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Vice, Public Good, and Personal Misery

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In Mandeville's poem, 'The Grumbling Hive', a hive of successful, industrious, and vaguely anthropomorphic bees petition the god, Jove, to make them virtuous. Jove, moved essentially by indignation, grants this request, for, unbeknownst to the bees, their accomplishments were due to their *vices*. It was the demand for luxuries that employed a million of the poor. Envy and vanity were in fact 'Ministries of Industry'. No more money is 'wasted' on fine clothes or in the taverns. The economy, once fuelled by greed and competition, is at a standstill. One can extrapolate further cases. In the end, without these vices, the hive falls into disrepair. The moral of the story—for one is explicitly given—is that '*Fools only strive to make a Great and honest Hive […] Without great Vices, is a vain Eutopia seated in the Brain*', and, presumably, in the brain alone (Mandeville, 1924). Mandeville is not the only one to suppose that the public good may depend on some sort of enabling vices. Bernard Williams wondered whether in politics a 'Kantian Cabinet is really what we want' (2014: 164). Orwell (in a widely misquoted passage) wrote that 'Those who "abjure" violence can only do so because others are committing violence on their behalf' (2000a: 316).[1] And Gordon Gekko said, with characteristic eloquence, 'Greed is good'. The sentiment is summarised in the subtitle given to Mandeville's work: *The Fable of The Bees: or, Private Vices, Public Benefits.*[2]

In what follows, I want to suggest that, while it may be said that the public good does in some way depend on the private vices of various individuals, these individuals in question still do possess vices and will (in most or perhaps all cases) suffer the consequences of them. To put this another way, while some vices may produce a measure of public good, they do not produce private good for the possessor. To give an account of my thesis I will turn to Aristotle's remarks on vice and misery particularly in the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

Before we reach Aristotle, one way to take this claim about the public dependence upon vice is to recognise vices in a dispositional sense whereby they are reliable ways of thinking, acting, and feeling.[3] This sort of vice brings about unhappiness in two ways. First, vices, by their very nature focus 'primarily on the self and its position in the world' (Taylor, 2006: 1). Cowardice and envy and stinginess, for example, physically or mentally treat the self as of greater importance than others, and, physically or mentally, treat others unjustly in order to secure the goods at which each vice especially aims. This will inevitably or eventually take a toll on relationships. Once a vice reaches this level and the relational or more broadly social fallout begins, the vicious person is typically unhappy. Suetonius' Nero is a lively example of this, ending up as he does a public enemy of the state, paranoid and weeping, and begging Sporus to set a good example by killing himself first (Suetonius, 2007: 238). Aristotle is realistic about this behavioural component of

[1] We also read in 'Rudyard Kipling', '[Kipling] sees clearly that men can only be highly civilized while other men, inevitably less civilized, are there to guard and feed him' (Orwell, 2000b: 206).
[2] For a fascinating discussion on Mandeville and his critics see Welchman (2007).
[3] This is the way in which many contemporary virtue ethicists view the virtues (and vices). See, for example, Annas (2011: 4)

vice, advising that we ought to dissolve friendships with excessively vicious people (*NE* 1165b13–18), and that a father may even need to cut off a vicious son at some point (*NE* 1163b24). Severe social exclusion, reproach, and the devastation of relationships is enough to make most people unhappy. We might call this the *instrumental* relationship between vice and misery whereby vice tends to have bad consequences in the world. There is also, second, a *psychological* toll intrinsic to the vice where vice tends to lead to misery even where it does not necessarily produce negative effects in the world as in the *instrumental* case.

Gabriele Taylor describes the vices as being 'corruptive to the self', paradoxically destroying whatever good they seek. Since the structural features of these vices are similar, an analogous story can be told for them. Here is Taylor on envy, for example (1994: 148):

> Envy the vice has as its 'object' not so much the good the other possesses, but rather the other's-possessing-such-a-good. In [the view of the envious], possessing it gives the other a more advantageous position relative to her own, so that she sees herself as deprived by comparison.

