## 5.3. Our Treatment of Subrational Beings

Most of us do not judge it wrong to so use animals and plants for our ends that the ends of their natures, for instance, the end of self-preservation, are not fulfilled. What makes the treatment of subrational beings ethically different from that of rational beings is that rational beings have freedom of choice and therefore must be valued as ends by the rational appetite.

In any free decision, I am pursuing an end I determine for myself. If in a free decision, I consciously place the pursuit of my end ahead of another person's, I am misevaluating her precisely with respect to the point of conflict, namely, the pursuit of freely chosen ends. The reason I cannot avoid misevaluating her if I do not make her pursuit of ends one of my ends is that my pursuit of a freely chosen end has come in conflict with her pursuit of freely chosen ends. No such point of conflict occurs in my treatment of nonfree things. My collie and my African violet are unequal in many respects but they are equal in that the nature of neither of them makes them able to determine their own ends. Nor, insofar as the existence of nonfree beings results from the causality of impersonal nature, does interfering with, or at least manipulating, their functioning cause a loss of anything's chosen goals the way interfering with a device I have designed can cause a loss for me.* Using subhuman beings as means, in other words, does not violate the finality of the rational appetite, because it does not evaluate them to be other than they are. They are not ends-in-themselves.

That is why it would not be defective to love my African violet more than my collie, even though the flower and the dog are unequal in nature. If the

finality of the will was just a matter of treating equals equally and unequals unequally, we would be obligated to prefer the dog. But both the dog and the flower must be evaluated as means to ends rather than as ends-in-themselves; evaluating them as oriented to ends they set for themselves would be defective for an appetite that evaluates things according to what they are. Either they are given their ends by impersonal nature, in which case no other end-in-itself is involved, or they are given their ends by God. But if God has created beings that are ends-in-themselves, then the rest of creation must exist for their sake; if not, God's decision is intrinsically defective, since, in the pursuit of their goals, free beings must make use of nonfree beings.

Still, it can be asked why an appetite oriented to what things are must not evaluate some means more highly than others, when the means are higher and lower on the scale of being. The answer lies in an aspect of the human rational appetite mentioned only briefly so far. In selecting goals for our pursuit, our wills are always selecting among the goals of other human faculties and inclinations. For example, in seeking the beatific vision, we are seeking a goal to be accomplished through the intellect. In seeking self-preservation, we are fulfilling an inclination of our underlying nature and seeking a goal to be enjoyed by the totality of our being, not just by the will. In the case of prefering a flower to a dog, the goal is a form of aesthetic pleasure to be experienced through a variety of human faculties, not just our intellects and wills. If our faculties are so disposed that flowers give us more pleasure than dogs, there is nothing wrong with the will evaluating the flower as more of a means to that kind of pleasure. When we evaluate a dog to be less of means to our aesthetic pleasure than is a flower, we are not violating the finality of the will because we are not evaluating the dog to be other than it is. On the contrary, there are situations where it could be unjust to prefer a dog to a flower. For example, a flower might be more important to our child than a dog is to us, and we could have empirical evidence for this. If some circumstance forced us to choose between them, it would be defective, all other things being equal, to make the child give up the flower so that we could keep the dog. Or we could be forced to choose between keeping our animals and having enough water to drink. Here, more than aesthetic satisfaction is at stake. Sufficient water is a necessary means without which we cannot pursue our goals, including the goal of aesthetic satisfaction. Even though the water is lower on the scale of being than animals, the water deserves a higher place in our evaluations.

In other words, the place a means has in our evaluations is determined by its contribution to a being that is not a mere means but is an end-in-itself. And given the complexity of our nature, the place various means have in our evaluations can differ from the place they have in the scale of being. The features our nature possesses in addition to the will are features belonging to an end-in-itself. In selecting between means, the first consideration for a rational appetite is not their place in the scale of being but their relation to the goals the rational appetite has or will select. And those goals are either goals of other inclinations and faculties belonging to the free being or goals of other beings who are ends-in-themselves. To be obliged to choose on the basis of what the means are, apart from their relation to the inclinations and faculties of free beings, would amount to being being obligated by the nature of things that are means, from the perspective of the will's finality, rather than by the nature of things that are

end-in-themselves. The means would "justify" the end, and choices of ends would be defective for that reason. The finality of the will is to evaluate things according to what they are, and to evaluate is to makes things ends or means in our system of values. Since rational beings are to be evaluated as ends and subrational beings as means, we would not be evaluating things according to what they are if our choice of specific goals was determined by the nature of subrational beings independently of their relation to the nature of rational beings and the goals rational beings are oriented to through the various features of their nature.

What, for example, if someone argued that the higher place of a dog on the scale of being would obligate the flower lover to find some way to restructure her aesthetic priorities? Would this demand conform to our rational knowledge of what things are? No, because reason knows that aesthetic sensibilities involve faculties other than reason and reason knows what these faculties are sufficiently to know that their nature does not give them the inherent finality of valuing things according to what reason knows about things. Rather than conforming to what reason knows, it would be unreasonable to attempt to so change the nature of these faculties that they were oriented to what things are as known by reason. It would be particularly unreasonable, that is, defective, to attempt to change their nature for the sake of a subrational being such as a dog. For these faculties are part of the nature of a rational being and, hence, of a being that is an end-in-itself for the rational appetite.

Reason does govern the rational appetite's choices with respect to our subrational faculties. For example, our knowledge of the calories and cholesterol in an ice cream cone can affect the validity of a decision to satisfy our sensory desire for an ice cream cone, since that decision can have effects on the health of an end-in-itself. Likewise, we may learn that our favorite flower is causing a serious allergic reaction in us. That knowledge would have ethical implications because it concerns an end-in-itself. But those implications would not include changing the subrational nature of the faculties that give us a desire for ice cream of for the flower, since those faculties belong to the nature of an end-in-itself just as they are.

It does not follow, however, that our treatment of subrational beings has no ethical significance. It would be defective for the rational appetite to make destruction its end and take satisfaction in destruction for the sake of destruction. The object of reason is being, that which exists. Therefore, the rational appetite is oriented to valuing being, rather than valuing nonbeing, absence, or privation. The removal of some mode of being is regularly called for by the will's finality, but called for in view of some end other than the removal itself. The removal is desired because what is removed is an obstacle to the existence of some other state of affairs.

Choosing destruction for its own sake would violate the will's finality of deciding for ends according to reason's knowledge. And since reason knows the difference between levels of being, making the destruction of a higher form of being an end would, all other things being equal, be more defective for a rational appetite than would the destruction of a lower form, since, by hypothesis, the destruction of a higher being is more destructive. It is worse to destroy a dog for the sake of destruction than to destroy a stone. But would it be worse to destroy a dog than to destroy the Grand Canyon? Other things would not be equal, by the standard of the rational appetite's finality, because the Grand Canyon gives ends-in-themselves immense delight,

because it sustains various higher forms of being, because its destruction would have a deleterious effect on the human and natural environment, because it is irreplaceable while dogs multiply, and so on.

To the obligation not to seek destruction for its own sake, there does not correspond a right in the subrational being not to be destroyed, in whole or in part. We have the right to destroy them, since they are not ends-in-themselves. But we only have the right to destroy them for the attainment of goals that do not violate the will's intrinsic finality, as taking satisfaction in destruction as such would.

Can it be responded that this analysis does not exclude the inflicting of pain for its own sake, since pain is not mere absence? Pain is not identical with destruction; pain is a consciousness that accompanies destruction in certain cases. Therefore it would seem that to make pain our end would not be defective in the way making destruction our end would be defective. In fact, pain in itself is a good, since it informs a conscious being of the privation of some other state that is good by the standard of the conscious being's appetites.

But by that very fact, pain is by nature a means through which a conscious being is informed of a privation of some good, for the sake of taking action to restore that good. And reason is aware of the fact that pain is such a means. Therefore, making pain an end would violate the will's finality of making things ends and means according to reason's knowledge. To will pain as such is to will something of intrinsically less worth for an appetite than whatever is destroyed in order to cause the pain. For by the nature of pain, its value for an appetite is subordinate to the good whose privation pain is a consciousness of. Therefore, to will destruction, not as an end, but as a means to pain, is to will contrary to reason's knowledge of what pain and destruction are as ends and means for appetites. The place pain has in our evaluations is contrary to what pain is and what appetites are.

There need be nothing wrong in willing pain as a means to the attainment of some other end. We do this when we deny race horses pain killing drugs so that their pain can tell us that they are injured. In such a case, what pain is in our evaluations is what it is in reality. Nor need there be anything wrong with the deprivation of a lower end for the sake of a higher, as when we deprive the horse of thefeeling of well being that the drug would procure in order not to harm the horse. But to will the deprivation of the feeling of well being for the sake of the existence of a something that is a means to the feeling of well being, as well as to other ends, is take satisfaction in the failure of a means to achieve its end; for the pain exists if and only if the end for which it exists is not achieved. We cannot place our satisfaction in the existence of this means without placing satisfaction in its failure to achieve its end. And to take satisfaction in its failure to achieve its end for the sake of its existence as a means to the end is defective for an appetite governed by reason's knowledge of what appetites, ends, and means are.

However, even in the absence of defective ends like delight in destruction or pain for their own sake, it cannot be the case that the pursuit of just any otherwise ethical end end would justify the choice of a means involving the abuse of animals. In this context, the earlier statement that pain is in itself a good needs to be qualified. Sometimes we overemphasize the privation theory of evil. It is true that any positive mode of being has value for the rational appetite. But from the perspective of an appetite oriented to particular modes of being, a given positive state of affairs can

be undesirable because of what it is. Pain is such a positive condition; for pain is a consciousness of an evil, either of the privation of a good (an end or a means necessary for an end) or the presence of an another evil (another positive state opposed to an appetite's finality). However, pain is not a consciousness like our disinterested consciousness of objects other than ourselves. Pain is a form of the conscious subject's self-awareness as a conscious subject. And pain is so linked to the conscious subject's affliction by an evil of which pain is a consciousness that pain cannot exist with the conscious subject's being afflicted by some evil. Therefore, it is not only the painful condition that is an evil for an appetite; pain itself is an evil relative to the appetite for which the painful condition is evil. That is, pain is something the appetite necessarily evaluates as to be avoided and eliminated. For the satisfaction of a cognitive appetite is achieved through awareness of the existence of the appetite's end. And pain is the opposite of that awareness. Hence, the appetite necessarily desires the cessation of pain. Given what pain is and what a cognitive appetite is, pain cannot not be an evil for the appetite whose end is interfered with by the painful condition.

If pain were an objective awareness, it would would not have to be evaluated by an appetite as an evil. When I look at my hand, sometimes I see it wounded, sometimes I do not. The nature of the consciousness is the same in both cases; that is, the nature of the consciousness is indifferent to that which are aware of through it. But the kind of awareness of the wound we have through pain is not indifferent to what we are aware of through it. A sensory appetite can recoil at the sight of a wound; that is not the same as evaluating the visual consciousness itself as evil. But as a subjective awareness, pain is both epistemologically and ontologically linked to a condition interfering with the subject's finalities as a conscious subject. Such an awareness is intrinsically an evil for an appetite whose satisfaction requires the subject's consciousness of the existence of its ends.

As a rational appetite, therefore, the will is governed both by our knowledge of pain as a good, insofar as it is a means to the removal of something evil, and by our knowledge of pain as something evil, relative to an appetite whose frustration pain is the consciousness of. Hence, o evaluate pain for what it is we are obligated to evaluated it as something to be eliminated except where it functions as a necessary means to a good of more value for the rational appetite than the good whose loss causes the pain. For example, we have a natural inclination toward entertainment that precedes our free choices and provides one kind of matter for our choices, since the will is always selecting among the ends of other faculties and inclinations. A certain amount of entertainment should even be considered a normally necessary condition for our successful functioning as pursuers of goals, because the psychological state of one deprived of sufficient entertainment can interfere with her pursuit of other goals. Since the inclination toward entertainment belongs to an end-in-itself, would we be justified in abusing animals for the sake of, say, making a movie? Not if there are other ways to provide the entertainment we need; if there are other ways, the pain is not necessary.

But since we are ends-in-ourselves, why can we not make such a movie our end, in which case abuse of an animal would be necessary for our end? The function of free choice is to select concrete ends that satisfy natural inclinations, inclinations which usually do not require this or that concrete way of satisfying them. Not all the concrete ends we can choose fulfill the

rational appetite's own finality of valuing things according to reason's knowledge of what they are. The will is not obligated to select a particular end satisfying a natural inclination, when the satisfaction of that inclination does not constitute a need for us as pursuers of goals or when the inclination can be satisfied in other ways. The abuse of an animal is not necessary to satisfy our natural need for entertainment. Therefore, the abuse of an animal is not necessary to fulfill the rational appetite's function of selecting concrete ends satisfying natural inclinations. To satisfy the inclination for entertainment by abusing an animal would fail to evaluate pain for what it is, a relative evil that, by that fact, is something to be avoided unless it is necessary for a good that is higher or more necessary for a rational appetite.

There could be cases where the choice of such a means was not defective. Stranded people might have no way short of abuse to kill an animal they need for food. What is at stake would constitute a need imposed by the nature of ends-in-themselves; they cannot be pursuers of ends without it. And since there is no other way to fulfill the need, there is no question that the goal achieved makes it reasonable to sacrifice the well being of the animal. But if there were another way to satisfy that need, chosing to abuse the animal would violate the will's finality of evaluating according to reason's knowledge of what things are. Medical experiments, also, are cases where there the end achieved can justify inflicting pain on animals, as long as the amount inflicted does not exceed that required by a medical purpose that serves the needs of ends-in-themselves.

## 6. Ethical Values Other than Fairness

For many, where justice in the sense of fairness toward another human is not at stake, no ethical value is at stake. The fact that we are ends-in-ourselves (whether because we are free beings or because our consciousness can attain the infinite fullness of being) imposes obligations toward ourselves and toward others that go beyond fairness. Justice means given something its due, that is, what is due it according to the finality of the rational appetite. Equality of treatment is not the only thing due an end-in-itself from a rational appetite. Even where equality is not an issue, we are capable of misevaluating both ourselves and other humans with respect to our character as ends-in-ourselves. Just as we can fail to give ourselves due credit at the level of belief and of psychological attitudes, and just as such failures are intrinsically defective for not achieving the goal of conformity to what we are, we can fail to give what we are the credit due it from a rational appetite and thus fail to achieve the appetite's intrinsic finality.

Ethical theories have to avoid the following potential problem. Seeking a basic principle that can be used as an ethical standard, a theory abstracts a principle from some agreed upon ethical examples. The theory then assumes it has the principle it needs only to find that applying the principle to other cases produces unwanted results. Is there a danger of that happening as I extend the analysis from fairness to other cases? There could be such a danger if this were a matter of deriving consequences from a principle. But I have put forward no such principle. In effect, I have treated the principles, "Treat other humans equally," and "Do not user other persons merely as means," not as foundations of ethical decisions but as something in need of foundation. That foundation was located not in a further principle but in a factual situation. The obligation to treat equals equally is not <u>derived</u> <u>from</u> that situation but <u>consists</u> <u>in</u> that situation.*

Similarly, in the examples to follow, I will not be deriving ethical consequences from a principle but will be pointing a factual situation like that I pointed to in the case of fairness, namely, a defect in placing evaluations on things, a defect measured not by a standard external to the act of deciding but by a decision's intrinsic finality of treating things as if they exist the way they are evaluated. If someone wishes to concede the occurrence of the defect but refuses to call it a moral defect on the grounds that it does not involve fairness in the usual sense, I can only reply that we are free to use words any way we want. However, the opponent will have to find something that the moral obligation to be fair consists in other than the defect in question, since the defect occurs in each of the cases.

Furthermore, since the defect is culpable, the guilty party deserves punishment as she does for her other ethically defective decisions. A defective decision freely deprives us of an end called for by our nature, since the defect consists in the decision's failure to achieve an end called for by the nature of the rational appetite. An all-powerful being aware of such a culpable defect would Himself make an intrinsically defective decision, if He did not allow us to suffer the consequences of the defect in our evaluations. In fact, God would be unjust to us, His will would be defective, if having given us free choice, He did not allow us to suffer the deprivations that we freely choose, along with any necessary consequences of those freely chosen deprivations.

For example, if a condition for achieving our ultimate end of knowing God is rectitude of will toward ends that are less than our ultimate end, the absence of that rectitude would require God to deprive us of our ultimate end. Why would rectitude toward lesser ends be necessary for achieving our ultimate end? Achieving our ultimate requires rectitude of will toward God, and a freely chosen lack of rectitude toward a lesser good can prevent us from having rectitude of will toward the source and exemplar of the lesser good.

We have seen how lack of rectitude occurs in the case of fairness toward our equals. The question is how it could occur in other cases. I will now indicate how it occurs in the cases of artificial contraception, drunkenness, and suicide. I discuss contraception in Section 6.1. Drunkenness and suicide are discussed in Section 6.2.

## 6.1. Artificial Contraception

Appetites cause us to evaluate things as ends or means to ends. The will causes us to evaluate things as ends and means according to our rational knowledge of what those things are. When we choose to use our sexuality, we choose to use it as a means to some end. But at times of fertility, human sexuality is, by nature, a means for bringing into existence beings that are ends-in-themselves. Human persons are ends-in-themselves and must be so evaluated by the rational appetites of other persons.

To evaluate something as an end is to give it a place in our system of values such that the thing's value does not derive from its relation to some other value. An end is an object of desire that is not desired for its relation to some other object of desire. For example, in willing that other humans have an opportunity equal to ours to pursue goals that not both of us can attain, we give them a place in our evaluations that does not derive from their relation to some other end we are seeking. Since its value for a rational appetite is not bestowed by its relation to anything else, an end-in-itself is an ethical absolute. Given something that is an end-in-itself, the rational appetite cannot fail to be defective if it does not value the thing as an end.

Does it follow that we have an obligation to make our goal the existence of all the ends-in-themselves that our sexuality could produce? That is, does it follow that we should all choose to bring into existence the maximum number of children whose conceiving and rearing would be compatible with other conditions without which we cannot conceive and rear (working to provide for food, shelter, and clothing, getting enough sleep, etc.)? To put it another way, from the fact that sexuality is a means to the existence of ethical absolutes, does it follow that we all have the obligation not to be celibate?

No. The rational appetite's obligations are determined by our rational knowledge. Reason knows the difference between the actual and the potential. It is one thing to know that another human being exists. That knowledge imposes the obligation to will the this being actually have an equal opportunity to pursue goals. It is another thing to know that if a child is conceived, another human being will exist. That knowledge imposes only the hypothetical obligation to will that, if a child comes into existence, she be treated equally. For example, it imposes the obligation to will that, if a child is conceived, she not be aborted.

The truth of "Another human being exists" is categorical; its truth is caused by the actual existence of the being, an existence that is independent of our knowledge of it. That same existence causes the being to have an actual right to equal treatment from us. That is, the finality of the rational appetite obliges the appetite actually to will the thing's equal treatment. On the other hand, the truth of an essential predication like "If a being has a rational appetite, it has freedom of choice" is hypothetical; its truth is not caused by the actual existence of anything. Still, its truth is caused by something independent of the cognition by which we know the truth, namely, the nature of the rational appetite. For the rational appetite is not caused to be what it is by this cognition of it. And the connection between the nature of the rational appetite and freedom depnds on the rational appetite's being what it is; it does not depend on our awareness that the rational appetite is what it is or our awareness that the rational appetite's nature gives it freedom.

But the nature that causes the truth of such a statement may have no actual existence outside of our cognition. That is why the truth is hypothetical. The nature must actually exist in knowledge in order to be known. But what is necessary for knowledge of the statement's truth is one thing; what causes the statement to be true is another. The nature is not a cognition-independent cause of truth insofar as it exists in cognition but insofar as it is capacity for being more than a term of this knowledge relation, specifically, a capacity for having an existence that is not constituted by our cognition of it. For the hypothesis in a truth like "If a being has a rational appetite, it has freedom of choice " is an hypothesis about the cognition-independent existence of beings with rational appetites.

