı varsayımlar etik yaklaşımları arasındaki farkı dikkate almamakta. Bu bölümde eylem-kılavuzluğu eleştirisinin erdem etiğinden tam olarak ne beklediği analiz edilmekte ve evrensel bir ilkenin doğru eylemi tanımlarken karar alma sürecini de modellemesinin mümkünlüğü tartışılmakta. Sonuç olarak normatif kuramların insanın ahlaki yaşantısını tekil sorunların çözümü ve karar sürecini modelleyen bir ilkeler algoritması gerekliliğine indirgemenin sorunları açıklanmaktadır.

Üçüncü bölüm eudaimonist erdem etiğine odaklanmaktadır. Burada öncelikli olarak eudaimonist erdem etiğinin merkeze aldığı erdem, pratik bilgelik ve *eudaimonia* kavramları tanıtılmaktadır. Eudaimonist erdem etiğinin başat esini sayılan Aristoteles'in etik kuramında bu kavramların birbiriyle ilişkisi ve doğru eylem tanımı verilmektedir. Ardından bu konuda en sistematik kuramı üretmiş olan Rosalind Hursthouse'un eudaimonist erdem etiği incelenmekte ve ona yöneltilen eleştiriler tartışılmaktadır.

Dördüncü bölüm bir diğer çağdaş erdem etiği modeli olarak hedef-merkezli (çoğulcu) erdem etiğini tartışmaktadır. Bu kuramın kurucusu olan Cristine Swanton'un erdem kavramının doğasını nasıl açıkladığını ve doğru eylem tanımını erdemin hedeflerini gerçekleştirmek üzerinden yapan savını incelemektedir. Swanton'un çoğulcu yaklaşımı ahlaki duyarlılığımızın bir kavrama indirgenemeyeceğini, erdemin temellerinin ve eyleme biçimlerinin farklı değerlerden hareket ettiğini savunur. Bu

bakımdan erdem kavramı sadece *eudaimonia*'yı etkin kılan edimler olarak kabul edilmez ve dünyanın farklı taleplerine yeterince iyi cevap üreten karakter özellikleri olarak karşımıza çıkar. Bu bölümde Swanton'un kuramının iki soru karşısında karşılaştığı zorluk tartışılmakta: 1) Erdem birliğini sağlayan bir temel var mı? Yoksa, erdemleri lokal karakter özellikleri olarak nasıl kavramsallaştırabiliriz? 2) Dünyanın taleplerini anlama ve ahlaki öğeleri saptama ve nasıl eylemememiz gerektiğine karar veren pratik bilgeliğin kuramdaki yeri nedir ve nasıl açıklanır?

Beşinci bölüm Michael Slote'un temsil ettiği eyleyen-merkezli (sentimentalist) erdem etiğine odaklanmaktadır. Slote'un kuramında öznenin saikleri, motivasyonları, duygu ve düşüncelerinin doğru eylemle arasındaki bağ incelenmekte ve bu kuramın eudaimonist erdem etiği ile benzerlikleri ve farklılıkları tartışılmaktadır. Burada sentimentalist erdem etiğine yöneltilen eleştiriler karşısında, bu kuramın doğru eylem ve saiklerin arasındaki kurduğu bağ bakımından aydınlatıcı fakat 'doğru eylem' ve 'doğru sebeplerden doğan doğru eylem' arasındaki farkı çizmemesi ve pratik bilgeliğin yerine empati ve iyi kalp kavramlarının konmasından doğan zorluklar tartışılmaktadır.

Altıncı bölümün amacı pratik bilgeliğin eylem-kılavuzluğu için gerekliliğini açıklamaktır. Bu amaçla öncelikle eudaimonist erdem etiğinin karşılaştığı eleştiriler karşısında revize edilen doğru eylem tanımları analiz edilmekte ve sonuç olarak tüm tanımlarda en gerekli ve eyleme rehberlik eden kavramın pratik bilgelik olduğu savunulmaktadır. Bu bölüm pratik bilgeliği ve bu bilgeliğin nasıl geliştiğini açıklayabilirsek erdem etiğinin henüz tam erdemli olmayan öznelere için de rehberlik sağlayabileceğini öne sürmektedir. Pratik bilgeliğin gelişimini açıklamak için pratik bilgelik ve beceri kazanımı, ustalık ve uzmanlık gerektiren beceriler üstüne yapılan empirik çalışmalar arasındaki benzerlikler işaret edilmekte ve erdem kazanımının beceri kazanmak gibi eylemin tekrarına bağlı olduğu açıklanmaktadır. Bu bölümde pratik bilgeliğin gelişimsel doğası özellikle eylem-kılavuzluğuna ışık tutması bakımından beceri kazanımı ile benzerliği yönünden irdelenmektedir fakat pratik bilgeliğin hedeflediği amaçlar bakımından becerilerden farklı olduğu, lokal ve tekil amaçların yanında (örneğin cesaret erdemini gerçekleştirmek için farklı bağlamlarda cesaret erdemini ifade eden farklı eylemler sergilemek: kanserle mücadeledeki cesaret ve savaş alanında sergilenen cesaret) pratik bilgeliğin 'insan için iyi yaşam' yani *eudaimonia*'ya sıkı bir bağlantısı olduğuna işaret edilmektedir.

Yedinci bölüm pratik bilgelik ve *eudaimonia* arasındaki bağlantıyı konu edinir. Bu bölüm eyleme kılavuzluk edebilecek erdem etiği türleri arasında eudaimonist erdem etiğinin daha iyi bir kavramsal çerçeve ve kaynak sunduğunu savını desteklemektedir. Bu amaçla bölüm ikiye ayrılmıştır. İlk kısım pratik bilgelik ve *eudaimonia* arasındaki birbirini gerektiren ve açıklayan ilişkiye odaklanır. Pratik bilgeliğin seçimlerinde tarafsız olmadığı ve pratik bilgeliğin referans aldığı değerler kümesinin *eudaimonia* kavramı ile kapsandığı tartışılmaktadır. Bu bakımdan *eudaimonia* doğru eylem tanımını ve eylem-kılavuzluğunu etkileyen bir kavram olarak karşımıza çıkar. Bölümün ikinci kısmında *eudaimonia* kavramının içerdiği anlam, Aristoteles'in felsefesindeki açıklama ve çağdaş yorumu ele alınmaktadır. *Eudaimonia*'nın içeriğinin açıklanması hangi karakter özelliklerinin erdem olduğunun belirlenmesi ve böylece erdemleri temellendirmesi ve erdem birliğini sağlaması bakımından konu edinmiştir. Aristoteles'in *eudaimonia* kavramını açıklamak için kullandığı natüralizm yaklaşımı çağdaş neo-Aristotelesçi eudaimonistlerin insan doğasını nasıl açıkladıklarına ışık tutması açısından verilmiştir. İnsan için iyi yaşam nedir sorusunu yanıtlarken insanın işlevi, dolayısıyla insanın doğasına odaklanan eudaimonist yaklaşımı doğalcılık

yanılgısı (naturalistic fallacy) eleştirisinden kurtarmak için insan doğasının biyolojik ve etolojik olarak sabit bir doğa olarak değil, değerlendirmeci bir kavrayışla açıklanabileceğini savunmaktadır. Yani insanın doğasının değişmez ve belirleyici olan biyolojik doğa ile tanımlanmadığını, insan doğasına özgü olan akıl (reason) kapasitesinin edimlerimiz için sebep belirleyen ve etik kural ve ilkeleri belirlerken doğamızın diğer özelliklerinden etkilenen (örneğin acıya duyarlı oluşumuz, sosyal oluşumuz, arkadaşlık ve yakınlığa değer verişimiz) fakat bunlarca belirlenmeyen bir doğası olduğunu savunur.

Sonuç bölümü tezde tartışılan konuların kısa bir özetini içermekle birlikte tezin ana argümanını tekrarlar.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Thesis Question and The Main Argument of the Dissertation

The question that this dissertation tries to respond to is whether virtue ethics can provide action guidance. The main ideas that I defend in this dissertation, in broad outline, are as follows. The action-guidance that is demanded from virtue ethics is unfair in the sense of asking a precision of decision-making that other theories also have difficulty to express with their universal principles. Virtue ethics can provide action-guidance, yet it cannot be captured in one principle that everything is derived from because ethical life is too complicated, and the matters of ethics do not have the precision of sciences such as geometry, and also human life, what we care about, what we find worthwhile is more complex than one principle can organize. Thus, the virtue ethical outlook differs from modern moral theories in its evaluation of the agent, the agent's life as a whole, her inner motives, feelings and reasons which must be harmonious to become good. Being good is not a static state and it necessarily involves doing good, so in virtue ethics we can find action-guidance that is built from the inside. I argue that right action can be defined through what a fully virtuous agent would do since the virtuous person's character and the reasons for virtuous actions are intimately connected. Practical wisdom required by every moral virtue is the key to explaining how action-guidance can work for virtue ethics, and if we can explain the improvement of practical wisdom, the theory can also guide novices: approximating the fully virtuous people despite their shortcomings is thus still analogous to the ideal of virtuous agency. The development of practical wisdom, as opposed to a mechanical, ends-means calculator, depends on habituating by exercising virtue (like acquiring skills), yet it also includes turning one's gaze to what is good for creatures like us. In this sense I argue that practical wisdom is conceptually connected to *eudaimonia* and good deliberation involves not only choosing 'this' and 'that' but also the knowledge of why. We can simply say that "the good person has a metalog and not a mere katalog mentality" (Gottlieb, 2009, p. 213). That is why I argue that virtue, practical wisdom and *eudaimonia* are concepts that support and explain each other in ways that are

inseparable, and for virtue ethics to guide action it is necessary to establish their interconnectedness.

1.2 Synopsis of Chapters

In Chapter 2, I present the historical revival of virtue ethics in order to see its background, as well as to show its relevance to conceptualization of the problem. I argue that the revival of virtue ethics underpins the difference of ethical outlooks between quandary ethics, which focuses on a solution-oriented, almost legalistic form of theorizing, and a virtue ethical outlook that focuses on the totality of the agent's life, the agent's internal life, motives, reasons, feelings. This kind of ethical outlook aims at the enlightenment of the agent which involves acquiring a harmony between reasons, feelings and motives. For virtue ethics, becoming good comprises of a more all-encompassing and integrative ethical outlook. This outlook does not necessarily mean the rejection of rules and principles, yet it recognizes the complexity of life which makes it difficult to hold one universalizable principle that provides an algorithm for right action and a model to guide the agent with a decision-making procedure. Thus, as I analyze the action-guidance objection I focus on these demands

- a) a consistent set of values and arguments that can be subsumed under one principle,
- b) a model that guides the agent through the decision-making procedure in order to show that (b) cannot be merely explained and modeled on (a).

Moreover, even modern moral theories' application of principles by the agent require a decision-making procedure which is not given by the account of right action; hence application of the principle "maximize happiness" would depend on what the agent takes as the definition of 'happiness'. And even if that is defined in terms pleasure, and higher pleasure is given a priority for greater happiness, the application would greatly depend on the agent's decision-making procedure. This conception of codifiability which implies that a (set of) principle(s) or universal rule(s) should be the criterion for right action as well as a clear decision-making procedure for any rational being is not the only option for an action-guiding normative ethics. Hence, I argue that the virtue ethical outlook is not devoid of action-guidance; it is a different kind of action-guidance.

In the following three chapters I look at different versions of virtue ethics which especially deal with action-guidance and provide an account of right action in the form

of a single principle. These versions are classified in terms of their background and the fundamental influences they represent.

In Chapter 3, I look at eudaimonistic virtue ethics, which can be counted as the most famous, typical neo-Aristotelian, naturalistic version. I introduce the concepts that are important to eudaimonistic virtue ethics and discuss the connectedness of the concepts of virtue, practical wisdom and *eudaimonia*. I present Aristotle's account of right action, which can be understood through virtuous agency in order to exhibit its similarities with Rosalind Hursthouse's eudaimonistic virtue ethics. As I analyze Hursthouse's paradigm definition of right action as what a virtuous agent would characteristically do in similar circumstances, I look at the virtuous person's relation to virtuous actions. In response to challenges that the primacy of agency invites circularity, and that right action is reduced to the primacy of agency, I argue that virtuous agency and virtuous actions are conceptually connected to each other in the sense that there are ranges of reasons for virtues (in a way independent of virtuous agency) that virtuous agents engages with also having proper values, feelings, and motives that support them. In this chapter, to emphasize the difficulty to address the precision in decision-making procedures, I examine Hursthouse's *tu quoque* response to discuss how modern moral theories fare in the face of the action guidance objection, especially with regard to the decision-making procedure. Showing that the precision in decision-making is also question begging for modern moral theories, I discuss how action-guidance is still possible without this kind of formulaic precision. I finish this chapter by introducing the further objections to Hursthouse's account of right action - the circularity objection, the "right but not virtuous" objection, and the "virtuous but not right" objection. I discuss how Hursthouse's eudaimonistic virtue ethics can respond to these objections.

In Chapter 4, I present Christine Swanton's target-centered (pluralistic) virtue ethics. Swanton provides a compelling and extremely interesting account of virtue in its complex profile which relies on the plurality of the grounds that validate them. Unlike eudaimonistic virtue ethics, human flourishing (or *eudaimonia*) is not the only basis for what makes a character trait virtue. I discuss Swanton's pluralistic virtue ethics especially with regard to the nature of the virtue, and the plurality of the fields, modes and bases of moral acknowledgement that give rise to a special account of right action. I introduce the target-centered approach of rightness which simply indexes rightness

to the achievement of the targets of a specific virtue. Regardless of the agency and the agent's life as a whole, Swanton's account provides an excellent discussion of how the pluralism that she relies on informs an account of right action, that which is defined through hitting the relevant targets of the virtue. This allows her to avoid the objections that are directed to Hursthouse's account. At the same time I argue that Swanton's account has difficulties regarding 1) whether there is a connection between virtues, or whether they are distinct, 2) whether the demands of the world require us to use some kind of practical wisdom in order to recognize which ends and virtues should be targeted, and if so, how to conceptualize this practical wisdom within a pluralistic moral approach. With regard to the first difficulty, I argue that Swanton's profile of virtues as based on the multifaceted and pluralistic demands of the world does not give a clear picture about how the demands of the world shapes them, whether it unifies them or situates them distinctly. I argue that this issue is connected with the second difficulty because hitting the targets of virtues requires a wise deliberation (or practical wisdom), yet it is not clear what role is given to practical wisdom and how it is employed responding to the demands of the world.

In Chapter 5, I examine Michael Slote's agent-based (sentimentalist) virtue ethics. I present his "right action as the expression of admirable inner states" thesis, which is similar to Aristotle's *act from virtue* prescription. I explain Slote's non-teleological virtue ethics which focuses on benevolence and caring as its most fundamental denominators. The rightness of an action is based on the fine motive that the action expresses in his account, and I argue that he provides an invaluable insight for the importance of the inner life of the agent and its relevance to rightness of an action. I discuss the difficulties that Slote's sentimentalist virtue ethics engenders, particularly in terms of reducing rightness to the admirability of the inner motives of the agent. Respectively I discuss the autism objection, which states that admirable agent with admirable inner motives, no matter what she does, would do the right thing as long as she carries this admirable inner motive. I also discuss a related objection that argues that a vicious person would never be able to succeed in fulfilling her obligations because whatever she would do would be wrong as long as she does not have admirable inner motives for it. While I acknowledge the relevance of motives to the rightness of actions, I argue that Slote's account, by failing to distinguish between 'doing the right thing' and 'doing it for the right reasons,' gives rise to counterintuitive

results. In the second part of this chapter, I focus on the justification of virtues based on the intuitive admirability of virtuous motives. I discuss Slote's rejection of practical wisdom in favor of the notion of empathy, and I argue that empathy cannot replace practical wisdom that develops through experience and is connected to a wholesome view of the world' and empathy cannot be sufficient to act virtuously.

In Chapter 6, I return to eudaimonistic virtue ethics. First, I present rejoinders to Hursthouse which take into account self-improvement, self-control and advice taking counterexamples maintained by the 'right but not virtuous' objection. Respectively, I look at advice model, approval model, decent person model, decent person's approval model, and finally the "reasons of the virtuous person" model. Instead of using the definition that a right action is one that the virtuous person would characteristically perform, these revisions replace either the first part (virtuous person), the second part (what she would characteristically do), or both. I argue that all of these revisions tell us that one thing is indispensable to develop an account of right action and action-guidance: practical wisdom. In the rest of this chapter I improve the developmental concept of practical wisdom that informs action-guidance and tells us how virtue ethics can provide action-guidance. Thus, I look at the analogy between acquiring practical wisdom and acquiring skills and empirical studies of expertise. I conclude the chapter by arguing that practical wisdom is distinct in terms of "the end" it aims at and is inextricable from the conception of *eudaimonia*.

In Chapter 7, I explore the relation between practical wisdom and *eudaimonia*. The first part of the chapter serves the main purpose, and the second part of the chapter focuses on the concept of *eudaimonia* as a validating ground for virtue. I argue that practical wisdom is not neutral in this deliberation and the set of values; understanding what is praiseworthy and worthwhile is grounded in the conception of *eudaimonia* that informs the choices of practical wisdom. Thus, I defend the view that *eudaimonia* is the necessary orientation that directs and structures the particulars, and thus locates practical wisdom, gives content to its value judgements and validates the virtues. I argue that, if it is to be an action-guiding theory, *eudaimonia* is an indispensable part of the theory. In the second part of the chapter, I offer a conceptualization of *eudaimonia* based on human flourishing. In order to do so, I explain Aristotle's account of *eudaimonia*, what is included in it, and the formal criteria that are necessary for the final end. I further the discussion by looking at the contemporary revisions of

eudaimonia, paying specific attention to neo-Aristotelian naturalism that they employ. Supporting my claim that *eudaimonia* is conceptually connected to practical wisdom and the virtues, I address the worries that state eudaimonistic virtue ethics produce a circular account of right action, and that neo-Aristotelian naturalism fails to regard the ‘is/ought’ distinction and commits the naturalistic fallacy. I discuss that the definition of right action as that which a virtuous agent would characteristically do does not create a vicious circularity, because the virtuous activity that the practically wise person engages with is not virtuous *only* because she does so, but rather virtuous activity is constitutive of the good life, and she does so having this reason. In response to the charges of committing a naturalistic fallacy, I argue that it is only applicable if the human nature that *eudaimonia* bases its judgments on is not an evaluative concept. In order to show that human nature is an evaluative concept, I discuss Hursthouse’s and McDowell’s naturalism which highlight that the concept of human nature is not biologically or ethologically fixed.

1.3 Definitions and Themes

Words have meanings that tie them to certain contexts, cultures and eras. Concepts have a more sophisticated ability to map out in its historicity. Being constantly reminded by our peers in academia and by friends who have analytical approaches to meanings that are meant, I think it will be helpful to define some terms and concepts that are used in this thesis. I understand the importance and difficulty of the clarity to the level of fixity for some concepts, and my definitions herein will serve as a simplified clarification. All these definitions can be contested and can be subjects of another book or dissertation, yet I intend to introduce what I mean by some concepts and terms as I use them in order to avoid confusion.

Virtue ethics

Virtue ethics as a term is introduced to mark an ethical theory which focuses on the virtue of character; this is what differentiates it from consequentialism (which emphasizes the goodness of state of affairs and consequences) and deontology (which emphasizes duties and rules). The introduction of the term can be coined with the revival of virtue ethics in 1960s, yet the roots can be found in various ancient Greek

philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, and the Epicureans¹ and also ancient Confucian philosophers². The tradition of ancient Greek ethics was adopted by early Christian philosophers such as in the sense of the role of moral virtues as complimentary ones to theological virtues.³ After middle ages, the concept of virtue is also explored in a secular way and as part of a larger inquiry about human nature by David Hume (1960). A century later Friedrich Nietzsche employed virtue and vice concepts in his philosophy in order to overturn the legitimized Christian (slave) virtue terms which expressed weakness, self-abasement and denial of life in exchange for virtues that express strength and affirmation of life⁴. His philosophy as ‘revaluation of values’ and his focus on virtues of the mature individual can be read as a species of virtue ethics.⁵ ‘Virtue’ as a term never disappeared from philosophical writings and is an inextricably important moral concept for consequentialist and deontological ethics. Yet, I separate these theories whereby virtue is not foundational and is reducible to rightness or performance of duty, or is defined as a tendency to perform actions that produce good outcomes.⁶ I take virtue ethics as the moral theory which gives a foundational or central role to virtue, one that has explanatory primacy in the justification of an action. In this thesis I look at versions of virtue ethics that develop a systematic response to how character and its development is central to explanations of right action. I present three versions of virtue ethics which have different influences. Eudaimonistic virtue ethics improves on the ancient Greek ethics and particularly is shaped by Aristotle. Target-centered (pluralist) virtue ethics draws on plural backgrounds which are influenced by Nietzsche, Kant and consequentialist thought. Agent-based (sentimentalist) virtue ethics is inspired by British philosophers like Hume and Hutcheson. It defines virtue as an admirable character trait and bases

¹ See (Kamtekar, 2013) for an overview of Ancient virtue ethics which focuses on the nature of virtue, practical wisdom and virtue’s connection to a well-lived life.

² See (Ivanhoe, 2013) where he discusses virtue ethics of Mengzi (also the later philosopher Wang) in which virtue is primarily described in terms of ‘certain broadly construed emotions’ (p.49). In this sense, his Confucian virtue ethics is closer to Humean and sentimentalist virtue ethics.

³ See (Porter, 2013) for virtue ethics received by Christian philosophers in the medieval period.

⁴ The concept of virtue is existent throughout his writings, yet especially see (Nietzsche, 1996) where he argues that slave revolt morality’s virtues should be overturned since they are servile virtues which are created as opposed to masters’ virtues that express will to power, strength and affirmation for life. See also Nietzsche (2007) and (2003). I also covered some of these issues concerning the herd morality and virtues that are born out of resentment in Nietzsche’s philosophy in my MA thesis (Bozkaya, 2014).

⁵ See Christine Swanton (2014) and (2015). She argues that Nietzsche’s philosophy can be positioned in a virtue ethical theory which are defined as a family of ethical theory in which virtue concepts are central.

⁶ See (Watson, 1990) and (Oakley, 1996)

morality on feeling rather than reason. I acknowledge the important influence of different traditions and backgrounds, yet I want to focus on theories of virtue ethics that are concerned with the nature of virtue, and the role of character in the justification of action. Considering the scope of the thesis, these backgrounds will be explained and developed as long as they serve the overall purpose of the thesis.

Neo-Aristotelianism

Herein neo-Aristotelianism is taken within the context of virtue ethics. As the name suggests, it is the view that is influenced by Aristotle with regard to virtue's nature as being entrenched dispositions of character and intellect that are essential for a flourishing life along with some external goods. Neo-Aristotelianism characterizes outlooks that follow Aristotelian teleology in the sense that virtuous activity includes natural goodness for human beings and enables them to live a good human life. Thus, neo-Aristotelianism integrates *eudaimonia* as being the 'the sort of happiness worth having', and conceptualizes virtue as entrenched character traits that are responsive to certain sorts of reasons.⁷ Another central idea that is adopted from Aristotle is practical wisdom (*phronesis*) which is involved in every virtue and is 'the ability to reason correctly about practical matters'.⁸ Yet, 'neo' refers to some modern departures from Aristotle. For instance, neo-Aristotelians reject Aristotle's views on slavery and women, or they include virtues that Aristotle did not consider as virtue (like universal benevolence)⁹. To be a Neo-Aristotelian virtue ethicist means following the foundational tenets of Aristotle's ethical writings such as the nature of virtue, practical wisdom and *eudaimonia*, yet also might mean moving away from some of these tenets, and applying his philosophy to novel situations and cases that he said nothing or so little about.

Ethical Naturalism: Neo-Aristotelian Naturalism as Ethical Naturalism

Naturalism is a view that can be employed in various disciplines to renunciate the element of "super-natural" in the explanation of objects and properties which cannot only be comprehended by *a priori* theorizing. I do not intend to account for scientific

⁷ See (Hursthouse, 2001, p. 11).

⁸ See (Hursthouse, 2001, p. 13).

⁹ The virtue of benevolence might be taken as equivalent to the virtue of magnanimity which refers to greatness of soul, and awareness of one's worth and nobility in helping one's fellow citizens. So, I think Aristotle's virtue of magnanimity is not as encompassing as we understand from benevolence today. See *NE*, IV, 3 in order to see Aristotle's usage of it. I am grateful to Geoff Bove for pointing out the virtue of magnanimity in Aristotle.

naturalism, yet the similarity refers to conceiving of reality cannot be exclusively belong to the *a priori* theorizing because there is a natural order that compromises everything.¹⁰ Ethical naturalism in the most general sense is the view that construes a continuity between the ethical and the natural. Different versions of ethical naturalism of such can be found in thinkers like Aristotle, David Hume, and John Stuart Mill. For instance, in Mill's philosophy the moral value is derived from the observable fact that human beings seek pleasure and avoid pain. Thus, he also applied naturalism to show that 'the ethical' is connected to the natural facts and properties. Neo-Aristotelian naturalism explains moral value of virtue on the basis of facts about human nature. Both Millian and Neo-Aristotelian naturalisms are versions of moral realism which hold that there are objective and mind-independent moral facts. According to these naturalistic moral realists, moral judgments or moral values such as 'maximizing happiness is good' or 'virtue is good' can be justified or validated by appeal to some natural facts that can be found in human nature, natural life-cycles or life forms. On the other hand, David Hume's method can also be called naturalistic, yet his naturalism cannot be classified as moral realism, but rather a non-cognitivist/ expressivist naturalism. In my work, I use ethical naturalism to refer to Neo-Aristotelian naturalism exclusively, and I refer to the non-cognitivist naturalism of Hume as sentimentalism which I will explain below. As a method of justification, neo-Aristotelian naturalism is employed by eudaimonistic virtue ethics as I will discuss in Chapter 3 and Chapter 7.

Wide-reflective equilibrium

Wide Reflective equilibrium is a method that seeks coherence between our moral judgements, the principles or rules that we think generate these judgments and backgrounds that supports these. The method is originally introduced by John Rawls (1974) in order to justify a theory of justice through examination of beliefs, and principles so that to achieve a reflective equilibrium between these beliefs, intuitions, judgements, principles that produce certain judgements and the background theory in a way that counterintuitive or challenging beliefs are revised or left.¹¹ With the method of wide reflective equilibrium, the justification of a theory of ethics does not have to single out a foundation that everything derives from, rather it means to look

¹⁰ See the entry "Naturalism" (Jacobs, 2020) at <https://iep.utm.edu/naturali/#H3>

¹¹ See Daniels (1979, 2020) for a detailed discussion.

reflectively at beliefs, including moral and non-moral beliefs, contesting principles and theories, to see whether a coherence is achieved among them. Christine Swanton uses the method of wide reflective equilibrium to build her target-centered virtue ethics. She relies on pluralistic conception of the good that is not only defined in terms of human flourishing. She discusses varying modes of moral acknowledgement such as valuing, respecting people, promoting a certain value, loving, honoring, or creating an artwork to be relevant background for understanding the nature of virtue. Michael Slote also engages with this method, emphasizing the emotion-based beliefs that he takes to be substantially relevant to moral judgments.

Empathy-based Sentimentalism

Empathy-based sentimentalism refers to the sentimentalism of Michael Slote influenced by David Hume (1960) and Francis Hutcheson (2002) and to a smaller extent Adam Smith (2002). The view holds that reason cannot be the source for making moral judgments and perceiving moral facts, reason cannot motivate and move us towards action, and moral conclusions cannot solely made by reason. Rather, empathy (which is called ‘sympathy’ by Hume¹²) forms the basis of moral action and making and understanding of moral claims (Slote, 2010). This view holds that moral approval and disapproval can be explained by means of empathetic reactions to agents and their motives. If the agent’s motives and actions reflect an empathetic concern for others that is about the well-being, or well-wishing of others, then others will have a warm feeling, an empathy towards the agent’s motives or actions. This constitutes the basis of and justification for approval and admiration for such motives and actions.

Anti-theory

Anti-theory in ethics refers to the movement of criticism towards moral theory that subsumes or reduces moral life (which is complex and messy) to a very small set of principles and values.¹³ Proponents of skeptical approach do not hold a unified view, yet are unified in terms of their dissatisfaction with moral theorizing that is reduced to obligation, and duty, and hence to a legalistic conception of ethics. Usually the origins of the anti-theory movement is attributed to G.E.M. Anscombe’s influential paper

¹² Hume develops on Hutcheson’s idea here. Hutcheson argued that moral sense is the basis of justifying reasons (2002 (1728).

¹³ See (Clarke, 1987) and (Andorno, 2011) for discussions about the commonalities and differences between these writers.

“Modern Moral Philosophy” (1958) where she criticizes a legalistic outlook especially exemplified in utilitarianism and deontology, that focuses on obligation. Pointing to the importance of character development and acquiring virtues rather than focusing on the key question of “what should one do”, Anscombe gave direction to anti-theory approaches towards an ethics of virtue. Philippa Foot (2002b, 2002c), Iris Murdoch (2007), Bernard Williams (1985), Alasdair MacIntyre (1984), Michael Stocker (2007), Susan Wolf (2007b), Annette Baier (1985), and John McDowell (2007) can be added to Anscombe’s camp in terms of critiquing modern moral theories’ aspirations to systematize our moral experience under a small set of rules and values that exclude some very important salient features of our moral experience. These philosophers differ in terms of the backgrounds they rely on, for instance Foot, Williams, MacIntyre, Stocker and McDowell can be considered to show Aristotelian influences, Murdoch represents a Platonist perspective in terms of claiming that goodness precedes rightness, Baier invokes a Humean background with her emphasis on the natural motives of trust and benevolence. The anti-theory approach sparks an interest in the sense of emphasizing the difference between legalistic ethical outlooks and the virtue ethical outlook, which accepts the difficulty of formalizing a universalizable principle that guides all actions, and instead focuses on development of good traits of character that embody certain emotions, motives and reasons. In this dissertation, I refer to the anti-theoretical approach for highlighting this different ethical outlook, and the difference of action-guidance that virtue ethics can provide.



2. THE RESURGENCE OF VIRTUE ETHICS AND ACTION-GUIDANCE OBJECTION

This chapter has three objectives. Firstly, it aims to provide the historical overview of resurgence of virtue ethics particularly as an alternative moral theory to modern moral theories. Secondly, it explains the action-guidance objection which claims that virtue ethics lacks the practical content to guide our actions since it is not equipped with principles and rules to tell us what to do. And thirdly, it will try to distill virtue ethics as a separate category. Accordingly, the chapter will be divided into three sections. In the first section of the chapter, the revival of virtue ethics that has started with the critique of the modern moral theories will be covered as well as the content. In the second section, the demands of the action-guidance objection will be examined to understand what is expected from virtue ethics exactly. Even though the action-guidance objection denies that virtue ethics can be an alternative to modern moral theories, ‘virtue’ is integrated to modern moral theories to highlight the importance of character, although not in an explanatory way but as a motivational ingredient. Hence, the third section of the chapter will start with elaborating modern moral theories’ engagement of virtues and continue with distilling virtue ethics compared to those. It is essential to the dissertation’s purpose since action-guidance in virtue ethics will be searched only within the scope of this theory, not under the light of another that engaged virtues as motivational or supporting elements.

2.1 The Resurgence of Virtue Ethics

In the recent studies in ethics, virtue ethics has gained momentum as an alternative normative theory to various accounts of deontology and consequentialism. The resurgence of virtue ethics refocuses attention from act-based moral philosophizing to the indispensability of the relevance of moral character traits or virtues within the broader framework of life as a whole. The ideals of personal excellence and human flourishing or well-being, or as it is translated as happiness that are understood in terms of the ancient Greek word *eudaimonia*, has roots in ancient Greek philosophers like

Plato and Aristotle, and has been highlighted as morally essential. Virtue being a deep-seated disposition that embodies certain reasons (as well as emotions and motives) for certain actions, the educational aspect of acquisition of virtue, the practical wisdom (*phronesis*) that is integral to having virtue, the notion of *eudaimonia* are the main topics of the ethical discussion that are brought to a new light with the resurgence of virtue ethics.¹⁴

This renewed interest in the concept of virtue as the basis of moral theory advanced itself through the criticisms of modern moral theories. In this regard, G.E.M Anscombe's 'Modern Moral Philosophy' is counted as a prelude to the resurgence of virtue ethics with her criticism of prevailing forms of deontology and utilitarianism ((1958) 2007).¹⁵ In particular, Anscombe highlighted the dissatisfaction with these theories in terms of their reductionist outlook; morality seen in terms of the language of 'obligation' and 'duty' are devoid of meaning without a lawgiver, and reminded to consider the relevant features of our moral experience as exemplified by the virtue ethics tradition (2007, pp. 31-35).¹⁶ Advancing through the criticism of the modern tradition of moral philosophizing in comparison to virtue ethics at the backdrop, she suggests that Aristotelian virtue ethics can help us to address the important features of philosophical psychology that concern our moral character, virtues and vices, motives and emotions, as well as human relationships like friendship and family, and a comprehensive understanding of human 'flourishing' (Anscombe, 2007, p. 43). We can say that after the first half of 20th century, entertaining the idea of an anti-theoretical approach to moral philosophy by arguing the harmful effects of existing moral theories on 'sound moral thought and practice' drew attention to virtue ethics

¹⁴ It should be noted that different strands of virtue ethics omit some of these discussions. I will talk about these later. Since the revival of virtue ethics was based on neo-Aristotelian approach, I highlighted the concepts that are included in neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics here, but it should be noted that contemporary accounts differ in selecting these elements while keeping virtue as a central concept.

¹⁵ Anscombe can be counted as 'the movement's grandmother' as Sanford calls her (2015).

¹⁶ She objects to the legalistic notions like 'obligation' and 'right', which are produced by the universal claims these moral theories make. According to deontology, universal law of rationality exhibits itself in the Categorical Imperative of Kant; however, in a secular age where there is no divine lawgiver, this kind of legislative mode of morality is devoid of meaning (p.31). The concept of obligation and duty in Kant's theory presupposes a divine-law that is derived from Judaism and Christianity, yet it is incoherent in the sense that the religious beliefs are rejected as a source of morality in modern life. On the other hand, she rejects utilitarianism because morality of an action is not only bounded with the consequences. For example, killing with whatever greatest happiness it would bring would be still immoral. Any obligation that would be derived from utilitarianism's universally applicable rule – is insensible without a lawgiver similarly (p.35).

(Hämäläinen, 2009, p. 539). Anti-theory approach holds that moral life cannot be reduced to a set of principles, obligation or duty.¹⁷ Anti-theory criticism is voiced among neo-Aristotelian and Wittgensteinian circles with the emphasis on misguided focal interests on precision in decision procedures and rigorous formulations of right action at the expense of the moral person.¹⁸ Neo-Aristotelianism refers to ethical approach that takes virtues essential to “live flourishing lives in accordance with our nature as rational beings” (Snow, 2018, p. 321).¹⁹ On the other hand, although Wittgenstein did not write about ethics except his lecture on ethics²⁰, his philosophical method, and criticism of theory forms a background for rejecting of ethical theory that claims to produce systematic set of principles and knowledge which would give clear prescriptive rules to follow. Wittgensteinians approach philosophy as an activity of clarification of thoughts.²¹ From this point of view, it is not purely coincidental that virtue ethics is associated with anti-theoretical approach. Yet, extensive attempts to show that it is an alternative normative theory to consequentialism and deontology proves that an anti-theoretical approach is not a necessary conclusion for virtue ethics. In the sense that it resurged in the face of criticism towards modern moral theories, virtue ethics can be associated with anti-theory when the theory includes stringent principles of both right action and decision procedures.

Although we do not engage with and think in terms of abstract philosophical arguments when acting on a daily basis, moral philosophizing attains a great importance as an academic endeavor. Moral theory is an attempt to explicate the reasons of moral codes, rules, or norms by which human beings as individuals and as

¹⁷ See my work pp.10-11 for more detail about anti-theory approach.

¹⁸ Neo-Aristotelians as Elizabeth Anscombe (1958), Annette Baier (1985), Bernard Williams (1981, 1985) although he does not explicitly call himself one, Julia Annas (1993), Philippa Foot (2002), Martha Nussbaum (1990) although she is a critic of the anti-theory, she also criticizes the monistic and foundationalist assumptions in modern moral theories, Rosalind Hursthouse (1999) and Wittgensteinians as Peter Winch (1972, 1987), Raimond Gaita, D.Z. Phillips and Cora Diamond (1991) as cited in (Hämäläinen, 2009, pp. 540-543). Yet, it should be noted that Wittgensteinian influence can be traced in most virtue ethicists or philosophers who are associated with virtue ethics such as Anscombe, Williams, Nussbaum, MacIntyre, Hursthouse and McDowell. I cannot develop this idea here, but see (Damonte, 2019) for Wittgenstein’s significant influence on virtue ethicists.

¹⁹ See my work pp.8-9 for more detail about the term neo-Aristotelianism.

²⁰ See (Wittgenstein, 1993).

²¹ See especially (Wittgenstein, 1986, I, 207) whereby he rhetorically questions whether ‘rule’ can be defined by regularity. He continues explaining that a concept can be taught (basically the use of the word) by means of examples and practices. Language-games as his key concept introduces the diversified and activity-oriented use of language. So, instead of relying on truth-bearing facts and form of life-independent use of language, he argues that we should look into the word’s uses throughout (Wittgenstein, 1986, I, 66)

parts of a society live/ should live their lives. So, despite its value as an intellectual endeavor, we also value the practical implications of the moral theory or how our concerns that we think very essential, cohere with it. Anscombe's main criticism brings these moral concerns to the fore in the face of consequentialism (especially forms of utilitarianism) and deontology which have been dominating theories since the Enlightenment. The importance of the moral person who has a past, and a future, who value certain kind of relationships, motives and emotions is reintroduced to the ethical discourse. A moral person as a more complex thing compared to a mere rational will is taken to be an important aspect of a moral theory.

Similar to Anscombe, within the theoretical landscape of morality dominated by consequentialism and deontology, MacIntyre parallels her critique of moral philosophizing and argues that there seems to be no consensus attainable between logically valid, and internally consistent rival moral arguments (1984, p. 8). The moral disagreement is interminable because there seems to be no rational way to evaluate the claims which employ different starting premises; normative ideals and evaluative concepts hence are very different in kind (MacIntyre, 1984, p. 8). As he points out, the irresolvable nature of the moral debate "relapses so quickly into unargued disagreement, we might conclude that there is nothing to such contemporary disagreement but a clash of antagonistic wills, each will determined by some set of arbitrary choices of its own" (MacIntyre, 1984, p. 9). Indebted to Anscombe, MacIntyre emphasizes the fragmentary and improper use of terms such as good, justice and duty which belonged to a context that made them intelligible around the idea of human life that is harmonious with the human *telos* (1984, p. 34). Considering this, he also points to virtue ethics as probable help whereby a common ground for meaningful moral debate can be established. Following Anscombe, virtue ethics has gained attention as an alternative ethical outlook refocusing on morally relevant features that seem to be very important for us (such as friendship, family, personal integrity, human flourishing).²² For MacIntyre, making virtue the central concept for moral theory does not entail that we add another incommensurable theory to the list. Its critical stance on moral theories (which are preoccupied by and large with resolving quandaries), invites

²² See Michael Stocker, "The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories", in R. Crisp, & M. Slote (eds.), *Virtue Ethics*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 66-79, and Annette Baier, "What Do Women Want in a Moral Theory" in R. Crisp, & M. Slote (eds.), *Virtue Ethics*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 263-278.

a broader ethical outlook that is concerned with life as a whole, personal excellences that contribute to happiness, the interrelatedness of the community and the individual and by extension of the interconnectedness, the importance of moral education to cultivate a virtuous character. This way, neo-Aristotelians hope to rebuild an ethical discourse that psychologically and phenomenologically²³ suits our human reality compared to what modern counterparts achieved so far.

The virtue ethical attempts to identify an alternative ethical outlook involves putting human character at the center of moral assessment as opposed to ‘rightness’ or ‘value of consequences of action’ (Solomon, 1988, p. 429). What is known to be one of the defining element of virtue ethics, the primacy of character denotes a certain kind of conceptual or metaphysical connection between virtuous character and right action (Zagzebski, 2004, p. 4). Primacy of character implies that the evaluation of the action is ancillary to the appraisal of character (Watson, 1990, p. 452).²⁴ That is to say, the definition of right action would be that of which is characteristically performed by a virtuous agent (Hursthouse, 2001). Thus, although virtue ethics does not take action to be primary, acting virtuously has an important seat in the theory as being connected to the character. Therefore, it is not accidental that good results or right actions are attained circumstance after circumstance by a virtuous person, it is rather that virtuous actions flow from virtuous character. It is not a surprise that virtuous person regularly does more good than harm, gets things right in her actions. The emphasis on the character is rather an essential one though, since it seems to be reverse the priority in the relations of act and character. I will look at different aspects of virtue ethics in the following chapters, yet it is helpful to address them in order to remember the initial resurgence and the distinctive points that are made against the modern moral theories.

Since virtue ethics is brought to scrutiny with its revival, some old as well as some new criticism are directed to it. The objections against virtue ethics can be classified as external and internal. External objections are the ones that come from outside of the field of ethics. The difficulties about epistemology and metaphysics of virtue ethics

²³ What I mean by phenomenologically is basically lived human reality.

²⁴ Trianosky claims that the judgements about character are ‘basic’ (1990, p. 336), as well as Watson (1990, p.452), whereas Annas refrains from using the term basic and instead prefers primary, or central (1993, p.9). I also side with Annas in terms of the choice of the word since ‘basic’ invites a certain kind of hierarchical relationship in which every other term is derived from the ‘basic’ term. However, I also argue that terms such as virtue, virtuous agent, practical wisdom and *eudaimonia* are interrelatedly central.

that might be raised by modern science, for instance, might be accounted as external (Solomon, 1988, p. 430).²⁵ Internal objections on the other hand are those that come from within ethical field itself. Herein, I am primarily concerned with objections related to action-guidance that come from within the ethical field.²⁶ So, in the next section I will introduce the original action-guidance objection and a more detailed contemporary take on it.

2.2 Action-Guidance Objection from Its Infancy to Its Sophisticated Persona

The action-guidance objection originates in the general criticism that virtue ethics cannot provide practical content in the form of a prescriptive and codified ethical theory since it is ‘structurally unable’ to do so; therefore, it cannot guide us about what to do in a specific circumstance (Louden, 2007, pp. 205-206). If we compare the objection, we can see that the objection is two-fold. First, virtue ethics does not provide a codified theory, and the second, virtue ethics consequently fails to provide action-guidance to moral agents. The objection primarily relies on a conception of virtue ethics which assumes that it is all about ‘being’ rather than ‘doing’; virtue ethics prioritizes the moral agent’s character rather than the rightness of action and focuses on aretaic concepts such as virtue and good rather than deontic concepts such as obligation, duty and right (Hursthouse, 2001, p. 25).

To begin with, it is important to address the grounding reasons for the objection. This objection originates from the general objection that virtue ethics is not a proper normative theory, especially when compared to theories like consequentialism and deontology. The underlying assumption about normative theories is that they include a consistent set of values and arguments regarding right action as well as a model which guides the moral agent through a decision-making procedure. In other words, this criticism emphasizes the normative ideal that an ethical theory should provide an algorithm of rules and principles to aid us in dealing with moral conflicts and moral indeterminacy (Solomon, 1988, p. 432). In this respect, virtue ethics’ focus on how to “be” in order to live the humanly good life is of no help in providing applicable rules to guide our actions on its own. This conception of normative theory as a system of

²⁵ For the dissertation’s focus external objections will not be analyzed here.

²⁶ Solomon also classifies the objections as self-centeredness, action-guiding and contingency objection (Solomon, 1988, pp. 431-433). Yet I will use Hursthouse’s and Pettigrove’s taxonomy for theirs includes Solomon’s and is much detailed.

hierarchical rules is widely accepted. William Frankena, in his famous introduction to ethics, argues below that theories of moral traits and moral principles are not rival but complementary theories (1973):

...for every principle there will be a morally good trait, often going by the same name, consisting of a disposition or tendency to act according to it; and for every morally good trait there will be a principle defining the kind of action in which it is to express itself. To parody a famous dictum of Kant's, I am inclined to think that principles without traits are impotent and the traits without principles are blind. (Frankena, 1973, p. 65)

It is not that virtue ethics and ethics of principles are indispensable parts of one thing, but rather that moral traits are the motivational ingredients of moral principles. Principles or the universal rules, as expressed by consequentialism and deontology are the basic notions from which the proper virtues can be derived. Perhaps this is an extreme reading of the passage, but at best it means that virtue ethics without principles will lack something very crucial as a normative theory. Virtue in this understanding sounds like something optional, whereas doing the right thing is required. So, what is most important in a moral theory is to lay the rules by which to abide, while it would merely be nice to be virtuous. Against the background of this type of normative theory, virtue ethics faces long-standing objections about its inadequacy to provide the conceptual resources necessary to give codified rules and to provide action-guidance to moral agents where it is needed. At best, so the criticism goes, virtue ethics offers only vague recommendations for moral practice. This basic objection is detailed and furthered after the paradigm response by Rosalind Hursthouse (2001) who defines right action as the one that a virtuous person characteristically would perform. If morally right action as such is only said to be that of which a virtuous agent would exhibit, then the argument for action-guidance remains circular and unfruitful. If the virtuous agent as moral exemplar or virtuous paradigm seems to be understood as a reference point for action-guidance, then this remains uninformative because it does not provide a system of ethics that tells us what to do in particular situations. I will return to further objections after I introduce the strands of virtue ethics that particularly try to provide action-guidance.

The objection parallels the conception of ethics in modern moral philosophy which is oriented towards providing rules and principles to solve quandaries and problems (Pincoff, 1971, p. 552). What is expected from an ethical theory is to provide a set of principles or universal rules (and most preferably a principle as a prescription) which

would be the criterion for right action as well as a clear decision-making procedure for any rational being. The assumptions that are deeply seated in modern moral philosophy about the task of normative ethics creates an unduly stringent demand that virtue ethics cannot meet and seems to blur the distinction between the account of right action and the decision-making procedure. Edmund Pincoff, in his critical essay on the conception of ethics, explains how the subject-matter of ethics came to be primarily about problem solving which assumes moral rules and principles from which a decision-making procedure is naturally derived.

The [B]usiness of ethics is with " problems ", i.e. situations in which it is difficult to know what one should do; that the ultimate beneficiary of ethical analysis is the person who, in one of these situations, seeks rational ground for the decision he must make; that ethics is therefore primarily concerned to find such grounds, often conceived of as moral rules and the principles from which they can be derived; and that meta-ethics consists in the analysis of the terms, claims, and arguments which come into play in moral disputation, deliberation, and justification in problematic contexts. (1971, p. 552)

According to Pincoff, the dominant task of ethical theory is the resolution of quandaries. In this respect, an ethical theory is expected to provide a set of principles or universal rules (and most preferably a principle as a prescription) which would be the criteria for right action as well as a clear decision-making procedure for any rational being. Pincoff's 'quandary ethics' reflects the concerns I mentioned about Frankena's conception of ethics above. The problem-solving approach to ethical theory demands that:

- i. It should have universal rules or principles in virtue of which right action can be defined.
- ii. The principles or principles should amount to a decision-making procedure that can actualize right action.
- iii. The principle or principles should be stated so that it is applicable and comprehensible even for a novice.

