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How Should we Conceptualize Moral Disagreements about Animals?

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I intend this paper as a sort of philosophical reflection on my experiences as an animal activist. In my three years of doing outreach on college campuses, I came to an increasing appreciation for what Murdoch referred to as "the difficulty and complexity of the moral life and the opacity of persons" (Murdoch 1998d, 293). This appreciation came in turn at the cost of an increasing disappointment with many of the philosophers I admired at the time – namely, Peter Singer and Tom Regan. What I came to understand is that many of these contemporary moral theories were in fact *inadequate* at grappling with the multi-faceted and endlessly varied phenomenon of moral disagreement as I encountered it in my experiences as an animal activist. In what follows, I hope to articulate what I found disappointing about philosophers like Regan and Singer. In pursuing this critique, however, I will instead focus on the more contemporary work of Paola Cavalieri: a philosopher very much in the same tradition as Regan and Singer.

Afterwards, I will explore the merits of an alternative picture of moral disagreement, one I found in Virginia Woolf's essay, "The Death of the Moth." Throughout, I will be relying on the insights of Iris Murdoch and Cora Diamond.

Chapter 1: Cavalieri and the Behaviorist Picture of Moral Disagreement

In the search for a theory of morality that is precise, neutral, and law-like, certain tendencies have emerged which have effectively narrowed what could be called the "field of study" (Murdoch 1998c, 76). These tendencies, common in contemporary moral philosophy, grow out of a desire to emulate the sciences in their neutrality and in their ability to generate laws which can be used to masterfully describe the patterns that underlie the (messy) world around us. A certain rationale seems to underlie this aspiration for philosophy: when considered in relation to the successes of the sciences (as evidenced in their endless ability to churn out technological advances which ever benefit our lives), philosophy looks more like a quaint pastime at best – a corrupt and indulgent enterprise at worst. If moral philosophers are ever to leak into the public discourse in any meaningful way, a more empirical, universal, and systematic approach must be pursued.

In their attempts to develop such a theory, these philosophers have begun to follow a certain procedure – what I will henceforth refer to as 'the common approach' (or, CA). We can think of the CA as being structured according to roughly two patterns. *First*, in determining and demarcating what is to become the field of study, and in surveying the facts in search of the fundamental patterns which can be clearly agreed upon as underpinning and animating the aggregate phenomena that we call 'morality', the CA excludes wholesale any phenomenon that is 'metaphysical' or 'transcendent' in nature. What is to be considered is only that which is empirically and publically open to view. By omitting from the selection all phenomena which don't meet a certain degree of objectivity, reliability, and universality, a more 'scientific' approach can be pursued.

Second, in developing a philosophical technique (a theory) with which to make sense of the selected phenomena, the CA gives preference to the one which best provides us with a comprehensive, totalizing, codifiable, and universalizable explanation of morality. The technique should be such that we could rely on it to determine with absolute certainty both what is at issue and how we ought to act, effortlessly and no matter the situation – that is, as long as we're in full view of the empirical facts. The technique would do this by formulating a universal moral principle that lays out the logic of morality in its entirety. The moral 'laws' which result from this approach can be thought of as analogous to the laws we formulate in the sciences – laws of gravity, relativity, thermodynamics, etc.

After the phenomena are selected for study, and a technique developed to describe it, we may begin to see a tendency of mutual reinforcement between the two: i.e., the phenomena lend support to that particular technique, which in turn lends support to the selected phenomena. It is thus customary for the CA to confine moral thought within a predetermined mold, or conceptual structure – which in turn *stifles* philosophical exploration of the phenomenon of morality, and sets rigid boundaries for what can be said to constitute moral discourse and moral discovery.

Moreover, despite its allure of simplicity, neutrality, and precision, I want to argue that this picture of morality embodies certain tendencies which leave a range of important moral phenomena unexplained and unaccounted for – i.e., what could be called a person's 'inner life' and their 'moral vision'. As Murdoch notes, "it has readily been assumed that in assembling the data [i.e. phenomena]… for the moral philosopher to work on, we can safely leave aside not only the inner monologue and its like, but also overt manifestations of personal attitudes, speculations, or visions of life such as might find expression in talk not immediately directed to the solution of specific moral problems. In short, the material which the philosopher is to work on is simply…

acts and choices, and… arguments… which appeal to [empirical] facts" (Murdoch 1998c, 79-80). In making my case I will limit myself to a specific area of moral life (a particularly challenging and rich area in my opinion): that of moral disagreement. In other words, I want to argue that there's a dimension to disagreement that goes unexplained and unaccounted for by the CA – specifically in regards both to *how* we disagree and *what* we disagree about.

