Existential Flourishing

A Phenomenology of the Virtues

Irene McMullin

EXISTENTIAL FLOURISHING

A Phenomenology of the Virtues

IRENE MCMULLIN
University of Essex

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India

79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108471664
DOI: 10.1017/9781108617260

First published 2019

Printed and bound in Great Britain by Clays Ltd, Elcograf S.p.A.

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
NAMES: McMullin, Irene, author.
TITLE: Existential flourishing : a phenomenology of the virtues / Irene McMullin.
DESCRIPTION: New York : Cambridge University Press, 2018. | Includes bibliographical references and index.
IDENTIFIERS: LCCN 2018029889 | ISBN 9781108471664 (hardback : alk. paper)
SUBJECTS: LCSH: Normativity (Ethics) | Success. | Existential phenomenology. | Ethics. | Virtues.
CLASSIFICATION: LCC BJ1458.3 .M37 2018 | DDC 179/.9–DC23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2018029889

ISBN 978-1-108-47166-4 Hardback

Contents

Acknowledgments

My thinking on this topic first began almost twenty years ago and I have received invaluable support and feedback from family, friends, and colleagues in the years since. I am indebted to my teachers at Rice University – especially Steven Crowell – for giving me the philosophical tools necessary for completing such a project. Early work on the book occurred while I was teaching at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, and I am grateful for the support and encouragement I received there. The majority of the book was written since arriving at the University of Essex in 2013. It would not have been possible without the extraordinary intellectual community I found here. I am deeply indebted to David Batho, Matthew Burch, Peter Dews, Matteo Falomi, Lorna Finlayson, Fabian Freyenhagen, Steve Gormley, Marie Guillot, Béatrice Han-Pile, Fiona Hughes, Timo Jütten, Yannig Luthra, Wayne Martin, Alexandra Popescu, Jörg Schaub, Ellisif Wasmuth, Dan Watts, and Rosie Worsdale for their support, philosophical conversation, and feedback, especially at the 'mini-course' I was invited to give in 2015. It is a privilege to be part of such a wonderful group of philosophers and friends. I am also thankful for the many rewarding and thought-provoking conversations I have had with my PhD students – Darshan Cowles and Jakub Kowalewski – over the years.

I am grateful to all the audiences who sat through talks on related material at the Universities of Oslo, Bristol, Dublin, Seattle, Oxford, and Warwick – along with the International Society for Phenomenological Studies conference participants. The questions, challenges, and recommendations that arose there have been invaluable.

Special thanks go to Alexandra Popescu for her incredible work in preparing the manuscript and index for publication.

I also owe a debt of gratitude to my wonderful family: Mom, Jim, Heather, Neil, Laura, Mike, Amanda, Pip, Anita, Fred, Eleanor, and clan Burch: thank you for constantly serving as my role models, cheerleaders, and interlocutors.

My deepest thanks of all go to Matt, Lucy, and Mary. Every day is better because you are there to share it with me.

Introduction

The aim of this book is to bring together virtue ethics and existential phenomenology to produce a phenomenologically sensitive form of virtue ethics. In doing so it resists the tendency in moral theory toward what existentialists call bad faith – namely, a tendency to conceptualize one's condition in terms of a false dichotomy and fluctuate between self-interpretations manifesting one or the other half of the dichotomy. We see this tendency in virtue ethics when flourishing is characterized as either a private state of the subject or an objective state of the person conceptualized as a worldly thing. In contrast, this book insists that excellent human lives are characterized by a kind of self-world fit at odds with such views – which either fail to demonstrate the essential dependence of the self on the world and the others who share it or fail to accommodate the lived normative responsiveness that defines us in our striving to be in the world well.

For many, the appeal of the revival of virtue ethics has been its insistence that we shift our focus from assessing isolated acts or act types to evaluating the shape and texture of lives as a whole. This shift has largely been motivated by the recognition that the meaning and motivation of individual acts cannot be understood in isolation from the context of the lives in which they occur. As a result, the suggestion is that we should be examining the extent to which a person is succeeding or failing at realizing an ideal of human excellence more globally understood.

Many recent virtue ethical attempts to define this human ideal – flourishing – have done so by relying on a naturalism that grounds moral theory in science-inspired analyses of characteristic human traits. While this approach has its merits, it can also come at the cost of both depersonalizing ethics and failing to account for its normativity. By conceiving of the moral agent simply as an instantiation of a natural kind, the individuation of the self in its struggle to be the best version of itself is obscured, as is the *ought* that underwrites ostensibly normatively neutral accounts of the

characteristic human behaviours constitutive of human nature. On the other hand, attempts to define human excellence with reference only to the lived experience of the agent and her personal satisfaction levels risk isolating the agent from the worldly context of meaning in terms of which those satisfactions find content, expression, and some measure of objective legitimacy. Viewing the self as a theatre of representations and pleasures that can be privately organized in an enjoyable or efficacious way loses the link to the world wherein the legitimacy of those thoughts and feelings is tested. On such an account, it would be possible to flourish in solipsistic isolation – a conclusion at odds with many of our intuitions about what a good human life looks like.

This book addresses these problems by making use of resources from the existential phenomenological tradition to provide an account of human flourishing that navigates a middle path between these two extremes. It also aims to provide phenomenological descriptions of what it is like to experience the normative claim particular to different virtues – descriptions that virtue ethical accounts have largely failed to supply to date. My approach in this regard is not characterized by simple fidelity to the existential phenomenological tradition but rather by creative appropriation of its best methods and arguments. I am committed to the idea that we can enrich our understanding of the issues by bringing this tradition into conversation with virtue ethics. When we do so, we recognize that the existential tradition affords us the following insights:

1. A recognition that to be human is to be consumed with the deeply personal question 'What does it mean for *me* to be?' and that flourishing cannot be understood without addressing this first-personal dimension of experience – this sense that each of us is at stake in our choices.
2. An understanding that we can answer this question only in dialogue with the world and the third-person normative categories it provides for defining our struggle to be who we are – which includes but is not limited to those categories used to specify a scientifically grounded account of human nature.
3. An acknowledgment that the immediate normative claims that other individuals make on us are irreducible to either first- or third-person categories but bear a distinctive kind of authority by which we are also bound in our struggle to be in the world well.
4. A recognition that the task of living well is necessarily fraught with an open-ended indeterminacy and irresolvable normative tension

(the first-person dimension). Similarly, utilitarianism prioritizes the third-person norm of universal utility, but it attempts to accommodate the other perspectives through the fact that one's own utility does not automatically trump the other person's (the second-person dimension) and the fact that the nature of its guiding norm – *satisfaction* – includes a fundamental reference to the first-personal domain. But in both cases the intention – an intention that is understood as realizable – is to provide a decision procedure that stipulates adopting a neutral third-person stance that purportedly captures the normative force or authority of the other two normative domains.

