The Ethics of Evil

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Preface

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Abstract

The Ethics of Evil is an old and controversial topic either because of its inherent nature as the study of deliberate harm of others or because many dispute its existence as a philosophical concept. The modern revivalist movement of Evil as a concept focuses principally on the secular and interpersonal, ignoring all other evils like natural evils or theological challenges from the existence of Evil, like " The Problem of Evil" in Christianity. Yet in many respects the dilemma of defining Evil remains. The lay or folk perception is that Evil exists and that you will know it intuitatively when you meet it, but serial killers only exist because this is not true. Yet few Philosophers have actually met Evil and a robust philosophical account of secular Evil remains elusive, leading many philosophers to claim Evil does not exist.

Outlined in this thesis is a conjunctive thick and reductive hybrid moral account of secular Evil, that attempts to resolve this dilemma.

The key elements in the Social-Harm model for a deed to be an Evil-deed by this account are:

1. The act will cause permanent, life-changing harm to the victim. 2. the perpetrator is a culpable agent. 3. the act must instill terror or moral outrage in the society where it takes place. This act must be so profound that it disrupts the coherence of society or public safety, thereby underscoring the societal impact of Evil.

As a thick account, the Social-Harm account needs to describes both why the deed is Evil and why it is immoral. The Social-Harm account, as normative ethical account, reduces Evil to a natural act that encompasses all three elements. The argument offered is that for an act to be deemed Evil, all three elements must be present. The first two describe why it is an act that has the disposition to be called Evil. The societal reaction to the act is the distinguishing normative element of the Social-Harm account, where an act can be deliberate, even if careless, and cause permanent harm, such as in

a motor vehicle accident without it being Evil on the basis of the societal response.

This account of secular Evil is compared to other earlier, often essentialist accounts of Evil. So, Evil must represent some form of occult brain damage or having a deformity of their personality or nature. Not all essentialist accounts of Evil necessarily support Evil as a concept. Cole's account describes Evil as only monstrous Evil and states that such can not exist by reason.

The critical defence of the Social-Harm account is against Moore's naturalistic fallacy. This classic meta-ethical theory argues that no moral property can be reduced to a natural object. A natural object may be an example of that property, but there is more to the property than just the object. Several counters to Moore's position, including Frege's "Begging the Question" argument and Langford's "Paradox of Analysis, before concluding that Moore's counterargument has not stood the test of time.

The real challenge to the Social Harm account is that particular counterexamples can be proposed, like Luke Russell's "Hunting the homeless for sport." This and similar examples appear to describe acts that are apparently Evil, yet under the Social Harm account, they are not because they do not illicite a negative societal reaction. Further clauses would need to be added to the Social-Harm Account to address these particular examples. Adding subsequent clauses to a hybrid account triggers an infinite spiral, whereby addressing any specific particular case makes a hybrid account less generalisable.

At the end of the day, the echo of Moore's naturalistic fallacy remains correct. There is more to Evil than cruelty and terrifying permanent harm, even if acts that are cruel and cause terrifying permanent harm are Evil.

Meaning the dilemma of defining Evil remains unresolved by this approach.

Acknowledgement

I acknowledge the many thoughts and opinions kindly and unkindly offered over many years of working on the frontlines of the emergency services especially the many friends and colleagues from the NZ Police, in the judicial system, and across various custodial facilities from the Youth Justice Facilities to Adult Medium Security Facilities. I would also acknowledge the staff, patients, and their families in the various forensic psychiatric facilities I have worked in. I also need to recognise the victims of crime and their families who have suffered often beyond words but also not to be forgotten are the perpetrators of crime, who are often victims of earlier crimes themselves. Their collective wisdom was the backbone of this thesis.

Lastly, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Gerald Harrison, for all his support and advice throughout the journey of this thesis.

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1 Introduction

Evil is a deliciously ancient emotive term whose meaning and usage have varied across time and cultures, yet yet many philosophers as will be discussed in this thesis argue for a universal singular concept of Evil. This inconsistency alone would justify the philosophical study of the word and its meaning, for how can any inconsistent account describe a universal moral object? The English word derives from a fusion of the equivalent Germanic, Dutch and old English words, yet the concept is far older.

Evil is also a broad topic, and its philosophical perspective is unfamiliar to many. However, it is one of the few topics in academic philosophy that the wider public is interested in and holds an opinion about. Unusually for any student in the humanities, there is never a risk of being challenged about the relevance of one's work, even less so with the horrors of war breaking out again.

Philosophically, any account of Evil is the study of what Evil is, why it is Evil, what Evil has in common with other moral objects and what is unique

about Evil so it is not just simply wrong. Nevertheless, despite humanity's endless ability to cause itself terrible pain and suffering, several principal usages or types of Evil have emerged.

1. Folk Evils. This usage started with fireside stories and evolved into literary tropes that, in turn, became incorporated into modern board and digital games. Each story element is progressively developed but each underlying trope has an underlying real-world basis, adding that nugget of truth, which adds credibility to the tale. Examples of these are the Vampires, with the echo of sexual abuse victims who go onto sexually abuse themselves or the change of personality and mentation with late-stage syphilis echoed in Robert Louis Stevenson's Dr Jekyl and Mr Hyde.
2. Theological Evils, where the ruling deity for a given culture often has the property of being infinitely Good, and any opposing entity or belief possesses the mirror property of being utterly Evil. Such a binary distinction justifies great cruelty to the followers of the Evil entity by the followers of the infinitely Good God.
3. Natural Evil describes the Evil chance or Evil fortune that results from various natural evils, such as natural disasters or plagues, afflicting humanity. Emergency services often describe this as the "wrong place, wrong time" syndrome.

4. Societal Evil. This conception captures Evil between groups within a society or between different societies. It is when humanity decides that members of an external or different culture or society are all bad and an Evil danger that this justifies their destruction without remorse or displays of compassion. The principle distinction is that the Evil agent who instigates the Evil and those who perform the actual deed are usually two different beings within a socially defined power structure.
5. Interpersonal Evil. This usage covers acts where one member of a society deliberately causes permanent harm to another in a way that causes terror and undermines the society's social structure. This account of Evil will be the predominant focus of this thesis.

These different usages and the nuance embedded under each high-level descriptor further challenge the view that Evil is a unified construct, causing philosophers to be sceptical about Evil as a unified or coherent concept (Cole 2019) and one that differs from mere superstitions. Nevertheless, agencies that deal with deliberately harmful, cruel or perverse acts such as Police and Prison officers are clear that Evil not only exists, because they have encountered it. So, is Evil a muddled, confused concept that is an anachronism best relegated to fiction? Or is Evil authentic and uncommon, but not necessarily rare, although probably unevenly distributed across so-

ciety? After all, very few Police or Prison officers have met a Philosopher, and Philosophers exist, if only within academic departments of the nearest university.

However, the scope for scepticism that Evil exists as a coherent philosophical construct is daunting. Christian theology unconvincingly struggles with the problem of Evil, where an all-knowing, all-powerful, all-present God should be able to stop Evil from occurring to his chosen people, particularly by his agents. Nevertheless, that such a God does not or can not prevent Evil is, at least for Mackie, fatal to the concept of a monotheistic Christian God (J. L. Mackie 1955). Mackie holds that God can not simultaneously be all-knowing and all-powerful yet also allow Evil, as the occurrence of Evil implies God is either not all-knowing or all-powerful. Societal Evil, especially when it causes interpersonal suffering, is often also seen as not the cause but as a symptom of the actual issue. Theories, like social disorganisation theory, say that offending is explicable by political, social, and genetic factors complicated by alcohol and other drug abuse (Kubrin 2009). Empirical science has undermined Evil as the cause of natural geological catastrophes. Earthquakes are not manifestations of supernatural Evil processes. Instead, they manifest underlying physical phenomena and are symptoms of the movement of vast tectonic plates that float on the mantle. Societal Evil, especially when it causes interpersonal suffering, is often also

seen as a symptom of social disorganisation theory(Kubrin 2009).

Folk evil struggles as modern medicine explains illnesses and human behaviour previously labelled as manifestations of Evil. Illness is not about transformation into an Evil creature. The vampire becomes the sexually abused child who themselves becomes a subsequent child molester; Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde are the noble males infected by the new strain of syphilis and developing General Paralysis of the Insane (Lishman 1987, 280); the characteristics of the Werewolf are the late stages of rabies (Lishman 1987, 303).

If the sceptical argument against Evil as a coherent universal concept needs further strengthening, then Figure 1 shows that the usage of Evil has waxed and waned over time. From 1500 onwards, the usage of Evil as a term did not correlate with either of its common synonyms, bad or wrong. Nor is it correlated with its supposed opposite of being virtuous.

If an Evil act is some form of particularly-wrong or bad act, if there is no relationship between these terms and Evil, then it suggests that Evil is something different if it exists at all.

Modern Evil revivalists attempting to rescue the concept of Evil from scepticism have primarily focused on secular and reductive accounts of Evil. Namely, Evil as a moral concept that can be reduced to and is equivalent to one or more non-moral or physical constructs. On their side is the reality

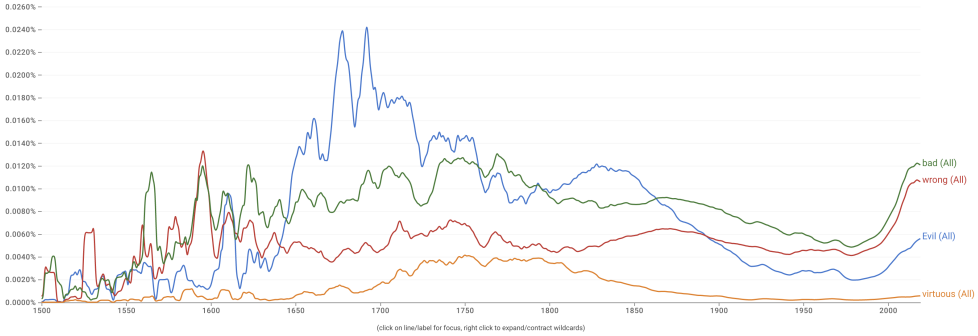

Figure 1.1: Ngram of usage of the words Evil, bad, wrong and virtueus 1500-2019

of Evil as a diabolical act of only intrinsic value to the perpetrator, often with little extrinsic benefit, unlike theft or other common wrong. David Fuller is an exemplar of the challenges for any philosophical account of Evil. His deeds, called Evil served no extrinsic purpose but he was driven to commit such deeds throughout his life. Many of these deeds are seen as repugnant.

David Fuller (born 4 September 1954) is, in many ways, an archetype of normality, or at least is a manifestation of Arendt's "The Banality of Evil". At the time of his arrest in his mid-60s, he is or was married to a nurse and has two adult children. He was an electrician and maintenance supervisor at the local hospital. A keen bird spotter who sat on the borderline between being a professional and serious amateur photographer. In his earlier years, he had accompanied soon-to-be-famous bands on tour as their photographer.

He was quiet, drank beer and was not "woke". In short, a fairly ordinary, peaceful member of society on the point of retirement.

This tranquility was punctured when the sins of his youth caught up with him. While many males in their 20s make poor choices, David's poor choice was to hunt, rape and murder two separate women. These murders earned him the label of the bedsit murderer, and at the time, they were never solved or repeated until a cold case team extracted a DNA profile and obtained a family link from a DNA registry, identifying David as the murderer.

The subsequent search of his house after his arrest revealed that David had also performed over 100 acts of necrophilia in the morgue of the hospital where he worked. All of these acts were carefully documented and photographed, with the Police able to recover the hard drives of the images and videos from where David had secreted them.

Fuller was sentenced to a whole-of-life sentence in 2021 and is now in a prison with the cheerful nickname of "Monster manor" owing to the nature of the prisoners incarcerated.

Hereafter, this thesis will use Fuller as a specific exemplar of what society means by Evil as opposed to deeply Wrong. Both Formosa (2013) and Garrard (2002) argue that any reductive account of Evil needs to describe, evaluate and explain Evil. This thesis proposes and then defends a defini-

tion of *Evil* as a novel conjunctive thick concept comprising a description of why the deed is Evil and a normative account of why it is wrong. This account focuses on the Evil deed and its consequences to the victim and society. It stands in contrast to the more prevalent unitary analytic description of Evil to elucidate precisely a particular core feature that must be present for an act to be Evil. It also builds on many years of field work. Chapter 2 will contextualise the revival of secular constructs of Evil within the broader philosophical debate on Evil and the move away from those accounts that require a commitment to any theological or supernatural metaphysics. Chapter 3 will outline the Social-Harm account of a thick, conjunctive definition of secular Evil as an initial placeholder. Chapter 4 will position this placeholder within the framework of Normative Ethics, while Chapter 5 will highlight the limitations in several notions of scepticism towards Evil,particularly from Moore's "Naturalistic fallacy". The following three chapters will contrast the Social-Harm account with differing unity approaches to defining Evil. Chapter 6 considers Evil to be the work of monsters devoid of humanity. Chapter 6 focuses on definitions of Evil based on the nature of the Evil deeds. Chapter 7 places Evil as a social construct. Chapter 8 considers the agent centred accounts of Evil.

2 The Evil within that lurks in plain sight.

The consideration of Evil, in general, and the ethics of Evil, in particular, are not new domains of philosophical research in any sense. This chapter introduces a series of differing philosophical accounts of secular Evil that address the first challenge for articulating any ethical account of Evil, the metaphysical description of Evil implied in any ontological account of what qualifies as Evil and how Evil is more than just morally very wrong.

The nature of any proposed Evil underlying or lurking within humanity has led several philosophers to take differing perspectives on the nature of Evil. Card refers to Schopenhauer, a philosopher loosely described as focused on pessimism who takes a dark view of human nature (Card et al. 2002). His stance is that the external world is inherently meaningless and incoherent.

2 The Evil within that lurks in plain sight.

Humanity's perception of the world is only a rational objectification of our sense impressions. Hence, there is no God, no grand plan or point to life except that we introduce or create through the arts, logic, mathematics or imagination (Wicks 2021). That underpinning our engagement as individuals with external reality and each other is the violence and Evil that rests within human nature. Violence and Evil drive us forward to engage with the world and each other, with inevitable consequences. For Schopenhauer, creativity helps us rise above our inherent nature and the "sage" has escaped from being an individual distinct from the world, leaving Evil behind (Wicks 2021).

In diametric contrast, Forti (2019) argues that Evil started as "privatio boni", or the absence of Good. Despite its attribution to Plato, this stance towards the nature of Evil arose from the work of Saint Augustine *de Natura* Chignell (2021) and is inherently but not necessarily a theological account of the metaphysics of Evil. To illustrate, in the Abrahamic traditions, Good is the presence of God. Evil becomes personified as Demons and the absence of God. The usual version in the Bible and derivative works like JRR Tolkien's "The Silmarillion" is that God created Angels. One Angel had more powers than all the others. This more knowledgeable or powerful Angel rebels and corrupts others, and this host loses the ensuing battle with God and the faithful Angels before this host is thrown out of heaven into hell.

Therefore, the absence of any supernatural God or supersensory realms is inherent in any secular account of Evil. As Forti outlines, one's position on the nature of Evil transforms into adopting one of two positions (Forti 2019, 207).

1. Evil does not exist; only ignorance of the metaphysical nature of entities permits a belief in it.
2. Evil does exist but risks transformation into an independent entity in its own right rather than being dependent on or a property of entities.

The first position argues that Evil only has meaning from a specific perspective. Changing or significantly broadening one's perspective allows the chimaera of Evil to evaporate. The sceptic's position on secular Evil is that it simply does not exist as a concept in its own right. Being a fallen angel implies a prior existence as an angel. If there are no angels, there is nothing or no one to fall.

Forti's second position holds and accepts that Evil is not an ontologically independent entity and seeks to answer what Evil is by outlining a series of philosophical positions. . To support a naturalistic account of Evil without Evil being an ontologically independent entity, Forti (2019) argues that the second position builds upon Plato's view that no man can do Evil as Evil has an independent ontological substance that intrudes on the actions of

man, making the deeds and the doer Evil.

Forti describes how Hegel argues for a radical rejection of dualism (Forti 2019, 307–8). She sought to downplay Evil as only an error in the perception of the truth, a lack of knowledge and awareness of the whole. Evil may be inherent in power but represents only power's distance from the truth, and gaining knowledge of the truth remediates Evil. In response to the problem of Evil, Hegel argued that Evil effectively did not exist as a distinct entity. It was only a subordinate element in history and ultimately only a "vanquished nullity". Forti argues that Marx took a similar view that Evil is only a bit of a player that disappears through taking a positive role in the "overarching dialectic". Forti argues that this stance has also led to constant attempts to rationalise totalitarian regimes and their brutal acts (Forti 2019, 307).

Forti (2019) argues that secularisation has broken or at least weakened the linkage between Evil and power. She sees Hobbes as arguing that Evil is not defined by objective morality or ontological condition; instead, it is part of the human condition. So what an individual likes is good; what the same individual hates is evil. Hobbs instead outlines that society functions according to the reason of sovereign law, where the state's power is in ensuring a good, safe life. Hence, power has lost its transcendent property, the property to save the individual after death. Instead, the individual's power is

constrained to allow society to collectively, on average, flourish in this life (Forti 2019, 310–11).

Forti argues that Kant resumed the Christian duality concerning Evil. She claims that Kant restored the reality of Evil as being within the heart of all humans. Evil is that which corrupts the upright faculty of human judgment. Obedience to the moral law (Kant's categorical imperative) leads to self-love and Good. Forti believes Kant got lost because if Evil is an inevitable stain upon humanity, then free will can not be the basis of human morality. The best Kant can do is to state that Evil is the ultimate example of using humanity as a means to an end, not an end in itself, and so is immoral (Forti 2019, 311–13).

Forti (2019) articulates the notion of power and its relationship to Evil, which she calls the "Dostoevsky paradigm" owing to its derivation from the literary works of Dostoevsky. Forti provides a theological account in this metaphorical approach where various demons, as evil manifestations of human impulses, all seek to replace God and his infinite freedom. As finite beings, demons can not create but can only destroy. So, for Dostoevsky, Evil enters the world as a diabolical disease of power, leading to destruction or evil leads to power and power and then to nihilism or Freud's death wish.