In respect to *how* we disagree, the CA pursues a pattern of thought which we could refer to as behavioristic, where all that matters are discrete acts and choices. In respect to *what* we disagree about, the CA adheres to a scientistic picture of one's moral landscape, where the moral concepts which we have access to in describing and evaluating our reality are strictly those that cohere with a scientific understanding of reality.

In what follows, I will present Cavalieri's argument for animal rights and show how it exhibits the behaviorist and scientistic tendencies of the CA. To characterize Cavalieri's position, I will draw on her essay *The Death of the Animal: A Dialogue on Perfectionism.* In this essay Cavalieri presents both a negative thesis and a positive one.

Cavalieri's negative thesis comes in two parts. The first is a critique of a certain tendency in our thinking – a tendency which she finds in philosophy, as well as in the sort of justifications people commonly seem to make in their domination of animals: she refers to this tendency as "perfectionism." In her words, perfectionists are those who "hold that there is a hierarchy in moral status. They maintain that conscious beings, and their interests, deserve different consideration according to their level of possession of certain characteristics… [In other words] perfectionism… is a kind of gradualism – it accepts degrees in moral status. Some individuals matter more than other individuals, and can be treated differently" (Cavalieri 2009, 3). In other words, perfectionists seem to hold (1) that a being ought to be ranked as more or less valuable

according to how much or how little of a certain characteristic they possess. And (2) that the characteristics which determine moral status are characteristics commonly associated with humans.

She goes on to argue in the second part of her negative thesis that the perfectionist tendency comes as a result of untenable and inherently hierarchical metaphysical world-views that place humans on top. Cavalieri defines metaphysics in this context as being "myths." Myths, that is, "in the sense of a more or less sacred story that can convey a lot of meaning but rests outside the disjunction of true or false" (Cavalieri 2009, 7). These myths moreover are often illicitly "translated into normatively hierarchical frameworks," which inevitably happens because they "embody structures that offer answers to fundamental" moral questions (5). An example of this would be praising a person's character in relation to the abstract ideal of goodness, and claiming that this goodness is a discernable quality in the world that exists independent of us.

What Cavalieri seems to categorize as metaphysical are all those explanations of reality that are not scientific in nature. If they are not scientific, they are not suitable for answering moral questions, since they wouldn't give us objective and universal truths (at least not the sort of empirically verifiable truths that science provides us). Ultimately, Cavalieri seems to believe that in the same way that science was able to truly flourish only after it had freed itself from its religious and metaphysical allegiances, so should ethics proceed if it is to achieve the sort of success and status of the hard sciences (95).

In what follows I want to show how Cavalieri's negative theses narrow the range of phenomena that can be included as part of the field of study. More specifically, I want to say that (1) in taking a stance against a perfectionist approach, Cavalieri effectively aligns herself with a behaviorist conception of moral disagreement, and (2) in taking a stance against a metaphysical

approach, she pursues a scientistic approach in construing moral concepts (i.e. she models her moral concepts after scientific concepts).

I

In this section I want to show how Cavalieri, in her argument against perfectionism, implicitly adopts a behaviorist stance in respect to the inner life and its place in morality. Perfectionism, as we saw, requires (1) the belief that our reality is at least partially transcendent in nature – that is, it cannot be wholly understood according to the natural sciences; and (2) that this moral reality (which transcends scientific explanation) is hierarchically structured – that is, there exist degrees in moral status as a result of some metaphysical characteristic. The implication is that these two components almost always go hand-in-hand, and that they almost always result in the assignation of higher moral status to humans over non-human animals (Cavalieri 2009, 14). Cavalieri then associates perfectionism with virtue ethics, and more specifically, with theories that see "morality as a set of orientations for developing forms of excellence and for giving meaning to one's life" (13). The reason Cavalieri associates virtue ethics with perfectionism and metaphysical worldviews is because the virtues themselves are considered metaphysical entities. Even the guiding question of 'what it means to be a good human being' (which can be considered the starting point for virtue ethics) is itself dependent on a belief in metaphysics. 'A good human being' is not a scientific/biological category, and yet for a virtue ethicist it's a concept which nevertheless refers to something *real* in the world. The same goes for 'courage', 'generosity', 'compassion', etc.

