

## 1. Introduction

This study concerns the nature of ethical obligation. I am asking what ethical obligation consists in, what constitutes the obligation to perform or refrain from performing an action. Another way to ask the question is what is it for an ethical decision to be good or evil, what constitutes the ethical goodness or evil of a decision. Or the question can be asked this way: what is moral obligation as an aspect of human behavior and experience?

I mean the question to be foundational, and this study belongs to the literature on the foundations of ethics more than to the literature on specific moral norms. Those who use, as I do, the distinction between speculative knowledge and practical knowledge would consider most of this study to be speculative knowledge. But the speculative knowledge sought here is knowledge about ethical practice, as the speculative knowledge sought in aesthetics is knowledge about the practice of art. Therefore, I discuss a variety of ethical questions, including some highly controversial ones, to show how they exemplify the nature of obligation and to show that my account of obligation differs from others in the practical decisions that it does and does not permit. "Speculative," in this sense, does not imply irrelevance to the difficulties we face in making decisions.

By the "foundations of ethics," I mean more than an analysis of ethical language or a phenomenological description of ethical experience. Although each of these methods is valuable in its own way, the conclusions I am arguing for go beyond them. Specifically, I intend to show that the obligation to perform or not perform an action, or the goodness or evil of the decision to perform or not perform an action, consists in an extramental state of affairs, a state of affairs describable and knowable on the basis of publicly available evidence, and a state of affairs made necessary by the natures of human beings and of the things our decisions relate us to. In other words, ethical obligation is objective, that is, is a factual, extramentally existing condition, is knowable, that is, is ascertainable by reason from evidence, and is unconditional, that is, is made nonhypothetically necessary by the natures of things.

For example, the obligation not to cheat in competition does not depend on the contingency that some individual or group has selected a particular goal it might not have selected, a goal by the standard of which cheating is wrong. The nature of the decision to cheat of and the things, especially human beings, affected by the decision unavoidably make cheating ethically wrong in all normal circumstances. And in all normal circumstances, we cannot avoid having sufficient knowledge of the relevant natures to recognize the evil of cheating. Where cheating could be justified because of abnormal circumstances, it is the knowable natures of the things involved in the circumstances that would justify the cheating.

The nature of most importance to obligation is the nature of the human ability to make decisions based on rational knowledge, that is, decisions that make use of at least some of of what we know by means of reason. As rational beings, we direct our actions toward ends we have some knowledge of; we make decisions that aim at ends of which we have some rational awareness. We may not be aware of the ultimate ends we are seeking, but we have some awareness of what the immediate ends of our chosen actions are. If we are fully conscious, we cannot avoid making decisions based on rational knowledge in this sense, since when conscious, we cannot avoid having some rational awareness of the ends and means to ends that confront our

decision-making ability. We can choose to put ourselves in a state where we do not use rational knowledge in making decisions; for example, we can choose to go under the influence of some drug. But to make that decision, we use our rational knowledge of what the drug does. (When I speak of making decisions based on rational knowledge, I am not distinguishing "what we know" from "what we believe." Both knowledge and belief are states of reason upon which we base decisions. I could describe the ability to make decisions based on reason as the ability to base decisions on what reason judges.)

Obligation consists in the fact that the acts of our ability to make rational decisions have a necessary goal, an end, whose achievement or failure of achievement unavoidably renders those acts successful or defective, good or bad, in the ethical sense. A traditional philosophical term for a relation to a goal is "finality." For an agent, a disposition to act, or an act to be directed to an end is to have a finality. Our ability to make decisions based on rational knowledge unavoidably imposes on its acts a finality by the standard of which those acts are correct or defective. I will describe this finality as the finality of valuing things according to what we know them to be by means of reason (where "know," again, has the broad sense of judge).

This finality is not a relation to one of the particular ends chosen by our decisions. Prior to our decisions, our decision-making ability has its own end, the end of producing acts whose end, as acts, is to value things according to what they are rationally known to be. (Of course, an ability and its acts may have a multiplicity of ends, but other ends are not pertinent at the moment.) That is what an "ability" is, a disposition toward acts of certain kinds. In postulating abilities, we are postulating whatever characteristic or set of characteristics allow us to perform acts of a certain nature. For example, our faculties of sight dispose us toward acts of sight. Because our ability to make decisions imposes a finality on our decisions, the standard of morality, that is, to decide according to reason, does not derive from our choice of particular ends.

A decision's fulfilling or failing to fulfill the finality of valuing things according to what we rationally know them to be is what we mean by moral goodness or evil in ordinary language. In other words, the person on the street's concept of moral right and wrong is correctness or defectiveness by the standard of this finality necessarily possessed by acts of our decision-making ability. But the explanation of obligation by means of this finality does more than save ordinary language and common sense. It solves the main philosophic problems concerning the objectivity, knowability, and unconditionality of moral obligation, especially the fact/value and is/ought problems, on the one hand, and the teleological/deontological problem, on the other.

Traditional names for our ability to make rational decisions are the "will" and the "rational appetite." I will use these terms for the sake of convenience. Outside of discussions of free choice, philosophers have paid little attention to the concept of will. If my arguments are correct, lack of attention to the will and the end its acts are naturally oriented to has prevented us from understanding ethical value for what it is. The finality of the rational appetite is both the heart of ethics and the most neglected aspect of ethical theory, neglected even by philosophers who, in other contexts, speak freely about the will and the rational appetite. The purpose of this study is to make up for that neglect.

### 1.1 Preliminary Qualifications

In a moment, I will explain what it means for acts of the will to have the finality of evaluating according to reason. First, it is necessary to dispose of some misconceptions that would vitiate the analysis from the start.

To use of the singular term "will" or the singular description "ability to make rational decisions," we do not need to be able to identify an individual faculty by means of which we make decisions. We only have to know that we are disposed to make rational decisions. In order to be so disposed we no doubt need to possess a set of features. Among those features, perhaps there is one whose addition to the others has the unique function of disposing us to make rational decisions; perhaps not. My use of the singular in referring to our being disposed to make rational decisions is not meant to answer that question. What is important is that the feature or set of features that so dispose us orient us to an end that determines the ethical value of our decisions. In other words, my account of obligation

presupposes some psychology, as well as some metaphysics, but only a minimal amount, that is, only a minimal amount of reasoning from the behavior of making decisions to the causal dispositions that explain this behavior.

The phrase "rational appetite" might cause the misconception that this is a Kantian analysis of obligation. Three considerations will show how far I am from Kant. First, as already mentioned, this account of obligation is teleological, since it is based on the will's relation to an end. Yet teleology in this sense is not opposed to, but rather explains and justifies, deontology. Because decisions are oriented to a certain end by their nature as acts of the will, they cannot avoid being either successful or defective by the standard of a finality belonging to them by their nature; they are good or bad by a standard belonging to what they are. Therefore, teleology does not imply that the standard of morality is something external to the act, nor does the fact that obligation is based on finality render obligation hypothetical. Again, the end in question is not an end chosen by an act of the will. It is an end the orientation to which is inscribed in every act of the will, including acts that select among particular ends. Further, as a consequence of the second consideration, that finality not only makes decisions good or bad by the standard of their own nature, but at the same time makes them good or bad by the standard of the natures of the things they deal with.

The second consideration concerns the concept of reason implied in the phrase "rational appetite." Our decision-making ability is a rational appetite because it is a disposition for making evaluations of things based on reason's knowledge of what they are. And unlike Kant, I hold that reason is able to know how things exist independently of our consciousness. Reason can know the natures of things, not easily or perfectly -- far from it, but sufficiently to justify my analysis of, as well as the everyday understanding of, obligation. (I have defended this account of rational knowledge elsewhere<sup>1</sup> and will discuss it here only to the extent needed for an understanding of obligation.)

One consequence reason's ability to know what things are is that analyzing obligation in terms of the rational appetite solves another traditional problem, whether morality is defined by the fulfillment of our own nature or by the respect due others because of what they are. Morality consists in our fulfillment and in the respect due others for the same reason: insofar as we are oriented to the end of the rational appetite, our fulfillment consists in valuing things according to what they are. For example, things that are equal in a particular respect "deserve" to be valued as equal in that respect because of what they are, where "deserve" means that valuing them unequally would be a failure to fulfill the finality of valuing things according to what they are known to be.

The third consideration concerns the unconditional character of obligation. Obligation is a case of natural necessity. The finality that constitutes the standard of morality necessarily belongs to our decisions because of the nature of the rational appetite and the nature of decisions as acts of the rational appetite, and particular obligations result from our knowledge of the natures of the things our decisions deal with. Contrary to Kantian necessity, necessity of this kind is neither transcendental nor known a priori. (I have discussed natural necessity and our knowledge of it elsewhere.<sup>2</sup>)

At the same time, the necessity with which obligations impose themselves is consistent with, and even requires, that decisions are free from causal determinism with respect to the particular ends we seek. I will argue that rational beings differ from nonrational in being able to pursue particular ends they give themselves, rather than ends given them by nature or by other sources beyond their control. Consequently, we are obligated to value other humans as beings in pursuit of ends they set for themselves, rather than our ends. In this sense, we are obligated to

treat other humans as ends-in-themselves, not as mere means to our ends. The Kantian appearance of this conclusion may be increased by the fact that the universality reason's objects is important to my argument for freedom of choice.

But the appearance is, again, misleading. Universality will not enter the argument for freedom as a form imposed by reason or the rational appetite. The ethical requirement that a decision be universally valid for anyone facing the same choice is something that must be accounted for. One of the strengths of my analysis of obligation is that it does account for this requirement, while most analyses of obligation take it for granted or at least fail to account for it. And unlike Kant's, my analysis accounts for it, not as the essential form of obligation, but as a consequence of the obligation to decide according to knowledge of what things are.

Another misconception can come from the use of the phrases "speculative knowledge" and "foundations of ethics" in connection with factual assertions about the nature of the will. The implication may appear to be that ethical judgments are deduced from truths about the nature of the will. No. I discuss the relation of the will to ethical knowledge later (Section ??), as well as discuss the relation of the foundations of ethics to ethics.<sup>3</sup> For now, suffice it to say that we can defend and explain ethical judgments by an analysis of our decision-making ability, but this philosophical analysis is after the fact, with respect to ethical judgments themselves. Similarly, the philosophies of logic, mathematics, and science study the foundations of these disciplines and how these disciplines derive conclusions from their foundations. Yet, philosophy does not usurp the role of these disciplines and claim to do the deriving itself. If it did, it would cease being the "philosophy of" another discipline and become that discipline.

Although we do not derive ethical judgments from truths about the will, I will argue that we derive them from other truths about what things are. Therefore, it will appear that my account of the foundations of ethics cannot avoid the fallacy of deriving "ought" from "is." Hume was entirely correct when he said that reason cannot dictate to passion. Value judgments presuppose orientations to ends. Rational knowledge cannot generate value judgments unless that knowledge bears on an end to which we are already oriented. But if our decision-making ability orients us to the end of valuing things according to reason's knowledge of what they are, the success or failure of our decisions (ought) are determined by truths about what exists (is).

A final misconception can come from the fact that brevity requires the use of phrases like "the will's finality" or "reason's knowledge." It is not reason that knows, but we who know by means of reason. It is not our decision-making ability that acts or is oriented to an end, but we who act through the dispositions that enable us to make decisions and who are oriented to an end insofar as we have the kind of decision-making ability we do. This goes for our other faculties as well, but it is particularly pertinent to the relation between reason and will. If the will were what made decisions and not we who make decisions by means of the will, we would face the following problem. Philosophers who distinguish reason and will do so because choosing on the basis of knowledge requires more than what is required for knowledge alone, since we can know without choosing. But if the will is something distinct from reason, how does the will become conscious of the alternatives it has to choose between? That reason presents the will with alternatives does not seem to be sufficient; if the will itself is not a faculty of knowledge, its choices are blind.

But it is neither reason nor the will that is conscious of alternatives. It is we who are conscious of alternatives by means of reason and who, once conscious of them, choose between them by means of the will. We introduce the terms, "reason," "will," and other terms for faculties into the language merely to express the fact that we have the ability to perform various kinds of

behavior. Such is the first stage of the minimal psychology this analysis of obligation will build on. As long as the purpose of these terms is understood, nothing is wrong with statements like "Reason knows that such and such is the case" or "The will makes this decision rather than that."

## 1.2. Method of Proceeding

I will begin by presenting my central ideas as nontechnically as possible in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 will argue that this analysis conforms to the everyday meaning of ethical terms and solves the main philosophical problems about the unconditionality and objectivity of ethical value. Chapter 4 will go more deeply into philosophical problems raised by my analysis.

In Chapter 2, I focus on only a small number of examples, to prevent details from distracting from the main argument. Chapter 5 will show how the analysis can be extended to a variety of other examples. Since this study concerns foundations, the purpose in Chapter 5 is not to cover all possible kinds of ethical decision but to cover cases diverse enough to make it reasonable to expect the analysis to apply to other cases as well. My goal is to show that expectation to be sufficiently reasonable to motivate the development of a complete ethic based on the foundations examined here.

Proceeding in this order will put the emphasis on positive presentation rather than criticism of other views. The reason for proceeding in this order is that the rational appetite approach to obligation has been so universally overlooked. As a result, it is more efficient to discuss conflicting views from the perspective of the already presented rational appetite analysis than to dwell on differences each step of the way. The differences are too fundamental, as well as being obvious in any case. I begin criticizing other views, especially utilitarianism and relativism, in the later sections of Chapter 3. And in Chapter 6, I criticize common philosophic assumptions that create a priori objections to the objectivity, unconditionality, and knowability of ethical obligation, in general, and the rational appetite analysis of obligation, in particular. Postponing that criticism until the rational appetite analysis has been defended has the advantage of allowing me to select the objections that are truly, as opposed to only apparently, germane.

This order of proceeding, however, has the apparent disadvantage of failing to situate the rational appetite analysis of obligation within philosophical tradition. The reason the disadvantage is only apparent is that this approach to obligation is unknown to existing philosophic traditions, as I have already said. Still, my ideas do have sources. For example, the idea of our decision-making ability as a rational appetite probably goes back to Aristotle's concept of choice as deliberate desire. And not only will my explanation of how decisions are based on rational knowledge agree with Aristotle, against Socrates, that we can act against knowledge, but the reason we can do so will be similar to Aristotle's.<sup>4</sup>

But while I believe my ethics develops some ideas that probably derive from Aristotle, this study defends no such historical claim; for neither Aristotle nor his followers have developed these ideas the way they are developed here. I also believe my conclusions are largely consistent with his, but where he is concerned with virtue, I am concerned with obligation, and where he is concerned with happiness, I am concerned with rectitude.

Therefore, the best way to express the relation of this study to existing philosophical traditions may be the following: two kinds of philosophers will find my analysis unfamiliar, Aristotelians and nonAristotelians. To remedy that situation, I discuss the more direct sources of my ideas in Chapter 7. That context will give me the chance to deal with some recent developments in ethics that are influenced by Aristotle at least in the same broad sense that this study is. Chapter 7 will also include a discussion of some important issues concerning the relation of ethical knowledge to knowledge of other kinds.

Another way to express the relation of this study to existing philosophic traditions is this:

if the author of this study were more clever than he is, he would have written a book entitled Thales's Lectures on Ethics. For this work comes from researches undertaken because of my belief that none of the existing ethical theories even comes close to conforming to our prephilosophic knowledge of what ethical obligation is. Existing theories do not begin to tell us, for example, why unfairness is wrong, what the evil of unfairness consists of. Something is missing from the entire philosophic tradition, and what is missing is fundamental, so fundamental that we need a fresh start. The discussion of existing views is best done after that start has been made.

## 2. The Rational Appetite

This chapter will present my main conclusions as nontechnically as possible. Subsequent chapters provide the philosophical analysis necessary to justify the rational appetite approach to obligation.

I want to consider the behavior of praising decisions for being ethically correct or blaming them for being ethically wrong. To simplify, consider the behavior of criticizing decisions as ethically wrong. Since ethical goodness is the expected norm, we easily take it for granted, when it occurs, and thus can easily overlook what the ethical goodness of a decision consists of. On the other hand, we criticize bad decisions because what constitutes ethical goodness is missing from them. What we had been taking for granted can no longer be taken for granted. Therefore, looking for whatever it is that provokes ethical criticism will help us focus on what constitutes ethical goodness. To simplify further, let us think of cases where we criticize the decisions of other persons. The analysis applies to our own decisions, of course, but it is easier to find the speck in the other person's eye than the sequoia in our own.

### 2.1. Decision Compared to Belief

We can gain some insight into obligation by comparing an ethically wrong decision with another kind of conscious event, a false belief. By hypothesis, such a belief is defective, incorrect, lacking in the kind of achievement appropriate to a belief. Understanding why a false belief is defective will aid in understanding the kind of defect that makes decisions ethically bad.

The defectiveness of a false belief consists in the fact that a certain goal, truth about what exists, has not been achieved. But why should the absence of that goal make a belief defective; aren't there many other goals by which to judge mental states and events? For example, the ethically significant falsehood that men and women do not share a common human nature could be just what we need in a science fiction story, as as part of an enjoyable daydream or joke, or as a means of making someone angry.

It is the intrinsic nature of belief that makes a false belief defective and a true belief good. When we say that a false belief is defective, we are not first discovering a species of mental event, giving it the name "belief," and only then analyzing the nature of the event to see if it has a goal in terms of which we can measure it as good or defective. Instead, we first recognize the existence of mental events with the characteristic of claiming that a certain goal, truth about what exists, has been achieved; we then name events thus related to the goal of truth, as opposed to other mental events not so related to this goal, "belief." Since a belief is thus related to a goal, belief by its very existence asks for, calls for, evaluation in terms of this goal.

Belief calls for evaluation in terms of this goal because belief is itself an evaluation of a statement as having achieved the goal of truth. We can evaluate statements by reference to goals other than truth. Such evaluations do not constitute what we happen to call beliefs, although they may have beliefs associated with them; for we can evaluate as true a statement that some other statement achieves a goal other than truth. For example, we may be looking for a statement that illustrates a logical fallacy; when we believe we have found a suitable statement, we believe it

true that this statement achieves the goal of illustrating the fallacy. But if the statement does not illustrate the fallacy, the belief that it does illustrate the fallacy is a defective belief. The belief is defective by the standard of a goal that belief cannot avoid being related to; for that is what a belief is, an evaluation of a statement as having achieved the goal of truth. A statement may or may not have been formed for the purpose of achieving truth, but belief evaluates the statement by reference to this goal. And if the belief does so incorrectly, the belief is defective by its own standard.

For the purposes of our comparison with ethical decision, we do not have to give a complete philosophical analysis of truth. But one feature of what goes on when we believe something is true of what exists has to be pointed out. Belief claims to relate us to things as they exist independently of our acts of belief. The goal in terms of which beliefs ask to be measured is that of informing us what things are in themselves.

The first point of comparison between beliefs and decisions is that, like beliefs, decisions are evaluations; they evaluate things. Decisions are evaluations because they put values on things; they give things different places in our system of values. By decisions, we make some things values for us as ends or as means to ends, refrain from making other things values for us, and make other things negative values as obstacles to be avoided, counter-means to our ends. We make decisions because we are forced to pick and choose between incompatible alternatives. In doing so, we are evaluating because we are putting higher values on some things, those we choose as ends or as means to our ends, than on others, those we do not so choose.

The "things" that decisions evaluate are actions, states of affairs, and entities. A decision may concern an action to be taken or refrained from. For example, in deciding whether to spend the next hour shopping or watching television, I am evaluating these activities as means to my ends. But we cannot say that actions are the only things decisions place values on. Actions are undertaken to bring about states of affairs, states of affairs we decide to bring into existence. In deciding to bring about state of affairs A rather than B, we place value on A that we decline to place on B. The states of affairs we decide to bring into existence involve entities other than ourselves, entities with their own goals. Because their goals come into conflict with one another and with ours, decisions cannot avoid giving these entities and their interests higher or lower places in our system of values, especially places higher or lower in relation to ourselves and to our own interests. Evaluation in this latter sense, the evaluation of entities and their interests, will turn out to be the nub of the ethical problem.