Indeed, virtue ethical accounts themselves fail to understand the nature of flourishing when they insist that such messiness can be avoided – by claiming, for example, that the fully virtuous person would never experience virtuous action as a sacrifice.[1] Failing to recognize the compromise among perspectives *as* compromise – i.e., as a condition in which legitimate claims sometimes cannot be met fully – is a failure to acknowledge the legitimacy of the claims. But by shifting our emphasis from specific acts to lives as a whole we can overcome this difficulty to some degree, since each agent will be assessed on the extent to which her life embodies a general respect for the different kinds of normative claim that she is tasked with meeting, not necessarily on the extent to which she does so in each particular act. However, we will see in Chapter 4 that certain deontic constraints must be operative – lowest common denominators below which the agent cannot go if she is to count as meeting the minimal requirements of each normative domain. Nevertheless, these constraints are both minimal and specific to the domains in question – and thus incapable of dissolving all possibilities of conflict. I will argue in Chapters 5 and 6 that ultimately we must look to specific virtuous lives as exemplars of the kind of perspectival balancing that is at stake in flourishing. There is no simple decision procedure or algorithm for determining what one ought to do or how one ought to be in every situation. But this is the truth of our moral predicament, not a flaw in our moral theory.

An existentialism-informed virtue ethics is a natural fit for accommodating this irrevocable tension at the heart of human life. It acknowledges that the messiness and complexity involved in negotiating such a normative plurality cannot be avoided. Broadly understood, existentialism analyzes the nature of human existence – understanding it above all in terms

[1] See McDowell 1980 and Phillips 1965.

of the fact that human beings take their existence to be at issue for them, relating to it in terms of questions of success and failure. Human existence is fundamentally oriented to questions of better and worse, and each of us experiences ourself as being at stake in how we navigate such normative demands. We care about doing what we have reason to do, and since practical reasons arise from incommensurable domains of value in human life, this means we care about knowing how to navigate this irrevocable tension well.

Phenomenology is the method regularly endorsed by thinkers of this existentialist tradition – largely because it explicitly attempts to embody this normative plurality in its methodology.[2] Phenomenology is a method committed to uncovering universal truths about the structure of meaning (third-personal categories) through descriptive analyses of one's first-person experience. These descriptions are aimed at evoking in others a corresponding grasp of that experience – a second-personal stance that recognizes others as occupants of their own first-person domain of experience. Though this characterization of phenomenology in many ways applies to philosophy in general, phenomenology understands itself as tasked with negotiating the plurality and tension that existentialism describes: it analyzes how objects both immanent and transcendent to first-person experience – the self, the world, and the others in it – are structured within that experience such that they accomplish their meaning *as* what they are for the agent engaged in her struggle to be. As such, it bears within its methodology an explicit acknowledgment of the plurality of perspectives with which it is operating: A good phenomenological analysis is aimed at examining and describing the nature of one's own first-person experience in such a way that it provokes in others similar first-personal self-grasping intuitions that can serve to confirm or disconfirm one's understanding of the structures of intelligibility that govern the possibility of that meaningful experience. And, importantly for my claim that phenomenology strives to embody methodological variations of all three normative stances, Husserl insisted that first-person reflection on the field of meaningful experiences could yield universal structural necessities. The most fundamental meaning structure of this kind, according to Husserl, is the fact that all consciousness is characterized by intentionality. Namely, consciousness is always consciousness *of* something; it is always

[2] Though we sometimes see the expression 'phenomenology' used to refer simply to the 'what it is like' nature of experience, here I use it in the sense developed by Edmund Husserl and his critical admirers in the early twentieth century. For a good introduction to this tradition, see Crowell 2013.

directed toward some meaningful object. This relationship is therefore composed of two *relata*: the act by which the meaningful appearance comes to manifestation and the object in its appearing. Phenomenology studies the correlation of these two elements, i.e., the dynamic interplay between the experiencer and the experienced such that meaning arises. Though it is possible to tease them apart in analysis, these two 'sides' of the meaning experience belong together inseparably (Husserl 1999, 39/77). Phenomenology's insistence on the importance of examining all meanings from the perspective of lived experience is motivated by its recognition of this necessary interplay between self and world.

Heidegger famously builds on Husserl's analyses of intentionality, critiquing the philosophical tendency to conceptualize lived experience through the lens of a kind of subject/object dichotomy that artificially separates the self from the world. He insists that being true to the nature of lived experience requires us to recognize that we are not typically 'subjects' grasping 'objects', but rather agents immersed in the world in a way that belies such a divide. Indeed, Heidegger more explicitly links phenomenology with existentialist themes by insisting that experiencing and analyzing meaning in this way depends on a normatively governed striving to be who one is in the world.

As will become evident, this existential-phenomenological approach is at work throughout the book. We see it in particular in my application of Heidegger's challenge to views of flourishing that isolate a subjective inner life from an objective external world, in my insistence that the dynamic correlation between experiencer and experienced – between agent and world – requires us to think differently about what kind of agents we are in our striving to flourish. Further, when we attend carefully to the phenomena we are forced to reject moral theories that model praxis on abstract knowledge or that prioritize one normative domain to the exclusion of others – whether that reductionist agenda is understood in terms of individual desire-satisfaction or in terms of third-personally conceived realizations of objective values or human nature. Genuinely understanding what a good human life is requires us to acknowledge the complex normative terrain and perspectival manifold that characterizes the experience of human life as it is lived – not to look for an artificial simplicity that can be applied to it from without. Succumbing to that temptation is a common human tendency since it offers clarity and direction to those yearning for it. But doing so involves bad faith: it is a failure to face up to the paradox and complexity of being subjects who are also worldly objects that can conceptualize themselves as such.