This Dostoevsky paradigm links the predator and the hapless prey through violence or the cynical leader to the masses incapable of resistance. Such a paradigm inevitably leads to Forti (2019) viewing Evil as a self-destructive power and the existence of a moral duality, with the wicked demons confronting the absolute victims on the other side. However, in late democracies, Evil has become the accumulation of unnecessary suffering from everyday actions by typical actors within society. This description leads Forti to argue to reevaluate Arendt and Foucault's works in light of the Dostoevsky paradigm. She held that Arendt's banality of Evil can arise from Foucalt's "thantopolitics", or the politics of death that follows from the slippage of "biopolitics", or the politics of living despite ordinary or good intentions and not just evil intentions (Forti 2019, 313–14).

Forti (2019) brings these descriptions of Evil together with the common themes of transgression, power and death that underpin the work of Primo Levi, where evil and power occupy a grey zone. So, instead of absolute demons on one side and absolute victims on the other, mediocre demons and their desire for normality and positivity emerge. For Forti, Evil is a system of wicked actors, a few zealous or committed agents and the broader circle of many acquiescent spectators. The drive for death becomes counterbalanced by the will to live. Nevertheless, for Forti, not judging the actions of the few and remaining thoughtless is a new threat to society, and we should

embrace our free will to be active participants in our lives. For Forti, the sin of pride echoes the original sin of disobedience, yet pride in ourselves is the best counter to Evil (Forti 2019, 314–15).

However, none of these positions addresses the moral question of what qualifies as Evil and how the act is morally wrong. They all focus on the ontology of Evil as residing within the Evil-doer yet remaining distinct from and corrupting their humanity. However, the morality of any deed is at the root of how the deed transforms into an Evil deed. Murder is the circumstances and intent of the killing, not the act of killing. Society justifies or accepts specific, deliberate killings, but not all such killings.

The next chapter describes and discusses the mixed account adopted in this thesis and outlines the attempt to address the apparent dilemma in describing Evil. Evil is commonly held to exist by the lay population and especially by the Police and Prison oficers who are disproportionately encounter Evil-doers in their role. Yet philosophy struggles to provide a coherent account of the ethics of Evil. This thesis proposes, tests and defends a Social-Harm account that prioritises Victim-centred and Spectator-centric accounts of Evil. This placeholder account also assumes that Forti's second position is correct. Evil does exist, but it is not an independent entity; secondly, a naturalistic account of such Evil is possible, plausible and defendable. Such

a naturalistic account will define Evil by describing Evil, and Korsgaard's reflective normativity (Korsgaard et al. 1996) will outline why such acts are morally wrong.

Any naturalistic account is a reductive theory. Evil gets reduced to its core axiomatic concepts, which are present in all secular, interpersonal Evils. Without which axiomatic concepts being present, the deed would not be classed as being an Evil deed.

3 The Social-Harm account

3.1 Describing Evil is to know Evil

This chapter describes the Social-Harm reductive, naturalistic account of Evil and places this account in the context of the central debate of this thesis. The Social-Harm account of Evil seeks to capture Korsgaard's normative ethics as the basis for its moral claims about the philosophical definition of Evil being the definition of what makes a deed an Evil-deed, with Evil-doers being secondarily defined as those agents who perform Evil-deeds.

Any naturalistic claim has to first address Moore's claim that any naturalistic claim is a fallacy (Moore 1903). Using Good as his moral property Moore (1903) considers three classes of ethical questions (para. 24) as being central to all ethics;

1. What is meant by "The Good"?

2. What things or deeds are Good in themselves?
3. How should what exists in the world be as good as possible?

These, consecutively, refer to the metaethical question of what is Good. The second question is the normative question of how to judge goodness? Lastly, the final question is the applied ethical question is what is good in this particular situation.

The significance is self-evident in any discussion of Evil. If Evil exists, it is a different category of moral objects from being simply Wrong. The challenge in any definition is both the description of Evil deeds and to articulate why those deeds are not morally Good or simply Wrong deeds.

Moore has framed the argument by his famous objection to naturalistic ethics or that Good or Evil is capable of being reduced to natural properties (Moore 1903, chap. 1). His position is that moral objects are universal and non-natural and, through supervenience, add the property of Good or Evil to a natural object. So, a natural object or deed might be an example of Evil, but Evil itself is more than any particular instantiation. Any attempt to define the universal metaphysics of an abstract object by the particular ontology of a non-abstract natural example is a class error and the claim of equivalence is a fallacy by definition. Moore also argues that any nominalist naturalistic descriptions of ethics, though using the Theory of Evolution,

are fatally flawed (Moore 1903, chap. 2). This is now a deeply mistaken understanding of the Theory of Evolution, but reflects the state of science and its limited understanding of inheritance in 1903. Making for Moore, natural selection another manifestation of the naturalistic fallacy equating a natural desirable property like health with an abstract moral property of being good (Moore 1903, para27).

Some 90 years later, Korsgaard et al. (1996) argue a contrary position, that a moral object is precisely the description of its natural properties. So Evil is the set of natural objects, where each and every member of this set describes the property of being Evil. The description of Evil is then the reduction of the general to the naturalistic properties of the particular. This understanding builds upon the explosion of scientific knowledge and central role of natural selection in the flourishing of species and ecosystems over the intervening years since Moore's work was published. The theory of Evolution is now a behemoth fully capable of answering Moore's early criticisms. Recent advances in functional neuro-imaging and neuro-anatomy support a reductive account of the psychological person being a brain state, supported by the physical body providing life-support functions and existing within a social system. Morality reverts to a modern version of Aristotle's virtue ethics, where the flourishing of society maximises the individual's and the capacity of the society to safely raise children. This naturalist position

Korsgaard calls "Normative Ethics."

The Social-Harm account endeavours to capture the elements of a deed needing to be present for the deed to be described as Evil instead of being simply harmful or wrong. Using a similar methodology as DSM-V (American-Psychiatric-Association 2013), this definition considers only objective markers of an event being Evil. While this drives reliability, it excludes common elements of the folk accounts of Evil, particularly cruelty or sadistic pleasure. Although such elements are often foundational to the folk concept of Evil, objectively determining their presence during an event and their relationship to the event being called Evil is inherently problematic. The BDSM subculture would view taking sadistic pleasure in the suffering of others as core to being a "Dominant" within a dominant-submissive sadomasochistic relationship, as described by the social rules of that sexual subculture. This subculture would not view someone taking sadistic pleasure as Evil but rather a shared intimacy that meets the asymmetrical desires of both partners. Different sexual subcultures would view the same deeds and the "perpetrator" of such deeds quite differently, feeling they are indeed utterly depraved and Evil. So taking sadistic pleasure in the suffering of others is not a necessary marker of Evil? Determining intent is even more problematic. How is intent, and precisely the intent to cause suffering, determined? Personally interviewing sadistic offenders or

serial killers reveals they say one thing before arrest or in unguarded moments and another when "supported" or "advised" by their lawyer while in custody facing dire consequences. Once incarcerated, they have little motivation to tell the truth. Regardless, those caught, brought before the courts and imprisoned are only a minority of a sub-group of the wider sub-group of Evil persons.

The Social-Harm account is a conjunctive account of three clauses, which when each and all are true means the deed was an Evil-deed and the perpetrator is an Evil-doer.

1. The deed causes objective harm that leads to measurable and permanent and significant changes to the human victim themselves and not just property, with the typical example in humans being damage to the neurological system, including causing fatal injuries.
2. And a culpable agent instigated the deed.
3. Moreover, the deed causes terror or moral outrage in the society where the event occurs. The event is such that it impune's the coherence of that society to collectively flourish and robs individual members of feeling morally or physically safe.

Each of the three clauses have distinct roles that must be collectively and individually true for the Social-Harm description of Evil to be valid. Each

will be discussed as will objections to each.

The first clause is a conjunctive threshold claim that aims to distinguish between Evil and Wrong deeds. Wrong deeds are seen as causing short-lived distress and may even cause discomfort or minor injury. As an example of a Wrong deed, even if performed by an Evil character, is Formosa's malicious bus passenger performed a wrong deed by being gratuitously rude to the driver, but this was not an Evil deed. It did not cause any permanent harm to the driver. In contrast, an Evil deed causes life-changing or fatal injuries from which physical and psychological recovery is impossible. In a naturalistic model, the self is a manifestation of nervous system. If the nervous system is damaged or destroyed, the sense of self is irrevocably changed. The victim's life will be measurably changed forever; even if they can establish a new normal, it will always be a reduction in what they previously had.

An apparent immediate reactive counter to the Social-Harm account is the use of neuro-trauma as the exemplar of irreversible harm to the sense of self and the victim's capacity for participation in society for humans. The first clause is describing the ontology of the event as it impacts the victim. It is not addressing the metaphysical nature of Evil and does not make any comment on the Evil-doer. The same injuries could be caused by non-evil

means, such as a motor vehicle accident but the first clause does not seek to make any moral claim. On an alternative water world filled with amoeba that do not possess a brain as we would understand it, then the damaging of one's flotation bladder so the victim slowly sinks into the darkness of the crushing depths as the victim's peers and family watch helplessly on, would serve the same purpose on that world. The first clause would also serve as an account of a catastrophic deed for an alternative account of Evil morality.

Three classic neurological sequelae are associated with life-changing injuries in the context of Evil, each with a poor prognosis. Death is the first and most straightforward. The deed killed the victim, and their life is over, robbed of all potential.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is just one member of the family of trauma-related changes to the brain. The DSM-V outlines how this is a constellation of a significant event, the development of intrusive re-experiencing of the event, and subsequently avoiding reminders. Associated with this are significant changes in the victim's cognitive, mood, arousal and reactivity levels to the point where significant social and occupational impacts last for more than a month (American-Psychiatric-Association 2013). Associated with this stable constellation of symptoms is a stable constella-

tion of findings across various neuro-imaging studies (Van der Kolk 2014). Fascinatingly, the various neuro-trauma diagnoses have stable changes in various brain structures, especially in the mid-brain. Increasingly, the physical brain becomes not a single organ but rather a cluster of cooperating nuclei, each with its function that connects the body to the frontal lobe, the anatomical home of the self. The other key observation is that what trauma victims describe in their experiences matches the role of the areas where measurable damage or change occurs. The prognosis for recovery in this spectrum of impairments is 25-50% (Hébert and Amédée 2020), depending on a bewildering array of factors, but this is probably an overestimate due to a combination of under-reporting and ongoing research. In comparison, gender reassignment surgery has a 70% success rate for physical recovery, with an impaired outcome of 23% driven by comorbidities or surgery complications for what can be substantive surgery. While over 90% of patients post gender reassignment surgery make a full psychological recovery, and only 7% later detransitioned (Hall, Mitchell, and Sachdeva 2021). Other studies paint an even more positive prognosis.

The third exemplar is phantom limb pain, representing permanent damage to the peripheral nervous system. Following an amputation, 80% of patients experience an ongoing awareness of the limb with severe pain associated. Of this group, 25-50% continue to have severe life-limiting chronic pain despite

optimal therapy (Erlenwein et al. 2021).

The key idea is that the threshold of harm needed for a deed to be deemed Evil in a naturalistic model is one that impacts the nervous system, causing significant life-changing structural and functional alterations to the victim, which prevents or inhibits recovery from the trauma.

There are two styles of counterexamples to the first clause. The first is the victim of "knee capping", where a gunshot to the back of the knee frequently leads to life-long physical disability. The objection is that this is a significant life-changing non-neurological injury, arguing against any single type of injury or organ damage as the basis for a definition of an injury that is significant enough to be deeded an Evil deed. Instead, the "knee capping" counter example argues for the amount of functional change to the individual as an alternative approach to a threshold claim. If this matters, as it does not significantly change the overall argument, the difficulty with any functional claim is that it is subjective and varies over time and context. For the Social-Harm description, the "kneecapping" style of objection fails because such injury usually occurs as part of torture within the context of terrorism or organised crime, which also directly causes PTSD as well as the physical injury. The resultant chronic pain syndrome from the gun shot wound is also a permanent injury to the peripheral nervous system.

So complex events with many elements, such as kneecapping, do pass the threshold to be Evil within this formulation of the Social-Harm model.

The second class of objection is more troubling to the Social-Harm account. These are where women in care facilities, who are in a persistent vegetative state, are raped and become pregnant, giving birth unexpectedly (Fins 2019). Given the mothers in such cases are in a persistent vegetative state, they can not suffer any harm as postulated by the Social-Harm description. This makes such a heinous event apparently not Evil. Equally, if the baby is unharmed through the lack of antenatal care and a reactive delivery process, then the only harm will be secondary, but this harm may be substantial and cause measurable damage leading to harm. There is a substantive literature on psychological and physical effects of adverse childhood events such as the social rejection and consequent emotional neglect of a child born in such circumstances that would certainly breach the threshold postulated in the Social-Harm account of Evil (Witt et al. 2019). Nevertheless, that a rape and consequent pregnancy of a patient in a persistent vegetative state by a nurse might not be inherently Evil, and just revolting or wrong will be discussed further subsequently. This class of objection to the threshold clause certainly highlights that all deeds that meet the threshold clause are candidates for an Evil deed, but not all despicable or disturbing deeds meet the threshold for being deemed Evil by the Social-Harm account as they

cause insufficient social distress. As will be later discussed later, Moore argues this is exactly the fallacy inherent in any naturalistic account of morality. Any particular instantiation may indeed be an exemplar of a moral abstract object like Evil, but the abstract universal moral object is not defined or constrained to a set of instantiations.

The second clause in the Social-Harm account outlines the cause of the injury, where the cause was a human, a human who willfully instigated the deed to occur. The term "instigated" also includes those deeds where one person created the situation where another person performed the deed, instead of only those situations where the instigator and the deed doer were the same person. The term culpable also excludes deeds where mental illness was the driving factor, and the capacity to distinguish right from Wrong has been lost.

Obvious objections include that someone who commits an Evil deed is not necessarily an Evil person or Evil doer. This distinction captures the difference in law between murder and manslaughter. Both result in the unlawful death of another, but the difference is the offender's intention or level of conduct. If it does not meet the threshold in a complex multi-part definition of culpable homicide (Crimes Act 1961 S167-168), then the unlawful death is called manslaughter (Crimes Act 1961 Section 178). An Evil doer, in

contrast, is someone who repeatedly commits Evil deeds, such as the BTK killer.

The second clause by design excludes any concept of intent. This exclusion seems an oversight given cruelty or lists of mental states such as Kramer's; namely sadistic malice, heartlessness, or extreme recklessness are common in accounts of Evil (Formosa 2019, 259). In search of making the Social-Harm description of Evil, one that can be verified objectively, the inability to objectively measure the perpetrator's intent at the time of the deed drove the exclusion from the account, making the Social-Harm account of Evil more reliable if somewhat unsatisfying.

Consider the robber who shot the shopkeeper during a robbery that has gone wrong as an example of the dilemma. Did the robber intend to harm or kill the victim or merely intimidate them? Different jurisdictions have come to different positions from implied malice as the shooting occurred within the context of a crime (MacIntyre et al. 2021) to manslaughter or reckless murder without intent (Kessler Ferzan 2021). To be legally culpable of a crime in most juristrictions derived from the English legal system requires both *actus reus* (a guilty act) and *mens rea* (a guilty mind) within the statutes of a given legal system. An act which seems Evil from a folk perspective need not possess all three of these requirements and yet

still be seen as Evil. An example might be Brigadier General Nguyễn Ngọc Loan, whose infamous execution of Captain Nguyễn Văn Lém at the end of the Vietnam War was captured in the iconic image taken by Eddie Adams. This photo horrified many and was called an Evil deed. It crosses the threshold of severity and nature to be an Evil deed, but the executioner was not legally culpable. By the Vietnamese law operating at the time, the Brigadier was allowed (and required) to execute spies who murdered fellow South Vietnamese officers, and Captain Nguyễn Văn Lém was just such a spy. Brigadier General Nguyễn Ngọc Loan therefore performed neither a guilty act nor had a guilty mind. He was "just" performing his professional role in difficult circumstances. However, for the lay-public, that the photo is horrific and haunting, makes the claim of the deed being Evil almost self-evident. Nevertheless, it does not fulfill the second clause of the Social-Harm account of Evil and the Brigadier was not charged with a crime, moved to the US and opened a pizzeria after the war.

Reliability is not the same as validity, so an objection to the second clause would be that it is overly inclusive. The serial rapist and murderer, Colonel Williams of the Royal Canadian Air Force, seems to be both Evil and very different from a careless act that caused the victim life changing injuries or death. The absence of intent or *mens rea* from the culpability clause seems to lead to a category error in the claim that both men are equally wrong.

A plausible defence for the Social-Harm description from such an objection is the third clause and the differing level of social distress following the two different fatal events. Yet this is still a fatal objection given the standard is that each arm of a hybrid account has to be individually true in all instances of Evil for the account to be valid. The second clause, excludes acts which present as Evil. It may also be simultaneously overly broad, meaning self-evidently, only wrong acts might be included within the definition of Evil if they cause sufficient harm.

If the first two clauses are the descriptive elements in the Social-Harm account of Evil of what is an Evil deed, the third is the normative clause as to why the deed is morally Evil, where the deed's impact on society decides its moral value and whether the action is morally right or wrong. This clause aims to capture how others in society react to the deed, with the examples used being a moral panic or moral outrage. Serial killers and terrorists spread fear through the communities and society in which they perform their deeds. The nature and severity of the fear created is sufficient to change that society and how it functions.

As discussed later, the third clause does not presuppose any particular metaphysical assumptions for moral judgement beyond the core claim of social realism. It is agnostic to the nature and priorities of a particular society

beyond its ability and wish to collectively flourish, so accepting that different societies will have different *a priori* priorities and beliefs as to what is right. It accepts that there can be more than one correct answer or different right answers between different environmental contexts across different social contexts. In accepting this, naturalistic descriptions reject the monist idea that there is a single *a priori* universal moral value like "Evil" or "The Good" that underpins a unitary description of morality. Instead, for any naturalistic account, the moral principle is an *a posteriori* description of the psychological and cognitive impacts of what did happen as compared to societal norms and expectations of what should happen.

