PURELY DYNAMIC EUDAIMONISM

by

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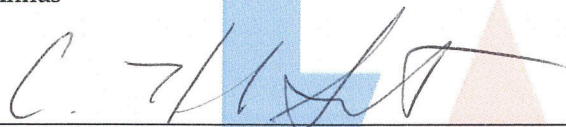In the Graduate College

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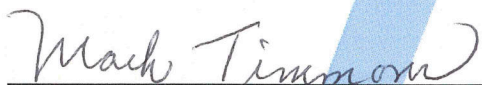
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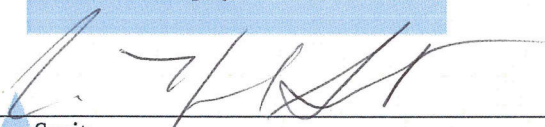
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DEDICATION

To the memory of Bob "Stingray" Hargrave

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ABBREVIATIONS

This list also serves to indicate translations used.

De Fin.	*On Moral Ends* Cicero (2004)
EN	*Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle (2000)
Gorg.	*Gorgias* in Plato (1997)
Phileb.	*Philebus* in Plato (1997)
Rep.	*Republic* in Plato (1997)
Sym.	*Symposium* in Plato (1997)

ABSTRACT

Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism (PDE) is a novel view according to which the final end of practical reasoning is virtuous activity. It stands in contrast to views which focus on the possession of virtue, views according to which our final end is the obtaining of some other state of affairs or engaging in some other activity, and views that fail to cleanly distinguish between virtue and its exercise. PDE is favourably distinguished from other eudaimonist views, such as Hursthouse's (1999), by how it engages with the intellectualism problems, and egoism objections, that face theoretical appeals to eudaimonia. In particular, problems of intellectualism are not explicitly engaged with by existing eudaimonisms, but PDE brings to light, and is partly motivated by, an appreciation of them.

PDE deploys the concept of eudaimonia to explain how developing virtue involves developing a unified practical understanding of what's unconditionally valuable. The appeal to eudaimonia also enables us to better ground the aspiration to develop the virtues in human lives by explaining how that aspiration is a rational response to the sorts of challenges and conflicts that arise in any adult life. Against non-eudaimonist philosophies of happiness, such as Wolf's (2016a, 2016b, 2015; Wolf et al. 2010), PDE better accounts for how ethical improvement makes lives good; it also explains how the process of integrating our practical concerns itself contributes to making lives good.

I defend PDE in three stages. Firstly, I provide a taxonomy of conceptions of happiness, giving precise accounts of the features shared by all and only eudaimonist conceptions of happiness (including a minimalist theory of virtue), while also explaining how eudaimonisms differ from one another. I then argue against representative views drawn from each category of the taxonomy, other than PDE's category. Finally, I provide positive arguments for PDE by expanding upon the minimal virtue theory common to all forms of eudaimonism. PDE is different from other eudaimonisms in holding that happiness is virtuous activity alone, that virtue is not perfectible, and that to exercise virtue is always further to develop it. These theses distinguish PDE from archetypal Aristotelian conceptions of virtue and happiness, and each has significant normative implications, which I explain and explore.

CHAPTER 1

THE STRUCTURE OF CONCEPTIONS OF HAPPINESS

1 Introduction

Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism is the view that the final end of practical reasoning is virtuous activity. The quality of our activity is understood to be the way in which we are living our lives, where the latter is understood in distinction from the circumstances in which we live our lives. The quality of our activity is determined by how well we handle, or respond to, whatever circumstances we find ourselves presented with. Then, for the living of our lives to have the quality of being virtuous activity is just for us to be handling the circumstances of our lives well. So the final end of practical reasoning is handling the circumstances of our lives well. Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism makes the further claim, following *EN* I, that happiness is the achievement of the final end of practical reasoning. Putting these together, we obtain the thesis that happiness is virtuous activity. The good life is the one in which the agent is actively engaged in the activity of responding well to the circumstances that come her way.

Commonsensically, how well someone manages to handle the things with which life faces her has something to do with the question of whether her life is a good one. We pity celebrities who seem to be responding poorly to the circumstances of fame and extreme wealth, and call them unhappy. On the other hand, we don't merely *admire* someone who is dealing magnanimously with unenviably difficult circumstances. Rather, comparing how she lives her life with the mediocre ways in which we lead our own, the fact that things are much more comfortable for us does nothing to dispel the sense

that what she is engaged in is rather more worthwhile. In the closing scenes of the 2001 film *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*, one of the heroes, Aragorn, finds himself suddenly in much worse circumstances. He has been cut off from doing anything further to help Frodo complete his mission, which makes the success of that mission significantly more precarious; Boromir, with whom he was developing an important fraternal bond, is dead; his other halfling charges, Merry and Pippin, have been taken prisoner; and his companions and friends Legolas and Gimli are both despairing that there is anything now worthwhile to be done. Yet his response is to note the resources still available, and commit both him and his companions to do the best they can with those resources: "We will not abandon Merry and Pippin to torture and death. Not while we have strength left."

We do not simply admire as morally worthy Aragorn's commitment to rescuing the halflings. Rather, we think of times when we gave up too easily in the face of setbacks, and if we think we haven't yet improved upon that tendency, we take our own lives to be *less good*, in this respect, than Aragorn's. And the facts that our friends are mostly still alive, and we remain in a position to succeed at our most important projects—Frodo's fate is still in our hands—are simply irrelevant to *this* respect in which we take the *goodness* of our lives to have fallen short. Now, we do take these facts to be *other* respects in which our lives are happier than Aragorn's. What we seem to get, commonsensically, is quite independent dimensions of the goodness of lives: how well we handle the circumstances we find ourselves with, and what circumstances we actually find ourselves with. These are two robustly independent respects in which my life can be going well or badly. In order to develop a conception of our good *simpliciter*, we will need to relate these two respects, and this dissertation will consider the conceptual possibilities for doing that.

In our pretheoretical thinking, then, virtuous activity looks to be at least partly constitutive of happiness. Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism makes the much stronger claim that it is *only* virtuous activity which can constitutively determine whether a life is a happy one.[1] This is not commonsensical, because we think that our lives are constitutively better than Aragorn's in the respect that they do not involve a war that threatens brutality and tyranny. How could Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism be

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[1]We will see that Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism is compatible with things other than virtuous activity, such as good circumstances, determining whether a life is a happy one in a non-constitutive sense.

defended? I will argue in terms of the structure of conceptions of happiness (I will use "conception of happiness" and "account of happiness" interchangeably). The structure of Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism's account of the good best reflects our practical predicament. That is, if we make the final end of our practical reasoning virtuous activity, such that all our practical reasoning is done ultimately for the sake of living well,[2] then our practical reasoning will best answer to the practical demands with which we find ourselves. These are the demands which push us to try to become practically wise.

How is the structure of Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism different from that of other eudaimonisms? At *EN* I.8, 1098b30–1099a5 we find Aristotle distinguishing virtuous activity from virtue, and taking only the former to be constitutive of happiness. Aristotle argues that virtue must be exercised in order for it to make a life good. His grounds for this are intuitive: a life in which we were only ever asleep, he says, could not count as a good life, but someone who was always asleep could well possess the virtues. If we agree that this individual does not have a good life, possession of the virtues cannot be constitutive of happiness (Birondo 2017, 192, who also draws our attention to *EN* I.13, 1102b5–8). This argument is suggestive of the important idea that the exercise of the virtues *makes* a life good, with which Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism is in agreement. However, I think we can do significantly better than this intuitive appeal to the goodness of lives, instead defending the significance of virtuous activity over virtue by considering the structural differences between making virtue the final end of practical reasoning, and making virtuous activity the final end of practical reasoning. In particular, a purely dynamic account can make best sense of the important point that virtuous activity is itself permanently an aspiration to do better, not something that is at any point complete (Annas 2011, 16–32, 38–39, 123–25). In other words, happiness is always a work in progress, because living well is always a work in progress. Put like that, this is an intuitively familiar point, but I seek to give it a solid theoretical foundation. The incompleteness of the virtuous activity that constitutes happiness will fall out of the structure of good practical reasoning—practical reasoning that best answers to our practical predicament.

The importance of Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism's distinct conception of the sense in which our

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[2]Houston Smit pointed out to me that the English expression 'living well' can be taken to refer to the conditions of "having a good living". For the avoidance of doubt, let me say now that I never intend 'living well' in this sense. Indeed, as we'll see at length, when I use 'living well' I intend not to refer directly to the circumstances of a life at all.

final end is permanently incomplete is not limited to the defence of the view in opposition to competing forms of eudaimonism. It also enables responses to non-eudaimonist views which take happiness to be partly or fully constituted by good external circumstances, such as hedonistic views. Such views incorporate into our final end, in more or less sophisticated ways, the possession of particular external circumstances—for example, those in which I experience a lot of pleasure. If I were to realise that final end by obtaining those external circumstances, my happiness would cease to be fully a work in progress. I will argue against such positions, and in favour of Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism, by showing that the structure of practical reasoning yielded by the external circumstances views is not adequate to the practical demands under which we engage in practical reasoning. Any view on which we could say "job done," with regard to our happiness, will not do.

Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism does not assign no relevance at all to good external circumstances. We will see that the view is compatible with holding that the virtuous activity which constitutes the good life has, as a precondition, certain states or circumstances. For example, the view is compatible with holding that freedom from extreme pain is a circumstance in which one must be living in order for it to be possible to engage in the virtuous activity that is identified as happiness. However, the view does not admit of any *static* role for good external circumstances. No particular states of the agent, or circumstances of living, are taken to be *constitutive* of the agent's life being a good one. At best, they are minimal preconditions for virtuous activity, which is what's constitutive of happiness. We will further see that Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism is also compatible with the denial that anything besides virtue is needed for virtuous activity; that is, the thesis that virtue is sufficient for happiness. On this latter view, external circumstances will still be relevant to happiness in the sense of being its materials, but good external circumstances and bad external circumstances equally fulfil this role.

Other philosophical objectives

In order to defend Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism, I will need to explain what it means to say that happiness is virtuous activity, and in order to do that, I will need to explain eudaimonism. In the most general terms, eudaimonism is an opinionated view of what ethics is all about, involving a number of basic theses which render eudaimonia and virtue theoretically central concepts, and cleanly

distinguish it from views that are not eudaimonist. I call eudaimonism opinionated because in the context of contemporary moral philosophy, adopting eudaimonism's basic theses has radical theoretical consequences, as we will see. This has not always been the case. Annas (1993) argues that almost all ancient ethical philosophy is eudaimonist, such that we can well imagine contemporary moral philosophy striking the ancients as strangely opinionated. She thinks, though, that while eudaimonism might clash radically with much of contemporary normative ethical theory, it is not in such serious disagreement with our ethical practice, and our thinking about our own happiness and the happiness of others. I share Annas's belief that a case for eudaimonism can be made in contemporary terms, independently of ancient texts, and intend to make it. This is because I think that we can do better philosophical ethics if we are eudaimonists. To the extent that it succeeds, this dissertation will be evidence for that claim, for it is an investigation into how we ought to conceive of happiness, and the position that I will ultimately defend is a form of eudaimonism.

In addition to mounting a defence of Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism, my favoured form of the view, this dissertation also aims to make much more explicit the more general ethical framework that is eudaimonism. At least some eudaimonist assumptions or theses are in the background, more or less implicitly, in most contemporary work in virtue ethics. But it is not always clear how the different eudaimonist ideas are meant to fit together, and distinctions are rarely very precise. For example, Annas (2011) appeals to a distinction between the living of a life and the circumstances in which it is lived, which is a eudaimonist appeal, but where exactly does the living of my life end and its circumstances begin? I intend to be explicit about such things. The Purely Dynamic Eudaimonist's idea that our final end is permanently incomplete also comes originally from Annas (2011), but again, I think that putting it in terms of the structure of practical reasoning and its outcomes enables us to be more precise about what exactly the idea entails.

Further, some virtue ethicists seem to want to minimise reference to eudaimonia, appealing to it in only carefully circumscribed ways, and this seems to be at least partly motivated by two flatfooted objections to eudaimonism. The first of these is the egoism objection. This is the worry that if my reasons for ethical action always make reference to my own flourishing or happiness, then I am ob-

jectionably selfish, or at least self-centred.[3] Thus we find Hursthouse (1999, 129 (e.g.)) appealing to sets of reasons associated to the virtues, "X reasons," which are basic and do not generally make reference to one's own flourishing. The second objection is the intellectualism worry—eudaimonism sometimes seems to make the acquisition of virtue, and thus happiness, a highly intellectual task, requiring specifically philosophical sophistication. It starts to sound as though the philosopher-kings of Plato's *kallipolis* (*Rep.* II–VII) are the only kind of people that can be good and happy. Thus since Hursthouse thinks that "people can be virtuous, really virtuous, without having spent clockable hours thinking about eudaimonia, coming to the conclusion that it is a life lived in accordance with the virtues," she concludes "[l]oving the noble, having a correct conception of eudaimonia and a grasp of the universal acting well, are not tests for virtue" (1999, 137).

I am not concerned with whether Hursthouse is here rejecting eudaimonism, in my sense, or just arguing that it belongs in the philosophy of happiness, rather than ethics more generally. What I contend is that if we make eudaimonism explicit in the way that I will lay it out in this dissertation, we put ourselves in a much better position to respond to the flatfooted objections, such that virtue ethicists need not be afraid of making direct reference to eudaimonia, and applying the theoretical consequences of eudaimonism. In particular, I will explain how the love of the noble is something that can be entirely implicit in someone's practical thinking, not at all dependent on having formally studied philosophical ethics. Thus, my account of the structure of eudaimonism represents a significant advance in the defence of eudaimonist virtue ethics as a viable contender in normative ethical theory, against deontology and consequentialism. My account enables us to make explicit and precise appeal to the eudaimonist framework in explicating the structure of virtue, and otherwise mounting that defence. We need not have any reticence in our appeals to the concept of eudaimonia.

In this chapter, I will explain the structure of eudaimonism. While I'll say something to motivate the assumptions that are to be made, I will not directly defend the view as a whole. Instead, my strategy in the subsequent chapters is to bring out the powerfully advantageous theoretical consequences of the view by considering what happens when we try to form conceptions of happiness that reject key eudaimonist assumptions. What we will see, repeatedly, is that such views run into difficulties that

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[3]Some interesting responses to the egoism objection are Annas (1993, 322–25) and LeBar (2018, 481–82).

eudaimonism is easily able to avoid. Then to defend Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism in particular, I will proceed by elimination of the alternatives.

In giving my substantive account of Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism in ch. 5, I'll explain the relationship between Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism and external goods. In particular, we will see what the theses that virtue is necessary for happiness and that virtue is sufficient for happiness become. Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism entails that virtue is necessary for happiness, but it does not entail either that virtue is or is not sufficient for happiness. In emphasising that our good is not virtue but virtuous activity, Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism is very deeply Aristotelian; nevertheless, it is compatible with taking either an Aristotelian or a Stoic line on the sufficiency of virtue for happiness. I will explain what the view looks like when coupled to each of the acceptance and the rejection of the sufficiency thesis.

2   Static, dynamic and hybrid conceptions of happiness

We can distinguish between *dynamic* and *static* conceptions or accounts of happiness. A dynamic conception of happiness holds that happiness is an activity. A static conception of happiness holds that happiness is some kind of state, either some state of the happy person, or the state of that person being in some particular kind of circumstances. On a dynamic conception, to say that someone is happy is to say that they are actively *living happily*. On a static conception, it is to say that some particular state of affairs obtains. Let's see some examples. Aristotle in *EN* says that happiness is virtuous activity. If this is to say that someone is happy so long as they are living virtuously, then he has a dynamic conception of happiness.[4] Bentham (1789) thinks that happiness is pleasure, which he takes to be a sensation. To have a sensation is to be in a state, so Bentham has a static conception of happiness. There are also hybrid conceptions of happiness. These have one or more dynamic and static components, plus some account of how the two kinds of components are differentially related to each other, and to happiness. I will use both "purely dynamic" and "dynamic" to refer to conceptions of happiness with only a dynamic component, and both "purely static" and "static" to refer to conceptions with only a static component.

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[4]In fact, we'll see below (ch. 4) that *EN* is best read as presenting a hybrid conception of happiness.

There is a distinction between what it is to *live for the sake of* a static component of a conception of happiness, and what it is to live for the sake of a dynamic component of a conception of happiness. To put it another way, there is a difference between *what it is to try to realise* a static component and what it is to try to realise a dynamic component. To live for the sake of a static component is to live in such a way that one believes will *obtain* or *maintain* the state specified by the static component. For example, to live for the sake of Bentham's static conception of happiness is to live in such a way that one obtains or maintains the state of maximum pleasure. To live for the sake of a dynamic component or conception is to engage in the activities the conception specifies as good.[5] So, for example, to live for the sake of a conception of happiness that equates happiness with virtuous activity is, simply, to actively exercise the virtues. Living for the sake of a hybrid conception will be some combination of living for the sake of its static and dynamic components. Exactly how these two activities are to be combined will vary greatly between hybrid conceptions; we will see examples below.

Note that living for the sake of (a component of) a conception of happiness is an activity. We see, then, that there is a sense in which living for the sake of a dynamic component is more direct than living for the sake of a static component. Living for the sake of a dynamic component means engaging in an activity which the component takes to be intrinsically valuable; by contrast, the activity of living for the sake of a static component has only an instrumental connection with the content of the static component. We can also say that living for the sake of a dynamic component is activity done for its own sake—this holds because there is no distinction between the activity of living for the sake of the dynamic component and the realisation of that component. On the other hand, living for the sake of a static component is activity done not for its own sake, but for the sake of the realisation or maintenance of the circumstances or states specified by the static component.[6]

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[5]What if it is not possible to perform these activities, because some preconditions are not met? On a purely dynamic conception, it will be simply impossible, in such a case, to live for the sake of the dynamic conception. With hybrid accounts, the answer to this question will be different for each account.

[6]To include a dynamic component in one's conception of happiness is implicitly or explicitly to hold that "there must be some activity or activities that are 'for the sake of' happiness in the sense that happiness is fulfilled *in* them, not *by means* of them." (Russell 2012, 75, emphasis added)

The scope of my defence of Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism

The reader will have observed that, in these terms, Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism is a dynamic conception of happiness. To the extent that my arguments in defence of Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism succeed, we should conceive of happiness as virtuous activity, at the very least in the applications of conceptions of happiness that I consider—primarily, the integration of lives. I do not think that the distinction between dynamic, static and hybrid conceptions of happiness exhausts the reasonable ways in which one might disambiguate the English term 'happiness', however. It is not my business to argue that other senses of 'happiness' are useless, such that we ought never conceive of happiness in those ways. My contention is rather that there are cases of central ethical importance where we might be tempted to deploy a static or hybrid conception of happiness, eudaimonist or otherwise, but where would do better if we were to deploy Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism.

Later in this chapter I will explain how, on my conception, all purely dynamic accounts are eudaimonist. Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism is not, however, the only possible purely dynamic account—it's not the only possible purely dynamic eudaimonism. We will see (ch. 5, sec. 1) that different possible purely dynamic views would have to be distinguished by different theories of virtue, and correspondingly different accounts of how virtuous activity alone can constitute a conception of the good. When I write "Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism," I mean to refer to the purely dynamic view distinguished by the particular, additional theses about virtue that I will defend across chs. 3–5. I make this distinction between purely dynamic eudaimonisms in general and Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism in particular for completeness, and because it clarifies the different scopes of the arguments of subsequent chapters, situated as they are within the conceptual framework established by this chapter. I am not sure, though, that the distinction is of much intrinsic philosophical interest, and it is perhaps best regarded as internal to the dissertation. For this reason, I haven't given Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism a more distinct name.

3   Minimal eudaimonism and concrete eudaimonisms

Eudaimonism may be understood as an account of the structure and importance of a process I call *eudaimonic reflection*. What we'll see is that eudaimonic reflection is an application of our conception of happiness, and thus the claims that the eudaimonist makes about eudaimonic reflection will impose constraints upon conceptions of happiness that could be acceptable to the eudaimonist. In other words, the eudaimonist's claims about eudaimonic reflection determine a class of *eudaimonist* conceptions of happiness.

Eudaimonism may be divided into two parts. *Minimal eudaimonism* is a common core of claims about eudaimonic reflection. *Concrete eudaimonisms*, or *eudaimonist ethical theories*, make further, more contentious claims about eudaimonic reflection, in order to "offer us different options … as to how best to achieve happiness" (Annas 2011, 128). Each concrete eudaimonism claims that "there are better and worse ways to go about achieving happiness" (ibid.), and they will disagree with other concrete eudaimonisms about which ways are better and worse. In the course of precisifying and otherwise filling out eudaimonism, concrete eudaimonisms usually yield conceptions of happiness, which can be dynamic, static or hybrid.[7] Minimal eudaimonism alone merely imposes constraints upon conceptions of happiness, without yielding its own.[8]

In the remainder of this section, in secs. 5–7, and in the appendix to this chapter, I will characterise minimal eudaimonism's claims about eudaimonic reflection in four ways: by considering what follows from the starting point of eudaimonic reflection; the impact on the structure of eudaimonic reflection of the minimal eudaimonist's *subordination thesis*; the relationship between progress in eudaimonic reflection and the reflector's flexibility; and the extent to which eudaimonic reflection need be conscious.

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[7]By precisification I mean the reduction of vagueness, in particular.

[8]I don't mean to suggest that in order to defend a concrete eudaimonism, we must first defend minimal eudaimonism, and then defend particular ways of precisifying that view. The logical structure I present, where concrete eudaimonisms precisify and otherwise fill out minimal eudaimonism, need not constrain the order in which the elements of concrete eudaimonisms are defended.

The starting point of eudaimonic reflection

The starting point of eudaimonic reflection is within adult lives that are already in the process of being lived. Most of what the minimal eudaimonist claims about eudaimonic reflection flows from this starting point.

Why does the process of eudaimonic reflection begin, and what is its aim? Begin by equating our happiness with *the good for us*, or, equivalently, equate happiness and *our own good*. Further, suppose that there is ultimately no conflict or contest between *the good for us* and the good *simpliciter*.[9] This is to say that while there may well be more to say about what's good than just what's good for us, it can never be that our good competes with, e.g., the good of others.[10] Now, the living of a life necessarily involves implicit commitments to various values. These are the things *for which* we live, and we do so because we believe that they are good, which is to say that living for them is part of the good for us (*EN* I.1–2, 1094a). However, almost all of us will find that these commitments come into conflict with each other (Annas 2011, 21–24). This indicates a deficiency in our understanding of what's good, and we are prompted to step back and attempt to improve our understanding of what it is for which we *should* live, such that our commitments can be harmonious.[11] We are prompted to ask how our life is going, and whether the truth about our own good would have us live it differently. This is eudaimonic reflection. When it is carried out successfully, it renders our understanding of our own good, or happiness, more *determinate*: while previously our understanding of the good permitted some particular commitments of ours to come into conflict, our new understanding excludes the

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[9]A slightly stronger version of this: "The Stoics [say that] the good produced by virtuous action is not the kind of good which could belong to particular people …" (Annas 1993, 266)

[10]Bett (commentary in Sextus Empiricus 1997, 69) argues that historical Stoic ethics hews to this supposition better than other ancient ethical theories. We might call it a point about *nonindexed goods*.

[11]Annas (2011, 16–20) calls this aspiration to a greater understanding of how it is valuable to live, in response to apparent deficiencies in our ability to respond well to new situations we encounter, the "drive to aspire".

conflict which prompted this successful instance of eudaimonic reflection.[12,13,14]

Note that to live for what is good is just to live well (*EN* I.4, 1095a14–20). This gives us several equivalent ways to characterise the task of eudaimonic reflection. We are attempting to determine what it is for the sake of which we should live; which is to say that we are attempting to determine our happiness, or the good for us; which is to say that we are attempting to determine what it would be to live our lives well.

We've equated happiness with the good for us, and claimed that what is good for us is not in conflict with the good *simpliciter*. This is not to make the further claim that there exists any good distinct from an individual's own good, nor to say very much about the relationship between our own good and the good *simpliciter* (Scanlon 1998, 133). However, it is to say something: we have already imposed constraints on conceptions of happiness that could be acceptable to any kind of eudaimonist. Let's see an example of these constraints in action by considering a concrete eudaimonist who thinks that each individual's happiness is a component or part, in some unspecified sense of parthood, of the good *simpliciter*. Then from minimal eudaimonism it will follow that the full realisation of a correct conception of one individual's happiness cannot thereby limit or impose upon the full realisation of

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[12]"The final end, then, is the indeterminate notion of what I am aiming at in my life as a whole. And the role of ethical thinking is to get us to think more determinately about it, to do a better and more intelligently ordered job of what we are already doing anyway." (Annas 2011, 124) (For Annas, "ethical thinking" is a broader category that includes what I've called eudaimonic reflection, and what she calls "the final end" is someone's conception of their good.)

See Annas (2011, 123–25) for her account of refining a conception of happiness to make it more determinate, and Bratman (2001) for an alternative notion of filling-out.

[13]Rachana Kamtekar, in conversation, suggested to me that progress in eudaimonic reflection might sometimes make someone's conception of happiness *less* determinate (also cf. Hursthouse 1999, 244). For example, if someone takes her happiness to be the possession of a particular set of circumstances, such as a particular kind of high-status job, it would be progress in eudaimonic reflection to realise that this individual's life would be no less happy were she to get a different kind of job which is just as valuable or more valuable, but not of high status. The employment circumstances she now takes to constitute her happiness would be less determinate than before, in the sense that they are satisfiable by a broader range of occupations.

I propose to understand this kind of case as a secondary sense of progress in eudaimonic reflection. For rather than being a positive increase in the reflector's understanding of what's valuable, it's instead a form of backtracking: undoing my having made my conception of happiness more determinate in a way that turned out to have been mistaken. When I came to the conclusion that my good involve an occupation that is high status, I was making an error. It's progress to realise this error, but only in a secondary sense of progress.

For simplicity, and given that eudaimonic reflection which makes my conception of happiness less determinate is only successful eudaimonic reflection in a weaker sense, the only kind of successful eudaimonic reflection I'll consider in the text will be that which makes my conception of happiness *more* determinate.

[14]Annas (1993, 409) discusses some of the affective effects of progress in eudaimonic reflection. Webber (2016) discusses the role of reflection in ethical improvement. Nussbaum (2001, 297) explains how a reflective process like that which I'm describing is not a matter of quantitative commensuration.

the correct conception of anyone else's happiness—since each person's happiness is a component of the good *simpliciter*, if the realisation of one individual's conception of happiness were to limit the realisation of another individual's, and neither conception is mistaken, the first individual's conception would be in conflict with the good *simpliciter*. This puts the minimal eudaimonist at odds with those who take the full realisation of any individual's happiness to be something that stands in opposition to the full realisation of the happiness of all or any other individuals. We are with Plato's Socrates and Glaucon, and against his Thrasymachus and Callicles. If something apparently good can be had only at the (actual) expense of (the good of) others, it can't in actuality be something good.[15]

We think that refining our understanding of our own happiness in this way is of great ethical importance. For we try to live for the sake of multiple different things, and these come into conflict with each other: family and work; career advancement and questionable activities of our employers;[16] justice and benevolence. We require a conception of what it would be to live well *simpliciter* in order to decide how we are going to relate these commitments, such that our time and energy is divided up between them in a way that reflects just how and why they are valuable, rather than just allowing ourselves to be pulled around by whichever commitment seems most salient in the moment. The

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[15]Thus while the minimal eudaimonist is neutral regarding Hursthouse's (1999, 264) claim that "[i]t is a contingent fact, if it is a fact, that we can, individually, flourish or achieve eudaimonia …", leaving that to concrete eudaimonisms, it does reject on conceptual grounds her claim that it is further "contingent that we can do so all together, not at each other's expense." (ibid.)

[16]For example, someone might be single-mindedly pursuing career advancement, until one day she discovers that her employer has been engaged in some deeply unethical practices. This will prompt eudaimonic reflection as she realises that her conception of happiness does not sufficiently clearly involve the idea of living ethically. We should live for the sake of living ethically, and so if this process of eudaimonic reflection is successful, it will result in a conception of happiness which *more determinately involves* a concern for living ethically. To live for the sake of this refined conception of happiness will involve, perhaps, spending more time looking into the details of all of the activities of one's employer, and a willingness to accept pay cuts in order to become employed by an organisation not involved in the unethical activity.

What's interesting about this particular example is how the businesswoman already cared about not working for an employer which engaged in unethical business activities, but her conception of happiness was not *determinate enough* to ensure that in living for its sake she would avoid working for such a corporation. Once she incorporates the idea of living vigilantly into her conception of happiness by means of eudaimonic reflection, thus making that conception more determinate, living for the sake of her conception of happiness comes to incorporate and account for her belief that she should not be living for the sake of her career advancement in a way that does not take into account the other activities of her employer.

In addition to the foregoing, there is another possible development that might occur for the businesswoman. She might now also take engagement in this sort of investigative activity to be itself something valuable. If she does, it would be because she has come to believe that a happy life constitutively involves a certain vigilance about the activities of one's employer. Engaging in the investigative activity is how the businesswoman lives for the sake of her new conception of happiness, but that investigative activity need not be valued only as instrumental to the achievement of something else. It's not the mere knowledge that one's employer is not doing anything unethical that the businesswoman takes to be required for a happy life, in this case, but rather the continual vigilance.

notion of making a conception of happiness more determinate is just what's needed to deal with this very practical problem. Eudaimonic reflection is the process by which we refine and correct our conception of happiness, and it is prompted when our practical experience demonstrates to us that what for the sake of which we *are* living might not be quite that for the sake of which we *should* be living.

Minimal eudaimonism rules out traditional ethical egoism

A proponent of the egoism objection to eudaimonist virtue ethics, recall, says that if I act virtuously because I take my own happiness to be at least partly constituted by virtue or virtuous activity, then my reasons for any given virtuous action are objectionably self-centred, making direct reference to my own happiness or flourishing. Instead, the objector thinks, I should treat someone benevolently because it is good for them to be treated that way, or respectfully because they have the right to be treated that way, not because doing so in each case contributes to *my* life being a virtuous life, and thereby a happy life.

We are not yet in any position to respond to this, having at our disposal only the resources of minimal eudaimonism, and not any concrete eudaimonisms. However, what we've just said does reveal a sense in which eudaimonism is anti-egoistic in its fundamental composition. Minimal eudaimonism requires concrete eudaimonisms to describe the connection between my good and the good *simpliciter* in such a way that these two things are never in conflict. If we assume that any concrete eudaimonism will take the realisation of my own good to be something that is, in fact, good, then to realise my own good will just be to realise part of what is good *simpliciter*. And so if I fail to live for the sake of what's good *simpliciter*, I must also fail to live for the sake of my own good. Thus if I'm a Callicles, and I act at the expense of others because I think that's what I ought to do, then it's not that I'm choosing one good over another, but that I'm not choosing any good at all. Effectively, there are no egoistic goods: anyone who thinks they've identified one is making a mistake, says the eudaimonist. Based on a conception of the starting point and purposes of eudaimonic reflection, the minimal eudaimonist posits a relationship between my own good and the good *simpliciter* that rejects classical ethical egoism.[17]

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[17]Kraut (1989, 137) as quoted by Hirji (2019, 13–14) is an example of an egoism objection to eudaimonism which implicitly rejects the minimal eudaimonist's contention that there is no conflict between my good and the good of others.

The limits of eudaimonic reflection

Is eudaimonic reflection meant to be capable of resolving *all* conflicts between things that we have reason to think are valuable?[18] Hursthouse (1999, 63–67) cautions us against assuming that practical reason can never run out of determining grounds, and is thus in principle capable of resolving all conflicts of value. Minimal eudaimonism does not need to assume that practical reason can never run out, though it is open to concrete eudaimonisms to subscribe to that idea. For minimal eudaimonism, all that's needed is that practical reason can get far enough in the resolution of conflicts that we can come better to understand what it would be to live well.

It will be up to concrete eudaimonisms to specify and explain the extent to which limits on practical reason's ability to resolve conflicts of value limit the extent to which eudaimonic reflection is capable of making our conception of how to live well more determinate. We can't discuss the theoretical options in any detail at this stage of our discussion, but it is possible to set out some of the battle lines. The first question is whether a given concrete eudaimonism accepts Hursthouse's view that we don't have any reason to think practical reason won't ever run out of determining grounds. If the concrete eudaimonism rejects Hursthouse's contention, there will be no limits to practical reason's ability to resolve conflicts of value, and thus no limits to eudaimonic reflection. This would be to reject the existence of Hursthouse's category of irresolvable moral dilemmas (1999, ch. 3). If, on the other hand, the concrete eudaimonism accepts that practical reason can run out, the question becomes whether that means there are limits on the capacity of eudaimonic reflection to make our conception of what it would be to live well more determinate.

This latter question is roughly equivalent to the question of whether there are any tragic dilemmas, which in Hursthouse's taxonomy form a subset of the irresolvable dilemmas. Tragic dilemmas are irresolvable dilemmas in which it is further impossible for anyone, however virtuous they are, to act well (Hursthouse 1999, 72). If such dilemmas exist, the limits of practical reason impose a limit on eudaimonic reflection's ability to make more determinate my conception of what it would be to live well. It cannot make that conception more determinate such that it is possible for me to live well if

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On the contrary, on most concrete eudaimonisms, both these things are nonconflicting parts of what's good *simpliciter*.

[18]Thank you to Rachana Kamtekar for asking this.

I encounter a tragic dilemma, because acting well in such a situation is not possible.[19] There would be limits on the extent to which it is possible for me to integrate commitments and thus limits on the extent to which it is possible for me to integrate my life.

Hursthouse's own position is that there are tragic dilemmas, which limit the extent to which it is possible for someone to live well (ibid.).[20] A concrete eudaimonism that takes more inspiration from historical Stoic ethics, on the other hand, could accept the category of irresolvable dilemmas but reject that any of them are tragic. Such a position would hold that my conception of what it would be to live well should be a conception of only what it would be to live virtuously. Then, in any irresolvable dilemma, it will remain possible for me to live virtuously and thus remain possible for me to live well, even though it's impossible to live for the sake of at least one horn of the dilemma. Concretely, if practical wisdom cannot resolve a conflict of value, then it is no less practically wise for me to choose either of the options. Thus, my resolving the dilemma one way or the other does not yield any sense in which I am failing to act virtuously—assuming that the way in which I pursue that horn of the dilemma is virtuous, I was as virtuous as it was possible to be. And that's all it takes for me to live well. So eudaimonic reflection's ability to make more determinate my understanding of living well is not affected.

Very much more would need to be said to substantiate each of these positions, but for the purpose of illustrating the theoretical options for where the limits of eudaimonic reflection might lie, let's consider an explicit example of a purportedly tragic dilemma: Williams's well-known case of Jim and the Indians (Smart and Williams 1973, 98–99). The agent is asked to choose between killing one innocent person himself, or allowing several innocent people to die. Let us stipulate further that practical reason is not capable of integrating the agent's commitment to not killing innocent people

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[19]Living well and acting well are not the same thing. The former is defined over a life as a whole, or at least extended periods of a life. For the purposes of the discussion of this subsection, however, we need not distinguish carefully between living well and acting well.

[20]Hursthouse goes on (1999, 73–74) to argue that while the virtuous person cannot act well in a tragic dilemma, it will not be the case that they act unjustly, callously, cruelly etc. I suspect that there is tension between these two claims—isn't acting in a way that is not unjust, callous or cruel a strong sense in which one is acting well? Her response seems to be that "[t]he actions a virtuous agent is forced to in tragic dilemmas fail to be good actions because the doing of them, no matter how unwillingly or involuntarily, mars or ruins a good life" (ibid.), i.e., not acting in a way that is unjust, callous or cruel cannot be sufficient for saying the virtuous agent acted well because then it would not be the case that the dilemma is a tragic one, but we stipulated that it is. This only restates the problem.

himself, and his commitment to the value of preventing bad people from killing innocent people. That makes this an irresolvable dilemma. Does its possibility limit the extent to which eudaimonic reflection is capable of developing the agent's understanding of what it would be to live well? Hursthouse will say of this case, under our stipulation, that it is impossible for the agent to act well, because neither killing the one person nor allowing the other people to be killed could possibly count as living well. Eudaimonic reflection cannot make our conception of living well sufficiently determinate that we can act well in a situation like this, and this is a strong limit on eudaimonic reflection.

The Stoic-inspired position might say that taking either of the options would be to act as virtuously as it is possible for anyone to act in such a situation—which is, we must be clear, to act virtuously—because by stipulation neither option is less practically wise than the other. And so to take either option would be to act well. Thus, eudaimonic reflection is quite capable of determining what it would be to live well in this situation; practical reason's inability to resolve the conflict of values does not limit the capacity of eudaimonic reflection to make my understanding of how to live well sufficiently determinate that I am able to live well in the scenario of an irresolvable dilemma that is purportedly tragic. We should note that such a Stoic-inspired view does not hold that I *cannot fail* to live well in this situation. It is possible to more and less virtuously take each of the two options. For example, it might display a lack of the virtue of respect if I were to avert my eyes while Pedro shot the several innocents, and it might display the vice of cruelty if I were not to be very careful in shooting the one innocent such that they die as quickly as possible.[21] What such a position would reject is Hursthouse's view that it is impossible, however virtuous you are, to act well in such a situation. That is to reject the idea that tragic dilemmas impose limits on eudaimonic reflection, without rejecting the idea that practical reason can run out of determining grounds.

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[21]These sort of thoughts push one to reject the example as in fact irresolvable: if I know that I am a much better shot than Pedro, for example, practical reason might have sufficient determining grounds to decide between the two options, such that it would be less virtuous for me to instruct Pedro to shoot. Or maybe not. The basic problem is that while we can accept Hursthouse's point that practical reason may sometimes run out, we are not capable of constructing fictional examples in which we can convincingly rule out the possibility that the dilemma is, in fact, resolvable. When considering examples like this, we have to suspend our belief, for the sake of our philosophical purposes, that a sufficiently practically wise person would be able to find a way out. Reid (2019, secs. 3.2–3.3) argues against doing philosophical ethics in this way.

4 My conception of my life as a whole

Some of the arguments in this dissertation will depend on a distinction between my conception of my good, and my conception of *my life as a whole*, or as I'll sometimes say, my conception of *my life overall*.[22] In this section, I'll explain that distinction, so that we have it to hand. This distinction will not usually be material to the arguments we'll see, such that invoking it, in the name of precision, would just make things more complicated, and in a way that does not do useful philosophical work. Thus, in most of what follows I will be able to gloss over the distinction. Sometimes, however, we will need to draw it.

A conception of my life overall is a *personalisation* of my conception of my own good, to which I aspire, that includes a conception of the kind of life *I*, in particular, should lead, making reference to my skills, tendencies, abilities and circumstances. Suppose that an aspiring academic has a purely dynamic conception of happiness, and the activity specified by the dynamic component of her conception of happiness is virtuous activity. Thus, she takes her good to be living virtuously for that activity's own sake. The content of the academic's understanding of what it is to live virtuously does not make ineliminable reference to her life as an aspiring academic, because a purely dynamic conception is developed in such a way as to be applicable to all circumstances of living.[23] In addition, though, the aspiring academic has a conception of her life overall which involves, specifically, aiming at a permanent academic position. This is a personalisation of her conception of her good in the sense that aiming at a permanent academic position is what she takes virtuous activity to amount to in the circumstances in which she actually finds herself. To put it another way, given her (non-circumstantial) conception of what it is to live well, and further given her talents, abilities and position in history, aiming to become a tenured academic is what she thinks it makes sense for *her* to aim for.

Eudaimonist views do not have a monopoly on conceptions of one's life overall. Someone with a purely static conception of happiness lives for the sake of obtaining particular states of affairs. Let's

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[22]The terminology is inspired by Annas (2016), but the precise way of drawing the distinction given here is my own.

[23]Even though *which* particular *aspects* of virtue the academic has most been able to develop is determined by her particular practical experience of being an aspiring academic. The content she's acquired is independent of any particular circumstances, but which bits of content she's acquired is not. See ch. 3, sec. 4 for a more detailed explanation of this aspect of purely dynamic views.

consider someone who takes the good to be secure material comfort, at the expense of others if that's the only way it can be achieved. Suppose that this individual is a lawyer. Then her conception of her life overall might involve aiming to become a judge. Given her conception of the good as material comfort, and further given her existing involvement in the legal profession, and the legal protections for judges in her country that grant them substantial job security, becoming a judge is what it makes sense for *her* to aim for. The distinction between conceptions of happiness and conceptions of lives overall enables us to explain how it is possible for this individual to acknowledge that it would not make sense for everyone to aim to become a judge, even though she holds that every individual's good is circumstances of material comfort. Aiming to become a judge is her personalisation of the idea; it's what aiming at her conception of the good amounts to in her circumstances.

Philosophical accounts of ethics or happiness—eudaimonist or otherwise—can fail to allow space for conceptions of one's life overall. A Spartan who thinks that the good of any young man is to engage in the activity of preparing for war, no matter how well- or ill-suited the young man is to this activity, might well have a view with the structure of eudaimonism. However, in requiring the same life of every young man, no matter their suitedness to that life, he fails to allow room for the young men to form conceptions of their own lives overall, which are personalisations of their more general conceptions of the good. Conceptions of my life overall, then, are in the domain of individuals' eudaimonic reflection, and we should not expect them to emerge directly from the conceptions of happiness provided by theorists, proponents of concrete eudaimonisms and proponents of non-eudaimonist views alike. What theorists can do is provide accounts that make it possible for individuals to develop conceptions of their lives overall.

5   The distinction between living and circumstances of living

According to the minimal eudaimonist, as we've seen, eudaimonic reflection gets going when we realise that in order to live well going forward, we need a more determinate conception of our good than the one we've been deploying up until now. This is because we determine what it would be to live well indirectly, in the following sense: we better determine what our good is, and then to live well is to live for the sake of that conception, and we succeed to the extent that the conception is correct. In

other words, the minimal eudaimonist thinks that the only way to make progress in determining how to live well is to consider what it is for the sake of which we should live.

To say this much is already to invoke, implicitly, a distinction between the *living of lives* and the *circumstances of lives* (Annas 2011, 78, 128–30 (e.g.)). Eudaimonic reflection begins when I ask myself what for the sake of which I should live, and this is to consider the activity of living my life in isolation from the circumstances in which I engage in that activity. So the distinction between the living of lives and the circumstances of lives is not some theoretical device, but a foundational conceptual element, without which eudaimonic reflection would not be intelligible.[24] The distinction, however, is at this point in our discussion vague. Where does my living of my life end, and the rest of the world begin? We do not arrive at eudaimonic reflection with an answer to this question. Further, as we'll see in sec. 8, below, the distinction need be only implicit in someone's eudaimonic reflection.

Eudaimonic reflection will involve reducing the vagueness of the distinction between the living of lives and the circumstances of lives. Explicitly theoretical thinking in the form of concrete eudaimonisms has a role to play here, by making the distinction explicit, and by giving us reasons for thinking that some element of our lives lies on one side or the other of the distinction. For example, the Stoics argue that our emotions are under our voluntary control (Graver 2007, 62), unlike our bodily health, say, and so the emotions that we have are part of the living of our lives, rather than its circumstances. This reduces the vagueness of the distinction between living and circumstances by arguing that something which sometimes seems to lie on both sides lies, in fact, on one side.

Now, any theoretical attempt to reduce the *vagueness* of the pretheoretical distinction between the living of lives and their circumstances will begin by *disambiguating* that distinction. There are a number of different ways to do this, good for different purposes. While minimal eudaimonism does not include much at all that will reduce the vagueness of the distinction, it does need to disambiguate it, for otherwise it won't be possible to give meaningful content to the subordination thesis, a key idea that's certainly part of minimal eudaimonism, introduced in the next section. Thus, I will suppose that the distinction between living and circumstances should be drawn in the following Stoic-inspired

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[24]Fossheim (2014, 75 ff.) argues for the implicit presence of several other virtue ethical ideas in our actual eudaimonic reflection.

way: the living of our lives is that which we control, looking forward from an instance of eudaimonic reflection in which the distinction is drawn, and the circumstances in which we live is what we do not control; the sense of control is relative to the time of eudaimonic reflection. In the appendix to this chapter, I offer independent grounds in defence of this way of drawing the distinction.

Disambiguating the distinction in even this minimal way is significant because doing so disambiguates in turn the distinction between static and dynamic components of conceptions of happiness: dynamic components are conceptions of what it is to control well that which we can control, and static components are conceptions of what things we cannot control it is good for us to have or be. The distinction remains vague, as we've seen, for it is up to concrete eudaimonisms to say more about what precisely we can control and what we cannot control. And even concrete eudaimonisms need not remove the vagueness entirely; they may restrict themselves to further structural claims. Even Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism remains agnostic as to whether things like the emotions are in our control or not.

6   The Subordination Thesis

We have now said enough to be able to state and explain the minimal eudaimonist's second characterisation of eudaimonic reflection. This is the claim that circumstances of living ought to be subordinated, in eudaimonic reflection, to living well:

> **Subordination Thesis.** Living well is good *simpliciter*, but circumstances of living can be only relatively good; specifically, good relative to the living of (phases of) lives well in those circumstances.

As with the other characterisations of eudaimonic reflection in this chapter, the primary theoretical role of the subordination thesis is to narrow the range of possible conceptions of happiness to only those which are acceptable to eudaimonists, thereby capturing something of what's distinctive about eudaimonism. The subordination thesis achieves this by imposing constraints upon our eudaimonic reflection, which in turn imposes constraints on the kinds of conceptions of happiness that could result from that reflection. In other words, only eudaimonist conceptions of happiness can emerge

from eudaimonic reflection which hews to the subordination thesis.[25]

As I've stated it, the subordination thesis requires disambiguation, for it does not specify the sense in which circumstances have only relative value. This is deliberate. The subordination thesis is part of minimal eudaimonism, and so it needs to be compatible with any concrete eudaimonism, but those theories disagree with each other about how exactly circumstances of living have relative value. In the course of yielding conceptions of happiness, concrete eudaimonisms fill out the subordination thesis in a variety of ways, saying more about the subordination of circumstances to living. For example, as we will see, Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism provides an account of the subordination thesis such as to yield the idea that virtuous activity is permanently aspirational, which is precisely what distinguishes Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism from other eudaimonisms. Thus, we see that another purpose of the subordination thesis is to allow concrete eudaimonisms to articulate, in giving an account of the thesis, what differentiates them from each other.

How does the addition of the subordination thesis, then, further develop minimal eudaimonism's account of eudaimonic reflection, thereby imposing constraints on the conceptions of happiness that can emerge from that process? In the previous section, we noted that all eudaimonic reflection involves a distinction, more or less confused and more or less implicit, between the living of a life and the circumstances in which that life is lived. I have claimed that we should draw that distinction along the lines of what we can control, and what we cannot control, following the Stoics. Now, choosing to draw the distinction in this way does not force eudaimonic reflection to come to any particular conclusions. Once we add the subordination thesis, however, we add the claim that circumstances of living can have value only relative to the living of lives in those circumstances. What in our lives has value, and how those things have value, though, is just what our eudaimonic reflection sought to address. Thus, once we add the subordination thesis, eudaimonic reflection becomes required to determine *just how* circumstances have value relative to our living well in them. And the conception of happiness that results from the reflection must incorporate conclusions about the relative value of

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[25]Thus, there exists conceptual space for eudaimonic reflection which is not eudaimonist, in the sense of failing to subscribe to the subordination thesis. I do not think this terminology is likely to mislead, because in a moment we will see that the minimal eudaimonist holds that eudaimonic reflection which does not subscribe to the subordination thesis cannot succeed. We can think of eudaimonic reflection which does not subscribe to the subordination thesis as eudaimonic in its aim, if not in its outcome.

circumstances (we'll see in subsequent chapters that there are numerous ways to do this).

While the distinction between living and circumstances of living is not a theoretical device, as I explained above, the subordination thesis is a philosophical claim. It is easy to see how a process like eudaimonic reflection would be prompted by conflicts within our attempt to live for the sake of things that we take to be valuable, but how could something as theoretically sophisticated as the subordination thesis arise in an ordinary person's thinking? Exactly how this happens is the province of concrete eudaimonisms. What the minimal eudaimonist holds is that progress in eudaimonic reflection will be very limited until and unless we adopt the subordination thesis. Taking only living well to be good *simpliciter*, and developing a conception of relative goodness for circumstances of living, is the only way forward. Minimal eudaimonism further characterises eudaimonic reflection by claiming that it cannot succeed until and unless its conclusions are constrained by the subordination thesis, but minimal eudaimonism's theoretical role does not include saying anything about how an ordinary eudaimonic reflector is to arrive at the subordination thesis, and the sense in which they arrive at it. (Minimal eudaimonism does, however, say that the subordination thesis may be only implicit in the structure of someone's eudaimonic reflection, as we'll see below (sec. 8).)

How concrete eudaimonisms subscribe to the subordination thesis

I said that the primary purpose of the subordination thesis is to capture something of what's distinctive about eudaimonism. Indeed, it is my hope that all and only eudaimonist views will accept the subordination thesis, though it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to argue for that in completely general terms. Let us, however, consider some examples, in order to permit us to observe some different ways in which concrete eudaimonisms can subscribe to the subordination thesis. Since my purpose is illustrative, I take some liberties with my readings of the authors I consider. However, I do think that key aspects of the eudaimonism of (the best reconstructions of the views of) the theorists considered here really are captured by the subordination thesis.

The Stoics subscribe to the sufficiency thesis, sloganised as the claim that virtue is the only good. Thus circumstances have no role to play in happiness, which is simply a matter of being virtuous. However, circumstances can be such as to be wisely selected or preferred, and this is a sense in which

they are good relative to the living of a life: it would be wise for me to aim at these circumstances here and now. This is to say that circumstances are good relative to the life I'm living, but it's only my virtue that can be good *simpliciter*. Virtue is a matter of the living of my life, not the circumstances in which I live. Thus the circumstances of my life are subordinated to the living of my life in the way that I have described.

At *EN* V.1, 1129b, Aristotle claims that the goods of fortune, such as health and wealth, are "good without qualification but not always [good] for a particular individual." It is difficult to know how to read "good without qualification", but for illustrative purposes let's suppose it means good when considered in isolation. Then the quoted sentence means that when health and wealth are considered as circumstances of a particular life (i.e., not in isolation), they are good only when that individual is living in such a way as to make good use of them; thus, qua circumstances of lives, they are subordinated to the living of those lives. Aristotle goes on to claim further that while people wish for health and wealth, they should instead wish to be such that health and wealth are good for them, which is just to have a concern to live well rather than a concern to obtain for oneself particular circumstances.

Finally, consider the distinction between the circumstances of a life and the living of a life as deployed by Annas (2011, 92–93 (e.g.)). It lies somewhere between the Stoic and Aristotelian positions I've just discussed. Annas thinks of the circumstances of our lives are materials; we work on those materials by living, and it is possible to put "the same materials … to skilful, or to botched, use." (ibid.) The view is Stoic in that it is good *simpliciter* to do a good job with whatever materials we have available. On the other hand, the metaphor is suggestive of the Aristotelian view that the materials might fairly be called good if they are such that they could be put to good use by most of us in most circumstances. However, if they're put to bad use, then they cannot be called good. This last point upholds the subordination thesis.

Therapeutic application of the subordination thesis

The assumption of the subordination thesis can often be used to explain what has gone wrong in cases of dissatisfaction with the results of eudaimonic reflection.[26] I'll give an example of this sort

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[26]Curren (2014, 493–97) discusses the frustration that might result from a failure to "reintegrate" our commitments.

of explanation, for it serves two purposes of mine. Firstly, it will provide plausibility to the minimal eudaimonism's contention that it is only when the structure of eudaimonic reflection is constrained by the subordination thesis that it can succeed. Secondly, it defends against the following objection. If the minimal eudaimonist thinks that most of our eudaimonic reflection runs into the dirt, with only partially satisfactory conclusions, then it's a process that fails to yield much of anything, and so it would seem certainly to fail to yield anything that could have relevance for happiness. So, then, what has eudaimonic reflection got to do with happiness? What I will show is that the subordination thesis generates an explanation for why we should *expect* the bar for success in eudaimonic reflection to be high. Then this fact alone does not constitute reason to reject the view.

The position of most of us, then, is that there are persistent conflicts between the things we care about, but few undogmatic resources with which to approach the conflicts. How does the subordination thesis explain what's gone wrong? I'll consider cases where the dissatisfaction results from the ambiguity of the English terms 'happy' and 'happiness'. Minimal eudaimonism contends that the goals of eudaimonic reflection will not be achieved if the reflection fails to address the question of the relative values of the circumstances of a life and the living of that life. So my strategy is to show how the ambiguity of the English terms 'happy' and 'happiness' can lead us to fail to address this question. That means we fail to achieve the goals established by the starting point of eudaimonic reflection, which explains our dissatisfaction.

In addition to the senses given to them by minimal eudaimonism, 'happy' and 'happiness' can refer to how we are currently feeling. Engaging in eudaimonic reflection, asking oneself how one's life is going, it is easy to unconsciously pass between these two senses of 'happiness', asking oneself "well, how have I been feeling recently?" While the answer to this question is relevant background information for thinking about the good, it doesn't get us very far, and can end up as a blind alley in which we become stuck: "I've been feeling good. I guess everything is going well"—but this is no progress towards a more determinate understanding of my own good at all.[27] Now, to diagnose the failure, consider the requirement imposed by the subordination thesis. While it's possible to reflect

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[27]When we don't make this mistake, the other, non-eudaimonic senses of the English words 'happy' and 'happiness'—such as feeling good—are subordinated, in eudaimonic reflection, to the overarching, eudaimonic sense: they are reduced to components of my good, at best.

on our feelings as part of thinking about how we are living—am I caring for my family with kindness and fellow-feeling, or am I just robotically fulfilling household duties?—if I've slipped to the non-eudaimonic sense of 'happy', thinking about how I've been feeling lately is to think about my feelings *purely circumstantially*, conceiving them only as aspects of the circumstances in which I'm living. If this is *all* I think about, I fail to address the question of the relationship between the circumstances of my life and the living of my life. And indeed, this is what happens when I fail to observe the ambiguity of 'happy' and 'happiness'. Until we've got something of a view about the relative values of life circumstances and the living of our life, just stating facts about our circumstances achieves little. This is why we feel unsatisfied with eudaimonic reflection that ends with tallying up good feelings, or any other purely circumstantial facts.[28] In our contemporary culture, which encourages us to obtain for ourselves particular familial and material circumstances, it is easy to make this slip.[29]

7   The reflector's flexibility

When we *do* make progress with our eudaimonic reflection, what is the practical upshot? How do we change? As its third characterisation of the process, minimal eudaimonism claims that progress in eudaimonic reflection grants us greater flexibility in acting for the sake of the good. There are two ways to see how this greater flexibility arises: from my description of the goals with which eudaimonic reflection begins, and from the effects of the subordination thesis on eudaimonic reflection. I'll consider each of these in turn.

I said that eudaimonic reflection begins when we recognise deficiencies in our conception of our own good. This recognition is prompted by our experience of apparent conflicts between the things for

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[28]There is the beginning of an argument against consequentialism here. Consequentialism tallies up good circumstances, taking the value of these circumstances to ultimately consist in their relation to people's happiness, but we've just seen the inadequacy of relating circumstances to the good in this way.

[29]I do not mean to suggest that the minimal eudaimonist holds that adoption of the subordination thesis will be *sufficient* to resolve the conflicts of value that prompt eudaimonic reflection, nor that purely dynamic concrete eudaimonisms think that adopting a purely dynamic account automatically resolves everything. In each case the claim is one of necessity, not sufficiency. The minimal eudaimonist holds that adoption of the subordination thesis is necessary for progress in eudaimonic reflection, and purely dynamic views will hold that adoption of a purely dynamic account is necessary, but not sufficient, to be as successful in eudaimonic reflection as we can be.