As we will see, this existential-phenomenological approach is in many ways a natural fit with a neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics insofar as the latter emphasizes the necessity of understanding agents as a whole: our striving for an excellence that manifests as both subjective pleasure and worldly achievement and the practical reason that allows us to navigate the normative questions intrinsic to a life that is always understood as governed by questions of success and failure. As I will show, humanity's characteristic activity in this regard is indeed 'an activity of the soul in accordance with reason',[3] but in what follows I will argue that 'reason' must be understood such that it accommodates the normative plurality of perspectives through which the world shows up as meaningful in the way that I have specified above. As such, defining reason as deliberation about how best to realize first-person preferences or conform to third-person categories of universalizability or scientific objectivity is too narrow. Reason must instead be understood in terms of a person's capacity to see the world not merely from the constraints of her own projects, but also in terms of the individual others we encounter and the intersubjectively determined standards established by the human community for sharing the world. These domains all provide flourishing agents with reasons – considerations that count in favour of an action or belief – and there is no ultimate perspective from which the different classes of reason can be definitively ordered. As a result, flourishing requires that one negotiate the complexity and tension that is characteristic of a life experienced from multiple perspectives and governed by the different demands that those perspectives reveal.

Chapter Breakdown

In Chapter 1, 'What Is Flourishing?', I defend the virtue ethical claim that the ultimate objects of moral assessment are lives, not actions, and I challenge both subjectivist and objectivist models of what an excellent or flourishing human life looks like, arguing that both approaches obscure the complexity of creatures who exist simultaneously as experiencing subjects and worldly objects. In contrast, I argue that practical rationality must be understood as the way in which agents enact their commitment to the project of being in the world well: a condition that overcomes the false

[3] Aristotle 2000: I.7.1098a10–11. All references to Aristotle 2000 – the *Nichomachean Ethics* – will henceforth be referenced in the text as *NE* followed by book, section, and line number.

subject/object dichotomy with which other accounts of flourishing tend to operate.

Chapter 2, 'Three Domains of Reason', builds on the claim that the right way to understand flourishing is in terms of different possibilities of self-world fit that arise from the three normative domains to which flourishing agents are appropriately responsive: first-person claims of the self, second-person claims of the other, and third-person claims of the shared world. This chapter examines each of these normative domains and the standards internal to them.

In Chapter 3, 'Justice, the Virtues, and Existential Problem-Solving', I address the question of how to integrate the different normative perspectives within one's life. This chapter also discusses what virtues are and how they relate to flourishing. I argue that they are problem-solving stances that overcome recurring existential problems that undermine our ability to flourish. I examine the virtue of justice in particular, endorsing the ancient claim that justice can serve as a stand-in for all the virtues, since its purview is the appropriate balancing of the three normative domains.

Chapter 4, 'Unity, Comparison, Constraint', examines the relationship between the virtues and defends a version of the ancient 'unity of the virtues' thesis. Here I also consider how practical wisdom allows us to compare claims arising from the incommensurable normative terrains and reach a decision on what to do. I also respond to the objection that a virtue ethical account of this kind has no room for deontological constraints. To the contrary, I argue that there are minimal requirements governing what counts as responding to each of the three different normative domains.

Chapter 5, 'Called to Be Oneself: Role Models and the Project of Becoming Virtuous', examines the claim that virtuous agents are the ultimate criterion of right action. I present an account of role models and moral development that echoes the tripartite structure of norm-governed agency developed in Chapters 1 and 2 by arguing that the three key modes of moral development – imitation, habituation, and critical comparison – are shown to particularly rely on and enable the second-person, first-person, and third-person normative stances, respectively.

By making moral agency dependent on habituation and the imitation of exemplars, this view is open to a major objection: namely, that there seem to be no protections against bad exemplars who model the wrong kinds of life and thereby pervert one's moral agency. Chapter 6, 'Corrupting the Youth', addresses this worry by demonstrating the role that the third-person perspective plays in introducing critical distance between the agent

CHAPTER 1

What Is Flourishing?

Ethics is typically taken to be a discipline dedicated to the task of answering certain questions about what we ought to do and how we ought to be in the world. How to best approach answering those questions has variously focused on the structure or consequences of specific actions – as in deontology and consequentialism – or on the agent's character and the shape of her life as a whole, as in virtue ethics. Despite this difference, much of the recent discussion of virtue ethics has focused on whether it can serve as a genuine rival to deontology and utilitarianism by questioning whether it can be action-guiding in the same way that the norms of utility maximization or duty can be. Indeed, one trend has been to read 'virtue theory' merely as a branch of deontology or utilitarianism, the claim being that the virtues simply express character orientations necessary for maximizing utility or acting in accord with duty.[1]

Though these discussions have been fruitful, they can nevertheless obscure the defining feature of virtue ethics – namely, the fact that it is primarily an account of what excellent lives look like as a whole, and – further – not merely an account of what *morally* excellent lives look like.[2] The virtue ethical focus is not merely on answering the question 'What ought I to do?' but on the question 'What must be the case if human beings are to live good lives?' By focusing only on specific acts, the general context of human agency can be neglected: the complex set of beliefs, affective orientations, and behavioural tendencies from which specific acts arise (one's character[3]); the temporal spread of an agent's plans and identities across a lifetime; and the conditions of moral luck that enable or inhibit that agency – good parents, a virtue-promoting political environment, and other pieces of luck such as health.

[1] See, for example, Crisp 2015.
[2] See Annas 1995a.
[3] See Swanton 2003.

But what exactly is at stake in these different evaluative orientations toward 'being' versus 'doing', as it is sometimes put? Why should we take an agent's life and character to be the most basic objects of moral assessment, as virtue ethics claims we ought? George Sher examines this issue in 'Ethics, Character, and Action' (1998), where he points out that much of the debate on this issue tends to simply presuppose and reiterate the general metaethical orientation for which each camp is arguing. Thus virtue ethicists accuse action-based accounts of being 'unacceptably abstract or impersonal' or failing to 'do justice to the immense complexity of human affairs' (Sher 1998, 1). Further, they fail to recognize the close link between stable traits and identity. In other words, they accuse duty-based accounts of focusing on acts instead of character, which is precisely the issue in question. Similarly, duty theorists 'complain that accounts of the virtues provide no concrete guide to action', while the moral significance of control seems to demand an emphasis on actions rather than traits (Sher 1998, 1, 7). So the other approaches essentially accuse virtue ethicists of focusing on character instead of acts; that is, they accuse them of being virtue ethicists. In both cases features taken as independent evidence for the legitimacy of focusing on character or act as the appropriate object of moral evaluation simply presuppose it.