Next, Cavalieri argues that a perfectionist/metaphysical approach is an instance of "morality in the broad sense – an all-inclusive theory of conduct, which includes precepts about the good life, the character traits to be fostered, the values to be pursued." Morality in the broad

sense is to be distinguished from what she calls "morality in the narrow sense – a system of constraints on conduct, usually expressed in terms of negative duties, whose task is to protect the interests of others – e.g., do not harm, do not confine, do not kill" (9). Moreover, unlike broad morality, narrow morality doesn't require substantiation by metaphysical entities. Part of the reason Cavalieri wants to make a distinction between broad and narrow morality is to say that one need not *totally* abandon their belief in a transcendent and normative reality. A belief in a transcendent reality is okay as long one acknowledges that this reality is "arbitrary" (27) – that is: not grounded in facts as "morality in the narrow sense" is (9) – and thus should never take precedence over morality in the narrow sense.

In making this distinction, Cavalieri essentially claims that morality can be done (and done better) without making reference to or relying on the idiosyncrasies of the inner life (non-empirical phenomena such as one's character and the values to be pursued). Indeed, if what we're after is a set of moral principles that are universalizable – that are true for everyone – we cannot formulate them by appealing to any subjective data. What this distinction ends up creating is "a separation between what a person is like, where that is tied to his style of thought, and his capacities as a moral agent" (Diamond 1998, 271).

Once the distinction is made, Cavalieri argues that broad morality should never be relied on "when what is at issue is the treatment of individuals" (Cavalieri 2009, 27). She argues that it would be *wrong* for morality in the broad sense to encroach upon what she calls "the territory of social morality" (34) because, given the importance of the task at hand, "it is unacceptable to draw universal values from *arbitrary* interpretations of reality" (emphasis mine; 27). In short, "when what is at stake is basic moral treatment, there is no room for the arbitrariness of general

belief systems" (38). On the contrary, the only acceptable belief systems we're to draw on in formulating universal moral principles for conduct must be empirically verifiable.

Largely, what seems to be driving Cavalieri in her arguments against perfectionism, virtue ethics, and morality in the broad sense is the suspicion (and consequent fear) that to include into the field of study phenomena associated in any way with the "cloudy and shifting domain" of the inner life is to sacrifice objectivity in ethics, is to make ethics 'arbitrary' (Murdoch 1998d, 74). An understanding of reality that (to a degree) relies on the private, introspective phenomena of one's mental life must, by extension, be an understanding which (to a degree) is particular to each individual. If one is to overcome this threat of subjectivity, one must reject the idea that the inner life could play a role in how we come to *understand* our moral reality. More specifically, one must reject as being of no relevance phenomena such as a person's "mode of speech or silence, their choice of words, their assessment of others, their conception of their own lives, what they think attractive or praiseworthy, what they think funny: in short the configurations of their thought which show continually in their reactions and conversations… things which may be overly and comprehensibly displayed or inwardly elaborated and guessed at" (Murdoch 1998c, 81). Indeed, since these sorts of phenomena vary greatly between person to person, allowing them into what we take to be the field of study would make it impossible to generate a universalizable "system of constraints on conduct" (Cavalieri 2009, 9). It would, in other words, make it *impossible* to capture the underlying logic of ethics through a single argument (since there *would be* no single logic, but rather "fundamentally different moral pictures which different individuals use or which the same individual may use at different times." Philosophy, then, would have to "remain at the level of the differences, taking

the moral forms of life as given, and not try to get behind them to a single form" (Murdoch 1998c, 97).