The second point of comparison between beliefs and decisions is that, like the evaluations that occur in beliefs, the evaluations that occur in decisions have the goal of relating us to things as they really exist. Specifically, I will argue that as beliefs hold that things exist the way they are expressed in statements, decisions evaluate things as if they exist, at least potentially, in certain ways; decisions evaluate things to be certain kinds of things. The will is the ability to make decisions based on rational knowledge. Acts of the will direct us to ends in response to the rational apprehension of those ends just as sensory desires respond to objects of sensory knowledge. But the object of reason is what things are in their extramental existence. Even when it is mistaken, reason represents things as if existing, actually or potentially, in certain ways. Therefore, in responding to ends presented by reason, acts of the will are responding to objects represented as certain kinds of existents.

In a moment, I will illustrate what it means for decisions to evaluate things as if they existed in certain ways. But first, I can now state what it means for decisions based on rational knowledge to have the goal of evaluating things according to rational knowledge. To evaluate things according to rational knowledge is to evaluate things to be what they are rationally known



-- or at least believed -- to be. For evaluations of things as if they were certain kinds of existents are defective when things they are not existents of those kinds. And evaluations of things as if they existed other than they are known -- or believed, even mistakenly -- to exist are ethically defective. Just as the belief that things exist otherwise than they do is defective by the standard of belief's own finality, a decision evaluating something as if it existed otherwise than it is known to exist is defective as an act of our ability to make decisions based on rational knowledge. When what things are in our beliefs is not the same as what they are in existence, there is falsehood. When what things are in our evaluations is not the same as what they are believed to be in existence, there is moral evil. A decision can no more avoid being defective if it fails of this goal than a false belief can avoid being defective. Both defects are measured by a standard inscribed in the nature of their acts.

Note that a decision can evaluate things as if they were other than they are because the decision is based on a false belief. But I am arguing that decisions can also evaluate things as if things were other than we believe them to be. The latter is the the kind of evaluation that is ethically defective, and that evaluation, is, by hypothesis, distinct from belief.

## 2.2. The Existential Character of the Will

What does it mean for decisions to evaluate things as if they existed in certain ways. To answer that question, it will help to first consider why some philosophers have found it appropriate to call our decision-making ability a rational "appetite." Appetites are dispositions whose acts are desires for ends of certain kinds and for other things as means to those ends. Appetites are not "occult" entites, except in the root sense of what is not directly observable. In postulating appetites, we are simply recognizing that desires, which are observable, are effects of preexisting causes. (Of course, it is we who are the causes of our acts, but we do so through features of our makeup that dispose us to those acts.) I will argue that the following comparison between our decision-making ability and appetites would be useful even if it were not correct to call our decision-making ability an appetite.

Assume that we have a desire for end X. If so, it is not only the desire that is oriented to X as to an end but also the appetite whose act is the desire for X. An appetite is not oriented to just any acts but to acts of a certain kind, in this case, acts of desire for X; for that is what an appetite is, a disposition for acts of a certain kind. Therefore the appetite is ultimately oriented to X, not just to acts desiring X. (That is why we justifiably attribute to appetites the acts by which we experience satisfaction in the possession of an end. The reason why we experience satisfaction when X comes about is a preexisting orientation to the existence of X. Such an orientation is what we postulate when we postulate appetites. The same disposition that is the reason why have a desire for X to begin with is the reason we experience satisfaction when X comes about. Postulating two such orientations, one, the appetite, to cause our desire for X, and the other to cause our satisfaction in X, would be more than a violation of simplicity. It would also require us to explain why an orientation that causes a conscious desire for X, when X does not exist, does not cause a conscious experience of satisfaction of desire when X exists.)

Since a desire for end X springs from a disposition oriented to X, a desire for X constitutes an evaluation of X as being a certain kind of thing, namely, the kind of thing to which the appetite producing the desire is oriented. Assume an animal is disposed to desire sweet tastes. We put the animal in the presence of molasses and honey. From past experiences, the sight and smell of each of these causes an image of a sweet taste to arise in the animal. If the taste associated with the honey appears sweeter than that associated with the molasses, the animal will desire the taste of honey more than the taste of molasses. That desire constitutes an evaluation of the honey's taste as being more of the kind of thing the animal's appetite is, at least t

the moment, oriented to as an end. The greater desire for the honey's taste than for the molasses's evaluates the honey's taste as having, or being, more of the X the appetite causing the desire is oriented to.

Notice that the animal is evaluating the honey as a better means to its end than the molasses, but she is not just evaluating the honey. She is first evaluating the taste presented by an image associated with the honey, evaluating that taste to embody an end her appetite is oriented to. So her evaluation is not confined to her "belief" that the honey is a better means to her end than the molasses. Instead, that belief is based on a greater desire for a taste presented by one image than for another. That greater desire amounts to an evaluation of one taste to be more of the what the appetite causing the desire has as its end.

Another way to put it: appetites are existential. An appetite is an orientation to either desire the existence of an end not yet attained or experience satisfaction in the existence of an end attained. And a desire is a response to a cognized object, a response that aims at bringing something into existence so that it will exist the way it has been consciously represented to exist. (We have desires that are not responses to the cognition of an object; often it is hunger that makes us think of food, rather than the thought of food that makes us hungry. Here, I am only discussing appetites that respond to cognized objects. We can call them cognitive or conscious appetites.) Hence desires relate to desiderata as potentially existing in specific ways. Desires aim at the coming into existence of specific potential modes of existence and hence value those potential modes of existence for what will exist when those modes of existence are no longer merely potentially. But a desire thus values a potential mode of existence because the appetite causing the desire is oriented to that mode of existence. So a desire values a potential mode of existence for being the kind of existent an appetite is oriented to.

Our ability to make rational decisions is called an appetite because, like other appetites, it is a disposition whose acts orient us toward ends to be achieved and toward means to those ends. And like the evaluations produced by other appetites, the decisions produced by our decision-making ability evaluate things to be certain kinds of things, to exist in certain ways. For like those sensory appetites that respond to objects of sense knowledge, the rational appetite is a power of responding to objects of rational knowledge. But unlike sensory cognitions which make us aware of ways our sense faculties are acted on by the environment, rational cognitions make us aware of what the things in the environment are. Hence while sensory desires evaluate sensory experiences to be the kind of thing a sensory appetite is oriented to, decisions based on reason evaluate extramental existents to be entities of certain kinds.

But my claim that decisions evaluate things to be certain kinds of things does not depend on the comparison with appetite. If you do not like calling our ability to make decisions an appetite, or do not like comparing decisions to desires, or do not like describing desires as evaluating things to be the kind of thing the appetite producing the desire is oriented to, we must still describe decisions as evaluating things to exist in certain ways. The will responds to objects presented by rational knowledge, giving them places as ends or means to ends in our system of values. The objects of rational knowledge are what things are in extramental existence. Hence the will's responses give things places in our values based on reason's representation of them as actual or possible ways of existing. But we would not be capable of basing our pursuit of goals on our rational knowledge of what things are, if the will's responses did not evaluate things as if they exist, actually or potentially, in certain ways. To pursue a goal consciously is precisely to aim at making something conceived exist the way we have conceived it to exist. And our conception of future goals is always founded on our consciousness of what things that already exist are. Furthermore, our satisfaction in an accomplished goal is a response to our awareness

of what exists when that goal exists. Since pursuing goals based on rational knowledge is deciding for things as if they were of certain kinds, if we can describe desires as evaluating things to be of certain kinds -- and I believe we should so describe them, a fortiori we must say the same thing of decisions. In other words, that evaluations treat things as existing in certain ways is true for desires as well as for decisions, but it is especially true for decisions and would be true of decisions even if it were not true of desires.

For the purposes of the foundations of ethics, this point about decisions can be made even more unassailable. My claim is that unethical decisions are defective because they evaluate things as if they were not what they are. In the strictest sense, however, I need not claim that decisions (or desires for that matter) evaluate things to be this or that. All I need to say is that decisions relate us to things as if they were this or that. If a decision relates us to something as if it really were X and the thing is not X, the decision is defective to that extent. We can relate to things as if they were not what they are without defect, since there are other goals for conscious states and acts than relating to what things really are.<sup>5</sup> For example, we can imagine something to be other than it is without believing it to be other than it is. Imagination can be said to relate us to things "as if they were of certain kinds," but the "as if they were of certain kinds" is not meant to imply that imagination has the finality of relating us to things as if they really exist the way they are imagined. Beliefs and decisions, on the other hand, do have the finality of relating us to things as if they really exist in certain ways. I believe my arguments show that decisions evaluate things as if they really were this or that, but I also believe these arguments show at least that decisions relate us to things as if they really were this or that; and that is all that has to be shown. I will continue to call our decision-making ability an appetite and to describe our decisions as evaluating things, but in the last analysis, my case does not depend on either way of speaking.<sup>6</sup>

### 2.3. An Example

Now let us see concretely what it means for decisions to evaluate things to be of certain kinds by considering an example of a decision we would ordinarily judge to be ethically defective. Assume two people are competing on an examination to determine which of them gets a job, and one of them cheats. Assume, further, that their reasons for wanting the job are not such as to make it more important -- important by our ordinary standards -- for one of them to get it. For instance, neither of them has a special need the job might fulfill, a need like providing for a sick child who would not get the proper care otherwise. Hence, there is no abnormal circumstance that might tempt us to think that cheating would be justified in this situation.

What is it that we think is wrong about cheating in this situation? One common way of expressing what is wrong would be this. The person who cheats is not treating the other person's interests equally to her own, since she is not giving him an equal opportunity to attain the goal they are both seeking. Notice that in the example there is no possibility of their sharing equally in the end pursued. By hypothesis, only one of them can get the job. In this case at least, treating their interests equally cannot mean desiring that they be equal with respect to the achievement of their immediate goals. However, they are able to have equal opportunities to pursue their goals, and in deciding to cheat, she is treating his interests as unequal to hers by depriving him of equal opportunity to pursue his goals.<sup>7</sup>

But what is it that we think is wrong about her treating his interests as if they were not equal to hers? The assumption made above is that their needs are equal, but that is not a sufficient answer to the question. Both my child and my African violet may be in danger of death if they do not get fed, but I would not consider the interests of my African violet equal to those of my child. Neither the need for food nor the desire to get a job exist in abstraction; they

exist as characteristics of concrete entities. And I do not consider the interests of the plant to be equal to those of my child because I do not give the concrete entity that the plant is a place in my system of values equal to that of my child. In putting the interests of my child ahead of those of the plant in my system of values, I am putting the concrete entity that my child is ahead of the plant.

To see why consider the following statements: to value is to value what something is (some action, state of affairs, or entity); to evaluate is to evaluate what something is; to evaluate is to give what something is a place our values. Although these statements may appear trivially true, they have the following nontrivial consequence. If your orientation to an end with characteristic X causes you to desire two things equally, you are evaluating those things as being equal with respect to having characteristic X. Faculties of desire and the faculty of making decisions are oriented to acts that evaluate modes of being. And to give modes of being relative places in our values is to evaluate those modes of being as if they had those relative places in reality, since relations of evaluation terminate in what things are. Decisions and desires evaluate things to exist in certain ways. Hence, if you put a value on what someone else is equal to the value you put on what you are, you evaluate what she is to be equal to what you are.

In the example of cheating, the "what something is" that cheater is putting a value on is not just her desire for the job as opposed to his. In defense against a charge of unfairness, we would not accept the plea, "I wasn't treating him unequally; I was just treating his desires unequally." When she puts her pursuit of goals ahead of his, she cannot avoid putting herself ahead of him. For in depriving him of an equal opportunity to pursue his goals, her decision cannot deal with his desire for a goal as something abstracted from the person to whom the decision belongs. Desires and the pursuit of desires have existence only as features of concrete entities, and reason is aware of that fact. A disposition oriented to valuing things according to reason's knowledge necessarily has the finality of dealing with another person's pursuit of his goals as a feature of that person. Consequently, the rational appetite cannot avoid giving concrete persons unequal places in our evaluations when it treats their interests unequally. When someone treats your interests unequally, she is treating you unfairly. And to consciously treat another person unfairly amounts to giving the other person an unequal place in one's values.

Likewise, when someone puts her interests ahead of someone else's, she is not evaluating her orientations to ends as abstract entities but as a modalities of her being, for she is aware of those orientations as something emanating from her and aware of her existence as the being to whom those orientations belong.\* Therefore, she cannot avoid evaluating herself, as source and subject of those orientations, more highly than she evaluates him. She cannot avoid putting herself -- not just her orientations to ends -- ahead of him -- not just ahead of his orientations to ends -- in her evaluations. She consciously puts the source and subject of her orientations to ends ahead of him, as if their beings were not equal with respect to that which it is the nature of rational appetite to value, what things are as known by reason.

If the cheater had treated the interests of the other person in pursuing the job as equal to her own, she would have treated him as in some sense equal to her. Here "treating" the other person equally means evaluating what he is as in some sense equal to what she is. She would put a value on what he is equal to the value she puts on what she is; therefore, in her evaluations, he would be something equal to what she is. On the other hand, to deny him equal opportunity to pursue goals is to put a lower value on his pursuit of goals than on hers. But to put a lower value on his pursuit of goals is to put a lower value on him. And to put a lower value on him is to evaluate what he is as if it were less than what she is. If the value she puts on what he is is not equal to the value she puts on what she is, she is evaluating what he is to be unequal to what she

is. And if the value she puts on what he is is not equal to the value she puts on what she is, she treats him as if he were not equal to her with respect to that which it is the nature of the will to value, what things are as known by reason.

But if what she is and what he is are equal, it is defective to evaluate them as if they were unequal. To put a value on what he is unequal to the value she puts on what she is amounts to evaluating what he is to be unequal to what she is. And just as it is defective to believe equals to be unequal, it is defective to evaluate them to be unequal. Again, if we are oriented to desire X and two things are equal as being X, unless we desire them equally as being X, our desire for at least one of them is defective by the standard of our orientation to desire X. In the case of the rational appetite, the X to which we are oriented is what things are as known by reason, and to evaluate equals unequally is to evaluate at least one of them to be other than what it is.

#### 2.4. Equality in What Respect?

But human beings are unequal in an indefinite number of respects. In what respect are we equal such that a decision like a decision to cheat on an examination misevaluates human beings to be unequal in that respect? In fact, is it really true that to treat people unequally is to evaluate them as if they were otherwise than they are? When we evaluate unequals to be unequal, are we not evaluating them according to what they are? For example, if you are hiring a piano player, your decision would be defective if you did not choose Vladimir Horowitz over, say, the author of this study. The defectiveness of the choice would be determined by your goal of hearing pleasing music and by what the things being evaluated are. That is, the choice would be defective because it would incorrectly evaluate something to be more of the kind of thing desired; it would evaluate me to be someone with more ability to play the piano than Horowitz.

The incorrectness in question is strictly hypothetical. If you want pleasing music, Horowitz is your person; but there is nothing intrinsically wrong with choosing a musical clod over a Horowitz. It all depends on what you want; for instance, you might want ugly music. Let us assume, however, that you want pleasing music; you hold a competition for the job, and I win by drugging Horowitz. Now the issue is not our equality or inequality as musicians but our equal opportunity to pursue goals chosen by acts of our decision-making ability. That means the issue is our equality with respect to being pursuers of goals chosen on the basis of rational knowledge. And unlike the end of pleasing music, the act of choosing on the basis of rational knowledge is an end our decision-making ability cannot avoid being oriented to. Hence, our being choosers of goals on the basis of rational knowledge is a respect in which the decision to cheat cannot avoid misevaluating us to be unequal. For my decision to cheat occurred only because our pursuit of goals chosen on the basis of rational knowledge came into conflict, and the issue of my treating him unequally arose only because of our rationally based decisions to pursue the same unshareable goal.

If pleasing music is the end to which you are oriented, it is defective to evaluate Horowitz and myself to be equal with respect to your end.<sup>8</sup> But if you are oriented to the end of decisions evaluating things as being pursuers of goals based on rational knowledge, it is defective to evaluate Horowitz and myself to be unequal with respect to your end. You can correctly judge my decision bad by the standard of its denying another person an equal opportunity to pursue his rationally chosen goal. Since I am not valuing his interests equally to own, my decision does not achieve the end of giving him 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 a person in pursuit of his own rationally chosen goals, goals whose choice was based on rational knowledge.

In situations where our decisions to pursue goals come into conflict, we cannot avoid the conscious choice of so acting that we treat the other person fairly or treat her unfairly; we have to

choose whether to give her an opportunity to pursue her goals that is at least equal to ours.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, we cannot avoid consciously treating her equally or unequally as being a pursuer of ends whose choice was based on rational knowledge; for we cannot avoid knowingly treating her equally or unequally with respect to being in pursuit of chosen ends, and our decision-making ability -- as a matter of fact and as a matter beyond the control of our choice -- orients us to pursue ends on the basis of rational knowledge. The end of decisions based on rational knowledge is, for the rational appetite, unlike the end of hearing pleasing music. Our decision-making ability cannot avoid being oriented to the end of making decisions based on rational knowledge. And since our decisions based on rational knowledge come in conflict, we cannot avoid the issue of evaluating each other equally or unequally in this respect. To put it one more way, the decision to treat another person fairly or unfairly is itself a decision based on rational knowledge, since it is made in awareness of such things as our increased likelihood of getting a job if we cheat. And since the decision cannot avoid evaluating the other person to be equal or unequal to us as someone in pursuit of chosen goals, the decision cannot avoid evaluating her to be equal or one equal to us as being a maker of the same kind of decisions in pursuit of goals as the decision whether to cheat, a decision based on rational knowledge.

But if we evaluate others unequally to ourselves as beings who pursue goals based on rational knowledge, we are not evaluating them according to what they are rationally known to be. As already noted, "based on" does not mean the same thing as "according to" in the thesis that the will have the finality of valuing things according to reason's knowledge. To make decisions based on reason's knowledge is simply to use at least some rational knowledge in directing our action. The significance of the distinction is this. What constitutes a failure to evaluate someone else according to what we rationally know her to be is not that we evaluate her unequally as someone with the finality of making decisions according to what she knows rationally. That circularity is avoided because what constitutes a failure to evaluate her according to what we rationally know her to be is that we evaluate her unequally as someone with the ability to make decisions based on rational knowledge.

Again, since our decisions based on rational knowledge come in conflict, we cannot avoid the issue of giving our pursuit of rationally chosen goals equal or unequal places in our values. And since our decisions cannot put a value on another's pursuit of goals in abstraction from putting a value on her, we cannot avoid evaluating her to be equal or unequal to ourselves as a being oriented to making decisions based on rational knowledge. We must evaluate what she is to be equal or unequal to what we are in this respect. Therefore, we cannot avoid either succeeding or failing to evaluate her according to what she is as known by reason; we cannot avoid evaluating her as if she is or as if she is not what we rationally know her to be. If we give her pursuit of goals a place unequal to ours in our system of values, we make what she is in our evaluations different from what she is in reality; for giving our pursuit of goals a higher place in our values is the same as giving oneself a higher place as someone in pursuit of goals. And if we evaluate her not to be equal to ourselves as a being who pursues goals based on rational knowledge, we are not evaluating her according to what she is as known by reason.

But is it the case that we are equal in being pursuers of goals based on rational knowledge? For example, our powers of rational knowledge are not equal, and so our rational awareness of what things are, the awareness on which our decisions are based, is not equal. To answer this question, we need a more specific understanding of the meanings of "equality" and "reason" as they pertain to obligation.