What, then, is the relationship between action and character, and does this relationship give us reason to grant one priority? On one reading, action has a kind of conceptual priority over character since it is only through what one does (or does not do) that a person's character could be known or understood. Thus the idea of character is conceptually dependent on certain act types. But on another reading, character has explanatory priority over action, since an action is more easily understood and categorized if we know that it arose out of a certain kind of character.[4] How are we to adjudicate between these modes of priority and to which approach ought we to grant *evaluative* priority?

In response to this impasse, Sher and others have suggested that we should question whether there is a problem with the unexamined assumption underlying both approaches: namely, the assumption that the task of ethics is to uncover the moral objects that we are in the business of evaluating. This assumption is problematic because it shifts our focus from practice to theory, presupposing that we can simply reveal what the conceptual categories are for moral classification, at which point it should be fairly obvious how to actually apply them in our lives. As Korsgaard points out, there is an unacknowledged tendency in ethical theory to wrongly think of

[4] Sher 1998, 4–6. See also Watson 2003, 262.

morality on the model of knowledge application, when it should be understood as a 'practical enterprise, an enterprise of working out the solutions to problems, not a mysteriously non-empirical theoretical enterprise aimed at identifying normative facts that are somehow part of the external world' (2008, 23). In attempting to determine evaluative priority we are not focused (primarily) on any kind of explicit categorization activity – especially of other people – but rather on the agent's ongoing assessment of how best to enact and direct her own practical engagement with the world. If we recognize that ethics is fundamentally a *practical* discipline in this way, what implications will that have for deciding whether to prioritize action over character in our struggle to answer the practical problems posed by life?

Sher argues that the practical orientation points us in the direction of action – i.e. knowing what to *do*. But in his framing of how to understand this practical reorientation he himself grants action an unargued-for priority in the very way that he critiques others for doing. Note his claim, for example, that:

> When we inquire about how to live, our aim is obviously to live that way; and living, in this sense, is unavoidably something we do. Moreover, although our lives are spread over many years, we live them one moment – and (roughly) one action – at a time. (1998, 16)

But it is far from clear that either of these claims is unambiguously true. Is living something we do, or something we are? And even if it *is* something we 'do', is it really the case that this 'doing' involves living one moment or one action at a time – in other words, that life is a series of discrete actions? The phenomenology of agency and temporality appears to be at odds with both of these claims.

The first claim – that life is what we *do* – seems to illegitimately sideline the beliefs, affective orientations, and relationships that are constitutive of our way of living but are not really something that we *do*. Indeed, this is precisely why virtue ethics insists that the virtues of character cannot be understood simply as standing dispositions to act in this or that way, but must also include the affective and intellectual stances that we take toward the world and which underpin our actions.[5] The practical project of a life well lived is concerned not just with what acts we are directly responsible for choosing at each moment but with the entire terrain of who we are and who we are striving to be. And the affective and cognitive stances constitutive of character are not the products of momentary choice but are,

[5] See Annas 1995a (especially ch. 1) and Solomon 1988, 428–429.

rather, the result of a lifetime of habituation into ways of seeing, feeling, and doing. Thus the claim that we live one moment or one action at a time is problematic, especially when we consider that the nature of temporality as it is lived – as opposed to how it is theorized in, say, Newtonian physics – is such that each moment cannot accurately be characterized as a discrete and interchangeable 'now' separated off from the others.[6]

If we are to take seriously the primacy of the practical stance in ethics we must take seriously the perspective from which it is lived: the first-person experience of the agent engaged in the task of living well. And from such a perspective, past, present, and future cannot be grasped adequately by theorizing them as occupying particular regions of some linear sequence of undifferentiated moments observable from without. From the perspective of practical agency, each 'now' is weighted with a past and directed toward a future. We experience ourselves as temporally dispersed beings oriented toward overarching goals and continuing practical identities, not as collections of temporally discrete acts that can be isolated from the flow of the life in which they find meaning. Each moment has the meaning that it does for my practical agency (and those other practical agents with whom I interact) only on the basis of a past that shapes the way the world shows up for me and a future that gives direction to my striving. Understood in this way, the suggestion that the practical stance in ethics should focus its attention on discrete moments of action seems highly problematic.

This problem is sharpened if we return to the suggestion that action has conceptual priority over character, namely, that the concept of character presupposes that of action, while the reverse does not hold. Sher supports this view by specifying three conditions necessary for something to be an 'action':

> When we describe someone as (physically) acting, we always imply that (1) his body moves in certain ways, that (2) those movements are in some sense initiated by him, and that (3) he initiates them with some intention or to achieve some purpose. (1998, 5)

Sher argues that none of these three conditions has implications for prioritizing character, since he reads character traits as constant

[6] This is a point made famous by Martin Heidegger, who – inspired by Husserl and Bergson – argues for the necessity of getting an ontologically correct understanding of lived time if we are to understand what we are. For Heidegger, lived time is characterized by projecting into a future whose possibilities are defined by the past, not in terms of discrete 'now' points. A full discussion of phenomenological accounts of temporal agency is beyond the scope of this discussion. For my own interpretation of Heidegger's account, see McMullin 2013.

dispositions to performing specific kinds of action despite varying circumstances. But notice that this way of conceiving of a character trait has already smuggled in the prioritization of action, since it reads traits as dispositions to perform action types that are specified in advance. In other words, the action type is itself what defines the character trait. This approach is typical of what Daniel C. Russell calls 'dispositionism', which treats personality as relatively independent from situation and specifies personality traits on the basis of nominally or externally attributed dispositions toward stereotypical behaviour associated with those traits.[7] But if we reject such a conception of character, reading it, instead, as modes of responsivity to varying circumstances in light of unifying goals and reasons – as Russell's account encourages us to do – then it is not so clear that we can simply prioritize action over character, since character is no longer definable simply in terms of action types.