A modern version of evolutionary-based virtue-style ethics characterises this perspective. The form and function of the DNA molecules and the cells that house them are all manifestations of the laws of physics and chemistry. The body comprises organs that are collections of cells. The DNA therefore encodes the information needed for the human to be born and codifies their capacity to engage with a given environment. The society where the individual is born and raised provides the resources and safety needed for the individual to achieve first sexual maturity and then successfully raise the next generation. Social rules are a combination of neuro-biology as to what is possible but also what is socially necessary to raise successive generations of children successfully in a given environment.

The interplay between the normative and descriptive elements of the Social Harm captures these elements of a folk description of Evil. Neo-Aristotelian flourishing is the flourishing of society as a whole, which from an evolutionary perspective is the successful rearing of the next generation by this generation. Any action or belief that supports or enhances this is good and anything that diminishes or impairs successfully raising the next generation is wrong. Evil deeds are those deeds that disrupt society and threaten the sense of social coherence, so risking the ability of the society to procreate through collective flourishing. Yet, for many war, where society causes deliberate harm to another group, is not seen as Evil, because the act of fighting and harm does not cause any moral injury to the society. This is the sense of societal reaction that the third clause captures. The social context of a deed and the reaction of society to the deed is the normative function that determines if the deed is held to be right or wrong. Simplistically killing an external invader is not Evil as society is afraid of the invader and so this is the "right" thing to do. While shooting the local Priest or some innocent child is wrong to the point of Evil if it frightens or horrifies society.

This combination of a descriptive and a normative account of Evil is consistent with Railton (2017) position on such thick concepts underpinning the socio-scientific explanatory basis of naturalistic realism. Roberts (2013) and Korsgaard et al. (1996) also supports such a conceptualisation. Kurtz

(1955) argues that this position reduces morality to a description with an associated implied justification in that by describing that "X is Y", we also imply this equivalence is what it means to be Y. The counter-argument Kurtz raises is why "X ought to be Y", implying that X causes Y and opening the debate around Hume's classic is/ought argument. Kurtz considers this position from an alternative non-naturalistic analysis that focuses on the analysis of language, accepting Russell's characterisation of this approach as "the aim (of ethics) is not practice, but propositions about practice" (Kurtz 1955, 121). Highlighted is the focus on using moral words, and Kurtz uses for his explanatory example Ayer's emotivism, which characterises a non-cognitivist morality that only claims feelings about a moral dilemma.

The third clause argues against a pure social account of Evil in that society has frequent moral panics where no Evil deed has occurred and such deeds maybe be Wrong but are not Evil in the sense being argued. Examples are numerous, but the McCarthy anti-communist witch hunt or the current transphobic rhetoric serve as iconic examples. These moral panics cause society to alter its behaviour, fearing for its integrity, but without any basis. This counterexample argues that while the societal reaction is normative, this normative function is not necessarily and implicitly linked to the descriptive elements of Evil, meaning the Social-Harm account of Evil does

not necessarily describe a coherent account of Evil where each test is individually true as well as the account itself. This raises concerns about the nature of the normative claim and the meta-ethical positions of Naturalism and non-Naturalism. Concerns that Moore seeks to amplify and clarify.

This thesis will not open the version of Pandora's box, which is the debate as to whether free will is compatible with determinism. The Social-Harm account is a reductionist model of Evil that assumes agency. One famous characterisation of Evil is the psychopath. Despite the term not featuring in DSM-V (American-Psychiatric-Association 2013), like the term Evil, the construct of someone being a psychopath remains in the popular vernacular. Psychopaths are colloquially described as having a "superficial charm" and being able to manipulate others easily. However, they may be able to learn and adapt quickly, lack empathy and remorse, and engage in criminal or harmful behaviour without feeling guilt or regret. A popular question in Psychiatry is whether the psychopath is an evolutionary dead end. Such individuals will have children but only participate destructively in raising them, so the "genes" for psychopathy should die out, but they do not. This description of the psychopath is analogous to the Evil agent or the Evil doer, who gains little or no evolutionary advantage in the medium to long term through acts of deliberate cruelty, yet truly Evil deeds deliberately caused by terrible Evil agents are common across the ages. Patton, Smith, and

Lilienfeld (2018) raises the possibility that psychopaths differentially survive and then go on to become transformational leaders in first-responder or combat-type scenarios. This position suggests a critical role for the degree of socialisation, which is higher in the case of those who become first responders and lower in those who perform Evil deeds, yet for both the ability to achieve the maximum short-term personal benefit from the moment without being overwhelmed is advantageous.

Also out of scope for this thesis is a discussion on Wittgenstein's position on Evil being a family of wrongs that share standard features, especially the distress to the broader society, but are also distinct. His position seeks to bring together other types of Evil such as Theological, Social and natural Evils. From the perspective of Russell's type theory, Wittgenstein's position would be a second order set containing sets of the different type of propositional functions describing each type of Evil (Whitehead and Russell 1910, 1:168). If that position is true, then Wittgenstein's account is subsumed by the Social-Harm account, but a formal discussion is beyond the scope of this thesis.

The next chapter outlines Korsgaard et al. (1996) description of "Normative Ethics". This discussion will elaborate on how, for Korsgaard, a reductive naturalist account of morality is a normative account of the morality of a

deed and an account of the deed. Each justifies the other. A reductive naturalistic account describes the Evil deed and, through that description also explains why the deed is morally Evil.

4 Normative ethics

The Social-Harm as a naturalistic reductive account of Evil is by no means the first such description of Evil. Before considering alternative accounts of Evil, it is crucial to define the stance of this thesis on normative ethics. Simplistically, if the previous chapter described what is Evil, this chapter outlines how the Social-Harm account of Evil claims why it is Evil. This claim will be a normative claim embracing the position of Korsgaard et al. (1996).

Korsgaard et al. (1996) argues that the challenge for philosophy is to define the foundations of morality as being "real" or "objective" but accepts that moral claims (moral propositions) are ultimately normative. These moral claims do not merely describe what we should do; they put claims or demands on us to behave or not behave in specific ways to achieve excellence. She contrasts this with the law that describes obligations to avoid the risk

of punishments (Korsgaard et al. 1996, Lecture 1).

She accepts that inevitably, what morality demands is complex and the associated question of "why" or what "justifies" the demands of morality needs answering. For Korsgaard's philosophy, it is critical to understand the nature of the "normative question," although she further refines the questions regarding moral concepts.

1. What does the concept mean - how are they defined or analysed?
2. What do they apply to - what things are good, what actions are obligatory?
3. What underpins the concept? Are they the product of reason, experience, or religon?

Through answering such questions and the practical or psychological implications of any theory of moral concepts, any moral theory endeavours to describe explanatory adequacy. Moral theories must also outline an adequate justification by providing normative criteria for any after applying a moral theory (Korsgaard et al. 1996, 10).

The risk is that the moral sceptic will successfully claim that no such normative claim exists for any moral theory. Equally, it is easy to confuse explanatory and normative claims. Although it is impossible to justify anything that can not be explained, for Korsgaard, the answer is one of

perspective. An explanatory claim is in the third person as to what others should do. A normative claim is in the first person and justifies why the individual should do it.

The claim is that a normative answer must address three conditions (Korsgaard et al. 1996, 16).

1. It must directly address someone in that situation and provide the answer in the first person, not talk in the third person or be general about a response.
2. The answer must be transparent about any underlying motivations and their true nature. The moral agent must truly understand why this justifies the theory's claim.
3. The claim needs to appeal sincerely to the agent's sense of identity.

Korsgaard argues that science has robbed humans of the belief that the world has a purpose, which is the basis for normative theories. She articulates her view of the four options open to the modem ethicist while attempting to address this deficit of purpose (Korsgaard et al. 1996, 18);

1. Voluntarism, where obligation stems from the command of someone (a sovereign monarch) as opposed to the previous something (God), who has legitimate authority over the moral agent and can frame

laws, that the populace "voluntarily" follow albeit to avoid potential consequences.

2. Realism is that moral laws are the product of reason argued from fundamental axioms or neo-platonic objects expressed as truth functional propositions. The claim here is that therefore moral laws are logically true propositions and describe true moral knowledge.
3. Reflective endorsement is the position that moral laws are grounded in human nature. The philosopher must explain why humanity uses moral concepts and feels bound by them by both reason and emotional resonance.
4. Autonomy, where the source of normativity is the agent's free will, meaning that the moral laws of society are the moral laws of the agent.

Korsgaard et al. (1996) offers the defence of her respective positions before focusing primarily on reflective endorsement.

4.0.1 Voluntarism

Korsgaard et al. (1996) starts with the position of Pufendorf that morality is imposed on humanity or intelligent beings of a morally indifferent nature

through the intervention of God or a God-like sovereign, where God appoints the sovereign and the sovereign makes the law[Section 1.3.1 - 1.3.4]. Although according to Hobbes and Pufendorf, the content of laws is indeed a product of natural reason because the existence of God is justified by reason, hence the goal-directed actions of God's earthly agent are also the product of natural reason. So, the sovereign makes an idea into law, making the claim that the law is now good and morally normative. The contents of the law itself is not necessarily morally good. It is that the sovereign or God made any idea into a law, is what invested the law with normativity.

Based on reason or divine obedience, in this account of morality, the citizen as a moral agent is duty-bound to obey any such law. Yet, sanctions or at least the threat of sanctions are still needed as they and they alone which establish the authority of the legislator. So, it is not merely acquisition by the citizens to the law that is sufficient. This balance of laws and the ability to enforce them underpins the divine or sovereign nature of the legislator and the property of requirement that their laws be obeyed as a moral principle.

4.0.2 Realism

The challenge to Voluntarism is that obligation comes from a social contract, but why should we voluntarily comply with any or even just this particular social contract when could write our own or choose another? It is hard to escape, given Hobbes and Pufendorf's claims about the critical role of the sovereign's power to enforce obedience through coercion and force, meaning that Voluntarism can degenerate into either a might-is-right style argument or a Foucault-style argument of the agent self-monitoring to ensure social compliance with the divine decrees. Otherwise, at best it depends on the (fortuitous) concordance between the agent and the ruling power's desires or at least a mutually beneficial compromise. Based on the realist claim (Korsgaard et al. 1996, sec. 1.4.1 - 1.4.8) their response to this claim is that moral obligation is not based on the social coercion of the individual, but is based upon a justification derived from the claim that there are objective moral facts about mind independent facts. So society is morally wrong if it expects the drinking of milk for someone with a lactose intolerance because drinking milk causes them gastrointestinal symptoms, not because some authority figure threatens punishment if they do. It would be bad for the agent, even if no one or importantly no authoritarian figure observed them drinking milk.

4.0.3 Autonomy

Korsgaard holds that notably Kant, but also Rawls (Korsgaard et al. (1996), p.19) argue that autonomy or free will as the basis of answering the normative question. For Kant, the "categorical imperative is the law of autonomy" (Korsgaard et al. 1996, 220), leads to the claim by Korsgaard that the normative claim for a private action driven by free will is based upon a public claim of compliance with the generalisable categorical imperative (Korsgaard et al. 1996). The impression is created that Korsgaard, in an allusion to Hume's is/ought paradox, seeks to use Kant's Categorical Imperative to bridge the gap between general (societal) norms as the focus of morality, and the specific ethical norms of the individual, while avoiding any form of utilitarian claim. In multicultural society, there will be more than one set of cultural norms to choose from, and there will be different communities of different sizes. Should a free agent from a small community obey the societal norm of their group/culture or those of the dominant, may be even abusive, culture? Either could be justified by the autonomy argument, which undermines its strength as a normative claim. A defence against the reality of cultural and ethical plurality is one of the underpinnings to Korsgaard's embrace of reflective endorsement.

4.0.4 Reflective endorsement

Reflective endorsement is Korsgaard's premiere normative claim (Korsgaard et al. 1996, 30). It locates morality in human nature and originated from sentimentalists like Hume, who argued that moral actions manifest human sentiment through reason. Such a position captures a similar sense to Neo-Aristotelian virtue theory. Hume's position does cause Korsgaard some challenges and she recognises that although Moore's second and third ethical questions are addressed, Moore's first question on what is "Good", what is a moral object still needs to be answered (Korsgaard et al. 1996, 52). Her defence is that Hume's claim of what is a moral object is based on the cumulative sentiment generated by the moral and emotional impacts on their family or neighbours and directly on themselves as being the total moral entity. So feeding the dog chocolate is not morally defensible, It is fun and the dog will enjoy eating the chocolate but the dog will consequently die. For Moore, in this instance, the external moral object of "Wrong" would supervene onto the act rendering the act of feeding the dog chocolate as a manifestation of a act being morally "Wrong". For Korsgaard, feeding the dog chocolate is morally indefensible on the basis of the sentiments created as the family and the agent witnesses the distress of the dog's death and when they consider all the other moments with the dog they have lost,

together how the wider society will view them for deliberately poisoning their dog for "laughs". By reason any act that creates such harm, engenders universal condemnation and distress is why such an act is "Wrong". Pre-emptively, a normative question can be addressed by reflecting on the usual or previous consequences of a particular action or applying general moral principles derived from previous similar actions.

Considering both, Hume feels we can reach a normative or convergent agreement on the moral agent's character as being a manifestation of their repeated choices and actions. The good moral agent wishes to have pride in themselves, so they collect virtues and try to avoid vices. The normative question with respect to character, then becomes whether or when we should yield to our internal desires or to become perceived as virtuous by society (Korsgaard et al. 1996, Lecture 2, Section 2.2.2). Therefore, practicing virtues brings happiness to the moral agent through their fulfillment. Hume states that a virtuous person acts not by duty or obligation but by the natural motivation that leads to the public approbation of others. One counter is that one can also act without the right motivation and still gain the benefit. The other challenge is that self-interest is critical to Hume's ethics, and often, what Hume calls secondary virtues like justice still operate. So, moral actions are undertaken not out of self-interest but to avoid the social consequences of unjust actions (Korsgaard et al. 1996, Lecture 2,

Section 2.2.3).

In his book "Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals," David Hume introduces the concept of the "sensible knave" as a challenge to the idea that reason is the basis of morality (Korsgaard et al. 1996, 58). The sensible knave understands the rules of morality but chooses to break them whenever it is in their self-interest to break them. Hume argues that the sensible knave is a logical possibility and that no argument can prove that it is always irrational to act immorally in every possible circumstance. He acknowledges that most people would find the sensible knave to be odious, but he argues that this does not mean the sensible knave is morally wrong from a logical position (Korsgaard et al. 1996). Consider the example of the starving survivors who ate the corpses of those who did not survive the initial aircraft crash, an act that would be seen as wrong but not Evil. In the sense, that the survivors literally had no choice and eating the bodies was their only means of survival. They had no other intent or choice.

For Korsgaard, this outlines how reflective endorsement works. Receptivity is a concept in social theory that refers to how social actors are aware of and reflect on their actions and embedded social context through reason. It is a process of self-monitoring and self-reflection that can lead to changes in behaviour. Reflexivity is a way of understanding the social world that is more

complex and nuanced than traditional approaches. It acknowledges that social actors are not simply passive recipients of social forces but actively shape and create their social reality.

Korsgaard claims that such a position supports that it is human nature to be governed by morality, or when considered from every point of view, including its own, morality ultimately both governs humanity and is also derived from humanity. In essence, human nature is inherently morally normative, as humans have no ability to not identity with their moral self or as social beings, and have no wish to reject social authority or risk ostracisation (Korsgaard et al. 1996).

Moral agents become exposed to multiple sources, and our adoption or endorsement of only some of these are the conscious choices on the grounds of social acceptance which defines their answer to any normative question. This account also avoids the one-dimensional views of Nietzsche and Freud that morality will tear humanity apart. For Hume, it simply will not, as moral agents will just choose a different path (Korsgaard et al. 1996). Simply put, we choose our friends and where we live. The act of choosing is the act of endorsing and agreeing with the moral obligations the form the basis of how that particular society collectively flourishes. We are always free to change our mind and move on.

Korsgaard then turns to Bernard Williams (Korsgaard et al. 1996, Lecture 2, Sections 2.3.1 - 2.3.9), who claimed that there is a difference between the objectivity of science and the objectivity of ethics. Williams accepted at least a version of realism in the former as our beliefs converge on a shared understanding of a single external reality built upon the physical laws of the material Universe. He argues that we share a common conceptual framework of this external world and we also have a dependent personal concepts on an underlying internal framework selectively constructed from less dependent concepts such as Williams' absolute concept of the world.

Of relevance, Korsgaard raises an objection based on the position that cognition is less perspective-dependent than perception-dependent. Korsgaard asks if Williams is saying that we can share cognitions more easily than sharing perceptions? This perspective would impact the ability of humans and aliens to develop a shared "absolute concept of the world", given that they live in many differing sensory realities that may only partially overlap if they are not discrete. Williams assumes this conceptual purism that drives science would give it automatic precedence over the perceptual (Korsgaard et al. 1996). A counter to this objection is that it denies neurodiversity and assumes that cognition of the external world is not a culturally defined concept. William's position also conflicts with Nagel's realism outlined in his classic "What it is like to be a bat" (Nagel 1980). Williams considers the

normative question from an external (alien) perspective. For Korsgaard, in contrast, Hume adopts the reflective endorsement of a human-centric perspective. She sees Hume as arguing that morality converges on self-interest, while Williams argues for congruence towards human flourishing.

To further contrast the two positions, Hume states he is considering fundamental human nature and psychology, so if morality is bad for the individual but good for society, humans are doomed to sit in social silence. Williams argues that different cultures have different values. If individual values clash with cultural values, one can change cultures. The old values are not wrong; they are no longer relevant and discarded.