Here and throughout this discussion, "equality" does not have a mathematical meaning. "Equality" means that a description like "has an ability to make decisions based on rational

knowledge" is accurate of each, or that the assertion of such a description is true of each. (Mathematical equality is a species of equality in this sense.) "True of each" is the sense of equality germane to reason and the rational appetite because decisions are based on beliefs, and awareness of truth is the goal of belief. We can also express equality in this sense as sameness or unity with respect to a predicate. If predicate F is an accurate description of individual a and of individual b, a and b are the same insofar as they are Fs.

Humans are equal to the extent that we have an ability to make decisions based on rational knowledge (cases of humans with no such ability will be considered in Section ??). Let "reason" mean the capacity for knowing not-directly-sensible characteristics of things, characteristics that have a causal relation to the sensible characteristics of things.<sup>10</sup> For example, we know (in the strong sense) that the only reasonable belief is that other humans have conscious states like our own; they are "other minds." As such, they are also capable of being aware of not-directly-sensible causal facts -- like the fact that others are capable of being aware of not-directly-sensible causal facts.

But at most, this makes humans equal to the extent of having some rational knowledge. Our powers of rational knowledge are not equal. Why is reason's awareness of our equality in the sense of having some rational knowledge, rather than its awareness of our inequality in the amount of that knowledge, what determines whether a decision is or is not in accord with what I know by means of reason?

Obligation derives from the fact that our decision-making ability has certain finalities of necessity. But what is at issue in the finality of our decision-making ability to make decisions based on or according to reason is the use of our rational knowledge, as perfect or imperfect as it may be, in making decisions, not the degree of the rational knowledge we have. To see why, consider another example. Someone kills another person and then kills herself. Can it be said that she treated her victim equally, since she did not do anything to the victim that she did not do to herself? No, although the murderer is pursuing her own chosen end, she is not allowing the victim to pursue his end.

In making decisions directing ourselves toward specific ends, we use rational knowledge, and it maybe that the victim's powers of rational knowledge are less than the murderer's. But obligation derives from our ability to make decisions based on rational knowledge, not from our ability to know rationally. Those abilities are not the same, since we can know without deciding. And the will's finalities of making decisions based on and according to rational knowledge remain what they are whatever the degree of our knowledge. If anything, a superior degree of rational knowledge would give a person more ethical responsibility for evaluating a less intelligent person to be equal as a rational pursuer of goals. For example, someone from a culture that has not reached the knowledge that people of all races are human beings does not deserve the same criticism for unfair behavior as a person from a culture that has achieved this knowledge.

But neither the more learned nor less learned person is more obligated to evaluate things according to the rational knowledge she has; that finality of their rational appetites remains the same in both cases. This is the reason we do not hold people morally responsible when, through no prior responsibility of their own, they lack the rational knowledge to make a correct decision or are not in a condition to make use of their knowledge in making decisions. But when they do base their decisions on rational knowledge, we criticize them morally if those decisions do not evaluate other people according to what reason knows of their equality with us as rational decision makers.

Likewise, we do not apply moral standards to organisms incapable of the knowing the

not-directly-sensible equality of other members of their own species. We each have an ability to make decisions for 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 decisions and are equal to that extent. But dogs cannot judge the truth of their equality in this respect. Since they do not have the ability to base decisions on that knowledge, their decision-making ability does not have the finality of deciding according to that knowledge. If it did, the dogs would be obligated to treat each others as equals, because their decisions to the contrary would be defective by the standard of a finality acts of their decision-making ability could not avoid having. 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.

### 2.5. How We Fail to Evaluate According to Reason

Replying to an objection will help us better understand why the fact that each of us has an ability to make decisions based on rational knowledge renders unfair decisions defective, despite the innumerable facts about characteristics we do not share. I claim the will has the finalities both of making decisions based on reason's knowledge and of making decisions evaluating things according to reason's knowledge. Yet, I also claim that achieving the goal of decisions based on reason's knowledge is something we cannot fail to do, when our faculties are fully functioning, while achieving the goal of valuing things according to what we know them to be is something we can fail to do. How can we fail of the latter goal if we cannot fail of the former?

To base our decisions on rational knowledge is to use rational knowledge in directing ourselves toward ends, something we cannot avoid doing if all our faculties are functioning. But we do not and cannot use all of our knowledge in making a particular decision. For example, in deciding whether to have some ice cream, I can use my knowledge of the calories and cholesterol ice cream contains to direct myself toward the end of health; or I can use my knowledge of the past enjoyment ice cream has given me to direct myself toward the end of pleasure. Thus, in any decision, we use some things that we know and ignore other things. To ignore something is not to forget it; we can still be conscious of it. But we are not conscious of in the sense of its being the object of consciousness we are using to direct ourselves toward an end. One way of being conscious of a truth or truths is to have it in mind as that by which we rationally direct our behavior toward an end. We can ignore something in that way while remaining conscious of it in other ways.

By itself, failure to use some piece of rational knowledge is not a defect, moral or otherwise, since in any decision, we know indefinitely many things that are not pertinent to the decision, pertinent by the standard of the finality or finalities involved in the decision. When information about what something is is not pertinent to the finalities involved in the decision, we can ignore that information without evaluating something to be other than we known it to be. When we do evaluate something as if it were not what it is known to be, we fail to achieve the finality of valuing things according to our rational knowledge, but we still achieve the finality of basing the decision on some of our rational knowledge. The failure to evaluate according to reason results from ignoring some knowledge that we need to use, if we are to evaluate something to be what it is. But failure to use some of our knowledge is not failure to use all of it. As long as our decision uses some other part of our rational knowledge, the finality of making decisions based on rational knowledge is achieved.

For instance, in our example of cheating, the cheater's pursuit of ends chosen on the basis of rational knowledge is in conflict with the victim's. In that situation, knowledge of what the victim is as a person who makes decisions based on rational knowledge must be pertinent to the



decision to cheat, pertinent by the standard of the will's finality of evaluating according to reason's knowledge, because the decision she is making cannot avoid evaluating him to be equal or unequal to herself as a pursuer of goals, and that decision is one based on rational knowledge. Therefore, the decision cannot avoid evaluating him to be equal or unequal to her as a pursuer of goals chosen on the basis of rational knowledge. That is, the decision cannot avoid evaluating him to be equal or unequal with respect to being a person who makes the same kind of decisions as the decision whether to cheat, namely, a decision using rational knowledge. Hence, in deciding whether to cheat, failing to use knowledge of that equality as the knowledge by which she directs herself toward her end necessarily results in a misevaluation of him. A decision that ignores that knowledge will give his rational pursuit of goals a place in her values other than the place she gives her own pursuit of goals; and that amounts to giving him a place other than the place she gives herself, as someone who pursues goals by decisions based on rational knowledge. This misevaluation is a defect by the standard of a finality the decision cannot avoid having, the finality of valuing him according to what she rationally knows him to be.

#### 2.6. Persons as Ends-in-Themselves

There is an even more precise way stating why our being rational pursuers of goals is the respect in which fair and unfair decisions succeed or fail, respectively, to evaluate us according to reason's knowledge of what we are. Describing obligation in terms of our equality as rational pursuers of goals is correct, but it is not sufficient to answer some important questions about obligation. To do that, we need a more specific understanding of that with respect to which we are equal. As so far argued, there is nothing about beings capable of rational choice that obligates the will other than their equality with respect to the area where conflicts arise, the making of rational choices. There is nothing in the nature of rational choice or beings capable of it that obligates apart from the fact of equality; there is nothing that obligates a rational appetite just by being what it is.

On the contrary, Chapter 4 will argue that there is a feature of the rational decisions of others that obligates the rational appetite by being what it is: freedom. In order to give a more complete picture of obligation, I will summarize the conclusions of that argument now.

Decisions based on rational knowledge are free from causal determination, not free from causality, but free from causal necessitation. As freely chosen, our ends are ends we give ourselves. Nonfree beings, on the other hand, have ends given them by the causes that brought them into existence. When our evaluations treat free beings as mere means to our ends, what they are in our evaluations is not what they are in reality. In reality, they are oriented to ends they set for themselves; in our evaluations they are oriented to ends we set for them. When our evaluations treat nonfree beings as means to our ends, however, what they are in our evaluations is what they are in reality, namely, beings oriented to ends they do not set for themselves. To value something is to give it the status, in our desires, of an end, a means to an end, or, in the case of negative values, an obstacle to an end. When we will another person's equal opportunity in the pursuit of her ends, we are making her equal opportunity one of our ends. But we cannot place a value on her pursuit of ends in abstraction from placing a value on her. The way I evaluate her relation to ends is the way I evaluate her. Therefore, in willing her equal opportunity I am treating her as an end, whereas, when I will that she not have equal opportunity, I am treating her as an obstacle, a counter-means, to my ends.

From this point of view, we can express our obligation toward others as the obligation to treat them as ends-in-themselves and never to evaluate them as mere means or obstacles to other ends. Our obligation is to value something according to our knowledge of what it is, and to value something according to our knowledge of what it is to give it the status, in our evaluations, of

an end or means to end an end, according to our knowledge of what it is. If we fail to value another person as someone whose ends are to have the same opportunity of accomplishment that our ends have, what she is in our evaluations is a being oriented to the accomplishment of ends we set, not a being oriented to the accomplishment of ends she sets. Hence, we have not given what she is the place in our evaluations that would fulfill the rational appetite's finality of valuing things according to reason's knowledge of what they are.

The freedom of decisions based on rational knowledge answers a fundamental objection against the rational appetite account of obligation. The rational appetite's finality of valuing things according to reason's knowledge of what they are does not seem capable, by itself, of distinguishing good decisions from bad. Since anything whatsoever can be an object of reason's knowledge, how could a goal thus described provide a content for decisions? The hierarchical nature of decisions offers one way of answering this question. By the fact of having to choose between alternatives, in each decision we value some things more highly than others. Therefore, the obligation to evaluate according to what things are would require a hierarchical evaluation of things. If there is such a thing as a scale of being, the rational appetite would be obligated to place a higher evaluation on beings higher on the scale.

The notion of a hierarchy of being has a place in the discussion of obligation, and it will occasionally be touched on, at least implicitly, in this study. But my case does not depend on a metaphysical doctrine of a scale of being. For example, I will not conclude that we are obligated to love our dog or cat more than we love our garden. Without some qualifications -- and where would the qualifications come from, a straightforward hierarchical account of obligation would be far from satisfactory.

Decisions, and desires in general, do evaluate things hierarchically, but the hierarchy is always in a circumscribed respect, namely, in respect to the finality of the disposition of which a decision or desire is an act. (That finality supplies the needed qualification on the hierarchy.) The apparent absence of a link between the will's finality and any particular aspect of things arises for this reason: merely stating that the will's finality is to evaluate according to reason's knowledge does not sufficiently tie our equality as rational pursuers of goals to the nature of that causally prior finality which is to make decisions based on rational knowledge. To be oriented to decisions based on rational knowledge is to be oriented to the free evaluation of things as ends and means. So the will must evaluate things hierarchically according to what they are with respect to the finality of being free determiners of their own ends. That is, it must value persons as ends and nonpersons, beings without free choice, as means.

Another way to put it. The finality whose fulfillment constitutes obligation is the finality of evaluating things according to our rational knowledge of what they are. But knowledge of what they are in what respect? In respect to being pursuers of goals based on rational knowledge; for we cannot avoid evaluating them to be equal or unequal to us as rational pursuers of goals, and so cannot avoid evaluating them to be or not be what they are. But the reason we cannot avoid evaluating others to be equal or unequal to us as rational pursuers of goals is not simply that the rational pursuit of goals is the point of conflict where hierarchical decisions have to be made. From a causal point of view, there is a more basic reason. The rational appetite is oriented to the evaluation of things as ends or means to ends. Therefore, the rational appetite cannot avoid giving other persons the status, in our values, of being directed to ends we choose or directed to their own chosen ends. Therefore, the rational appetite cannot avoid evaluating other persons to be or not be what they are with respect to making decisions based on rational knowledge, because it cannot avoid evaluating them to be what they are with respect to freely determining their own ends, which is what decisions based on rational knowledge do.

In other words, the will cannot avoid having the finality of valuing things according to our rational knowledge of them concerning that which the will necessarily does, namely, freely make things ends or means to ends. For the will cannot avoid evaluating things to be or not be things whose action is directed to ends we set, rather than being directed to ends they set. To evaluate something according to our knowledge of what it is is to give it the place, in our values, of being directed to ends it determines or ends given it by another, according to our knowledge of what it is. Thus, the will's finality of valuing according to rational knowledge does not imply a hierarchy of value based directly on a hierarchy of being. The hierarchy required by the finality of valuing according to what things are is the hierarchy of giving persons the status, in our values, of ends and other things the status of means. (The ethical significance of our behavior toward nonfree beings is discussed in Section ??.)

To evaluate things as ends or means is to evaluate them to be things whose actions are in pursuit of ends they set for themselves or things whose actions are in pursuit of ends set by another. To evaluate the actions, or the being, of another person as not existing for the ends of that person is defective just as is the belief that the person does not set the ends for her actions. And when we do not give another person the equal opportunity to pursue her ends, the place her actions, and therefore she herself, have in our evaluations is not that of existing to accomplish her ends. The evaluation we put on her actions is solely by the standard of our ends to the exclusion of hers. Her actions are evaluated either as serving our ends, in which case they are evaluated positively, or they are evaluated as interfering with our ends, in which case they are evaluated negatively. In either case, the value we place on her as an agent is by the standard of whether her agency serves our ends as opposed to hers. What she is in our values is not someone directed toward ends she determines. This is a defective evaluation of her, a misevaluation, because it evaluates her as if she were not the determiner of her own ends. We do not cease believing she determines her own ends, but we evaluate her as if she were not what we know her to be.

Note, however, that my arguments do not imply that freedom of choice is an end-in-itself. Neither the ability to choose ends nor the choice of ends is an end; they are means to our achievement of ends. It is beings whose nature gives them freedom of choice that we must treat as ends-in-themselves.

Another question freedom answers concerns possible differences in our decision-making abilities. I have already dealt with the question why differences in our rational knowledge do not make us unequal, in the sense pertinent to ethics, as rational decision makers. But what about differences in our wills, for example, different degrees of "will power"? As long as a person has some ability to decide for her own ends, we are obligated to evaluate her as an end for the reasons given above and defended in Chapter ?. An inequality in our degrees of will power would affect our ability to carry out our decisions. But when we are evaluating someone to be equal or unequal to us as a determiner of the ends she is in pursuit of, we are not evaluating her chances of achieving her ends. Whether her action is directed toward ends of her own choosing is one question; whether she is pursuing those ends effectively is another. If and how well she will actually achieve her ends does not fall within the scope of our evaluation of her. In fact, it does not fall within the scope of our evaluation of ourselves as determiners of our own ends; a fortiori it does not fall within the scope of our evaluation of others as equal to us in this respect.

Compulsive behavior provides common examples of areas where we are unequal in our abilities to achieve our ends, but it does not provide evidence against our being determiners of the ends we are seeking and, therefore, against the obligation to value the compulsive person as an end. For example, the speed with which a program like Alcoholics Anonymous spread after

its founding showed that there were many people who had chosen to stop drinking even though they were previously unable to succeed in carrying out their choice.

## 2.7. Equality Is Not the Central Issue

I did not introduce the notions of freedom and of treating other people as ends earlier because I did not want to complicate the initial presentation of this account of obligation any more than necessary. The statement that we are obligated to evaluate others to be equal to ourselves as makers of reason-based decisions is both a common way of understanding obligation (as I argue in Section ??) and a perfectly correct one as far as it goes, since to make decisions based on rational knowledge is to decide freely.

But the fact that the rational appetite must value humans as ends-in-themselves has important implications concerning the extent of our obligations. It is not the case that fairness toward others is the only domain of obligation. Section 5.?? will show that, because freedom makes us ends-in-ourselves, we have obligations toward ourselves and others we would not have were we not ends-in-ourselves. Still, the majority of the examples I will discuss, as well as the majority of ethical questions that daily confront us, concern fairness. In discussing with examples fairness, I will analyze obligation in terms of our equality as rational pursuers of goals, since there will be no need to raise the issue of freedom of choice explicitly.

This simplification, however, has the potential disadvantage of giving the impression that equality of evaluation is the defining characteristic moral goodness. It is not. The finality that renders an unfair decision defective by the decision's own standard is the finality of evaluating someone to be what we know her to be, the finality of coincidence between what she is in our evaluations and what we know (or believe) her to be in reality. That is the implication of the will's being an ability to make decisions based on rational knowledge; for the object of reason is what things are. But when two things are equal with respect to being X and we evaluate them unequally with respect to being X, we fail to evaluate at least one of those things to be what it is. And when another thing is like us in being a chooser of her own ends, yet her place in our values is that of a means to our chosen ends, what she is in our evaluations is not what she is in reality.

However, since most of the ethical issues in this study and in life concern fairness, there is a danger of focusing on the equal treatment of equals as if it were the crux of obligation. To forestall that mistake, I will now give an example that will most emphatically make the point that the equal treatment of equals does not define obligation. The example will make that point even though some will find it controversial for other reasons.

Those who believe that the uncaused is an infinitely perfect being, rather than something like matter-energy or space-time, "should" make the uncaused, God, the highest value. That is, a decision that would deny this being the highest and ruling place in our system of values would be defective by its own standard as an act of a rational appetite. The finality of the rational appetite is to value, as ends or as means to ends, what things are, the intrinsic reality of actions, states of affairs, or entities, according to what reason knows or believes about what things are. An infinitely perfect being possesses all possible reality in itself and so possesses everything the will could possibly value as an end. What God is, His intrinsic reality, literally leaves nothing to be desired; whatever the rational appetite is able to value as an end is in Him; there is no reality lacking in Him that the will could prefer to Him and still fulfill its finality of evaluating things to be what they are. Therefore, if He is not the value to which all others are subordinated, we are evaluating Him as if He were not what He is.

For example, a decision to curse God for not arranging things the way we would like to see them arranged, would be defective, because the place we give Him in our values relative to

the place we give ourselves would be other than the places our beings have relative to each other in reality. Whatever there is in us that the will is oriented to value is already in God together with infinitely more of what it is the will's finality to value. Here equality or inequality has nothing to do with the defectiveness of the decision; there is no question of equality between ourselves and God. And although it is not wrong to describe the defectiveness of the decision by speaking of "places relative to each other" in reality and in our values, it is more precise to speak of "what things are" in our reality and in our values. A reason-based decision God concerning God is a response to objects of rational knowledge and, therefore, values God as if He were a certain kind of thing. A decision to curse God would prefer some other thing to God and so evaluate Him as if He were not the being Who possesses everything that the will could possibly value as an end. Such a decision would be defective for failing to value God as if He was what we know or believe Him to be.

In what follows, I will sometimes make reference to the existence of God for purposes of illustration, as I have here, since God is the ultimate test case for some important ethical concepts. So, let me say now that my account of obligation does not presuppose that God exists, or, to put more philosophically, that the uncaused is an infinitely perfect being.

### 3. The Nature of Obligation

Needless to say, much work needs to be done to justify this outline of obligation. To show that the work is worth doing, this chapter will defend the view that the rational appetite analysis of conforms to the everyday meaning of ethical terms. It will then show how the analysis solves traditional philosophical problems about obligation: the is-ought/fact-value problem, the problem of teleology and deontology, the problem of why be moral, and the problem what it means for unethical behavior to deserve punishment.

In other words, the rational appetite approach solves the main philosophical problems about the unconditionality, objectivity, and knowability of ethical value. This chapter will also present an initial, intuitive argument for the superiority of the rational appetite analysis of obligation to utilitarianism's analysis.

However, this chapter does not address one of the most obvious questions so far left unanswered: can the rational appetite analysis explain obligation in cases other than the few already mentioned? I have chosen to delay the discussion of other cases until Chapter 5 rather than bog the central presentation down with the numerous examples considered there. Those who wish to can read that chapter next.