Think further about what is implied under conjunct (3). What does the intentional structure of action tell us about the agent who performs it? Sher's account seems to operate with the supposition that discrete actions can in some sense be taken to be intrinsically meaningful insofar as they need not appeal to something outside themselves in order to explain the intentionality that establishes their meaning as the kind of action that they are. But one might question this supposition by pointing out that individual acts are meaningful via intentions that are themselves meaningful only in light of the overarching agency of which they are a part. This contrast turns on our understanding of the second part of Sher's third conjunct: namely, the claim that actions are initiated to achieve some purpose. For an action to be an action – as opposed to a meaningless movement – it must be governed by a norm specifying what it is trying to be or do, and that norm must be present to the agent as such on some level, though typically not in the form of an explicit belief. It must be 'initiated with some intention', as Sher puts it.[8] In other words, for something to be an

[7] Russell 2009, 239–331. Understood in this way, the virtues have been the target of situationist criticisms. See Doris 2002. Russell demonstrates the manner in which situationism and virtue ethics can be read as mutually supportive, rather than at odds, so long as virtues are understood as cognitive-affective repertoires responsive to the way that well-functioning practical reason allows the situation to be construed. See also Kamtekar 2004 for another virtue ethical response to situationism that challenges the way that it reads virtues/character traits as broad-based behavioural tendencies.

[8] Annas supports this reading, arguing, 'We may do some things which are pointless or spontaneous, but these are not clear examples of actions or choices' (1995a, 30). Alisdair MacIntyre makes a similar point in *After Virtue* (1984, 209), taking this to be reason to endorse a narrative account of the self. I am not arguing for such a narrativist view here, though I agree that literature is an essential tool in moral discourse and education. See also Kawall 2009, 9; Stocker 1976.

> it is precisely in exercising the skill – not in projecting its future fulfillment – that the intention-in-action is constituted. (Crowell 2013, 11)

Thus the normative framework within which actions are meaningful *as* actions must be understood in terms of an agent striving to *be* something – with all of the relevant affective and intellectual orientations involved in that state of being – rather than simply as a striving to *do*.[12]

As we will see throughout the book, I will argue that the virtues are to be understood as problem-solving abilities or skills that help us in this project of striving to be. It is therefore important at the outset that we properly understand the interpretation of 'skill' that I will be using in terms of the above discussion. Doing so will allow us to avoid many of the problems associated with the skill model of virtue. Critics of that model have focused on the way that 'skill' has been characterized by some influential proponents in formal and relatively intellectualist terms along the lines of playing bridge.[13] In keeping with this, skilled action is viewed as governed by articulable, precise rules and practiced and adopted by choice, typically by mature people who have an antecedent interest in and liking of those activities.[14] Understood as such, it is unsurprising that critics reject this view as an inappropriate model of virtuous action. But on my account this interpretation speaks to only a small subset of what I mean by skill. Skillful action is best understood as a norm-governed but pre-theoretical form of fluid response to the environment and its affordances – a responsivity that is only sometimes deliberately chosen. It is future-directed striving embedded in structures of significance that govern the success and failure conditions to which the skillful agent is responsive. Skill should therefore be understood in terms of a continuum – with the unthinking and unchosen skills we learn as infants (such as sensory-motor skills, eating, walking, etc.) at one end of the continuum, all the way up to highly codified and deliberate skills such as bridge-playing or astrophysics at the

[12] Here there are important overlaps with Korsgaard's account of practical identity (1996), though I agree with Michael Bratman in rejecting the idea that a practical identity 'explicitly includes in its content the very idea that it is a conception of one's identity' (2007, 41). My account focuses on normatively governed abilities to be – what Heidegger calls *Seinkönnen* – only some of which will be evident to the agent as such.

[13] For example, Annas 2003 and 2011 argues that a skill involves teachability, unifying principles, and the ability to give an account. For this reason, she claims that Aristotle is one of the few philosophers who *rejects* the skill model of virtue. In contrast, Stitcher 2007 argues that Aristotle is indeed offering a skill model of virtue, but one that is at odds with the strongly intellectualist Socratic model of skill that Annas champions. See Angier 2012 and 2015a for discussion of problems with many versions of the skill model of virtue.

[14] I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for this formulation of the view.

other. Understanding the nature of skill solely in terms of the latter end of the continuum misunderstands the whole and overlooks how deeply such norm-governed striving runs through the entire human condition. To compare the virtues to skills, then, is on my account simply to highlight the fact that they are specific norm-governed modes of seeing, feeling, and doing that embody and realize an agent's project of trying to be in the world in a way that is responsive to the different normative sources that make a claim on her. They are, as Heidegger would put it, abilities to be – or *Seinkönnen* – by which we act into possibilities we recognize the world to be offering us in light of an implicit understanding of their success and failure conditions and our care to respond to these well. Though such abilities are sometimes deliberately chosen and governed by articulable rules, generally they are not.[15] It is important not to get too fixated on the idea of a skill as being a highly specific and formalized set of behaviours, then, but rather understand it in terms of patterns of responsive coping governed by an orientation toward the better and worse.

Of course, one might object that with this talk of skillful striving and abilities to be in the world I myself have simply presupposed the virtue ethical normative orientation in the way that Sher diagnosed. After all, I have presupposed that we must conceive of the practical project of ethics as primarily focused on helping us solve the problem of how to live good *lives* and thus viewing actions in terms of their contribution to realizing the projects and patterns of being that comprise those lives. On that reading, we cannot treat the intentional context of action as irrelevant to those assessments. But one might endorse an alternative conception of the kind of practical purpose our ethical theories are meant to serve. Namely, one might suggest that the purpose of moral theory is to specify what acts are and are not acceptable – its purpose being to set the minimal standard of behaviour to be expected of people, *not* to help individuals reflect on and live excellent lives. If so, then it seems that action may indeed have a kind of evaluative priority, since we are concerned in this latter approach primarily with what agents do, not with who and how they are. And in the service of this practical orientation toward behaviour, one might argue, we can and should abstract from the context of agency to list action types that are and are not permitted.