We can associate (i) with the account of right action, and (ii) and (iii) with the decision-making procedure. However, what is understood from a hierarchically higher principle is that once it is established, the decision-making properties that amount to it would be discovered automatically too. In its own right, this is a challengeable idea yet herein I only want to focus on the problem-solving orientation of modern ethics. This change

of orientation in ethics is at odds with previous tradition of ethics which was “by and large, not so much concerned with problematic situations as with moral enlightenment, education, and the good for man.” (Pincoff, 1971, p. 553).²⁷ This change in ethical perspective primarily focuses on moral conflict and indeterminacy and alleges that “normative ethics should help in each of these cases by providing principles or rules (action-guides generally) of a suitably algorithmic character which will help deliver us from our perplexity” in these situations (Solomon, 1988, p. 432). Especially under the light of this orientation, virtue ethics is found to be inadequate for providing precise and determinate action-guidance. In comparison to deontological and consequentialist theories, virtue ethics is deemed to be lacking the most essential component of a normative theory. Taking virtues as the focus of ethical consideration is thought to be only vague recommendation if not totally unhelpful. Consider Aristotle’s virtue of generosity:

Actions done in accordance with virtue are noble and done for the sake of what is noble. So the generous person will give for the sake of what is noble and in the correct way, to the right people, in the right amounts, at the right time, and so on, with the other qualifications that attach to correct giving. (*Nicomachean Ethics*, IV, 1, 1120a27-31).²⁸

According to Aristotle, actions that are in accordance with virtue, in this case generosity, are the ones that are done at the right time, in the right amount, and to the right people. Without any specification, virtue ethics leaves it to the practical wisdom of the agent to determine the right time, the right amount, and the right people. Instead of following an ever-guiding rule, an Aristotelian virtuous agent would count in the salient features of the circumstance at hand and address the problem accordingly. Hence, the criticism holds that virtue ethics, with its emphasis on character traits, lacks adequate action-guidance because there is not a principle like act-utilitarianism’s ‘maximize happiness’ or Kant’s categorical imperative to guide a moral agent that would work in any situation without exceptions. On the other hand, the doctrine of the mean in Aristotle implies that moral virtue is the golden mean between two extremes as excess and defect (*NE*, II, 6, 1106a26–b28). Instead of being an arithmetic mean, or instead of being subject to one universalizable and general principle that holds true ‘always’, the golden mean -virtue- is in equilibrium and it is relative to us (*NE*, II, 6,

²⁷ Pincoff does not take modern conception of ethics to be that of ancient or medieval philosophy or of later thinkers like Shaftesbury, Hume, and Hegel.

²⁸ From here on *Nicomachean Ethics* will be referred to as *NE*.

1106a28-33). Being in equilibrium refers to virtue being in the mean or at least avoiding the most contrary extreme. For example, the virtue of courage is about managing fear, and hitting the mean between two vices of cowardice (deficiency) and rashness (excess). There is a generality about what is courageous, and sometimes it means to avoid the more opposing vice. For instance, in the case of virtue of courage, cowardice is more opposed to the mean; hence to be avoided (*NE*, II, 8, 1109a1-7). Yet, the mean being relative to us ‘is not one single thing, nor is it the same for all’ (*NE*, II, 6, 1106a31-33). That is to say, it might be generous of a person (who has certain financial means) to donate two shoes to a homeless shelter, while it would be stingy of Jeff Bezos to do the same. What would be generous for him to do would be something like building a homeless shelter, so that the mean is relative to his wealth. Aristotle also underlines that generosity does not prescribe a certain quantity and it is in accordance with the giver’s resources (*NE*, VI, I, 1120b9-12). Thus, we can argue that relying on one universal principle that could organize all behavior in a precise way is not available in virtue ethics.

Thus, one possible reaction to this unduly stringent demand²⁹ might be to reject it, stating that virtue ethics does not and would not provide codifiable universal rules because the major premise of virtuous activity required for *eudaimonia* cannot be captured definitely (McDowell, 2007, pp. 154-156). Aristotle himself points out the complexity and variability of human life and difficulty bringing up an exact and precise conclusion for the subject matter of ethics and politics (*NE*, I, 3, 1094b13-24). Since the circumstances of life are too varied to be definable in strict terms, we cannot expect the precision of geometry for example. That is to say one universal rule cannot capture every intricacy in a vast number of circumstances; therefore, codifiability is rejected. Although initially such a reaction may seem intuitively correct, whether virtue can provide action-guidance or not does not strictly depend on this conception of codifiability. As Hursthouse puts it “let us by all means say that virtue ethics does not reject the idea that ethics is codifiable. It does not need to be supplemented by such principles; it embodies them already-and many many more besides” captured in virtue and vice terms (Hursthouse, 2001, p. 41).

²⁹ Simply, it is a demand that is unreasonably rigorous because when it is applied to the modern moral theories, we can see that it is also challenging for them to respond to it at least in terms of decision-making procedures. Later on, I will explain this issue further in the next chapter.

Although it cannot, and more importantly would not, provide deontic rules or strictly codified principles, eudaimonist virtue ethics' insight lies in its ethical outlook that considers moral life not as "episodic encounters with moral dilemmas or uncertainty", but rather "a life-long pursuit of excellence of the person" (Solomon, 1988, p. 437). This might look simple, yet the difference in ethical outlook results in a different kind of guidance. David Solomon frames this ethical outlook as follows:

The moral life is not, on this view, best regarded as a set of episodic encounters with moral dilemmas or moral uncertainty (although anyone's moral life will certainly contain moments of this kind); it is rather a life-long pursuit of excellence of the person. The kind of guidance appropriate to such a pursuit will be quite different from that envisioned by many modern ethical theorists. An EV [*Ethics of Virtue*] primarily helps us to answer questions like: What features of human life contribute essentially to human excellence? What character traits should one strive to develop? In taking such questions as primary, it will, of course, fall short of providing determinate guidance of action for the whole range of problematic situations in which human beings might find themselves. But it does not take this as its goal. The task of an EV is not determinately to guide action; that task is left to virtues. Virtue theories do not propose algorithms for solving practical difficulties; they propose something like a fitness program to get one ready to run a race. This does not mean, of course, that an EV is completely without resources in guiding particular actions. (Solomon, 1988, p. 174)

In this long but insightful passage, Solomon explains the primary ethical reflection in virtue ethics with a nice analogy. Virtue ethics does not concern itself with episodic moral dilemmas and uncertainty, nor does it detail what kind of moral dilemmas you can face in life. Moreover, it does not give you a prescription for what to do in specific cases. It does not put you in the imaginary situations employed by lifeboat ethics, whereby you have to kill 1 person to save 5, and the like. Indeed, it proposes something like a fitness program to get you ready to run a race, acknowledging that there are tragic moral dilemmas from which even a virtuous person cannot emerge unmarred (Aristotle, *NE*, I, 10, 1101a5-12). As Solomon points out, virtue ethics leaves the task of practical matters to virtues, so that in cases of problematic situations virtues present themselves as the exercises that are given by your fitness program.

The action-guidance objection at the reawake of virtue ethics can be elaborated as above and the highlights of virtue ethics can be covered under the eudaimonist tradition. Yet, there are proliferating strands of virtue ethics and also proliferating furthering criticism concerning action-guidance. I think the objection that I explained so far constitutes the backbone of the criticism and includes the contemporary

particular ones, yet let us look at the following classification and see which ones are related to the action-guidance discussion.

The objections against virtue ethics are grouped under eight subjects concerning application (anti-codifiability), adequacy, cultural relativity, conflict problem, self-effacement, justification, egoism and situationist objection (Hursthouse & Pettigrove, 2018). I believe that most of the problems can be associated with the general theme of action-guidance objection or probable answer to it except the self-effacement, egoism and situationist objections.

The application objection which by and large constitutes the basis of related action-guiding objections states that virtue ethics cannot be counted as a normative theory because it does not have universal rules or principles. Basically, the application objection points out the characteristic of a normative theory which has universal principle by which decision-making procedure for right action would be secured and a novice could understand and apply it (Hursthouse & Pettigrove, 2018). By and large, application objection is what I portrayed as action-guidance objection above. This objection relies on a specific conception of normative theory so that universal principle denotes the whole character of the theory, hierarchical set of principles are established so that the conflicts and quandaries are resolved, and these principles are so clear and direct that they guide advanced or beginner moral agent in the same direction ending up with the same situational features.

The adequacy objection is similar to application claims that virtue ethics cannot provide adequate account of right action because virtuous character is neither sufficient nor necessary to guaranty the account of right action (Adams, 2006, p. 6). That is to say, a virtuous agent might occasionally fail to do the right thing even if it is due to her limited attention and in this sense virtuous character is not sufficient to insure right action (Adams, 2006, p. 6). Another point is that virtuous character is not necessary to explain the right action since right thing to do is so even one does not have the virtuous motivation or character (Adams, 2006, p.7).

The cultural relativity objection stresses that virtues will change according to different cultures; hence the rules of conduct will take different forms. This objection is very much related to the justification objection (Hursthouse & Pettigrove, 2018).

The justification problem simply is about the justification and grounds of ethical beliefs. For virtue ethics, justification objection questions how to validate which character traits count as virtues. Closely related to the cultural relativity objection, justification problem criticizes virtue ethics for lacking objective and rational grounds for so called virtues (Hursthouse, 2001, p. 125). The particular concern in the justification problem is not really how virtue ethics justify virtues rationally, but that virtues that are already imbued by society are rationalized by virtue ethics, and it is nothing more than a circular acceptance of what society indoctrinates (Hursthouse, 2001, p.125). Different strands of virtue ethics reply the justification problem by choosing different methods to validate virtues. For instance, Swanton and Slote engage a Rawlsian coherentist approach which invokes a wide reflective equilibrium among beliefs, intuitions and moral judgements, or conclusions and a background theory of human nature.³⁰ Neo-Aristotelians establish their accounts on ethical naturalism by defining virtues as constitutive of human flourishing (Hursthouse & Pettigrove, 2018). In Swanton's justification, I think the answer to the justification objection also answers cultural relativity objection if one is not arguing for relativistic ethics. Although these two are not directly linked to action-guidance, in case they are answered it surely strengthens the normative position of virtue ethics. That is why I believe it is a necessary dimension to be evaluated.

The conflict problem is about the lack of action guidance when the directions of different virtues conflict in a circumstance (Hursthouse, 2001, p. 62). For instance, over the subject of euthanasia, two virtues might seem to conflict: charity and justice. Thus a question might be asked whether it is charitable to kill someone because this person would be truly better off dead, or whether justice forbids this action.³¹ The resolvable and irresolvable dilemmas are subjects of different discussion though

³⁰ For the definition of wide-reflective equilibrium see my work pp. 9-10.

³¹ Here I take justice as a virtue to mean caring attention to other's rights (Foot, 2002, p. 9). It is one of the readings of Aristotle's account of justice. However, justice is one of the most difficult virtues to conceptualize, also because in tradition of virtue ethics, there are different understandings of it. For instance, in *The Republic*, Plato's account of justice is about the harmony of our *psyche*'s faculties, but also analogous to the justice in the city. Harmony in three faculties (namely Reason, Spirit and Appetite) means that each part of the *psyche* function as they should: Reason rules on behalf of the *psyche* and spirit supports Reason, and Appetite should be controlled by these higher faculties. Aristotle also treats justice in humans and justice in political organizations somewhat similar, but justice as a virtue of character can be interpreted in different ways in Aristotle. For instance, according to one interpretation, justice is about fair distribution of money, honor, and fame (Curzer, 1995) (Williams, 1980). Another reading is that justice is about common goods (O'Connor J. D. , 1988). See (LeBar & Slote, 2016) for a detailed overview.

relevant to conflict problem. The assumption that one decision always overrides the other since one is right and the other is simply wrong may motivate our everyday thinking, yet especially in case of irresolvable dilemmas the distinction between right and wrong are quite blurry. Yet, the objection states that the conflict problem poses more of a formidable difficulty for virtue ethics. It seems like it all comes down to the theoretical capacity of a moral theory to prescribe one right action even in case of tragic dilemmas.

The following objections will be introduced yet not be subjects of further analysis since they are not related to the action-guidance objection. Self-effacement objection means justification of an action as right despite a lack of motive to do so. The self-effacement objection can be directed to modern moral theories, so it is not only what virtue ethics has a problem with it. Michael Stocker (2007) argues that modern moral theories generate a kind of moral schizophrenia that makes it impossible to align your reasons to do the right thing and your motives. For instance, visiting a friend in the hospital because it is your duty instead of the fact that you care about your friend is an example of how deontology is self-effacing. While Stocker's criticism targeted consequentialism and deontology, virtue ethics is also charged with self-effacement. Simon Keller argues that a virtue ethical account of right action prescribes one to act as a virtuous person would characteristically act, hence one's motive would not necessarily align with the reason for so acting. Similarly, if one is helping a friend (virtue of generosity) because that is what a virtuous person would characteristically do, then virtue ethics is equally self-effacing (Keller, 2007, p. 227).

Egoism objection simply states that a virtuous agent does what she does merely to achieve *eudaimonia*, or to serve herself for her betterment and in that sense virtue ethics is egoistic. Lastly, the situationist objection claims that there is no such thing as character since the social psychology proves that character is not a consistent and wholesome thing, hence we cannot talk about virtue (Doris, 1998; Harman, 1999).

Having framed the highlights of virtue ethics at its revival and the action-guidance objection in its general form as well as related particular aspects, in the next section I will try to distill virtue ethics as a category on its own, rather than a motivational aspect for another moral theory.

2.3 Virtue Ethics as an Alternative Normative Theory

It should be noted that most of these discussions concerning revival of virtue ethics and the action-guidance objection took part in eudaimonist tradition. However, eudaimonist virtue ethics does not capture all accounts of virtue ethics. Contemporary virtue ethics include different strands that have different accounts of virtue as well as practical wisdom and some of which omits *eudaimonia* completely. The following chapters will be devoted to different strands of virtue ethics with regard to action-guidance. Yet, before the distinction is made, it is important to take note of something. In the face of the revival of virtue ethics even modern moral theories integrated a component of virtue ethics in their favored theory. Since the only virtue ethical ingredient to these theories is virtue's complementary role in their systematic moral theory, I separate these moral theories with a virtue component as not qualifying as virtue ethics.³² It is not only that virtue is not given primary concern but also reduced to a higher principle or principles the promotion of which is attained through acquiring certain virtues. Although Martha Nussbaum as a virtue ethicist argues that the contrast or the difference between modern ethical theories and virtue ethics is a confusion, and virtue ethics does not present a unitary approach to be contrasted to Kantian and utilitarian theories (1999, p. 168), I think these theories depart greatly from each other in terms of their primary concerns for human moral experience.³³ The novelty of virtue ethics compared to types of Kantian and Consequentialist ethics springs from a totally different picture of moral life: life as a whole rather than episodic problem-solving experience³⁴, the primary place for character in the evaluation of right action, and treatment of virtues as intrinsically objective goods and ethics being the enquiry into how one should live if one to be happy, to be a good human being, to flourish. Despite the essential role given to character in some of Kantian and Consequentialist ethics, what decides the value of character in these theories is grounded on their *summum bonum*. Virtue in these theories are evaluated in terms of another morally more

³² These theories are distinguished by Rosalind Hursthouse as 'virtue theory'. See Hursthouse, Rosalind and Pettigrove, Glen, "Virtue Ethics", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2018 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL =<<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2018/entries/ethics-virtue/>>.

³³ I noted especially Nussbaum's comment on how virtue ethics is not an ethical theory in its own right to underline that this understanding is very common and even held by a virtue ethicist.

³⁴ This might be taken as an exaggeration since for instance Mill's utilitarianism keeps 'good life' at the backdrop of his theory, 'good life' being a life where you maximize happiness (hopefully both for yourself and others). Yet, if we look at the focus of these theories, they are designed to solve moral quandaries in the form of a universal principle as being the measure of all action in particular situation. See Pincoff, E., (1971) "Quandary Ethics", *Mind*, New Series, Vol. 80, No. 320, pp. 552-571

important basic concept (Copp & Sobel, 2004, p. 516). In a nutshell, Kantian ethics which spares a room for character weighs the goodness of one's character on the basis of the agent's capacity and ease to apply a universalizable maxim. Similarly, consequentialist ethics derives the goodness of one's character from how well the agent maximizes the valued state of affairs (Oakley, 1996). In another words, the kind of consequentialism that takes virtue to be partially focal defines right action as an expression of a state of character which maximizes good consequences (Sinnott-Armstrong, 2019).³⁵ As I noted before, what virtue ethics has to offer should not only be assessed in terms of its ability to solve moral problems, but also in its deep conception of well-being, and its picture of human life. Laying this down, herein I can expand this thought by focusing on the examples of modern moral theories' implementation of virtue in their system and why I do not include them.

For instance, Kant's neglected "Doctrine of Virtue" has gained attention to give virtue a complementary place in deontological theory to promote its basic and primary notion of right.³⁶ The concept of virtue in Kantian ethics is only around the orbit of the basic tenets of Kantian ethics.³⁷ In its simplest sense "virtue is *steady respect (Achtung) for the moral law*" (Roberts, 2017, p. 28). Kant explains the concept of virtue as below.

Virtue signifies a moral strength of the will. But this does not exhaust the concept; for such strength could also belong to a (superhuman) being, in whom no hindering impulses would impede the law of its will and who would thus gladly do everything in conformity with the law. Virtue is, therefore, the moral strength of a man's will in fulfilling his duty, a moral

³⁵ This kind of consequentialism is classified as virtue consequentialism (Bradley, 2018) and the most famous representative of this view is Julia Driver (2007).

³⁶ Doctrine of Virtue is the second part of Kant's *The Metaphysics of Morals* (1797). Compared to his widely acclaimed earlier works as *The Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785) and the *Critique of Practical Reason*, this later work -*The Metaphysics of Morals*- has taken attention long after it was published in German. It was only in 1964 that the second part of the work- The Doctrine of Virtue- was translated into English 167 years later by Mary J. Gregor. *The Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* deals with the form of morality, in other words with the subject of moral goodness and morality's supreme principle, whereas *The Metaphysics of Morals* gives content to the form by dealing with virtues and duties that are practical outputs of such supreme principles. See Kant, Immanuel, *The Doctrine of Virtue*, New York: Harper & Row Torchbooks, 1964. trans. by Mary J. Gregor. See also Kant, Immanuel, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, Cambridge University Press: New York, 1991, introduction, translation and notes by Mary J. Gregor.

³⁷ For Kantian influenced conception of virtue see R. B. Louden, (1986), 'Kant's Virtue Ethics'; O. O'Neill, (1984) 'Kant After Virtue' where Louden evaluates Kant as standing between deontology and virtue ethics, C. Korsgaard, (1996), 'From Duty and for the Sake of the Noble: Kant and Aristotle on Morally Good Action'; Hill, Thomas, (2012) "Kantian Virtue and 'Virtue Ethics'". On the similarity of Kantian and virtue ethics see O'Connor, J. D. (2006) "Are Virtue Ethics and Kantian Ethics Really so Very Different?"

constraint through his own lawgiving reason, insofar as this constitutes itself an authority executing the law. (Kant, 1991, p. 206)

From the passage above, it can be seen that virtue is defined as the strength of the will. However, Kant presupposes a universally binding moral law that human reason attains, and virtue has only an instrumental value. In this sense, definition of virtue depends on this *summum bonum*. Moral duty is what virtue should lead to and attain through eliminating impediments and natural inclinations that stand in the way. It is clear that virtue has no primary place in his theory, on the contrary it is only explicable based on man's duty or a moral constraint which man sets out through his own lawgiving reason. As Gary Watson argues "duties and obligations are simply factors to which certain virtues, for example, fidelity and justice, are responsive." (1990, p. 451). Hence, duties and obligations are the ruling concepts.

Apart from its motivational role for duty, virtue as being 'the moral strength of a man's will in fulfilling his duty' resembles Aristotle's self-control or continence which is different than virtue. Kant's conception of virtue is a disposition of the will rather than disposition of reasoning, feeling, emotions, desires and motives. In Aristotle, virtue is a disposition that is amenable to habituation for human beings, and that includes the other features of human nature such as emotions and feelings. Will is not the sole matter of respect for virtue (Johnson & Cureton, 2019). While finding both virtue (*arête*) and continence (*enkrateia*) praiseworthy, Aristotle contends virtue to be greater because virtue in Aristotle's account incorporates harmony of reason, inclinations and emotions. He says

The element in the soul of the self-controlled person, at least, obeys reason and presumably in the temperate and the brave person it is still more ready to listen, since in their case it is in total harmony with reason. (*NE*, I, 13, 1102b28-31)

In the quotation above, for the continent person the reason dictates something which is not in alignment with one's motivations and inclinations, reason wins at the end at the expense of inclinations. On the other hand, the virtuous person readily acts virtuously without any hindrance, moreover, takes pleasure in it (*NE*, I, 8, 1099a16-23), hence the Aristotelian conception of virtue is a complex psychological disposition that includes habituation of feelings and acting well (or any relevant feature of human nature that is amenable to habituation). While a self-controlled person has the knowledge of what is right, she fights the contrary inclinations and emotions. Despite

these nuisances, she avoids the temptation to do wrong and acts right. In this sense, the self-controlled person is a Kantian agent who uses her virtue as disposition of her will to overcome contrary inclinations to moral duty. Kantian virtue presupposes an already existent moral duty and instead of defining what good character traits are on the basis of which how one should act would be determined. Considering this, I do not include Kantian forms of virtue evaluation as a viable strand of virtue ethics.

Consequentialism is easier to differentiate from both deontology and virtue ethics. The state of affairs that determine the right in consequentialism are specified in different ways. The most famous version of the consequentialism is utilitarianism (often argued as most plausible form) and more viable variations of that in which the valued state of affairs is happiness. Some contemporary proponents of utilitarianism argue that utilitarianism is commensurate with virtue ethics. In a way, it is not a big surprise when we think about the concept of happiness that resides in both theories as very central at least.³⁸ But in another way, it is really hard to draw close parallels. Simply put, the main and huge difference is that utilitarianism's concern for maximization of happiness, no matter how it is qualified in terms of high and low pleasures, does not sit well in the virtue ethical understanding of *eudaimonia*. Most importantly in a utilitarian life boat ethics, virtue ethics would never embrace an action that is bad yet necessary evil as the right action.

In order to give an example to exclude utilitarian virtue theory, I want to look at the utilitarian accounts that could be somewhat closest to virtue ethics. Roger Crisp discusses that most plausible version of utilitarianism is what he calls *Biographical Utilitarianism*. Biographical Utilitarianism offer a moral theory in which "any individual ought to live in such a way that the total amount of utility in the history of the world is brought as close as possible to the maximum." (Crisp, 1992, p. 142). His account resonates with a form of well-being and in the sense of excluding individualistic, and particularistic point of view, he appeals to virtue ethics to reply the question how we are to live if we are to accomplish this historically possible maximum. He argues that this plausible utilitarian approach requires us to 'live virtuously, consulting the Biographical Utilitarianism's criterion only on certain

³⁸ David Hume can be counted as one of the first thinkers who brought virtue and utility together although he was not utilitarian, so I exclude him. Yet, I should note here that he thought virtue is socially useful in its promoting human happiness (Driver, 2007, p. 63)

special occasions.’ (Crisp, 1992, p.154). Even this version which takes well-being as morally important (different than aggregate utility of happiness calculation), treat virtues as only derivatively valuable. With his own words, ‘The right way of living may turn out to be living virtuously – but it is right only if it maximizes utility.’ (Crisp, 1992, p.155). There is not a real sense of the intrinsic value of virtue, and even if that is established the actual consequences that are external to agency are what defines the *summum bonum* of the theory. Moral virtue having a complex psychological profile means to have certain intentions, motives, motivations, feelings and finally to produce good actions. When the actual consequence shows us that saving a drowning child is a virtuous thing to do, for virtue ethics it still matters to do so with the right virtuous motives rather than to impress the mother of the child.

Another interesting account of consequentialism is of Thomas Hurka. Hurka reconceptualizes virtue to avoid Bentham’s hedonistic approach (Driver, 2003, p. 66). He proposes that virtue is state of character that promotes the good, yet it is intrinsically valuable since it means loving the good.

Another very similar example can be given by Julia Driver’s consequentialist virtue theory. Driver defines virtue as a character trait that produce good effects in general (2003, p.67). To sum up, utilitarian virtue theories in which utility takes the explanatory priority and virtue takes a supplementary position whereby the acquisition of more good would result in being in the same category of those of Kantian virtue theories and will not be given attention in this dissertation.

In this chapter, I tried to give an account of the history of the revival of virtue ethics as a critique to modern moral theories. In the aftermath of a renewed interest, a long-standing action guidance objection is posed and developed over time. I introduced the initial action-guidance objection and concerns that are compressed in it. The most recent objections to virtue ethics include issues concerning application (anti-codifiability), adequacy, cultural relativity, conflict problem, self-effacement, justification, egoism and situationist objection. I argued here that except self-effacement, egoism and situationist challenge, the rest of the objections are related to action-guidance objection: some closely related (application, adequacy and conflict objections) and some indirectly related (cultural relativity and justification objections). To me, closely related objections are extensions of initial action-guidance objection or application problem. The cultural relativity and justification objections are indirectly

related to action guidance, yet very important to strengthen virtue ethical response to the objection. Justification for virtues by providing a ground for the virtues also establishes a universality to the concept of virtue, hence replies the cultural relativity objection. Before looking at how virtue ethics handles action-guidance objections, virtue theories are differentiated because of the simple reason that virtue does not have an explanatory role in their theory. In the following chapters I will present three strands of virtue ethics which are dealing with action-guidance and exhibit a systematic account namely eudaimonistic virtue ethics, pluralist (target-centered) virtue ethics and sentimentalist (agent-based) virtue ethics. So, now let's turn to eudaimonistic virtue ethics.



3. EUDAIMONIST VIRTUE ETHICS

This chapter aims at explaining the action-guidance that can be found in eudaimonist virtue ethics. In order to do that, this chapter will be divided into three main sections. The first section will provide a brief introduction to the central concepts such as *eudaimonia*, *phronesis* and virtue³⁹. Second section will look at Aristotle's account of eudaimonist virtue ethics in order to trace back the commonalities between the ancient and the contemporary accounts and in order to show the importance of practical content (acting) and how central concepts are interlocking themes rather than hierarchically inferior or superior to each other. The first and the second section will set the stage and reveal the ancient influence for contemporary account of eudaimonist virtue ethics. The third section will be devoted to Rosalind Hursthouse's account in virtue of being the most systematic analysis of eudaimonist virtue ethics with regard to action-guidance. Hursthouse's section will be divided into three parts. In the first part, regarding Hursthouse's definition of right action who the virtuous agent is and her relationship to virtuous action will be discussed. In the second part Hursthouse's initial response to action-guidance objection will be explicated. This part will highlight the stringency of the action-guidance objection, and discuss how virtue ethics can be action-guiding and decision-making procedure is as problematic for modern moral theories as for virtue ethics. In the third part, the objections against definition of right action will be introduced. In this regard, three objections will be discussed: circularity objection, "right but not characteristic of the virtuous" and "characteristic of the virtuous but not right".

Since my main thesis in this project is that *eudaimonia* is indispensable for a virtue ethics to provide an account for practical matters as well as for the purposes of theoretical coherence, in this chapter I intend to present the main concepts to establish

³⁹ I use the ancient Greek terms only to avoid any confusion that could result from different translations of them. *Eudaimonia* is commonly translated as happiness, but also well-being, human flourishing, the good life. *Phronesis* on the other hand has different translations which may not be as confusing as the translations of *eudaimonia*. Yet, it is useful to clear the possible confusion that could be caused by translations such as practical wisdom, practical reason, practical thoughtfulness, practical intelligence, mindfulness or even prudence which are all used to refer to *phronesis*.

the basis and significant and the most relevant topics concerning action-guidance, so that I can expand my discussion of eudaimonist virtue ethics later in Chapters 6 and 7.

3.1 A Brief Introduction to the Central Concepts of *Eudaimonia*, Practical Wisdom and Virtue and Their Relationship

The Ancient Greek philosophers are the first ones to be considered in a traditional history of philosophy class. From Plato to Aristotle, to Hellenistic and Neo-Platonic philosophers, not to mention early Christian religious apologists, we see how philosophical inquiry dwells on very extensive questions of how to live. In all of these schools of thought, the presumption that all things pursue happiness persists. Eudaimonist virtue ethics construes a conceptual relationship between the virtues and *eudaimonia*, commonly translated as happiness, but better described as human flourishing, well-being, the good life. It should be noted that all of the attempts to translate *eudaimonia* have some drawbacks. Happiness implies a very subjective sense in contemporary understanding, well-being is vague without a proper adjective like mental, physical, psychological. Human flourishing or the good life could be saved from such a subjectivity objection, yet then the idea of flourishing and what it consists of can be mistaken for something it is not. Before I turn to a conceptualization of *eudaimonia* and its vitality for virtue ethics I also take it to be “true (or real) happiness” or “the sort of happiness worth having” (Hursthouse, 2001, p. 10).

This strand of thought is best exemplified by Aristotle and much later by neo-Aristotelian virtue ethicists such as Philippa Foot (1978), Rosalind Hursthouse (2001), Julia Annas (1993) (2011), Daniel Russell (2009), and Alasdair MacIntyre (1984). These accounts make *eudaimonia* a central concept and see the virtues as conducive to it. *Eudaimonia* is a complete life of virtuous activity guided by reason, and as our ultimate end, it is what we aim at and try to achieve. (Aristotle, *NE*, I, 1, 1094a23)⁴⁰ Practical wisdom (*phronesis*) has a very important seat since it is integral to all virtue in its deciding the course of action needed to actualize virtue. Virtue is a character disposition described as what is naturally good for human beings, and what is

⁴⁰ Aristotle is interpreted as having two version of eudaimonic life. The first of which is the complete life lived according to virtues guided by reason. The latter is that of which is lived in theoretical contemplation. Agreeing on the first description, I also believe that there is not much difference between them, since I think for Aristotle actuality precedes potential. That is to say theoretical contemplation which includes the thought of virtue would be void without actual practicing.

necessary for *eudaimonia* or the well-functioning of human beings. Without setting a hierarchical relationship between the notions of *eudaimonia*, *phronesis* and virtue, eudaimonist virtue ethics take these terms as primary. Due to their interdependency, the nuances about terms such as sufficient, necessary, commensurate, conducive requires a certain attention. It can be good to point from the beginning that virtuous activity is conducive to *eudaimonia*, and fully incorporated virtuous activity is commensurate with *eudaimonia*. Consider the skill analogy to clarify: Learning to play the piano can be thought as a skill. This includes certain kind of development yet unsurprisingly the development from imitating our teacher or following instructions to mastering the art is common to all of our experience about learning a skill.⁴¹ Learning involves copying our role model, learning technical content of the skill, learning to play sonatas in this case. During the learning, playing the piano is conducive to mastering it (having learned to play the piano). Having learned to play the piano includes an ease (or flow), increased understanding of the skill and art (Annas, 2011, pp. 13-14). So, learning to play the piano (virtuous activity) is conducive to mastering it, and having learned the piano is commensurate with the mastery. Similarly, virtuous activity is conducive to *eudaimonia*, and fully incorporated virtuous activity is commensurate with it. The terms that specify the relationship between virtue, virtuous activity and *eudaimonia* are not limited to commensurability. Sufficient and necessary conditions are commonly used terms in philosophy. They point to a degree of dependency. The connection between *eudaimonia* and virtues is construed in different degrees. While the conceptual link between them stay put for all eudaimonist virtue ethicists, the degree to which their dependency is established is subject of controversy. For instance, in Aristotle virtue is necessary for becoming *eudaimon*, yet it is not sufficient because other external goods as a matter of luck plays a role in it too. The Stoics and Plato, on the other hand, deems virtue to be both necessary and sufficient for *eudaimonia*. However, the condition of necessity and sufficiency is not the only way to construe the conceptual link between *eudaimonia* and virtue, and Rosalind Hursthouse argues for this third view in this respect denying that virtue is either necessary or sufficient for *eudaimonia*. Hursthouse argues that virtues do not guarantee to a characteristically good human life as similar to the analogy that doctor's advising not to smoke for a healthy life is not a guarantee

⁴¹ For the skill analogy see also (Aristotle, NE, II, 1, 1103a28-1103b1)

to perfect health, yet it is the ‘only reliable bet’ (Hursthouse, 2001, pp. 172-174). The differences about the link is not a crucial respect for the aim of this chapter, yet I hold that virtue is not sufficient for *eudaimonia* and at least it is our best bet for a good life. As for this dissertation’s claim, the conceptual link between *eudaimonia*, virtue and practical wisdom must be kept intact if we are to evaluate virtue ethics as a different normative category and action-guiding moral theory. Before looking at the systematic eudaimonist account that is created to answer action-guidance objection discussed in Chapter 2, let us briefly examine the basics of Aristotle’s eudaimonist view to lay down the framework.

3.2 Aristotelian Outline for Eudaimonist Virtue Ethics

Aristotle begins his *Nicomachean Ethics* by stating that “every skill and every inquiry, and similarly every action and rational choice, is thought to aim at some good; and so the good has been aptly described as that at which everything aims” (I, 1, 1094a1-3). While everything aims at some good, Aristotle acknowledges that there are several ends, yet there is an end that we choose for the sake of itself. The end that we only want for the sake of itself seems very natural and necessary because otherwise, choosing everything for the sake of something else would create an infinite regress that would make our desire vain and fruitless. It can be said that without this *telos* (ultimate end) we would end up like Sisyphus rolling the stone up eternally. Thus, knowledge of the ultimate end attains a great importance for our lives (*NE*, I, 1, 1094a21-25). He emphasizes the importance of figuring out our *telos* as below.

And if, like archers, we have a target, are we not more likely to hit the right mark? If so, we must try at least roughly to comprehend what it is and which science or faculty is concerned with it. (*NE*, I, 2, 1094a26-29)

Despite the claim that virtue ethics is not concerned with action, Aristotle clearly is interested in finding morally important features of the good life for human beings, so that we could aim for the right mark (using our associated faculty). Thus, eudaimonistic moral inquiry takes as its starting point the good for human beings. He says *eudaimonia* is an activity in accordance with virtue, in other words virtuous activity is commensurate with *eudaimonia*. Aristotle clearly advocates the importance of doing as well as being. They are more like two sides of the same coin. For if a state is not actualized then it is not so different from being sleep despite having a state. In

other words, the state is useless unless employed for some purpose. Thus, virtue necessarily engages in action if it is to mean doing well. Virtue as being a character trait and associated with ‘being’ is not exempt from ‘doing’, on the contrary for it to be a virtue at all, it has to be embodied in virtuous activity. Aristotle explicates the condition of attaining the good and the noble (*kalon kagathon*)⁴² as “in life it is those who act rightly who will attain what is noble and good” (*NE*, I, 8, 1098b34-1099a7).

Having established the ultimate end, the process by which we attain that end is Aristotle’s real project. He does not have a determined picture for human nature. Humans are by nature could be virtuous and good as well as not virtuous and not good. He argues that humans have the capacity (*dunamis*) for being virtuous, yet one has to be trained properly through habit so that virtues are acquired and internalized (*NE*, II, 1, 1103a25-26). It is possible that there are naturally virtuous people with the capacity to be either good or bad, and so the inquiry about how we can acquire virtues and be good attains a great importance; for that reason, Aristotle places a crucial emphasis on the action (*praxis*). Aristotle’s analysis of action is not the rightness or wrongness of action in episodic encounters *per se*, but fine-tuning practices that mold character. He argues that the robust effect of virtuous activity is what makes a just person just, and a brave person brave (*NE*, II, 1, 1103b1-2). This means when we refer to a virtuous person for the definition of right action, one person does not make herself the sole cause of rightness or wrongness, but the embodiment of virtuous agency includes certain reasons and emotions. Emotions are associated with moral virtues like justice, courage and temperance and reason is associated with intellectual virtues such as wisdom (*sophia*), intuition (*nous*), science (*episteme*) and practical wisdom (*phronesis*). Action is tied to practical wisdom since the latter results in the first. Practical wisdom is taken to be one of the most important elements of eudaimonist virtue ethics since it guides the course of action in circumstances as well as regulating the emotions that are proper to certain actions.

In the structure of *Nicomachean Ethics* we can follow how *eudaimonia*, virtue and *phronesis* are connected to each other as interlocking themes. One and each of them

⁴² *Kalon kagathon* is actually *kalon kai agathon* (noble and good). *Kalon* is translated sometime as noble and other times as beautiful and fine (Irwin, 2010, p. 383). This point does not have an essential role for this dissertation, and it is enough to note here that in Aristotle *kalon* is used to point out both beauty and moral rightness, and in ethics *kalon* indicates non-instrumental goods which are different than other non-instrumental goods in terms of being praiseworthy because they are chosen and their connection to voluntary actions imply praise (or blame) (Irwin, 2010, p. 390). See also (Aristotle, *NE*, 1176b2-10).

cannot be explained without the other two. Book I of the Ethics searches into the aim of human life, and *eudaimonia* as the best life is said to involve development of our specific human capacities. Book II looks at traits of character -virtues- that contribute to *eudaimonia*. Book VI looks at the necessity of *phronesis* if we are to make virtuous choices and become virtuous. Around the concept of *eudaimonia*, Aristotle does not prescribe rules of a deontic or utilitarian type, rather he introduces the virtuous person and the virtues that are exercised by this person. He says,

Actions, then, are called just and temperate when they are such as the just and the temperate person would do. But the just and the temperate person is not the one who does them merely, but the one who does them as just and temperate people do. So it is correct to say that it is by doing just actions that one becomes just, and by doing temperate actions temperate; without doing them, no one would have even a chance of becoming good. (*NE*, II, 3, 1105b5-11)

Following Aristotle, a eudaimonist virtue ethics account of right action derives from virtuous agency. As starter of the conversation about how virtue ethics entails a systematic theory for action guidance, and as paradigm criterion since the 1990s Rosalind Hursthouse formalizes right action in terms of its relation to virtuous agents.⁴³

An action is right iff it is what a virtuous agent would characteristically (i.e. acting in character) do in the circumstances. (Hursthouse, 2001, p. 28)

Let us turn now to Hursthouse's discussion of action-guidance for eudaimonist virtue ethics.

3.3 Hursthouse's Fine-Tuning to Eudaimonist Virtue Ethics

Rosalind Hursthouse has provided one of the most famous and systematic responses to the action-guiding objection and her account is taken as a paradigm response to it. The action-guidance objection long stood against any attempt to build a case for virtue ethics as an alternative moral theory, yet it only got detailed and furthered after Hursthouse's presentation of virtue ethics as action-guiding moral theory. As one of her colleagues said, virtue ethics has nothing to do with providing rules and principles for action guidance, yet she did it so well (with *On Virtue Ethics*) that now virtue ethics

⁴³ Christine Swanton calls Hursthouse's version as "qualified-agent virtue ethics" and Slote's virtue ethics as agent-based (Swanton, 2001, p. 33). I prefer to distill the strands as eudaimonist, target-centered and sentimental (agent-based) in order to emphasize the importance of *eudaimonia*.

is in the game.⁴⁴ In her earlier work, her definition of right action did not include “characteristically (i.e. acting in character)” (Hursthouse, 1991, p. 25). It was necessary to add it because even the virtuous agents sometimes may act out of character and make mistakes due to things that escaped their attention or may judge a situation mistakenly. When we are talking about real people, it is not so surprising to imagine that a fully virtuous agent may act out of character “when they are exhausted, dazed with grief, ill, drunk (through no serious fault of their own, we must suppose), shell-shocked, and so on” (Hursthouse, 2001, p. 62). Under those circumstances, it is possible for even saintly person to fail, thus in *On Virtue Ethics*, she specifies that right action is that which a virtuous agent would characteristically do in a particular circumstance granting that under those circumstances it is possible that even fully virtuous agents act like ‘not themselves’ (2001, p.62). Apart from action-guidance, what a virtuous agent would characteristically do raises other questions since it does not provide a direct, straightforward guidance because there is not sufficient clarity regarding the virtuous agent. Considering this, her definition of right action needs to be specified in terms of the questions such as 1) who are virtuous agents? 2) What does it mean for an action to be performed by virtuous agent in certain circumstances?

So, in the next section I will look at who the virtuous agents are and how their actions are related to their agency.

3.3.1 Virtuous agents and their relation to virtuous actions

Firstly, virtuous agents are taken to be people who actively participate in life; reacting and responding to the world for certain reasons, taking into account certain facts that affect their choices. They evaluate people, actions, situations, corporations, society, institutions. They have a certain character possessing and practicing virtues (Hursthouse, 2001, pp. 29, 123-124). So, virtuous agents are not non-existent people yet ideal, abstractly existent individuals. If they are those who possess and practice virtues, then we can explain these moral exemplars by specifying virtues (in her case by defining them as character traits that are needed for *eudaimonia*). We may find them around us: some closer to the ideal, some falling short a little bit. These are figures that we take to be morally praiseworthy with their whole life, as role models

⁴⁴ Richard Paul Hamilton in our private conversation in *Virtue, Skill and Practical Reason* conference made the remark about Hursthouse.

to us (and all humanity): Martin Luther King, Marie Curie, Mahatma Gandhi, moral exemplars from literature like Atticus Finch, and those that a smaller number of people knew and know about. Hursthouse neither provides an extensive conceptual analysis of the virtues nor virtuous agency, nor does provide a list of virtuous exemplars that we can look at. The expectation from the reader is that we have a familiarity with these notions. In this instance, she follows Aristotle's argument that the question of how to be virtuous is more important than what virtue is.⁴⁵ For Aristotle (as well as Hursthouse), this is not to say that theoretical account is not important, but rather that the theoretical account may provide us 'what is good' or 'what is virtue', but it does not help us about how to become good, or virtuous. This point in Aristotle can be interpreted also as Aristotle's opposition to Plato's idea that virtue is knowledge (Plato, *Protagoras*, 329b-33b) and if you have the knowledge of the good, you can't err in your doings because nobody fails to do what is right knowingly (*Protagoras*, 352c). In a way, the universals and unchanging features of the good are dormant without practicing them and Aristotle in *Nicomachean Ethics* is interested in finding out how to attain those goods which he counts that his students already know of. Thus, relying on the belief (or knowledge) that virtue is good, Hursthouse also focuses on the particulars such as virtuous person and how she characteristically acts. So, now let's turn to characteristic acts of the virtuous person.

When it comes to what it means for an action to be performed by a virtuous agent, there are two things to note from the beginning: first, there is a conceptual link between the virtuous agent and virtuous action, secondly primacy of agency should not invite circularity, or virtuous actions should not be reduced to primacy of agency. The answer to the second concern relies in the first one, so let us look at the second concern first.

What is expected from an honest agent is performing honest actions, yet honest actions can also be performed by non-virtuous agents at times. Thus, the criticism states that virtuous actions have features that are not necessarily defined by virtuous agency. Hursthouse argues that virtue terms always refer to a sort of activity that virtuous person engages with. Honesty involves prescription like telling the truth and prohibition like avoid lying. The activities that a virtue prescriptively or prohibitively points to can be called "v-rules" or "v-acts" (Hursthouse, 2001, p.30). So, honesty as virtue generates the general rule that of "do what is honest", and in this sense

⁴⁵ See (Aristotle, *NE*, 1103b27-33)

prescriptions and prohibitions that are derived from virtue terms do not have to be associated with virtuous agency. Hursthouse argues below that virtuous actions (or vicious ones) have a certain kind of independence from agency.

I initially described the v-rules as ‘generated’ by the terms for the virtues and vices, and thereby I am happy to say that the notion of ‘v-acts’ is, in some way, ‘secondary to and dependent upon the notion of’ a virtuous person. But I construe ‘secondary to and dependent upon’ as something more complicated than ‘only to be defined or understood at all in terms of’. The v-adjectives applied to actions have a certain amount of independence—especially, I think, the vice adjectives—which is encapsulated in dictionary entries and mother's-knee rules. (2001, p. 64)

Of course, the independence she is talking about does not extend to eschew conceptual connection between virtuous agency and virtuous action. Even though the concepts of good and evil or virtue and vice cannot be reduced to virtuous agency, there is a very close connection between them. Virtue terms always refers to certain actions that a virtuous agent characteristically engages with. Outrageous, horrible, terrible things really are the sort of actions that would characteristically be done by the wicked (Hursthouse, 2001, p.64). By the same token, for the most part, a very callous, dishonest, unjust thing would not ever cross a virtuous agent’s mind for the reason that it would bring great evil (Hursthouse, 2001, p.64). When we deem an agent honest, we have expectations that she will not lie, cheat, “casually pocket other people’s possessions, and will tell the truth, own up to her mistakes or communicate sincere remarks” (Hursthouse, 2001, p.10). It is surprising, or exceptional when an honest agent lies, and it would be a situation that definitely requires some explanation especially when lying is significant.

Hursthouse engages with Bernard Williams to explain why virtuous action has a close-knit connection with yet should not be reduced to virtuous agency. She argues that every virtue has its range of reasons by which virtuous agents are motivated to act (Hursthouse, 2001, p. 99).⁴⁶ Virtuous agents characteristically perform actions for the right reason (*orthos logos* in Aristotle), their correct reasoning are very much related to their view of the world and pursuing proper ends (Hursthouse, 2001, p. 129). For instance courageous people target to manage fear for worthwhile goals and in different circumstances this might require different actions such as fighting cancer, or breaking

⁴⁶ The idea of association between certain virtues and certain range of reasons is taken from Williams’s “Acting as the Virtuous Person Acts” (1995, pp. 13-23).

bad news to loved ones, standing up against an injustice even at the expense of yourself, standing up for somebody when they can't, and finally it might be fighting in a battle, or fighting somebody to protect the weak. A benevolent agent aims at helping or benefitting other people, and truly benevolent people don't just help but they help for the right reasons. When somebody is in need of shelter, they try to help by finding a shelter option, help financially to solve the shelter problem, or open one's house to host the person (a friend, a family member, or even a trusted stranger). The intricacy of the situation may require sensitivity to particular reasons, and a virtuous person differs from a non-virtuous, malicious person or novice in recognizing the salient features and of course using particular ends to actualize an act. The conceptual connection between the virtuous agency and the virtuous action does not strictly necessitate the primacy of character, yet the virtuous agency provides the fine-tuning for virtuous actions. A virtuous agent is one who has internalized the virtues i.e. honesty for instance, and as a the paradigm person to look at in order to decide when to "eschew being economical with the truth" (Hursthouse, 2001, p. 64). For example, there are cases where an honest agent may be economical with the truth, and their deception is not dishonest. Yet, this should not be taken such that virtue ethics is soft and conciliating and we can easily fit our excuses into virtue discourse. Consider the example of hiding Jews in one's cellar from the Nazis at one's door whereby it might seem like telling white barefaced lies is consistent with the having the virtue of honesty.⁴⁷

I would not condemn someone as dishonest if they lied to the Nazis about the Jews in their cellar either. If I think that the only way out of this situation is to lie, and my putatively honest agent lies, I do not say that this is any reflection on her honesty (that what she did was dishonest), though I do not say it was an exercise of it either. I say, 'Well, the considerations of honesty do not arise here, you see, because...' So possession of honesty is consistent with telling barefaced lies too. It seems that we tailor our virtue (and vice) concepts to fit the world as we find it; and we find it to be a world in which genuinely virtuous people sometimes break the deontologist's rules. (Hursthouse, 2001, p.85).