Korsgaard sees John Stuart Mill as a third philosopher who "adopts" reflective endorsement (Korsgaard et al. 1996, Lecture 2, Sections 2.4.1 - 2.4.3). Korsgaard reads Mills as a naturalistic realisty who embraces the idea that the presence of pleasure and the absence of pain is desirable. Korsgaard focuses on Mills claim that desire is the normative source in Utilitarianism. Where constraints or sanctions bind humanity to a particular moral practice. These can be external, as in the love of others or God and the desire to please or internal, or the pain of social disapproval for someone is "properly cultivated" (Korsgaard et al. 1996, 79). Korsgaard postulates from an internalist position that an agent knowing they have duties or social ex-

pectations makes them more likely to act upon the social expectations and enjoy the associated benefits bestowed by that society for conformity.

The Social-Harm account of Evil captures the various senses of the normative approach to morality that Korsgaard advances. The Social-Harm account needs to address her three claims that any normative theory of morality has to answer.

The Social-Harm account describes Evil as a life-changing event defined by measurable harm, performed by a culpable agent that causes terror or fear in the broader society in which it occurred. Underpinning the social reaction is Hume's sentimentalism. Each directly or indirectly impacted community member knows by reason that they could have been the victim, and nothing or nobody would have saved them either. They can put themselves in the shoes of the victim, as well as have an emotional reaction to life-changing and potentially life-ending harm caused to the victim. On top of this personal reaction, each member is validated in their reaction by others in society having a similar reaction, and each empathises with others around them. Society comes together through its member's responses to this deliberate extreme external event. This collective social reaction built upon individual responses is what Korsgaard seeks to capture through her concept of reflective endorsement.

4 Normative ethics

This chapter seeks to take the definition of the Social-Harm account of Evil deeds from the previous chapter and considers it in a reductive normative and naturalistic ethical framework. So, building the case for the validity of the Social-Harm account as a potentially viable account of Evil. The next chapter, will provide the contrasting meta-ethical position of Moore who argues that any naturalist account of morality is a fallacy.

5 Defending the Social-Harm account of Evil:

The Social-Harm account of Evil is a hybrid model that makes a reductive and naturalistic normative claim to give a description of Evil. The key contra-position to any natural reductionist account of morality is Moore's non-natural, intuitive account of morality. Considerable time is devoted to describing Moore's argument within the broader intuitionist tradition.

5.1 Naturalism and the intuitionist reply

Naturalism and non-naturalism hold diametric views on meta-ethical claims about the nature of Evil (or Good). From the naturalistic position, the capacity for morality is an emergent phenomenon arising from underlying

natural processes such as individual consciousness that arise from cognitive function or are group norms generated from the interaction of group members seeking to optimise their reproductive outcome. For Railton (2017), naturalistic realism is a meta-ethical position that holds that it is possible to provide comprehensive explanations of ethics from natural phenomena, where the description is without any unexplained phenomena but equally without resorting to super-natural, un-natural or historical mythology such as Plato's theory of Forms. Railton holds Aristotle as the first philosopher to make such naturalistic realist claims. Any naturalistic claim needs to address the challenge of factuality in substantiating its validity, while an naturalistic ethical claim also needs to address the challenge of normativity. With respect to factuality, both types of claim share many properties in common. Both share a common propositional logic; both consider their respective objects' general and abstract positions. Both have a modal dimension and seek to predict and not just explain. Both seek to be objective and impartial while avoiding social bias (Railton 2017, 44).

The added normative dimension is the distinguishing feature of a naturalistic ethical claim. Where the normative element to claim is that which prescribes or compels action beyond simply describing events. Different philosophers have focused on varying options for articulating and justifying the normative especially with regards to naturalism, but Aristotle's *eudai-*

monia remains the exemplar where the normative is a consequential claim that judges the rightness of an action or belief by its impact on human or societal flourishing (Railton 2017, 44). Hobbes and Hume, respectively, took an alternative stance on the normative claim. They consider the natural virtues, where natural or innate character traits support societal flourishing. Artificial values complement these natural traits of a given society, like justice, are learned as the child grows and are at the least to some extent, social dependent (Railton 2017, 45).

At its core, naturalism argues that by reducing moral properties and their associated actions to physical and material objects, or derived abstract ideas or concepts, provides the best understanding of ethical claims, especially in the face of the exponential growth in scientific knowledge into the 21st Century. Railton labels this claim as "substantive naturalism" (Railton 2017, 47).

For a non-naturalist, the normative claim and the particular instantiation are distinct objects, that exist in different realms. A normative moral claim then supervenes on to a natural object or belief, so conferring a moral property onto the natural object or claim. This distinction between the natural and the moral means that non-naturalism makes the broader claim that any particular instantiation of a moral claim is always less than the gen-

eral moral claim itself. To use Bertrand Russell's type theory (Whitehead and Russell 1910, 1:168–75), moral claims are second order functions, while particular instantiations are members of sets described by first order functions. That there is more to Evil than a naive naturalistic account can describe does not automatically validate the argument for a non-naturalism of morality. However, Moore believes his intuitionist account of the naturalistic fallacy does precisely that, making Moore the classic nemesis of naturalism.

Everyone since Moore describes Moore as an intuitionist, except Moore, who denies the claim. For Moore, intuitionism makes two claims. The first is the epistemic claim that moral propositions are self-evident, and the second is the metaphysical claim that moral properties are not natural properties (Stratton-Lake 2020). Although often taken as conjoint claims, the epistemic claim does not inherently imply any particular metaphysical claim. The often-quoted classic example is the truth of the proposition "An unmarried man is a bachelor," as, after all, a bachelor is an unmarried man. Equally, it does not make any particular claim about the nature of a bachelor and intimate relationships outside of marriage. It does not need to for the proposition to be true.

Stratton-Lake (2020) outlines Price's position that all true knowledge is ul-

timately built upon tautologies, namely constantly and self-evidently true propositions. According to Price, these axiomatic statements are incapable of proof as much as they do not need proof, hence their foundational role in intuitionist epistemology (Stratton-Lake 2020). The nuanced point is the need to distinguish between our intuitive awareness of the truth of self-evidently true propositions, as described above, and our spontaneous conscious intuition based on a particular cognitive state. An example of the latter is Marcie Lyons' account of surviving her date with the serial murderer Ted Bundy [https://marcielyons.com/i-survived-a-date-with-ted-bundy/]. Marcie had an intuition based on her mental state of being subjectively terrified by the individual she was meeting. An intuition that was not based on any self-evidently true proposition. She did not know the individual was Ted Bundy, or that he was a highly prolific serial killer of young women.

5.2 Moore's counter - the naturalistic fallacy

Moore (1903) (para 3) captures a similar perspective through his two questions. These questions are central to any consideration of ethics. The first is, "What kind of things should exist for their own sake"? The second question is, "What kind of actions should we perform?"

Moore distinguishes between them based on the evidence required to verify the truth of each. Moore calls answers to the first question as "intuitions". Where such intuitions can only be known as self-evident truths, claiming that no other evidence is available or needed to verify the truth of any such proposition further.

Any answer to the second question has to adopt one of two types of proofs. The first is causal proof, where the ethical consequences of the action are the proof of the proposition's validity for the correct action. The second type or element of the correctness of any particular action is that it is a manifestation of an answer to the first question, namely that it is self-evidently a tautology.

Moore is adamant in his position that there are no absolute answers to the second question on the correctness of particular actions. He calls answers to his first questions "intuitions", as in the usage later adopted by Price. Moore, however, denies that he is an intuitionist, claiming that intuitionism argues that it is possible to answer both questions. Moore, in contrast, claims it is not (Moore 1903).

Stratton-Lake (2020) highlights that Moore is a moral monist, holding that a singular and universal moral truth underpins the ability to answer the first question. Moral monism also prevents the ability to answer the second

question, as an answer requires the adoption of an ethical pluralism, that no singular moral truth verifies or underpins a valid claim for the correctness of an action in a given circumstance.

Later, Langford describes how Moore's position creates a "paradox of analysis", also called the Langford-Moore paradox. A moral proposition is deemed either uninformative because it is self-evidently always true or the proposition is inherently untrue in every circumstance despite being actually informative sometimes. The Langford-Moore paradox claim is that a moral proposition can not simultaneously be valid and informative (Langford 1949).

Black (1944) considers various objections to this paradox. He uses numeric solutions to illustrate his position. Black begins by outlining Moore's 1942 defence of his original position in *Principia Ethica*. Moore intended to compare metaphysical concepts in his analysis. To avoid ambiguity, Moore never intended for one arm of the identity relationship to be a verbal description of the other arm. He was comparing the concept of an apple with the concept of an apple (Black 1944, 263).

Black's position is that the claim 21 = 21 is both vacuous and different from that of 3 * 7 = 21. The concept of "3 * 7" makes several claims. Using the prefix notation, multiply(3,7) is the function that calls for the serial

addition of three units each of seven, which in base 10 gives the answer of 2 * 10 ⁽1) + 1, which is equivalent to the concept of 21 on the opposing side of the identity. Black uses the notation of A(21, 3, 7) to denote this equivalence but non-identity relationship (Black 1944, 265).

O'Connor (1982) takes a similar stance by arguing that Moore is comparing a contingent and a necessary proposition and claiming an equivalence. To support this claim, he considers Lewy's articulation of the paradox, comparing the word "Vixen" with the "Female Fox" concept (O'Connor 1982, 211).

(A) The concept of being a vixen is identical with the concept of being a female fox;

(B) The concept of being a vixen is identical with the concept of being a vixen.

Now (1) (A) does not entail anything about the word 'vixen' or about the expression 'female fox"; (2) if (A) and (1) then (3) The proposition that the concept of being a vixen is identical with the concept of being a female fox is identical with the proposition that the concept of being a vixen is identical with the concept of being a vixen.

The challenge is that (3) is a naturalistic paradox by Moore's formulation. O'Connor argues that from differing perspectives, there is no paradox. Ex-

amples he uses include Frege's Sense and Reference, where the word Vixen is the sense and "Female Fox" is the object that the word refers to in an equivalence but not an identity relationship so that Frege would deny (1). In contrast, Lewy and O'Connor argue that Moore would deny at least (2) (O'Connor 1982, 212).

Slobin (1996) uses a different equivalence to undermine Moore's paradox of analysis through identity. He argues that the linguistic determinism of a thought or concept is highly dependent on the social and cultural context in which the language developed. This position defends the view of ethical pluralism, denying Moore's conceptual identity and moral monism (Slobin 1996, 70–71).

Moore's framing of his epistemology appears to doom it from an intuitionist perspective. Its remaining attribute is that it does not necessarily imply any specific metaphysics. Equally, as Stratton-Lake (2020) outlines, non-naturalist metaphysics is a core belief for many framings of intuitionism, including Moore's, where moral objects are cognitive, not solely natural in any sense and exist only in a supersensible realm. In support of intuitionist epistemology, moral objects are indefinable, simple ideas only knowable by intuition or "immediate perception" (Stratton-Lake 2020).

Moore used "Good" as his exemplary moral object and argued that it must

be a simple, indefinable object (Moore 1903, para 6) as only complex objects can be defined (para 7) and that this object must exist in a supersensible, non-natural realm (para. 66). The presence of such an object is the "yard-stick", or attribute,by which a particular complex natural object can be deemed to be Good (para. 10). Because any natural object is a complex object, it is capable of definition. Moore uses the example of a horse to illustrate this where a horse can be good but this is based neither on the description of a horse in general or the definition of Good in particular. Equally, it is possible to objectively assess the good in any physical object as part of its definition. However, this description of good is not generally applicable to the good in other natural objects. For Moore, only an indefinable, simple object existing in a supersensible realm will deliver a moral monist, generalisable account of moral principles like Good or Evil.

Moore famously denied naturalistic ethics and argued that all such claims fall foul of his "naturalistic fallacy" or that any such natural claims did not answer the "open question" as to whether moral properties were natural. (Moore 1903).

Firstly, outlined below are the key elements of the naturalistic fallacy argument.

1. A moral property like "Good" is simple and undefined. So it is not

any particular "good"; instead, it is the "Good", a universal moral property that resides in an alternative supersensible realm. It is not a complex natural object from the material universe. Like the colour "yellow," then the "Good" in effect supervenes on an object, bestowing upon it the property of being Good.

2. A complex natural object may have the property of being good, but this complex object is not and can not be the simple property the "Good" itself. For Moore, any simple property is not an object. So Y can have the property of X, but X is not an object, and Y does not describe X. If it did, we could substitute Y for X and make the vacuous claim of a tautology in that Y is Y without shedding any light on the nature and properties of X.
3. For Moore, any claim that as the natural object Y, which has the moral property of X, therefore Y describes X commits the "naturalistic fallacy". For emphasis, other non-Y objects can also have the property of being X without being substitutable for Y.

The basis of the naturalistic fallacy is that, given Moore's definition of the categorical distinction between physical and moral properties; no physical property can be a moral property without committing a category error. Equally, no universal moral property is reducible to a particular natural object without committing the fallacy that Moore calls the "naturalistic

fallacy". For Moore, there is always more to morality than naturalism can explain due to the inherent nature of moral properties as indefinable entities without properties. Hence, no naturalistic claim can underpin a meta-ethical account of a moral property like good (or Evil).

There are several counters to this version of Moore's objection to naturalistic ethics. The first is attributed to Frege and is the "begging the question" claim. The outline of this is that in the first premise, Moore claims moral properties are not natural properties. In the conclusion, Moore then uses this claim to justify that natural properties can not describe moral properties and thereby begs the question as the conclusion is implied in the premises.The begging-the-question objection is complicated to mount a counter against and may be why later scholarship on Moore's work has focused on the "open question" argument as will be discussed subsequently.

There are two other objections to Moore's counterargument. The first of these objections was first made after the beginning of the 20th Century when light and individual colours were revealed as natural objects. Moore prior to the discovery of the quantum properties of light had claimed that colour as another example of a simple and undefined property of an object. A object can be yellow, but yellow is not described by the object. Within the standard model of particle physics that emerged subsequently, light is

a photon (an object) carrying energy of a particular frequency, meaning that light is not a simple object like Moore described, rather it is an object with a property of its own. This new science increases the pressure on Moore's claim that moral properties are not physical objects if his examples of equivalent non-moral non-physical objects are actually physical objects.

The third objection is Mackie's claim "from queerness" (a title that has not aged well) (J. Mackie 1990, 38). Mackie was arguing against the existence of Moral Objectivism as characterised in Moore's argument of his indefinable but simple but non-natural moral properties known only by intuition. Mackie's overall argument against such moral objectivism is the "argument from queerness" against such universal ethereal moral objects and has two arms.

The metaphysical arm: If non-Naturalism is correct, moral objects must be unlike any other objects in the material universe to have the metaphysical properties required to support the claims of moral objectivism. Likewise, they are not predictable by any empirical scientific theory, such as either Einstein's General or Special relativity. This claim seems inherently "odd" and quite unlikely particularly with the passage of time and the growth of physics in naturalism.

The epistemological arm: This is the challenge by Mackie that to be aware of

something that resides in a supersensible universe and is unlike any material object, we would need some "special facility of moral perception or intuition" (J. Mackie 1990, 38), which clearly humans do not have. For Moore, this is his intuition that a moral object will be recognised by intuition. The "odd" elements of this claim how does one acquire such an intuitive sense of moral intuition, maybe through training that builds upon some innate ability. If the claim is made that for a hidden innate ability, does this mean the moral imbecile (a delightful Victorian term more prosaically now called Anti Social Personality Disorder) who has no such innate ability, so is not morally responsible for the consequences of their actions as they are "cognitively blind" to morality? This would seem quite "odd" and totally counter-intuitive.

Moore counter argues for two moral propositions classes (Moore 1903, 3). The first class or moral propositions or intuitions, which for Moore, are deemed incapable of proof or disproof and only known by intuition. Moore denies he is an intuitionist proper as such holds to defending his second class of moral propositions, which Moore does not. These second class of propositions address whether an action is right are incapable of proof or disproof through a consideration of the consequences.

Despite his claims, Moore's intuitionist position captures one sense of Evil.

It has no universal description, but the observer will know it when they see it. This is the reality for experienced Police and Prison staff who claim that Evil exists and that they recognise Evil when encountered.

Mackie proverbially holds Moore's feet to the fire and states that an intuition is an intuition and to claim otherwise "is a travesty of actual moral thinking" (J. Mackie 1990, 38). Mackie states the best strategy is the "companions in guilt" counter. If there is no empirical knowledge of abstract moral objects, then there is equally no empirical knowledge of other abstract objects like numbers. Mackie outlines Price's argument that if we can create and understand numbers as abstract tools for the study or quantification and numbers. Mackie counter argues whether intuitionism about morality is not similarly created to rationalise about morality as opposed to being innate or axiomatic objects that were discovered as Price claims (J. Mackie 1990, 40)? In contrast, Cowling (2017), in his defence of abstract objects, argues that mathematical entities and universals are different objects, undermining Price's defence of moral objects and accidentally supporting Mackie's position.

Moore's variation of his naturalistic fallacy is the open-question argument that seeks to show that moral properties cannot be reduced to objective properties. As a non-naturalist, Moore attempts to answer moral questions

purely by analysing the propositions containing them.

1. Suppose a question is answerable by analysing the words alone. In that case, it is a closed question, such as "it is true that a bachelor is an unmarried man", which is true by analysing the words and their meaning within the context of the proposition.
2. If the question is not answerable by analysing the words alone, it remains an "open question".
3. From the naturalistic fallacy argument above, a natural object can have an instantiation of a given property. However, the universal of the same property has instantiations on or with other unrelated and different objects.
4. Hence, no universal moral property can be reduced to any particular or singular natural object without the claim being a naturalistic fallacy.
5. Hence, no natural object can be the basis for defining a universal moral property, meaning naturalism is not the basis for morality, but any particular moral question remains an open question. QED.

A common objection is that Moore has committed a category error. Often attributed to Frankena (1951), Kurtz (1955) provides a fuller account of the objection.

Kurtz breaks the open-question argument into two styles of question. The

first is the "Is X good?" or "Why ought X exist?" style question (Kurtz 1955, 115). The second is the "Why ought I do X?" style question.