In particular, when the conflicts of value which prompt eudaimonic reflection amount to (apparent) conflicts between the demands of different virtues, phronesis will be required to make progress in resolving the conflicts. Thank you to Rachana Kamtekar for pressing me to make this explicit.

which we are living. The claim in this section is that these conflicts can be understood as generating *inflexibilities* in acting for the sake of things that we take to be good. Successful eudaimonic reflection relieves us of these inflexibilities by improving our conceptions of our own good such that the conflicts do not arise. And to relieve inflexibilities is to increase flexibility. The idea that conflicts between our commitments result in inflexibility is straightforward. Suppose we have two commitments that conflict in at least some scenarios. We are able to act flexibly for the sake of each of those commitments in scenarios in which there is only the opportunity to act for the sake of one or the other of the commitments. But in scenarios where the conflict between our commitments raises its head, there appears to be only two things we can do—act for the sake of this commitment at the expense of the other, or for that commitment at the expense of the first. To have only two basically unsatisfactory choices is a situation of inflexibility in acting for the sake of what we care about, and responsibility can be traced directly to the inability of our conception of our own good to tell us how we can live for the sake of both of these things that we take to be good. Successful eudaimonic reflection improves our understanding of our own good such that we can see how to live for the sake of both commitments without sacrificing either. Post-reflection, we are more flexible because we are not stuck with just two unsatisfactory options.

The subordination thesis, too, contributes to the ability of eudaimonic reflection to make us more flexible in acting for the sake of the good. If circumstances can be good only relative to living well, the content of an understanding of what it is to live well must be logically independent of any particular circumstances (otherwise, we get a vicious conceptual circle between the goodness of circumstances and the goodness of living well). The subordination thesis thus reminds us that we must develop our understanding of living well in such a way that it is applicable beyond any particular, given circumstances, including the circumstances in which the understanding was developed. Otherwise, what we have developed will not in fact be an understanding of how to live well *simpliciter*. And if we develop our understanding in this way, we are able to live for the things we take to be good in a broader variety of circumstances than we would be if our understanding was tied to any particular circumstances. So the subordination thesis helps us develop flexibility. This point may seem extremely demanding, but the claim is not that someone who has been successful in eudaimonic reflection will automatically be

successful if we take them out of their society and drop them in a completely different culture or time period. Rather, the point is developmental. We must develop our understanding of living well in such a way that it has the *potential* to be adapted to completely new circumstances, given time to adapt it through more eudaimonic reflection.[30]

8   Eudaimonic reflection can be implicit or explicit

My final characterisation of eudaimonic reflection, on behalf of minimal eudaimonism, comes from considering the extent to which eudaimonic reflection need be conscious. The minimal eudaimonist holds that the understanding of one's own good developed by eudaimonic reflection may be an implicit understanding, and that eudaimonic reflection need not be carried out consciously. I'll describe these in turn.

By a *practical understanding* I mean the kind of understanding the possession of which is not separable from the possession of an ability to act in accordance with that understanding (Hursthouse 1999, 130; Roberts 2014, 102).[31] Then, an *implicit* practical understanding is one the possessor of which is not able to articulate, but is nevertheless reflected and expressed in actions and character traits. An implicit practical understanding permits us to respond intelligently in relevant situations, perhaps without being able to say much at all about why that was the right thing to do here. For example, we may be able to discern in a businesswoman's activity a systematic and intelligent approach to managing her workers, but that's not something she's able to pass on to us in a classroom. Experience has taught her reasons to act in this way rather than that, and "[t]he reasons have left their effect in the person's disposition" (Annas 2011, 30).[32] Broader implicit practical understandings, such as of one's own good, are most easily observed in situations where one's life takes a significant and unexpected turn. Most of us are left floundering when a host of new things for which we must live suddenly

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[30]Nussbaum (2001, 301 ff.) explains how a similar point about flexibility is made in *EN*.

[31]Practical understanding is not the same notion as knowledge-how, though perhaps the distinction between knowledge-how and knowledge-that could be drawn in terms of the distinction between practical and non-practical understanding.

[32]Webber (2016, 138) quotes the psychologists Mischel and Shoda (1995, 251) in identifying "the individual's 'behavioural signature that reflects personality coherence.'" I take this behavioural signature to be at least an expression, and in the case of a dynamic component a realisation, of the agent's conception of the good.

Card (2018, 65) suggests that Korsgaard's (1996) notion of self-conception could be "analysed in terms of norms and values *implicit* in our conduct …".

demand our attention, and we will be likely to fail to live for the sake of all of the things we take to be good. For example, when a parent is suddenly hospitalised, we are likely to fail to properly integrate our new demands with our old, at least for a while. Someone with a more developed understanding of their own good will do a better job of bringing their actions back into harmony. The choices such an individual would make to balance the use of their time will express an understanding of their own good which they may not be able to make explicit.

The distinction between implicit and explicit practical understanding is one of degree. A practical understanding is implicit to the extent that it can't be articulated, and explicit to the extent that it can be (I'll often speak loosely of a practical understanding this is just implicit or explicit *simpliciter*, but should be understood as saying that the practical understanding is mostly implicit or explicit, respectively, in relevant respects). There is a sense in which practical understandings always have some degree of implicitness, because the reasons that a virtuous person gives for her actions are only comprehensible to someone who already has at least a minimal amount of the relevant virtue.

Independently—whether our conception of happiness is an implicit or an explicit instance of practical understanding—eudaimonic reflection need not be carried out with conscious awareness that we are reflecting on how our life is going, and what we are living for. What characterises successful eudaimonic reflection is not sitting somewhere quietly and consciously enquiring into conflicts of values. Instead, what matters is that one is intelligently incorporating one's experience of conflicts between commitments into an improved understanding of those conflicts, and of one's own good. An example of successful unconscious eudaimonic reflection is as follows. Someone might have a concrete idea of how it is good for them to live that they frequently espouse to others—perhaps it involves some quite traditional values. This exposition might be simultaneous with gradual, unconscious reconsideration of their priorities, over a period of six months, say, which happens in response to various conflicts that have arisen between their commitments. The only phenomenological manifestation of this reconsideration might be a steadily growing unease that arises when they are explaining their old ideas of the good life to others. One day, a particularly challenging situation makes them realise that their priorities have shifted: suddenly they are aware of how different conflicts over the past six months enabled, in their own ways, the refinement of a new and improved understanding of what was best

for them. They suddenly become conscious of this process of intelligent incorporation in which they'd been engaging, and of the unease with the old ideas that they hadn't realised they'd been experiencing. Such awareness need never actually arise in order for unconscious eudaimonic reflection to further develop implicit or explicit understandings of our own good. Nevertheless, the example illustrates that unconscious reflection is something in which we engage.[33]

One might be sceptical about the idea of reflection of which we are not conscious. Further, even if one is willing to grant that there are cases like the one I gave in the previous paragraph, how could *reflection* ever generate an implicit understanding of anything? Isn't reflection a process by which things are made explicit? This scepticism may be relieved by applying the skill analogy (Annas 2011, ch. 3).[34] In Annas's account of virtue, the skill analogy is applied to explain both the development and the exercise of virtues. Now, a conception of happiness is not a virtue. However, in many of the respects in which the development of a virtue is analogous to the development of a practical skill, the development of a conception of our own good too is analogous to the development of a practical skill. Thus the analogy applies. Let us see how. Developing a skill requires the steady, intelligent incorporation of reasons for action into the practical understanding that constitutes the skill. We get better because we see or are told reasons for doing things, and integrate those reasons with the other elements of the skill that we've acquired up to that point. And repeat. Now, when developing a practical skill in this way, we need be capable neither of explaining what we've understood—the understanding may be implicit—nor be aware that we are in fact developing our understanding of anything. The student in woodworking has developed something of the skill of woodworking, but she need not be capable of making that understanding sufficiently explicit that she can explain it to someone else. And the student need not be sufficiently self-aware to realise that she is improving. Indeed, she might feel dissatisfied with the daily grind of heading to the workshop for her apprenticeship, thinking every day to be the same, and it might take a mentor or parent to point out to her, "look at all the things you can do now that you couldn't do last year." The mentor or parent can observe an *understanding* implicit

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[33]Indeed, eudaimonic reflection is likely to be mostly unconscious because we don't ever get a holiday from living our lives Z(Annas 2022, 7–8; 2011, 123–24). We have to improve our understanding of how best to live *while living*—we can't stop and step outside our lives to get our eudaimonic reflection done.

[34]Thanks to Rachana Kamtekar for pressing me to make explicit my (thitherto unconscious!) application of the skill analogy here.

in the student's actions, even though the student cannot see that herself, and was not conscious of its development.

Similarly for the development of our conception of happiness. We want to live for the sake of all the things the living for the sake of which we take to be part of our good. This will require modifying both our commitments and the ways in which we live for our commitments. Practical experiences teach us reasons for living in this way or that way, and learning from that experience requires the intelligent incorporation of these reasons into a new and improved conception of happiness. We need not be conscious that this is what we are doing, as the woodworker is not conscious, and we can come to do a better job of living for the sake of all of our commitments without being able to make that improved understanding explicit.

The reader may yet still find my use of the term 'reflection' disingenuous. I do not need to insist that eudaimonic reflection really is the same kind of thing as everything else that we call reflection, and so an unhappy reader may take my use of the term stipulatively. Nevertheless, let me conclude by briefly explaining two further motivations for calling the minimal eudaimonist's central process by 'eudaimonic reflection'. Firstly, when we act upon an improved understanding of our own good generated by successful eudaimonic reflection, we demonstrate that we have *learnt intelligently from our practical experience*. I take it to be analytic that a process involving the deployment of intelligence is reflective. Secondly, we can become conscious of a process of eudaimonic reflection of which we were not previously conscious, and an implicit conception of happiness can become an explicit conception. When either of these changes occurs, phenomenologically it can seem as though the process had already been conscious and explicit all along, and thereby strikes us as something appropriately called 'reflective'.

Responding to the intellectualism worry

My philosophical motivation for introducing this fourth characterisation of eudaimonic reflection, on behalf of the minimal eudaimonist, is to enable a response to the intellectualism worry for eudaimonism (briefly introduced in sec. 1, above).[35] The problem, recall, is that minimal eudaimonism

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[35]Badhwar (2014, sec. 4.8) has a different but complementary response to the intellectualism worry.

looks to overintellectualise both happiness, and the process by which we come to better understand the nature of our own good. What's been said in previous sections might seem to suggest that the only way we make progress is by consciously thinking through how exactly our commitments have come into conflict, coming up with resolutions for those conflicts which then go on to constitute aspects of an improved understanding of the good. But then only people with a high degree of intellectual capacity can ever get better at living for the sake of their commitments, and everyone else is just bumbling around, never improving. This is implausible. Intellectuals are just as prone—if not more prone—to living conflicted lives, and they do not have a monopoly on the capacity to bring their commitments into closer harmony.

In addressing this problem, Hursthouse (1999, 127) asks "Does a modern English speaker who has not read the ancient Greeks have the concept of *to kalon*? … If we are going to ascribe grasp of the concepts of … virtue ethics to every virtuous person, we must say something more about what grounds such ascription." In giving her own solution, she says that "[v]irtue must surely be compatible with a fair amount of inarticulacy about one's reasons for action …" (ibid.) And the way to achieve this theoretical desideratum "is to insist that it is the ascription of virtue that (in this context at least) is basic." (Hursthouse 1999, 137) Now, Hursthouse conceives of the reasons that the virtuous person will give for what she does as not making reference to the final end for her own agency (1999, 129). Instead, what she says will bottom out in claims like "it would have been cowardly not to," "he needed help," "it doesn't belong to me." Call these *X reasons* (Hursthouse 1999, 129).[36] Then, ascription of virtue can be taken to require responsiveness to X reasons, and it need not be taken to require intellectually involved concepts such as *to kalon*, because X reasons can be stated and understood without reference to such concepts. The overintellectualism worry is resolved by making the cognitive content expected of the virtuous something that does not involve anything too intellectual.

Hursthouse does not explicitly consider the possibilities of implicit practical understandings, and reflection of which one is not conscious. However, if X reasons are as explicit as the virtuous are able to be about their reasons for action, then there is a limit imposed upon the cognitive complexity expected of the virtuous, and so the intellectualism worry cannot arise in any of its forms. By contrast,

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[36]Swanton (2021, 131) credits the terminology to Williams (1995).

on the account of minimal eudaimonism under development here, we do not assume in advance any limit to the complexity of the cognitive side of the possession of virtue. Instead, we take it that the intellectualism worry arises only if eudaimonic reflection need be conscious, and the practical understanding that results need be explicit. For it is these two things that look to require a great degree of specifically intellectual sophistication: being explicit about reasoning, including practical reasoning, is precisely one of the things that philosophers, and other intellectuals, are trained to do. If we permit eudaimonic reflection to be carried out unconsciously, and do not require the resultant developed practical understanding to be made explicit, then no specifically intellectual sophistication is required, and the intellectualism worry does not arise. If we observe the life of a virtuous person, we might be able to discern in her actions a commitment to the idea that acting virtuously is valuable for its own sake. The structure of the cognitive side of her virtue, in such a case, would reveal an implicit understanding of *to kalon*, at least on one interpretation of that piece of Greek terminology: she is acting for the sake of the noble, which wouldn't be possible if she couldn't be said to understand the notion of acting for the sake of the noble.

This account, then, says that yes, to the extent that a modern English speaker is virtuous, she can be said to possess a concept of *to kalon*, though it will probably be an implicit practical understanding, not an explicit theoretical understanding nor an explicit practical understanding.[37] We satisfy Hursthouse's theoretical desideratum that virtue be compatible with a fair amount of inarticulacy precisely by making this an implicit practical understanding, not necessarily achieved through a process of eudaimonic reflection that was completely conscious. A key advantage of this account over Hursthouse's is that we do not impose, in advance, a limit on the cognitive complexity that might be required in order to achieve the heights of virtue. For Hursthouse's appeal to X reasons threatens to impose a limit on the possible depth of understanding that might be needed in order to possess virtue: that understanding could only be so deep as the X reasons, which is not very deep. But becoming good at practical reasoning is very difficult, and requires us to understand an awful lot, as Hursthouse (2006, 2011) herself argues elsewhere. It looks like there might be an *under*intellectualism worry about

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[37]I'm assuming without comment, here, that the correct understanding of virtue involves the notion of *to kalon*. Whether or not that is true is not material to the present argument.

views like Hursthouse's, to which minimal eudaimonism is not subject.[38]

Secs. 2–3 and 5–8 of this chapter together establish a taxonomy of conceptions of happiness which I will use to structure the remaining chapters of this dissertation. They do this by introducing two distinctions, between conceptions of happiness that accept and reject the subordination thesis, and the tripartite distinction between purely dynamic, purely static and hybrid conceptions of happiness. These two distinctions are not quite orthogonal, for I claim that there are no purely dynamic accounts that reject the subordination thesis. Equivalently, rejection of the subordination thesis entails the presence of a static component. I do not have a general argument for this; we will see various ways in which the rejection of the subordination thesis leads to static and hybrid accounts in ch. 2.

Looking ahead, chs. 2–4 establish, by elimination, the claim that we should conceive of happiness as an activity—purely dynamic conceptions of happiness are those that are left standing after the work of those chapters. In my final chapter, I will then go on to argue that we should conceive of happiness not only as activity, but as a particular conception of virtuous activity. I will explain in detail the best way to give an account according to which happiness is virtuous activity alone.

Of the six conjunctions that may be formed by drawing one element from each of the tuples ⟨SUB.THE., ∼SUB.THE.⟩ and ⟨DYNAMIC, HYBRID, STATIC⟩, it is only the combination of ∼SUB.THE. and DYNAMIC that I think is satisfied by no conceptions of happiness. Each of the other five categories of the taxonomy has members. In particular, there are eudaimonist static and hybrid accounts, to be discussed in chs. 3 and 4, respectively.

9   Minimal eudaimonism's minimal account of virtue

A minimal, functional characterisation of virtue falls out of the minimal eudaimonist's conception of the ethical role of eudaimonic reflection. Once again, giving a more complete theory of virtue

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[38]In this subsection, I use Hursthouse's engagement with issues of intellectualism as a foil to help explain the motivation for the strategy I adopt. Although I think minimal eudaimonism compares favourably to her view, I don't believe that concerns about underintellectualism are fatal to Hursthouse's virtue ethics. Jeremy Reid suggested to me that Hursthouse's later work on phronesis, referenced in the text, might well be sufficient to deal with my explanatory concerns.

is left to concrete eudaimonisms, but minimal eudaimonism's account of eudaimonic reflection does say something about what sort of thing virtue has to be. In order for it to be possible for me to freely make reference to virtue in the discussions and arguments of subsequent chapters, I'll explain here how a functional conception of virtue falls out of what's been said so far, and I'll note what controversial virtue-theoretic claims are *not* being made by the minimal eudaimonist. Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism, on the other hand, subscribes to some of the latter claims in explaining how the good is virtuous activity, as we'll see (ch. 5, secs. 1–2).

The minimal eudaimonist holds that a virtue is a character trait that is committed to the good in the following two senses (Annas 2011, 103).[39] Firstly, a virtue is a trait that enables its possessor to live well.[40] The (weak) sense of enablement is that living well becomes, precisely, the exercise of one or more relevant virtues, or, the engagement in virtuous activity.[41] Now, what we've seen is that to live well is to live for the sake of what is good. Then the virtues are committed to the good in the sense that they enable living for the sake of what is good.

Secondly, the subordination thesis says that living well is good *simpliciter*, so then virtue is committed to the good in the sense of directly enabling its realisation. Virtue is wanted for the sake of virtuous activity, and we can gloss this by saying that virtue is wanted for its own sake.[42] How should

[39]Minimal eudaimonism does not adopt any particular philosophical account of character traits, though a concrete eudaimonism might. I do assume that a character trait is a state of the agent.

[40]Living a life involves the development and exercise of character traits. So living a life *well* must require the development and exercise of character traits committed to the good.

[41]Alternatively, a virtue is whatever state of the agent is such that: the relevant kind of virtuous activity is possible only to the extent that the agent possesses that state. For example, courage is whatever character trait is such that courageous activity is possible only to the extent that the agent possesses courage.

There's a minor bump in the rug here. Aristotle (*EN* II.4) points out that someone can act as the courageous person would without being themselves courageous, and argues that repeatedly acting like that is what's needed to become courageous. And in English it is natural to say that such a person, though not yet very courageous, is managing to act courageously. When someone who is not courageous acts courageously, though, that action need not express a practical understanding of the point of courage, because the agent may not possess such an understanding. In such a case, while they are acting courageously in the sense that they are acting as the courageous person would, they are not acting courageously in the sense that their action does not express a proper understanding of the point of courage, and how courageous activity contributes to a person's good. Or it might be that they are not acting courageously in a different sense, determined by their lack of some requirement for virtue other than practical understanding, as explained by the fuller virtue theory of a concrete eudaimonism.

When I say that a virtue is whatever state in the agent makes it possible for the agent to act courageously, then, I mean to refer to the courageous action of the courageous person, not the action of the person who lacks courage but manages to act courageously. When the courageous person acts courageously, the difference between them and the person who lacks courage, but acts courageously, is not simply that they perform the same activity but one of them possesses a given state. The possession of that state enables that same activity to be done in a different way, even if we call it by the same name.

[42]Adams (2006, 15) calls virtue "worth having for its own sake."

we understand virtue when considering a conception of happiness that rejects the subordination thesis? On such a view, the virtues are committed to the good indirectly. They enable living well, which is not in itself good *simpliciter,* but is for the sake of what is good *simpliciter*.

Let's see some examples. Suppose we have a purely dynamic account, and suppose that to live courageously is to live well. Courage would then be a virtue, committed to the good in the sense of constitutively enabling courageous activity, which latter is good *simpliciter*. Now suppose we have a purely static account, and the realisation of the circumstances specified by the static conception requires us to be brave. Then courage would be a virtue, committed to the good in the sense of enabling living courageously, which is done for the sake of realising what our conception of happiness takes to be good.

The extent to which some trait of mine is actually a virtue, and the extent to which my activity is virtuous activity, depends on the extent to which I'm right about the good. Suppose, again, that we have a purely dynamic account, and that living courageously is to live well. Suppose further that I have something of a grasp on courage, but I don't always get it right. Sometimes I'm rash, misidentifying the doing of dangerous things as courageous, when it is not in fact courageous to do them. To the extent that I think doing those things is courageous, I'm wrong about what it is to live well, and to that same extent my character trait, responsible for both my living courageously and my living rashly, is not courage.

This minimal account of virtue does not settle the questions as to whether virtue is a skill or analogous with skill; how the virtues are to be individuated; whether the virtues are integrated; whether the virtues are not merely integrated but form a unity; whether the executive or intellectual virtues form separate classes from the rest;[43] what the acquisition of virtue is like; and more. Concrete eudaimonisms will take positions on at least some of those questions in giving their conceptions of

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[43]In an essay in progress, "What's different about the executive virtues?", I argue that possession of the executive virtues is a kind of excellence distinct from the excellence of possessing other virtues. On the account of the executive virtues I give there, they are contingently instrumentally good. By contrast, the other virtues can never be of instrumental value. With courage we can distinguish the value of an exercise of courage from the value of the end or ends for the sake of which it was exercised. With a virtue like beneficence, I argue that there is not something else other than the exercise of the virtue, such that we can consider separately whether the exercise of the virtue was good, and whether the something else was good.

happiness.[44]

Finally, we can also now say what it means to talk about virtue *simpliciter*, as opposed to talking about a particular virtue, such as courage. Someone's virtue is the union of all the virtues she possesses, i.e., the state of being in all those states. Note, again, that this does not in itself say anything about the integration or the unity of the virtues. We can take the union of any set of states. If on a concrete eudaimonism the virtues are unified such that the set of states has exactly one member, then the union is trivial, but my definition of virtue *simpliciter* stands. On the other hand, how the thesis of the integration of the virtues is cashed out in terms of states of the individual could vary, but taking the union of these states will still be possible.

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[44]A further controversy upon which minimal eudaimonism does not take a position is the question of whether virtues are fundamentally historical traits, metaphysically impossible to possess without the agent having had an appropriate history involving their development. To take the virtues to be fundamentally historical in this way is to rule out the possibility of a virtuous swampman.

I do not believe that any of my purposes in this dissertation require me to take a position on whether or not a virtuous swampman is possible, though I'm not sure about this. In particular, Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism's particular appeal to the skill analogy (ch. 3, sec. 4 and ch. 5, sec. 1) might entail that a virtuous swampman is not possible. Either way, though, I will not need to make explicit argumentative appeal to the thesis that there can be no virtuous swampman. Thus, in order to lend my arguments as much generality as possible, I will commit neither minimal eudaimonism nor Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism to the view that the virtues are fundamentally historical in the sense of ruling out the metaphysical possibility of a virtuous swampman.

Julia Annas, in conversation, emphasises this fundamental historicity of the virtues. She argues that a philosophical account of virtue should never be so thin that it permits the possibility of a virtuous swampman. However, Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism is a view about the best way to connect virtue and happiness, and we want to make the case for it with as thin a theory of virtue as we can manage. It is then open to a defender of Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism to independently make the case for the fundamental historicity of the virtues. Thus, *pace* Annas, I will not commit any positions defended in this dissertation to the metaphysical impossibility of a virtuous swampman.

CHAPTER APPENDIX A

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN LIVING AND CIRCUMSTANCES*

Russell (2012, esp. chs. 4, 9–11) defends a number of theses which together constitute a normative conception of happiness for humans. He argues that someone's happiness is constituted by her virtuous engagement in a certain special sort of activity, which he calls *embodied activity*. Russell thereby focuses our thinking about happiness on a special sort of agency, rather than on our patiency, to borrow Russell's terminology. We *make* our lives happy by engaging in the right sort of activities in the right way—specifically, by engaging in embodied activities in ways that are virtuous. What simply happens to us, on the other hand, is never constitutive of happiness. Accidents of fortune merely have the potential to prevent us from being happy, and their occurrence can force us to have to try to make our lives happy in a new, distinct way.

An embodied activity is one which depends for its identity on things which lie outside of the agent's control. What this means is that whether or not it is possible for the activity to continue is not completely up to the agent. A motivating example is my activity of living alongside my spouse. Whether or not it is possible for this activity to continue is not entirely within my control, because my spouse might die, or otherwise become unavailable to me. Contrast this with a *formalised activity*, such as living in a way which is respectful of others. It's entirely within my control whether or not I continue to live in ways which are respectful, so we can say that the activity of living in ways which are

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respectful does not depend for its identity upon anything which is outside of my control. In terms of this contrast between embodied and formalised activities, Russell's philosophy of happiness becomes the view that not only is happiness a matter of our activity, rather than a matter of what happens to us, but it is a matter of embodied activity, not formalised. Russell's contention is that when it comes to the value that may be realised by our own agency, the correct conception of happiness, or of a happy life, is virtuous engagement in embodied activity. This implies that to the extent we're living for the sake of anything else, we're not living for the sake of what's actually valuable. In particular, formalised activity alone does not suffice for a happy life.

To defend the view that it's embodied activities which are constitutive of happiness, Russell defends what he calls the *embodied conception* of the self. This is the view that the boundaries of the self whose happiness is at stake include all the constitutive parts of its embodied activities. In particular, those boundaries include all those things which we do not control upon which the identities of our embodied activities depend. My spouse, as she is now, forms constitutive part of the embodied activity of my life alongside her. And so she falls, as she is now, within the boundaries of the embodied conception of myself. (The "as she is now" qualifier captures the point that my spouse could change such that she remained the same person, yet no longer formed constitutive part of the embodied activity, such as if she were to stop being interested in living alongside me.)

Then, to defend this expansive way of drawing the boundaries of the self, Russell appeals to the relationship between experiences of loss and one's assumptions about one's possibilities for action. If I lose a limb, I must undergo a reconfiguration of my conception of what sort of engagement with the world is possible for me. Similarly, Russell (2012, 213) argues, if my spouse or career becomes unavailable to me, very many of my assumptions about how it is possible for me to engage with the world are violated, and must be replaced. In terms of embodied activities, the point is that once we've recovered from losses of limbs, people and careers, the activities in which we engage will look very different to the ones in which we engaged before the loss. Now for eudaimonists, happiness is defined relative to a conception of possibilities for action: happiness is the final end of *my* practical reasoning and that's dependent upon what sort of activity is actually possible for *me*. Thus, if our conception of our possibilities for action changes radically, then we are effectively considering the happiness of

a different self. And so our self should be taken to include those things outside of our control which partly determine our possibilities for action. Then, the activities of the embodied self are embodied activities, and so the happiness of the embodied self is constituted by embodied activities. Thus, our happiness is constituted by virtuous embodied activity.[1]

In this chapter appendix, my goal is to argue against Russell's view that it's only embodied activities which are constitutive of happiness. Correspondingly, I will argue against the embodied conception of the self. Russell and I are in agreement that it is the practical concerns which prompt us to engage in eudaimonic reflection which determine where we should draw the boundaries of the self. We disagree about which boundaries of the self best answer to those practical concerns. Against Russell's embodied conception, I will defend the *formalised conception* of the self. The formalised conception draws the boundaries of the self so as to include only that which lies strictly within the scope of my agency: what I absolutely control. On this notion of control, I control how I treat my children, because that is absolutely up to me, but I don't control how my children respond to the ways in which I treat them. This contrasts with a commonsensical sense of 'control', on which we can say that parents control their children. In the present context, they do not, because how parents treat their children does not absolutely determine how the children will respond. What we will see is that if we adopt the formalised conception of the self, we can consider the relevance to our happiness of both formalised and embodied activity. By contrast, under the embodied conception of the self, it is possible to consider the relevance of only embodied activity. I accept Russell's arguments in favour of the relevance of embodied activities to eudaimonic reflection, but we should not go so far as to adopt the embodied conception of the self.

One key reason why Russell is interested in defending the embodied conception is its relevance to discussion of the *sufficiency thesis*: the claim that virtue is sufficient for happiness. Russell (2012, pt. 2, esp. 107–15, 148–51, 178–80) argues that the defenders of the sufficiency thesis in ancient philosophy after Aristotle won the argument, and then he diagnoses the failure of those who sought

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[1]Nussbaum appears to commit herself to the embodied conception, saying that "externals are not merely instrumentally related to good activity but enter themselves into the specification of what good activity is" (2001, 319) and that "the world" provides "a constituent part of the good activity itself" (2001, 381). In these passages she is giving her reading of *EN*, but she endorses the resultant conception of happiness. Also cf. Nussbaum (2001, 343–44). Thanks to Jeremy Reid for pointing me to Nussbaum's view as an example of the rejection of the formalised conception.

to deny the sufficiency thesis. The problem, he explains, was that all sides implicitly accepted the formalised conception of the self, but that conception is very friendly to the sufficiency thesis, and very unfriendly to its detractors. Then it is no wonder that the arguments of those seeking to defend the sufficiency thesis were that much more convincing. If Russell is right about this, then we can conclude that Hellenistic defences of the sufficiency thesis were the weaker for having implicitly assumed the formalised conception of the self. Moreover, if acceptance of the formalised conception permits arguments to the sufficiency thesis strong enough to have clearly won the debate in the Hellenistic world, then an important preliminary to any successful contemporary defence of the sufficiency thesis is likely to be an explicit defence of the formalised conception. It is my purpose in this chapter appendix to provide such a defence. I won't discuss the sufficiency thesis further until ch. 5, sec. 5, but if Russell is right, then the argument of this chapter appendix might well provide groundwork for a modern renewal of the case for the sufficiency thesis, independently of my defence of Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism. Russell's corresponding strategy is to use his defence of the embodied conception in an argument against the sufficiency thesis.

With respect to the main project of this dissertation, this chapter appendix serves two supplementary purposes. Firstly, in the process of making the case for the formalised conception, we'll further characterise eudaimonic reflection and minimal eudaimonism (esp. sec. 2, below). Secondly, to defend the formalised conception is to argue in favour of the disambiguation of the distinction between the living of lives and the circumstances of lives that I adopted in ch. 1, sec. 5. Recall that I said that the distinction is pretheoretical, and explained how the notion of eudaimonic reflection brings the distinction along with it, conceptually speaking. Simply, when we are trying to better determine what for the sake of which we should live, then we are considering how to go about living our lives, *given* the circumstances in which we find ourselves having to live them. Then, each of the formalised and embodied conceptions yields a way in which the distinction can be disambiguated, because the living of a life is just the activity of the self whose happiness is at stake. To draw the *formalised distinction*, as I did in ch. 1, sec. 5, is to say that the living of our lives is only what we absolutely control, and the circumstances of our lives is everything else. So the circumstances of our lives includes, for example, the state of our bodies. The *embodied distinction* (or, *Russell's distinction*) additionally includes

in the living of our lives those things that we do not control, but upon which the identities of our embodied activities depend. So it would include my spouse in the living of my life, rather than in its circumstances.

To defend the formalised conception, then, is to defend the formalised distinction. Similarly, while Russell does not make explicit use of the distinction between the living of lives and the circumstances of lives, his arguments in favour of the embodied conception of the self are effectively arguments in favour of the embodied distinction. Indeed, the crux of the disagreement between Russell and myself is that we disagree about how to disambiguate that distinction for the purposes of eudaimonic reflection, and moreover, my reasons for objecting to the embodied conception are based on paying close attention to the distinction between living and circumstances. As I said, though, my argument here is supplementary, such that a reader who is already onboard with my choice of the formalised distinction may prefer to skip over the proceeding.

1   Three preliminaries

Firstly, in defending the formalised conception, I will defend the formalised distinction, but I will not commit to any theoretical views about *what* exactly *is in* our control, which would be a matter not of disambiguating the distinction, but of reducing its vagueness. In particular, despite defending the distinction between the living of lives and the circumstances of lives drawn by Stoics, I will not commit the minimal eudaimonist to any Stoic views on the matter of what exactly is in our control. All I need is that we all arrive at eudaimonic reflection with a rough, mostly-overlapping conception of what lies within the scope of our agency, although making serious reflective progress may well require us to make that conception less vague.

To motivate this, consider how we all agree that we have control over what we try to achieve by our actions, but not what those actions actually achieve. The world frequently intervenes. To see that people share this belief, consider someone who says that they intend to achieve some outcome. If you press them, they will always admit that what they intend is to *try to* achieve the outcome, and they *hope* or *wish* that their attempt will lead to the outcome they want. Similarly, most people take their emotional state to not be under their control; if someone intends to not get angry about something,

what they mean is that they intend to take steps that constitute *trying* not to get angry, and they hope that they will be successful, or, they wish for the outcome of their attempt to be the state in which they are not angry. In particular, what I assume is that we all think that we can intelligibly form intentions about that for the sake of which we will live: we can intelligibly form intentions to live in accordance with steadily more determinate conceptions of the good.

These remarks are intended to characterise the distinction between what we can control and what we cannot control in terms of the scope of our agency in a way that is sufficiently robust for the defence of the formalised conception, but without attempting to settle questions in the philosophy of action and the philosophy of emotion. This is because the formalised conception, as a component of minimal eudaimonism, makes only structural claims. What we see, though, is that while we have only disambiguated the distinction between the living of lives and the circumstances of lives, an actual reflector will additionally need to reduce its vagueness: she must now ask, for various elements of lives, such as emotions, whether or not they lie within her control. Philosophical engagement with such questions may change someone's view as to whether, for example, the Stoics or Kant were right about whether and how the emotions are something over which we have control, and this will in turn develop, possibly even transformatively, someone's conception of how one can live for the sake of a good emotional life. Indeed, without some kind of reduction of the vagueness of the distinction between living and circumstances with respect to the emotions, it is difficult to see how one could develop a conception of what it would be to live for the sake of a good emotional life at all, and correspondingly, how one could develop a very determinate conception of what a good emotional life even amounts to. So to the extent that happiness involves a good emotional life, successful eudaimonic reflection will require a reduction in the vagueness of the distinction between living and circumstances of living. However, this philosophical engagement affects only the content of eudaimonic reflection, not its structure.[2]

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[2]Rachana Kamtekar notes, in conversation, that this view would have the agent regard aspects of her own state as part of the circumstances of her life. This is easy to motivate when we think of things like our own present bad habits, which we have to take as given, in an instance of eudaimonic reflection, in much the same way that we take our present material circumstances as given. But in general, it's a very strong position. In particular, Kamtekar suggests, we would seem to have a very different relationship with aspects of our own state than we do with things that are really external, such as life circumstances.

On the contrary, I suggest, it is often easier to effect change in our external life circumstances than in our own foibles.

The ethical projects of Kantians and Stoics, understanding these groups broadly, can also be thought of as starting with an assumption like mine that we all already share a relatively robust notion of what we can control and what we cannot control. However, they then additionally attempt to show that more is in our control than we might be first inclined to think. For example, Kant (1996, 5:30) compares the case of being threatened with immediate and summary execution for committing adultery, and being threatened with a similar execution for refusing to give false testimony against someone honourable. Kant first says that the individual in the first case would readily admit that he could "control his inclination" to fulfil his desire. This is Kant's supposition that we all agree that we have control over whether we act on our emotions in at least the case where acting on them would result in our death. In the second case, he asks, would the individual "consider it possible to overcome his love of life" in the service of justice? Yes: "[h]e would perhaps not venture to assert whether he would do it or not, but he must admit without hesitation that it would be possible for him." We do not readily share Kant's optimism that everyone would agree "without hesitation" that it would be "possible" to overcome their emotional attachment to staying alive in the service of justice. However, we can understand Kantians as trying to establish the right sense of possibility, so that it does come out true that whether we act on our emotions in the false testimony case, too, is in our control.

Now for Stoics. We commonly think that we have some amount of indirect control over our body of beliefs about what is good and bad. For any given claim about value I cannot just decide to believe or disbelieve it, but each of us does take it to be intelligible to form the intention to make up our own mind about what's good and bad. We further think, before encountering the Stoic position, that we have control over whether or not we act on our beliefs about value, but only in the absence of strong emotion. To consider again Kant's example, a spouse takes it to be in their control whether or not they are faithful, but perhaps only in the absence of exceptionally strong temptation. Now, Stoics give an account of the emotions designed to show that they are nothing more than beliefs about what is good and bad (Graver 2007, 4–7). That would mean that strong emotion is just strong belief. If I find myself tempted to be unfaithful, then, I should not just shrug my shoulders and think that whether

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Our life circumstances and our bad habits are *equally external to our agency* in the sense of not being under our control. See also Katsafanas (2017).

or not I manage to be faithful is basically out of my control, and in the control of my emotions. For if strong emotions are just strong beliefs, then I can intelligibly form an intention to more definitively make up my mind about whether or not it is bad to be unfaithful, thereby taking more control of whether or not I actually am unfaithful.[3]

If these argumentative strategies I've sketched on behalf of Kantians and Stoics can succeed, they do so only if their readers already mostly agree with them about what we can control and what we cannot control. Then these ethicists can be understood as trying to extend the former group at the expense of the latter. In this dissertation, I make the same assumption that we have a robust notion of what we can control, and characterise that in terms of intentions we think we can intelligibly form in the context of eudaimonic reflection. However, in contrast to this conception of the ethics of Kantians and Stoics, I do not intend to try to show that more is in our control than we tend to think is in our control. In particular, all that matters for my purposes is that we all think that we can intelligibly form intentions about that for the sake of which we will live—again, that we can intelligibly form intentions to live in accordance with steadily more determinate conceptions of the good. Exactly what aspects of living for the sake of something we can intelligibly form intentions about—does it include the kind of emotions we'll have, or what we'll believe?—need not be settled. There is sufficient agreement for me to proceed.

Finally, it is reasonable to question whether there is, in fact, anything that we absolutely control. For if there isn't, we will not be able to properly distinguish between the embodied and formalised conceptions.[4] In response, I suggest that to rely upon the foundational idea that we can make our lives happy by how we live them, as do both Russell and proponents of the formalised conception, is to presuppose that there exist conceptions of *how it is good to engage with the world* to which it is absolutely up to us to commit our agency, looking forward from an occasion of eudaimonic reflection. Equivalently: all sides presuppose that there exist conceptions of *engaging virtuously* with the world,

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[3]Houston Smit suggests that thinking like a Stoic here might enable the development of virtue such as to *expand* what's under my control, enabling certain projects of self-improvement which previously seemed impossible. This is stronger than my point in the text, which is just about *correctly conceiving* of what's under my control. I would like to explore this further.

[4]Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for putting the question this way. In addition, Mark Timmons helpfully argued that disambiguating the distinction requires characterising the sense of the control, not just invoking a distinction between what we can and cannot control.

in accordance with which it is absolutely up to us to live. If there does not exist any such conception, then I will engage with the world *well* only by chance. Then there does not seem to be anything I can do to *make* my life a happy one by living it well—in particular, I can't engage virtuously in any embodied activities. To get Russell's eudaimonism off the ground, then, we have to suppose that we absolutely control enough of how we engage with the world that in eudaimonic reflection we can commit ourselves to engaging with it in accordance with conceptions of what it would be to engage with it well. This gives us enough to distinguish the two conceptions of the self: the formalised conception includes only my engagement with the world, and the embodied includes more.[5]

Boundaries of the self

For my second preliminary, consider again how Russell calls the two ways of drawing the distinction between the living of lives and the circumstances of living conceptions of the *self*, in particular. We need to be clear about why he does this, and it explains why the disagreement between Russell and myself is not merely verbal, but I do not think there is anything too difficult going on. When we engage in eudaimonic reflection, as we've said, we draw a distinction between what counts as the living of our life, and what counts as the circumstances in which our life is being lived. The living of *my* life is, simply, all of *my* activity. Exactly how far the living of our life extends is then just the same question as how far our self extends: to determine whether something is part of the living of my life, we simply have to determine whether it's me doing the living. Thus, considerations of the boundaries of the self become relevant to eudaimonic reflection because eudaimonic reflection implicitly involves an (initially vague) distinction between the living of lives and the circumstances of living, and the latter implicitly commits us to a view of the boundaries of the self. The relevance of the boundaries of the self to eudaimonic reflection is basically the same as the relevance to eudaimonic reflection of

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[5]Briefly, here is a more detailed proposal for characterising the sense of control in terms of intentions. We can say that what we can control is that about which we can intelligibly form *intentions*, and by that which we cannot control, I mean that about which we can intelligibly form only *wishes*, and not intentions. By intentions, here, I do not mean only intentions to take particular actions, but a broader sense of the voluntary. For example, it will include intentions to live in certain ways, or live for the sake of certain things (the intention to live for the sake of a virtue is an intention to live in certain ways, so these can overlap).

This distinction between intending and wishing is similar to Aristotle's distinction between rational choice and wish in *EN* III.2–5. Russell (2012, ch. 3, sec. 1.1) seems to have something similar in mind in his distinction between our agency and our patiency, which we'll discuss again in ch. 3, sec. 3.

the distinction between living and circumstances of living.

In the arguments to follow, then, I will move back-and-forth between talk of views about boundaries of the self and talk of ways to draw the distinction between the living of lives and the circumstances of living. To a view of the boundaries of *which* self do we commit ourselves? The self that can be happy or not; the self whose happiness we are considering in eudaimonic reflection. This need not be the metaphysical bearer of personal identity, nor need it be the self who is morally responsible, nor need it be the self with which others have relationships, such as friendship (Russell 2012, 96–97, 248 n. 40). We might call this the *reflecting self*, but I'm not completely sure that's the right one.[6]

Specifying the boundaries of the self that can be happy or not precisifies (in the sense of the reduction of vagueness) the distinction between static and dynamic components of conceptions of happiness, by saying what counts as the activity of that self, and what counts as the circumstances in which that activity is carried out. Now, Russell goes on to argue from his embodied conception of the self to various conclusions about happiness for humans (2012, ch. 4). Many of these are in tension with the conclusions of this dissertation. It is outside of my scope to consider each of these points of disagreements in turn. I mention them in order to indicate that our disagreement over how to draw the distinction between the living of lives and the circumstances of living is not merely verbal: it has consequences for the philosophy of happiness. It is to fold a certain conception of the self into eudaimonic reflection. Instead of exploring those consequences directly, though, I'll limit myself to consideration of the contrast at the root of our disagreements, between the embodied and formalised conceptions of the self. Just as Russell's arguments depend on the choice of the embodied conception of the self, my arguments will turn on the distinction between the living of lives and the circumstances of lives being drawn along the lines of the formalised conception.

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[6]Discussing psychological research into moral exemplars, who in the minimal eudaimonist's terms are those who must have had a great deal of success in their eudaimonic reflection (ch. 1, sec. 3), Monin and Jordan (2009, 344) explain that "[moral exemplars] were more likely to incorporate … ideals in their self-concept, to include systematic beliefs and life plans, and to connect it to past and future selves, thus giving their self-concept a greater sense of continuity through time." This fits with the idea of making a conception of the good more determinate, where the self is the reflecting self.

Russell's dialectic

The final preliminary is to note the different dialectical role played by the choice of how to draw the distinction between the living of lives and their circumstances in Russell's project, and in the project of this dissertation. By the time he comes to defending the embodied conception of the self, Russell has already completed his defence of dynamic conceptions of happiness, or, his defence of the view that happiness is virtuous activity. By contrast, I defend dynamic accounts by repeated appeal to the distinction between the living of lives and the circumstances of lives. So I must defend the formalised conception with quite different theoretical resources to those that Russell uses to defend the embodied conception.

Briefly, Russell's dialectical position when he comes to defend the embodied conception is as follows. He has already argued that happiness is an activity. He thinks, though, that the activities which constitute human happiness must be those that are vulnerable to fortune (Russell 2012, 98 (e.g.)).[7] Combining these necessitates the view that some things that we do not control form constitutive parts of the activities that make up the living of one's life. And, Russell (2012, ch. 10) thinks, this view has independent support from how it makes best sense of grief and loss: it's really the case that in those situations, we lose parts of ourselves. Russell argues for his embodied conception *given* that happiness is (only) the living of our lives, and this is why the fact that grief and loss are like losing a part of oneself is evidence for his view. By contrast, in this chapter appendix, I intend to argue against the embodied conception without relying on arguments in favour of purely dynamic accounts, which latter I haven't yet made. I am in complete agreement with Russell's defence of the view that happiness is virtuous activity, but hope to give a defence of the formalised conception which is independent of the assumption that the conceptions of happiness refined by means of eudaimonic reflection are conceptions only of activities.

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[7]Another way to put this is that Russell wants to show that the self that can be happy is only the embodied self.

2 The formalised distinction and eudaimonic reflection

The positive part of my defence of the formalised conception is to explain how application of a distinction between living and circumstances drawn along the lines of what we can control and what we cannot control permits me to make progress in my eudaimonic reflection. In this way, the formalised conception lets us get a grip on the issue of how to live well *simpliciter*.

Eudaimonic reflection begins in a life that is already being lived, and has for its material aspects of that life, including things that happen to us, things that happen to others that we observe, things that we do, and things that we think and feel. What is the basic structure of eudaimonic reflection's making use of these materials? I suggest that in the core cases of eudaimonic reflection, for some actual or possible aspect of our life, X, we ask ourselves how our life is going, or would be going, with regard to X.[8] This is to ask whether and how X is, or would be, good or bad for us. Although what we are ultimately after in eudaimonic reflection are general truths about happiness, the basic materials of such reflection are our concrete practical experiences, by means of reflection upon which we hope to refine our general conception of what for the sake of which we ought to be living. For example, reflection upon my particular relationship with my spouse might enable me to refine my general conception of just how friendships can contribute to a good life, helping me to realise what can be only superficially valuable in friendships. Perhaps I would conclude that what's most valuable in that relationship is ongoing companionship, rather than the opportunities it affords for adventurous episodes, such as international travel. Then I can refine my conception of happiness so as to emphasise living for the sake of ongoing companionship, and to deemphasise living for the sake of thrills and excitement.[9]

In eudaimonic reflection, then, we seek to answer the question of how to live well by refining

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[8]Annas (2011, 121) takes the starting point of reflection to be the question of how my life is going, but I don't think that's specific enough. What we ask ourselves is how to live well, and the question of how my life is going is secondary, considered only as a means to answer the first question, as we'll see below.

[9]Note that we cannot simply apply the distinction between static, dynamic and hybrid accounts of happiness directly to the question of whether our life is going well with regard to X, asking for each of the components of our conception of happiness whether X is conducive to its realisation. That's because (i) X is not a conception of happiness, and (ii) the features of X that separately bear upon static and dynamic elements of our conception of happiness are entangled with each other within X. This is why we first need to apply the formalised distinction to X, to separate things out. That application does not directly yield components of conceptions of happiness, either, but it does yield things that can *inform* our conception, as we'll see.

our conception of the good, and we approach that task of refinement by asking whether our lives are going well with regard to some actual or possible aspect of our lives. To make my positive defence of the formalised conception, I'll now consider at some length the example of an academic who is considering, in eudaimonic reflection, standing up for a controversial thesis in print.[10] We suppose that she's observed (or predicts) standing up for that thesis coming into conflict with other things that she cares about, such as some of her social relations. The hope, on the academic's part, is to abstract from this concrete case, and learn thereby something more about what it is to live well, and the human good, in general.

Now, my positive claim on behalf of the formalised conception is that it is always *possible*, *intelligible* and *useful* to apply the distinction between what we can control and what we cannot control, and thereby break the question about X down.[11] Like this: *given* the things about my defending this controversial thesis that I do not control, am I doing well with regard to the things that I *can* control? Given the fact that for the time being I'm the only person in a position to defend this thesis, and given the fact of the risk that other people will alienate themselves from me as a result, which is up to them and not up to me, am I doing what someone who finds themselves in such a situation should be doing?[12] And then, in the other direction, *given* whatever conception I have of how best to handle the situation, is it good for me to be in circumstances in which it looks like I'll have to defend a controversial thesis in that way?

The general structure of application of the formalised distinction is to make one very hard question into two somewhat more approachable questions: am I handling (or would I handle) this aspect of my life well, and is it (or would it be) good for me to find myself needing to handle it? For my handling of the situation is in my (absolute) control, and the fact that I have (or would have) to handle it

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[10]The example is originally due to Annas (2016, 229).

[11]I think that it's *in* its productive application to eudaimonic reflection that the formalised distinction, between what we can control and what we cannot control, implicitly yields its disambiguation of the distinction between living and circumstances. As I've described her, the academic invokes the Stoic distinction regarding control at least somewhat explicitly. It does not, however, seem like she need make explicit reference to the general distinction between living and circumstances. I treat the Stoic distinction regarding control and the general distinction between living and circumstances as extensionally equivalent, but not conceptually equivalent.

[12]Note how this way of putting the question remains basically neutral, at least (and perhaps not only) regarding the philosophically controversial cases, about precisely what it is that I am able to control; in other words, it does not go beyond the broadly shared conception of what we can control that I assumed above (1st preliminary, sec. 1, above).

is not. What I will now argue is that eudaimonic reflection on each of these two questions has the potential to be fruitful, with respect to the goals with which eudaimonic reflection began, thanks to the particular way in which the formalised distinction breaks things down. Reflection on each of the two questions can be thought of as a subprocess of eudaimonic reflection, so for ease of reference, let's call the academic's consideration of the first question the L-subprocess ('L' for living) and her consideration of the second question the C-subprocess ('C' for circumstances). I'll suppose for the purpose of explaining my example that the L-subprocess mostly precedes the C-subprocess, but I do not believe that anything hangs on describing things that way around. As we'll see, what will matter is not the temporal ordering of the subprocesses, but the differences in what each subprocess takes as given.

Let's begin by considering in detail how the L-subprocess might go. Application of the formalised distinction, here, sets aside the question of the relevance to the academic's happiness of her having ended up in this situation. Let's not worry about how I got here, the academic thinks; I find myself with this thesis to defend, and I can learn something about what it would be to live well by taking that as given, and considering how to respond. For whatever the significance of how I got here, she thinks, I'm here, and I have to decide where to go. As I've described the case, there are two main things to which the academic needs to respond well. Firstly, defence of the controversial thesis is important because it's not clear that anyone else is going to do the work, the thesis being so controversial. If the academic doesn't put up a good defence, then whatever benefits would accrue to the academic's discipline, from a defence of the thesis, would be lost. If the thesis is mostly right, the discipline will be missing out on access to the truth, and if the thesis turns out to be mostly wrong, the discipline will miss out on the opportunity to understand why it's wrong, and thereby improve its collective understanding of the reasons that speak in favour of other positions (Mill 1859, ch. 2).

Secondly, the academic needs to do justice to her relationships with her peers. If she doesn't disagree with them in a way that's respectful, she will fail to act in a way that reflects her belief that these academics are worthy of respect, even though she thinks they are not following the argument where it leads with respect to the controversial thesis. The academic is thus in a position where she must defend the thesis in a way that properly respects the importance to the discipline of the thesis

getting a hearing, and the importance of treating other members of the discipline in the way they deserve to be treated. It would be a mistake to defend the thesis so fiercely that her defence assumes her detractors are just fools, as it would be a mistake to defer so much to the opinions of others that she is not able properly to explain what the controversial thesis has going for it.[13]

To avoid the first of these two extremes, the academic requires the virtue of humility. To avoid the second, she needs courage. Now, we can assume that all of us are already committed to the idea that we should live both humbly and courageously, because all cultures pass on to their young people the idea that humility and courage are virtues. However, the less determinate our conception of what it would be to live for the sake of a humble and courageous life, the more difficult it is for us actually to respond courageously and humbly to the situations in which we find ourselves. The academic has an opportunity to develop her understanding of both of these virtues in the L-subprocess. She'll begin her attempt using the ideas she already has: it would seem prima facie courageous to accept any invitation to speak or write in favour of the controversial thesis. She might then be able to realise, though, that certain environments encourage her to speak on behalf of the thesis in a way that is not respectful of those who disagree with her. For example, those who wish to see their unreasoned belief in the controversial thesis validated by academic authority might invite her to speak, and then goad her into rejecting reasonable academic disagreement, or take her words and use them in a way which is not respectful of reasonable academic agreement. In this way, the presence of the requirement to respond with humility enables the academic to see that responding courageously is not simply a matter of accepting any opportunity to speak in favour of the controversial thesis. On the contrary, it might take some courage to turn *down* some opportunities on these grounds, because the academic might worry that invitations to defend the thesis in environments in which it is possible for her to disagree with others respectfully might be less forthcoming. This enables the academic to draw some more general conclusions about courage.[14] To back down from opportunities to defend good things might seem like it could never be the courageous thing to do, but in fact, sometimes it takes courage

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[13]Another sense in which a humble response is required is that responding angrily would be to respond in a way that assumes more about the thought processes of her peers than she is entitled to assume. Not doing so is an aspect of responding humbly, and for the sake of humility.

[14]And also about the value of living courageously.

to do just that.

Next, let's see just how drawing the distinction between living and the circumstances of living in the formalised way enabled this sort of insight into how to live well. We supposed that the academic is committed to living for the sake of a virtuous life (among other things), but that she requires eudaimonic reflection to figure out what living for the sake of a virtuous life determinately involves, in her sort of life circumstances. This is, indeed, parallel to the situation of all of us. In the academic's case, the situation of having a controversial thesis to defend provides the material for her eudaimonic reflection. We applied the formalised conception: if the living of my life is precisely what we can control, then what would it be to live well here? Well, it would be to manage to respond to the situation of having to defend the thesis both humbly and courageously. Consideration of how these concerns interact led to the more general conclusion that, contrary to what we might naively have thought, backing down might sometimes not only be the right thing to do, but the course of action which requires us to exercise our courage if we are to be successful.

Now, crucially, note how this epistemic access to the general nature of courage was made possible *precisely by the academic taking it as given* that the controversial thesis is to be defended (and, defended by her rather than anyone else). For taking that as given is, precisely, to move to consideration of how it would be intrinsically valuable to respond. Let me explain. Virtuous responses are intrinsically valuable responses, because they are the best way to respond—this is a conceptual point about virtue.[15] So if we want to make our commitment to a life lived virtuously more determinate, consideration of how it would be intrinsically valuable to respond is just what's needed. And to take it as given that the thesis is to be defended is, precisely, to move to consideration of how it would be intrinsically valuable to respond.[16] This was just what the formalised conception had the academic do by having her engage

[15]The idea that the intrinsic value of virtuous responses is due to their being the best responses can be understood as a consequence of the idea that living well involves responding well, i.e. living well involves good responses, and the idea that living well is good *simpliciter* (ch. 1, sec. 9). For a more general discussion of the intrinsic value of virtuous responses see Annas (2011, ch. 7): "… exercising virtue is a commitment on the part of the virtuous person to goodness because it is goodness: goodness is not just an outcome." (ibid., 116)

[16]An alternative way to put the point is as follows. To live for the sake of a life lived virtuously is to live for the sake of virtue for virtue's own sake. Then considering *responding well for the sake of responding well* is what we need to consider if we're to make more determinate our conception of what it would be to live for the sake of a life lived virtuously. But responding courageously is one aspect of living virtuously. So for the academic to have the insights about courage, it was necessary for her to consider responding well for the sake of responding well.

in the L-subprocess. The formalised distinction enables us to make progress in eudaimonic reflection by having us focus our attention in such a way that we can make our conception of living virtuously more determinate, where our conception of living virtuously is part of our conception of happiness.

It is also important to see that the work done by the formalised distinction is not atomic, simply asking us to focus our attention on something that we have already managed to pick out or distinguish. Thinking in terms of the distinction between what we can control and what we cannot control enables us to develop our ability to take the right things as given. And taking the right things as given is necessary to make the sort of progress in one's understanding of courage and humility that I described above. To the extent that we put things on the wrong side of the line between our living and the circumstances of our living, eudaimonic reflection will misdevelop our conception of a life lived virtuously—as noted above (1st preliminary, sec. 1), the Stoics are at pains to argue that we won't be able to develop virtue so long as we think that our emotions are not under our control in just the same way as our beliefs.

In this case, the academic has to realise that it is not up to her that she's the only person around here who, upon careful reflection, has come to the conclusion that this thesis needs to be defended—this sort of belief, at least, is involuntary. *The courage and humility of her response to her situation will be shot through with this very recognition.* Consider the academic addressing her colleagues, explaining to them that she too is uneasy about the conclusions she has drawn, and that she understands and expects them to disagree with her. Doing this is for her to accept with humility the possibility that her intellectual constitution is such that she cannot help coming to believe in theses which her peers are easily able to dismiss as false and, perhaps, even pernicious. And it is to courageously proceed with the deployment of her skills in defence of the thesis, in the face of the possibility that she is so clearly wrong about it that she'll disqualify herself as a researcher, such that others will never want to work with her again. The humility and courage of this response is partially constituted by the belief that it is not under her control that she came to the conclusion about the controversial thesis that she did. Assuming that this is indeed the virtuous response to her situation, it is difficult to see how she could have come to that understanding without application of the formalised distinction.