She accepts the case of lying to Nazis to save the Jews as an example of right thing to do; however, there are couple of things to note here. First of all, someone who is already accepting of vices (who thinks world is such a place where one will often be

⁴⁷ This example resonates with Kant's highly discussed "On a supposed Right to Lie from Benevolent Motives" (1909) whereby he argues that telling the truth is the duty whatever the consequences are, and telling a lie always harms humanity and the source of law; hence, absolutely prohibited.

forced to lie and kill) seriously lacks virtue. Similarly, as Anscombe argues, such a person who is already “open to question whether such an action as procuring the judicial execution of the innocent” shows a corrupt mind (2007, p. 42). A virtuous agent is the paradigm that characteristically acts in certain ways, she has distinct reasons for acting, feelings, values and motives. The conceptual link between virtuous agency and virtuous action is a tight one without reducing one to the other.

Having laid down who virtuous people are, and the relationship between the virtuous act and the virtuous person, in the next section I will focus on Hursthouse’s initial answer to action-guiding objection.

3.3.2 *Tu Quoque* response: Rejection of mathematical model of decision-making

When it comes to action-guiding in virtue ethics, Hursthouse starts from what kind of activity virtue connotes. She claims that virtue ethics provides informative natural guidelines for virtues such as ‘be honest’ and ‘be generous’ like the virtuous agent. The virtue of honesty prescribes being honest, and the prescription ‘be honest’ is as clear as ‘do not lie,’ in the sense that virtue ethics simply provides action-guidance that emanates from virtues like ‘be honest’ as prescriptions as well as vices that constitute the prohibitions (i.e. do not be callous) (Hursthouse, 2001, p. 28). Hursthouse calls these prescriptions and prohibitions v-rules. In other words, being a certain way always implies doing a certain kind of thing, and according to her description this could be taken as a certain type of prescription. However, the objection stands: even when the rule such as ‘do what the virtuous would *characteristically* do’ is postulated, one might still be dissatisfied because how to act in accordance with the rule is not stipulated. There are two sides to this objection. Firstly, this kind of action-guidance would still remain ambiguous for a novice, since she would not understand exactly how to accomplish what the virtuous would do; a novice would not know the reasons of the virtuous yet alone not have the feelings, motives, and motivations of the virtuous. Thus, even if eudaimonist virtue ethics forms a viable account of right action, it would still fall short of providing a decision-making procedure for the agents who are in their infancy of becoming virtuous. The objection demands that there should be a systematic method of resolution to any particular moral quandary guaranteed by set of rules, the universalizability of these, an algorithm to solve dilemmas or come up with the best outcome. The contemporary understanding of normative theory relies on a set of (preferably one) principles that govern decision-making procedures

(Hursthouse, 1996, p. 31). So, in modern moral theories the expectation is that the right action can be determined almost in a deductive fashion using the formulae of universal principle. The assumption after all is that any rational agent using the proper methodology will arrive at the same (or at least very similar) moral resolution. Secondly, if v-rules acquire their sense only from virtuous agency as given in Hursthouse's definition, then it seems almost arbitrary since whatever a virtuous agent would do would be right (circularity objection), and even virtuous person errs ('virtuous but not right' objection).

Despite the emphasis on precision about providing action-guidance and decision procedure for any situation and for any rational being, Hursthouse problematizes the possibility of precision in normative theory for modern moral theories. In an attempt to respond to a lack of action-guiding in virtue ethics, she employs what we can call the "*tu quoque* response". She looks at how action guiding theories develop their moral rules. According to Hursthouse, such approaches seem relatively similar to the moral guidance that virtue ethics provides. In her comparing virtue ethics with other contemporary moral theories, she indicates how utilitarian and deontological accounts suffer from the same problem with which virtue ethics is charged. That is to say, both deontology and utilitarianism theories are equally susceptible to the charge laid against virtue ethics about not providing universal principles that even a novice could easily apply, hence *tu quoque*. But, I should emphasize herein that the main idea behind the *tu quoque* response is not to blame other moral theories to pardon virtue ethics' failing providing action-guidance. The main idea is that the action-guidance that is expected from virtue ethics is stringent to the point where not only virtue ethics, but also other theories cannot satisfy it. Hursthouse argues the supposed lack of guidance is only lack of specificity. Action guiding theories also fail to supply such specificity for novices, if this critique is applied to them too. It is to say that the point about decision-making procedure is a very stringent demand. For example, act utilitarianism⁴⁸ draws the general account for right action in the first premise as follows:

U.1. "An action is right if it promotes the best consequences". (Hursthouse, 2001, p. 26)

⁴⁸ Act utilitarians can be exemplified by classical utilitarians such as Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill, and Henry Sidgwick.

The first premise of act-utilitarianism provides the link between right action and best consequences; however, it does not lay out clearly what one should do unless one knows what best consequences are. In order to provide guidance, there needs to be a second premise to specify right action further. That is as follows:

U.2. “The best consequences are those in which happiness is maximized-which forges the familiar utilitarian link between the concepts of best *consequences* and *happiness*.” (Hursthouse, 2001, p.26).

As it is shown in U.2., even when the best consequences are identified with happiness, it will still be left to the judgment and knowledge of the novice to interpret these. Act utilitarianism does not specify in its entirety what happiness consists in. It would help to develop the account by defining happiness as pleasure and absence of pain taking into count the higher value of intellectual over physical pleasures, yet since it is not represented in the universal principle of the utilitarianism, it would be a clear directive for an agent who does not know this.

The same thing applies to deontology in the sense that the first premise that specifies right action does not suffice to provide action-guidance until the background assumptions and necessary definitions are unpacked. Deontology lays out its first premise in D.1., and following that second premise reveals the specifics of the first one:

D.1. “An action is right if and only if it is in accordance with a correct moral rule or principle.”

D.2. “A correct moral rule (principle) is one that..”

(I) “...is on the following list-(and then a list follows, perhaps completed with an ‘etc.’), or”

(II) “...is laid down for us by God, or”

(III) “...is universalizable/ a categorical imperative, or”

(IV) “...would be the object of choice of all rational beings, and so on.” (Hursthouse, 2001, p. 27)

What this means is that for both theories, universal action-guiding principles do not specify the happiness and right in itself in their first principles. They also have to explain what these terms mean to them to unfold the underlying premises in the

principle (Hursthouse, 2001, p.26-27). In order to unfold the underlying premises, every theory spends a lot of time: utilitarianism specifies happiness as maximization of pleasure and minimization of pain and details the terrain of pleasure as higher and lower, deontology specifies a categorical imperative that governs choice for all rational beings. This argument is to show that in virtue ethics too it takes time to unpack the action guiding rule. Thus, the specification for right action in virtue ethics is just as sufficient (or insufficient) as utilitarian and deontological ones. Hursthouse lays down the same procedure for virtue ethics as follows to show how it explains its action-guidingness.

EVE1: “An action is right if it is what a virtuous agent would *characteristically* do in the circumstance.” (2001, p. 28)

This raises suspicion and might be deemed circular. Who is this virtuous agent? She goes on to specify virtuous agent as,

EVE1a: “virtuous agent is one who has and exercises certain character traits namely virtues.” (Hursthouse, 2001, p. 29)

EVE2: “A virtue is a character trait that...”

... “is on the following list.”

... “a human being needs for *eudaimonia*, to flourish or live well.” (Hursthouse, 2001, p. 28)

As in other theories, the first premise becomes informative only when looked at in the light of the second premise, and virtue ethics is no different in this respect. In her account, the action guidance of virtue relies on the premise that an action is right if a virtuous agent would *characteristically* do it in the given circumstances. She argues that it is satisfactorily action-guiding if we disclose what is contained in the premise. A virtuous agent possesses certain character traits called virtues, and these are what human beings need to have and exercise in order to flourish or live well (Hursthouse, 2001, p. 29). Yet again, it is maybe true that for virtue ethics one has to be a better doer as well as better thinker, and in modern moral theories merely a better thinker. However, the assumption that we can render deontology and utilitarianism more direct and capable of guiding action is only true when they only have very clear prescriptions like a grocery list which includes don't lie, share your excess food, save drowning kids, don't make mean jokes to vulnerable people. As far as the action-guidance is

concerned, virtue ethics is not so different than solution-oriented moral theories. The right action is defined in terms of a virtuous agent in her characteristic exercising of virtues. There again, the nature of the virtue, whether it is a trait that benefits its possessor or traits that are needed to live the good life needs to be explicated.

Through *tu quoque* response, Hursthouse tries to prove that the action-guidance objection is too stringent on virtue ethics, yet when it is applied to modern moral theories they may suffer from the same problems in terms of decision-making. As long as it is consistent with the theory's unity and as long as it is plausible to accept, account of right action can be established. However, account of right action for either modern moral theories and virtue ethics is one thing, and its action-guiding force is another. I agree with Hursthouse that virtue ethics is practically action-guiding and only lacks precise decision-procedure as much as other theories since either deontology or utilitarianism also requires a certain educational background for any informed decision. Yet, even if we take it for granted that eudaimonist virtue ethics can provide action-guidance, we still need to respond to certain objections. Hence, in the next section I review the objections that are voiced against Hursthouse.

3.4 Objections to Eudaimonist Virtue Ethics

3.4.1 Circularity objection

Hursthouse's definition of right action famously raised questions of circularity: the right action is the one that the virtuous person characteristically would do and the virtuous person is the one with the disposition to do the right thing. In order to avoid the circularity, it seems like right action should be determined by an independent criterion. If we are to take virtuous agent as the source of right and wrong, as sole moral compass, then we have a difficulty explaining why virtue is virtue beyond it is what a virtuous person would do. Critics argue that the notion of the virtuous agent will inevitably find ground in some other antecedent concept of rightness (Das, 2003, pp.331-334; Driver, 2006, p.118; Östenberg, 1999, p.287).

But if so, how could it still be called virtue ethics? If there is an independent criterion other than virtue, then we would not need to call it virtue ethics. However, this kind of thinking assumes something very modern, namely that that 'ethical theory must have a structure which is hierarchical and complete' and ancient ethical theory does not

work like that (Annas, 1993, p. 111). While *eudaimonia* is the primary concept, it does not play the role of the basic and hierarchically prior principle. Virtuous activity too is the primary concept which is understood as conducive to *eudaimonia* but not in an instrumental way because virtue is understood in terms of *eudaimonia* and not as a list of character traits that adds up to it.

In response to the critique of circularity, Hursthouse argues that the judgment of the right action ultimately depends on human flourishing. The human flourishing rests on a form of ethical naturalism⁴⁹. Ethical naturalism basically refers to the view that virtue is grounded in human nature, and virtuous activity is exercise of our natural human abilities. The ethical naturalism that Hursthouse defends is Aristotelian in two senses:

1) that the virtues are those character traits that human beings, given their nature, need for *eudaimonia*, to flourish or live well as human beings,

whereby

2) considerations of human nature provide, in some sense, a rational foundation for ethics. (Hursthouse, 2004, p. 263)

Thus, the grounds of living a moral life can be found in the natural goodness of human beings. Her ethical naturalism is neo-Aristotelian in the sense that justification of virtues and finding a rational foundation for ethics is rather a modern project (Hursthouse, 2004, p. 263). Philippa Foot is taken to be the forerunner of this rather modern project of naturalism. Simply, she argues that goodness of a human being is determined by or based on the facts about human nature and human life (Foot, 1994, p. 214). Hursthouse develops an ethical naturalism whose origins are in Aristotle and yet can be seen in a different light in the form of Foot's naturalism.⁵⁰ Hursthouse says,

[A]s Foot says the virtue of charity is 'the virtue that gives attachment to the good of others, and because life is normally a good, charity demands that it should be saved or prolonged'. What constitutes the (true) good of others, and when life is and is not a good, are amongst the things that the virtuous person knows and can recognize, but they are so not because she recognizes them but because of facts about human nature. (2001, pp. 81-82)⁵¹

Appealing to naturalism in this way, Hursthouse points to the conceptual link between *eudaimonia* and virtue (2001, p. 74). Hursthouse's account is largely shaped by

⁴⁹ See my work Chapter 7, Part II for discussion of naturalism.

⁵⁰ See Chapter 7, Part II for a more detailed discussion of Foot's naturalism.

⁵¹ See also (Foot, 1978, p. 17) as quoted by Hursthouse.

Aristotle's naturalism, his concept of virtue, his concept of choice (*prohairesis*) and moral development. The concept of *eudaimonia* is explained in terms of the naturalism that Aristotle constructs in his teleological view as I have mentioned above (pp. 36-39). Everything aims at some good, and we humans must also aim at something that we only want for the sake of itself. *Eudaimonia* as being our *telos* can be attained by character traits that make us good humans *qua* humans. Naturalism, hence human nature is a base for understanding what virtue is. Like Aristotle, she argues that virtue (generally) is a state (*hexis* in Aristotle's terms) of one's character (Hursthouse, 2001, p. 11). Like Aristotle's *hexis* she defines virtue as a character trait that has certain reasons and emotions as well as values, sensibilities, and desires. It is not a tendency to act in certain ways arbitrarily; virtuous character in its unity is "extremely labyrinthine. It couples systematically a person's values, choices, desires, strength or weakness of will, emotions, feelings, perceptions, interests, expectations and sensibilities." (Hudson, 1986, p. 43)⁵². That is why we are very surprised and puzzled when we see a person who we know to be exceptionally generous and courageous to do something repellent (Hursthouse, 2001, p. 155). What does it mean to say that virtue is a character trait that 'makes its possessor good and enables her to act well'? Hursthouse relies on the neo-Aristotelian naturalism to ground virtues as excellences in relation to the human *telos*. The teleological elements that are logically distinctive if not quantifiable about human nature are taken to be the determining elements for what is virtue and what is not. Like other gregarious animals, humans are social and in this sense their contribution to their community has an impact on the community and the good of the community definitely has an impact on the good of the individual agent.⁵³ In their interdependent existence, the logically distinctive characteristics that make their possessors good and enable them to act well include care for each other, beneficence, honesty, courage, generosity, temperance etc.

Hursthouse's extensive discussion of neo-Aristotelian naturalism is to provide how virtue ethics is objective/rational. Although it is a different subject than how virtue ethics can guide actions, it is an essential part of explaining why virtues are virtues and how the definition of right action is not circular. The *eudaimonia* that is found at the root of the naturalism has a direct claim to how practical wisdom enables an agent

⁵² See also (Hursthouse, 2001, p.12).

⁵³ See (Foot, 2001) for further discussions.

to deliberate well. *Phronesis* means reasoning properly about practical matters and taking appropriate action. Each virtue involves getting things right; hence each virtue involves practical wisdom. Finding the proper course of action in a situation, *phronesis* is guided by knowledge (the concept of *eudaimonia* as our *telos*). Agents who have their aim right are most likely to deliberate well. Agents who don't have aims, or have wrong goals are most likely not to deliberate well even if their deliberation is clever. Thus, *eudaimonia* as the ultimate human end gives aim to practical wisdom and they have an interconnected relationship. This issue will be discussed further in Chapter 7.

To sum up this section, it is wrong to assume in the first place that even if there is a universal principle that is supposed to guide action, a novice's experience will fall short of application considering the role that practical wisdom plays. That is to say her account of right action is as sufficient as those of modern moral theories', and it provides an adequate decision procedure for action that can only be applied properly by the virtuous agents. This is not so different for other theories, since the universal principles may supply an account of right action, but it is still left to the agent to apply it with the correct conception of the *summum bonum* of the theory. Algorithmic principles that supposedly provide decision-procedures and right action even in morally difficult cases are not more than illusory in terms of their application. For, a universal moral principle cannot give precise, determinate, all-governing action-guidance that transcends the agent's practical wisdom (McDowell, 2007, pp. 154-158).⁵⁴ Even in a situation where the case is an irresolvable dilemma, Hursthouse's virtue ethics provides guidance in the form of pointing to 'good action' rather than right action, since there is not a right action in the fullest sense. In an imperfect world, it is still a merit for a theory to make such distinction between good and right action.

A virtuous agent's choice of action is conceptually linked to *eudaimonia* and proper employment of *phronesis*. Hursthouse puts it as follows.

...within virtue ethics, 'good action' is not merely a surrogate for 'right action', nor is it simply determined by 'action of the virtuous agent'. Virtue ethics does not hold that actions are good, bad, or indifferent, as some people hold that actions are right, wrong, or permissible; nor does it call what the virtuous agent does (for the most part) 'good action' for want of any other phrase. 'Good action' is so called advisedly, and although it is conceptually linked to morally

⁵⁴ See also (Solomon, 1988, p. 438). He argues in parallel to both Hursthouse and McDowell about the precision that can be expected from a moral theory.

correct (right) decision and to ‘action of the virtuous agent’, it is also conceptually linked to ‘good life’ and eudaimonia. (2001, p. 74)

As Hursthouse exemplifies, in eudaimonist virtue ethics right action can be defined with reference to virtuous agency. However, this should not be thought of as a basic concept that everything derives from. This strand of thought is derived from a modern style of moral theorizing that postulates a basic concept from which all of the other concepts are derived.⁵⁵ In deontology, concepts such as the categorical imperative, and good will are both derived from the basic concept of right. Similarly, maximizing utility or maximizing happiness for the greatest number, are concepts that have their roots and motivation in the “good” that utilitarianism frames. However, in virtue ethics no single concept is the basic concept that explains every other. As Julia Annas argues,

In [ancient virtue theories], the notions of the agent’s final end, of happiness and of the virtues are what may be called primary, as opposed to basic. These are the notions that we start from; they set up the framework of the theory, and we introduce and understand the other notions in terms of them. They are thus primary for understanding...However they are not basic in the modern sense: other concepts are not derived from them, still less reduced to them. (1993, p. 9)

Thus, if we change our perspective in terms of hierarchy of principles, and basic-derivative relationship, then it is possible to see that circularity objection can be overcome. In the next subsection, I will elaborate the objection that addresses the actions that are right but not characteristic of the virtuous agent.

3.4.2 “Right but not virtuous” objection

Originally stated by Gilbert Harman, this objection simply states that there are right actions that would not be performed by a fully virtuous agent (1983, p. 315). However, Robert N. Johnson provides the full-fledged version of this objection against Hursthouse’s definition of right action (2003). The objection gives a counterexample to the definition of right action with the actions that are right, but would not be performed by a virtuous agent since a virtuous agent would not find herself in a situation like non-virtuous put herself in. Thus, what to do in this case is not what a

⁵⁵ Hursthouse blames John Rawls for the resistance towards virtue ethics as a normative alternative. For, in *A Theory of Justice* (1971) he presented only two ‘basic notions’ or ‘main concepts’ as good and right. While deontology makes use of “right” as its basic concept, utilitarianism starts from the basic notion of the “good”. Virtue ethics is also taken to be using the ‘good’ as its foundational, most basic concept; thus “virtue” is not indexed by Rawls as a starting point, virtue ethics was put in the same camp as consequentialists (2006, p. 100).

virtuous person would do but rather what a non-virtuous person should do. Johnson provides three cases whereby his claim is true.

The first case involves self-improving actions. These actions are right for a novice, or non-virtuous agents in virtue of improving their character. For instance, a chronic liar who wants to become honest and virtuous should commit to remedial tasks like writing down even the unimportant lies to become more aware of his habit of lying and to remind himself of the importance of truth. The stages of moral development and the things that he ought to do is different than what the virtuous would do (simply telling the truth, or simply not lying); writing down the lies, gaining awareness of his habits, keeping track of smaller successes, gaining awareness of the underlying motives and temptations to lie (low self-esteem) and understanding the value of truth finally (Johnson, 2003, p. 817)

For imperfect agents, the steps that should be taken is not what a virtuous agent would do. Considering that there is a moral obligation to improve your character, a chronic liar would remind herself the importance of truth telling and write down the lies she tells each day so that she can step by step become lie-free. Yet, a virtuous agent is not a chronic liar to begin with. Thus, what the chronic liar does is what she ought to do and right, and it is uncharacteristic of the virtuous. So, as for the question whether Hursthouse's definition of right action is plausible he says:

Not at least for many stages of moral development and for many people trying to better themselves. It certainly isn't plausible with regard to the reforming liar. Strategies of the sort my mendacious person employs are far more realistic than simply doing what is characteristic of the truthful person, whatever that may be beyond simply telling the truth. Hence, if the above argument entails that as a general rule one becomes virtuous simply by acting as the virtuous person acts (and, hence, that as a general rule there are no right actions that are uncharacteristic of the virtuous) it is unsound (Johnson, 2003, p.819).

Other examples of right but not virtuous actions are those of incontinent individuals. Those are self-controlling in the sense that they take effort, struggle, planning and conscious movement toward performing right action. Someone who lacks adequate moral upbringing and always struggles to behave well against opposite natural tendencies, ought to create a web of self-controlling acts to support good behavior. Consider someone who decides to help his mother move across town. Since he does not have the psychological makeup to easily act out of that inner aphorism of "I ought to help others in need", he tells his friends he ought to help his mom that weekend, and

he won't be around (Johnson, 2003, pp. 821-822). For someone who loves to drink too much, becomes aggressive and rude with people, what would be right is to carefully steer away from liquor stores, social gatherings that prompt drinking, or at least drinking alone and at home. Johnson also refers to Aristotle here to question the plausibility of Hursthouse's definition. Aristotle himself argues that hitting the mean is difficult and sometimes it is better to identify which of excess or deficiency is more erroneous and choose the lesser evil accordingly (*NE*, 1109a17-b26). For individuals, it would mean acting against natural tendencies and steering in the opposite direction of pleasure (since we are not impartial judges of it and we tend to easily be carried away towards pleasure) (Johnson, 2003, p. 819).⁵⁶

A final counterexample is that of taking advice about what to do for someone who lacks certain "moral sensitivity in some area" (Johnson, 2003, p.822). It would be the right thing to do for some to take advice, yet this would be uncharacteristic of a fully virtuous person. When someone's moral perception is imperfect and one is aware that he lacks appropriate moral sensitivity, for him to seek counsel about what the situation calls for is the right thing to do. This is not to say that one will be dependent upon a virtuous person's counsel all the time, but taking advice helps the imperfect agent to learn what the right thing to do is in a given situation and also might improve their perception and open their gaze to the required sensitivity in similar situations (Johnson, 2003, pp.822-823). Additional criticism here also targets the virtuous agent's capacity to teach. Similar to native speakers, the virtuous agent would know what to do, as a native speaker would know what is correct grammatically, what fits and sounds natural, yet there is a good chance that their advice would not go beyond that because they can't give smaller tasks to improve a novice's character (Johnson, 2003, pp.823-824).

There are different strategies to respond to Johnson's argument. One is rejecting it through problematizing the usage of ought and its relation to right (Russell, 2009, pp. 48-49). The other is accepting it and revising Hursthouse's definition of right action as

- i. An action is right *iff* the reasons for it would characteristically guide a fully virtuous agent in similar circumstances (Tiberius, 2006).

⁵⁶ See also (Aristotle, *NE*, 1109b3-13)

- ii. Right action is the one that a fully virtuous agent would advise in particular circumstance (Smith, 1995)
- iii. Right action is the one that a fully virtuous agent would approve in particular situations (Kawall, 2002)
- iv. An action is right if a fully virtuous agent would not characteristically disapprove (Svensson, 2010)
- v. An action is right if it is characteristically performed by a decent agent in particular circumstances (Brännmark, 2008 cited in Svensson, 2010, p.266).⁵⁷

Tiberius revises the definition in (i) by focusing on the reasons of virtues that a virtuous person relies on, so that virtuous person's reasons do not exclude self-improvement and upkeep of her virtuousness (Tiberius, 2006, p. 253). This way Tiberius's definition avoids Johnson's first objection regarding self-improving actions. Once self-improvement is accepted as something that the virtuous person is committed to, self-controlled (or incontinent) actions that bring one closer to the ideal do not pose a problem like in Johnson's objection. Likewise, an imperfectly virtuous person would seek advice when she thinks she may miss what reasons require (Tiberius, 2006, p. 256).

The second definition or advise model (Svensson, 2010) also escapes Johnson's objection that deals with self-improving actions for novices, because according to the definition there will be actions that virtuous person would not characteristically do, but advise someone (chronic liar) to do (write down his lies) ⁵⁸. Similarly, self-controlling actions that are right for incontinent individuals can be advised, even if not performed by the virtuous. With regard to the objection that taking advice would be right for not-fully virtuous, in this definition it is acceptable that in case of doubt or ignorance even for an imperfect virtuous agent taking advice from another (fully or at least more) virtuous person would be right thing to do.

⁵⁷ Originally Brännmark gives this definition as "an action is wrong iff it is one that no decent person would characteristically (i.e acting in character) do in the circumstances" (2006, p.596). Svensson argues that in his later work (2008), he agrees that definition can be formulated as in here.

⁵⁸ Svensson (2010, p.263) cites a few authors who acknowledge advise model such as (Smith, 1995), (Railton, 1986), (Conee, 2006), (Crisp, 2000), (Cullity, 1999), (Doris, 1998) (Driver, 2006), (Harman G. , 2001), (Johnson, 2003) and (Milgram, 2005).

(iii) is very similar to advice model, and avoids Johnson's objections in the same manner. Yet, for this definition it is more difficult to address the problems concerning the distinction between right, permissible and supererogatory actions (Svensson, 2010, p. 265). A virtuous person might approve things that are morally irrelevant and those would be counted as "right". In order to avoid this worry, Svensson offers the revision in (iv) which states "An action is right for S in circumstances C if and only if a fully virtuous agent would not characteristically disapprove of S's doing A in C" (2010, p.266). So that, according to the definition a virtuous person's disapproval would only be granted for morally wrong actions and not for lunch preferences.

The definition in (v) tries to avoid demandingness of Hursthouse's definition and lowers the standard from "fully virtuous" to "decent person". In this way, the definition escapes all of Johnson's objections because a decent person (simply non-vicious person) could still be performing some self-improving, self-controlling actions and take advice when he feels like he lacks knowledge, understanding or perspective.

I will suffice with introducing the revised definitions here but I will look at these closely in Chapter 6 in order to see whether any of these fares better than Hursthouse's original definition and can help eudaimonist virtue ethics to provide better action-guidance. Now, I shall continue with the objection that targets actions that are virtuous in virtue of being performed by a virtuous agent, yet still not right.

3.4.3 "Virtuous but not right" objection

This objection aims to provide a counterexample to Hursthouse in terms of actions which are characteristically performed by fully virtuous agents, yet not right. These are morally neutral actions that are characteristic of the virtuous, actions that are characteristic of a virtuous agent yet not omniscient of all salient features and eventually not right, and finally actions that are performed by virtuous agents in tragic dilemmas.

First thing that comes to mind here is that there are some other neutral actions that a virtuous agent would do and those would not attain any moral importance, yet according to the definition they would be right. Driver, following David Estlund argues that "characteristically" in the definition requires more specification in order to overcome this worry. For, if characteristically means typically, then a virtuous person's knocking on the door three times, or letting the phone ring three times before

picking it up thereby would be right. However, it is not wrong or immoral to knock four times (2006, pp.122-123). I think this is a weak counterexample because it is obvious what is meant by characteristically, and only when a virtuous agent's actions are connected to morally significant features such as virtuous deliberation, motive or emotion are they relevant. For instance, if someone is letting the phone ring three times (and consider this is a long time) to worry one's friends and family and distress them, then it wouldn't be virtuous thing to do. Yet, if someone does this only because she has an obsessive-compulsive disorder, letting the phone ring three times is morally irrelevant.

A second counterexample suggests that actions that are characteristically done by a virtuous person, yet fall short of important insight can in the end affects the overall assessment of an action's rightness. Since virtuous people are not omniscient, they can't know all the morally significant features of a situation, and in their characteristically acting they may cause objectionable results. For instance, the virtuously motivated and practically wise decisions of a politician which results in environmentally disastrous policies would not be right (Swanton, 2001, p. 35).

Consider another counter-example from Driver.

Suppose that the only way to get rid of an evil dictator who has taken over one's country is to kill him and the only way to do this (let's suppose) is by strangling him with one's shoelace. It may well be that the kind, compassionate person would not be able to carry it through, whereas a ruthless person would be able to. It seems very natural to me to say that the ruthless person – the person who hated the dictator with an all-consuming passion and was able to carry it through on that hatred – did the right thing in killing the evil dictator, though he was only able to do it because he was ruthless. The compassionate person who could not carry it through acted wrongly. In these cases Hursthouse's theory seems to give the wrong answer (2006, p. 117).

According to the quotation above, what a virtuous person would do is not to kill the dictator with a shoelace because that would be cruel (not compassionate). Yet, as it is understood the assumption is that killing is what ought to be done in that case. This issue is connected to the discussion of tragic dilemmas. Hursthouse spares a chapter for tragic dilemmas to highlight the difference between action assessment by which the question of rightness is explained, and the action-guidance by which decision of what one ought to do is explained. The tragic dilemmas are not a new topic, and have been discussed before by many authors including Williams and Michael Walzer (1974)

(as dirty-hands dilemmas). Williams's famous example was that of Jim and Pedro where Jim finds himself (blamelessly) in a situation where he has to make a decision between shooting one person or letting all twenty to be killed by Pedro (1973, pp. 98-100). Similarly Walzer presented a case where a politician has to make a decision whether to torture a terrorist in order to draw the information about the location of a bomb (1974, p. 66).

For Hursthouse, even a virtuous agent cannot get out of a tragic dilemma with clean hands (Hursthouse, 2001, pp. 71-72). The residual regret, and suffering from the deed that is performed will stay with the virtuous person. The truism about "the virtuous never does what is wrong" does not apply here because these are irresolvable dilemmas. We would not call these acts right (or good), but rather necessary (Hursthouse, 2001, p.76). For an action to be right, it has to merit praise rather than blame, one has to be rather proud than unhappy having performed it, and it has to be certain kinds of acts that are decent and that virtuous agents seek to perform (Hursthouse, 2001, p.46). The actions in tragic dilemmas where situation forced the virtuous agent to act in a certain way are such that "he does not act wrongly, for he doesn't act indifferently or gladly, as the vicious do. He acts, instead, with immense regret and pain" (Van Zyl, 2011, p. 223).

I believe "virtuous but not right" is more demanding than "right but not virtuous". Especially with regard to tragic dilemmas, the demand of the objection extends to a certain precision that can't be attained in any circumstance. I think we can associate this ambition with the mentality of quandary ethics. Yet, this kind of objection is also challenging for modern moral theories in two ways. Firstly, if the unforeseen information matters and changes the status of "rightness" of an act, for utilitarianism it will be impossible to overcome this objection. It would be fairly simple to say it is right to kill the dictator, since killing would maximize the happiness for the rest. Yet, if killing the dictator would lead to plenty of other little dictators claiming leadership and authority and consequently creating a state of chaos and survival, would not utilitarianism have to revise the status of the initial act of killing? Secondly, if a theory can grant a certain kind of act to be "right" in any circumstance regardless of their consequences, in the case of tragic dilemmas either the theory keeps silent since both of the actions are wrong and you should not perform any of them, or in the case of resolvable dilemmas the theory cannot guide one to the least "worse". Consider the

case of Jim who finds himself (blamelessly) in a situation whereby forced to make a decision between killing one person himself among twenty people, or letting Pedro kill twenty of them. For deontology, killing is wrong. Even in such a compelling case, deontology cannot prescribe killing one person to save nineteen. For the example where one has to either lie to Gestapo to save the Jews, or let Gestapo to kill them, deontology would prescribe to tell the truth regardless of the consequences. Latter resolvable dilemma poses another problem for deontology: it is simply chilling and terrible to let the human beings to be executed in exchange of lightness of telling the truth.

In this chapter, I tried to establish the basics of eudaimonist virtue ethics by introducing the central concepts of *eudaimonia*, *phronesis*, and virtue as well as their relationship. Having discussed that these concepts are interrelated in a non-hierarchical way, I presented Aristotle's account of eudaimonist virtue ethics to show proof that it is interested in practical matters and acting, and to show the extent of its impact on Hursthouse's account. To explicate the action-guidance in eudaimonist virtue ethics, I presented Hursthouse's virtuous agent and her relation to virtuous activity to show the conceptual link between them, and provided Hursthouse's response to action-guidance objection to show the sort of action guidance eudaimonist virtue ethics generates, and to show that demands of the objection are so stringent to the extent that when it is applied to other moral theories, the same questions need to be addressed. In the last part, I looked at objections that are directed to Hursthouse, namely circularity objection, "right but not virtuous" objection, and "virtuous but not right" objection.

Before I come back to eudaimonist virtue ethics in the following chapters for further analysis with regard to indispensability of *eudaimonia*, I will present two other contemporary strands of virtue ethics namely target-centered (pluralist) and agent based (sentimentalist) virtue ethics. Now, I shall continue with Christine Swanton's target-centered virtue ethics.

4. PLURALIST (TARGET-CENTERED) VIRTUE ETHICS

In this chapter, I will present Christine Swanton's pluralist (target-centered) virtue ethics which is one of the most ingenious and complex contemporary version of virtue ethics. In order to explain the account of right action in pluralist (target-centered) virtue ethics I will divide the chapter into three sections. In the first section, I will look at the most relevant components of the nature of virtue that shapes the pluralistic approach in account of right action as it is featured in Swanton's theory. Thus, this section will mainly highlight the pluralism Swanton endorses by explaining (i) plurality of items in the field of virtue and (ii) the plurality of the modes and bases of moral acknowledgement. The plurality of the field and modes and bases of moral acknowledgment will provide the basis for the account of right action. In the second section I will look at the targets of the virtue, and what it means to hit the target of the virtue in order to examine Swanton's account of right action. In order to do that firstly, I will present Swanton's categorization of targets (i) that have several modes of moral acknowledgement, (ii) that are internal to agent, (iii) have plural ends to achieve, (iv) that are contextual, and (v) that are to avoid things. And secondly, I will discuss the overall virtuousness in relation to hitting the targets of virtue. In the third section, I will present a critical outlook to Swanton's target centered virtue ethics in order to emphasize the importance of *eudaimonia* and *phronesis* particularly.

4.1 The Nature of the Virtue

The pluralist or target-centered virtue ethics approach is developed by Christine Swanton (2003). For Swanton, virtue and character are fundamental normative concepts for her virtue ethical moral theory. It differs from eudaimonist virtue ethics in terms of omitting the notion of *eudaimonia* and the evaluation of practical wisdom. It differs from sentimentalist virtue ethics on the basis of evaluating virtues in a pluralistic way by defining differing bases and modes of moral responsiveness and eventually targets that are characteristics of certain virtues rather than counting them

as admirable traits of character. This strand of virtue ethics is particularly inspired by Nietzsche⁵⁹ in terms of depth-psychology, but also has consequentialist, and Kantian influences. For example, Swanton uses Kantian idea of respect without reducing it to any other idea. Virtue is a response to objects or world as those objects or world demand. So, respect is a response demanded by people (as the proper object of respect). Similarly, she makes use of utilitarian idea of promotion as a response or acknowledgement of some values which demand promotion (i.e. another's good). Depth psychology is defined as "the study of unconscious mental processes and motives, especially in psychoanalytic theory and practice" (Oxford University Press, 2020). Swanton's appropriation of Nietzschean depth psychology includes deconstructing the values or moral beliefs one has in order to see whether "apparently valuable responses" express valuable states (2003, p.130). For instance, altruism as a valuable response might express disvaluable deep psychological states such as "resentment, self-hatred or masochism" (Swanton, 2003, p.130). So, Swanton enunciates her debt to Nietzsche for her concept of self-love as an important component of virtue expressing strength and avoiding perfectionism that harbors destructiveness (2003, 11). As can be seen from the different influences, Swanton's account draws upon a plurality of bases and modes of moral responsiveness resulting in a plurality of targets for virtue. In her account, right action depends on achieving the ends of virtues by hitting their appropriate target. Thus, the rightness of the action is based on the success at hitting the relevant targets and in this way target-centered virtue ethics avoids the counterexamples that are given to eudaimonist virtue ethics. By designating a target-centered success, her account makes the agent's wisdom, her being a novice, virtuous or non-virtuous a non-essential element. In this way, she avoids the objection that virtuous agents (also virtuously motivated agents in Slote's case) sometimes fail to act virtuously in some cases.

Swanton's target-centered account of right action is derived from the plurality of bases and modes of moral acknowledgement. Thus, in order to understand account of right action, two components of the nature of the virtue namely the field(s) of virtue and

⁵⁹ In this dissertation I focus on Swanton's virtue ethics and account of right action, and I mention the influence of Nietzsche in her account, and how she employs it. I thank Barry Stocker for raising the issue of Nietzsche's influence, which alas must be reserved for a future project.

modes and bases of moral acknowledgement should be looked at. Let's start with the fields of virtue.

4.1.1 The field or fields of virtue

The field of virtue consists of the things that are spheres of concern of the virtue and consequently types of items that an agent takes into consideration in terms of the demand of the virtue- or items to which virtue is responsive. The items might be in the spheres of the agent's internal life, or situations such as dangerous ones, abstraction such as beauty and knowledge, physical and natural objects such as kids, friends, animals, artworks, environment (Swanton, 2003, p. 20). To exemplify the field of virtue, consider the virtues of courage, temperance and generosity. Courage is responsive to items such as people, situations, danger including actions. Temperance is responsive to bodily pleasures. Similarly, items such as people, situations and resources belong to the field of generosity. Having the disposition of courage would mean that acknowledging the dangers in a situation and responding in an excellent or good enough way according to what courage would demand. Her definition of virtue implies a threshold concept of virtue. As being a good quality of character to acknowledge and respond to items in its field, virtue can be exercised in an excellent way which is intricately complicated as it includes proper emotions and desire, hitting the target, correct deliberation, strength of will. However, virtue can also be exercised in a good enough or adequate way. In an imperfect world which is marked with disastrous situations, and evil, depending on the context, adequately courageous is to be counted as virtuous (Swanton, 2003, p.25). This means that context and the individual stage of moral development impacts the evaluation of virtuousness. Russell argues that we should refer to the "threshold concept" of virtue as a *satis* concept rather than a threshold. Since threshold could imply a boundary that sharply divides F and not-F things for example, it is closer to being binary compared to a *satis* concept which includes degrees of F-ness (Russell, 2009, pp. 113-114). For Swanton, to be generous enough fits the definition of virtue even though it may fall short of excellent, flawless or ideal (Swanton, 2001, pp. 24-25).

An issue that plural fields of virtue brings us to the question of how these fields interact with each other, or the nature of their connectedness or distinctiveness. In short, Swanton does not have an answer for how these fields are interconnected or distinct. Consider these examples of two soldiers with different upbringings. One is brought up

to enjoy eating to the extent of ‘too much and too many’ but is also fair, considerate and generous. The other is brought up to have a very healthy diet, yet to be unjust, inconsiderate and selfish. The first one is licentious in Aristotle’s terms, and intemperate. The second is temperate when it comes to food, but he won’t hesitate to steal your food, cheat his fellow soldiers out of rations of their campaign (Hursthouse, 1980-1, p. 63). Swanton argues that in the case of the second person, he does not only fail in justice, but also temperance because in his case failure in justice is a result of an excessive appetite for pleasure (Swanton, 2003, p. 21). This means that the relation between fields posits an indeterminacy, and she does not think it is necessary for the account to detail this. To her, what matters most is that the items in the field of virtue make demands on us. The demands of the world beyond Aristotle’s account also include inanimate items such as those considered by Kantian moral duty for self-perfection that could instantiate in self-love, temperance, and creative virtues to develop one’s talents (Swanton, 2003, p.21). As we will see in the next section, the bases of the fields of virtues are plural.

4.1.2 Modes and bases of moral responsiveness/acknowledgement

Bases of moral responsiveness characterize the field of virtue and its components. The sphere of concern or the field of virtue have items -natural or physical- that make demands on us. It is not the items but the features that characterize these fields, and spheres of concern have normative force. Swanton calls these normatively important, or morally significant features of the field as bases. For, these bases are grounding reasons for specific ‘modes’ of response. Since a specific mode of response presupposes an ‘appreciation of a normative claim the feature makes, Swanton calls these modes of response forms of ‘moral acknowledgement’” (Darwall, 2005, p. 591).

As we mentioned above, these bases are not derived only from one value. Swanton claims that her pluralist virtue ethics avoids an appeal to one dominating value. So, she rejects one overriding principle that these bases reckon with. In addition to other monistic theories, she also wants to distinguish her theory from its ancient counterpart. Swanton questions the eudaimonists’ ultimate question about what the good life is, and draws a distinction between questions of what the ‘good life’ is and what it is to be a ‘good human being’ (2003, p.56). The distinction refers to the tension between the concepts of ‘right’ and ‘good’. With this worry in mind, she rejects eudaimonism on the basis of it being a highly moralized conception of the good life excluding

prudential components (Swanton, 2003, p.77). It can be argued that these bases presuppose a certain human condition, however. The demands of the world, as she understands it, require humans to act in certain ways and do not have the same impact on the other living things and inanimate things. For instance, essential relations to human life makes a demand for love, promoting benefit demands generosity, and humans valuing status makes a demand for respect. While rejecting the eudaimonist thesis that virtue and its exercise is necessary for *eudaimonia* as the sole justification, she claims that, in a pluralistic way, there are other bases to ground virtue (Swanton, 2003, p.81). She argues that necessary condition of a trait being virtuous is that:

- i. It be admirable
- ii. It be partially constitutive of a successful life
- iii. It be partially constitutive of a life that is meaningful.

For Swanton, moral responsiveness relies on the bases of value, status, good, and relations. Bases of responsiveness not only derive from some kind of value such as the greater good for the greater number, but also include other morally important features of human life such as self-love and universal love, creativity, respect for people and proper authority, appreciating value of abstract and inanimate items. Modes of moral responsiveness consequently vary from bringing about or promoting benefit or value, to honoring and appreciating value, creating, and loving (Swanton, 2003, p. 21). She says,

One may respect an individual in virtue of her status as an elder or one's boss; promote or enhance value; promote the good of a stranger or friend; appreciate the value of an art work, nature, or the efforts of a colleague; create a valuable work of art, creatively solve a moral problem; love an individual in ways appropriate to various types of bonds; be open or receptive to situations and individuals; use money or natural objects. (Swanton, 2003, p.21-22)

Modes of moral acknowledgement refer to relying on the above-mentioned bases to respond in a way of promoting a value, loving beloveds, respecting persons, appreciating the value of an artwork or the hard work of a colleague, or creating an artwork. What makes a mode of responsiveness appropriate to the associated item in the field of the virtue is the base of moral responsiveness. Many virtues exhibit many modes of moral acknowledgement. For instance, the virtue of friendship is not only exercised in promoting the good of a friend. Loving, appreciating respecting and caring are all appropriate acknowledgements and responses (Swanton, 2003, p.22).

She takes the acknowledgement a kind of wisdom which involves a habit of fine discrimination (Swanton, 2003, p.22)⁶⁰. The question that remains is that whether there is anything that integrates the bases of moral responsiveness. Swanton argues that there is not a solid general formula that unifies all the modes of moral responsiveness, but moral responsiveness in the virtues of love, respect and creativity are existent in all virtues. In this way she proposes a unity of the virtues. Following Kant, she proposes that love and respect are two opposing forces in moral realm that have to be balanced or integrated (Swanton, 2003, p.99). In every virtue's profile, she claims to find love and respect at least indirectly. For example, perseverance embodies self-love if one is to succeed a project with a healthy relation to it (not at the expense of oneself); moreover, love and respect for the other is required for a project to be worthwhile and succeeded virtuously (Swanton, 2003 p.100). Under the same light, if love is not existent in virtue of hope, it could encompass a distorted, misanthropic outlook. To be more precise, hoping that COVID-19 would rid the earth off the human virus would not be the virtue of hope. Agreeing with Iris Murdoch, she gives love a special place in her theory since love is central; without love, virtue is impossible and if there is love, respect will also follow (Swanton, 2003, p.110).⁶¹ Besides love as bringing close, and respect as keeping distance, she also takes creativity to be an integrating element of virtues (Swanton, 2003, p.104). Borrowing from Abraham Maslow's psychological theory⁶², she discusses that creativity as a mode of moral acknowledgement pervades the good life and present in all virtues. The creativity Swanton draws on has more stringent conditions though because it is not only artistic creativity; it is virtuous creativity. It has both internalist and externalist aspects. The internalist aspect of creativity is about a form of expression that shows itself in the agent's authenticity, talent and inventiveness (Swanton, 2003, p. 167). The externalist aspect of creativity exhibits novel outcomes of products that are of value (it does not have to be understood as a consequentialist value). Love, respect and creativity as observed in all virtues are

⁶⁰ As Swanton refers, this idea can be found as 'delicate sentiment' in Hume's "Of the Standard of Taste". (1874-75)

⁶¹ In her essay "The Idea of Perfection" Murdoch criticizes the quandary ethics and their solution-oriented outlook. She argues morality is much more than action that is understood as bringing change in the world and it involves an attention to the world with a loving gaze. So, love besides wisdom is very much central to her understanding of morality (1970, pp. 1-45)

⁶² See (Maslow, 1968). Maslow addresses creativity as a feature of a self-actualizing person who is expressive, uninhibited and spontaneous in their behavior (Maslow, 1968, p. 137).

the binding forces for unification. However, how it works and whether these are the justification of why virtues are virtues are not very clear.

In this section, I have presented the main components of the nature of the virtue in order to show how pluralism informs Swanton's theory. Since the bases of moral acknowledgement are variable, the modes also include variable appropriate responses such as honoring, promoting, respecting, loving and creating. The plurality is also seen in the spheres of concern or the fields of the virtue. Now, let's see how this pluralistic conception impacts the targets of virtues and the account of right action.

4.2 The Target of a Virtue: Swanton's Account of Rightness

The target of a virtue is the backbone of Swanton's account of right action. She draws on Audi's idea that virtues have particular 'targets', 'ends', or 'goals' (1997, p. 180). Based on this understanding, rightness of an action is founded on the excellent realization of the target of the virtue (Swanton, 2003, p. 29). For instance, the target of courage is managing fear and that of beneficence is the well-being of others (Swanton, 2003, p.29). Relying on the definition that virtue is a good quality or excellence of character which involves acknowledging and responding to the relevant items in its field in at least a good enough way, she describes hitting the target of virtue in the following manner:

Hitting the target of a virtue is a form (or forms) of success in the moral acknowledgement of or responsiveness to items in its field or fields, appropriate to the aim of the virtue in a given context (Swanton, 2003, p. 233).

Attainment of the target of virtue is what Swanton uses as the necessary condition for the virtuous act (and therefore right act). For example, meeting the goals constitutive of the virtue of friendship would mean responding to friends in variety of different modes such as loving, appreciating, and promoting their well-being in a given context. Herein, as she points out, it is necessary to mention the distinction between *act from virtue* and *virtuous action*. She refers to Aristotle where the origin of the distinction resides.

Someone might, however, wonder what we mean by saying that becoming just requires doing just actions first, and becoming temperate, temperate actions. For if we do just and temperate actions, we are already just and temperate; similarly, if we do what is literate or musical, we must be literate or musical. But surely this is not true even of the skills? For one can produce

something literate by chance or under instruction from another. Someone will be literate, then, only when he produces something literate and does so in a literate way, that is, in accordance with his own literacy. Again, the case of the skills is anyway not the same as that of the virtues. For the products of the skills have their worth within themselves, so it is enough for them to be turned out with a certain quality. But actions done in accordance with virtues are done in a just or temperate way not merely by having some quality of their own, but rather if the agent acts in a certain state, namely, first, with knowledge, secondly, from rational choice, and rational choice of the actions for their own sake, and, thirdly, from a firm and unshakeable character (*NE*, II, 1105a19-b).