A nature can cause an obligation for a rational appetite only in the way it causes the truths that reason knows. If a nature actually exists, it can cause a categorical obligation. If a nature's capacity of cognition-independent existence is unfulfilled, any obligation associated with it is only hypothetical, just as the nature's existence is only potential. The object of reason is being, actual and potential. The rational appetite's finality is to value the objects of rational knowledge as known by reason. And reason knows the difference between the actual and the potential. To call such obligation hypothetical can be misleading. The obligation

is not hypothetical in the sense in which teleological ethics is sometimes accused of making obligation hypothetical. That is, a means can be obligatory on the hypothesis that you wish to obtain the end that only this means can bring about; but there would be no way to make the end itself obligatory except in terms of the hypothesis of a further end which itself is nonobligatory. In fact, however, all obligation consists in the fulfillment of the rational appetite's intrinsic relation to the end of valuing things according to reason's knowledge. As such, no obligation is hypothetical. The choice of another end for the rational appetite could not escape this obligation, since the choice would be an act of the rational appetite. But the knowledge which nonhypothetically governs the will's decisions may be the knowledge of a hypothetical truth. The nonhypothetical obligation corresponding to such a truth would not be the obligation to will the actual existence of anything but the obligation to will that some state of affairs obtain if the hypothesis of the truth is fulfilled.

The fact that human sexuality is, at times of fertility, a means to the existence of an ethical absolute, therefore, does not impose the obligation to make that existence actual by using our sexuality. Does the fact that human sexuality is a means to an ethical absolute impose any other obligation on the rational appetite? Human sexuality is a means to other potential ends besides persons, for example, pleasure. Could one ethically decide to frustrate sexuality's function of producing absolute ethical values in order to use it solely for another value like pleasure? If we employ contraceptives, we are not evaluating sexuality as a means to an end-in-itself. The place it has in our system of values is that of a means to some end less than an ethical absolute, since we are precisely choosing to prevent the coming into existence of an ethical absolute while using our sexuality. As a result, my evaluation of my sexuality as a means to ends, my placing of sexuality in my system of values, is defective. I am evaluating my sexuality to be other than it is by reducing it to being less than a means to an end-in-itself.

How does an unconscious fact about sexuality's orientation to the production of human beings imply moral obligation? That unconscious orientation becomes conscious at the level of the rational appetite which makes the action of the sex faculty its own. That consciousness requires me to take a stand at the level of the rational appetite regarding the value sexuality as a means to ends. I am evaluating my sexuality as if it were a mere means to to things that are not ends-in-themselves, since that is how I am consciously using my sexuality. In so doing, I am evaluating my sexuality to be other than it is as a means to ends that have an absolute value by the standard of the rational appetite's intrinsic finality.

My obligation not to interfere with this goal of the sex act is not one of justice to the potential child. I owe no debt of justice to a being that may never exist; otherwise, the obligation would be to bring the new human into existence. We would be obliged to perform the sex act. The obligation not to interfere with the coming into existence of a new human being only occurs if I am performing a sex act. For it is only then that preventing conception requires that I treat the sex act as if it were not ordered to the existence of something that is an end-in-itself. In other words, the merely potential nature of the end-in-itself to which sexuality is ordered imposes only a hypothetical obligation toward the use of sex for that purpose. If we use sex, the decision to interfere with the production of a person is defective as an act of the rational appetite. In making choices, the rational

appetite's nature requires it to evaluate things as ends and means to ends. I am not obligated to make the future existence of a human an end I pursue. But when I undertake an action, I cannot avoid evaluating the action as a means to ends. Hence, the problem of whether sexuality is evaluated as a means to ends-in-themselves does not arise until the rational appetite chooses a sex act and must evaluate the act as a means to rationally understood ends. If I employ contraceptives, I am not evaluating the act as a means to an end of unconditional ethical value.

The difference between someone who prevents the existence of a person by abstaining from sex and someone who prevents it by using contraception is that the abstainer does not evaluate her sexuality to be less than a means to a thing that is an end-in-itself for the rational appetite. If I refrain from sex in order not to have children, the place sexuality has in my evaluations need not be that of a means to ends that are less than ethical absolutes. In fact, I sacrifice the other ends I would attain through the sex act rather than treat sex as if it were not naturally oriented to a goal that is an end-in-itself and an absolute ethical value.

This way of distinguishing those who prevent conception by refraining from sex from those who do so by other means is an important difference between the present analysis of the evil of contraception and other analyses. Other analyses make it difficult to see why, if you can choose to abstain for the purpose of contraception, you cannot achieve the same purpose in other ways. For example, where it is recognized that contraception denies the other person her fertility and yours, it needs to be made clear why couples cannot mutually agree to deny each other their fertility. Mutual agreement appears to make the arrangement fair and, therefore, ethically valid; one party is not asking the other to give up something she is not willing to give up herself. And if we can mutually agree to deny each other our sexuality by abstaining, why can't we mutually agree to deny each other our fertility? Because doing so violates the will's finality by evaluating sexuality to be other than what it is as a means to an end of absolute value for the will.

The fact that the absolute value is only potential does not preclude obligation; it merely renders the obligation hypothetical: if you use your sexuality, do not interfere with its production of an end-in-itself. For the existence of our sexuality is not potential; it is actual. Hence, the existence of sexuality's orientation to a potential thing that would be an end-in-itself is actual, not potential. That orientation is nothing other than sexuality's nature, what sexuality is, since the orientation of any cause to its effects is, ultimately, identical with what exists when the cause exists.

Therefore, in evaluating sexuality to be less than a means to an end-in-itself, I am treating some actually existing ends-in-themselves unjustly, namely, myself and my sex partner. I am evaluating our nature as sexual beings to be less than what it is as a means to something of absolute value for the rational appetite; I am not giving our sexual nature the place in my evaluations that is due it from the point of view of the rational appetite's intrinsic finality. As a result, my decision is defective with respect to giving actually existing persons, ends-in-themselves, what is due them from a rational appetite. To misevaluate our sexuality is to misevaluate ourselves.

In Section 4.4.3, I pointed out that, from the perspective of God's justice, our intentions are more important than the carrying out of our

intentions. The first good due things from the rational appetite is their proper place in the evaluations of the rational appetite. If we do not give things the place due them in our evaluations, an injustice has been done even if we do nothing else. Therefore, if we freely choose to treat ourselves as less than what we are, if we choose not to give our nature the evaluation due if from an appetite oriented to making things ends and means according to reason's knowledge of what the evaluated things are, God would make an intrinsically defective decision if He did not allow us to be deprived of our true ends in proportion to our culpable failure to give ourselves as sexual beings the place we are due in our own evaluations. God would be unjust to us if He did not give us what we choose along with any necessary consequences of that choice.

In other words, the decision for contraception would deserve divine punishment in the same way that a decision to deny another person equal opportunity to pursue their ends would deserve it. Punishment for contraception would not restore equality between persons. But from God's perspective, that is, in reality, it is disordered willing that is constitutive of moral evil and deserves punishment. A decision for contraception is just as much disordered as the intention to treat others is, even when we cannot carry out the intention. In neither case is an end-in-itself actually deprived of an equal opportunity to pursue goals. But in each case, our willing is disordered with respect to giving an end-in-itself the place its nature is due in our evaluations.

Another implication of the evil of contraception needs to be pointed out. A decision for contraception is intrinsically defective because it misevaluates sexuality as less than a means to an ethical absolute. But such a misevaluation could occur in two ways. One way would be through ignorance of the fact that children are produced by sex acts. That source of the misevaluation is excluded in the present case. For one thing, the situation under discussion is that of taking measures to prevent conception; so knowledge of what sex can produce is assumed. More fundamentally, inculpable ignorance would excuse from moral obligation, because obligation concerns evaluating things as they are known by reason. When we are analyzing the finality of the rational appetite, rational knowledge must be presumed.

But if the fact that human beings are produced by sex is known, the only way to evaluate sex as less than a means to ethical absolutes is to evaluate the existence of a human being as less than the existence of an ethical absolute, an end-in-itself. When we use contraception, we are treating sex as if it were not by nature an orientation to the production of something of absolute ethical value, which is the same as treating the results to which sex is oriented as not being of absolute ethical value. The rational appetite is always engaged in directing the activity of other faculties. How the rational appetite evaluates a faculty with respect to being a means to ends implies an evaluation of the products of the faculty. For ends and means are correlative as objects of rational consciousness; my conscious evaluation of means as such implies an evaluation of its results as ends. Hence, the way I evaluate my sexuality requires an evaluation of the results to which my sexuality is oriented. If I so evaluate my sexuality that I can use it for one result while preventing another, I am evaluating the prevented result as something other than an end-in-itself. If I pick and choose between the ends of an action, I am not evaluating those ends as absolutes. In using contraception, I knowingly make an act oriented to an

end-in-itself defective with respect to the production of an end-in-itself; therefore my decision is also defective with respect to the rational evaluation of an end-in-itself as such. Again, the status of the child as potential makes any obligation hypothetical. The only actual beings to whom I have an obligation are my sex partner and myself. But in misevaluating our sexuality as less than a means to an ethical absolute, the existence of a child has already been misevaluated as less than the existence of an ethical absolute. Therefore, the misevaluation of the ethical value of children begins before abortion; it begins in contraception. Not that those who decide for contraception are logically committed to decide for abortion. Logic is the domain of necessity; decisions are the domain of freedom. But the misevaluation of our sexuality does logically imply a misevaluation of its results. Hence there is nothing inconsistent with taking the next step and deciding for abortion when contraception fails.

Note that this analysis of contraception does not obligate us to refrain from sex at times of infertility. The fact that sexuality is a means to the existence of an end-in-itself does not even require us to have procreation as our primary psychological purpose. As long as we do not use sex with the intention of preventing the production of a child by an act that could otherwise produce it, we are not giving a means to the existence of children a place in our values that denies it the place of being a means to the existence of children, since we are not deliberately interfering with the production of a child when that production could occur. Therefore, our evaluation is not defective for lack of identity between what sex is as a means to ends in reality and in our evaluations. The relation of sex to children is not an ethical absolute in the sense that we must only use sex for that purpose. Rather, that to which sex is related, when it is able to produce children, is something of absolute ethical value. Therefore, we are obliged not to frustrate that purpose when it could be achieved; for we would be giving sex a place in our values that would deny it the place, in reality, of being a means to ends-in-themselves.

It is also important to make clear that this analysis does not locate the moral evil of contraception in the frustration of the primary natural end of a faculty. We have many faculties whose primary function can be frustrated morally. The frustration becomes morally evil when the natural end of the faculty is something of absolute ethical value; for the location of moral evil as such is in the act the rational appetite, not the act of another faculty directed by the rational appetite. Moral evil is privation with respect to the will's intrinsic finality. The privation of another faculty's end can have moral significance only to the extent that it implies a privation in the will with respect to the will's own end. There is a perverted faculty in moral evil, but that faculty is the rational appetite itself. In unfair behavior, the perversion consists in evaluating other persons as if they were not ends-in-themselves. In contraception, the perversion consists in evaluating the sexual being of ends-in-themselves as if it was not naturally a means to the existence of an end-in-itself, that is, as if its natural end was not something of infinite value. Openness to the production of persons is not obligatory by virtue of being the faculty's natural end. Rather, openness to this natural end is obligatory by virtue of the end's being the production of persons. Otherwise, the fact that a means is related to a particular end would have more moral significance than the fact that the end is something of infinite value. For instance, the fact that our olfactory faculties have

smell for their end would be more important for ethics than the fact that the end of our reproductive faculties is the existence of an infinitely valuable being.

Although the preceding argument does not depend on whether procreation is the primary end of sexuality, the fact is that procreation is sexuality's primary end; and that fact has ethical significance, at least for those who know that God exists. Even when conception cannot occur, sexuality is what it is primarily in order that conception can result at other times. Just as a person is still a person when she is sleeping or drugged, sexuality is <u>always</u> something that exists so that it can <u>sometimes</u> produce children. That is, just as a person is always what she is primarily so that she can do the things she does when she is awake, so also sexuality is what it is primarily for the times when it can produce children.

To ask what is the primary end is to ask what is the most important end. The most important end sexuality accomplishes, the most important thing it contributes to us, is our existence. Sexuality contributes many other things to us but none of them is or can be as important as our existence, since without existence, nothing else is possible. That everything else sexuality can accomplish presupposes existence seems too obvious to say. Yet that fact is implicitly, though unintentionally, denied by those who deny that procreation has primacy among the ends of sexuality. For those who know that God exists, the primacy of existence means that procreation is the primary reason sexuality is what it is even at those times when procreation cannot result from the sex act. God made sexuality what it is primarily so that it can sometimes produce human beings. If not, then God is ignorant of the fact that existence is more important than any of the other things sexuality contributes to us. Since God designed sexuality to bring human beings into existence and since He knows that nothing else sexuality accomplishes can be as important as exisence, He designed sexuality for the primary purpose of bringing us into existence. Likewise, our faculties of nutrition are what they are primarily for the sake of maintaining us in existence, even though we can use them to draw pleasure from substances with no nutritional value.

(*But the existence nutrition maintains is the existence of an end-in-itself. Does that fact oblige us not to interfere with the primary end of nutrition by ingesting something without nutritional value? Not unless ingesting the substance would harm us in some way. For unless the substance would harm us, its lack of nutritional value would no more oblige us not to ingest it then the fact that conception cannot now occur would oblige us not to engage in sex. And if ingesting the substance did harm us, the moral evil would not consist in misevaluating the nutritional faculty as a means to a potentially achieved end. The moral evil would consist in depriving already existing ends-in-themselves, namely, ourselves, of conditions necessary for our pursuit of goals, including goals like gustatory pleasure. (See Sections 4.4.1 and 5.3.) If our continued existence imposes an obligation, the reason is not the nature of the nutritional faculty as oriented to that end but the fact that what already exists is an end-in-itself. (See Section 6.2.2.) If it were not already an end-in-itself, the nutritional faculty would not be maintaining the existence of an end-in-itself.)

The fact that God made sex what it is primarily to bring children into existence has ethical implications even at times of infertility. Since human sexuality is what it is primarily in order to produce ends-in-themselves, the marital relation exists because we have faculties whose primary purpose is

procreation. The basis of the marital relation, our sexuality, is what it is primarily to be a means to the existence of ethical absolutes. Even when that purpose cannot be achieved, ethical meaning of the marital relation is the use of faculties that exist primarily to sometimes produce beings of unconditional ethical value. Therefore, the sexual union should take place through genital faculties even when conception is not possible. If the sexual union does not take place through organs that are what they are for the sake of procreation, couples are evaluating their sexuality to be something other than it is; for they are treating it as if it is not always what it is for the sake of procreation. They are evaluating their sexuality as if it were not always what it is primarily to produce, from time to time, things of unconditional ethical value. If couples do not use their sexuality in ways consistent with that purpose, the place sexuality has in their values is inconsistent with what sexuality is. When sexual union does not take place through genital organs, sexuality is not evaluated as always being what it is primarily for procreation. But if we are to make things ends and means according to our knowledge of what they are, our evaluation of sexuality must never deny its being what it is for the sake of procreation.

### 6.2. More Ethical Values Other than to Fairness

Two more examples outside of the domain of fairness will illustrate how far the analysis of obligation by the intrinsic finality of the rational appetite extends.

#### 6.2.1. Drunkenness

Ordinarily, drunkenness and other drug-induced states contain a threat of unfairness, since our behavior can affect others at any moment. But consider the person shipwrecked and isolated on a remote island. The possibility of unfairness to another is nil, but her decision to get drunk is not ethically neutral.

The difference between drug-induced states like drunkenness, on the one hand, and drug-induced unconsciousness, on the other, is that while drunk we continue to perform activities that would otherwise be under the control of reason and the rational appetite. Drunkeness, however, impedes reason and weakens our ability to direct these activities by decisions based on rational knowledge. Either we cannot make decisions based on rational knowledge, since rational judgment is lacking; or we can make rational decisions but cannot carry them out, since the rational appetite's control over other faculties is impaired. On either analysis, the decision to get drunk is defective by the standard of the will's intrinsic finality. In the first case, our decision would be to enter in a state in which we would make decisions but would not make them according to our rational knowledge. But the nature of the will is to make decisions according to rational knowledge. Therefore, the decision would seek an end contrary to the end of the faculty that produced the decision. The decision would evaluate the will to be something whose finality was other than it is, since the decision would be opting for future decisions contrary to that finality.

In the second case, the decision is to deprive ourselves of conditions necessary to carry out a set of future decisions. But to will that we not be able to carry out our decisions is to will that the finality of the rational appetite not be achieved. The ends selected by the rational appetite are selected as ends whose achievement is to be pursued; otherwise our decisions are merely wishes. Where conditions beyond our control prevent the pursuit of

an end, a wish can be a way of selecting an end. But an end is not truly our end if we fail to pursue it when ethical means of doing so are available. A decision to pursue an end includes in its finality the carrying out of the decision; that is, the carrying out of the decision is aimed at in deciding to pursue an end. For the intention of actually attaining an end is an integral part of the decision for an end.

The production of a decision is not the ultimate goal aimed at by any appetite. The decision is merely a necessary step toward the goal, since the goal does not yet exist. Here, however, we are choosing conditions that prevent the carrying out of decisions and therefore choosing not to fulfill the finality of the rational appetite. A decision that the goal of the appetite producing the decision not be achieved would be defective for any appetite. It is especially defective for an appetite that has the finality of evaluating things, including itself, according to rational knowledge of what they are. On either analysis, then, in choosing drunkenness, we would be valuing some state such as pleasure or forgetfulness of our troubles more highly than the state of being able to accomplish the intrinsic finality of the rational appetite.

Another way to put it is that, in deciding to get drunk, as in deciding for contraception, we are unjustly evaluating an end-in-itself; we are evaluating ourselves to be less than what we are as ends-in-ourselves. In fact, we are evaluating ourselves in the same way that we evaluate others when their value for us is not that of beings whose action is directed to ends they set for themselves. The place our orientation to ends, while drunk, would have in the evaluations we make in choosing to get drunk would be the place of an orientation to ends not determined by the being that has those orientations; that being will be directed to ends unconscious nature sets for her, either because she will not have free choice or will not have free control over her behavior. For the sake of a goal like pleasure, we would sacrifice our ability, while drunk, to pursue freely chosen goals. And that is what we do when we treat another person unfairly: deny them the opportunity to pursue a freely chosen goal for the sake of some goal we have chosen. And just as unfairness to others is defective for not valuing them as ends-in-themselves, so the decision to get drunk is defective for not valuing ourselves as ends-in-ourselves. In one case, we use others as means to some goal of ours without allowing them to pursue their goals; in the other case, we use our faculties as means to a goal that will prevent us from having free control over the pursuit of other goals.

The goals I choose for myself do not have to be ends-in-themselves in the sense of things the rational appetite is obliged by its intrinsic finality to will as ends. For example, pleasure can be chosen as an end, rather than as a means, but its value derives from its relation to faculties other than the rational appetite. The fact that a being with a rational appetite also has faculties oriented to pleasure does not make pleasure something the rational appetite is obligated to value as an end, since the rational appetite could choose to forgo pleasure without violation of its own intrinsic finality. The value of pleasure derives from its relation to faculties of desire other than the rational appetite as such. Therefore, that natures of neither pleasure nor the will make pleasure an end-in-itself for the will, even though we can choose pleasure as an end.

Although the nature of the rational appetite allows it to choose ends that are less than ends-in-themselves, such a choice acquires ethical

implications in circumstances where the finality of the rational appetite would be at stake, for example, when choosing comfort would require us to violate someone's rights. And the finality of the rational appetite is at stake in a choice, like the choice of drunkenness, which would require the rational appetite to evaluate pleasure more highly than the ability to have free control over our behavior.

### 6.2.2. Suicide

A final example of obligation that does not involve unequal treatment of other persons. Our ethical status as ends-in-ourselves derives from our power of choosing our own ends. Does that status give us the right to choose suicide? For instance, as the determiner of my own goals, should I not have the right to choose physical comfort as an end and therefore to die rather than face a life of pain?