The aim of the envious is to redress their lack of self-esteem. One way of doing this is to destroy the other's advantage. This can be done in a *primitive* way as when a child destroys a toy it cannot have. Here the agent feels that the desired good is not theirs *because* the other has it. Spoiling the desired good, as we know, means that the envious will never truly have it and so will be continually frustrated. Envy can also take a *sophisticated* course where an agent desires another's position or status. The envious here has a low view of their own self. The other's possession of position or status is not the *cause* of the envious agent's own lack but rather a spotlight revealing their own shortcomings. Instead of focussing on their own lack, then, the envious focusses aggressively and negatively toward the other. A superficial comfort is produced while she is not thinking of her inferiority. Nothing is really done to help her self-esteem or self-worth, however, as no positive steps are taken. And so she continues to 'protect' a self which she does not value; this is the root of the envy itself. Taylor writes that envy of this kind aims to change the world by magic (1994: 149). Instead of facing reality, the envious creates a 'web of self-deception which will only further entangle them in their confusions and prevent them from finding a route of escape' (Taylor, 2006: 52). 'Concerned as she is with self-esteem she has yet left herself no clear view as to how it ought to be based and how it could be fostered' (Taylor, 2006: 50). Envy in this way destroys the good it covets. If all that sounds serious, I think it is because it is supposed to be. The true final destination of an agent in the grip of a vice is a paradoxical psychological turmoil by that which they hold to be a cure.

Although the instrumental and psychological stories are certainly plausible, there is still another sort of unhappiness that I want to examine. In order to distinguish between the instrumental and psychological stories just mentioned and a different vicious experience I will presently examine, I will label the former the Weak Unhappiness Thesis whereby vice typically leads to unhappiness either *instrumentally* or *psychologically* (that is, without *necessary* negative effects in the world). I want to suggest that Aristotle holds what I will call the Strong Misery Thesis whereby vice is *constitutive* of misery.[4] The word 'strong' is due to the necessary relationship between the ends of the vicious person and their inability to fulfil a foundational human desire with an objective target. I have chosen 'misery' rather than 'unhappiness' since the plight of Aristotle's vicious person concerns something deeper, more holistic, and more

[4] Thanks to Paul Formosa for helping with this terminology.

existential than the *instrumental* or *psychological* results of acting according to one's vices, as we shall later see.[5] To discover more about all this, we need to look at Aristotle's strict requirements for vice.

In Book 3 of *NE* Aristotle invokes a particular desire for the end called *boulēsis*, often translated 'wish', and locates it in the rational part of the soul.[6] In the opening phrases of the *NE* we learn that the ultimate end (*telos*) of our pursuits is that which we wish for its own sake (*ho di' hauto boulometha*) (*NE* 1094a18–22). In order to distinguish wish from mere appetite Aristotle makes clear that we pursue the object of our wish not (only) as pleasant but as *good* (*NE* 1113b1). But precisely who's good is in question here, we may ask? The answer to this is important.

In Book 2 of the *Eudemian Ethics*, Aristotle says that the ends of given pursuits are good by nature (*EE* 11227a18–31):

> The end is by nature always a good […] However, contrary to nature, and through perversion, something that is not the good but only the apparent good may be the end […] Both health and disease are objects of the same science but not in the same fashion: the former is its natural object, and the latter unnatural. Likewise, the good is the natural object of volition, but contrary to nature evil too is its object. By nature one wills what is good, but against nature and through perversion one wills evil.

The ends of medicine, says Aristotle, are in accordance with nature when they produces health. At work here is the comparative notion that what one wishes by nature is for the true good (*hē boulēsis physei men tou agathou esti*) and not whatever one happens to think is good, and contrary to nature one wishes for what is in fact not good. Aquinas tells us that 'every natural faculty has some object determined by its nature' (1993: 3.10.491). Wish, concerning the faculty of the will, possesses by nature a desire for the good for human beings, rational activity of the soul in accordance with virtue. As we know, the virtuous person chooses what is good for her nature: 'For as we have said, what is good by nature is good and pleasant in itself for an excellent person (*NE* 1170a15)'. And the bad person does not wish for what is good for themselves *qua* human.[7]