Let's now turn to the C-subprocess. In the example of the academic, engaging in this process of

eudaimonic reflection is to take as given her conception of how to respond well to the situation, and then ask, is it good *to have to respond* in that way—or, equivalently, is it good for her to end up in circumstances like that? This is not just to ask simply whether it is good for people to have to face the prospect of losing their friends in order to defend controversial theses, though that is part of it. More specifically, it is to consider whether it is good for her to end up in that sort of situation *given* the response she *already thinks* such a situation demands of her, and given her understanding of the usual consequences of that sort of response. She's concluded, in the L-subprocess of eudaimonic reflection, that to respond well is to courageously defend the thesis, and while she seeks to do that respectfully, there remains a risk that she'll lose her friends—after all, whether or not they ultimately reject her is not something under her control. Then the question of whether it is good for her to be in this sort of situation becomes the question of whether it is good for her to be in the sort of situation in which she is at risk of losing her friends in the process of defending something which it is important to defend.

In the context of eudaimonic reflection, for the academic to consider whether it is good for her to be in the situation of having the controversial thesis to defend, *given* her conception of the fitting response, is for her to consider whether and how she should live for the sake of avoiding, or encouraging, her ending up in this sort of situation.[17] Now, our academic seeks to flourish as a researcher in her field, in the sense that a constitutive component of her conception of happiness is her interlocked professional and personal flourishing (let's assume you can't have one without the other). How can application of the formalised distinction to the C-subprocess make her conception of happiness more determinate? Well, to apply the distinction would be for the academic to consider the effects of having controversial theses to defend upon her chances of flourishing as a researcher, given her conception of how she should respond to having such theses to defend.

It would then seem that having too many such theses—spending too much of her time working on controversial areas of her discipline—would inhibit her prospects for generally flourishing as a researcher. The contributions that she can make to the discipline when she's not in a fully defensive mode are important too, and making those contributions partly constitutes her managing to flourish

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[17]Whether *and how*: as I will discuss below, the C-subprocess has the potential to develop both the static and dynamic components of our conception of happiness.

as a researcher. Similarly, her personal and professional flourishing will be inhibited if she ends up alienated from too many of her colleagues. And so she can conclude from this that she should take steps not to completely avoid controversy, but simply to ensure that not all of her research is in controversial parts of the discipline.[18] We're assuming here that it is not the case that everything important in the discipline, in the academic's day, is controversial. If that does not obtain, then perhaps any avoidance of controversy would be to take a back seat in a way that is not to live well. And it remains true that should circumstances conspire to land the academic with only controversial theses to defend, her view that she needs to defend them stands. Nevertheless, the academic has both personal and professional reasons for limiting the portion of her work that engages with controversial areas of her discipline.[19]

In what ways does her conception of the good become more determinate as a result of this sort of thinking? We can distinguish two ways in which it develops. Firstly, her conception of the circumstances in which she can most readily flourish is made more determinate by excluding circumstances in which she finds herself with only controversial theses to defend.[20] This has relevance not only for the academic herself. If she observes any academic mentees of hers pursuing only highly controversial topics of research, she might compliment them for respects in which their defences of these theses show courage and humility, while suggesting to them that they might be narrowing their academic horizons by always choosing areas of research that land them in this sort of controversy. Secondly, the

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[18]It might seem natural to put this in terms of sacrifice, and say that the academic learns she should limit the extent to which she expects herself to make personal sacrifices for the sake of the benefits to the discipline of having her defend controversial theses. Against this, Bloomfield (2014, 119–23) argues that virtue can never, in actuality, require sacrifice.

[19]This point about the relative independence of the conclusions of the two subprocesses—the academic's conclusion that she should try to avoid circumstances in which she has too many controversial theses to defend does not affect her conclusion that she really should defend controversial theses she does end up believing—is parallel to a point about courage in societal contexts in which courage is largely martial courage. Following Aristotle, virtue ethicists claim that the courageous person enjoys going into battle, in some attenuated sense. This is because to have virtue rather than mere continence, we must enjoy acting virtuously (*EN* I.8, 1099a). An easy way to misunderstand this point is to object that then it would seem like the courageous person should seek out opportunities to exercise their martial courage, since they enjoy it, but it is surely not virtuous to be any sort of warmongerer or provoker of fights. Indeed, it is not. The brave warrior's affective response to the situation of being on the battlefield is reflective of his conviction that the courageous response is what's warranted here, and it is analogous to the academic's conclusion that should she end up with controversial theses to defend, she should do so courageously. There is no reason why the brave warrior cannot also conclude, from something analogous to the C-subprocess, that it is not good for people to end up in situations in which martial courage is the fitting response. The warrior's conception of happiness includes the idea of living for the sake of minimising how often the exercise of such courage is necessary.

[20]She might also learn about whether and how the frequency with which one ends up in academic controversy is a sign that one's work is more worthwhile, less worthwhile, or neither.

academic also develops her understanding of relevant virtues, for other things being equal, it will be virtuous to live in ways conducive to the circumstances in which she is able to flourish. In particular, the academic will learn something about living compassionately with respect to herself, not treating the defence of important but controversial theses as always more important than her more general flourishing as a researcher. This too is something that she can pass on to any mentees she might have.

Finally, note how the distinction between the development of the content of static and of dynamic components does not map neatly onto the distinction between the L- and C-subprocesses.[21] If the academic's conception of happiness has a static component, then asking whether and how it is good for her to find herself in the sort of situation in which she has to defend controversial theses will develop the content of that component, for to ask this is precisely to ask what sort of circumstances are those in which it is good for one to live. There is a corresponding development in her conception of what it is to live for the sake of this static component—living well—in that it will be to live in ways that are likely to lead to not being overly involved in controversy. But in addition, realising that doing this is a matter of living compassionately with respect to herself develops any dynamic component of the academic's conception of happiness, because it tells her something about how it is good *simpliciter* to live for the sake of living compassionately.

Let us take stock. The example of the academic shows that application of the formalised distinction is always *possible* and always *intelligible*. The academic moved to considering how it would be intrinsically valuable to respond by taking as given what she did not control. This move did not depend on the specifics of my example: there is always plenty that we do not control, and it is always possible for us to take it as given. We may not always get it right as to what about a situation is really out of our control, as the Stoics are keen to remind us, but to the extent we do get it right, we can always put ourselves in the position of developing our understanding of how it would be intrinsically valuable to respond. I might have picked any other example of an aspect of someone's life, and we would have been able to intelligibly distinguish between the question of handling that aspect of a life well, and

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[21]Thank you to Houston Smit for pointing this out to me. He encouraged me to expand my discussion of the academic to bring out this point. I regret that I have not been able to consider in explicit detail his further suggestion that the L-subprocess, too, probably has relevance to the development of both static and dynamic components, and more generally I regret that these insights are not better integrated into this section's discussion.

the question of whether it is good to be in circumstances in which that aspect of a life is present, and thereby needs to be handled.

Secondly, the example also shows that application of the Stoic distinction is always *useful*. Once we have broken down the initial question about some aspect of our lives along the lines of the Stoic distinction, we are able to see how that aspect of our lives is separately relevant to both our understanding of what circumstances of living we should try to realise, and to our understanding of how it is intrinsically valuable to respond to whatever circumstances we actually end up with.[22] The example also demonstrates why we need to develop our conceptions of both of these. The academic needs to know how circumstances of defending controversial theses are related to circumstances in which it is possible for her to flourish as a researcher, so that she can develop her ability to choose what to work on in a way that most enables her flourishing as a researcher. And, given that she can't know in advance to which theses she will find herself committed, she needs to develop her conception of how she should respond to the difficult situation of having a thesis so controversial to defend that one might lose one's friends. We can note that it is not only that the two subprocesses are more approachable or tractable than simply asking how my life is going with regard to X, but that they enable us to refine our conception of the good in quite specific ways, not suggested by the original question of, simply, how our life is going with regard to X.

Static and dynamic components

The disambiguation of the distinction between living and the circumstances of living that I adopted in ch. 1, sec. 5 drops right out of the application of the formalised conception I've been describing. For that application implicitly takes the living of my life to be that which I can control, and the circumstances of my life to be that which I cannot control. The fragment of eudaimonic reflection under

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[22]In the cases where my conception of happiness is purely static or purely dynamic, application of the distinction enables me to see *what about* and *how* that aspect of my life is at all relevant to my conception of the good, enabling me to set aside the rest. For example, if I have a purely dynamic conception, application of the distinction enables me to set aside the question of whether it is good *simpliciter* to find oneself in a situation in which one has to defend controversial theses, and consider only how it is best to handle the situation of having to defend them, going forward. Part of handling the situation well might be reorienting my research such that it is less controversial. Someone with a purely static conception who came to a similar conclusion about the value of academic controversy, on the other hand, would take living well going forward to be living in ways that are instrumental to not being in circumstances in which one has a controversial thesis to defend.

discussion, with its two subprocesses, presupposes that the things I cannot control are the circumstances in which I can succeed or fail to control well the things that I can control. In my example of the academic, the circumstances of having a controversial thesis to defend are the circumstances *in which* she can respond well or badly—in which she can *live* well or badly.

The distinction between the living of my life and the circumstances of my life is implicitly invoked by the very notion of eudaimonic reflection: we want to determine how better to live well. But what we now see is that disambiguating the distinction between living and circumstances of living in this way further characterises eudaimonic reflection. Specifically, now that the living of my life is a matter of what I control, living well becomes a matter of *handling well the things over which I have control*. We may also observe that choosing the formalised distinction disambiguates in turn the distinction between what it is to live for the sake of any static component in my conception of happiness, and what it is to live for the sake of any dynamic component. The living of my life is the attempt to realise any static component of my conception of happiness, and the attempt to live in accordance with any dynamic component; these things, and only these things, are in my control.

We can understand how the academic is able to learn more about how to live well as going via, or being by means of, the notion of acting for the sake of one's conception of happiness. For when we refine static and dynamic components of our conception of our good we refine our understanding of how to live for the sake of that conception. Figuring out what it would be to respond well (or, figuring out how it would be intrinsically valuable to respond) to the situation of having something to defend—courageously, but also virtuously with regard to my social relations—is incorporated into the dynamic component of the academic's conception of her good, if she has one, thereby developing it. Then living for the sake of this component—living well—is a matter of acting in that way, going forward. I suggested that the academic will develop a conception of the circumstances in which she is best able to flourish as a researcher as those in which she does not have only controversial theses to defend. Then if she has a static component to her conception of happiness, she now knows that living for the sake of that conception—also living well—is a matter of living in such a way as to get herself into circumstances in which she is less likely to find herself defending only controversial theses.

If the academic has both static and dynamic components to her conception of happiness, she'll have

to integrate the activities of living for the sake of each of the components.[23] Logically speaking, though, she first has to determine what it would be to live for the sake of each of the components in isolation, which requires the separate refinement of the dynamic and static components of her conception of her good, to the extent she possesses either. And as we've seen, that's just what application of the formalised conception enables her to do: both by breaking down the situation into questions the answers to which refine the components of her conception, and by disambiguating the notions of living for the sake of each of the kinds of component.[24]

3   Embodied activities

I've now considered at some length application of the formalised conception. To make my negative case against the embodied conception, in the remaining sections of this chapter appendix, I'll consider how Russell's alternative proposal for how to draw the distinction between the living of my life and its circumstances is meant to work. Russell does not disagree with me about what falls on either side of the distinction between what we can control and what we cannot control. His point is, rather, that the distinction between the circumstances of a life and the living of that life does not map neatly onto the distinction between what we can control and what we cannot control. Russell's embodied conception is the view that there are some things in the world which are not in our control, but nevertheless form part of the living of our lives, because those things are constitutive parts of some of our activities. The activities would not be the activities that they are were it not for those things in the world, so they form part of those activities, and so part of the living of our lives, not its circumstances. Above I introduced the motivating example of the living of my life alongside my spouse. Russell claims that my spouse forms part of the activity of living my life, and so her death would mean that, necessarily, the living of my life would become a different activity. Another way of putting this is that there is a sense in which, if my spouse dies, it is no longer possible to live the life that I was living. I have to live a different life—one without my spouse. And, clearly, my spouse is not in my control; in particular, it

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[23]The failure to permit this integration will be a basic reason for which I'll reject various conceptions of happiness, in favour of Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism, in the remaining chapters of the dissertation.

[24]Also relevant here is how choosing between the embodied and formalised conceptions precisifies the distinction between static and dynamic components of conceptions of happiness (2nd preliminary, sec. 1, above).

is not up to me when or how she dies.

Here, let us note further that whether or not some external thing counts as part of the living of my life will depend on various factors, such as the ways in which I engage with it, and how long it stays around. Some things have the potential to be either part of the living of my life or just part of the circumstances of my life, on Russell's view. For example, a friend might fill an interchangeable role where their involvement in the living of my life is limited to properties that they share with plenty of other people; in such a case, them being around in my life would be one of its circumstances. The activity of living my life could continue if they are no longer around, because other potential friends are around. The activity would have to change only if no such people were ever around anymore. On the other hand, if the friend leaves a profound impact on me only because of the unique combination of properties they have, they would be part of the living of my life, as the activity of living with them in my life cannot continue once they have gone. A second example is the work that I am employed to do. If my job is part of a career that really is a career and is not just marketed as such, it will be part of the living of my life. The activity of living my life would have to be a distinct activity if, for whatever reason, I had to change careers. On the other hand, a job that is just done for the sake of a paycheque would just be an interchangeable circumstance of my life. If I had to change it for another or for unemployment, the same activity of living my life in the way that I had been could simply continue.

My negative case against the embodied conception falls into four parts. The first two of these four arguments have similar overarching purposes. Each of them is designed to show that while Russell's discussion admirably illustrates how consideration of embodied activities could be important for progress in eudaimonic reflection, he doesn't establish that we must adopt the embodied conception of the self, in preference to the formalised conception, in order to obtain those insights. Rather, our best shot at making progress looks to be to adopt the formalised conception, and then indeed consider embodied activities, but only among other things. Thus, while consideration of embodied activities might be valuable, the embodied conception of the *self* does not seem to answer to the practical concerns which prompt eudaimonic reflection. Embodied activities are not sufficiently fundamental to eudaimonic reflection that we have reason to adopt the embodied conception of the self in preference to the formalised.

4   First argument against the embodied conception

Russell and I are largely in agreement about the practical concerns which prompt eudaimonic reflection. For my first argument, let's consider what Russell's own remarks suggest about how the notion of embodied activities could be applied in response to those practical concerns. What we will see is that we are pushed towards application of the formalised conception of the self in order to properly understand the relevance of embodied activities to happiness.

In *EN* I, Aristotle argues that we all implicitly agree with him about the formal structure of eudaimonia, in the sense that whatever we take its content to be, we all think that eudaimonia must have the structure of a final end. His strategy is then to argue that only his own answer as to the content of eudaimonia satisfies the formal conditions required of final ends, and the other things that people propose as contents of happiness—honour, wealth, pleasure, etc.—cannot be made to fit.[25] Russell can be read as doing something similar. He takes us to agree about the question that philosophy of happiness is tasked with answering, and then argues that only embodied activities could constitute a suitable answer. While Russell makes much use of *EN* I in explicating and defending the embodied conception, he attempts to start from explicitly commonsensical thinking, rather than the formal structure of our ends:

> … 'happiness' is the name of a solution to the very practical problem of how to give oneself
> a good life. (Russell 2012, 2)

The notion of happiness as giving oneself a good life is then connected up to the notion of living well, and the notion of finding something for which to live:

> After all, when I ask how I might live so as to give myself the gift of happiness, the gift
> of a good life, I am asking about something that will be good for me … giving myself a
> gift means finding things to live for. (ibid.)

Finally, Russell brings in the notion of fulfilment:

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[25]This reading of Aristotle's strategy in *EN* I is due to Dan Russell's lectures in the Fall 2017 semester at the University of Arizona; also cf. Russell (2012, 75). Additionally, my understanding of what's important about Aristotle's notion of a final end was more generally improved by hearing those lectures.

> Second, I argue that a happy life is a life that is fulfilling for the one living it. Part of this
> fulfilment is the sense or experience of fulfilment: it is obvious that a happy life must be
> one that one finds fulfilling. Another part of it, though, is the idea that a happy life must
> really be fulfilling. (Russell 2012, 5)[26]

We are interested in the process of eudaimonic reflection, in which, for some actual or possible
aspect of our life X, we ask ourselves how our life is going (or would be going) with respect to X.
We can put Russell's view in these terms as the idea that whether my life is going well with regard
to X is a matter of whether my life with regard to X involves giving myself a good life, about which
I can rightfully feel fulfilled. Now, Russell's answer regarding the content of happiness is that it is
constituted by embodied activities. So let us restrict the range of X to the embodied activities in our
lives. Then the question for eudaimonic reflection becomes determining the extent to which a given
embodied activity constitutes (or would constitute) giving myself a good life, about which I can feel
fulfilled. For example, I might ask whether my relationship with my spouse involves giving myself a
good life, about which I can feel fulfilled, or whether by staying together each of us are just giving
ourselves bad lives. I can thereby learn how and whether to live for the sake of our continued life
alongside each other.

How can we understand how asking whether I can rightly feel fulfilled, with respect to a given
embodied activity, can allow us to get a better grip on what it would be to live well? Russell is appealing
to a commonsensical notion of fulfilment, here, but he does immediately distinguish between feelings
of fulfilment, and really being fulfilled. This allows us to state Russell's claim as the view that a
necessary condition for a happy life is that it involve *fitting feelings of fulfilment*.[27] A happy life must
involve a certain kind of feeling, which is taken to be a feeling we can all readily identify, but which
must have been caused by engagement with objects and activities which are worthy of producing that

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[26]I think that part of Russell's motivation for bringing in the notion of fulfilment might be to avoid a standard objection
to Aristotelian naturalism. This objection assumes that happiness has to be something that is good *for me*, and then
questions whether achieving eudaimonia is going to be something that is good *for me*, as opposed to being just good for
the world in general. I take it that Russell understands bringing the notion of fulfilment into his account as incorporating
an appropriate sense in which the conception of happiness he advocates is good for its possessor. I'll come back to this
topic in ch. 5, sec. 3.

[27]Mark Timmons pointed out to me that it is helpful here to more precisely characterise the sense of fulfilment to which
appeal is being made. In ch. 2, sec. 2, I will come back to the notion of fitting feelings of fulfilment, in discussing Wolf on
meaningfulness.

feeling. In terms of the distinction between living and the circumstances of living, Russell's claim is that engaging in embodied activities can constitute living well only when those embodied activities provide fitting feelings of fulfilment.

In eudaimonic reflection, then, we are to consider whether and how certain embodied activities provide fitting feelings of fulfilment, or, perhaps, how they might come to provide fitting feelings of fulfilment. We can see immediately that such reflection will usually be tasked with determining whether feelings of fulfilment are fitting, and rarely tasked with determining whether and how a given embodied activity generates feelings of fulfilment. What we will typically need to determine is the extent to which an embodied activity is constitutive of happiness, and thus worthy of generating feelings of fulfilment.[28]

Now, the motivating examples of embodied activities reveal that no singular embodied activity could be *unconditionally* constitutive of happiness. My life is not a good one if I ignore suffering in my community in order to engage more fully in the activity of living alongside my spouse, for example. We can capture thoughts like this by saying that a condition of embodied activities being valuable is that it is possible to engage in them virtuously. For to engage in the activity of living alongside my spouse, while ignoring the suffering outside our front door, is to live in a way that's callous, and callousness is a lack of the virtue of compassion. If I felt fulfilled by my life alongside my spouse, but the generation of this feeling relied on ignoring suffering outside our front door, the feelings of fulfilment would not be fitting.

Thus, in order for us to determine whether an embodied activity is worthy of generating feelings of fulfilment, in the circumstances of our own lives, we will first need to develop a conception of what it would be to engage in the embodied activity virtuously.[29] How can we develop such a conception? Unfortunately for defenders of the embodied conception, it seems as though the only way that we could do this would be to apply the formalised distinction to the embodied activity. My engagement

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[28] See also Bloomfield's (2014, 131–34) distinction between caring about our happiness versus caring about what makes us happy.

[29] This will be a matter of both applying and further developing our existing conception of virtue, making it more determinate such as to yield a conception of what it would be to engage in this embodied activity virtuously. In the example just considered, we need to incorporate into our conception of the virtue of compassion the idea that compassion requires paying a certain amount of attention to the general conditions of one's society, even if economic privilege isolates one from feeling the effects of those conditions oneself.

in an embodied activity is that about the embodied activity which is under my control, and in order to know how that engagement could be virtuous, I need to take as given everything about the activity that I do not control. In the example from the previous paragraph, it's not only my spouse, but also the worldly circumstances in which we find ourselves that are outside of my control. Suppose that my spouse is someone such that a full engagement in the embodied activity of a life alongside her is not compatible with an adequately compassionate response to the suffering outside our front door. Then given the presence of suffering in my community, and given the way my spouse is, the embodied activity of fully engaging in life alongside my spouse would not be constitutive of happiness, because it would be a callous way to live.

What we see, then, is that this application of the embodied conception to eudaimonic reflection, yielded by considering Russell's philosophy of happiness in its most general terms, does not seem to give us enough resources to get from consideration of actual or possible embodied activities to conclusions about how to live well. Unless we go ahead and apply the formalised conception, we do not have the theoretical resources to draw conclusions about living well from the fact that a given embodied activity is or is not fulfilling to me. Russell's notion of being fulfilled is difficult to understand in such a way that it could get us an improved grasp of what it would be to live well.

We *can* ask, of course, whether I am giving myself a good life *by continuing to engage* with my spouse, but that would be to apply the distinction between what I can control and what I cannot control, because continuing to engage with my spouse is something within my control. It would thus be to draw the distinction between living and the circumstances of living in a way that the embodied conception rejects. On Russell's view, living well is constituted by whole embodied activities, not just our own continued engagement with those activities. It seems, however, that if we want to ask whether life with my spouse counts as giving myself a good life, we need to consider what I actually do give myself, which requires breaking down embodied activities along the lines of what we control, and what we cannot control.

What I've described in this section is not the only possible application of the embodied conception to eudaimonic reflection, and nor need Russell accept exactly how I've described the basic structure and role of eudaimonic reflection. As I said, Russell's dialectical position is different from mine, in that

he does not begin his account with the starting point of eudaimonic reflection, as I did (3rd prelimi-nary, sec. 1, above; ch. 1, sec. 3). Suppose, though, that we accept what I've said about eudaimonic reflection, and that what I've described in this section is a fair attempt to apply Russell's philosophy of happiness, including the embodied conception, to eudaimonic reflection. Then what we see is that consideration of embodied activities pushes us towards drawing the formalised conception's distinc-tion between the living of lives and circumstances of living. So, Russell's arguments in favour of the relevance of embodied activities do not establish that we should adopt the embodied conception of the self. Russell's notion of being fulfilled is difficult to understand in such a way that it could get us an improved grasp of what it would be to live well, until and unless we bring in the formalised distinction.[30]

5   Second argument against the embodied conception

Now that we've considered what Russell's text suggests about how the embodied conception might be applied to eudaimonic reflection, I'll turn to direct comparison with application of the formalised conception. Like in the previous section, in making this argument my aim is to show that while Rus-sell makes a good case for the relevance of embodied *activities* to eudaimonic reflection, he doesn't establish that we must, or even should, adopt the embodied conception of the *self*. I'll consider an attempt to apply the embodied distinction and then the formalised distinction to eudaimonic reflec-tion, and then the converse attempt to apply the embodied distinction subsequent to the formalised. Contrasting these two attempts will reveal that the formalised distinction enables useful eudaimonic reflection which is not possible if we adopt the embodied conception.

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[30]I said that on Russell's view we are to determine the extent to which a given embodied activity constitutes (i) giving myself a good life, (ii) about which I can feel fulfilled, and in the text I've focused on (ii). It doesn't amount to an objection to Russell's view, but I am also unsure how the question of whether with regard to an embodied activity I'm giving myself a good life can be understood in a way that allows us to get a grip on what it would be to live well. It is difficult to see how this could happen because it is difficult to find a sense in which embodied activities are things which I give myself, because an embodied activity is (partly) outside the boundaries of what I control, (partly) literally constituted by other people. Chance and circumstance would seem to give me my life with my spouse; the most that I can be said to give myself is how I treat her, or how I engage with her. The latter, though, is not what Russell's view would have me ask myself about in eudaimonic reflection. It's whole embodied activities that I must consider, not just the aspects of embodied activities that I control. Yet it is not clear how we can make sense of asking whether I am giving myself a good life with regard to something that I do not do entirely by myself, and in particular, how asking that question can get us an answer about how to live well.

I've suggested that in the core cases of eudaimonic reflection, for some actual or possible aspect of our life, X, we ask ourselves how our life is going, or would be going, with regard to X, and this is to ask whether and how X is, or would be, good or bad for us. For the first part of my argument, let us consider application of Russell's distinction to eudaimonic reflection, upon X, and with the foregoing basic structure. Where would Russell have us focus our reflective attention? He holds that happiness is constituted by only embodied activities, which suggests that it is vital first to distinguish, among the elements of X, the embodied activity. Then I can consider whether and how that embodied activity contributes to my life being a good one, and avoid mistakenly taking other elements of X to be *constitutive* of my good, though they might be relevant to my conception of happiness in other ways. Now, to distinguish those elements of X which are part of the embodied activity is just to apply the embodied distinction. Recall that this is a distinction between living and circumstances. On Russell's view, it's only embodied activities which constitutively contribute to the living of lives in the relevant sense, so to apply Russell's distinction to X is to divide it into an embodied activity, E, and the circumstances in which the embodied activity plays out, C, say.

For example, let's indeed take X to be a spousal relationship. Then application of Russell's distinction might enable me to see that while my wife is a constitutive part of my happiness because the embodied activity cannot continue without her, the neighbourhood in which we live is not, falling within C and not E. On the other hand, the relationship's being good for us might be dependent upon living here, in which case the neighbourhood too would be partly constitutive of my happiness. As outlined above, Russell (2012, chs. 4, 9–10) persuasively argues that consideration of whole embodied activities can enable us to better understand how it is possible for us to engage with the world, and so better understand happiness. If he's right that it's only embodied activities which can be constitutive of happiness, then success in eudaimonic reflection will require me to determine what really lies in E and not C, which is equivalent to correctly applying the embodied distinction to X. Then I can ask whether and how my life is going well with regard to E.

However, in addition, it will always be intelligible and useful to now go on to apply the *formalised* distinction, to E. This is to divide E into those aspects of the embodied activity that I do and do not control, and to do so focuses our eudaimonic reflection upon two questions which are conducive to its

success. Firstly, in a way that is now familiar, we can take as given the things about E that I cannot control, and ask what it would be to control well those things I can control. In our example, this is to ask, *given* that I'm in this relationship, what would it be to *engage virtuously* with the relationship, and to what extent have I been doing that? To put it another way (in terms which harmlessly beg the question against Russell), it is to ask whether I am living well with respect to the aspects of these activities that I cannot control. Secondly, we can take as given how I think I should control those aspects of E that I can control, and ask whether it is good to find myself with those aspects of E which I do not control. In our example, this is to ask, *given* my conception of how it would be most intrinsically valuable to handle the relationship, is it good, and how it is good, to find myself with a relationship like this to handle? Along the lines of our earlier discussion, this second question is to ask whether and how possession of the relationship might constitute, or fail to constitute, circumstances in which I am best able to flourish, *given* my conception of how I should engage in the embodied activity.

Answering these two questions can help us refine our conception of happiness in two robustly independent ways. This is easy to see in our example. In answering the second question, I might conclude that this sort of relationship is not good for me to have, perhaps because my partner discourages me from certain kinds of ethical improvement. This is significant to eudaimonic reflection because we seek to live for the sake of obtaining those things outside of our control that we think it is best for us to have. Independently, in answer to the first question, I might conclude that to abandon the relationship would not be to handle it well, because of responsibilities I've picked up. This is significant to eudaimonic reflection because we seek to engage virtuously with the world. Putting these two answers together, I come to regard my relationship as a kind of embodied activity that I should try to avoid getting into again, but also something that I cannot just run away from. This is a conclusion about how I should live, looking forward from this occasion of eudaimonic reflection: I should seek to responsibly extricate myself from the relationship, and move on to some other sort of long term romantic relationship.

We should note that it is difficult to see how this sort of nuanced assessment of how my life is going with regard to E could be achieved except by means of a (possibly implicit) application of the

formalised distinction. In order to conclude that I cannot just abandon the relationship, I have to consider how it is good for me to engage in the embodied activity, which is, precisely, to take as given everything about E which falls outside of my control—I have to consider only the living of my life, in the sense of the formalised distinction. Similarly, in order to develop my conception of what sort of things outside of my control it is good for me to have, based on consideration of E, I have to set aside my agency—I need to consider the relationship independently of how I think it's responsible to engage in it if I'm to see that it's not good for me. Thus, once again we see that application of the formalised distinction is always intelligible and always useful: after application of the embodied distinction, subsequent application of the formalised can be seen to advance eudaimonic reflection.

Now, for our contrast, let us consider applying the two distinctions in the opposite order. X is my relationship with my spouse, including the worldly circumstances in which that relationship plays out (i.e. Russell's distinction has not been applied). Apply the formalised distinction to X, such that Y comprises those elements of X that I can control, and Z comprises those elements of X that I cannot, say. Russell's distinction is between embodied activities and the circumstances in which they play out. Embodied activities contain elements that I do not control, and thus neither side of Russell's distinction—the activity nor the circumstances—contains *only* things that I control. However, Y contains only elements of X that I control. Thus, Russell's distinction cannot be applied to Y because it cannot be used to partition Y into two parts.

So, then, an application of the embodied distinction subsequent to the formalised must be an application to our reflection upon Z. What is the latter? We've just seen: when we apply the formalised distinction and consider what we don't control, in this case Z, the point is to take as given our conception of engaging virtuously with what we don't control, and try to develop our conception of what things that we don't control it is good for us to have. How could applying the embodied distinction help? Well, on Russell's view, of the things outside of our control, it is those which help define (good) embodied activities which it is most important for us to have, since embodied activities are what constitute happiness. So what we need first to do is determine which elements of Z are part of the embodied activity, and set aside the others. And this is just what it is to correctly apply the embodied distinction to Z. Then we can consider whether and how this embodied activity makes my life good.

Thus the embodied distinction is useful to eudaimonic reflection upon Z, to the extent that Russell is right about the importance of embodied activities to happiness.

Let us suppose, for a different example, that X is my career. Then Y is how I engage in that career, and Z is the circumstances in which I engage in that activity, which includes my continued status as employed by this particular institution. In my eudaimonic reflection upon Z I seek to determine whether my continued employment is one of the things outside of my absolute control which it is best for me to have—whether it is partly constitutive of the circumstances in which I am best able to flourish. Russell would have me first ask whether X could continue if I were to lose my job. If it could— perhaps because I could easily find another job of the same sort—then my continued employment here does not help define the embodied activity of my career, and so it cannot be one of the things outside of my control for the sake of which I should seek to live. It is not material to my flourishing. On the other hand, if X could not continue, then taking steps to keep my job would be part of my attempts to realise my happiness, if I further conclude that X is a *good* career.

We've now considered applying each of the two distinctions in one order and then in the other. What is the significant contrast? Well, recall that applying either of the distinctions involves adopting a conception of the boundary between the living of my life and its circumstances, and a corresponding conception of the self. Then my claim is that, of the two reflective processes just described, in order to obtain the insights described, the first process requires the abandonment of the embodied conception in favour of the formalised, but in the second, the formalised conception need not be abandoned. Thus, if we adopt the formalised conception of the self, both of the reflective processes just described remain possible, whereas if we adopt the embodied conception, we'll be limiting the possibilities for developing our conceptions of happiness. Another way to put this is that in the first process the application of the formalised distinction subsequent to the embodied is necessary, whereas in the second, after applying the formalised distinction, we can apply Russell's valuable discussion of embodied *activities* without requiring the embodied *distinction*.[31]

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[31]This is possible because Russell's characterisation of embodied activities is independent of, and prior to, his argument that it's only embodied activities which will form constitutive part of our happiness. Russell independently establishes two theses about embodied activities. He argues by example that they exist, and then argues that it's embodied activities which are constitutive of happiness, because our concepts of ourselves are tied to continued involvement in particular embodied activities (Russell 2012, esp. chs. 4, 9).

Consider again applying the formalised distinction subsequent to the embodied. In order for me to see that I would not be living my life well if I were to simply run away from the relationship, even though I've concluded the relationship is not good, I have to treat the elements of the relationship as circumstances of my life, and then ask what it would be to live virtuously in circumstances like those. My holding to the embodied conception would block this, because that conception includes too much in the living of my life to permit me to take up the required perspective—the embodied self cannot engage in the relevant formalised activity. So I really do have to apply the formalised distinction, and abandon the embodied conception of the self. The need for the formalised conception of the self is explained by this need to draw a distinction between living and circumstances that's not possible under the embodied conception.

On the other hand, consider again our reflection upon Z, after an application of the formalised distinction to X. In this case all of the elements of Z are regarded as circumstances of our lives, and I suggested that Russell's discussion of embodied activities prompts us to try to determine which elements of Z are definitive of embodied activities, as these are especially relevant to refining our conception of what things outside of our control it is good for us to have. But, crucially, this is essentially a distinction among kinds of circumstances, not one between living and circumstances, and so we need not adopt the embodied conception. For instead of considering how the loss of elements of Z would affect the possibilities for action of the embodied self, we may simply consider how such losses would affect how the activity of the formalised self plays out in its circumstances. What we should consider is whether elements of Z are required for the continued possibility of the formalised self engaging in the relevant activity.

This works because while the embodied self cannot engage in formalised activity, the formalised self can engage in embodied activities. Consider again the case where X is my career, such that Z includes my continued employment at this institution. In order to conclude that my remaining employed here is one of the things outside of my control which is significant to my happiness, what it's essential for me to see is that my job is not interchangeable in the way that so many other elements of Z are: losing my job would be an interruption to my career in a way that moving to a different neighbourhood, say, need not be. But I can see this by considering how different the activity of the

formalised self would be, with respect to X, in circumstances in which I no longer have the job, and how similar its activity would be if I simply moved neighbourhoods. Consideration of Russell's account of embodied activities can help put me in a position to see this difference, but the embodied conception of the self is not required.[32] There is no need to draw a distinction between living and circumstances in order to apply Russell's insights about happiness to Z. We need not consider the embodied self, but simply activities of the formalised self which have as enabling conditions certain of the elements of Z.[33]

Narrower boundaries

Let us recap by making the foregoing argument, about attempting to apply the embodied conception after application of the formalised conception, again in the abstract. Suppose for some aspect of our lives X we have broken it down into those aspects of X that we can control, Y, and those aspects of X that we cannot control, Z. Can we now usefully apply Russell's distinction to either of Y and Z? Well, it certainly does not apply to Y, because neither side of Russell's distinction contains only things that we can control. In other words, applying Russell's distinction to Y just yields Y. So let us consider how we might apply Russell's distinction to Z. Our example of the academic showed that when we consider those aspects of X which we do not control, the question in eudaimonic reflection is typically what we might be able to learn about the circumstances in which we are best able to flourish. For such circumstances are something for the sake of which we seek to live. Applying Russell's distinction to Z would then be a matter of discarding those elements of Z which are not necessary for the activity of X to maintain its identity. This, however, is a reflective process in which we can engage without any commitment to the embodied conception of the self, and perhaps even without explicit reference to the notion of an embodied activity.

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[32]It might be that the circumstances of having this particular job are essential to multiple different embodied activities, not just X, if many of my activities make reference to having this particular job. Then a separate reason why the circumstances of retaining the job would be those in which I am most able to flourish would be that my living for the sake of what I take to be most important is supported by not having to deal with the aftermath of losing my job. This reasoning, again, does not seem to require the embodied conception of the self.

[33]While consideration of embodied activities is one way to this conclusion, there does not seem to be reason to think that it is the only way to get to this conclusion. And if my argument in the next section is correct, such that consideration of embodied activities might be ethically distorting, it might in fact be preferable to reach this sort of conclusion about relative interchangeability by a route which does not involve consideration of embodied activities.

The argument of this section has been essentially a matter of drawing out the consequences of the fact that the formalised conception draws the boundaries of the self strictly more narrowly than does the embodied conception. We have observed that consideration of formalised activities requires us to adopt the formalised conception of the self: considering formalised activities requires us to regard as distinct from ourselves everything except what is under our absolute control. By contrast, consideration of embodied activities is possible whether we adopt the embodied or the formalised conception of the self. This contrast was established by considering application of the formalised conception both before and after application of the embodied conception. Adopting the formalised conception of the self does not rule out consideration of embodied activities, but adoption of the embodied conception would rule out the eudaimonic reflection enabled by application of the formalised distinction.

An immediate consequence of this is that adopting the embodied conception commits us to the idea that there isn't anything more to eudaimonic reflection than consideration of embodied activities. This is because reflection on formalised activities requires us to take aspects of the embodied self as given, but this cannot be done without rejecting the embodied conception in favour of the formalised conception. In giving my examples in this chapter appendix, about how we can learn a great deal about what's valuable from application of the formalised distinction, I've shown that there is more to eudaimonic reflection than consideration of embodied activities. And the formalised conception does not rule out consideration of embodied activities. So we should adopt the formalised conception. In other words, we should not conclude from Russell's persuasive discussion of the importance of embodied activities to successful eudaimonic reflection that embodied activities are all that's relevant. And that's just to say that we should reject the embodied conception of the self.

Indeed, our discussion suggests that the formalised self, and not the embodied self, is fundamental to the structure and purposes of eudaimonic reflection, such that if we require a way to draw the distinction between living and circumstances for the sake of our further philosophical theorising about ethics and happiness, we should choose the formalised distinction. With regard to any X for which we can ask "well, with regard to X, how is my life going?", the structure and purposes of eudaimonic reflection press us to break that question down into whether my life is going well with regard to the aspects of X that I can control, and whether it is going well with regard to those aspects of X that

I cannot control. For if I want to determine that for which I should live, I have to consider both the living for the sake of static and dynamic components of my conception of happiness, and we've seen repeatedly that if consideration of X is going to be useful for this, it's thanks to applying the formalised distinction to X. If we first apply Russell's distinction and ask whether our life is going well with regard to what he calls the living of our life—whether it is going well with regard to the embodied activities—we subsequently have to apply the formalised distinction, too.[34]

6   Third argument against the embodied conception

In this section I'll consider another application of the embodied conception that's implicit in Russell's text. We can get at it by considering Russell's contention that the way in which people experience loss and grief is evidence for his view (Russell 2012, 199–207, 213). What he says, in particular, is that the way in which we experience loss and grief shows that the most important of our activities really are embodied: as I've said, when our spouse dies, or our career ends, living our life well requires us to take up distinct activities, rather than continue the same activities in different circumstances:

> Grieving therefore involves more than responding to changed circumstances, as when one has to get used to the rearranged furniture in the front room. It involves nothing less than a gradual incorporation of environmental changes into a new conception of oneself. (Russell 2012, 204)

Recall that if we assume that what I've said so far about eudaimonic reflection is correct, and then consider Russell's view that the content of happiness is embodied activities, the question for

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[34]By discussing the refinement of static and dynamic conceptions of happiness in the way that I just did, might I beg the question against Russell? If the distinction between dynamic and static components of conceptions of happiness is understood along the lines of the distinction between what I can control and what I cannot control, respectively, it is no surprise that the only way to refine those components is by applying the formalised distinction to aspects of my life. I would have built my conclusion into my starting point, and then derived it. But this is not what is going on. The distinction between static and dynamic components is disambiguated such that it is drawn along the lines of what I can control and what I cannot control only after we apply the formalised conception. The non-question-begging point is that after we apply the embodied conception we have to then go on to apply the formalised conception. The distinction between static and dynamic components is disambiguated to be in terms of control because application of the formalised conception is found, independently, to be useful; it is not the case that application of the formalised conception is useful only because the distinction between static and dynamic components has already been made friendly to its application. I am making an epistemic point about what and how we learn from eudaimonic reflection, and that epistemic point does not depend on the formalised conception's disambiguation of the distinction between static and dynamic components of conceptions of happiness.

eudaimonic reflection becomes how my life is going with regard to each of my embodied activities. Russell's discussion of loss and grieving suggests, then, a different way in which we might apply his account of the embodied conception to this question. What we do is ask ourselves how it would be if a given embodied activity had to end, such as how it would be if our spouse died, or we lost our job. Russell's view seems to be that if the activity is really part of our good, we would at this point enter a process of grieving. Then, and crucially, I take it to be implied by Russell's discussion that consideration of this actual or possible process of grieving would help us improve our conception of our good. For example, by considering how many of our daily activities would lose their reference point if she were to die, I could come to see different ways in which my spouse partly constitutes my embodied activity of living well. I'd thereby learn something more of my own good: exactly how my happiness involves my spouse. A second example would be considering how my life would have to change if it were to become impossible to pursue my current career path.

In summary, Russell's contention is not just that the way we experience loss and grief is evidence that the activities that are most relevant to our happiness are embodied activities. His discussion is also meant to establish, on the evidence of our experiences of loss and grief, more about *how* embodied activities are constitutive of happiness.[35] Thus, if that discussion is right, it ought to be possible to learn more about our own good by considering what it would mean if an embodied activity had to come to an end.

I take it that it is indeed possible for us to learn about the relevance of other people and projects to our lives by considering what would happen to us if our engagement with those people and projects had to end. However, it's not clear how reflecting on this could tell me, on its own, about what it would be for me to live *well*. The problem is that there are both good and bad careers, and good and bad relationships, the ending of all of which we would grieve. If our grief involves the belief that losing those things affects our happiness, reflection on the embodied activity can tell us about the conception of the good for which we *have been* living up until now, but it is not clear how it can help us, by itself, develop the conception of happiness for the sake of which we should *go on* to live.

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[35]There is no question that the living of our lives continues when something good outside of our control ceases to be available to us. The question is whether the living of our lives is the same (my view) or a different (Russell's view) activity on each side of the change.

An alternative way to put the present point is that this kind of eudaimonic reflection can reveal details of my conception of my life as a whole, without permitting me to develop thereby the details of my conception the good. Recall that what I mean by a conception of my life as a whole is a conception of what it is to act for the sake of my conception of my good given the particular circumstances of my life (ch. 1, sec. 4). Russell is right that the deaths of spouses can result in very large changes to one's assumptive world (Russell 2012, 205). When so many of my daily habits have reference to someone who is no longer there, what it is to act for the sake of my conception of my good in the life I have will change dramatically, that is, my conception of my life as a whole will have to change. But, I suggest, my conception of my good need not.

We can illustrate this point most effectively if we consider an embodied activity that does not form part of anyone's good. Suppose that someone aims to build a sustainable income for herself by trying to sell mostly ineffective remedies to people with a certain disease. This is an embodied activity because it is partly constituted by the people who have the disease: in order to be successful, the con artist must build relationships with any leadership figures there may be among the people with the disease, sympathise with them, convince herself that her remedies are at least emotionally beneficial to them, thereby, per Russell's discussion, incorporating the sufferers into the living of her life. The people with the disease are not under the con artist's control, but they are constitutive parts of the activity which dominates her working life, without which her chosen career could not continue. Indeed, if the con artist considers what would happen if someone else came up with an actual cure for the disease, she must realise that she would begin a process of grieving for the possibility of building her empire to the point where she never has to think about her income ever again. Reflection on what would happen if someone came up with this cure, then, reveals to the con artist further contours of her conception of happiness, and how it deeply involves the sufferers she intends to con. It reveals to her just how many of her daily activities and routines, at least on weekdays, would have to change if selling the remedies were no longer possible. But, of course, it is not actually constitutive of the con artist's flourishing that she is selling remedies that give people false hope. And, crucially, nothing about reflecting on what would happen if her embodied activity had to cease enables her to see that what she is doing is not part of her good. All that reflection can do is show her what she has been

taking to be her good. It doesn't seem possible for her to learn, from this, about which ways of living are actually good and bad.

I've suggested that asking what would happen *if* we lost something outside of our control, that nevertheless lies within the boundaries of the self, does not in itself seem able to inform us about how we should live now, given that currently the spouse is still alive, the career is ongoing. It is important to be clear that this application of the embodied conception is at best implicit in Russell. He does not explicitly describe an application like this because he does not explicitly discuss eudaimonic reflection at all. My suggestion in this third (and in my first) argument against the embodied conception is that there is some risk, in applying it to eudaimonic reflection, that we learn only about what we've been taking to be valuable up to now, and not also about how to live well going forward.[36]

7   Fourth argument: the unknowability of other people

My fourth argument against the embodied conception will not consider directly its application to eudaimonic reflection. Instead, the argument will provide us with more general reasons against conceiving of the living of one's life as including things that we cannot control. I will argue against the way in which the embodied conception draws the boundaries of the self on epistemic grounds. If this argument is successful, we should not attempt to apply the embodied conception to eudaimonic reflection because that would involve epistemic irresponsibility. The focus will again be on Russell's primary motivating example: relationships with others which are sufficiently intimate that those others come partly to constitute the activity of living my life well. I will argue that drawing the boundaries of the self in this way involves forming beliefs in a way that is not epistemically responsible. This argument will rely on the claim that there is a strong, particular sense in which other people are unknowable to us. The epistemic irresponsibility will be the failure to take account of this unknowability in the formation of an embodied conception of happiness.

The sense of the unknowability of others that I take to be relevant is developed in the fiction of

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[36]Julia Annas suggested to me the basic idea behind this objection, and proposed naming it after *Big Yellow Taxi*, the 1970 song by Joni Mitchell. We are asked to consider what would happen if our embodied activity could not continue, because you don't know what you've got till it's gone. But this might not tell us whether it *should* be gone, or whether there are good and bad ways of keeping or getting rid of it.

Haruki Murakami（村上春樹）.[37] I'll now expand upon this sense of unknowability, before turning to explain the corresponding epistemic irresponsibility. In summary, the unknowability claim is the view that it is impossible to know all the details of a person's thinking and feeling, in the sense that however much we come to know about someone, there will always be aspects of that person that escape our cognitive and emotional grasps. Further—and crucially for my purposes—the presence of these unknowable depths tends to undermine almost any knowledge of the person that we *do* manage to acquire. It's not that Russell's view requires that participants in embodied activities attempt, *per impossibile*, to understand other people down to the depths of their souls. Rather, drawing the boundaries of the self in the way that Russell would recommend commits an agent to claims about other people, in a way which fails to recognise the possibility of the unknowable depths of those other people undermining the agent's knowledge of them, such as it is. In a recent short story, *Drive My Car* 「ドライブ・マイ・カー」, Murakami makes the unknowability point explicit:

> "From what I can gather," Takatsuki said after a long silence, "your wife was a wonderful woman. I am convinced of that even as I realise my knowledge of her is no more than a hundredth of yours. If nothing else, you should feel grateful for having been able to spend twenty years of your life with such a person. But the proposition that we can look into another person's heart with perfect clarity strikes me as a fool's game. **I don't care how well we think we should understand them, or how much we love them.** All it can do is cause us pain. Examining your own heart, however, is another matter. I think it's possible to see what's in there if you work hard enough at it. So in the end maybe that's the challenge: to look inside your own heart as perceptively and seriously as you can, and to make peace with what you find there." (Murakami [2017] 2018, 34, emphasis added)

The character Takatsuki is consoling Kafuku, whose wife has died. Takatsuki previously had an affair with Kafuku's wife, and he too is grieving the loss (Takatsuki is unaware of Kafuku's knowledge of the affair). Takatsuki's explicit claim, in the quoted passage, is that it is impossible to come to know

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[37]In his recent study of Murakami's fiction, Strecher (2014, 89) mentions the unknowability of other people, though it is not among his themes.

everything about a person's thinking and feeling. Given this impossibility, if we take it that we *ought* to acquire full knowledge of those with whom we're intimately involved, our attempts will end in only painful failure (cf. the emphasised sentence in the quoted passage). If we think that engaging in the relationship puts it upon us to know the very depths of our partner's souls, we will inevitably consider ourselves to have failed to hold up our end of the relationship, because such depths are not knowable.

Murakami recognises that this painful failure is one towards which we tend. We yearn, he seems to say, to understand other people more fully than is in fact possible. Discussing *The 1963/1982 Girl from Ipanema*「1963／1982年のイパネマ娘」, Rubin puts it like this:

> In this brief, songlike, funny story, we encounter … a melancholy longing for a special
> time and place when—"all gaps gone"—we come fully in touch with others and ourselves.
> This, as we shall see, is vintage Murakami. (Rubin 2002, 12) [38]

How exactly does Murakami think that other people escape our attempts to know them—why should we think that Takatsuki's diagnosis of our epistemic predicament with regard to other people is correct? Murakami develops his point by means of what we might call his *disappearing women* trope.[39] Across his work, women who are intimately involved with men suddenly disappear from those mens' lives. These disappearances are never just accidental. They always involve some element of the woman's will, although just how much the women wanted to disappear is one of the many things that remains forever mysterious to the protagonists. The men who are left behind always find themselves with the sense that they never really knew the women with whom they were involved. But they seemed to have been as intimate with these women as it is possible to be. There was, then, something *in* the women that was forever out of their reach. They realise that there is a strong sense in which the women were unknowable to them. Other people always outstrip the extent to which they participate in the activity of any given person's life.[40]

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[38] In this connection also cf. *Sym.* 191a–193b, and Nussbaum's (2001, 171–76) discussion. I suggest that our desire to have all gaps be gone is not completely mistaken, for the attempt likely results in closer relationships than we would have if we were to give up on that desire.

[39] I found this name for the trope in an infographic by "/u/TazakiTsukuru" at `<https://imgur.com/a/trXpDLO>` (uploaded 6th October 2018, retrieved 28th March 2019), as posted to Reddit's online community for discussion of Murakami and his work, `<https://www.reddit.com/r/murakami>` (retrieved 28th March 2019). The infographic indicates, for several of Murakami's tropes, how significantly the trope features in each of a number of Murakami's novels.

[40] I do not think that the unknowability claim is a gendered point. Murakami's protagonists are usually heterosexual

I'll now consider two representative examples of women who disappear out of men's lives in Murakami's fiction: the character Naoko, in *Norwegian Wood*「ノルウェイの森」(Murakami 2000), and Kumiko, in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*「ねじまき鳥クロニクル」(Murakami [1997] 1998).[41] The male protagonists are, respectively, Watanabe and Okada.[42]

Firstly, *Norwegian Wood*. In her childhood and teens, Naoko was in a relationship with Kizuki. They were deeply devoted to each other throughout many formative years. What began as a close childhood friendship naturally became something romantic when they reached an appropriate age. Their lives and identities were defined in terms of each other. Kizuki, however, suddenly committed suicide, one day when he was seventeen. He did not warn Naoko that this was going to happen. Unsurprisingly, she was deeply scarred. A few years later, the male protagonist and narrator of the novel, Watanabe, meets Naoko by chance in Tokyo. Watanabe was a school friend of both Kizuki's and Naoko's, so the shock of his sudden death was something that they shared, and the two start spending time together, and become involved.

Naoko, however, basically fails to adjust to adult life. She is forced to retreat into a remote community in the mountains for people with mental impairments like hers. Watanabe visits her there, and they exchange numerous letters. Another patient, Reiko, believes that if it is possible for Naoko to recover, it will require Watanabe's participation. The result of this is that figuring out Naoko's condition becomes an embodied activity in which Watanabe, Reiko and Naoko are all engaged. Watanabe's

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men in contemporary Japanese society, and the unknowable people are always women. But these are just contingent authorial choices, made, presumably, because Murakami thinks he can most accurately depict this sort of experience. They need not affect the generality of his point about unknowability.

I don't think that my reading here exhausts the disappearing women trope. For my purposes in responding to the embodied conception, however, it does not matter whether I have captured everything that is going on when women disappear from men's lives in Murakami's fiction.

[41]Other examples of the trope include the unnamed girlfriends in both *Hear the Wind Sing*「風の歌を聴け」and *A Wild Sheep Chase*「羊をめぐる冒険」, the twins in *Pinball, 1973*「1973年のピンボール」, Shimamoto in *South of the Border, West of the Sun*「国境の南、太陽の西」, both Miu and Sumire in *Sputnik Sweetheart*「スプートニクの恋人」, and in short stories, the unnamed aspiring pantomime artist in *Barn Burning*「納屋を焼く」and the protagonist's wife in *UFO in Kushiro*「UFO が釧路に降りる」. In *1Q84* there are two equally significant male and female protagonists, and two women disappear on each of them: Tamaki and Ayumi for Aomame, and the older married woman and Eriko Fukada for Tengo.

[42]In the two novels I'll discuss, the men are the narrators, so the women are referred to mostly by their first names. I use the surnames of the men because they have the same first name, Toru. Philip Gabriel, a translator of other works, reports in seminar that with reference to his earlier works, Murakami says he found it difficult to come up with names for characters. In later works, such as *Colourless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage*「色彩を持たない多崎つくると、彼の巡礼の年」, the names of characters become strongly connected to their personalities. Rubin (2002, 38) reports that the early Murakami thought that "imposing" names on his characters would make him a "god-like creator," a role with which he was uncomfortable.

visits to the mountain are not mere excursions, and his letter-writing, including to Reiko, is a defining activity of his life in Tokyo. He spends a lot of time just waiting for phone calls or letters from Naoko to arrive. Watanabe begins to forge a new relationship in Tokyo with a girl named Midori, but his devotion to Naoko renders him emotionally distant.

In the end Naoko's condition deteriorates and she commits suicide. When this occurs, the reader does not experience any surprise. There is a strong sense that this conclusion to Naoko's story is inevitable. It is not, however, her suicide which constitutes Naoko's disappearance from Watanabe's life. She gradually fades into what Watanabe describes as the unchanging world of those who have already died. Kizuki, he says, is permanently seventeen years old (Murakami 2000, 37); Naoko feels that he is calling to her (Murakami 2000, 141), and she seems to be becoming herself something fixed and unchanging, and dead (Murakami 2000, 279). And Watanabe's attempts to help Naoko recover cannot continue unless Naoko is able to change and reject the world of the dead. The embodied activity of trying to understand and help Naoko dominates much of Watanabe's life back in Tokyo; he takes himself to be actively living a life that involves her. But she is rapidly fading out of that life in a way that is entirely out of his control. When Watanabe returns to Tokyo after visiting Naoko in the mountains, he returns to the world of the living, from which Naoko is fading. She steadily shades out of his life as it becomes clearer that she will never be able to come back down the mountain.

Naoko's slide into the world of Kizuki is not simply some illness with which she is saddled. It affects the quality of her will. She defined herself in terms of Kizuki, forming her conception of herself as he formed his conception of himself as they grew up together. It is *Naoko* that wants to join Kizuki in the world of the dead, just as much as it is Naoko who wants to follow Watanabe back to Tokyo—she seems to take it that her good is to die, even though a part of her takes it to be her good to live.[43] And however much he shares with Naoko, Watanabe is not capable of understanding this desire of hers to die, and how it relates to her desire to stay alive.[44]

[43]Murakami considers a contradiction like this again in *Landscape with Flatiron*「アイロンのある風景」(Murakami [2002] 2003). Thanks to Houston Smit for bringing this story to my attention.

[44]In *Norwegian Wood*, Murakami seems also to want to warn us that trying too hard to know the unknowable depths of others can bring only misery. Given Reiko's beliefs about what it will take for Naoko to recover, Watanabe does not seriously consider the possibility of abandoning Naoko. He believes his commitment to Naoko to be a necessary condition for her future recovery, and this commitment renders Watanabe utterly emotionally unavailable to his new friend: he repeatedly sidesteps Midori's attempts to become closer to him. In particular, Watanabe spends a lot of time ruminating

This is enough about *Norwegian Wood* for my purposes. I'll now turn to *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*. Okada's wife, Kumiko, elopes one day with a man with whom she's been having an affair. At first it seems that the reason for this is that Kumiko was able to obtain from this man a physical satisfaction that was not available in her marriage. As the novel progresses, however, it becomes clear that Kumiko has been kidnapped by her brother, Noboro Wataya. She now resides in an extradimensional hotel that can be accessed by climbing into a particular dry well in a particular neighbourhood of Tokyo. With the help of a wealthy patron who shares some of his supernatural abilities, Okada proceeds to attempt to rescue Kumiko from Noboro Wataya's grasp.