No, because this choice of an otherwise ethical end would here violate the finality of the rational appetite. By choosing death over pain, we would be putting the existence of a being experiencing comfort higher in the evaluations of the rational appetite than the existence of an end-in-itself, a human being. We would be evaluating the existence of a being without pain as higher, for the rational appetite, than the existence of a being capable of selecting the ends of her own existence. In other words, we would be treating the existence of an end-in-itself as if it were a means to the existence of a being without pain, so that if the goal of eliminating pain cannot be achieved, the means to that end can be dispensed with.

But our status as ends-in-themselves derives from our freedom of choice. Therefore, this criticism of suicide seems to make freedom of choice alone an end-in-itself, since we are sacrificing comfort for the sake of preserving a being with freedom of choice. And it seems that (self-referentially inconsistently) we are preserving our ability to choose ends at the price of not allowing ourselves to choose comfort as an end.

However, the end-in-itself is not freedom of choice; it is the entity who has freedom of choice. The fact that a thing's nature gives it freedom of choice makes the thing an end-in-itself for an appetite that evaluates according to reason's knowledge of what things are. Reason knows that free choice is subordinated to the being who has free choice as that which exists secondarily is subordinated to that which exists primarily, as the instrumental cause is subordinated to the principal cause, and as the means is subordinated to the being whose end the means procures. For our underlying nature produces freedom of choice as a means to the ends it, our nature, gives us.

But what natural end do we accomplish by choosing to remain alive through debilitating pain? At least the end of evaluating things according to reason's knowledge of what they are, in this case, the knowledge that a human being is an end-in-itself. Is this reasoning circular since the knowledge that we are ends-in-ourselves is, ultimately, the knowledge that we have an appetite with the finality of evaluating things according to reason's knowledge of what they are? No, because to take one's life to avoid pain would be to evaluate the existence of a human being as less than that of an end-in-itself, since we would be sacrificing human life for something that is less than an end-in-itself. The rational appetite's evaluation of things as ends or means must extend to an evaluation of itself and of the being that possesses it; otherwise, the rational appetite would not be a faculty of evaluating things according to reason's knowledge of them.

For the rational appetite, the existence of a being capable of evaluating things according to reason's knowledge of them must have a higher value than the existence of a being with comfort. If not, there is no ethical obligation at all. If I can evaluate my own being as a means to the existence of comfort, why can I not evaluate the existence of another free being as a means to the existence of comfort and so prevent her from pursuing her ends in order to achieve my own comfort? The reply will be that the crucial question is whose comfort is at stake. As a free being, she can choose comfort as her end, and I do not have the right to interfere with her choice. The true crucial question, however, is why I do not have that right; why do I owe it to her to allow her to pursue her goals? In other words, what is the nature of obligation; on what is it founded?

If we can evaluate ourselves as means to the existence of comfort, or anything else we may choose, without violating the will's finality, then free choice is an end-in-itself, not the being that has free choice. The free choice of an end is the ultimate measure of the value possessed by anything other than the end, since there is no finality pre-existing the choice of an end by which the value of the choice would be measured. Free choices would not exist to fulfill the finality of the appetite producing them and, ultimately, of the entity that produced the appetite. In particular, free choices would not have the finality of valuing things according to reason's knowledge. In other words, if my evaluation of another person (or myself) stops at the behavior of making a choice, like the choice of comfort, and does not go on to value the entity making the choice as an end-in-itself, I am not evaluating according to reason's knowledge of the existence of choices, dispositions to choice, and beings whose natures give them orientations to ends to be achieved through making choices. I am not evaluating according to what I know these things to be. But if my choices do not have the finality to value things according to reasons knowledge of what they are, why am I obligated to treat the other person as if her choices were ends-in-themselves? The value that everything else has for me would derive from my choice of ends, not from my rational knowledge of what she is as a being whose nature gives her freedom of choice.

In short, it is the objection, not my explanation of the evil of suicide, that would make free choice an end-in-itself. And in so doing, the objection would eliminate all obligation, including the supposed obligation to value free choice as an end-in-itself. The same argument, by the way, applies to those who would justify infanticide at any time before the child develops the proximate ability to make free choices. Is it the proximate ability to make decisions that bestows value on a child? If so, we must ask "Value for what, by what standard?" The answer must be, "Value relative to the arbitrary decision of another freedom to bestow a value on the child's freedom, even though the opposite decision would not be defective by any intrinsic standard." The answer cannot be, "Value for an appetite whose finality is to make things ends and means according to reason's knowledge of what they are." For the value of free choice is no longer that of a means by which the underlying entity achieves the ends inscribed in its nature; its value is not that of an instrumental cause relative to a principal cause, nor is the being which exists primarily and which causes that which exists secondarily of more value than that which exists secondarily. But in all these ways, reason knows the existence of the underlying entity has primacy, ontological and causal primacy, over the existence of the proximate ability for choice. In se

particular, reason knows that the existence of faculties fulfills orientations found in the underlying entity and that, therefore, faculties exist as means to the achievement of the ultimate fulfillment of the entity's orientations. (This is not an anthropomorphic importation of conscious finality into nature but an ontological analysis of the requirements for behavior to be caused. Conscious finality is just a particular instance of the universal requirement for effects to be produced by causes disposed to produce those effects.) If suicide and abortion are made permissable, respectively, by the presence and absence of free choice, everything is permissable; there is no ethical obligation.

To return to suicide. For those who do not know the existence of God and the afterlife, the fact of being ends-in-ourselves may be small consolation for a life of pain. But we are stuck with that fact and its ethical implications, just as we are stuck with the rational appetite. And if that fact may not motivate some secular individuals to continue life, it should motivate even a secular society to prohibit euthanasia for the sake of preserving the foundation of public morality, namely, the societal commitment to the ethical value of human life.

On the other hand, those who do not know that God exists can still understand the nature of ethical obligation as here explained, since this explanation does not presuppose the existence of God. And even though a child mature enough to know that the choice to be unfair is defective probably also has an implicit awareness that contingent things require an uncaused cause, that awareness need not be directly involved in her grasp of the obligation to be fair. If an atheist can understand ethical obligation, however, why could she not be happy choosing life over comfort as a result of knowing that she was giving her life the value due it because of what it is? Conversely, why would the choice of comfort over life not make her unhappy as a result of knowing that the choice was unworthy of a being who makes decisions based on rational knowledge of what things are? Also, why should she not be happy knowing that she was helping other end-in-themselves by reinforcing society's commitment to the value of human life, since she would know that by choosing death she would contribute to the weakening of that commitment and thus violate the rights of other ends-in-themselves.

But even if understanding the ethical value of human life were not sufficient to motivate the atheist to choose life over comfort, this explanation of obligation, in general, and of the obligation not to commit suicide, in particular, would stand. The argument to the contrary is that the analysis of obligation in terms of the rational appetite cannot answer the question "Why be moral?" Since knowledge of the ethical value of life would not motivate her, making the moral choice would not make her happy; happiness is what results from the accomplishment of that which motivates us. "To be happy," therefore, would be an insufficient answer to "Why be moral?" for an atheist faced with a life of pain.

The objection fails on two counts. First, the nature of obligation does not consist in the fact that something will or will not make us happy. If it were possible for us to be truly happy while knowingly doing the unethical thing, it would remain the case that our action would be intrinsically defective and would deserve to be so judged by ourselves and others. Second, the nature of obligation is to evaluate according to reason's knowledge of what things are. Therefore, to judge the consequences of obligation's being what it is, we must assume that a person has accurate knowledge of whatever is

relevant to a particular decision. From the fact that an understanding of obligation does not require knowledge of the existence of God and the afterlife, it does not follow that such knowledge is irrelevant to all questions that can be asked about obligation. The hypothesis of the present example is that the person is ignorant (inculpably, let us say) of the existence of God and of the afterlife. Hence, while we are assuming that she understands the nature of ethical obligation, we are not assuming that she is fully aware of what is at stake in the decision to commit suicide. For a person aware of the nature of obligation and also of the existence of a just God and an afterlife, "To be happy" would be a sufficient reason for not commiting suicide. Likewise, a person can understand the nature of obligation without knowing anything about the destructiveness of atomic bombs or arsenic. Such a person could be happy with certain decisions made in ignorance of those facts, but she could not be truly happy with same decisions made in full knowledge.

Since I can ethically desire a goal that is less than an end-in-itself, however, I can wish for death to occur by ethical means. That is, I can wish for death to occur while at the same time willing that life continue until terminated by means out of the rational appetite's control. Wishing we were dead for the sake of a goal less than an end-in-itself is not the same as so evaluating human life that we will human life to be sacrificed, or even to be eligible for sacrifice, for the sake of that goal. For example, wishing we were dead to avoid pain does not require us to evaluate being comfortable as on a par with being an end-in-oneself, since it does not require us to will that our life as free beings be sacrificed for the sake of comfort. Rather, in choosing to remain alive, in spite of our wish for death, we are sacrificing other ends -- as does the person who prevents conception by sexual abstinence -- for the sake of our existence as ends-in-ourselves.

Some goals for the rational appetite are worth the sacrifice of life. For example, if I sacrifice my life to save the life of another person in circumstances when both lives cannot be saved, my goal is, unlike comfort, the existence of an end-in-itself. Nor am I evaluating myself to be less than the other person as a free pursuer of goals, since I am pursuing my own freely chosen goal, not death, but the life of an end-in-itself. But not all methods of sacrificial death are worthy of the rational appetite. Specifically, I do not have the right to be my own executioner, as opposed, say, to risking my life for another person or accepting death from a third party in another's stead. In the situation of risk or acceptance, I am not the principal agent of the destruction of an end-in-itself; I am not the principal cause of the events that will lead to the death of an innocent human. To knowingly be such a cause is to evaluate oneself as a means to the destruction of an end-in-itself. When we know that such a cause exists and that we cannot ethically stop it, allowing it to take our life instead of another person's life is not to evaluate ourselves as a means for the death of an end-in-itself; that is not the place we are giving ourselves in our evaluations. Rather, we are evaluating ourselves as means to the existence of an end-in-itself, something we cannot consistently do if we take our own life to save another's. The rational appetite evaluates things according to reason's knowledge of what they are. Reason knows the difference between being the principal cause of one's own death and accepting or risking death when other causes have made the death of a human ethically unavoidable.

# Afterword

## Where These Ideas Come From; How They Relate to Some Other Ideas; Where They Might Lead

Two kinds of philosophers are apt to find the preceding ideas disconcertingly unfamiliar, nonThomists and Thomists, or, as I prefer to call them, Realists. In this afterword, I am addressing Realists. In another work, Causal Realism, I have tried to explain the metaphysical and epistemological background of these ideas in a way that, in theory at least, nonRealists can understand. The present work is the ethical extension of those metaphysical and epistemological analyses.

### 1. Where These Ideas Come From

The preceding analysis of obligation came out of reflections on two of Jacques Maritain's neglected insights (did he have any other kind?). The first was his reconciliation of ethical teleology and deontology in Neuf lecons. He showed that the ethical value of an act consisted in its intrinsic perfection, but he also showed that the intrinsic perfection of an act did not exclude its being an end for an agent. Value concerns the order of specification or formal causality; finality concerns the order of exercise or an efficient cause's orientation to posit the act. Rather than being exclusive of one another, both orders are required in any action. As Aristotle said, the formal and final causes are one; whatever is a formal cause is also a final cause, and vice versa.

The dissolving of the teleology/deontology dilemma gave me hope for dissolving other dilemmas. And together with another of Maritain's contributions, his way of dissolving that dilemma turned out to also be the key to the is/ought, fact/value, "naturalistic fallacy" problem.

That other insight was his explanation of Aquinas's theory of truth by means of the distinction between things as things and things as objects of cognition. Aquinas had seen that truth required a real identity of things that had been made logically distinct by means of diverse cognitions. Maritain expressed this in terms of the real identity and logical distinction between things as objects of knowledge and things as extraobjective things. When there is truth there is strict identity between that which is an object of concept and what some extraobjective thing is, but the same extraobjective thing can be conceptually objectified in many logically distinct ways.

In reality, Maritain's theory was simply a necessary consequence of Aquinas's doctrine that truth is a transcendental property of being, and that fact is what made Maritain's theory of truth significant for ethics. The doctrine of the transcendentals states that true adds to being only a being of reaon, the relation being-known. That is why there is strict identity between what is true and what exists: the distinction between what-is-known (Maritain's object) and what exists cannot be a real one since the relation being-known, as a being of reason, adds nothing real to that which exists.

The implication for ethics comes from the fact that the good is

also a transcendental that adds nothing to being but a being of reason, the relation being-desired. Just as being becomes denominated "true" by a relation to intellect, being becomes denominated "good" by a relation to appetite. Where Maritain uses the word "object" to describe what is a term of a relation of cognition, we can use the term "value" to describe what is a term of a relation of appetition. That is, just as a thing becomes denominated an "object" by being known, it becomes denominated a "value" by being desired. But in each case, that which is so denominated is the thing itself in its own

reality, since that is what terminates the relation of cognition or appetition.

By inference, then, there should be an identity between the term of a relation of desire and what exists just as there is identity between between a the term of a cognitional relation and what exists. And just as failure of identity between a cognitional object and what exists constitutes falsehood, a failure of identity between an object of desire and what exists should constitute evil.

In other words, there is a parallel between the transcendentals good and true precisely with respect to (1) the real identity of both with being due to (2) the fact that each adds to being only a relation of reason, the relations being-known and being-desired, respectively. But then there should also be a parallel between a defect with respect to the true and a defect with respect to the good. There should be a parallel between the opposite of truth, in the domain of cognition, and the opposite of goodness, in the domain of desires. And since lack of identity between what is believed and what exists is what makes a belief false, some lack of identity between what is desired and what exists must be what makes a desire evil. Just as beliefs are defective for not achieving identity between what is believed and what exists, a lack of identity between what is desired and what exists must make desires defective. If not, the parallel between the transcendentals true and good is lost; for the parallel is the identity between what terminates a relation of knowledge or desire and what exists. Therefore, if a nonidentity makes a knowledge act defective with respect to the true, it should make a desire defective with respect to the good.

Of course, transcendental goodness is not moral goodness. But moral goodness is a species (or analogate) of transcendental goodness, so what is true of transcendental goodness in general must be true of moral goodness in its own way.

For some it will (unfortunately) be important to point out that one does not have to use Maritain to conclude that there should be a parallel between defective desire and defective belief on Aquinas's principles. Aquinas has the doctrine of a logical distinction and real identity in truth, as well as the doctrine that both the <u>true</u> and the <u>good</u> are only logically distinct from <u>being</u>, because they only add beings of reason to it. Hence, there should be a parallel between the case where that which is believed is not genuinely true, for lack of identity with what exists, and the case where that which is desired is not genuinely good. In other words, there should be a parallel between a defective cognitional act and a defective appetitive act: both should be rendered defective by lack of identty between that of which the relations of reason being-known and being-desired are predicated and that which really exists.

How could this parallelism occur? How can there be identity or lack of identity between the term of a relation of desire and what exists as there is between that between the term of a cognitional relation and what exists? Maritain's insight into the teleology/deontology problem provides a clue to this question. The transcendental good concerns being as term of a desire, an act of an appetite. Therefore the parallel with the true and the false concerned an act of an appetite, in particular, the will, not the

act of any faculty directed by the will. The reconciliation of deontology and teleology depends on the fact that the final cause and the formal cause are the same cause looked at from different points of view. Deontology is correct in thinking that the ethical value of an act must be found in its intrinsic perfection (formal causality), but for any agent, the intrinsic perfection of

its act is also that which fulfills the agent's orientation to the end because of which the agent acts (final causality).

In considering acts of the rational appetite, however, whose final and formal cause is in question, those of the will's act or those of another faculty directed by the will? Since the transcendental good concerns being as term of a relation of desire, the act in question is the appetite's act, and the finality in terms of which the success of failure of the act is measured must be the finality of the appetite itself. The finality of other faculties must be relevant only to the extent that those finalities relate to the will's finality. If not, the final cause and the formal cause giving moral value to the act would not be the same. The formal perfection of the appetite's act, i.e., the perfection that fulfills the appetite's finality, would be one thing. The formal perfection that constitutes the moral value of an act, i.e., the fulfillment of the other faculty's finality, would be something else. For the formal cause and the final cause to be the same, the act whose intrinsic perfection constitutes moral value must be an act satisfying the finality of the will itself.

Again, this is a conclusion one could have reached from Aquinas, without benefit of Maritain. But Maritain has done us the favor, not universal among Realists, of thinking about these questions philosophically, i.e., in the light of philosophical problems that need solving or pseudo problems whose character as pseudo problems needs to be explained.

The reason one could get this from Aquinas is the fact that moral goodness and evil resides in an act of the will. Therefore, if an act of the will is going to be morally defective in any absolute, categorical, nonhypothetical way, the goodness or evil of the act must be intrinsic to the act. And it can be intrinsic only if measured by the act's own finality. If the goodness or evil of the act of the will is measured by some finality other than that of the will, the quetion will always arise why that standard must be applied to the will's act. That question will always come up because goodness adds to being the relation of being an end to which an appetite is oriented, since that is what it means to be desired. Therefore, if an act of the will is declared good by reference to some other appetite, the question arises why the ends of that other appetite provide a standard for the will, since the will has its own ends. If the will's finality is so related to the that of the other other appetite that the will's finality cannot be accomplished without the other's, the act of the will is not being measured by an external standard to the exclusion of the will's own standard. The success or failure of the will's act is being measured by the will's own finality, even though the fulfillment of that finality depends on the fulfillment of the finality of another appetite. But if the fulfillment of the will's finality is not so related to the other finality, why must the will's act achieve that other finality?

Before going on, it is necessary to prevent a possible misconception. These remarks may make it appear that this analysis of obligation was deduced from metaphysical principles. That is not the case. The explanation of obligation resulted from a deliberate attempt to stay as far away as possible from the a priori level and analyze a concrete example of unethical behavior,

unfairness toward another on a competitive examination. But Realist doctrines did guide my thinking heuristically. And one other Realist doctrine should be mentioned, the doctrine that consciousness is an existence for the object of consciousness, an existence other than the existence which the object has for itself as an entity. The existence of the term of consciousness within

consciousness has always been affirmed of cognition, and it should be true of the term of a conscious desire as well.

Those heuristic principles prepared me to see that in unfair behavior we were treating an equal as if it were the case that she was unequal, as if she were unequal in real existence. And just as the belief that we were not equal would be inherently defective as a belief, a decision treating us as if we were not equal would be inherently defective as an act of will. In each case, a conscious orientation to a goal would fail of its goal by treating something as if it were not what it is. And that defect in the act of the will was what the moral evil of unfairness consisted in, for we would not hold someone morally guilty who acted from inculpable ignorance of the equality. The decision to act unfairly, in other words, gave things an existence (a place) in our desires, and what things were as existing in our desires was not identical with what they were in themselves. Likewise, in false belief, what exists as term of the relation of belief is not identical with what exists in reality. Further, it seemed clear that any other analysis of the evil of unfairness would sacrifice either the principle that moral evil resided in an act of the will or the parallel between the transcendentals true and good with respect to their identity with being resulting from their denominating being as a term of a conscious relation. For that which is desired by the will to be a genuine, as opposed to illusory, good, there must be identity between what something is as a value for the will and what it is in itself. That identity is precisely what is lacking when I value my interests, and hence myself, more highly than the interests of another person, and hence more highly than the other.

In working these initial ideas out, however, it was necessary to minimize the use of technical metaphysics. No doubt the person on the street has an implicit grasp of the realities the concepts of Realist metaphysic make explicit. But there is also no doubt that the person on the street can grasp the objectivity, unconditionality, and knowability of ethical values without having those explicit concepts. Of course, it is neither desirable nor possible, in a philosophical discussion of the foundations of ethics, to leave out explicit metaphysics altogether. For example, I could not simply affirm human equality with respect to our underlying nature as rational beings without some explanation. And I hope the consistency of my explanation with Aquinas's principles is obvious to Realists. Nature, for Aquinas, is a causal concept; nature is essence understood as a source of activity. And our knowledge of human nature in particular comes from our reflective awareness of our conscious acts as emanating from their causes in the habitus, powers, and existence of the soul.

## 2. How These Ideas Relate to Some Others

Although my account of obligation was suggested by certain of Aquinas's fundamental insights, it may not be obvious how some aspects of the analysis are consistent with his ethics. Since there are various interpretations of his ethics, however, I cannot address all possible questions of consistency. Instead, I will comment on the issues that, in my judgment, are the most important or the most likely to need clarification.