Above Aristotle separates acts from virtue in its characteristic to be worthy of choice, done for its own sake rather than its characteristic of turning out with a certain quality. An act from virtue implies that the agent has virtue from which the acts flow; in other words, the agent has virtue (a good quality of character) which is expressed reliably in acts. On the other hand, the product of skills (*technai*) have their merit in themselves regardless of the agent. For Swanton, like skills, virtues have targets, ends to be achieved. Virtuous action can be done even by a person who does not own the virtue yet achieves the ends of relevant virtue when needed. Therefore, she endorses an account of right action as such:

- (1) An action is virtuous in respect V (e.g. benevolent, generous) if and only if it hits the target of (realizes the end of) virtue V (e.g. benevolence, generosity).
- (2) An action is right if and only if it is overall virtuous. (Swanton, 2003, p. 228)

One does not have to be virtuous to act rightly because what makes an act right in her virtue ethics is to hit the target(s) of the virtue at stake. Since Swanton cuts the connection between the agent and the action, she avoids the criticism that are directed at Hursthouse. For instance, Swanton's account avoids circularity objection which states that there is circular reasoning in defining virtuous action in terms of virtuous agent and then defining virtuous agent in terms of virtuous actions. Secondly, she avoids 'right but not virtuous' objection as in the case of situations whereby no virtuous person would find themselves yet for a non-virtuous, for example a chronic liar, would take remedial actions to improve his character -by reminding himself the importance of truth telling (Johnson, 2003, pp. 816-819). And lastly the objection 'virtuous but not right' as in the case of virtuous person's failing to act virtuously due to some unforeseeable elements and consequences. Swanton describes the rightness in terms of the success at achieving the target(s) of virtue. The targets are multi-dimensional and contextual. The second condition clarifies that an action is right if it

hits the targets in an excellent or good enough way, therefore rather than sharp and deontic type of coding it generates a threshold concept. The multi-dimensional features of hitting the targets of virtues are divided into five categories: (i) hitting the target may manifest several modes of moral response and acknowledgement, (ii) some targets may be internal to the agent, (iii) some targets may have plural ends to achieve, (iv) some targets are contextual, and (v) some targets aim to avoid things. This classification shows us that the profile of the virtues exhibits pluralistic concerns. The right action is to realize the aims categorized as below.

4.2.1 Multidimensional features of targets

(i) Hitting the targets may exhibit several modes of moral response and acknowledgement appropriate to items in virtue's field:

Without giving specification, she argues that hitting the target of the virtue will take different forms of the modes of promotion, love, creativity, and success. Furthermore, success that is appropriate to the target of a virtue is noted as a complex matter. Herein, she refers to Murdoch's notion of attention which Swanton understands as proper receptivity. Let's visit Murdoch's example.

A mother, whom I shall call M, feels hostility to her daughter-in-law, whom I shall call D. M finds D quite a good-hearted girl, but while not exactly common yet certainly unpolished and lacking in dignity and refinement. D is inclined to be pert and familiar, insufficiently ceremonious, brusque, sometimes positively rude, always tiresomely juvenile. M does not like D's accent or the way D dresses. M feels that her son has married beneath him. Let us assume for the purposes of the example that the mother, who is a very 'correct' person, behaves beautifully to the girl throughout, not allowing her real opinion to appear in any way. We might underline this aspect of the example by supposing that the young couple have emigrated or that D is now dead: the point being to ensure that whatever is in question as *happening* happens entirely in M's mind.

Thus much for M's first thoughts about D. Time passes, and it could be that M settles down with a hardened sense of grievance and a fixed picture of D, imprisoned (if I may use a question-begging word) by the cliché: my poor son has married a silly vulgar girl. However, the M of the example is an intelligent well-intentioned person, capable of self-criticism, capable of giving careful and just *attention* to an object, which confronts her. M tells herself: 'I am old-fashioned and conventional. I may be prejudiced and narrow-minded. I may be snobbish. I am certainly jealous. Let me look again.' (Murdoch, 1970, p. 17)

The mother in the given context has an emotional attitude (feeling hostile) to her daughter-in-law. Although it seems like the case has little to do with 'love', Swanton underlines how emotional attitude in receptivity considers some features to be more important than others. Hostile gaze would turn a blind eye to the good qualities of the daughter-in-law and eventually motivate behaviors lacking in caring (Swanton, 2003, pp.111-112). The connection of this example to modes of moral acknowledgement (responsiveness) is that circumstances (even very mundane and daily encounters) require a "heightened awareness, an openness which is pre-analytical and involves feeling rather than thinking" (Swanton, 2003, p.112).⁶³ Attention (loving gaze, not any attention) as openness to truth eliminates the distorting effect of some emotions that we deal and struggle with every day.

The relationship between loving gaze and wisdom should be noted here. Although hostility-driven attention can result in vice through distorting our perception by the falsifying veil of our psychological defenses, and loving gaze can eliminate these distortions, it (loving gaze) may still lack some of the hallmarks of wisdom. Loving gaze or this attitude of openness is not exactly Pollyanna's irrepressible optimism that can be associated with naiveté. So, it does not mean that it is detached from the facts and reason-receptive analysis. Following Nodding, Swanton argues that loving gaze does not have to be degradation of consciousness, and it is rather a precursor of reason-receptive analysis (2003, p.114).

Love is a form of moral acknowledgement, but there is also respect as we mentioned before. The issue here is to balance them so as to produce virtuous behavior. Success in modes of moral responsiveness that is appropriate to the target of virtue is a complex subject to fit into a clear-cut generalization because varying contexts may require conflicting concerns. For instance, if one has to tell a friend who has been in a car accident and is in an unstable situation that her husband is in a critical state, one can be conflicted between two virtues - honesty and kindness. Although honesty would demand telling the truth or at least not lying, reckoning that it might be the last time she might see him; kindness would demand being evasive until she gets better, reckoning that her unstable situation might get worse if she saw her husband like that.

⁶³ The idea of receptivity is parallel to attention in Murdoch (1970) and 'engrossment' in Nel Noddings (1984).

So, if we think in terms of modes of moral responsiveness, it is not direct and clear whether to rely on promoting the well-being of your friend by not telling the truth or honoring the value of truth by breaking the bad news. The difficulty of fixating on one dimension is due the fact that such circumstance would mandate several modes varying from promotion to creativity to love and respect.

Relying on different bases such as value, status, relations, and good, the most appropriate mode or modes of moral acknowledgement set the stage for the appropriate mode of response. I believe, finding out and balancing the proper modes of moral acknowledgement and response is the important part of achieving the ends of a virtue (or virtues) in a particular situation. It is more general than the rest of the categories and seems like it preconditions the moral agent to be able to hit the particular targets of virtues. For instance, some virtues have internal targets, some targets to avoid things, some have contextual targets, and some virtues require to hit plural targets at once. Now, let us have a look at the targets that are internal to agent.

(ii) The Targets of Some Virtues are internal.

There are targets of virtue that are external to the agent, some are internal and there are some targets that are neither exclusively external nor exclusively internal (Swanton, 2003, p.235). As examples, targets that are external to the agent can be given by justice and beneficence. Justice demands conforming ‘to legitimate rules of procedure’, and beneficence successfully promoting human welfare and hitting these targets only requires you to conform to those rules and bringing about welfare regardless of any inner state that accompanies (Swanton, 2003, p.234-235). External targets of virtue do not require the possession of appropriate inner states, but neither does it preclude them.

Targets that are completely internal to the agent are things such as determination or mental strength. In the case of determination, being resolute, or trying hard to accomplish a purpose hit the target of the virtue, although agent does not succeed in her purpose (Swanton, 2003, p.235).

If virtues were only to have either external or internal targets, this would be fairly easy. Yet, there are some targets that are both external and internal, and it is often the case even for those which are deemed to have especially external targets. So, hitting the external targets of a virtue would not suffice as right or virtuous since the internal

target would be as morally salient as the external target. For instance, the target of caring is to behave in certain ways such as visiting your friend at the hospital, yet also having certain inner mirroring feelings such as love. Stocker argues for the same reason that visiting a friend at the hospital because it is your duty as a friend bespeaks a malady of the spirit (2007, p. 66). Swanton uses an interesting example to show that some virtues have both internal and external targets to realize, and without both to be achieved an action may be called wrong.

[The] target of the virtue of (racial) toleration is not merely external: the pro forma respecting of the rights of people in certain racial groups. We may call an act *wrong* because racist if the agent, in respecting a right, possessed racist motivation, even if that motivation was not displayed. Notice, however, that the application of terms such as ‘racist’ to acts is controversial, and what is required for an act to not be racist may be more or less demanding depending on context. Though the full virtue of racial toleration may demand that we morally acknowledge those of other races through a variety of different modes (e.g. respect, promotion of good, appreciation, even a form of love), the conditions under which we call an act racist and thereby wrong may be more or less stringent. (2003, p. 235).

She relies on Sverdlik’s argument that motives matter for the deontic status of an act (1996, pp. 327-349). The example he uses is a little different than Swanton’s. He looks at acts that could be permissible if motivated differently. If a realtor refuses to sell a house to a black person on the basis of her credit score, refusal is permissible. Yet, if the refusal was impacted by the realtor’s motives of racism (or anti-Semitism, or sexism), then this would affect the rightness of the action. Swanton, on the other hand, thinks about the case where the realtor sells the house to the black person conforming to the rules (respecting the rights of individuals regardless of their race and sex), while possessing racist motivation. I believe that it is already controversial to take racial toleration as a virtue. Maybe it could be better to take virtue of open-mindedness which would mean being open to differences, new ideas, and criticism. For, racial tolerance assumes that races different than yours are something to be tolerated for various reasons that are probably pejorative. Tolerance evokes certain meanings such as enduring and allowing something that you don’t agree with or you don’t like. This meaning is obvious when we say something like “the music was too loud, yet I tolerated it”, “I tolerate your capricious behavior, because you are my friend”, or “the body can tolerate five cigarettes a day”. In all these sentences, the objects of toleration are understood to be negative: “loud music”, “capricious behavior”, “cigarettes” are not wanted, or not good, or at least bothering at some level, thus to be tolerated. So, it

is this reason that I think that “racial toleration” is not a virtue and should be replaced by something like “open-mindedness” or “anti-racism”.⁶⁴ However, one can say that this criticism is not to the point because her theory is designed acknowledging the imperfection of the world, thus she uses the example to show virtue as a corrective to an existing flow.

The point about internal targets of the virtues is that successfully hitting the targets of some virtues can be assessed only with the external achievement, yet the relevant virtue could have internal targets. The circumstance may demand hitting entirely external or internal targets at times, sometimes both. Context related evaluation raises the question whether the targets of virtues are connected or if there is unity. At least, it raises a concern about how Swanton’s theory can accommodate both contextuality and unity of the targets of virtues.

As I understand, Swanton’s aim here is to highlight that the internal targets that are important to some virtue, or constitutive of some virtue can change the status of an act; therefore, unless those targets are realized, we cannot count an act right. As it could be the case that some virtues have both external and internal targets, some might also have plural targets as I will discuss next.

(iii) Targets of some virtues are plural

Since a virtue can have more than one field, a virtue can have plural ends to achieve. Swanton’s explanation is pretty short, giving only one example of virtue of courage. Hitting the target of courage will take the regulation of fear and also confidence into consideration as well as the evaluation of a threatening case successfully. In order to hit the target(s) of courage, then one has to achieve the relevant ends for the act to be deemed “courageous” or “right”.

(iv) Some targets are contextual

As I mentioned above in the section on internal targets, differing contexts seek to attain certain targets. In some cases, such as a pandemic, there is an urgent need for medical

⁶⁴ I believe it is a very relevant issue in the wake of George Floyd’s murder by the police and bird-watching Christopher Cooper’s interaction with a white lady who threatened him to call the cops and tell them that her life is threatened by an African American man upon she has been asked to put her dog on a leash. One of the discussions around the topic was that of non-racist is not the opposite of racist since it may still mask racism in its so-called neutrality. Anti-racism instead is offered as a proper strategy, since it includes active and conscious effort to confront multidimensional aspects of racism, and similarly I believe the virtue of “racial toleration” harbors, or masks a degrading mentality.

supplies such as tests, ventilators, masks, and gloves. The target of generosity would be achieved by doctors and nurses giving their time and even risking their lives, and also by the people from relevant industry producing the needed supplies instead of donating a sum of money. Swanton argues that in circumstances where there is a pressing need, it would be enough to reach the target even if the generous act is not nobly performed out of generous spirit (2003, p. 236). The contextual variability depends on the understanding that a virtuous act should be done ‘in the right time’, ‘to the right people’, ‘in the right way’ and ‘in the right amount’. Although this idea was originally put forward by Aristotle, and seems familiar, it is different. Consider this.

Actions done in accordance with virtue are noble and done for the sake of what is noble. So the generous person will give for the sake of what is noble and in the correct way – to the right people, in the right amounts, at the right time, and so on, with the other qualifications that attach to correct giving. And this he will do with pleasure, or at least without pain, because what is done in accordance with virtue is pleasant or painless, and certainly not painful. Someone who gives to the wrong people, however, or not for the sake of what is noble but for some other reason, will be called not generous but something else. Nor will the person who finds it painful to give be called generous, because he would choose wealth over noble action, and this is not characteristic of a generous person. (Aristotle, *NE*, IV, 1120a27-38)

For Aristotle, contextual variability is about deciding the mean according to the situation. Similarly, for Swanton too targets of the same virtue may take different forms in each context. The difference between the two is that Aristotle also specifies that in each case for an act to be counted as virtuous, it has to be done for the right motives, with ease (which means your desires, motives and motivations are in harmony with right reason), and ultimately for the right reason. Aristotle’s account is indebted to Plato. In *Meno*, Socrates directs us toward an understanding that virtue is some kind of knowledge, and all virtues share this knowledge in particular instances. (Plato, 78e). So, we can say that even if the targets seem to be hit in a way contextually appropriate⁶⁵, for Aristotle and Plato these contextual targets are accompanied by the “knowledge” or “wisdom” that is shared by all virtues. Now, let’s look at the targets whose aim is to avoid things.

⁶⁵ I thank Barry Stocker for pressing about the clarification about contextuality. As I argue in p.22, by contextuality I do not mean for instance generosity is virtue in some contexts and not in others. Virtue as golden mean between the excess and deficiency, refers to an equilibrium and generality. Yet, different context might require expressing a certain virtue in particular ways. As in the example I provided here, generosity might be expressed in donating your services as a doctor during pandemic, or producing supplies as an industry leader.

(v) Some targets aim to avoid things

With regard to what right action is, we tend to think in terms of virtues, and of hitting the target of virtue as something positive. However, Swanton highlights that there are targets which are to avoid things instead of bringing about benefit or valuable state of affairs.⁶⁶

[One] may believe (as I do) that what makes modesty a virtue is not its tendency to promote valuable states of affairs (absence of jealousy, etc.), but its being the expression of a valuable or flourishing state of the agent—namely, an agent who has self-love, and who does not therefore need to get a sense of self-worth from comparisons with others. Though this is what makes modesty a virtue on my view, that is not its target, however. (Swanton, 2003, p. 238)

Instead, the target of modesty is to avoid overestimation: not talking excessively, or bragging about yourself, or drawing attention to yourself.

As this complex picture about hitting the target of the virtues proves that an *act from virtue* does not guarantee right action because having the relevant inner states does not necessarily bring one to hit the relevant targets of the virtues. *Virtuous acts* on the other hand may lack fine inner states such as practical wisdom, fine motivation or dispositions of fine emotion and in this regard fail to be an *act from virtue* (Swanton, 2003, p.239). Yet depending on the situation, the urgency and importance of resolution may deem these inner states non-critical or vice versa.

Virtuous action is very contextual in Swanton's case. An act can be virtuous in one regard, but fail to achieve other targets of other virtues that are salient to the context. This brings us to the issue of overall virtuousness. For, in a particular context, it is possible that both virtue and vice terms are applicable. For instance, an act can be "both just and weak, or just and malicious, or friendly and unjust, or self-protective and non-beneficent, or independent and unkind, or cruel and environmentally sound, or assertive and hurtful, or efficient and uncaring" (Swanton, 2003, p.242).

4.2.2 Overall virtuousness

What decides the overall virtuousness? In order to give an answer to this question, Swanton appeals to a form of moral particularism that is influenced by Jonathan Dancy (1993). She says that "we cannot claim that certain features always contribute

⁶⁶ She contrasts her own understanding with Julia Driver's consequentialist virtue ethics. For the discussion about a trait is a virtue iff it produces valuable state of affairs see (Driver, 1996).

positively (or negatively) to the overall virtuousness of an act, even if those kinds of feature characteristically contribute positively (or negatively)” (2003, p.242). That is to say virtue reasons, or v-rules such as “be kind” like in Hursthouse’s account “generally” contributes to the status of rightness or virtuousness of an act. However, in circumstances whereby kindness may be outweighed by justice, or honesty, v-rule of “be kind” may be not as relevant as the other concerns. To illustrate, imagine Christine is a mom who wants her kids to be caring, generous and magnanimous and not be overly passionate about justice and fairness especially in intrafamilial settings. Her older son shares a cake and carelessly gets the bigger part, and the younger son seems to be uncaring and happy with what he got. Although “being just” contributes positively to the rightness, for Christine to intervene would show obsessive and weak quality of behavior (Swanton, 2003, p.243). So, in her weaker version of particularism, the application of a term such as ‘be kind’ to acts is not a sole right-making feature for the act, even though it is a good contributory reason to favor such actions (Swanton, 2010, p. 166). Overall virtuousness is determined by the context as in the example of lying to the Gestapo to save the Jews in the basement (Swanton, 2010, p.167). So, the act of lying cannot be called honest since lying is exact opposite of telling the truth which is part of the description of honesty. Yet, the act of lying in this case cannot be called honest and wrong at the same time. Although lying is neither a v-reason or contributory reason in Gestapo example, it is an enabler for other important v-reasons to operate such as beneficence, resoluteness and courage (Swanton, 2010, p.167).⁶⁷ As I understand it, lying is demanded here by the virtues of beneficence, resoluteness and courage; it is a means to employ the most relevant virtues in the case. Russell’s claim that overall virtuousness in Swanton is equal to “virtuous in *all* relevant respects” implies that in cases where virtues are conflicting, the right action is not really possible (2009, p. 108). Contrary to this, Swanton’s overall virtuousness allows for an act to be right even when the target of the one of the conflicting virtues not be hit.⁶⁸ When there is indeterminacy involved to figure out which dimensions of mean are relevant to rightness, or v-reasons conflict, then “stringent or strong default reasons” that pertain to the essential characteristic of a virtue, v-reasons function in a holistic way to outweigh one v-reason. So, in the case

⁶⁷ She borrows the term of ‘enabler’ from Dancy (2004).

⁶⁸ See also (Van Zyl, 2014).

of lying to the Gestapo, the v-reason of honesty is outweighed by v-reasons that belong to beneficence, resoluteness and courage (Swanton, 2010, p. 173).

I have tried to introduce and analyze Swanton's profile of the virtues by looking at the fields of virtues, modes and bases of moral acknowledgment for virtues and the targets of the virtues. The section about the targets of virtue is where Swanton's account of right action can be found. In the next section, I will present the problems that I find to be most important for Swanton's target-centered virtue ethics.

4.3 A Critical Outlook

Swanton's pluralist approach to nature of virtue is a very interesting and in so far as it is as the most familiar to our daily experience. I think it falls short in three regards. First, the relation between virtues, whether there is a unity between them or not is not clear. Love and respect that give a limited unity to virtues are used to account for virtues' connection, yet it is not convincing because it does not give a ground for why virtues are virtues. Second, her account fails to explain and position *phronesis* which seems to be very important to grasp the demand of the situation and the world. Lastly, related to the second concern, the concept of the demands of the world seems to portray an arbitrary image. In what follows I discuss these issues respectively.

The definition of virtue that Swanton endorses as a good quality of character to respond to, or acknowledge, items in its field or fields in an excellent or good enough way is neutral in the sense that virtue does not have to belong in one specific strand, be it eudaimonist, non-eudaimonist, or monistic. One worry about this comprehensive virtue definition is that it does not distinguish the account as distinctly virtue ethical. It is likely that the definition can be adapted by or dissolve into a consequentialist or Kantian moral theory. Let this be a weaker criticism to Swanton's virtue ethics though. She argues that virtues are not only grounded in teleological considerations, because they include non-teleological elements. The base of moral responsiveness does not only include good (or benefit), but also value (such as the value of an artwork), status (such as respect for one's autonomy) and bonds (such as friendship) (Swanton, 2003, p. 86). That is to say that the justification of virtues relies on plural grounds such as "flourishing, admirability, success (worthwhile achievement) or meaningfulness" (Swanton, 2003, p.96). Against eudaimonist virtue ethics, she prefers "to understand the rationale of virtue not primarily through the idea of the perfection of our nature,

but through the idea of the multifaceted, pluralistically understood demands of the world” which is naturalized or constrained via healthy growth and development for human flourishing (Swanton, 2003, p.94-95). Rejecting *eudaimonia* as a grounding foundation does not imply its total exclusion. She prefers to slide to a kind of naturalism that highlights a complex human psychology. She takes human beings as not uniform and not even predestined for perfect health since ‘sickness’ is a very standard condition for human beings (Swanton, 2003, p.60-63). For, man is sick and uncertain; therefore, virtue cannot be defined in terms of perfect health. She considers the limits of human nature as being a constraint for setting the standard of virtue. Thus, she endorses a definition of virtue as

...a good quality of character in a human, is a disposition to acknowledge the ‘demands of the world’ in ways suitably constrained by *human* nature. However, this constraint entails only that, although there are many possible ways of meeting the demands of the world, some of these ways are not excellences in *humans*. (Swanton, 2003, p.65)

This passage implies that morality is not as demanding as the eudamonic tradition would have it. In this way, she rejects the idea that the good life is necessarily the virtuous life as well as the notion of virtue which is described through *eudaimonia*. She avoids the ideals of eudamonic virtue ethics (Russell, 2009, p. 108). For, the demanding nature of morality is only relative to agents’ strengths; moreover, the world we live in is imperfect. This strain of thought is borrowed from Nietzsche and his undistorted will to power. She evaluates Nietzsche’s injunction ‘do not be virtuous beyond your strength’ as such that virtue should be evaluated “in an agent-relative way to ‘one’s strength rather than self-interest” (Swanton, 2003, p.204).⁶⁹ This might remind us of Aristotle’s idea that ‘the mean is relative to us’. I believe this interpretation of Aristotle is a common one⁷⁰, yet the mean Aristotle talks about is not exactly agent-relative. Consider the passage where Aristotle talks about the mean being relative to us.

For if ten pounds of food is a lot for someone to eat, and two pounds a little, the trainer will not necessarily prescribe six; for this may be a lot or a little for the person about to eat it – for Milo,⁷¹ a little, for a beginner at gymnastics, a lot. The same goes for running and wrestling.

⁶⁹ See also F. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Part 4, pp.398-403 (New York, 1976).

⁷⁰ For some such as (Kraut, 1989, p. 328), it is not so clear whether they advocate agent-relativity as well as relativity to circumstances. Yet for others such as (Peterson, 1988, p. 236), the mean is interpreted explicitly relative to agent. For agent-relativity interpretation see also (Leighton, 1992) and (Losin, 1987).

⁷¹ Famous athlete from Croton of the later sixth century

In this way every expert in a science avoids excess and deficiency and aims for the mean and chooses it – the mean, that is, not in the thing itself but relative to us. (*NE*, II, 1106a1-7)

The common interpretation focuses on the Milo and the novice, as such that they are taken as the moral agents. Yet, if we think about this example from the trainer's point of view, his actions regarding Milo and the novice (prescribing appropriate diet to them) is not trainer-relative. I believe that by 'relative to us', there is more than 'individual-relativity' signaling 'relative to us as human beings'.⁷² For, in the following passages Aristotle defines virtue as "a state involving rational choice, consisting in a mean relative to us and determined by reason – the reason, that is, by reference to which the practically wise person would determine it." (*NE*, II, 1106b37-1107a2). The *phronimos* plays an important role herein to decide the mean by the *logos* (reason or rational principle), and it is very difficult to conform the idea that the mean is relative to individuals with the latter (Brown, 1997, pp. 80-81). We can find also in Aristotle that what is expected from an expert (like Milo) is different than of the novice, and that the mean is more demanding for the expert. Although this will be true for Aristotle, this is not the conclusion or the point he is trying to make because he is trying to frame the excellence of character, the ideals of virtue, not what the best you could do given the circumstances. So, the stage of moral progress one is in is not determinate of what is excellent.

Thus, although it might remind us of Aristotle's mean, Swanton's virtue is agent-relative in the sense that it depends on the individual's strength (or even the stage of moral development). Swanton claims that "don't be virtuous beyond your strength" has intertwined elements of self-regarding, other-regarding and dynamic, non-dynamic. It is dynamic in the sense that one should strive for greater strength, greater temperance, perseverance or benevolence for worthwhile goals. However, for weak agents this progression or pushing for progression might mean vice because it might be a disastrous sort of perfectionism resulting in self-loathing and more harm than good (Swanton, 2003, pp. 204-205). Swanton highlights the damaging and daunting effects of ideals when combined with attempts of overreaching oneself.⁷³ As a result, the right action for Swanton takes the shape of 'good enough' or 'overall virtuous' at

⁷² For an excellent discussion about whether the mean is agent-relative see (Brown, 1997). It is an important discussion in its own right, yet for the scope of this chapter it is enough to emphasize the difference between Aristotle's and Swanton's understanding.

⁷³ See also (Curzer, 2017, pp. 53-59). Following Swanton, Curzer explains how ideals are theoretically and practically problematic, not only unhelpful but also pernicious.

the backdrop of indefinite human nature that accepts its limits. Swanton especially avoids ideals of eudaimonist virtue ethics, thus detached the connection between *eudaimonia* and virtue because 1) virtue does not make its possessor necessarily *eudaimon* (barring ill luck), 2) fully healthy, flourishing and strong individual cannot set the standard in an nonideal, imperfect world (Swanton, 2003, p. 66). The idea that virtue does not necessarily make the possessor *eudaimon* exists in Aristotle too. He discusses that virtue is not sufficient for *eudaimonia* and external factors as well as ill luck could deprive a virtuous person from being *eudaimon* (*NE*, VII, 1153b18-20). Swanton believes her theory to be more applicable to our lives since it explains virtue as responsiveness to demands of the world. Nevertheless, the existence of imperfect world does not require us to reject *eudaimonia* but maybe revise it. I believe Swanton's effort to explicate the different bases of moral responsiveness, demands of the world and morally relevant features for humans beside prudential elements of good life does not harm the argument I am trying to make. The justification of virtues and a better understanding of it relies on the final end that is for human beings. As for Swanton, even though she tries to detach virtue from *eudaimonia*, she still appeals to human nature to explain the demands of the world on us. This means the constraint that she describes for virtue as healthy growth and development for human flourishing has a causal relationship with an account of right action. Therefore, I argue that her seemingly non-eudaimonist account still assumes a final end which, while surely different than Aristotle's, still shows the need of final end in theoretical structure in virtue ethics.

In one sense, *eudaimonia* and the unity of virtues are connected concepts. Despite the controversial discussions, the unity of the virtues is construed by their relationship to the knowledge of the good. (Brickhouse & Smith, 1997, p. 313) If we use Socrates' analogy, individual virtues are like pieces of gold: they might differ in size, yet they are the same thing (Brickhouse & Smith, 1997, p.319).⁷⁴ Although the functions (*erga*) of the virtues are different such as justice and courage, the knowledge or wisdom (*epistêmê* or *sophia*) by means of which these virtues are attained is the same (Brickhouse & Smith, 1997, p.319).⁷⁵ The pluralist view developed by Swanton treats

⁷⁴ See also (Plato, 1962, 329d4-10).

⁷⁵ Brickhouse and Smith contend that the only problem is to show how same knowledge results in different function. Unity of the virtues is a topic of controversy where some argue that the connection between wisdom and individual virtues are strong and to have one virtue is a sign of having other virtues.

each individual virtue as attentiveness to what it targets. Virtues are local responses to the demands of the world (Swanton, 2003, p. 57). Because the normative properties of *eudaimonia* that unify the virtues have no part to play, virtues remain as distinct and plural, targeting the ends of their field almost in an independent way. An apparent worry here is that virtue gains a particular meaning that depends on the context, culture, religion, and time. Even though virtue ethics cannot guarantee universal principles like deontology, I believe that virtue ethics can provide a better definition of virtue as well as right action through human nature and capabilities that are objectively important and universal for us as human beings.

Another issue that I want to focus in Swanton's account is the evaluation of practical wisdom. As I mentioned before, *phronesis* is an integral part of every virtue in the eudaimonist strand. Let's visit Aristotle's definition of practical wisdom which is defined through the actions of people who are practically wise.

We may grasp what practical wisdom is by considering the sort of people we describe as practically wise. It seems to be characteristic of the practically wise person to be able to deliberate nobly about what is good and beneficial for himself, not in particular respects, such as what conduces to health or strength, but about what conduces to living well as a whole. (*NE*, VI, 5, 1140a24-29).

What could be understood from the above is that *phronesis* not only consists of choosing with reason, but also deliberating about the good and the noble. As an intellectual virtue, *phronimos*' deliberation about living well as a whole is not merely an intellectual activity; it comprises deciding what kinds of actions should be taken in the practical realm. The practically wise person is one who not only is concerned with universals, but also with particulars. Especially, one needs experience and practice to get to be effective and be able to use *phronesis* well (*NE*, VI, 7, 1141b15-23). The important point here to draw is the connection between *phronesis* and particular actions within the connection of *phronesis* and *eudaimonia*. Because of this relationship, *phronesis* is inherent in every virtue, for virtue is good character traits for living humanly well. Swanton too recognizes the importance of practical wisdom yet portrays a different account than that of eudaimonist virtue ethics.

On the other hand, this view is contested with empirical data to show that it is simply false since all people are mixes of virtues and vices.

In order to grasp where and how *phronesis* is positioned in her theory, first have a look at how she explicates right action. As mentioned above, virtues have external and internal targets, sometimes exclusively (one or the other) and sometimes mixed (Swanton, 2003, pp. 234-235). There are other times where the situation requires virtues which have internal and external constituents yet hitting the external target is more important and enough to have the act counted as overall virtuous and right. For instance consider Ramon Das' example whereby a man dives into a swimming pool and saves the child of the woman only for which he was motivated to act such so that he could sleep with her (Das, 2003, p. 326). Das himself argues that what the man did was the right action regardless of his motives (2003, p.327).⁷⁶ Swanton arrives at the same conclusion with a different outlook though.

[The] act clearly misses the target of a virtue of benevolence on one dimension of the mean (acting from reasons of benevolence) but hits the target of that virtue on other dimensions that are more important in this context. The act of diving and saving is an act performed at the right time (delay may have been fatal) with respect to the right person (the child in danger of drowning) in the right manner (with alacrity and competently). (Swanton, 2010, p. 172)

Saving the drowning child without proper reasons to do it is sufficient to satisfy the overall virtuous in this instance. It is indeed very different than 'acting from virtue'. The right action in Swanton's account does not always have to be in harmony with the right reasons, motives and feelings. It could as well be that case that right action can be performed accidentally.

Swanton's definition of the virtuous and thus right action seems to be reasonable and realistic at first glance. Whatever motives one has, we would think it is the right thing to save a drowning child. Swanton avoids the extremes of the demanding and perfectionist principle *act from virtue* which expresses 'a variety of fine inner states, such as fine motivation, practical wisdom, and fine emotional states' and she acknowledges that practical wisdom is a concept where "fine emotions and right reason are mutually informing and dependent" (2003, pp. 293-294). Swanton says that she has an enriched understanding of practical wisdom with the help of depth-motivational aspect of self-love (2003, p.295). We can say that she follows a right instinct about assessing an act: when assessing an act from outside, what we can

⁷⁶ Das herein especially targets Michael Slote's agent-based account in which the right making features of an act relies in the motives and motivations of the agent. For further analysis of this discussion see also (Van Zyl, 2009)

observe is what the situation requires and whether those are done. If what is expected from a moral theory is to assess the rightness and wrongness of the acts, then Swanton's account suffices as a moral theory.

However, I believe that the real richness of virtue ethics lies in its harmonious treatment of human moral life with motives, motivations, feelings, proper reasons and acts. However, it is still important to produce an answer to the action-guidance objection. Swanton's account focusses on the objective targets of virtues to evaluate rightness. One does not have to be virtuous to do the virtuous thing in her case. However, her pluralistic profile of the virtues does not make it any easier to guide action compared to eudaimonist virtue ethics. Swanton argues that hitting the target of virtue is complex. For, there are plural bases and modes of responsiveness for virtues, some targets are internal to the agent, some targets are plural, and some are contextual, other targets of virtue is to avoid things (2003, p.233-234). These elements that are about virtue and its applicability can be found in Aristotle as well. For Aristotle too target of some virtues are integral to the agent; some virtues have plural targets (courage aims to overcome fear and manage confidence); temperance aims to avoid excessive food that disturb health (*NE*, II, 2, 1104a11-20). Yet, they are quite different. Eudaimonist virtue ethics focusses on the building of morality from within, in other words in improving a good character from which good actions come into being. Here, a virtuous person has an unchanging commitment to *act from virtue*.⁷⁷ An account of virtuous living does not provide the formula for what particular actions are required for particular situations in life, but rather proffers good character traits that we need to acquire and exercise if we are to live a good life.

In the situations that Swanton hypothesizes about, in order to recognize the morally salient features, to differentiate the variable targets of virtues, in order to choose the right means (bases and modes of responsiveness) to hit the relevant targets, an agent needs to make use of practical wisdom. Even though we take particular virtues as local responses to the demands of the world, practical wisdom seems to be indispensable.

While Swanton recognizes the importance of practical wisdom and its role as a glue that binds virtues like those in Aristotle's account, she downplays the role of practical wisdom as a necessary feature of all virtues (Swanton, 2003, p. 27). Love, respect,

⁷⁷ See (Annas, 2005, p. 516) and (Audi, 1997, p. 189).

creativity (and even passion) instead should persist integrated in every virtue. Swanton does not give an explicit account of practical wisdom, moreover its position and function is very ambiguous. Her examples might help to infer the position of practical wisdom in her theory. For instance, consider her example of the virtue of obedience.

Certainly, obedience as a virtue, for example, involves being well disposed with respect to its field (legitimate authority), and that in turn requires virtuous acknowledgement of the status of the authority. However, obedience as a virtue is not blind obedience. On occasion, practical wisdom may demand a questioning or even disobeying of orders from that authority, where the virtuous agent nonetheless recognizes (as appropriate) her fallibility, her role as just one member of the organization, and the authority of the agent giving orders. (Swanton, 2003, p.40)

According to the quotation above, obedience as a virtue has the target of obeying and respecting legitimate authority unless the situation presents one with other morally relevant aspects whereby questioning and disobeying are necessary. Recognizing these aspects seems to be only possible with practical wisdom if one has to hit any target. It is reasonable to think that in any situation, virtue and practical wisdom have to coexist, and moreover be integrated. According to eudaimonist virtue ethics a virtuous person is practically wise, or every virtue includes practical wisdom. Therefore, a virtuous person's "acts from virtue" generally and systematically are right actions. While Swanton argues that hitting the targets of virtues require deliberating wisely, does not she affirm that practical wisdom is not detachable from virtue? So, wouldn't it be more applicable to use "acts from virtue" rather than virtuous acts in order to define right action since acts from virtue "generally and systematically" are right acts if every virtue involves *phronesis*? (Russell, 2009, p. 109)

Thus, although Swanton provides a rich and interesting account of virtue ethics with an unconventional connection to Nietzsche, in her target centered view, it is not clear how the demands of the world shape the target of the virtues, hence the ground for virtues and whether and how virtues are unified. The latter issue brings forth the considerations about practical wisdom in her theory. While hitting the target of a virtue requires a wise deliberation that displays practical wisdom, its role and final reference it uses are ambiguous. As opposed to the eudaimonist version where *phronesis* is subject to considerations about what is fine and noble which are represented by *eudaimonia* as the final end, Swanton eschews *eudaimonia* and as a consequence downplays the role of practical wisdom. Without *eudaimonia* setting the standard for

appropriate deliberation about what to do, it is vague where the foundation or bases of virtues or demands of the world finds its place.

I have emphasized the difference between eudaimonist virtue ethics and Swanton's theory in this chapter. To revisit and summarize, Swanton rejects the claim that virtue is characteristically beneficial for its holder in the sense that if one is virtuous, one is by definition *eudaimon*. It does not mean that she totally eschews *eudaimonia*; she admits that *eudaimonia* is one of the concepts that can define which character traits are virtues, yet it is not a necessary condition for it (Swanton, 2003, p. 80).⁷⁸ She argues that the starting point of pluralist virtue ethics is that virtue is more complex than it is in the neo-Aristotelian strand. Virtues as good character traits indicate responsiveness to different items of each virtue's field, where a field refers to people, situations, objects, actions or inner states. Pluralistic virtue ethics departs from the interconnectedness of *eudaimonia* and virtue and rejects the Platonic idea of the unity of virtues. Omitting *eudaimonia* may still be tolerable if an account of what virtue is established as good character traits for human beings, and it might suffice to take virtue as having intrinsic value as 'for the sake of itself'. Yet, the latter issue about unity of the virtues makes it hard to locate practical wisdom which is the catalyst for determining which features matter morally in a situation and how to act particularly in those in her theory.

In the next chapter, I will look at the last virtue ethics approach, namely agent-based (Sentimentalist) virtue ethics.

⁷⁸ She argues that some virtues contribute to one's personal good yet could be inimical to her *eudaimonia*. For instance, she uses a live of an artist with bipolar disorder as an example where she refuses to take medication in order to be able to benefit from the manic phases for creativity (Swanton, 2003, p. 82).



5. SENTIMENTALIST (AGENT-BASED) VIRTUE ETHICS⁷⁹

Sentimentalist (agent-based) virtue ethics which is represented by Michael Slote is one of the contemporary versions that differentiates itself from eudaimonistic virtue ethics. As one of the most radical forms of virtue ethics, agent-based virtue ethics fixes ethical rightness on the virtuousness of inner motives. In this sense, it reminds us of the dictum *act from virtue* in Aristotle, and as opposed to Christine Swanton's focus on *virtuous act* or success in hitting the relevant targets, it focuses on the virtuous inner motives as right-making property of an act. I will look extensively at Slote's *Morals From Motives* (2001) to provide an analysis of this strand as well as his more recent work *Moral Sentimentalism* (2010) to understand the justificatory explanation of virtue as admirable trait. I will divide this chapter into three sections: the first will cover right action in agent-based virtue ethics, the second will introduce the problems and objections to it, and the third will look at how justification of virtue as admirable trait is provided and the problems it raises.

5.1 Right Action: Expression of Admirable Inner States

In this section, in order to evaluate the account of right action, I want to provide a brief introduction to the theoretical underpinnings of Michael Slote's agent-based (sentimentalist) virtue ethics in the first part, and analyze the definition of right action and its relation to virtuous motives in the second part.

⁷⁹ Linda Zagzebski's exemplarist virtue ethics is similar to Agent-based virtue ethics in the sense that the foundation of her theory is also based on emotion of admiration. She argues that identifying virtuous people with the emotion of admiration (and vicious people with the emotion of contempt) is the foundation of coming to know which states of character are virtuous. Although she appreciates *eudaimonia*, she omits it in her theory because she thinks it is a vague concept and invites counterexamples (2017, pp.10-11). However, she places a great importance on practical wisdom. Since, she shares emotion of admiration as basis, she could have been treated in this chapter, but I opt to treat her separately than agent-based virtue ethics because she has eclectic elements taken from both eudaimonist and agent-based virtue ethics. Since, exemplarist virtue ethics has these eclectic characteristics, I am not planning to devote another chapter for it.

5.1.1 Positioning agent-based virtue ethics

Michael Slote's agent-based virtue ethics gives priority to inner states and relies on the evaluation of motives, dispositions, or the inner life of individuals for deciding the moral status of an action. The inner states of agents are equally important to eudaimonist virtue ethics, but what differentiates the agent-based strand is that virtue is not explained in terms of *eudaimonia*, but rather considered as an intuitively admirable trait. Slote defines his version of virtue ethics as “one that treats the moral or ethical status of actions as entirely derivative from independent and fundamental ethical/aretaic facts (or claims) about the motives, dispositions or inner life of moral individuals.” (Slote, 2001, p. 7). He states that he changed his neo-Aristotelian orientation in *From Morality to Virtue* (1995b) to a more agent-based and sentimentalist approach which has its influence in British sentimentalists like Hume and Hutcheson in *Morals From Motives* (2001).

Slote argues that agent-based virtue ethics can be constructed around morality as inner strength, morality as universal benevolence, and morality as caring (2001, pp. 19-38). Morality as inner strength refers to the notions of health and virtue of the soul similar to the way that Plato takes it to be the backbone of all good human action (Slote, 2001, p.20).⁸⁰ In its lacking the idea of human concern for others, morality as inner strength is classified as ‘cool’. In morality as inner strength, right action expresses or reflects inner strength or health (Slote, 2001, p.21). In morality as universal benevolence, right action expresses the motivation of universal benevolence or to promote universal human well-being (Slote, 2001, p. 24-29). Finally, the morality as caring employs expressing motivation to promote human well-being especially for the ones that are near and dear to us. Inner strength on its own cannot account for other morally relevant facts about human life such as kindness or being honest (Slote, 2001, p.21). Since motives such as benevolence, compassion, and kindness cannot be derivatively admirable, or in other words inner strength cannot be their ground, Slote argues that ‘warm’ (or sentimentalist) agent basing is more promising for an agent-based virtue ethics compared to “cool” agent basing like Plato’s. Against the counterintuitive worry in terms of the importance of other values such as justice or the public good he says,

⁸⁰ Slote points to Spinoza and Nietzsche as using the metaphors of health and inner strength, yet omits these philosophers because they don’t provide an agent-based ethics (2001, p.20).

To be sure, compassion cannot always have its way; it sometimes must yield to justice or the public good, and a compassion or generosity that never pays any heed to the agent's own needs seems masochistic, ethically unattractive, lacking in self-respect. But still, even if compassion has to be limited or qualified by other values, it counts with us as a very important basic moral value. And it seems to distort the aretaic value we place on compassion, benevolence, kindness, and caring for others to regard them as needing justification in terms of the (cool) ideal of inner strength or indeed any other different value. (Slote, 2001, p.23)

The motives of benevolence, kindness and compassion are “very important basic moral value(s)” and as Slote argues their grounding in any other value is implausible for “modern moral consciousness” (2003, p.23). Agent-based morality that appeals to morality as universal benevolence and as caring establish altruistic human concern into its aretaic foundation, and morality as caring comprises concern for loved ones particularly. Therefore, it could be argued that in cases whereby caring for a loved one might mean exhibiting bad motives to others. Against this objection, Slote argues that an agent's total or overall motivation should be good/virtuous enough to say that the act is right. Slote says,

Someone who cares about the well-being of one particular person and acts for that person's benefit acts, in some individualistic or narrow sense, from a good motive. But if such action involves neglecting the well-being of other people he knows or doesn't know, then it may demonstrate an overall bad character and may count as wrongdoing. (2001, p. 33).

So, agent-based morality of caring, while granting some form of partiality, does not exclude humanitarian caring (Pettigrove, 2018). Caring as a “fundamental form of moral excellence” should be balanced in its partialistic and universal tendencies to be a virtuous motive to make an act right. Since Aristotle's account lacks this humanitarian caring, Slote rejects Aristotelian ethics.

The proper concern that Aristotle's account lacks is found in the form of benevolence in Hume and universal benevolence in Hutcheson (Slote, 2001, p. vii-viii). Slote draws a parallelism between his Sentimentalist account of virtue ethics and the ethics of care.⁸¹ Following his understanding of virtue and virtuousness, an action is virtuous or right if and only if it is done out of appropriate motivations regarding that virtue. Slote defines right action “in terms of good motivations and wrongness in terms of having of bad (or insufficiently good) motives” in this regard (2001, p.14). So, Slote rejects

⁸¹ However, Slote differentiates his account from ethics of care defended by Nel Noddings (1984) because Noddings's ethics of care argues to promote caring overall in the world; thus, invites a certain consequentialistic and perfectionist framework (2001, p.30).

both *eudaimonia* and *phronesis* in favor of motivation on his account. We can summarize Slote's theory as grounded along two aspects: "rightness derives from virtuousness, and virtuousness is fundamental" (Russell, 2009, p. 74). These two dimensions will be addressed to see how fixing rightness on the inner life of the agent and fundamentality of the virtue may be subjected to criticism. Before focusing on the problems that agent-based virtue ethics have, let us look at the account of right action and its relation to virtuous motives

5.1.2 Right action and the virtuous motive

The distinctive element in Slote's account lies in his understanding of the fundamentality of virtuous motivation. Virtuous motivation is presented as the necessary condition for right action. Slote's criterion of right action can be found in the following passage:

An act is morally acceptable if and only if it comes from good or virtuous motivation involving benevolence or caring (about the well-being of others) or at least doesn't come from bad or inferior motivation involving malice or indifference to humanity. (2001, p. 38)

According to the quotation, rightness depends on virtuous motive. When and only when a virtuous motive is expressed, is an action right. And when a vicious motive is expressed in the action, regardless of the consequences and regardless of whether having performed the action expresses a deontic principle, then the action is wrong. It is the non-vicious, or virtuous motivation that makes the action right, thus Slote uses words and phrases like "comes from", "exhibits", "reflects", "expresses", "demonstrates" interchangeably to describe the relationship between right action and virtuous motivation (2001, pp. 16-17). Fundamentality of the motive points to intuitively good and independently *end in itself* nature of virtuous motivation. This means that virtuous motives are in need of no further grounding or justification because their value is intuitively obvious, in such cases like the moral goodness of (universal) benevolence or caring about people. Before unpacking these ideas, first I want to focus on usage of the concepts of morally acceptable or morally good as the equivalent of right.

It is important to note that rightness is thought of in terms of goodness or virtue. Without connoting obligation, Slote's definition of morally acceptable action is employed as the definition of right action. Slote has been especially criticized about

not drawing a proper line between rightness and goodness. Since the deontic status of an action is independent of the agent or her motivations, being virtuously motivated when performing an action is thought to serve as a bonus element to make the agent 'good' yet does not affect the status of "right" or "wrong" action. Considering that the line between right and good can be quite indistinct in virtue ethics, this objection is a not a very surprising one. Indeed, it is a very old discussion and the contrast between right and good has been argued to different degrees in the past. This discussion is relevant for Hursthouse's eudaimonist virtue ethics too, yet it poses a greater importance for Slote's agent-based virtue ethics. Slote's definition of right action relies exclusively on the virtuousness of the motive, whereas Hursthouse's definition focuses on the action as it is done by the virtuous agent, not specifically the motives, and feelings of the virtuous agent. In what follows I will look at the distinction between right and good.