Considering the "Why ought X exist?" question, Kurtz outlines this as the causation question with two schools of answer: the naturalistic descriptive approach and the alternative non-natural causation approach. Science favours the former, and Moore, among others, focuses on the latter. Kurtz argues that scientific descriptions now epistemically predominate.

It is the "Why ought I do X" question that raises the category error for Kurtz. The answer to this question is either psychological or social. No unifying underlying theoretical structures inevitably or deterministically link a belief and any subsequent chronically conjoined action as would be seen in a biological system driven by the singular laws of physics underpinning the physical universe.

By this argument, Kurtz's claim is that Moore has conflated the former question with the latter. So, the question "is this tomato red?" (the instantiation question) asks a different question to the question "why are all tomatoes red?" (the universal question). For Kurtz, Moore, in his open-question argument, has conflated the two questions, making the question unanswerable and invalid so then it is not open (Kurtz 1955, 118).

Kalderon (2004) makes a similar argument. He argues that competent lin-

guists can usually distinguish normative and descriptive predicates. The challenge is when they can not, as Kalderon describes it, articulate which side of the inviolate partition between the normative and the descriptive that a given predicate lies. Kalderon holds that there is a relationship between linguistic predicates and metaphysical properties and that the partition between linguistic predicates is contingent on a partition in the underlying metaphysical properties (Kalderon 2004, 251).

There can only be two states to understand the underlying metaphysics of a partition if no normative property is also to be a descriptive property (Kalderon 2004, 252).

1. Normative properties are distinct from descriptive properties.
2. Normative properties are a distinct sub-kind of descriptive properties.

From this position, there can only be a partition between the normative and the descriptive if the first is true. Moore argues for this clear partition. Indeed, he premises his argument with it. Moral properties are simple, unnatural, and indefinable objects that reside in a supersensible realm. This assumption is also the conclusion.

Moore is held to the claim that verbal definitions are "contingent, *a posterori* and synthetic" while analytic definitions are instead "necessary and *a priori*" (Kalderon 2004, 253). Verbal claims focus on descriptive linguistic claims,

while analytic claims are metaphysical. Kalderon articulates the following challenge to Moore's open-question argument (Kalderon 2004, 260). So, a competent speaker can know two predicates, F and G, but needs to learn more about them to realise that they apply to the same objects. So, by Moore's open-question argument, it would be true that F & G are non-synonymous. Various examples of such a pair, such as Furze and Gorse or Ketchup and Catsup, are given, where each describes the same object but using two distinct non-synonymous words.

A further objection to Moore's non-naturalism is also outlined (Kalderon 2004, 263–64). Moore is held to have made the claim that:

"P1: No moral predicate is synonymous with any descriptive predicate. C: No moral predicate is identical to any descriptive predicate.

Where synonymous and identical are non-equivalent. Hence, this statement is false. Kalderon outlines a more robust version from the position of predicate nominalism.

P1 (the existence premise): It is *a priori* that the property of being F exists iff F is a meaningful predicate. C (the identity of properties): It is *a priori* that the property of being F = the property of being G iff F and G are synonymous."

At this point, the following argument appears plausible.

1. A naturalistic, reductionist, thick claim to describe Evil is possible and plausible.
2. Moore's non-natural counterargument is that any reductionist, natural descriptive claim that an object with its property is identical, with the universal or general claim as to the nature of the property itself is invalid.
3. Mackie, Kurtz and Kalderon have outlined various objections to 2.
4. Hence, a naturalistic, reductionist, thick claim for describing Evil is possible and plausible.
5. Hence, for a naturalist, Evil itself is possible and plausible.

Kurtz leaves an argument to one side when considering the normative question. "Why should my social group do X?" (Kurtz 1955, 115). He did not discuss this argument further and proceeded as previously outlined. Yet this question is central to the normative claim in any reductive naturalistic system not just the Social-Harm description of Evil. It can be applied equally to mammals as it could to only humans and is still successfully answerable by Kurtz's social normative question. Indeed, Singer outlines that all animals, or at least all mammals, would want to avoid an event that fulfills the social harm description of Evil or any terrifying and life-ending or life-changing trauma—implying that for the moral evils or wrongs at least that there is no difference between humans and other mammals.

5 Defending the Social-Harm account of Evil:

If the Social-Harm account as a reductive naturalistic account of Evil is not to be troubled by Moore's scepticism towards naturalism, the question remains open as to whether other accounts of Evil, raise concerns or objections. The next set of chapters will discuss several alternative accounts of Evil and compare them with the Social-Harm account of Evil.

6 Scepticism about Evil

6.1 From the ontology of Evil

Scepticism about the existence of Evil was captured in Forti's first position on secular Evil. The power of her argument rests on the fact that many, if not most, descriptions of Evil are derived from a theological ontology. If a particular conception of God and any consequent ontology is discounted, then any derivative account of Evil is also discounted. This chapter discusses Cole's famous account of scepticism which claims that even secular accounts of Evil are inherently contradictory and equally bereft as theological accounts.

The challenge Cole highlights is that any coherent description or definition of Evil needs an effective counter to scepticism about the existence of Evil but ultimately one does not exist, so Evil does not exist. Specifically, to avoid

begging the question of assuming the existence of Evil as an assumption underpinning a claim that substantiates the existence of Evil. Cole attempts to argue for moral scepticism (Cole 2019) by equating pure or universal Evil with monstrous Evil. Then, by modus tollens, Cole seeks to deny the existence of Monstrous Evil; therefore, he can deny the existence of pure Evil. As outlined by Garrard and McNaughton (2012), Cole defines four progressively weaker conceptions of such pure monstrous Evil, then seeks to show that as each stronger claim inevitably collapse to a weaker claim until only the fourth and weakest claim to a defintion of pure Evil is a valid claim but is only a valid description of mental illness. Hence, Evil does not exist as a independent universal or even descriptive account of any specific agent, the monster, therefore pure Evil does not exist.

Cole's first conception is of monstrous Evil, where an agent divorced from humanity fixedly purses Evil and is dedicated to the infliction of suffering, for its own sake. The second conception is the Evil agent who is not distinct from humanity but still pursues Evil for its own sake and willfully causing suffering for its own end. The third conception is where Evil is but a means to an end of achieving some profit or value for the willfully Evil agent. The last and fourth conception is where a psychological impairment underpins why the agent causes suffering. By definition this last conception is excluded as an example of pure Evil as the agent is suffering from a disease of the

mind and is not culpable Cole (2019).

Cole outlines objections to each of his first three conceptions. Against the first, he rejects the view that such pure monsters exist. However this claim by Cole is challenged by description such as that or Warren's description of "Jeff", a sexual sadist and serial murderer, who dominates his wife into actively entrapping teenage girls for him to rape and subsequently murder (Warren and Hazelwood 2002, 76). To defend against such counters, Cole requires that a supernatural driver to be present for the first conception to be true, which is antithetical to a secular explanatory model of Evil, and does not address "Jeff", whose life was dedicated to meeting his sexual needs regardless of the consequnces for others. A further objection is the perception that Evil agents to be rare or at least uncommon (Garrard 2002, 321), so Evil describes only rare severely Wrong acts. However, Gurian (2017) claims there may be 100 serial killers active at any time in the USA, with 4,000-5,000 victims each year. While this is a small percentage of all murders in the US each year (Gurian 2017), it is uncomfortably larger than Garrard hopes and accounts for many of the malicious murders and so this objection remains open.

In other objections to Cole's position, the first and second conceptions require a binary position on Evil. Either one is Evil and a Monster or one

is Good, and there is no situational grey area, which seems implausible. Dr. Harold Shipman is a counter-example who, between his serial murders of an estimated 250 of his patients, was a successful and popular local doctor. Nevertheless, his 2004 suicide while in custody after his conviction was timely regarding his wife's maintaining access to her augmented state pension. Shipman's suicide could be seen as an act of altruism. Shipman then was both altruistic towards his wife and also murderous towards only some of his patients despite taking good care of others. Shipman's plurality contradicts Cole's claim that pure Evil is a binary state.

Lastly, Cole rejects the third conception as being unable to explain Evil, as he believes that there must always be an alternative means to achieve the desired ends besides Evil (Garrard and McNaughton 2012), so Evil does not describe anything unique or distinct. Yet, Evil can be an end in itself and is driven by intrinsic motivations not extrinsic factors. If an agent desires to be Evil as the outcome, then by doing Evil deeds he is achieving his desires. As an end in itself for an Evil agent and an Evil deed is in one sense monstrous purely as the agent chose to do it, even though they had externally motivated and had benign alternatives. Fuller, took time out from a full active life to commit murder and acts of necrophilia. He lived a non-binary life, and yet performed Evil deeds as the (only) way of achieving Evil, which had no other purpose.

To defend his argument from these style of objections about his characterisation of Evil agents, Cole starts by outlining the contrary position of Garrard & McNaughton (Cole 2019, 179) that the concept of Evil reflects societal reactions to the deeds of Evil doers. That this reaction serves as the basis of Evil implies that social reactions act as a normative judgement about the action in question. Nevertheless, society regularly makes category mistakes, triggering baseless moral panics. However, if true, this model implies the presence of neither Evil deeds or Evil agency is necessary to trigger society's reaction that en event is Evil. Nothing can not trigger something, hence Cole argues even if Garrard and McNaughton are right, they are still wrong.

Cole summarises the position of Garrard & McNaughton (Cole 2019, 179) as follows;

1. We will not experience moral horror unless we have experienced an Evil deed.
2. So, to have a normative understanding of moral horror that underpins our description of Evil, a theory of Evil agency is needed as a core concept.

Cole's counter is that Evil agency applies to only those types of Evil where a monstrous Evil doer consciously performs Evil deeds. Evil agency can

not, for Cole, apply to those other types of Evil, such as the consequences of natural disasters or the results of malice. Echoing G.E. Moore (Moore 1903), Cole argues that the only consideration of why Evil agency underpins Evil deeds attempts to address the question of what is pure Evil, while also arguing that others have yet to succeed in that quest.

Cole equates Evil, a deliberate act, with causing suffering. Nevertheless, an individual can suffer without the cause being the deliberate act of another human, such as the consequences of natural events or ill-chance. Further, that the attribution of Evil agency is often a post hoc or a secondary rationalisation following a horrific event that causes great suffering, often described someone becoming a scapegoat for the failures of a system or society. Indeed, for Cole, Evil agency can be seen as parasitic concept as it contributes nothing to understanding great suffering except to make it worse by pretending there was malice associated just because there was great suffering (Cole 2019). This thesis counters that a culpable act by a culpable agent, that causes suffering and associated social distress in combination is the description of Evil, not any form of irrelevant epiphenomenon. That a deed was performed by a culpable agent is a key factor that differentiates an Evil deed from a careless deeds, natural phenomena or some other systemic failure, even if onlyby bad luck or incompetence harm was caused.

Cole also denies Russell's thin moral theory where Evil doers are different from the rest of humanity in that they are naturally predisposed to performing Evil deeds and are beyond rational dissuasion, an account of pure monstrous Evil. Cole challenges the ontology of such a position. Russell's Evil doers have two aspects that justify their exclusion from humanity: the fixity and autonomy components. The fixity component describes how the Evil doer has a fixed disposition to perform Evil deeds under the right conditions. The intention is to exclude the possibility of rehabilitation and capture the folk beliefs on the nature of an Evil doer. The autonomy component is the limitation that only an Evil doer will autonomously perform an Evil deed. According to Russell, any impairment of a person's autonomy excludes the deed as Evil. This account describes a very rare individual. Cole reminds the reader of the famous Milgrim experiments (Milgram 1963), where ordinary people were selected effectively at random on being simply asked, the ultimate situationism, to perform repeated horrific deeds that caused suffering on a seemingly innocent victim. Cole's counter claim is that Milgram's experiment is not compatible with Russell's claim that Evil is done only by rare pure Evil monsters. "Evil" deeds are just situational deeds and the perpetrators could also be victims in their own right of the manipulations of others.

The support for Cole's position by the Milgrim obedience experiments might

not be as robust as Cole's reading suggests. In Milgrim's experiment, the participants knew they were performing a one-off task within the narrow social construct of a research project. This experiment actually tested the individuals willingness to defy societal norms of the day and prioritise the needs of the victim. This experiment never studied Evil a more typical exemplar of institutional Evil, namely the professional torturer or "violence worker", who is an agent of society. In the course of their duties torturers willingly and while knowing the consequences for the victims continues to repeatedly causes harm. Zimbardo outlines how ordinary people transform into "violence workers" (Zimbardo 2004). Zimbardo describes several versions of the same journey from citizen to professional "violence worker". The first step is identifying those with a strong view supporting the corrupting agency from a wider pool of recruits. Then, the predisposed trainee is isolated from the broader society in a training camp and given special privileges. The training (indoctrination) sets up a stark dichotomy between the society the trainee seeks to protect, which is all-good. The threat that seeks to destroy this society, is characterised as being all-bad and the associated all-bad agents are systematically dehumanised as part of the indoctrination process. The absolute dichotomy allows as well as justifying the imposition of cruel violence on all-bad prisoners or those merely suspected as not being all-good in the wider society. The trainee is given a sense of having a unique

purpose to protect society and so joins the isolated elite group with strong camaraderie to undertake this special defence of society and social values. In one sense, they are the special forces, who act as agents of that society. Once the special mission has ended, these "violence workers" stand down and return to their "everyday lives, believing they have done their duty to their nation, with no evidence of predilection to further violence or causing deliberate suffering. These are misguided soldiers who are also victims, in one sense, of the Evil agency of the corrupting authority. This account of the professional"violence worker" describes a very different situation to either Garrard or Russell. The latter authors seek to describe someone who performs Evil of their own volition and creates opportunities to inflict suffering on others. By such accounts, that for individuals performing Evil deeds, standing down and returning to"civilian" life should not be possible. That such a stand down is possible, undermines the accounts of Garrard and Russell of fixed pure Evil monsters. In this sense, Zimbardo supports Cole's claim that "Evil" is only situational terrible wrongness and pure Evil monsters do not exist outside fiction.

The challenge of finding a pure Evil monster is indeed daunting, to the point that some philosophers articulate how Hitler may not have been Evil. They argue that Hitler may have believed it was his moral duty to trigger the final solution (Formosa 2008). This position would not make him Evil as he

was acting under a misguided premise of responsibility to save society, and none of the usual motivations of Evil were present. In his BTK persona, Denis Rader's actions were grotesque. He enjoyed making his victims suffer during their humiliating deaths (Hutnyan 2022). Nevertheless, he had a longstanding marriage, held down a job and was a leader at his local church and in the local Boy Scouts troop. Rader, like Hitler and Williams, committed monstrous deeds but without knowledge of the deeds, they would not have been seen as Monsters, meaning they were clearly never pure Evil monsters whose life was only about Evil. Stalin seems the closest fit for a seemingly true Monster in the secular era. From his abuse of his second wife and children, fathering two children with a 14-year-old teenager, personally committing violent crimes, and overseeing the great purges that murdered millions, including murdering his in-laws, Stalin was a caricature of Evil, yet his first marriage was to someone he deeply loved.

Yet, despite being unable to articulate any pure Evil monsters, the challenge to Cole's difficulties with Evil as being the deeds of a pure Evil monster is whether his objection is to only a necessary conjunction of a pure Evil monster, would an impure monster still be Evil? Alternatively, Cole can be read as arguing could monstrous deeds be performed by non-Evil agents but that societal or situational factors can drive an individual to perform Evil-deeds. Both of these binary positions miss that inherent to humanity is a plurality

of drives and passions that underpin human's social interactions. Everyone has a day job, lives next door to someone and has to go shopping for dinner. This banal plurality of physical and psychological existence undermines the concept of pure anything, not the concepts of Evil or Monsters.

A separate threshold model for monsters hidden in society is plausible. Consider the group of individuals who work in the slaughterhouse or freezing works. As an industry, it "processes" millions of animals yearly, which are all sentient beings who suffer and die miserably at the hands of the workers. The impact on the workers of being exposed to the horror causes rates of PTSD similar to combat veterans Dillard (2008). The next tier is the sporting hunters, who deliberately kill members of a family of animals, including the young, for pleasure, while maintaining social acceptance and not suffering any particular psychological harm. The penultimate tier is those like Eichmann, who live ordinary lives when constrained by society but embrace the opportunity for terror and Evil acts when allowed by circumstance, yet not actually commit any physical deeds at all. Lastly, there are the true Monsters, in a societal sense but not in the sense Cole means, who are still human but create their reigns of terror over a society such as Stalin or Hitler.

Each tier in such a hierarchy is smaller or less frequent in the population

than the tier which preceded it. While also the harm of Evil deeds caused by such agents increases alarmingly with each tier should the opportunity arise. It could be that such a hierarchy is a manifestation of the dark side of humanity's Bell curve, with each tier being a standard deviation away from the mean. The other side of this Bell curve could be the Good side, with the far group or third standard deviation seen as Saints or paradigms of virtue, always seeking ways to help people experiencing poverty and relieve suffering.

Nevertheless, a superficial glance reveals such a model as little more than a post hoc rationalisation. If the philosophical inquirer met any individual from such an Evil agent continuum on public transport, they would be none the wiser that they were gazing at an Evil agent. In this sense, Evil is not banal as invisible. The Evil agent only becomes Evil by performing serial Evil deeds that cause harm and frighten society, when society becomes aware of them. The latter two criteria define the agent as Evil and are only known after the events occurred, not prior. For such a threshold model of an Evil agent to be either descriptive or explanatory, an underlying marker would need to exist to say this person will create a situation or embrace an opportunity to cause Evil. Given this account of Evil implies both the predisposition (a biological parameter) and the opportunity (at best a social marker, if not just chance or luck) there is no common underlying unifying

construct hence the tier model of monsters is not explanatory of Evil.

If Cole's scepticism about the existence of pure monstrous Evil, does not exclude Evil itself just because pure monsters do not seem to credibly exist. What alternative approaches for describing Evil can be postulated? Formosa holds that at its core Evil is when Evil doers perform Evil deeds. Formosa (2019) then provide a series of positions outlining different approaches to an account of Evil from varying non-pure, non-monstrous perspectives. He al;so provides some potential counters.