#### 3.1. The Meaning of Everyday Ethical Terms

Does the rational appetite analysis of obligation sound too abstract and unfamiliar to be a plausible basis for understanding our everyday ethical concepts? If so, consider this. When we blame someone for treating us unfairly, we are judging her decision to be defective. Therefore, we have a goal in mind by the standard of which we judge the decision; we are using the achievement of a certain goal as a standard to judge a product of her decision-making ability, and we are judging the product to be deficient by that standard. In particular, we have in mind the goal of our receiving equal treatment, and we are judging a decision of hers to be defective because it fails to achieve that goal.

Why do we apply this standard to her decisions; why do we think this finality is pertinent? Is the following answer too far-fetched? We know rational decisions have this finality because we know from our own case what rational decisions are, and we know she is like us in having the ability to make decisions based on rational knowledge. We know that if we do not treat her equally to ourselves as a pursuer of goals, we are not treating her according to our knowledge of what she is. And we know such a decision is defective because a decision made in

knowledge of her equality in this respect has the finality of giving her a place in our evaluations consistent with what she is known to be. That is, our reflective awareness of the nature of our own decisions reveals them to have the finality of evaluating her to be the kind of being we know she is.

Not only is this explanation plausible, but it is most direct and simple explanation of our behavior with respect to judgments about fairness. The common belief is that unfair decisions are defective, and it is the common belief that the reason they are defective is their unequal treatment of equals. The question is whether unequal treatment of equals means treating them as if they really were unequal, that is, as if they are related in existence the way they are related in our evaluations. If so, it is also the common belief that decisions do treat things as if they existed the way our decisions evaluate them -- and that is the concept of rational appetite I am putting forward.

To see that this is indeed the common view of decisions, recall that we do not hold someone ethically responsible who could not have known any better. When inculpable ignorance is behind a decision that we would otherwise hold morally defective, we do not hold it defective in a moral sense. And if we hold someone's ignorance to be culpable, we do so because of other knowledge she possesses on the basis of which we judge that she should have taken steps to overcome the ignorance.

With reference to fairness then, we would not hold someone morally responsible for an unfair decision if she were inculpably ignorant of human equality with respect to being rational decision makers. So, when the common person judges that an unfair decision is indeed defective in a moral sense, the moral defect is judged on the basis of the unfair person's presumed rational knowledge of that equality. The moral defect in treating people unfairly is believed to come from the fact that people are known to be equal as rational pursuers of goals, or at least thought to be thus equal, in their extramental existence. Hence, the decision is judged by the standard of whether it treats things according as they are known really to be. When we judge a decision by this standard, we are implying that in making decisions, we are treating things as if they existed way our decisions evaluate them. Unless our evaluations treat people as if they exist in certain ways, a decision treating another person unequally would not be treating her as if she were unequal to us, as a pursuer of goals, in real existence. If an unfair decision did not treat her as if she were unequal to us in real existence, the decision would not treat her contrary to our knowledge of what she is. And if the decision did not treat her as if she were unequal to us in real existence, the prior knowledge that we are equal in having the ability to make decisions based on rational knowledge would not make our decisions culpably defective. If we did not assume that rational decisions have the goal of evaluating things to exist as they are known to exist, we would not judge decisions defective by their failure to achieve that goal.

The ordinary person is perfectly capable of recognizing that there is something wrong with treating another person's interests unequally to her own. And she is perfectly capable of recognizing what makes it wrong is not a relation to some hypothetical goal that need not be used as a standard for such an act. She is capable of knowing that unfair behavior is wrong, period. The question is what does this recognition consist in, or what does the wrongness, the evil of the act consist in, or what does the standard of judgment consist in and why is its application unavoidable? In judging the act to be wrong, she is recognizing that unfair behavior does not treat other persons according to what we know they are. Therefore, she is recognizing that our decisions cannot avoid having the finality of treating things according to what we know they are. In other words, she is capable of judging decisions the way she judges beliefs, namely, as having a finality whose frustration makes them nonhypothetically defective. Specifically, she is able to

recognize that beliefs and decisions have the finality of agreement between what things are in our conscious states and what they are in themselves.

The fact that a decision consciously treating equals unequally is defective as the kind of conscious act it is (as a false belief is defective as the kind of conscious act it is) is what we mean by saying we ought to treat equals equally, we should treat equals equally, or we are obligated to treat equals equally. "One ought not to do X" means "The decision to do X would be a defective act by the standard of a finality belonging to decisions by their nature as conscious acts."

The fact that a decision consciously treating equals unequally is defective as the kind of conscious act it is also what we mean when we say someone equal in nature to us has the right to be treated equally to us or is owed, is due, or is deserving of equal treatment. To say a certain kind of treatment is "due" or "owed" someone is to say this treatment is called for by the finality of an appetite oriented to valuing things according to what they are as known by reason. A conscious decision not to so treat her is defective as an act of a disposition by which we are oriented to valuing the intrinsic reality of things, while the decision to treat her equally fulfills that finality.

Our rights and obligations are rights and obligations from the perspective of the rational appetite, where "from the perspective of" means that the fulfillment of that which is an "obligation," that which another person has a "right" to from us, consists in the accomplishment of the rational appetite's finality. Conversely, when we use "right" to mean that we have the right to perform such and such an action, that we are not obligated to avoid the action, we mean that the decision to so act does not contradict the will's finality of valuing things according to what they are known to be.

In arguing that my analysis of obligation agrees with the common view, I have been describing the common view as the belief that we should be treated equally. But the common view can also be described as the belief that people should be treated as end-in-themselves, not as means. For example, we often speak of it being wrong to "use" another person. Although the concept of treating persons as ends-in-themselves provides a more precise way of expressing obligation than the concept of treating them as rational pursuers of goals, these concepts are logically coextensive. To see the connection between them as ways of describing the common view, we need only ask in what respect the common person believes we should be treated equally. The common person believes we should be treated equally as pursuers of goals. And to treat others equally as pursuers of goals is to treat them as ends-in-themselves, since it is to treat them as equal to us in being free pursuers of goals. If I give her an equal opportunity to pursue ends, I treat her as having ends that belong to her as my ends belong to me; for I am making her pursuit of ends one of my ends. But if I do not make her opportunity to pursue ends one of my ends, I treat her as if she were not equal in having ends that belong to her as my ends belong to me; for I am evaluating her pursuit of ends by its relation to my ends, which are other than her ends. I evaluate myself rather than her as the being who will set the ends to be accomplished. I therefore give myself a higher place than her with respect to setting ends.

To judge it wrong to use another person is to judge it wrong to treat the other as a means to your ends in a way that prevents the ends of the other person from being fulfilled or, at least, having the opportunity of fulfillment. At every moment, we rely on the contributions of other persons to achieve our own ends. But the common belief is that we should not do so in ways that deprive other persons of the opportunity to achieve their ends. In other words, the common person believes that, in our evaluations, other persons should primarily be entities whose action is directed to their own ends rather than our ends.

And the common person thinks so for the same reason she believes other people should

be treated equally to us as pursuers of goals: we know from our own case what rational decisions are. Hence we know from our own case that in making decisions we are setting our own ends. And we know that other persons are like us in being able to make rational decisions. Therefore we know that they too have the ability to set the ends their behavior is directed toward. But we also know from our own case that rational decisions have the finality of treating things as they are known to be. That is, we know that decisions evaluate things as if they existed in certain ways and, therefore, that decisions are defective if things do not exist as they are evaluated to exist. Since those decisions give other persons the status either of pursuing ends we set for them or of pursuing their own ends, the decisions are defective if they do not give them the status they are known to have in real existence, the status of pursuing ends they set for themselves. Our reflective knowledge of the nature of decisions reveals that evaluating someone as ordered to our ends amounts to evaluating them as if their actions were not, in real existence, ordered to their own ends.

### 3.2. The Is/Ought Dilemma

The common person, in other words, believes our decisions are governed by our rational awareness of what things are, where "governed" does not mean physically regulated (necessitated) but means that rational knowledge provides the standard by reference to which decisions are to be judged properly done or defective as rationally conscious decisions.

Does this position imply the supposedly impossible circumstance of reason prescribing to appetite or, to use Hume's phrase, dictating to passion, rather than vice versa? Value judgments presuppose that orientations to ends exist prior to the judgments; orientations to ends do not come into existence, in the first instance, as the result of value judgments. For to be a "value," to be "good," is to fulfill or contribute to fulfilling an orientation toward an end, and to be contrary to a value, to be "bad," is to prevent or contribute to preventing the fulfilling of an orientation to an end. Likewise, to judge that something is good or bad is to judge its relation to an end toward which something has an orientation. Without a prior orientation to an end, reason has no standard by which to judge something good or bad. As a result, rational knowledge cannot be what first determines the nature of the ends we seek.

But what if our decision-making ability is a rational "appetite," an orientation to value what things are as reason knows them? If the dispositions by which we make decisions orient us to the goal of valuing things according to reason's knowledge, reason determines whether decisions are good or bad even though doing so presupposes an orientation to ends, that of our decision-making abilities, that is not identical with reason itself. For the rational appetite, the goal of treating things as if they exist the way they are evaluated is inscribed in the nature of its act as rationally conscious functions. This goal is not an external standard imposed on decisions by reason or by anything else; it is a goal decisions cannot avoid being related to, since they are related to it just by being what they are. If our decisions resulted from a disposition that was not oriented to acts treating things as if they exist the way they are known to be, then what reason knows about the existence of things could not prescribe for that appetite. But if the appetite producing our decisions has the nature of a rational appetite, as described here and as believed in by the person on the street, that is, an orientation to acts valuing things as reason knows them, then it is a false dilemma to oppose reason to appetite on the matter of who prescribes to whom or to oppose deriving "ought" from appetite, on the one hand, to deriving it from knowledge of what is, on the other.

It is true that value judgments presuppose orientations to ends. Ethical judgments, in particular, presuppose the finality of our decision-making ability to evaluate things to be what they are known to be. Reason's ethical value judgments express whether or not decisions fulfill



that finality. But what a decision must do to value something as if it is what it is known to be is determined, ("prescribed" or "dictated") by judgments of reason prior to the decision and prior to the ethical judgment about the decision. Those prior judgments of reason are not value judgments (at least not ethical value judgments, although in individual cases they may concern other values, for example, aesthetic values). Or I should say that those prior judgments essentially involve only one value, truth. For the prior judgments of reason that determine the ethical value of decisions are factual judgments about what exists, for example, judgments about whether other beings are or are not like us in having a rational decision-making ability or whether the uncaused is an infinite being.

Incidentally, those prior judgments do not include factual judgments about the relation of the will to its end. They include awareness that decisions have this end, but they include only a minimal awareness, not raised to the level of judgment, about why decisions have that end. That is the reason students of the foundations of ethics have had so much difficulty explaining why the obligation to be rational imposes itself unconditionally. But in order to make ethical judgments, we no more need to study the foundations of ethics than scientists and mathematicians need to study the foundations of their disciplines. To do science, we need to have an understanding of what our goal is, namely, truth, but we do not need a philosophical analysis of that goal or reason's relation to it. Similarly, to make ethical judgments, we need to have an understanding of that goal of decisions which is to evaluate things as if what we evaluate them to be were what we know them to be, but we do not need to know why having that goal is a necessary characteristics of decisions.

Decisions have that goal because the dispositions by which we cause them orient us to cause acts having that goal. It is true that reason can only prescribe to an ability oriented to acts valuing what things are as known by reason. But given that reason exists, the existence of such an ability is not something accidental or paradoxical. Any cognitive appetite is oriented toward some mode of being that can be an object of knowledge. The rational appetite is simply a disposition for responding to that which can be an object of rational knowledge, being in its fullest extent. The finality of the rational appetite is to value that which is. To the question "Why does the rational appetite have being for its value?", we can give a reply similar to one once offered to "Why does metaphysics talk about being?" Because there is nothing else for it to talk about -- and there is nothing else for an appetite to value but being, either as known by the senses or known by reason.

To return to the ultimate test case, if we know that the uncaused is an infinite being, there is nothing arbitrary or adventitious about our obligation to value that being above all else. That is, there is nothing arbitrary or adventitious about the fact that a decision not to love Him would be defective by the standard of its own finality. Reason can prescribe that we love Him above all else, because reason knows that this being possesses everything that any appetite could value.

Only if, per impossibile, nature could have so designed us that we had reason but did not have a rational appetite would there be a problem about reason prescribing to appetite. But if nature had so designed us, we would not be ethical beings, that is, beings who pass the ethical judgments we do pass on our decisions and the decisions of others. For our everyday ethical judgments apply the standard of rational appetition to our decisions. If there were no rational appetite as here described, all the relations to ends which could provide standards by which we would judge decisions would be other than a rational appetite's relation to ends, and we could not apply the moral standards that we do apply.

Furthermore, the only appetites we would have would be appetites for particular modes of being, such as the appetites we share with animals. The desires of those appetites often come in

conflict with what we could desire had we the ability to evaluate things according to reason's knowledge; yet those would be our only desires. Therefore our desires would often necessitate our behaving in immoral ways, that is, in ways contrary to the finality that would be inherent in acts of the rational appetite. (Nor could we have the free choice to refrain from being immoral since, as argued in Chapter ??, only a rational appetite can endow us with free choice.)

Was it necessary that nature produce beings with reason and, therefore, with rational appetites? We do not have to answer that question. The fact is that nature has produced such beings. We are stuck with that contingent fact and, therefore, with its necessary consequences. One of those consequences is that a decision failing to conform to what reason tells us about our equality as makers of decisions based on rational knowledge is a decision defective by the standard of its own finality. In other words, the contingent fact of a rational appetite's existence necessarily implies the equally contingent fact of the existence of beings who make unconditional, objective, and knowably true ethical judgments.

We might wish that nature had not given us a rational appetite, but that wish would itself be an act of the rational appetite, and an inherently defective act. For it would be an act with an inherent finality as an act of a rational appetite and at the same time an act wishing that its inherent finality not be fulfilled and not be able to be fulfilled.\* The finality of valuing things according to what they are is inherent in an act of a rational appetite; it is not a finality set for these acts extrinsically as when we use a stone as a paper weight. The wish that the rational appetite not have the finality of valuing things according to reason's knowledge of what they are would be an act with the finality of valuing things according to reason's knowledge and at the same time an act willing that things not be valued according to reason's knowledge.

None of the above, however, should be considered an attempt to derive "ought" from "is." In fact, I have not attempted to derive "ought" at all. Instead, I have attempted to describe a factual situation, not a situation that ethical obligation is derived from, but a situation ethical obligation consists in.

### 3.3. Why Be Moral? Teleology and Deontology

Section 4.4.2 takes up the question, "Why be moral?" and explains how the concept of inherent finality reconciles teleology with deontology. Lastly, Section 4.4.3 discusses the justice of punishment from the point of view of the rational appetite. An adequate account must also answer the question, "Why be moral?", and it must explain the justice of punishment for morally defective acts.

If ethical obligation is as I have described it, making ethically correct decisions is a necessary condition for achieving the ends given us by our nature and, therefore, a necessary condition for happiness. If that condition is lacking, we will fail to achieve the state that constitutes our happiness, since happiness consists in the complete achievement of the ends we are oriented to. Why are ethically correct decisions necessary conditions for happiness? Perhaps the connection can appear arbitrary, as if some higher beings were going to dispense happiness to us upon our successful completion of an obstacle course they have designed for their ends, an obstacle course whose successful navigation would otherwise have no relation to our ends. To see why the connection is not arbitrary, all we have to do is look at the nature of ethical obligation as analyzed here and at the reason why we cannot avoid actions to which that obligation applies.

Ethical obligation springs from our nature as beings with reason, beings who direct our actions by means of our knowledge of what things are, beings who are capable of so directing our action that things are valued according to their known intrinsic reality. In other words, our nature is identical with a tendency to, among other things, decisions of the kind governed by ethical

obligation. Such actions are among the goals the achievement of which constitutes the fulfillment of the tendencies of our nature, and the fulfillment of those tendencies produces happiness. Thus, that which makes decisions governed by ethical obligation necessary conditions for happiness is the same thing that makes decisions intrinsically correct or defective by the standard of their own finality, and that which makes intrinsically correct or defective decisions necessary features of our existence is the same thing that makes decisions necessary conditions for happiness: our nature includes knowledge of things as they are in themselves and, consequently, a power oriented to valuing things according to our knowledge of what they are. If we fail to so evaluate things, we fail with respect to the tendency of our nature that necessitates such acts to begin with. Therefore, for a rational being, ethically correct decisions must be necessary conditions, at least, for happiness.

On this analysis, ethically correct decisions are not obligatory because they are necessary for happiness. The ethical correctness or defectiveness of a decision does not consist in the fact that it fosters or inhibits happiness. Decisions are ethically correct or defective because they fulfill or fail to fulfill their own inherent finality as acts of a rational appetite. And since the fulfillment of that finality is a necessary condition for happiness, correct ethical decisions are necessary for happiness because they are correct, that is, because they fulfill the inherent finality of decisions.

Therefore, answering "Why be moral?" with "To be happy" does not reduce morality to being a means to happiness. If our decisions are intrinsically ethically defective, we fail of happiness by that fact. But as argued in Section ??, happiness is not our end in the sense of being an object of knowledge that provokes desire. Happiness is the state of satisfaction -- partial or complete -- that accompanies the existence of the cognized object that is our end. Good ethical decisions contribute to happiness by fulfilling our ends; they fulfill our ends by valuing things according to what they are known to be in themselves, not by valuing things according to their perceived contribution to our happiness. In fact, we are obligated to seek happiness, since consciously choosing against happiness would amount to consciously choosing against some end to which the rational appetite is oriented by being what it is.

There is, of course, a sense in which happiness can be a cognized object that provokes desire. As reflective beings, we are capable of being aware of our current subjective state of satisfaction and of comparing it to other states in which we appear more or less satisfied. And as beings who have not yet achieved complete happiness, we are capable of forming ideas of potential subjective states constituted by more complete satisfaction of desires. The ability to acquire such ideas is part of what it means to be rational beings. But to be motivated by such an idea of happiness need mean nothing more than being motivated to seek the ends of our nature, since happiness is simply the state of being in possession of those ends. And the ends to which we cannot avoid being oriented include the will's end of valuing things according to what they are in themselves. In this sense, there is no conflict between the motivation to achieve happiness and the motivation to value things according to reason's knowledge of what they are.

That we are seeking happiness in all actions amounts to no more than the fact that we are aiming at an end in all actions. Therefore, the most precise reason for being moral is to achieve an end to which we cannot avoid being oriented. Instead of asking "Why be moral?", should we then ask "Why seek to achieve that which is our end?" We can ask that question as long as we remember that "Why" in this case means "For what end?" or "What end is achieved?" So the question really is "What end is achieved by seeking to achieve our end?" Next question, please.

And as explained in Section ??, the fact that action must spring from a prior orientation to an end on the part of the agent does not and cannot make motivation necessarily egocentric. Nor

does the fact that ethical the ethical value or defectiveness of an act consists in its achievement or failure to achieve an end make the value extrinsic to the act itself and make obligation relative to something extrinsic to the obligatory act. There is no other way for an action to possess an intrinsic value than to possess the perfection the nature of the act calls for by having an intrinsic finality. And since every act emanates from a prior orientation to act on the part of the agent, there is no other way for an act to have an intrinsic finality than to have the finality it acquires by being that which emanates from the agent's prior orientation to act. That is, an act can only have the intrinsic finality its agent gives it by causing the act to be what it is. Hence, that an agent can only act because oriented to an end does not and cannot imply that the value of an act produced by the agent is extrinsic to the act itself, that, in other words, an act produced by the agent must lack an intrinsic finality whose achievement constitutes a value intrinsic to the act.