But such an approach does not address the deeper question about *why* we should be interested in what is permitted of us. If ethics is a practical affair, then the question of what is permitted must arise in an agent's life as

[15] See Heidegger 1985, §31.

a problem to be solved – not simply as a theoretical puzzle to be analyzed. And when we remember this fact, it seems clear that conceiving of ethics in terms of the 'what is permitted?' problematic adopts an implicitly *political* conception of ethics insofar as it is aimed at solving the problem of what minimal rules of conduct are necessary for group functioning. In other words, it takes the specification of behavioural rules to be the fundamental practical problem that human beings understand themselves to be faced with. On my reading, on the contrary, the task of specifying minimal standards of behaviour – indeed, the very problem of how best to enable group functioning, whether through specific rules or otherwise, is itself meaningful only insofar as we are interested in living good lives. On this reading, ethics is the name of the discipline aimed at helping people answer this practical problem. Lives have evaluative priority over actions, I believe, because ethics is to be understood as the practical project of figuring out how to live well and be good, not simply the project of avoiding actions that are bad enough to prevent communities from functioning.[16]

However, the ultimate lesson of our engagement with Sher's rewarding discussion should be that trying to carve one area off from the other is an artificial and misleading endeavour that ought to be challenged – though if one *must* choose, then it is humanity's striving to be a certain way that is the ultimate object of evaluation, since all actions only are what they are in light of that striving, and the purpose of ethics is to help us do it well.[17] One cannot offer a bare-bones description of someone's action without reference to her character because her character entails a commitment to who she is trying to be, and such trying – comprised of goals and motivations, modes of feeling and believing and responding to the world over time – is constitutive of the meaning of any particular action she undertakes. 'Character' is the closest name we have for the direction and tenor of an agent's striving – that set of cognitive, affective, evaluative, and behavioural orientations that comprise a person's temporally extended agency, a set that must be considered as an organic whole if we are to get an adequate grasp of how well agents are faring in that striving.

[16] I am grateful to Fabian Freyenhagen for his helpful suggestions here.

[17] Nussbaum holds a similar view: 'Moral philosophy should focus not only on isolated acts of choice, but also, and more importantly, on the whole course of the agent's moral life, its patterns of commitment, conduct, and also passion' (1999, 170). Indeed, she argues that it is just Anglo-American moral philosophy from the 1950s to 1970s that ignored these points and in doing so, neglected its own history.

The Good Life

At this point we must turn to the question of what exactly we are striving to be. Though it is in some sense obvious that we are striving to be healthy when we go to the gym or eat kale, a great deal of the literature on virtue ethics has addressed itself to asking what we are striving to be when we cultivate character traits typically known as the virtues, such as courage, modesty, and justice. By all accounts the answer is *eudaimonia* – namely, 'excellent' or 'happy' or *flourishing* – though all of these terms have a tendency to reify the active nature of what they are attempting to designate. Simply put, it is human life ongoingly lived well.[18] Though the relationship between the virtues and flourishing is sometimes given an instrumental reading – namely, the virtues are those characteristic stances necessary to bring about flourishing understood as a state separate from the virtues themselves – they are more typically understood as *constitutive* of flourishing in the way that was discussed above. Namely, one engages in practices of excellent living (the virtues) in order to live excellently (flourish) just as one engages in practices of good writing in order to be a good writer. The practices are constitutive of the identity that one is striving to embody. They are successful as such practices insofar as they do in fact embody that way to be in the world.

What does human life lived well look like? Unsurprisingly, there is an enormous literature dedicated to this question – much of it falling under the auspices of questions about either 'flourishing' or 'well-being'. These two different terms track the general tendency to take one of two approaches to the question of the human good, which are sometimes referred to as 'objectivist' and 'subjectivist' theories, respectively.[19] By briefly analyzing these two different approaches, we will see that there are difficulties with both orientations – difficulties that arise from a failure to accurately conceptualize the self that is engaged in this project of striving to be.

[18] See Annas 1995a on the translation – despite designating the highest of all human goods, the goal is an activity, not a state. This is in keeping with Aristotle's claim in Book X of the *Nicomachean Ethics* that *eudaimonia* is an activity and not a state (X.6.1176a–b). Thus J. L. Ackrill points out that *Eudaimonia* 'is doing well (*Eupraxia*), not the result of doing well; a life, not the reward of a life' (1980, 24). See also Baril 2014.

[19] See Annas 2011; Haybron 2008; McGregor and Little 1998; Waterman 1993; and Zagzebski 2006.

Subjectivist Accounts of the Good

Subjectivist theories of the good human life are those that make welfare depend on some mental state, where 'mental state' is taken to encompass both cognitive beliefs about life satisfaction and affective experiences of pleasure and fulfillment.[20] As Arneson puts it, for accounts of this kind, 'what is good for each person is entirely determined by that very person's evaluative perspective. Call this the claim of agent sovereignty' (1999, 116). In other words, on the subjectivist account what is good for people – what counts as their flourishing – is what they decide or believe it is. The key intuition for this view is that any account of human well-being must display a deep connection with each individual agent's particular desires, interests, and projects. As Daniel Haybron puts it, 'My welfare must not be alien to me, a value that floats down from some Platonic realm and, remora-like, affixes itself to me with little regard to the particulars of my constitution' (2007, 2–3). Rather, what I value, what I choose, the projects in which I am engaged must arise out of the particularity of who I am and be recognized from the perspective of the agent herself as satisfying the preferences of that particularity.

One benefit of subjectivist accounts is that they can accommodate the modern sense that visions of the good life are legitimately plural. Each person chooses for *herself* what is valuable in her life, and the goodness of achieving it lies in the positive experience achieved by the satisfaction of the preference, not in the content of the preference itself. Thus on subjectivist accounts all candidates for the good – all possible reasons for action – are assessed in light of a standard internal to individual agents.

The simplest form of this subjectivist approach is hedonism, which simply equates flourishing with feeling pleasure. Few endorse this view in its most basic form since it commits one to the counterintuitive implication that nothing can matter to me except the pleasurable quality of my experience.[21] Nozick's famous 'experience machine' objection makes short work of this view, since it forces us to question whether a subject who is completely passive and isolated from the world – a subject living a kind of illusion – can be understood as flourishing, no matter how enjoyable that subject's experiences might be. Doubt about the ability and authority of agents to truly assess the value of the pleasures they experience is further

[20] Sumner 1996, 82. For research in psychology on this, see Diener et al. 1999, 277; Myers and Diener 1995, 11; Ryan and Deci 2000, 144.