Accounts of what is Evil focus on either the agent or the deed as the explanatory aspect of this an account of Evil. Act-first accounts of Evil focus on outlining how specific deeds are Evil (Formosa 2019, 257–59). As outlined in the previous chapter, act-first accounts struggle with the an act being seen as Evil often depending on the situation not the act. So slitting the throat of a pet lamb at a petting zoo would be Evil. The same deed as a farmer on a farm makes one a man of the land, the back bone of the nation.

Perpetrator-first accounts focus only on the nature, behaviour and beliefs of the Evil doer necessary for them to transform a wrong deed into an Evil deed. As a moral monist theory, a potential counterexample is the malicious bus passenger who deliberately makes the bus driver feel bad about

themselves, causing harm without experiencing any personal guilt only joy. These are all characteristic features of an Evil agent. However, from the victim's perspective, such a deed only makes the Evil-doer unpleasant and miserable. This is hardly a convincing account of Evil without the account also describing significant harm to the victim. (Formosa 2019, 258).

Victim-first theories state that it is only when the victim suffers extreme harm that a wrong deed becomes an Evil deed. Formosa's counterexample to such an account is when someone's accidental discharge of a firearm kills their best friend. There has been terrible harm, but the act as an accident is not Evil as there is no intent or *mens rea* (Formosa 2019, 257).

Spectator-first theories hold that it is solely the spectators' reaction that transforms a wrong deed into an Evil deed. Formosa gives two counterexamples to this stance. Firstly, the agent who gleefully eats a disgusting, morally protected bug would trigger disproportionate social outrage from the audience. Secondly, situations where joyfully and cruelly torturing a terrorist to death does not engender a social reaction as literally, no one from this society cares about such terrorists from another social group (Formosa 2019, 258).

Lastly, Formosa articulates the mixed theories that give an account of Evil. These are a combination of the preceding three mono-theories. Such ac-

counts are attractive. Each mono-theory describes a dimension of how Evil is different from Wrong. At the same time, each provides an objection to any specific counterargument against another mono-theory. For example, the grumpy passenger is not performing Evil, even though they are an Evil doer, as the act did not engender actual or severe harm. The challenge for any mixed account of Evil is which combination or weightings are applied. Regardless of the balance, mixed accounts provide a robust naturalistic but necessarily reductive account of Evil (Formosa 2019, 258–59)

The next chapters will consider accounts of Evil from these differing perspectives. These monist accounts of Evil will all be found to be wanting, but the differing mixed accounts are attractive and the focus of current philosophical research on the ethics of Evil.

7 Social accounts of Evil

The philosophical literature takes an individualistic stance towards social accounts of Evil instead of sociological ones. The focus is on why the Evil doer does not fit into and participate with society as a social being, rather than specifically on society's reaction to Evil. The exemplar used is not the serial killer but the holocaust, where on behalf of society banal bureaucrats organised and managed the murder of millions without leaving their offices.

If Evil is real but not monstrous, what are the alternative secular accounts to Cole's scepticism? Garrard aims to describe a description of Evil that answers the question of what it is for an act to be Evil. She wants to also appeal to why such an act should not be performed and understand the Evil-doers' motivations for performing it, without social constraint. Building on her work trying to understand the Holocaust, Garrard seeks to define those

Monsters who are also human.

Garrard (2019) focuses on a narrow description of Evil, avoiding the ambiguity from multiple usages of the term. Her approach is to describe Evil in terms of deeds and seeks to differentiate Evil-deeds from either simple or particularly wrong deeds (Garrard 2019). Garrard describes how Evil represents an intensifier from the simply wrong, and the drivers for Evil-deeds are different from the merely wrongdoing. A challenge for Garrard to overcome developing this account, is that Evil-doers in The Holocaust were not necessarily Evil-characters, and their crimes seem primarily situational. Hence, for Garrard, the potential for large numbers of Evil-doers in society seems counter-intuitive to her impression of humanity as inherently benevolent. Garrard focuses instead on the Evil-agency and the state of mind before the atrocity to understand how the transition to being an Evil-doer can occur. She makes the analogy to an act of benevolence is defined, at least partially, by the state of mind of an agent wishing to perform a benevolent act. So a definition of Evil, for Garrard, needs to include why certain deeds are deemed an Evil deed, why the rest of us are horrified and why the agents performed them.

Garrard disputes Cole's central premise linking Evil to the suffering of the innocent for its own sake by non-human monsters (Garrard (2019) p. 191). She

feels that there is a range of acceptable secondary motivations, e.g. sadism or enacting ideological commitments that can underpin Evil deeds. She also disputes that even if Evil-doers are monsters, humanity will necessarily exclude them. Garrard asks is it not possible that dark motivations lurking within us all, or many of us, waiting for the opportunity for expression? Labeling something as Evil seems judgmental rather than explanatory and no more valid than labeling someone as a Harm-doer or even a really-bad-harm-doer.

Garrard starts by trying to describe what an Evil act is and some of the difficulties inevitably encountered. The first attempt is suffering at a large scale but she sees WW2 as a counter-example as this is a morally justified war (Garrard 2019, 194). Her second attempt is to argue that Evil is the dark supererogatory twin of moral excellence. Where moral excellence is performing beneficial supererogatory acts which are non-causative and abstract acts. Such acts are morally praiseworthy because they are outside the domain of moral requirements. Such acts had no benefit for the individualso are not morally obligatory for the individual to perform but still provide benefit to the recipient. Garrard states that the dark counterpart is morally forbidden acts. However, as Evil is always forbidden, so it can not be a supererogatory act beyond the domain of moral requirements (Garrard 2019, 194–95).

Garrard's third approach focuses on the Evil agent such as the agent who enjoys causing pain to others. Her counter is the Evil-at-a-desk agent like Eichmann, who supposedly gained no pleasure from his clearly Evil deeds, a claim that those who met Eichmann are sceptical of. Equally, the insightful sadist may choose to work in an area where being upset by the suffering of others would be a handicap such as being a slaughter man in an abattoir and like an obsessive compulsive bookkeeper whose challenges are an occupational advantage, his sadism is a beneficial asset to a particular society (Garrard 2019, 195).

Garrard's fourth argument against the Evil agent is the instrumental sadist, e.g. the for-hire or contract torturer who gains neither pleasure at his acts nor sympathy for the victims of his employer.

Garrard plans to focus on Evil agents, what they see and fail to see for acting and performing Evil deeds. She uses McDowell's concept of silencing. The virtuous agent silences the impulse by virtue and reason given voice by circumstances. So the agent is aware of the impulse but does the right thing but through effort. McDowell talks of motivational silencing, where the agent is not tempted to act in a way that is incompatible with virtue, or rational silencing, where the agent has no reason to act in a way that is incompatible with reason. Garrard uses the terms psychological and

metaphysical silencing to differentiate.

For Garrard, an Evil-doer has a profound cognitive deficit, leaving them unable to grasp the consequences of their actions on others. They do not need to silence such thoughts as they do not experience them in the first place. An Evil-doer then is "blind and deaf" to significant reasons not to act as they do. This state represents a failure of psychological silencing for Garrard. The Evil doer is blind to his pleasure as being inappropriate or the impact on others of his actions. There is nothing to be outweighed or considered, the reasons to not act are simply not heard or seen. For Garrard, more is needed to define Evil in an explanatory way and offers as a counter example to her failure of silencing formulation, the cold soul who does not visit their lonely parent and does not care that she is lonely. Such a cold soul is not seen as an Evil doer but he has silenced his parent's pain and so he should be classed as Evil by Garrard's position (Garrard 2019, 195–97).

What is not clear from Garrard account of Evil being the inability to silence inappropriate thoughts, is what of the virtuous agent who never had them in the first place. The Evil deed literally did not occur to her, so there was nothing to silence. Which is the abnormal state? The failure to experience inappropriate thoughts, a pathological naivety as they may miss

something socially important or as in Evil, the failure to silence inappropriate thoughts? There is no actual evidence of a cognitive deficit to explain this failure to silence or the failure to experience such thoughts. Equally, analysis of prisoners reveals that many have severe psychiatric syndromes with a physical basis or alcohol and other drug concerns, which seem actually explanatory in contrast to a hypothetical account. Those few left over from such a filter do not have any detectable cognitive disorders, even those who have performed monstrous deeds. Most with cognitive disorders are not Monsters. Milgram (1963) highlights that non-monstrous agents can perform monstrous behaviour in the right situation. This speculated cognitive deficit also lacks of a foundation in the neurosciences, neuropsychology or functional neuroimaging, raising the suspicion this is merely an elegant post hoc rationalisation.

Garrard (2019) attempts to validate her definition against three criteria.

1. Does her theory possess explanatory powers concerning Evil deeds?
2. Can it resist criticism from the perspective of Ethical Error theory?
3. Does her theory of Evil still accommodate the idea of monstrous Evil?

Indeed, for Garrard, if the Evil agent is emotionally impervious due to this cognitive deficit, then he is some form of an Evil doer, or his actions are Evil. Equally, such a formulation does not suggest the automatic alienation

of Evil doers from society, like any other member of the wider neurodiverse community, they are still human, just different and in the case of Evil, very different. For Garrard (2019) this cognitive deficit and the consequent inability to feel the consequences of their actions serve as explanations for the Evil deeds. The deed itself will reveal the positive reasons for the Evil deed, and the reasons for not performing will inform what was ignored in the decision made by the Evil doer (Garrard 2019, 196).

Eichmann by this formulation had a cognitive deficit and could not react to even an intellectual understanding of the harm he was causing, so he is deemed Evil, even though he did not actually murder anyone. Most would hold Eichmann as being more Evil than Fuller, yet Fuller committed actual murders. Fuller, apparently and arguably, changed his methodology to skip the murder aspect of his offending to focus on necrophilia. If this was some form of insight about the consequences of his murders on the victims families then he would not be Evil under this account, which seems counter-intuitative?

Concerning the Social-Harm placeholder, Garrard's position focuses on the agent. Her position is very binary. One has or does not have this cognitive deficit. A situational threshold model like the Social-Harm placeholder better describes observed reality. Many usually law-abiding agents will still

travel at an illegal speed on the roads and mount a stereotyped defence of either their superior driving skills mitigating risk or the benign conditions likewise mitigating risk. Fewer moral agents will steal an unattended vehicle that is left unattended. Fewer again such agents will burgle a house and so on down the cascade of offending. The exact threshold is situational even for the same agent, as in war zones or even on holiday, as in the infamous phrase "what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas". The common existence of a situational threshold is counter to Garrard's binary cognitive deficit model.

De Wijze (2019) takes an alternative position that seeks to distinguish between Evil as a concept and the conception of Evil. De Wijze argues that the concept of Evil is a universal and general claim of what Evil is. In contrast, a conception of Evil is the reasons and arguments for a particular account of Evil or Evil-deeds.

For Garrard, Evil is an act performed by an agent with a cognitive deficit who is unaware of the reasons not to proceed or the reactions of others in society. In contrast, de Wijze's concept of Evil is a set of dreadful actions, persons and institutions whose actions, vices and practices go beyond the ordinary censure or disapproval. Evil subverts and distorts normative social boundaries, so it is not just very wrong. Instead, if left unchecked, Evil

destroys or seriously harms the established or accepted moral, social or political boundaries of that society as a whole. This concept of Evil triggers various secular or theological conceptions of what is Evil manifest.

For De Wijze (2019), secular accounts of Evil argue that the concept adds something particular and vital to the moral vocabulary. However, de Wijze claims that liberal societies have "lost their sense of Evil" and have not just lost the word, they have dispensed with the concept of Evil. For de Wijze, this means that through the reductive analysis of any action to rationalisations that, for liberal societies, reductively reframe supposed Evil deeds into the underlying Sociology, Biology, Psychology, or Political drivers. As such, any such reductive analysis would make Evil an outmoded term, a non-contributory hangover from our superstitious past. Hence Evil does not exist as a concept, and de Wijze's claim that liberal societies have lost their sense of Evil.

To counter this claim, de Wijze argues that society has lost the word and the concept of having Evil experiences, does not mean that Evil has ceased to exist. These "Evil" experiences are horrific and are sufficient to pervert the nature of the society in which they occur. Such experiences continue to exist at the individual and societal levels. The secular conception of Evil seeks to redress this absence of a concept or conception to describe and

reason about events which continue to occur.

De Wiljze largely focuses his description of Evil on the social context in which Evil occurred and how a given society can have differing positions on the general and specific descriptions. Like the Social-Harm placeholder, de Wiljze highlights how Evil disrupts the functioning of the society in which it occurs to the point of damaging its functional capacity. This description of Evil is certainly a threshold claim, but one that requires society to recognise the harm or risk of the deed to the societal norms and function. An Evil deed may not reach this threshold but still be Evil. The sexual abuse of infants and babies would certainly qualify as Evil and will have significant consequences for the perpetrator, if caught. Society will blame the perpetrator and such deeds will not undermine any implicit social contract even thought they will usually but not always lead to widespread societal distress, such as seen with faith-based abuse of children in care. These deeds are Evil, but there is no risk that they will disrupt societal norms, even if they should. In contrast, for millennium, adolescents have been accused that their behaviour threatens the moral fabric of society. Few removed from any immediate situation and associated frustrations or irritations at the particular behaviour would describe the adolescent's behaviour as Evil.

To counter these objections raised by the de Wiljze description, the Social-Harm description placeholder focuses on societal distress instead of existential risk to society for this exact reason. At the same time, social distress still acknowledges that societal impact is a critical factor in the description of Evil. As a hybrid account of Evil, the Social-Harm account shifting the threshold clause for a deed being described as Evil to the threshold clause being one where an Evil deed is one causes measurable permanent physical harm to the victim. It is to this significant physical harm that society reacts when the act is Evil. This reaction is the normative clause. De Wiljze argues for the social reaction to be both the descriptive and the normative clause.

De Wijze (2019) describes several approaches.

1. Rather than focus on a single construct of Evil, Wittgenstein advocates for "family resemblances" in considering historical Evil. When Evils are not directly comparable, they can be distinguishable. The challenges with this approach include the following. Firstly, a historical focus on Evil deeds over time, with Nazi concentration camps being the recent archetype example he uses. De Wijze outlines several challenges to this position.

a. The distinction between natural and moral Evils has fluctuated over

time.

b. It overlooks significant issues, including the differences between Evil deeds, Evil doers and corrupting institutions.

c. A historical approach does not necessarily tell us about the term's current usage.

d. Nieman argues that Evil shatters faith in the world, and the Evil deed causes the effect of Evil.

2. The second or scientific method is via contemporary natural and social sciences. The lack of empathy for others and the supposed linkage to the worst behaviours seem plausible, but such a lack of empathy does not explain all genocide or torture. Baron-Cohen then argues that Evil is "empathy erosion" and postulates a role of "corrosive emotions" like hate, eroding perceptions of and empathy for others. This empathy erosion can be long-term, and for Baron-Cohen, what folklore describes as an Evil doer. The challenges de Wijze outlines are;

a. We cannot reduce a general (de Wijze describes Evil as well-understood) moral concept like Evil to a scientific concept like "empathy erosion". Empathy erosion does not generate a shuddering sense of horror like Evil. It is just not the same thing and lacks a

normative judgement.

b. Lack of empathy is not linked universally to criminal behaviour. The autistic community has trouble with empathy but is not Evil.

c. Evil is credibly associated with cruelty, but how does empathy erosion credibly link to Evil?

3. The third or philosophical method is a conceptual analysis of folk or initiative concepts of Evil. Such an analysis would reveal the conditions necessary for conceptualising Evil, accepting that some folk concepts will become obsolete.

De Wijze (2019) considers the phenomenology and pre-cognitive responses to Evil. De Wijze talks of using conceptual analysis focusing on biological and environmental explanations to describe human actions as such an approach overcomes the limitations of previous models built on speculations or theology. By analogy, the observer needs to be able to see red to have a conscious experience of red, for which a simple or non-experiential explanation alone can not suffice. Equally, as de Wijze outlines, the observer must understand what it is to be terrified or frightened to understand the possibility of Evil.

This common reaction to a plurality of triggers is rooted in our consistent mammalian autonomic nervous system. From this perspective, our collec-

tive intuitions are critical to our cultural phenomenological experience of Evil. Even if the context of this emotional experience varies over time, the core collective phenomenological experience transcends time and space, according to de Wijze. De Wijze outlines how a strong, overwhelming autonomic response in the presence of a dire threat is typical of all accounts of Evil. Such a dire threat must be sufficient to directly or indirectly cause changes in the brain. De Wijze struggles with threshold issues for his definition of Evil, and raises such as whether an anti-Semite meeting with a Jew would have a sufficient reaction. Simply put, they do not and these have now been measured by functional neuro-imaging studies. The anti-Semite might experience anger, contempt or disdain but never the gut-wrenching terror of encounter with Evil sufficient to transform the structure of their brain.

De Wijze (2019) sets out Hampshire's concept of the "Great Evils." He is trying to articulate why and how the "Great Evils" are quantitatively worse than ordinary harmful or immoral acts. These "Great Evils" are core to this definition of Evil, where such actions and events make tolerable life impossible for all sentient beings and destroy social order. Examples provided are starvation, imprisonment and losing the victim's family and home (De Wijze 2019, 210). De Wijze's concept of Evil includes fear of these "Great Evils" so that precursor actions or beliefs also engender fear in the popu-

lation. The "Great Evils" predominate whenever the social order breaks and facilitate Evil-deeds to be freely done by Evil-doers. Nevertheless, the "Great Evils" also break down or further break down the social structure of society, creating a cascading cycle of Evil where an Evil event is the direct or indirect trigger for the next Evil. Key in this concept of Evil is the emotional response by the victim and the society in which they reside. For de Wijze, this emotional reaction to Evil provides a plausible universal concept of Evil to enter our moral vocabulary.

The Social-Harm account of Evil has a similar perspective on the social impact of Evil-deeds, but takes an individualistic stance, considering how each deed performed by a specific agent causes actual harm to a particular victim. Starvation highlights the distinction. De Wijze (2019) means those episodes where there is widespread and deliberate famine, such as during a large scale war. Yet, starvation is also widespread in young women across Western society causing great harm and social distress. Anorexia fulfills De Wijze's of the great Evil of Starvation, but is not seen as an Evil-deed, more a tragedy. This distinction is captured by the Social-Harm account of Evil.