Ultimately, Cavalieri thinks that to allow our understanding of our moral reality to be in any way predicated on the private phenomena of our inner life is to open the flood gates to a transcendent, normative, and hierarchical moral universe that necessarily "rests outside of the disjunction of true and false" (Cavalieri 2009, 7). Therefore, if our goal is to generate universal reasons for actions, our moral reality must not be determined by or predicated in any way by phenomena which aren't empirical or objective. As Murdoch notes: "The notion of privileged access to inner events has been held morally suspect because, among other things, it would separate people from 'the ordinary world of rational argument'" (Murdoch 1998b, 326).

At this point, it seems fair to say that the worldview which Cavalieri subscribes to is one where "we all live in the same empirical and rationally comprehensible world and that morality is the adoption of universal and openly defensible rules of conduct" (Murdoch 1998c, 88). What I would like to do next is to explore in more detail the implications of this worldview for how we conceptualize and/or picture the moral life of the individual.

In order to characterize what a person is like, morally, Cavalieri would only look to the choices they make. Since reality, for her, consists only in what is publically and empirically observable, the only human activity which could bring "about a recognizable change in the world" is action (Murdoch 1998b, 302). Put differently, if we construe reality as only having an empirical dimension, then the only human activity which could show up on our radar (and thus the only activity which we could meaningfully talk about) is a person's *behavior*.

Despite the emphasis on behavior, a person's inner life is not *wholly* excluded in this picture; it *is* given a role, however diminished: in Diamond's words, "one's thinking… can have moral interest only in so far as they dispose the user of the language to choose one sort of action rather than another" (Diamond 1988, 271). Additionally, if choice is to be regarded as *moral*, it must be "supportable by reasons which are universalizable." (The goal of Cavalieri's theory, as we've seen, is to generate a system of constraints on conduct which is universally binding for all rational agents). The thoughts that count, then, in addition to providing us with the language to choose, *must also* conform to a picture of universal reasoning – after all, thoughts must conform to the structure of universal reasoning if they are to seek universalizable reasons for action (Murdoch 1998c, 85).

In the resulting picture, the individual comes in only as a rational agent whom we can characterize, morally, by the choices they make. If we are to apply scrutiny to the choices of a rational agent, we may look to the reasons which they gave for their choices. These reasons can be thought of as arguments backed up by facts. These arguments, in turn, must rely on language which conforms to the picture of universal reasoning. Thus, "the material which the philosopher is to work on is simply (under the heading of behavior) acts and choices, and (under the heading of language) choice-guiding words together with the arguments which display the descriptive meaning of these words" (Murdoch 1998c, 79).

There are several limitations to this picture which I'd quickly like to point out. First, the inner life, defined as "personal attitudes and visions which do not obviously take the form of choice-guiding arguments" is completely excluded from the field of study (Murdoch 1998c, 80). This means that a person's private mental life, their character, their particular style of thinking – all these things aren't allowed to factor into what a *person* is like, nor are they allowed to factor

into what a person's *moral universe* is like. To use an example: there would be no reason to think (according to Cavalieri's view) that the fact that a certain person (X) is vegan is a characteristic which would entail a difference in what X is like, or what X's moral universe is like; it wouldn't be a characteristic that X would display in any way other than in their actions. In turn, if we wanted to *praise* X for their commitment to animals, we couldn't point to things like the manner in which they speak of animals (e.g. with kindness, curiosity, or fascination), the distress they experience in light of an animal's misfortune (e.g. when they drive past a dead deer on the road), or the courage and sincerity they display (e.g. in voicing their convictions at the risk of being ridiculed). If we wanted to praise X, we would have only their actions to judge – i.e., the fact that they *choose* not to eat meat. Here one might feel compelled to say that the choice itself, of whether to eat meat or not, isn't what really matters; it does not, in other words, encompass the totality of what it usually means to be vegan. In fact, perhaps the most *defining* feature of what it means to be vegan is that the act of eating meat might not present itself as a choice at all: given what an 'animal' *is* to them, 'eating animals' isn't seen as a choice, or even a wrong choice, but rather as something you don't do. It would be conceptually confusing, in other words – perhaps in the same way that the idea of eating one's pet is conceptually confusing. As Diamond notes, "it is not 'morally wrong' to eat our pets; people who ate their pets would not have pets in the same sense of that term. (If we call an animal that we are fattening for the table a pet, we are making a crude joke of a familiar sort.) A pet is not something to eat, it is given a name, is let into our houses and may be spoken to in ways in which we do not normally speak to cows or squirrels. That is to say, it is given some part of the character of a person" (Diamond 1998, 323-324).