An apparently obvious problem surfaces here, however, since Aristotle also holds that people wish for what they *believe* to be good (*NE* 1136b7–8). In the dilemma raised at *NE* 3.4, the suggestion that a person with an incorrect view of the good would thereby not possess a wish is taken to be unpalatable ('hence what he wishes is not wished, which is self-contradictory', *NE* 1113a20). Aristotle solves the problem stating that, while the good person's object of wish is the good without qualification, the bad person's object of wish is the apparent good and an object of wish in a qualified sense, that is, in relation to himself (Broadie, 2002: 318).[8] By analogy, a sick person may indeed wish for what is good for a sick person. We must add, though, that even if the sick person obtains what is good for the sick person or the drug addict what is good for the drug

[5] Even while Aristotle's account of vice is compatible with the instrumental and psychological stories, it also goes beyond it.

[6] '[F]or in the part concerning reasoning there will be wishing, and in the irrational part wanting and passion' (*DA* 3.9 423b5–6), and, 'For wish is a desire, and when anyone is moved in accordance with reasoning, he is also moved in accordance with wish' (*DA* 433a23–25).

[7] This comes out clearly in the anonymous paraphrase of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, 193.33–37 (Konstan, 2001).

[8] Relatedly, Aristotle distinguishes between that which is good without qualification and that which is good for a certain person (*NE* 1152b26–27).

addict (i.e. more drugs), it does not mean that they have attained what is good for their nature as a human. Foundational needs are still to be met over and above the drugs that an addict sees as good and in fact the desires of the addict may conflict with these.

Gösta Grönroos suggests that a Socratic spirit permeates this line of thinking: a person may pursue what they believe they desire even while it is not what they truly desire (*Gorgias* 466c9–468e5; *Laws* 9, 860d1–861d9). In respect to wish, a person may wish for what they falsely believe to be good even while this very pursuit is motivated by a basic desire for what is truly good by nature. Grönroos writes, 'In case the *representation* of the good is erroneous, the agent will pursue the wrong things, but the source of the *motivation* will still be the desire for the human good' (2015b: 74, emphasis added).[9] Support for this view comes from *NE* 1173a4–5 which Grönroos translates as, '[S]imilarly, in bad people too there is something by nature good, which is greater than what they are in themselves [i.e. qua bad], and which longs for [*ephietai*] its own proper good' [*isōs de kai en tois phaulois esti ti physikon agathon kreitton ē kath' hauta, ho ephietai tou oikeiou agathou*, (2015b: 79).[10] There are echoes here of Aquinas who translates the same passage, 'Perhaps in evil men there is some natural good better than themselves which seeks their own proper good'. Aquinas goes on to say that 'in evil men there is some natural good that tends to the desire of a suitable good; and this natural good is better than evil men as such' (1993: 10.12.1977). Not only is there a real good for humans, then, there is also in each person a basic inclination towards it motivating the pursuit of true and not only apparent goods (Grönroos, 2015b: 72).

Take appetite as an analogous case. According to Aristotle, the person who misrepresents the object of a given appetite and fails to satisfy it is still motivated by the desire for the proper object of that same appetite. Consider the intemperate person (*NE* 3.11). In this sphere there is a natural appetite which is the desire for nourishment (*trophē*). Grönroos reminds us that this natural appetite is framed objectively, without recourse to pleasure, and concerns the replenishment of a lack. Even where the intemperate person views the food and drink as pleasant, therefore, whatever pleasure is obtained is not the criterion of fulfilment of this natural appetite. An intemperate person often believes that they have satisfied this desire with the pleasure of food and drink, but the desire is truly for *nourishment*, and overindulgence brings about 'especially slavish people' (*NE* 1119a20).

Apply this to the vicious person who, according to Aristotle, has a false view of the good, perhaps it is pleasure. Wish by nature is a desire for the human good. All people seek it, just as all have an appetite for nourishment. For Aristotle, the human good is the activity of the soul in accordance with virtue bringing human nature to its proper function. Even where the vicious person successfully obtains pleasure (her mistaken representation of the good), therefore, she will not have the object of that which *motivates* this pursuit of pleasure, since that is a life in accordance with virtue. Even where she does obtain pleasure successfully she will not have satisfied the natural object of wish.