First and most famous of all, David Ross argued that rightness and goodness are two independent categories. Moral goodness according to Ross is associated with its motive, yet the rightness of an act is about the nature of what is done, not the motives that it proceeds from (1930, p. 156). In light of this distinction, Ross indexed virtue in the category of the good, as a disposition from certain motives (to do one's duty, to bring something good into being, to give pleasure or save pain to others) (1930, p.134). This understanding of difference between rightness and goodness is a common one whereby rightness connotes obligation, duty and 'ought to be done', goodness connotes praiseworthiness, or admiration.⁸² Commitment to Ross' distinction, to varying degrees means that motives and motivations have no role to play in right-relevant features of an action. Rightness of an action is about the nature of the act, the properties that are objectively defined and required. For instance, saving a drowning child is the right thing to do whether or not you have the matching virtuous motivations to do so.⁸³ Even if one is viciously motivated to save the child (to be able to sleep with the mother or let's say to get money from the family), the vicious motivation does not contribute to the rightness of the act according to this conception.

⁸² This subject in its own right deserves books to cover all the relevant topics. For the purpose of the dissertation I believe it is enough to point out the distinction, and how virtue ethics positions itself. For the similar understanding for the difference between rightness and goodness see also (Frankena, 1973, pp. 9-10).

⁸³ See (Das, 2003) for the example which he uses to criticize agent-based virtue ethics.

Another degree of distinction can be found in Swanton, as argued in the previous chapter. She claims there is a fine difference between the evaluation of an action and evaluation of the agent's motive with reference to the distinction between *virtuous action* and the *action from virtue* (Swanton, 2003, p. 238).⁸⁴ Although she separates *virtuous action* as one that is successful in hitting the targets of a relevant virtue, she argues that it does not mean that rightness and goodness are always independent in the sharp way that Ross claims they are. There are some virtues which have internal targets such as “determination or (mental) strength”, and thus inner motives are relevant to the rightness of the act (Swanton, 2003, 234-235). Along the same lines, Sverdlik defends the view that motives can be rightness-relevant. For instance, act-types such as hunting, joking or refusing to sell a house can be wrong based on the motive one has performing them, although if the motives were different the acts would not be wrong or at least excusable (Sverdlik, 1996, pp. 339-341). To the motives that are rightness relevant, Sverdlik gives the examples of desire for money, trifling, cruelty and motives of racism, sexism or anti-Semitism, and others. Although it is permissible for an owner not to sell her house to a buyer on the basis of the buyer's credit score, not selling the house because the buyer is black makes the act wrong (Sverdlik, 1996, p.341). Similarly, the act of hunting gains different moral status if we know that “one person goes into the woods and kills many birds for the sheer fun of it” or that “another person in the similar circumstances could kill the same number of birds in the same way as a measure to insure a proper population of them” (Sverdlik, 1996, p.340). Sverdlik's conclusion to the question whether the motives of an action can affect the deontic⁸⁵ status of it, is ‘sometimes’ (1996, 339). He defends the idea that there are actions which are obligatory and ‘right’ even when they do not stem from good motives. Thus, saving a drowning creature is morally right, whether the motive is duty or the hope of being paid for the trouble (Sverdlik, 1996, 329).⁸⁶

I believe that the relevance of motive in action assessment is not a mishit, and there are compelling examples to prove the importance of motives. As I have discussed in eudaimonist virtue ethics, *act from virtue* is more praiseworthy since it systematically

⁸⁴ See also (Van Zyl, 2014).

⁸⁵ He refers to rightness and wrongness of an action as deontic status, yet it should not be problematic since it simply means the moral status of an action described in modern moral philosophy language.

⁸⁶ The original example of saving a drowning fellow creature seems to be Mill's. For the reference see (Sverdlik, 1996, p. 329)

produces right actions. However, Slote's motivation for basing all kinds of moral evaluation on the aretaic concepts is different.

Slote's main concern in emphasizing the fundamentality of the virtuous motive is to avoid the circularity objection that eudaimonist virtue ethics is charged with. He says,

If the virtuous individual is the measure of what is fine or right, they may simply mean that she is in the best possible position to know/perceive what is fine and right; similarly, if acts are right if a virtuous person would perform them, that still leaves open the possibility that the virtuous individual would perform them because they are right. (Slote, 2001, p. 5)

Slote's argument in the quotation above targets specifically the circularity problem that eudaimonist virtue ethics generates. When eudaimonist virtue ethics defines virtue as character traits that are needed for human flourishing or *eudaimonia*, and define *eudaimonia* in terms of virtuous activity, then it seems like there is not a good explanation for either of them. Slote's solution to avoid circularity and create a moral theory which is distinctively virtue ethical is to base rightness in the motives of the agent (Van Zyl, 2009, p. 53).

If we compare it to Aristotelian eudaimonist virtue ethics, in Hursthouse's definition we see that right action employs a reference to the virtuous agent, not particularly her motives but what she would characteristically do. On this view, the virtuous agent knows what virtuous, right or good, and virtuous motives are seen as part of the virtuous agent's disposition to act in certain ways and are contributive to her flourishing. The justificatory terrain of right action lies in the concept of *eudaimonia*. On the other hand, the rightness of an act in agent-based virtue ethics is essentially derived from the goodness of the agent's motives. A virtuous person appeals to her "good heart," or in other words good inner states to see the right, noble or admirable thing to do.

Having examined Slote's account of right action and the necessary condition of virtuous motivation, I will continue with the problems concerning action-guidance in agent-based virtue ethics in the next section.

5.2 Problems of Agent-based Virtue Ethics

There are a few objections to agent-based virtue ethics. The first is the autism objection, due to its focus on the inner motives. If rightness is defined by the existence

of these admirable inner motives and exhibiting those in actions, it can be argued that it would not matter what an admirable person with admirable inner traits does. A person with admirable inner traits can do anything and it will be counted as right regardless. Deriving right from an agent's inner states would mean that there is no need for any standard, principle or constraint with which we intuitively, or common sensually associate moral life. In order to respond to the autism objection, Slote argues that even for the agent-prior view (and agent-focused view of Hursthouse) if it was the case that the right action is the one that the virtuous person would do, it does not follow from the definition that whatever the virtuous agent does is automatically good, right or admirable (Slote, 2001, p.16). In Slote's agent-basing, acts are not admirable or virtuous just because they are performed by a virtuous agent (who characteristically has admirable inner states); to be admirable, acts "have to exhibit, express, or reflect such states or be such that they would exhibit, etc., such states if they occurred" (Slote, 2001, p.17). I believe this answer to the autism objection is fair, yet it does not clear up the other concerns about the fundamentality of inner states for right action.

A related objection would be that agent-based virtue ethics fails to consider that 'ought' implies 'can' (Jacobson, 2002)⁸⁷. Slote addresses inner states as necessary and sufficient conditions of right action, from this it follows that vicious agents couldn't fulfill obligations since whatever they do would count as wrong due to their bad motives (Slote, 2001, pp. 15-16). For 'ought' to have meaning, it should also assume that agents 'can' do. However, for agent-based virtue ethics it seems that whatever ought to be done cannot be done by the vicious. Consider that Tayyip has malicious motives to harm people and lacks care for others.⁸⁸ The only reason why he does not harm a person is that he fears being caught or being harmed himself. Thus, if he harms an innocent person he will exhibit the malicious motive of cruelty (acting wrong), and if he avoids harming others, then he will express cowardice or at least he will lack overall good motives (acting wrong) (Doviak, 2011). In the example of Tayyip, at least what he ought to do would be not to harm an innocent person, in order to accomplish this refraining from such motives would be right thing to do; Yet, Slote's account seems to not accommodate this because Tayyip's lack of good motivation would make the act wrong in either case. However, it should at least be morally

⁸⁷ For the same criticism to Slote's account see also (Copp & Sobel, 2004, pp. 550-551) and (Hurka, 2001, pp. 225-226)

⁸⁸ The example is borrowed from (Doviak, 2011) minus the name of the person.

permissible to refrain from harming an innocent person despite the existence of vicious motivations or despite the fact that refraining is motivated by cowardice (Kawall, 2014, pp. 133-134). Thus, it seems that there is not a room for the possibility of doing the right thing for the wrong reasons in Slote's version. This and all problems related to action-motive tension eventually can be attributed to the failure of distinguishing doing the right thing from doing the right thing for the right reasons.⁸⁹ I believe that even though Slote tries to employ a different conception of right which is morally excellent and praiseworthy, it is important to make the distinction between at least morally acceptable and morally right, or in other words, *virtuous action* and the *action from virtue*. This way it is possible to explain 'right but for the wrong reasons', or 'right but not completely virtuous' since it does not match with the proper inner states.

The lack of distinction between right act and right act for the right reasons brings us to another problem that is related to action-motive tension. If wrong actions come from bad motives, what about actions that express good motivation yet result in unintentional wrong? According to the agent-based account these actions that express an overall good motivation are deemed as right in a way that is contrary to common sense intuition, as well as disregarding the philosophical distinction between *assessment of an action* and *assessment of an agent*. An agent with good motives could as well be factually misinformed about the situation, and consequently wrong about the assessment of the situation.⁹⁰ Consider two examples from Kawall and Van Zyl.

Suppose a benevolent doctor carefully assesses a situation, and provides the best available treatment for a mild disease in an isolated village, an action that she very reasonably expects to help a hundred people. Unfortunately, it turns out that many of the villagers have a severe allergy, unique to the village, one that was previously unknown, and which the doctor had no reason to suspect existed. Her action in fact severely and permanently harms the hundred people. (Kawall, 2014, p. 134)

B gives a person suffering from extreme thirst a drink of liquid she takes to be water but is in fact poison. (Van Zyl, 2009, p. 51)

For both of the cases, the agents have good motives but cause harm to people. As opposed to the previous case whereby an agent was blameworthy for not having good motive whilst saving a drowning child, both agents in these examples are praiseworthy

⁸⁹ See (Jacobson, 2002) and (Brady, 2004) for the distinction.

⁹⁰ This objection is also raised by (Setiya, 2002, p. 617), (Kawall, 2002, p. 204), (Swanton, 2001, p. 36).

and their actions are right on Slote's account. It sounds quite counterintuitive, but let's look closely at the examples.

Harming one hundred people without any other qualification would not be deemed right for any version of virtue ethics, nor deontology nor utilitarianism. If we think about the first example, a benevolent doctor applies the best available treatment with no reason to suspect that these one hundred people are allergic to the medicine. Normally, the best available treatment would heal the sick, yet in this particular case it results in permanent harm. So, which one of the following can we regard as wrong? The doctor's motivation, the doctor's decision to provide the best available treatment, the doctor's act of giving medicine that results in harm, or the consequence of giving the medicine?

The doctor's motivation is benevolent and thus praiseworthy, and she has a good will to help those in need, thus she is praiseworthy. So, neither her inner motivation nor she herself are subjects of blame and wrong. Her decision to provide the best available medicine is also the morally right decision, and by extension an act of giving that medicine is right thing to do according to Slote. Yet, the consequence of the act harms one hundred people and this is an unintentional wrong. Along the same line, giving poison to kill someone is inarguably wrong. Yet, the person unwittingly giving a poisonous drink to help the thirsty is not blameworthy. The agent is only mistaken in believing the drink is water. In Slote's theory the moral status of an act depends on its motive, so in both of these cases both agents do the right thing and there is no room for moral luck (Slote, 2001, p. 34). I believe Slote's intuition about the close connection between the 'right thing to do' and good inner motives has an essential implication and also relevance for our moral experience. From a theoretical point of view, the implication is that reasons or justifications for what makes an action right relies on the good inner motives that produce them, not their consequences particularly, nor their conformity with duty. As a moral theory this line of argument can still be defended. It also resonates with our moral experience, for we care about the reasons why our friend comes to visit us at the hospital. It makes a difference for us to know whether the visit is done out of sense of duty, or to raise future benefits, or out of care.⁹¹ Along the same line, Van Zyl remarks that we often revise our evaluation

⁹¹ The original example belongs to (Stocker, 2007, p. 74) to highlight the disharmony modern moral theories produce by splitting motives and reasons for justification (duty or maximization of good).

of an action that has had consequences of we learn afterwards that it was done out of good intention, yet bad luck affected the results through no fault of one's own (Van Zyl, 2009, p. 55). An agent-based account ignores the agent-regret in these kinds of situations. Even though an agent who acts out of good motives is not culpable and blameworthy, it would still be the case that a virtuous person whose actions unintentionally harm others would feel regret. The important point here is that, the evaluation of an action would be affected if we knew that the agent does not experience any appropriate regret (Walsh, 2016, p. 653). It intuitively shows that agent-regret should be made "rationally appropriate, indeed as a *morally desirable*, form of response" because it would be callous not to feel regret for the lives that are lost as a result of one's actions (Walsh, 2016, p. 653). On the other hand, if we assume that somehow agent-based virtue ethics makes room for agent-regret, then again, the results would be very unappealing and counterintuitive. For, allowing regret will point to a conclusion that the agent is not blameworthy, and the action is right, yet the action deserves regret. That is simply confusing, but more importantly troubling for the consistency of the theory. If the distinction was made between doing the right thing, and doing the right thing for the right reasons, this conclusion would be avoided.

A related objection to the obliteration of these categories is also raised by Robert Das. Das argues it is difficult to see how Slote's account guides the badly-motivated agent to perform an intuitively right action (Das, 2003, p. 327). In the case of the drowning child, what any person ought to do is to save the child, regardless of one's motives. Yet, it is unclear how agent-based virtue ethics accommodate the ethical status of saving a drowning child as right as well as how it helps badly-motivated agent to decide what to do. Herein, I agree with Van Zyl that the problem of action-guidance in Slote's theory is of greater importance (Van Zyl, 2009, p. 56).

The action-guidance objection argues that agent-based virtue ethics cannot help us in practical matters because one's looking inward to her motivations will not help to resolve any moral problem. Problems have external demands and include facts about people and the world. For instance, how does the morality of benevolence help one to decide whether to oppose or advocate heroic measures to keep one's ailing mother alive (Slote, 2001, pp. 39-40). Simply, Slote's response to this is that agent-based theory does not answer this question in that instance; one has to collect other relevant

information before arriving at a decision such as the mother's "condition and prospects, as regards future suffering and incapacity" (Slote, 2001, p.40).

And it can tell her this by reference to her actual motives, because if she does not find out more and decides what to do or to advocate about her mother solely on the basis of present relative ignorance, she will demonstrate a callousness (toward her mother) that is very far from benevolent. To decide to pull the plug or to allow heroic measures without finding out more about her mother would demonstrate indifference or callousness toward her, and on that basis, morality as benevolence can make the moral judgment that she ought to find out more before making any decision. (Slote, 2001, p.40)

According to the quotation above, it is understood that action-guidance is inherent in the virtue of benevolence or its opposite (by reference to avoiding callousness). Yet, it is not clear how the agent here in the example bases her decision on her actual virtuous motive. Right action according to Slote can be attained by steering away from callousness, and as long as the action does not express vicious motive it passes Slote's criteria. However, it is not so clear how an agent from the motive of avoiding callousness decides to gather information.

Another thing to note here is that, when someone has no benevolent motive which grants that she won't be able to choose to act from virtuous motives, how is it possible for Slote's theory to tell her what she should do? If we give complete authority to virtuous motives to define right action, then it seems difficult to explain how agent-based virtue ethics can guide us in practical matters if it is left to the inner psychological life of the agent. Consider Slote's remarks on action-guidance.

[The] most moral thinking doesn't involve thinking about morality, and the morally good person isn't guided by a theory or (agent-based) moral principle or even a sense of rightness as much as by a good heart that seeks to do good for and by people. (2001, p.42)

We can endorse such arguments as individuals leading a moral life, yet this does not necessarily prove to be sufficient for guiding us about what to do. It is not unsound to state that virtuous people generally don't think in terms of moral principles and duties. However, if we refer to the actual motives of the agent, it makes it difficult for Slote's theory to face abovementioned objections as well as the action-guiding objection. Even if it provides an agent-based account of right action, it is still open to criticism concerning the action-guiding capacity of the theory. Van Zyl argues that in order to avoid this difficulty, actual motives should be replaced by hypothetical motives: to say that an act is virtuous or vicious, we refer to at least the motives that the particular

action characteristically exhibits (so in this sense motives of a hypothetical agent) , not actual motives of an agent in question (2009, pp. 59-60). To remedy the action-guiding objection for Slote's case, she argues that instead of relying on exhibiting actual virtuous motives or at least not expressing a vicious motive, the definition can be formulated as below.

A decision is right if and only if it is what a virtuous person would characteristically choose in the circumstances. (Van Zyl, 2009, p. 60).

The hypothetical agent-based account such as that which Van Zyl argues for could fare better against the autism objection. It focuses on the motives which are typically expressed in actions, rather than actual virtuous motives which may or may not exist. The hypothetical agent account is only offered as an action-guiding principle of the agent-based virtue ethics though. Action assessment on the other hand, can still be addressed in terms of an agent's actual motives for performing the act (Van Zyl, 2009, p.62). Nevertheless, if an agent chooses an act because that is a decision that would be chosen by the virtuous, then the agent would be choosing not out of a virtuous motive but a conception of right (or a sense of duty). In this sense, Van Zyl's hypothetical agent action-guiding principle is self-defeating (2009, 65).

I think Slote's account is very informative about showing the relevance of inner motives and their close connection to right-relevant features of an action. Nevertheless, in its obliteration of the distinction between "doing the right thing" and "doing it for the right reasons" creates difficult counterintuitive results. Moreover, one can still defend agent-based ethics to provide an account of right action no matter how demanding it is. And I believe there is value in Slote's theory in terms of distinguishing "accidentally or ironically useful actions (or slips on banana peels) from actions that we actually morally admire and that are morally good and praiseworthy." (Slote, 2001, p. 39). Yet, by the same token, it is essential to recognize the normative significance of the categories of "doing the right thing" and "doing it for the right reasons".

Now I turn to the justification of virtue in agent-based virtue ethics. The following section will focus on the nature of admirability and fundamentality thesis of aretaic concepts in Slote's account in order to question "the ground floor" of virtue and to show the difficulty it causes for practical deliberation.

5.3 Admirability of Virtues: Intuitive Justification for Agent-based Virtue Ethics

In order to support the main thesis of my work that *eudaimonia* and practical wisdom are necessary concepts to show virtue ethics can provide an account of right action and action-guidance, in this section I will look at the nature of virtues as admirable inner states to show how justification is provided in Slote's theory and the problems it raises. I believe that fundamentality of virtuousness in Slote's account poses a more important question in its relation to practical wisdom and consequently make it more difficult to prove agent-based virtue ethics as action-guiding.

Slote refuses the conception of virtue that is grounded in *eudaimonia*. He explicitly criticizes Hursthouse in her evaluation of virtuousness with reference to human flourishing, or in his own words 'judgments about, a conception of, *eudaimonia*' (2001, p. 6).

The admirability of wanting to be independent and not a parasite is not a function of its consequences for anyone's happiness, but, according to the present view, is and can be recognized to be admirable apart from any consequences. (Slote, 1995a, p. 89)

I believe it is essential to start from this comparison to understand Slote's theory. The comparison especially serves to show the fundamentality of the concept of virtue and virtuousness of inner states whose value are not derived from any other value.

Slote takes virtue as an admirable state of character. Virtues as fundamentally admirable traits are the "ground floor" which employs the explanation, and justification of other ethical judgements (2001, p. 18). Herein, showing how the intuitive admirability of virtuous inner states as the sole independent ground is necessary.⁹² He opens intuitionism to discussion by briefly questioning the ground-floor ethical assumptions of other theories such as utilitarianism. He gives a further explanation in a footnote and says,

Is there any reason to think that the judgments about the good upon which utilitarianism ultimately bases itself are less controversial than judgments about the moral admirability of motives? Considering the reasons given by Rawlsians to try to avoid making use of judgments about the good, probably not. Agent-basing may be less familiar than other approaches, but if, as I believe, moral judgments about motives can be made on a strong intuitive basis, then, since

⁹² Russell calls this *virtue intuitionism* (2009, p.94).

ethical judgment has to start somewhere, we have reason to explore the potential of agent-based ethics. (Slote, 2001, p.19)

I agree with Slote about this point. In every science, the starting assumption, or axiom or premise that the whole theory built upon is something to be believed for further reasoning. The good that utilitarianism treats as *summum bonum*, right as deontology takes to be fundamental can still be questionable. Aristotle points to this issue with the same reason by saying that the question why be moral should be left aside because basically you cannot convince someone who does not value being moral. There are still important questions that Slote need to address though.

As I have argued above, Slote builds agent-basing around caring and universal benevolence. His sentimentalist method can be traced back to Hume, Hutcheson, and especially Martineau (Slote, 2014, pp. 55-57). Between the morality of inner strength, of care and of universal benevolence, Slote opts for an ethics of caring which is balanced in its features of caring for intimates and caring for others. He rejects views that ground virtuousness in anything other than the ‘admirable’ and ‘morally good’ (Slote, 2001, p.18). For instance, consider the ideals of compassion and kindness that can be also found in Christian morality of *agape* (love). If the obligation or imperative of love is grounded on God’s command, the theory is a form of deontology rather than a sentimentalist virtue ethics. Although his account is influenced by Hume, he rejects Hume’s idea that the virtuousness of motives is partially based on the utility of those motives. Similarly, he also rejects the Platonic evaluation of virtuousness on the basis of Form of the Good (Slote, 2001, pp.7-9). Admirability as a final explanation has no criteria, nor we can find an answer to questions such as 1) what arouses admiration? 2) what warrants admiration? and finally 3) whose admiration matters?

First of all, what Slote means by “intuitively admirable” is that there is a common sense about an ethical assumption being plausible, sensible, or aggregable (he uses ‘initially plausible’) (2001, p. 18). So, we admire benevolent people for instance because we initially admire their benevolent motives, or in other words we initially find the virtue of benevolence plausible. However, for the issue of how “intuitively admirable” is in no need of further justification, he says,

If judgments about the ethical status of motives ground claims about right and wrong action, then the claims about right and wrong action that a given agent-based view yields can be used to test the validity or reasonableness of its grounding assumptions. (Slote, 2001, p. 18)

It seems that Slote wants to support his claim that virtues are admirable traits by testing the plausibility of other ethical judgments (judgements about right and wrong action). So, if a motive is taken to be virtuous, yet the actions that arise from this motive turn to be unfit, or inappropriate, then we have to reconsider the motive's virtuousness. Although he does not explicitly explain, we can see that he employs a form of reflective equilibrium which aims at coherence between beliefs, intuitions and moral judgements, or conclusions.⁹³

Eudaimonist virtue ethics take the virtuous agent as the anchor who deliberates the best course of action and chooses actions due to their virtuousness. The reference to the virtuous person relies on her special ability to use her practical wisdom to determine the mean in a particular situation. This kind of derivative qualification is not acceptable for Slote, for the account would be something other than agent-based as such. Rightness resides in the virtuous inner motives and therefore, goodness of heart will determine the course of action and make it right regardless of the consequences.⁹⁴ Slote rejects Aristotle's approach on this same ground.

[I]n the case of Aristotle, choice lying in a mean between vices is according to (what is sometimes translated as) 'right reason', and a rational and virtuous individual has a disposition to make such choices. But here (as analogously elsewhere in Aristotle's ethics) the disposition seems to be virtuous or good because of the way it leads to rational, virtuous, or 'noble' choices, so rather than in agent-based fashion understanding the rationality of choices in terms of independently characterized rational motives or dispositions, the status of the latter would appear at least partly to derive from the former, so that the theory isn't agent-based. (2001, p. 171)

Slote argues that virtuous agent's actions are right because these actions spring from their virtuous inner states. It may not seem problematic at first glance, but in Slote's account practical wisdom is replaced by a good heart. Practical wisdom as excellence in deliberation entails that there are reasons other than the choosing of a virtuous agent that make an action right and make the person virtuous who uses it properly.

Making virtue fundamental in his account means that the grounding is to be found strictly on aretaic terms such as the term "admirable". Herein, I just want to recall the distinction drawn between primary and fundamental, and to the point that making

⁹³ Originally reflective equilibrium belongs to John Rawls (1971). Although he avoids using the notion 'intuition', beliefs and judgments are taken to imply intuition. An acceptable coherence means not only that beliefs are consistent with each other, but also that some of them explains others (Daniels, 2020).

⁹⁴ See (Russell D. C., 2009, pp. 72-73)

aretaic notions primary in virtue ethics does not necessarily mean that it should be hierarchically primary, but rather it has a primary explanatory role in understanding what right action is (Watson, 1990, p. 454). The notion of fundamental and basic on the other hand, brings a hierarchical structure like those of deontology and utilitarianism. The basic or the fundamental notion not only have a primary explanatory role, but all other notions and values derive from these basic and fundamental concepts.

Since Slote commits to the notion of “fundamentality” of virtuous inner states, virtuousness and rightness of action can only be explained by the virtuous motive from which it springs. However, in practical matters every virtue is bound by and necessarily relates to a sort of responsiveness to morally salient features of a particular situation. Slote admits that his concept of virtue surely is sensitive to these facts. Let us consider this in order to analyze better what fundamentality of virtuousness means in the face of practical matters.

If one is really benevolent or wants to be socially useful, one doesn’t just throw good things around or give them to the first person one sees. Benevolence, for example, isn’t benevolence in the fullest sense unless one cares about who exactly is needy and to what extent they are needy, and such care, in turn, essentially involves wanting and making efforts to know relevant facts, so that one’s benevolence can really be useful. Thus, someone acting on that motive must be open to, seek contact with, and be influenced by the world around her—her decision will not be made in splendid isolation from what most of us would take to be the morally relevant realities, and for an agent-based view, therefore, the moral value of a motive like benevolence isn’t free-floating, but depends, rather, on the kind of internal state it is and, in particular, on the aims and hopes it has, and the efforts it makes, vis-à-vis the world. (Slote, 2001, pp. 17-18) ⁹⁵

In this quotation, there are two points to make. The first concerns the conceptualization of practical wisdom and its relation to virtuous act, or at least explanation of practical deliberation about what to do next. The second concerns the relationship between *eudaimonia* and virtuous act.

The practical reasoning seems to be very similar to Aristotle’s in the above passage. The knowledge of ‘who is needy’, “what extent they are needy” are all relevant facts to be used in virtuous agent’s deliberation for eudaimonist virtue ethics and consequently they are evaluated (even though not always in a very elaborate way) with

⁹⁵ See also (2001, p. 105).

reference to *eudaimonia*. However, in Slote's case it seems that gathering information and knowing the relevant facts give rise to a proper expression of benevolence, but more importantly having the benevolent inner state brings an agent to act in benevolent ways. Consider Russell's description of Slote's model below.

On this model, one does not find the benevolent act, but is, so to speak, naturally drawn to a particular act by one's very benevolence, and it is choosing and doing the act from that sort of motivation that makes the act benevolent. (2009, p. 78)

Thus, Slote's agent-based virtue ethics does not make use of the notion of practical wisdom. Practical wisdom as correct deliberation about what to do is replaced by something which resembles goodness of heart. In order to explain what I call goodness of heart Slote uses the notion of "balance". Slote tries to explicate the balance of concerns by an example rather than a systematic argument. The example is that of a father who has two children, one disabled and the other independent and successful. Out of virtue of benevolence, the father spends more time and resources on the disabled child to improve his/her welfare; yet for he loves his other child too, love will warrant a balance of concern and helping his disabled child would not impede him from giving time and resources to the other child also. The basic concern here is that the 'balance' that is supposed to be attained naturally evolves in the heart of good man as I understand it. He says that the balance is

between the concern or love he has for the one and that which he has for the other, and that means he will at least some of the time help and/or pay attention to a much-better-off child, even though that time could be spent doing more good for the other and producing more total or aggregate good as well...equal concern for children by its very (unselfconscious) nature tends to lead a person to allot efforts and attention in a somewhat balanced way. (Slote, 2001, p.68)

Slote tries to avoid utilitarian considerations by highlight that producing more aggregate good is not relevant to balanced concerns for a father. Yet, what seems bizarre is that the decision that is made "unselfconsciously" flows from the concern of love or the loving, caring inner state. In contrast with the agent who deliberates about what act would be virtuous in this case, Slote's virtuous agent acts virtuously by gathering information and facts about the situation and his benevolent motive arouses naturally as a response to these. So, in his theory practical wisdom is replaced by some form of "benevolent intuitionism" (Slote, 2001, p.42). The balance that the father finds showing love and care for his children do not result from deliberation about what

would be the right or best thing to do, but rather simply expressing one's love in this case. Moreover, Slote argues that balance is in the very nature of love, and deliberating would imply a lack of it (2001, p.67). Thus, practical wisdom is rejected and furthermore in some cases seems to be the opposite of what a virtuous person would need expressing the good inner states. Even if we take this as valid, the problem of why these states deserve admiration prevails.

In *Morals From Motives*, Slote does not focus on a defense of intuitivism, yet we can find further explanations in his more recent works, *Moral Sentimentalism* (2010) and "Virtue Ethics and Moral Sentimentalism" (2014). In *Moral Sentimentalism*, he explicitly rejects Aristotelian conception of practical wisdom.

Aristotle may have regarded a high degree of intelligence and intellectual skillfulness as necessary to ethical virtue, but we nowadays (more democratically and like Kant) hold that such intelligence and skill isn't necessary to moral decency or goodness. We think, rather, that moral goodness and decency are more a matter of the heart and that, therefore, the capacity for being moral isn't widely denied to people because they aren't smart or intellectually agile enough (Slote, 2010, p.154).

Slote rejects practical rationality or reasoning as deontologist and Aristotelians understand it. Instead, his sentimentalist approach brings feelings into the picture relying on Hume's notion of empathy complimented by recent psychological studies of empathy (Slote, 2010, pp. 56).⁹⁶ This attempt is to show that our common intuitions and thought about morality have certain objective validity (Slote, 2010, viii). I want to briefly look at this because it will shed light on the meaning of the intuitively admirable character of virtue.

Empathy "involves having the feelings of another (involuntarily) aroused in ourselves, as when we see another person in pain" (Slote, 2014, p. 58). Hume similarly treats empathy as "contagion" of feeling from one to another. To support Hume's presumptive empirical facts about empathy, Slote also looks at psychological studies to explicitly show how empathy develops and affects our altruistic tendencies, or capacities of caring and love (2014, p.58)⁹⁷. I don't want to go into the psychological developmental stages that show us how empathy is at work through childhood and

⁹⁶ It should be noted that Slote does not take Hume's empiricism and explicitly says that experience (sense) is not the source of moral concepts. He further implies his affinity with Noam Chomsky in terms of innate knowledge or capacity for these concepts (2010, p. 11).

⁹⁷ See also (Slote, 2010, p. 16). Slote draws on the psychological studies of (Batson, 1991) and (Hoffman, 2000).

improves from being emphatic reactions to suffering you see to empathic reaction towards people you cannot see. What I am interested is the relation between empathy and moral judgments and claims.

Accounts that take practical reasoning as an essential part of their theory and rationalists as Slote calls them argue that moral approval or disapproval is constituted by or involve “judgments about the rightness or wrongness (or goodness or badness) of certain (kinds of) acts, motives, or traits of character.” (2014, 45). Slote, on the other hand, takes empathy as the basis of our feeling of moral approval or disapproval and possibly admiration (2010, pp. 34-35).⁹⁸ He says,

The idea that moral approval doesn’t require a moral judgment about rightness may seem odd and implausible at first, but the empathic reaction of being warmed by someone’s helpfulness toward others doesn’t appear to involve any judgment and *does* seem to involve a positive emotional attitude toward the person(’s helpfulness), one that contrasts with the empathic “chill” we take from seeing (learning about) someone else’s cruelty or indifference toward others, a chill that it is natural to describe as constituting or involving a negative feeling toward the cruel or indifferent person(’s behavior). (Slote, 2010, pp. 45-46)

According to the quotation, the warm feelings of empathy towards a benevolent act of a person and feeling of chill towards someone’s cruelty arise naturally in us. Slote argues this warm emphatic feeling of approval to be the reference fixer of morally right (Slote, 2010, 48). He borrows from Kripkean direct reference theory to support this method. According to direct reference theory, (moral judgment for Slote, but natural terms for Kripke) the experience of red(ness) or “warm emphatic feelings of approval” fix the reference for “red” and “morally right” (and “morally wong”) (Slote, 2010, p.48). For instance, we cannot define “red” as an objective term, or we cannot understand or know “redness” unless we visually experience “red”. So, even if we cannot define red, we can take “red” as *a priori* truth that causes certain kind of *a posteriori*/empirical experience (Slote, 2010, pp.57-58).⁹⁹ Similarly, our subjective experiences of empathic warmth (or chill) is the basis of our understanding of “right” or “(morally) good” (Slote, 2010, pp.58-59).

⁹⁸ He makes a distinction between approval and admiration in the sense that admiration is always positive and can be also directed to non-moral things such as intelligence, art or beauty (Slote, 2010, p.43). Approval on the other hand refers to morally acceptable or all right rather than necessarily positive attitude (Slote, 2010, p.42).

⁹⁹ See also (Zagzebski, 2017), especially pp. 212-237 where she discusses direct reference theory of Putnam and Kripke to ground exemplarist semantics and meta-ethics.

What (among other things) is more largely or capaciously a priori to our understanding of moral judgments and to our fully having the concept of moral rightness or goodness is our *capacity for empathically feeling or reflecting what others (and, in particular, agents) feel*. (Slote, 2010, p.64).

So, moral rightness and goodness are only derivable from the feeling of empathy, and there is no further justification than that of empathy. As I noted in the footnote above, Slote makes a distinction between admiration and empathy in his later work. It was actually surprising to me to have found that in *Moral Sentimentalism* (2010), he only touched upon the notion of admiration or admirability in order to differentiate it from approval. Yet, I think the quality of “intuitive admirability” seems very similar to feeling of “empathic warmth” and “moral approval”. So, I take his grounding to be found in human sentiments (empathy) which arise naturally, are common to all humans (except psychopaths who are deemed to be incapable of understanding moral claims and genuine moral judgments).¹⁰⁰ So, we can find answers in *Moral Sentimentalism* to question of 1) what arouses admiration? 2) what warrants admiration? and finally 3) whose admiration matters? We can say empathy arouses approval and thus admiration for virtuous motives and virtuous acts. This very human capacity of empathy, or feeling warmth to virtuous motives and acts warrants admiration. And lastly, admiration of humans matters, although felt subjectively, it is also felt phenomenologically in human species. However, I defend the idea that the ability to differentiate which objects and morally relevant matters deserve admiration is still secondary to an understanding of what is good.

The second issue that I want to look at is closely related to the above argument and my general claim that *eudaimonia* is necessary for a theory of virtue ethics. In the quotation, in order for one to be benevolent, Slote argues that one has to know the relevant facts about the situation. He claims that a “motive like benevolence isn’t free-floating, but depends, rather, on the kind of internal state it is and, in particular, on the aims and hopes it has, and the efforts it makes, vis-à-vis the world” (Slote, 2010, p.18). For instance, recall the example where someone is called to the hospital because her mother is terminally ill. The right action can only be evaluated in the light of more information about the mother’s situation such as ‘quality and duration’ of life as well as ‘future suffering and incapacity’. In responding with benevolent motivation, relying

¹⁰⁰ See (Slote, 2010, pp. 51, 59, 86, 113).

on the facts and information concerning the future suffering and quality of life, one can choose to discontinue life support on the basis of future suffering and terminal illness or appeal to heroic measures to make the mother live more (Slote, 2010, p.30-40). Slote claims that the decision is ‘plausibly derivable from morality as benevolence’ (2010, p.40). Even if we accept that practical wisdom need not be implemented in his theory, what does it mean for the motive of virtue to have aims and hopes?

The aims and hopes that the motive of virtue includes definitely do not consist in the goodness of the motive. For instance, the aim and the hope of benevolence is to help and provide aid to people. The specification of the help is decided within the relevant context, however for Slote it seems like one’s good motive moves one to a benevolent act. I want to refer to the distinction between the natural virtue and virtue proper which includes practical wisdom. Slote’s account does not try to evaluate natural virtue and naturally virtuous motives, yet his good-hearted agent whose choosing an act makes it right resembles naturally virtuous. I should note in advance that I do not try to argue that practical wisdom exhibits a deliberation process which works like a computer algorithm. The best exemplars of practically wise people are thought to be those who act virtuously without deliberating.¹⁰¹ There are examples where instantaneous and quick action is necessary, and failing to respond means failing in virtue. However, as Hursthouse argues as long as we merely focus on these cases as a proof that good-heartedness is enough to act virtuously, we overlook how deliberation or practical wisdom develops through experience (2006, p. 302). For instance, we would expect an adult to instantly leap forward and take a baby out of the bathwater that she slips in. Failing to do so would only be attributed to the wicked but doing so would not grant practical wisdom (Hursthouse, 2006, p.302). My point here is that good-heartedness is not sufficient to act virtuously because motives that are not flee-floating and depend on the aims and hopes and efforts it makes vis-à-vis the world, which requires not only practical wisdom but also wisdom that is wholesome and that unifies virtues. I believe *eudaimonia* accomplishes this. I agree that in everyday life practical wisdom can be taken as redundant in case of good-heartedness or well-intention because immediate perception, apprehension, and act might imply lack of deliberation. Yet, the theory

¹⁰¹ See (Foot, 2002, pp. 10-11) and (Hursthouse, 2006, pp. 300-305)

should be able “to model the decisions of benevolent persons as emanating from good-faith judgements of a specificatory kind” (Russell, 2009, p.82).

But even when the benevolent person recognizes straightaway the thing to do, this is not a leap of intuition but a judgment that can be unpacked into a number of finer background judgments of both specificatory and executive types. Such judgments involve no mysterious intuitive faculty; they are the sorts of ‘good sense’ characteristic of practical intelligence and people who know, in Philippa Foot’s phrase, ‘what’s what’. (Russell, 2009, p. 83)

Slote admits that aims and hopes are important to virtuous motivation, however by rejecting practical wisdom he rejects responsiveness to certain reasons. Yet, virtuous motivation prompts one to think about how to balance concerns. I believe virtuous motivation requires a certain ethical outlook for a theory.

Slote’s account focuses on something very important for eudaimonist virtue ethics: the inner feelings and motives of the individual. Yet, the way he reduces right making features as well as the explanatory primacy of virtue to inner states is problematic. Relying on the intuitive admirability of virtues as a foundational concept makes it hard to explain why virtues are virtues, resulting in inadequacy of explanation for deliberation in the form of balancing concerns. While Swanton’s account establishes at least an alternative to eudaimonist virtue ethics in terms of its systematic analysis of right action with its target-centered understanding of virtue, Slote’s sentimentalist account falls short in many respects despite its merit of highlighting the importance of inner motives, motivations and feelings. Now, I turn to rejoinders to eudaimonist virtue ethics to elaborate the objections to it further to show how theoretical structure of it allows a better account for action-guidance.



6. REJOINDERS TO HURSTHOUSE: THE IMPORTANCE OF PRACTICAL WISDOM

In Chapter 3, I evaluated the account of right action and action-guidance in eudaimonist virtue ethics and provided objections that are particularly directed to it namely the circularity objection, the “right but not virtuous” objection and “virtuous but not right” objection. Among these objections, the ‘right but not virtuous’ objection attracted a lot of attention and generated different responses. Johnson’s version of the “right but not virtuous” objection includes counterexamples such as self-improving and self-controlling actions as well as following advice which is right but not virtuous. Such examples don’t fit Hursthouse’s definition. In order to overcome these counterexamples and to support Hursthouse’s definition, some revisions are required for the formula “a right action is the one that a virtuous person would characteristically perform in a particular situation”. In this chapter, I will evaluate these revisions such as the advice model, the approval model, the decent person model, the decent person’s approval model, and lastly reasons for the virtuous person model. I aim to analyze these revisions to see whether they fare better in responding Johnson’s objections. What becomes evident is the importance and indispensability of practical wisdom in virtue ethics. Therefore, I will first focus on the newer adaptations of the virtuous agent model, and I will argue that in all the revisions, an understanding of right action falls back to the concept of practical wisdom which is the characteristic capacity of the virtuous person. So, if we can understand practical wisdom better, and how to develop it, the ideal of virtuous agency is not as problematic as Johnson’s objection claims. This is because the developmental nature of virtuous agency and practical wisdom already address the issue of “the things that a novice has to do that a virtuous agent would not”. Thus, in the second part of this chapter I will focus on practical wisdom and consequently how the development of practical wisdom sheds light on action-guidance. Herein, I will also explain how practical wisdom is different than mere “cleverness” and argue that practical wisdom makes sense only with the ultimate end that gives its abstract goal and shapes it. I will conclude by showing the importance of

the relation between practical wisdom and *eudaimonia* in this sense before I explore this relationship in the final chapter.

6.1 Revisions to Hursthouse's Account of Right Action

In this section, I will look at the modifications that aim to help Hursthouse's account of right action in the face of Johnson's objection. Johnson's argument concerning actions that are right but not characteristic of the virtuous agent includes self-improvement, self-controlling actions and taking advice. These actions are right actions that should be implemented by those who are not-yet-virtuous-but-trying-to-be. Obviously, self-improvement, and self-controlling actions are not those that a virtuous agent would characteristically perform. In order to respond to Johnson's criticism, there are different strategies that could help Hursthouse's definition of right action. While keeping the virtuous agent as the paradigm and anchor for determining right action, these revisions aim to address self-improving and self-controlling actions and taking advice as right action for novices, or not-yet-virtuous agents. I will look at advice model, approval model, decent person model, decent person's approval model and finally reasons of virtuous person model respectively. I will try to show in this section that all revisions deal with "metaphysical messiness" rather than "epistemic messiness" in the sense that revisions are made to accommodate the objections and to enforce coherence of the theory.¹⁰² Epistemic messiness means that even a theory can prescribe the best, the right choice/action/decision, that does not guarantee that the agents will be able to know what that objective best action is. Metaphysical messiness on the other hand refers to messiness in explanations of the nature of things and their relations. Epistemic messiness still seems to be a problem in these revisions, since decision-making for ordinary agents in the face of real-life messiness may not easily accommodate the definition of right action. My goal is to show that all of the revisions that are made to help Hursthouse's definition bring us back to the concept of the practical wisdom of the virtuous agent; hence practical wisdom has a very important role to play and should be explained to show action-guidance in virtue ethics.

Advice model is implied and acknowledged by a few authors although not all of them are virtue ethicists. Simply, the advice model revision can be captured as below.

¹⁰² I borrowed the terms "epistemic" and "metaphysical messiness" from (Driver, 2006, p. 116).

VRA: An action is right for S in circumstances C if and only if a fully virtuous agent would characteristically advise S to do A in C. (Svensson, 2010, p. 263)

The implications of the advice model can be found in Michael Smith's arguments on practical reasoning. Smith looks at the platitude that states "what it is desirable that we do is what we would desire to do if we were fully rational; that what we have normative reason to do is what we would desire if we were fully rational" (Smith, 1994, p. 150). Similarly, a fully virtuous agent is a fully rational agent who would have the proper normative reasons to act in certain ways. One apparent worry here is that if a novice would take advice from an (at least) more virtuous person, for the advice to be "right" the virtuous agent would have to know all relevant features as well as the novice's character with its strengths and weaknesses. In order to take this into account, the advice model can be reformulated as follows:

An act is right iff a virtuous person who was fully informed about the agent and the agent's circumstances would advise performing the act, if the agent were to consult the person about what to do in the situation. (Conee, 2006, p. 179)

Conee gives a counterexample to this formulation though. A virtuous agent could (possibly) advise doing the wrong thing preempting that the consulting individual is a stubborn and rebellious person, and he would do the opposite of the advice. In order to correct this then, Conee specifies the advice model as follows:

An act is right iff a virtuous person who was fully informed about the agent and the agent's circumstances would advise performing the act, if the agent were to consult the person about what to do in the situation and the virtuous person answered honestly. (2006, p. 179)

So, the advice of a fully informed virtuous person (when he advises what he really thinks and not strategically in order to have the rebellious novice to act certain ways) would be the right thing to do. An advice model in this form can accommodate Johnson's objections. For the cases in which a virtuous person would not find herself in, the right thing to do would be what a fully virtuous person would advise a novice, although she herself would not get into such a problem in the first place or would not need to self-monitor or improve. For instance, a fully virtuous person would not make fun of a physical trait of his friend to hurt him, and would not need to apologize for such behavior. Yet, right thing to do for a non-virtuous person who already put herself in a situation as such would be to apologize, and a fully virtuous person would advise her to apologize for her behavior. However,

Morally virtuous agent might think that he or she ought not to give another person advice about certain matters, perhaps because it would be better for the other person to figure things out for him or herself, or for other reasons. (Harman, 2001, p. 121)

This is a fair worry. Even though the best of us sometimes ask for advice from friends and people whom we think morally wise, (1) it is not practical to ask for advice for everyday mundane things that we are morally indecisive about, and (2) there are very personal decisions that one needs to make on her own as Harman points out. Yet, I agree with Svensson that the advice model escapes this worry because the definition does not require an ‘actual virtuous agent’ and ‘actual advice taking’ in all cases (2010, p. 264). The definition is like an equivalence claim; the right thing to do is the same thing as what a fully virtuous person would advise to do.

Another objection to the advice model is that if we add “full information” to the conception of complete virtue then the theory becomes a form of ideal observer theory¹⁰³; and as such it is not a new alternative to others (Johnson, 2003, p. 828). Johnson argues,

As Aristotle himself saw, there is simply no vice in a bare lack of information (unless, of course, one is responsible for the lack). Of course, it could be added to complete virtue, but then the view collapses into a version of an ideal observer view. The virtue element would no longer be doing work in the account beyond providing some general goodwill that is already present in ideal observer views in the form of universal benevolence. (2003, p. 828)

Johnson treats the fully virtuous agent as the ideal observer who has goodwill in the form of universal benevolence, yet the fully virtuous agent is not only concerned with universal benevolence and her character embodies many other virtues besides practical wisdom. Thus, even though it might look as if the advice model approximates the ideal observer view, it is different in the sense that the conception of the fully virtuous agent is different than the ideal observer (Svensson, 2010, p. 264).

I believe that the advice model remedies the problems that Hursthouse’s definition faces. It answers Johnson’s objections and clears the counterexamples involving the self-improving and self-monitoring actions that a virtuous person would not characteristically perform, yet advise others if they lack full virtue. The next model is very similar to the advice model, but it avoids the counterexample of advice for

¹⁰³ Ideal observer theory states that moral judgments are judgements of ideal observers who have all the facts that are relevant to the judgments, who is not biased and is immune to logical-fallacy and wrong inference (Jollimore, 2020). For the representative account, see (Firth, 1952).

rebellious advisees or advice that falls short of the best thing to do if given in accordance with the flaws of advisees. Consider Watson's example. Imagine a squash player who cannot help but get frustrated at losing and all he wants to do is to smash his opponent's face (Watson, 1975, p. 210). The fully virtuous person in that situation would not get frustrated; she would be calm, and she would shake her opponent's hand and congratulate them if she lost the game. Hypothetically a fully rational version of the angry squash player would advise himself to do the same as the virtuous person (Smith, 1994, p. 154). Yet, the right thing for him to do in this situation is probably not what the virtuous person would do (shake opponent's hand) because "if he tried he would end up smashing his opponent in the face with his racquet" (Das, 2015, p. 338). Thus, it might be argued that the advice model fails in these kind of cases (Das, 2015, p.338) because the advice given to a squash player with anger management issues wouldn't serve the purpose, instead it would push the angry player to a situation whereby he does something harmful. I am not fully convinced that this is a serious problem for advice model, since if the fully virtuous person knew about the character flows of the squash player, her advice would be to walk away and calm down in the locker room. However, let us embrace this objection and canvas the approval model to overcome it.