The relationship between Kumiko's affair and her imprisonment at the hands of Noboro Wataya is complex and nuanced (it is the supernaturality of Kumiko's imprisonment that grounds and expresses this complexity in the novel). Indeed, Murakami leaves much up to the reader's interpretation. It is clear, though, that the extramarital affair is certainly not just some cover story invented by Noboro Wataya. There is an element of Kumiko's will involved. At some level, she *wants* to be in the hotel— possibly only because she wants to go there and be rescued by Okada, or possibly she wants to be there for good. And her desire to be there has something to do with physical satisfaction. Why exactly Kumiko thinks she should elope, however, is not knowable by Okada. Kumiko's thinking outstrips the Kumiko that participated in a marriage with Okada (Murakami [1997] 1998, 30–31 (e.g.)). He cannot understand what she has done, and is left thinking that he overestimated his knowledge of his wife.

What the reader of *Norwegian Wood* and *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* comes to see is that the full structure of the womens' ends for their activity outstrips the extent to which they are engaged in the activities of lives lived alongside, or involving, the protagonists of the novels. It is important to

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on Naoko's situation. We might understand this as Watanabe's attempt to see into the darkest depths of Naoko's spirit, in the hope of understanding her. Midori sees that this is what he is attempting to do and rejects the attempt as something painful and hopeless. In a note she writes to Watanabe, she alludes to the pain of the solitude caused by feeling that one has a duty to fully know someone else:

> But don't get me wrong. I'm not totally mad at you. I'm just sad. You were so nice to me when I was having my problems, but now that you're having yours, it seems there's not a thing I can do for you. You're all locked up in that little world of yours, and when I try knocking on the door, you just sort of look up for a second and go right back inside. (Murakami 2000, 252–53)

Murakami does not make it clear, at the end of the novel, whether or not Midori and Watanabe are able to be together. Yeung (2013) explains how this indeterminate ending is developed by the clever use of tense in the Japanese original, and how it contributes to the presentation of a relatively pessimistic view of love.

note that it is not simply that the men have incomplete pictures of the women. It is not just that they correctly understand some aspects of the women, while other aspects remain hidden from them. Rather, the men develop conceptions of the women which turn out to be inaccurate, because what they don't know about the women undermines what they thought they did know. Specifically, Watanabe thought that Naoko could recover and participate in a life with him in Tokyo; Okada thought that Kumiko's married life with him was entirely satisfactory. A suggestion made by each novel is that they were *radically* wrong in each case. Naoko's slide into Kizuki's world is *inevitable*; Kumiko's self is too complicated to be accommodated by the life she has with Okada at the start of the novel.

The embodied conception

With these examples in hand, let's return to Russell's embodied conception. What happens when someone draws the boundaries of the self such that other people are taken to partly constitute the activity of living well? To draw the boundaries of the self in this way is to incorporate my conception of my spouse, say, into my conception of my own good. She's a constitutive part of an embodied activity which I take to be my happiness, and so a *conception* of her is constitutive part of my conception of that activity. The radical unknowability claim, however, threatens to undermine the epistemic status of any such conception of my spouse that I form, thereby undermining, in turn, the epistemic status of my conception of my happiness. Now, exactly how adoption of the embodied conception involves epistemic irresponsibility will depend on the structure of the conception of my spouse that I incorporate into my conception of the good. A defender of the embodied conception has a number of different ways to explain just what gets incorporated, and the epistemic problems will be correspondingly different. So what I'll do now is begin by explaining the most basic way in which I can incorporate a conception of my spouse into my conception of the good, explain the epistemic irresponsibility this involves, and then attempt to respond on behalf of the proponent of the embodied conception. I'll subsequently explain why I think the attempts to respond cannot succeed.

The core idea of the embodied conception is that my spouse, as she actually exists in the world, forms constitutive part of the embodied activity of my life alongside her. This corresponds to Russell's idea that activities which are vital to our happiness depend for their identity on things which lie

outside of our control. The most straightforward way in which I can incorporate a conception of my spouse in a conception of this embodied activity, then, is to incorporate my holistic understanding of the whole person that she is. On the embodied conception, it's whole people that form parts of the living of my life, so it's then natural to think that it's conceptions of whole people that form part of my conception of what it is to live my life happily. Based on the aspects of my spouse that are knowable to me from my life alongside her, then, I form a conception of who she is *simpliciter*. This is a conception of a whole person.

This process does not presuppose that I know everything there is to know about my spouse. But it *does* presuppose that those aspects of my spouse which are *not* presently knowable to me do not undermine the conception of the whole person which I form based on those aspects of her which *are* knowable to me. This, though, is what the unknowability claim suggests it is not reasonable for us to assume. If people are radically unknowable, in the sense that they have depths which have the potential to undermine everything we thought we knew about them, then I am not epistemically positioned to form a conception of a whole person on the basis of those aspects of my spouse which are knowable to me. Thus, any conception of a whole person which I do form is liable to track what my spouse is actually like only barely. So while I think I am taking the activity of my living well to be partly constituted by my spouse, what I'm actually doing is taking the activity of my living well to be partly constituted by someone who does not actually exist, because there is no person that corresponds to the conception of a whole person I've formed for myself. If you like, I take my happiness to be the activity of living alongside a two-dimensional projection of a higher-dimensional person.

We can distinguish two senses in which someone who forms an embodied conception like this goes wrong. Firstly, adoption of this embodied conception involves forming the false belief that my spouse *as I understand her* is a constitutive part of the activity which is what it is for me to live well. But my spouse as I understand her cannot be the person who actually does participate in the activity of our lives, thanks to unknowability. My spouse just behaves similarly to that imaginary person, for the time being. Involving these false beliefs, failing to properly track reality, adopting the embodied conception involves me in epistemic irresponsibility.

Secondly, an embodied conception of the good that is epistemically mistaken in this way will likely

cause me to treat my spouse inadequately. In particular, I am likely to *reduce* my spouse to my two-dimensional projection of her, not taking into account the fact that there is more to her than that of her which now participates in our life together. Let me explain how this likelihood arises. Russell (2012, 237–38) reads Epictetus as arguing that incorporating things outside of our control into our conception of our own good is dangerous, because it might mean that we seek to preserve our access to those things at the cost of acting virtuously. This is, I argue, what can too easily happen with the embodied conception. The conception of my spouse that I incorporate into my conception of my good is probably mistaken, because the full structure of my spouse's ends for the living of her life outstrips what I can know of her, in a radical sense. My spouse's success in her own eudaimonic reflection, then, might invalidate the conception of her that I've incorporated into my conception of my good. But I take my spouse *as I conceive of her* to be part of my good. That means that I believe, more or less implicitly, that I should take steps to maintain the situation in which my spouse appears to match the conception of her that is a constitutive part of my conception of the activity of living my life well. This is to reduce my spouse to that conception—to reduce her to those aspects of her that are relevant to the activities of the living of *my* life—and attempt to stymie opportunities for her personal growth. Instead of taking my happiness to depend on my spouse, as a proponent of the embodied conception would intend, thanks to unknowability, I end up taking my happiness to depend on just some parts of her, and this leads me to treat her disrespectfully.

When we deal with other people, however intimate the relationship, a certain humility is required in the face of their unknowability to us. They might change in ways that outstrip our present understanding of them. But if I've incorporated that understanding into my conception of the good for me, it will be difficult to retain this humility. For to have performed that incorporation just means that I take it to be part of my good that my spouse matches the way that I conceive of her. This makes it difficult to treat her *as someone who could* make a decision about how to live that outstrips the understanding of who she is that I've held up until this point. What if, in fact, my spouse has outgrown the relationship? What if, as Murakami suggests might be the case, Naoko *should* return to Kizuki's realm and leave Watanabe behind, and Kumiko *should* remain within the corridors of the transdimensional hotel? My spouse might rightly change out from under me. For me to fail to permit this would not be

to treat her as she ought to be treated.

Revisions to the embodied conception

This is not yet much of an objection to the embodied conception, because I've considered only a very simple way to incorporate a conception of another person into my conception of an embodied activity which I take to be part of my happiness. On behalf of a proponent of the embodied conception, I'll now consider two ways in which the embodied conception could be modified to attempt to accommodate the radical unknowability claim.

When I take my good to be an activity partly constituted by someone else, Russell could first argue, I need not incorporate a conception of what they are *like* into my thinking, but instead incorporate, as it were, a reference or pointer to them. I take my good to involve an embodied activity of living alongside my spouse, *however she turns out to be*. All my beliefs about how she *is* are regarded, when I am thinking about my happiness, as defeasible. No matter how many of them turn out to be false, no matter how my understanding of who she is has to change as we go through our lives, my happiness is an activity that involves living with her, coming to understand her better, even if I never come fully to know her. Since I don't take any particular beliefs about how my spouse is to form part of my conception of my good, I'm not being epistemically irresponsible, and I won't be liable to reduce her to any particular set of properties that she has. I will be humble with regard to how she is, treating any particular beliefs as defeasible.

This refined version of the embodied conception does manage to take some account of the un-knowability of others, but it does not fully account for their unknowability. In particular, it ignores the fact that people can change in ways that mean we should allow our intimacy to fade away. Recall that Russell's view is motivated by the contention that when certain aspects of our lives that are not in our control become unavailable to us, the activity that was our happiness has to end, to be replaced with some new activity. If my spouse dies, what it is for me to live happily changes, in the sense that it must now be a new, distinct activity. The problem with this first revision of Russell's view is that it fails to recognise a sufficiently wide range of reasons for why a relationship has to end. On this view, I conceive of my spouse as partly constituting the activity of my happiness, however she turns

out to be. But there are ways in which she could turn out to be that mean we should part ways, or, ways in which she could turn out to be that mean the activity of living with her is no longer part of my good. This is what makes Murakami's examples so haunting. As I said, it is not simply that Naoko is impinged upon by mental illness, or that Kumiko is kidnapped by her brother. In each case, there is an element of who the person *is* that is at least partly responsible for her disappearance. Now, it might well be that Kumiko and Naoko are making mistakes about how they must live. Perhaps there is no inevitability to Naoko's slide back to the dark, static, unchangingly adolescent embrace of Kizuki, and perhaps Kumiko has no good reason to think that her marriage is not enough for her; she's simply being manipulated by her brother. The novels underdetermine these questions. The suggestion of the works is simply that it *could* be the case that these women *ought* to disappear out of the lives of the protagonists. And if that's true, then it is could cease to be part of the happiness of either of the protagonists to live alongside these women. The revision of the embodied conception under discussion cannot really make sense of this. For it holds that no matter how the women turn out, the activity of living with them is part of my good. That's false, given unknowability, so it remains epistemically irresponsible to form such a conception of my good. Again, when I say that *Norwegian Wood* suggests that it might be the case that Watanabe and Naoko should part ways, the fact that Naoko eventually commits suicide is not relevant. The relevant sense in which Naoko disappears is not her killing herself, but disappearing inside of herself, rejecting the world of the living. This is what Russell's account is not able to make sense of.[45]

It is also worth noting that this revised embodied conception does not really answer to Russell's motivation for taking happiness to be a matter of embodied activities. On this view, my spouse could change all of her properties, such that it would be appropriate for me to grieve the loss, yet the revised embodied conception would say that life with that particular other person would still be the same embodied activity.[46] But the embodied conception was meant to capture the significance to my

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[45]Kumiko's disappearance into an extradimensional hotel, and Naoko's death, are much more dramatic than the distressingly mundane, gradual drifting apart of a married couple. I do not think that the unknowability must be different in kind between the cases, however. Moreover, the highly dramatic events of the novels serve to more effectively illustrate and explain the sense of unknowability.

[46]There are, of course, serious questions of personal identity here. If personal identity is not metaphysically fundamental, such that personal identity depends on the maintenance of certain externally-accessible properties, this revision of the embodied conception will not be coherent.

happiness of the life I am presently leading with my spouse, an activity which is partly characterised by properties she contingently possesses. The activity of living alongside a numerically identical person, who could have completely different properties than those my spouse has now, does not capture that.

There is a second revision of the embodied conception that Russell can make in response to the foregoing rejoinder. There is a middle ground available between the two options we've considered so far for the conception of my spouse that I incorporate into an embodied conception. I can form a conception of my spouse that takes her to have a number of properties, without implicitly filling in the gaps between those properties to form a conception of a whole person. That means that I incorporate into my embodied conception a partial conception of my spouse. Then my happiness is an activity done alongside *this* person, however she turns out to be, so long as she continues to have the specified properties. If she changed so dramatically that she no longer has those properties, the activity that was the good for me would have to end; I could no longer be happy in the way that I had been. The idea is that I don't know what is going to happen in the future of my relationship because I don't know everything about my spouse; I take it to be my happiness to be along for the ride, though there are certain things that could mean we ought to part ways.

The purpose of this move is to avoid overreaching in the claims that my embodied conception entails about what my spouse is like. It includes enough about her to avoid entailing, as the first revision did, that my good is to be with her no matter how she might change, but it includes little more than that. This embodied conception enables its bearer to be epistemically responsible in my first sense. The claims about what my spouse is like that are incorporated into my embodied conception of my happiness are all true. There might be other aspects of her that would mean that even these properties of her could and perhaps will change, but that does not make it epistemically irresponsible to hold onto those beliefs for the time being. By avoiding filling in any details, this second revision avoids being radically wrong in the sense that Murakami's protagonists were radically wrong about the women. The second revision of the embodied conception involves an understanding of my spouse that is correct as far as it goes.

In the end, however, this second revision of the embodied conception is still liable to cause me to treat my spouse inadequately. In the case of the original version of the embodied conception, we saw

that in addition to the epistemic irresponsibility involved in taking my happiness to involve someone who does not actually exist in the world, forming such a conception also has the practical consequence of taking steps to maintain the person in a state in which she can *still be reduced* to that conception. As Russell points out in his discussion of Epictetus, if we take something to be part of our good then we will defend it. (On the eudaimonist picture, this is a trivial point: we take our good to be what we should pursue.) Even if I accept that my spouse might change in higher-dimensional space, I will try to limit that change such that my two-dimensional projection of her remains possible. But what if she has outgrown the relationship? I should not try to prevent this growth of hers. This problem arises just as much for the revision of the embodied conception now under discussion as it did for the original version. For if I form the second revision of the embodied conception, I take my good to be living alongside someone with a certain set of properties, and so I am in danger of trying to to maintain my spouse as having those properties. But, in fact, I should not treat her this way. I should permit her to change in ways that might mean we should part ways. It is difficult for me to permit that if I take it to be part of my good for her to have certain properties that ground her continuing to live her life with me, because to take it to be part of my good involves seeking to maintain those properties.

Let's consider, briefly, how the formalised conception avoids the epistemic irresponsibility under discussion. That view holds that the activity of living my married life well is an activity that *engages* with my spouse, without claiming that my spouse *partly constitutes* that activity. So I do not incorporate into my conception of living well conceptions of any particular other people, which avoids the epistemic irresponsibility. Now the radical unknowability claim, in these terms, is that my engagement is only ever with aspects of my spouse, not with all of her. This still obtains. But, crucially, the notion of engagement, unlike the notion of embodied activity, does not involve the risk of reducing my spouse to those aspects of her with which I engage. Indeed, to the extent that I am living well, my engagement with my spouse will express a recognition that she is a far larger thing than what I see in our living together. This is an epistemically responsible response to the unknowability of other people.

Finally, consider the possibility that the radical unknowability claim applies just as much to one's

own self as to other people.[47] An embodied conception will include a conception of myself as I exist in the world just as much as it includes conceptions of relevant other individuals, and so there is the potential for further epistemic irresponsibility in both of our senses. Suppose that what I don't know about myself, as I actually exist in the world, threatens to undermine what I do know. Then incorporating into my embodied conception a conception of myself based on what I do know will involve forming false beliefs, in just the same ways that incorporating a conception of my spouse did.

Further, if the embodied activity of my embodied conception depends on my being a certain way, then I'm committed to maintaining myself such that it can continue, which might clash with how I really am. Perhaps the truth about me, as I actually am, means that this career is no longer constitutive of my happiness. But my belief is that I should seek to maintain the conditions required for the embodied activity, because it's constitutive of my happiness, so I am liable to suppress any discovery of the truth about myself, forcibly reducing myself to those aspects which are compatible with the continuance of the activity.

A proponent of the formalised conception can be seen again to fare well. From the eudaimonic reflector's perspective of seeking to develop my conception of engaging virtuously with the world, both the possibility and my discovery of hidden depths within myself are further circumstances of living to which I should try to respond virtuously. I need to ask: *given* that there is the possibility I'm radically wrong about who I actually am in the world, how it is virtuous to go on? As we've seen, the formalised conception of the self is required to ask this sort of question. The answer will be similar to what it was for my spouse. I should live in ways which are epistemically humble with respect to myself, not making plans or choosing embodied activities in ways which involve assuming things about myself which may turn out not to be true.

This concludes my arguments against drawing the distinction between the living of lives and the circumstances of lives as Russell would, and in favour of drawing the distinction along the lines of another distinction, between what I can control and what I cannot control. As I explained in ch. 1,

[47]Thank you to an anonymous reviewer for this suggestion.

sec. 5, this has the consequence of disambiguating in turn the distinction between static and dynamic components of conceptions of happiness: dynamic components are conceptions of what it is to control well that which we can control, and static components are conceptions of what things we cannot control it is good for us to have or be.

In his own terms, Russell is defending a dynamic conception of happiness, because he holds that happiness is an embodied activity. However, once we draw the distinction between the living of our lives and the circumstances of our living as I now have, an embodied activity is not a pure activity. Once we've disambiguated the distinction between static and dynamic components along the lines of the formalised distinction, then, what kind of conception of happiness is Russell's? It is, in fact, a hybrid account. The parts of embodied activities that we can control are aspects of a dynamic component, but these activities have as necessary conditions certain static circumstances. These are not merely necessary conditions but also partly constitutive of my good, in the manner of a static component. Assimilating the embodied activity of living well in my married life to my distinction between static and dynamic components, for example, requires us to say that the activity of handling my marriage well is a dynamic component, there is a static component of my spouse continuing to be around, and the relationship between these is that one can live for the sake of the dynamic component only so long as the static component is realised. This captures Russell's idea that what it is for me to live well has to change if this static component is no longer realisable, such as it would be if my spouse were to die. Of course, he would not be happy with stating his view in these terms, for he thinks that it gets the boundaries of the self wrong.

I have defended this way of distinguishing static from dynamic components of conceptions of happiness by showing how drawing the distinction between the living of lives and the circumstances of lives in this way gets us a grip on the question of how to live well, and thus better serves the purposes of eudaimonic reflection.

CHAPTER 2

ACCOUNTS WHICH REJECT THE SUBORDINATION THESIS

In this chapter I will reject static and hybrid conceptions of happiness that are not eudaimonist in the sense that they reject the subordination thesis (recall that purely dynamic accounts all accept the subordination thesis). In particular, I will consider static accounts whose staticity is *due to* the rejection of the subordination thesis, and show that these conceptions are not suitable to be anyone's final end. They do not enable the integration of lives. We'll see that that means the conception of happiness lacks the resources to deal with problems that arise in natural and important applications. For hybrid accounts, I'll show that these fail to be suitable as final ends when, and only when, they reject the subordination thesis. In both cases, I don't have completely general arguments, applicable to any account which satisfies my definition of static or hybrid and is seen to deny the subordination thesis. That's because these terms are not completely determinate; for example, there are many different ways to fail to subordinate the circumstances of one's life to the living of one's life, and there are many different possible relationships that could obtain between the static and dynamic elements of a hybrid conception of happiness. Instead, I'll argue in response to particular kinds of static and hybrid conceptions, and the hope is that the arguments could be extended to other kinds of such conceptions.

1 Commonsensical static accounts

I'll begin by explaining a commonsensical way in which someone might reject the subordination thesis, and thus find herself with a static conception of happiness. We said that eudaimonic reflection is prompted by apparent conflicts between the things for which we are living. We are prompted to ask ourselves how our life is going, and realise, more or less explicitly, that we require a better and more developed idea of our own good. This is in order to avoid a conflict between the things we care about the next time we find ourselves in the kind of situation that prompted this instance of eudaimonic reflection. Considering this, someone might say: well, while it is true that one can make better or worse of the circumstances in which one finds oneself, *this* is ultimately subordinate to obtaining or maintaining the circumstances which constitute one's happiness, which are what ultimately matters when we think about our own good and how our life is going. My happiness is some set of circumstances that I want to obtain, and I'm living well to the extent that the way I live contributes, instrumentally, to obtaining or maintaining those circumstances. I'm making good use of my present circumstances to the extent that I make them effective means to the obtaining or maintenance of the circumstances which constitute my happiness. So in my eudaimonic reflection, I must first figure out what circumstances constitute my happiness—is it peace of mind or freedom from strong emotion? health? wealth? some combination?—and then develop my understanding of how I can live such as to get myself closer to those circumstances, or keep those circumstances once obtained. This is to subordinate the living of a life to the obtaining of particular circumstances, and is thus a rejection of the subordination thesis: living counts as living well only when it contributes to acquiring or maintaining the particular circumstances which that individual takes to be their good *simpliciter*. And the conception of happiness under development here is straightforwardly static: someone's good *simpliciter* is some particular set of circumstances, to be obtained or maintained.

I said that this static conception of happiness is commonsensical, but what I've said about it so far is purely schematic. We need some examples of how individuals in our contemporary culture reject the subordination thesis, and end up with a static conception of happiness that has the structure described in the previous paragraph. I'll give three examples here. To avoid these examples seeming like straw

men, it is important to bear in mind that I'm not claiming that anyone in our contemporary culture has *exclusively* the static conceptions of happiness described. Our thinking about our own good is not so unified as that. However, I *do* claim that the static conceptions of happiness I am about to describe can dominate our thinking at critical junctures in our lives.

Three commonsensical static conceptions

My first example I call the Professional Academic (here, 'professional' has its pejorative sense). The Professional Academic thinks that happiness, for her, is the occupation of the permanent academic position towards which she is working. If you ask her how her life is going, she tells you that that she recently had a paper published, but otherwise she's struggling with writer's block and is apprehensive about being able to make progress through that while teaching an entirely new course during the upcoming semester. Notice how her conception of how her life is going implicitly assumes that she's living well to the extent that she's successfully converting her circumstances into means to the end of a permanent academic position. We asked her how her life was going, and she replied by telling us about the things that are taking her towards her desired circumstances—having published the paper—and the things that are limiting the extent to which she is moving towards those desired circumstances—the writer's block and how that might be exacerbated by teaching an entirely new course. So this individual is concerned with how she's living her life, but this concern is subordinated to the overarching goal of obtaining the permanent academic position, which is taken to be her good *simpliciter*.

When sufficiently distracted by her friends at dinner, for example, or engaging with art and literature, the Professional Academic will likely find herself with ideas about her own good that are richer than the above—even if she went to dinner or the movie theatre for the instrumental purpose of resting so that she can work harder tomorrow. But when it comes down to more significant decisions about how to spend time or other resources, her static conception is likely to dominate.

Another example is the Olympic Athlete, who wants to win gold for her country.[1] Let's suppose that the Olympic Athlete's sport is one in which one can realistically expect to compete internationally

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[1]Annas (2021, 28–30) also discusses this sort of example.

only up until one's late twenties.[2] Now, the Olympic Athlete is not so naive as to take her good to be the winning of gold medals: she recognises that there is much chance involved in who ends up winning, and genetically advantaged opponents might have an edge on her throughout her career. Instead, she takes her good to be the state in which she is as best placed to win as it is possible for her to make herself. There's some vagueness here; for example, does the taking of illegal performance enhancing drugs count as a way for her to "make herself" better placed to win? This vagueness might not be completely resolved by the Olympic Athlete's present conception of her own happiness, but that's the kind of thing she'll have to work on in her eudaimonic reflection. The Olympic Athlete's conception of living well is activity that contributes to getting her into the state in which she is as best placed to win as it is possible for her to be, or maintaining herself in that state once she's reached it. If you ask her why she's doing something ("to make my leg muscles stronger"), and then ask her why she's doing that ("to accelerate faster at the start of a race"), and so on, she will eventually say that it's for the sake of getting herself to the point that she's best placed to win, or to maintain that state. And so living well is subordinated to her static, circumstantial conception of her own good.

Again, the athlete's thinking about her own good is unlikely to be exclusively that which I just described. As I stipulated, the state at which she aims is something that can be maintained only up until her late twenties. She probably has some ideas about what her own good will look like beyond that point. However, (i) those ideas will be highly indeterminate, not developed by means of eudaimonic reflection (I'll come back to this point); and (ii) they will not be relevant to the choices that she makes based on her conception of her own good. She does not take any steps to live for the sake of that conception of what her own good will be after her athletic career.

My final example is the Productive Citizen. Suppose he's seventeen, and currently preparing whatever is needed to apply to university in the country in which he lives; perhaps he's studying for entrance exams or doing mock interviews. The Productive Citizen wants to get into a prestigious university so that he can get a corporate job, in the hope of later achieving promotion to a high status

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[2]The choice of the late twenties is not important: all of the Olympic sports in which people compete in the way that the Olympic Athlete does have a cutoff point relatively early in people's expected lifespans. The Olympic events that do not have such a cutoff are those where preparation for competition does not dominate the lives of competitors in the way in which preparation for her sport dominates the life of the Olympic Athlete.

corporate job, with the income needed to buy an expensive house, get married to someone with a certain set of high status properties, and raise children that will be on the road to high status corporate jobs themselves. The Productive Citizen takes his happiness to be that state in which he has the high status job, spouse, house and children who are in the state of having made good progress towards their own high status jobs. All these things are circumstances of a life, and so we can understand his conception of his own happiness as the state in which he possesses all of those desired circumstances. How about his conception of living well? Again, he thinks he's living well when the way in which he is living is moving him closer to that desired state. For example, suppose he slacks off and spends a week hanging out with his family, that he might have spent preparing his applications. While during that week he might act for the sake of a broader conception of his own good, once it's over and he considers his goals, he will take himself not to have lived well during that week and will be keen to start living well again by getting on with his applications.

How commonsensical static conceptions fail

We have seen three static conceptions of happiness, the staticity of which is due to the rejection of the subordination thesis. I also discussed the general structure of this rejection and how it results in a static account. What I will now show is that these static conceptions of happiness are not suitable to be *final ends*, in the Aristotelian sense (*EN* I.1–7), and how this generates problems when individuals engage in eudaimonic reflection. Final ends have a number of distinguishing characteristics. What's important for my arguments is that a final end is one that permits the *integration* of one's life. I'll explain how the static conceptions of happiness under discussion do not permit this, how this creates problems when individuals engage in eudaimonic reflection, and how acceptance of the subordination thesis avoids these issues.[3]

Before I begin, let me note that my explanations of how the problems I raise can be avoided by accepting the subordination thesis are necessarily vaguer than my showing that the static conceptions of happiness under discussion are not suitable to be final ends. I've specified precisely what it is to hold one of these static conceptions, so I can be similarly specific in my critique of them. However,

[3]In making this argument I was helped by a conversation with Julia Annas and Jeremy Reid.

as we saw in ch. 1, accepting the subordination thesis does not determine whether your conception of happiness will be static, hybrid or dynamic, and so accepting the subordination thesis does not determine any particular conception of happiness. So when I show how accepting the subordination thesis avoids the problems I raise, I cannot refer to one specific conception of happiness and must speak in more general terms.

We said that eudaimonic reflection is prompted by apparent conflicts between the things for which we are living. The eudaimonist holds that we resolve these conflicts by making our conception of our own good more determinate, such that the conflicts which prompted this instance of reflection no longer arise. There is thus a kind of virtuous feedback loop between our conception of our own good and our living for the sake of what we take to be good. To what extent is someone with a static conception of happiness able to engage in eudaimonic reflection? A conception of happiness which specifies circumstances to be attained is able to resolve some apparent conflicts between the things that we care about. We saw something of this in the examples above: when it seems that we have to choose between acting for the sake of one thing that we care about or for the sake of another, a static conception of happiness has us act in whichever way will get us closer to the circumstances which constitute our conception of happiness. So if acting for the sake of our own financial success will get us closer to our desired circumstances, we're to choose that over acting for the sake of our physical health, say.

The problem is that there are some conflicts which arise in anyone's adult life that the static eudaimonic reflection I just described will not be able to resolve. And we will see that this failure is due to the failure of the static conception of happiness to be suitable as a final end. I'll consider two such conflicts.

The first kind of conflict is between a static conception of happiness and what we might call our other ethical priorities. For no-one thinks that their static conception of happiness is to be pursued at all costs. The Productive Citizen might be willing to do some ethically questionable things to advance his position in the corporation, but there are always limits to this. He won't endorse his corporation setting up a drug trade. He would grudgingly accept that ethical conditions might be such that he has to abandon his pursuit of his desired circumstances, and thus accept that by his own lights, he will

never be happy. This is also true, note, for selfless static conceptions of happiness. If someone thinks that their own good is to get into a state where they care about their own health and wellbeing only instrumentally to helping the poorest people in the world—the state of having eliminated all contrary "selfish" impulses—they too will accept that this goal should be abandoned if it turns out that it would enable them to be manipulated into making things worse, say.

The structure of this first kind of conflict reveals that we are committed to *living* in certain ways that cannot be captured by any given static conception of happiness.[4] In particular, we are committed to living at least minimally ethically. When there is a conflict between this commitment and our commitment to taking the most effective means to our static conception of happiness, eudaimonic reflection is powerless to help us resolve the conflict. Note how the problem is created by the rejection of the subordination thesis. The static conception of happiness subordinates living well to the achieving of circumstances. But all of us care about living minimally ethically, which is a way of living well that we take to be good *simpliciter*, which thus clashes with this subordination. The result is the lack of a rational way to resolve the conflict, and thus the impossibility of integrating these disparate ends into a single conception of how we should live. Which is just to say that the static conception is not suitable to be a final end.

How does acceptance of the subordination thesis avoid this kind of apparent conflict becoming irresoluble? If we accept the subordination thesis then we hold that living well is good *simpliciter*, and nothing else is good *simpliciter*. So whatever we take to be good *simpliciter* will be ways of living, and we can then determine how those ways of living can be minimally ethical ways of living. Determining this is logically prior to determining circumstances at which we might aim, because aiming at those circumstances is to take them to be good, but according to the subordination thesis, circumstances are good only relative to living well in those circumstances. We can never get a conflict between circumstances at which we might aim and living minimally ethically because if aiming at those circumstances involves failing to live minimally ethically, then those circumstances are not good, and so not to be aimed at.

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[4]In recent essays Annas (2015, 102–4; 2022, 4–8) discusses the idea that our commitment to living in certain ways can silence reasons for action that are instrumental to achieving particular circumstances.

The second kind of conflict arises for only some static conceptions of happiness: those where the static conception of happiness might be attained, but cannot be sustained indefinitely. The Olympic Athlete has such a conception: the circumstances at which she aims apply only up to around the end of her twenties. Now, we said that the Olympic Athlete has a faint, undeveloped conception of what her own good will be after her athletic career. There will be conflicts between living for the sake of her future happiness and living for the sake of her athletic career, which she takes to be her present happiness. So, for example, she might be able to get an edge on her opponents, putting herself closer to being in the state in which she's best prepared to compete, by training in a way that is detrimental to her longer term health. The conflict is between living for the sake of that state in which she's best prepared to compete, and living for the sake of her health after her athletic career. How does her static conception of happiness resolve this conflict? By brute force: it would have her just ignore her health after her athletic career and engage in the damaging training. But this is no resolution of a conflict at all. There has been no integration between the various things that she takes to be good, such that she can live for the sake of all of them. Again, this shows that a static conception of happiness is not suitable to be a final end.

Now suppose that the Olympic Athlete accepts the subordination thesis. She takes living well to be good *simpliciter*, so the task becomes integrating living for the sake of her athletic goals with living for the sake of her later flourishing. And clearly this requires her to live in such a way that contributes to her athletic goals without sacrificing her prospects for future flourishing. What acceptance of the subordination thesis did here was change the elements to be integrated, from ends that cannot be integrated, to ends that can. Previously, the circumstances in which the Olympic Athlete is best placed to succeed were taken to be good *simpliciter*, and this demanded all means to their realisation. Now that it's living well that's good *simpliciter*, we don't get that unintegrable component.

A further failure

In showing how static conceptions of happiness are not suitable to be final ends, I considered two kinds of conflict. The existence of these conflicts in anyone's adult life demonstrates that each of

us actually has a conception of our final end.[5] We all have an overarching idea of our own good, however indeterminate and undeveloped. But our examples have shown one way in which we can be in two minds about our own good. In addition to ideas about our own good that would be suitable components of a conception of our final end, we can have a static conception of happiness. Ultimately these are in unsolvable conflict, but we might not become sufficiently conscious of this to recognise that it's our clinging on to our static conception of happiness that's preventing us from integrating our lives.

Note, too, where all the effort is going. In the examples above, the eudaimonic reflection in which the individuals with static conceptions of happiness engaged was all to the end of either making their static conception more precise, or improving their instrumental reasoning regarding the obtaining or maintenance of the circumstances specified by their static conception. When they received new practical experience, they asked themselves "does this change my idea of what I am aiming for (e.g. how many children can I raise before it detrimentally affects my other goals)?" or "maybe this way of living is not contributing optimally to obtaining my happiness; I might have to rethink spending my time that way." By contrast, they are not putting any effort into developing their conception of their final end. The Olympic Athlete doesn't think about what she should be doing now such that she can continue to be a good athlete without sacrificing her future. The Productive Citizen has a vague awareness that he wants to live minimally ethically but he doesn't spend enough time figuring out what this means for his career choices.[6]

In summary, holding these conceptions of happiness that are static due to their rejection of the subordination thesis causes a failure to *want* a more developed idea of one's own good that *is* suitable to be a final end, and thus a failure to do anything to refine those ideas about one's good that one *does* possess that *are* suitable to be a final end. And so one's eudaimonic reflection will be unsuccessful, for there will be persistent conflicts that only a conception of one's own good suitable to be a final end will be capable of resolving. Purely static conceptions of happiness should be rejected.

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[5]*Pace* Millgram (2015).
[6]Cf. ch. 1, n. 16 (p. 21, above).

An objection

I'll now consider a natural objection to the foregoing. It's all very well, the objector says, to show how the ways of rejecting the subordination thesis that we've seen get people like the Productive Citizen, Olympic Athlete and the Professional Academic into trouble, but aren't there much more sophisticated ways to reject the subordination thesis? Indeed, don't people like the Productive Citizen quite quickly come to realise their errors—isn't the way that they think about their happiness rather childish, and obviously so? One of the goals of this dissertation is to critique static conceptions of happiness, but if the static conceptions I've considered are only very poor and unsophisticated conceptions, I will not really have contributed anything to the critique of static conceptions. So the objection is that the static conceptions I've considered are so weak that my demonstration that they fail to permit their bearers to integrate their lives does not establish anything about static conceptions, and the subordination thesis, in general.

The structure of my response is to note several things about conceptions of happiness in our contemporary culture. These observations disarm the objection in different ways, as we'll see. The first thing I'll note is that we often have false beliefs about the conceptions of happiness that actually influence our own decision-making and the decision-making of others, such that the immaturity and simplicity of our conception of happiness might not be accessible to us. Indeed, it is common for our thinking about our own lives to be transparently straightforward to those who know us very well, but highly complicated and opaque from the point of view of ourselves, and of everyone else who does not know us very well. And it's those who are close to us who are correct: for most of us, close friends can predict what we'll say better than we can. If we try to put ourselves in the shoes of the individuals considered above, such as the Olympic Athlete, my descriptions of the static conceptions of happiness that operate at key junctures of their lives can strike us as simple and immature simply because none of us believe that conceptions of happiness as unsophisticated as that could possibly have an influence on our decision-making, or at least not for very long. But this reaction in ourselves is precisely what we should expect, once we note that the immaturity of our conceptions of our own good is usually accessible only to other people who know us well, and not to ourselves. Since we should expect that

static conceptions will strike us as unrealistically simple and childish when we imagine ourselves in the position of characters like the Productive Citizen, the fact that they strike us this way is not evidence that my discussion takes an overly simplistic view of those who hold static conceptions of happiness.

There is a second reason to expect that we will react with disbelief when we encounter the static conceptions of happiness that I've described. This is that we tend to assume that our conceptions of happiness are more unified than they in fact are. As I noted before describing the characters, my claim is not that the static conceptions of happiness under discussion control every aspect of the individuals' decision-making. The point is just that these static conceptions of happiness dominate at critical junctures in their possessors' lives. We are often unable to see that the way we make decisions in certain contexts—for example, when the stakes are high—is disunified with the conceptions of the good that are expressed by our actions the rest of the time. For example, people who reject aspects of their upbringing are not always able to resist choosing in accordance with that upbringing when it comes to big decisions, falling back, as it were, on something that is embedded deeper in their psyche, and that is associated with the security of their childhood. The fact that we deploy different conceptions of happiness in different situations is another example of a conflict between things which we care about, and the solution is to integrate our lives by bringing together these disparate conceptions of happiness. However, when thinking uncritically, we tend to believe that we've accomplished more of this integration than we in fact have. So when we put ourselves in the shoes of the three characters, we should both expect to find disunity, and expect to be surprised by it. Given this expectation, the disunity between the static conceptions of happiness and the other conceptions of the good that are expressed in the actions of the characters is not reason to think that I'm taking an overly simplistic view of those who hold static conceptions of happiness.

That completes my first observation about conceptions of happiness in our contemporary culture. The second thing I'll note in response to the objection is the influential cultural trope of the midlife crisis. I take this to be evidence that the simple static conceptions of happiness under discussion dominate the thinking of many of us, at crucial junctures, and also as evidence for my view that holders of static conceptions also possess faint, barely-developed conceptions of their own good that *are* suitable to be final ends. How is a midlife crisis thought to proceed? Someone like the Productive

Citizen wakes up one day, aged perhaps 35, having achieved the circumstances specified by his static conception of happiness. Suddenly, he realises that he has no real idea why he poured all that effort into obtaining those circumstances. What's so good about his corporate job? His house? Did he marry his spouse for the right reasons? Why is he pushing his children in the direction in which he is pushing them? His static conception of happiness is not able to answer these questions, because it is not suitable to be a final end. The Productive Citizen is in the process of realising this. And we think that an experience like this is a live possibility for people who make decisions based on an aim of obtaining for themselves particular life circumstances. If the objector was right, such that the static conceptions under discussion are so simple that we are able easily to discard them, the cultural trope of the midlife crisis would not be such an influential cautionary tale: if everyone could see the immaturity of their static conceptions and discard them, there wouldn't be any midlife crises.

With what intellectual resources is the Productive Citizen able to come to see that his static conception of happiness is not suitable to be a final end? He's only able to come to this conclusion because he *also* possesses a faint, barely-developed conception of his own good that *is* suitable to be a final end, as I claimed above. What he realises during his midlife crisis is that he has a conception of a final end for the sake of which he would like to live, but up until now he's had the mistaken implicit belief that pursuing the realisation of his static conception of happiness had something to do with living for the sake of his final end. He has no idea how, or whether, living for the sake of the realisation of his static conception could constitute living for the sake of his final end. Had he no conception of his own good that is suitable to be a final end, he could not have come to this realisation—there would be nothing which which to contrast the pursuit of his static conception.

This responds to the objection that the static conceptions I discuss are too simple to be plausibly held, over the longer term, by members of our contemporary culture. Prima facie, the kind of relationship we have with our conceptions of happiness shows that the way in which the conceptions seem simple and childish is not good reason to believe that they would be easily discarded, and the influential cultural trope of the midlife crisis is positive evidence that they are held, over the longer term, by members of our contemporary culture. A natural next move for the objector is to argue that members of our contemporary culture possess developed conceptions of their own good that contain

both static and dynamic elements, i.e., they have hybrid accounts. I'll consider those below (sec. 3), but first I'll consider a philosophical static account of happiness.

2   Wolf's static account

Wolf (2016b, 2016a, 2015; Wolf et al. 2010) has a static conception of happiness.[7] I will show that this staticity is due to its rejection of the subordination thesis, and show that this renders it unsuitable as a final end, incapable of integrating lives. Wolf's account is particularly interesting because she is in broad agreement with eudaimonists like Annas about the content of the good life. However, we will see that the static structure of her account gets her into trouble.

Wolf holds that there are three basically orthogonal dimensions to the good life. These are: morality; happiness; and meaningfulness. Wolf individuates these dimensions by means of the reasons or motives for action that each provides. Morality provides reasons or motives of duty, happiness provides reasons or motives of self-interest, and meaningfulness provides reasons or motives of love, where this love can be of "people, ideals or other sorts of objects." (2016b, 255) (Reasons of love are not reasons *for loving* something, but reasons for action that are "grounded in love" (Wolf 2016a, 280).)

I've been following the eudaimonist in using 'happiness' to refer to someone's own good, so we have a clash of terminology here: Wolf uses 'happiness' to refer to just one of the three dimensions of the good life, which is a narrower usage. Henceforth I'll use 'happiness$_W$' to refer to the dimension of the good life to refer to which Wolf uses 'happiness'. So, in my terms, Wolf takes there to be three dimensions to someone's happiness—morality; happiness$_W$; and meaningfulness—and I will show that this is a static account, which fails to be suitable as a final end. I have little to say about happiness$_W$ in isolation.

We can characterise the first two of Wolf's dimensions briefly. Her thought is that in justifying courses of action, we most commonly appeal to either the self-interest of the individuals carrying out the actions, or to what these individuals owe to others (2016b, 254). For example, we might say

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[7]Jeremy Reid first suggested to me that Wolf's view yields a static conception of happiness. He bears no responsibility for my attempt to demonstrate that her view does indeed yield a static conception.

that she should return the book because her borrowing it created an obligation to return it; this is a reason of morality. On the other hand, we might say to someone that they should go ahead and leave without us, because they should look to their own interest in not being late for the exam. These are both dimensions of the good life, because if we are lacking in one of them, we won't count as living well—if we're only self-interested, we're missing something important about the good human life; similarly if we act only for the sake of others.

The third dimension of Wolf's conception of happiness is meaningfulness. This really is a third dimension: reasons or motives of love are "not to be assimilated to reasons of self-interests or to reasons of morality." (Wolf 2016b, 255) Meaningfulness is introduced as follows:

> According to the conception of meaningfulness I wish to propose, meaning arises from **loving objects worthy of love and engaging with them in a positive way.** What is perhaps most distinctive about … the category of value I have in mind is that it involves subjective and objective elements, inextricably linked. (Wolf 2016b, 256; emphasis added)

What are the subjective and objective elements of meaningfulness, and why is Wolf keen to say that they are inextricably linked? The subjective element is "a kind of joy in life" that we may call "feelings of fulfilment" which are "the opposite of the very bad feelings of boredom and alienation." (Wolf 2016b, 258) The objective element is a *worthiness* in the objects, the engagement with which generates the feelings of fulfilment. What is it the objects must be worthy of? For meaningfulness, the objects must be worthy of the kind of serious engagement that generates feelings of fulfilment. Wolf uses the example of Sudoku puzzles to illustrate this. Completing Sudoku puzzles might give one a feeling of fulfilment, but there's something deceptive about that. It may well be worth doing Sudoku puzzles casually, but there's something mistaken about engaging with them with the seriousness with which one might engage in the project of caring for one's friends. And it's only that serious engagement that will produce feelings of fulfilment, rather than mild amusement. Sudoku puzzles are not worthy of the serious engagement that generates feelings of fulfilment, so the objective element is missing, so they do not contribute to meaningfulness in life even if they cause someone to feel fulfilled.[8]

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[8]There seems to be some connection between concentration and the feelings of fulfilment associated with meaningful-

The subjective and objective elements of meaningfulness must be inextricably linked because otherwise they would not form a "coherent" dimension of value (Wolf 2016b, 260–61). Wolf does not really explain what this inextricable linking must amount to, just asserting that it must exist. For the purposes of my essay we need not investigate whether this assertion is warranted.[9]

Wolf's insistence that there are reasons or motives for action that cannot be understood in terms of some non-trivial notion of self-interest, nor some kind of duty, is insightful and important. For there certainly are such reasons. We said above (ch. 1, sec. 3) that the eudaimonist holds that what is actually good for someone cannot be incompatible with the good of others, or the good more generally. This purely schematic claim of minimal eudaimonism needs fleshing out by concrete eudaimonisms. And appeal to Wolf's reasons of love could be a component of that fleshing out. We disinterestedly sink our time and effort into causes that we take to be worth promoting, and this is not because we think we have a duty to promote those causes, nor because it is instrumental to something narrowly self-interested. The concrete eudaimonism will then incorporate some notion of worthy cause, and some notion of the promotion of worthy causes, into its conception of happiness.

Let's see how Wolf's account yields a static conception of happiness. I claim that for each of the three dimensions, the way in which acting on the reasons provided by that dimension contributes to happiness is that it contributes to the obtaining of particular static circumstances: from the point of view of happiness, acting on the reasons provided by each dimension is merely instrumental to obtaining certain static circumstances (I don't claim that acting on the reasons provided by each dimension is instrumental in any other sense). To see this, consider how a failing in one of the three dimensions results in someone not counting as living a good life. If we're not living well because we're failing on the morality dimension, it must be that we're in a state of having at least one unfulfilled

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ness. In particular, high levels of concentration can generate feelings of fulfilment of which the objects of our concentration are not worthy. A nice example of this can be found in Banana Yoshimoto's novel 「N・P」: "I was [photo]copying with such concentration that when I finally finished, it felt as if I had accomplished something." (Yoshimoto 1994, 79).

[9]In the text I do not consider what Wolf says about the reasons why meaningfulness is valuable, i.e. why we should think it's a component of the good life. I am taking it for granted that loving objects worthy of love is part of our good. Her claims about the structure and content of the third dimension of the good life are independent of her reasons for thinking that this really is a third dimension of the good life, and in the text I set aside the latter.

It is worth noting, though, that what she does say about why we should take meaningfulness to be a third dimension of the good life suggests another sense in which her conception of happiness is static. Wolf (2016b, secs. 5–6) says that loving objects worthy of love might be valuable because is answers to our needs for community and for self-esteem. But then it would seem that happiness is the state, or circumstance, of having those needs fulfilled.

duty. Acting on reasons of duty will put us in a state of not having these unfulfilled duties, and that's its contribution to happiness. It's not that *the individual* consciously acts on reasons of duty only instrumentally, for the sole reason that it contributes to their happiness. The point is simply that acting on reasons of duty is not itself part of happiness, but contributes to happiness by getting someone into a state of not having unfulfilled duties. Similarly, if we're not living well because we're failing in the meaningfulness dimension, it must be that we're not feeling fulfilled at all, or not feeling fulfilled with regard to things worthy of love. Acting on reasons of love for things that are worthy of love will put us in the state of feeling fitting fulfilment. Again, it's not that the individual acts on reasons of love because it will cause a certain feeling that they consciously want to obtain; the point is that the acting on reasons contributes to happiness only to the extent that it creates the right sort of feeling. The happiness$_W$ dimension is harder because Wolf does not say much about what kind of things the self-interest of happiness$_W$ takes an interest in. It seems likely, though, that one of the things in which we'll take self-interest is the obtaining of particular states and life circumstances, such as not being too stressed, or having enough money. Acting on reasons of self-interest will contribute to happiness because it is instrumental to obtaining these states. (There might be other reasons of self-interest that do not contribute in this way, but this does not affect my conclusion that the account is static.)

Might this be unfair to Wolf's account? There is an obvious way to avoid a static conception of happiness: take the *acting* on the reasons of duty, self-interest and love to be what constitutes happiness, such that acting on those reasons contributes directly to happiness, and the states produced by this acting are not components of happiness. Acting is an activity, so we get a dynamic conception of happiness. In this chapter I am interested in the failings of static and hybrid accounts, so it is no problem for me here if there is an account close to Wolf's that yields a dynamic conception of happiness. However, I do think that a static account is the most natural reading of Wolf, for she lays such great emphasis on feelings of fulfilment. If we say that it's acting on reasons of love that's valuable, then as far as happiness is concerned feelings of fulfilment will be of instrumental value, because they enable acting on reasons of love. But Wolf certainly does not think that feelings of fulfilment are only instrumentally of value when it comes to happiness.[10]

[10]In fact, though, attempting to obtain a dynamic conception of happiness, by taking the acting on the reasons provided

Say that we've *adequately* acted on the set of reasons associated to a dimension when we've acted on enough of them that we don't fail to be happy. So we've adequately acted on reasons of duty when we're in the state of having no unfulfilled duties. We've inadequately acted on reasons of love when our only feelings of fulfilment come from engagement with unworthy objects like Sudoku. Then in summary, the conception of happiness that emerges from Wolf's view is static because it takes happiness to be the state in which we have adequately acted on the reasons provided by each of her three dimensions.

I've explained why Wolf has a static conception of happiness. How is the subordination thesis rejected, and in what sense is the account's staticity due to this rejection? Wolf's conception of what it is to live well is acting on reasons of happiness$_W$, morality and love. When it comes to happiness, this activity is good only when it results in the state in which we don't have unfulfilled duties, aren't unhappy$_W$ and have enough fitting feelings of fulfilment—if we have some unfulfilled duties and we are furiously acting on reasons of love, then that acting on reasons of love is not actually good. So living well is subordinated to the obtaining and maintenance of particular circumstances, which are good *simpliciter*. And it's precisely in this subordination of living to circumstances that the account ends up saying that it's static circumstances that constitute happiness.

First argument against Wolf's static account

I've two arguments to show that the static conception of happiness that emerges from Wolf's account is not suitable to be a final end. The first is similar to one of the aspects of adult life that I raised in objecting to the purely static conceptions considered in sec. 1, above. I suggest that we are committed to pursuing meaningfulness and happiness$_W$ *ethically*, and that this commitment cannot be captured by Wolf's morality dimension, or anything like it.

The thought is that we are committed to pursuing meaningfulness and happiness$_W$ honestly, courageously, compassionately, and so on. We'll give up on loving objects, even if they're worthy of love, if the only way for us to love those objects is dishonest or cowardly. And we won't pursue our self-interest in ways that are dishonest or intemperate. We take it to be part of our good to abandon

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by the three dimensions to be what constitutes happiness, fails. See ch. 5, sec. 4.

pursuing happiness$_W$ and meaningfulness if they can be pursued in only these unethical ways. Now, it's straightforward that Wolf's morality dimension can't capture this ethical commitment of ours, because the maintenance of the state of having no unfulfilled duties does not capture, without implausible distortion, a commitment to pursuing whatever we pursue in certain ways. So we might think that the issue is just Wolf's Kantian conception of the morality dimension. Perhaps if we conceive of the morality dimension differently, as a matter of something other than duties, we could capture this commitment. Or perhaps we need to add a fourth dimension.

The problem runs deeper, and moves like these cannot succeed. The structure of Wolf's account is that our happiness is the conjunction of several states, each one of which is associated to one of her dimensions of the good life. Acting on reasons of self-interest, duty or love is only instrumental to obtaining these states. However, the commitment to pursuing happiness$_W$ and meaningfulness ethically is a commitment to *acting* in certain ways, not a commitment to obtaining or maintaining any state. We have ethical commitments to ways of living of a kind that can't be captured by commitments to obtaining or maintaining states.

The result of this is that there will be conflicts between our commitment to the three dimensions, and our commitment to pursuing two of them ethically. We take it to be good *simpliciter* to pursue happiness$_W$ and meaningfulness ethically, but Wolf's account is static, so the only things that it considers good *simpliciter* are the possessings of some states. Thus living for the sake of Wolf's static conception of happiness means obtaining meaningfulness even if that requires being cowardly, because on that conception obtaining meaningfulness is good *simpliciter*. But this is in conflict with our commitment to pursuing meaningfulness courageously. And so on. We can't integrate our commitment to acting for the sake of this static conception of happiness with our commitment to pursuing it ethically, and so Wolf's static conception of happiness is not suitable as a final end.

How could acceptance of the subordination thesis prevent a conflict between our commitment to the three dimensions, and our commitment to pursuing two of them ethically? If we accept the subordination thesis then only living well is good *simpliciter*, and the static circumstances of Wolf's static conception are only relatively good. In particular, if living for the sake of those static circumstances conflicted with living well, living for the sake of those static circumstances would not actually

be good. So someone who accepts the subordination thesis would not be committed to living for the sake of those circumstances where that living conflicted with living well. So the conflict between commitments under discussion does not arise.

Second argument against Wolf's static account

My second argument to the conclusion that Wolf's conception of happiness is not suitable to be a final end begins from some observations of Annas (2016). Considering Wolf's account, Annas is "puzzled as to how I am to decide between the competing considerations salient in a decision, in a way that relates the decision comprehensibly to the person I am and the person I am to become in making the decision." (2016, 6) The competing considerations to which Annas refers are the sets of reasons of morality, self-interest and love, and the lacuna in Wolf's account Annas has identified is an inability to relate a choice to act on one of those sets of reasons over the others, to an *integrated* conception of *my life overall* (ch. 1, sec. 4). I'll explain just how Wolf's static account fails to make it possible to develop, by means of eudaimonic reflection, an integrated conception of one's life overall. But what's significant about an integrated conception of my life overall? What we've been interested in so far is not integrated conceptions of one's life overall, but integrated conceptions of one's own good (which is equivalent to integration between the things for which we are living). Though I suspect it is true, I won't consider the general claim that an integrated conception of one's life overall is needed if eudaimonic reflection is to successfully integrate one's life *simpliciter*. What I'll show is the less general claim that *Wolf's* account will fail to integrate one's life unless it makes room for the development of an integrated conception of one's life overall. And so, since Wolf's account makes it impossible to have such a thing, Wolf's static conception will not be suitable as a final end.

Recall that a conception of one's life overall is a personalisation of one's conception of the good. It says what that more general conception comes to under the circumstances in which I actually find myself. We said that conceptions of my life overall are in the domain of individuals' eudaimonic reflection, and such that we should not expect conceptions of one's life overall to emerge directly from the conceptions of happiness provided by theorists like Wolf. What theorists can do is provide accounts that make it possible for individuals to develop conceptions of their lives overall. Annas's worry about

Wolf's account is that it does not leave room for this. Let us see how.

If we start with Wolf's static conception of some given individual's good, what conception of their life overall is it possible to construct? We said that, on Wolf's conception, my good is the state in which I've adequately acted on the reasons provided by each of her three dimensions. So the activity of my life will be the maintenance of adequate investment in acting on the reasons provided by each of the three dimensions, putting more time into a dimension if it is in danger of slipping below the point of adequacy.[11] My conception of my life overall is some personalisation of this activity of my life: an account of what it is to maintain adequate investment in each of the three dimensions, given the circumstances of *my* life. For example, suppose I'm in a situation of dire war. Then it might be that I more readily accumulate duties to help others, so I have to do a lot of work to ensure that I do not end up in a state of having too many unfulfilled duties. My conception of my life overall is an account of what living for the sake of Wolf's static conception means in my life, so it'll include the point that I spend disproportionately more time working on the morality dimension. Now, in order for this to be an *integrated* conception of my life overall, it must include an explanation for why my conception of my own good requires me to spend more time on the morality dimension in these circumstances—if it's left unexplained why I'm acting disproportionately on reasons of duty, my acting for the sake of the three dimensions is not integrated in my conception of my life overall. My conception of my life overall needs to say: my conception of my own good provides me with reasons to prioritise acting on reasons of morality over reasons of love, say, in situations of war, and I'm in a situation of war, so I'm prioritising acting on reasons of morality. The resources for constructing this account are limited to my conception of my own good, because a conception of my life overall is a personalisation of that conception.

But Wolf's static conception of happiness does not supply the needed materials. All that I have available to include in my conception of my life overall is: my conception of my own good provides me with reason to prioritise acting on reasons of morality over reasons of love when I'm in danger of losing adequate investment in the morality dimension, *whatever the cause of that danger*. My conception of my life overall can say that I spend more time acting on reasons of morality *because* I'm in danger of

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[11]Jeremy Reid calls this a "checkbox" view of happiness.

having too many unfulfilled duties, not *because* I'm in a situation of dire war. The latter is required

to render it intelligible why I'm sinking more investment into the morality dimension, which is what's

required for my conception of my life overall to be integrated. On Wolf's view, the disproportionate

investment in the three dimensions is a brute arbitrariness or contingency.