If we accept this account of wish (or something close to it), why does vice constitute misery? After all, if virtue is an ideal then many or most people will not possess it.[11] If those who are

[9] Perhaps it cleaner to speak of the 'need' or 'urge' of the rational part of the soul rather than intentional desire.
[10] For a defence of this translation see Grönroos (2016)
[11] Aristotle also appears to admit the possibility of people without any conception of the human good and so without a *representational* wish (*NE* 1179b11–15; *EE* 1214b).

neither virtuous nor vicious have a *motivational* wish by nature, however, and do not obtain it either through failure or disinterest, why are they not in the same state as the vicious?

The answer, I believe, comes from earlier depictions of vice the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Notably, there is an alleged discrepancy between the consistency and mental harmony that is foundational to the vicious person in Book 7 and the sudden admission of pretty severe misery and psychological conflict in Book 9.[12] I believe, however, that that the misery of the vicious is facilitated precisely by the lack of conflict apparent in the vicious agent of Book 7,[13] in this way linking together two apparently incompatible accounts and, more importantly, arguing for the necessity of Book 7 in illuminating Book 9.

Aristotelian vice demands slightly more of the agent than merely dispositional vice in that there is more to the possession of an Aristotelian vice than the disposition to think, act, and feel in certain ways. Aristotle's virtues and vices are decision states (*hexis prohairetikē*). Decision (*prohairesis*) is a technical term for Aristotle, partly of his own making, and might be thought of as an 'all-things-considered judgment of what to do', or 'something practical to which one is committed' (Broadie, 2002: 42).[14] In light of an agent's wish, decision is the desire to carry it out and is in this way desire in action. It is particular focus of Aristotle's to underscore that virtues and vices are dispositions manifesting a person's conception of the good not only in desires but, importantly, in action and feeling. He writes that 'our *decisions* [*proaireisthai*] to do good and bad actions, not our beliefs, form the characters we have' (*NE* 1112a2–3, emphasis added). Susan Meyer explains this well (2011: 26):

> Aristotle thinks that the distinctive feature of moral agency is not simply the possession of a conception of happiness, or even the ability to form desires based on a conception of happiness, but rather the disposition to act in accordance with that conception. In calling a virtue or a vice a *hexis prohairetikē*, Aristotle means that it is a disposition in which one's capacities for feeling and doing are disposed to be exercised in a way that expresses one's conception of happiness. The distinctive feature of a moral agent, on Aristotle's view, is that he acts for the sake of his happiness.

Now unlike the akratic who, overpowered by appetite, acts against what they know to be truly good, the wish, appetite, and decision of the vicious person are aligned, producing a remarkable psychological harmony. It plays out in precarious ways, and goes a long way in explaining the consistency of vice ('For vice [*mochthēria*] resembles diseases such as dropsy or consumption, while incontinence is more like epilepsy; vice is a continuous bad condition, but incontinence is not, *NE* 1150b35–35) and the unawareness of the vicious person ('For the vicious [*kakia*] person does not recognise that he is vicious, whereas the incontinent person recognises that he is incontinent, *NE* 1150b3–5). Nothing gives the vicious person pause, *at least in the moment of action*, for no conflict arises. This in turn makes the condition continuous; it is uninterrupted by

[12] Enter the scholars. Inconsistency is very interesting to a philosopher, just as a murder is to a detective. And, as we might expect, philosophers—though far fewer than one might imagine for such an illustrious case as Aristotle—descend upon the scene trying to make sense of it (Annas, 1977: 553-554; Brickhouse, 2003; Gauthier & Jolif, 1970: 733-735; Irwin, 2001; Müller, 2015; Roochnik, 2007; Stewart, 1892: 364).

[13] Unlike Grönroos who spends almost no time Book 7 as he takes Book 9 to be Aristotle's more 'considered view' (2015a: 150).