To make a slightly different point with a slightly different example, suppose you have someone who associates meat eating with certain cherished childhood memories – meat eating could be ingrained in a way of life which is integral to their identity. Similarly, in this case and for this person, eating meat might not present itself as a choice. Indeed, this person could simply say, "I would never stop eating meat, and can never imagine myself doing so. If the day ever came where I stopped, I would not be the same person. I would not recognize that person as myself." We couldn't look at this person and talk about his *decision* to eat meat as if that were the heart of the issue. We couldn't say that deep down the decision was really a perfectionist belief in human superiority over animals. Moreover, if the decision to eat meat is defended on the grounds that it coheres with one's identity, then we also wouldn't be able to say that such a reason aspires to universality, and thus, we wouldn't even be able to classify that as a reason at all.

Another limitation of this view is, to use Diamond's words, that it understands "moral differences between people" as arising only when "moral concepts [are applied] in different ways to the same world." What it fails to see is that "the conceptual activities of the mind and the spirit in which we see the world make us who we are, morally speaking; two people may not, in the relevant sense, inhabit the same world" (Diamond 2010, 73). The inability to see this comes as a result of subscribing to what Murdoch calls "the genetic theory of meaning," which holds that the moral concepts we make use of derive their meaning solely from outward patterns of behavior (Murdoch 1998b, 303-311). According to this theory, we learn the meaning of concepts only by witnessing how that concept is used by others: "How do I learn the concept of decision? By watching someone who says 'I have decided' and who then acts" (309). Even after one *acquires* the concept of decision, the genetic theory does not think that one could then "move on

from a behavioristic concept to a mental one… A decision does not turn out to be… an introspectible movement. The concept has no further inner structure; it *is* its outer structure." Concepts in this picture could then be thought of as "lines drawn round separable factual areas" – and if they're *moral* concepts we simply add a recommendation (Murdoch 1998c, 95). Since a concept could only ever be defined according to purely empirical criteria, disagreements over the *use* of a moral concept could only be conceived as disagreements over what *facts* we're to define our concepts in terms of – i.e., over our *factual criteria*.

What the genetic theory of meaning fails to see is that our concepts often *do* taken on additional meaning on the basis of our lived and private experiences. Concepts can be deepened, and refined over time and their meanings can change through purely mental processes like contemplation or attention. What it fails to see is that the structure of a concept is often contingent on and/or contextual to an individual's unique history. To use Murdoch's example: our notion of love is often much different at 20 than it is at 50. If we see concepts having an inner/historical structure in this way, moral disagreements start to appear less like a matter of arguing over factual criteria and more "like a total difference of gestalt. We differ not only because we select different objects out of the same world but because we see different worlds" (Murdoch 1998c, 82).

II

Before we move on to Cavalieri's argument for animal rights, I want to more closely attend to the picture of concepts that she subscribes to (and which I introduced in the last section under the heading of 'the genetic theory of meaning'). Given that her arguments are, in the end, simply arguments for why certain criteria (and not others) should determine the meaning of the moral concepts we're to act in accordance with, we need to know a bit more about the *nature* of

the concepts she subscribes to before we fully can understand the nature of her arguments. Thus, what I want to argue in this section is that Cavalieri makes use of moral concepts and moral vocabulary in a way that closely models the way we use language and apply concepts in the sciences – an approach which, in turn, leaves us "blind to uses of words for which that picture leaves no room" (Diamond 1988, 262).

In the sciences, concepts are deliberately formulated in a simple and straightforward way. This is because, in Murdoch's words, "Scientific language tries to be impersonal and exact and yet accessible for purposes of teamwork" (Murdoch 1998b, 326). To demonstrate proficiency in using a scientific concept, one need only rely on their senses and their reason (because only *those* faculties can provide us with data that is objective and empirical and thus universalizable). A person is thus *proficient* in their use of a scientific concept if they can successfully "group the right things under it" (Diamond 1988, 266). In this picture, concepts are used for the purposes of classification: they place "a movable and extensible ring laid down to cover a certain area of fact" in order to make distinctions between *that* grouping of empirical facts, and *other* groupings (Murdoch 1998c, 82).