And as was also explained in Section ??, the fact that we only act out of an orientation to an end does not and cannot imply that that other persons can have no value for us other than being means to our ends. When we give their pursuit of goals a place in our evaluations equal to ours, we are treating other persons as ends while achieving our rational appetite's end at the same time. Likewise, the fact that ethical value or defectiveness consists in an act's achievement or failure to achieve its inherent finality does not and cannot imply that obligation is relative to our personal fulfillment in a sense opposed to obligation's being relative to rights other persons possess by being what they are. For the finality whose fulfillment constitutes the satisfaction of obligation is the finality of valuing things, especially other persons, according to reason's knowledge of what they are. (The history of ethics is a history of false oppositions.)

On the other hand, my reflective awareness of the subjective states constituted by my achievement of ends enables me to be motivated by "happiness" and to relate other persons to the achievement of my ends in an ethically defective sense. For it is through my self-awareness that I am able to give my pursuit of goals a higher place in my evaluations than another person's pursuit of goals. "In order to happy, I must be moral," means "In order to be happy, morality, not my own happiness, must be my goal." If I make my own happiness the end I am seeking and treat another person equally merely so that my treatment of her will contribute to my happiness, I may perform the external acts required of treating her equally, but in my evaluations she does not have a place equal to mine. Therefore my evaluations are ethically bad. I am obligated not to make my happiness my primary consideration, and if I do, I fail in what is necessary for my happiness.

The reason there need be no conflict between seeking happiness, seeking my ends, and being moral is this. The same power of reason by which I am aware of what happiness and the achievement of my ends are enables me to be aware of what other persons are and of the fact that what they are calls for a place equal to what I am in the evaluations of a rational appetite. I am thereby enabled to give other persons an equal place in my evaluations; that is, I can evaluate them according to my knowledge of what they are, not just according to their relation to ends of my own that I have given a higher place in my evaluations.

An obstacle to seeing this point is the common belief that our ends are constituted entirely by states of our own consciousness, the belief that what is ultimately aimed at in our action is satisfying states of our own consciousness. For example, in desiring my child's happiness, I would really be desiring the satisfaction I would get from knowing that my child is happy. The arguments of Section ?? apply to this position. Unless it is my child's happiness that is my end, there is no reason why knowledge of my child's happiness, rather than any other random event, should make me happy. Because I am a rationally conscious being, it is possible for me to defectively desire my child's happiness only as a means to my own. But the same

rational consciousness enables me to know that what my child is makes her worthy of a place equal to mine in the evaluations of the rational appetite. And that knowledge enables me both to evaluate her equally to me and to know that, if I did not, I could not achieve the happiness that comes from the fulfillment of the finalities of my nature.

Another example will make the point more emphatically. A blind person can have a conceptual understanding of what color is but not the joy of seeing beautiful colors. Likewise, our conceptual understanding of what God is does not give us the joy of an experiential union with infinite beauty. But reason does allow us to know that an experiential union with infinite beauty would bring infinite happiness. Does it follow that in seeking to do what is necessary to see God, for example, in seeking to be moral, what has the highest place in our values is not God Himself but the joy we will get from seeing Him? No, because the same rational knowledge that tells us seeing God will bring happiness tells us that it is because God is what He is that seeing Him will bring happiness. Our happiness will be caused by the knowledge that God is what He is. Our response to that knowledge will be an act of love for God, not for our knowledge of God. That knowledge is lovable but only because it consists in an experiential union with an object that is lovable. Similarly, aesthetic delight is delight in a work's being what it is. To have that delight we must be conscious that the work is what it is. But the consciousness brings delight because it is consciousness of the work's being what it is. We desire the consciousness as an experiential union with what the work is. We do not now have the kind of consciousness of God that will provoke an infinitely joyful act of love. But the same rational knowledge enabling us to know that the joy will be a response to God's being what He is enables us to know that what God is, not what our experience of God will be, deserves the highest place in the evaluations of an appetite oriented to what things are. In deciding to give God that place, we acting out of an orientation to an end whose accomplishment will make us happy. But the end of the rational appetite is accomplished if and only if God has a higher place in our evaluations than the fulfillment of our ends or our happiness. Deciding not to give God the highest place would be ethically defective because it would frustrate the act's inherent finality. But the obligation to love God is not thereby made relative to the fulfillment of the will's ends in the sense that the obligation would not derive from God's being what He is.

#### 3.4. Punishment

Among the ethical concepts that the inherent finality of the rational appetite can explain is the concept of deserving punishment. In human affairs, punishment can have many purposes, the purpose of deterrence, of education, of making society safer by depriving recalcitrant members of liberty. Here I am concerned only with the justice of punishment, where "justice" means what is due by the standard of the finality of the rational appetite.

The rational appetite does not obligate that you claim a right, but it does obligate that you respect the rights of others unless they decline to claim them. For example, if you choose to compete with another in the pursuit of a particular goal, equality in the pursuit of that goal is due you. But you may not be obligated to pursue that goal; nothing in the rational appetite's finality may require you to pursue it.

An unjust act is "worthy" of punishment in the same sense that a right is "worthy" of respect. A right does not have to be claimed, and an injustice can be forgiven. If you are wronged, you are not obligated to will that the offender be punished. But when I deprive another person of what is due her from a rational appetite, what is due me from a rational appetite is the desire that I be sufficiently deprived of goods to restore equality between myself and the wronged person, unless the wronged person chooses that equality not be restored in that respect. If you know that an injustice has occurred and that the offended party does not choose to forgive, your failure to

desire that equality between the persons be restored by depriving the unjust person of an equal good would be defective from the point of view of the rational appetite's inherent finality. For the finality of the rational appetite is to evaluate these persons according to what they are, and to evaluate them according to what they are requires that they be treated equally, and you would not be desiring that they be treated equally.

In other words, punishment for failing to treat others equally's pursuers of goals is due, from the perspective of the will's finality, as a means of restoring the equality called for by our being what we are. Punishment is due even when goods equal to those lost cannot be restored to the offended person. That is, punishment is due even when all that can be done is to deprive the offender without compensating the offended. The offended is at least due the good of equality of treatment between herself and the offender; for she is due the good of equality of place in the values of an appetite oriented to what things are as known by reason. Punishment achieves that even when it accomplishes nothing else. To give the offended the place she is due in our evaluations, we must will that the offender be treated equally. Not to will that the offender be punished proportionately to the way in which she has violated equality would be to willfully acquiesce in the offender's failure to treat the offended equally.

In fact, the first good due us from a rational appetite is not equality in treatment, where "treatment" refers to the external behavior directed by the will. The first good due us from a rational appetite is equality of evaluation, that is, the place in the appetite's values required by what we are. The first good due, in other words, is the ethical value of fulfilling the will's finality. Ethical value requires equality in external treatment as a necessary consequence; we cannot evaluate equals equally if we do not will to behave toward them equally. That is the reason restoration of equality is due even when compensation of the offended is not possible. We cannot give the offended the first good she is due, equality of place in our evaluations, without willing that the offender be deprived of goods in a manner proportionate to her unequal treatment of the offended. Furthermore, the mere intention to treat another unfairly deprives her of what is due from the rational appetite, an equal place in its system of values. Since punishment must be commensurate with the loss suffered, the appropriate kind of punishment for this injustice is a place of disapprobation for the unjust act in our evaluations.

Still, if we are not obligated to claim a right before it has been violated, we are not obligated to claim it after it has been violated. If I choose to compete with you for a goal that cannot be shared, I have the right to equal opportunity in pursuit of the goal. But I am not obligated to choose to compete with you. And I am no more obligated to assert my right to equality after finding you have cheated me than I was before. Similarly, if there is no injustice in giving some of my property away, there is no injustice in declining to seek punishment of a thief. The rational appetite's finality does not require that you seek a restoration in equality with respect to a particular way you have been deprived of it. But unless we know that someone has chosen not to claim her right or not to seek punishment for an injustice done her, our failure to desire the right to be respected or the injustice punished is defective by the standard of the finality of the rational appetite.

The validity of our desire for justice does not imply that we have the right to personally correct the injustice. In fact, our decision to correct the injustice could be defective by the standard of the will's finality. I am not the only one who should desire the injustice to be corrected. If everyone acted so as to carry out that desire, the unjust person would be deprived of more than equal goods; hence, a new injustice would have occurred. And reason knows from observation that, in general, vigilante action can produce more harm than good. Therefore, achieving what the members of groups are due from the point of view of the rational appetite

requires developing specific structures for punishing injustice. A social agent charged with punishing injustice would be obligated to punish, unless the offended party decides to forgive. Of course, circumstances will sometimes allow a social agent to act in the stead of an offended person and pardon the offense. For example, the offended person may be deceased or incompetent. The most obvious case where the victim of injustice cannot benefit from the punishment of the guilty is murder. The author of this essay is opposed to capital punishment for a variety of reasons. Those reasons do not include the belief that capital punishment for murder is unjust. Even though the death of the guilty does not compensate the victim, the death of the guilty is just, since it restores the equality of treatment lost by the decision to commit murder. It is not the case that capital punishment fails to respect the value of human life. On the contrary, it is a way for society to affirm the ethical value of human life, the value it has for a rational appetite, by seeking to restore the lost equality between the guilty and the victim. To oppose capital punishment as not respecting the value of human life is to defectively give some other value for life, perhaps a sentimental value, a higher place in our evaluations than its ethical value. Therefore, opposing capital punishment because of the value of the killer's life under values human life rather than respecting it. In fact, the social under valuing of human life is one of the risks we take in rejecting capital punishment. If we give up capital punishment, as I would prefer, we should replace it by nothing less than life imprisonment with no chance of furlough or parole. The policy of paroling or furloughing first-degree murderers is not more "humane." It is less humane, since it demeans the ethical value of human life by the disproportion between the punishment and the crime. (Then why is capital punishment not obligatory? Because it is not obligatory to claim a right.)

Finally, from the point of view of the agent responsible for the common good of the entire universe, the intention to do injustice is more important than the carrying out of the intention. The intention is within our control; whether we succeed in carrying it out is not. If God did not choose to punish us in a manner proportionate to the evil we intend, His decision would be defective as an act of a rational appetite, just as our decision not to disapprove of an unjust intention would be defective.

Can God forgive? We cannot deprive God of any good intrinsic to Him. But denying the infinite being the place due it in our evaluations is an infinitely defective act for a rational appetite. It is an act infinitely more defective than denying another human the place due her in our evaluations. And if denying another human due evaluation calls for punishment from the sake of justice, the infinite debt of justice due God calls for a proportionate penalty. Does God's justice, then, preclude forgiveness? The very least we can say is this: it does not preclude forgiveness if there is a way in which forgiveness would be consistent with the satisfaction of the infinite debt of justice. Could there be such a way? On one reading of the New Testament, the demons may not have thought so. Philosophers should not be so rash.

There is another difference between punishment from God's perspective and from ours. God's punishment is simply His granting us what we choose. In making defective evaluations, we are deciding not to pursue the good that satisfies the rational appetite's finality and, by that very fact, the true good, the good constituted by things' being what they are. By allowing us to suffer the loss of our true good, God would simply be respecting our freedom. Since God gave us our freedom, it would be unjust of Him not to give us what we choose. That is, His decision not to give us what we choose would be defective not only because of what we are, free beings, but because of what He is, the creator of our freedom.

##### 5.

The example we began with was the decision to cheat or not cheat on an examination,

that is, the decision whether or not to give another person equal opportunity to pursue her goals. With respect to the decision to treat another person's interests as equal or unequal to my own, moral goodness and evil are the presence and absence, respectively, of agreement between our comparative positions as rational deciders in reality and in our evaluations.

For example, the statement that our decisions have the finality of valuing things according to reason's knowledge of what they are does not seem capable, by itself, of distinguishing good decisions from bad. Since anything whatsoever can be an object of reason's knowledge, how could a goal thus described provide a content for decisions? The hierarchical nature of decisions offers one way of answering this question. By the fact of having to choose between alternatives, in each decision we value some things more highly than others. Therefore, the obligation to evaluate according to what things are would require a hierarchical evaluation of things. Where reason knows there is more being, there is more for the rational appetite to value. Hence we are obligated to value living things more than nonliving, animals more than plants, etc.

The notion of a hierarchy of being has a place in the discussion of obligation, and it will occasionally be touched on, at least implicitly, in this study. But my case does not depend on a metaphysical doctrine of a scale of being. For example, I will not conclude that we are obligated to love our dog or cat more than we love our garden. Decisions, and desires in general, do evaluate things hierarchically, but the hierarchy is always in a circumscribed respect, namely, in respect to the finality of the disposition of which a decision or desire is an act. As oriented to decisions based on rational knowledge, the will is oriented to the free evaluation of things as ends and means. So the will must evaluate things hierarchically according to what we know about them concerning this finality, that is, concerning their being free determiners of their own ends. Hence, it must value those beings that have free choice as ends and those that do not have free choice as means; otherwise, its decisions are defective for not valuing things according to what they are known to be in respect to the will's necessary finality.

#### 5. Persons as Ends-in-Themselves

While I believe the preceding explanation of obligation is accurate as far as it goes, I do not believe it goes far enough. In general, valuing A more highly than B is defective for an appetite, if there is nothing in what A is that makes A more of that to which the appetite is oriented than B is. And in the case of the rational appetite, that to which the appetite is oriented is what things are in themselves, since the finality of the rational appetite is to value things according to reason's knowledge. Therefore, if I do not treat another person equally, I am not giving what she is the value relative to what I am that she is due from an appetite that evaluates according to reason's knowledge of what we are. But more needs to be said about what it means for an appetite to be ordered to valuing things according to reason's knowledge.

Since reason is open to all aspects of things, there would seem to be no link between a rational appetite and any particular aspect of things. The most that reason's knowledge would seem to obligate would be a hierarchical evaluation of things. Where reason knows there is more being, there is more for a rational appetite to value. Hence we are obligated to love living things more than nonliving, humans more than animals, and God immeasurably more than creatures. And the reason we are obligated to treat other humans equally is that they are equal to us as things whose nature enables rational choice. But there is nothing about their nature that obligates an appetite oriented to



what things are, other than the fact that they have features giving them equality with us with respect to the area where conflicts arise, the making of rational choices. There is nothing about those features in themselves that obligates, apart from the fact that they are equal to the features of another being; there is no feature that obligates a rational appetite just by being what it is.

As a result, there are problems this explanation leaves unsolved. Unless there is a specific feature or features of our nature that obligates by being what it is, the only obligation reason's knowledge imposes is to evaluate hierarchically according to degrees of being. But then, why am I not bound to value my collie more than my African violet, since reason knows that dogs are higher on the scale of being than flowers? Therefore, why am I not obligated to sacrifice the flower rather than the dog, if I am forced to choose between them? For the same reason, we who believe in angels would be obliged to love angels more than humans, and hence more than we love ourselves.

These problems arise because the explanation so far given does not sufficiently tie the obligation to treat others equally as pursuers of goals to what it means to be a rational pursuer of goals. There is a feature rational pursuers of goals have that obligates the rational appetite by being what it is: freedom of choice. The finality of the rational appetite is to evaluate things according to what they are. In dealing with other persons, the rational appetite cannot avoid choices that either succeed or fail in evaluating persons according to what they are as free beings. Specifically, the nature of free beings obligates the will to evaluate them as ends-in-themselves and never to evaluate them as mere means to other ends. We are obligated to respect the angelic nature as more intelligent and powerful than ours; but because we both have freedom of choice, there is no difference between angels and humans as ends-in-themselves. In fact, angels are obligated to value us as ends-in-ourselves.

Freedom of choice, however, is not a transplant that must be grafted on to the analysis of obligation in terms of the rational appetite. Section 5.1

will show that freedom of choice follows from the nature of the rational appetite. In other words, Proposition 4 (freedom of choice) is really a necessary consequence of Proposition 3 (the rational appetite). And Section 5.2 will show why the explanation of obligation already given requires the rational appetite to value free beings as end-in-themselves. In other words, the obligation to treat persons as ends-in-themselves follows from the analysis so far given, and does not require any new premise other than that of freedom of choice.

The fact that the rational appetite must value humans as ends-in-themselves, however, does have important implications concerning the extent of our obligations. It is not the case that fairness toward others is the only domain of obligation (other than our obligations toward God). Chapter 6 will show that, because freedom makes us ends-in-ourselves, we have obligations toward ourselves and others we would not have were we not ends-in-ourselves.

Conversely, Section 5.3 will show why the fact that we are, and subrational beings are not, ends-in-ourselves allows our evaluation of subrational beings to not be hierarchical in all respects. That section will also discuss why we are obligated not to mistreat animals.

#### 5.1. Freedom of Choice

How does a defective decision come about? That is, how can a decision produced by an appetite oriented to an end fail as a decision for that end? In Chapter 2, I said that the act of any appetite can be defective by the standard of the appetite's orientation to an end, but I also said that acts of the will could be defective even if the acts of other appetites could not. The reason why the act of any appetite can be defective is that there can be "many a slip 'twixt cup and lip." An appetite's successful production of an act can depend on conditions external to the appetite itself, conditions such as the proper operation of other faculties, for example, faculties of perception, imagination, and memory.

The source of moral defects in the rational appetite's acts, however, is not external to the appetite. The rational appetite is itself the cause of whether its acts are good or bad by the standard of the appetite's finality. For the concept of rational appetite not only solves traditional problems concerning the relation of being to value, knowledge to desire, and finality to deontology; it also solves the problem of free will.

The idea that rational appetite gives us free choice might seem to contradict other things I have said about rational appetite. The will's finality is to value things according to what they are in themselves, since it is an appetite for objects presented by reason, and reason knows what things are in themselves. Therefore, how can the will not value things according to the reality contained in their natures, unless through inculpable ignorance on the part of reason of what those natures are? Must not the will necessarily make things values according to the way reason has made them objects of knowledge?

Not only is freedom compatible with the nature of the will but the nature of the will requires that ethical decisions be free. For a rational appetite to fulfill its intrinsic finality

of valuing the being of things as known by reason, the appetite must itself bestow on things the place in our values that corresponds to what things are in reality. And the same nature that gives the rational appetite its finality gives it the power of placing values on things freely and, hence, fallibly.

### 5.1.1. The Universality of Concepts

The basis of freedom is this. Because it values things according to reason's knowledge, the will can relate to things in the same way reason does, namely, in a manner characterized by universality. Since the universality characterizing rational is the basis of freedom, a few words about universality are required in order to explain freedom.

The issue of universality is not the issue of whether we must quantify over abstract objects. The objects of reason are not universal in that sense, but universality is a characteristic of the manner in which reason relates to its objects. Through perception, imagination, and memory we relate, for example, to individual animals. If these modes of consciousness relate us to individual animals, they relate us to features that constitute what it is to be an animal; for where an individual animal exists, features by reason of which it is an animal must exist. Through the concept of animal, however, we relate to what it is to be an animal in abstraction from individual instantiations. That is, through the concept of animal, we relate to what it is to be an animal in such a way that we can attribute this object of consciousness to more than one extracognitional individual. That manner of relating to objects is called "universality"; and cognitions which relate to objects in this manner are called "concepts." (A concept can be universal in this sense while being very fuzzy around the edges. All that universality requires is that an object of concept be attributable to more than one individual. Universality as here understood does not require decidability for all possible individuals.)

In its extracognitional existence, and in its status as object of perception, imagination, and memory, what it is to be an animal is not characterized by universality. But universality as a characteristic of our relation to objects of concept does not violate the principle that whatever exists must be individual. As compared to extracognitional animals, the object of the concept of animal is not individual, while they are. But as compared to other objects of concept, the object of the concept of animal is an individual object of concept. What it is to be an animal is one object of concept; what it is to be a star is another object of concept; what it is to be a computer is another, and so on. To recognize that universality characterizes the manner in which reason relates to its objects, one does not have to understand how one object of concept among others can be related to its extracognitional instances as attributable to more than one. But some brief words of explanation are in order, since most philosophers aren't even aware of the existence of the position that has been most commonly held by those of us who accept at least a moderate form of realism regarding universals.