[14] This reflects Chamberlain's reasonable suggestion that we translate *prohairesis* as 'commitment' (1984: 155).

conscience. Broadie writes that the akratic's potential for reform is due to their 'deplorable inconsistency' (2009: 158). The presence of conflict is still indicative of a weak knowledge of what is right, burning gently within. The vicious, on the other hand, is very difficult to reform due in large part to their 'deadly consistency' (Broadie, 2009: 158).

But now a problem surfaces for our vicious person. The psychological harmony does not provide full inoculation from every possible trouble. Nielsen is correct in saying that Aristotle is not committed to 'the view that the intemperate do not experience pain or regrets of any sort; all that is required for Aristotle's taxonomy is that, if they regret their actions, this is not because they recognize a conflict between the acts that they naturally do and the acts recommended by their rational principles. Nothing Aristotle says precludes other types of pain and regret, for instance pain or regret stemming from their pursuit of bad ends' (2017: 8).[15] This is quite different from the 'moral hangover' experienced by the akratic (Nielsen, 2017: 10). The vicious person does not wake up at last thinking clearly. Rather, they regret that things are not going well for them. In this sense the remorse is largely instrumental rather than moral or principled.

In a fascinating and fascinatingly underdeveloped essay by C. S. Lewis called, 'First and Second Things', he writes, 'The man who makes alcohol his chief good loses not only his job but his palate and all power of enjoying the earlier (and only pleasurable) levels of intoxication' (1970: 280). He suspects this is a universal law. 'It may be stated as follows: every preference of a small good to a great, or a partial good to a total good, involves the loss of the small or partial good for which the sacrifice was made' (1970: 280). The idea is not advanced much further, but presumably Lewis cannot mean that pursuit of any lesser good at any time will have disastrous consequences.[16] If this was so, we would never be able to pour a glass of whisky or read a detective novel. Rather, the lesser good must be pursued in such a way that it is seen as the greater good. Because lesser goods cannot perform the role of the greater or greatest good, however, the person expecting a lesser good to deliver that which only proceeds from the greater good is pursuing an end that categorically cannot be fulfilled. The result is the loss of both the lesser and greater goods.[17]

Now, postulating a universal law is ambitious.[18] But the idea is not something Aristotle himself shies away from, and the internal logic of the argument is pretty sound even if one finds the teleology doubtful. *If* there is in fact a human good (or goods) by nature, there will also, by extension, be those goods the pursuit of which does not constitute *eudaimonia*.

Take, for example, the vicious agent choosing reputation over virtue and inculcating the vice of envy. Since, according to Aristotle (and common-sense), reputation is a lesser good, envious behaviour, even while it may provide a temporary gratification, will in the end fail to

[15] And Curzer thinks similarly on this point: '[T]he vicious do not regret their actions, although they may regret their situation. That is, even if the vicious are discontent with the way things have turned out in their lives, they do not make moral progress, because they do not believe they have acted wrongly' (Curzer, 2012: 372). They blame those around them for their failures, continuing in their ways.

[16] Thanks to Jeanette Kennett for helping to clarify this point.

[17] One might plausibly wonder if it would not be better to care nothing about the good rather than to chase a mistaken conception of the good and face the resultant consequences.

[18] It would be less difficult, as per Taylor, to draw out a psychological law based on the paradoxically unsatisfying nature of the vices.

satisfy the motivational wish instilled by nature.[19] Envy also fails to achieve its own, more immediate goal of self-esteem, protecting as it does an unhealthy self that is unwilling to examine the true causes of despondency. The greater good is forfeited for the lesser one, and the lesser good of reputation through envy turns out to be toxic. The vicious agent misses out twice.

Or, consider the vicious agent choosing wealth and displaying the vice of stinginess or miserliness. Wealth is a lesser good even where it can make a person feel temporarily secure and powerful. Since there is no point in a person's life where he can be completely immune from circumstance and misfortune, however, the person seeking such things from wealth, writes Taylor, 'will always have to be on his guard against threats and incursions, constantly and obsessively concerned with keeping his hoard intact' (2006: 37). The greater good is forfeited for the lesser one, and the lesser good of wealth in this case turns out to be an interminable rod for the miser's back. Once again, the vicious agent misses out twice.