The approval model holds that an action is right if and only if a fully virtuous person would approve of it. Svensson's formulization is as below.

An Action is right for S in circumstance C if and only if a fully virtuous agent would characteristically approve of S's doing A in C. (Svensson, 2010, p. 265).

A version of this model is originally defended by Jason Kawall. Kawall offers a kind of ideal observer approach where the definition of right action relies on the fully informed and unimpaired ideal virtuous observer. He says,

An action is right for an agent in a given set of circumstances iff an unimpaired, fully-informed virtuous observer would deem the action to be right. (Kawall, 2002, p. 208)

There are two different interpretations of Kawall's definition as I understand it. For instance, Das argues that a fully-informed and unimpaired virtuous agent knowing that Ed is incapable of being calm after the loss would not advise him to shake his opponent's hand yet would approve of this act (even though Ed would not/cannot do it) (Das, 2015, p. 338). So, in this instance what a fully virtuous person would actually approve is to be calm and congratulate the opponent, thus she would approve the best

action. The other interpretation is that since Ed is incapable of congratulating his opponent upon his defeat and, since the fully virtuous person knows this, would approve him avoiding contact and leaving the court (which is the second-best action in Ed's case). In both of these instances the best action is shaking the opponent's hand, and that is what a fully virtuous person would herself do. Yet, walking away in Ed's case would be the right thing to do if not the best thing. So, as we can see that the approval model invites other worries such as the vagueness of differentiation between right, permissible, and supererogatory (Svensson, 2010, p. 265).¹⁰⁴ If we assume that the fully virtuous person would only approve the best (or a best) action, then this revision would not really fare well in the face of Johnson's objections. If we assume that the virtuous person would approve the best action in the circumstances for the person in question, then it answers Johnson's objections, but fails to distinguish right from permissible and supererogatory. Next revision basically lowers the threshold so that it solves the above mentioned problem concerning the distinction between right, permissible, supererogatory.¹⁰⁵

In the decent person model, the formulization of rightness is shaped by prohibitions of vicious behavior. In this sense, a decent person's steering away from vicious actions sets the standard for the morally right action. The influence of this model can be found in Urmson's "Saints and Heroes" (1958) whereby he introduces the concept of supererogation which is applied to saintly and heroic actions that are beyond duty and obligation. If we take the fully virtuous person to exemplify a saint or a hero, then what the fully virtuous would do, would advise, and would approve will include (if not exclusively) supererogatory actions that are demanded as an obligation by the above analyzed definitions.¹⁰⁶ I don't hold that the fully virtuous person characteristically performs solely supererogatory actions, and I think this interpretation is extreme. Some actions that virtuous person characteristically performs are merely right (permissible or obligatory) whereas some other actions are supererogatory. However, there will be cases in which what a virtuous person would do, advise or approve doing would be supererogatory. And there is consensus that omission of supererogatory actions cannot be wrongdoing. Imagine a doctor who

¹⁰⁴ Svensson also mentions the problem of cases which virtuous person is indifferent to (2010). I don't think this is an important worry because the approval of virtuous person only applies to morally relevant issues, not lunch preferences.

¹⁰⁵ I discuss supererogatory below.

¹⁰⁶ Brännmark defends this view (2006, p. 596).

travels overseas to Wuhan to help health workers there to treat Covid-19 cases at the expense of risking his own life. His action would be deemed praiseworthy and admirable, yet we would not expect other doctors to exemplify this kind of heroic attitude, and we would see this type of action optional, rather than obligatory. With this concern in mind, the account of right action can be revised as below in order to avoid the worry about supererogatory actions.

An action is wrong iff it is one that no decent person would characteristically (i.e., acting in character) do in the circumstances (Brännmark, 2006, p. 596).¹⁰⁷

Thus, the decent person model lowers the threshold of right action to actions that are allowed in virtue of not being wrong. Another implication of the decent person model is that an action is obligatory if ‘not performing’ it would be vicious (Brännmark, 2006, p. 596). In this sense, the supererogatory actions are accounted for; they are permissible, but not obligatory. I believe that the initial and essential struggle with the decent person model is the question of who would qualify as a decent person and what would justify taking decent people as moral exemplars. (Kawall, 2009, p. 182). We can define the decent person as simply non-vicious as Brännmark does, and in this form, the decent person model would suffice as an account of right action in the face of Johnson’s objection. Yet again, this definition would invite other worries. Svensson introduces further objections to the decent person model. The first one can be stated as follows: “if someone has landed himself in circumstances that no decent person could be in, then whatever the person does will count as wrong” (2010, p.267). He gives Hursthouse’s example whereby a man induces two women, A and B, to bear his children convincing both that he intends to marry them, although in reality he can only support one child fully. A has another suitor who happens to happily support and raise her child with her. So, what the Casanova ought to do in this case is to marry B. However, Svensson argues that we cannot define this action as right with reference to what a decent person would do because no decent person (just as fully virtuous person) would create a situation as such, so the prior wrongdoing of convincing two women with false hope is outside of the limits of decency (2010, p. 267). The second objection is that the definition spares no room for obligation to aspire towards moral improvement (Svensson, 2010, p. 267). He argues that decent people do not

¹⁰⁷ The decent person definition can also be formulized in the positive way as “an action is right for S in circumstances C if and only if a decent person would characteristically do A in C” (Svensson, 2010, p. 266).

necessarily aim to improve their character, or in other word it is not a characteristic feature of non-vicious people to aspire to be better. Although one might argue that the decent person model intentionally avoids the perfectionism in virtue ethics for the better, Svensson argues that it is against our simple intuition that “people are at least *pro tanto* obliged to try to improve their characters in different respects” (2010, p. 267). From the perspective of eudaimonist virtue ethics, the issue of moral improvement is of great importance. Nevertheless, I don’t find this objection convincing because the decent person paradigm only sets the limit for the right action; the definition does not entail that moral improvement is necessarily out of a decent person’s agenda. On the contrary, I think it is very reasonable that a decent person would be somewhat committed to improve her character. The decent person model saves Hursthouse’s definition from Johnson’s objections in the sense that decent people perform self-controlling actions, take advice when needed and performs those actions that can have self-improving aspects (contrary to Svensson’s argument). For instance, it is very imaginable that a decent person who is shopaholic would want to improve her unthrifty character. I assume that decent people could fall short of some virtues yet have some kind of awareness of this and feel distress about the lack of a desired good trait. Again, I think the decent person model remedies Johnson’s objections yet, by lowering the threshold, misses the important insights that virtue ethics can provide.

In the revision of the reasons of the virtuous agent model, I want to focus on Valerie Tiberius’s qualified agent definition with an emphasis on reasons. I find this version of the revision most plausible, yet with some reservations. Let us have a look at Tiberius’s definition first.

An action is right for S in circumstances C iff it is the action in accordance with the reasons that would guide the action of a completely virtuous person acting in C. (Tiberius, 2006, p. 248)

Tiberius focuses on the reasons that would guide a virtuous agent rather than the characteristic behavior of the virtuous person. Reasons can be thought of as “maxims of action” or “subjective principles of the will” (Tiberius, 2006, p. 248). Although “maxims of action” and “subjective principles of the will” are Kant’s terms, Tiberius interprets the reasons of the virtuous person in a virtue ethical fashion by characterizing the concept of “maxims of action” or “reasons that guide action” with

virtue traits and human flourishing (Tiberius, 2006, p. 248).¹⁰⁸ I will further develop this idea, but before let us look at how she defends her revision of the definition against Johnson's objections.

First, let us consider self-improving actions. Consider a habitual liar who is advised to write down the lies to remind himself the value of truth telling. Unlike for the fully virtuous person who does not need these kinds of self-improving actions, writing down the lies is the right thing to do for the habitual liar. Tiberius argues that the reasons that guide fully virtuous person can be applied to self-improving actions. The basic maxim that a person with the virtue of honesty follows is this:

For the sake of fostering good communication and treating others with respect, tell the truth in C, even when doing so is not in your interest, unless there is some more important moral consideration that renders telling the truth in C the wrong thing to do. (Tiberius, 2006, p. 251)

So, fully virtuous person tells the truth and exhibits honesty in her endeavors with ease considering the reasons above, and the novice, following the same reasons might act differently yet rightly for his specific circumstances. Thus, self-improving actions are accounted for in Tiberius's definition. I think Tiberius has a very good point against Johnson's criticism regarding the lack of concern for self-improving actions. She argues that it would be odd if virtue ethics cannot accommodate moral improvement, given that it deals with moral development remarkably more than any other moral theory (Tiberius, 2006, p.254). She defends the view that the ideally virtuous person is someone who is committed to self-improvement or at best upkeep of her character (Tiberius, 2006, p.253). So, the reasons that guide the virtuous person would be action-guiding for those in different circumstances from those of the virtuous agent. Thus, the habitual liar, although he cannot be honest without effort, would be acting in accordance with the reasons that guide a virtuous agent ("lying is disrespectful, shameful, weak, bad for social functioning, and so on" (Tiberius, 2006, p.255) when he writes down his lies to better his mendacious character.

Very similar to self-improving actions, self-controlling actions can be accounted for the reasons of the virtuous person. Consider the philanderer who finds it difficult to be faithful to his partner. The right thing for him to do (unlike the virtuous agent) would

¹⁰⁸ Of course, subsuming virtuous action under principles will be rejected by some philosophers with regard to anti-codifiable character that virtue ethics are taken to be. For this view see (Dancy, 1993) and (Sher, 1998).

be to avoid social interactions whereby alcohol is involved with attractive people.¹⁰⁹ Hence, for the philanderer, controlling his tendencies is “to act in accordance with reasons of fidelity by removing the options for infidelity” (Tiberius, 2006, p.256). It could be the best that our philanderer could do; yet, the proper virtue requires performing, and we cannot count one to be honest and faithful if he only avoids circumstances whereby, he will exhibit vicious behavior.¹¹⁰

As a response to the counterexample of taking advice, Tiberius argues that a novice who does not know what reasons the situation requires, or who is simply incapable of recognizing the morally salient feature of a situation is well expected to ask for guidance from a more virtuous person. The reasons that the virtuous person will provide to the novice will be the reasons of the relevant virtues (kindness, generosity, courage, honesty). She says,

[A]n imperfectly virtuous person who asks for guidance may be acting in accordance with a maxim of honesty, generosity or the like, because given her ignorance about what reasons require, asking for guidance is the best way to act in accordance with them. (Tiberius, 2006, 256)

For the novice’s situation, actions that accord with the reasons of virtues still are not as perfect as the actions of fully virtuous person. Yet, the best means to become honest for the habitual liar is to write down his lies, and in this form his action is still for the same reasons of the virtuous agent (Tiberius, 2006, p.257).

[W]riting down your lies is not a way of performing the action of ‘not lying’, nor is it a way of following the rule ‘don’t lie’. It is, however, a way of acting for the sake of the reasons for which the virtuous person does not lie in a context in which reasons to improve one’s character are also salient. (Tiberius, 2006, p.257)

Tiberius’s account is in a position to respond to Johnson’s objections since it can accommodate self-improving actions. However, her account can be accused of abandoning virtue-based considerations for reason-based ones. Thus, if it could be argued that maxims and reasons that are thought to be guiding, then it is possible to accept the definition on Kantian grounds (Tiberius, 2006, p.258). Against this worry, Tiberius argues that her account can be defended as consistent with virtue ethics because the reasons of the virtuous cannot be defined without reference to

¹⁰⁹ For Johnson’s example see (2003, pp. 820-822)

¹¹⁰ I thank Geoff Bove for reminding me this point.

characterizations of virtuous people (2006, p.259). The same line of argument is given by John McDowell in “Virtue and Reason” (2007). Simply, the reasons are taken to be closely connected to values and emotional make-up of the virtuous person. The benevolent agent would hold reasons to value the needs of others and help without abasing doing so (McDowell, 2007, p.260). An honest person would not lie because he would value the truth and social trust, and he would still care about self-improvement. He would not do something so base, yet still he would try to maintain the harmony between his reasons and his emotions. So, for instance if he overcomes the temptation to pass by and instead picks up a litter (not thrown by him) from the stairs, his reasons for being benevolent, or environmentally responsible also involve the reasons for the self-improvement.

The accounts that take a qualified agent to be the anchor of the right action can be proliferated. The revision can be a combination of advice, approval, disapproval, and the reasons of a fully virtuous or a decent person. Yet, I don’t think it is necessary to instantiate all cases, because in all these revisions there is one concept that has to be appealed to: practical wisdom. In all of these accounts, advice or approval of the virtuous person, reasons that guide virtuous person (and many more cases that can be created such as the approval of the decent person etc.) imply a certain kind of judgment that is characteristic of the fully virtuous (or decent) person. I believe that an account of right action can still be defended as it is in Hursthouse, yet decision-making procedures or the guidance of non-virtuous people could be addressed better if we could explain the distinctive capacity of practical wisdom and how it develops. Thus, in the next section I will look at what practical wisdom is and how virtuous person develops and employs it.

6.2 Practical Wisdom (*Phronesis*): A Guide to Virtuous Living

In the revisions discussed above, the problems that Johnson described concerning non-virtuous agents’ self-improving, self-monitoring and advice following actions are addressed. As I suggested from the very beginning, an account of right action and decision-making procedures need different discussions, and this is same for other moral theories. As I argued before, eudaimonistic virtue ethics can provide an account of right action as defined in terms of the characteristic actions of a virtuous agent. The qualified-agent model specifies the right action on the basis of the persona of the fully

virtuous person as a whole. Yet, individuals at their specific level of development might need to perform a different set of “right” actions than the fully virtuous would. These remedial actions can be counted as what ought to be done and right to perform in that sense, but they are not “the central cases of excellent action” (Russell, 2008, p. 308). So, the qualified-agent model defines the right action, but when it comes to guiding the actions of fools¹¹¹ virtue ethics still has resources to explain how we fools can become more virtuous. As we have seen in Hursthouse’s definition as well as in the revisions, practical wisdom attains a great importance if we are to develop our character and consistently act in a virtuous manner. Thus, in this part I will focus on the unique capacity of practical wisdom in order to show how practical wisdom impacts virtuous deliberation.

Practical wisdom is one of the most difficult concepts to explicate in virtue ethics. As the virtue of deliberation or choice-making, it seems like it is not always put into use consciously; it comes very naturally and easily to the virtuous agent, whereas it is expected to be employed like a mathematical problem by a novice. It is a capacity that is used in a particular moment in an instance, yet it is also a wisdom that surpasses these momentary applications and is imprinted as blue print of virtuous agency (Hursthouse, 2006, p. 302).

In other words, (V) helps us to identify right actions; it asserts that what all right actions have in common is that they are the kinds of action that virtuous agents characteristically perform. The question of what makes a particular action right will have to be answered by referring to the virtuous person’s reasons for performing the action. But Aristotelian virtue ethicists don’t think it is possible to provide a useful summary of the virtuous person’s reasons, or a set of right-making features that can be presented in the form of a set of rules or principles: there is no substitute for practical wisdom. (Van Zyl, 2019, p. 102)

So, if we can actually have a good understanding of how practical wisdom works, or how we can improve it, then we can infer from this understanding what ways non-virtuous agents should act to become more virtuous. In order to have a better understanding of the concept, first I want to focus on Aristotle’s understanding of it because the contemporary eudaimonist tradition more or less employs a very similar one.

¹¹¹ The term “fool” is used especially by the stoics to highlight the differences between the wise man (or sage) and the rest. Fool is not always vicious, and can strive to become virtuous, yet called fools in lacking the true wisdom (Stephens, 2020).

Aristotle's fully virtuous person has practical wisdom which is the "true state involving reason, concerned with action in relation to human goods" (*NE*, 1140b23-24). While scientific knowledge consists of rational, demonstrable, universal and necessary suppositions, practical wisdom is concerned with indeterminate course of actions concerning morality. Consider the quotation below to see what is meant by "indeterminate".

Practical wisdom, on the other hand, is concerned with human affairs, namely, with what we can deliberate about. For deliberating well, we say, is the characteristic activity of the practically wise person above all; but no one deliberates about what cannot be otherwise, or about what has no goal that consists in a good achievable in action. The person unqualifiedly good at deliberation is the one who tends to aim, in accordance with his calculation, at the best of the goods for a human being that are achievable in action. (*NE*, VI, 7, 1141b11-18)

Aristotle refers to the complexity in human affairs obviously. Moreover, he also implies that circumstances, non-ideal situations, one's individual strength or weakness about something, whether the situation includes resolvable or irresolvable dilemma are relevant for deliberating well. The practically wise person is the one who formulate plans towards the good, and also specifies and execute aims of relevant virtues (Urmson, 1991, pp. 81-83).

Because the plan is in the form of "be benevolent and kind" and in this sense it is indeterminate, it might take so many forms of execution. For instance, imagine a practically wise person who happened to be on a street where a car accident occurs. The virtue of benevolence would require helping those in need. The practically wise person is the one who could specify the particulars and execute the virtue of benevolence. Whether this virtuous person knows how to apply first aid, if so, whether she is experienced enough to intervene, the practically wise person would be aware of her limits and strengths, and she would not intervene to give CPR if she only watched CPR videos on Youtube. Aristotle argues about the importance of particulars and compares it with the knowledge of universals as below.

Nor is practical wisdom concerned only with universals. An understanding of particulars is also required, since it is practical, and action is concerned with particulars. This is why some without knowledge - especially those with experience - are more effective in action than those with it. For if someone knew that light meats are digestible and wholesome, but did not know which kinds are light, he would not produce health; rather, the person who knows that chicken is wholesome will be better at producing health. And since practical wisdom is practical, one

needs both kinds of knowledge, but especially the particular kind. Here too, however, there must be some master science (*NE*, 1141b11-28)

So, the deliberation of the practically wise person consists of rightly judging and appreciating the particulars and acting accordingly rather than focusing on abstract reasoning or theoretical knowledge. Though knowledge of the good is important for its employment (which will be the subject of Chapter 7), knowing how to apply the relevant virtues in particular circumstances is the essential concern of practical wisdom. This knowing-how to act, which is preceded by a certain perception, or sensitivity to relevant features takes time; it takes experience and practice. This is what the ancients called habituation.¹¹²

The reason is that practical wisdom is concerned also with particular facts, and particulars come to be known from experience; and a young person is not experienced, since experience takes a long time to produce (*NE*, 1142a19-22)

The necessity of experience does not mean accomplishing the items in a checklist. The knowledge that one gains through experience is not like a chip to get to a threshold.

[I]t is dynamic knowledge that relates to the person's character. It is not merely an accumulation of knowledge, but a learning from experience that brings to bear previous insights to future actions and shapes who the person becomes. As such, it is self-correcting and self-reflective, and it is not knowledge that merely directs action, but knowledge that develops and is protected and maintained by good character. (Athanassoulis, 2018, p. 421)

Its use works same for both naturally virtuous and fully virtuous agents. However, there is a fine and essential line between the two. The naturally virtuous person has good intentions (a good heart) but is naïve in her choosing since she does not fully incorporate the right reasons with her good intentions, and she is naïve in self-reflection and self-correction since her heart is in the right place. On the other hand, the fully virtuous person while having the same goal also has knowledge to the extent that reasons and intentions are well placed. Proper development of virtue requires the cultivation of practical wisdom that the naturally virtuous agent lacks (Hursthouse, 2001, pp. 104-107). How is practical wisdom cultivated? How can one develop this capacity?

Aristotle famously stresses the importance of upbringing for being virtuous. His discussion highlights the pivotal role of habituation of good habits before coming to

¹¹² See also (Hursthouse, 2001, p. 59) and (Athanassoulis, 2018, p. 419)

understand the reasons why (*NE*, II, 1103b1-3). Aristotle refers to good upbringing from childhood, I agree on the effect on good upbringing in terms of creating awareness and sensibilities for morally relevant things. It could be also observed in the opposite examples whereby someone is raised to be racist, and when he wants to eradicate those to cultivate virtuous attitudes instead, it would take more time and effort to fix the deformed sensitivities. Yet, this does not mean that people with bad upbringing cannot improve virtuous character later. Aristotle argues that habituation and experience must be established in the first place in order to reflect on more general and abstract teachings of morality (*NE*, I. 3. 1095a1-14)¹¹³

Argument and teaching, presumably, are not powerful in every case, but the soul of the student must be prepared beforehand in its habits, with a view to its enjoying and hating in a noble way, like soil that is to nourish seed. (*NE*, X, 9, 1179b26-29)

Aristotle thinks that habituation is like preparing the soil for the seed to nourish. Thus, although the ultimate end is in the seed, the habituation which includes different levels of developmental stages are necessary to nourish the seed. In this idea we can find answer to Johnson's objection concerning actions that are not characteristic of fully virtuous yet still necessary to get there. I believe the action-guidance that virtue ethics generates lies in this developmental understanding of virtue and the implications can be found in Aristotle.

Practicing certain habits regularly like Johnson's liar writing down his lies and reminding himself the value of truth is a step to habituate honesty successfully. Self-correcting and self-improving actions require first the belief in the value of virtuous actions, and a commitment to be "more" virtuous, but the process of habituation and regular practice is a "gradual, cohesive process of development of both emotions and reason, such that one illuminates, guides and supports the other and neither reason nor habit dominates." (Athanasoulis, 2018, p. 421)¹¹⁴

According to one interpretation, habituation can be explained as "goal-dependent automaticity". Snow calls this the "folk" approach because it focuses on the pathways that the folk follow to acquire virtue through imitating fully virtuous people, following their advice, or acquiring habits that aim to attain virtue-relevant targets (Snow, 2016,

¹¹³ See also Aristotle, *NE*, I, 4, 1095b3-10 and X, 9, 1179b 23-29. Aristotle argues about the importance of habituation with the background of old discussion about whether virtue is from nature, habit or teaching.

¹¹⁴ This type of cohesive development is defended also by (Sherman, 1989) and (Vasilou, 1996).

p. 136). However, virtue acquisition or development is limited in this approach, and falls short of the eudaimonistic conception of virtue. Practicing certain habits in this interpretation still involves a regularity in dispositional responses, appropriate motivation, a form of practical reason (Snow, 2016, p. 136). However, acquisition of virtue is not a mindless activity, and for virtue proper honesty, benevolence, generosity should be internalized.

The skill model has a better account to address how virtues are internalized. The skill analogy is widely recognized and provides a developmental virtue ethics. The intellectual evaluation of skill similar to virtue can be found in Plato, and Aristotle, yet especially Aristotle (and Thomas Aquinas following him) underlines an important difference despite their similarities. The main difference is that the practical wisdom that is found in every virtue is concerned with the whole life of humans, yet skill is a task for a particular matter (Annas, 1995). The person who is an expert in stone carving is not expected to be good at playing the piano, or long jumping. However, the person with practical wisdom is expected to act well overall if not perfectly in all cases. I believe the skill analogy is the best viable option to see what is needed to acquire virtue (like skill) and develop to the point of expertise. This way of epistemic achievement necessary for skills can shed light on epistemic achievement that practical wisdom requires. Thus, collaboration with developmental psychology will be of help further. As for now, let us look at how the acquisition of skill takes place.

Similar to practical skills, acquiring virtue requires “the need to learn” and “the drive to aspire”. As opposed to the folk approach, virtue acquisition is intelligent rather than mindless; virtues -like skills- require conscious deliberation and mindful implementation, thus they are not rote (Annas, 2011, pp. 13-14). For, learning not only involves following your teachers and role models as well as their teachings but also practicing the skill for yourself. Because that cultivating virtue is like acquiring skills, Aristotle does not argue for a special method for becoming more virtuous, since he thinks that the process of becoming virtuous, or acquiring virtues is like anything we do to get better at something: through training and practice (Russell, 2015, p. 18) Learning is never a mere copying of the teacher’s practice; one learns it for herself. For instance, when learning Italian, we emulate the teacher in terms of correct understanding of Italian grammar, vocabulary and syntax. Yet, after time and effort, when we can speak Italian (when we master the skill), our use of it or practicing is not

dependent on the teacher anymore (Annas, 2008, p. 23) (Annas, 2011, pp. 17-18). Similarly, the student of virtue will need to first emulate virtues and then come to a point where articulate the reasons for herself and become honest by performing honest actions, and just by performing just actions (Aristotle, *NE*, 1103a32-b2).

The skill model also finds support in empirical research on the acquisition of practical wisdom. Russell (2015) discusses the findings of varying socio-cognitive models of psychology on distinctive features of experts compared to novices in order to show how practical wisdom is similar to expert skills.¹¹⁵ For instance, expert chess players differ from novices not with their computational or memorization skills but with their attunement to strategically relevant moves (Russell, 2015, 33-34).¹¹⁶ Similarly, experts radiologist are more accurate in recognizing anomalies in X-rays not because they have a better memorization skills but because they are better at ruling out the irrelevant things and focus on the disease-relevant features (Russell, 2015, 34).¹¹⁷ In all of these areas of expertise, the attribute is acquired similarly thorough habituation and practice reinforced by environmental feedback. Consider the quotation below.

Such an isomorphism between personality and skill would cast light on the cultivation of virtue: becoming virtuous, like becoming skilled, is a matter of having certain goals and values in terms of which to focus one's attention on one's environment; it is a matter of learning how to focus that attention effectively so as to extract information salient to those goals and values; and it is also a matter of learning enough about how the world works to process that information so as to formulate intelligent plans and adjust one's behavior accordingly. In other words, having a virtue, just like having a skill, means both getting the goal right and getting things right with respect to that goal, not by chance but in accordance with an entrenched personal attribute. (Russell, 2015, p.35).

If human beings can master a skill whose end is the ability to discern the relevant features of a situation, through the similar habituation and practice, virtue and practical wisdom can be developed.

Athanassoulis argues that based on this kind of model of skill (and virtue) cultivation, we don't really need the ideal of virtuous agent, instead "all we need are instances of virtue" (2018, p. 423). I agree with her on this point with a reservation. For, the action-guidance that virtue ethics is capable of can be executed simply by cultivating virtues

¹¹⁵ For the empirical studies that Russell uses see (Narvaez & Lapsley, 2005), (Chase & Simon, 1973) (Myles-Worsley, Johnston, & Simons, 1988)

¹¹⁶ See (Chase & Simon, 1973)

¹¹⁷ See (Myles-Worsley, Johnston, & Simons, 1988)

this way and following v-rules such as “be kind”, “don’t be selfish”, “be generous”, “don’t be deceitful” etc. However, I think that the virtuous agent is still necessary for virtue ethics because the fully virtuous agent is a short-cut who employs practical wisdom that is deliberating with respect to good overall understanding of what is worthwhile in life. Moreover, virtuous person provides the particulars, the exemplary actions; hence provide the ideal to emulate. This is where skill and practical wisdom (or virtue) diverge as well as the clever and the virtuous person do. Skill or expertise do require goal-directed consistency and in this sense, it could target isolated goals irrelevant to living well, but practical wisdom is a type of know-how that unifies the virtues around the concept of living well.

Practical wisdom requires an insight into human life that is not required by any skill, and this insight in turn requires reflection of a sort not required by any skill. Wisdom is a matter of knowing how to conduct oneself that concerns human life considered generally: knowing what kind of life is worth living, and this knowledge is a product of a special sort of reflection. (Hacker-Wright, 2015, p. 985)

In order to see the importance of “the goal” or “end”, let us have a look at the difference between clever and practically wise person. The fully virtuous and the clever person differ in their possession of practical wisdom.¹¹⁸ While a fully virtuous person’s possession of practical wisdom extends to longer periods of time, the clever person’s use is limited to instances for wrong reasons. Although they may share the method in one instance for example saving a drowning child, they differ in terms of their aim.¹¹⁹

And once we recognize the fact that the *phronimos* and some of the wicked may share this perceptual capacity, we should find it unproblematic that there are other sorts of ‘non-moral’ details that experience will enable the *phronimos* to perceive which the inexperienced fail to perceive, and thereby blunder. (Hursthouse, 2006, pp. 299-300)

Hursthouse’s point herein is that the *phronimos* and the wicked might share merely technical aspects of the capacity for deliberation. Cleverness seems to be included in practical wisdom, and as Hursthouse argues in this mundane, worldly way that practical wisdom includes non-moral and sort of ‘technical’ expertise which could as

¹¹⁸ Some argue that *phronesis* is the same as cleverness if the cleverness is espoused with worthwhile goals. See (Bostock D. , 2000, p. 89) and (Natali, 2001, p. 53). Yet, I hold that this conception of practical wisdom is deficient because *phronesis* necessarily includes a conception of the human good, and planning in a broader sense about the ends (or end), whereas cleverness can be found without *phronesis*. See (Urmson, 1991, p. 82f) for this point.

¹¹⁹ Ramon Das’ example whereby a man saves a drowning kid to impress the mother in order to sleep with her. He argues saving the child is right thing to do although his motives do not match the act (2003, pp. 326-327).

well be employed by a wicked person (Hursthouse, 2006, p.305). The idea that the distinctive feature of the *phronimos* also consists of her deliberation directed to the right end in Hursthouse. She contends that “the ways in which maturing virtue will shape the experience gained, and thereby expertise” (Hursthouse, 2006, p.305). That is to say, only when one is committed to living virtuously, will one take lessons from experience be it one’s own failure, or a fictive character’s achievements etc. She argues that the naturally virtuous, non-virtuous and fully virtuous would be struck differently by the same stories concerning “how someone achieved a great deed, or what made them fail and whether, thinking about it, they can see a way in which they could have succeeded” (Hursthouse, 2006, p.306). In her account the *phronimos* needs to have acquired the worldly wisdom (what she means by mundane in her title) regarding ‘knowledge of mankind’ (Hursthouse, 2006, p.307). The worldly experience¹²⁰ that will help us gain comprehension, perception and capacity for effective deliberation is important for Hursthouse’s *phronimos*. While I don’t deny the importance of experience, I believe that the comparison between clever versus *phronimos* or (even naturally virtuous versus *phronimos*) make it clear that the ultimate end is needed at least for the theory. We might find academically uneducated yet reflective and virtuous villagers who could exemplify the paradigm of the *phronimos*. While I spare this possibility, I think it is very rare.

The *phronimos* has to be clever in the sense that she should be able to find means to acquire appropriate ends, yet the most important part for practical wisdom is the correct conception of what is worthwhile. For instance, imagine a comparison of Victor who is fully virtuous with Connor who is not (Van Zyl, 2019, pp. 78-80). Victor is excited to see a movie, yet on his way to the theatre he comes across an old friend. His friend is robbed of all her belongings and pretty upset. Victor stays with his friend because it is the right thing to do since she needs help. Moreover, he stays without any feelings of resentment or annoyance and also knows that sympathy and concern are the appropriate feelings to have. On the other hand, Connor perceives that she needs help, and he has the practical skills to help (locating the nearest police station, canceling the credit cards and providing emotional support), yet he calls a friend whom he knows to be available and he goes to his movie instead (Van Zyl, 2019, p.80). So, the *phronimos*’ ability does not reside in his calculation of the greatest utility, but his

¹²⁰ Hursthouse embraces Quarles’s ‘wisely worldly, not worldly wise’ for the *phronimos* (2006, p.307).

conception of what is more valuable and the idea that it is better for him to pursue such ends rather than others. Probably Connor in this example is better at maximizing the overall welfare by calling another friend who could help the robbed friend and watching the movie he was looking forward to. For the *phronimos*, being kind and being generous requires him to stay with his friend (happily), he has the knowledge of what is good and worthwhile.

Practical wisdom makes the agent flexible enough to apply her virtue to differing contexts and reliable enough to exhibit the same virtue (maybe expressed in different actions) across similar contexts. As Swanton does, it is possible to profile virtues separately and even in isolation so as to define the targets of each to create an account of right action. The importance of taking the *phronimos* to define right action lies in the wholeness of her character with practical and cognitive abilities as well as the emotional make up that establishes her character. Practical wisdom in virtuous agency plays an indispensable role in explaining why right action is right. Operating in each virtue, practical wisdom unifies the virtues and connects reasons under the ultimate end.

It takes *phronesis*, that is, to grasp connectivity between considerations as belonging to virtue reasons of a certain species, as happens in specificatory deliberation, and the same holds true at the level of a genus of virtue reasons: it takes *phronesis* to grasp that a commitment to be responsive to one species of reasons is also a commitment to another species of reasons. Simply put, then, where there is connectivity there must be *phronesis*. Therefore, a cardinal virtue, and each exercise of that cardinal virtue, requires *phronesis*. Since cardinality is indispensable for virtue ethics, so too is *phronesis*. (Railton, 1986, p. 205)

It might be argued though that there is enough evidence that human behavior depends on so many situational variables from emotions, traffic, loneliness to being hungry (Ross & Nisbett, 1991, Ch1-2). Thus, according to this observation human behavior is not always responsive to reasons and practical wisdom cannot be always employed against this evidence. However, I believe this kind of argument does not prove that the ideal of virtuous person, or the concept of practical wisdom are fatally unhelpful. Here is why:

Skill, no less than virtue, involves responding to reasons to do some things and not others, and yet people do acquire the skills of driving a car, building a wall, playing chess, diagnosing a patient. When it comes to skill, we know already that developing personal excellence in

responsiveness to reasons to act is a path for improvement that human psychology makes available. (Russell, 2018, p. 437)

Of course, acquiring virtue or becoming virtuous are more complicated than acquiring a skill. For, life does not consist only of regularities, and learning environments affect us in varying ways. Yet, it is still possible to improve our characters even though it could be difficult, slow and very messy. I believe that the importance of the ultimate end lies also in the fact that turning your gaze upon the end to be virtuous motivates one to be better, at least a little better.

I defend the view that *phronesis* as being the deliberation medium or ability to reason about practical matters is tied to the aims one has. Agents who have their aim right are most likely to deliberate well. Agents who don't have aims, or have wrong goals are most likely not to deliberate well even if their deliberation is clever. Practical wisdom involves the knowledge about what is good, worthwhile, important, valuable or trivial. The knowledge of this kind is inherent in each virtue, and in this way, there is a unity between virtues. Consider Wolf.

[K]nowledge of the value of one item is necessarily knowledge of that item's value relative to the values of everything else. Knowing the value of physical safety means knowing what's worth fighting for and what's not; knowing the value of money means knowing when it is and when it is not worth spending it or giving it away. This suggests that perfect and complete knowledge of the importance of, say, physical safety, may require knowledge of the importance of wealth, and vice versa. For one may need to know when a certain amount of wealth is worth fighting for, or when giving money to assure another person's physical safety is appropriate. (2007a, p. 150)

The unity of virtues treats virtues as not isolable, discrete traits but examples of excellences that belong to good humans qua humans. The good for this species is where the justification lies for virtues.

Before I turn to the ultimate end of living well and practical wisdom's connection to it, I want address the elitism objection that the concept of practical wisdom entails for some. The objection concerning elitism states that practical wisdom seems to be relevant for only a few intellectual elites. According to this objection "Aristotle's theory requires a great deal of intellectual development and moral sophistication for an agent to possess any virtue. Only the *phronomoi*, the wise, are virtuous, and these people are few and far between." (Driver, 2003, p. 53). This kind of objection holds that for some people virtue is not within reach because of their environment, their

upbringing or socio-economic situation. However, the objection is not fatal as long as the account of virtue (and practical wisdom) does not transcend our human capacities. For one thing, acquiring virtue could be difficult, but the same is the case for being moral for other theories. Being fully moral or virtuous takes time, habituation, experience, reflection, self-correction, feedback and etc. As the skill analogy shows, it is our human capacity to be able to acquire skills as well as virtues, and most people failing at it does not mean they are incapable of it. One's circumstances might warp their moral sensitivities, or some might be naturally better at it but the need to learn and to drive to aspire are common and accessible to all. Like skills, acquiring virtue is within reach once the will to learn is expressed in practice and drive to aspire is acquired.

To conclude, in this chapter I looked at the qualified-agent model revisions that are provided to overcome Johnson's objections. In all of these revisions, the concept of practical wisdom seems to be the key to action-guidance. I argued what has been clear is that for decision-making procedures (in all theories) what is needed is moral sensitivity, moral discernment, appreciation of importance of moral values. There is difference between epistemic precision and metaphysical precision. A theory can provide metaphysical precision in terms of defining "the right" action, and I believe eudaimonist virtue ethics can accommodate this. Epistemologically it is very difficult to give a precise answer, since novices, ordinary agents and most people are not readily engaged with the metaphysical certainty, or not motivated to act in accordance with it (Driver, 2006, pp. 115-116). Thus, the initial doubt that especially virtue ethics cannot guide the non-virtuous people is an unduly stringent demand to begin with. Taking that the fully virtuous agent is a short cut or "summary notion" that captures the features of practical wisdom¹²¹ I argued in this chapter that if we understand how practical wisdom works and how we can improve it to become more virtuous, then the problem of guiding fools can be addressed sufficiently. In order to explain the concept of practical wisdom I showed parallelism between Aristotle's account and the contemporary understanding of it supplemented by skill analogy and empirical studies of expertise. The skill analogy and consideration of how expertise develops illuminates how practical wisdom develops and can be improved in novices as skilled know-how

¹²¹ Smith argues in the similar line for "the rational" as being the summary notion for features of practical rationality (1994, pp. 155-156)

form of practical knowledge. I argued that the skill model shows that non-virtuous agents can develop practical wisdom and cultivate virtues. I concluded the chapter arguing that practical wisdom is distinct in terms of “the end” it orients toward, and interdependent with the conception of *eudaimonia*. In the next and final chapter, I will discuss the relationship between practical wisdom and *eudaimonia* and argue that *eudaimonia* is indispensable for virtue ethics to justify virtues and locate *phronesis*.





7. THE INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF PRACTICAL WISDOM AND *EUDAIMONIA*

In general, the practically wise person knows all of the relevant elements of a given circumstance uses this information practically in a wholesome way. As I argued in the previous chapter, the development of this capacity dwells on habituation and practice. Using the skill analogy, the need to learn and the drive to aspire can be applied to give an account of how to improve practical wisdom, and to acquire virtuous traits. It might be argued that the virtuous ideal is difficult to find -if we can find at all- because people might be wise in different and limited ways. Yet, it is still possible to argue that practically wise or fully virtuous people get things right and especially get the important things right. Practical wisdom is connected to knowing, comprehending what is worthwhile and what to do effectively in relation to that. The process of development is the most difficult part to explain for practical wisdom, since “knowledge that” does not necessarily help “knowledge-how”. Knowing that generosity is good, or that some situations require courage does not mean that one will be able to exemplify those virtues where they are needed. Nevertheless, the same is the case for other moral theories, because there always is a gap between the theory and the application. It is due to the fact that even if a universal principle is set as a criterion for an algorithmic calculation of right action, the individual judgment is inextricable from the application of the principle. For example, one might be knowledgeable about ethics but nevertheless, might not be wise and ethical himself. Yet, still we can argue that practically wise people in the sense that virtue ethicists use it are thought to grasp what is good and the ends to pursue for a good life, and are not merely wise to achieve whatever personal goals they have. We cannot call a successful businessman necessarily practically wise, nor we cannot call a gangster practically wise. There is a certain framework for the ends that practically wise people seek, and there is an important link that practical wisdom has to “the good”. I maintain in this thesis that for virtue ethics to provide an account for right action and how action-guidance works, we need to address how practical wisdom pitches in and how to develop it, and to

explain it with the link to *eudaimonia* that is indispensable for conceptualizing practical wisdom and validating the virtues overall. Thus, I will divide this chapter into two parts. In the first part, I will try to explicate the relationship of practical wisdom to *eudaimonia* as the final end, in order to show that practical wisdom is not neutral in its choices. In the second part, I will give an account of *eudaimonia* by looking at the Aristotelian and modern conceptualizations of it. The conceptualization of *eudaimonia* deserves another thesis on its own, but in my work the specification of the concept of *eudaimonia* (not to fix its meaning but to show the general outline of it) will help to shed light on the action-guidance challenge especially in terms of avoiding the circularity objection by validating virtues on a naturalistic ground rather than on ‘what a virtuous person would do’.¹²² In the section on *eudaimonia*, I do not intend to analyze all aspects of *eudaimonia*; instead I focus on neo-Aristotelian naturalism that validates virtues, and virtuous activity’s connection to the good life.

7.1 Practical Wisdom and *Eudaimonia*: Interlocking Themes¹²³

In the previous chapter I argued that practical wisdom is the capacity which deals with the details, and how to achieve the ends of virtues. Without practical wisdom’s efficiency in practice the idea of *eudaimonia* would be loose and vacuous. In other words, in case *eudaimonia* is described precisely in abstraction, there will still be a need for practical wisdom in terms of achieving virtuous activity in specific instances. This role, which is about particulars, might be deemed the most important role of practical wisdom; however, practical wisdom is also a matter of conceiving how things fit together and in this sense, it is concerned with the unity of the virtues. *Eudaimonia* as the final end is the ground that validates virtues, it provides the justification for which character traits are virtues and establishes a ground for their unity. Every virtue includes practical wisdom; thus, practical wisdom is conceptually connected to *eudaimonia*. My aim in this section is to illustrate this relationship between practical

¹²² To remind, the circularity objection states that the definition of right action is determined by the virtuous agent’s characteristic actions, and in return these characteristic actions are defined as right actions; hence, action-guidance is circularly unfruitful.

¹²³ I borrowed the term ‘interlocking’ from Paula Gottlieb. She explains that in Aristotle’s ethics there is not one theme or thesis that the rest of the themes are derived from. Instead themes and theses are mutually supporting as opposed to being in a hierarchical relationship (Gottlieb, 2009). In her work, Gottlieb argues for the “maligned” doctrine of the mean as one of themes besides practical wisdom, virtue and *eudaimonia* to be a very important one. She argues that Aristotle’s doctrine of the mean has three important aspects 1) virtue is a state of equilibrium like health 2) virtue is relative to us, 3) virtue is in a mean between two vices (p.3). I leave this issue aside due to the scope of the dissertation.

wisdom and *eudaimonia*. In this way, I want to support my argument that *eudaimonia* is needed for a virtue ethics theory to provide a systematic normative theory that can respond to the action-guidance objection.

Eudaimonia is necessary (at least)¹²⁴ in the theoretical structure to explicate and locate practical wisdom because it explains why certain decisions are praiseworthy and an outcome of practical wisdom. It is the case that acquirement of virtues requires habituation of emotion as well as desire, yet the end of this habituation is to rationally recognize the goodness of the appropriate actions that should be desired.¹²⁵ In the previous chapter I argued that the development of practical wisdom can be explained like the development of skills. There is the need to learn, which includes the process of habituation, and the drive to aspire which includes internalization of virtues to the point whereby the desires and feelings are appropriate to the reasons of the virtues. The stage of habituation involves establishing certain practices and exercises; simply cultivating moral virtues by exercising them. This process of habituation implies moral education. Moral education in childhood might be effective (yet unreflective and not conscious), but it does not mean that once childhood moral education is missed it is not possible. Habituation can be implemented by an adult at a more conscious level such as Johnson's liar.¹²⁶ The goal of the habituation process is to understand the "why" part of virtues. That is why we call people practically wise who not only have natural virtues and act in reliably good ways, or exhibit isolated virtues, but who have a sensitive gaze that unites their actions under the label of the ultimate end. Consider the passage below from Aristotle.

This is why anyone who is going to be a competent student in the spheres of what is noble and what is just must be brought up well in his habits. For the first principle is the belief *that* something is the case, and if this is sufficiently clear, he will not need the reason *why* as well. (NE, 1095b5-9)

In the above quotation, Aristotle argues that in order to be a competent student in ethics, the first principle is to habituate, and practice virtue (upon the belief or

¹²⁴ I use here "at least" because for action-guidance I think that the knowledge of *eudaimonia* for agents does not necessarily require the theoretical, metaphysical complete knowledge of it (although it helps immensely). Instead, reflection on and overall idea of the human good is what a virtuous agent necessarily commits to.

¹²⁵ This is the interpretation of Aristotle's view that I agree with. For the same interpretation see (Sorabji, 1980, p. 216) and (Pierce, 2005, p. 274).

¹²⁶ See my work p. 123.

commitment to it), and this stage might not need the reason why. The person who knows *that* (i.e. being honest is good) is in a position to easily respond to varying situations (that require honesty). In another words, people who have habituated moral virtues (this could include naturally virtuous) know *that*. The person who knows *why* is the one who knows *that* and can also explain *why*.¹²⁷ The virtue of the *phronimos* is that she can explain why virtues are virtues. A fully virtuous person thus does not only have moral virtues but also practical wisdom, which means deliberating well according to the virtues as well as according to the situation. I argued in the previous chapter that practical wisdom can be developed like we develop skills. However, practical wisdom's special link to *eudaimonia* is what distinguishes it from skill, and herein my aim is to argue for the indispensability of *eudaimonia* for virtue ethics in relation to practical wisdom.

In order to show their connection, first I want to focus on the distinction between practical wisdom and skills. One might argue that practical wisdom is a higher form of skill or know-how, yet there is a fine difference between them. Although both require judgment, practical wisdom is about value judgments in particular cases (Flyvbjerg, 2004, p. 288).

Matt Stichter reflects on the difference between skill and practical wisdom by focusing on acquisition of expertise which does not involve value judgments. For instance, the fixed end of playing tennis is to win the game, and the skill in playing tennis involves the knowledge of how to attain the desired end. The skill of playing tennis does not necessitate making value judgments about playing tennis in a well-lived life (Stichter, 2016, p. 211). On the other hand, practical wisdom (as well as other virtues) requires a value judgment about the ends being pursued. Think about a doctor - Twyn - who has expertise in virology. As relevant as it is today, Twyn, who finds the vaccine for Covid-19 is reluctant to share it with public unless he profits from it individually. He has the right to (legally) to hold ownership of the patent for the vaccine, and his expertise in medicine is unquestionable. Twyn will not share the vaccine with public unless he is given the full credit and the profit. Twyn is committed to the practice of medicine, and he is an exemplar of this skill, yet his moral performance is not guided by the practical wisdom which is not only about instrumental reasoning concerning

¹²⁷ See (Curzer, 2012, p. 299 ff.) for the discussion about how practical wisdom involves the knowledge of the *because* while moral virtue involves the knowledge of the *that*.

the means to desired (subjective in Twyn's case) ends, but also about deliberating about those ends. The practical wisdom that is necessary for agents to be fully virtuous cannot escape the unifying final end; hence, virtue ethics should incorporate *eudaimonia* for a guiding normative theory.

As opposed to my thesis, one can argue that there is no need for a unifying final end, because virtues in themselves are sufficient to account for practical wisdom. For instance, Michael Slote's Agent-based virtue ethics omits practical wisdom and replaces it with *a good heart*. Swanton's target-centered virtue ethics treats virtues as particular, isolable good traits without the necessity of any unity, and understands practical wisdom as the capacity to achieve the targets of individual virtues. However, as I argued in the previous chapter, practical wisdom cannot be a mere ability of instrumental rationality or cleverness. In order for it to make sense, the conceptual connection between *eudaimonia* and practical wisdom should be addressed. The value of practical wisdom is not based on the individual goals of an agent that are set previously, or episodic deliberative success in attaining the targets of "some" virtues.

On the contrary, practical wisdom requires the knowledge of a worth-while end or ends. In order to have practical wisdom, one needs to have the knowledge of worth-while ends and the relative value of particular ends¹²⁸. Thus, in eudaimonist virtue ethics, practical wisdom requires a certain appreciation for the conception of living-well, which determines what is "worth-while". In its enactment in novel situations, one's values, desires according to those values, and deliberation which is affected by those values, give rise to a specific decision rather than another one. Although the conception of a good life is not on the very surface of our psyche, it definitely is the blueprint that effects the ways we act, think, and feel.¹²⁹ For this reason, agents with the right aims are most likely to deliberate well and agents who don't have aims, or have wrong goals are most likely not to deliberate well even if their deliberation is cleverly appropriate for the gains in a situation. Consider Foot's argument on practical wisdom and its relation to the knowledge of worthwhile ends.