For one thing, I have chosen to assume that the reader knows it is not the will that is oriented to making decisions; it is we who are oriented to make decisions by means of our wills. It is not the will that has the finality of valuing things according to reason's knowledge; it is we who have the finality of valuing things according to reason's knowledge through our acts of will. And of course, it is not reason that knows what things are; we

know what things are by means of reason. But this book is meant to focus on the role of the will and to help make up for neglect of the will in the foundations of ethics. To accomplish that using the "we . . . by means of the will" construction would have made some already convoluted sentences even more convoluted.

Now to Aquinas's ethics proper. Aquinas calls the commandments to love God above all things and love our neighbors as ourselves first, common, and self-evident precepts of the natural law (ST I-II, 3 ad 1). The obligations expressed by these commandments are the very obligations explained by the rational appetite's finality of valuing things according to reason's knowledge of what they are. It is self-evident that a decision to love the infinitely perfect being above all else values Him according to what He is. And it is self-evident that a decision not to love a being equal in nature to us as we love ourselves does not value the other being according to what her nature is. Likewise, it is self-evident that, if we do not give another being who sets her own ends the place in our evaluations of someone directed to ends she gives herself, what she is in our evaluations is not what she is in reality. Thus, my analysis justifies giving the precepts to love God and neighbor the pride of place they deserve in ethics, while many discussions of Aquinas's ethics do not.

Some might object that Aquinas's self-evident ethical precepts express practical knowledge rather than speculative. In what sense, then, can the obligation expressed by the precepts to love God and neighbor be explained, as I have tried to explain them, by speculative truths about the equality of human nature and our knowledge of it, about the nature of the rational appetite, and about freedom of choice? If ethical precepts like those to love God and neighbor are deduced from speculative truths, such precepts can be neither ethical nor self-evident.

The first thing to notice here is that, while ethics is practical knowledge, the study of the foundations of ethics is speculative knowledge. For example, the statement "Ethics is practical knowledge" is itself an instance of speculative knowledge, not practical knowledge. Likewise, the statement "The precept 'God should be loved above all other goods' is a principle of practical knowledge" is an instance of speculative knowledge about practical knowledge. Secondly, the self-evidence of the precepts of natural law are not compromised by their justification in the foundations of ethics. Metaphysics explains and defends, for example, the self-evident principles on which mathematics, logic, the philosophy of nature, and natural science are founded (as I have tried to do in Causal Realism). But the principles of these sciences are not deduced from metaphysical truths. Rather, metaphysics defends them indirectly by reduction ad absurdum. Reductio ad absurdum works by showing that the denial of a self-evident principle, taken together with other truths, for example, that something is an F, implies a contradiction, for example, that an F is not an F.

Metaphysics also reflects on what it means for principles to be necessary, that is, on why the identity of diverse objects as things is necessary in the case of certain objects and not others. And the philosophy of man explains how self-evident principles come to be known as such, that is, how we are able to so objectify things that the necessary identity of some objects is knowable from

their objectification. (See, for example, Germain Grisez's explanation of the necessity and self-evidence of the practical principle "Good is to be done and evil to be avoided.") But none of this amounts to deducing self-evidently necessary principles from higher principles.

(*Here, I have attempted neither a reductio ad absurdum defense of the principles of natural obligation nor an explicit deduction of speculative conclusions about the foundations of ethics from self-evident speculative principles. Having attempted to do that for speculative knowledge in general in Causal Realism, I have learned just how arduous a task that can be, not only for the writer but also for the reader -- and there is something to be said for writing books that are readable.)

"The good is to be done and evil avoided" plays the role in practical knowledge that the principle of noncontradiction plays in speculative. Hence, denying a self-evident practical precept like "The infinite being is to be loved above all others" amounts to denying that good is to be done and evil is to be avoided. The last sentence expresses speculative knowledge about the connection between two practical principles. Whether that speculative statement is directly deduced from self-evident speculative statements or defended indirectly by reductio ad absurdum, the process of reasoning will make use of other truths. At least some of these truths will express speculative knowledge, since the statement being defended is a matter of speculative knowledge. And in general, for every practically known truth P, there is a set of speculatively known truths like "P is a practically known truth," "P is self-evident to practical knowledge," "If P is false, the first principle of practical knowledge is not a principle of practical knowledge," and so on. Since the latter truths are speculatively known, they must be verifiable, directly or indirectly, by appeal to other speculatively known truths.

For example, the reason that denying the infinite being is to be loved above all amounts to denying that good is to be done is that loving the infinite being is what is the good is in the choice under discussion. But why is loving God above all the good to which the first principle of practical reason directs us? To love God above all is our good because it fulfills the finality of the will as an appetite oriented to valuing being. And to know the truth of the last sentence is to have speculative knowledge. But speculative knowledge about the will, as opposed to speculative knowledge about God, does not enter into our practical knowledge that God is to be loved above all, as I will explain in a moment.

Grisez and Joseph Boyle defend that practically known truth that human life is an intrinsic good by arguing that its denial leads to the denial of speculatively known truths about human nature.* Still, Grisez, John Finnis, Boyle and others do not think of themselves as giving the speculative knowledge of human nature the importance in ethics that Realists usually give it. For they believe the opportunity provided by Aquinas for handling the is-ought problem is in the practical character of ethical knowledge. They feel that making practical reason's grasp of obligation dependent on speculative knowledge of human nature commits the fallacy of deriving ought from is.

It is ironic that the intersection between Aquinas and Hume be located at Aquinas's commitment to the practical character of ethical knowledge. The irony is that Aquinas has an insight corresponding exactly to Hume's doctrine that reason cannot dictate to passion, but Aquinas's insight justifies the role of speculative knowledge in imposing obligation on the will. Hume's doctrine

corresponds to Aquinas's analysis of good as a transcendental. The fact that reason's value judgments presuppose an appetite's orientation to an end is what the doctrine of good as a transcendental expresses by saying

that being becomes denominated "good" by being that to which an appetite is oriented. Hence, without our awareness of the existence of desires (in the broadest sense of the word), we could not have the concept of goodness and attribute goodness to being. Because "good" means being insofar as it terminates relations of appetite, when reason formulates judgments about what is or is not good, reason is formulating judgments about the conformity of things to appetites. And that is Hume's point about reason's value judgments presupposing passion or volition. (Of course, Aquinas's appetites have orientations to ends that precede what Hume would call passions or volitions, but we come to know the nature of our faculties only through their acts.)

But the same fact about the transcendental concept of goodness requires, contrary to Hume, that speculatively known truths determine ethical goodness or evil. For the relation by means of which we formulate the concept of goodness exists in the appetite, not in that which is desired. Being-desired is truthfully attributed to the term of a relation of desire, but being-desired is itself only a relation of reason that posits nothing real in that which is desired. Therefore, goodness involves strict identity between what something is as a value for us (as that which is desired) and what something is in itself. In other words, every conscious desire evaluates a thing to be something, namely, to be the kind of thing to which the appetite is oriented. And since our decision making ability is an appetite oriented to valuing things to be what they are as known by reason, the speculatively known truths that objectify what things are in themselves determine what decisions are good or bad for the rational appetite to make. For example, a decision not to love God above all evaluates Him as if He were not an infinitely perfect being. Hence, speculatively known truths determine the truth or falsity of practical judgments about the goodness or evil of decisions.

The way out of the is-ought problem provided by Aquinas is not the practical character of ethical judgments but the nature of the will as a rational appetite together with the logical distinction and real identity of being as being and being as a value. If the will is not as I have described it, an appetite oriented to valuing what things are in real existence as known by reason, then Aquinas's theories of the beatific vision, of the end of man as intellectual contemplation, and of freedom as deriving from the will's having the same object as the intellect cannot stand. But since the will is a rational appetite, the content of speculatively known truths determines the goodness or evil of decisions. For it is by means of speculatively known truths that the will has the target of its evaluations, what things are, proposed to it.

Then why is practical knowledge not derived from speculative? Consider, again, the practically known truth that God is to be loved above all things. The obligation to love God above all is a speculatively knowable state of affairs consisting of the facts that God is what He is and that the will is what it is, namely, something with the finality of valuing being as known by reason. To have practical knowledge of that obligation, we need the speculative knowledge that God is what He is, but we do not and cannot need the speculative knowledge that the will's finality is what it is. As Grisez and Finnis point out against Hume himself,

speculative knowledge of finality does not make practical knowledge practical. To the speculative knowledge that God is what He is, the practical knowledge of the obligation to love God does not add our speculative knowledge of the will's finality. What then does

the practical knowledge of our obligation add to our speculative knowledge of God?

It adds, not reflexive awareness or conceptual awareness of the will's orientation to value being as known by reason, but the existence of that orientation. Practical reason is reason functioning to direct our actions. But for reason to direct our actions, it must direct acts of our decision making faculty, for as rational beings, our primary actions are the decisions by which we direct other actions. Reason alone does not cause us to act, as Hume and Aquinas knew. Practical reason is reason functioning in the service of that by which we do cause our acts; hence practical reason is reason functioning in the service of the rational appetite. Practical reason is not reason plus volition. Grisez is, again, correct in pointing out that adding volition to reason does not solve the is-ought problem. But the intellect's practical function presupposes the existence of the will's orientation to make decisions. The practical function of the intellect presupposes this orientation as that which gives that practical function its reason for being and its nature, since the intellect's practical function is just the intellect providing direction for the will's decisions.

But how does this answer the question about what the practical knowledge of the obligation to love God adds to the speculative knowledge of what God is? When practical reason asks "Should we love God above all?", practical reason is, <u>in effect</u>, asking whether loving God above all fulfills the finality of the rational appetite, or equivalently, whether loving God above all fulfills our finality as makers of decisions. But practical reason is not literally asking that question, for the question is speculative. The question asks for the relation between what speculative reason knows of God and of the will. And since the question is speculative, its answer does not explain how the "should" comes into our practical knowledge that God should be loved above all. The answer to that speculative question explains why "God should be loved above all" is a <u>truth</u>, but explaining why a statement is true does not explain how it is <u>known</u>, either speculatively or practically. (Conversely, however, the fact that the truth of an item of practical knowledge can be explained speculatively does not render practical knowledge speculative. As said above, speculative reason has the job both of defending and explaining the truth of propositions known to practical reason and of explaining practical reason's knowledge of those truths, without practical reason's mode of knowing being that of deduction from speculatively known truths.)

But in recognizing that God should be loved above all, practical reason is recognizing that the decision to love God fulfills the finality of the will. That recognition does not take place by practical reason's conidering the truth of "The end if the will is such and such," but by practical reason's considering the truth of "God is the infinitely perfect being." To say that the latter truth is considered practically is to say that it is considered by reason undertaking the task of directing the decisions of the will to the end of the will. But the will's relation to its end does not enter practical reason as a truth to be objectified; it enters as the extraobjective state of affairs existing prior to practical

reasoning that makes practical reasoning necessary. The will's finality is presupposed by practical reason, where "presupposed" does not refer to a logical premise but to the existential state of affairs that causes there to be such a thing as reason functioning practically.

What this mode of presupposition means is that, when practical reason asks if we should to love God above all, it would be irrelevant for practical reason to also ask "Should from what point of view; by the standard of what finality?" If the point of view, the finality, determining what "should" means were not that of the rational appetite, reason would not be asking this question practically. It would be asking the question speculatively, as it might ask whether exposure to air helps fulfill a fish's goal of self-preservation. The act of asking practically whether we should love God above all is the act of asking that question in order to direct the will to its end. That is what it is to ask that question practically instead of speculatively. If it were necessary for practical reason to add "Should by the standard of the will's finality," there is no such thing as practical, as opposed to speculative, knowledge of the obligation to love God above all.

To put it another way. When practical reason asks, "Should I love God above all?", it would be irrelevant to also ask "Should from whose point of view; by the standard of whose finality?" The person whose finality provides the standard by which the question is to be answered is presupposed in the asking of the question. "Should I love God?" amounts to "Does loving God fulfill my finality?" But insofar as I am a decision maker, my finality is the finality of the rational appetite. Therefore, the finality of the rational appetite is presupposed in the asking of the question just as necessarily as my finality is presupposed.

How then does the fulfillment of the will's finality by loving God above all become known practically? As a result of knowing (speculatively) that God is the infinite being, we know (practically) that God should be loved above all, because the will's finality enters practical knowledge but as a conscious orientation, a conscious inclination, the conscious inclination without which we would not be thinking practically. The will's finality enters practical knowledge, not as that which is objectified directly, but as the means by which God's infinite being is objectified as a good to be loved. To ask how we become practically aware that God should be loved above all is to ask how we become practically aware of God's being as completely fulfilling the will's finality. We become practically aware that God's infinite being fulfills the will's finality by means of the existence of a conscious inclination to value being as known by reason's (peculative) knowledge, a conscious inclination provoked by the existence of speculative knowledge of what exists. For things are revealed as "good" by being revealed as ends to which desires are directed. And it is as goods that things are objects of practical knowledge.

Without our awareness of inclinations and desires, we would not have our awareness of things as good, since things become denominated good by their conformity to appetite, and we become aware of appetites through their acts. To be aware of something as a good is to be aware of it as that to which a desire is directed and, therefore, as conforming to the appetite producing the desire. Thus, our awareness of being as conforming to appetite comes from the existence of conscious inclinations. From this initial awareness of being as conforming to appetite, we derive our

concepts of "good", "end", "fulfillment of finality", etc. Using those concepts we can achieve both speculative and practical knowledge about good (and evil). But our practical knowledge does not derive from our speculative knowledge of good. Our practical knowledge of good is practical because it derives directly from our awareness of good by means of the conscious inclinations that precede our concept of good.

Practical knowledge employs the concept of good and cognate concepts. But it either gets those concepts directly from our awareness of the inclinations without which we could not have those concepts, or it gets them from our speculative use of those concepts. If the latter, practical knowledge is not practical.

What then does practical knowledge add to the speculative knowledge of God's infinite being? It adds the awareness of God's infinite being as satisfying the finality of the will, which awareness practical reason has through the existence of conscious inclinations elicited from the will by reason's speculative awareness. Practical reason does not make the will's conscious inclinations an object of reflexive awareness. Practical reason is concerned with the terms of the will's relations of desire, concerned with that to which desire is directed. Practical reason is concerned with what that which is desired is, since it is desired for being what it is.

However, is not practical reason concerned with what is desired only as what is desired, since it is only as term of a relation of desire that what exists becomes denominated a good? Yes, but a conscious desire makes us aware of what something is as good, and so makes practical reason concerned with what is is that is revealed as good. The alternative is the dilemma of Section 2.3: the cognized object that provokes desire would be the satisfaction of desire, and what practical reason would objectify as that which satisfies desire would be the satisfaction of desire. Practical reason becomes aware of something as good, not by reflecting on the existence of the desire, but simply by the desire's existence being a conscious existence that does not require reflection to make it conscious. Reflection occurs after the existence of the desire and, therefore, after the existence of that which makes us conscious of what something is as good. When we reflect on the existence of desire, we are already aware of something as a good, because that s what a conscious desire does, namely, make us aware of that which is desired as a good.

A comparison will help. When we exercise our faculty of sight, we are not just aware of the object seen. When we see an object, we cannot not be aware of ourselves as seers of the object. But it is not by means of an act of reflection distinct from the act of sight that we are aware of ourselves as seers of the object. We are made aware of ourselves as seers by the act of sight itself, since sight is a conscious act. Likewise, we cannot not be aware of ourselves as beings oriented to deciding according to reason's knowledge of what is simply by the existence of conscious inclinations provoked in the will by reason's grasp of being. Just as we are conscious of the act of sight through the act of sight itself, we are conscious of the will's inclinations through the inclinations themselves, since they are conscious acts. And just as the act of sight is directed to the object seen, not to the subject seeing, practical reason is directed to that which is recognized as good, not to the inclination by which it is recognized as good.

Do the conscious inclinations I am speaking of really exist, or are they a philosopher's invention, generated by the dictates of theory rather than reality? The consciousness of the will's orientation to its end is not some special tingle or twitch. It is our awareness of ourselves as oriented to valuing what things are

as known by reason, our awareness of ourselves as beings who use what reason knows about things to direct ourselves toward ends. That awareness is a constant part of our nonreflective self-awareness.

When a situation demanding a rationally conscious decision occurs, in order to make the decision, we do not have to first move ourselves into a conscious state of readiness to employ what reason knows in making decisions. If we are sufficiently conscious to make a rational decision, we are already in the conscious state of readiness to do so. That state of readiness is precisely our conscious inclination toward the end of deciding according to what we know, that is, deciding according to what things are.

To further demystify the role of conscious inclinations in practical knowledge, recall that the speculative and the practical intellect are not distinct faculties. They are just different uses of the intellect. The reason that the practical function of the intellect uses neither reflective nor conceptual awareness of the will's orientation to its end is just that this is what distinguishes the practical use of the intellect from the speculative.

The concept of good has a primacy in practical knowledge analogous to the primacy the concept of being has in speculative knowledge. In stating that the source of the concept of good is awareness of conscious inclinations, I am a answering a question about the concept of good similar to the question we answer about the concept of being, when we say that the concept of being derives from judgment. Since judgment involves an implicit reflection on the intellect's own act, that reflection is one of the things required for forming the concept of being. Although that reflection precedes our concept of being, as well as our concept of judgment, the point is not that no concepts are involved. In order for there to be an act on which to reflect, a proposition making use of concepts must be formed. Likewise, in order to have the awareness of the will's finality from which the concept of good is formed, we must have and use concepts of things that are good. But what makes practical knowledge practical does not derive from a concept of goodness preexisting our awarenes of the will's finality by means of the will's own conscious inclinations.

Conscious inclinations are the source of the concept of the good and of the practical knowledge of the truth of self-evident practical precepts such as "Equals should be treated equally." To say that the concept of good derives from consciousness of the will's inclinations is to say that it derives from awareness of something as fulfilling the will's finality. Unless reason had presented the will with an object that provokes the will's natural inclination to the object as fulfilling the will's finality, we could not have an awareness that depends on a conscious inclination of the will toward its end. If we could have this awareness without reason's prior presentation of an object, the will's nature would not be that of a rational appetite, an appetite oriented to valuing things as known by reason. Therefore, the concept of good arises from the prepropositional awareness of something as terminating a relation of finality, the awareness brought to propositional expression in formulas like "Treating equals equally is to be done."

The practical knowledge of the precepts directing the decisions of the will to the achievement of its finality is not deduced from speculative knowledge. In particular, it is not deduced from speculative knowledge of the will's inclinations. What practical

knowledge adds to the speculative knowledge that, for instance, an infinitely perfect being exists, is an awareness of that existence as terminating the will's inclination toward its end. Practical knowledge adds an awareness that this existence

constitutes a good for the will, is something to be valued by the will, because the will's orientation to ends is what it is. The concept of good involved in this practical knowledge derives from our awareness of the will's inclinations to ends. If practical reason does not get its knowledge of good directly from the will's conscious inclinations, it must get it from some other use of the concept of good that comes from these inclinations. And the only other use is the speculative use. Or, if the concept of good had it source in the speculative analysis of the will, the practical knowledge of God's existence as a good for the will, as something to be valued by the will, would be derived from speculative knowledge. On either analysis, practical knowledge would not be practical.

In directing the will to decisions, the practical function of reason makes use of our speculative knowledge of what things are. For there is nothing else for it to make use of but the will's orientation to value what the things known by speculative reason are. And as just argued, the will's orientation enters practical knowledge, but not as something known speculatively. However, what things other than the will are enters practical reason from speculative knowledge, since speculative knowledge provides the will with the terms of its relations of desire. Thus, practical reason decides that God should be loved above all on the basis of what is known speculatively about God, not what is known speculatively about the will. When practical reason asks whether God deserves our highest evaluation, it is asking whether what He is deserves our highest evaluation. Practical reason tells the will that God deserves all the will's love because of what God is.