Describing objects of concept as individual relative to other objects of concept does not require us to invoke a theory of types or any other theory of second-order predication. The relevant distinction is between the logical and the ontological domains, with the extracognitional causal factors necessary for the latter, not between prior and posterior orders in the logical domain. Whatever exists is individual. Therefore objects of concept and their extracognitional instances are individual. But

to have the individuality necessary for their extracognitive existence, the individuals to which the objects of our concepts are attributable must require the presence of a cause that is lacking in the existence of our concepts. Because that cause is present in extracognitive animals, extracognitive animals are individuals

relative to the object of the concept of animal. Because that cause is lacking in the extracognitional existence of concepts, the object of the concept of animal is attributable to more than one animal rather than being attributable to one extracognitional animal only. To know that universality does not violate any ontological principle, we do not have to know what that cause is. We only have to know the some ontological causal factor must be present in one case and absent in the other. (In fact, the cause is Aristotle's prime matter, but we do not have to know that.)

Universality itself is logical, rather than ontological. That is, the word "universal" refers to an object of rational consciousness that has no existence outside of rational consciousness; and it is present in rational consciousness only as a cognized relation between individual objects of concept and individual extracognitional existents. Once the epistemological threshold between the ontological and logical domains has been crossed, we can form other concepts whose objects are related to their instances as universals to individuals, without any question of the presence and absence of the ontological cause of individuality. That cause concerns extracognitional existence only. When the objects of concepts are logical relations or cognition-dependent constructs, causes of extracognitional existence are irrelevant. In each case, the object of concept will be only one among many objects of concept, but it will relate to its instances in the manner we call "universality." We can form such concepts without the presence and absence of the ontological cause of the individuality of our primary objects, because universality and individuality have already become objects of rational consciousness as a result of our epistemologically prior concepts of extracognitional natures.

For example, consider the object of concept: object-of-concept. As attributable to more than one instance, object-of-concept is universal relative to such instances as the object of the concept of animal and the object of the concept of star. (I chose this example to show that the present account of the universality of objects of concept is self-referentially consistent.) Object-of-concept is related to what it is to be an animal and what it is to be a star as a universal to individuals. But to be an object-of-concept is not a characteristic of what it is to be an animal or what it is to be a star in their extracognitional existence. Object-of-concept is a being of reason (as are being an object of proposition, a genus, a species, a set, a subset, and so on.) Hence the causes necessary for extracognitional existence do not enter the question of how object-of-concept can be attributed to more than one instance. But we have a concept of object-of-concept only because we first have concepts of extracognitionally existing natures whose individuation requires a cause that is lacking in our concepts. As a result of those original concepts, universality and individuality are objects of rational consciousness. Once universality and individuality have an existence in cognition, we can form concepts whose objects are related to their instances as universals to individuals without need of the extracognitional cause of individuation; for the only existence at issue, cognition-constituted existence, has already been accounted for.

### 5.1.2. The Universality of the Rational Appetite

We do not have to understand why the universality of concepts does not violate the need for whatever exists to be individual in order to know that the rational appetite relates to things, as reason does, in a manner characterized by universality. The evidence is as follows.

We are capable of asking questions like "What is the meaning of life?", "What does true happiness consist in?", "What should my goal in life be?", "Is there any end worth pursuing for its own sake and not for the sake of anything else?" When we ask such questions, we are relating to the objects of concepts like the meaning of life, happiness, goal, good-in-itself. But we are relating to these objects in a universal manner. That is, we are relating to them without attributing them to any individual instantiation. The answers to the questions will relate us to individual instantiations. But we ask the questions when we do not yet have answers. If we do not have answers, we do not know which of several possible individuals might embody the answer. Therefore, in asking the questions, we are relating to the objects of such concepts in abstraction from any individual instances.

Such concepts express in different ways what the rational appetite is oriented to. Since reason can relate in a manner characterized by universality to what the rational appetite is oriented to, the appetite oriented to things according to reason's knowledge must be able to relate to them in a similar manner. For reason to be so related to objects is not to be related to individual instances of them as the senses are, but to be related to objects attributable to more than one instance. (There may be only one true happiness, but insofar as grasped by a universal concept, happiness is not presented as identified with one and only one state.) Likewise, the rational appetite is not by nature oriented to choosing this or that individual end because the rational appetite is, by virtue of being oriented to ends as reason is oriented to objects, capable of relating to ends in a manner that transcends the individual alternatives that confront it. That is, just as an object of a universal concept is, when truthfully attributable, attributable to some individual instances not specified by the concept itself, the rational appetite must choose some individual good or happiness or meaning, etc., not specified by these universal concepts themselves. And just as an object of concept is not presented as identified with any individual instance, the rational appetite is not necessitated to choose this individual end as opposed to some other. If the rational appetite were so necessitated, it would not be a rational appetite, an appetite oriented to things according to reason's way of knowing things.

There is one crucial difference between the way universality characterizes reason's way of relating to objects and the will's way of relating to value, but this difference confirms rather than contradicts the will's lack of necessity with respect to individual goals. Reason can comprehend that a conceptual object is embodied in many individuals; reason does not have to choose between them. But the choices that confront the will are incompatible with each other. We cannot have everything. As an appetite, the will is oriented to valuing concrete states of affairs to be brought into existence by its decisions or, if already in existence, to be enjoyed. But as an appetite oriented to its ends according to the way reason knows things, the will relates to things in a universal manner, which means that the nature of the will forces it to choose some concrete state of



affairs but not this one as opposed to that. The appetite that values according to the way reason knows things is not forced to choose this end as opposed to that, since the objects of reason's concepts of good, value, end, etc. are, as universal, not presented as instantiated in this or that individual.

Of course, reason does more than form concepts. It also knows truths such as the truth that complete happiness could only be found in experiential

awareness of the concrete entity that is infinitely perfect. Does this knowledge force the will to choose courses of action compatible with the beatific vision? On the contrary, this knowledge confirms the will's freedom. As an appetite, the will is oriented to concrete ends to be known through experiential knowledge. Only experiential, concrete awareness of God could necessitate the will. If reason presented the will with the infinite being experientially apprehended, the will would necessarily, not freely, value that being as its complete good; for by hypothesis, there would be no reality lacking in the infinite being that the appetite could prefer to it. But propositional knowledge does not give us experiential knowledge of God. The only experiential awareness available to us is awareness of finite states of affairs. Confronted with anything less than an infinite being, including an action that was necessary for the will's access to the infinite being, the will's response is free, since any experientially apprehended finite reality could exclude some other reality that also offers an attraction for the will.

Thus, the will's relation to ends is necessary in some respects and not necessary in others. As a rational appetite, the will necessarily has the end of valuing things according to reason's knowledge of what they are. But in valuing things, the will is freely selecting the concrete ends our behavior will actually be directed toward. What those concrete ends actually will be is not necessitated by the nature of the will. Therefore, in the selection of its concrete ends, the will can succeed in fulfilling or fail to fulfill the finality that is necessarily inscribed in each of its acts, the finality of valuing things according to reason's knowledge of what they are. Some of the states of affairs the will has the power to make its concrete ends achieve that intrinsic finality, so do not. In other words, the will's attainment of its true natural end requires that it freely give things the place in our evaluations that is called for by its intrinsic finality, on the one hand, and what the things it is evaluating are, on the other. But it can also fail of its natural end by freely evaluating things as if they were otherwise than what they are. (The will's twofold way of relating to ends can also be expressed in terms of its own end and the ends of other inclinations and faculties. In selecting a concrete end, the will is always selecting the end of another faculty, set of faculties, or inclination of the nature that underlies our faculties -- the intellect, sexuality, nutritional faculties, our nature's inclination to self-preservation, and so on. Each act of the will has an intrinsic finality that can fail to be achieved as it chooses ends to which other faculties and inclinations are ordered.)

When a free choice occurs, then, does a change occur without causes sufficient to bring about this change? No, the causes are the nature of the rational appetite and the attractiveness perceived in the course of action chosen. But the will's universal manner of relating to its ends allows it to refrain from responding to any perceived attractiveness, since incompatible courses of action can also be attractive. Refraining is a nonact positing nothing new in existence and,

hence, requiring no causality. Responding, on the other hand, has sufficient causes in the perceived attractiveness and in the appetite's universal manner of relating to ends, since that relation to ends requires the appetite to choose some good as its concrete end. If some other cause were necessary for its acting or nonacting, the will would not be an appetite oriented to ends in a universal manner. That universality gives us the freedom to nonact or to allow an attraction to cause us to act.

Nonacting with respect to course of action A amounts to choosing as our concrete goal the state of affairs that will exist in A's absence. Of course, there is usually at least one other course of action, call it B, available to us. If we nonact with respect to A, we are still free to choose course of action B. But our choice of B is free because we can also nonact with respect to it. And we are always free to choose neither A nor B nor any other concrete state of affairs except the one that will exist if we do nothing.

Finally, freedom of choice answers a possible objection concerning one of the things that is necessarily true of all appetites but which would be true of the rational appetite even if it were not true of others. I have described the act of an appetite as an evaluating of the end desired or decided upon. To this way of describing appetitive acts, the response has been made that evaluations are cognitional rather than appetitive. For instance, the judgment that Horowitz is a better musician than the author is an intellectual act and is a different kind of act from the appetitive delight or dislike we experience on hearing a musician's playing. The general problem with this objection is that, while it is certainly true that there are cognitional acts that deserve to be called evaluations, it does not follow that appetitive acts are not evaluations in their own way. Aesthetic delight, for example, is a valuing or appreciating of an artist's work.

But even if appetitive acts should not be called evaluations, the analysis of the will's acts, though slightly more complicated, would stand. For the will's freedom means, among other things, that the will, rather than evidence, is the cause of the ultimate intellectual evaluation by which we direct ourselves toward ends. When I am deciding whether to have an ice cream cone, for example, I can let my knowledge of the pleasure I will derive determine the concrete end at which I will aim, or I can let my knowledge of the undesirable consequences for health that the calories and cholesterol can have determine my concrete end. Insofar as I act rationally, my direction to ends must be determined by knowledge of some kind; otherwise, my orientation to ends would be unconscious. But if knowledge necessitated the choice of one end, say, health, rather than another, the choice would not be free. The choice can be both free and directed by knowledge if and only if the knowledge by which I evaluate something as my actual concrete end is the result of the will's causing the intellect to use a certain part of its knowledge as that which will direct us toward our end. That is, it is an act of the will that causes our intellectual evaluation of something as the concrete end for our pursuit. And instead of explaining obligation in terms of the will's evaluations, I could have explained it in terms of the will's causing of the intellect's ultimate evaluations of things to be our actual, concrete ends. The will can cause such evaluations in a way that either accomplishes or fails to accomplish the will's intrinsic finality of deciding according to reason's prior knowledge of what things are.

## 5.2. Valuing Free Beings as Ends-in-Themselves

Since human nature gives us freedom of choice, human beings

are ends-in-themselves and should be treated as ends by the decisions of the rational appetite, while anything whose nature does not make it an end-in-itself is eligible to be treated as a means to the ends of those who are ends-in-themselves.

The nonfree being has ends, as any being does. That is, its nature is an orientation to certain forms of behavior that, ipso facto, are goals for those orientations. But the ends of a nonfree being are not its, do not belong to

it, in the sense that it does not give itself its relation to ends. The nonfree being's relation to ends come to it completely extrinsically; the universe gives it its relation to ends. There is nothing in the reality constituting its nature that gives it the power of selecting the ends of its own existence.

Let us assume you have constructed a mechanical device to perform some function. If that function is interfered with, there is an important sense in which the loss is to you and not to the device. The device has that function because you gave it a function in view of some goal of your own. The interference with the function is a loss to you because the device no longer serves to achieve your goal. Is it a loss to the device? In some respects, perhaps it is. But it is not a loss to the device in the sense of the device's being deprived of a pursuit of an end it gave itself. The device's end, that is, its function, is given it by something else in view of ends the other thing has given itself. The nonfree beings in nature are exactly like the device in this example, with one difference. The device is given ends by a being who does not get its ends from anywhere else but itself. Things in nature are given their ends by beings that do not give themselves their own ends but are themselves given their ends by other beings (\*I abstract for the sake of argument from the issue of divine creation). Endowing a natural being with ends is, in effect, nature's means of using that being to achieve nature's ends. This is not a back-door argument for design in nature. I am simply pointing out that when one thing is given its ends by another, the first thing is serving the ends of the second.

The makeup of a person, on the other hand, includes the power to determine its own ends. The external causes bringing us into existence determine our ends only in general (as long as they are in the domain of finite being). For example, it is a natural determination out of our control that we are oriented to acts evaluating things as if they existed, and as if we knew they existed, in certain ways. But our evaluations are made freely; hence, we can choose to evaluate things contrary to what we know of their being. In other words, that natural determination does not include a specification of any of the particular ends we actually direct ourselves to by our choices. We will necessarily choose some end or ends. But experience shows that humans are capable of making an indefinite variety of contradictory things the ends of their behavior. When we are talking about the concrete ends we are actually in pursuit of, the ends are our own in the sense that we are the ultimate and conscious cause of the fact that we are directed to these ends and not others. We cause our ends to be our ends; the ends we serve are not given us by another as means to its ends.

We can ask, however, how this fact about persons produces an obligation to treat them as beings whose actions are directed to their own ends, rather than using them as means to my ends regardless of how that affects their pursuit of their own ends. To argue from a person's being an end-in-herself in the sense of having freedom of choice to the conclusion that we should treat her as an end-in-herself in the sense of not using her as a means seems to be a clear case of attempting to derive ought from is.

But obligation consists in a describable fact, the fact that acts of the will have a finality whose fulfillment makes them intrinsically successful and whose lack of fulfillment makes them intrinsically defective. And everything already said about this concept of obligation both conforming to our everyday ethical concepts and solving philosophical problems like that of

deriving ought from is applies here. For to fail to treat another free being as an end-in-herself is to fail to evaluate her according to what she is.

Appetites evaluate things to be certain kinds of things, to exist in certain ways, just as belief asserts that things exist in certain ways. Things are evaluated, however, as ends or as means to ends; if something has a value for us, its value is that of an end or a means to an end. And there is such a thing as evaluating another person as an end. To will her equal opportunity in the pursuit of her ends is to make her equal opportunity one of our ends. But we cannot place a value on her pursuit of ends in abstraction from placing a value on her. The way I evaluate her relation to ends is the way I evaluate her. When we give her equal opportunity to pursue her ends, she has the place in our evaluations of someone "worthy" to pursue her ends, where "worthy" means fulfilling the finality of the appetite doing the evaluating. If so, we are evaluating her as an end, not as a means. When we give another person the status of an end in this sense, we are evaluating her to be what she in fact is. The place that she has in my evaluations is the place that she has in reality. In my evaluations, she has the status of a being oriented to her own ends, ends she sets for herself, and that is what she really is.

But if we fail to value her as someone whose ends are to have the same opportunity of accomplishment that our ends have, we evaluate her as if she was other than she is. What she is in our evaluations is a being oriented to the accomplishment of ends we set for her, rather than a being oriented to the accomplishment of ends she sets for herself. We may continue to believe she is oriented to ends she sets for herself, and that belief fulfills the intrinsic finality of belief, since it is true that she is a free being. But our evaluation is defective by the will's finality of evaluating things to be what they are. In our evaluations, she is not oriented to the accomplishment of ends she freely sets for herself. Hence, we have not given what she s the place due it in the evaluations of an appetite whose finality is to value things according to reason's knowledge of what they are.

Another way to put it. To value something is to give it the status, in our volition, of an end or a means to an end. Therefore, to value something according to our knowledge of what it is is to give it the status of an end or means to end an end, according to our knowledge of what it is. To evaluate another person is give her the value, for us, of being a means to an end we choose for ourselves or being someone whose pursuit of her own chosen ends is one of our ends. And therefore, to evaluate another person according to our knowledge of what she is is to give her the value of being directed to ends we choose or directed to her own chosen ends, according to our knowledge of what she is. But knowledge of what she is in what respect? In respect to being something whose action is directed to ends she sets for herself rather than being directed to ends given her by another. Why must the rational appetite evaluate persons according to what they are in this respect?

Like any appetite, the will evaluates things to be or not to



be the kind of thing the appetite is oriented to. If the will had a concrete mode of existence, such as some kind of sensory experience, as its necessary goal, it would evaluate sensory experiences by whether or not they were the kind of thing it was oriented to. With the exception of a being whose infinite perfection would fulfill the universal idea of being in itself, the will does not have such a necessary concrete goal. Still, the will is necessarily oriented to making free choices of whatever concrete goal or goals we will

actually achieve. And in making free choices, the will cannot avoid having the goal of evaluating things according to our knowledge of what they are. The will's necessary concrete goal, infinite being, is necessary only because the will is an appetite ordered to valuing things according to reason's knowledge, so the evaluation of things according to reason's knowledge, in making choices of our concrete goals, is an integral part of the will's necessary finality. But to evaluate is to make things our ends or means to our ends. As a result, the will cannot avoid having the goal of evaluating according to reason's knowledge precisely for the sake of freely making things our ends or means to our ends.

And for that reason, the will cannot avoid having the goal of valuing things according to our rational knowledge of them concerning that which the will necessarily does, namely, freely make things ends or means to our ends. Reason knows that the actions of other persons are, in reality, directed to their own freely chosen ends. But to evaluate them is to give them the place, in our values, of being ends or means, that is, the place of things whose actions are in pursuit of ends they set for themselves or things whose actions are in pursuit of ends we set. Therefore, if the will is not oriented to evaluating persons according to what reason knows about them in this respect, it is not oriented to evaluating according to what reason knows about them with respect to that which the will is necessarily ordered to, the free evaluation of things as its ends or as means to its ends.

The will can no more avoid treating things as if they existed the way they are evaluated than belief can avoid being an assertion that things exist in certain ways. Both belief and evaluation have the finality of identity between the way things exist and the way they are believed or evaluated to exist. To evaluate the actions of another person as not existing for the ends of that person is defective just as is the belief that the person does not set the ends for her actions. And when we do not give another person the equal opportunity to pursue her ends, the place her actions, and therefore she herself, have in our evaluations is not that of existing to accomplish her ends. The evaluation we put on her actions is solely from the perspective of our ends to the exclusion of hers. Her actions are evaluated either as serving our ends, in which case they are evaluated positively, or they are evaluated as interfering with our ends, in which case they are evaluated negatively. In either case, the value we place on her as an agent is from the perspective of whether her agency serves our ends as opposed to hers. The value she has in our system of ends and means is not that of being the person who determines the ends her actions are directed toward.

To sum up. The act of any appetite evaluates something to be or not be the kind of thing the appetite is oriented to. For the rational appetite to evaluate something to be or not to be the kind of thing the appetite is oriented to is to evaluate it as directed to its own freely chosen ends or as directed to an end the will sets for it, since the will is oriented to the free evaluation of things as ends for the will or as means ordered to the will's ends.

But we do not have to comprehend the philosophical analysis of free will to know that other persons deserve to be treated as ends by the rational appetite. At some age, a child becomes aware of the fact that, in pursuing rationally chosen goals, she is setting her own ends. And for the reasons discussed in Sections 1.1 and 3.2, she is aware of others as having a nature similar to hers with respect to the ability to pursue rationally chosen

goals. Hence, she is aware that others are like her in being able to set their own goals. If she does not give another the equal opportunity to pursue his goals, what he and his actions are in her values is not identical with what they are in reality and what she knows them to be. For in her values, he does not have the status of the person who sets the ends his actions are directed toward. And she is aware of this inherent defect in her evaluations.