To further illustrate the scientific picture of concepts and to begin to inquire into the relevance that Cavalieri's technique might have for how we *do* moral philosophy, we can turn to an example by Cora Diamond:

> It seems to be the view of many analytic philosophers that the concept of a human being is the concept of a member of a particular biological species, *Homo sapiens*. The literature on animal rights furnishes a particularly clear example; it is argued repeatedly there that being human is not a morally relevant characteristic of a thing, because membership in a particular species is not – as if it were patent that the notion of human being, as used in moral discussion… had to be a biological notion. (Diamond 1988, 263)

For Diamond, in order to truly understand what it means to be a human being one must know more than just the biological category which corresponds to that concept. Indeed, one must also know how to use that concept in a variety of diverse moral contexts – one must be able to "participate in life-with-the-concept" (Diamond 1988, 264-266). This form of understanding, for Diamond, entails much more than just to "construe… [the concept of human being] as combining description of a thing as a member of that species with some evaluation or prescription concerning the thing: 'protect its life' and so on" (263). Indeed, what it means to know a concept should also entail a knowledge of what it is like to live, think, and understand things with that concept.

Put differently, the sort of activity which goes into giving concepts meaning, on Diamond's account, is not simply behavior. We do not come to understand a concept solely through a process of discerning patterns in the behaviors of others and distilling from that a series of rules (rules which allow us to determine how to group the right things under the concept) and following those rules as best we can. Our thought – defined broadly as all cognitive actives of the mind – also has a role in giving concepts meaning. More specifically, we do not come to understand the moral concepts of others simply by trying to determine what evaluative principle, what criterion for 'right' action, is implied or expressed by the moral choices they make. To use Murdoch's words, "Here communication of a new moral concept cannot necessarily be achieved by specification of factual criteria open to any observer… but may involve the communication of a completely new, possibly far-reaching and coherent vision… differences are in this sense 'conceptual' and not exclusively behavioristic" (Murdoch 1998c, 82).

For Cavalieri, however, to assign the concept of human being any (moral) connotations other than the biological one is (to use her terms) an illicit appeal to metaphysics, as well as an instance of perfectionism. Moreover, Cavalieri associates the failure to adhere to the scientific picture of moral concepts with philosophy's lack of success as a discipline. In her words, the "insertion of foreign elements into moral philosophy has clear parallels in science… [I.e.:] The introduction of a priori philosophical or religious concepts to explain the natural world… checked [its] development… [and] science could proceed only by freeing itself from such external ties. The same holds for ethics" (Cavalieri 2009, 94-95). In a particularly illuminating section, Cavalieri even associates the failure to adhere to the scientific picture of moral concepts with the rise of Nazism:

> Don't we condemn the Nazi policy of discriminating against – indeed, exploiting and killing – individuals on the basis of the biological group they belonged to? And don't we do this because we hold that scientific classifications in themselves have no bearing in ethics, and that biological characteristics such as gender or race membership have no moral relevance? And yet, when we say that humans should be morally protected qua humans, aren't we giving moral weight to a biological characteristic – that is, species membership? (Cavalieri 2009, 36).

The Nazis, of course, were justifying their 'discrimination'[1] of non-Aryans *not solely* (or, in my opinion, hardly at all) on the basis of biological characteristics, but also on the basis of what Cavalieri would call a perfectionist and metaphysical worldview: Aryans were deemed the 'chosen race' and whatnot, while Jews were considered 'vermin' to be 'exterminated' in order to 'purify' the 'nation'. This perfectionist and metaphysical worldview, Cavalieri thinks, is one which was superimposed over biological criteria, blanketing the scientific universe with a simple evaluatory framework. Thus in criticizing the Nazis, Cavalieri *doesn't* take issue with the

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[1] I don't really think that's the right word for it.

particular moral concepts they employed or with the particular *ways* in which these concepts were used (concepts like "Aryan', 'chosen race', 'Jew', 'vermin', 'extermination', and 'purification'); rather, (and I think this is revealing) what she takes issue with is the assigning of normative value to what are, in the end, simply biological characteristics. One might say here that Cavalieri misunderstands the Nazis. What a Jew is for them is not at all a biological notion. To see that, one need only look at the way Jews were portrayed, thought of, talked about, and treated in Germany at the time, the way they existed in the collective imagination of a people. To say that it was only a matter of assigning normative value to certain biological characteristics is to totally miss the point. What a Jew is could never just be a scientific concept (to anyone but a Martian, perhaps).