The ends of the vicious person cannot by definition be satisfied. In the teleological order, lesser goods cannot take the place of greater ones. Pleasure, for instance, is not intrinsically bad, but it is not the human good on Aristotle's view, and a person choosing it under this heading will not fulfil the motivational wish instilled by nature, stirring the very pursuit in which they are engaged. A second similarity with the Socratic spirit is on display here, I believe, in that a thing's value is determined by the use made of it by virtue or vice (Annas, 1999: 42). Vicious people treat pleasure incorrectly, expecting it to do something for them which it cannot do, namely, function as the natural object of their desire for the good. Where Aquinas speaks of vice and 'inordinate desires' I take this to mean that a *good* thing like pleasure becomes an inordinate desire where it is understood to be the *ultimate* thing it is not.

All this is particularly damaging for the vicious person. Recall that the decision of the vicious person is desire in action, involving an expectation that the *prohairesis* will achieve the object of wish. Since pleasure, for example, is not the human good, the person who obtains pleasure expecting it to do what it cannot do will be disappointed, confused, and, ultimately, miserable. Within the destructive insulation afforded by a harmony between decision and appetite, the vicious person has no sense that their goals are problematic. 'Carry on', is the only instruction she has. And as she continues along a ruined path, she will become increasingly depressed that the good aimed for is not turning out to be as good as she believed it would be. Unlike the akratic, however, she has no true conception of the good to return to (nor could she hear it easily with such corrupted principles). And so she continues, attempting to cure the misery with the very same poison that is causing it.

Now, it may be asked, why does this constitute misery rather than, say, non-happiness? I need to now say something about *misery* itself and why I have chosen this word over something like 'unhappiness'.

In the Weak Unhappiness thesis I argued that dispositional vice as a sustained and ingrained pattern of thinking, feeling, and acting will, because of its stability and pervasiveness, typically lead to kind of instrumental and psychological problems. The path of the vicious person is torturous because of the self-serving and increasingly isolating nature of the vices themselves, and it will very likely be case that the pursuit of the vicious person comes at great personal cost in the form of reproach and broken relationships. At this stage, as Howard Curzer has pointed

[19] The vicious will very rarely (if ever) value their pursuit under the explicit heading of envy. They are not Milton's Satan in this way. Vice will be justified with other language; the racist sees himself as a patriot and Eichmann viewed himself as loyal, etc.

out, they may very well blame this erosion of relationships on the friendships themselves, attributing their misfortune, drinking problems, and loneliness to someone else (Curzer, 2012: 373). Aristotle's vicious person is subject to all this. But the unhappiness and non-flourishing in the case of the Aristotle's vicious person is also deep in a psychological sense in that it is actually a state of misery.[20]

First, Aristotle's vicious person experiences the loss of a good they were expecting *and* suffers the destructive nature of this lesser good (where it is taken to be the greater good). The envious person misses out on the happiness they are expecting *and* ends up with an increasing inability to redress their lack of self-esteem and a cycle of depressing comparisons between themselves and the people around them. The miser misses out on the happiness they are expecting *and* ends up with the relentless task of trying to maintain a security that cannot be maintained in a world of changing fortunes. Not only are the ends of the vicious unattainable, they produce toxic results.

Second, because the failure of the vicious person is connected to their wish and decision pairing, it strikes directly at the heart of their governing view of the world,[21] their engagement with it, and the justification of their goals. This is not to say that a vicious person can fully reckon with this, blinded as they are by corrupt principles. But instead of a relatively compartmentalised failure like a party going badly, the wish-decision pairing of the vicious person is an umbrella governing all that sits underneath it and in this way potentially infecting every aspect of life. Such a picture leads me to call it a holistic or existential misery.