[21] See Arneson 1999, 114 and Nozick 1974, 42–43.

there must be universal forms of human striving whose goodness transcends cultural and individual differences and which allow us to assess individuals on the basis of their success in realizing them, regardless of the quality of their lived experience in doing so.[30]

One such approach to this demand is to come up with an objective list of all of the properties necessary for a good human life. The most prevalent version of this approach is a naturalism that grounds the list in an account of human nature. Such an account purports to demonstrate why the entries on it are not arbitrarily chosen but are in some sense scientifically grounded. This has the appeal of linking moral claims – which are typically viewed as requiring justification – with scientific claims – which are not.[31] We can see this approach when we consider Aristotle's claim that to flourish is to perform the human *ergon* – its function or characteristic activity – well. Aristotle attempts to motivate his view by noting that other things have characteristic activities and arguing that the human being as a whole must therefore have a comparable function (*NE*, I.7). On this view, we can clearly recognize how to assess lives and actions – namely, in terms of the function that gives them meaning as what they are.

In virtue ethics this function argument is typically given a naturalist interpretation wherein a broadly scientifically based account of human nature is taken to be the foundation for our understanding of the human 'function'. We look to characteristic human behaviours and dispositions constitutive of the kinds of things that we are – which we can observe like any other natural thing. Those that are realizations of human nature will be called good or virtuous, and those that are distortions or perversions of it will be called evil. As Philippa Foot argues, we should not assume that the term 'good' suddenly takes on a radically different meaning when applied to human lives. When we call something a good cactus or a good knife we mean that we're evaluating them 'qua specimens of their kind'.[32] When we call a human being good, we should think in the same way: moral evaluation is essentially just evaluation of humans as specimens of their kind. Thus there is something defective in a human being lacking justice or charity just as there is something defective about an antisocial bee.

[30] See Drummond 2002, 33–39.
[31] See Zagzebski 2006, 53–54.
[32] See Foot 2002, 132–147. As Rasmussen puts it, activities constitutive of flourishing are 'those that both express and produce in a human being an actualization of potentialities that are specific to its natural kind' (1999, 4).

This so-called function argument has been the object of a great deal of criticism. The language of 'function' seems to assume that human flourishing is equivalent to fulfilling our 'purpose' by developing some innate human nature or ability – the trouble being that this seems to commit us to a debunked teleological metaphysics.[33] But as Korsgaard points out, humanity's 'function' or 'ergon' need not be read in terms of some type of metaphysical *telos* – rather, 'function' is better conceptualized as 'characteristic activity' constitutive of the things that we are – in keeping with Crisp's updated translation of that term.[34] This has the benefit of avoiding static or thing-like characterizations of self, since the idea of characteristic activity involves a notion of accomplishment; it is an ongoing project for which the agent is responsible.

So the question then becomes: What does humanity as a species characteristically do, and how is it built such that it can do it? We can talk about those questions without having to believe that human beings have some kind of higher (perhaps God-given) purpose that they are trying to serve through these characteristic activities. What we are attempting to discover when we analyze humanity's 'function', then, are those basic structures of our being that allow us to be the kinds of things that we are – regardless of how or why these structures came into being, metaphysically speaking (Korsgaard 2008, 137–140). A good cactus or a good human is one whose parts and activities enable its characteristic way of life. Understood as such, flourishing is defined in purely objective terms; human lives can be assessed for excellence on an objective scale that is observable from the outside.

The problem, however, is that making our *eudaimonia* assessments dependent on objective states of the world – not the attitudes of the agent

[33] Another tradition in ethical theory – the natural law tradition – defines nature in terms of such a teleological metaphysics. For this tradition 'nature is thoroughly normative, being the arena of a host of rational ends, which are inextricably embedded in its myriad workings. And it is this teleological conception of nature – according to which description and prescription, "fact" and "value" are deeply intertwined, and never finally separable – that will be the hallmark of natural law ethics hereafter' (Angier 2015b, 54). As we will see in the next section, my account is consistent with the natural law tradition's claim that being human involves an orientation toward seeking certain goods – and developing the virtues that allow us to realize them – but unlike that tradition, it takes no stand on how we became this way. Typically, natural law theory holds that the natural law is grounded in an eternal divine law that is the source of its normative force – though one need not know or believe this to be claimed by its constraints. Since phenomenology brackets metaphysical commitments in the interest of simply describing meaningful experience and uncovering the transcendental conditions that enable it, the natural law tradition's approach is largely orthogonal to my own. For further discussion, see Chappell and Oderberg 2004; Haldane 2009; Kainz 2004.

[34] See Korsgaard 2008, 134–135; 2009, 37–40.

herself – means that it is perfectly possible for an agent to despise or feel alienated from something that, objectively speaking, is constitutive of her well-being. Critics object that this allows for characterizing situations as instances of 'flourishing' regardless of whether it *feels* like flourishing to the agent involved. Thus learning to play chess is counted as an event of greater flourishing than watching television, since the former involves social interaction, greater intellectual challenges, capacity for growth, etc. – a judgment we can make regardless of the misery experienced by the chess student.[35] Such approaches appear to neglect the first-person lived experience of the person doing the flourishing. While subjectivist accounts appeared to be too internal, objectivist accounts appear to be too *external*.

Hursthouse has attempted to avoid this difficulty by defining humanity's characteristic way of life in terms of what she specifies as the four goals of all higher animals: individual and species survival, group functioning, and enjoyment.[36] Note that on this list a certain level of subjective enjoyment is a necessary constituent of flourishing. Thus she accommodates the subjective dimension – the quality of lived experience – within the objectivist approach: producing a hybrid or compromise view akin to the subjectivist attempt to accommodate objectivity through the idea of 'authentic' desires.

When we apply this list of criteria to humans, we recognize the virtues as those character traits conducive to humanity functioning well in these four domains. Taken together, Hursthouse argues, we can use these goals to assess individual lives and the actions and dispositions of the individuals who lead them. Thus the virtue of charity can be understood as directly serving the goals of species continuance and the good functioning of the social group, and this in turn indirectly serves the goals of survival and enjoyment.

Note that though positive subjective experience is a feature on the list of ends constitutive of the human good, it is taken to be an *objective* fact that subjectively positive experiences are constitutive of the good life for all human beings, and this class of experiences can accommodate a wide variety of idiosyncratic preferences that many individuals would not necessarily count as positive. In other words, the objectivist approach to the

[35] See Haybron 2007, 9 and Sumner 1996, 24 for examples.