What we can see is that one of the things a wise man knows and a foolish man does not is that such things as social position, and wealth, and the good opinion of the world, are too dearly

¹²⁸ Philippa Foot (2002a) argues along the same lines.

¹²⁹ There could be a question about the motivating force of values. Yet, even if we fail to comply with our values in action, this probability does not affect the positive relationship between values and motivation to act in accordance with it. I leave the motivation issue aside here.

bought at the cost of health or friendship or family ties. So we may say that a man who lacks wisdom 'has false values', and that vices such as vanity and worldliness and avarice are contrary to wisdom in a special way. (Foot, 2002a, pp. 6-7)

As Foot shows in her example, vice and lack of wisdom and virtue and wisdom are connected to each other in special ways. Thus, there is an essential link between knowledge of the good and practical wisdom. It is no wonder that people without practical wisdom sometimes show random kindness, or random goodness and yet other times sacrifice their friendships for financial gain, or perfectly fit in being a sycophant for socio-political gain at the expense of their fellow citizens. That is also why we wouldn't call a murderer a courageous person in virtue of having overcome his fear to kill someone or wouldn't call his act a courageous one (Foot, 2002a, 15-16).

Thus, I believe it is necessary for a person to contemplate about the final end or worthwhile ends to have a unifying approach to morality. It is like getting one's bearings on the sea. When you don't have a GPS device, or a compass, finding your bearings can help you to locate and orient yourself relative to these unmoving references. Likewise, when one reflects on the question of what the good human life involves or what the good life looks like, it is more likely than not to know your relative position to the ultimate end. Similarly a lack of reflection on what is good in human life and a lack of sustained commitment to it entails a lack of practical wisdom, and probable moral failure(s).¹³⁰ Annas discusses the importance of this structured approach to reflecting on ends (or end) in a way also to provide harmony between them.

Reflection thus both triggers and then furthers thinking about how to achieve the goals I have in the light of the constraints I have (time, money, energy) and their mutual achievability. This thinking is unifying about the goals because they are all my goals, and I need to have an integrated and unifying way of achieving them because I have only one life, the life I am living. What is activated is not thinking in the abstract about types of goal and how they could fit together, but thinking about how I can achieve the goals I have in the life I have. It is thinking about my life and how it is going. It is practical thinking, thinking about my life and how I should structure it. (Annas, 2011, pp. 122-123).

The ultimate end or flourishing life is the bearing that directs and structures the particulars. Even if *eudaimonia* is not always an explicit factor to the agent in regard

¹³⁰ See also (Hacker-Wright, 2015, p. 988). He follows this line of argument yet especially to highlight the difference between skill and practical wisdom. It is still illuminating to think about the differences between skill and *phronesis* this way, yet for the purpose of my thesis I opt to leave it aside.

to being a clear prescriptive and justificatory ground, when practically wise person is asked, she can more or less account for her actions as being conducive to human flourishing. Thus, even if the conception of the good life is not appealed to explicitly, it is still a major premise that influences the minor premises (Sorabji, 1980, p. 209). In another words, practical wisdom is about knowledge of the particulars (means), but at the same time it is about a better understanding of the ultimate end that justifies and grounds the minor premises. The importance of practically wise person, or fully virtuous agent depends on her being the embodiment of this understanding. I understand the ideal of virtuous agency as helpful for two things in practice. 1) in the process of being fully virtuous, yet-to-be-virtuous people emulate this ideal to approximate, since practice makes perfect and prepares us to understand the inherent reasons why virtue is desirable. Hence it is helpful (and psychologically available to human beings) to try to approximate “the ideal”. The ideal might be a fully virtuous neighbor, Gandhi, or a fictive character, as yet it could be only in abstraction “the ideal” that we aspire to, or the best version of ourselves. 2) virtuous people not only exemplify virtues and how to implement them, but also are in a position to explain why. They share moral virtues with naturally virtuous people, yet unlike naturally virtuous people, they possess practical wisdom. The definition of a right action focuses on the agency of the fully virtuous agent because she embodies the interconnected themes in her character: she is practically wise, so she acts virtuously in differing circumstances, she is committed to the good which explains the *why* question.

Given that virtues are character traits that are conducive to *eudaimonia*, the judgment of the right action ultimately depends on the conception of human flourishing. Although right action seems to be reduced to the actions of the virtuous agent, the virtuous agent only recognizes what is to be done because of the facts about human flourishing and human nature (Hursthouse, 2001, pp. 81-82). Appealing to naturalism in this way, neo-Aristotelians points to a conceptual link between *eudaimonia* and virtue. Consider Aristotle’s mature virtuous agent:

[Actions] done in accordance with virtues are done in a just or temperate way not merely by having some quality of their own, but rather if the agent acts in a certain state, namely, first, with knowledge, secondly, from rational choice, and rational choice of the actions for their own sake, and, thirdly, from a firm and unshakeable character (*NE*, II, 1105a32-36).

The first condition that a virtuous person satisfies is having knowledge. What kind of knowledge is this? It is the knowledge that includes the knowledge of the highest good (*NE*, I, 4). *Eudaimonia* as the highest good is commensurate with virtuous activity. Defining the account of right action through virtuous agency assumes knowledge of the final end, and the capacity to recognize the morally salient features of a situation. Therefore, right action is understood in the activity of the virtuous agent who embodies the reasons of virtues, or simply “gets it right”.¹³¹ So, it is still important to take virtuous agent as the anchor for virtue ethics since her ideal agency collects the most important parts of the theory by exemplifying the virtues, having *phronesis*, and having the knowledge about what pertains to the living well; hence, *eudaimonia*. However, when it comes to guidance for the fool, it might be difficult to extract a direct set of guidelines from virtue ethics. Yet, if it is easier, it is still difficult for any theory to provide step by step algorithmic guidelines because even application of crystal-clear principles (maximize happiness) takes experience and practice.

I argued in the previous chapter that eudaimonist virtue ethics can account for practical wisdom which develops through experience and practice. The practical wisdom that is exhibited by the fully virtuous person is the proper version, yet usage of it will differ for agents in their different stage of development. When Johnson’s liar, for example, commits to being virtuous, he will write down his lies to develop a more honest character. Practical wisdom in his case would find appropriate means (writing down lies) to accomplish the end of virtue. The universal principles may supply an account of right action, but it is still left to the agent to apply it with the correct conception of the *summum bonum* of the theory. *Phronesis* is an innate capacity in humans, yet it should be cultivated in order to be properly employed (Kultgen, 1998, p. 330). In order to see the role that *eudaimonia* plays in the theoretical structure, let us look at the seat of *phronesis* and consider the use of this capacity in deciding the course of action with reference to the highest good in Aristotle.

We may grasp what practical wisdom is by considering the sort of people we describe as practically wise. It seems to be characteristic of the practically wise person to be able to deliberate nobly about what is good and beneficial for himself, not in particular respects, such as what conduces to health or strength, but about what conduces to living well as a whole (*NE*, VI, 5, 1140a24-29).

¹³¹ For the same line of argument see (Svensson, 2011, p. 335) and (Eylon, 2014, pp. 141-142).

The practically wise person in this respect is not only the person who applies virtues properly, but also the one who deliberates about living well as a whole. This is to say simply that deliberation about *eudaimonia* is integral to a virtuous person's choosing if it is not prior to it. *Phronesis* is correct deliberation in "particular and variable action as a means to the good and end wished for" (Sherman, 2006, p. 486). In this sense, *eudaimonia* stands as 'grand blueprint for the good life' for the sake of which *phronesis* chooses particular actions (Russell, 2009, p. 27). The blueprint view endorses that *phronesis* chooses particular actions to actualize *eudaimonia* with a 'correct and comprehensive blueprint of the human good' (Russell, 2009, p. 27). This blueprint supplies the grand cause to an agent in the form of the best life, ideal person and ideal conduct in accordance with these. The issue here that can be problematized is how in our everyday ethical deliberation this grand blueprint guides our conduct. One answer might be that *phronesis* takes local ends into consideration rather than taking a course of action as constitutive of the blueprint (Broadie, 2007, pp. 123-126). It is sensible to think that practical wisdom does not implement *eudaimonia* in every particular action by contemplating that doing such and such is the right thing to do for the good life. Yet, I disagree with Broadie in terms of the argument that practical wisdom does not make use of *eudaimonia*. Through virtues the *phronimos* uses her *phronesis* properly. 'Properly' herein addresses *phronesis* in accordance with the conception of the good life. *Phronesis* is the ability to depotentialize the pre-existent actual which is logically prior good life for human beings. As Aristotle puts it "the first principle of what is done consists in the goal it seeks." (*NE*, VI, 5, 1140b18-19). In the theoretical structure, *eudaimonia* provides the framework for the reasons that a virtuous person acts on as a way of expressing the conception of the good which is pre-existent for human beings in the final end of *eudaimonia*. In McDowell's Terms, *eudaimonia* stands as a 'coherent scheme for a life' (1995a, p. 214). Virtues are not mechanical habits and they require correct reasoning. All virtues are construed by their relationship to the knowledge of the good (Brickhouse & Smith, 1997, p. 313). If we use Socrates' analogy, individual virtues are like pieces of gold: they might differ in size, yet they are the same thing (Brickhouse & Smith, 1997, p.319)¹³². Although the functions of the virtues are different such as justice and courage, the knowledge or wisdom by means of which these virtues are attained is the same (Brickhouse & Smith,

¹³² See also Plato, "Protagoras", in W.M.R. Lamb (tr.), *Plato with an English Translation: Laches, Protagoras, Meno, Euthydemus*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), 329d4-10.

1997, p. 319). Virtues are not independent local responses to the demands of the world as Swanton argues (2003, p. 57). The normative properties of *eudaimonia* unify the virtues. So, a virtuous agent acts from a virtue, for instance bravery, when her ‘attitude and judgments about bravery are unified by her grasp, at some level, of the value of bravery, its contribution to her (correctly conceived) overall good’ (Annas, 1993, p. 75). Consider the following two passages from Aristotle:

Wisdom produces happiness, not as medicine produces health, but as health does. For by being a part of virtue as a whole, it makes a person happy through its being possessed and being exercised. Again, our characteristic activity is achieved in accordance with practical wisdom and virtue of character; for virtue makes the aim right, and practical wisdom the things towards it (*NE*, VI, 12, 1144a4-10) .

[Practical wisdom] is not in control of wisdom or the superior part of the soul, just as medicine is not in control of health. For it does not make use of health, but provides for its coming into being; it therefore issues prescriptions for the sake of health, but not to it. Besides, saying this would be like saying that political science governs the gods, since it issues prescriptions about everything in the city (*NE*, VI, 13, 1145a9-14).

In the quotations above, Aristotle makes an analogy between health and medicine and between the superior part of the soul (the rational faculty that contemplates about *eudaimonia*) and practical wisdom. Health is that for the sake of which we seek other things. Medicine in this respect is the medium that provides its coming into being. The analogy applies to the relationship between *phronesis* and *eudaimonia*. *Eudaimonia* is the governing principle for practical wisdom; although practical wisdom deals with the everyday practical matters and issues prescriptions regarding which virtue to apply regarding the relevant features of the situation, it only does so with regard to the ‘grand blueprint for the good life’. Practical wisdom, then, must be a true state involving reason, concerned with action in relation to the final end (*NE*, VI, 5, 1140b23-24). In this sense, *phronesis* is not neutral in its values and is inextricably connected to *eudaimonia*. If we take practical wisdom to be a certain form of instrumental practical rationality, then it might also justify subjective (and sometimes villainous) ends. Practical wisdom as the master virtue is conceptually connected to *eudaimonia*. Thus, for virtue ethics to provide action-guidance, we cannot simply dismiss one or the other because they are interrelated in very deep and broad ways.

Having argued that *eudaimonia* is indispensable to explain how practical wisdom works, in the following section I will focus on the concept of *eudaimonia*. As the final

end, or the goodness that practical wisdom orients itself toward, we still need to specify what it is. This does not attain the utmost importance for my thesis question, yet it is still essential to show how *eudaimonia* can be validating ground for virtues.

7.2 *Eudaimonia*: The Ultimate End

I have argued that practical wisdom is not empty in its choices and it is organized around local ends (individual virtues) which are connected in a structured way around the final end: *eudaimonia*. *Eudaimonia* has been translated as happiness, well-being, or human flourishing (all with some drawbacks, but I think it is something between these translations) is the concept that defines the good life for human beings; hence it relies on an account of human nature. However, it is yet to be specified. Thus, herein I intend to provide a specific conceptualization of *eudaimonia* as a validating ground for virtues. Thus, I will first look at what Aristotelian conceptualization amounts to, in order to illustrate the original understanding that neo-Aristotelian virtue ethicists rely on. This will present the basis of naturalism that justifies virtues within the eudaimonistic framework, and the connection of virtuous activity to *eudaimonia*. Secondly, I will provide the modern conceptualizations of *eudaimonia* that follows a neo-Aristotelian naturalism. For the modern conceptualizations I will look at Philippa Foot who shaped the neo-Aristotelian naturalism (yet was not explicitly eudaimonist), Rosalind Hursthouse who provided the most systematic eudaimonist virtue ethics as an action-guiding theory and used neo-Aristotelian naturalism to respond to the circularity objection, and John McDowell who provides a defense of ethical naturalism against “the naturalistic fallacy objection”.¹³³

7.2.1 Aristotelian *Eudaimonia*

In this section I aim to exhibit what *eudaimonia* amounts to in Aristotle’s evaluation. Considering that the ancient Greek theories that take virtue as central cannot be reduced to Aristotle and that he is not representing a unifying picture of these accounts of virtue, *eudaimonia* or practical wisdom, I want to explain briefly why Aristotle’s account of *eudaimonia* is scrutinized here. First of all, the eudaimonistic tradition of

¹³³ The naturalistic fallacy objection simply states that it is fallacious to reduce ‘what is good’ to natural properties such as pleasure or desire. It is originally stated by (Moore, 1903). It is similar to David Hume’s (1960) “is-ought problem” which refers to the problem of deducing normative ‘ought’ statements from non-evaluative, non-moral, factual “is” statements.

virtue ethics derives its most basic arguments from Aristotle's philosophy because he provided the most systematic approach to it, and secondly Aristotle's conception makes the most sense for our time.¹³⁴

Ancient Greek moral theories dwell on the question of how to lead a happy life, relying on the assumption that we -as other living things- have a final end. According to this perspective, moral theory is not merely about solving difficult quandaries or to calculate what to do (especially in hard cases), rather it deals with the whole life (and we can observe this in Plato, Aristotle, the Epicurians, and Stoics). The word *eudaimonia* is composed of *eu* (good) and *daimon* (spirit, god, demon) and conveys a sense of having a good guiding spirit, hence implying being fortunate or lucky. Aristotle acknowledges early on in *Nicomachean Ethics* that most people would agree that the highest good for us is happiness. However, when it comes to specification there seems to be different candidates for what the happy life is for us. Consider the passage below.

Let us continue with the argument, and, since all knowledge and rational choice seek some good... that is, of all the good things to be done, what is the highest. Most people, I should think, agree about what it is called, since both the masses and sophisticated people call it happiness understanding being happy as equivalent to living well and acting well. They disagree about substantive conceptions of happiness, the masses giving an account which differs from that of the philosophers. For the masses think it is something straightforward and obvious, like pleasure, wealth, or honour, some thinking it to be one thing, others another. (*NE*, I, 4, 1095a17-26)

In the above passage Aristotle argues that common view would be different than philosophical view although they both would understand it as living well (*eu zēn*) and acting well (*eu prattein*). Most people would think that *eudaimonia* is the life of pleasure, wealth or honor, but Aristotle's contention *eudaimonia* requires a more sophisticated account because it is the final end for the sake of which we should organize our lives and it is the most complete (or self-sufficient). On the other hand, the life of pleasure, honor or wealth, although they could be chosen for their own sake, are also chosen for the sake of happiness which 'no one chooses for the sake of any of these nor indeed for the sake of anything else' (*NE*, I, 7, 1097b2-7). *Eudaimonia* is not

¹³⁴ Especially compared to Stoic conceptualization of *eudaimonia* which takes virtuous activity necessary and sufficient for the good life. Aristotle's account of *eudaimonia* holds virtuous activity necessary; however, not sufficient for the good life because other external goods such as friendship, wealth, and health are also important.

one good among others, “for if it were, one could add more goods to it and this would make the life correspondingly more *eudaimōn*” (Rabbås, 2015, p. 93). *Eudaimonia* as final good stands as irreplaceable in the sense that it is what “the agent values most and without which the other goods would be pointless to him” (Brodie, 1991, p. 27). Aristotle’s method of introducing candidates for the good life is not to ridicule the common sense conception of it, but rather to start from these to understand and clarify commonly shared judgments because it would be odd to reject “broadly accepted views’ without consideration to begin with (Annas, 1998, p. 35).¹³⁵ For the query of the highest human good, or the good life, Aristotle looks at these different candidates to see whether they satisfy the formal constraints of the ultimate good. Thus, the account of *eudaimonia* with its specifications should meet the formal constraints of the final end: completeness (for the sake of which everything else is chosen), and self-sufficiency. Friendship, or health can be pursued for their own sake, but not in the sense that *eudaimonia* is pursued. Friendship and health are chosen for their own sake, but also chosen as constituents of *eudaimonia*, whereas *eudaimonia* is complete in the sense that it is only pursued for its own sake, and nothing else. Thus it is more complete than other aims. It is also self-sufficient because it lacks in nothing, and makes human life worthy of choice on its own (*NE*, I, 1097b). With regard to these formal criteria, the lives of honor, wealth or pleasure are eliminated as candidates for ‘the good life’. The next step is to specify what this life looks like.

Aristotle thinks we can specify *eudaimonia* if we grasp the characteristic activity of humans (*NE*, I, 7, 1097b27-28). For this reason Aristotle’s account of *eudaimonia* is based on an account of human nature, and it does not concern itself with the subjective and psychological aspects of happiness as we understand them today, but with a more objective set of features of the good life taken to be characteristic of human beings. That is not to say that prudential elements and external goods are irrelevant to the good life, but rather Aristotle seeks to find the morally relevant prospects which might affect our relation to external goods, or prudential elements of happiness.

This is where Aristotle introduces the function argument to explain the nature of *eudaimonia*. The function of humans which is characteristic to their species, and differentiates them from vegetative and other sentient organisms is reason (or *logos*)

¹³⁵ It is called Aristotle’s “endoxic method”. I thank Geoff Bove for this reminder.

(*NE*, I, 7, 1198a1-5). So, the best use of reason is the way to accomplish living and doing well. He says,

[W]e take the characteristic activity of a human being to be a certain kind of life; and if we take this kind of life to be activity of the soul and actions in accordance with reason, and the characteristic activity of the good person to be to carry this out well and nobly, and a characteristic activity to be accomplished well when it is accomplished in accordance with the appropriate virtue; then if this is so, the human good turns out to be activity of the soul in accordance with virtue, and if there are several virtues, in accordance with the best and most complete. (*NE*, I, 7, 1098a18-25)

Aristotle takes the reason to manifest itself in virtues. For, doing well or mastery in anything requires certain virtue or excellence. Similar to the analogy of excellence in *techne* or skills, the excellence in characteristic activity for human beings is presented in virtue. In terms of relying on human nature and hence understanding reason to be our distinctive function, there are couple of things to note. The human function of reasoning (or more precisely practical reasoning if *eudaimonia* is practically possible) not only comprises intelligent thinking with regard to what the good life is, respectively what to do, but also cultivating proper emotions. Reason as a genuinely human function does not exclude our other needs, and faculties. Humans are sentient beings that need to eat, are driven to seek pleasure and to avoid pain. Designating reason as the unique human function for eudaimonism simply means that 1) it is what shapes and organizes the human life and 2) it infuses every other aspect of our nature; thus, it is the distinctive functioning that makes our whole nature distinctively human (Nussbaum, 1987, pp. 46-47). As an example to how reason interpenetrates other aspects of our nature, think about jogging (or curbing our appetite for more wine). Our basic drive to avoid pain, for example, would direct us away from painful physical exercise (jogging). Yet, our reason can intelligently convince us why we need to exercise, (to jog) although painful at the beginning. Aristotle's writing on the subject matter of human good is an outline for it, and he argues that it is something to be furthered later on (*NE*, I, 7, 1098a20-26).

Up to this point, three things are agreed upon about *eudaimonia*. 1) The idea that *eudaimonia* is our ultimate end (or *telos*) 2) *eudaimonia* is the activity of our rational part in accordance with virtue 3) *eudaimonia* rests on a conception of human nature. So, *eudaimonia* as the highest human good and its relation (in one sense or another) to virtue is not contested. Yet, it is also infamous that Aristotle has two definitions of

eudaimonia which don't seem to be consistent, and it is the subject matter of a major controversy. It is essential to draw the differences on this instance and sketch the main arguments because it is closely related to action-guidance.

The first definition holds that *eudaimonia* is a complete life of virtuous activity guided by reason; it is what we aim at and try to achieve as humans in virtue of being rational creatures (*NE*, I, 1, 1094a23). In this sense, *eudaimonia* is not simply virtue or a state or condition; it is lifelong virtuous activity. The supporters of this interpretation (inclusivists) hold that virtuous activity in its most complete form includes both ethical and theoretical virtues.¹³⁶ For some scholars, this active life also includes the external goods that are important to happiness such as friendship, family, wealth, or health, yet external goods might be a matter of luck and some of them may befall on you, or your virtuousness might not secure all of them.¹³⁷ However, habituating virtue is not a matter of luck and by being in our power it is the subject of ethical inquiry. In another words, although external goods can have an impact on *eudaimonia*, they are not self-sufficient to constitute it; whereas virtuous activity is necessary even if not sufficient for *eudaimonia*. In order to emphasize the importance of this, consider Irwin arguing “the virtuous but unlucky person is not happy; the lucky but non-virtuous person is unhappy” (1999, p. 10). So, the full-fledged example of *eudaimōn* is someone who is necessarily virtuous, and also blessed with good fortune. In this interpretation, the dominant component of the conception of *eudaimonia* is virtuous activity. However, I should note that although there is a consensus in this reading, that *eudaimonia* includes activity of ethical and intellectual virtues, there are differences in the interpretation of the nature and the relation of goods to *eudaimonia*. For instance Irwin defends a view in which there are several intrinsic goods such as ethical virtues, theoretical virtues and certain external goods, and *eudaimonia* is a combination of them (1999). Roche defends an inclusivist view of *eudaimonia* which consists of both ethical and theoretical virtuous activity (1988). Ackrill argues that ethical and theoretical activities are equally desirable, and none has a superior standing to the latter (1999, pp. 19-20). Keyt, on the other hand, advocates that theoretical activity is the highest activity and that it structures the rest; ethical activity is the foundation (1983, p. 370). Yet, all of

¹³⁶ See (Akrill, 1999) (Roche, 1988) (Purinton, 1998) (Keyt, 1983) (Irwin, 1999) (Cooper, 1999).

¹³⁷ Based on Aristotle's argument in *NE*, I, 1099a35-37. See especially (Nussbaum, 2001) for the importance of luck for the happy life.

these interpretations hold that virtuous activity is an important part of *eudaimonia*, and that is what matters for this thesis.

The second definition describes *eudaimonia* as the contemplative life based on the interpretations of few passages. One is from the above passage whereby Aristotle says human good resides in the activity of the soul in accordance with virtue and if there are several virtues in accordance with the best and the most complete. So, if there is one virtue which is the most complete and the best, then *eudaimonia* is the exercise of that virtue. The proof for the best virtue in Aristotle is found in Book X of the *Nicomachean Ethics* where he says,

If happiness is activity in accordance with virtue, it is reasonable to expect that it is in accordance with the highest virtue, and this will be the virtue of the best element... That this activity is that of contemplation (6, 1177a14-21)

Thus, taking proof in the passage which states that *eudaimonia* is activity of the rational part of us in accordance with the best virtue, and the passage that describes the best virtue to be wisdom (*sophia*), this interpretation states that the highest virtue is intellectual virtue (*sophia*) and according to the clear definition above the happy life consists of activity of contemplation.¹³⁸ The supporters of this interpretation (intellectualists) endorse the view that contemplative activity is the sole highest good for human flourishing and virtuous activity is instrumentally valuable to attain it (Kraut, 1989, p. 9).

Some argue that these two definitions of *eudaimonia* cannot be reconciled.¹³⁹ Although the exegetical disputes concerning this issue are beyond the purpose of my thesis, I agree with the inclusivist reading that human flourishing not only consists in the activity of philosophical wisdom, but also requires exercise of moral virtues.¹⁴⁰ I believe that in order to see how eudaimonist virtue ethics can provide action-guidance, it is necessary to accept that *eudaimonia* as lifelong virtuous activity and *eudaimonia* as contemplative life are not mutually exclusive. Moreover, there is compelling exegesis which support this interpretation of Aristotle.¹⁴¹ This reading does not

¹³⁸ For instance (Van Cleemput, 2006) (Cooper, 2004, pp. 143-147) (Kenny, 1977, pp. 25-32).

¹³⁹ This line of argument mainly relies on the idea that there is an apparent contradiction in *Nicomachean Ethics* and it cannot be remedied by charitable interpretation. See (Hardie, 1965, p. 279) and (Wilkes, 1978, p. 566) (Cooper, 1975, pp. 165-180). Note that Cooper has changed his mind about this reading to more inclusivist reading (Cooper, 1999).

¹⁴⁰ For a summary of different interpretative readings see (Hope, 2010, pp. 12-16)

¹⁴¹ (Walker, 2011) (White, 1990) (Crisp, 1994) (Kraut, Aristotle's Ethics, 2018) (Brodie, 1991, pp. 338-419) (Bostock, 2000, pp. 7-25) (Cooper, 1999)

contradict the interpretation that theoretical wisdom is the best virtue especially in terms of its role in completing the other virtues (Walker, 2011, p. 95). It is also compatible with the overall understanding of living well which is an activity. I want to revisit some passages from *Nicomachean Ethics* whereby the importance of activity is shown with poetic analogies.

Again, this must be over a complete life. For one swallow does not make a summer, nor one day. Neither does one day or a short time make someone blessed and happy. (I, 7, 1098a26-28).

For while a state can exist without producing any good consequences, as it does in the case of a person sleeping or lying idle for some other reason, this is impossible for an activity: it will necessarily engage in action, and do so well. As in the Olympic Games it is not the most attractive and the strongest who are crowned, but those who compete (since it is from this group that winners come), so in life it is those who act rightly who will attain what is noble and good. (I, 8, 1099a1-7).

As I argued in the previous chapter, moral virtues are needed to address relevant ethical issues, and habituation of them has a cognitive and psychological effect on the agent. Practical wisdom (as a practically relevant intellectual virtue) is only bestowed upon an agent when she is a fully virtuous exemplar, exercising virtues. The success in exercising moral virtues and the success in having practical wisdom are inseparable. Regardless of the issue of which precedes the other, the human form of life requires us to engage in activities (physical and social)¹⁴² where deliberation is necessary even with regard to when to eat, or how much to eat. Aristotle's image of a human being is not like Plato's solitary philosopher whose existence is perfect as contemplating on her own. His image of a human being is by nature a social (political) being (*NE*, I, 7, 1097b7-11). Thus, understood in totality of Aristotle's philosophy, I agree with the inclusivists that a human being naturally existent in a certain form of life can only flourish at the fullest extent when she exercises both ethical virtues and intellectual virtues.¹⁴³ I believe that for eudaimonistic virtue ethics to provide action-guidance, we need to rely on an inclusivist conception of *eudaimonia* that necessarily includes life-long virtuous activity.

Above, I have provided some differing accounts of *eudaimonia* in Aristotle. To support my thesis that eudaimonist virtue ethics can provide action-guidance and

¹⁴² Unless one is God or a beast as Aristotle argues (*Politics*, I, 2, 1253a28-30).

¹⁴³ For the same line of argument see also (Rabbås, 2015, p. 102)

virtuous activity, practical wisdom and *eudaimonia* are indispensable parts of the theory, I provided the background of influence for contemporary eudaimonist virtue ethics. To recap the importance of this background to my thesis I should suffice to state the claims below.

- i. There is a reciprocal relationship between moral virtues and practical wisdom. That is to say, one cannot exemplify genuine moral virtue without the guidance of practical wisdom.
- ii. As the virtue of determining the salient features and specifying proper action, practical wisdom is also conceptually linked to *eudaimonia* because it involves a grasp of the good life.¹⁴⁴

Eudaimonist virtue ethicists rely on the conceptual link between moral virtues, practical wisdom and *eudaimonia*. With regard to the conceptualization of *eudaimonia*, all eudaimonists accept that the ultimate human good (*eudaimonia*) should satisfy the formal constraints of completeness and self-sufficiency, yet they use different strategies to construe the relationship between virtue and *eudaimonia* in the sense of whether virtuous activity is necessary or sufficient (or neither) for *eudaimonia*. This explanation of *eudaimonia* ultimately depends on Aristotle's conception of human nature. Contemporary eudaimonist virtue ethics use a similar ethical naturalism to explicate *eudaimonia* and which character traits can count as virtues. Thus, in what follows I will focus on contemporary conceptualizations of *eudaimonia* with regard to neo-Aristotelian naturalism, and as I do I will particularly address the naturalistic fallacy objection which problematizes deriving 'ought' statements from 'is' statements.

7.2.2 Contemporary Eudaimonist Virtue Ethicists

As I have shown above, there are different readings of the conception of *eudaimonia* in Aristotle. The contemporary conceptualizations are shaped by other concerns about our value-laden ideas; hence we can find several conceptualizations of *eudaimonia*. The modern conceptualizations of *eudaimonia* consist in theories about practical reasoning, happiness, or the virtues, but especially the relation of these three: "eudaimonism is the idea that we grasp which character traits are the virtues by

¹⁴⁴ See also (Lebar, 2018)

understanding what traits practical reasoning recommends as essential to living a fulfilling human life” (Russell, 2013, pp. 7-8). I have argued for the relation between practical wisdom and *eudaimonia* in the above section, and herein I want to look at how contemporary philosophers explain *eudaimonia* using neo-Aristotelian ethical naturalism with reference to human nature.¹⁴⁵ In this way, I want to emphasize the role of *eudaimonia* as the ground for determining which character traits are virtues. I want to show how eudaimonist virtue ethics respond to the circularity objection which states that right action is defined in terms of the virtuous agent’s actions, and the idea that a virtuous agent’s actions are defined as right actions poses an unfruitful circularity. The subject of conceptualizations of *eudaimonia* deserves another dissertation in its own right. Herein, I do not claim to explain every metaethical nuance to these discussions. Rather, I want to show that we don’t need a complete account of *eudaimonia* in order to establish a relationship between virtue and the good life, and to see that engaging in virtuous activity and developing virtues are one of the most important constituents of the good human life. So, I will focus on how *eudaimonia* can validate virtues, and that will cover neo-Aristotelian naturalism for *eudaimonia*. Before I look closely to relevant literature, I want to mention the commonalities that exist among contemporary virtue ethicists. I will briefly give a road map for this section and the background that shapes the contemporary accounts of *eudaimonia*.

Contemporary eudaimonist virtue ethicists share a few central claims about virtue ethics. These central claims imply an interconnectivity between virtue, practical wisdom and *eudaimonia*. So, eudaimonism for these philosophers does not refer to a theory about either practical reasoning, or virtue, or happiness. Rather, it refers to a theory that establishes a relationship between these three themes, in a way that each part explains and illustrates better the other part. Contemporary eudaimonist virtue ethicists’ commonalities are that:¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ Ethical naturalism refers to the view that moral judgments can be grounded in the judgments about natural facts in general, and these natural facts can be about the world, human nature, and human societies. Here, I am only concerned with neo-Aristotelian naturalism which differs from others due to its focus on teleological evaluation of something as ‘good of its species’.

¹⁴⁶ For details of this discussion see (Baril, 2014)

- i. They agree on the character traits which count as virtues, and more or less these match Aristotle's list of virtues such as honesty, courage, generosity, temperance, and justice.¹⁴⁷
- ii. They understand virtues as character traits which are "deeply entrenched and systematically interrelated dispositions to act (and to act in a certain manner, for certain reasons); to respond (behaviorally, attitudinally, emotionally); to reason, feel, desire, value, choose, perceive, and so on" (Baril, 2014).¹⁴⁸
- iii. They take practical wisdom understood as the "ability to reason correctly about practical matters" (Hursthouse, 2001, p. 154).¹⁴⁹
- iv. They take virtue to be the characteristic trait that make humans good and makes them act well, and this goodness and doing well is understood in terms of *eudaimonia* (Baril, 2014, pp. 22-23).

When it comes to differences, some stay loyal to Aristotelian naturalism as it is (or as it is interpreted)¹⁵⁰, others provide a revised version of ethical naturalism following Aristotle¹⁵¹, some are explicitly eudaimonist¹⁵², some are less clearly so¹⁵³. In this section, I want to introduce briefly the influence of Aristotelian naturalism in Philippa Foot who has been a major influence on ethical naturalism in the eudaimonist tradition, and to focus on the revised accounts of *eudaimonia* with the emphasis on the evaluative character of human nature. The contemporary revisions will focus on this evaluative human nature in Rosalind Hursthouse and John McDowell.

Before I deal with the contemporary evaluation of *eudaimonia*, let me present the background that partly shaped the conceptualizations and objections that these accounts respond to. One thing that makes the analysis more difficult is that the translation 'happiness' connotes a subjective "smiley-face" feeling, something on our enjoyment and liking axis, and something that is of a state of mind. This conception of *eudaimonia* is central to ethics puzzles thinkers, and disorganizes the analysis of it.

¹⁴⁷ For instance, see Hursthouse (2001, pp. 19, 59), and Wallace (1978).

¹⁴⁸ Also see (Hursthouse, 2001, Introduction).

¹⁴⁹ See also (Russell, 2009), (Kamtekar, 2013), (Annas, 2011), (Wallace, 1978)

¹⁵⁰ Annas(1993, 2011) belongs to this category. In (1993) she articulates eudaimonism in ancient theories, and in (2011) she develops her account of virtue without emphasizing *eudaimonia* too much.

¹⁵¹ Hursthouse (2001) and Becker (1998) fall into this category.

¹⁵² Annas(1993), Hursthouse(2001), Russell (2009) are in this category.

¹⁵³ Foot (2001), and Haybron (2008) situate in this category.

Yet, one thing has not changed: we still strive for happiness as the ultimate end, it is that for the sake of which we do other things. Consider one the most famous soul doctors of all time.

What do they demand of life and wish to achieve in [life]? The answer to this can hardly be in doubt. They strive after happiness; they want to become happy and to remain so. (Freud, 1933, p. 25)

The strive for happiness is still self-evident and lasting desire of us. Yet again, Freud's presentation of a modern conception of happiness is something different than that of the ancient Greeks. Happiness is defined in terms of the pleasure principle- the absence of pain and unpleasure and the seeking of pleasure. Hence, what a modern individual calls happiness depends on the sudden satisfaction of her desires and needs (Freud, 1933, p. 25). So, a modern conception of happiness is more like an episodic experience similar to euphoric moments to which we built up tolerance and need more and more of the stimulus to have euphoria. Happiness is reduced to a subjective enjoyment at best and detached from morality. For the same reasons that imply elusiveness and subjectivity of the concept Kant excluded it from his inquiry into morality.

...the concept of happiness is such an indeterminate one that even though everyone wishes to attain happiness, yet he can never say definitely and consistently what it is that he really wishes and wills. The reason for this is that all the elements belonging to the concept of happiness are unexceptionally empirical, i.e., they must be borrowed from experience, while for the idea of happiness there is required an absolute whole, a maximum of well-being in my present and in every future condition (Kant, 1993, p. 27)

Kant's observation about what happiness is also reflects how the Enlightenment discourse on happiness centered upon episodic feelings of pleasure. He argues that happiness consists in subjective experiences and that the indeterminate and arbitrary accounts of happiness rise from this very subjective ground. Happiness belongs to the sphere of wants and wills, and this causes a great deal of arbitrariness. Thus, it is no wonder that the concept of happiness with a connotation of human flourishing and the good life has faded into either subjective well-being or faded away altogether as philosophers turned their attention to questions of duty and obligation.

This turn is with good reason -to secure our individual freedom of thought and conscience of course-. The Enlightenment's trust in individual reason to choose the best life for herself has implications for our intelligence's ability to transcend our nature. The only thing that is needed to fulfill our various goals is freedom. Freedom

is understood as self-determination and the autonomy of the individual self over shaping her priorities or goals for her life¹⁵⁴. As the “star” of the enlightenment, freedom provides us with various options in our power of choosing. The idea cherished here is a life with rich options and well-being that is only grounded on one’s choosing the best life for herself. Yet, the importance of freedom should not really exclude an objective set of criteria for human flourishing. In other words, studying what is necessary for human flourishing, or the good life is not contradictory to our most precious freedom.

This sort of view does not eliminate the need for the philosophical work on well-being. But, it does diminish its importance. People who are authorities about their own good don’t need enlightenment; they need empowerment. They need economics, not philosophy. Thus, perhaps did formal research on well-being pass largely from the philosopher to the economist, who attempts to solve the arcane problems of how most efficiently to get resources into people’s hands. Economics, and its attendant focus on our material conditions, became ascendant in the culture and in policy circles. Question of the character of well-being and its psychology, and the most sensible way to live, have accordingly taken a back seat. (Haybron, 2010, p. 12)

Haybron’s argument above parallels the conception of happiness that retreated to a very privatized area of personal affairs. For, human flourishing understood as subjected to Aristotle’s metaphysical teleology inheres a certain form of paternalism that is contrary to free will. Moreover, Aristotle’s metaphysical teleology is not acceptable anymore under the light of modern science; hence, there is no ground for good life which can be attained through virtues (Williams, 1985, Ch3). And these two objections are connected. For, the Aristotelian biological teleology is not acceptable and even if the human nature has a correct conceptualization, it does not have any normative authority over our lives.

I believe the worry about paternalism that can be dictated by a ‘fixed’ human nature, and the objection that moral judgments cannot be grounded on judgments about this outdated human nature particularly shaped the contemporary conceptualization of *eudaimonia* to a great extent. I agree that a moral theory employing ethical naturalism should be careful to avoid paternalism, since the value of freedom is indisputable. Yet, I think that employment of *eudaimonia* (which is indispensable as the ground of virtues) does not necessarily introduce a determinism or lead to paternalism. When it comes to the disbelief in a teleological picture of nature, I think the objection only

¹⁵⁴ See also (Haybron, 2010, pp. 225-226)

applies if teleology pertains to a non-evaluative explanation of human nature: a nature that is fixed, features of which can be grasped by positive sciences like in chemistry, and it is what it is.¹⁵⁵ In what follows, I will present contemporary revisions of *eudaimonia* that take Aristotle as “the protagonist against whom [they] have matched the voices of liberal modernity” (MacIntyre, 1984, p. 146).

7.3 Returning to *Eudaimonia* in 21st Century: Reinterpretation of Aristotelian Naturalism

The idea that virtue is beneficial to its possessor and makes the possessor good *qua* human being is one of the central claims of Aristotelian naturalism. The view that moral goodness is a kind of species-specific natural goodness is defended by several authors including Philippa Foot (2001), Michael Thomson (2008), Rosalind Hursthouse (2001), Alasdair MacIntyre (1999), Martha Nussbaum (1995, 2001), John McDowell (1995), Julia Annas (2011) and Daniel Russell (2009).¹⁵⁶ In this section, I want to focus on how contemporary philosophers approach the issue of neo-Aristotelian naturalism with respect to one of the biggest challenges concerning human nature’s normative authority. Especially in response to Bernard Williams’ question of why facts about human nature should have normative value and be authoritative in morality, contemporary eudaimonist virtue ethicists focus on evaluative character of human nature that defines what things are important for *eudaimonia*.¹⁵⁷

Followers of Aristotelian naturalism focus on the species-specific natural goodness that defines the characteristics that make X good *qua* Xs. Philippa Foot (2001) provides paradigm example of Aristotelian naturalism that shaped other accounts to a great extent. In her influential book *Natural Goodness*, Philippa Foot argues that goodness is based on the natural facts about a certain specimen.¹⁵⁸ Yet, the specimen

¹⁵⁵ I will return to this issue in the objections section, and explain it as normative authority of nature challenge.

¹⁵⁶ The implications and roots of naturalism can also be found on the writings of G.E.M Anscombe (1958)

¹⁵⁷ Some argue that Williams’ critique of Aristotelian naturalism is based on a misrepresentation of his ethics to begin with. Especially (Nussbaum, 1995) argues that Williams’ criticism of Aristotle rests on inaccurate picture of Aristotle’s human nature project and reduces it to be based on ‘natural scientific facts’; hence it is not an ethical evaluation, and its source in external viewpoint presents a fixity that will necessarily rule out certain ethical alternatives (pp. 87-88). See also (McDowell, 1995b)

¹⁵⁸ Note that Foot held the idea that practical rationality is instrumentalist in the sense that choosing the best action to maximize the fulfillment of subjective desires and needs. For this view see (Foot, 2002b) and (Foot, 2002c). She changed her mind about this issue, and in her latest book she argues that the

should not be understood in terms of biological evaluation. With the terms she borrows from Michael Thompson (1995), she argues rather, the life form - the specific facts and features that are characteristically associated with a specimen - determines the goodness for the members of that specimen.¹⁵⁹ She uses analogies with other social animals such as wolves¹⁶⁰ to show that goodness is determined by the life form of the thing itself. A wolf qua wolves would be defective and not good in case she does not collaboratively hunt with her pack (Foot, 2001, pp. 16, 42).

So, as the analogy presents, the goodness of the wolf involves activities that seem to be characteristic to their social life form. Similarly, the goodness of a human being is constituted by the natural goodness that is unique to humans (practical reason). Therefore, she argues that practical wisdom is not instrumental in its choosing the desired individual ends, but it directs us to worthwhile ends in accordance with the natural goodness and gives reasons for actions appropriate to these worthwhile ends. Thus, practical wisdom is tied to the idea of *eudaimonia* in this sense (Foot, 2001, p. 18).

Hursthouse accepts this idea that (1) virtue benefits its possessor in the sense of enabling one to flourish. She also agrees that (2) the virtues make the possessor a good human qua humans. Despite the obvious difference such that (1) is about personal part of the flourishing, (2) is about the features that are characteristically good for human life overall, Hursthouse argues that they are interrelated and these two claims in combination can “validate our beliefs about what character traits are the virtues” (Hursthouse, 2001, p. 167).

As perhaps the most ardent proponent of eudaimonist virtue ethics and its action-guiding capacity, Hursthouse borrows a lot from Aristotelian naturalism via Foot. Humans share four ends with the sophisticated social animals: 1) individual survival, 2) continuance of the species, 3) characteristic seeking of enjoyment and freedom from pain, and 4) the good functioning of the social group (Hursthouse, 2001, pp. 200-201). While these natural ends are shared with social, sophisticated animals such as wolves,

conception of practical rationality should be compatible with the overall conception of human good and be derived from it. Herein, I only focus on this latest view.

¹⁵⁹ She acknowledges Michael Thompson (1995) argument for ‘the life form’ for her work (2001, p.28-29).

¹⁶⁰ I omit the analogies with plants and other animals such as peacocks because I think the closest analogy can be observed in social animals.

horses or elephants, the human way to realize these ends is ‘a rational way’. Hursthouse appeals to the function of practical reason for her ethical naturalism and calls this a “rational way” (2001, p.222). “A ‘rational way’ is any way that we can rightly see as good, as something we have reason to do” (Hursthouse, 2001, p. 222). Considering this, one might ask, - why then we do not take humans as rational agents of some more abstract class? (Lott, 2014, p. 774). Hursthouse’s response to this would be:

It is still the case that human beings are ethically good in so far as their ethically relevant aspects foster the four ends appropriate to a social animal, in the way characteristic of the species. And the structure—the appeal to just those four ends—really does constrain, substantially, what I can reasonably maintain is a virtue in human beings. I cannot just proceed from some premises about what it is reasonable or rational to do to some conclusion that it is rational to act in such- and-such a way, and hence that a good human being is one who acts that way. I have to consider whether the corresponding character trait (if such a thing could be imagined) would foster or be inimical to those four ends. (2001, p. 224).

So, the rational way (or practical reason) that is designated as the characteristic feature of the human life form does not belong to an abstract class of rationality that is external to us. A rational principle (or *logos*) is not completely constrained by biological or ethological facts, it is not established on a neutral scientific foundation. In this sense, our rational way shapes what we think we have reason to do in the light of the above mentioned four ends. Yet, it is not shaped such that our physical and psychological nature dictates our reason, but rather in a way that informs the reasons that practical rationality picks. So, her definition - right action is the one that the fully virtuous person would characteristically do - does not generate a vicious circularity because the virtues that *phronimos* exercises are not virtues merely because she performs them, but because virtuous activity is constitutive of the good life.

Hursthouse presents an ethical naturalism that is close enough to the Aristotelian version, yet by the emphasis on the role of evaluative human nature she also responds to the authority of nature challenge. She takes *eudaimonia* to be the ground that validates virtues, but she differs from the Aristotelian understanding about virtuous activity’s connection to *eudaimonia*. Like Aristotle, she argues that virtuous activity is not sufficient to guarantee *eudaimonia* because some nasty misfortune might affect it in an undercutting way (Hursthouse, 2001, p.172). However, she also does not hold virtuous activity as necessary for *eudaimonia*; rather she takes it as our only reliable

bet (Hursthouse, 2001, p. 172). She says “it is to claim that no ‘regimen’ will serve one better- no other candidate ‘regimen’ is remotely plausible” (Hursthouse, 2001, p.173).

Although not very different than the thesis that virtuous activity is necessary for *eudaimonia*, Hursthouse’s conception especially is attuned to voices of liberal modernity. She implicitly accepts the possibility that some people without virtue might flourish like a green bay tree (Hursthouse, 2001, pp. 172-174). She does not accept that the counterexample of former Nazis who lives happily without remorse undermines the thesis that virtue is important for *eudaimonia* (Hursthouse, 2001, 172-174), but for a different reason. She argues that as long as one cannot prove that vicious activity systematically, historically or generally contributes to the good life, these isolated examples cannot discredit the claim that virtue is beneficial to its possessor. So, virtuous activity in her account is like a doctor’s recommendation for not smoking: it is neither necessary nor sufficient for health, yet it is our best bet for health (Hursthouse, 2001, pp.172, 173, 235). I think that this is an odd conclusion when we think of the naturalistic ground that she argues for. Let me illustrate.

1. As sophisticated social animals we have four ends: individual survival, continuance of the species, characteristic enjoyment and freedom from pain, and the good functioning of the social group.
2. Our rationality guides us how to serve these ends.
3. Virtuous activity rather than vicious activity seems to be beneficial for its possessor in virtue of fitting the rational way to serve these ends.