In arguing that my analysis of obligation conforms to the common view, I described the common view as the belief that we should be treated equally. But treated equally in what respect? Treated equally as pursuers of goals. And to treat others equally as pursuers of goals is to treat them as ends-in-themselves, since it is to treat them as equal to us in being free pursuers of goals. If I give her equal opportunity to pursue ends, I treat her as having ends that belong to her as my ends belong to me; for I am making her pursuit of ends one of my ends. But if I do not make her opportunity to pursue of ends one of my ends, I treat her as if she were not equal in having ends that belong to her as my ends belong to me; for I am evaluating her relation to ends by its relation to my ends, which are other than her ends. I evaluate myself rather than her as the being who will set the ends to be accomplished. I therefore give myself a higher place than her with respect to setting ends.

But in addition to judging ethical obligation in terms of equality of treatment, the common person often speaks of it being wrong to "use" another person. The correspondence between this way of judging unethical behavior and the present analysis of obligation should be obvious. To judge an act as wrong is to employ a standard, a goal, by reference to which we evaluate the act. To judge it wrong to use another person is to judge it wrong to treat the other as a means to your ends in a way that prevents the ends of the other person from being fulfilled or, at least, having the opportunity of fulfillment. At every moment, we rely on the contributions of other persons to achieve our own ends. But the common belief is that we should not do so in ways that deprive other persons of the opportunity to achieve their ends. In other words, the common person believes that, in our evaluations, other persons should primarily be entities whose action is directed to their own ends rather than our ends. Why?

We know from our own case what rational decisions are. Hence we know from our own case that in making decisions we are setting our own ends. And we know that other persons are like us in being able to make rational decisions. Therefore we know that they too have the ability to set the ends their behavior is directed toward. But we also know from our own case that rational decisions have the finality of treating things as they are known to be. That is, we know that decisions evaluate things as if they existed in certain ways and, therefore, that decisions are defective if things do not exist as they are evaluated to exist. Since those decisions give other persons the status either of pursuing ends we set for them or of pursuing their own ends, the decisions are defective if they do not give them the status they are known to have in real existence, the status of pursuing ends they set for themselves. Our reflective knowledge of the nature

of decisions reveals that evaluating someone as ordered to our ends amounts to evaluating them as if their actions were not, in real existence, ordered to their own ends.

Another area of consistency between the analysis of obligation in terms of our being ends-in-ourselves and the earlier analysis needs to be pointed

out, namely, what was said in Section 4.4.3 concerning the justification of punishment. The discussion of punishment emphasized the restoration of equality, but only as a consequence of restoring of what is due by the standard of the will's finality of treating things according to what they are. The description of the will's finality can now be more specific: we must treat things as what they are with respect to the free choice of ends. But in human affairs, restoring what is due ends-in-themselves from the rational appetite will often require the decision to restore equality of treatment through punishment. (As for the other forms of punishment mentioned earlier, disapprobation and God's punishment, I hope the justice of disapprobation for treating another person as a means has been made clear, and God's punishment will be discussed further in Chapter 6.)

Note, however, that my arguments do not imply that freedom of choice is an end-in-itself. Neither the ability to choose ends nor the choice of ends is an end; they are means to our achievement of ends. It is beings whose nature gives them freedom of choice that we must treat as ends by allowing them to pursue their ends (as long as their choice of concrete ends does not violate the finality of the rational appetite).

For those who know that an infinitely perfect being exists, humans are ends-in-themselves in another sense that has even greater ethical significance. Just by having knowledge of God's existence, humans possess infinite perfection within themselves; for that is what knowledge is, having within us the being of the other in a way that allows us to remain other.\* That which is entitatively other than us also exists within us, by another mode of existence. The rational appetite, therefore, must esteem human beings as possessing or capable of possessing the fullness of that which it is the nature of the rational appetite to value, being. For a rational appetite, in other words, each human being has infinite value.

### 3.2. Equality and Human Nature

But in what respect are we equal in a way that would make the decision intrinsically defective as an act of a rational appetite? We are equal in the sense that we possess a common human nature. And a decision denying us equal opportunity is intrinsically defective because it cannot avoid treating us as if we were not equal in the sense of having a common human nature.

In deciding to deny Horowitz an equal opportunity to pursue his goals, I am giving myself a higher place in my evaluations. But in what specific respect do I evaluate myself as higher? In putting my interests ahead of his, I evaluate myself to be higher as a pursuer of goals. To give my pursuit of goals a higher place in my evaluations is the same as giving myself a higher place as a pursuer of goals. The reason the relative positioning does not stop at our desires is that we are aware of the desires as emanating from and belonging to Horowitz and myself. The recipients of the unequal evaluations are the concrete entities that are the agents and subjects of the conflicting interests. And to be a pursuer of goals here means to be a maker of

decisions based on rational knowledge, for the pursuit in question is the pursuit of goals chosen by acts of the rational appetite. In evaluating myself to be higher as a pursuer of goals, I am evaluating myself to be higher as a producer of rational decisions.

In a moment, I will discuss what "rational knowledge" means in this context. But first, what does evaluating another person to be unequal as a maker of acts of will have to do with inequality with respect to human nature? To be aware of myself as a producer of decisions is to be aware of myself as a being whose makeup includes features sufficient to enable me to produce decisions. And to be aware that another is equal to me as a pursuer of goals is to be aware that her makeup includes features sufficient to enable her to produce evaluations based on rational knowledge of what things are. The evidence that she is equal to me in this respect is the evidence that she too can consciously aim at making something exist as she has rationally conceived it to exist, that her conception of future goals can be based on her rational knowledge of what things are that already exist, and that her satisfaction in an accomplished goal can derive from rational awareness of what exists when that goal exists.

The features enabling me to cause decisions include proximate dispositions, for example, my state of readiness to make decisions when I am awake. They also include more remote dispositions, for example, the dispositions for making later decisions that I possess when asleep, drugged, or in a coma. But it is not the dispositions that cause decisions; it is I who cause decisions by means of whatever features of my being constitute my dispositions for making decisions. To be aware of myself as a cause is to be aware of myself as a concrete existent. Only concrete existents, not their features considered in abstraction, can be causes.

Therefore, in evaluating myself to be higher than another person as a producer of decisions, I am evaluating myself to be higher as a concrete entity whose features enable him to be the cause of decisions, and I cannot avoid evaluating myself as higher with respect to what makes me a cause of decisions. When I put my interest ahead of hers, the reason my comparative evaluation does not stop at the interests in abstraction from the entities whose interests are in conflict is that I am aware of our desires as achievements, effects, of dispositions belonging to us. But both the proximate and remote dispositions by which I cause decisions are themselves actualizations of more fundamental dispositions. If the fact that our desires are actualizations of dispositions requires evaluations made by rational beings not to stop at the desires themselves, that same fact requires that those evaluations not stop at the more proximate dispositions but extend to the more fundamental dispositions.

Indeed, for a being who evaluates things according to knowledge of what things are, the more fundamental dispositions must be the more fundamental features in respect to which the things are evaluated; otherwise, the evaluations would be defective by the standard of failing to evaluate according to our knowledge of what things are, the intrinsic finality of the will. For I am made a cause of decision principally, as opposed to

instrumentally and secondarily, by the more fundamental dispositions through which I produce the more proximate dispositions for decision. In particular, I have my proximate ability to make decisions because the organism that existed when I was a child developed that ability by means of causal dispositions it then possessed, causal dispositions that still exist in every cell of my body.

A child is an agent who will produce, in the course of her development, the dispositions enabling choice, just as a novice athlete is an agent who will produce, in the course of her training, the dispositions for feats she is now incapable of. And just as the agent who now produces admirable athletic feats is the same agent who undertook training some time ago, the person who now makes ethical decisions is the same agent who began developing the proximate ability to make decisions long before she had that ability. Contrast the existence of the sperm and ovum that will become the child to the existence of the child. When the sperm and ovum exist separately, there does not yet exist an agent whose causal dispositions will enable it to produce the proximate dispositions for choice; when the child exists, there does exist such an agent. Therefore, when the child begins producing choices, the agent producing them is the same agent that existed before. And it is this agent that we evaluate as equal or unequal to another person. Nature is a causal concept and a temporal causal concept. A nature is a set of features that accounts for ongoing development and change. Do we value an infant because of what it is or because of what it can become? A false dilemma. We value what it is because what it is now has a relation to what it can become. What it is now is a set of dispositions by which it is destined to become a mature human being, given the proper environmental support. The underlying dispositions that determine our other features constitute our nature. And whatever features constitute our mature ability to make decisions are themselves caused by means of the more fundamental features that belong to our nature.

Therefore, it is principally by means of the nature I already possessed as a child that I am a cause of decisions, somewhat as it is the artist rather than her tool that is principally the cause of a human fabrication. In order to make something, an artist may first have to make a tool. But the artist is more the cause of the final work than is the tool. The tool produces the effects it does only because it is both designed by and used by the artist to produce those effects. Likewise, in order to cause decisions, an organism must first produce whatever features proximately dispose it to cause decisions. Decisions are not ends in themselves; they are means to the kind of ends we are related to by the inclinations and faculties of our nature (see Chapter 5 and Section 6.2). In fact, the rational appetite is itself a means to ends, to achievements, relations to which are inscribed in the zygote; for evolution selected the human zygote because of its relation to achievements of that kind. Therefore, reason knows that the rational appetite and its decisions are related to the more fundamental dispositions of the rational decider the way tools are related to the artist; and an evaluation of humans as



pursuers of goals is defective as an act of a rational appetite if it does not evaluate us with respect what reason knows about the nature through which we principally become causes of rational decisions.

Another aspect of the features by which we make decisions leads to the same conclusion. Usually, the tools an artist makes in order to produce her final work exist independently of her, as brushes exist independently of the painter. However, the more proximate dispositions by which I make decisions exist in me derivatively and secondarily relative to the more fundamental features of which the proximate dispositions are achievements. The proximate dispositions exist only by residing in a being constituted what it is by more fundamental features, features by which the proximate dispositions are caused. And it would be defective for an appetite adapted to what exists as known by reason to value things according to what exists secondarily and derivatively more than what exists primarily and foundationally.

However, the features of our nature necessary for making decisions include many dispositions we share with nonhumans. Does it follow that I must give them a place equal to myself in my evaluations? No, the equality in question is equality as beings whose natures bestow on them, actually or potentially, the ability to pursue goals based on rational knowledge. The generic features we share with nonhumans are necessary but not sufficient for our having underlying dispositions that will produce the rational appetite, since rational appetite is specifically human. Hence, it would be defective to evaluate what these other beings are equally to what I am as a being that can produce acts of a rational appetite.

What about a species that did not share a common nature with us yet was able to make decisions based on rational knowledge? From the point of view of the finality of the rational appetite, what those beings were would call for equality of evaluation with what we are. That is why I said in Chapter 1 that community of nature was not precisely what constitutes ethical equality. What the argument of this section has emphasized is the causally underlying character of nature rather than its logical character of commonness. We evaluate actually or possibly existing entities, not logical relations. And we evaluate entities according to their underlying causal dispositions, since causes are what make things what they are, and reason is aware of that fact. Specifically, we evaluate entities according to the relation of the rational appetite to their underlying causal dispositions, since it is evaluations by means of the rational appetite that are in question.

(\*On the other hand, is a nature sufficient to produce a rational appetite common to all humans? What about the severely retarded or human offspring without human brains? The phenomena of idiot savants and of Downs' Syndrome victims attending college make it rash, to say the least, to assume that the retarded lack the kind of knowledge required for a rational appetite. More generally, there are only two possibilities. Either the afflicted human's causes, her parents, did not pass on a rational nature to their offspring, or a nature sufficient to produce rational faculties is present, but, due the presence or absence of

other causes whose cooperation or lack of interference is necessary, the rational nature cannot produce its normal effects. In the latter case, the afflicted human is equal in nature to us just as a zygote that has not yet produced its normal effects is equal in nature to us. And even if the former were the case, a decision to treat the afflicted human unequally would be defective unless we knew her causes had not passed a rational nature onto her, since we know that human parents normally do pass on a rational nature. Sufficient, though not necessary, evidence that her causes had given her a rational nature would be her ability to produce offspring with a rational nature. Other evidence could come from the kind of genetic repair that would correct the affliction.)

The question of human nature in the sense significant for the foundations of ethics, then, is not the question of whether we possess some identical genes or whether another species possesses some corresponding genes. Perhaps totally different combinations of genes can be functionally similar in that each combination supports an ability to make decisions based on rational knowledge. And perhaps some alien rational species does not reproduce by means of genes or does not even reproduce. Still less, therefore, is the question of human nature the question of whether some form of specifically human behavior is carried on the same way in all cultures, for example, the question whether some social rule is the same in all cultures. What if "human" cultures represented biologically distinct species? As long as the members of the cultures could make decisions based on the degree of rationality necessary to create social rules, these people would possess a rational nature in the required sense.

For the foundations of ethics, also, equality as pursuers of rationally chosen goals does not require equality in our degree of rational intelligence, in our degree of will power, or in any other degree. That is one implication of the fact that the rational appetite's finality is to evaluate us according to the underlying nature that gives us our rational appetite. Two beings whose degree of intelligence or will power differ greatly can each possess a nature that gives them a rational appetite. If so, to treat them unequally as pursuers of goals is to treat one of them as if its nature is not what it is; for as argued above, our evaluation does not stop at the behavior and cannot avoid dealing with the behaving entity as possessing the underlying causes of the behavior.

Even underlying nature, however, can be subject to degrees. Assume that what gives us a rational appetite is substance X; assume further that rational beings can have more or less of substance X. Would it be defective for a rational appetite to evaluate these beings equally as pursuers of goals? No, even members of different species would be equal from the point of view of the finality of the rational appetite, if their underlying natures endow them with the ability to make decisions based on rational knowledge. A fortiori, beings so endowed by different degrees of the same substance are equal from that point of view. Reason knows that quantities, that is, numbers and dimensions, exist only as quantities of something, of things and

states of affairs with quantitative characteristics. In other words, reason knows that quantities exist secondarily as characteristics of something that exists more fundamentally. And, again, it would be defective for an appetite oriented to evaluating according to reason's knowledge to evaluate according to what exists secondarily and derivatively rather than primarily and foundationally.

But what if the difference between a subrational being, a chimp, say, and a rational being where a certain degree of substance X? No matter. Since a chimp's degree of substance X does not give the chimp a rational appetite, failure to treat a chimp equally as a pursuer of goals is not failure to treat it as what it is. Failure to treat a human equally as a pursuer of goals, on the other hand, is failure to treat her as a being with a nature like ours insofar as our nature endows us with a rational appetite.

But what is this degree of intellectual ability called "reason" that humans have and other species lack? In particular, what is it that makes those who have the ability to value things according to reason's knowledge equal from the point of view of this evaluative ability? In this context, reason is the ability to know not-directly-sensible truths concerning the causal dispositions things possess in order to act on the senses as they do. The senses do not simply make us aware of the way things act on the sense organs. By making us aware of the way things act on us, the senses make us aware of things as having features enabling them to so act; for to know that something is acting on us in a certain way is to know that it is able to so act. But by the senses we can know nothing more of what these enabling features are other than the fact that they exist and enable this action. By reason, on the other hand, we can know truths about what these features are beyond their directly sensible manifestations. In other words, reason gives us an awareness of the what the dispositions are that underlie the sensible characteristics of things.

But even more specifically in the context under consideration for ethics, reason is the ability to know that some beings do, and some do not, possess unobservable features similar to those we observe in ourselves by introspection. For that is the awareness required to judge the equality and inequality of other beings to us as pursuers of goals. To evaluate myself to equal to another person as a cause of decisions, I do not need an explicit concept of causal dispositions nor of the relations between proximate dispositions, remote dispositions, and human nature. Nor do I have to understand human genetics or development. At some age, children can be aware of the fact that, behind the directly observable behavior of other humans, are unobserved abilities like the ones the child directly observes through introspection. Children give evidence of this kind of awareness when they ask others to close their eyes and imagine, remember, count silently, think of a number from one to ten, etc.

It is not necessary to know at what age that childhood awareness reaches the level crucial for ethics. But at some point, a child is able to judge that other persons are like she

is in being the kind of thing from whom decisions emanate and in which decisions reside. She is also able to judge that infants and the unconscious are of the same kind as her in this respect, even if they not now have the ability to make decisions. And she can judge that nonhuman species give no evidence of being things of this kind. They give no evidence of having the kind of awareness of what things are on which she is able to base decisions, as she knows through introspection.

Thus, there is nothing arcane about the concepts of nature and reason necessary for ethics. If children can know that animals do not have a rational nature in the ethically significant sense, philosophers should be able to also. There are many difficult questions about the differences between animal and human mental capabilities, but the question of an ethically significant difference should not be counted among them. A chimp is capable of recognizing another chimp. But recognizing two things as being of a kind is not the same as knowing the truth of a judgment about unobservable causal dispositions accounting for observable behavior. Even granting chimps knowledge of sentential truths, the truths they are capable of grasping are not of the kind whose verification requires appeal to principles such as "Similar causes have similar effects," "Dissimilarities in effects require dissimilarities in their causes," or "Since the goal of judging truth is conformity with what exists, where there is no evidence for the existence of diverse causes, there is no evidence that the goal of judgment is achieved by positing them."

However, principles like these are implicit in a child's reasoning at some early stage. Learning from experience, which chimps can do, is not the same as judging a sentence about causal relations to be the only acceptable hypothesis on the basis of inductive evidence. Even the noninductive judgment that a chimp's senses make it aware of a thing as having causal dispositions by which the thing acts on the senses is a judgment achieved by reason, which chimps do not share, rather than by the senses themselves, which chimps do share. Might chimps have the ability to judge the truth of an inductively established hypothesis about causal dispositions without displaying that ability? Perhaps. But even children are capable of knowing that, while we can imagine rocks thinking, it would be foolish to believe they do. And if it is foolish, it is hardly consistent with the finality of an appetite oriented to valuing things according to reason's knowledge.

There is a virtuous circle worth noting in our awareness that others are equal to us from the point of view of the rational appetite's finality. Briefly put, to be aware of others as equal is to be aware of them as rational; to be aware of them as rational is to be aware they have the same kind of knowledge as that by which we are aware of their rationality. If the essence of reason were the awareness that someone else had reason, the circle would be vicious. Rather, reason is the faculty by which we know the natures of things, and among the natures we know are the natures of things endowed with reason as we are.

To return to the main point. The features primarily responsible for our being causes of decisions are features

belonging to our underlying nature. Therefore, in denying her an equal opportunity to pursue goals, I cannot avoid evaluating us as if we were unequal with respect to our underlying nature. Since the finality of the rational appetite is (1) to evaluate concrete entities (2) according to what reason knows of them, my evaluation could abstract from the nature only if I did not know that the underlying nature made me the kind of entity that can make decisions. In making the decision, I am evaluating myself as a certain kind of agent. The fact that it is my nature that enables me to be such an agent by producing the proximate dispositions is something that could not be altered by a choice to act as if it was not. If I chose to kill someone who was unconscious on the grounds that she was not then equal to me with respect to the proximate ability to make decisions, my decision could not avoid evaluating her as if her nature were not equal to mine. I would still be evaluating one concrete entity as being higher than another in respects that include human nature. For I would be evaluating myself as the kind of entity from which decisions emanate, that is, as having whatever the features are that enable me to cause decisions.

In denying another person equal opportunity to pursue goals, I am consciously relating to existing things as if what they are in themselves was not what I know them to be. Therefore, my decision is defective as the conscious act of a rational being just as a false belief is defective, that is, not by the standard of some finality external to itself, but by a finality it has just by being what it is. Acts of that kind happen to exist. Not only that, but we cannot avoid producing them. And we can no more change the structure of those acts as acts of a rational appetite than we can change the structure of belief so that falsehood would not be a defect.

Finally, it is important to recall again that equality of evaluation is not the goal of the rational appetite's intrinsic finality; the goal is evaluation of things according to what they are. But the failure to evaluate our equals as equal to us requires us to fail to evaluate either them or ourselves according to what we are. On the other hand, for those who know that an infinite being, possessing all possible modes of being, exists, a decision not to love that being completely and above all else would be defective by the standard of an appetite oriented to esteeming things according to what reason knows of the being they possess. Equality would not be at issue. (Why, then, would it not be defective to value my African violet more than my dog, since the dog is higher on the scale of being? See Section 5.3.)