So it looks like Wolf's account cannot make possible the development of an integrated conception

of one's life overall. Of course, in isolation this need not bother Wolf—she can just deny that a concep-

tion of one's life overall is required for a good life, as Strawson (2004) can be read as denying. What

I'll now show is that an integrated conception of one's life overall is needed in order to integrate our

separate commitments to each of the three dimensions—i.e., to integrate our lives.

The need arises when we consider supererogatory acting on reasons of self-interest, duty or love.

Suppose that someone is happy, according to Wolf: the static conception is realised. It is not the case

that they have unfulfilled duties, or a lack of happiness$_W$ or meaningfulness. Suppose they can now go

on to act for additional, supererogatory reasons of self-interest, duty or love. Assume that it is possible

for them to act on such reasons without the side effect of the static conception ceasing to be realised.

Now, there are three options: they could improve their lot even more, do more in the service of their

imperfect duties,[12] or engage with even more worthwhile things for reasons of love. How are they to

decide between these? Wolf's conception has nothing further to say—which is okay on its own terms,

since it's an account of happiness, and this individual is already happy.

Now, suppose this individual decides to act mostly on supererogatory reasons of love, and less on

supererogatory reasons of duty or self-interest. This reveals a differential commitment to reasons of

love than to reasons of duty and self-interest. Their life will not be integrated until this differential

commitment is explained. And the only way to do that is by means of a conception of their life

overall: why does it make sense for them, in their circumstances, with their capacities, to focus on

supererogatory reasons of love? Their life is not integrated without an account of how acting on *those*

supererogatory reasons, over others, makes sense for them. A conception of their life overall would

include such an account, but as we just saw, Wolf's account does not make room for the development

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[12]Set aside the issue of whether it is possible to act on reasons of duty when one does not have any unfulfilled duties, perfect or imperfect. All I need is that Wolf's morality dimensions admits of supererogation.

of such a conception.[13]

A different way to see basically the same point is to consider, instead of supererogatory action on reasons provided by the three dimensions, the case of someone who cannot fully realise Wolf's static conception of happiness, and must choose between the dimensions they'll satisfy inadequately. Suppose that someone cannot adequately satisfy at least two of the three dimensions. Their happiness is out of reach, but they are still committed to acting for the sake of their conception of their own good, so they have to choose which reasons they'll act upon with the resources they have available. How are they to make this choice? We act for the sake of Wolf's static conception by acting on reasons associated to the dimensions of the good life on which we have not adequately acted, but if it's impossible for us to act for the sake of *realising* that conception, Wolf's view seems to lack anything to say about what it would be act for the sake of the three dimensions. Now, suppose that the individual decides to prioritise acting on reasons of love. This reveals a commitment to reasons of love. How is this commitment to be integrated with their other commitments? What is needed is an explanation of why it made sense to focus their resources on reasons of love, given the circumstances of life with which they find themselves. So, again, what's needed is a conception of their life overall, which includes an idea of what it makes sense to prioritise when the chips are down, but as we saw, that's what Wolf fails to make room for.[14]

How could Wolf avoid these issues if she accepted the subordination thesis? If we accept the subordination thesis, then my conception of living well is a conception of my good *simpliciter*. I can then develop a conception of my life overall on the basis of my conception of living well: what would it be to live well in *this* life? And we've seen that that's just what's needed to integrate differential commitments to the three dimensions.

[13]Annas notes another arbitrariness in the search for meaningfulness according to Wolf: on the conception of my life overall that emerges from Wolf that I give in the text, it seems that we "just find things in our life which are meaningful and give our life meaning." (2016, 10) It's just a matter of what we run into. On the contrary, "[w]e *make* them meaningful in our lives, by devoting time and attention to them" (ibid.). The thought can perhaps be expressed by saying that we make things meaningful by connecting them up with our conception of our life overall, and thereby our good.

[14]The point here is not a general objection to pluralist accounts of value. It's not that we must reduce all the things to which we are committed to a single value, in order that they can be integrated. Even if there is a plurality of values, deciding what *I'll* do requires a conception of my own good that integrates my life. If value is plural, that conception will encode trade-offs between the values.

3 Living-well-as-X hybrid conceptions

We've considered both commonsensical and philosophical static conceptions of happiness that reject the subordination thesis. A reader who is sympathetic to the simplicity objection that I raised at the end of sec. 1, above, might think, at this point, that the conceptions of happiness that are actually expressed at critical junctures in people's lives have both static and dynamic elements. For such a hybrid conception is able to avoid the kind of midlife crisis problem that I discussed in response to that objection. What we saw is that a purely static conception gives out once the static circumstances that it specifies are secured, assuming that acting so as to maintain the possession of those static circumstances does not take up all of one's time. Hybrid conceptions can avoid this problem by the addition of a dynamic component that kicks in once the circumstances specified by the static component are attained. As Rachana Kamtekar put it to me in conversation, someone's aim might be to *live well* in *certain circumstances*. What an individual like this aims for is not simply to *attain* certain circumstances. They *also* aim to live well *in* those circumstances, once attained. If this individual obtains the circumstances specified by the static component of their conception of happiness, and they do not have to spend all of their time simply maintaining possession of those circumstances, their conception of happiness does not cease to give them something for which to live because they can now live for the sake of its dynamic component.

In this section I will show two things about hybrid conceptions like these, after describing more precisely their structure. Firstly, I'll show that hybrid conceptions fail to be suitable as final ends, in a particular way, exactly when they reject the subordination thesis.[15] Secondly, I'll show that the dynamic component of a hybrid conception that rejects the subordination thesis is epistemically ungrounded, such that adopting such a conception makes it unlikely we'll get it right when it comes to the question of the good.

My aim in this chapter is to eliminate conceptions of happiness that reject the subordination thesis, and the two arguments of this section contribute to that purpose by critiquing hybrid conceptions

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[15]It is not clear to me whether the staticity of these impurely static conceptions is *due to* their rejection of the subordination thesis. So my argument is not simply an extension of the conclusions of my discussion of purely static accounts to the case of impurely static conceptions.

of happiness that reject the subordination thesis. Hybrid conceptions that accept the subordination thesis, on the other hand, will come under scrutiny in ch. 4, and I will reject them for quite different reasons to those deployed here. Making the arguments of this section also contributes to my broader case in favour of conceptions of happiness that accept the subordination thesis, because making these arguments will require me to discuss further the effects of the subordination thesis on eudaimonic reflection, and the task of integrating lives.

The structure of living-well-as-X conceptions

What, then, is the structure of the conception of happiness of someone who aims to live well in certain circumstances? Their conception of happiness requires both obtaining certain circumstances, and living well in those circumstances, and is thus a hybrid of static and dynamic components. We can gloss Kamtekar's case as someone who aims to *live well as X,* for some predicate X that may be understood as circumstances of a life—I'll say "circumstances X" for short to refer to these—such as aiming to live well *as* a tenured academic. Being a tenured academic is the circumstances of life they seek to attain, but then they also aim to live well within those circumstances, once attained. What I will show is that a living-well-as-X conception of happiness can be suitable to be a final end when, and only when, it accepts the subordination thesis. To show this, we must first describe the structure of a living-well-as-X conception of happiness that accepts the subordination thesis, and a living-well-as-X conception of happiness that rejects the subordination thesis. These are quite different. For ease of reference, label these the *A-conception* and the *R-conception* respectively (an A-conception is a living-well-as-X conception of happiness that **A**ccepts the subordination thesis, and a R-conception is one that **R**ejects it). Write *A-agent* for someone who has an A-conception, and *R-agent* for someone who has an R-conception.

Let's begin with the R-conception. Someone who aims to live well as X, but rejects the subordination thesis, has a conception of their own good that involves two components. Firstly, as before, there are the static circumstances they think they should obtain. Someone who wants to live well as a tenured academic takes obtaining a permanent academic position to be a component of their good. Secondly, there is a conception of what it would be to live well as a tenured academic. It

must be emphasised that this conception of living well is not instrumental to achieving anything else. Someone who wants to live well as a tenured academic might think that they want to be a generous tenured academic, say, but this is for generosity's own sake, not because being generous is instrumental to achieving or maintaining some circumstances. For future reference, call this individual the *R-academic*.

Now, similarly to the commonsensical conceptions considered in sec. 1, above, an R-agent will also possess an instrumental conception of living well, though again as in sec. 1, this will not be a component of their conception of their own good.[16] When we considered purely static conceptions of happiness, we said that individuals with such conceptions take themselves to be living well when they're living in such a way that is most conducive to obtaining or maintaining the circumstances that constitute their happiness. Similarly here, an R-agent will have a conception of living well that is instrumental to obtaining their desired circumstances. So in summary, such an individual has a static conception of some circumstances, X, a dynamic, non-instrumental conception of living well in those circumstances, and an instrumental conception of living well; only the first two of these constitute their conception of their own good, and the latter is instrumental to the realisation and maintenance of that conception.

How does this R-conception involve the rejection of the subordination thesis? That thesis is about conceptions of living well, and there are two such conceptions to consider in the above. Firstly, the instrumental conception of living well is straightforwardly subordinated to acquiring the circumstances X, just as in the purely static conceptions we considered earlier. Secondly, living in accordance with the non-instrumental conception of living well is good only when that activity is carried out in the desired circumstances X, so it's not good *simpliciter*, so the subordination thesis is rejected here too.[17]

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[16]Mark Timmons helped me see that it's not right to say that both the instrumental and the non-instrumental conceptions of living well both belong constitutively to the conception of happiness, as I had it in a previous version.

[17]It is worth contrasting the R-conception, the motivation for which involves Aristotelian ideas about the role of circumstances in a good life, with my reading of *EN* V.1, 1129b in ch. 1, sec. 6. Someone with an R-conception wants to live well in circumstances X, and such a person thinks that they would lack happiness if they obtained the circumstances but failed to live well in them. However, in disagreement with *EN* V.1, 1129b, such an individual does not hold that the circumstances could be *bad* for them if they were not properly equipped to handle those circumstances, that is, equipped to live well in them. That's why, when they live for the sake of the static component of the R-conception, they aim at obtaining circumstances X unconditionally.

The general motivation for hybrid conceptions is discussed further in ch. 4.

Now let's consider an A-conception. Consider an individual who aims to live well as X, and who implicitly or explicitly (ch. 1, sec. 8) subscribes to the subordination thesis. Again, they have a conception of static circumstances X they think they should obtain and then maintain, and a non-instrumental conception of living well. We are here interested in hybrid accounts, so again, both of these components are part of this individual's conception of their own good, such that the latter has both static and dynamic components. What are the effects of the subordination thesis? These come in the relationship between the circumstances X and the conception of living well, which is different from the relationship between these in an R-conception. The A-agent takes their conception of living well to apply whether or not they have obtained circumstances X. They take it to be good *simpliciter* to live that way, in all circumstances.

In discussing the R-conception, I used the example of someone who aims to live well as a tenured academic, the R-academic. Let's consider a counterpart who aims to live well as a tenured academic but has an A-conception. Consider the A-academic, who implicitly or explicitly subscribes to the subordination thesis, and is also seeking a permanent academic position. The A-academic thinks that, given her talents, abilities and position in history, it makes sense for her to pursue an academic career as an integral component of her flourishing. Thus, she is aiming at particular circumstances.[18] However, this aiming at circumstances is subordinated to the aim of living well. In particular, the A-academic does not hold the obtaining of a permanent academic position to be what is ultimately most important for her, because this would be to treat the possession of a permanent academic position as good *simpliciter*, which the subordination thesis does not permit. Living well is what is ultimately most important, and it's just that the A-academic has judged that aiming at a permanent academic position is an important component of what it is for *her* to live well, at least for the time being. The circumstances of having a permanent academic position are part of her conception of her good, but in a subordinate relationship with her conception of living well.[19] Living well is not instrumental to

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[18]In this description I'm glossing over my distinction between the A-academic's conception of her own good and her conception of her life overall (ch. 1, sec. 4), because that distinction does not matter for the arguments of this section. The A-academic's conception of her own good is a hybrid conception because she takes it that the obtaining of particular circumstances matters for happiness. When she applies to her own life her conception of *which* particular circumstances matter, she comes up with the conclusion that she should aim at becoming a tenured academic; this is her conception of her life overall.

[19]Here we see that which of living well or circumstances is subordinated to the other is independent of whether the

anything else.[20] Still, the A-academic is aiming to live well *as* a tenured academic, and has a hybrid conception of happiness.[21]

First argument against R-conceptions

I'll now describe a respect in which R-conceptions will fail to be suitable as final ends, while A-conceptions continue to make it possible for their possessors to integrate their lives. My argumentative strategy is similar to sec. 1, above. I'll consider an apparent conflict which arises in typical adult lives, and show how an R-conception does not enable eudaimonic reflection capable of resolving the conflict, while an A-conception does enable sufficiently powerful reflection. A difference with the work of sec. 1 is that because I've specified both the R-conception and the A-conception precisely, I can be equally precise in showing that the A-conception enables eudaimonic reflection capable of resolving the conflict, as I can be in showing that the R-conception doesn't (recall that in sec. 1, my explanations of how the subordination thesis avoids the problems I raised for purely static conceptions had to be vaguer than my explanations as to how the purely static conceptions fail to be suitable to be final ends, because mere acceptance of the subordination thesis does not determine any particular eudaimonist conception of happiness).

We're considering hybrid accounts of happiness that conceive of happiness as living-well-as-X and which reject the subordination thesis. Someone with such a conception of happiness, an R-agent, has two conceptions of living well, one that is instrumental and one that is non-instrumental. We saw when considering purely static accounts in secs. 1–2, above, that maintaining circumstances X will be as important as obtaining those circumstances to begin with. The instrumental conception of living well possessed by an R-agent counts them as living well when they live in such a way that

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subordinand is part of the conception of happiness or not.

[20]Indeed, given my description, there is a sense in which becoming a tenured academic is instrumental to the goal of living well—if the A-academic thinks that becoming a tenured academic is what it would be to live *her* life well, then becoming a tenured academic serves the goal of living well. However, it would be a mistake to take becoming a tenured academic as *merely* a means to the end of living well, in the way that living well is merely a means to becoming a tenured academic for the Professional Academic. For the A-academic, the relationship between her circumstantial and eudaimonic aims can be much more subtle, so long as it is only the latter that can be good *simpliciter*.

[21]In the text I'm considering an academic who has a hybrid conception of happiness. There is also a corresponding academic with a fully dynamic account, for whom the circumstances of a permanent academic position are not a component of her conception of her good at all. It's still true to say that she aims at them, however. We'll see more about this dynamic sense of aiming at circumstances in ch. 4, sec. 2.

promotes the maintenance of circumstances X if they have them, or their acquisition if they don't. Additionally, the dynamic component of the hybrid conception, their non-instrumental conception of living well, kicks in once they acquire circumstances X. So an R-agent has two conceptions of living well that apply to their living in circumstances X. And what we very quickly see is that these will conflict. Living well as X will often require living for the sake of things that erode one's possession of X, so the non-instrumental conception will require something that the instrumental conception counts as failing to live well. For example, living well as a tenured academic includes living honestly and courageously as a tenured academic, and that might mean being very forthcoming with professional opinions about something the government is doing. This might make it more likely that the academic will be forced out of the university. If the academic has an R-conception, there is a conflict between the non-instrumental conception of living well, which requires living honestly and courageously, and the instrumental conception of living well, which requires them to live such as to maintain circumstances X, of being a tenured academic.

This kind of conflict between conceptions of living well does not yet establish that an R-agent has a conception of happiness not suitable to be a final end. We were clear that the instrumental conception of living well is not part of the R-conception. Only the non-instrumental conception, and the static conception of circumstances X, are components of an R-conception. The conflict between the two conceptions of living well that we just saw is not, then, a conflict between things for the sake of which someone with an R-conception is trying to live, which is to say that it is not a conflict between the kinds of things on which eudaimonic reflection works. So it does not in itself show anything about the integration of lives. However, the conflict between the two conceptions of living well generates a conflict between the two components of the hybrid R-conception, or, what is the same thing, between living for the sake of these two components. For to live for the sake of the static component of the R-conception is just to live well according to the instrumental conception of living well—as we saw in ch. 1, sec. 2, to live for the sake of circumstances is to live in a way that best promotes obtaining or maintaining those circumstances. So the fact that there is a conflict between the two conceptions of living well means that there is a conflict between living for the sake of each of the components of the R-conception. And there is nothing else in the structure or contents of the R-conception with which

to resolve this conflict. So the R-conception is incapable of integrating its possessor's life, and so it's not suitable as a final end. Living for the sake of the dynamic component of her R-conception, the R-academic should speak out against the government, but living for the sake of the static component of her R-conception, she should do whatever it takes to maintain her position.

Now consider, for contrast, A-conceptions. How does acceptance of the subordination thesis enable eudaimonic reflection that can resolve the kind of conflict I've just described? Well, as we saw, an A-agent has exactly one understanding of living well, so there can be no conflict between a conception of living well instrumental to maintaining circumstances X, and a non-instrumental conception of living well. The kind of case just discussed does not arise.[22,23]

Second argument against R-conceptions

My second argument against R-conceptions has as its conclusion that the dynamic components of R-conceptions are epistemically ungrounded.[24] This means that if we accept an R-conception, our conception of happiness will track what is actually good only coincidentally, if at all. This is a serious problem with R-conceptions, because we adopt and refine conceptions of happiness in order to know what for the sake of which it is actually valuable to live.

I'll give two reasons to think that the dynamic components of R-conceptions will be epistemically ungrounded. Before giving those reasons, there are some preliminaries to note about R-conceptions, upon which my argument will depend. Firstly, we should not expect overlap between the contents of the two conceptions of living well held by an R-agent. This is because ways of living are included in each of the conceptions of living well for quite different reasons, or, in the service of quite distinct

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[22]There might be other ways in which living for the sake of the static component of the hybrid A-conception could come into conflict with living for the sake of its dynamic component. However, the subordination thesis enables eudaimonic reflection capable of resolving such conflicts: the static component of the A-conception is subordinated to the dynamic component, i.e., the realisation and maintenance of the circumstances X are good only insofar as the individual is living in accordance with their conception of living well. As we saw when discussing other effects of the subordination thesis on eudaimonic reflection in ch. 1, exactly how this subordination will enable resolution of the conflict will depend on other details of the conception of happiness. But the subordination means that the resources to solve the conflict are there.

[23]My description of R-conceptions takes it that the non-instrumental conception of living well applies only after circumstances X have been obtained. An advocate of hybrid conceptions might argue that it is meant to apply both before and after obtaining circumstances X. This does not help, though, as it makes it possible for more, not fewer, irresolvable conflicts between the two conceptions of living well to arise—not only the sort described in the text when in circumstances X, but additional, analogous conflicts when outside of circumstances X.

[24]In ch. 4, sec. 1, I'll show that there are also epistemic problems with the *static* components of both A-conceptions and R-conceptions.

ends. If some ways of living do appear in both of the conceptions, this is at best coincidental. The two conceptions would take a way of living to be valuable for such different reasons that we could not say that the two conceptions were *agreeing* on anything, except in a trivial sense. For two conceptions of living well to overlap, ways of living would need to be taken as valuable for at least similar reasons. But the reasons for valuing ways of living endorsed by the two conceptions of living well possessed by an R-agent are quite different. Valuing ways of living because they are instrumental to achieving circumstances X is quite different from valuing ways of living as good *simpliciter*.

I've considered the possibility of coincidental overlap between the two conceptions of living well, but in fact that's the exceptional case. What is more likely is that when we think we've observed a way of living appearing in both conceptions of living well, when we look closer we will find that it is not quite the same way of living. The different reasons for valuing living in that general kind of way will finesse the way of living into something different in each of the two conceptions.

To see this, let's return to the R-academic. The academic's instrumental conception of living well will consider a number of ways of living to be valuable because conducive to getting projects out of the door and into print, which is good because it is ultimately conducive to obtaining circumstances X. Now, the dynamic component of the academic's R-conception will recommend living in various ways that will be conducive to not letting projects stagnate, too. For example, a certain amount of courage is required to send work out for others to review, and the dynamic component will take living courageously to be an aspect of living well. However, in this case the reason for courageously sending out work is not because it will be conducive to obtaining tenure, but simply because it is intrinsically good to live courageously—it is to be done for its own sake. These different ends for the sake of which courage is to be exercised straightforwardly change what counts as living well, such that the content of the two conceptions will not overlap. So, while we can correctly say that both conceptions take the exercise of courage in deciding when to send things out to be a good way of living, they will in fact disagree about what counts as courageous. For example, the instrumental conception will have the academic live in ways that will get work published, even if that work does not contribute significantly to progress in the discipline. It might be more effective for the academic to jealously defend their published theses against all comers, even if some of the responses are not

worth engaging with, because there might be the possibility to add to their CV by engaging with the response. The courage recommended by the dynamic component, by contrast, will be moderated by the concern to be making a genuinely important contribution. It might recommend living in ways that will reduce the strength of the defensive instincts that arise when someone publishes a response to the academic's views. The dynamic component would see an eagerness to send something out before the academic is sure they've got it right as boastful pride, not courage.

We should expect, then, the two conceptions of living well possessed by an R-agent to be disjoint. Now, to make it plausible that an R-conception could have good epistemic credentials—that is, could non-coincidentally be a conception of what's actually good—its proponents will say that the contents of the two conceptions of living well are based on the R-conception possessor's practical experience. Specifically, the possessor of an R-conception will apply eudaimonic reflection to their practical experience in order to refine the static component of the R-conception, and each of their conceptions of living well, in the way described in ch. 1 and its appendix.[25] However, a consequence of the observation that the two conceptions of living well possessed by an R-agent will be disjoint is that eudaimonic reflection that develops and makes more determinate one of the two conceptions can make no significant contribution to the development of the other. If I reflect on ways in which I might live that will be more conducive to obtaining tenure, I do not thereby learn about what it would be to live well, *simpliciter*, in the circumstances of being a tenured academic. The former kind of reflection has as a presupposition that ways of living are good when they are conducive to achieving circumstances X, and the latter does not, which makes the reflection non-overlapping, as we've just seen. So what the proponent of the R-conception should say is that an R-agent who has not yet obtained circumstances X will need to run their practical experience through *two independent processes* of eudaimonic reflection, in order to develop and refine the content of two independent conceptions of living well.

There are, then, separate questions about the epistemic status of each of the independent processes of eudaimonic reflection in which an R-agent will engage. For the sake of contrast, as my final preliminary, I'll note that the refinement of the instrumental conception of living well is epistemically

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[25]Strictly speaking, reflection that refines the non-instrumental conception of living well would not be eudaimonic reflection because this conception of living well does not form constitutive part of the R-conception, but we can ignore this.

unproblematic.[26] I am, now, trying to obtain circumstances X, so we can expect that my experience will teach me actually better and worse ways of living when it comes to obtaining circumstances X. Someone aiming to live well as a tenured academic, who is not yet a tenured academic, might find that lately they aren't getting anything published, and they might be able to identify some ways in which they are living that are responsible for this. Such ways of living are evidently not to live well, where living well is understood as living in ways that are conducive to obtaining the circumstances of being a tenured academic. They refine their instrumental conception appropriately, and they are doing so in a way that is epistemically grounded in their experience: their own life enables them to see, in an epistemically respectable way, exactly how and why their research output has stalled.

By contrast, the refinement of the non-instrumental conception of living well, by means of eudaimonic reflection that takes place *outside* of circumstances X, fails to be epistemically grounded in *relevant* practical experience, and thus we should not expect its content to track how it is actually intrinsically good for someone to live *in* circumstances X. As I said, I will explain two reasons why we should think that the dynamic component is rendered epistemically ungrounded by the eudaimonic reflection of an R-agent.[27]

The first reason is the more straightforward of the two. I'm not in circumstances X, so my practical experience is not providing me with any feedback on how particular ways of living work out in circumstances X. If I'm trying to increase the impressiveness of my CV in order to obtain a permanent academic position, I can try living in certain ways, and the extent to which these succeed in increasing the impressiveness of my CV enables me to refine my instrumental conception of living well. When it comes to living well, non-instrumentally, in circumstances X, however, I do not receive any such feedback. As we saw in ch. 1, developing conceptions of living well involves reflecting on apparent conflicts between things that we value. Our newly enhanced conception is justified by reasons that we encountered in the practical experience that led to the instance of reflection. However, we are discussing the eudaimonic reflection of someone who aims to live well as X but has not yet achieved

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[26]The refinement of the static component of the R-conception, however, will be seen to be epistemically problematic in ch. 4, sec. 1.

[27]Russell (n.d., ch. 5) concurs that we cannot know how to live well in at least some circumstances until we've had experience living in them, but the reasons that he gives for this are quite different to those that form my argument here.

circumstances X. Such an individual does not have access to any relevant conflicts of value, or reasons to live in this way rather than that way in those circumstances. It is therefore impossible for them to develop an understanding of what it would be to live well in those circumstances that is justified by reasons that there are to live this way rather than that in those circumstances.[28] This leaves the dynamic component epistemically ungrounded at best, and essentially arbitrary at worst.

This is an instance of a more general point that the development of practical understanding (ch. 1, sec. 8) requires relevant activity. An R-agent outside of circumstances X has had none of the activity relevant to developing their non-instrumental conception of living well, that is, the activity of trying to live well in circumstances X. While it's logically possible for an agent to possess an understanding of living well in circumstances they have not yet attained, there is no reason to think that creatures like us could have such an understanding.

The second and deeper reason to think that refinement of the non-instrumental conception of living well by means of eudaimonic reflection outside of circumstances X will be epistemically ungrounded is that when we take living well to be merely instrumental to the obtaining of particular circumstances, instrumental reasons for living in certain ways dominate and silence other reasons, rendering it impossible to simultaneously develop a non-instrumental conception of living well, never mind a conception of living well in circumstances distinct from those in which one now lives. I have two conceptions of living well, but outside of circumstances X, only one of them gets put into practice: the instrumental conception. The reasons for which we are trying to live well colour our perception of our practical experience, and when it comes to instrumental reasons, the pigment is strong. When our overriding concern is to achieve particular circumstances, in particular, we just can't see why certain ways of living are non-instrumentally to live well. Someone aiming to live well as a tenured academic observes that getting defensive about her theses makes it more likely she'll get a response to her critics submitted to a journal. She locks onto this instrumental advantage. She is thereby prevented from seeing that it is intrinsically valuable to resist getting so defensive in the face of criticism. More ex-

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[28]Rachana Kamtekar suggests that reading the autobiography of someone who has lived in the desired circumstances could help one develop an understanding of living well in those circumstances, but I find this doubtful. However, an autobiography could certainly help refine an understanding of living well for someone actually living in circumstances similar to the subject of the autobiography, by providing further input to their eudaimonic reflection.

plicitly, my claim is that once practical experience has been put through the process of eudaimonic reflection that refines an instrumental conception of living well, it is coloured in such a way that it cannot help with the eudaimonic reflection that refines the non-instrumental conception of living well.

This reason to doubt the epistemic credentials of the dynamic component of an R-conception relies on contingencies of human nature, but I am appealing to something more than a mere cognitive limitation. The point is not that it is difficult to retain a copy of our original experience, as it was prior to the process of eudaimonic reflection that refines our instrumental conception of living well, in order to put it through the other process of eudaimonic reflection as if it had not been through the first. Rather, it is that the process of eudaimonic reflection is not some kind of function or subroutine that takes in a fixed amount of practical experience, processes it, and returns a result which is then applied going forward. Instead, there is a continual, mutual feeding-back between our practical experience and the refinement of our conception of the good. The contingency of human nature, here, is that we don't get to take a holiday from living our lives in order to decide how to live them going forward; we have to decide how to live them *as* we live (Annas 2022, 7–8; 2011, 123–24). We have to do everything at once, so the two processes of eudaimonic reflection that the proponent of an R-conception points to cannot really be independent from each other. When the circumstances X are a fixed point, upon which we do not really reflect—I'm aiming to live well as X, and while I refine my understanding of what X involves, I don't wonder whether I should be aiming to live well as Y—there is a practical imperative to consider whether ways of living are or are not conducive to obtaining circumstances X. This interferes with any attempt to develop a conception of how it is intrinsically valuable to live, for its own sake. Thus, whatever dynamic component an R-agent ends up with by the time they obtain circumstances X, there's little reason to think that it will be grounded in practical reality, and thus little reason to think it will track ways in which it is actually intrinsically valuable to live.

An objection

I'll pause here to consider an objection on behalf of the proponent of the R-conception. I just gave two reasons to doubt the epistemic status of the dynamic component of someone's R-conception, but both of these questioned the epistemic credentials of attempts to develop the content of that dynamic

component outside of circumstances X. Why couldn't an R-agent develop their dynamic component after obtaining circumstances X, though? Once they've obtained circumstances X, their practical experience will be relevant to determining how to live well in circumstances X, and the practical imperative to develop an understanding of how to maintain their possession of circumstances X is weaker than the practical imperative they had before obtaining circumstances X, so perhaps it would interfere less with the development of a non-instrumental conception of living well.

To respond to this, recall the dialectical role of the hybrid conceptions of happiness under discussion, and how they are intended to be able to respond to the midlife crisis problem raised at the end of sec. 1, above. To say that an R-agent will develop their understanding of what it would be to live well *simpliciter* in circumstances X only after obtaining circumstances X is to give them what is effectively a purely static conception, and thus to fail to respond to the objection. There are a few ways to see this. Firstly, when an R-agent obtains circumstances X, their non-instrumental conception of living well is meant to kick in to give them something for which to live. But if they have no idea of what it would be to live well in circumstances X, having postponed developing an understanding of that until after obtaining circumstances X, there is nothing to kick in, and they are in the same position as described in the midlife crisis problem. Secondly, the dynamic component of an R-conception like this is so thin that the description of the individuals with a purely static conception will apply with only slight modifications. I claimed that people like the Olympic Athlete have a vague conception of what it would be to live well in their future, but they put no work into developing it, instead considering only the instrumental goodness of ways of living to obtaining the circumstances specified by the static components of their conceptions of happiness. That's just what we have in the case of an R-conception whose dynamic component is not developed until circumstances X are attained. The R-conception can be used to respond to my arguments against purely static conceptions only if there is a continual attempt to refine the content of its dynamic component, but we've seen reason to doubt that such refinement will result in a conception of happiness that tracks what's actually good.

The academics again

To illustrate these claims I've made about the starkly different epistemic statuses of the instrumental and non-instrumental conceptions of living well of an R-agent, I'll consider the R-academic at greater length. I'll show how it can be that the dynamic component of this individual's conception of happiness—her non-instrumental conception of living well—turns out to be empty of useful content. We can interpret that in two ways: either she failed to develop it at all, or she developed it in a way that is epistemically ungrounded, such that when she comes to apply it, she realises that it is not of any use. Either way, we see that R-conceptions are epistemically problematic.

Our academic, then, has an R-conception of her happiness, whose static component is being tenured. While she is working towards tenure, she develops various industrious habits, learning how to divide up her time so that she can write good papers while still completing her teaching duties. This is what she needs to do in order to achieve tenure, but it's also what she needs to do in order to live well after tenure, so she might think to herself that by learning how to live well in such a way that she achieves her desired circumstances, she's also learning how to live well in those circumstances. There will be no sense in which her conception of happiness gives out once she achieves those circumstances, she thinks, because many of the activities she performs now will be part of what it takes to live well as a tenured academic. In this way, she is distinguished from those discussed above in connection with the influential cultural trope of the midlife crisis. It is not obvious that her conception of happiness will give out, as theirs did. At least on the face of it, hybrid accounts are an answer to the final problem with commonsensical purely static accounts that we discussed.

In fact, though, the academic's conception of what it would be to live well as a tenured academic is inadequate because it is not grounded in the right kind of practical experience. The academic will discover this for herself, in something like the following way. When the academic obtains tenure, she will indeed be fulfilled, by her own lights. And at first, she won't find herself lost and without purpose. She has bare habits of industry, and skills regarding making progress on papers and not spending too much time on teaching. These habits and capabilities are to at least some degree independent of her conception of her good, and will carry her along for a little while.

However, the academic's sense of fulfilment is in fact illusory, because her practical understanding now floats free of reasons that make sense, in the life she now finds herself living, for her to live in this way rather than that. Researchers working in universities must decide how they will divide up their time between research and teaching activities: how long to spend reading new work, how long to spend on grading, how long to spend on lecture preparation, etc.. We look for reasons to divide our time in certain ways, and these become a part of relevant conceptions of living well; in the case at hand, they are meant to become part of the dynamic component of the academic's conception of happiness, which is a conception of living well as a tenured academic. Now, the only reasons that there are to divide up one's time in particular ways to which the academic has had sustained access were those that were presented to her by the practical experience she had before tenure. But that means that all the compromises, trade-offs and prioritisations in her ideas about living well will make reference to the goal of obtaining tenure, as I've explained. The academic might have found that overly extensive lecture preparation gets in the way of the kind of work that permits her to publish more papers. Perhaps it's still the case after tenure that her research is harmed by extensive lecture preparation, but in order to choose to limit her lecture preparation time, she now needs a new reason to be doing that research. This is the precisely the kind of reason that she has not been able to incorporate into her dynamic conception, because she has not had the relevant kind of practical experience.[29] Treating living well purely as a means to the end of tenure blocked her from developing an understanding of living well for its own sake. At some point life will challenge the tenured academic's choices about how she divides up her time, prompting eudaimonic reflection, and she will realise that she has no epistemically well-grounded resources with which to resolve the conflict. It will not be clear what it is for which she is living, and she will be quite at a loss: why am I working so hard on these papers? Neither of her two conceptions of living well have both of the following properties, which they would need to be of use: being epistemically well-grounded in relevant practical experience, and being non-instrumental to the goal of obtaining the circumstances X.[30]

[29]Another way to put this: her sophisticated conception of how exactly to divide up her time between teaching and research is grounded in instrumental reasons: dividing it up in precisely this way is most conducive, ultimately, to obtaining tenure. But now those instrumental reasons do not apply to her, for she has already obtained tenure. So her practical understanding of living well is simply inapplicable, not grounded in any reasons that are relevant to her life now.

[30]A corresponding description can be given of the Professional Academic, though she will find herself at a loss for lack

Let's see how an A-agent avoids the problems described here. The A-academic, recall, has an A-conception, and is also seeking a permanent academic position. This individual thinks she would be living poorly if she didn't try to excel in her field, and seeking a permanent academic position is part of this. In contrast with the R-academic, though, this eudaimonist has a single, non-instrumental conception of living well that applies both before and after tenure. We saw in ch. 1, sec. 7 that acceptance of the subordination thesis helps explain why the eudaimonist's understanding of living well is flexible, in the sense that it gives the A-academic the capacity to live well in a broader variety of situations. By subordinating the value of circumstances to living well, the A-academic develops an understanding of living well that is detachable from any particular circumstances of her life. All of her practical experience is, therefore, relevant to it, and so to the extent that she understands how to live well, that understanding is epistemically well-grounded in all the practical experience she's had. In this way, acceptance of the subordination thesis protects the A-academic from getting stuck after achieving tenure, with either no developed dynamic component, or with one that is inadequately epistemically grounded.

We can also bring out the contrast between the R-academic and the A-academic by considering what would happen to each of the two individuals if it became impossible for either of them to obtain a permanent academic position. Perhaps a new law is passed banning tenure, requiring academic hiring to be on an annual basis. The R-academic then gets stuck, rather like she did when she obtained tenure: neither of her conceptions of living well apply to this new situation in which it is impossible to achieve circumstances X. Everything she understood about living well was given in terms of reasons pertaining to obtaining a permanent academic position, but there are no such positions available. She has no applicable understanding of what it would be to live well going forward.[31] The A-academic, by contrast, has a conception of living well that continues to apply, because it is a conception of living well *simpliciter*. She'll have to revise the static component of her conception of happiness, looking for

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of any dynamic component, rather than for lack of epistemic grounding for her dynamic component. The Professional Academic's static conception of happiness will not be suitable to be a final end, because once she obtains tenure, it is not able to yield answers as to what for the sake of which she should live.

[31]If some similar permanent, high-status position would satisfy the R-academic instead of the now-withdrawn option of university tenure, just suppose that there are further economic and legal changes such that there aren't any jobs that are attractive in the way that the R-academic found a permanent academic post to be attractive. When circumstances X can neither be obtained or lived in, neither of the conceptions of living well applies.

alternative career paths, but she does not need to throw out the whole thing; in other words, she still has something for which to live. It is also worth noting that the A-academic will have an easier time applying what she has learned from academia to other fields, because her understanding of how it is good to live is developed in a way that is detached from particular circumstances, thanks to the subordination thesis.[32]

Let's take stock.[33] Subscription to the subordination thesis means that the fundamental task of the A-agent's eudaimonic reflection is better determining what it would be to live well. Her conception of happiness takes this alone to be good *simpliciter*, in the particular sense that the goodness of any circumstances can never be in competition with ways of living. Thus, we do not get conflicts between seeking circumstances X and attempting to live well *simpliciter*. Further, the A-agent's eudaimonic reflection is epistemically respectable, because there is a constant feedback loop between her practical experience and her conception of living well. She attempts to live in accordance with the dynamic component of her conception of the good, and the results of that attempt feed back into the content of the conception. That process is not interrupted by the attainment of circumstances X, because the sense in which the A-agent aims to live well as X does not involve a conception of living well that applies only when circumstances X have been attained, as the R-agent's did.

In this chapter, all the conceptions of happiness we've considered have involved the claim that the attainment and maintenance of certain circumstances is constitutive part of someone's good. But all views, except for the A-conception, got into difficulties which the A-conception's acceptance of the subordination thesis avoided. Thus we are able to better see the defensibility of the minimal eudaimonist's claim that eudaimonic reflection cannot succeed without subscription to the subordination thesis (ch. 1, sec. 6). The purpose of eudaimonic reflection, established by its starting point, is to refine our conception of the good such as to avoid conflicts between things for the sake of which we are

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[32]In conversation, Julia Annas observes a symmetry: the R-academic ends up stuck, not knowing how to go on, *whether or not* she achieves the circumstances specified by her static component. Annas suggests that this might be a heuristic for detecting cases in which someone has failed to incorporate the truth of the subordination thesis into their practical understanding.

[33]In this chapter, the focus is on the subordination thesis. More general motivation for A-conceptions, including why one might prefer the A-conception to purely dynamic accounts, will be discussed in ch. 4.

attempting to live, in a way that tracks what is actually good. What we saw in this chapter was several specific kinds of conflict between things for the sake of which agents thought it good to live that are not satisfactorily resolvable without subscription to the subordination thesis. We also observed some properties of eudaimonic reflection carried out without subscription to the subordination thesis, and these cast doubt on the possibility of that reflection tracking what's actually good. The strength of the A-conception, as compared with all the non-eudaimonist views considered in this chapter, shows that our conceptions of happiness should be eudaimonist in the sense of subscription to the subordination thesis.

CHAPTER 3

STATIC EUDAIMONISM

In this chapter and the next, I'll consider and reject static and hybrid accounts that accept the subordination thesis—that is, static and hybrid eudaimonisms. In the previous chapter I argued in favour of the subordination thesis, but that is not enough to defend Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism. To defend a purely dynamic account, I must consider and reject concrete eudaimonisms (ch. 1, sec. 3) that are not purely dynamic, too. In this chapter, I'll argue against static eudaimonisms. I'll explain the form that I think a static eudaimonism will have to take, and then give two arguments against views with this structure.[1]

1 Two ways to aim to live well

In order to explain how a purely static eudaimonism will have to work, I need first to introduce a distinction between *aiming to live well dynamically* and *aiming to live well statically*. I'll introduce this distinction in general terms because I will have need of it again in the next chapter, for the critique of A-conceptions.

In previous chapters, we've been implicitly assuming that when an understanding of what it would be to live well is incorporated constitutively into a conception of happiness, it is as the content of a dynamic component of that conception. What I'll now explain is how it is possible to incorporate an

[1]Nussbaum (2001, 323 ff.) provides a different argument against static eudaimonism.

understanding of what it would be to live well into a conception of happiness as a *static* component. Now, as we've seen, living for the sake of a static component is very different to living for the sake of a dynamic component (ch. 1, sec. 2). To aim at an understanding of living well that has been incorporated into a conception of happiness, though, is just to live for the sake of the component of that conception into which the understanding has been incorporated. So what we end up with is two quite distinct ways of aiming at a single, given understanding of what it would be to live well. If we incorporate an understanding of living well into our conception of happiness as a static component, we can aim at that understanding of living well in the sense of living for the sake of a static component, and if we incorporate the understanding of living well into our conception of happiness as a dynamic component, we can aim at that understanding of living well in the sense of living for the sake of a dynamic component. The former is to aim to live well statically, and the latter is to aim to live well dynamically. A *single given* content of what it would be to live well—an understanding of what it would be to live well—can be aimed at in two distinct ways.

What's new in this chapter is the idea that an understanding of living well can be incorporated into a conception of happiness as a static component; the difference between living for the sake of static and dynamic components of conceptions of happiness, and the incorporation of an understanding of living well into a conception of happiness as a dynamic component, are familiar to us at this point. How, then, can an understanding of living well be incorporated into a conception of happiness as a static component? We cannot say much about this process in the abstract. In the two applications of the distinction between aiming to live well statically and dynamically in this chapter and the next, the incorporation of the understanding of living well as a static component will happen in quite different ways. What I can do here is make a few abstract, structural points that will help us when we come to apply the distinction later in the chapter.

Firstly, for a given understanding of living well, incorporating it as a static component of a conception of happiness, and incorporating it as a dynamic component of a conception of happiness, are guaranteed to yield two distinct conceptions of happiness, even though there is only a single understanding of living well in play. This is because how we aim at what we take to be our good is itself part of what we take our good to be, and these two incorporations yield different ways in which we

aim at the given understanding of living well.

Secondly, coming to aim to live well statically can be broken down into two interdependent moves in eudaimonic reflection. These are the conversion of the understanding of living well into a static component, and coming to live for the sake of that static component. Given an understanding of living well, to aim to live well statically is at once both to convert that understanding into a static component of my conception of happiness and to aim at the component in the way that one lives for the sake of a static component. What we will see is that the motivation for these two moves will be unified in eudaimonic reflection, such that coming to aim to live well statically will be more than the bare conjunction of these two moves. I convert my understanding of living well into a static component *in order* that I can aim at it in the manner of aiming at a static component of happiness, but it will also be true that I aim at it in the manner of aiming at a static component *because* I have converted my understanding of what it would be like to live well into a static component.

Finally, zooming right out, it is clear how whether we aim to live well statically or dynamically will affect how we live our lives: it is the difference between taking one's conception of one's good to be something in which one can engage now, versus something that one is hoping to reach at a future point in time. For living for the sake of a dynamic component is to live in the ways specified by that dynamic component right away, even if we don't do a particularly good job of living in those ways, for the reason that the dynamic component is as yet fairly indeterminate. By contrast, living for the sake of a static component means living in ways that are instrumental to realising that component, and those ways of living can be disconnected from the content of the static component. When I have a static component of being a tenured academic, living for the sake of this component means doing things in order to become a tenured academic, which are not necessarily the things that a tenured academic would do. Similarly, what we will see is that if I incorporate an understanding of living well into my conception of happiness as a static component, aiming to live well statically, then living for the sake of this static component need not involve living in any of the ways specified by the understanding of living well.

2 The structure of static eudaimonism

Purely static eudaimonisms are views that accept the subordination thesis yet recommend only a purely static conception of happiness, without any dynamic component. I think that there is only really one form that such a view could take, and it's that structure that I'll explain, illustrate and then reject in this chapter. Why, then, might a eudaimonist defend a purely static view? Purely static eudaimonism is motivated, I think, by the idea that virtue is something perfectible, combined with the idea that perfect happiness is just possession of this complete and perfect virtue. And only a purely static conception of happiness is able to capture this combination of theses. For a purely dynamic view can say at most that my happiness is perfectly virtuous activity—acting as the perfectly virtuous person would—in all of the situations in which I actually find myself over the course of my life. However, it is possible for such a dynamic conception of happiness to be satisfied without the possession of perfect virtue. For, in order for such a dynamic conception of happiness to be realised, I need only be sufficiently virtuous that I am able to handle perfectly virtuously all of the situations that actually arise for me. A purely static conception, by contrast, can capture the idea that perfect happiness is perfect virtue, by equating my good with the state of having achieved complete virtue. Such a conception is not realised merely by the possession of virtue sufficient for me to live *my* life perfectly virtuously. Only the attainment of perfect virtue fully realises this purely static conception. If virtue is something perfectible, a purely dynamic account will not do.

If happiness is the state of perfect virtue, then, let us see in more detail, and in the terms of this dissertation, what conception of happiness the static eudaimonist must propose. Acceptance of the subordination thesis involves a commitment to the idea that living well is good *simpliciter*. Thus, static eudaimonism must have a place for a conception of living well, and it must, as a concrete eudaimonism, relate the conception of living well to the process of eudaimonic reflection. The latter is the means by which we determine what it would be to live well, and static eudaimonism needs to say (i) how this understanding of living well is best incorporated into our conception of happiness, and (ii) how, or in what manner, we are to aim at it. Now, having us aim to live well dynamically is blocked by the account's being a static eudaimonism. To aim to live well dynamically requires a dynamic component

to the conception of happiness, but introducing such a component would make happiness more than just complete virtue. So it must be, given the motivations for static eudaimonism that we just saw, that the view holds we are to aim to live well statically, incorporating the understanding of living well that results from eudaimonic reflection into our conception of happiness as a static component.

How is this incorporation to be achieved? When we consider aiming to live well statically in the context of A-conceptions, in ch. 4, sec. 1, I'll discuss a way of aiming to live well statically which is *lossy*. By this I mean that it is not the case that all of the content of the understanding of living well is preserved when that understanding of living well is incorporated as a static component. In the context of purely static eudaimonisms, however, there is a way to *losslessly* incorporate an understanding of living well as a static component. Let the static component be the circumstances in which the agent cannot fail to live in the ways specified by the understanding of living well. Then aiming to live well statically will be the attempt to get oneself into that state. Happiness is equated with the circumstances of being in the state in which one cannot fail to live in the ways specified by the understanding of living well. Happiness is the state in which one's constitution is such that one is guaranteed to live in the ways specified by the understanding of living well. In other words, the state of perfect virtue.

Nussbaum (2001, esp. chs. 4–6, 11) calls this sort of position the *good condition view*. She ascribes it to Plato (*Rep.* 443c–e, *Phileb.* 11d (e.g.)),[2] and takes Aristotle to have explicitly rejected it. While there's no doubt that Aristotle rejects, as the content of our final end, virtue, in favour of virtuous activity (*EN* I.8, 1098b30–1099a5), it is not so clear that Plato can be held to have rejected virtuous activity in favour of virtue. For a plausible alternative interpretation is that Plato simply failed to notice the distinction between virtue and virtuous activity, or perhaps he rejected the possibility of its theoretical importance on metaphysical grounds. In the former case, the distinction would be a theoretical innovation of Aristotle's that Plato might have been quite willing to adopt.[3]

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[2]Nussbaum (2001, 121) also claims that "[i]n the middle dialogues, Plato makes it clear that the ultimate ends of a good life are not feelings, but activities; activities are ranked for their intrinsic worth, not in terms of the states they produce." This is not, however, the contrast between virtue and virtuous activity, but that between eudaimonism and views which reject the subordination thesis.

[3]An expression of the good condition view that fits well with how Nussbaum understands it is the portrait of Socrates in the final speech of *Sym.*. Socrates is depicted as impervious to the things which affect other people's ability to get on with things, such as cold, hunger etc.. The perfect condition of virtue renders one unchangeable in the face of such things. A purely dynamic account does not have such a fundamental role for unchangeability.

A question left open by what I've said so far about static eudaimonism is whether there are degrees of happiness, and correspondingly, whether there are degrees of virtue. Does attainment of perfect virtue mean that I cross all at once from unhappiness to happiness, or am I happy to the extent that I approximate the state of perfect virtue? The answer to these questions depends on further details of one's theory of virtue. We need not be detained, however, for my arguments against purely static eudaimonism do not depend on whether or not happiness comes in degrees. In the appendix to this chapter, I will say a little more about this issue.

3   First argument against static eudaimonism

In ch. 1, sec. 5, I said that I would draw the distinction between the living of a life and its circumstances along the same lines as the distinction between what we can control and what we cannot control. While doing this did further determine the content of the subordination thesis, we should not think that the thesis is something that can be stated and defended only if we first draw the distinction between the living of a life and the circumstances of a life in this particular way. In the appendix to ch. 1, I explained how Russell (2012) argues that the distinction should be drawn differently, but Russell, too, can and does accept the subordination thesis. It is worth asking, then, just what the subordination thesis commits us to, independently of how we draw the distinction between the living of lives and their circumstances. Thus, in this section, we put aside the idea of drawing the distinction in terms of what we can and cannot control, and make an attempt to consider it in fuller generality.

What is the subordination thesis saying? A high-level interpretation of the idea that circumstances of a life are good only relative to the living of that life is the thought that things are only good for us to the extent that we *make* them good for us, by means of our activity.[4] How do we get to this idea? Russell (2012, ch. 3, sec. 1.1) asks us to consider what we should focus on when considering the question of whether the life of a creature that is anything like us is happy. He first points out that if we think about this for a moment, we realise that we must consider the creature's *agency*, not merely its *patiency* (borrowing this terminology from Russell, as I did in ch. app. A), in trying to answer the question of whether its life is a happy one. It is not enough to consider what happens to the creature.

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[4]This is a similar thought to the one that I ascribe to Aristotle in my reading of *EN* V.1, 1129b in ch. 1, sec. 6.

We must also consider what it does with what happens to it. In order for us to consider the life to be happy, we take it that the creature's agency must make its patiency good for it. The patiency alone will not determine whether the life was happy.[5]

Russell, then, takes it that we all already consider agency to matter at least somewhat in the question of whether a life was happy. We want children to find themselves in good circumstances, qua patients, when they grow up, but we don't take this to be enough (Russell 2012, 63–64). We also want to enable them to make the best of those circumstances. A different way to put this is to say that we want children to grow up lacking in neither opportunities nor the capacities required to grasp and make the best of those opportunities. The subordination thesis is much stronger than this thought that we are all taken to share, however. It says that the question of whether a life was happy is never settled by patiency alone. For it holds that the circumstances of a life are only good relative to the living of that life. It matters, fundamentally, whether we handled the circumstances of our life well. How do we get to this stronger conclusion, from the weaker idea that patiency matters at least somewhat? Russell argues as follows:

> [O]nce we appreciate the difference our agency makes for the sort of patients we are, we must appreciate that in fact it makes *all* the difference in the world. To be a patient who is also an agent is not to be two things instead of just one—both a patient (in a way that a dog might be) and also an agent (which a dog is not). It is instead to be a radically different *kind* of patient. For instance, the need for autonomy and self-direction in a happy human life is a need that we have as agents and not merely as patients, and that need makes a radical difference with respect to what can count as genuine happiness *for a human*. Simply put, once we realise that our agency makes some difference for our happiness, we cannot stop there—we have to go on to see that what it actually makes is

[5]Nussbaum (2001, 238) and Scanlon (1998, 118–25) make similar appeals (Scanlon's notion there of "fixed points" is theoretically analogous to minimal eudaimonism in distinction from concrete eudaimonisms).

An equivalent point to the one in the text, made by Dan Russell in conversation, is that the excellences (i.e. virtues) of something that has agency (or the power of choice, or the power of control) are fundamentally different from those of something that does not.

In discussing the differential importance of agency and patiency, at one point Russell (2012, 71) puts it in terms of finding something for which to live. I am not sure whether this expression has the same sense there as it does in this dissertation.

a *radical* and *defining* difference for our happiness. (2012, 69, emphasis in original)

The point is simply that once we consider just how agency matters in the question of whether a life is happy, we cannot consider the goodness of the patiency of the life separately from its agency—and the subordination thesis says exactly that we can't do that. How we handle the circumstances in which we find ourselves has a *controlling* role in the determination of the goodness of our life (*EN* I.10, 1100b8–11 as cited by Russell 2012, 74).

We need not assess carefully here whether Russell has successfully argued from the weaker point we are all taken to share, to the stronger claim which is entailed by the subordination thesis. My strategy in this dissertation, with regard to the subordination thesis, is not to defend it directly. Instead, I've been considering the consequences of accepting and rejecting that thesis. In this section, what matters is that we see how accepting the subordination thesis commits one to the idea that agency matters for happiness, in the sense that it is a fundamental component. My critique of purely static eudaimonisms is that they accept the subordination thesis, but fail to properly reflect the concomitant fundamentality of agency in the structure of the conception of happiness that they propose. This is at best a tension within static eudaimonism; it may well be a more severe kind of problem.

The problem is in the structure of purely static conceptions of happiness, a structure that is familiar to us at this point. And it is not a complicated problem. The static eudaimonist has a purely static account, and so equates happiness with a set of static circumstances. My activity of trying to obtain or maintain this state is taken to be only instrumentally good; if it were taken to be intrinsically good, we would have (at least) a hybrid conception of happiness. So the static eudaimonist's answer to the question of what my happiness is does not include an activity. But commitment to the subordination thesis, as we've just seen, requires that one take the way that I live my life to determine, constitutively and not just instrumentally, whether my life was a good one, i.e., to take the way that I live my life to be something that can be intrinsically good (or bad). The static eudaimonist simply fails to do this. If by divine intervention the circumstances of my life were to become, instantaneously, the circumstances that the static eudaimonist equates with happiness, the static eudaimonist has to say that this is a happy life, no matter how I handle the fact that I am now living in those circumstances. And as we've

just seen, you can't say this while accepting the subordination thesis.[6]

4   Second argument against static eudaimonism

In the previous section we considered a conceptual tension within static eudaimonism. What I'll argue now is that the view does not fit with practical reality, given what the development of the practical understanding (ch. 1, sec. 8) embodied in the virtues is like for creatures like us. The activity of living well is not something that is supported by an unchanging state like that of perfect virtue, and indeed, we should be sceptical that a state like that could exist for creatures like us. By considering the development of practical wisdom, we will see that the states that support living well—the virtues (ch. 1, sec. 9)—just can't be achieved except by living for the sake of dynamic components of conceptions of happiness, that is, aiming to live well dynamically. The acquisition and deployment of an understanding of what it is to live well is a process that we do not ever complete once and for all. Static eudaimonism fails to understand our epistemic situation with regard to the content of virtue; in particular, the content of the virtue of practical wisdom.

I'll now introduce the Purely Dynamic Eudaimonist's account of our epistemic situation with regard to the content of the virtues, and explain how acceptance of this account would be to reject the structure of static eudaimonism. Then I'll argue that the static eudaimonist has it wrong; specifically, that static eudaimonism misconstrues the nature of the epistemic challenge involved in the development of practical reason.

Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism holds that to exercise virtue is always further to develop it; that it, the exercise of virtue is just not the sort of thing that could be the exercise of a static condition. That's because its exercise involves creative thought, and the exercise of creative thought means that we learn something new, altering the state we're exercising. About what are we being creative? When we act virtuously, we are applying our practical understanding to the situation in which we find ourselves, thereby determining what to do and how to do it. Each time we do this, however, the application is a new application. Even if the situation is not meaningfully distinguishable from a previous situa-

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[6]The static eudaimonist will point out that I can't fail to handle well the fact I'm now living in those circumstances. But they fail to give that well-handling a constitutive role in happiness.

tion we've encountered, our practical understanding will have developed since then, and so we'll be applying a practical understanding to the situation distinct from the one we applied last time. And determining exactly how a practical understanding applies to a situation is something that requires creative thought.

The thought here is that action in general—and so, exercising virtue in particular—involves the bringing together of our conception of how to live well with the situation in which we find ourselves, and each time at least one of these two things—our practical understanding, and the situation—will be different from how it was last time. Bringing them together, then, will require creative thought, thus further developing our conception of how to live well, however incrementally. This is the sense, I think, in which the exercise of virtue always involves further developing virtue. Annas (2011, 11–15, 18, 38) makes a similar point by appeal to the skill analogy for the virtues. A concert pianist cannot exercise their skill without further developing it, for to do that would be to give a performance that did not involve any creativity, which would, thereby, not count as the exercise of the skill possessed by a concert pianist. Analogously, it would not be an exercise of virtue to do exactly what I did once before, unless I determine, creatively, that it's what I should do here too.