In the qualitative difference theory, Russell argues there is no distinct property that differentiates between evil and wrong except in the quantity of

harm caused. For de Wijze, this difference articulates his concept of Evil. De Wijze argues that Evil seeks to break down societal barriers to the "Greater Evils" and the moral fabric of society. De Wijze also articulates Calder's argument. For de Wijze, Calder argues that although harm and evil share common properties, a qualitative difference can be articulated with each instance. Liberto & Harrington take a different position but illustrates the same point using altruism and heroism. Both actions involve risk to the agent, but one focuses on that risk, the other on the benefit to the recipient. So these are two different instantiated properties, and the presence or degree of one does not impact the other.

De Wijze argues that his definition of Evil also solves two key issues. Evil is an explanatory term. Evil is the distortion of our perception of reality and sense of self. It destroys the normative reality of the very society in which these actions occurred. Evil provides a vocabulary to describe these terrible experiences. De Wijze argues that the claim that ethics can be articulated in the good or bad dichotomy, and possibly with the very bad label added to depict the horrifying.

In summary, Garrard's single point of failure description of Evil lacks generalisability and focuses on the actions of individual Nazis during the Holocaust in WW2. Why this genocide is unique in dominating Western Philo-

sophical considerations of Evil is not apparent and Garrard seems to take it as a self-evident truth. If Garrard's account is overfitted to a narrow range of Evils, de Wijze's Greater Evil embraces a broader range of undoubted Evils; it is still narrow compared to the breadth of humanity's imaginative cruelty to each other. Excluded from de Wizje's list of Great Evils are many apparent Evils, or alternatively, the distinction between great and its opposite is not as self-evident as de Wilzje claims. The Social-Harm account through its focus on the specifics of the individual deed avoids the challenges of generalisation while retaining specificity.

8 Action-based accounts of Evil

Action-based accounts of Evil capture the sense behind the phrase "the deeds define the man" or any of its variants, where an Evil-doer is someone who performs Evil-deeds. The description of Evil is the description of Evil-deeds, and by either Barry's identity theory or Folk accounts of Evil, those who do such deeds are Evil-doers. Their Evil actions define and describe them as Evil, a relationship Barry describes as an identity theorem for apparent reasons.

Examples of Evil doers primarily defined by their Evil deeds include the BTK serial killer (Dennis Rader) or Colonel Russell Williams of the Royal Canadian Air Force. Both epitomised the banality of Evil, and both very definitely committed evil deeds. It was only after their arrest that many in society claimed awareness of their abnormal character. Before their arrest, both were respected members of their local society. Colonel Williams was a

well-respected, highly decorated senior military pilot in Royal Canadian Air Force, commanding one of the Air Force's major bases and flying dignitaries like Queen Elizabeth or senior Canadian politicians.

In many respects, Williams and Rader are outliers in terms of serial killers with long durations of offending as compared to the median solo serial killer in a data set of ~ 5000 serial killers whose median duration of offending was only three years (Woster 2020). Fuller is a more typical serial killer who committed a small number of murders over a short period but also highlights the intersectionality of offences committed by a socialised offender as he went on to focus on necrophilia.

The challenge with any such action-based accounts of Evil is that they contradict the view that Evil is rare because long-term serial murderers are rare. Tragically, Evil deeds are not rare. Worldwide, child physical abuse rates are estimated to be 16% and emotional neglect at 18% of children. Both are prevalent but multi-faceted, covering all domains of development and mental and physical health (Kobulsky, Dubowitz, and Xu 2020). Some meta-analyses claim higher incidences by continent and gender.

Moody et al. (2018) reports sexual abuse rates at 20.2% of North American girls and 28.8% of Australian girls. These authors cite physical abuse rates on the African continent as 50.8% for boys and 60.2% for girls. Emotional

neglect rates by comparison for the African continent were 41.8% for girls and 39.1% for boys (Moody et al. 2018). The Catholic church continues to grapple with the scale and duration of the abuse perpetrated by the Priests and Nuns in religious orders, serial and systemic abuse that occurred with the complicity of their seniors (Böhm et al. 2014). These and other studies outline the industrial scale of humanity's problem, from child abuse and neglect. The abused can mature into abusers or at least be very angry with an increased incidence of violence (Ford et al. 2019).

A successful action-based account of Evil has to bridge the gap between the contradictory social perceptions that Evil deeds are ubiquitous while detection of the Evil doers who performed them is extremely rare.

As an Evil revivalist, Russell (2019) attempts to bridge this social perception gap by redefining it as whether Evil is a distinct ontological entity (such as the horrific serial murderer) or merely just very Wrong (presumably because deeds like industrial child abuse do not engender the same sense of personal horror due to their scale and anonymity of the individual victims). Nevertheless, for Russell, this is an example of how philosophical terms are historically inconsistently applied, leading to "winnowing." A delightful agricultural term for sorting the wheat from the chaff or the important from the unimportant. Inconsistent application of winnowing underpins much of

the confusion about Evil in the modern era and the debate between the sceptics and revivalists (Russell 2019, 246–47).

For this position to be true an Evil revivalist has to articulate why Evil is an ontologically distinct category. Kekes and Calder argue that Evil actions are more than being morally Wrong and are different categories of actions. They claim that, sadistically, torturing an old-age pensioner is morally distinct from simply stealing their wallet so they can't afford to eat that week. These two actions belong to morally different categories of actions. One is not an extreme version of the other, and claiming that they are is to make a category error (Russell 2019, 248).

The challenge is when society accepts that some very Wrong actions are not morally wrong, so they are not Evil. Russell is attempting to capture the sense of the phrase "the lessor of two Evils", where something (torturing a foreign terrorist to stop a planned terror attack such as a mass bombing campaigning) is in a different category of moral wrongness to apparently Evil deeds like torturing a kidnapping victim for pleasure. However, the deed and its impacts are the same, arguing that moral wrongness can not be the basis for delineating Evil actions.

If a very Wrong deed (torturing someone) is to be an ontologically distinct Evil deed, for Russell, being morally wrong or lacking moral justification

alone is not sufficient to differentiate between them (Russell 2019, 248).

Calder raises the opposite objection, namely where the deed is overtly Good but morally Evil. His example is of a charity run by "A", who needs to hire someone for a new role. He has an existing employee, "B", who is fully qualified for the role in every sense but has fragile mental health. Getting the role would bolster her mental health and enable her to shine through gaining the role. Not getting the role would cause her great psychological harm, which "A" knows. The other candidate, "C", is also an exemplary candidate. Not only would they also shine at the role, but they would also transform the role and allow the reach and benefit of the charity to be manifestly greater. "A" gives the job to "C", not because of the many positive and fully justified reasons. "A" gave the job to "C" becuase he deliberately wants "B" to suffer from her failure and live in utter despair, all for his sadistic enjoyment (Calder 2019, 227).

This "malicious hirer" objection illustrates the disjunction between the good deed of hiring C and A's performing this good deed but with Evil intent or moral ill will. Without privileged access to "A's" intentions the deed is not an Evil-deed, just a rational business decision.

Between Calder and Russell's objections, the relationship between deeds and intent is not an identity relationship, challenging Barry's claim that

they are and that such a claim underpins his description of Evil.

One objection that Russell and Calder raise to the "Malicious hirer" thought experiment is that Evil actions are deplorable regardless of whether they are morally wrong or not, with the counter-argument that Evil actions are, by definition, morally wrong. This position creates the risk of a circular argument, where morality defines what Evil is, but for other moral systems, Evil or its absence describes what is moral.

If thick accounts of Evil deeds struggle without an external moral anchor such as adopted by the Social-Harm account of Evil, then thin accounts do little better. Such thin accounts attempt to articulate deeds that define themselves as being Evil. What is it about a deed that makes it Evil? David Fuller is an example of how difficult such a position is. As previously described there are two distinct phases of Fuller's offending, his serial murder phase and his phase of serial necrophilic acts. Although both deeds are grotesque, in what sense are they both Evil, and they do seem to both be Evil deeds? The murders are straightforward Evil deeds. This man hunted down two women and deliberately killed them and raping them, depriving them of their lives and agency, with their families being justifiably horrified. Such a deed seems a good candidate for a deed that is Evil by its nature alone. The challenge is that so does necrophilia. It is illegal, and the families

were justifiably horrified at such an indignity occurred to their loved ones. However, the direct victim, being already dead, did not suffer and had no agency to lose. If Fuller had performed the same deeds on a plethora of legitimately purchased life-sized artifical sex dolls, then the functionally same deeds would not have been deemed Evil or even illegal.

The common feature of Fuller's deeds was that they were of the sort that engendered societal outrage. Society identified with the victims and understood that these sorts of deeds by this sort of man could have happened to them or their wider family. So it was the nature of the social reaction, not the nature of the deeds, that labelled them Evil.

Social outrage also highlights the reaction to Rader and Williams' offending. Folklore accounts of Evil include the fact that Evil deeds cause fear and anger not only in the victims but also in the broader society where the victim lives. This distinction separates why torturing a terrorist from another society is not seen as Evil by this society, only by the terrorist's own society, as compared to torturing a member of your society, which will lead to social outrage.

Yet, social outrage alone is insufficient to define Evil, as a society can have moral panics, such as the current banning of library books in the US if they do not fit a particular social narrative. Equally, society can politely ignore,

doubt or dismiss apparently Evil deeds, such as what has occurred in Poland about the impact of serial childhood abuse and trauma perpetrated by the clergy of the state-backed religion.

The Social-Harm account of Evil captures the critical role of social outrage in describing and defining Evil but balances this with the argument that the deed has to cause actual harm. So, books that do not fit a particular narrative are not harmful. The reader can simply stop reading them or discount the opinions offered. Systemic faith-based sexual and physical abuse will cause the victims long-term physical, mental and emotional problems that will impact all aspects of their lives. Only the latter is an Evil deed, while the former is a moral panic.

Yet this distinction between deeds that cause actual harm captures Calder and Russell's point. Wrong deeds and Evil deeds are fundamentally different. The difference is that Evil deeds cause measurable long-term harm, not just short-term distress. What their concepts do not capture, is why Evil deeds are morally wrong.

9 Agent-centred accounts of Evil

Differing accounts of Evil build upon different premises as to the fundamental nature of Evil. Agent-centered accounts were previously popular starting points, where the general character of the Evil doer is the focus for building an account of Evil as opposed to the previous chapter where Cole's narrow focus was on denying the existence of a purely Evil monster. This chapter will introduce the wide range of philosophical approaches to Evil as a failure of character. Commencing with the powerful and attractive dispositional account of Evil, which claims that Evil-doers were different from other members of society; they were predisposed to performing Evil deeds. This chapter will conclude that while attractive, dispositional accounts struggle similarly to arguments on Evil-intent as the basis for Evil-deeds. Even if the Evil-doer knows they are predisposed, how should society distinguish them before they commit any Evil-deeds? If they do not commit any Evil-deeds are they still Evil? If not, then Evil is more defined by the deed than by the

predisposition? Can an Evil-deed could occur by terrible luck alone without any predisposition to Evil? These are the challenges that dispositional accounts of Evil seeks to address.

While the account of Cole (2019) appears literally one-dimensional in its treatment of Evil characters as pure monsters, Barry (2019) builds on Card's account of atrocity (Card et al. 2002), that someone labelled Evil without qualification is an Evil-agent and must have an Evil-character. Barry uses as his concept of character, where character is by the account of Miller (2014), is a set of interrelated traits, and each trait comprises a set of corresponding mental state dispositions.

9.1 Dispositional-based accounts of Evil

For Barry first account, an Evil-agent is just an Evil-character who is predisposed to do Evil deeds (Barry 2019, 234). The agent's predispositions define and describe them, which Barry calls his identity theorem. The counter challenge to this position quickly becomes finding such an Evil-character, yet without him causing direct (or maybe indirect) harm, is he actually an Evil-doer?

Barry admits that running this thesis in reverse is not an improvement,

namely that an Evil agent is defined by them performing Evil deeds due to their predisposition of having an Evil character. The challenge is that the typical Evil agents who despite performing genocide seldom differ from the rest of humanity, until they embarked on their mass murders or similar atrocities. This reality attract phrases like Arendt's famous "the banality of Evil" (Arendt 2006). Such banality led to the (arguably false) conclusion that Evil is rare, particularly if like Arendt you use the Holocaust as your reference account of Evil. As discussed later, Evil might not be rare; rather, it congregates in places where philosophers are not to be found. So philosophers might be considered equally rare and potentially mythical creatures to a society of Evil doers, such as HM Prison Wakefield, the infamous Monster Manor in England. This argues that there is more to understanding Evil, that just an abstract awareness of its existence. One may understand that French or German is a language, read translations but a native speaker has nuanced and often quite different understanding of what is written.

Rejecting the Evil identity theorem, then the action-based accounts of Evil could equally support that Evil characters are predisposed to perform Evil deeds when given the opportunity yet usually mask this tendency. Barry outlines Russell's perspective that any veneer of normality or banality that hides Evil can be fragile—referring to Hursthouse's definition that the trait of generosity is the predisposition to act in a particular type of action in the

right circumstances. Barry argues that surely the same must equally apply to Evil doers (Barry 2019, 235). Barry argues that the range of situations and the threshold size before an Evil doer acts are substantively lower than a simple Good-doer. Nevertheless, this makes any dispositional account of agent-centred Evil hard to defend if it is only subsequently to performing an Evil-deed does the predisposition to Evil-action becomes apparent. The deed becomes more relevant to a character-centric account of Evil than character of the Evil-doer.

There is the challenge of someone predisposed to Evil deeds and is self aware of themselves but is ashamed of their Evil character. They atone through endless good deeds in anticipation of possible future Evil deeds, should they lapse. By dispositional accounts of Evil-agent, they are still Evil, which is counter-intuitive and would appear to be quite bonkers to their family or colleagues owing to the plethora of Good-deeds. The apparent concern of any dispositional account of the Evil-character without Evil-deeds is that Evil becomes the disposition to have particular thoughts about the propensity to perform specific actions under specific circumstances. Yet for sufferers of Obsessiveness Compulsive Disorder (OCD), having intrusive terrifying ego-dystonic thoughts, such as wanting to harm another that leads to a series of repetitive actions to prevent them acting on these thoughts is the literal definition of their illness. No one would consider them Evil and

OCD does not predispose to any form of offending.

Barry (2019) considering character as a collection of dispositions outlines how the finer the account of these dispositions becomes, the fine and richer any consequent account of character becomes. This perception is also accurate in Evil and might consequently explain why an Evil doer does Evil deeds. Barry becomes challenged, though, about the distinction between Moral vice and Evil character. One only sometimes leads to the other in some meaningful way. The intuition addressed here is that the two are quantitative and qualitatively different (Barry 2019, 242–43).

One focus, for Barry, is on moral vice, where performing extreme sins describe an Evil-character. The more intense the wish to act on the vice, the more powerful the vice. The nature of the object of the vice also matters to such an account; the more vulnerable the object, the worse the vice. Extremity accounts for a plurality of vices but allows that particular dispositions to cluster. Such a plural account will mean that extremity accounts are disjunctive but with the clustering acting as a constraint not excessively so. The result is that Evil-characters will manifest several severe coherent character flaws that ensure the perception of an evil person as being generally wicked and evil. The Social-Harm account of Evil gives voice to such an approach. It outlines what is meant by harm to the victim and how it

impacts society leading to a culpable agent being labelled as Evil.

Russell (2010) considers the counter claim that not every Evil-doer is an Evil-person. Russell seeks instead to argue for Evil personhood. Such a claim is attractive in that it supports an account of when a person disposed to Evil but does not perform an Evil-deed not being seen as Evil, as well as the role of bad luck when a good person commits an Evil-deed such as willfully and recklessly speeding, rolling the car and killing passing pedestrians.

The core claim of Russell's dispositional account is that an Evil-doer is a person who is disposed to commit Evil deeds under a specific set of circumstances. Russell advances his claim by considering eight pre-theoretical or folk positions on Evil persons (Russell 2010, 232).

1. There are some actual Evil persons
2. Evil persons are rare.
3. Evil persons deserve our strongest moral condemnation.
4. Sometimes, that a person is Evil explains why they perform Evil deeds.
5. Not every Evil doer is an Evil person.
6. Performing Evil deeds may transform one into an Evil person.
7. An evil person can (rarely) be reformed.

8. Not every Evil person seeks or intends to perform Evil actions.

Russell then outlines the basic dispositional model of Evil: an person is Evil iff they encounter the correct for them specific triggering circumstances will perform an Evil deed. This account supports the folk intuitions 1,4,7 and 8. It also fits with the account that repeated Evil deeds can transform one into an Evil-doer, if not into an Evil-person, as seen by many soldiers returning from combat.

In contrast, an aggregate or hybrid account of Evil fails intuitions 4 and 8, namely that not every Evil deed performed by an Evil-doer manifests their Evil disposition. Nor does every Evil-person seek or intend to perform Evil actions at this time, in this place or by a particular set of means. Evil persons can encounter the same bad luck as persons disposed to good and commit Evil deeds through simple bad luck, just without remorse.

Superficially, for Russell, the dispositional account of Evil is more plausible than the hybrid or aggregate account of Evil. An objection is that such an account would imply that, at least, potential Evil doers are common in society, and all that stands between them and performing Evil deeds is luck and circumstances. This conclusion does not resonate with the folk intuition that Evil doers are rare and most citizens in society are inherently good. This incongurity may be an actual flaw with the validity of the folk

intuitions about Evil, not hybrid accounts. Malicious Evil acts such as serial murders are also rare from a folk perspective, which fits with Evil doers being rare in the "wild". Yet serial murderers and deliberate and systematic abuse of children are not rare, but are Evil. Additionally, most violence in contrast is situational, accidental or domestic but not Evil and re-offending by non-malicious murderers is low.