Why does Hursthouse have a reservation regarding the necessity of virtuous activity for *eudaimonia*? The explicit reason is that she holds the view that virtue may lead to someone’s downfall. Especially in times of great evil in which “life for most people is, or threatens to be, nasty, brutish, and short and *eudaimonia* is something that will be impossible until better times” (Hursthouse, 2001, 177). The idea is that virtuous activity “for the most part, by and large” contributes to the good life, “when it does not, when *eudaimonia* is impossible to achieve or maintain, that's not ‘what we should have expected’ but tragically bad luck” (Hursthouse, 2001, p.185).

This line of argument still does not affect the importance of *eudaimonia* in a theory of virtue ethics, but it weakens the role of virtuous activity for the good life. Prudential

elements, and the psychological well-being are important features of the good life. Yet if we can call the former Nazi in South America a happy man, then we at least accept that there are different forms of a good life and *eudaimonia* only exemplifies one version. Then, virtuous activity as commensurate with *eudaimonia* is only one of the alternatives, rather than being one of the most important constituents. Despite the fact that external goods are important, and ill luck can maim one's happiness, I do not agree with this conclusion. If the best possible life for human beings is to be grounded in natural goodness, and if practical reason seems to guide to certain actions (virtuous action) that are in accordance with this nature, I don't see how this life does not necessitate virtuous activity. I think a better explanation can be found in John McDowell.

John McDowell provides intriguing arguments concerning the role of virtuous activity in *eudaimonia*, and addresses the above mentioned challenge that virtue might lead someone to her downfall. He also argues for a neo-Aristotelian naturalism and for the function argument similar to that of Foot and Hursthouse. In his interpretation of Aristotle, McDowell focuses on how Aristotle treats virtue as a second nature to us. Aristotle argues that virtue is not something that arises automatically in us. It takes practice, and time to acquire it. Once the virtues are acquired, they exhibit a certain reliability to occur as natural things we observe. In this sense, they are similar to one's nature (not like first nature but like second nature) (*NE*, 1152a29-35). For, practical rationality that is the peculiar function of humans, structures our passions and guides our actions (with virtuous activity as the result) in a way to make them compatible with reason. Taking its start from here, McDowell develops an ethical naturalism that relies on a conception of human nature (endowed with reason) that has shaping and remaking capacity (1995b).

Reason does not just open our eyes to our nature, as members of the animal species we belong to; it also enables and even obliges us to step back from it, in a way that puts its bearing on our practical problems into question. (McDowell, 1995b, p. 132)

Thus, he also does not take human nature to be biologically or ethologically fixed, and the conception of the good life relies on the grasp of our practical rationality of what sort of things we have reason to do.¹⁶¹ Similar to Hursthouse, he focuses on human nature as an evaluative concept that is predominantly defined by the practical reason

¹⁶¹ (McDowell, 1998, pp. 55-56)

that is peculiar to human beings. To illustrate his argument, let us look at his example of the wolves which acquire reason (*logos*). (McDowell, 1995b, p. 130f).¹⁶² A rational wolf would be able to think about possible alternatives to behaviors that come natural to wolves such as co-operative hunting. The rational capacity would enable the ability to conceptualize the world (not as it is, but as conforming to the content of the faculty of reason) and one's place in it; hence, the rational wolf would have an agency manifesting itself in choosing between options. Instead of complying with the first nature (co-operative hunting), the rational wolf can reflectively think about why he should pull his weight in the hunt, and can reason about the alternative that he might free-ride without others noticing him and still have his share without any effort (McDowell, 1995b, pp.130-131). Similarly, practical reason sheds light on our natural impulses, or first nature, and by imparting practical reasoning through moral education (acquiring virtues), humans step back from the first nature and "question its rational credentials" (McDowell, 1995b, p.145). From the analogy of the rational wolf, one can assume that reason overthrows nature's authority in favor of self-interest. It is not necessarily so. McDowell's ethical naturalism emphasizes the evaluative feature of human nature represented in the transformative role of practical reason. In return, it explicates a distinctive range of reasons for acting in certain ways. Thus, the second nature (virtues) has a normative authority, and the rationality of virtue is explained without suspense. The second nature unlike first nature is not fixed and open to reflective questioning (McDowell, 1995b, p.145).

McDowell's ethical naturalism, natural facts about us that pertain to our first nature such as we feel pleasure/ pain, we need to eat and drink to survive, and we are social animals do not predetermine our reasons to act, yet they put some limits on reason (1995b, p.146). Yet most importantly, reason transforms our realizations of these facts. So, it is not merely a biological 'natural' fact that we have reason and this natural fact determines that virtuous activity is beneficial for us. Rather, the case is that second nature reconciles our reason (as part of our nature) and our nature (other parts that are characteristic to human life). In this sense, reason's transformative nature gives practical and normative quality to what we have reason to do.¹⁶³ So, his reference to

¹⁶² He reminds us of the Wittgensteinian aphorism that "if a lion could talk, we could not understand him" (Wittgenstein, 1986 , p. 225), but for McDowell's discussion the intelligibility of the example does not matter, and the thought experiment is enough to illustrate his point (1995b, p.130).

¹⁶³ See (McDowell, 1995a, pp. 151-153).

human nature for *eudaimonia*, or simply ethical naturalism consists in framing acquisition of virtue as reason's second nature. Human nature as the first nature does not bear explanatory power for normative claims, yet reason and agency (that hold reason) carry this power of inducing normativity.¹⁶⁴

Unlike Hursthouse, McDowell holds virtuous activity to be necessary for *eudaimonia*. Thus, contra to Hursthouse, he argues that by acting virtuously at the cost of some other loss, the virtuous person would not think of it as loss. Her reason for virtuous activity "is apprehended, not as outweighing or overriding any reasons for acting in other ways, which would otherwise be constituted by other aspects of the situation (the present danger, say), but as silencing them." (McDowell, 1998, pp. 55-56). Thus, "sacrificing" personal goods at times for the sake of virtue would not be deemed as a loss. We can say that it is similar to Hursthouse's accounting for ill luck, or bad fate that undermines one's happiness, rather than virtuous activity causing the loss.¹⁶⁵ Aristotle too claims that it would be foolish to say that great misfortune does not affect the happiness of the virtuous person.

But even virtue seems, in itself, to be lacking something, since apparently one can possess virtue even when one is asleep, or inactive throughout one's life, and also when one is suffering terribly or experiencing the greatest misfortunes; and no one would call a person living this kind of life happy, unless he were closely defending a thesis. (*NE*, 1095b37-1096a4)

Aristotle claims that only if we are defending a thesis about the sufficiency of virtue to be happy, it might make sense. Realistically, the greatest misfortunes might ruin the happiness of a fully virtuous person. Yet, the important point to emphasize here should be that even at those times of great misfortune, there is a difference between the virtuous person and the non-virtuous person. Virtue still shines through in the midst of these unfortunate circumstances, and virtuous person would never be wretched because she would never perform hateful and base actions (*NE*, 1100b27-1101a10)¹⁶⁶. Virtue would still serve to make the life better. Practical wisdom that the virtuous person has allows them to deal with the contingencies of the world, and it is not "easily

¹⁶⁴ For the scope of this thesis, I think it is enough to represent the evaluative human nature in McDowell's case. Martha Nussbaum argues in the same line about normative authority of evaluative human nature. She discusses thinking about human nature is a way of determining the crucial goods without which the human way of life is unimaginable. See especially (Nussbaum, 1995, sections VI; VII, VIII; 1987, p.41).

¹⁶⁵ See (Peters, 2013, p. 76) for a detailed discussion of "loss" in McDowell.

¹⁶⁶ See also (Nussbaum, 2001) for an excellent discussion of the fragility of virtuousness in the face of ill luck.

diminished by them” (Nussbaum, 2001, p. 333). The virtuous activity’s connection to *eudaimonia* should not be understood through how great misfortune could dislodge a virtuous person. It should be understood whether we can imagine a good life which excludes virtuous activity, and includes the external goods and resources. *Eudaimonia* is vulnerable to great misfortunes, because external goods and resources are important to do well and the absence of certain goods such as health and friends or loss of one’s child might ruin one’s happiness. Yet, the one with the virtue would still fare better because virtuous activity has a special relation to the good life compared to other goods.

So, to summarize McDowell’s position, we can say that *eudaimonia* necessarily involves virtuous activity because virtue is the natural product of practical reasoning. Against the objection that ethical naturalism derives ‘ought’ statements from ‘is’ statements, he provides an evaluative reading of human nature. According to this evaluative account, the capacity of reason includes the power to choose between alternatives and transform and shape our first nature. So, virtuous activity is chosen as a rational activity that is commensurate with the good life. Therefore, he argues for the value of virtuous activity even at the expense of other loss.

The argument about ethical naturalism consists in explaining what reasons we have to act in certain ways are constrained with our convictions about our nature. The ultimate end which is defined by our practical reason includes the end that all humans share, such as crucial goods that are essential to the human way of living. It does not follow from this picture that everyone has to live the same life. Diversity in our wants and enjoyments does not pose a problem for the idea that human flourishing requires certain goods that are crucial to all humans, and it is not at the expense of individual, and subjective happiness. The ethical implications of human nature do not map out a specific way of life, or encourage people to ignore their individual differences. This does not make the notion of human nature in question trivial. Human beings are, it is assumed, similar by nature in very general respects: we are by nature rational, and we not only deliberate about what to do but do so in a way that reflects concern for a whole life. All ancient theories agree on general facts about human nature which are substantial enough to support the formal points of eudaimonistic ethics about which they concur: we have a final unifying aim in life which directs our deliberation and commitments and in some way guides what we do. They all agree on the point that

normally rational human beings have deliberative concern for the whole of their lives, not just for ‘present aims’ and the like (Annas, 1988, pp. 157-159).¹⁶⁷

As finite beings whose lives are shaped, and infused with the characteristic activity of reason, *eudaimonia* provides a coherent whole in the sense that it organizes and structures the worthwhile items, determines their proper importance and role.¹⁶⁸ (Wilkes, 1978, p. 554). It is the ultimate reference for practical wisdom, and it provides the justificatory ground for virtues and in this sense unifies them.

In this section, I tried to show how neo-Aristotelian naturalism can help to explain *eudaimonia*’s role in virtue ethics. By validating virtues, the concept of *eudaimonia* solves the circularity problem as exemplified by Hursthouse. Both Hursthouse and McDowell provide an evaluative concept of human nature that constitutes their neo-Aristotelian naturalism, and also respond to the authority of nature challenge. In order to show the connection between virtue and *eudaimonia*, I believe it is essential to argue that *eudaimonia* requires several kinds of goods¹⁶⁹, yet the roles these goods play in it does not attain the same importance. Virtuous activity coupled with good fortune is sufficient for *eudaimonia*, so they are both necessary, yet only one of them contributes to *eudaimonia* in a very important way, whereas the other cannot do so on its own. So, I think virtue has a special footing, or is a special constituent for *eudaimonia*. *Eudaimonia* helps and structures the ends for the good life. It is indispensable in virtue ethics since it locates practical wisdom and gives the general content to its value judgments and validates virtues. Thus, action guiding virtue ethics should embody all conceptually connected themes: virtue, practical wisdom and *eudaimonia*.

¹⁶⁷ (Hursthouse, 2001) makes the same point in her book.

¹⁶⁸ See also (Wilkes, 1978, p. 554).

¹⁶⁹ I agree with the inclusivist reading that *eudaimonia* requires intellectual virtues of practical wisdom and theoretical wisdom, but also bodily and external goods such as friends, money, just institutions, a just society, good water, good food. See also *NE*, I,8, 1099a31-b8; I, 10, 1100b8-11, 1101a14-16)



8. CONCLUSION

Virtue ethics, an ethical approach to ethics with very ancient origins, experienced a significant revival in the mid 20th century. Although ‘virtue’ as good character trait has been employed in different cultures throughout different times, virtue ethics as a possible alternative to consequentialism and deontology is rather new. The interest in virtue ethics emphasizes the agent’s life as a whole, her character, the importance of emotions, happiness, and practical reasoning. These old-new insights that hint at what matters for us as human beings seem to remedy the narrow outlook of modern moral theories that focused on rigorous formulations of right action, obligation and duty. Yet, virtue ethics as an alternative normative theory faces a longstanding objection, which can be articulated as follows: virtue ethics cannot provide action-guidance because it does not have the structural capacity to form codified rule(s). In this dissertation I discuss whether virtue ethics can provide action-guidance. The simple answer to the question is yes, yet the explanation of how virtue ethics can guide action is not as simple. The virtue ethical outlook differs from the outlook of other moral theories in the sense that the theory is not hierarchically ordered in terms of a ‘basic’ notion from which everything is derived, and it does not/cannot subsume the evaluation of all action under a universalizable principle which can clearly prescribe rightness and wrongness as well as a decision-making procedure. Among the different strands of virtue ethics which deal specifically with the action-guidance objection, I argue that eudaimonistic virtue ethics is better equipped to respond to the objection because the notion of virtue is connected to practical wisdom and eudaimonia in inseparable ways.

Chapter 2 provides the historical overview of the revival of virtue ethics and introduces the action-guidance objection which states that virtue ethics does not have the practical capacity to guide actions. One of the main points I try to make here is that it is important to understand what the action-guidance objection asks for, since the assumptions that are made about what normative theory should be like affects how we should perceive the objection to begin with. So, I explain the ethical outlook that virtue ethics provides as a criticism to modern moral theories in its historical development

and evaluate the action-guidance objection in light of this different ethical outlook. I distill virtue ethics from virtue theories in order to narrow the research for action-guidance in virtue ethics which makes virtue the central notion.

Chapter 3 presents eudaimonistic virtue ethics with regard to the action-guidance that it can provide. In order to explain the contemporary systematic attempt to generate a eudaimonistic virtue ethics, I introduce the central concepts of eudaimonia, practical wisdom (*phronesis*) and virtue and discuss Aristotelian eudaimonistic virtue ethics in order to identify the background that largely influenced the contemporary accounts of eudaimonistic virtue ethics. I focus on Rosalind Hursthouse's eudaimonistic virtue ethics with regard to her response to action-guidance objection and problematization of the objection itself and how she develops a theory that can produce action-guiding rules. Thus, I analyze the rightness of action that is defined through the virtuous agent in her case as well as introducing the objections to her account.

Chapter 4 examines the target-centered (pluralist) virtue ethics of Christine Swanton. I look at Swanton's account of the nature of virtue which presents a more complex profile and explicates the plurality of goods that belong to fields concerning people, situations, actions, inner states and objects. I analyze her account of right action which defines rightness in terms of hitting the targets of the virtues and excludes the virtuous agent as a parameter in the definition. I argue in this chapter that target-centered virtue ethics makes it hard to locate and explain practical wisdom without the interconnectedness of eudaimonia and virtue and the conception of the unity of the virtues.

Chapter 5 looks at Michael Slote's agent-based (sentimentalist) virtue ethics with regard to an account of right action. I introduce his account of right action as the expression of admirable inner states by drawing similarities and differences with eudaimonistic virtue ethics. I consider the objections that are directed at agent-based virtue ethics and argue that Slote's account helps to reveal the importance of inner motives and their connection to rightness. I also discuss the difficulties it bears with regard to making the distinction between "doing the right thing" and "doing it for the right reasons" and the justification of virtues.

Chapter 6 aims to show the indispensability of practical wisdom for virtue ethics. In order to make this argument, I address the revisions that are made to Hursthouse's definition of right action, especially in light of the criticisms that I introduce in Chapter

2. Particularly I deal with the ‘right but not virtuous’ objection that targets self-improving and self-controlling actions; despite the fact that these are right actions, a yet virtuous person would not necessarily perform them. I discuss the role of practical wisdom in virtue ethics and argue that if we understand practical wisdom, and how to develop it, then the ideal of virtuous agency in the definition of right action does not invite an apparent vicious circularity and actually provides guidance even for novices.

Chapter 7 tries to reveal how practical wisdom and eudaimonia are conceptually connected to each other. In this chapter, I argue for the indispensability of eudaimonia for practical wisdom, and how it also constitutes the validating ground for virtue. In addition to this, I also address the worries about naturalistic fallacy objection against eudaimonism and offer that the evaluative conceptualization of the human nature can produce an answer to naturalistic fallacy objection.

The main claim of the dissertation is that virtue ethics can provide action guidance if we understand how practical wisdom develops and how eudaimonia, practical wisdom and virtue are intricately connected.



REFERENCES

- Ackrill, J.** (1999). Aristotle on Eudaimonia. In N. Sherman, *Aristotle's Ethics: Critical Essays*. Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Adams, R. M.** (2006). *A Theory of Virtue*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Andorno, R.** (2011). Anti-Theory. In H. Chadwick, H. ten Have, & E. Meslin, *Sage Handbook of Health Care Ethics* (pp. 31-39). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Annas, J.** (1988). Naturalism in Greek Ethics: Aristotle and After. *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy*, 149-171.
- Annas, J.** (1993). *The Morality of Happiness*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Annas, J.** (1995). Virtue As A Skill. *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 3(2), 227-243.
- Annas, J.** (1998). Aristotle on Virtue and Happiness. In N. Sherman, *Aristotle's Ethics* (pp. 35-57). Lanham; Boulder; New York; Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc.
- Annas, J.** (2005). Virtue Ethics. In D. Copp, *The Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory* (pp. 515-536). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Annas, J.** (2008). The Phenomenology of Virtue. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, 7, 21-24.
- Annas, J.** (2011). *Intelligent Virtue*. Oxford : Oxford University Press.
- Annas, J.** (2017). Ancient Eudaimonism and Modern Morality. In C. Bobonich, *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Ethics* (pp. 265-280). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Anscombe, G.** (2007). Modern Moral Philosophy. In R. Crisp, & M. Slote, *Virtue Ethics* (pp. 26-45). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Aristotle.** (1998). *Politics*. (C. Reeve, Tr.) Indianapolis / Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company.
- Aristotle.** (2000). *Nicomachean Ethics*. (R. Crisp, Tr.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Athanassoulis, N.** (2018). Acquiring Aristotelian Virtue. In N. E. Snow, *The Oxford Handbook of Virtue* (pp. 415-432). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Audi, R.** (1997). *Moral Knowledge and Ethical Character*. New York : Oxford University Press.
- Badhwar, N. K.** (1996). The Limited Unity of Virtue. *Noûs*(30), 306-329.

- Baier, A.** (1985). *Postures of the Mind*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Baril, A.** (2014). Eudaimonia in Contemporary Virtue Ethics. In S. Van Hoof, *The Handbook of Virtue Ethics* (pp. 17-28). Durham: Acumen Publishing Limited.
- Batson, C. D.** (1991). *The Altruism Question: Toward a Social-Psychological Answer*. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Bloomfield, P.** (2014). *The Virtues of Happiness: A Theory of the Good Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bostock, D.** (2000). *Aristotle's Ethics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bozkaya, Ikbāl.** (2014). *Apolitical Freedom* (MA thesis, Istanbul Technical University, Istanbul, Turkey). Available at <https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi/> (Thesis No:359969)
- Brännmark, J.** (2006). From Virtue to Decency. *Metaphilosophy*(37), 589-604.
- Brännmark, J.** (2008). Dygdetik Och moraliskt Beslutsfattande (Virtue Ethics and Moral Decision-Making. *Filosofisk Tidskrift*, 28(2).
- Bradley, B.** (2018). Contemporary Consequentialist Theories of Virtue. In N. E. Snow, *The Oxford Handbook of Virtue* (pp. 398-415). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Brady, M.** (2004). Against Agent-Based Virtue Ethics. *Philosophical Papers*, 33, 1-10.
- Brickhouse, T. C., & Smith, N. D.** (1997). Socrates and the Unity of the Virtues. *The Journal of Ethics*, 1(4), 311-324.
- Broadie, S.** (2005). On the Idea of the summum bonum. In C. Gill, *Virtue, Norms, and Objectivity* (pp. 41-59). Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Broadie, S.** (2007). *Aristotle and Beyond*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Broadie, S.** (1991). *Ethics with Aristotle*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Brown, L.** (1997). What Is 'the mean relative to us' in Aristotle's "Ethics"? *Phronesis*, 42(1), 77-93.
- Chase, W. G., & Simon, H. A.** (1973). The Mind's Eye in Chess. In W. G. Chase, *Visual Information Processing*. New York: Academic Press.
- Clarke, S. G.** (1987). Anti-Theory in Ethics. *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 24(3), 237-244.
- Conee, E.** (2006). Dispositions Towards Counterfactuals in Ethics. In K. McDaniel, J. F. Raibley, & M. Zimmerman, *The Good, the Right, Life and Death: Essays in Honor of Fred Feldman* (pp. 173-189). Ashgate Publishing.
- Cooper, J.** (1975). *Reason and the Human Good in Aristotle*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Cooper, J.** (1999). Contemplation and Happiness: A Reconsideration. In J. Cooper, *Reason and Emotion* (pp. 212-236). Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- Cooper, J.** (2004). Plato and Aristotle on 'Finality' and '(Self)-Sufficiency'. In R. Heinaman, *Knowledge, Nature, and the Good*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Copp, D., & Sobel, D.** (2004). Morality and Virtue: An Assessment of Some Recent Work in Virtue Ethics. *Ethics*, 114 (3), 514-554.
- Crisp, R.** (1992). Utilitarianism and the Life of Virtue. *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 42(167), 139-160.
- Crisp, R.** (1994). Aristotle's Inclusivism. *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 12, 119-136.
- Crisp, R.** (2000). Particularizing Particularism. In B. Hooker, & M. Little, *Moral Particularism* (pp. 23-47). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cullity, G.** (1999). Virtue Ethics, Theory, and Warrant. *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, 2(3), 277-294.
- Curzer, H.** (1995). Aristotle's Account of the Virtue of Justice. *Apeiron*, 28, 207-38.
- Curzer, H.** (2017). Against Idealization in Virtue Ethics. In D. Carr, J. Arthur, & K. Kristjansson, *Varieties of Virtue Ethics* (pp. 53-73). London: Palgrave Macmillan .
- Curzer, H.** (2012). *Aristotle and the Virtues*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Damonte, M.** (2019). The Soft Presence of Wittgenstein in Virtue Ethics and His Hard Significance for Its Future. In E. Grimi, *Virtue Ethics: Retrospect and Prospect* (pp. 43-59). Cham, Switzerland: Springer.
- Dancy, J.** (1993). *Moral Reasons*. Oxford : Blackwell.
- Daniels, N.** (1979). Wide Reflective Equilibrium and Theory Acceptance in Ethics. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 76(5), 256-282.
- Daniels, N.** (2020). Reflective Equilibrium. In E. N. Zalta, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Vol. Summer). Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University.
- Darwall, S.** (2005). Virtue Ethics. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 589-597.
- Das, R.** (2003). Virtue Ethics and Right Action. *AustralasJ Philos*, 81(3).
- Das, R.** (2015). Virtue Ethics and Right Action: A Critique. In L. Besser-Jones, & M. Slote, *Routledge Companion to Virtue Ethics* (pp. 331-345). New York: Routledge.
- Descartes, R.** (2006). *Meditations, Objections, and Replies*. (R. A. Cress, & C. D., Dü) Hackett.
- Doris, J.** (1998). Persons, Situations, and Virtue Ethics. *Noûs*, 32(4), 504-530.
- Doviak, D.** (2011). A New Form of Agent-Based Virtue Ethics. *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, 259-272.
- Driver, J.** (1996). The Virtues and Human Nature. In R. Crisp, *How Should One Live? Essays on the Virtues*. Oxford : Clarendon Press.
- Driver, J.** (2003). *Uneasy Virtue*. Cambridge University Press.

- Driver, J.** (2006). Virtue Theory. In J. Dreier, *Contemporary Debates in Philosophy* (pp. 113-123). Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Driver, J.** (2007). *Uneasy Virtue*. Cambridge University Press.
- Eylon, Y.** (2014). The Virtuous Person and Normativity. In S. van Hooft, *The Handbook of Virtue Ethics*. Durham: Acumen Publishing Ltd.
- Firth, R.** (1952). Ethical Absolutism and the Ideal Observer. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 12(3), 317-345.
- Flyvbjerg, B.** (2004). Phronetic Planning Research: Theoretical and Methodological Reflections. *Planning Theory & Practice*, 5(3).
- Foot, P.** (1978). *Virtues and Vices*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Foot, P.** (2001). *Natural Goodness*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Foot, P.** (2002a). Virtues and Vices. In *Virtues and Vices and Other Essays in Moral Philosophy* (pp. 1-19). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Foot, P.** (2002b). Moral Arguments. In P. Foot, *Virtues and Vices and Other Essays in Moral Philosophy* (pp. 502-513). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Foot, P.** (2002c). Moral Beliefs. In P. Foot, *Virtues and Vices and Other Essays in Moral Philosophy*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Frankena, W.** (1973). *Ethics*. Englewood Cliffs.
- Freud, S.** (1962). *Civilization and Its Discontent*. (James Strachey, Tr.), New York: W. W. Norton Company Inc.
- Gottlieb, P.** (2009). *The Virtue of Aristotle's Ethics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Hämäläinen, N.** (2009). Is Moral Theory Harmful in Practice?—Relocating Anti-theory in Contemporary Ethics. *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*(12), 539-553.
- Hacker-Wright, J.** (2015). Skill, Practical Wisdom, and Ethical Naturalism. *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, 18, 983-993.
- Hardie, W. F.** (1965). The Final Good in Aristotle's Ethics. *Philosophy*, XL, 277-95.
- Harman, G.** (1983). Human Flourishing, Ethics, and Liberty. *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 12, 307-322.
- Harman, G.** (1999). Moral Philosophy Meets Social Psychology: Virtue Ethics and the Fundamental Attribution Error. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, New Series*(119), 316-331.
- Harman, G.** (2001). Virtue Ethics Without Character Traits. In A. Byrne, R. Stalnaker, & R. Wedgwood, *Fact and Value* (pp. 117-129). Cambridge: The MIT Press.
- Haybron, D. M.** (2010). *The Pursuit of Unhappiness: the Elusive Psychology of Well-Being*. Oxford University Press.
- Hill, T. E.** (2012). Kantian Virtue and "Virtue Ethics". In T. E. Hill, *Virtue, Rules and Justice: Kantian Aspirations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Hoffman, M.** (2000). *Empathy and Moral Development: Implications fro Caring and Justice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hope, M.** (2010). *Aristotle's Ethics*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Hudson, S. D.** (1986). *HUman Character and Morality*. Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Hume, D.** (1874-75). Of the Standard of Taste. In D. Hume, *The Philosophical Works of David Hume* (Vol. 3). London: Longman, Green.
- Hume, D.** (1960). *A Treatise of Human Nature*. (L. Selby-Bigge, Ed.) London: The Oxford University Press.
- Hurka, T.** (2001). *Virtue, Vice and Value*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hursthouse, R.** (1980-1). A False Doctrine of the Mean. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 81, 57-72.
- Hursthouse, R.** (1991). Virtue Theory and Abortion. *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 20, 223-246.
- Hursthouse, R.** (1996). Normative Virtue Ethics. In R. Crisp, *How Should One Live*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hursthouse, R.** (2001). *On Virtue Ethics*. Oxford : Oxford University Press.
- Hursthouse, R.** (2006). Are Virtues the Proper Starting Point For Morality? In J. Dreier, *Contemporary Debates in Philosophy* (pp. 99-113). Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Hursthouse, R.** (2006). Practical Wisdom: A Mundane Account. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 106, 285-309.
- Hursthouse, R., & Pettigrove, G.** (2018). Virtue Ethics. In E. N. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosphy* (Vol. Winter 2018). Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University.
- Hutcheson, F.** (2002 (1728)). *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of Passions, With Illustrations on the Moral Sense*. (A. Garrett, Ed.) indianapolis: Liberty Fund.
- Irwin, T. H.** (1999). Permanent Happiness: Aristotle and Solon. In N. Sherman, *Aristotle Ethics: Critical Essays*. Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Irwin, T. H.** (2010). The Sense and Reference of Kalon in Aristotle. *Classical Philology*, 105(4), 381-396.
- Ivanhoe, P. J.** (2013). Virtue ethics and the Chinese Confucian tradition . In D. Russell, *The Cambridge Companion to Virtue Ethics* (pp. 49-70). Durham: Cambridge University Press.
- Jacobs, J.** (2020). Naturalism. In *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Retrieved from <https://iep.utm.edu/naturali/#H3>
- Jacobson, D.** (2002). An unsolved Problem for Slote's Agent-Based Virtue Ethics. *Philosophical Studies*, 111, 53-67.
- Johnson, R. N.** (2003). Virtue and Right. *Ethics*, 113(4), 810-834.

- Johnson, R., & Cureton, A.** (2019, march 21). Kant's Moral Philosophy. In E. N. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University. Retrieved from <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2019/entries/kant-moral/>
- Jollimore, T.** (2020). Impartiality. In E. Zalta, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University.
- Kamtekar, R.** (2013). Ancient Virtue Ethics: An Overview With An Emphasis On Practical Wisdom. In D. Russell, *Cambridge Companion to Virtue Ethics* (pp. 29-49). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kant, I.** (1909). On a supposed Right to Tell Lies from Benevolent Motives. In I. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason and Other Works on the Theory of Ethics* (pp. 361-364). London, New York, Bombay: Longmans, Green, and Co.
- Kant, I.** (1964). *The Doctrine of Virtue*. New York: Harper & Row Torchbooks.
- Kant, I.** (1991). *The Metaphysics of Morals*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Kant, I.** (1993). *Grounding for Metaphysics of Morals*. (Third, Ed., & J. W. Ellington, Trans.) Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.
- Kawall, J.** (2002). Virtue Theory and Ideal Observers. *Philosophical Studies*, 109, 197-222.
- Kawall, J.** (2009). Virtue Theory, Ideal Observers, and the Supererogatory. *Philosophical Studies*, 146, 179-196.
- Kawall, J.** (2014). Qualified Agent and Agent-Based Virtue Ethics and the Problem of Right Action. In S. Van Hooft, *The Handbook of Virtue Ethics* (pp. 130-141). Durham: Acumen.
- Keller, S.** (2007). Virtue Ethics is Self-effacing. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 85(2), 221-231.
- Kenny, A.** (1977). Aristotle on Happiness. In J. Barnes, M. Schofield, & R. Sorabji, *Articles on Aristotle: Ethics & Politics*. London.
- Keyt, D.** (1983). Intellectualism in Aristotle. In J. Anton, & A. Preus, *Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy* (Vol. 2, pp. 364-387). Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Korsgaard, C.** (1986). Skepticism About Practical Reason. *Journal of Philosophy*, 5-25.
- Korsgaard, C.** (1996). From Duty and for the Sake of the Noble: Kant and Aristotle on Morally Good Action. In S. Engstrom, & J. Whiting, *Aristotle, Kant and*
- Kraut, R.** (1989). *Aristotle on the Human Good*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Kraut, R.** (2018). Aristotle's Ethics. In E. N. Zalta, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University.
- Kultgen, J.** (1998). The Vicissitudes of Common-Sense Virtue Ethics. *The Journal of Value Inquiry*, 32(3).

- LeBar, M.** (2018). Eudaimonism. In N. Snow, *The Oxford Handbook of Virtue* (pp. 470-491). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- LeBar, M., & Slote, M.** (2016). Justice as a Virtue. In E. N. Zalta, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University.
- Leighton, S.** (1992). Relativising Moral Excellence in Aristotle. *Apeiron*, 25(1), 49-66.
- Losin, P.** (1987). Aristotle's Doctrine of the Mean. *History of Philosophical Quarterly*, 4(3), 329-341.
- Lott, M.** (2014). Why be a good Human Being? Natural Goodness, Reason, and the Authority of Human Nature. *Philosophia*, 42, 761-777.
- Louden, R.** (1986). Kant's Virtue Ethics. *Philosophy*, 61(238), 473-489.
- Louden, R.** (2007). On Some Vices of Virtue Ethics. In R. Crisp, & M. Slote, *Virtue Ethics*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- MacIntyre, A.** (1984). *After Virtue*. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press.
- MacIntyre, A.** (1999). *Dependent Rational Animals*. Chicago: Open Court.
- Maslow, A.** (1968). *Toward a Psychology of Being*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co.
- McDowell, J.** (1995a). Eudaimonism and Realism in Aristotle's Ethics. In R. Heinaman, *Aristotle and Moral Realism*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- McDowell, J.** (1995b). Two Sorts of Naturalism. In R. Hursthouse, G. Lawrence, & W. Quinn, *Virtue Ethics and Reasons* (pp. 128-153). New York: Oxford University Press.
- McDowell, J.** (1998). Virtue and Reason. In J. McDowell, *Mind, Value, and Reality* (pp. 50-73). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- McDowell, J.** (2007). Virtue and Reason. In R. Crisp, & M. Slote, *Virtue Ethics* (pp. 141-163). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Milgram, E.** (2005). Murdoch, Practical Reasoning, and Particularism. In E. Milgram, *Ethics Done Right* (pp. 168-197). Cambridge University Press.
- Moore, G. E.** (1903). *Principia Ethica*. London, New York: The Cambridge University Press.
- Murdoch, I.** (1970). The Idea of Perfection. In I. Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of the Good* (Vols. 1-45). London, N.Y: Routledge.
- Murdoch, I.** (2007). The Sovereignty of Good over Other Concepts. In R. Crisp, & M. Slote, *Virtue Ethics* (pp. 99-118). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Myles-Worsley, M., Johnston, W., & Simons, M. A.** (1988). The Influence of Expertise on X-ray Image Processing. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, 14, 553-557.

- Narvaez, D., & Lapsley, D. K.** (2005). The Psychological Foundations of everyday Morality and Moral Expertise. In D. K. Lapsley, & F. Power, *Character Psychology and Character Education*. University of Nortre Dame.
- Natali, C.** (2001). *The Wisdom of Aristotle*. (G. Parks, Trans.) SUNY Press.
- Nietzsche, F.** (1996). *On the Geneology of Morals*. (D. Smith, Ed.) Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nietzsche, F.** (2003). *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. (R. Hollingdale, Ed.) New York, USA: Penguin Books.
- Nietzsche, F.** (2007). *Ecce Homo: How to Become What you Are*. (D. Large, Ed.) Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Noddings, N.** (1984). *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Nussbaum, M.** (1987). Nature, Function, and Capability: Aristotle on Political Distribution. In *WIDER Working Papers* (Vol. 31, pp. 1-50). Helsinki: World Institute for Development Economics Research of the United Nations University.
- Nussbaum, M.** (1995). Aristotle on Human Nature and Foundation s of Ethics. In J. E. Altham, *World, Mind, and Ethics* (pp. 86-132). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Nussbaum, M.** (1999). Virtue Ethics: A Misleading Category? *The Journal of Ethics*, 3(3).
- Nussbaum, M.** (2001). *The Fragility of Goodness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press .
- Oakley, J.** (1996). Varieties of Virtue Ethics. *Ratio*, 9(2).
- O'Connor, J. D.** (1988). Aristotelian JUstice as a Personal Virtue. *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, 13, 417-27.
- O'Connor, J. D.** (2006). Are Virtue Ethics and Kantian Ethics REally so Very Different? *New Blackfriars*, 87(1009), 238-252.
- O'Neil, O.** (1984). Kant After Virtue. *Inquiry*, 26(4), 387-405.
- Oxford University Press.** (2020). Depth psychology. *Lexico.com*. Retrieved November 16, 2020, from https://www.lexico.com/definition/depth_psychology
- Östenberg, J.** (1999). The Virtues of Virtue Ethics. In R. (. Sliwinski, *Philosophical Crumbs* (Vol. 49). Uppsala: Philosophical Studies.
- Peters, J.** (2013). Virtue, Personal Good, and the Silencing of Reasons. In J. Peters, *Aristotelian Ethics in Contemporary Perspective* (pp. 69-83). New York: Routledge.
- Peterson, S.** (1988). Horos (Limit) in Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics. *Phronesis*, 33(3), 233-250.
- Pettigrove, G.** (2018). Alternatives to Neo-Aristotelian Virtue Ethics. In N. E. Snow, *The Oxford Handbook of Virtue* (pp. 359-377). New York: Oxford University Press.

- Pierce, A. W.** (2005). Aristotelian Virtue and Practical Judgment. In C. Gill, *Virtues, Norms, and Objectivity* (pp. 257-279). Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Pincoff, E.** (1971). Quandry Ethics. *Mind*, 80(320), 552-571.
- Plato.** (1962). Meno. In W. M. Lamb, *Plato with an English Translation: Laches, Protagoras, Meno, Euthydemus*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Plato.** (1962). Protagoras. In W. M. Lamb, *Plato with an English Translation: Laches, Protagoras, Meno, Euthydemus* (Vol. IV, pp. 85-259). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Plato.** (2004). *The Republic*. (C.D.C Reeve, Tr.) Indianapolis: Hackett.
- Porter, J.** (2013). Virtue Ethics in the Medieval Period. In D. Russell, *The Cambridge Companion to Virtue Ethics* (pp. 70-92). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Purinton, J.** (1998). Aristotle's Definition of Happiness. *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 259-378.
- Rabbås, Ø.** (2015). Eudaimonia, Human Nature, and Normativity: Reflections on Aristotle's Project in Nicomachean Ethics Book I. In Ø. Rabbås, E. K. Emilsson, H. Fossheim, & M. Tuominen, *The Quest for the Good Life* (pp. 88-113). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Railton, P.** (1986, April). Moral Realism. *The Philosophical Review*, 95(2), 163-207.
- Rawls, J.** (1971). *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Roberts, R. C.** (2017). Varieties of Virtue Ethics. In D. Carr, J. Arthur, & K. Kristjánson, *Varieties of Virtue Ethics*. Palgrave: Macmillan.
- Roche, T.** (1988). Ergon and Eudaimonia in Nicomachean Ethics I: Reconsidering the Intellectualist Interpretation. *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 26(2), 175-194.
- Ross, L., & Nisbett, R. E.** (1991). *The Person and the Situation: Perspective of Social Psychology*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Ross, W. D.** (1930). *The Right and the Good*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Russell, D.** (2008). That "Ought" Does Not Imply "Right": Why It Matters for Virtue Ethics. *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, XLVI, 299-315.
- Russell, D.** (2009). *Practical Intelligence and the Virtues*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Russell, D.** (2013). Virtue Ethics, Happiness and the Good Life. In D. Russell, *The Cambridge Companion to Virtue Ethics* (pp. 7-29). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Russell, D.** (2015). Aristotle on Cultivating Virtue. In N. Snow, *Cultivating Virtue* (pp. 17-49). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Russell, D.** (2018). Putting Ideals in Their Place. In N. E. Snow, *The Oxford Handbook of Virtue* (pp. 432-453). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sanford, J.** (2015). *Before Virtue*. The Catholic University of America Press.

- Setiya, K.** (2002). Morals From Motives by Michael Slote. *Philosophical Review*, 111, 616-618.
- Sher, G.** (1998). Ethics, Character and Action. In E. Frankel Paul, F. D. Miller Jr., & F. P. Jeffrey, *Virtue and Vice* (pp. 1-17). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sherman, N.** (1989). *The Fabric of Character*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Sherman, T. S.** (2006). Wisdom and Action Guidance in the Agent-Based Virtue Ethics of Aristotle. *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, 80(4), 481-506.
- Sinnott-Armstrong, W.** (2019). Consequentialism. In E. N. Zalta, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University.
- Slote, M.** (1995a). Agent-Based Virtue Ethics. *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, 10.
- Slote, M.** (1995b). *From Morality to Virtue*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Slote, M.** (2001). *Morals From Motives*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Slote, M.** (2010). *Moral Sentimentalism*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Slote, M.** (2014). Virtue Ethics and Moral Sentimentalism. In S. Van Hooft, *The Handbook of Virtue Ethics* (pp. 53-64). Durham: Acumen.
- Smith, A.** (2002). *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. (K. Haakonssen, Ed.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Smith, M.** (1994). *The Moral Problem*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Smith, M.** (1995, March). Internal Reasons. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 55(1), 109-131.
- Snow, N.** (2016). How Habits Make Us Virtuous. In J. N. Annas, *Developing the Virtues* (pp. 135-157). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Solomon, D.** (1988). Internal Objections to Virtue Ethics. *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, 13.
- Sorabji, R.** (1980). Aristotle on the Role of Intellect in Virtue. In A. O. Rorty, *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics* (pp. 201-221). University of California.
- Stephens, W. O.** (2020). *Stoic Ethics*. Retrieved August 2020, from Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <https://iep.utm.edu/stoiceth/>
- Stichter, M.** (2016). The Role of Motivation and Wisdom in Virtues as Skills. In J. Annas, & D. Narvaez, *Developing the Virtues* (pp. 204-224). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Stocker, M.** (2007). The Schizophrenia of Moral Ethical Theories. In R. Crisp, & M. Slote, *Virtue Ethics* (pp. 66-79). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Svensson, F.** (2010). Virtue Ethics and the Search for an Account of Right Action. *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, 13, 255-271.
- Svensson, F.** (2011). Eudaimonist Virtue Ethics and Right Action: A Reassessment. *The Journal of Ethics*, 15(4).
- Sverdlik, S.** (1996). Motive and Rightness. *Ethics*, 106, 327-349.

- Swanton, C.** (2001). A Virtue Ethical Account of Right Action. *Ethics*(112), 32-52.
- Swanton, C.** (2003). *Virtue Ethics: A Pluralistic View*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Swanton, C.** (2010). Virtue Ethics and Problem of Moral Disagreement. *Philosophical Topics*, 38(2), 157-180.
- Swanton, C.** (2014). Nietzsche's Virtue Ethics. In S. Van Hooft, *The Handbook of Virtue Ethics* (pp. 105-118). Durham: Acumen Publishing Limited.
- Swanton, C.** (2015). *The Virtue Ethics of Hume and Nietzsche*. West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.
- Thompson, M.** (1995). The Representation of Life. In R. Hursthouse, G. Lawrence, & W. Quinn, *Virtues and Reasons*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Thompson, M.** (2008). *Life and Action*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Tiberius, V.** (2006). How to Think About Virtue and Right. *Philosophical Papers*(35), 247-265.
- Trianosky, G. V.** (1990). What is Virtue Ethics All About? *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 27, 335-344.
- Urmson, J. O.** (1958). Saints and Heroes. In A. I. Melden, *Essays in Moral Philosophy* (pp. 198-216). Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Urmson, J. O.** (1988). *Aristotle's Ethics*. Blackwell Publishing.
- Van Cleemput, G.** (2006). Aristotle on Eudaimonia in Nicomachean Ethics I. *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 30, 127-157.
- Van Zyl, L.** (2009). Agent-based Virtue Ethics and the Problem of Action Guidance. *Journal of Moral Philosophy*, 6, 50-69.
- Van Zyl, L.** (2011). Qualified-Agent Virtue Ethics. *South African Journal of Philosophy*(30), 219-228.
- Van Zyl, L.** (2014). Right Action and the Targets of Virtue. In S. Van Hooft, *The Handbook of Virtue Ethics* (pp. 118-129). Durham: Acumen.
- Van Zyl, L.** (2019). *Virtue Ethics: A Contemporary Introduction*. New York: Routledge.
- Vasilou, I.** (1996). The Role of Good Upbringing in Aristotle's Ethics. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 56(4), 778-797.
- Walker, M.** (2011). Aristotle on Activity 'According to the Best and Most Final' Virtue. *Aperiron*, 44, 91-110.
- Wallace, J. D.** (1978). *Virtues and Vices*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Walsh, J. P.** (2016). Agent-Basing, Consequences, and Realized MOtives. *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, 19, 649-661.
- Walzer, M.** (1974). Polical Action: The problem of Dirty Hands. In M. Cohen, T. Nagel, & T. Scanlon, *War and Moral Responsibility: A Philosophy and Public Affairs Reader* (pp. 62-85). New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Watson, G.** (1975). Free Agency. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 72(8), 205-220.

- Watson, G.** (1984). Virtues in Excess. *Philosophical Studies*(46), 57-74.
- Watson, G.** (1990). On the Primacy of Character. In O. Flanagan, & A. Rorty, *Identity, Character, and Morality* (pp. 449-483). Cambridge: MIT Press.
- White, S.** (1990). Is Aristotelian Happiness a Good Life or the Best Life? *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 8, 103-143.
- Wilkes, K.** (1978). The Good Man and the Good for Man in Aristotle's Ethics. *MInd*, 87(348), 553-571.
- Williams, B.** (1980). Justice as a Virtue. In A. Rorty, *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics* (pp. 189-99). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Williams, B.** (1985). *Ethics and Limits of Philosophy*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Williams, B.** (1995). Acting as the Virtuous Person Acts. In R. Heinaman, *Aristotle and Moral Realism* (pp. 13-23). London: UCL Press.
- Wittgenstein, L.** (1986). *Philosophical Investigations*. (G. Anscombe, Ed.) Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd.
- Wittgenstein, L.** (1993). Lecture on Ethics. In J. Klagge, & A. Nordmann, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Philosophical Occasions 1912–1951* (pp. 37-44). Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett.
- Wolf, S.** (2007a). Moral Psychology and the Unity of the Virtues. *Ratio*, 20(2), 145-167.
- Wolf, S.** (2007b). Moral Saints. In R. Crisp, & M. Slote, *Virtue Ethics* (pp. 79-99). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Zagzebski, L.** (2004). *Divine Motivation Theory*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Zagzebski, L.** (2017). *The Exemplarist Moral Theory*. New York: Oxford University Press.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Name-Surname: İkbāl BOZKAYA

EDUCATION

- **Ph.D.:** 2021, Istanbul Technical University, Political Studies, Political and Social Thoughts PhD Program
- **M.A.:** 2014, Istanbul Technical University, Political Studies, Political Studies M.A. Program
- **B.A. (exchange):** (2010-2011) Institut d'études Politiques de Paris (SciencesPo), Political Science and International Relations
- **B.A. (h):** 2011, Bogazici University, The Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Political Science and International Relations

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE AND AWARDS

- **Research Assistant** (2013-2019), Graduate School of Arts and Social Sciences at Istanbul Technical University
- **Visiting Scholar** (2017-2018), University of Wisconsin-Madison, Department of Philosophy
- **Bogazici University Honor Degree** (2011)
- **Bogazici University Cemil Koksal Academic Success and Sportsmanship Award** (2011)

PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS ON THE THESIS:

- **Bozkaya, İkbāl,** “The Importance of Eudaimonia for Action-guiding Virtue Ethics” *The Journal of Value Inquiry* (forthcoming).
- **Bozkaya, İkbāl.** (2019). “Christine Swanton’un Çoğulcu Erdem Etiğine Bir Bakış”, *Dokuz Eylül University Journal of Humanities*, 6 (1), 280-299.
- **Bozkaya, İkbāl.** (2018). “Why Do We Need the Final End in Virtue Ethics? The importance of Eudaimonia for Action-guiding Virtue Ethics”, *Conference by the Society for Women in Philosophy in Turkey*, Ankara.
- **Bozkaya, İkbāl.** (2017). “A Re-evaluation of virtue ethics: Can Virtue Ethics Generate Action-guiding Principles?”, *Virtue, Skill and Practical Reason Conference*, Cape Town, South Africa,

OTHER PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

- **Bozkaya, Ikbal.** (2016). “The Bond Between Artist and Artwork: To Read the Artwork from Panofskian Perspective with Regard to Artist Being the Reference Point for The Content of Artwork”, *Art-Sanat*, Histart’15 Special Issue, 31-40.
- **Bozkaya, Ikbal.** (2015). “The Bond Between Artist and Artwork: To Read the Artwork from Panofskian Perspective with Regard to Artist Being the Reference Point for The Content of Artwork”, *HISTART '15 Conference*, Istanbul.
- **Bozkaya, Ikbal.** (2014). “Apolitical Freedom”, 4th World Congress for Middle Eastern Studies, Ankara.