Annas's summary of her position makes it clear how this is to reject static eudaimonism:

> What has emerged from examining the acquiring of virtue is that virtue itself is an essentially developmental notion. We do not go suddenly or in a simple move from being pre-virtuous to being virtuous (pre-brave to being brave, for example), being then able to stop, as though we had acquired a static condition. Virtue is not a once and for all achievement but a disposition of our character that is constantly developing as it meets new challenges and enlarges the understanding it involves (this leading to self-direction and improvement). (2011, 38; also cf. 2003, 74)

The static eudaimonist view is that once you have perfect virtue, it does not change; if it were to, it couldn't have been the case that you had it. (The Purely Dynamic Eudaimonist has precisely the opposite view: a static condition which did not admit of change could not possibly be a virtue.) If you have something to learn, then you don't have the perfect practical understanding that's constitutive

of perfect happiness. Perfectly virtuous activity is the exercise of this perfect virtue. Either you're in that state or you're not, and when you are, there is no change going on. Even if the situations encountered are different, the practical understanding brought to each situation by someone who is perfectly happy is the same. If you still have something to learn about what it would be to live well, you are not in the state that guarantees you live well.

Why should we think, though, that however virtuous we are, there is always more to learn? Perhaps the virtues are not analogous to skills in this respect. Why should we think they are? What I claim is that there could be no state like that proposed by the static eudaimonist. The point here is not simply that we don't live long enough, or our upbringing is not good enough, to overcome all the epistemic sidetracking involved in the human condition, and obtain for ourselves that perfect state. Rather, the process by which we develop our practical understanding is just not the kind of process that could result in the kind of state that the static eudaimonist takes our good to be, no matter how long it went on for, or how conducive were the circumstances. The Purely Dynamic Eudaimonist's view that to exercise virtue is always to develop it does justice to this point, and static eudaimonisms cannot, so we should reject static eudaimonism in favour of Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism.

Humans have all sorts of epistemic limitations. One of the most fundamental of these is that we can be in only one place at once. That means that we can experience only a linear series of situations which call for the exercise of virtue and the application of our practical understanding.[7] We are able intelligently to abstract from these situations, coming implicitly or explicitly to more general conclusions about how to live well. However, a constraint on the limits of that understanding is imposed by the series of circumstances in which it was developed. We can integrate what we learn from each situation into a unified understanding, and in this respect reason is able to carry us beyond the particulars of any one of the situations in which we've found ourselves. But there is a sense in which it cannot carry us beyond the whole series of circumstances. This means that at any given point in someone's life, the content of their understanding of the good is based on a finite number, n, of practical experiences. There are, though, infinitely many possible practical experiences. The creative application of

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[7]"We always learn to be virtuous in a given context; there is no such thing as just learning to be generous or loyal in the abstract." (Annas 2011, 21) Birondo (2017) discusses some other aspects and consequences of how virtue is always developed in particular cultural contexts from those I focus on in the text.

this individual's current understanding of the good to any one of these new situations would yield for them a practical understanding based on $n+1$ practical experiences. With a different empirical basis, this new understanding of the good would be distinct from the one they had before. And, except when we make mistakes, it's an improvement on the previous practical understanding, because it has incorporated the results of the creative application of the previous practical understanding to the new situation—because the application had to be creative, it involved learning something new. But then since there are always new practical experiences available, it's always true that someone's practical understanding *could* be enhanced in this way. So there is no state of perfect virtue, which the static eudaimonist says is a practical understanding that *could not* be improved.

Take the content of practical wisdom to be acquired empirically, and to be grounded in the series of experiences we've actually had—we can learn how to be virtuous in only the situations we actually have opportunity to live in. Assume further that given how large and varied is the world in which we could be called upon to exercise virtue, it must be that there are always situations in which we are faced with a challenge that is meaningfully new to us. Then it cannot be the case that virtue is a threshold concept, such that we cross over, all at once, into a state of perfect virtue. Instead, the perfectly virtuous person is an asymptotic ideal, like a perfect circle or square, never actually to be realised in the empirical world.[8] A hard rationalist about the content of practical wisdom will not accept any of this, but such an opponent will need to explain why the virtues are disanalogous with skills in the respect that to exercise them is always further to develop them.[9,10]

We will come back to the important idea of Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism that to exercise virtue is always further to develop it in ch. 5. It has a number of powerfully advantageous theoretical consequences that are not available to proponents of other views. For now, though, this completes my second argument against static eudaimonism.

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[8]"There can be no actual virtuous person, because this is an ideal—the ideal of always doing better, which each of us does in our own way, in our own circumstances. Nobody can be virtuous in all circumstances, because nobody can live in all circumstances; each of us tries to live our lives virtuously in the circumstances we have." (Annas 2015, 12)

[9]See also Hursthouse (1999, 59–60 esp. n. 12), and Nussbaum's (2001, 291, 293, 302, 306, 307, 316 and esp. 320 ff.) discussion of the "evolving conception of the appropriate".

[10]I should not be misunderstood as arguing that we do not learn about the good *simpliciter*, but only what's good relative to the situations we've experienced. The experiences we have had limits *which aspects or parts* of what's good *simpliciter* we can know about, but that is not relativism.

CHAPTER APPENDIX B

DEGREES OF VIRTUE

My two arguments against static eudaimonism do not depend on whether the view takes virtue, and therefore happiness, to be all-or-nothing, in the sense of not coming in degrees. Purely static eudaimonism holds that virtue is perfectible and that complete happiness is the possession of perfect virtue, but we have not said anything about whether or not the extent to which I approximate virtue is also the extent to which my life is happy. Famously, the historical Stoics rejected this approximation idea, holding that virtue is indeed all-or-nothing, in that it does not come in degrees. Either you have complete and perfect virtue, or you're as steeped in vice as the very worst people (Annas 1993, 406; Annas 2011, 42, n. 30; Graver 2007, 50, 134; *De Fin.* III.48). The sage alone is happy.

In this chapter appendix I'll provide an argument against taking over unmodified, into contemporary virtue ethics, this notorious idea that virtue does not come in degrees. Specifically, I'll show that if we accept the subordination thesis, and think that virtue is what matters for happiness, but then add the idea that virtue does not come in degrees, the theoretical option of aiming to live well dynamically (ch. 3, sec. 1) will be taken off the table. The resulting view will have the structure of purely static eudaimonism, and as such my two arguments in the previous two sections will apply. Thus, we should reject the idea that virtue does not come in degrees, because accepting that idea forces us to aim to live well statically, arguments against which we've just seen. In ch. 3, sec. 2, I argued that purely static eudaimonism is motivated by the combination of two ideas: that virtue is perfectible, and that

happiness is perfect virtue alone. We saw that this combination of ideas forces the view to say that we should aim to live well statically: aiming to live well dynamically requires a dynamic component, but introducing such a component gives up the idea that happiness is possession of perfect virtue alone. In this chapter appendix, my purpose is to explain how maintaining that virtue does not come in degrees is a different way in which the theoretical option of aiming to live well dynamically can be taken off the table.

My interest here is in a view which imports unmodified, into a contemporary metaphysical framework, the idea that virtue is all-or-nothing. It must be stressed that what I say in this chapter appendix does not allow us to conclude that my two arguments against purely static eudaimonism will apply to historical Stoic ethics. For interpretation of the role of the claim that virtue does not come in degrees in historical Stoic ethics would require us to engage with Stoic metaphysics. These are different from our own, and far beyond the scope of this dissertation.[1] Thus, what we're interested in in this chapter appendix is not Stoicism *simpliciter*, but a kind of contemporary Stoicism which is characterised by the structure and theses of minimal eudaimonism, plus the taking over into a contemporary metaphysical framework of the idea that virtue is all-or-nothing.[2] I'll call this view *Simple Stoicism*. In responding to the Simple Stoic, then, I am arguing against taking over unmodified into contemporary virtue ethics the idea that virtue does not come in degrees.[3]

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[1]Annas (1993, 396, 408) says that the Stoics have a "dynamic" view, and in conversation she suggests that for the Stoics, being in a state of virtue is not metaphysically distinct from the (state of) engagement in virtuous activity, such that even my basic theoretical distinction between living for the sake of static and dynamic components of conceptions of happiness may not cleanly apply.

Graver (2007, 135), by contrast, thinks we should take the claim that virtue is all-or-nothing literally. She argues that the Stoics are driven to the view that virtue is all-or-nothing because of the stress they put on the coherence of the knowledge possessed by the sage. Cicero (*De Fin.* V.83) argues that the Stoics must say that virtue is all or nothing in order to be consistent with what they say about the sufficiency thesis (see the introduction to ch. app. A and ch. 5, sec. 5 for discussion of that thesis).

Jeremy Reid, in conversation, argues that, at least in the texts we have, the historical Stoics seem to reject the *EN* idea that experience can yield genuine practical understanding, and not just mere habituation. We can note that this is to reject one key, motivating element of the skill analogy for the virtues, though it need not be to reject all of that analogy. The thought seems to be that if I understand that the right response to bodily danger is indifference, there's nothing for actual experience of fear to teach me, other than habituation to develop the stability of my belief. This is why virtue is more like geometry than it is like making shoes: I don't have to do any actual measuring to know the truth of the Pythagorean theorem.

[2]I do not think anything could reasonably be considered a form of Stoicism if it rejected the subordination thesis, but it is beyond my scope to argue for that.

[3]I don't doubt that a correct and subtle understanding of the reasons that the historical Stoics had for claiming that virtue does not come in degrees will teach contemporary virtue ethics something useful. Nevertheless, it was the possibility of importing the idea *unmodified* that first prompted me to consider, as part of my defence of Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism,

How the Simple Stoic view rules out aiming to live well dynamically

The Simple Stoic holds that there is a condition of perfect virtue, and there is no condition of imperfect virtue, because either you're perfectly virtuous, or you're not virtuous at all. On behalf of the Simple Stoic, let's use the traditional Stoic term *sagehood* to refer to the condition of complete and perfect virtue. The sage is "as rare as the phoenix" (Long and Sedley 1987, text 61N, paraphrased). The invocation of a mythical creature makes the dual points that (i) for all practical purposes we should believe that there has never yet existed a sage, yet (ii) we should retain our faith that such a thing is possible, even perhaps in our own case (compare: presecular people did not go around thinking there was any chance *they'd* run into any mythical creatures, but they thought that the nature of the world supported the existence of such things). Note that the state of sagehood is one in which I cannot fail to live well, because any activity which occurs when I am in the state of sagehood will be perfectly virtuous activity. This is the only state that could have this property, because the state of sagehood is just the state of possessing virtue, and virtue is all-or-nothing. Further, no attempt to live my life which sprung from a state *other* than that of perfect virtue could count as living well, to any degree. For living well means exercising virtue (ch. 1, sec. 9), but only the sage has any of that. Sagehood is a necessary condition for virtuous activity, or, the activity of living my life well.

So far I haven't said anything about the content and structure of the Simple Stoic's conception of the good. I've just considered the idea that virtue is all-or-nothing, which yields the notion of sagehood; I haven't connected the state of sagehood with happiness. Now let's consider the fact that the Simple Stoic is a eudaimonist, in the sense of ch. 1. That means that she thinks we aim to live well by living for the sake of a correct conception of the good. The point of developing and refining a conception of my good is so that I can live for the sake of that conception. We always live for the sake of some conception of the good, and we want to improve our understanding of what is actually good, so that living for its sake will really be to live well. What is the Simple Stoic's understanding of what it would be to live well? It has to be living as the sage does, because as we just saw, only the sage is capable of living well, and the sage always succeeds in living well. To aim to live well would be,

the demerits of purely static eudaimonism.

then, to aim to live as the sage does. How are we to do this? First consider the possibility of aiming to live well dynamically. That would be to incorporate living as the sage lives into the Simple Stoic's conception of happiness as a dynamic component, and then to aim to live well would be live for the sake of that component. To live for the sake of a dynamic component, though, is simply to perform the activity specified by that component. In this case, it would be to live as the sage lives. But as we just saw, only the sage is capable of doing that; if you're not the sage, the way in which you live cannot count as living well. Thus, if the Simple Stoic were to have us aim to live well dynamically, she would be asking the impossible, by her own lights. So aiming to live well dynamically is theoretically unavailable to the Simple Stoic, thanks to her adherence to the idea that virtue is all-or-nothing.

How, then, does the Simple Stoic tell us we are to aim to live well? The relevant understanding of living well is living as the sage lives. I can't aim to live well dynamically, because I can't live as the sage does, so what seems to really matter is attaining sagehood. Thus, I aim at the static, unchanging circumstances of my possessing perfect virtue. To live for the sake of this is to live in such a way that might make it possible for me to someday make the transition, all at once, to sagehood. We said (ch. 3, sec. 1) that there are two moves in eudaimonic reflection which are interdependently involved in coming to aim to live well statically: we convert a given understanding of what it would be to live well into a static component of a conception of happiness, and we aim at that static component of happiness in the sense of living for its sake. We can now see that Simple Stoicism is forced into making both of these moves. If living well is living as the sage lives, but only the sage can live in that way, then the only way for me to aim to live well is to aim to become the sage. This is to incorporate sagehood into my conception of the good as a static component, and to aim to realise that component.[4] The understanding of living well is converted from an activity, to the state in which one cannot fail to perform that activity, that is, sagehood, and we are to aim to become the sage.

Note further that it cannot be the case, on this view, that activity of mine done for the sake of obtaining sagehood forms any constitutive part of my good. There are no degrees of virtue, so there is no sense in which this activity moves me *closer* to sagehood. And without a notion of getting closer to

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[4]"When virtuous actions take place, benefit does (necessarily) result; but it is not virtuous actions themselves, but the virtues which give rise to them, which are strictly speaking the origin, or 'spring', from which this benefit occurs." (Bett's commentary in Sextus Empiricus 1997, 70)

the static component of the conception of happiness, there is no sense in which that activity is good. It is simply the attempt to prepare the ground so that I may move, all at once, from vice to virtue. The activity which constitutes that attempt is not itself good, because there is no sense available in which it is to live well; it is only to aim to live well *later*. This is to say that there is no dynamic component to happiness. Thus, not only is the Simple Stoic forced to say that we should aim to live well statically, but further, she has a *purely* static conception of happiness. She has to say that my good is to *be the sage,* with no constitutive role for the activity of trying to become the sage, nor for living as the sage does. Saying that my good is constituted by living as the sage lives would require me to aim to live well dynamically, but that's been ruled out. And so we see that Simple Stoicism has precisely the structure that I said static eudaimonism will have to have: happiness is equated with the state in which I cannot fail to live well. Thus my two arguments in ch. 3, secs. 3–4 will apply. Combining the idea that virtue does not come in degrees with minimal eudaimonism lands us with purely static eudaimonism, and all its problems.

CHAPTER 4

HYBRID EUDAIMONISMS

In this chapter, I'll argue against hybrid accounts that accept the subordination thesis. Firstly, I'll argue against A-conceptions, the hybrid concrete eudaimonisms introduced in ch. 2, sec. 3. Secondly, I'll explain how we can read relevant parts of *EN* as a hybrid conception that accepts the subordination thesis, but one that is not subject to my two objections to A-conceptions. I'll give one argument in favour of a purely dynamic account over the *EN* account.

The *EN* account is what I take to be the most promising alternative to dynamic eudaimonism, in the sense that it is the most difficult conception of happiness for a dynamic eudaimonist to convincingly argue against. Thus, my defence of Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism must engage with the *EN* account. The point of introducing it as a response to my objections to A-conceptions is that this allows me to explain just why the *EN* view is a much tougher opponent than the other conceptions of happiness we've seen.

1 Rejection of A-conceptions

I've two arguments against A-conceptions. Firstly, there are epistemic problems with their static components, suggesting that accepting these hybrid conceptions will make it very difficult for us to develop conceptions of static circumstances that track what is actually good. Secondly, hybrid conceptions have a kind of instability, and in particular, there is a risk that their dynamic components will become

static components over time. This is not guaranteed to happen, but what we'll see is that a purely dynamic view is able to avoid the risk.

In this chapter we are considering conceptions of happiness that accept the subordination thesis, so the arguments will not turn on acceptance of that thesis, as the arguments of ch. 2 did. It's worth noting, though, that the objections I give here to A-conceptions will also apply to the R-conceptions that were considered in ch. 2, sec. 3. However, while the arguments of this section are more generally applicable, they do not do anything to bring out the general importance of accepting the subordination thesis, as the arguments directly against R-conceptions did.

First argument against A-conceptions

Recall, then, that living for the sake of an A-conception may be glossed as aiming to live well as X, where X is some (set of) circumstances. An A-conception has two components: a dynamic component which is a conception of living well, and a static component which is a conception of circumstances X. The conception of living well applies whether or not the individual finds themselves in circumstances X, and so the subordination thesis is respected. Someone who lives for the sake of this A-conception holds living in the ways specified by the dynamic component to be intrinsically good, and possesses no competing conception of what it would be to live well. In ch. 2, sec. 3 we saw that there are epistemic problems with the R-conception's dynamic component: we learn how to live well from eudaimonic reflection which relies on us having relevant practical experience; if we're not actually in the circumstances specified by the static component of the R-conception, we can't learn what it would be to live well in such circumstances, and so the dynamic component of the R-conception is unlikely to be a correct conception of what it would be to live well in circumstances X. We saw that the A-conception does not have this problem. Thanks to the subordination thesis, its dynamic component is taken to be applicable to any circumstances at all, and so all our practical experience provides it with its epistemic grounds.

The A-conception, however, is not free from epistemic problems. For what we find is that it is its static component that now looks to be ungrounded. We're considering the case of taking one's good to be living well in circumstances X, such as aiming to live well as a tenured academic; being

a tenured academic only counts as good if I'm living well in the role, but still, I take my happiness to be partly a matter of actually possessing those particular circumstances. Unlike in the case of the R-conception, aiming at circumstances X does not pose an immediate threat to the integration of my life because if there is a conflict between living for the sake of the dynamic and static components of my hybrid conception of happiness, my commitment to the subordination thesis will have me sacrifice (or at least postpone) the fulfilment of the static component, for I take the fulfilment of the latter component to be good only to the extent that it does not interfere with fulfilment of the dynamic component. Still, it is true to say that I am aiming to obtain circumstances X. It is not just that I take actions that are conducive to the attainment of circumstances X to be what living well amounts to in my present situation—as someone with a purely dynamic account might think—but that I am aiming at circumstances X because I take *those particular* circumstances to be constitutively a part of my good.

How, though, could I be in a position to know that circumstances X are what I should actually be aiming at? When we aim at particular circumstances, we have only a partial grasp of what those circumstances are actually like, and what living in those circumstances would actually be like. For example, if we aim to be a professional musician, we have only a very partial grasp of what it is to be a professional musician when we first start learning an instrument.[1] This doesn't mean that we shouldn't take actions that have as their expected outcomes the obtaining of particular circumstances—how could we not—but, I now contend, it does mean that we should resist incorporating those circumstances into our conception of the good for us.

How exactly is our grasp of the circumstances that constitute the static component of an A-conception partial? It is different from the way in which our grasp of a conception of living well can be incomplete. What's characteristic about this kind of partial grasp, of circumstances, is that while we might make small refinements to the content of our static component as we go along, actually achieving the circumstances makes a huge change to our understanding of them, and achieving the circumstances is the only way to make this leap. We don't understand a lot about what it is like to *be* a parent until we actually have a child for whom we are responsible. In the same way, achieving

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[1]Thank you to Rachana Kamtekar for the example of the musician and for first raising to me the point, relied upon by this argument, that our grasp of the *circumstances* at which we aim is also partial, in addition to the way that our grasp of conceptions of living well is incomplete/indeterminate, in the minimal eudaimonist's sense (ch. 1).

tenure will force someone to reconsider what they thought it meant to be a tenured academic. In the case of an A-agent, this individual is attempting to develop an understanding of living well that incorporates a conception of circumstances that they have not yet achieved, that is, circumstances of which they have only a partial grasp. Thus, this understanding of what possessing circumstances X is actually like is epistemically ungrounded. And in particular, my belief that circumstances X would actually form part of my *good*, which is constituted by the fact that I incorporate my conception of circumstances X into my conception of happiness as a static component, is not justified by my practical experience.[2]

We can contrast this with the incompleteness of dynamic components of conceptions of happiness. When it comes to living for the sake of these, there is no point in time that is analogous to the obtaining of the circumstances specified by a static component, as indeed we saw in my second argument against static eudaimonisms (ch. 3, sec. 4). So in the case of dynamic components, we don't get a sudden change in the epistemic status of our belief that the content of the component is actually good. Living for the sake of a dynamic component involves continually refining its content in response to apparent conflicts that arise in our attempt to live for the sake of different aspects of that component, and so at any given point all of its content is answerable to, and justified by, all of the practical experience that we've had. In particular, by incorporating an understanding of what it would be for me to live well as a dynamic component, I take it to be my good to live in the ways specified by that understanding only to the extent that I've determinately specified those ways. Thus, the content of the dynamic component does not outrun the practical experience that epistemically grounds my belief that living in those ways really is good.

When we live for the sake of a static component, however, it's only our instrumental understanding of how to *realise* the circumstances specified that is answerable to our experience. Our reasons for thinking that living in circumstances X will actually be good, by contrast, won't be tested against

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[2]In conversation, Dan Russell makes a similar point about the choice to enter higher education. It is unwise to think of one's higher education solely as instrumental means to an end that one has already fixed for oneself (such as achieving particular material circumstances). Rather, we enter higher education in the hope of acquiring better ends, that are not knowable in advance of the education. An A-conception has a fixed end of achieving particular static circumstances; a purely dynamic conception evolves in a more epistemically humble way. Callard (2018, 71 ff.) makes a similar point about coming to know the value of an end.

relevant experience until and unless we actually possess circumstances X. By trying things out and paying attention to the experience of our peers and of those who have attempted to realise these particular circumstances before, we can figure out what we need to do in order to become a lawyer, parent, musician or tenured academic. But we can't know very much about what it is like to be those things, and so we are not in a position to have an epistemically respectable belief that it would actually be good to possess those circumstances. The incompleteness of static components is epistemically problematic in a way that the incompleteness of dynamic components is not.

This point about the static components of A-conceptions recalls the midlife crisis problem with commonsensical static accounts (ch. 2, sec. 1), but now that we are considering views that accept the subordination thesis, the practical mistake being made is much more subtle than the midlife crisis problem. The subordination thesis protects someone with an A-conception from failing to adequately develop a conception of what it is to live well *simpliciter*, but when it comes to her ideas about the circumstances that would partly constitute her good, there is a large imbalance between the epistemic status of her conception of what she needs to do to obtain circumstances X, and why she thinks circumstances X would be good. We all know people in this sort of situation. They can tell us a great deal about all the steps that they will need to take in order to achieve circumstances X, and about common mistakes it will be important to avoid, but when we ask "but why do you want circumstances X?" the answer is glib and unrefined. A young couple might be highly focused on each obtaining a stable income, such that they can get married, jointly take out a mortgage on a home, move in together and have children. Let's say that the structure of their (overlapping, mutually developed) conceptions of happiness is that of an A-conception, such that the realisation of circumstances X comes second to the importance of living virtuously. They have thought carefully about how they will achieve their goal. They are not hurrying towards it, because they will not compromise on their ideas of what it is to live well. For example, perhaps they are avoiding ethically questionable career paths that would result in them having enough money to put down a deposit rather sooner. Still, though, they are not in a position to form an adequately justified belief that in the case they are not able to fulfil the static components of their conceptions of happiness, their lives will not be as happy as they could have been. This is because there is so much each of them won't know about the value or disvalue of living on

a permanent basis with that particular other person—or any person—until they actually try it. This lack of knowledge will be reflected in what they say: we can imagine that if we ask them why they are aiming to move in together, they'll only be able to speak in vague generalities about how fulfilling it will be. This is in sharp contrast to their detailed, well-grounded knowledge regarding how to get there.

This example should not be misread as suggesting that it is not epistemically justified for the couple to have the goals that they have. Their practical experience *is* capable of justifying a belief that they should be aiming to get married and move in together—this is a belief about what it would be to live well that can form part of a dynamic conception of their life as a whole (ch. 1, sec. 4). What they are not justified in doing is forming the belief that should they fail to succeed to obtain the circumstances at which they are aiming, their lives will not be as happy as they could have been. But to incorporate those circumstances as a static component of a conception of happiness is precisely to form that belief. By contrast, the rejection of an A-conception in favour of a purely dynamic conception is precisely to avoid forming this sort of unjustified belief about the goodness of particular static circumstances.

As a second illustration, let's return to our examples of aiming to live well as a tenured academic, but instead consider how someone with a purely dynamic conception aims at these circumstances. It's right to say that someone with a fully dynamic conception is aiming at circumstances X, but they do not aim at it in the sense of taking it to be part of their good to be a tenured academic; they are not aiming to live well as X, but only to live well.[3] Someone with a fully dynamic conception might think that her conception of living well demands, in her present circumstances, that she try to become a tenured academic. But it would be misleading to say that she aims to live well *as* a tenured academic. Instead, she aims to live well, and what living well amounts to here and now is aiming, in an attenuated sense, at being a tenured academic.

This attitude involves an appropriate humility about what this individual can know about the circumstances of being a tenured academic. She doesn't assume that it is part of her good to be a tenured academic, only that it is what it makes sense to aim at, for the time being, "among the

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[3]Annas (2022) seems to have a similar point in mind with her distinction between objectives and goals. Also cf. *De Fin.* III.22–24 esp. n. 12.

indifferents," as a Stoic might put it. What she can be confident about is her conclusion that, given her circumstances and what she does know, she should aim at being a tenured academic. What she does not think she can be confident about is whether the circumstances of actually being a tenured academic would actually be good. Or, to put it the other way around, whether failing to achieve those circumstances would mean that her life was made less good.

Second argument against A-conceptions

What I'll now argue is that in the attempt to live for the sake of an A-conception, it is easy and natural to fall into aiming to live well statically (ch. 3, sec. 1). That slide results in someone with an A-conception coming to have a purely static conception, and then my arguments against static eudaimonisms, in ch. 3, will apply. It is the structure of A-conceptions which makes it easy and natural for an A-agent to go down this road, and end up with a purely static conception. Thus, A-conceptions are unstable; there is a propensity for collapse. We should have conceptions of our own good that are unstable only in the sense of being epistemically responsive to new practical experience, so this instability gives us reason to reject A-conceptions. This argument is much weaker than my first argument against A-conceptions, because the slide into statically aiming to live well that I will describe is not guaranteed to occur. However, giving this argument allows me an opportunity to showcase some advantages of purely dynamic conceptions which it is worth taking the time to explain.

What is it like to make the attempt to live for the sake of an A-conception? Consider the attempt to live for the sake of its dominant component, the dynamic component, outside of circumstances X. This component is a conception of what it would be to live well that applies whether or not I'm in circumstances X. Now, unless our lives are for some reason particularly unchallenging or unchanging, our attempts to live for the sake of the dynamic component will constantly run up against its indeterminacy. We are prompted to aspire to a greater understanding of how it is valuable to live because we find that we can respond to new situations that we encounter, at best, only adequately, and often inadequately. Refining the content of our dynamic component is difficult and slow, and it is easy to become pained and frustrated with how incapable we seem to be at living in the ways specified by our dynamic component. I take living courageously to be living well, but would it be courageous to

continue to pursue this relationship, or instead, to break it off? Is it kind to spend a lot of time reassuring this person, or would it be kinder to distance myself from them? Is it cowardly to give up on this career path, or would that be an intelligent response to too much competition? There will always be new questions like these, where my dynamic component is too indeterminate to settle the matter.[4]

Frustrated with this, I am tempted to make a crucial mistake. Implicitly or explicitly, I might decide that it would be better to attempt to live for the sake of the dynamic component of my conception of happiness *later*: only when that component has become substantially more determinate. I think that such a deferred attempt is more likely to be successful. For now, I'll aim to live in such a way that enables me to *switch over* to living for the sake of my dynamic conception of living well at some future point, when the latter has become much more determinate. In terms of dynamic and static conceptions of happiness, to think this way is to come to aim to live well statically (ch. 3, sec. 1). Let C be my understanding of living well (recall that an A-agent possesses only one of these). Then, we are considering what happens when I implicitly or explicitly come to the belief that C is too indeterminate, as yet, for it to be possible for me to aim to live well dynamically. Two things happen at the same time. I aim to live in such a way that at some future date, C will be sufficiently determinate that I'll be able to aim at it dynamically without the present difficulties in doing so. Simultaneously with this, I convert C into a static component of my conception of happiness. I have come to aim to *be someone who* knows exactly how to live courageously, compassionately, and the rest—I aim at the circumstances of possessing that practical understanding. What it would be for me to live well now is to live in ways that are instrumental to becoming such a person. Actually living virtuously will just have to wait until then.

We should note two things about the conception of happiness of someone who has come to aim to live well statically in this way. Firstly, their conception of happiness has become purely static, because C is now incorporated as a static component of that conception, rather than as a dynamic component. They conceive of living well as X purely statically. Secondly, this individual is involved in a pretty serious epistemic mistake. The only way to refine an understanding of living well is to aim

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[4]"Coming to see that being loyal or brave is a worthwhile way to live is just the first step. Becoming virtuous requires habituation and experience." (Annas 2011, 12)

to live well dynamically, and engage in eudaimonic reflection on the results. You can't improve your understanding of what it is to live well except by trying to live in the ways specified by your current understanding, and reflecting on how it went. This is the basic Aristotelian point that we become virtuous by repeatedly acting as the virtuous person would (*EN* II.1–4, 1103a14–1105b18), and not in any other way.

Why should we expect this slide into aiming to live well statically to happen to an A-agent? What I'll now explain is how aiming to live well as X sets one up perfectly to make the epistemic mistake that I just described. Thus, setting their bearers up in this way, A-conceptions are unstable, liable to become purely static. The point is best seen by first noting how it *can't* occur to someone with a purely dynamic conception. The rejection of any static component in one's conception of happiness is equivalent to the belief that the *only* task to be accomplished in eudaimonic reflection is to refine a conception of living well. At no point is it implicit in the practical thinking of someone with a purely dynamic conception that she need additionally develop an understanding of the static circumstances which would be required for her life to be as happy as it could be. Now, as we just said, the task of making our understanding of what it would be to live well more determinate is very difficult. If we've rejected any role for static components, though, however difficult the task may be, it's the only thing to be done. With no other task for eudaimonic reflection, someone with a purely dynamic account is not in danger of postponing the work of figuring how what it would be to live well.

An A-agent, however, has the belief that there *are* certain static circumstances, X, the obtaining and maintenance of which partially determines whether or not her life is as good as it could be. In her eudaimonic reflection, this individual attempts to refine both the static and the dynamic components of her conception of happiness. Now, the indeterminacy in the static component of the A-conception is of a different kind to that of the dynamic component, as we've seen. While I've argued that I can't know much about what circumstances X are *like* to live in, I do know what circumstances X *are*—I know how the legal institutions of tenure and marriage work, for example. Next to this, while my dynamic component might specify that to live courageously is good, I cannot be said to know what courage *is* in the way that I can know what marriage and tenure are. For to further refine the dynamic component is to come to know what courage is, which is not separable from knowing what it would

be to live courageously. In the static case, what I don't know is what it would be like to live as a tenured academic, but I do know what a tenured academic *is*. Then, the indeterminacy of a static component is more tractable than the indeterminacy of a dynamic component, in the specific sense that the indeterminacy of a static component does not affect my ability to live for its sake. Knowing what marriage and tenure *are* is enough for me to figure out what I need to do to obtain those circumstances, as we saw in the case of the young couple in my first argument against A-conceptions. By contrast, just knowing that living courageously is valuable is not enough to successfully live courageously. So, if it looks to be impossible to refine the content of the dynamic component of the A-conception, it will always be tempting to think of living well in the way that I think of circumstances X, and live for the sake of my understanding of living well in the manner that I live for the sake of circumstances X—that is, aim to live well statically.

Illustrating my second argument against A-conceptions

Let's now look at an extended illustration of the slide into aiming to live well statically that I'm describing. Commonly, when aiming to live well as X, one has a mentor or hero who one takes to already be living well as X. So I'll now consider the example of aiming to live well as an academic, with a focus on two individuals who have an academic mentor, whom they take to be living well qua member of an intellectual culture. Membership of an intellectual culture is broader than the goal of having a permanent academic position, in that the latter is not a necessary condition for the former. Suppose, though, that as well as lacking a permanent academic position, the individuals we consider here are not yet members of the intellectual culture either; they aim to live well as members of that culture, where being members of that culture is something yet to be achieved.

I call the two individuals the Hybrid Mentee and the Dynamic Mentee. The Hybrid Mentee has an A-conception: she takes her understanding of what it would be to live well to apply both before and after she becomes a member of the intellectual culture of her mentor, but she does take simply being a member of that culture to be part of the good for her, appropriately subordinated. Her conception of her good has both static and dynamic components, but she subscribes to the subordination thesis.[5]

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[5]Like the commonsensical static conceptions discussed in ch. 2, sec. 1, I don't need to assume that the Hybrid Mentee has only an A-conception, but just that the A-conception dominates at critical junctures of her life.

The Dynamic Mentee has a purely dynamic conception of happiness. To the extent that he takes his mentor to be living well, he takes his good to be living as his mentor does. Various things about how he lives serve to move him closer to joining his mentor's intellectual culture, but being a member of that culture does not feature as a component of his conception of happiness; he does not count a life in which he fails to join the culture as, just because of the fact of that failure, one that's less happy. For simplicity, let's suppose that both of the mentees have the same mentor, such that learning from the way that the mentor lives makes more determinate a single understanding of what it would be to live well, C, say. What we'll see is how the Hybrid Mentee could slide into aiming to live well statically, while the Dynamic Mentee is protected from this possibility, where both take living well to be correctly specified by C.

Consider first the Hybrid Mentee. There is something that is attractive to the mentee about the way that her mentor lives: she takes this to be someone from whom she can learn about that for the sake of which it is really worth living. But how the mentor achieves what they do is mysterious. Her mentor draws on vast amounts of knowledge and is able to apply these in creative ways, is engaged with interdisciplinary literatures and seems to have something useful to say about all of them, deals with critics with friendly magnanimity, and not an ounce of defensiveness. The mentee, by contrast, finds herself reacting badly to critics, alienating potential collaborators, and unable to express in writing ideas that seemed so promising when they first came to her—not all the time, but often enough. What she has observed of how her mentor lives forms an understanding of how to live well, C, but C is highly indeterminate. In particular, the Hybrid Mentee has no idea how to live in the ways specified by C: she just doesn't know how to begin to live magnanimously in the face of criticism, for example. This is to say that while she can incorporate the understanding of living well gleaned from observing her mentor as a dynamic component of her conception of happiness, she takes herself to be unable to live for the sake of that dynamic component. And given that the Hybrid Mentee has an A-conception, this means that she can't live for the sake of either component of her conception of happiness. For acceptance of the subordination thesis means that we constrain living for the sake of any static component of happiness by the requirements of living for the sake of any dynamic component, but if we don't feel able to live by those requirements because we don't think we know what they are, we're completely

stuck, basically unable to live for the sake of either component.

This situation cannot long persist. Someone with a purely static conception of happiness, or an R-conception, can believe that the way that they live constitutes living for the sake of the good even if they have good reason to believe that the static component of that conception is not something they can ever realise. By contrast, if we think that we can't even live for the sake of our conception of the good, never mind whether we can realise it, then we cannot hold on to that conception. That is the situation of the Hybrid Mentee. We need a conception of the good to refine in eudaimonic reflection, reflection that will just keep being prompted by our practical experiences; if the conception of happiness that we have cannot serve this purpose, then we will find ourselves putting it aside, developing a new conception in its place, and living for the sake of that. There is a practical necessity for a conception of the good for the sake of which we think we are able to live, whether or not we actually can coherently live for its sake.

Thus, the Hybrid Mentee makes an implicit shift to aiming to live as her mentor does statically. She can't aim at C qua activity, so she *implicitly reduces* C to a series of circumstances, and aims at those.[6] The Hybrid Mentee knows how to determine whether or not someone is a member of her mentor's intellectual culture, even if she doesn't really know what's good about being a member of that intellectual culture, and so she knows at least something about what she would need to do in order for others to regard her as a member of that intellectual culture. The Hybrid Mentee subscribes to the subordination thesis, so she takes living well to be more than doing just what's needed to be regarded as a member of the intellectual culture. However, she thinks that she will have more success if she aims at C in the manner in which she might aim at being regarded as a member of the intellectual culture; that is, if she aims at C statically.[7]

[6]Another possibility, from which acceptance of the subordination thesis protects the Hybrid Mentee, is simply missing that's what good about being a member of an intellectual culture is living in certain ways, not merely the bare membership of the culture.

[7]A different way to be an ineffective mentee is to pick up the material trappings of the life of your mentor without engaging in the activity of that life. This is like deciding to start a hobby, buying lots of expensive equipment, and then failing ever to use it. The Hybrid Mentee's mistake is more subtle than this. She converts the activity of the mentor's life into mere circumstance, rendering it inaccessible, rather than simply ignored.

The Dynamic Mentee might pick up some material trappings of his mentor's life: he might buy a lot of books. This can be helpful, though ultimately dispensable. Unlike the mistake made by the Hybrid Mentee, picking up material trappings needs not get a mentee stuck, unless combined with the wrong attitudes. On this point see Annas (2003, 69), Callard (2018, 85) (who discusses mannerisms in particular) and Fossheim (2006, 109–14).

So, then, the mentee observes that her mentor tends to have several half-read books in their office, and a series of essays that have each been only partially completed, and comes to the conclusion—this is the reduction of C to circumstances—that living as a member of her mentor's intellectual culture must require having lots of unfinished projects. This is precisely to conclude that living well is a matter of possessing the circumstances of having many unfinished projects—someone in those circumstances would *just have to* be someone living well, she thinks. Trying to obtain these circumstances—living for the sake of a static component of her conception of happiness into which C has now been incorporated—the mentee arbitrarily stops working on projects until she's got several piled up, and switches to a new book once she's read a few chapters, again until a backlog develops. Similarly, the mentee notes that her mentor's diary is bristling with lunch dates with other intellectuals, and so she incorporates into the static component of her conception of happiness the circumstances of having a full diary. Now the hybrid mentee has something for the sake of which she can live! She starts living in ways that she takes to be instrumental to obtaining a pile of unfinished projects and a full lunch diary. For example, she might indiscriminately accept any invitation to have lunch with an intellectual, even if she has other things to be doing that day, as she thinks having the full diary get her closer to living as her mentor does. And so aiming to live as her mentor does statically means that the mentee does not have to knowingly abandon her goal of living well in the circumstances of being a member of an intellectual culture. In fact, though, she is no longer living for the sake of an A-conception, because its dynamic component has disappeared.

The reduction of C to a series of circumstances is a kind of perversion of C, changing it from a conception of an activity to a conception of circumstances that is not equivalent to that activity. In particular, the mentee's desire for the circumstances to which she has reduced C is altogether disconnected from the reasons why her mentor is living in those circumstances.[8] It is ways in which

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[8]Note that this example of incorporating C into a static component of a conception of happiness has quite different properties to the example of aiming to live well statically that we discussed in the case of static eudaimonism (ch. 3). Here, C is reduced to a static component, in the sense that much of what was valuable about C is lost in the conversion process. By contrast, static eudaimonism took living perfectly virtuously and converted that to being in the condition of perfect virtue, but the condition of perfect virtue guarantees that you'll live well in exact accordance with C, so nothing about the understanding of what it would be to live well is lost in the conversion. So while static eudaimonisms and A-conceptions can both involve aiming to live well statically, which is bad enough, A-conceptions can additionally go wrong in perverting the contents of C.

the mentor is living that result in having the unfinished projects, half-read books and full diary. And it is those ways of living that are actually valuable, and worth the mentees both learning from, not the circumstances that result from living in those ways. Further, someone living in the circumstances is not necessarily someone who is living well; the causality goes the other way. Just aiming to obtain those circumstances, in a way that is disconnected from the ways of living that caused the mentor to obtain those circumstances, is not of value. The Hybrid Mentee began by taking there to be something good about the ways in which her mentor lives their life, but simply trying to live in those ways seemed too difficult, so she did something else, and called it aiming to live as their mentor does. But it simply isn't to do that. What the mentee seems to hope is that if they can obtain the right circumstances, then it will be easy to live in the good way in which their mentor is seen to live; easy to aim to live well dynamically. But there are no circumstances that enable this activity in this way. The only way forward is practical experience and reflection upon it. Whenever you obtain any particular circumstances, it's still up to you to live well in them—the circumstances can't do that work for you. Aiming to live well statically cannot help you later aim to live well dynamically.

Now let's consider the Dynamic Mentee. This individual does not make the mistake just described. Like the Hybrid Mentee, he begins from the observation that there is something good about the way that their mentor lives, and he adopts the provisional aim of living well as a member of the mentor's intellectual culture. However, unlike the Hybrid Mentee, the Dynamic Mentee has a purely dynamic conception of happiness. He does not take being a member of that intellectual culture to be any constitutive component of his good. Instead, he thinks that he can learn most about what it would be to live well simply by *aiming* to be a member of the intellectual culture of their mentor. In other words, that's what living well amounts to for him, here and now. This preexisting commitment to a purely dynamic conception of what happiness is means that the Dynamic Mentee does not respond to the difficulty of aiming to live well dynamically in the way that the Hybrid Mentee did. In dismissing from his conception of happiness any static component, he has committed himself to the belief that the only work for eudaimonic reflection to do is the refinement of his dynamic component. Thus, he will not be tempted to think that he can make progress in refining C by reducing C to a series of circumstances.

How, then, will the Dynamic Mentee respond to the challenge of living for the sake of a highly indeterminate dynamic conception of happiness into which C has been incorporated? And how will he respond to the unfinished projects and full lunch schedule? The Dynamic Mentee is not better positioned than the Hybrid Mentee with regard to the ways in which the mentor engages with criticism and interdisciplinary issues; he does not know how to achieve the right balance between humility in the face of particular expertise he does not possess, and a boldness in applying the synoptic conclusions of his own discipline. He too will look at the circumstances of the mentor's life for clues as to how to live like that, but because he has no static component of his conception of happiness to refine, there is no danger of reducing C to the possession of those circumstances. Instead, when this mentee observes that his mentor always seems to have several books they are working their way through, they might see this as a reflection of a carefully cultivated curiosity that works best by getting input from different sources at once. Alternatively, the Dynamic Mentee might come to the conclusion that his mentor has a problem finishing things that they start. This reflection enables the second mentee to make C more determinate, refining their dynamic conception of happiness. The Hybrid Mentee wants the unfinished papers; the Dynamic Mentee wants to be researching in a way that tends to result in multiple unfinished papers.[9]

An alternative way to look at this contrast is to note that the Hybrid Mentee struggles to live *her* life as an intellectual, instead trying to replicate what life as an intellectual looks like for her mentor. Suppose that the kind of research for which the mentee shows a flair is shunned by the academic establishment, but the mentee has good reason to think that it will bear important fruit some years from now. This will leave the mentee with a very quiet social calendar, as other intellectuals shun her. The Hybrid Mentee would see this as a sign that she was failing to live up to the standards she has set herself with reference to her mentor, because they had a full social diary, and this mentee's understanding of life as an intellectual is given in terms of circumstances, such as having a full social diary. The Dynamic Mentee is more interested in the academic courage, which is one of the reasons for their mentor's full diary. People are attracted to the mentor thanks to their courage, and this gives

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[9]The best that we can hope for on behalf of the Hybrid Mentee is coming to see the good ways of living by spending enough time acting them out. This is Burnyeat's (1980) interpretation of *EN* II.1–4, 1103a14-1105b18.

the mentee a pointer to understanding what's important about that courage, but it certainly does not constitute what's important about it. The Dynamic Mentee is able to recognise that academic courage in *his* life might mean having an empty social diary for some years. The contrast is between trying to live one's life just as one's mentor does, or trying to live one's own life well, learning how to do this by observing how the mentor lives their life well.[10]

A general response to my two arguments against A-conceptions

There is a general response open to a proponent of A-conceptions which should be considered in light of the two mentees. The objector can accept both the epistemic problems with the static component of A-conceptions, and the risk of an A-agent coming to aim to live well statically, but argue that the right response to these arguments cannot be to reject A-conceptions in favour of purely dynamic accounts. For if circumstances X really are good, including a static component alongside the dynamic component simply reflects the reality of what's valuable. The fact that it is easy to get things confused does not change the status of circumstances X as valuable, and our conceptions of the good need to include everything that is, in fact, good. It is the structure of a purely dynamic conception that guards against the slide into aiming to live well statically, but if it's not true that the only thing that can constitute my good is ways of living, then adopting the structure of a purely dynamic conception would involve believing what is false.

Instead of rejecting A-conceptions, the objector continues, we will just have to hold them in a way that is more sophisticated, and more self-aware. In response to the epistemic problems in my first argument, a proponent of A-conceptions might argue that we should not live for the sake of obtaining or maintaining circumstances X, given that we might be wrong about whether they are valuable. That

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[10]A third way to bring out the contrast is to consider what would happen if some event rendered it impossible for either of the mentees to lead a traditional intellectual career. Suppose that a war breaks out, and the mentees are conscripted into the army. Everything that the Hybrid Mentee might have gained from looking up to their mentor is now useless, as it is impossible for them to obtain any of the circumstances of the intellectual life. By contrast, the Dynamic Mentee can take what they learned and weave it into their understanding of what it would be to live the life of a soldier well. For example, the intellectual strategies involved in pursuing multiple partially overlapping research projects reflect ideas about living well that might be quite applicable to the lives of soldiers. It is important not to get so attached to particular projects that one pursues them beyond the point where doing so yields real returns; doing so would be self-indulgent. Similarly, a soldier must not allow their ego to prevent them from delegating tasks to others even when this will result in them getting less credit for those tasks. This is a quite general aspect of virtue to which the Dynamic Mentee has been exposed by trying to live well as his mentor does.

achieves the right epistemic humility without giving up the idea that circumstances X are actually good. In response to my second argument, the objector might say that we should maintain a clean separation between our view that circumstances X are required for our life to be as happy as it could be, and the process of living for the sake of the dynamic component of the A-conception (and thus refining our understanding of the ways in which it is intrinsically good to live in a way that is epistemically respectable). This should prevent the slide into aiming to live well statically. Holding A-conceptions in a way that's epistemically and practically respectable is difficult, but then having the right beliefs about what's valuable, and holding these in the right way, always was.

There isn't a knockdown rejoinder to this, because the proponent of hybrid conceptions can always just insist that circumstances actually are constitutively valuable. However, in light of what we've already said about the subordination thesis, and the example of the two mentees, there are a few rejoinders that I take to be jointly sufficient to show this objector's response to be inadequately motivated.

Firstly, recall the points from Russell in my first argument against static eudaimonism in ch. 3, sec. 3. In response to my first argument against A-conceptions, the objector says that the epistemically respectable thing to do is not to live for the sake of the A-conception's static component. But that would be to disconnect our patiency from our agency, in a way that is not in accordance with the A-conception's acceptance of the subordination thesis. If we do not live for the sake of the static component of the A-conception then there is no sense in which we make circumstances X good for us (except for how living for the sake of the dynamic component of the A-conception makes them good for us). In other words, if the static component of our conception of happiness has no practical work left to do, as the objector would have it, then its relevance to the question of how good my life was is independent of the relevance to that question of the ways in which I lived my life, which we saw to be in tension with acceptance of the subordination thesis. If the objector wants to stick with a hybrid account rather than a purely dynamic account, circumstances X must be understood as valuable in a way that is connected with agency.

Secondly, consideration of the different way in which the Dynamic Mentee approaches the project of learning from his mentor makes the insistence on the presence of a static component look unmoti-

vated. As we saw, it's good for the Dynamic Mentee to have his mentor, because it is possible for him to learn about what it is to live well from observing how his mentor lives. The fact that the mentor is a member of an intellectual culture is a consequence of those ways of living, but it's not what's good about them. What must be examined is the reasons why the mentor is a member of that culture, and not in the instrumental sense of trying to figure out how they managed to become a member of that culture in order that the mentee can become one too. The objector maintains that the circumstances of being a member of the intellectual culture really are good, and good for the mentees, so including a static component alongside the dynamic component simply reflects the reality of what's valuable. But this now seems an inadequately motivated insistence. For as we just saw, it might be that for the Dynamic Mentee to live *his* life as his mentor does, to the extent that his mentor lives well, he must allow himself to be rejected by the intellectual culture. If his work is important but controversial, living well might require doing the work even though it will mean alienation. But in this latter case, the mentee's life was not a worse one for not having achieved the circumstances of being a member of the intellectual culture. On the contrary, had the mentee pursued less important research in order to ensure the achievement of the circumstances of being a member of an intellectual culture, it would have been a worse life, achieving less of what is good. This form of argument should generalise to other A-conceptions, and suggests a different kind of instability: the loss of any constitutive role for particular circumstances, and so a collapse into a purely dynamic conception. I'll develop this point at length in response to the *EN* hybrid conception of happiness, next to be discussed.

2   Aristotle's hybrid conception

We can read *EN* as advocating a view with the structure of an A-conception.[11] Under the taxonomy of conceptions of happiness established in this dissertation, it is the most promising alternative to purely dynamic views. What I will argue is that this kind of hybrid view shows a different kind of instability to that which we saw in the previous section: there is a propensity for someone who holds an *EN* hybrid conception to slide into holding a purely dynamic conception. That argument will rely on the specific

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[11]For the sake of readability, I will usually refer to Aristotle's A-conception as "the *EN* conception", and use the name "A-conception" only for the kinds of views introduced in ch. 2 and critiqued in this chapter.

theoretically-motivating reasons for the structure that the *EN* conception has, so I need to explain that structure, and why a defender of hybrid conceptions of happiness would want to defend it. I'll do this in two stages. First I'll show why a defender of the A-conceptions we've seen so far might switch to defending the *EN* conception in response to the arguments against A-conceptions that I've just given. Then, I'll apply Hirji's (2021) interpretation of *EN* to explain the reasons Aristotle himself seems to have for advocating an account with the structure of the *EN* conception. These two sets of motivating reasons together explain why the *EN* account is the toughest contender to dynamic eudaimonism, and will also enable me to argue that the view is ultimately not a stable one.

The *EN* account as a less determinate A-conception

The first thing to observe is that the arguments of the previous section relied on the static components of the A-conceptions discussed being fairly determinate. By this I mean that the set of circumstances of living that would count as the satisfaction of circumstances X was small. Not even any high status position in society would satisfy the A-academic: only a permanent academic position would do. A powerful way to respond to my arguments is to make the static component a lot less determinate, such that it is more easily satisfied, and its contents more epistemically accessible to possessors of the conception. Further, as we'll see, while someone with such a hybrid conception still aims to live well as X, X will typically be something to be maintained, rather than something to be obtained.

To obtain the *EN* conception, we proceed as follows. Given an understanding of living well, let *blessed circumstances* be circumstances in which I am not hindered from fully engaging in the activity of living well.[12] Then the *EN* conception is an A-conception which has as its static component blessed circumstances, where the relevant understanding of living well is that which has been incorporated into the A-conception's dynamic component. Circumstances X are blessed circumstances. *The* EN *agent*, an individual whose conception of happiness has the structure of the *EN* conception, aims to live well in blessed circumstances.

Blessed circumstances are defined relative to, and in terms of, a given understanding of living well. Any indeterminacy in the understanding of living well is inherited by the conception of blessed circum-

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[12]The name is inspired by *EN* I.8, 1099b2–8.

stances. For the *EN* conception, where the relevant conception of living well is that which has been incorporated into the dynamic component, the *EN* agent's conception of blessed circumstances—her static component—is only as determinate as her dynamic component. That means that no very specific circumstances, such as those of being a tenured academic, will feature in the *EN* agent's conception of blessed circumstances. For the dynamic component of the *EN* conception will be indeterminate in the usual way that we've seen: eudaimonic reflection in the service of dynamic components makes the content of these components *more* determinate but never *fully* determinate, based as it is upon a finite amount of practical experience (ch. 3, sec. 4). And no indeterminate conception of what it would be to live well could entail that fully engaging in the activity of living well could be carried out only in the very specific circumstances of being a tenured academic, or similar.

To see why, let's consider more carefully what sort of conclusions about circumstances we can get out of indeterminate conceptions of living well. A completely determinate conception of an activity— a completely determinate conception of the working life of a tenured academic, say—is able to yield the conclusion that particular circumstances are required for fully engaging in that activity. Or, to put it another way, it is able to yield a completely determinate conception of the circumstances that are required for fully engaging in that activity. But an indeterminate conception of living well never says enough about what it is to live well so as to yield specific circumstances that are required in order to fully engage in that activity. That is, it will never say enough to yield a completely determinate conception of blessed circumstances. The *EN* agent's indeterminate understanding of living well might involve the idea that to fully engage in living well requires me to engage in the activities characteristic of close relationships (indeed, as we'll see, Aristotle would include this in the *EN* conception's dynamic component). This yields the conclusion that circumstances of having people around with whom it is possible for me to form close relationships are necessary in order for me to fully engage in the activity of living well. But do I need to have blood relatives, or are friends enough? How many people do I need? How long do we need to have known each other and how much do we need to have in common? The conception of blessed circumstances is indeterminate in that it never determines answers to *all* such questions, even if it determines answers to some of them, precisely because the *EN* agent's dynamic component is not a completely determinate conception of the activities characteristic

of close relationships. The indeterminacy of the dynamic component is inherited by the conception of blessed circumstances yielded by that component.

Adopting the *EN* conception commits me to the idea that there is a distinction between engaging and fully engaging in the activity of living well, where the latter requires the presence of certain circumstances of living. As we've just seen, though, adopting the *EN* conception does not commit me to any determinate conception of *which* external circumstances are required. Since blessed circumstances are incorporated into my conception of happiness as a static component, the *EN* agent also thinks that I would not be living as happily as I could be if I'm not in blessed circumstances. It should be emphasised that the idea of fully engaging in living well is itself indeterminate, as a part of the content of the dynamic component of the *EN* conception. Over time, engaging in eudaimonic reflection, the *EN* agent can refine her idea of what it means to fully engage, rather than just engage, in the activity of living well.

The *EN* conception is an A-conception in having both static and dynamic components with the former subordinated to the latter. Unlike the A-conceptions introduced in ch. 2 and critiqued in the previous section, its static component too is indeterminate. Eudaimonic reflection that renders the dynamic component of the *EN* conception more determinate will render its static component more determinate in turn: when I improve my grip on what it is to live well, I also get a better grip on what blessed circumstances are. We might say that my conception of blessed circumstances supervenes upon my conception of living well. This is a notably strong subordination of the static component of the *EN* conception to its dynamic component. We might call the earlier A-conceptions, introduced in ch. 2 and critiqued in the previous section, *determinate A-conceptions*, and the *EN* conception a kind of *indeterminate A-conception*. Then, in general, we can say that the set of circumstances that will satisfy the static component of an indeterminate A-conception is much larger than the set of circumstances that will satisfy the static component of a determinate A-conception.

In practice, what will blessed circumstances amount to? For our purposes in this section, it will be useful to have some concrete gloss of what living in blessed circumstances will involve. In *EN* X.8, Aristotle suggests that what will be required to satisfy the indeterminate static component of the *EN* conception will be a "moderate" amount of external goods. If I can't satisfy my basic social and

material needs, the thought seems to be, then I won't be able fully to engage in the activity of living well. Aristotle seems not to want to say, in advance (i.e. at the level of giving a concrete eudaimonism), exactly *how much* external goods will be required for the happiest life, though he is convinced that *at least some* will be required to make a life as happy as it could be. The indeterminacy of the *EN* conception accommodates this point. Presumably the *EN* agent's conception of their life as a whole (ch. 1, sec. 4) will say more about how much external goods are required for the *EN* agent to count as living in blessed circumstances.[13]

The *EN* account and my two arguments against A-conceptions

We'll shortly see Aristotle's theoretical motivation for thinking that there's a distinction between engaging and fully engaging in the activity of living well that's relevant to whether my life is as happy as it could be. Right now, let's see how the *EN* conception avoids the two arguments against A-conceptions of sec. 1, above, and thus why the view would be generally attractive to proponents of A-conceptions.

My first argument against A-conceptions disputed the possibility of being justified in taking determinate circumstances to be constitutively part of my good if I haven't yet lived in those circumstances.