The truth of principles like "The infinite being should be loved above all" or "Equals should be treated equally" is self-evident to practical knowledge. If they are not true, then what fulfills the will's finality is not to be done and what frustrates its finality not to be avoided. In moving from self-evident practically known principles to practical conclusions, practical reason again makes use of speculative knowledge of what things are; there is nothing else for it to make use of. But now speculative knowledge is viewed in the light of practical principles. That is what makes the reasoning practical. (See, for example, the use of speculative knowledge in the practical reasonings of Section 4.4.1.)

As I have already said, the role of conscious inclinations in our initial knowledge of the principles of practical reason in no way implies that these principles cannot be rationally explained and verified. There is a form of "intuitionism" in our discovery of these truths. (How else are any truths discovered, if not by some form of intuition?) But the process of discovery is one thing; the processes of verifying that something is true and explaining why it is true, as well as the process of explaining our knowledge of its truth, are other things. And the intuition in question is not the discovery of some property unknown to reason, but the discovery that the properties known by reason satisfy the inclinations of the rational appetite and, therefore, determine the success or failure of acts of the rational appetite as measured by their own intrinsic finality.

Now I must make a crucial qualification. Inclinations produced by the rational appetite are not the only inclinations we possess. In

fact, many of our most important inclinations toward ends exist prior to the inclinations produced by the will: the inclinations to self-preservation, to the propogation of the species, to socialize, to have physical comfort and pleasure, and so on. It is from awareness of such inclinations that we first

derive our concept of good and its cognate concepts, for use by both speculative and practical knowledge. Likewise, ethical reasoning is not the only kind of practical reasoning; there is also art, in the broadest sense of that term.

But I have been talking about ethical goodness specifically. The concept of ethical goodness derives from conscious inclinations produced by the will toward the end of valuing things as known by reason. Up to some point in a child's development, the meanings of "good, "should," and other evaluative terms describe ends that are not freely chosen or means to such ends. But once consciousness develops to the point where practical reason can direct the free choice of ends, these terms cannot avoid acquiring their ethical meanings. We do not always use them with those meanings; practical reason still functions technically. But the conclusion of a technical deliberation requires a free choice in order to be put into practice. In older children and adults, therefore, the meanings of evaluative terms that practical reason is primarily concerned with are ethical meanings, since the ethical meanings directly govern decisions. Not all decisions involve the technical meanings; but all decisions involve the ethical meanings, the meanings that derive from the conscious inclinations of the will.

However, the existence of other inclinations to ends brings me to a possible line of agreement between my analysis of obligation and the very original and enlightening ethical work done by Grisez, Finnis, and their school.

## 3. Where These Ideas Might Lead

The rational appetite is always directing us toward the ends of other inclinations and faculties. Again, this is consistent with Aquinas, although it may not be obviously so. To see the agreement with Aquinas, consider the fact that even the ultimate end sought by the will, the beatific vision, is not its own act but the act of another faculty, the intellect. The will's final act, at which all its other acts are directed, is an act of love provoked by the intellect's attainment of its end. That end is attained in the intellectual experience of God, and the will's love is directed toward the object attained in that intellectual experience.

Because it is the rational appetite's nature, as a human faculty, to direct us toward the ends of other inclinations and faculties, and since the Grisez/Finnis theory of ethics is based on the fulfillment of natural inclinations toward goods, inclinations preceding free choice, perhaps there is room for our theories and mine to accommodate each other, at least to some degree. In particular, perhaps it can be argued that an act of the will is intrinsically defective, defective by the standard of the will's own nature, if the act does not direct us toward the goods that are ends for those other inclinations, since it is the will's nature to direct us toward those goods.

Because the purpose of this book is to open a new mode of ethical inquiry, I do not want to discourage the line of thought just mentioned. In fact, I believe it deserves to be pursued. There may be a way to show that the connection between the finality of other inclinations and the finality of the will is such that failure to direct us toward the finality of other inclinations

constitutes a failure as measured by the will's own finality. But without discouraging this line of inquiry, I want to mention some difficulties it must overcome.

The difficulties concern the way Grisez, Finnis, and others connect other goods with ethical obligation. First, it does not seem to me that we make ethical judgments by consulting principles of the kind they offer as practical precepts. The principles we consult to make ethical judgments are not like "Knowledge is a good to be pursued" or "Respect the good of knowledge, life, religion, etc. in every act." The principles we consult are like "Equals should be treated equally," "The common good should be preferred to the individual good," "Free beings should not be used for my ends in ways that deprive them of the opportunity to achieve their ends."

The point is not that principles like "Knowledge is a good to be pursued" are not self-evident and practical. They can be both since we have inclinations other than the will's inclinations that can reveal things to practical reason as human ends. But the question is whether these other human ends determine ethical obligation, that is, goodness and evil with respect to the end of our decision making ability itself. Aquinas, for example, may have meant that these other inclinations determine the scope of the will's activity without determining which decisions aimed at fulfilling these inclinations are ethically good and which are ethically bad. (*Refer Langan.)

Of course, Grisez and Finnis might want to reply that the principles they cite are the foundations of principles like those I have just cited, and the reason we don't cite their principles is that we rarely push back to foundations when deliberating practically. In other words, the basis of the truth of precepts that immediately and proximately direct the will is expressed through these other precepts. And the proximate precepts could still be self-evidently known, since the fact that their truth is founded on more remote principles does not imply that our knowledge of their truth is derived from knowledge of the more remote. For example, in the Grisez/Finnis theory, the basis of the obligation to be fair seems to be that other humans can participate in the basic goods just as we can. Therefore, in not respecting the rights of others, we are not respecting the basic goods, since other people are like us in being capacities for participation in these goods. In failing to be fair, I would be failing to fulfill my nature's orientations to participate in the basic goods.

But the obligation to be fair must either be derivative from other goods that are more basic or itself be one of the basic goods. If it is one of the basic goods, the other goods do not determine the obligation to be fair. The reason I am failing to fulfill my nature's orientations is that fairness is one of the goods to which I am oriented. But then the reason why I am so oriented itself needs to be explained, and reference to other basic goods will not help explain it.

However, Grisez seems to hold that the obligation to be fair is derivative from the obligations imposed by more basic goods (*refer Grisez and Boyle). It is important to understand what a paradoxical position this is and how the rational appetite analysis of obligation dissolves the paradox. The most obvious example of ethical obligation, quoad nos, is the obligation to be fair to other human beings. For many, that is the whole of obligation: if it does not hurt someone else, it is all right. Believers in other

obligations are always on the defensive when they speak for those obligations. To make the most obvious form of obligation derivative from others is to make the more obvious derivative from the less obvious.

More importantly, making the obligation to be fair derivative seems to take away the meaning of that obligation. The other person is owed fairness from me because what she is is owed a certain place in my values, not because some other good is owed a place in my values. If unfairness is evil because directed against some aspect of my flourishing other than the aspect of valuing other persons for what they are, then the evil of unfairness does not consist directly in the failure to give other persons what they are due by being what they are.

On the other hand, the rational appetite analysis makes fairness a relation to what other persons are at the same time and in the same way that it is a relation to our own ends. The rational appetite's end is to give things the value of being directed to ends they set for themselves or to ends we set for them, according to what reason knows about whether things are directed to ends they set for themselves. Thus, the rational appetite analysis makes the obligation to be fair a matter of human flourishing and a relation to what other persons are for the same reason: our end as rational deciders is to value things according to what they are.

It is less clear in Finnis whether the obligation to be fair is derived from other obligations. He may be interpreted as holding that our nature's orientations to participate in basic human goods require us to respect any other participants in these goods. Participation in these goods is the moral ultimate, and I am not the only being which can participate in these goods. Still, this interpretation does not direct obligation immediately at persons and the value of persons. The reason unfairness prevents me from fulfilling the orientations of my nature is that it prevents me from participating in goods other than the good itself of valuing other persons for what they are. No matter that the inference to the value of persons requires only one or two steps, the value that persons have for us because of what they are is not direct;it depends on the relation of persons to goals that can only be described, in contrast to persons themselves, as somewhat abstract. The good of knowledge, the good of religion, the good of play, etc. do not have to be looked on as abstract. But when they are made the basis from which the value of other persons is derived, the value of the more concrete is being derived from the less concrete.

The response may be that, on any analysis, the value of any finite person, myself or another, is derived from the ends the person can achieve. What makes the nature of a person more valuable than the nature of a subrational being is what a person's nature enables her to do. For example, the obligation to treat others as setters of their own ends is based on the fact that they can set their own ends. Yes, but that fact imposes an obligation on me because of my rational appetite's orientation to value things according to reason's knowledge of what things are with respect to the rational valuing of things, not because of the rational appetite's orientation to toward any other end. Or, if I am valuing the finite being because I know her relation to the infinite being, I am valuing one concrete entity because of her relation to another concrete entity. Another way to put it is that the reason I am wrong if I treat another unfairly is not that I am failing to fulfill my own inclinations, unless it is the inclination to evaluate her according to what she is, the rational appetite's

inclination.

Another difficulty. For Grisez and Finnis, our orientation towards the basic goods does not obligate us to be seeking them in every act, since that is an impossibility; but that orientation does minimally obligate us never to will an act directed against any of the basic goods. For example, the procreation and education of children is a good to which we are oriented by nature. Choosing to prevent contraception when I engage in sex is choosing a positive act directed against this good. Hence, artificial contraception is not a moral possibility. However, choosing to refrain from sex when I could otherwise engage in it is not choosing an act directed against life; it is refraining from an act directed toward life. And I am not obligated to seek every basic good in every act. Pursuing the course of action that would result in the greatest number of children that I could expect to adequately rear would prevent me from pursuing other human goods. Hence refraining from the marital act when I could otherwise engage in it is at least an ethical possibility.

But moral goodness and evil reside in the act of the will (or the refraining from making an act of the will) which directs us to perform or to refrain from performing other acts. Moral goodness and evil do not reside in the acts directed by the will except insofar as they are so directed. There is clearly an important sense in which the will of the temporary refrainer from sex is not directed against the good of procreation as the will of the user of contraceptives is. For whoever chooses to use contraceptives also has the option of refraining from sex. But what about the will of the person who chooses to be celibate? Here it is not a matter of the impossibility of pursuing every good in every act but of choosing never to pursue a particular human good. Why is that decision, as an act of will, less directed against that good than is the decision to employ contraceptives? Again, the issue I am raising is the need to establish a connection between endsother than those of the will itself and the finality of the will, so that a failure with respect to other ends can render the act of the will defective by its own standards. Can it be ethical for our will to choose against some basic good as long as no external acts chosen by the will are opposed to that good? Then what is the connection between the ends of external acts and the will's finality?

The rational appetite analysis avoids this problem. Neither the temporary nor the permanent celibate evaluates herself as a sexual being to be other than she is. The righteousness of her decision does not depend on some good other than the good of valuing things, as ends or means, according to what they are.

A final difficulty. If there is such a thing as a self-evident practical precept it is the following: when the pursuit of the good of play would interfere with the pursuit of the good of religion, prefer the good of religion. This example illustrates two points. First, by its nature an ethical decision is hierarchical. When we decide, we cannot avoid giving something a higher place in our values than something else; for the reason we have to make decisions is that existentially incompatible values confront us. Therefore, the job of ethics is to tell us what concrete instances of value to prefer to others. Perhaps Grisez and Finnis can account for the <u>truth</u> expressed by the cited precept consistently with their nonhierarchical analysis of value at the

level, not of specific choices, but of prevolitional orientations to basic goods. But, and this is the second point, can they account for our knowledge of this precept? Its self-evidence as a practical

principle depends on our speculative knowledge of human nature and of the realities to which we are related by human nature. Because the intellect and will are what they are, that is, have the finalities our nature gives them, and because God is what He is, religion is more essential to the fulfillment of our finalities as rational decision makers than is play. In other words, for an ethics to provide a knowledge of the hierarchy of values, in the sense in which an ethical decision requires a hierarchy of values, ethics must rely on our speculative knowledge of human nature to determine what is and is not more important to us as pursuers of goals.

Because of difficulties like these, it might be said that Grisez and Finnis have added to the problem of deriving "ought" from "goods" to that of deriving "ought" from "is." No matter how enlightening their analyses of basic human goods are, you are left wondering about the connection with obligation as you prephilosophically understand it. And if they are allowed to reply that obligation must be so explained because there is nothing else by which to explain it, why cannot the the same claim be made for deriving ought from being? The lacuna in both accounts, as hitherto presented, is the nature of the rational appetite and its own orientation toward the good. An analysis of the will's own finality is what has been missing from Realist accounts of ethics. This work is meant to begin to make up for that omission.

And despite my criticisms, there is something intuitively correct about the view that other natural orientations to ends can impose obligations on the will, since the will's finality as a human faculty includes the job of directing us to the fulfillment of other orientations to ends.

One of the motivations behind the basic goods analysis of obligation is to avoid consequentialism or proportionalism, the view that the ethical value of any act is to be judged by the proportions of good and evil in the consequences of the act. The basic goods analysis i an attempt to show that some acts are intrinsically good or evil regardless of their consequences. Hopefully, it is clear that the rational appetite analysis also shows this. For example, a decision for artificial contraception, drunkenness, and suicide would be intrinsically defective regardless of its consequences in a particular situation. In other words, the definitions of some terms, like "suicide" or "murder," or "artificial contraception," happen to include conditions sufficient to render the choice of any act so defined defective by the standard of the will's finality. As defined, the acts are always opposed to the will's finality. No matter what good effects such acts may have in addition to the effects by which they are defined, the conscious choice of those acts would evaluate things as if they were other than they are. For example, the choice of murder or suicide always require evaluating an end-in-itself as if it were not an end-in-itself, and the choice of artificial contraception always requires making the value of a means to an end-in-itself to be something less than an being a means to an end-in-itself.

The definitions of other terms, like "knowingly telling a falsehood," happen to include conditions sufficient to render the choice intrinsically defective unless other conditions occur that involve something the will should value more highly than the communication of the truth in question, given that human nature is what it is. For example, it would be wrong to send a person to an unjust death rather than tell a lie. Communicating truth is a good by the standard of the rational appetite, but not an end-in-itself. Only persons are ends-in-themselves; all other goods are relative to the goals, especially the prevolitional goals, of ends in themselves. The possession of most truths is such a relative good, as is freedom from pain. (If the same cannot be said for truths like "God exists" or "Human life is immortal," the reason is that values for persons other than the value of truth alone are at stake.) Since truth is a relative human good, "lying" is defined by an effect that is an evil. And lying, considered just as such, is an evil act, as is inflicting pain. But since lying is a relative evil, other effects that are more important for ends-in-themselves can render telling certain lies the ethical thing to do, just as the correct ethical decision can require us to inflict pain.

The definitions of still other terms, like "playing loud music at 4 a.m." do not include conditions sufficient to render the choice of the act so defined either successful or defective by the standard of the will's finality. Human nature's orientations to ends does not make loud music at 4 a.m., considered just as such, either a relative good or a relative evil. Effects other than those by which "playing loud music at 4 a.m." is defined must be examined to decide whether the decision to play music then would be good or evil (see Section 4.4.1).

The conditions that render suicide always wrong and lying wrong in default of more important values do not depend on custom. Custom might determine that a particular lie would be justified in one culture though not in others, due to the relative unimportance of that lie and the relative importance of some other value in the culture. But as defined, telling a falsehood always needs a justification. On the other hand, it is possible that the customs of all human societies render playing loud music at 4 a.m. ethically evil, in default of more important values. But it is not necessary that that all societies have customs rendering loud music at 4 a.m. evil; human nature does not demand such customs.

Do not confuse an "intrinsic" like suicide, a "relative," evil like lying, or a "neutral" act like playing loud music at 4 a.m. with the evil in the decision to perform such acts. In normal circumstances, the conscious decision to play loud music at 4 a.m. is intrinsically evil as an act of will, even if the effects which make it evil are not included in the definition of "playing loud music at 4 a.m." And finally, there are greater and lesser degrees of intrinsic evil in acts of the will, just as there are greater and lesser degrees of the values to which those acts are opposed. Reason knows, if it knows anything, that ill-timed music does not interfere with another person's pursuit of goals as much murder does.

## 1.2. Why a False Belief Is Defective

The decision to treat another human unequally is one thing; the belief that she is unequal in nature to us is another. But on our hypothesis, that belief is false and hence defective.

## 2. Intrinsic Finalities and Defects

To make clear the comparison of defective beliefs to defective acts of the rational appetite, this chapter will first compare belief to appetite in general. The relevant points of comparison are their possession of intrinsic finalities, on the one and, and their relation to real -- extracognitional and extra-appetitive -- existence, on the other.

The specific comparison of belief with ethical decision will be made in Chapter 3. That comparison will not logically depend on the general analysis of appetite. In theory, one could go immediately to the comparison of belief with ethical decisions. Historically, however, misconceptions concerning appetite and desires in general have been among the main obstacles to recognizing those characteristics of the rational appetite that constitute the objectivity, unconditionality, and knowability of obligation. Certain common errors have acquired the appearance of necessary truth, and the belief in their necessary truth makes it difficult to see the rational appetite for what it is.

### 2.1. Belief and Desire

There is nothing mysterious about a conscious state having an intrinsic finality. An inanimate object may have no intrinsic relation to the goal for which we use it. For instance, we can use a hammer for pounding nails or pulling them, as a paper weight or as a weapon. The hammer's relation to the goal for which we use it is entirely extrinsic to what the hammer is. The hammer's relation the goal a person is using it for is in the consciousness of the user, and the hammer is also in the user's consciousness. But unlike the hammer, the hammer's relation to the goal of its use is <u>only</u> in the consciousness of the user.

But what about the person's conscious relation to the goal she is using the hammer for? The person has a desire for that goal. The desire's relation to the goal is not extrinsic to the desire the way the hammer's relation to the goal is extrinsic to the hammer. In fact, that is what a desire is, a relation to a goal. And if a desire's relation to a goal were extrinsic to it, the desire would have to get its relation to the goal from a source where the relation to the goal was intrinsic; otherwise, we would be in an infinite regress. The other source, then, would be the true desire for the goal. For that is what we mean by a "desire," namely, way way of being related to things such that things stand, in this relationship, as "goals."

Desires, however, are not the only conscious states that involve intrinsic relations to goals. Belief involves an intrinsic relation to a goal because belief is an evaluation, an estimation, of something as having achieved a certain goal. It is an evaluation of a statement as having achieved the goal of truth.

The achievement of that goal depends on conditions extrinsic to both the act of belief and the statement believed. Because of the dependence on extrinsic conditions, the statement can fail of that goal, and the belief's estimation of whether the statement achieves the goal can be defective. But the fact that the success of the belief's relationto the goal depends on conditions extrinsic to the

belief in no way lessens the fact that the belief, as an evaluation, is a conscious state with an intrinsic relation to a goal whose achievement will make the belief successful or unsuccessful on the belief's own terms. For conscious states like beliefs and desires to have intrinsic relations to goals requires no more than that they be relations to goals. And that requires no metaphysical magic or sleight of hand. Why is the defect in a belief or desire intrinsic if it depends on conditions extrinsic to the belief or desire? Because a belief or desire is a relation to something other than itself. That is what conscious states in general are.

Like beliefs, desires are evaluations; they give things places in the desiring entity's system of values. An extracognitionally existing thing becomes describable as an object of knowledge because the thing terminates a relation of knowledge belonging not to the thing known but to the knowing subject. Likewise, something is a describable as a value because it terminates a relation of desire, or at least potentially terminates a desire some appetite is oriented to producing. A thing becomes a value, therefore, by the relation to it of a desire or of the appetite oriented to producing such a desire. Another way to put it. A thing is a value either as something's end or as a means to something's end. In the sphere of conscious beings, a means is a cognized object desired because of its known relation to another cognized object, while an end is a cognized object not desired because of its relation to some further object. Both ends and means, however, are values because they terminate a relation of desire. Therefore, desires are evaluations; they make things values as ends or as means to ends.

Let me put this important point one more way. Desires are evaluations because they make things more or less values for us, according to the kind of desire we have for each thing. A desire is an estimation of that which is desired, an estimation of it as being the kind of thing an appetite is an appetite for. When a dog is offered two pieces of meat and desires one more than the other, the dog's desire is an evaluation of the preferred meat as offering the dog more of the kind of thing one of its appetites is oriented to. Assume the appetite is oriented to a certain kind of gustatory experience. The preference for one of the pieces of meat is an evaluation of that piece as a means to more of that kind of experience.