Other objections raised by Russell to this basic account of a disposition account of Evil (Russell 2010, 235–36) include inevitable inconsistency around the folk intuition that Evil doers or Evil persons deserve utterly moral condemnation. Many Evil doers were themselves the victims of violence or humiliation during childhood (Braimovic 2015), so their deeds might not always deserve utter condemnation. In contrast, the basic dispositional account would hold that someone is inherently predisposed from birth regardless of social circumstances to performing Evil deeds and as such would deserve society's utter condemnation without necessarily performing any Evil deeds. That they have the predisposition is enough, to be branded Evil, if only society knew who they were. In any class-based society the significance of deeds and their moral interpretation depends not on the deed but on the class of the deed-doer.

However, Boddy (2010) argues that those who fulfill his definition of corpo-

rate psychopaths and possess the "dark triad" of Psychopathy, Machiavellianism and Narcissism are more likely to be found as successful managers and leaders in the financial sector. Implying that Evil doers who perform arguable Evil deeds in the corporate world are not universally viewed as Evil by society.

The Social-Harm account's strength is that Evil is described as causing objective harm to the victim that causes moral panic. The Evil bank manager who enjoys foreclosing a mortgage does not trigger social distress to the point of moral panic. Likewise, the Social-Harm account makes no comment on the frequency of Evil doers in society or their nature, only that the frequency of Evil-deeds is low and yet Evil-doers must exist because Evil deeds do occur. That not all Evil-doers perform Evil deeds is addressed in the Social-Harm account by the Evil-doer being culpably responsible without defining the nature of any mitigation that might render an Evil deed to be regarded by society as a really Wrong deed.

9.2 Accounts of an Evil character based upon privation

As already discussed, privation, or the absence of something, usually Good, is a common approach to understanding Evil, dating back to Augustine. Barry quotes Midgley as saying that Evil requires the absence of Good, so Evil is never an independent ontological concept in its own right. So by privation accounts, Evil (or wickedness) is the lack of balance or other motivations to counter evil impulses leading an Evil character (Barry 2019, 236).

Barry argues that if it is true that Evil-doers lack global shame or remorse for their actions or consequences, this is equally insufficient to define someone as having an Evil-character. Barry argues that this absence maybe only focal in such cases, while Evil-characters have widespread but coherent character deficits. However, Autism spectrum disorder is characterised by differences in the communication, social skills and behaviour to varying degrees. These differences are not focal, are widespread and coherent, are often associated with a lack of empathy, yet people with autism are not Evil or violent.

Haybron counters the objections to the focal privation model with a global

privation model. The Evil doer has a global absence of Good and has no good side to their character in any circumstance. A weaker version might be that an Evil character lacks significant moral virtues, but they still possess morally insignificant virtues, like being kind to only dogs and not cats. These morally nominal values are insufficient to prevent Evil deeds. The challenge is that the weak version argues that someone who means well but never acts on any Evil impulses is still classed as Evil. The strong version, ruling out any redeeming moral virtues in any circumstances, seems analogous to Cole's monstrous conception of Evil with all its inherent difficulties (Barry 2019, 236–37).

Barry argues that by Haybron's account, a small addition of the littlest amount of sufficient Good would transform any Evil character into a Good character. Also, there must be no link between the most display of virtue and the Evil deed (Barry 2019, 237). So apparently, being vaguely considerate to a pregnant woman means that the Evil doer simultaneously undertaking the mythical "hunting the homeless for sport" is not an Evil character, which seems implausible.

9.3 Affective accounts

Here, the account of the Evil character that underpins Evil doers is the affective (the subjective experience of emotions) predispositions. Barry argues that inclining to have certain feelings is enough to make a person Evil—those with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder can have similar terrifying intrusive thoughts or feelings and never act upon them. Having Evil feelings is a necessary but insufficient reason for being labelled as having an Evil-character or being an Evil-doer (Barry 2019, 237–40).

The question then is, what are Evil feelings? Barry uses Sadism and Envy, where Sadism or experiencing pleasure or arousal at the suffering of others, is a necessary and sufficient affect to underlay an Evil-character. The challenge is that neither is necessarily inappropriate, especially in the past, as Kant describes the general enjoyment of a social pest getting punished and suffering. Barry explains how Russell also finds the conflation of Sadism and Envy as odd as they are not in equal order of magnitude to participate equally in the description of Evil. Dr. Josef Mengele reportedly got no pleasure from his cruel and inhumane experiments and saw himself purely as a scientist seeking only academic advancement through scientific publication (Halioua and Marmor 2020). Hence he is not actually Evil by affective accounts of Evil, but only because receives no pleasure from his actions, which

seems implausibly insufficient to avoid a claim of Mengele being labelled as utterly Evil.

Barry's argument seems weak. Barry uses the example of the crystal vase, which can remain intact for long periods but will always easily break in the right circumstances. The same analogy applies to an Evil character, where reform or redemption is impossible, although until they re-offend, it will be impossible to detect their vulnerability. The classic philosophical thought experiment of the restrained and sedated Evil-character predisposed to enjoyable Evil feelings is Evil on this account. Yet, they are not able to undertake any primary Evil deeds. They may passively cause secondary harm by creating a market for videos portraying violence. However, they require an Evil-enabler to achieve this, who is perceived as the real or primary Evil character in this scenario. Barry struggles with the idea that an Evil-doer with Evil feelings is genuinely able to not participate in Evil-deeds. A non-practicing sadist from the BDSM sub-culture would seem to fit such a description. Barry correctly argues that Evil deeds tend to be multiple, so he finds it hard to believe an Evil doer can retire completely, despite accounts of exactly that, such as Gao Chengyong who retired from successfully offending as a long term serial murderer 14 years before he was finally caught by DNA evidence. He claimed that he just got too old to any longer manage the physicality of predatory malicious murder so simply

retired and instead worked in the family shop.

9.4 Hybrid accounts

As none of the previous seems to uniquely account for the moral depravity of Evil, so Barry proposes instead either agglomerative or disjunctive accounts of Evil (Barry 2019, 240–42). Such models, like the Social-Harm placeholder account of Evil, seek to describe Evil through combining different premises into a single hybrid account. The challenge is articulating which understandings of Evil should be included or excluded from such a model.

Disjunctive accounts fall as each disjunct individually has to be true and the whole account true as a collective. Agglomerative accounts mean that the strengths of another can address the deficiencies of one account. Barry's concern is that agglomerative accounts become too strict or, indeed, so strict that no particular individual is selected.

Barry (2019) has highlighted one key vulnerability of the Social-Harm placeholder description of Evil, that it is over fitted and hence even if it refers to any particular set of Evils, it is no longer capable to generalisation to

also describe near neighbours in terms of deeds that many would class as Evil.

9.5 Summary

In summary, this chapter describes accounts of Evil based on possessing an Evil character. The challenge is that each account is either insufficient so fails to suffice as an account of Evil or degenerates into a rationalisation by the non-Evil society as to why anyone would commit such atrcious acts based primarily on their own incredulity. As such they are subjective, and seek to reassure the wider society that those who commit Evil deeds are different. A line of thought that quickly extends to the Monster arguments earlier refuted by Cole and Garrard.

Luke Russell's account differs from Barry's in arguing that Evil deeds occur in situations that trigger someone predisposed to Evil. At the same time, while this account fits some who have been exposed to severe adverse childhood events, including trauma (Ford et al. 2019); it is not generalisable.

Barry's hybrid accounts of Evil are similar to the Social-Harm account of Evil. Although the focus of his discussion is the form of the account, as opposed to the contents of such accounts, he does raise the legitimate concern

of hybrid accounts being vulnerable to over fitting.

10 Some objections to the Social-Harm account

The Social-Harm account of Evil is particularly vulnerable to several significant objections.

Russell considers how the severity of the harm may allow Evil to be seen only as Wrong actions. He distinguishes between the severity of the harm caused and the severity of society's reaction (Russell 2019, 249–51). He raises an objection to any accounts of Evil based on the severity of actual harm not being proportionate to the social distress caused. Russell considers where, if, by a lucky chance for the victim, the deed failed to cause any harm, would, or should, the deed still be considered Evil? The type of example imagined is when, during a robbery-murder attempt, the gun may have jammed at the very moment of firing. Alternatively, the rapist got a severe leg cramp from

hiding in the bushes and fell on his face just as the victim walked into range. Russell asks whether such failed Evil deeds are still Evil deeds. The Social-Harm account would say no and argue that intent and failed effort alone are insufficient to label a deed Evil or even necessarily Evil. After all, the failed rapist may actually have been a clumsy night-shift gardener dressed in a black face mask with his fly zip undone. The actual and permanent harm clause intends to avoid the hypothetical "Thought Police" prosecuting future or potential crimes as currently being Evil deeds, but does it mean the Social-Harm also misses a sense of the term Evil.

Such failed Evil deeds by malicious agents are still terrifying to the public. Often, Folk accounts would deem such deeds Evil by their Evil quality because of their potential terror, and it would be unsurprising if they caused psychological trauma to the victim. However, reductive naturalistic accounts struggle to distinguish between Evil and Wrong Deeds to avoid being over-inclusive and specific; they exclude deeds that seemingly have the quality of being Evil. This contradiction is the basis of Moore's objection to any reductive naturalistic moral claim. In that, there is more to Evil than any instantiation of Evil. Further, by sharpening the moral claim to cover a particular instantiation, the over-fitting of the description reduces the generalisability of any account to being a universal description of a moral claim.

Another objection is whether naturalistic accounts can reliably describe immoral acts as Evil acts if the societal reaction is one of indifference or actual support for the harmful deeds (Russell 2019, 248). The thought experiment proposed considers whether a small Evil that prevents a greater Evil is still an Evil. An example is that a society might allow a soldier to die to save the rest of their society or, more enthusiastically, allow an anonymous foreigner to die an immoral death for the benefit of the observer's society. These seem wrong and are examples of Evil, but neither would fall within the Social-Harm account of Evil. What distinguishes them from accounts of Evil is whether or not society identifies with the victim, not the act itself or the consequences for the victim.

Calder's account of the malicious hirer is another example of a similar objection where some obviously Evil actions are deemed morally right or at least not Evil by any account of Evil that encompasses societal outrage as the normative function because society remains blissfully ignorant (Russell 2019, 248–49). Even though the agent was culpable and the act caused significant harm because there was no social reaction, the act is not deemed Evil. Likewise, in Luke Russell's "Hunting the Homeless for Sport" style objection. The mythical "hunting the homeless for sport" would not be deemed Evil by the Social-Harm account of Evil deeds if the bodies were never found, the victims were never missed, or society never cared about the

death of a homeless person even if they knew. From a folk psychology perspective, such immoral acts against some of the most vulnerable members of society are clearly Evil acts (Russell 2019, 247). However, the Social-Harm account's failure to categorise cruel deeds that do not attract social condemnation or evulsion as Evil is an obvious objection to its effectiveness as a complete account of Evil.

An an alternative is Card's account of atrocity built upon the philosophical account of Nazi atrocities in WW2 that makes the same argument from a different perspective (Card et al. 2002). In WW2, most of the Evil and atrocious deeds in Nazi Germany were ordered by a "monster" but were undertaken by subordinates. The leader was the true Evil character who, by being predisposed to Evil, set up an Evil enterprise before employing or recruiting subordinates who performed the actual Evil deeds. The Evil leader would fit under the rubric of the Social-Harm account of Evil or could, with further reductions in scope, because they did not directly cause any harm themselves. The account of the subordinates needs to be more clear-cut. Undoubtedly, some were willful participants, who were Evil and cheerfully embraced the opportunity to cause horrendous harm. Others were potential victims of evil leaders' deliberate manipulations, and themselves suffered a different type of harm by being forced to participate, so like slaughter men of today were left with PTSD (Zimbardo 2004). As outlined, the Social-Harm

account assumes society is making its independent normative judgement on the deed to decide if it is Evil. As seen in WW2, the leader can subvert society to their will and view favourably horrific deeds as necessary to safeguard society (De Wijze 2002). According to the Social-Harm account, such a leader's deeds, while breathtakingly Evil from any Folk account, are not morally Evil. The leader did no personal direct harm to others, and the society in which they occurred was, at best, indifferent to the suffering of the victims and harm caused.

The current version of the Social-Harm account can not account for any scenario with a disconnection between society's reaction and the cruelty remotely inflicted at the behest of a distant Evil-organiser. An Evil atrocity was cruelly committed and caused great harm to the victim, fulfilling the first clause of the Social-Harm account. The second clause is problematic in the case of an atrocity because the true Evil-doer or Evil-organiser culpably caused the harm but only indirectly, so the harm-causer may not be personally culpable or not culpable in the same sense as the Evil-organiser, making the person who committed the deed neither personally culpable nor blameless. The problems for the third clause caused by an indifferent society were discussed previously. That the Social-Harm account can not reliably or robustly describe the Holocaust as an Evil deed is a serious objection to it being an account of Evil.

Therefore, using the Social-Harm account of Evil as a whole instead of the conjunction of the three individual clauses does not provide a strong defence for any reductive, naturalistic accounts against Evil-scepticism, without bespoke modification for particular instantiations of Evil.

These objections to the Social-Harm account of Evil deeds leave the dilemma of describing Evil unresolved. Intuituativly, Evil is held to exist, particularly by frontline Police and Prison staff, who are most likely to encounter agents who do Evil deeds. Equally, there are vast numbers of victims of sexual and physical child abuse around the world in every society, causing life-changing permanent harm to these children. Abusing vulnerable children often in the care of their abusers to such an extent is Evil. Women of rape say the same; it is an Evil event, causing life-changing, often permanent harm. Increasingly, the evidence is that this direct and indirect harm has caused permanent changes to the brain, and so has physical harm.

Yet, if Evil exists and is wrong, the challenge remains in developing a satisfactory universal account of Evil that embraces both the particular and the general.

11 Summary

This thesis aimed to propose and defend a novel theory of Evil despite philosophical and lay scepticism that Evil is anything more than a historical anachronism now fit only for fiction or video games. This scepticism applies equally to all members of the family of Evil, namely folk, theological, natural, communal and interpersonal Evils.

The Social-Harm account attempts to address the scepticism about Evil by arguing that Evil can be reduced to a naturalistic paradigm. That this account provides a generalisable account that can be robustly defended against previous accounts but also competing meta-ethical perspectives.

The key elements of this hybrid account are

1. The Evil-action causes permanent life-changing harm; the example used is brain damage.

2. That a culpable agent performed the deed.
3. This deed caused great social distress and threatened or harmed the fabric of society.

The first two clauses of this hybrid account describe a cruel deed, and the third clause outlines why it is morally wrong from the perspective of Korsgaard's normative ethics. From this naturalistic perspective, Evil is an Evil-deed as described in the Social-Harm account, and an Evil-doer is someone who repeatedly undertakes Evil-deeds. That is all it is. A Wrong deed is a deed that does not meet the full description of an Evil-deed. The harm and distress is not permenant or it did not cause significant social distress. An example might be the fight of a near miss car crash where the other driver was drunk, but the victim was unharmed but badly shaken although their car was destroyed. The victim quickly recovered, especially when their new car arrived and society calmed down once it learned no one was actually hurt and the drunk driver had been arrested.

This novel account is defended against alternative attempts to revive Evil as a philosophical concept focused on communal or interpersonal Evil. These alternative perspectives have taken several differing accounts to describe why an event is a manifestation of Evil from an action-centric, agent-centric, spectator-centric and hybrid perspective. These accounts all need to de-

scribe why an event is Evil and why the event is morally wrong. Each account of Evil was outlined, its limitations discussed, and the advantages of the Social-Harm account were highlighted.

The tension between naturalism and intuitionism is central to any consideration of making naturalistic ethical claims, especially one adopting Korsgaard's normative ethics and her embrace of Rawl's and Hume's respective positions.

Moore's classic metaethical rebuttal of naturalism and his claim of a "naturalistic fallacy" from any naturalistic moral claim is the key counter-position to both naturalism and Korsgaard's normative ethics. Moore's elegant neoplatonic, commonly held to be an intuitionistic theory, views Good or Evil as simple undefinable objects that exist in a supersensible realm and supervene onto complex natural objects and confer ethical properties on the object. The object becomes an example of the manifestation of the ethical property but is not the ethical property itself. To claim it is to commit what Moore calls his "naturalistic fallacy". Outlined were various intrinsic objections, like Frege;s claim Moore begged the question and the challenges posed to Moore's theory by the progress of science since the early 20th century.

However, regardless of Moore's argument's flaws, naturalism does not es-

cape its embrace through Korsgaard's normative ethics. Korsgaard argues that situational ethical positions are determined behind Rawl's veil of ignorance. According to this account, members of society will objectively decide their ethical position or moral reaction to a deed or situation without knowing the actual impact on themselves or their lives. In reality, Evil-deeds occur in a context within the circumstances of each participant, and immediately, the claim of objectivity risks degenerating into a claim based on subjectivity as each individual seeks to maximise the safety of their current position in society. Without some form of consistent social position to a crime, Hume's is/ought paradox predominates. An instantiation of Evil is terrible but it's impossible to argue that this particular Evil-deed ought to be always regarded as Evil. Meaning a deed becomes only subjectively and situationally Evil, but the claim cannot be generalised, and neither can the Social-Harm account of Evil.

Moore's "naturalistic fallacy" and Korsgaard's normative ethics seemingly better rebut each other than they provide a positive account of morality.

Therefore, the dilemma of providing a robust account of the ethics of Evil remains. The claim remains that Hybrid naturalist and reductive theories present robust alternatives that **almost** explain why an atrocious event or moral object is Evil in various situations. The Social-Harm account, a novel

example of such a naturalistic and reductive account focuses on the degree of harm and society's reaction to that harmful event and provides a plausible account of why David Fuller, a serial murderer and prolific necrophile, is Evil. What it struggles to address is accounting for the Holocaust.

Yet Evil still seems to lurk in society's dark corners, causing great harm to its victims. Even if philosophers seldom venture into such places.

> Philosophy triumphs easily over past evils and future evils; but present evils triumph over it. *François Duc De La Rochefoucauld, Reflections: Or, Sentences and Moral Maxims*

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