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[13]Exactly what is needed to satisfy one's basic social and material needs is difficult to know. People often behave as though their life could not be a good one if they didn't have access to various luxuries, for example. When it comes to social needs, it is very difficult to identify what aspects of relationships are actually valuable, contributing to making our lives better, and what about them is neutral or makes our lives worse, and lots of people get it wrong. We frequently take ourselves to require at a bare minimum much more than we actually need; we think that our life would be irreparably marred if we were to become single, say. Many people get used to overly dependent relationships and come to think that they need to be in such a relationship. Overly dependent relationships are not all bad, but people who take such things to be part of their basic social needs are misidentifying which aspects of the intimate relationship are actually good for them.

A *thin* A-conception is a determinate A-conception which says that circumstances X are, simply, circumstances in which my basic social and material needs are satisfied. Such a view would at this point run right into the epistemic problems with determinate A-conceptions: it is difficult to see how someone could obtain a correct conception of what's actually needed to satisfy her basic social and material needs, and thus the epistemic status of the static component of a thin A-conception is called into doubt (note that this problem for thin A-conceptions applies whether or not our basic needs are presently satisfied—a determinate thin static component tends to keep slipping through our fingers, even if at first it seems like the thinner we make the static component, the easier it is to know what static circumstances should be realised in order for my life to be as happy as it could be. Also note that Aristotelian *philia* is rather thick, such that if the happiest life requires it, it will hardly be a matter of only our *basic* social needs). The *EN* conception, however, does not have this problem, even if we adopt Aristotle's view that blessed circumstances will amount to the possession of a moderate amount of external goods. The *EN* conception's static component is indeterminate, only specifying what counts as blessed circumstances to the extent that the *EN* agent's practical experience can justify.

Julia Annas helped me to see that an indeterminate A-conception, rather than a thin A-conception, is closer to Aristotle's position in *EN* X.8. However, while it's clear that Aristotle does not there come down in favour of a thin A-conception, Annas isn't sure he comes down strongly in favour of an indeterminate A-conception either. It's a difficult interpretative question. There is also the issue of whether and how to reconcile the idea that the best life requires only moderate external goods with the claim in *EN* IV.2–4 that the exercise of certain civic virtues requires serious wealth.

To the limited extent that the static component of the *EN* conception determinately specifies the content of blessed circumstances, however, that specification is epistemically well-grounded in my actual practical experience, and so the argument will not apply. As we saw, the content of the static component of an *EN* conception supervenes upon the content of its dynamic component. That is, I take external circumstances to be required for my life to be as happy as it could be only to the extent that I believe that engaging in the activity of living well requires the presence of that sort of circumstances. Thus, the epistemic status of the content of my static component is derivative of the epistemic status of my dynamic component. And the latter is a good epistemic status, because I make the content of my dynamic component more determinate by means of eudaimonic reflection, which has for its material the practical experience I've actually had.

For example, suppose I believe that I need not to be starving in order fully to engage in virtuous activity, and so I take the circumstances of having enough to eat to be part of what it means to live in blessed circumstances, and thus take having enough to eat to be constitutively part of my good. My justification for believing that having enough to eat is constitutively part of my good is entirely dependent upon my justification for taking fully engaging in living well to be an activity that requires having enough to eat. And the latter is a justification for an aspect of the content of my dynamic component, which is epistemically well-grounded in my eudaimonic reflection, thanks to the subordination thesis, as we've seen (ch. 2, sec. 3, 2nd argument). If eudaimonic reflection has led me to the conclusion that to fully live well is to live in ways that require me not to be starving, then I've acquired an epistemically respectable belief that to fully live well requires me not to be starving, because eudaimonic reflection is based on the practical experience I've actually had. Under the *EN* conception, I now take circumstances in which I've enough to eat to be constitutively part of my good, but the justification for doing that is just the same as the justification for taking fully living well to require me not to be starving. A fortiori, then, the belief that the circumstances of having enough to eat is partly constitutive of my good is epistemically respectable.[14]

[14]Since the epistemic status of the content of the static component of the *EN* conception is dependent upon the epistemic status of its dynamic component, we cannot independently call into question the epistemic status of the static component, which is what my first argument against determinate A-conceptions tried to do. Any epistemic relevance had by whether or not I've actually lived in the circumstances which I now take to be blessed is accounted for by the process of eudaimonic reflection. If it's true that I would have had to live in those circumstances in order to be justified in taking them to be

There's another way to see that my first argument against determinate A-conceptions will not apply to the *EN* conception. We can understand the indeterminacy of the *EN* conception's static component as reducing the epistemic gap between my present circumstances and my (current) conception of blessed circumstances, such that I need not have ever stably possessed (what I now take to be) blessed circumstances in order to be justified in believing that possessing them is necessary in order for my life to be as happy as it could be. As the *EN* agent refines her conception of what it would be to fully engage in the activity of living well, she adds to her conception of blessed circumstances conditions restricting what circumstances would count as blessed. For example, suppose the *EN* agent comes to believe that serious friendships of Aristotelian *philia*[15] opens up opportunities for the exercise of the virtue of kindness that are not available to people who do not have friends, and also that the development of *philia* requires people to stick around in the circumstances of one's life for extended periods. Then the *EN* agent might add to her conception of blessed circumstances the condition that circumstances in which the people around her are constantly changing are not blessed, because there will not be an opportunity in such circumstances to exercise certain kinds of particularly valuable kindness. Separately, the *EN* agent might have added to her conception of blessed circumstances the condition that she have enough to eat, coming to the epistemically respectable conclusion, based on her practical experience, that the exercise of certain virtues will be impaired if she's struggling to have enough to eat. Now, another way in which we can understand the conception of blessed circumstances to be indeterminate is that each of these conditions on blessed circumstances is epistemically independent. I can have had relevant practical experience so as to be justified in believing that I need people to stick around, and independently have had relevant practical experience so as to be justified in believing that I need not to be starving, even if I've not yet been in circumstances in which *both* of these conditions are satisfied. And similarly for each aspect of the *EN* agent's indeterminate conception of blessed circumstances. Even if I've never possessed what I now take to be a moderate amount of external goods across the board, I can have had relevant practical experience so as to be separately justified in holding each aspect of my indeterminate conception of what blessed circumstances amount to.

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blessed, eudaimonic reflection would yield the conclusion that those circumstances are necessary in order to fully engage in the activity of living well only in the case that I had, in fact, experienced living in them.

[15]See Nussbaum (2001, ch. 12) for a good discussion of what this is.

The key here is that I do not incorporate into my static component a conception of *determinate circumstances in which* all of the conditions on blessed circumstances yielded by my dynamic component are satisfied. For then the epistemic gap described in my first argument against determinate A-conceptions would open up. The *EN* conception's static component does not specify any particular, determinate circumstances, but only a number of conditions upon circumstances, which together constitute an indeterminate conception of circumstances. And it's only conceptions of determinate circumstances, not indeterminate conceptions of circumstances, which I cannot be justified in incorporating into my conception of happiness as static components until I've experienced living in those determinate circumstances.[16]

If *EN* X.8 is right that blessed circumstances are those that involve possession of a moderate amount of external goods, there's a third way to see that my first argument against determinate A-conceptions will not apply. I said that one cannot be justified in believing that the circumstances of being a professional musician are constitutively part of one's good unless one actually possesses those circumstances, because one cannot know what it is really like to be a professional musician until one actually is a professional musician. However, by contrast, it is possible for an *EN* agent to be justified in believing that possessing a moderate amount of external goods is required for her life to be as happy as it could be without her having ever stably possessed (what she now takes to be) a moderate amount of external goods. That's because possession of a moderate amount of external goods is never too distant from anyone's present circumstances, because it does not take so much to be in possession of a moderate amount of external goods, as compared with what it takes to be a professional musician. I can know enough about what it would be like to have friends to know that it would be good for me to have friends, even if I am presently alone in a strange land.

Turning now to my second argument against determinate A-conceptions, it is easy to see that having only an indeterminate static component would protect me from the slide into aiming to live well statically that I described in the case of the Hybrid Mentee. We said that the Dynamic Mentee

[16]I do not mean to suggest that the actual yielding of each condition upon blessed circumstances, by the dynamic component, will be completely independent. It's just that for any given condition on blessed circumstances, the dynamic component can generate a justification for that condition which does not make reference to the goodness of any conception of determinate circumstances.

is protected from the Hybrid Mentee's mistake because he does not take his task, in eudaimonic reflection, to be to determine what circumstances the possession of which counts as constitutive part of his good; he is considering only ways of living. An *EN* agent thinks in a similar way. The task is to determine what it would be to live well, and what it would be to fully engage in living well. Making the indeterminate static component more determinate is secondary and derivative of this task, in the sense that I can make progress on making my static component more determinate *only by* making my dynamic component more determinate. If the *EN* agent converts her understanding of living well into a static component, as part of coming to aim to live well statically, she would be making her static component more determinate in a way that is independent of making her dynamic component more determinate. To do that would be to abandon the *EN* conception. Just as the structure of a purely dynamic account blocks coming to aim to live well statically, so does the structure of the *EN* account. Indeed, if *EN* X.8 is right that what will be required is simply a moderate amount of external goods, then the *EN* agent might quite quickly complete the task of making the static component as determinate as it needs to be, because it is not hard to know just what's involved in possessing a moderate amount of external goods.

Why Aristotle does not defend a purely dynamic account

Before saying anything else, we should distinguish two roles for external circumstances. These two roles will be important in our own discussion, especially in ch. 5, but the distinction is also present in *EN*. We must be clear about it in order to understand Aristotle's motivation for giving a hybrid account. Firstly, good external circumstances can be necessary conditions for certain virtuous activity to be possible, and secondly, they can be intrinsically valuable, required for a life to be as happy as it could be. The having of friends makes possible the exercise of the virtues of friendship. Additionally, the having of friends *simpliciter* is taken to be an intrinsically good feature of my life. What we need to observe is that it is only the second of these two roles for external circumstances that lands Aristotle with a hybrid account. For when external circumstances are only necessary conditions of virtuous activity, what we get is a fully dynamic account: it's only the virtuous activity that is taken to be intrinsically good. On a hybrid view, by contrast, external circumstances are good, not only as

necessary conditions for it to be possible to live for the sake of my dynamic conception, but intrinsically.

Why, then, does Aristotle reject a purely dynamic account? Aristotle explicitly distinguishes, at the theoretical level, between virtue and its exercise, emphasising that it's the latter that matters for happiness (*EN* I.8, 1098b30–1099a5). And this already enables him to disagree with Plato and the Stoics about the sufficiency of virtue for happiness: he can point out that however important virtue is, certain external circumstances are necessary conditions for its exercise; just having virtue is not enough.[17] So what principled reason is there for adding an additional, static role for external goods?[18]

We can answer this question, following Hirji (2021), by considering what a purely dynamic interpretation of Aristotle's remarks about the complete life would have to look like.[19] Aristotle says that a life like Priam's, in which my children are killed and the city state that I live to defend falls, could not possibly be considered a complete life, or, a completely happy life (*EN* I.9). If my children are snatched away from me by circumstance, I don't get to exercise the various virtues involved in parenting; this is a strong sense in which my life, which might have been complete, turned out not to be.[20] We can understand this as relying on the claim that a life would not be complete if we didn't get to exercise those virtues that require substantial external goods for their exercise, even if some virtuous activity, that depended on much less substantial circumstances, remained possible. In the absence of the necessary conditions for certain important forms of virtuous activity, a complete life is not possible. This accommodates the intuitive idea that Priam's life cannot be said to be completely happy, while retaining the focus on virtuous activity. Indeed, we have not said anything incompatible with a purely dynamic account. For when it comes to the question of Priam's happiness, the circumstances of his children outliving him is seen as only instrumentally good, as an enabling condition of

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[17]This is similar to Nussbaum's (2001, ch. 11) strategy. In the next chapter, I will call this kind of position *Aristotelian dynamic eudaimonism*, to be contrasted with *Stoic dynamic eudaimonism*.

[18]Julia Annas, in conversation, suggests that Aristotle's claim that it is simply absurd to say that the Stoic on the rack could be happy, made unequivocally at both *EN* I.5, 1095b31–1096a2 and *EN* VII.13, 1153b, anchors his view as a hybrid conception of happiness.

[19]I will not attempt to give an account of the notion of the completeness of a life. I am assuming that we can gloss it as a life being as happy as it could have been—the complete fulfilment of all components of a correct conception of the good for that person. My arguments will not ultimately depend on whether this is exactly what Aristotle means when he talks about the completeness of a life in the final chapters of *EN* I.

[20]I'll follow Hirji in discussing parenting, but I think that the point generalises to the having of all serious friendships. That is, what's needed for the complete life is serious friendships, not specifically those of parent and offspring. The kind of serious friendships I mean are those of Aristotelian *philia*.

Priam's virtuous activity.[21]

Hirji argues that this purely dynamic reading of *EN* cannot be made to fit with other things that Aristotle says. In particular, she reads Aristotle as holding that "actions are unqualifiedly noble—and so complete and unqualified exercises of virtue—when they aim to achieve ends that have positive value …." (2021, 39) What this means is that the virtuous activity that Aristotle thinks necessary for a life to count as fully happy is aimed at ends which have themselves intrinsic value qua circumstances of my life. For example, the activity of bringing up his children, denied to Priam, is aimed at the good of his children; the mere presence of the children, it would then seem, are part of what would have made his life happy. So there is a static component, in addition to the dynamic component which includes Priam's activity of bringing up his children. The basic reason for thinking this is that if the presence or absence of children is going to determine whether Priam's life counts as happy, it had better be because the children have intrinsic value, not only because they have instrumental value; otherwise, Hirji argues, we cannot make sense of Priam's life having been less good because certain classes of virtuous activity were not possible.

Another way to put it is that the best kind of virtuous activity engages with valuable things in the circumstances of my life. This is to be contrasted with the virtuous activity that engages with bad or neutral things in the circumstances of my life. Aristotle wants the theoretical resources to distinguish between these two kinds of virtuous activity, because he thinks that a life with only the latter will not be as happy as it could have been. If we take external goods to have only a dynamic role, then their value can be had only relative to my activity: my children have value only in the sense that they enable me to exercise various virtues. Hirji takes this to be Cooper's (1985) reading of Aristotle on external goods and rightly rejects it as interpretatively unsatisfactory. By developing instead a hybrid conception, Aristotle is able to say that certain external goods are intrinsically valuable. For that is just what it is to incorporate my having children into a static component of a conception of

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[21]Note that this view is not incompatible with taking the children to have intrinsic value in some other sense. It just takes them not to be intrinsically valuable when it comes to the question of Priam's happiness—they are not intrinsically valuable in the sense of being part of a static component for the sake of which Priam should live. They might independently have a kind of value which must be respected, if not promoted. But if we are asking whether Priam's life was a good one, on this purely dynamic account under consideration they contribute to it being a good life in only an instrumental sense. Also cf. *De Fin.* III.55.

the good: it is to take them to be actually valuable circumstances, in addition to their instrumental value in enabling certain virtuous activity of mine. Giving external goods only a dynamic role cannot assign the children the kind of value needed to distinguish the two kinds of virtuous activity, but Aristotle takes the complete life to be one in which our virtuous activity engages with genuine value in the world. Holding a hybrid view, which takes some static circumstances such as having children to have intrinsic value, is a way to make this point. Hirji distinguishes between actions which have intrinsically valuable ends from actions that have ends that are only the best we can do in a situation. Virtuous activity then engages with value in the world when it aims at promoting elements of my static conception of the good.

What this leaves us with is a hybrid conception with a relatively indeterminate static component. Priam's life does not count as happy because his social needs are not being fulfilled: the people with whom he was close were taken away from him, and now there is no-one with whom he is able to have sufficiently deep relationships. If his life becomes as happy as it could be again, it will only be because other people enter his life with whom he is able to form serious relationships of Aristotelian *philia*.[22] His conception of the circumstances that he would need in order to fully exercise the virtues of friendship, however, is only as determinate as his conception of what it is to exercise those virtues. His previous experience of *philia* with his now dead family justifies his conception of the activity of engaging fully in *philia*, which in turn justifies his belief that his life will not be as happy as it could be until and unless he has people with whom he is able to have sufficiently deep relationships. His belief that it is partly constitutive of his good to have such people around cannot be challenged on the grounds that he has not yet experienced close relationships with anyone other than his dead family members, that is, with anyone with whom he actually could form close relationships going forward (i.e. my first argument against determinate A-conceptions will not apply). He's experienced enough of the circumstances of having close relationships to be justified in taking an indeterminate conception of the circumstances in which such relationships are possible to be constitutively part of his good. Actually entering into *philia* with new people would alter Priam's conception of the good in the manner of making more determinate its dynamic component, which in turn would make more

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[22]Recall, from the appendix to ch. 1, Russell's (2012, 98–99 (e.g.)) idea that he will need a new and distinct happiness.

determinate his conception of blessed circumstances, which forms the content of the static component of his *EN* conception. But the fact that he would learn something new about how one can engage well in friendship if he makes new friends does not mean that the less determinate conception of happiness he has before meeting those people is not epistemically respectable.

Why can't a purely dynamic conception account for this difference between a life that engages with only external bads and things with little value, and a life that engages with things that have intrinsic value qua circumstances of a life? It is simply that there is no space in a purely dynamic account for things to have intrinsic value *qua circumstances of a life*. If we try to accommodate the Priam point using a purely dynamic account, we have to say that the activity of living well has as a necessary condition sufficiently good external circumstances. Then Priam before he lost everything was fulfilling the dynamic conception, and afterwards he wasn't. But the dynamic account can't say that the reason he can't fulfil the dynamic component is that something intrinsically valuable is missing from the circumstances of his life, preventing him from engaging with it.[23]

The *EN* account is liable to become purely dynamic

We've seen that the *EN* conception is attractive to a defender of A-conceptions. It is a sophisticated way to incorporate into our conception of happiness the idea that certain static circumstances actually do make our lives better. My two objections against the determinate A-conceptions do not apply. And the position is eudaimonist, in the sense of accepting the subordination thesis. Living for the sake of the realisation of the indeterminate static component of the *EN* conception is good only to the extent that it can be done while living for the sake of the dynamic component. That is, living for the sake of the static component is good only so long as it is done virtuously.

We saw above that determinate A-conceptions have an instability, in that there is the potential for someone with such a conception to end up aiming to live well only statically, implicitly converting

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[23]A second problem trying to reflect this understanding of Priam in a purely dynamic account is accounting for the (reduced) value of virtuous activity that engages with external bads, i.e., activity which does not have as a necessary precondition the particular external circumstances. We would seem to need two dynamic components, one of which specifies an activity that cannot be engaged in without particular external circumstances, and one of which can. The conception of happiness would also need to say that fulfilment of the former component is more valuable than fulfilment of the latter. That means it wouldn't really be a *purely* dynamic account anymore, as it would be doing more than specifying a single unified conception of the activity of living well.

the dynamic component of the A-conception into a static component. The *EN* conception avoids this, because someone with only an indeterminate static component is much less likely to confuse the refining of their dynamic component with the refining of their static component. That's because the refining of the content of their static component is derivative of the process of refining the content of their dynamic component. What I'll argue now is that the *EN* conception shows another kind of instability, in the other direction: there is a push towards a purely dynamic account of happiness. What happens is that the static component of the *EN* conception runs out of work to do in determining how we will live. The dynamic component is able to do all of the work. Further, thanks to the subordination thesis, the dynamic component takes priority over the static component. But refining our conception of our own happiness is a practical project. We do it because we want to know what for the sake of which we should live, and to what extent we've been succeeding in living for the sake of things which are actually valuable. If the static component has no work to do in determining how we live, its incorporation into a conception of happiness is unmotivated. It will fade away. This is the instability.

Recall from the example of the two mentees in sec. 1, above, that the Dynamic Mentee has a purely dynamic conception of happiness. It's still true, we said, that the Dynamic Mentee is aiming to become a member of an intellectual culture, but he does not take actually *being* a member of the intellectual culture to be constitutively part of his good. Instead, the structure of his practical reasoning reflects the belief that what it would be to live well here, and now, is to live in a way that has among its expected consequences the joining of an intellectual culture. This yields a sense in which joining the intellectual culture is treated as valuable by the Dynamic Mentee's conception of happiness: he takes it to be practically rational for him to live in ways that will tend to yield joining the intellectual culture. It's just that whether or not living in those ways *actually yields* joining the intellectual culture does not determine in the least whether he is living as happily as he could be, by his own lights. We can understand this as equivalent to absorbing the static component of an A-conception into its dynamic component, by considering when aiming at the circumstances specified by the static component would be practically rational. A purely dynamic view reflects the differential value of circumstances within the content of virtue.

We can make the same point with regard to the indeterminate A-conceptions now under discus-

sion. A proponent of the *EN* conception holds that it is actually valuable to live in blessed circumstances; typically, this will be circumstances in which we possess a moderate amount of external goods. The dynamic component of this A-conception is able to absorb this static component and yield a different sense in which it is valuable to possess those circumstances. It is practically rational to live in ways that tend to yield blessed circumstances. Someone with a purely dynamic conception can hold this, and aim at circumstances which enable her to more fully engage in living well, just as the Dynamic Mentee can aim at joining an intellectual culture. It's a different sort of aiming than aiming at a static component of a conception of happiness because whether or not the aim is achieved does not determine whether or not the individual is living as happily as they could be.

The subordination thesis now becomes something respected by (or realised in) the content of the dynamic conception, rather than something that is respected by (or realised in) the relationship between the static and dynamic components of the A-conception. For it is good to aim at any particular circumstances, in this dynamic sense of aiming, only when it is good to live in ways that tend to yield those particular circumstances. If virtue demands that I sacrifice circumstances in which I am able most fully to engage in *philia*, then it will no longer be the case that it is good to live in ways which would yield circumstances in which I can most fully engage in *philia*, for the only available ways of living that would yield those circumstances would not be virtuous ways of living.[24]

I've talked about ways of living as yielding, or tending to yield, particular circumstances. This was in order to speak as generally as possible. It was not meant to suggest that someone with a purely dynamic conception lives in ways that, coincidentally, just do tend to yield particular circumstances. The ways of living are those that, here and now, really do *aim* at yielding particular circumstances. I work in ways that invite collaboration from others not just because I believe that if I work in these ways, I will just happen to find myself living in community, but because I am actually trying to achieve a situation in which I am living and working in community with others. But the goal is not distinct from the activity of living in those ways, as it would be in the case of aiming at a static component of a conception of happiness. The goal is built into the way of living: living in the ways that my dynamic conception of happiness takes to be practically wise just is to be aiming to realise certain

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[24]Bloomfield (2014, 119–23) argues against putting the demands of virtue in terms of sacrifice.

circumstances, but in a way that does not take the *actual achievement* of those circumstances to be determining of whether I am living as happily as I could be.

This is a description of how an A-conception *can* become a purely dynamic conception, but why is this something that is likely to occur to an *EN* agent? It involves giving up the idea that the actual achievement of blessed circumstances is constitutively part of my good. Why is the *EN* conception unstable, in the sense that it can involve giving up this idea, with its dynamic component tending to absorb its static component? The reason is that to accept the subordination thesis, and to have a dynamic component, is already to make the implicit shape of practical reasoning like that which I've just described. Whenever we consider living for the sake of the circumstances specified by our static component, and we accept the subordination thesis, we will need to first consider whether living for the sake of those circumstances would count as living well according to our dynamic component. But in any case in which it would, the conception of the virtue of practical reasoning incorporated in our dynamic component would take it to be practically rational to live in ways that tend to yield the circumstances given by the static component. So while it's true in such a case that we're living for the sake of the static component, we're also living for the sake of the dynamic component, and these two together overdetermine the question of what it would be to live well, here and now. And this is the only sort of case that can arise: thanks to subordination, we cannot be in a situation in which we can live for the sake of our static component without living for the sake of the dynamic component, though we can be in a situation where we live for the sake of the dynamic component but not the static component (when the content of the static component cannot be pursued virtuously). So there is no work left for the static component to do.

A defender of the *EN* conception might say at this point that there remains work done by the presence of the static component. If that component is not realised, then my life is not as happy as it could have been, which reflects the idea that when living virtuously requires me to sacrifice circumstances in which I can most fully engage in *philia*, say, then I give up the prospect of living a life that's as good as possible. Someone with a purely dynamic account is not able to say this quite so definitively. This is essentially the response to my arguments against determinate A-conceptions that I gave and responded to at the end of the previous section, and my response there applies here too.

Of course, the property of a life as to whether it is lived in circumstances in which I have a moderate amount of external goods is ethically relevant. The virtues demand that we try to ensure that our life, and other people's lives, are lived in blessed circumstances. Once we note the overdetermination point about hybrid conceptions that accept the subordination thesis, however, it ceases to make sense to try to capture this ethical importance by means of a static component of my conception of happiness. For whether or not that component is satisfied has become disconnected from my activity as an agent. The conceptual material by which I determine how I will live, we've just seen, is provided by the dynamic component of the *EN* conception. So, if we insist on retaining the static component, the realisation or lack of realisation of that static component will not be connected to that for the sake of which I am living. My living for the sake of the dynamic component fully determines how I will live; there is no sense in which I am living for the sake of the static component except that I have an idle hope that it will be realised. But what my conception of happiness is is determined by that for the sake of which I actually live. Even if I insist, in speech and thought, that I don't count my life as happy unless it is lived in a particular kind of circumstances, if the only conception of happiness for which my actions reveal me to be living is purely dynamic, then I have a purely dynamic conception of happiness. As I will have, if I start with the *EN* conception, and my description of the slide into a purely dynamic account, above, is correct.

Another way to understand the argument I've been making is as a defence of the Stoic view that there are two kinds of value: the value of virtue or virtuous activity, and the value of the preferred indifferents.[25] Once we recognise that these two kinds of thing are valuable, we further see that they are valuable in different ways. Virtuous activity is unconditionally good, always to be engaged in, while circumstances in which I possess the preferred indifferents are to be pursued only when that can be done virtuously, which is just to say, when it is practically wise to pursue them. This is the subordination thesis. Once we recognise this, though, it becomes difficult to see how whether or not I actually possess the preferred indifferents could be relevant to the question of whether my life is good. What matters is whether my life is one in which I pursue the preferred indifferents virtuously; the kind of value that they have is, as it were, internal to the practice of practical reason. If we ask for

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[25]This Stoic view was discussed briefly in ch. 1, sec. 6.

a sense in which their presence *simpliciter* contributes to the goodness of my life, we are not able to give a straight answer; all that we are able to say is that a practically wise life is valuable, and within the practice of practical reason there are some things that are treated as valuable in the sense of being worth pursuing, so long as that can be done virtuously (Annas 1993, 392–94, 397–98, 402, 432).

It is worth contrasting this sense in which good circumstances have only conditional value with a different kind of conditional value, that they would have on a hybrid account like Aristotle's, and that was raised briefly in ch. 1, sec. 6 as part of my initial explanation of the role of the subordination thesis.[26] We noted there that Aristotle (*EN* V.1, 1129b) takes external goods to be conditionally good in that they are only good for a person to possess if that person is well-suited to possession of those goods. For example, wealth is only good for someone who handles being rich well; for someone who is not good at disposing of their wealth, large amounts of money would actually be bad. This is distinct from the account now under discussion. The Aristotelian view takes the conditionality to apply to whether the *possession* of external goods would be good or bad. A purely dynamic view takes the *pursuit* of external goods to be what is only good conditional on whether they can be pursued virtuously. *On the* EN *conception, it is only the latter of these two senses of conditionality that can be connected with eudaimonic reflection, so the view slides into a purely dynamic conception.* Accepting the subordination thesis makes the value of circumstances of living conditional. Once we recognise that this is conditionality in the rationality of pursuit, rather than the goodness of possession, the conditionality cannot be captured by adding a static component to our dynamic component and expressing our commitment to the subordination thesis by the relationship in which these two components sit. The conditionality can be understood only as internal to the dynamic component, and then we can discard the static component.[27]

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[26]Also cf. Russell (2012, 69, n. 10).

[27]Russell (2012, ch. 5) argues that if we draw the distinction between the living of a life and the circumstances of that life in the way that I have done, we inevitably slide into Stoicism. In the next chapter we will see that Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism is compatible with the rejection of the thesis that virtue is sufficient for happiness, so the argument I've made here is not quite the inevitable slide to which Russell refers, but there are certainly similarities.

CHAPTER 5

PURELY DYNAMIC EUDAIMONISM

1 How virtuous activity alone can be a conception of the good

In this chapter I'll explain just how Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism amounts to a concrete eudaimonism, situating it in the framework of ethical views established in ch. 1 (esp. secs. 2–3). Let me begin by noting that minimal eudaimonism's minimal, functional characterisation of virtue (ch. 1, sec. 9) is already sufficient to commit every possible purely dynamic view to the thesis that happiness is virtuous activity. Different possibly purely dynamic concrete eudaimonisms will thus not be differentiated by whether they take happiness to be virtuous activity or some other kind of activity. Rather, they will be differentiated by having different theories of virtue and virtuous activity, and correspondingly different accounts of how virtuous activity alone can constitute a conception of the good. Another way to put this is that all purely dynamic views hold that happiness is engagement in activity that expresses a commitment to the good, from minimal eudaimonism's minimal account of virtuous activity, but different purely dynamic views will differently describe what counts as activity that expresses a commitment to the good.

Let's briefly see why, under minimal eudaimonism, every purely dynamic view holds that happiness is virtuous activity. Recall (from ch. 1, sec. 9) that according to the minimal eudaimonist a virtue is any trait that enables its possessor to live well. Living well must then be just virtuous activity, because for someone to live is for them to exercise character traits, and we've already stipulated that the virtues

are whichever traits are exercised when someone's living amounts to living well. Now on a purely dynamic view, to live well is to live for the sake of a purely dynamic conception of happiness, but to live for the sake of a dynamic component is just to engage in the activity specified by that component. So on a purely dynamic view, happiness is living well. But under minimal eudaimonism, living well is virtuous activity. So on any purely dynamic view, happiness is virtuous activity.

Given the foregoing, we can see that Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism will amount to a concrete eudaimonism in virtue of making claims about the nature of virtue, and about the nature of virtuous activity, that go beyond those to which all eudaimonists are committed, and in particular beyond those to which all possible purely dynamic views are committed. My primary purpose in this chapter is not, however, to defend Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism's distinctive claims about the nature of virtue and its exercise in opposition to other possible purely dynamic views. The primary goal of this dissertation is to defend the view that happiness is virtuous activity. I take it that this goal cannot be achieved without explicitly exhibiting and defending a *concrete* conception of happiness which equates happiness with virtuous activity, and up until this point that has not been done. What we've seen so far is basically a *negative* case against the alternatives to purely dynamic concrete eudaimonisms: we had better be eudaimonists because non-eudaimonist views get into trouble (ch. 2), and eudaimonists had better have a purely dynamic view because static and hybrid eudaimonisms get into trouble (chs. 3–4). Logically speaking, that work does constitute an argument in favour of purely dynamic concrete eudaimonisms, which, as we've just seen, all say that happiness is virtuous activity. However, we noted (ch. 1, sec. 3) that while minimal eudaimonism puts constraints on conceptions of happiness, it is not meant to be persuasive on its own, specifically because it does not say enough to yield its own conception of happiness. So if defending the view that happiness is virtuous activity does require explicitly exhibiting and defending a conception of happiness, then we need a concrete eudaimonism. Defending Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism's distinctive claims is thus my *positive* case for the view that happiness is virtuous activity.

Another way to put this is that minimal eudaimonism's minimal, functional characterisation of virtue is too permissive in what it counts as a virtue for the arguments I've given so far to amount to a sufficiently robust defence of the view that happiness is virtuous activity. To positively defend the view

that happiness is virtuous activity, we need to explain and defend a concrete eudaimonism, not just minimal eudaimonism. My approach to doing that, in this chapter, is to say more about what virtue is, and how thinking of virtue that way allows us to apply the framework of minimal eudaimonism to give good responses to the problems for eudaimonism that I raised in ch. 1, sec. 1.

The two distinctive ideas about virtue that distinguish the Purely Dynamic Eudaimonist from other possible purely dynamic views are the thesis that virtue is not perfectible, and the thesis that to exercise virtue is always further to develop it. The second of these implies the first, but the reasons for adopting each thesis are different. Now, these two ideas have both already been invoked, in ch. 3, sec. 4, in the service of arguing against purely static eudaimonism. In making that argument there was no need to carefully distinguish between the two theses. Here my goal is to carefully specify what's distinctive about Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism, so I'll avoid running them together as was done there.

Virtue is always in progress

The first distinctive idea of Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism, as opposed to other possible purely dynamic views, is that virtue is not perfectible. Specifically, while on any purely dynamic view eudaimonic reflection makes our conception of virtue more determinate (because eudaimonic reflection makes our conception of the good more determinate, and on any purely dynamic view the good is virtuous activity), the Purely Dynamic Eudaimonist claims further that it can never make our conception of virtue *fully* determinate (Annas 2011, 38). We are not ever done with eudaimonic reflection. Successful eudaimonic reflection makes our conception of our own good more determinate, but never to the point that that conception becomes fully determinate. This is a structural point: the imperfectibility of virtue is not just the result of human limitations. It is a conceptual point about the shape of the practical understanding (ch. 1, sec. 8) that's embodied in the virtues.

As we saw in detail in ch. 3, sec. 4, the Purely Dynamic Eudaimonist holds that virtue is not perfectible thanks to her empiricism about practical knowledge and understanding. Briefly, practical understanding requires practical experience, and so the extent to which we've acquired virtue is limited by the range of situations we've actually had opportunity to live in. But the world is sufficiently large and varied that there are always meaningfully new practical experiences available to us. So

there is always more to learn. Thus, virtue is always in progress.[1] This does not mean that what we learn is fundamentally relative to the situations in which we learnt it. The experience which taught me how to be courageous in social situations taught me something of courage *simpliciter*, rather than a practical understanding applicable only to social situations. However, acquiring other aspects of the general virtue of courage would require me to make the attempt to live courageously in other kinds of situation too, such as those involving physical danger.

This idea distinguishes Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism from purely dynamic views which hold that virtue is perfectible, such that the happiest life is one in which I engage in activity which springs from perfect virtue. Perfect virtue corresponds to a fully determinate conception of the good.[2]

To exercise virtue is always further to develop it

The most distinctive aspect of Annas's (2011, chs. 2–3) application of the skill analogy for the virtues implies the second distinguishing claim of Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism.[3] Annas points out that the exercise of a practical skill is never the exercise of a static condition, instead being always either an improvement or worsening of that skill. And she argues that the virtues are analogous to skills in this respect:

[1]Kant (1996, 6:409) concurs that "[v]irtue is always in progress," and Mark Timmons suggested to me that this could indicate that he has a dynamic account. Furthermore, Kant's (1998, A814/B842 as cited by Wood 1970, 84) view that happiness forms part of the highest good only to the extent that it is deserved; his conception of virtue "as worthiness to be happy" (1996, 5:110); and his opening claim that the only thing that's intrinsically valuable is a good will (1996, 4:393) are, taken together, structurally analogous to the subordination thesis. Of course, Kant's conceptions of both virtue and happiness are very far from any eudaimonist's. While he may say that virtue and happiness are jointly constitutive of the highest good, that's not because Kantian virtue is constitutive of Kantian happiness. So the relevance of Kant's idea that virtue is always in progress to Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism cannot be straightforward.

[2]It would be misleading to call this "perfectly virtuous activity" because someone with less than perfect virtue might be able to act as virtuously as possible—perfectly virtuously—in all of the situations which actually arise for her.

I said in ch. 3, sec. 2 that a purely dynamic view cannot capture the perfectibility of virtue as constitutive of happiness. So the alternative purely dynamic views considered in the text are those which hold that perfect virtue is possible, but not constitutive of happiness. Such a view might be motivated by the idea that perfect virtue is a coherent ideal, but not something achievable by us in our lifetimes.

[3]I take Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism to be a friendly development of the views advanced in Annas (2011). Specifically, while Annas avoids committing herself to a purely dynamic view ("living virtuously will in *at least in part* constitute living happily" (Annas 2011, 147, emphasis added)), nothing that the Purely Dynamic Eudaimonist holds is incompatible with anything that Annas says.

If we read especially the later chapters of Annas (2011) as working to construct a purely dynamic view which is Stoic in the senses of allowing no constitutive role in happiness for anything but virtuous activity and understanding the affective side of virtue highly cognitively, then Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism is a continuation of that work. Also cf. Annas (2011, 168, n. 19).

> [A] habituated activity does not reach a plateau of routine which, once established, is
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> unchanging and can be left alone; it needs constant monitoring for improvement or wors-
>
> ening. Skilled dispositions are not static conditions; they are always developing, being
>
> sustained or weakened. One of the major suggestions of this book is that virtue is like
>
> practical skill in this respect (as well as some others). (Annas 2011, 14)

If the virtues are indeed conditions that are either being sustained or weakened (by development, however trivial),[4] then the exercise and the development of virtues can't be separate processes. They must be intertwined. On a purely dynamic view which equates happiness with virtuous activity, this would mean that our conception of the good is always under development, even as we try to live for its sake. Living for the sake of our conception of the good is simultaneously to live in accordance with that conception and to engage in the development of that conception. These two processes are inextricably intertwined. A worsening of virtue would be a case of the misdevelopment of someone's virtue, pushing it in wrong directions.[5]

The skill analogy is a good way to introduce and defend the idea that to exercise virtue is always further to develop it. In ch. 3, sec. 4, I advanced a novel way to get to the same place, and which does not directly rely upon the skill analogy. The key idea is that the exercise of virtue involves the bringing together of our conception of how to live well with the situation in which we find ourselves, and each time at least one of these two things will be different from how it was last time. Bringing them together, then, will require creative thought, thus further developing our conception of how to live well, however trivially. Note that ensuring that our conception of how to live well will be different each time relies on the idea that virtue is not perfectible (perfect virtue is unchanging (ch. 3)), and thus this second distinctive idea of Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism implies the first.

The idea that to exercise virtue is always further to develop it lends support to the minimal eudaimonist's claim that eudaimonic reflection need not be explicit (ch. 1, sec. 8). We don't get to press pause on our lives and make a hard switch from living to reflecting on our living; instead, our

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[4]Julia Annas, in conversation, suggests that the exercise of virtue might sometimes merely *maintain* virtue, without thereby further developing it. However, if we make the point that to exercise virtue is always further to develop it in terms of creativity, as I did in ch. 3, sec. 4, then there is no hard distinction between maintenance and further development. Maintenance is achieved by means of further development, even if the latter is very small.

[5]Also see ch. 1, n. 13 (p. 20, above).

eudaimonic reflection has to be some part of our living, and so it will often have to be implicit. In particular, there might be circumstances in which making my eudaimonic reflection explicit would be an indulgence, preventing me from doing what needs to be done. In this case, to make my eudaimonic reflection explicit would not be to live well. Thus, in contrast with minimal eudaimonism, Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism is not neutral between implicit and explicit eudaimonic reflection. By adding the idea that to exercise virtue is always further to develop it, Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism integrates eudaimonic reflection into the living of a life in such a way that sometimes implicit reflection is *better* than explicit reflection (and vice-versa).[6]

On Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism, then, engagement in eudaimonic reflection is itself something for the sake of which we are committed to living, or, to engage in eudaimonic reflection is itself to live for the sake of what's good. Engagement in eudaimonic reflection is taken to be partly constitutive of our good, in the sense of being a constitutive aspect of a dynamic component.[7]

How these two theses yield a conception of happiness

We can summarise the Purely Dynamic Eudaimonist's position as the view that happiness is virtuous activity, where that's the intertwined activity of living for the sake of what we think is valuable, and engaging in (explicit or implicit, as circumstances demand) eudaimonic reflection to steadily develop and improve our conception of what's valuable. This is a concrete eudaimonism, making substantive claims about happiness beyond those made by minimal eudaimonism. Specifically, only *fundamentally improvable* traits will count as virtues. This gives a distinctive shape to the conception of a good life that's yielded by Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism. It's a life in which an agent continually employs her ability to learn from her practical experience, in the specific sense of developing flexible (ch. 1, sec. 7), practical understandings of what's valuable. The goodness of a life is constituted by this intertwined activity of simultaneously deploying and developing a conception of the good, where that conception is embodied in the possession of (the Purely Dynamic Eudaimonist's conception of) virtues, and thus has a distinctive, skill-like shape.

We must make a small qualification to this summary as stated. To what extent must our concep-

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[6]Bloomfield (2014, 198) connects learning to reflect well with the virtue of temperance.

[7]I believe that a corresponding point would follow from what Annas (2011, 16–20) calls the "drive to aspire".

tion of happiness be correct in order for us to count as living happily? There must be some sort of correctness condition. Not any purely dynamic conception of happiness will do, because Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism should not count someone with all wrong ideas about her own good as living happily. There is a theoretical difficulty here. The permanent indeterminacy which the Purely Dynamic Eudaimonist ascribes to conceptions of happiness entails that there will always be a sense in which anyone's conception of happiness is deficient. Thus, the Purely Dynamic Eudaimonist can't simply say that happiness is the intertwined activity when that activity involves exercising and developing an unambiguously *correct* conception of happiness, because no-one will have one of those. It would also be inadequate to say that someone is living happily to the extent that their conception of the good approximates a completely correct conception of the good. For this would be to ignore the empiricism about practical knowledge that underlies Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism's distinctive theses. The content of someone's grasp of what's valuable is determined by the practical experiences they've actually had, such that different agents will have better understandings of different aspects of the good. And then it is not meaningful to ask which of them more closely approximates a correct conception of the good, and thus there is not any robust sense in which we can define the extent to which someone is living happily in terms of the extent to which her conception of the good approximates a unambiguously correct conception of the good. We can't get a single scale of approximation-to-correctness out of the practical empiricism.

We can resolve this by saying that, under Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism, someone's conception of happiness is sufficiently correct for her to count as living happily just when it's as correct as we can reasonably expect it to be for (i) someone of her age (ii) living in cultural and material circumstances like hers.[8] If someone has failed to acquire from her culture certain pieces of knowledge about her own good that we would expect someone of that age to have acquired, she won't count as living happily. The use of the vague expression "reasonably expect" allows this dynamic conception of happiness to flexibly accommodate many different cultures. I'll give one example, here, of applying the criterion. If someone in their thirties living in a contemporary market economy thought that they should live

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[8]Annas (2011, 42–46) makes a similar move in her discussion of moral progress, where a similar theoretical difficulty arises. Markovits's (n.d.) account of the partial relativism of praise and blame makes a corresponding appeal to what we can reasonably expect of members of our own culture. Also cf. Hursthouse (1999, 148 ff.).

for the increase in their salary alone, with all other commitments coming in second place or lower, we would say that they are failing to live happily. We can reasonably expect thirty-somethings living in contemporary market economies to have realised that this is not something for the ultimate sake of which it is worth living.[9]

In summary, the Purely Dynamic Eudaimonist says that someone is living happily to the extent that they're exercising (and thereby further developing) whatever virtue they have, so long as they haven't failed to develop that virtue to the extent that we could reasonably expect an average individual in their cultural and material circumstances to have developed it. This latter condition is satisfied, definitionally, by most people. Thus, for most of us actual people, the view says we're living happily to the extent that we exercise the virtue that we've acquired. Couldn't most of us be doing much better, though? Yes—and since our external circumstances do actually put us in a position to know that we could be doing much better, we would not be living happily if part of our living were not the attempt to do better. Doing the best we can reasonably be expected to do in our circumstances is enough for Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism to count us as living happily (or: we're living happily to the extent that we're doing the best we could reasonably be expected to do).[10]

2   Further consequences of the two distinctive ideas

The second distinctive idea of Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism raises a question about children. Should the Purely Dynamic Eudaimonist deny that virtue can additionally be developed *independently* of its exercise? If she does deny that possibility, then there is something of a bootstrapping problem. If virtue cannot be developed independently of its exercise, the only way to further develop a virtue would be to already possess at least something of that virtue. We would then have to say that children are born already to some degree virtuous, and all they have to do is further develop what they already have.

This, however, would fail to do justice to the transformative effects of the acquisition of practical wisdom as children become adults. In this transition, we do not simply develop something we already

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[9]See Annas (2011, 34) for another example.

[10]Note that exercising whatever virtue I actually have right now is something under my control, while the extent to which I've managed up to this point in my life to develop virtue is at least not fully under my present control.

have, but seem instead to acquire something new. It fits the nature of human development better to say, with *EN* VI.12–13, that children can have an assortment of natural virtues or protovirtues, but the acquisition of actual virtue requires the development of a practical understanding which only actual experience of living and engaging in eudaimonic reflection on that living can provide.[11]

Thus, the Purely Dynamic Eudaimonist should allow for a distinction between developing the virtues independently of the exercise of virtue, and developing the virtues as part of exercising what virtue we have. The former will be what children do, gradually switching over to the latter as they acquire a sufficient degree of practical wisdom. We can note as a consequence of this view that Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism will not count children as living happily until they've moved beyond only developing virtue, to engaging in the intertwined activity of simultaneously exercising and further developing virtue. This is a welcome conclusion, because we think of the happiness of children as something altogether different from the happiness of adults. And virtuous activity is the happiness of adults, not of children.

The affective side of virtue

Our discussion so far has been dominated by the cognitive aspects of virtue. However, eudaimonists since at least Aristotle take it that the exercise of virtue involves both thinking and feeling rightly, and even the historical Stoics were unwilling to subsume the latter *entirely* to cognition.[12] How, then, is the process of eudaimonic reflection meant to establish and develop the right affective capacities as part of establishing and developing virtue? A complete account of this is beyond the scope of this dissertation, in which our focus is on the structure of conceptions of happiness, not the relationship between these conceptions and affectivity. Indeed, Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism inherits minimal eudaimonism's agnosticity as to the extent to which the emotions are under our control, and thus the precise extent to which exercising virtue—which is under our control—involves affectivity (ch. app. A,

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[11]Correspondly, Hursthouse (1999, 106) maintains that children do not possess a concept of the good. Hursthouse (1999, 105–7) also argues that adults can't have natural virtue because to the extent that adults act from inclination and not phronesis, we are akratic, not naturally virtuous. She is then able to conclude that virtue cannot be just natural virtue plus phronesis, but a distinct disposition, nevertheless developed out of natural virtue.

[12]See Graver's (2007, ch. 4) discussion of the *propatheia*.

sec. 1, 1st preliminary). However, there are a few general, schematic remarks that we can make.[13]

The Purely Dynamic Eudaimonist assumes that the affective responses that are part of virtue are cognitive, at least to an extent such that they constitute an affective expression of relevant aspects of the agent's conception of the good. That is, the affective side of virtue is an intelligent expression of my beliefs about what's valuable. Thus, feeling rightly is part of virtue in the sense that affectively expressing relevant aspects of my conception of what's valuable is part of what it is for a human to live for the sake of her conception of what's valuable, or, part of what it is for a human to live well. Now, what we obtain from eudaimonic reflection is not just improved understanding, but an improved *practical* understanding of how to live well. A practical understanding, recall, is one the possession of which implies a corresponding ability to act in accordance with that understanding. Putting these two points together, for me to improve my practical understanding of how to live well must involve improving my ability to affectively express relevant aspects of my conception of what's valuable. So the sense in which eudaimonic reflection develops my affective capacities must be, at least, that it improves my ability to affectively express relevant aspects of my conception of what's valuable. And that is certainly something that can be part of the process of making my conception of the good more determinate. For the affective expression of relevant aspects of my conception of what's valuable is, on a purely dynamic view, part of my conception of what's valuable. To get affectively better is just another part of further refining my conception of happiness.

Let's see an example of how this is meant to go. Suppose that a series of experiences are feeding into a process of eudaimonic reflection that will result in my becoming more generous. Under Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism, this is understood as a process of refining my conception of the activity of living generously. This improves my ability to live well, because my conception of the activity of living generously is part of my conception of happiness, and living well is living for the sake of that conception, in the dynamic sense of attempting to engage in the activity it specifies. Now part of becoming more generous is having the appropriate affective response to and alongside generosity, un-

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[13]A related question is how Aristotelian habituation (*EN* II.1–4, 1103a14–1105b18) relates to the process of eudaimonic reflection.

It is important not to implicitly take the distinction between the cognitive and affective sides of virtue to be a hard distinction (Hursthouse 1999, 15–16).

generosity, and opportunities for generosity and ungenerosity, on the parts of both myself and others (Hursthouse 1999, 12). But if to have those affective responses is part of what it is to live well, then the having of those affective responses is part of attempting to live in accordance with my conception of the activity of living generously. And we have understood getting better at living in accordance with my conception of the activity of living generously as a matter of making that conception more determinate. I get better at affectively expressing relevant aspects of my conception of what's valuable by making more determinate my conception of the way in which living generously is valuable. That's because the relevant affective responses are intelligent, in the sense of being expressions of relevant aspects of my conception of what's valuable.

A secondary kind of value embodied in the practice of practical wisdom

The subordination thesis distinguishes between the goodness of circumstances and the goodness of living well. Any concrete eudaimonism which accepts that thesis owes us a more detailed account of exactly how the value of good circumstances and the value of the activity of living well are related. Purely dynamic views take only the latter to be constitutive of happiness, and this is how such views satisfy the first part of the subordination thesis, that only living well is good *simpliciter*. In what sense, though, do purely dynamic views allow good circumstances to have a relative value, per the second part of the subordination thesis? Answering this question will further specify the distinctive shape of the conception of happiness yielded by Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism.

What we can say is that circumstances are good to the extent that, all other things being equal, it is practically wise to pursue that sort of circumstances. This makes the valuing of circumstances something internal to the practice of good practical reasoning: to value them is to take steps to realise those circumstances, when virtue does not demand responding to one's present circumstances in other ways.[14] Note that this is to draw a rough and porous distinction, in virtuous activity, between pursuing standardly desirable circumstances, and not being able to pursue them. A good agent will have a conception of what material circumstances are generally worth pursuing for themselves and others: what sort of relationships are valuable, how many of them it is wise to invest in, what degree

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[14]Appeal to this way of valuing circumstances was made in arguing against the *EN* conception in ch. 4, sec. 2.

of material wealth it is worth pursuing, what sort of educational and economic opportunities ought to be available to people, and more. That same agent will also have an idea of when acting virtuously is not to pursue, and perhaps to frustrate, the realisation of desirable external circumstances. If the only way to obtain what would otherwise be a desirable level of material comfort is cowardly, say, the good agent will not pursue it. Following the historical Stoics, we can say that the good agent *prefers* good circumstances, while the holding of a dynamic account ensures that when considering her happiness she is *indifferent* as to whether or not those good circumstances are actually realised—good external circumstances may thus be called the *preferred indifferents* (Annas 1993, 97). External circumstances which are undesirable, other things being equal, may be called *dispreferred indifferents*. I'll adopt this convenient terminology.

Purely dynamic accounts in general are too thin to admit of a robust distinction between preferred and dispreferred indifferents. All we can say of purely dynamic minimal eudaimonism is that circumstances are good to the extent that it is practically wise to pursue them. This doesn't really distinguish, however, between virtuous activity that is in pursuit of preferred indifferents, and virtuous activity which is not. For there are circumstances in which the practically wise thing to do would be to pursue poverty, for political purposes, say. Purely dynamic minimal eudaimonism can't sharply distinguish this from the case in which the practically wise thing to do is to pursue material comfort, because it doesn't say enough about virtue. As a concrete eudaimonism, Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism is able to say, as part of its thicker conception of virtue, that practical wisdom is such as to divide, roughly, into the pursuit of preferred indifferents and virtuous activity which does not involve the attempt to realise preferred indifferents.[15]

In summary, the Purely Dynamic Eudaimonist's conception of what's valuable breaks down into circumstances that it's typically wise to pursue, and ways of living that are good *simpliciter*. The former is subordinated to the latter in that the pursuit of those circumstances is only good when what it would be to live well is to pursue those circumstances. Even though Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism

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[15]This is still probably a less robust distinction than the historical Stoics drew. They refer to a metaphysically robust notion of "natural advantage," and define the preferred indifferents as the naturally advantageous (Annas 1993, 97). The Purely Dynamic Eudaimonist does not appeal to any metaphysical distinction, but simply a rough division of the practically wise life for humans.

takes the good to be virtuous activity, the good agent will still possess a concrete conception of what external circumstances are typically to be preferred, and this will constitute a significant piece of their sophisticated conception of the good.

3   Responses to objections

In ch. 1, sec. 1, I said that a secondary objective of this dissertation is to support the unapologetic appeal to eudaimonia on the part of virtue ethicists; in particular, by making the structure of minimal and concrete eudaimonisms explicit, we can put ourselves in a much better position to respond to the egoism objection and to intellectualism worries. In laying out minimal eudaimonism we saw discussion of the egoism objection (ch. 1, sec. 3) and a response to intellectualism worries (ch. 1, sec. 8). Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism is able to respond well to the egoism objection, and among concrete eudaimonisms, to give the most convincing version of my response to intellectualism issues. In this section I'll explain how those responses go. Additionally, there is an objection to eudaimonism which is particularly pressing for purely dynamic views. This is the idea that a concrete eudaimonism has to equate happiness with something that is good *for me*, and it is more difficult to see how views with no static component can achieve that. In fact, though, Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism is able to respond well to this objection too.

The egoism objection

The objection, recall, is that if virtue or virtuous activity is partly constitutive of my own happiness, the justification for any given virtuous action will make ultimate reference to the fulfilment of my own conception of my own happiness, and that's objectionably self-centred. Let's put the objection to Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism in particular. Acting ethically requires treating others respectfully, and for no other reason than that they deserve to be treated respectfully. But on Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism, treating others respectfully is an aspect of living virtuously, which constitutes my happiness. And living well is to live for the sake of realising this conception. So according to the Purely Dynamic Eudaimonist, the good agent treats others respectfully because that activity is partly constitutive of the content of their conception of their own happiness, and in their living they are ultimately seeking

to realise that conception. But this is to treat others respectfully for the ultimate reason that it realises my own happiness, not to treat others respectfully for the reason that they deserve to be treated respectfully. So, we might conclude, whatever else it might be about, Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism is not about acting ethically.

The first thing to note in response is that purely dynamic accounts do not involve the agent's own moral perfection as constitutively part of their happiness, as purely static eudaimonisms do. So acting for the sake of the Purely Dynamic Eudaimonist's conception of the good is not to act ultimately for the sake of the state of possessing virtue, but for the sake of exercising virtue. And there's nothing essentially egoist about the latter. Indeed, on any purely dynamic view, developing the virtues is merely preparatory to actively exercising them. So the egoism objection to Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism cannot take the form of objecting to a self-centred focus on the development of the virtues, or self-perfection, as it might against purely static eudaimonism.[16]

Moreover, what then becomes clear is that acting for the sake of realising the Purely Dynamic Eudaimonist's conception of the good is just identical, in the example we're considering, with acting for the sake of respecting someone else's status as deserving of respect. What it takes to live for the sake of (what the agent understands to be) living virtuously, in the case we're considering, is treating other people with respect for the reason that they're deserving of that respect. Another way to put this is that living for the sake of my conception of virtuous activity, in a situation in which there is a requirement to treat someone with respect, can be constituted only by treating them with respect for the reason that they are deserving of that respect. Indeed, it's *only in* acting respectfully *on the basis of* the other person's deservingness *that* the Purely Dynamic Eudaimonist's agent realises her own good. Were she to act in the same way for any other reason (such as her own material benefit), she would fail to live for the sake of her conception of happiness.[17]

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[16]Annas (1993, 116) makes reference to the ethical inadequacy of a focus on being virtuous over exercising virtue. Also relevant is the idea of aiming to live well statically (ch. 3, sec. 1), though that need not entail an unwarranted focus on self-perfection. We saw (ch. 4, sec. 1) that agents might be driven to aiming to live well statically because they feel incapable of aiming to live well dynamically, but that might be precisely because they care about exercising virtue over its possession. For a different argument in favour of an emphasis on virtuous activity over virtue, see Nussbaum (2001, 323 ff.), where she gives an argument against static eudaimonism.

[17]We might say that my own good is just the good relative to my own agency—the part of what's good *simpliciter* for which it makes sense for me to consider myself responsible. Then it can't be objectionably self-centred to act benevolently for its own sake—which is certainly part of what is good *simpliciter*—just because doing so is also constitutive of my own

In short, eudaimonist views which take my flourishing to be constituted by my activity of living virtuously, rather than any static circumstances or states of affairs, are not vulnerable to the egoism objection because there is nothing essentially egoist about living virtuously. Under Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism, unlike with views which include static components, treating other people ethically is not instrumental means to my own flourishing, but identical with it, and thus is done for the right reasons.[18]

The intellectualism worry

Responding to the egoism objection required appeal to the particular theoretical structure of purely dynamic views. Our dialectical position with respect to the intellectualism worry is different: we were able to give a response to that objection back in ch. 1, sec. 8, with only the resources of minimal eudaimonism. Nevertheless, we can make the response stronger by appeal to Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism's role for the intertwined activity of simultaneously exercising and further developing our conception of the good.