The dog's desire for the meat is an example of evaluating one thing as a means to another thing, an end. But desires also evaluate ends. What is it for a state of affairs to be an end to which an appetite is oriented? It is for the state of affairs to be desired, if it does not yet exist, and for the existence of the state of affairs to cause the cessation of the desire and the satisfaction of the appetite (*at least partially). An appetite can desire the existence of one thing as a result of a desire for the existence of another thing. But the existence of that which we call an "end" or "goal" is not desired in view of the satisfaction of some other desire, and so the existence of the end causes the appetite's satisfaction. To desire a state of affairs as an end, therefore, i to evaluate the state of affairs as being the kind of thing an appetite is adapted to.

Confronted by one piece of meat, the dog may have an image of one kind of gustatory pleasure. The image can provoke a desire in the dog for that pleasure. If so, the desire is an estimation of the pleasure as the kind of thing to which the dog's appetite is adapted. Confronted by another piece of meat, the dog can have an image of another kind of gustatory experience. The second image can provoke in the dog a greater desire for the second piece of meat than for the first. If so, the desire is evaluating the pleasure suggested by the second piece of meat as more of the kind of thing to which the appetite is adapted than is the first experience. But in both cases, the gustatory pleasure is an end that is not desired for the sake of anything else. Therefore, desires are evaluations of ends as well as of means.

Section 5.1.2 will explain that acts of the will involve evaluations of ends in a way that the acts of other appetites do not. Hence, if one does not agree with calling desires for ends evaluations, the analysis of the rational appetite will not be affected. But any desire for an end is an evaluation of the end in the sense of an esteeming of the end, that is, an estimating of something's worth as an end for the appetite. To desire something as an end is to value it, to appreciate it; and to desire one end more than another is to esteem it, to value it, to appreciate it more than the other.

Can a desire be defective as a belief is? Clearly, the estimation of something as being a means that will bring about an end can be defective, and it can be defective the way an evaluation of a statement as achieving the goal of truth can be defective. In each case, the success of the evaluation depends on conditions extrinsic to the act of evaluation and to that which is evaluated. The success of an evaluation of something as a means to an end depends on whether the end actually comes about. The success of an evaluatio of a statement as true depends on the statement's relation to the way the world exists independently of the existence of the statement.

But how could a desire for the end as such be defective? To evaluate something as defective, we must evaluate it in relation to an end. Therefore, it would seem that we have nothing by which to evaluate a desire for an end except by a other desire for some other end. But if one desire is defective by reference to a standard set by another desire, the first desire is not defective as a belief is. That is, the defective desire is not intrinsically defective; it is not defective with reference to the end that the desire is itself a relation to, as a false belief is defective with reference to an end that the belief is a relation to. The desire is defective only with respect to the end of some other desire.

That we can judge a desire for an end to be defective only on the basis of another desire for an end is one of the errors about desires that make it difficult to see ethical obligation for what it is. The possibility of the rational appetite's evaluation of ends being defective can be shown independently of making the general argument for intrinsic defects in desires for ends. I will attempt to do that in Chapter 5. But is also important to know that rational appetite is not unique in this respect. Understanding the general case will remove an obstacle to understanding the kind of defect that makes a decision unethical

and its opposite obligatory.

## 2.2. Defective Desires for Ends

Contrary to appearances, the desire for an end can be defective otherwise than the standard of some other desire. For example, the gustatory experience that a desire evaluates to be the kind of thing its appetite is oriented to may not satisfy its appetite after all. If not, the desire for the experience was a defective evaluation of something as an end. How can this be? Like belief, desire has an intrinsic relation, in fact, is a relation, to a goal. But the goal to which it is intrinsically related is something other than the desire itself; something extrinsic to it. And just as the success or defectiveness of a belief depends on conditions extrinsic to the belief, so does the success or defectiveness of a desire for an end.

A belief asserts something other than itself to be a certain kind of thing; if the thing is other than the belief asserts it to be, the belief is defective. A desire for something as an end evaluates a thing to be of a certain kind; it evaluates it to be the kind of thing to which the appetite causing the desire is an orientation, the kind of thing to which the appetite is adapted by being what it is. If the thing so evaluated is not that kind of thing, the desire is defective. For example, animals, including humans, can misevaluate a pleasurable experience presented by a memory or an image to be the kind of experience that will satisfy a sensory appetite.* Such a misevaluation can result from disease, tiredness, sensory illusions, drugs, excessive heat or cold, and so on.

By what standard are we judging such a desire for an end defective, if not by some other desire for an end? I have said a desire is defective if it evaluates something to be other than what it is, that is, if it evaluates something to be a thing of a certain kind and the thing is not of that kind. But why choose agreement between what a thing is and what it is evaluated to be as the standard? Because a desire springs from a preexisting orientation on the part of an appetite whose act a desire is; and eery appetite is by nature oriented to the existence of something such that the appetite produces a desire for the thing, if the thing does not exist, and the appetite experiences satisfaction in the existence of the thing when that existence comes about.

In postulating appetites, I am not postulating occult entities. I am simply recognizing that desires and pleasurable states resulting from their satisfaction are acts of preexisting causes. A cause produces an act because the nature of the cause, what the cause is, orients it to this act and not some other. If not, the nature of the alleged cause would no more orient it to this act than to that. Therefore, what the alleged cause is would be no more a cause for this act than for some other incompatible act; so, when this act occurs, it would no more be caused by what the agent is than is the act that does not occur.

To use definite descriptions like "the rational appetite" and "the will" in speaking of appetites, we do not have to be able to individuate appetites and relate individual appetites to individual desires or sets of desires. That is, we do not have to relate desires to discriminable parts of our makeup. We only have to know that each occurrence of a desire springs from <u>some</u> preexisting

orientation. It may be, for instance, that my orientation to produce a certain desire consists of a set of characteristics. If so, convenience would still allow us to speak of that orientation as "an appetite."* In fact, I believe there is a case for identifying the will with an individual faculty, but my argument will not depend on making that case.

A desire occurs, therefore, because a preexisting orientation for the desire exists. We call such a preexisting orientation an appetite. But the preexisting orientation is not just an orientation for the existence of the desire. It is an orientation to the existence of the particular thing that is desired as an end. An orientation to the production of a desire is an orientation to by the existence of an end other than the desire itself. A desire exists only because the state of affairs for which the appetite is an orientation does not yet exist. Hence the appetite's orientation to an end can serve as a standard for judging a desire defective.

If our will is free, however, its desires can be defective even if those of other appetites could not be. Achieving the will's natural finality would require that it freely and, hence, contingently desire things in ways that fulfill its finality. (See Section 5.1.) That free desires for ends can be defective does not depend on the analysis just given. But for those who do not admit free choice, defective desires for ends are still possible.

## 2.3. The "I" of the Beholder

You may object that the end we are really seeking is the pleasurable state of consciousness that results from some experience, for example, the dog's gustatory experience. Therefore, the gustatory experience is defectively evaluated as a means to an end, not defectively evaluated as an end. The desire for the pleasure itself could be called defective only by reference to the end of some other desire, and that other desire would be no more than a desire for another kind of pleasurable experience. Therefore, we cannot speak of a desire for an end as being defective.The reply to this objection will do away with a number of misconceptions about the relation of appetites and desires to ends. Even if these misconceptions were true of other appetites, they would not be true of the rational appetite. Hence, establishing the foundations of ethics does not logically depend on dispelling them. But these are the kind of misconception that appear to exclude the possibility of an objective ethics before the examination of the rational appetite has even begun.

Supposedly, value is essentially egocentric. A thing becomes a value by being related to a desire. And why do we desire it? Because of the thing's relation to an appetite we possess independently of the thing. Value is in the ego of the beholder; it is not a characteristic in things. Associated with the egocentric analysis of value is the view that, since we are seeking happiness in every action, the value of other things for us, including other persons, can be no more than that of being means to our happiness.

To begin with the objection that desires for ends cannot be defective. As a matter of fact, we can desire a particular pleasure; that very pleasure can come about, and we can still find ourselves with an unsatisfied appetite. The end of the desire has

been fulfilled, and yet the end of the appetite has not. Does it follow that the end of the desire is only a means to the end of the appetite? No. What follows is that the appetite's act was a defective evaluation of a particular state of affairs to be the appetite's end. It is possible to distinguish the end to which an appetite is orientated by its nature from the end aimed at by a desire produced by the appetite. But that distinction will not help us avoid calling a defective desire a defective desire for an end. In fact, that distinction is part of the reason the desire for an end can be defective.

An appetite's orientation to a particular state of affairs as its end is preconscious, since this orientation is the cause of something that is conscious, th desire. The desire itself is a response to an object of cognition, for the desire is a response on the part of the appetite to an object, for example, a pleasurable experience, presented by cognition, for example, by memory or imagination. We can desire an object of cognition, an ice cream cone, for instance, as a means to a pleasurable experience. But if so, we are desiring the ice cream cone for the sake of some other cognized object, a pleasurable taste that we remember or imagine. If we are not desiring the other object of cognition as a means to a further cognized object, we are desiring it as an end. When a desire for cognized object A is not provoked by A's contribution to the attainment of some other cognized object but is provoked by the recognition that A is what it is, the desire for object A is the desire for it as an end, not as a means.

The objection claims that an appetite desires everything other than its own satisfaction only as a means to its satisfaction. But if so, what is the object of cognition that provokes the appetite's response? What is the thing the appetite is so oriented to that the cognition of it causes the appetite to desire it as an end and its existence causes the satisfaction of the appetite? That thing can be nothing other than the satisfaction of the appetite, the fulfillment of the appetite's preconscious orientation to an end. But then there is no end whose existence will cause the satisfaction of the appetite; for a nothing is the cause of itself. The object of cognition whose real existence will presumably fulfill the appetite's preconscious orientation and satisfy the appetite would be the fulfillment of the appetite's orientation or would be the appetite's state of satisfaction in that fulfillment. That is, the cognition the provokes desire would be the cognition of the satisfaction of the appetite. But what is it that will satisfy the appetite? The satisfaction of the appetite. And what is the appetite an appetite for? For something that will satisfy it. But what is the thing that will satisfy it? Its own satisfaction.

If an appetite's own satisfaction were the object of cognition that is desired as an end and whose existence will satisfy the appetite, there would be nothing that satisfies the appetite. Why does the appetite respond to object of cognition A and not to B? Because the appetite is so oriented to what A is that the cognition of A provokes the appetite's response, and the existence of A satisfies the appetite. But unless there were some A to respond to other than the appetite's state of satisfaction, there would be no reason for the existence of A to satisfy the appetite rather than

the existence of B. In short, it cannot be the case that an appetite must evaluate everything other than its own satisfaction only as means to its satisfaction. We get nowhere if we analyze a desired object that is not desired in view of another desired object not as an end but as a means to the satisfaction of the appetite.

An end is a state of affairs knowledge presents to an appetite and to which an appetite responds by causing us to desire that the state of affairs exist. What we desire to exist is not that our appetite for the existence of something be fulfilled. It is the existence of a state of affairs consciously desired as an end that will satisfythe desire and -- assuming the desire is not defective -- the appetite. It follows that there can be a defective desire for an end, if the end desired is not, at least is some respect, the kind of state of affairs to which the appetite producing the desire is oriented.

More generally, the fact that a thing is valued only insofar as it terminates a relation of appetition or desire proves no more in ethics than the fact that a thing is known only insofar as it is known proves in epistemology. That a thing is known only insofar as it is known has been used to justify idealism, or at least subjectivism, in knowledge. Allegedly, we cannot know things as they are outside of knowledge because we know them only by bringing them within knowledge. From the fact that we know something, however, it cannot follow that it is known under the aspect of being known. The aspect under which it is first known must be something more than and something causally prior to the fact that it is known; something must already be known in order for it to be known as known.

Similarly, a thing becomes a value by terminating a relation of appetition or desire. But it cannot follow that a thing is desired only because it has the characteristic of terminating a relation of appetition or desire. The characteristic because of which we desire something is not and cannot be the fact that it is desired. A thing has the characteristic of being desired only if it is desired; so the thing would have to be desired already in order to become that which is desired. The thing must terminate the relation of desire because it possesses some other characteristic. Nor can we avoid the dilemma by saying that the characteristic by which the thing provokes desire is the characteristic of satisfying an appetite, of being that which an appetite is oriented to. The desire for A is provoked because an appetite is oriented to A as its end. But what is it for an appetite to be so oriented? It is for the appetite to be oriented to A because of some or all of the characteristics making A what it is. Therefore, a hing can have the characteristic of being that to which an appetite is oriented only if the thing already possesses other characteristics by reason of which an appetite is oriented to it.

In fact, the statement made at the beginning of this section, that things become values by being related to appetites or desires, is not strictly true. We do not make things values by relating them to appetites and desires. Rather, appetites and desires relate us to things, and the relation of an appetite or desire to an actual or potential thing makes the thing a value for us. An appetite's relation to a thing is something in us, not in the thing. That is

the element of truth misleadingly put by the statement that value is not a characteristic in things. But the conclusion to be drawn is the opposite of the egocentric analysis of value. Values are centrifugal, not centripetal. By being relations to things, appetites and desires relate to characteristics in things, characteristics other than that of things being related to appetites and desires.

If "being a value" means being that to which an appetite is oriented, being a value is not a characteristic of things in their own existence. Being-that-to-which an appetite is oriented, like being-known, is a logical construct, specifically, a relation of reason, based on a characteristic, the appetite, existing in an entity other than the thing itself. But "being that to which an appetite is oriented" is predicated of the thing, not the appetite. And the very fact that it predicates a <u>logical</u> construct implies that there can be no <u>real</u> distinction between what is so described and what can also be described as "a thing that is what it is independently of our appetites." If "being desired" adds only a relation of reason to "what something is," what is desired is identical with what the thing is, that is, with what some or all of its characteristics are. Therefore, there is no real distinction between the value of a thing and what its desired characteristics are (in other words, goodness is a transcendental property of being).

As argued earlier, any desire evaluates the thing it makes an end to be a certain kind of thing, namely, the kind of thing to which the appetite producing the desire is adapted. For an appetite can either desire the existence of a state of affairs that does not yet exist or experience satisfaction in the state of affairs when it does exist. Any appetite or desire is an appetite or desire for some mode of existence. And a desire is defective if it evaluates something to be the kind of existent to which an appetite is adapted when the thing is not that kind of existent. This existential character of appetite implies, again, that the value of a state of affairs for an appetite is identical with what that state of affairs is.

Chapter 3 will show that the rational appetite would have this existential character even if other appetites did not have it. In fact, however, the rational appetite shares this characteristic with all appetites.

Before turning to the rational appetite there are some important consequences of this analysis of value to be pointed out. Since we are seeking happiness in every action, must the value of other persons amount to their being means to our hapiness. Or, since in every action we are aiming at an end, must the value I place on another person be her relation to one or more of the ends I am seeking? Must the value of another be that of a means to my ends and never be any thing higher than that? The affirmative answer to these questions embodies a fallacy similar to the fallacy of deriving idealism from the fact that a thing is known only insofar as it is known.

There is a way in which happiness is our end, but there is also an important way in which happiness is not our end. Happiness is not our end in the sense of being the object our knowledge proposes to us and to which our faculty of desire responds. In this latter

sense, an end is an object of knowledge that we value, for example, wealth, social justice, or reliable personal relationships. When that which we desire in this sense is achieved, there is a conscious state of satisfaction of desire. The conscious state of satisfaction is a state of partial happiness. If all our desires could be satisfied completely, we would have a state of complete happiness. But as just argued, the satisfaction of an appetite cannot be the cognized object that provokes desire on the part of the appetite. To say we are pursuing a course of action only insofar as it brings happiness is like saying a thing is known only insofar as it is known. It does not and cannot follow that the object of knowledge which provokes our desire, the end we are thinking of as we pursue action and whose attainment will bring happiness, is happiness itself. An end whose accomplishment brings happiness is not valued because it possesses some relation to happiness. Rather, it brings happiness because we possess the kind of relation to it that makes it an end for us. If my end is the happiness of another person, that person's happiness is not valued merely is a means to my own happiness.

Just as we are always seeking happiness when we act, we are always acting because we are seeking an end. But it cannot follow that my orientatin to an end is the cognized object that provokes desire for an end. Therefore, it cannot follow that other persons can be valued only for their relation to my orientation to ends, understood as itself the end that I am seeking. If I make the interests of another person the object of my desire, I am pursuing my own end, but I am not thereby reducing the other person's interests to being an means toward the fulfillment of my ends anymore than knowledge reduces the known to being known only as an object of knowledge. To be a value is to be the term of a relation of appetition or desire. But that which is valued is not valued as related to appetite or desire. Rather, appetites and desires are relative to perfections in things just as human knowledge is.

## 2.4. Sensory and Rational Appetites

The centrifugal and existential character of values, even though true, may not seem to buy very much in the case of sensory appetites. Our appetite for the pleasurable taste of an ice cream cone is an appetite for what that taste is as a real existent, not for some relation to the appetite the taste possesses prior to the appetite's being related to the taste. Still, the end to which the appetite for taste is related, namely, a pleasurable experience, is a state of the same entity to which the appetite belongs. The relation of the appetite to its end is not egocentric. But the relation of the entity possessing the appetite to the end of the appetite is egocentric in the sense that the end of the appetite is a state to be undergone by the appetite's possessor, as opposed to some other state that does not modify the possessor.

However, the payoff with the centrifugal and existential character of values is for the rational appetite. By the senses, we are aware of things outside of us through their actions on us. Sensory appetites, therefore, have as their ends the way we are affected by those actions, for example, the kind of taste the ice cream cone produces. Rational knowledge, on the other hand, goes beyond objects the senses are able to distinguish from one another to the not-directly-sensible features things must possess in order to act

on our senses the way they do. Sensory cognition can distinguish the blue of one litmus solution from the red of another, but the distinction between what it is to be acidic and what it is to be alkaline is not an object of sensory knowledge. We call our ability to know such distinctions "reason."

The senses are not unaware of what things are. To know things as acting on us in certain ways is to know them as able to act in these ways, and their ability to so act is constituted by what they are.* Still, the ends of sensory appetites are ways things affect us, and what external things are constitute means to those ends, since the senses know external things only through their actions on us.

Rational knowledge of what things are derives from sensory knowledge of what they are. But as distinguished from sensory knowledge, rational knowledge attains what things are independently of their actions on our sense organs. Sensory knowledge is both the source of and locus of verification for rational knowledge. But <u>that</u> <u>which</u> is known by rational knowledge may have no direct relation to the actions of things on our sense organs. Contrast, for example, seeing the color of the litmus paper to seeing the location of a pointer on a measuring device. A causal relation obtains between the acidity of litmus solutions and differences in their their perceptible colors. The location of the pointer may allow us to verify a theory, but the theory may have little or no relation to the reason light from measuring devices so acts on our eyes that we are able to see differences in pointer positions. For example, a pointer reading can indicate the difference between two theories of a subatomic particle, but those theories may call for no difference in the explanation of why light allows us to perceive the positions of pointers, whatever those positions may be. Or, if they explain light differently, they may not call for differences in the way light from a pointer affect our sense organs.

As correlative to rational knowledge, rational appetite is able to have ends other than states undergone by the entity the appetite belongs to. For example, we can have as an end the well being of our children. It is true that the satisfaction of the appetite will come not just from the well being of our children but from our knowledge of their well being, and knowledge is a state belonging to the same entity the appetite belongs to. Does it follow that our end is really the gratifying knowledge of the state of affairs, and the state of affairs itself is only a means to that end? No, unless our end were the state of affairs itself, there would be no reason why knowledge of state of affairs A, rather than state of affairs B, gratifies us. The existence of the end satisfies us only insofar as it is known, just as we desired its existence only insofar as it was known. But no more follows from that than from the truism that a thing is known only insofar as it is known. Specifically, the aspect of a state of affairs that causes our satisfaction by being known cannot be the fact that the state of affairs is known (*except in cases where knowledge is our end). Something must already be known in order for it to be known as known. Therefore, the aspect under which a thing is first known must be something more than and something causally prior to the fact that it is known. Knowledge of that prior aspect must cause our satisfaction, and so that prior aspect is what makes the state

of affairs our end.