For Cavalieri, if concepts are to function according to the scientific picture, they cannot contain within their meaning anything that transcends a straightforward scientific category. To think otherwise is to believe that there exists a dimension to our world that is not entirely reducible to empirical facts, that is not objective, or public, or open to view by any onlooker; it is to picture moral concepts as deriving their meaning from the configuration of thought of a certain individual. To give so much significance to this private, introspective dimension, and to think that the way we think in turn affects how we see the world and what we find valuable in it – all this is deeply unsettling for a lot of philosophers. As Murdoch notes, "The notion of privileged access to inner events has been held morally suspect because, among other things, it would separate people from 'the ordinary world of rational argument'…This conclusion is feared and avoided by many moralists because it seems inimical to the operation of reason and because reason is construed on a scientific model (Murdoch 1998b, 326). In other words, an account of moral concepts which moves away from the scientistic model is feared because it would make it

more difficult for philosophers to settle moral disputes with the sort of finitude, objectivity, and universality that is sought after in the sciences. Indeed, this fear is what ultimately has driven the pursuit of "a rationalistic desire for unity" as well as the search for a "single philosophical definition of morality" that we see in much of contemporary philosophy (Murdoch 1998c, 97). With this in mind we can also better understand why so many philosophers limit the concepts they use to 'right' and 'good': doing so allows them to attempt to capture the logic of morality within a single concept.

In this picture, the job of the moral philosopher is to find factual criteria for the moral concepts that they've established as sovereign, and to defend these criteria with rational arguments. So, if they were to define a concept like right, they would have to group the correct things under it alongside the correct moral recommendation. For Cavalieri, right is a concept we can appeal to in order to recommend certain actions, and discourage others (remember: actions are all we have to work with). In turn, we can determine *what* actions are right by searching for factual criteria. The question becomes: In virtue of what facts are we to say that an action is right? Here we have to be careful, they might say, lest we commit the naturalistic fallacy. We do not, in other words, want to say that we can *derive* moral content from a fact itself: facts and concepts, and indeed all descriptive language, are construed after the scientific model, and thus always must remain value free. However, we can *settle* on a right making criterion if we can find one which is both *consistent* with many of the moral judgments we commonly make, and which would *include* into the sphere of moral consideration all those beings whom we are concerned with.[2] The criterion that Cavalieri settles on is 'interests': "through their having positive and

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[2] I think it would be a significant question to ask if 'settle', 'consistency', and 'inclusion' are functioning like moral concepts here.

negative attitudes about what happens to them, subjects are the only immediate and uncontroversial sources of value… [In other words] the criterion for access to the sphere of rights holders is simply the fact of being an agent that is an intentional being that has goals and wants to achieve them" (Cavalieri 2009, 38-39).

For Cavalieri, a preliminary list of the necessary moral concepts could look something like this:

- 'Right' (Functions as *the* sovereign concept – all other concepts orbit around it)
  - Description: actions by moral agents which promote the interests of moral patients.
  - Prescription: moral agents ought to engage in right action towards moral patients; moral agents ought to act in a way in which the interests of moral patients are given consideration.
- 'Moral patient'
  - Description: beings to whom we extend moral consideration; beings with the capacity to have interests.
  - Prescription: we ought to extend moral consideration to moral patients; we ought to take their interests into account.
- 'Moral Agent'
  - Description: rational beings.
  - Prescription: rational beings ought to act rationally.
- 'Rationality'
  - Description: the capacity for universal reasoning; the capacity to use logic.
  - Prescription: we ought to be 'rational'.
- 'Interests'
  - Description: beings with the capacity to feel pain and pleasure can be said to have an interests in the sense that they are interested in avoiding pain and seeking pleasure.
  - Prescription: we ought to promote interests.