The key is that Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism assigns a concrete role to implicit eudaimonic reflection as part of a life lived for the sake of virtuous activity. In sec. 1, above, we said that Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism, in contrast to minimal eudaimonism, is not neutral between implicit and explicit eudaimonic reflection. In particular, since the engagement in eudaimonic reflection is itself part of the activity of living well, whether or not that reflection should additionally involve making the agent's practical understanding explicit will depend on whether spending the time and effort to do that would be to live virtuously. Now, if my reframing of the problem in ch. 1, sec. 8 is correct, the intellectualism worry is pressing only when living well requires making eudaimonic reflection explicit and conscious to the extent that only a small subset of people are able to respond to the demand (recall from that discussion that the implicitness and explicitness of eudaimonic reflection is a matter of degree). For in such a case, the eudaimonist would be restricting the possibility of living well to only those with a

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happiness. This relies on drawing the distinction between living and circumstances in the way that I do (ch. 1, sec. 5).

[18]In giving this response I have not carefully distinguished motivational and justificatory versions of the problem—between the virtuous person's own reasons for what they did, implicit or otherwise, and the ultimate justification for what they did. I plan to develop an improved version of this response which is more careful in that respect. Thanks to Hallie Liberto for helpful discussion.

high degree of intellectual capacity. Note, though, that it will not usually be virtuous for someone to invest time and effort into making their eudaimonic reflection more explicit than they are readily able to make it, for that would come at the cost of engaging in virtuous activity which is more pressing. For example, there is no demand of virtue that non-philosophers come to an explicit understanding of the skill-like nature of virtue. And thus Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism does not issue in a demand satisfiable only by those with a high degree of intellectual sophistication. It would not be to live well for most of us to make our conception of the good explicit to a point that requires the development of a high degree of intellectual sophistication, and thus the Purely Dynamic Eudaimonist does not say that living well requires making our conception of the good that explicit. So the intellectualism worry cannot arise. We are all rightly said to love the noble to the extent that we live intelligently for its sake, and limiting our making that intelligence explicit will be itself partly constitutive of our loving the noble.

Happiness has to be something good *for me*

Let's first see why this objection is more pressing for purely dynamic views, in particular. Any account of happiness, the objector supposes, must yield some sense in which the realisation of its conception of happiness is *reliably good for* the happy person.[19] For example, a purely static account which equates happiness with pleasurable circumstances can say that pleasure is something people want, so it's good for someone to be in pleasurable circumstances—not just good *simpliciter*, but good *for that person*. A second important example, which will shortly help us see why the objection is particularly pressing for purely dynamic views, is a hybrid eudaimonism, such as the *EN* conception. Hursthouse (1999, ch. 8) argues that the virtues can be seen to reliably benefit their possessor in the sense that in typical circumstances they will result in a life that's better than a life lived without possession of the virtues. Unless we are very unlucky, being kind, generous and just will work out well for us.

In my terms, Hursthouse's claim is that the realisation of both the static and dynamic components of a hybrid eudaimonism will typically be good for us, and moreover, the realisation of each of the

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[19]Hursthouse (1999, 167) calls this "Plato's requirement on the virtues." Houston Smit suggested to me that 'happiness' and 'eudaimonia' both connote some sense of *satisfaction*, in a way that merely talking about the goodness of a life does not.

components will be good for the possessor of virtue *as a result of* their possession of virtue. Thus hybrid eudaimonism, which takes happiness to be partly constituted by the exercise of virtue, is a conception of happiness which is reliably good for its possessor. In what sense is realisation of each of the components meant to be good for us? For the static component, the thought seems to be that we'll be better able to live in concert with other people the more virtuous we are, and the better we're able to live in community with others, the greater the extent to which the static component of the hybrid eudaimonism will be realised. For the dynamic component, Hursthouse's (1999, 168) claim is that the ways in which the virtuous person would go on, in typical circumstances, are ways of going on that we pretheoretically take to be good for the agent. For example, in typical circumstances living honestly is just so much more straightforward than managing a web of lies. It's only when things are very bad that living honestly is something painful. Thus, the realisation of the dynamic component of a hybrid eudaimonism reliably benefits its possessor in the sense that in typical circumstances we prefer to live in ways that are virtuous. Possession of virtue reliably benefits its possessor in the sense that in typical circumstances it enables us to live in ways that we pretheoretically prefer.

Now let's consider purely dynamic views. We might at first think that the second part of Hursthouse's answer is available to proponents of purely dynamic views, too. The dynamic component of a hybrid eudaimonism is very similar to a purely dynamic conception's only component, so perhaps we can say, correspondingly, that realisation of this dynamic component is reliably good for us because we typically prefer to live in ways that are virtuous. The problem with this answer is that our preference, here, is qualified. Living in ways that are virtuous is pretheoretically preferred only in typical circumstances. If we're unlucky enough to be in certain sorts of bad external circumstances, living honestly is more painful than living dishonestly, and so the sense in which the virtues are good for us disappears. Now a hybrid view accounts for this, because it only takes us to be as happy as we could be when both its static and dynamic components are fulfilled. And the fulfilment of the static component of a hybrid eudaimonism is precisely the fulfilment of circumstances in which living virtuously is what we prefer. For example, on the *EN* conception (ch. 4, sec. 2), the fulfilment of the static component is possession of life circumstances in which we are not hindered from living virtuously, and it's just when living virtuously is straightforward in this way that we prefer to live virtuously.

So a hybrid eudaimonist like Hursthouse can argue that the fulfilment of her hybrid conception (by means of virtue) is reliably good for us because the static circumstances are good for us, fulfilment of the dynamic component in the case where the static component is realised is good for us because we prefer to live in those ways in those circumstances, and the virtues are reliably good for us because they are typically able to produce the fulfilment of both components. By contrast, a proponent of a purely dynamic view cannot say that fulfilment of the dynamic component will be reliably good for us in the same sense because fulfilment of a purely dynamic conception of happiness does not entail possession of circumstances in which living virtuously is what we prefer.

How, then, should the Purely Dynamic Eudaimonist respond when challenged to provide a sense in which engagement in virtuous activity is reliably good for the agent, and thus plausibly a conception of that agent's happiness? I suggest that possession and exercise of the virtues is good for the agent in being *practically satisfying* for that agent. Specifically, the Purely Dynamic Eudaimonist's intertwined activity of simultaneously developing and exercising virtue is the only practically satisfying response to the prompting of eudaimonic reflection by our practical experience. We want to know how to live well—this is the practical challenge with which our experience faces us—but we very quickly come to see that our attempt to do that is always a work in progress, in the specific sense that our attempt to live well is always simultaneously an attempt to better develop our conception of what it would be to live well. The distinctive claims about virtue made by the Purely Dynamic Eudaimonist establish the intertwined development and exercise of virtue as the only thing that answers this very practical need in a way that's satisfying. If we say that living well is living in ways that are instrumental to realising particular circumstances, our experience will demonstrate to us that unconditionally pursuing the realisation of particular circumstances is not to live well (even if those circumstances are the perfection of our own character). If we say that living well is living for the sake of both static and dynamic components where the former activity is subordinated to the latter, our experience will show us that our practical concerns turn out to be answered entirely by the latter activity (ch. 4, sec. 2). If we think that living well is engaging in a static, unchanging activity, our experience will show us that our epistemic situation with regard to the content of the activity of living well is different. Our rational

nature is such as to seek to live well and so make our life something good.[20] The Purely Dynamic Eudaimonist's conception of virtuous activity is practically satisfying in being the fulfilment of this rational nature. And the fulfilment of our own nature as agents is something good for us, not *just* good *simpliciter*. We pose the question of how to live well *to ourselves, for our own sake qua agents who must decide how to live,* which is what we most fundamentally are.

Why is the notion of what's practically satisfying a good way to understand the demand for a conception of happiness to be something that is good for the happy person? Well, Hursthouse's response on behalf of hybrid eudaimonisms can also be understood as implicitly an account of how hybrid eudaimonisms are practically satisfying. Hursthouse and the Purely Dynamic Eudaimonist just disagree about the nature of the practical demand to which their conceptions of happiness are responses (and my arguments against hybrid eudaimonisms in ch. 4 are correspondly a response to that dispute). To see this, we can restate Hursthouse's argument in terms of needs. A hybrid eudaimonist takes it that we have need for certain external goods, such as health and community, as partly constitutive of our happiness. We also have a need to be able to live in ways that we prefer. The virtues reliably obtain for us all of these external and internal goods, in reliably realising both the static and dynamic components of a hybrid conception, or, being virtuous and living virtuously will reliably ensure the satisfaction of our needs, internal and external. If my arguments against static and hybrid views in chs. 2–4 succeed, however, then our ultimate practical predicament is simply the question of how to live well, and the Purely Dynamic Eudaimonist's conception of the intertwined activity of simultaneously developing and exercising virtue is the practically satisfying response to that problem.[21]

4   A dynamic version of Wolf's view

In secs. 1–2, above, I gave a positive account of Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism, explaining how virtuous activity alone is best thought of as constituting a conception of happiness. To contribute further to the defence of the view that happiness is not just an activity but the Purely Dynamic Eudaimonist's

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[20]Recall ch. 3, sec. 3.

[21]We can think of the arguments in ch. 2, against views which reject the subordination thesis, in terms of the notion of what's practically satisfying, too. In failing to yield a final end for the sake of which we might live, those views are not practically satisfying.

conception of virtuous activity, I'll now return to Wolf's account of happiness, which we discussed in ch. 2, sec. 2. There I noted my interpretative view that a static account is the most natural reconstruction of Wolf (2016b, 2016a, 2015; Wolf et al. 2010), even though there exists a dynamic version of her view in the vicinity (I do not believe it is possible to read Wolf as advocating a hybrid account, in my sense). In this section, I'll show how a dynamic version of Wolf's account can be constructed, and then compare it with Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism. I will argue that the dynamic conception of happiness that we can obtain from Wolf's account cannot integrate the life of its possessor, just like the static version. Further, I'll bring the dynamic version of Wolf's account into direct contrast with Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism. What will emerge is that Wolf's account has a structure that's more complicated than that of Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism, but that complexity fails to help her case. Taking virtuous activity alone to constitute happiness turns out to be sufficient for the integration of lives, and indeed it does a better job than Wolf's account.[22]

A purely dynamic reconstruction of Wolf's account

In ch. 2, we saw that Wolf holds that there are three dimensions to the good life: morality; happiness$_W$; and meaningfulness. These provide us with reasons of duty, reasons of self-interest and reasons of love, respectively. When we interpret Wolf as offering a static conception of happiness, acting on the reasons provided by each dimension contributes to happiness in that it contributes to the obtaining or maintenance of particular static circumstances. Happiness is equated with the state in which we've adequately acted on reasons provided by each of the three dimensions, where the notion of adequacy is the one I used in ch. 2, sec. 2: we do not have unfulfilled duties, we have not neglected our own interests, and we have a sufficient amount of feelings of fitting fulfilment, where feelings of fulfilment are fitting when the objects the engagement with which generated the feelings of fulfilment are worthy of that engagement. This view rejects the subordination thesis because it takes acting on reasons provided by each of the three dimensions to be good only when that acting results in obtaining the static circumstances just listed, thereby subordinating the acting on reasons to the obtaining of circumstances. Further, this subordination of acting to circumstances is precisely the move that gives

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[22]Wolf's account rejects minimal eudaimonism. Thus, a purely dynamic version of Wolf's view need not say that happiness is *virtuous* activity, in the minimal eudaimonist's sense (ch. 1, sec. 9).

Wolf a static account.

To obtain a dynamic account, we invert this final step. We take the *acting* on reasons of duty, self-interest and love to be what constitutes happiness, such that acting on those reasons contributes directly to happiness, and any states of affairs that may or may not be produced by this acting are not considered to be constitutive components of happiness. Acting is an activity, so we are on the way to constructing a dynamic conception of happiness. It is worth emphasising, before going any further, how much of a departure this is from the spirit of Wolf's text. On this new view, the states that are the intended results of acting on reasons provided by each of the three dimensions have, at best, some kind of instrumental value. From the point of view of our own good, those states are valuable only because acting for the sake of obtaining those states is intrinsically valuable.[23] So feelings of fulfilment, and answering our needs for community and self-esteem (Wolf 2016a, 261–63), are not actually good or contributory to our happiness, but at best instrumentally good. This is a significant departure from the first order normative views that motivate Wolf's project.

To give a dynamic conception we must be able to identify the activity that the conception identifies with happiness. A dynamic conception says that someone is living happily when they're engaged in a certain sort of activity; to give a dynamic conception we must be able to say what sort of activity counts. On Wolf's view, there are three relevant activities: acting for the sake of moral reasons; for happiness$_W$ reasons; and for reasons of love. So what activity is happiness? We must disjoin the activities of acting for the sake of reasons provided by each of the three dimensions. The view has to be that someone is living happily just when they are acting for the sake of reasons provided by one or more of the three dimensions. Someone is living happily so long as they're acting for the sake of moral reasons, and/or reasons of self-interest, and/or reasons of love.

This cannot be the end of the story. The account, as it stands, counts as happy someone who acts on reasons of self-interest and of morality but not on reasons of meaningfulness, because the disjunction of acting on one or more of the three dimensions is satisfied by acting on two (or even one)

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[23]When the agent acts on reasons provided by each of the three dimensions, her conscious intention will not be simply to act on those reasons in order to contribute to her own good, but to obtain the intended results of those actions. This does not mean that when it comes to the agent's own good, it's only the acting on those reasons, itself, that constitutively contributes.

of them. This is precisely the kind of case that Wolf's account is designed to avoid; the whole point is to stress that self-interest and morality are not enough for the good life, because meaningfulness too is required. The static version of Wolf's account does not have this difficulty because we can look to the circumstances of adequately having acted on the set of reasons associated to a dimension. Someone is happy, on that view, only when they've adequately acted on reasons provided by each of the three dimensions. An equivalent move for the dynamic account would be to say that someone is happy only when they're acting on (non-trivial) reasons provided by all three of the dimensions at the same time, but this is no use because it is not the case that at any given moment one actually can act on all three dimensions. Often we can act on reasons associated to just one dimension. The general problem here is that in constructing this account, we have referred to only an activity and no circumstances of living, and this makes it very difficult to capture the notion of *having adequately acted* on certain classes of reasons. This shows that Wolf's view builds in a role for circumstances at quite a deep level.

Nevertheless, it is possible for us to continue to construct a dynamic version of Wolf's view. We replace each disjunct with an activity which, by stipulation, can be carried out only when we have most reason to act on reasons of that dimension rather than reasons of the others. Then happiness is the activity of acting on reasons of morality when we have most reason to act for the sake of reasons of morality, acting on reasons of self-interest when we have most reason to act on those, and acting on reasons of love when we have most reason to act on those. What reasons we most have reason to act upon is determined by the circumstances in which we find ourselves; for example, we should put our art project aside when someone urgently needs our help, i.e., we have most reason to act on reasons of morality rather than of love, in such a case. Note that while each of the disjuncts of this activity violates the subordination thesis, the disjunction of all three of them does not (as we should expect for any purely dynamic account). Considering the meaningfulness dimension, the activity of acting on reasons of love is subordinated to being in circumstances in which what we most have reasons to do is act on reasons of love; acting on reasons of love is not good *simpliciter*, but only good relative to being in the right kind of circumstances. And similarly for the other two dimensions. However, disjoining the three dimensions yields an activity which is compatible with the subordination thesis. Wolf's view assumes from the very start that our circumstances are always such that we most have reason to act

upon reasons of morality *or* reasons of self-interest *or* reasons of love, or some combination of reasons provided by more than one of the dimensions. So the disjunction of all three activities, where each is conditionalised on being in circumstances where that activity is what we most have reason to do, is good *simpliciter*. Its goodness is not relative to the goodness of any circumstances, because any circumstances are such that acting on the disjunction is good.[24]

What we now have in hand is a dynamic version of Wolf's view which accepts the subordination thesis. The only thing that is good *simpliciter* is one particular disjunctive activity. Circumstances of a life, such as the circumstance of having adequately acted on all of the three dimensions, are not part of the conception of happiness except in some derivative, non-constitutive sense.[25] We have observed some significant departures from Wolf's text which might reasonably be considered to do damage to the plausibility of the conception, and the activity identified with happiness is somewhat artificial. However, the view is superior to the static version of Wolf's account in at least the point that it inherits all the general advantages that dynamic views have over static and hybrid views. This conception of happiness is independent of any particular circumstances in which the agent finds herself, rejecting any constitutive role in happiness for external goods. It says that happiness is something that the agent makes for herself rather than something she might just acquire by accident, and it is more likely to be able to integrate lives because it does not have to negotiate between the realisation of both static and dynamic components, as hybrid accounts do. More concretely, we will see below that the dynamicity of this version of Wolf's account renders it invulnerable to one form of an objection I used against the static reading of Wolf in ch. 2.

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[24]This purely dynamic version of Wolf's view is eudaimonist in the sense of accepting the subordination thesis, but it rejects other aspects of the minimal eudaimonist's outlook. So it is most accurate to call it a non-eudaimonist purely dynamic view, even though it accepts the subordination thesis. The view is thus technically a counterexample to my claim that the subordination thesis is hewed to by all and only eudaimonist views. I do not think this is really a problem for me because the satisfaction of the subordination thesis by this purely dynamic version of Wolf's view requires a somewhat artificial process of construction, as we see in the text. Perhaps it could be argued that this purely dynamic view accepts the letter but not the spirit of the subordination thesis, but I won't investigate that any further here.

[25]I am deliberately avoiding saying anything very much about the nature of this derivative value, because it is not very important to my purposes here. What matters is that on this view, the activity is the only thing that is good *simpliciter*.

First argument against the dynamic version of Wolf

This dynamic version of Wolf's account of happiness is ultimately vulnerable to only slightly modified versions of the two objections I raised against the static version of Wolf's account in ch. 2. The first objection to the static version of Wolf's account was that we are committed to pursuing meaningfulness and happiness$_W$ ethically, and such a commitment cannot be captured by Wolf's morality dimension, or anything like it. The problem was that the maintenance of a state in which we do not have any unfulfilled duties cannot capture a commitment to *pursue in certain ways*—i.e., virtuous ways—whatever else it is that we pursue. The new, dynamic version of Wolf's view under consideration in this chapter replaces the maintenance of a state with the carrying out of a particular activity, but this does not help. For as specified, the dynamic version of Wolf's view says that our good is the activity of acting on reasons of self-interest and of love when those are the reasons that we most have reason to act upon, but it does not say anything about *how* we act upon those reasons, failing to capture the fact that we are committed to acting upon reasons of self-interest and of love ethically.

Once again, the problem here is not the highly Kantian flavour of Wolf's morality dimension. Even if the conception of morality in that dimension were to be broadened to include more than duties, it would still be orthogonal to the other two dimensions, and thus incapable of capturing our commitment to acting on reasons provided by those two dimensions ethically. It is the disjunctive structure of the account that makes it vulnerable to the objection.

It might seem that there is an obvious fix: modify the happiness$_W$ and meaningfulness disjuncts such that acting on reasons provided by those dimensions is part of happiness only when both (i) acting on those reasons is what we most have reason to do; and (ii) our acting on those reasons can be ethical. But this would be to throw out the most basic motivation for Wolf's project: that the happiness$_W$ and meaningfulness dimensions be sufficiently independent of ethical concerns. And even if a supporter of the dynamic version of Wolf is willing to bite this bullet, sustaining the view requires a highly complex and somewhat artificial conception of the activity identified with happiness, and it is no longer so clear what advantages it might have over Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism.

Second argument against the dynamic version of Wolf

Now let's consider the second objection I raised to the static version of Wolf's account in ch. 2. I argued that Wolf's account cannot integrate one's life unless it permits the development of an integrated conception of one's life overall (ch. 1, sec. 4), and then I showed that Wolf's conception cannot permit the development of such a conception. An integrated conception of one's life overall, recall, is a personalisation of a conception of my own good: given my circumstances, skills, abilities and tendencies, what kind of life should *I* lead? We can note that a conception of one's life overall is subordinated to one's conception of one's own good, in the sense that the reasoning that leads to developments in one's conception of one's life overall cannot change anything about one's conception of one's own good. Of course, attempting to develop a conception of one's life overall might reveal inadequacies in one's conception of one's own good, but logically speaking, one must resolve the problems in one's conception of one's own good on its own terms, before returning to the question of one's conception of one's life overall.[26]

The argument that the purely dynamic version of Wolf's account cannot make room for the development of an integrated conception of one's life overall is similar to the corresponding argument for Wolf's static account. As before, the problem is not obtaining a conception of one's life overall, but obtaining an *integrated* conception of one's life overall. A conception of one's life overall is integrated when it includes an explanation for why my conception of my own good requires my conception of my life overall to have the shape that it does. Let's consider the same example as we did in ch. 2. We suppose that someone is in a situation of war, and therefore spends disproportionately more of her life acting on reasons of morality than reasons of love, say. To be integrated, this person's conception of her life overall needs to say that her conception of her own good provides her with reasons to prioritise acting on reasons of morality over reasons of love in situations of war, and she's in a situation of war, so her conception of her own good has her prioritise acting on reasons of morality over reasons of love. In an important way such a conception of her life overall *makes sense of* her disproportionately acting

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[26]To make this additional subordination claim, which goes beyond what I said about conceptions of one's life overall when introducing them in ch. 1, sec. 4, is roughly equivalent to rejecting Russell's embodied conception (ch. app. A). If, as on his view, particular individuals and activities involved in my life are constitutive of the activity of living well, then changes to my conception of my life as a whole might impact my conception of my own good.

on reasons of morality. It does this by explaining that disproportionality in terms of the combination of her conception of her good and the circumstances in which she has to live.

Now, does the dynamic version of Wolf's account of happiness have the resources to explain this disproportionality? Once again, it fails to supply the needed materials. What it yields is that my good will be to prioritise acting on reasons of morality over reasons of love just when I'm in circumstances such that what I most have reason to do is act on reasons of morality and not reasons of love, *whatever the explanation is for that fact*. Constructed on the basis of the dynamic conception of happiness under consideration in this section, a conception of my life overall can say that I should spend more time acting on reasons of morality because this is a situation in which I do not have most reason to be acting on reasons of self-interest or of love, *not* because I'm in a situation of dire war. But the latter is what's required to render it intelligible why I'm so disproportionately acting on reasons provided by the morality dimension, which is what's required for my conception of my life overall to be integrated. On the dynamic conception under discussion, it's a brute contingency.

As in ch. 2, the next step in this second objection to the dynamic version of Wolf is to show that her account requires an integrated conception of one's life overall in order for it to be possible to integrate one's life *simpliciter*. The argument turns out to be a bit weaker than it was against the purely static version of Wolf considered in ch. 2. I established my conclusion there by showing that an integrated conception of one's life overall is needed in two cases: deciding between supererogatory reasons provided by at least two of the three dimensions, and deciding which dimensions to satisfy inadequately when it's not possible to fully realise Wolf's static conception of happiness. The second case, however, simply does not arise for the dynamic version of Wolf's account, because we have done away with the notion of adequately having acted on the reasons provided by a dimension. This is a general advantage of purely dynamic accounts: they do not build in something concrete to be achieved or maintained, and so do not have problems with our good taking different forms depending on whether or not we have achieved that something concrete.[27]

It is enough for my second objection, though, to show how Wolf's conception requires a conception

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[27]When we considered purely static eudaimonism, in ch. 3, we saw other problems with building in something concrete to be achieved.

of my life overall in the supererogation case. The argument has to be a bit different from ch. 2, but it is no more complex. Suppose that someone could go on to act for supererogatory reasons of self-interest, duty or love. How are they to decide between these? The dynamic version of Wolf's conception finds it difficult to say anything useful because of the nature of supererogatory reasons. In the normal, non-supererogatory case, the dynamic conception is able to say that we should act on reasons of duty over reasons of love, say, because if we've unfulfilled duties then we always have more reason to act so as to fulfil those duties than reason to act on reasons of love. With supererogatory reasons, however, moves like this are not available. What factors can determine whether we most have reason to act on supererogatory reasons of love, self-interest or morality? It is very hard to see how this question could be answered by reference only to the situation in which someone finds themselves, and an abstract, impersonal conception of their good. What's needed is information about *them*: their moral personality. Given how they are, and given that they are in a position to go above and beyond, should they go above and beyond in serving others, or in serving art, or in serving themselves? In order for this individual to make sense of the choice to act on one of these sets of supererogatory reasons over the others, or some specific combination, what is required is an integrated conception of their life as a whole. This can tell them why it is that in this situation, with their talents, their history and their conception of the good, what makes sense is acting mainly on supererogatory reasons of love, say. And as we've seen, such an integrated conception is not available on Wolf's account.

A possible response here is to argue that the notion of supererogation has disappeared, along with the notion of adequacy, in the move to a purely dynamic account. If there is no longer such a thing as an adequate investment in acting on reasons of self-interest, love and morality, then there is no longer such a thing as going above and beyond an adequate investment in these dimensions. This is right, but it puts a supporter of Wolf's account in a difficult position. For supererogation is something that follows naturally upon the first order normative motivations for a project like Wolf's. By introducing the three orthogonal dimensions, a proponent of Wolf's account is saying that when it comes to our good, the demands of the morality dimension are constrained by the importance of the other two dimensions. So there is a limit to what is morally required: roughly, in Wolf's terms, what is required is the satisfaction of our duties. There will, though, be plenty more that is morally good that can be

done beyond this; Wolf's point is that we will fail to realise our good if we pursue these morally good actions at the cost of investing in acting on reasons provided by the two other dimensions. In short, the view requires a notion of supererogation in order to express the idea that when it comes to our own good or happiness, what's morally required of us is not the only thing that counts.[28] So, in fact, this rejoinder actually strengthens the objection to the dynamic version of Wolf. For what it shows is that the view struggles in general to articulate supererogation, but it fails to show that the view has any less need for a notion of supererogation.[29]

This second objection to the dynamic version of Wolf's view, adapted from the second objection raised against the static reading of Wolf in ch. 2, can be stated in more general terms. When it comes to relating my conception of my good and the circumstances of my life, we need to know about the trade-offs between acting on reasons provided by each of the three dimensions. All the dynamic version of Wolf's conception is able to offer is that we should act on the reasons provided by a dimension when we most have reason to act on the reasons provided by that dimension. But that's just to restate the question. *When* do we have reason to act on reasons of morality over reasons of love, say? The dynamic version of Wolf's conception is silent on this question. And this is not merely the fault of my somewhat artificial, purely dynamic reconstruction of the view. For the resources to answer that question are basically absent from the original static reading of Wolf, too. Even though we were able to construct an activity to equate with happiness that yielded a view that accepts the subordination thesis, there is still an arbitrariness and lack of integration in the disjunction of the three dimensions into a single conception of happiness. The notion of adequacy is a purely schematic solution.

Another, less careful way to put this is to deny that anything like Wolf's view could yield a conception of happiness at all, because the simple disjunction of three different dimensions is not a *single* conception of happiness at all, but an arbitrary disjunction of three conceptions of happiness. In other

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[28]Note that someone who denies supererogation usually does this not by denying that the actions that Wolf calls supererogatory are morally good, but by saying that those actions too are morally required.

[29]How could a notion of supererogation be added to the dynamic version of Wolf's account under discussion? We would need to build a notion of adequacy into the disjuncts of the conception of happiness, such that it says we most have reason to act on reasons of love, say, only when we've no unfulfilled duties, which is to say that we've acted adequately on reasons provided by the morality dimension. But then the dynamic version of Wolf's conception loses its invulnerability to the case where someone is not able to act adequately on reasons provided by at least two dimensions; in such a case the account will not be able to integrate that person's life without an integrated conception of their life overall, which remains unavailable.

words, conceptions of happiness are not closed under disjunction: disjoining conceptions of happiness does not necessarily yield a conception of happiness. Conceptions of happiness are integrated, coherent things, and if they have components, work has to be done to integrate them. In particular, disjoining three activities does not yield an activity that is suitable to be a conception of happiness. Note that Wolf too recognises the inadequacy of failing to properly explain why components in a conception of the good life go together, in her insistence that the subjective and objective elements of meaningfulness be inextricably linked (Wolf 2016b, 260–61).

The contrast with Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism

Thus, the attempt to construct a dynamic version of Wolf's account fails. Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism, by contrast, compares very favourably with what we've just seen. For it addresses the driving concerns of Wolf's project without getting into any of the difficulties in my two objections, and without the complexity in construction of the account we just saw. The motivating worry for Wolf, recall, was that our good must be something broader than adherence to morality, but it must also be broader than just adherence to morality plus the promotion of my self-interest. Or, to look at it from the other direction, what must be added to self-interest to obtain a conception of happiness divides into two quite distinct things: we need both morality, and meaningfulness. I take Wolf's motivation to be on target, but my contention is that eudaimonism is the better response to the worry, and the problems for Wolf's response basically stem from her implicit rejection of eudaimonism.

The Purely Dynamic Eudaimonist's conception of virtuous activity, in particular, does not require supplementation by either self-interest or meaningfulness. For virtuous activity is controlled by the activity of practical wisdom (*EN* I.10, 1100b8–11 as cited by Russell 2012, 74), which brings together the following four things which are left unintegrated by Wolf's account: acting on reasons of self-interest; acting on reasons of morality; acting on reasons of love; and, crucially, determining what reasons one has to act on reasons provided by which dimensions. What we get is the lack of a meaningful distinction between these different sorts of reasons at the level of conceptions of happiness, because the notion of virtuous activity has unified the pursuit of reasons provided by each of the three dimensions. Instead, what remains of the distinction between the dimensions will be internal to the

practice of practical wisdom (sec. 2, above). In the exercise and further development of virtue, we will observe, perhaps, a deliberate commitment to the pursuit of meaningfulness at the occasional expense of self-interest and opportunities to serve others. Wolf's point becomes a call to develop such a commitment as part of the development of our own virtue. By making that a practical rather than a theoretical project, embedded in eudaimonic reflection, the task of integration is not made impossible by the introduction of three dimensions at the level of conceptions of the good.

On Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism, then, the task of balancing our concerns is theoretically delegated, as it were, to the practical understandings developed by actual agents. Wolf's point about the need to supplement moral demands with two other significant concerns is well taken, but it is best made with reference to individual's actual practical experience, rather than at the theoretical level at which we determine what's the most philosophically robust structure for conceptions of happiness. This is what a view like Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism enables us to do. It does not say, in advance, exactly what sort of reasons are those to which virtuous agents will be committed, and how those commitments will trade off against one another. This means that exactly how the commitments are integrated and traded off will itself constitute part of the activity of living for the sake of virtuous activity.

Note that this last point is captured particularly well by Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism's notion of virtuous activity, as simultaneously the exercise and further development of virtue. It is not just, as on any purely dynamic view, that the exercise of practical wisdom is needed in order to integrate our commitments to each of the three dimensions. Rather, that integration is itself simultaneously a matter of expressing in action our conception of how independent commitments to each of the three dimensions can be reconciled in a commitment to living well *simpliciter*, and a matter of improving our conception of how these different things together constitute living well.[30]

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[30]Julia Annas, in conversation, suggests that Wolf's view has our practical thinking *precompartmentalised*. It seems to say that we arrive at reflection already in possession of the three dimensions. But then, Annas asks, where did we get them from? On Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism, the fundamentally developmental nature of virtue does not allow issues like that to arise. For the work of dividing up our practical concerns into roughly independent dimensions is itself one of our practical concerns.

5   The necessity and sufficiency theses

The necessity thesis is the claim that virtue is necessary for happiness. The sufficiency thesis is the claim that virtue is sufficient for happiness. Each of these theses, as just stated, is ambiguous: to know exactly what is being claimed, we must disambiguate both 'virtue' and 'happiness'. But even before doing that, each of the theses is already arresting, and of normative significance. If virtue is necessary for happiness, we cannot get away with not being good: someone who is evil cannot be happy, no matter their power and riches. If virtue is sufficient for happiness, being good is *all* we need: no matter the material forces arrayed against us, we presumably still have it within our grasp to be good, and thus happy. Even though these intuitive claims inherit the ambiguity of the necessity and sufficiency theses—what is evil, how does it relate to happiness, and what does it mean to say that it remains within our grasp to be good?—they show us that whether or not we accept each of the necessity and sufficiency theses will have first-order normative impact. It will change how we relate to others, how we interpret events that go on around us, and perhaps most importantly, how we relate to ourselves and our own practical thinking.[31]

Given these powerful first order effects of both accepting and denying each of the two theses, I take it to be important to situate any proposed theory of happiness with respect to each of them, and that is my purpose in this final section. Note that we can do this only now. We don't start with the questions of whether virtue is necessary, and separately whether it's sufficient, for happiness. These questions arises once we get to the point in our account at which it is possible to give an account of the two theses. Once the question has arisen, though, we must respond. As Russell (2012, 94) puts it, "whatever we may say in the end about the sufficiency thesis, what we absolutely cannot do is ignore it. To ignore that issue would be to ignore a host of deep and important questions about what it means to be human and what it means to live a happy human life."

Under the theoretical structure of Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism, then, what do the necessity and sufficiency theses become—how are they disambiguated by the view? And is the truth or falsity of either of them determined by the view? To anticipate, in this section I will explain that Purely Dynamic

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[31]"The position we take on what virtue has to do with happiness is inextricably bound to how we define ourselves and our relations to persons and things in the world around us, …" (Russell 2012, 257) Also cf. Annas (2011, 146 ff.).

Eudaimonism's necessity thesis is true, but with regard to the sufficiency of virtue for happiness, Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism is compatible with its truth or its falsity. Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism allows virtue to be insufficient for happiness in only an attenuated sense, however, as we'll see.

Some of what I'll say in this section will be true of purely dynamic accounts in general, not just Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism. I'll take care to indicate when appeal is made to the distinctive ideas of Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism in particular, and when appeal to purely dynamic minimal eudaimonism is sufficient. Nevertheless, in this concluding section of the dissertation, my interest is in relating the view I've ultimately sought to defend to the necessity and sufficiency theses, and that view is Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism in particular, not purely dynamic views in general.

The necessity thesis

If we disambiguate 'virtue' and 'happiness' as they would be disambiguated by any purely dynamic minimal eudaimonism, the necessity thesis becomes trivial. According to minimal eudaimonism, virtue is what enables virtuous activity, i.e., virtue is a necessary condition for virtuous activity (ch. 1, sec. 9). Virtuous activity is the exercise of virtue, and you can't exercise virtue without virtue. Now, any purely dynamic minimal eudaimonism equates virtuous activity *simpliciter* with happiness. Thus, virtue is necessary for happiness.[32]

The fact that the necessity thesis has been trivialised by the time we reach it is not a problem for purely dynamic accounts. For the work was done in defending the view that happiness is virtuous activity. If happiness is virtuous activity, then it is trivial that virtue is necessary for happiness, but it was not trivial to establish that happiness is virtuous activity. So we need not be worried about how little work it takes to get from purely dynamic views to the truth of the necessity thesis.

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[32]In just a little more detail, on a purely dynamic view, happiness is virtuous activity *simpliciter*, which is the exercise of virtue *simpliciter*. The latter is the union of the character traits the agent possesses to the extent that those character traits are virtues, i.e., to the extent that they enable living well. It follows that each of these individual virtues is a necessary condition for the exercise of the agent's virtue *simpliciter*, and so each of these virtues is a necessary condition for the agent's virtuous activity, i.e., her happiness. (On Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism in particular, there will be the additional condition that the agent has acquired the minimum amount of virtue that we can reasonably expect people in their cultural and material circumstances to have acquired (sec. 1, above).)

The sufficiency thesis: preliminaries

Let's turn now to the sufficiency thesis. There are some pitfalls to be avoided here. Firstly, it is important to be clear that we are not talking about the sufficiency of virtuous activity for happiness, but about the sufficiency of virtue for happiness. For purely dynamic views all equate virtuous activity with happiness, which then makes it trivial that virtuous activity suffices for happiness. To say that virtue is sufficient for happiness, on the other hand, is to say that virtue is sufficient for virtuous activity. And given the necessity thesis as just discussed, that is to say that virtue, and nothing other than virtue, is necessary for virtuous activity. Given a purely dynamic view, then, determining whether or not virtue is sufficient for happiness is a matter of determining whether there is anything other than virtue that is necessary for the virtuous activity we're interested in. Given a purely dynamic view, the sufficiency thesis becomes the denial that anything other than virtue is necessary for virtuous activity qua the sole constituent of happiness.

Why take the sufficiency thesis to be about virtue rather than about virtuous activity?[33] Wasn't one of the whole points of a dynamic account to reorient us to thinking of our good as something that we do, not something that we are or have? Why should we be interested in the question of whether some state is sufficient for happiness? The question matters because of the first-order normative impact of acceptance or rejection of the sufficiency thesis. If sufficiency holds, then all that we need to *obtain* for ourselves is virtue, and virtuous activity—our good—becomes available. When we think about pursuing our good we are often thinking about what to obtain for ourselves; whether virtue is the only thing we need obtain thus matters a lot.[34]

The second potential pitfall, when talking about what other than virtue might be necessary for virtuous activity, is that we must be careful to distinguish what might be necessary for the development of virtue from what might be necessary for the exercise of virtue. In particular, the question of whether good circumstances of living are necessary for the exercise of virtue is left open by Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism, but the question of whether good circumstances of living are necessary for the development of virtue is not at all controversial. Recall (sec. 2, above) that the Purely Dynamic

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[33]*Pace* Russell (2012, 86).

[34]This framing that all we need obtain for ourselves is virtue is a theme in Plato, e.g. at *Gorg.* 522c.

Eudaimonist distinguishes between the development of virtue that's independent of the exercise of virtue, which is needed to avoid a bootstrapping problem for the development of virtue in children, and the development of virtue involved in the intertwined activity which results from the idea that to exercise virtue is always further to develop it. Let's consider these in turn.

Firstly, on Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism, whether there is anything besides virtue that is necessary for the development of virtue that's part of the intertwined activity reduces to the question of whether there is anything besides virtue that is necessary for the exercise of virtue. This is because the view maintains that to exercise virtue is always further to develop it.

On the other hand, I take it to be uncontroversial that the development of the virtues that goes on independently of the exercise of virtue requires sufficiently good circumstances of living, such that it cannot occur in bad circumstances of living. The point here is simply that if one's upbringing is sufficiently bad, or one suffers from very significant mental disability,[35] it will not be possible for one to develop virtue. For example, children in the worst Victorian workhouses might never have been in a position to come to see the point of living temperately. Specifically, they would probably not have been able to get even the minimal grip on living temperately that would be required to bootstrap themselves into the intertwined activity. This is because they were never, or only very rarely, put in a position to make their own choices about engaging with pleasurable things, so they could not see that there is a need to get into an appropriate relationship with those things so that one does not frustrate the achievement of one's other ends. Similarly, someone who never receives any kindness from anyone and never sees it passing between others, even if they're born with the natural virtue of kindness, will simply be unable to come to see that there is reason to be kind. And so on. The content of (actual, adult) virtue is sufficiently complicated that we cannot expect those who have never been in any circumstances but the direst to stand any chance of acquiring that practical understanding and habituation.[36]

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[35]Or a less significant mental disability in circumstances in which one cannot get enough help to mitigate the disability's worst effects.

[36]As Nussbaum (2001, 322; also cf. 336–7, 346, 400) puts it, Aristotle (*EN* I.9, 1099b18–19; also cf. X.9, 1179b–1180a) thinks of sufficiently bad circumstances as rendering us "ethically maimed" and thus unable to acquire virtue and so the good life. A bad upbringing blocks the acquisition of eudaimonia.

Graver (2007, 167–71) argues that the Stoics, too, had a role for moral luck in the development of virtue, even though they insist on no role for luck in the exercise of virtue.

There is a final distinction that we must make in approaching the question of whether anything
besides virtue is necessary for virtuous activity, which is, recall, what the question of the sufficiency
thesis becomes on a purely dynamic view. The distinction is between two senses in which so-called
external goods can be necessary for happiness.[37] In my terminology, external goods are good cir-
cumstances of living (which includes bodily goods, because these are not under the agent's control
(ch. app. A)). There are two respects in which these have been thought to be necessary for happiness:
a static and a dynamic sense.

The static sense in which external goods might be necessary for happiness is that a life might
not count as happy unless it is lived in circumstances of a certain sort. For example, if a life lived
in circumstances of unending dire poverty is not a happy life, then circumstances in which sufficient
food is available—the external good of having sufficient food—are necessary for happiness in the
static sense, and the sufficiency thesis is rendered false. Static and hybrid conceptions of happiness,
as discussed in previous chapters, hold that external goods are necessary for happiness in this way.

Secondly, external goods can be necessary for happiness in a dynamic sense. This comes from
the suggestion that happiness is an activity, but one that cannot be carried out in just any circum-
stances of living. It's possible to engage in the activity of living happily, it might be suggested, only
in circumstances in which certain external goods are available, such as blessed circumstances (ch. 4,
sec. 2). External goods are necessary for happiness in a dynamic sense if the activity ultimately iden-
tified with living well cannot be carried out in circumstances in which those external goods are not
available. An admittedly crude example of this, just to make the point, is the idea that exercising the

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Some contemporary discussions on what's externally required for the development of virtue to be possible are Annas
(2011, 31–32, 53–65) and Curren (2014).

The idea that sufficiently good circumstances of living are required for the development of virtue to be possible has
given rise to the elitism objection to virtue ethics (e.g. Simpson 1992). Aristotle's (*EN* IV.2–3) discussion of magnanimity
and magnificence, in particular, has given the impression that the circumstances required for the development of virtue
are not accessible to most people.

It is beyond my scope to consider the elitism objection in any detail. I'll note, though, that the sorts of examples I raise
in the text put pressure on proponents of any ethical theory to accept that whether or not it is possible for someone to
become ethical is dependent on having sufficiently good circumstances in childhood. Kant's apparent insistence, in his
"fragment of a moral catechism" (Kant 1996, 6:480–84), that any child is able to figure out the content of the moral law
all by herself, no matter her circumstances, is not plausible. If it were not for having sufficient external goods, we would
not come out with the right beliefs about the moral law.

[37]We've already seen this distinction between two senses in which external goods can be necessary for happiness in the
context of discussing the *EN* conception (ch. 4, sec. 2).

virtue of generosity requires one to be in sufficient possession of external goods. The point can be seen by noting that if you are too monetarily poor and generosity involves giving money to others, it is not possible for you to be generous, but the thought generalises to any kind of resource: if you have to work sixteen hours per day to stay afloat, you cannot be generous with your time. If happiness is virtuous activity, and generosity is one of the virtues that must be exercised in order for someone to count as adequately engaging in virtuous activity such that they count as happy, then external goods are necessary for happiness in a dynamic sense.

The sufficiency thesis under Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism

With these clarificatory points settled, we can turn directly to the question of whether, on Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism, anything besides virtue is necessary for happiness. I'll narrow my discussion at this point and consider only whether, on Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism, external goods are necessary for happiness. There are a few reasons for this. Firstly, I cannot see how something other than virtue could be both thought to be necessary for happiness, and not be conceivable as circumstances of living. Secondly, I am not aware of anything that's been defended as necessary for happiness other than virtue and external goods. And thirdly, the question of whether external goods are necessary for happiness has a rich history of deep controversy (Annas 1993, ch. 21; Russell 2012, 9); by discussing this question I am engaging with what everyone else has taken to be the most salient candidate. On the question of external goods, does Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism side with Aristotle and the Aristotelians, or with Plato and the Stoics?[38]

Well, firstly, any purely dynamic view rules out the possibility that external goods are necessary for happiness in the static sense. The view equates happiness with an activity, and denies the existence of any static component. Indeed, to reject a static role for external goods is precisely to reject static and hybrid conceptions of happiness in favour of purely dynamic accounts. Most of what we've seen in the previous chapters has, we can now see, been indirectly an argument to the conclusion that external goods are not necessary for happiness in the static sense.[39] The question that remains is whether, on Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism, external goods are necessary for happiness in the dynamic sense. In

[38]On Plato see Annas (1999, 5). On the Stoics, see Annas (1993, 166, 431). On Aristotle, see *EN* I.10.
[39]See n. 3 (p. 195, above).

fact, Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism does not settle this question. What Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism says about virtue does not amount to a complete virtue theory, and the view is thereby compatible with both accepting and rejecting the necessity of external goods for virtuous activity. What I'll now do is consider two ways in which one could make further claims about virtue, in addition to what Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism says, that *would* settle the question of whether external goods are necessary for virtuous activity.[40]   Neither of these two sketches of accounts are entailed by Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism. Adopting either of them requires more than the arguments I've given in favour of Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism, and I will not do more than gesture at the reasons why one might find these accounts attractive. This is because my purpose is to defend Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism, and not either of the following two views; I give these two views here only in order to show how Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism is compatible with both accepting and rejecting the necessity of external goods for virtuous activity.[41]

Let us consider first how what we can call an *Aristotelian Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism* would reject the sufficiency thesis.[42] Such a view holds that virtuous activity is a kind of activity that cannot go on without a certain level or kind of external goods.[43] At a bare minimum, virtuous activity involves movement of the body, and so it requires a certain minimal level of health and freedom. This is just a claim about what it is to exercise a virtue: the kinds of traits the exercise of which constitutively matters for happiness are those that involve movements of the body, and thus are dependent on a minimal level of external goods. This is a minimal rejection of the sufficiency thesis, but an Aristotelian might well go much further. They might take there to be many more virtues than just courage, temperance, compassion, wisdom and justice: perhaps there are particular virtues regarding particular spheres

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[40]A third possibility, which I'll not consider—it's unneeded to complete my purely illustrative purposes in the text—is a view with two dynamic components (ch. 4, n. 23 (p. 186, above)). The circumstances required for engagement in the activity specified by one of the two components would probably be blessed circumstances (ch. 4, sec. 2).

[41]I suspect that defending one or the other of these views will require saying more about what exactly is in our control, and what's not in our control (ch. app. A). The historical Stoics' idea that the emotions are in our voluntary control (Graver 2007, 62) is tightly integrated with their defence of the sufficiency thesis.

[42]As we saw (ch. 4, sec. 2), this could not be Aristotle's own view, which is a hybrid eudaimonism. He has both dynamic and static roles for external goods.

[43]Inwood (2014, 36) says that the sufficiency thesis "follows logically from a rigorous interpretation of the view that happiness just is a sustained pattern of activity in accordance with stable rational excellences." If by this he means that the sufficiency thesis is entailed by the idea that happiness is virtuous activity, then he's missed the theoretical option of Aristotelian Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism, which demonstrates that the sufficiency thesis is not so entailed.

of human life, and virtuous activity will require that we have the resources to engage in all of those spheres to at least some extent.[44] We might even require the capacity to give lavishly to civic projects, if we find ourselves in the position to do that, such that our circumstances must include riches in order for us to be happy.

On the other hand, we can accept the sufficiency thesis, defending what we might call *Stoic Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism*. What we do is continue to take virtuous activity to be the kind of activity that involves one's external circumstances, but hold that it can proceed just as well with external *bads* as it can with external goods.[45] In other words, virtuous activity is doing the best we can with whatever circumstances we find ourselves in, and there is no minimal level of external goods that is required for us to be able to exercise (and thereby further develop) what virtue we have.[46] If I find myself a prisoner of war, I can still live happily because I can still exercise virtue to do the best that I can with my circumstances: being courageous as I am threatened by the prison guards, treating my fellow prisoners with compassion and justice, being temperate in response to attempts to manipulate me into making things worse for my fellow prisoners by the prospect of material pleasures. An Aristotelian says here that I can't exercise very many of the virtues, such as generosity and justice, in a situation like this, but a Stoic holds that the practical understandings that constitute these virtues are equally well expressible with regard to external bads.

We can take a more extreme case. Suppose that I cannot move my body, such that my interaction with my circumstances is unidirectional: I can sense what is going on, but cannot do anything about it. The Aristotelian says that I cannot live happily because I am not capable of virtuous activity, because that activity is something that requires the external good of a minimal level of health such that I can

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[44]This is one standard way to understand the individuation of the virtues in *EN* (e.g. Curzer 2018).

[45]Nussbaum (2001, ch. 11) discusses the importance of activity, but it is worth noting that at least in that chapter she fails to recognise the possibility of Stoic purely dynamic accounts (and, I suspect, purely dynamic accounts in general). In particular, Nussbaum (2001, 325) seems to fail to recognise the possibility of virtuous activity that engages with external bads, discussing only virtuous activity which engages with external goods.

[46]Robert H. Wallace pointed out to me that if the development of virtue which goes on independently of the exercise of virtue requires external goods, then there is a derivative sense in which the exercise of virtue requires external goods, even on a Stoic Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism. For the exercise of virtue requires virtue, which requires previously having developed virtue independently of its exercise (otherwise there's a bootstrapping problem (sec. 2, above)), which requires external goods. This is worth noting, but it does not diminish the motivation to defend a Stoic Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism over an Aristotelian Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism. The first order normative importance of whether the intertwined activity requires external goods is not diminished by this derivative sense in which the exercise of virtue might require external goods.

move around. The Stoic, by contrast, says that virtuous activity is still possible here.[47] I can have

the right beliefs and affective reactions to what I observe, and my thoughts about what I *would* do

were I able to move can be had virtuously, or not. What we see, then, is that under Purely Dynamic

Eudaimonism, whether virtue is sufficient for happiness depends on what one's theory of virtue says

about whether any particular external goods are required to exercise virtue.[48]

We've drawn a number of distinctions, so let us now summarise the results of our discussion of the

details of how Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism—the view I'm defending in this dissertation—is related

to the necessity and sufficiency theses. Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism says that virtue is necessary

for happiness because happiness is the exercise of virtue, and virtue is necessary for the exercise

of virtue. Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism does not settle the question of whether virtue is sufficient

for happiness, but it does narrow the theoretical options down: if external goods are necessary for

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[47]Perhaps not the historical Stoics. Julia Annas, in conversation, argues that the historical Stoics rejected the idea of virtue in a void. Instead, they focus on the idea of virtuous activity that engages with external bads.

The Stoic notion of well-reasoned suicide might be in tension with Stoic Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism, though I'm not sure about this. Annas (*De Fin.* III, n. 36 (p. 84)) explains it as the view that "[a]lthough virtue is the only good and vice the only evil, it can be reasonable for the virtuous person to commit suicide in sufficiently unfavourable circumstances, which preclude a life of virtuous activity." (Also cf. Long and Sedley 1987, 428–29; Annas 1993, 408–9.) This view might entail that certain external goods, such as the circumstances of not living under a tyrant who coerces you do something vicious, are necessary conditions for virtuous activity to be possible.

This doesn't mean that a Stoic Purely Dynamic Eudaimonist must entirely reject this idea about the rationality of suicide. Such a theorist could maintain that suicide is what virtuous activity amounts to in extremely bad circumstances, without saying that the reason for this is that virtuous activity is no longer possible in circumstances this bad.

[48]If I'm not even able to have the right beliefs and affective reactions to what I observe, I'm probably not an agent at all, and so the question of whether virtuous activity requires any particular external goods becomes moot. It would seem that there is no longer any living of my life going on, or, there no longer seems to be any life for me to live. One possible response to the Stoic on the rack, then, is to say that they're not an agent anymore, merely a particularly passive patient or recipient, and so for that reason not a counterexample to the sufficiency thesis. Alternatively we can bite the bullet, as the Roman Stoics famously did, and claim instead that the sage on the rack is no counterexample because they are in fact living happily, because they remain capable of having the right beliefs and affective reactions.

Jeremy Reid pointed out to me that both of these possible responses rely on empirical claims about exactly what extreme circumstances it is possible for one's power of choice to survive, and he suggested that advanced psychological torture is more threatening in this regard than any possible physical torture. However, we need not ever settle these empirical issues in order to maintain Stoic Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism. For any given extreme circumstances which purportedly threaten the continuance of one's ability to have the right beliefs and affective responses, either that ability does continue, and so Stoic virtue is possible, or it does not, in which case the question is moot. What we ultimately see is that if cases like Stoics on racks are to help the Aristotelian Purely Dynamic Eudaimonist, it will have to be because they are counterexamples to the Stoic theory of virtue, rather than counterexamples to the sufficiency thesis itself.

There is a remaining question about how to understand the resumption of the power of choice, should the torture not end in the victim's death. This may or may not be similar to how we should think about the suspension of someone's power of choice when they undergo anaesthesia, or indeed natural sleep. See also, again, Nussbaum (2001, 323 ff.).

happiness in addition to virtue, it can only be in the sense that exercising the virtues cannot be done in the absence of external goods of the right kind. Indeed, most of the previous chapters have been indirectly arguing for this narrowing of the theoretical options: external goods cannot matter for happiness in a static sense. This is a strong claim, and in very broad strokes, my argument has been that adherence to the subordination thesis transforms the implicit shape of one's practical thinking so as ultimately to reject any static role for external goods. Circumstances matter only relative to what we do with those circumstances; external goods are not unqualifiedly good for us, but only when we handle their presence well. Nevertheless, Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism permits the articulation of a view that virtue is not sufficient for happiness, on the grounds that virtue cannot be exercised in all circumstances, but only in the presence of certain external goods. And these external goods required for the exercise of virtue might be quite substantial; like Aristotle, we might think that virtuous activity requires the modern equivalent of the capacity to respond to certain civic occasions with enormously lavish gifts, such that the external goods of significant wealth will then be necessary for happiness, and virtue alone will not be sufficient. Or we might have a (more plausible) account according to which only a much more minimal level of external goods is required for it to be possible to exercise virtue and thus to live happily. Finally, Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism is also compatible with the rejection of the necessity of external goods for the exercise of virtue, and the corresponding acceptance of the thesis that virtue is sufficient for happiness.

Is virtue sufficient for happiness? What might recommend a Stoic Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism, as sketched just above, over an Aristotelian Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism? In her investigation of the structure common to all ancient eudaimonist accounts of happiness, Annas (1993, 432) concludes that the historical Stoics do not at any point *argue* that virtue has a special kind of value over other things, but take it that this is something we all already believe, in the sense of it being implicit in our practical thinking, such that the task of the philosophy of happiness is to *account for* that special kind of value, not to defend it. This is just like Kant, who begins the *Groundwork* by noting that there is something special about intending the good (Kant 1996, 4:393); this is, I think, the very same thought about the special value of virtue, cashed out in terms of what one intends, rather than in terms of character traits possessed. The Stoics, Annas explains, then go on to *derive* the sufficiency thesis by arguing

that only an account on which the sufficiency thesis is true does justice to our preexisting belief that virtue has a special kind of value. I suspect that a defence of Stoic Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism will have to take a similar tack. A significant part of the work has already been done, however, in this dissertation's defence of purely dynamic minimal eudaimonisms. In the rejection of both purely static and hybrid conceptions of happiness, it's been shown that external goods should not be taken to form any constitutive part of happiness; this is half the battle. What remains to be shown is that virtue can be exercised in any circumstances, no matter how bad. And the idea that virtue has a special kind of value is a good starting point for such an argument: virtue shines brightest in the toughest circumstances, we might say, which could not be true if its exercise required a certain level of external goods.[49] Arguing for that, however, is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

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[49]Jeremy Reid suggested to me that this is where a defence of the sufficiency thesis might begin. It's by observing people in tough circumstances, such as Nelson Mandela in prison, that we are able to learn the most about virtue—we generally learn less by observing people in comfortable circumstances. Hirji (2021) mentions this sort of argument in her opening paragraph. Hirji's argument against Cooper's (1985) view that Aristotle has a purely dynamic account (discussed in ch. 4, sec. 2) might possibly be adapted to a more general argument against Aristotelian Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism, but I have not investigated this. Russell (2012, 132–33) thinks that virtuous activity shining through adversity does not count as happiness. Annas (1993, 367, 397 ff.) considers the ancient debate as to whether the skill analogy for the virtues, relied upon by Purely Dynamic Eudaimonism's two distinctive claims, entails the falsity of the sufficiency thesis.

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