For a rational appetite, it is a false dilemma to oppose an external state of affairs to our internal knowledge of the state of affairs as the end of the appetite. Knowledge is needed to satisfy this appetite because it is an appetite oriented to valuing things insofar as reason is aware of what those things are. But the objects of reason are what things are in their extracognitional existence; when truth is obtained, there is identity between what an extracognitional state of affairs is and what the object attained by reason is. A state of affairs becomes an end for the rational appetite because of our rational knowledge of what the state of affairs is or will be. Therefore, our appetite is satisfied by our knowledge that the desired state of affairs exists. But unless there were identity between the object of knowledge and the existent that is the end of the appetite, the appetite's satisfaction would be illusory, just as a desire that misevaluates a potential existent to be the kind of thing an appetite is oriented to would be a defective desire.

This defense of the nonegocentric character of the rational appetite, like the other arguments of this chapter, is not a logical presupposition of the remainder of my analysis. The characteristics of the ill that explain obligation can be shown independently of the discussion of other appetites. But we have to clear the ground before we can erect a building or, in this case, lay the foundations.

It will be objected that the predicates of different languages reflect radically different linguistic structures, structures that derive from the language and not from what is expressed in language. True, but such structures are characteristics accruing to the objects of our knowledge as a result of having become objects. And we do not attribute to things in their cognition-independent existence characteristics they are associated with only from the perspective of their being objects of knowledge. For example, the fact that the meaning of a predicate has the attribute of logical universality does not imply that when we assert a predicate of an individual, we assert that the individual is a logical universal. Likewise, we can use different linguistic structures to assert the same thing, as in 'This is red' and 'This has redness'. In neither case do we attribute to the thing the properties of the linguistic structure by which we make the assertion.

I have used 'good' as the opposite of 'defective' in a non-moral sense to describe a true belief. If the moral connotations associated with 'good' or 'correct' are too strong, I could use a rather awkward circumlocution like 'successful'.

This is not a 'paradigm case' argument which moves from the given existence of a word to the necessity for a known referent of the word. My argument moves in the opposite direction; it first points out the existence of something and then notes that this thing is the referent of a particular word.

For the present discussion, I abstract from the question of things in nature being given their ends by God. I address that question in Section VIII. In contrasting a person as giver of its own ends to things given their ends by the impersonal universe, I do not mean to deny that the universe is the way it is because God so planned it. However, there are many ethical values that can be recognized as such by those who do not know that God exists. For such values, it is necessary to explain how they are recognzed in the absence of knowledge of God's existence. But for those who know that God exists, examples such as those in Section VII involve justice in a deeper sense than fairness, the sense of giving to each thing what is due it from an appetite adapted to the being of things. What is due an infinitely actual being from a rational appetite is obedience to His will. For He is an ethical absolute, an end-in-Himself, in an infinitely superior way than is a human person. He is an end-in-Himself in the sense of possessing in a superabundant manner all the actuality that is able to become an end for an appetite adapted to what exists.

I am not implying that our treatment of animals has no moral significance. Again, to illustrate the unconditionality, objectivity, and knowability of ethical values, I am using the example justice without denying the existence of other ethical values. The ethical significance of our treatment of animals would not be a matter of justice in the sense of fairness.

If my analysis has been correct, then one who has followed it derives his <u>philosophic</u> <u>understanding</u> of the obligation to treat equals equally from the analysis of that situation, but deriving our philosophic understanding of this obligation from X does not imply that the obligation stands to X in a relation of logical

derivation from prior principles or of causal derivation. How we derive our understanding of obligation is an epistemological matter; what obligation consists in is an ontological matter.

*We have desires that are not responses to the cognition of objects. Often, it is not the thought of food that makes us hungry but hunger that makes us think of food.

*It can be objected that the ability to produce ethical decisions admits of degrees since the rational knowledge admits of degrees, and the rational

appetite is defined as the ability to esteem things according to our rational knowledge.

But assume the orientation to produce a desire consists of a set of characteristics, A and B. Assume also that the desire was rendered defective by the presence of other characteristics, Y and Z. Then Y and Z have an influence on the desire's being what it is; for without them, the desire would not have whatever features make it defective. Therefore, why should we not say that the appetite, the orientation to produce the desire, consists of the entire set, A, B, Y, and Z? Because in the absence of Y and Z, be they tiredness or sickness or whatever, A and B could still produce a desire. A and B constitute an orientation for something that does not exist; hence they produce a desire. But because of the presence of Y and Z, the desire evaluates a thing to be that which A and B constitute an orientation for although the thing is not that.

*That would amount to saying that the end we are aiming at in every desire is the achievement of our end. And that would be like the truism that a thing is known only insofar as it is known. The latter truism has been used to defend idealism, or at least subjectivism, in knowledge. It has been claimed that we cannot know things as they are outside of knowledge because we know them only by bringing them within knowledge. But from the fact that we know something, it does not and cannot follow that it is known under the aspect of being known, that what is known is that something is known. The aspect under which a thing is known must always be something more than that it is known and something causally prior to the fact that it is known. The alternative is an infinite regress, since something must already be known in order for it to be known as known; in other words, the thing would have to be known before it could be known. Similarly, the fact that something other than the appetite is valued only insofar as it terminates the appetite's relation of being oriented to this thin proves no more in ethics than the fact that a thing is known only insofar as it is known proves in epistemology. We cannot desire something without relating it to our desires. But the characteristic because of which an appetite is oriented to a thing is not and cannot be the fact of the thing's being that to which the appetite is oriented. The thing must be that to which the appetite is oriented because it possesses some other characteristic, a characteristic capable of provoking desire by being known. Otherwise, the reason why something satisfies desire would be that it satisfies desire. Desires are relations to characteristics in things, characteristics other than that of satisfying desire.

How do I know they are mine? The question incorrectly assumes I have some knowledge of myself other than as the cause of my behavior or some knowledge of decisions other than as emanating from the source I designate "me."

In fact, my awareness of my own existence is basically awareness of myself as the source of conscious acts like sensations, beliefs, desires, and decisions.

*Should I therefore value the elements that make me up more highly

than human nature, since they are foundational for human nature? I evaluate myself as equal or unequal to her with respect to being causes of decisions. None of the elements making me up have dispositions whose achievements include the ability to make ethical decisions. Those dispositions belong to the whole made up of elements.

Footnote on Finnis, Nozick, Aristotle, and Veatch concerning wishing to be a cow.

Freedom is not randomness. Randomness is a form of determination. The next digit in pi is not predictable before it is calculated, but it is entirely determined and necessary.

## Abstract

Is falsehood a defect for a belief? Yes. Is the standard by which falsehood is counted a defect something accidental to beliefs, something only contingently related to beliefs? No. What if we have an appetite oriented to valuing things according to reason's knowledge of what they are? Then failure to do so would be defective just as falsehood is, that is, non-contingently or accidentally. For example, if we know that an infinitely perfect being exists, it would be a defect not to value Him accordingly, that is, to love Him completely. If we know that another being is equal to us in possession of the nature that makes us possessers of an appetite by which we make rational decisions, it would be a defect to choose to pursue goals in a way that did not give her an equal opportunity to pursue her goals.

Specifically, in pursuing my interests at the expense of hers, I evaluate my reality, the reality of the being who is the source and subject of the desires being pursued, as though it were higher on a scale of reality than hers.

## Appendix

This is true of aesthetic values as well as ethical values.

The preceding analysis of desire and the relation of values to desire allows us to answer the question whether goodness, be it ethical or aesthetic, is a characteristic of things in their own existence.

We are equal not only in having a similar nature but in having a nature that makes us free beings. Free beings are ends-in-themselves.

In either case, our evaluation is defective because the places things have in our evaluations, with respect to being evaluated as ends or as means to ends, is inconsistent with what the relation that holds between them in reality.

To show the consequences of the concept of rational appetite for ethics, I will compare ethical decision to belief. Specifically, I will argue that just as in truth there is identity between what is an object of knowledge and what some extra-cognitionally existing thing is, so there is identity between what is a value for us and what some thing, action, or state is in itself.

Do we know why we are desiring the end itself? And if so, how do we know it? We know why we desire an end because a desire for an end is a conscious evaluation of the end as the kind of thing the appetite is adapted to, the kind of thing whose existence will satisfy the appetite's preconscious orientation. That is what a desire is.

Explaining this difference between our treatment of rational and subrational beings will show why the concept of free beings as ends-in-themselves is needed for the analysis of obligation.

### 4.4.2. Outtakes

#### 3. The Rational Appetite

I discussed belief in order to compare the false belief that two humans do not share a common nature to a decision that treats the two unequally. The next section discusses what the identity, in true belief, between what is believed and what things are has to do with ethical decisions. Section 3.2 discusses in what sense a

common nature is and is not a necessary presupposition for this comparison of rational appetite with belief.

A reminder is necessary at the beginning. The analysis focuses on the example of unequal treatment of equals. Once again, inequality as such is not the point of the comparison of decision with belief or of what makes a decision defective. The point of the comparison is the finality of the will as an appetite whose nature it is to value things according to what they are. If we give our equals a place unequal to us in our system of values, we cannot be treating them according to what they are.

### 3.1. Decision Compared to Belief

I can give my interests a higher place in my system of values than those of another, even though the inherent perfection of our natures are equal. If so, there is a lack of identity between the relative positions of our natures in reality and the relative positions my conscious estimations of value assign them, that is, a lack of identity between the way things terminate my relations of desire and the way their intrinsic realities relate to each other. A decision is a form of desire; it is an appetite's response to a cognized end not yet achieved. Or at least -- if you do not want to call a decision a desire -- what has so far been said about desire applies to decision as well. In particular, decisions are evaluations, since decisions make things values for us and give things relative positions among other values. And just as a conscious act of belief is defective if there is a lack of identity between what the belief asserts about the thing and what the thing is, so a conscious evaluation of the inherent reality of things is defective if there is lack of identity between the way things relate to one another in in our evaluation and the relation that obtains between them in real existence. For as belief claims that things exist the way we express them in statements, a decision treats things as if they existed the way they are evaluated; a decision deals with things as if what they are as values for us is identical with what they are in themselves; a decision evaluates things to be of certain kinds, to exist in certain ways.

For example, in deciding to cheat on an examination, I am depriving another person of an equal opportunity to pursue her goals, so I am putting my pursuit of goals ahead of hers in my system of values. But when I put my pursuit of goals ahead of hers, I cannot avoid putting myself ahead of her.

What is the evidence for these assertions? In particular, why must ethical decisions treat things as if they existed the way they are evaluated? In discussing belief, we noted that intellectual acts can have goals other than identity with what exists, but belief happens to be an act to which a relation to this goal is intrinsic. Likewise, to judge an ethical decision defective for treating things otherwise than as they exist is to judge it by the standard of a finality, an orientation to a goal, that is intrinsic to the decision itself. The defect is not hypothetical, as if the decision was defective only by reference to a goal to which the decision itself need not be related. Why?

To begin with, the very occurrence of ethical decisions presupposes that potential values ae in opposition; otherwise, we would not have to make a choice between them. Therefore, every ethical decision is an evaluation that assigns something a relative

place in our values higher than something else. Next, as we saw in Chapter 2, appetites are existential. An appetite is an orientation either to desire the existence of an end not yet attained or experience satisfaction in the existence of an end attained. Therefore, every desire evaluates its object to be something, namely, to be the kind of thing an appetite is adapted to. And a desire aims at bringing something into existence so that it will exist the way it has been imagined or conceived to exist. Hence desires deal with their objects as potentially existing the way they are desired. That desires treat things as existing in certain ways is true for sensory desires as well as for ethical decisions, but it is especially true for ethical decisions and would be true of ethical decisions even if it were not true of sensory desires.

In the case of sensory desires, what is evaluated to be a thing of a certain kind is a sensory experience. In preferring an experience presented by one image, say the experience of eating chocolate, to an experience presented by another image, the desire evaluates the taste of chocolate to be more of the kind of thing our appetite, at least at the moment, is oriented to. But our rational knowledge of what exists does not stop at our knowledge of what our sensory experiences are. We can have knowledge of what things are as they exist independently of our conscious states. And our disposition for making ethical decisions is a rational appetite. As an appetite, it orients us to goals. As rational, it is a power of responding to objects of rational knowledge and, therefore, of desiring things according to what reason informs us about them. But by reason, we are aware of what things are in themselves. Therefore, a rational appetite relates me to goals according to my knowledge of what things are in themselves; a ratonal appetite is a power of valuing, esteeming, appreciating, honoring the intrinsic reality of things that are presented to that appetite by reason.

If there is any doubt about the existence of the rational appetite as here described, we have only to consider that otherwise we would not be capable of desiring goals according to our rational knowledge of what things are. Yet, to pursue a goal is precisely to aim at making something consciously conceived exist as we have conceived it. And our conception of future goals is always founded on our consciousness of what things are that already exist. Furthermore, our satisfaction in an accomplished goal derives from our awareness of what exists when that goal exists.

Since the rational appetite relates me to goals according to my awareness of what things are in themselves, a decision made by the rational appetite cannot avoid consciously evaluating things to be of certain kinds, to exist in certain ways; it cannot avoid evaluating things as if their being were this or that. In other words, by its intrinsic nature as an act of a rational appetite, an ethical decision calls for, asks for, being judged in terms of identity or lack of identity between the way it treats things as values and the way things exist, between what something is as a value for us and what it is in itself. Sensory desires also call for judgment on this ground, but even if that were not true of sensory desires, it would be true of ethical decisions.

That ethical obligation has these characteristics can be shown on the basis of the following propositions:

(1) Humans are equal with respect to possession of a common nature that underlies our individual differences.

(2) Human reason is capable of knowing the natures of things to some extent and at least to the extent required to know our equality with respect to this underlying nature.

(3) Our ability to make ethical decisions* is a rational appetite, that is, a faculty of desire that orients us to goals according to our knowledge of the natures of things.

I have defended Proposition (2), reason's ability to know the natures of things, elsewhere.* I will defend Propositions (1) and (2) here. Defending Proposition (1), our possession of a common nature, will not be as difficult as it might appear. In the present context, a common human nature is at issue only to the extent that it has ethical significance. That significance will not commit us to as much as belief in a common nature may commit us in other contexts.

Proposition (3), a faculty of desire oriented to goals according to reason's knowledge of the natures of things, will be the crucial one for this study. For many, the phrase "rational appetite" may have a Kantian ring, but a concept of rational appetite (or the will) that is almost diametrically opposed to Kant's goes back at least to the high middle ages. That concept of rational appetite overcomes both

Briefly, the rational appetite has the intrinsic finality of valuing things according to reason's knowledge of what things are. For example, when we know that an infinitely perfect being exists, a decision that would deny this being the highest and ruling place in our system of values would be intrinsically defective. That is, the decision would be defective by the standard of a finality, a relation to goals, that is identical with the nature of the rational appetite and of the decision itself as a product of the rational appetite. It would not be defective by the standard of some goal imposed on the will from without. The decision, in other words, cannot avoid being defective by the standard of its own nature.

Such a defect in the will's act is what constitutes moral evil. Moral goodness, on the other hand, is constituted by the fulfillment of the finality inscribed in an act of the rational appetite. To be morally obligated to make a certain decision means that the opposite decision cannot avoid being defective by the standard of the will's intrinsic finality. I will argue that

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*Throughout this essay, I use the phrase 'ethical decision' to refer, not to a judgment that a choice is ethically good or bad, but to a choice that is to be so judged. For example, an ethical decision is a choice to cheat or not cheat on an examination, as opposed to the judgment that such a choice is ethically right or wrong.

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this analysis both conforms to our everyday understanding of morality and solves the main philosophic problems concerning the objectivity, unconditionality, and knowability of moral obligation.

For example, the fact that obligation is based on finality does not render obligation hypothetical as long as the relation to the goal is intrinsic to the rational appetite and its acts. To momentarily use some traditional terminology that I will not rely on in the remainder of the discussion, what is a final cause from one point of view is an intrinsically perfecting formal cause from another point of view. And the absence of that intrinsic perfection is an intrinsic defect. The opposition between teleological and deontological ethics is a false dilemma.

Another false dilemma is the opposition between appetite and reason concerning who prescribes to whom. It is entirely true that value presupposes desire, and desires spring from appetites adapted to certain kinds of goals. But if there is a faculty of desire adapted to valuing the being of things as known by reason, that faculty's act is intrinsically defective if it does not reflect what reason knows about things. This notion of rational appetite, far from being a contrivance for escaping from dilemmas, is in conformity both with our prephilosophic understanding of ourselves and with the demands of a philosophic analysis of experience.

One more proposition will enter into this account of ethical obligation:

(4) Rational appetite gives us freedom of choice.

I mention Proposition (4) last because those who disagree with freedom of choice will find that they can go quite a long way with the analysis before parting company with it.

### 1.1. Method of Proceeding

To show that ethical obligation can be objective, unconditional, and knowable, it is only necessary to show that obligations with these characteristics sometimes occur. And since my conclusions are so controversial, the examples illustrating them should be as uncontroversial as possible. Accordingly, I will confine myself mainly to examples of one of the most universally admitted kinds of ethical value, justice in the sense of fairness to others in the pursuit of a goal that can be possessed by only one of those pursuing it. This limitation on the scope of the study does not imply that justice in the sense of fairness is the only ethical value. Section 5.3 and Chapter 6 show how the analysis can be extended to other cases.

A necessary condition for answering this question is to determine in what sense the other is equal to me. We are presumably not equal in an indefinite number of respects. In fact, the evidence for a common nature is basically the same as the evidence for other minds. Nature is a causal concept; human nature is a set of causal dispositions underlying our behavior. To believe in a common nature is to believe that the similarities in our behavior are accounted for by similarities in the dispositions that enable us to behave as we do. The belief that our behavior is similar does not require, for example, that humans have a common language or culture; it only requires that humans have a capacity for language (surpassing that of animals) and a capacity for culture. The question of nature concerns the underlying causes of the capacities for such behavior, as well as the capacity for degrees of knowledge superior to that of animals, the capacity to conceive of nonphysical modes of existence, the capacity to conceive of an afterlife, and so on. Why should we believe the

roots of such behavior are similar from human to human when it is entirely possible for similar effects to be produced by dissimilar causes?

The mere possibility of dissimilar causes does not make it reasonable postulatethem, unless multiplying causes can account for differences in effects that cannot otherwise be accounted for. The differences in human behavior are manifold. But rather than arguing against common underlying causes, differences in human behavior argue for them. Differences in languages presuppose that humans are alike in having linguistic ability greater than that of animals; differences in culture presuppose that humans are alike in having psychological capacities necessary for developing culture; and so on. The differences in such abilities are differences regarding language or culture because of the similarities in the abilities, and the similarities in the abilities call for explanation by similarities in the underlying causes of the abilities. A similar set of underlying causal dispositions is what is meant by a common human nature.

And another causal consideration makes postulating different natures unreasonable. Effects have whatever their causes put into them. The causes of human beings are their parents. Human parents produce children by means of reproductive faculties that are similar from one set of parents to another. And although dissimilar causes can have similar effects, similar causes, as such, do not produce dissimilar effects. Dissimilarities in effects do have to be accounted for by dissimilarities in their causes, and the dissimilarities between human reproductive faculties are manifold. But these dissimilarities also presuppose basic similarities without which reproduction could not take place. The dissimilarities are associated with reproduction only because of the similarities. Two people can carry different genes only if both carry genes; one human ovum differs from another but both are human ova. The reproductive faculties of other species share similarities with human reproductive faculties. But specifically human behavior has its ultimate source in causal dispositions given us by the similar reproductive faculties of human parents and not given to the offspring of other species.

With respect to other human beings, then, the only reasonable belief is that the behavior we discover in them by external observation is accounted for by their having a nature similar to that we discover in ourselves through reflective self-awareness. What moral significance does the knowledge of our possession of a common human nature have?