[36] See Hursthouse 1999, 197–202. See also Foot 2001 and 2003, 189–208 for a more sustained defence of the idea that moral assessments are continuous with assessments of plants and animals as defective or excellent examples of their kind.

human good specifies as an objective fact of human flourishing that a certain level of subjective happiness is a necessary constituent thereof, while recognizing that the actual content of that subjective happiness will vary between persons. Thus an element of individuality is maintained: individuals are not simply interchangeable tokens instantiating universal and generic goods.[37] Rather, it is only when the individual's particular talents, desires, and potentialities are brought to worldly expression and experienced first-personally as such that *eudaimonia* is possible for her.

Though naturalistic approaches have what some consider to be the attractive result of being continuous with the scientific worldview such that ethics essentially becomes a branch of zoology, they sometimes do so by obscuring the normative dimension central to the meaning of ethics. Namely, they have a difficult time answering how nature gets its normative grip on us. Why *ought* we pursue the ends laid down by nature? It takes for granted the idea that it is *good* to realize such a human nature.[38] Further, how do we decide what *counts* as normal functioning or characteristic activity? As critics working on philosophies of gender, race, and disability have pointed out, the notion of 'normal' functioning is rarely neutral but has tended to marginalize significant portions of the human population.[39] Further, if we're concerned with what is distinctively and characteristically human, why aren't making fire, 'having sexual intercourse without regard to season; despoiling the environment and upsetting the balance of nature; or killing things for fun' taken to be the activities that we ought to pursue? (Williams 1972, 59). Why isn't someone a defective human if they fight to save the environment, for example, since virtually every other human (at least in modernity) has been characteristically bent on its exploitation? Of course, one could respond that despoiling the environment is *really* just a poorly executed effort to promote individual and species survival or enjoyment. But in making this claim one is required to adopt a stance whereby some characteristic human activities are interpreted in light of others. Some characteristic activities are taken to be central 'oughts' while others are viewed as merely being better and worse instantiations of those central normative imperatives supposedly given to us as such by human nature. But once we adopt such an evaluative stance, we have in effect left naturalism behind. No longer are the categories at work characterizable as

[37] See Rasmussen 1999, 6.
[38] See Hurka 1999, 47. See Foot 2001 for a response to this objection.
[39] See, for example, Amundson 2000; Carel 2016; Freeland 2010.

purely objective since they are shaped by the presuppositions and preferences of the theorists who decide what is to count as part of human nature.

The adoption of an (unnatural) evaluative stance in deciding which activities are characteristic of human nature is further evident in the fact that such approaches often take an overly optimistic view in their specification of what makes for a characteristically human life. As Haybron puts it: 'Is humanitarian concern for strangers really necessary for a full or rich, or even a characteristically, human life? History offers little reason for optimism on this count' (2007, 6). We tend to believe that respect for the dignity of all others is central to our moral concerns, but it would require a stretch to turn our animalistic interest in the good functioning of our social group into the disinterested altruism that many take to be the mark of human morality. Indeed, by simply specifying 'enjoyment' as one of the goals that we naturally pursue, we have imported the problem with the subjectivist view into the objectivist view – namely, how to distinguish higher- and lower-order enjoyments in such a way that the pursuit of the former can be viewed as a characteristic activity, thereby grounding our assessment of better and worse lives.

In general, then, the naturalist approach pretends to an objectivity that can be read off nature when in fact it is operating with a normatively loaded vision of the 'natural' that is not available from an evaluatively neutral standpoint.

Neither Subjective nor Objective: Reconceptualizing the Self

Such difficulties lead some to wonder whether objectivist accounts of *eudaimonia* and subjectivist theories of well-being are even investigating the same things. Thus Haybron suggests that when Julia Annas claims that the fundamental question is 'How ought I to live?' (1995a, 27), she is asking us to take up a perspective from which we are asking about our ultimate priorities or goals, which is *not* the same thing as asking about what would make us happy. If modern theories of well-being are not asking the question of what it means to live well, then subjectivist and objectivist accounts are speaking past each other, despite using much of the same terminology. This difficulty is evident in the fact that most subjectivist accounts would endorse the idea that a terrible person is capable of flourishing. Indeed, they would argue that eudaimonists are simply equivocating by treating 'flourishing' as meaning two fundamentally different things: both the good life (an objective good we ought to pursue and which can be recognized from without) *and* well-being (a subjective good

they are surely that as well. They are the way I live out the project of who I will be. It is because we exist embedded in these networks of meaning and reference – the world understood not as a collection of objects but as the space in which human striving finds its shape and direction – that we can make sense of the practical project of living well that ethics is tasked with understanding.[41]

There is no self without the world that gives that self the objects and contexts of mattering that define its struggle to be, and there is no 'human nature' without the first-person domain of lived agency – both because humans are not humans without it and because the scientific endeavour wherein we see the world in terms of a domain of third-personal truths about natural kinds presupposes that agency. If this is right, the self can be neither an isolable arena of desires and preferences to be satisfied nor simply a scientific object whose functionality can be assessed without reference to the fact that we experience ourselves as tasked with the project of striving to be.[42] Rather, each of us is entrusted with an existence that is both constrained and enabled by the world. How well we negotiate this way of being in the world – both by changing the world and by changing ourselves – determines whether we are flourishing.

Practical Rationality

One way in which to conceptualize this middle terrain on which human life occurs – this status as neither subjective nor objective but simultaneously both – is in terms of practical rationality. On this view, human flourishing is equivalent to well-performed activity of the specifically human dimension of the soul – namely, rationality. Aristotle emphasizes that human beings perform this characteristic activity well when they choose things that are 'noble' or worth doing for their own sake – not simply when they are useful or pleasant.[43] Rationality is humanity's 'function' because it is our characteristic activity, informing all other aspects of our lives through the normative orientation that it provides. Thus any naturalistic emphasis on goals shared by all higher animals appears to be misleading, since it is the excellent use of our capacity to *reason* – properly understood – that is humanity's 'function' in Aristotle's

[41] See Heidegger 1985, §12.
[42] Thus for Aristotle, flourishing requires consciousness, will, and disposition. See Whiting 1988, 43.
[43] See, for example, *NE*, III.8.1117a4–6, *NE*, II.6. 1106b–1107a, and *NE*, VI.5.1140a25–28. See Luthra 2015 for discussion.