Third, where ordinary vices are in many cases due to negligence and often contain no special motives to behave in the relevant way, [22] Aristotelian vice is pulled along by a view of the end or goal (however explicit this might be, see fn. 20). Because Aristotle's vicious person is trying to *achieve* something with and expects a result from the vice in question, she is more committed than a person with a *merely* dispositional or negligent vice. As mentioned above, this commitment is not compartmentalised, based as it is on their view of the good—a relatively overarching project. Where the ends of the vicious are by definition unattainable, the vicious person, equipped with no other options, resolves to continue down this path, perhaps even doubling down on her efforts in order to guard against repeated failures. The spiral secures an ongoing misery. Furthermore, if the agent does decide to try even harder in an attempt to avoid a

[20] I am aware that it is partly an empirical matter as to whether vice *necessarily* constitutes misery in the individual case. But I think we have a constitutive account that is as theoretically sure as anything can be in moral psychology. One might further say that a deceived man is not truly leading a happy life even if he *feels* happy (Kraut, 1979: 179). Could we also say that a man is living a *miserable* life even if he *feels* happy? Here we are talking about two things, feelings of misery and objective descriptions of a miserable life; Aristotle himself does not draw as hard a line between the two as modern writers.

[21] Whether or not this conception of the good is as detailed as a perfectly detailed blueprint is at least questionable. Broadie argues against the notion that the virtuous and vicious agent works from 'an explicit, comprehensive, substantial vision of that good, a vision invested with a content different from what would be aimed at by morally inferior natures' (1991: 198). Kraut makes a substantive case for the opposing view (1993). In a stunning essay on deliberation and choice, Heda Segvic writes: 'A conception of the good life, which is the starting point of ethical deliberation, is a set of evaluative attitudes—from simple desires to more complex evaluative attitudes which involve a desiderative component, such as choices, practical concerns, commitments, and so on—which, if their content were fully spelled out, would jointly amount to some specific picture of how one should live one's life. An ordinary person's conception of *eudaimonia* is to a large degree implicit; it is also usually vague and full of gaps in parts, not well integrated, and, more often than not, inconsistent. Nonetheless, it is Aristotle's view that most human adults have evaluative attitudes which involve substantive valuations and which jointly amount to an evaluative outlook on the manner in which they should conduct their life' (2011: 173).

[22] Julia Driver goes so far as to claim that moral vices have no connection to intentional action (2001: 107).

second or third failure, the external manifestations and psychological effects of the vice or vices can quite easily become more severe.

Let us finish with an example. Oskar Schindler was a morally suspect adulterer, profiteer, and opportunist who made use of a program to Aryanise Jewish-owned businesses, bought himself an enamelware factory, and was 'wildly successful in the chaos of wartime' (Lykken, 2006: 12).[23] As we know, he also saved the lives of around 1200 Jews, arguing that they were needed in his armament factory and could not therefore be sent to the labour camps. Virtues such as compassion and bravery are apparently at play here. But, we might say, Schindler also relied upon his vices; his opportunism, his ability to deceive and manipulate. Were these vices used for public benefit? Undoubtedly. But we should not think of vices too narrowly.

While Schindler's vices may have been beneficial for specific Jews at a specific time, vices have as their object the good of their possessor (i.e. wealth, honour, pleasure, etc.), very often at the expense of the people around them. In the case of a true vice,[24] there is no guarantee that such a trait will be used for the public good save in those cases where the public good fortuitously aligns with the goals of the vice.[25] We have no assurance that vices will do much for the public good in any sustained or meaningful way unless there is an incidental alignment of interests between the vicious person and the public.

And to return to my main thesis, if—for teleological or psychological reasons—there is a human good or goods, allowing or even encouraging people to pursue vicious goals will see them miss out on the greater good or goods as well as the immediate and lesser good they are trying to attain. Aristotle explains that vice, ignorant of the true good, takes an agent further and further from *eudaimonia* even and especially where the vicious agent believes they are correct. Therefore, while the vicious agent may achieve a limited public benefit, the very vice that makes this possible is also the very vice that takes them further away from true happiness and towards misery. There is no true vice that comes at no cost to its possessor.

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[23] In fact, Lykken suspects Schindler was a psychopath.

[24] And not, for example, a 'dirty hands' case where a person performs a bad act for the greater good and where it is not in accordance with the possession of a vice (see, for example, Coady, 1991; Stocker, 2000).

[25] I am not making the claim that Schindler himself behaved in a way to benefit himself primarily. It has been said that his character changed dramatically and his virtues were genuine. I am making a theoretical point about the nature of vices.

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