#### 4. The Nature of Obligation

The preceding comparison of ethical decision with belief will enable us to analyze our fundamental ethical concepts. I have described a factual state of affairs, namely, the fact that the will's acts have an intrinsic finality and that those acts can be defective by the standard of that finality. But I have so far introduced no ethical terms into the discussion. I have not even made an ethical judgment about the kind of defect I have described in ethical decisions. I have not, for instance, claimed that we are obliged to avoid such defects or that we

ought not make decisions having them. I have not said that equals deserve or have the right to be treated equally.\*

In this chapter, I will argue that ethical obligation consists in the factual situation I have described. For one thing, our common beliefs about obligation require and use the concept of the rational appetite with its intrinsic finality. That concept is what is involved in our everyday uses of ethical terms. I will not try to argue that this account of ethical terms conforms to the usage of any particular philosopher. Instead, I will argue that analyzing ethical concepts in this way answers the main philosophic objections to the unconditionality, objectivity, and knowability of obligation. Philosophers wanting to defend ethical deontology, categoricity, and absoluteness, as well as naturalness and knowability, do not need any other meanings for ethical terms. This despite the fact that the analysis is based on finality and appetite.

I begin with a statement, in Section 4.1, briefly explaining the meaning of ethical terms by reference to the rational appetite and its intrinsic finality. The significance of the statement will unfold as I defend it in subsequent sections.

#### 4.1. The Meaning of Ethical Terms

#### 4.2. Rational Appetite as a Common Belief

What does analyzing ethical concepts by reference to the rational appetite's intrinsic finality have to do with our everyday ethical judgments?

#### 4.4. The Sufficiency of This Explanation of Obligation

Adequate foundations for ethics must do much more than my account has done so far. For one thing, an adequate account must explain the intrinsic defectiveness of unfairness in cases other than cheating on competitive examinations. For another, an adequate account must explain how we judge what is fair and what is not.

Section 4.4.1 discusses our knowledge of the correctness or incorrectness of ethical decisions. That discussion begins the treatment of cases other than cheating on a competitive examination. Hopefully, the examples of Section 4.4.1 are sufficient to show that the intrinsic finality of the rational appetite can account for obligation in all cases where the issue is justice in the sense of fairness toward other rational beings. (Issues of other kinds will be considered in Section 5.3 and Chapter 6.)

#### 4.4.1. Our Knowledge of Our Ethical Obligations

This account obligation provides an objective, verifiable way of knowing the truth of "This decision is ethically correct" or "This decision is ethically defective." For the moment, consider only the example of cheating on a competitive examination. Reason judges the ethical correctness or defectiveness decision by whether beings whose nature makes them equal to what we are as pursuers of goals have a place equal to ours in our evaluations. In other words, reason judges a decision to be good or bad that way it judges the proposed belief that the natures of things are equal or unequal to be true or false. The evidence for the latter is also evidence for the former.

I have discussed that evidence in Sections 1.1 and 3.2. The point there was that only a narrow understanding of similarity in nature is needed for this account of obligation and that the evidence of observation is overwhelmingly in support of that understanding. Very elemental causal reasoning leads to the conclusion that we are similar in having an underlying nature accounting for our ability to base decisions on rational knowledge. Again, the evidence of similarity in nature in the required sense is basically the same as the evidence for other minds. The causal reasoning involved, like all causal reasoning, is nonHumean. It is not a matter of subsuming less universal connections under more universal. It is a matter of recognizing that changes, since they occur to things other than themselves, are dependent on other entities, and a matter of attributing the causing of changes to the kind of things necessary to satisfy the dependency. Children are capable of this reasoning -- perhaps because they have not yet read Hume and been conditioned to think that we cannot know that changes require causes.

But reason can give us more information pertinent to the rational appetite's finality than the fact that our natures make us equal as pursuers of goals. Reason's knowledge of human nature, human behavior, and the environments in which we live also provides criteria for judgments concerning the relative importance of conflicting interests. Experience provides ample evidence that some things are more important than others to our ability to pursue chosen goals; that is, reality establishes conditions necessary for us to have equal opportunity in the pursuit of goals, and experience shows us what those conditions are. We have empirical evidence of conditions related to our ends as necessary or normally necessary means, and we have evidence of the relative importance of different conditions to our pursuit of ends.

For example, biological facts about human nature reveal that some physical conditions are normally necessary for our pursuit of goals, and that some physical conditions are more necessary than others. Also, facts about the environments in which we pursue goals make some things normally necessary for the pursuit of goals that might not otherwise be necessary. On this planet, for instance, we usually need to earn a living, unless our goal is to die of exposure or starvation. Finally, observation of human behavior reveals the relative importance of different goals to different individuals and cultures. When our interests are in conflict with the interests of others, we have to evaluate the relative importance of the conflicting goals and/or of the interfered with means to goals. Failure to evaluate the conflicting ends or means according to what their relative importance is as known by reason can result in failure to evaluate the others to be equal to us as pursuers of goals.

For example, does my desire for loud music at 4 o'clock in the morning make it justifiable for me to keep the person in the next apartment awake? We know this is not the case from our knowledge of the biological needs of human nature. A decision that would evaluate my listening to loud music as equal or higher on a scale of priorities to her sleeping would give these things relative places in my evaluations in conflict with their relative

importance to our ability to pursue chosen goals. If it is just to keep another awake with loud music, then at least one horn of the following dilemma must hold: her interests are not equal to mine (our natures are not equal), or human nature makes loud music as necessary as a good night's sleep for our having the ability to pursue goals. Since in fact human nature makes sleep more necessary, I am depriving her of an equal opportunity to pursue her interests and, therefore, treating her as if her nature did not make her equal to me as a pursuer of goals.

But can someone not have loud music at 4 a.m. as her goal? Yes, and there is nothing wrong with that, unless pursuing that goal deprives others of an equal opportunity to pursue their goals. And reason is able to judge from experience whether that is the case. The amount of sleep people need differs from individual to individual. But experience shows that a certain amount of sleep is necessary for earning a living, which, in turn, is normally necessary for pursuing goals like listening to music. Therefore, by depriving another of sleep, I am treating her unequally as a pursuer of goals.

Among the conditions we need for the pursuit of our ends are social arrangements and institutions. For example, the pursuit of many of our ends requires relying on commitments given us by others. If in the pursuit of some end I break a commitment, I am treating the other unequally unless my breaking the commitment provides for a need that observation shows to be more important to us as pursuers of goals than is the commitment in question. The observation, again, is observation of biological facts, of our environments, and of our behavior. In all normal circumstances, to break an appointment to play golf for the sake of watching a cartoon on television would be to treat the other unequally as a pursuer of goals; breaking the appointment would evaluate watching cartoons to be as important a goal, or a means to goals, as keeping the commitment. We know that is not normally true from our observation of human behavior, of the time, energy, and resources we invest in differing pursuits, of the way we complain when deprived of different ends or means to ends, etc., and from our observation of the things, like the keeping of social commitments, that nature and environment make necessary as means for the achievement of ends.

To understand the kind of knowledge involved, consider cases in which it would not be unfair to break the appointment for the sake of watching cartoons. We can imagine an espionage or science fiction situation where watching the cartoon would be necessary to save other persons from destruction or from some debilitating disease. Here, observation could inform us that keeping the appointment would deprive others of a condition necessary to pursue any end, existence, or a condition normally necessary for the pursuit of ends, health. So observation would inform us that keeping the appointment would treat others unequally as pursuers of ends. Or we can imagine a culture in which the opportunity to watch cartoons was a rare and highly prized occurrence, much more highly prized than playing golf. Observation of behavior in this culture could show us that people would not expect someone to keep an appointment for golf, if the opportunity to watch cartoons came up. If I criticized someone



for not keeping the appointment, I would be treating her differently from the way I would expect to be treated in the same circumstance. Therefore, I would be treating her unequally as a pursuer of goals.

At the other extreme would be the person who treats another unequally just by choosing to make watching cartoons her end at that time and thereby deprives another person of the opportunity to pursue their end, since pursuing their end depends on the first person keeping the prior commitment to play golf. Contrast this to breaking the appointment for the sake of taking your sick child to the hospital. It would be defective act of the rational appetite to evaluate keeping the appointment to be a condition equally or more important to the human pursuit of ends than is health; for the evidence of experience shows that health is in all normal circumstances a more necessary prerequisite for the pursuit of ends than is the keeping of appointments. Therefore, keeping the appointment would deprive the child of an equal opportunity to pursue her ends. Of course, there are also abnormal circumstances. An invalid, for example, is not treating us unequally if she asks us to do for her things she cannot do in return. On the contrary, we would be treating her unequally if we did not give her special treatment, since we would be depriving her of conditions necessary for her pursuit of ends. Her physical condition limits her range of choices in ways we are not responsible for and are not responsible for correcting, since we do not have the ability to correct them. But within those limits, she can choose goals, and we would be depriving her of equal opportunity to pursue goals if we did not supply her with necessary means by doing things for her we are not obligated to do for others. The difference between her physical condition and ours makes different treatment necessary if we are to give her a place equal to ours in our system of values. Of course, invalids can make unreasonable demands. Reason is aware that we all have limited time, abilities, and resources. And when we attempt to balance her pursuit of goals against what we need to pursue our goals, we are attempting to evaluate the relative importance of differing goals and means for achieving goals according to reason's knowledge of human nature and the human condition.

Thus, the existence of abnormal circumstances contradicts nothing I have said about our ability to know the truth of ethical judgments nor about the nature of those judgments. We have empirical evidence that different people have different needs, if they are to have an equal opportunity to pursue goals. As the last example is meant to illustrate, the fact that experience provides evidence for ethical judgments does not imply that these judgments are always easy. Differences in needs and abilities, and differences in natural and social relations, between human beings often make it difficult to judge what constitutes equality in treatment of people as pursuers of goals. But that difficulty does imply that ethical judgments are subjective and relative to egocentric interests, nor does it imply that ethical judgments are not made on the basis of experiential evidence. On the contrary, a theory implying that such difficulties do not or should not exist would be

inconsistent with evidence. What these difficulties do indicate is the complexity of human nature and the complexity of the situations within which objective moral values are at stake. Likewise, complexity may make the laws of acoustics and hydrodynamics difficult to apply in practice. Complexity does not make them subjective.

For example, reason does not always know the exact point at which an invalid's demands on us are unfair. But the existence of unclear cases does not disprove the existence of clear cases. Clear cases of reasonable and unreasonable demands exist, respectively, before and after that point.

Furthermore, our empirically based knowledge of human nature, environments, and behavior provides a standard by which we can judge that some individual needs are pathological and do not impose moral obligations. If someone has a psychological need for loud music twenty-four hours a day, we have no obligation to let her fulfill that need. Rather, those with the appropriate social relation to her (her spouse, her mature children, her pastor, etc.) would have the obligation to help her overcome that need. For we have ample evidence that such a need cannot be fulfilled without depriving others of their needs. Not only that, but we have ample evidence that abandonment to that goal would deprive her of means the human condition makes necessary for the ability to pursue other goals she could reasonably be expected to have. Tomorrow she may have different goals for which she needs the good will she has lost by her previous behavior, or she may develop a medical or legal problem she cannot afford to pay for due to her past decisions. We know that such occurrences are real possibilities because we know that the world, including human beings, is what it is.

As explained earlier, when I put my interests ahead of another's, my evaluation cannot stop at the desires but must include the entities to whom the desires belong. That is why equality of opportunity does not obligate us to refrain from using our abilities when they are greater than another person's abilities. Equality of opportunity in the pursuit of an end is equality of opportunity for another concrete entity with all the features that constitute her being, even if we are unequal with respect to those features. Equality of opportunity is equality for us to use the means at our disposal, especially means that are features of the concrete entities who are the objects of our evaluations. Our differing abilities, however, are not the only means we use in the pursuit of goals. In the environments in which we live, possession of property is a normally necessary means for the pursuit of goals. If I could play the piano like Horowitz but could not purchase food, clothing, and shelter, I could not long use my musical ability as a means to my ends. And just as equality as pursuers of goals does not make it defective for us to use abilities that are greater than those of another, equality as pursuers of goals does not make an unequal distribution of property intrinsically defective. Nothing in the finality of the rational appetite, for instance, makes it defective to reward someone with greater skill in proportion to their accomplishments.

Still, there are intrinsically defective ways of obtaining

property. In particular, it would be defective to deprive someone of property without their informed consent. I would not be treating her equally as a pursuer of goals, just as I would not be treating her equally if I prevented her from using her abilities to the fullest. Her possession of property is just as much a fact about the concrete entity I am evaluating as is her possession of unequal abilities. Property is different in that it is a social arrangement rather than a personal endowment. But we are social beings, and social arrangements are among the means necessary to pursue personal goals. On the other hand, our knowledge of human existences shows that there are things more necessary to us than property. Property is a means to things, like food and shelter, without which we would not be able to make use of our personal abilities to achieve other ends. Someone without enough property to provide the things more fundamental to us than property may have no way to obtain them other than to take from those with more than enough. To do so would not be to evaluate anyone unequally to us as pursuers of goals.

Incidentally, there are many ways to treat others unequally with respect to resources. If I drink the spring water at work but deliberately avoid doing my share of changing the bottle, I am evaluating others unequally to me as pursuers of goals. For I am making them spend more time and energy than I am spending for the same benefit.

With reference to unequal personal endowments, notice that there are many cases where we are obligated to evaluate human beings according to their inequalities. Thus, if I am judging a competitive examination to decide which of the competitors most merits some award or position, I am obligated to judge on the quality of performance, rather than, say, decide for someone because she is my cousin. But even though I should judge the competitors by certain of their inequalities, the basis of obligation remains the fact that, to treat them according to what they are, I must treat them equally as pursuers of goals. What bestows moral significance on such inequalities and makes my evaluating people on the basis of inequalities an obligation is the fact that these inequalities belong to beings who are equal to one another and to me in having human nature. If my cousin is competing with Horowitz in a piano competition, they do not have equality of opportunity in the pursuit of goals if they are not going to be judged by the quality of their playing. So in deciding for my cousin on the basis of kinship, I am denying Horowitz equality of opportunity.

Among the most important diversities in conditions that differentiate our obligations are the husband-wife and parent-child relations. Assume two children are drowning. One of them is my child; the other is not. If I can only save one of them, I am obligated to try to save my child. I am a cause of the fact that my child is now in need of help, since she would not be in need if I had not brought her into existence. I am not a cause of the fact that the other child is now in need of help. If I chose to save the other child at the expense of my own, I would be being unfair to my child. I would be pursuing my goal by causing her to be deprived of something she needs to be able to pursue any goal, life; for I am a cause of the fact that she has

a life that will be lost by my pursuit of my goal. Therefore I am placing myself as a pursuer of goals ahead of her in my evaluations. But if I chose to save my child at the expense of the other's life, I would not be a cause of the other's being deprived of life, since I am not a cause of the fact that she has a life to lose. Therefore, my decision would not evaluate her unequally to me or to my child in human nature, but would correctly evaluate her as unequal to my child with respect to my pursuit of goals being a cause of her deprivation. The alternative to evaluating her unequally in this respect would be to evaluate my child unequally as a pursuer of goals.

If, however, the other child was drowning because I had accidentally pushed her in, I would have more obligation to save her than my own child, since I would be a more direct cause of her need of help. By deciding to save my child, I would be pursuing my goal by causing the other to be deprived of life, since I am the cause of the fact that she will not live unless I save her. Thus, I would be evaluating her unequally to myself as a pursuer of goals.

A final example. The evidence of experience shows that lying usually violates the finality of the rational appetite by treating others unequally. But experience also shows that telling the truth can sometimes deprive others of an equal standing in my evaluations. I can be obligated to lie to save someone from an unjust death, since not lying would amount to participating in an intrinsically defective act on the part of the would-be killer. In other words, lying is wrong when it treats another unequally as a pursuer of goals, but right when telling the truth would treat another unequally. As in the previous examples, the ethical correctness or defectiveness of the decision is constituted by a factual state of affairs; and the difference between these cases is judged by the evidence of experience.

XXXXXXX.

1. Causal Realism: An Essay on Philosophical Method and the Foundations of Knowledge (Lanham, Maryland: 1985).

2. Ibid.

3. For the relation of the will to ethical knowledge, see Section ???. For the relation of the foundations of ethics to ethics, see Section ???.

4. Deliberated desire, Nichomachean Ethics III, 3: 113a10; acting against knowledge, ibid. VII, 2-3:1145b21-1147b20.

5. See Section 2.1.

6. Of course, a desire can also be described as relating us to some mode of existence in accordance with its appetite's relation to that mode of existence. Appetite or not, the will is doing nothing strange when it causes decisions relating us to what things are. Other words for this relation would be "esteeming," "estimating the worth of," or "appreciating." Desires and decisions estimate or appreciate the worth of things with respect to the finalities of appetites and our decision-making ability, respectively.

7. If the contestants do not have equal abilities, would equality of opportunity require the more able person to refrain from using his abilities to the extent that they exceed the abilities of the less able person?

I discuss that question in Section ????. In the meantime, recall that the interests of the prospective employer are also at stake. Her goal is to find the person with most ability to do the job. An ethical requirement that the more able person hold himself back would deprive the employer of the opportunity to pursue her goal. In order to simplify the discussion in the text, however, let us only consider the contestants' pursuit of goals.

8. Notice that the judge has the obligation to judge Horowitz to be a better piano player. An evaluation to the contrary would be at least aesthetically defective, because it would fail to evaluate our respective musical abilities to be what they are. But the defect need not be a moral defect. The judge may misevaluate our musical ability because, for example, she is ill. But if she judges me the winner of the competition because I am her cousin, she is making a morally defective decision; for she is obligated to judge us according to our unequal musical abilities. The reason an unequal evaluation is morally obligatory, not just aesthetically appropriate, is our equality as makers of reason-based decisions. That is, the equality of the judge and the contestants as rational choosers of goals often makes it obligatory for the judge to evaluate the contestants unequally in other respects. Failure to evaluate the contestants unequally in those respects in which they are unequal can constitute a failure to evaluate them equally in respect to being pursuers of rationally chosen goals. Both the equalities and inequalities concern what the things being evaluated are, but what we are as decision makers causes a moral obligation to evaluate our inequalities according to our knowledge of what they are. Objective facts of nature make Horowitz more suited to the job of piano player than I, but other objective facts of nature, the rational appetite's finality and our relation to it, make it morally obligatory to judge Horowitz more suited to the job than I. On the other hand, what we are with respect to being rational

decision makers often makes it obligatory to overlook our inequalities in other respects. If Horowitz and I are starving, we have an equal right to be fed, because we each depend equally on food for the ability to pursue our goals. See Chapter ?? for more on these and similar issues.

9. We can choose to give ourselves less opportunity than another person to pursue a goal; for we can decline to claim a right. To do so, however, is to choose to subordinate our desire for the immediate end for which we are competing to some, ipso facto, higher end. See Section ??.

10. This is sufficient to distinguish rational knowledge from sense knowledge. But a complete analysis of what reason is would account for the fact that there is rational knowledge, as opposed to sensory knowledge, of directly sensible objects. The first difference is that reason forms universal concepts of sensible objects and uses those concepts to know the truth of propositions about sensory objects. Secondly, those propositions, together with necessary truths about causal relations, enter into reasonings that give us knowledge of truths about the nature of those sensible objects as well as their not-directly-sensible causes. Such reasoning is different from sensory association. Animals learn from experience. But inductive reasoning leads us to knowledge, in the strong sense, that it is un"reasonable" (contrary to the finality of our faculty for believing propositional truths) to believe the opposite of a proposition asserting a necessary causal connection or an effect of a necessary causal connection.