Virtue Ethics

- Virtue Ethics

- Background

    - Aristotle (384-323 BC)
    - Thomas Aquinas
    - Important in cultures
        * Islamic
        * Jewish

- **Different** from other appraoches

    - What sort of **person** should I be?
    - What is a **good** life?
    - What **virtues** should I develop?
    - No regard for what makes an action **right**...
        * This would be secondary
    - People must choose to act virtually and improve themselves - they are not born virtuous

- **Key Ideas**

    - *Telos*
        * end, purpose, aim, goal...
    - *Eudaimonia*
        * Activity that strives towards virtue
        * Happiness, flourishing
    - *Arete*
        * excellence, depends on what it is...
        * A *good* car

- **Virtues of Character**

    - Cardinal Virtues
        * Prudence
        * Temperance
        * Courage
        * Justice
    - Obtained through *practice*
    - But what *is* a virtue
        * A *mean* between *deficiency* and *excess*
        * People must seek the same virtues
            · But actions depend on the individual
        * Must be **intended** and **acted upon**

- **Virtues of Thought**

    - *Phronesis*
        * Practical judgement

- – *Techne*
  - ∗ Skill in making
- – *Episteme*
  - ∗ Explicit reasoning
- – *Nous*
  - ∗ grasping the nature of things
- – *Sophia*
  - ∗ *Episteme* and *Nous* used towards the highest ends

- **Right/Wrong Acts**

  - – Whatever the *virtuous* person would do is *right*
  - – The best answer possible is obtained from those with *experience* and *trust*

- **Critiques**

  - – Situational Challenge
    - ∗ Situational circumstances may have impacts on what people do.
  - – Thomas Aquinas'
    - ∗ Faith and revelation are necessary to properly direct the natural capacities of humans.
    - ∗ Cardinal virtues need to be complemented by *theological virtues.*
      - · Faith
      - · Hope
      - · Charity
      - · These cannot be self-generated. Originate from God.

- Elizabeth Hausler

  - – Build better homes to prevent damages and deaths from natural disasters
  - – Embodiment of aspirational ethics

Article takeaways

I propose (92) -> (94)

- Ethics is to gain a self-understanding combining professional and personal aspects of one's life.
- Decisions serve a purpose
- identity comes from deliberation and integration of learned virtues
- more objective approaches (utilitarianism) do not consider necessary circumstances and virtues
- habits build ethos (character)
  - – our morals & virtues are impacted by our routines and work
- focus on telos / aim of the work