Before turning to the direct comparison between belief and acts of the rational appetite, I will compare belief to appetites in general, with respect to having intrinsic defects, in Chapter 2. That discussion will clear up some a priori difficulties with the notion of an objective and unconditional ethics. Those difficulties include the idea that appetite and desire are necessarily egocentric, and the idea that there is no standard by which to deem a desire for an end defective except some other desire for an end. Chapter 3 takes up the direct comparison between belief and a decision on the part of the rational appetite to treat equals unequally. There, the idea of a common nature and the sense in which it is pertinent to ethics will be refined.

Ultimately, it is not our equality with respect to being humans but our equality as pursuers of goals that is pertinent to obligation, and something could be equal to us as a pursuer of goals without being human.In Chapter 4, I will argue that the concept of rational appetite elucidated by the comparison with belief is the operative concept in our everyday ethical judgments and is sufficient to resolve the main philosophic problems concerning the foundations of ethics. In addition to the already mentioned fact/value and teleology/deontology problems, there are the problems of the knowability of obligation, of "Why be moral?" and of why immoral actions deserve punishment.

All of those questions will be dealt with before the question of freedom of choice comes up in Chapter 5. The concept of rational appetite, in addition to solving other problems in the foundations of ethics, solves the problem of free choice. And the fact that we have free choice explains the ethical concept of a person being an end-in-itself, that is, of our obligation to treat a person as an end, not as a means.

In Section 4.4.1, I begin to extend the analysis of obligation to cases beyond that of fairness in competition. And in the final chapter, Chapter 6, I extend the analysis to cases that appear even more remote from fairness: artificial contraception, drunkenness, and suicide. Since this study concerns foundations, the purpose is not to cover all cases of ethical decision but to cover cases diverse enough to make it reasonable to expect the analysis to apply to other cases as well. The study will have succeeded if it makes that expectation sufficiently reasonable to motivate the development of a complete ethic based on the foundations examined here.

we may reject a job offer we would otherwise have chosen because we felt it was not equal to another offer with respect to opportunities for advancement. When we later find that the two offers were equal in this way, we consider our preference for the job we took to have been a bad preference.

necessarily knowledge of what things are with respect to the ability make rational decisions directing themselves to their own ends is, by hypothesis, pertinent to any decision; for the finality of our ability to make rational decisions is necessarily involved in any decision. Therefore, we cannot avoid evaluating another as equal to us as a pursuer of rationally chosen goals

To say that our decision making abilities have the finality of valuing things according to reasons knowledge is to say that they have the finality of valuing things according to <u>what</u> <u>they</u> <u>are</u> as known by reason, for the object of reason is what things are. Hence, when you criticize my decision to cheat against you, you are criticizing it for treating me as if I were not what I am, since what I am is equal to what you are in the respect to the finality of our decision making ability but you are not treating me as if what I am were equal to what you are in this respect. Any decision treats something as if it is or is not what it is, just as a belief relates to something as if it is or is not what it is. And just as a belief that something is not what it is is defective by the

standard of belief's unavoidable goal of truth, a decision relating to something as if it were not what it is known to be is defective by the standard of a goal a decision cannot avoid having.

"Based on" does not mean the same as "according to," when I say that our decisions have the finality of valuing things according to what we rationally know of them. "Based on" simply means that we make decisions using our rational knowledge; we make decisions in the rational consciousness of what things are, and we cannot avoid being rationally aware of what things are when we make decisions. It is the fact that our decisions cannot avoid being made in the presence of rational knowledge that gives our decisions the finality of valuing things according to our rational knowledge. But the fact that our decisions are made in the presence of rational knowledge is not the same as the fact that our decisions have that finality. For the former fact is the cause of the latter fact, and cause and effect are not the same. But in not treating us as being equal to the extent that we pursue goals based on rational knowledge, my decision to cheat violates the finality of valuing things according to what they are known to be, because I know we are equal to that extent and because I am denying you equal opportunity to be a pursuer of rationally chosen goals. My decision is therefore defective by the standard of the finality our decision making ability cannot avoid having.

Assume you are choosing between two jobs that are equal in all respects of concern to you, but you mistakenly believe that one offers more job security. If you ealuate the other job as less desirable for this reason, your evaluation is defective.

(Again, equality is not the essence of the will's finality, but if I am not placing a value on her equal to that I place on myself, I am not evaluating her according to what she is.)

Because reason knows what things are as extramental things, the finality of valuing things according to reason's knowledge is the finality of valuing things according to what they are in their own natures.

(I will illustrate what it means to value things according to reason's knowledge of what they are in a moment.)

The ends to which any ability is oriented are hierarchical. The action to which an ability disposes us may not be the ultimate end to which we are oriented because of the ability; the action may only be an means to a further end. But any action is related to the ability by which we produce it as an end, since it is something distinct from the ability and whose existence the ability is oriented toward bringing about. Therefore, an abilities action always stands to it as its immediate, if not ultimate, end.

Furthermore, the finalities of the rational appetite itself remain what they are regardless in differences of degrees between the rational appetites of different individuals, for example, individuals who do not have the same degree of "will power."

At least -- and this is the crucial point, the finalities of our rational appetites are sufficiently the same that we cannot avoid

misevaluating another rational decider, evaluating another pursuer of goals chosen on the basis of some rational knowledge, to be other than what she is if we do not treat her interests as equal to our own. No matter what the differences in our wills, it remains true that we have an ability to pursue goals based on some rational knowledge. And, by hypothesis, we have sufficient rational knowledge to recognize our equality in that respect. Therefore, we have an ability to make decisions based on that knowledge. If we do not base our decisions on knowledge of this equality as pursuers of rationally chosen goals when the pursuit of those goals comes into conflict, we unavoidably evaluate those whose pursuit of goals conflicts with ours as if they were not equal to us in this respect. That is, we unavoidably fail to decide according to our knowledge that we are equal in this respect, because we evaluate them as if they were not equal to us in this respect.

However, there are ends to which our decision-making ability are necessarily oriented in addition to the end of evaluating according to reason's knowledge. In particular, our decision-making ability is oriented to making decisions based on reason's knowledge.

No matter what the differences between our faculties of decision, it remains a truth that we are each oriented to direct ourselves toward specific ends by decisions based on some rational knowledge. This is an X to which we are oriented by means of our dispositions to make decisions. With respect to this X, both the murderer are equal. But the murderer's decision does not value the victim as if he were her equal in this respect, because her decision denies the victim the opportunity to pursue his rationally chosen ends.

I am arguing that my decision to deny him equal opportunity cannot avoid being defective because, no matter what my specific goal, the rational appetite's finality is to evaluate things as if they existed the way they are evaluated. And my decision to deny him equal opportunity evaluates what we are unequally even though we are equal. Therefore the decision is defective as a false belief is, defective by the standard of a goal the decision is related to just by being what it is. But in what respect are equal such that the decision is unavoidably defective?

your criticism of my decision is criticism of it for not evaluating him equally, not in just any respect, but in respect to an end to which our decision-making ability necessarily orients us, that of making decisions based on rational knowledge.

Therefore, she is not treating him equally from the point of view of a goal to which our ability to make decisions necessarily orients us, the goal of pursuing ends of our own choice. More fundamentally than having the ends of making decisions in accord with rational knowledge or based on our rational knowledge, our ability to make decisions has the end of making decisions directing us to other ends. (Just as the will cannot have the end of directing us to ends in accord with rational knowledge unless it makes use of rational knowledge in directing us to ends, the will cannot make use of rational knowledge in directing us to ends unless it directs us to ends.)

It may be objected that the analogy between the will and an appetite oriented to an end breaks down because no specific end, no X, has been provided as the point of reference for the will's evaluations. To evaluate two things as equal or unequal, we have to evaluate them as being equal or unequal in a certain respect, that is, either with respect to embodying end X or with respect to being means to end X. Without a specific end, there is no basis for comparison.

For example, a moment ago I said treating an other person equally means evaluating what he is as in "some sense" equal to what we are. But the description so far given of our decision-making ability seems to provide it no specific sense in which to evaluate things as being equal or unequal. The finality of valuing things according to reason's knowledge of what they are seems to do the opposite of providing a specific point of reference for evaluations. Any mode of being can be an object of reason; and any two things can be unequal in an indefinite number of respects; that is, "what they are" can be unequal in an indefinite number of ways. Why should an evaluation of two things as being equal or unequal in one respect as opposed to others constitute a violation of the will's finality? Hence even granting that decisions evaluate what things are to be equal or unequal, we appear to be a long way from explaining what the moral evil of treating another person unequally consists in.

To answer this question, it is necessary to make clear the concept of reason that I have been assuming (although a complete account of reason is not necessary, since the psychology required for this analysis of obligation is minimal).

To see why, consider why we do not blame subrational beings for not treating each other equally; for the same reason, we do not ourselves for treating subrational beings as unequal to us but to blame ourselves for treating rational beings unequally.

I have stated that the equality of humans from the perspective of the rational appetite consists, not in the fact that their powers of reason are equal, but in the fact that they have they have the ability to direct themselves toward ends using whatever rational knowledge they happen to have. There is more to our moral equality than that. For most humans, to believe that we are equal in a moral sense is to believe that there is a respect in which we are equal that is more fundamental to what we are than are the respects in which we are unequal, and to believe this is to believe in a common nature underlying our differences, a nature more fundamental to what we are than are the respects in which we differ.

For the purposes of this introduction, I will assume the truth of this belief, with the following qualifications. First, I will argue later (Section ??) that a a common nature is not precisely what is necessary for ethical equality. Therefore, there is no need to defend here the claim that most people believe in a common nature. Second, although a common nature is not necessary for ethical equality, it happens to be the case that humans do share a common nature in a sense sufficient for ethical equality, and most people in fact believe in a common nature in this sense. But as I will argue below (Section ??), belief in a common nature sufficient for ethical equality does not commit us to as much as one might

think. Thus, not only is the common nature I am defending not necessary for ethical equality, but the belief in a common nature sufficient for ethical equality is less controversial than belief in a common nature can be in other contexts.

The nature in question is a set of causal dispositions more fundamental than the proximate ability to make rational decisions we exercise when we are fully conscious or even the more remote disposition to make rational decisions we possess while we are aslep or in a coma. Causally more fundamental than either of these dispositions is our disposition, as living beings, to maintain ourselves in existence. We share the ability to maintain ourselves in existence with all living things. The difference is that the being we maintain in existence is a being whose nature also gives it the dispositions, proximate and remote, to make rational decisions. For reasons to be explained (Section ??), the common nature sufficient for ethical equality is that of beings able to maintain themselves in existence as causes of rational decisions. (I will also discuss the ethical status of humans without the ability to make rational decisions.)

I claim that in such a case a really existing situation obtains that the English language describes by phrases like "my having an obligation not to cheat on the examination." That situation consist in the fact that the decision to cheat has an intrinsic defect because of the nature of decisions and the natures of the things this decision deals with. And the evidence of experience makes that situation knowable to reason.

The behavior of critizing decisions as ethically wrong implies that obligation consists in the rational appetite's finality of valuing things according to reason's knowledge of what they are. The behavior of criticizing decisions ethically embodies that finality. When we criticize a decision as being ethically bad, we imply a standard by reference to which the decision is being judged. A decision is judged to be bad because existence of the decision fails to achieve something. What that something is constitutes a standard we are holding the decision to. But "that which is to be achieved" is the definition of a goal, an end. To hold a decision to a standard is to have in mind a goal by which we judge the decision. Any standard expresses a goal to be achieved by whatever is being judged according to the standard. If the goal is achieved, the thing is good; if not, the thing is bad. Hence in judging a decision o be ethically bad we are judging that it fails to achieve some goal.

The goal we have in mind, when we criticize a decision ethically, is something that either is or is not achieved by the existence of the decision itself, as opposed to some external effect to be brought about by the decision. External effects may be involved in the judgment, of course; that is, the standard we hold the decision to may make reference to effects that the decision does or does not aim at bringing about. But morality concerns decisions. Where external effects are not in the control of our decisions, we do not judge the effects morally unless our standard requires that there

should have been a decision in control of them. Nor do we fail to judge a decision to be evil just because circumstances prevented the decider from carrying it out. Many things may go into determining the content of an ethical standard, but the standard is ethical to the extent that it allows us to classify a decision or the absence of a decision as being an achievement of a certain kind. That is, the standard must allow us to classify a decision as achieving a goal by its, the decision's, being what it is.

But there is another way of looking at a decision as achieving a goal. Decisions, like any acts, result from prior dispositions to action on the part of their agent. An agent acts this way as opposed to that because a disposition existing prior to the action orients the agent to act this way as opposed to that. By hypothesis, a decision to be judged ethically is a caused event; for we hold the maker of the decision to be its cause. If we believed decisions were something that just happened to a person and over which a person had no control, we would not hold people ethically responsible for decisions, and our ethical judgments would not be what they are.[1] Since a decision is caused, the nature of the cause, that is, features possessed by the cause, must account for the decision being the kind of thing it is. If not the decision would be caused and uncaused; it would be uncaused since nothing existing prior to it would account for the decision's being what it is.

Therefore, the prior dispositions by reason of which the agent brings a decision into existence relate the agent to a goal or goals; for they relate the agent to the achievement of an event of a certain kind. The existence of a decision is an achievement of a goal or goals to which the ability to make decisions is related by being the kind of thing it is. Therefore, when we judge an action by its relation to a goal, the goal we invoke is either consistent or not consistent with the relation to goal constituted by the disposition that enabled the agent to act. If it is not consistent, our application of the goal by which we judged the act is <u>unfair</u>; we are judging the act by a goal the agent could not achieve and has no reason to achieve. Since we do not believe we are being unfair when we judge decisions by ethical standards, we believe that the agent's dispositions to act relate the agent to goals that are consistent with the goals by which we judge the act. To believe this is to believe something about the dispositions we exercise when we make ethical decisions.

To believe it is fair to apply a certain standard to a decision is to believe that the dispositions we are exercising give the decision a finality, a relation to a goal or goals, such that the decision is itself successful or defective according to whether it accomplishes that finality. Since the decision exists as an exercise of dispositions that cause us to act because they aim at achieving a goal, the decision itself has that finality and cannot avoid being good or bad according to whether it fulfills that finality. Similarly, a belief cannot avoid being either good or bad according to whether it achieves the goal of truth, for he finality of attaining truth belongs to the nature of belief. Its relation to the goal of truth is one of the things distinguishing belief from other conscious states.

What, then, is the goal our dispositions for making decisions

impose on those decisions. That question is answered by the fact that we appeal to rational knowledge to determine whether decisions are good or bad. That question is also answered by the reason cannot settle questions of good or bad without presupposing an orientation to some goal as given. Our decision making abilities have the goal of deciding according to reason's knowledge of what things are. That is the standard we hold decisions to when we judge them ethically, the standard of valuing things according to what we know them to be. In holding decisions to this standard we imply the opinion that decisions have this finality, as belief has the finality of attaining truth, and therefore that the dispositions we exercise in making decisions give decisions this finality.

Now what if the X to which we are oriented is the making of decisions that value things according to what we rationally know of them? Consider the case of you and I deciding to seek a goal whose achievement requires us to compete against each other. If I decide to cheat to attain this goal, you correctly judge my decision bad by the standard of its denying you an opportunity equal to mine to pursue your chosen goal. I am not valuing your interests equally to mine. Hence you rightly criticize my decision for not achieving the end of giving you a place in my values equal to the place I give myself. But the equality in question is equality in a specific respect, equality with respect to being someone in pursuit of her own rationally chosen goals. For the decision to cheat only occurred because our pursuit of rationally chosen goals came into conflict, and the issue of my treating you unequally only arises because of our decisions to pursue the same unshareable goal. Therefore, your criticism of my decision is criticism of it for not treating us equally with respect to X, that is, with respect to the end to which our decision-making ability orients us.

To see why, consider another example. Someone kills another person and then kills herself. Can it be said that she is not guilty of treating her victim unequally, since she didn't do anything to the victim that she didn't do to herself? No. Although the murderer is pursuing her own chosen end, she is not allowing the victim to pursue his end. Therefore, she is not treating him equally from the point of view of a goal to which our ability to make decisions orients us, the goal of making decisions by which we direct ourselves to our own ends. In making such decisions, we use rational knowledge, and it maybe that the victim's powers of rational knowledge are less than the murderer's. But what is at issue in the finality of our decision-making abilities is not the degree of our rational knowledge, but the use of whatever rational knowledge we have to direct ourselves toward ends by means of our own decisions. Both the murderer and the victim have decision making abilities that are alike in this respect. But the murderer does not value the victim as if he were like her in this respect, that is, with respect to a necessary goal of her dispositions for making decisions.

And it is not simply a matter of each of our decisions and our ends being our own that is at issue. What is at issue is that we each have an ability to make our own decisions for our own ends

based on some rational knowledge, at least sufficient rational knowledge to recognize our likeness in this respect -- in other words, sufficient rational knowledge to recognize "other minds." Two dogs make their own decisions and are equal to that extent. But dogs do not have an awareness of their equality in this respect. If they did, the dogs would be obligated to treat each others as equals, because their ability to make decisions would have that finality. When dogs mistreat themselves or us, we don't criticize them ethically because we would not say, "They should have known better." But we do criticize humans ethically by saying that they should have known better.

To say that our decision making abilities have the finality of valuing things according to reasons knowledge is to say that they have the finality of valuing things according to what they are as known by reason, for the object of reason is what things are. Hence, when you criticize my decision to cheat against you, you are criticizing it for treating me as if I were not what I am, since what I am is equal to what you are in the respect to the finality of our decision making ability but you are not treating me as if what I am were equal to what you are in this respect. Any decision treats something as if it is or is not what it is, just as a belief relates to something as if it is or is not what it is. And just as a belief that something is not what it is is defective by the standard of belief's unavoidable goal of truth, a decision relating to something as if it were not what it is known to be is defective by the standard of a goal a decision cannot avoid having.

At any rate, the preceding is the core of my analysis of ethical obligation. Not only do we impose the standards we do on decisions because we believe our dispositions for making decisions have the finality I have described, but it is also true that our dispositions for making decisions have this finality. It is with reference to this finality that we rightly think of ourselves as having intrinsic value and rights. Rights are what are "due" me, where "due" means what fulfills this the inality of a rational being's decision-making abilities in dealing with me. This definition appears to make rights extrinsic, since the rational being in question may be other than myself. But the finality of that other being's decisions is to value me according to what I am. Pace Plato, what I am is not extrinsic to me. And it is because another person knows what I am that I am due something from her. In fact, the first thing I am due from her is the place, in her values, of a being independent of her who has ends independent of hers and whose pursuit of ends is independent of her pursuit of ends.

How does my relation to the finality of another person's decision-making powers differ from a baby animal's relation to the finality its mother fulfills when she sacrifices herself for it? In several ways, but I need only mention one now. An animal's knowledge grasps only certain sensible aspects of what her offspring is. For example, some birds will blithely stuff food down the open throats of statues made to look like the birds' chicks. The finality the mother is accomplishing when she sacrifices herself for her young, therefore, is that of valuing something with certain sensible characteristics. Rational knowledge, on the other hand, is open to what things are in toto. While we never achieve complete knowledge

of what anything is, the basis of another person's evaluation of me is the other person's openness to what I am *in toto*. Specifically, the basis of our evaluations of other humans is our reflexive knowledge of ourselves as rational knowers and deciders and our awareness of other humans as having minds like our own. So in fulfilling the finality of my decision-making ability, I am valuing them as rationally conscious beings who direct themselves to their own ends. The sensible characteristics an animal values can be said to have intrinsic worth for the animal, since it is what these characteristics are that the animal values. But those characteristics do not include anything's having dispositions to direct itself to its own ends, since rational knowledge is required to recognize that. It is my status as a self-aware being rationally conscious of and self-directed toward my own ends that has (or *should* have) intrinsic worth for another human being.

That is the intrinsic worth that we like to consider to belong to us as persons. And that is the intrinsic worth that utilitarianism cannot accommodate. For if we recognize that intrinsic worth, we recognize a finality that provides a standard by which our decisions are rendered right or wrong, not because of their consequences, but because they are what they are.

1. The justification for the belief that the decisions of others are caused is the same as our justification for belief in other minds, since we are aware of ourselves as causes of our own decisions. I discuss belief in other minds in Section ??. The often proposed distinction between reasons and causes may or may not be relevant to some issues in the foundations of ethics. It is not relevant to any use I make of the belief that decisions are caused events.