Having established *how* Cavalieri wants her moral concepts to function and *what* concepts she intends to use, we can now begin to inquire as to the *limitations* that such a worldview[3] may have for our understanding of moral disagreement. I think we can see the limitations most clearly if we focus on her concept of interests. For Cavalieri, the capacity to have interests is the only thing which can factor into determining how we ought to ethically engage with others. Thus, "our starting point in thinking about the relationship" both among human beings and between human beings and other animals is: "a moral agent as an item on one side, and on the other a being capable of suffering" (Diamond 1991, 325). However, Diamond objects to this approach:

> We cannot say, "This thing (whatever concepts it may fall under) is at any rate capable of suffering, so we ought not to make it suffer." That 'this' is a being which I ought not to make suffer, or whose suffering I should try to prevent, constitutes a special relationship to it, or rather, any of a number of such relationships – for example, what its suffering is in relation to me might depend upon its being my mother. That I ought to attend to a being's sufferings and enjoyments is not the fundamental moral relation to it, determining how I ought to act towards it – no more fundamental than that this man, being my brother, is a being about whom I should not entertain sexual fantasies. (325)

It's important to note that Diamond here doesn't *reject* the notion that suffering matters morally in our relations with others, what she rejects is the idea that suffering must always be "the fundamental moral relation" as opposed to simply one "of a number of such relationships." What she wants to say is that, in determining the moral nature of a relationship, much more should be considered than whether or not the 'thing' in question is capable of suffering. More specifically, by settling on suffering as the most fundamental moral characteristic – and indeed, as the only

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[3] Any understanding of the world is predicated on the concepts one makes use of. The configuration of our world reflects the configuration of our concepts. Thus, to understand Cavalieri's world one must first understand her concepts. Once one understands her concepts, we can talk about her 'worldview'. 'Worldview' here is synonymous to 'the conceptual scheme that determines how one views the world'.

moral characteristic with significance – we blind ourselves to the possibility that in some cases (or even in most cases) other concepts may be significant (perhaps even more significant).

To use an example, if we look at the practice of eating meat, we will quickly see that having interests is not really that important: it is not the concept which seems most apt for the task of understanding, say, why many people eat farmed animals and not pets, why vegans don't eat any animals at all, and why people in general don't eat other people. To use Diamond's example:

> Treating pets in these ways [i.e. not eating them] is not at all a matter of recognizing some interest which pets have in being so treated. There is not a class of beings, pets, whose nature, whose capacities, are such that we owe it to them to treat them in these ways. Similarly, it is not out of respect for the interests of beings of the class to which we belong that we give names to each other, or that we treat human sexuality or birth or death as we do, marking them -in their various ways – as significant or serious. And again, it is not respect for our interests which is involved in our not eating each other. (324)

Diamond ultimately wants to say that, in light of these facts, one of the most straightforward ways of proceeding might just be to look at the concept of 'animal' and 'human' – to look at them, *not* as biological classifications, but as deep and expansive moral concepts which play a role in configuring the ways we think and the ways we make sense of the world. We should look at these concepts and ask ourselves: given what a human is, and given what an animal is, what are the proper relations between the two? That, at least, would be a good way of beginning.

III

I intend this section to be relatively short. My only objective will be to inquire as to *how* Cavalieri decides on a right-making criterion, and as to *why* she settles on the biological capacity to have interests as the only suitable grounds for an ethic. In order to do this I first want to bring to the fore two concepts which could be said to lie in the background, and which form the frame

of Cavalieri's argument. Those concepts are: 'moral agent', 'rationality'. To a large extent, Cavalieri has *no choice* but to work with these concepts. If you excise all metaphysical entities from the field of study, only those phenomena that are purely empirical remain.

Why do I consider moral agent and rationality the only empirical phenomena? When you look at a person doing morality (and look only at their behavior) the first thing that stands out is the fact that that person makes choices. If you try and deduce – from their behavior and from the choices they make – what sort of activity goes on in their heads, the first thing you might conclude is that we all share (albeit to varying extents) the capacity to be 'rational' (i.e. we can think logically). In our capacity to act and make choices, and in our capacity to be rational, all humans are the same. If one is determined to establish a theory of morality that is universally applicable, your best bet would be to start off with a picture of the individual that includes *everyone* that can do morality. Now we coin a new concept – moral agent – and under that concept we include all humans who can make choices and have the capacity for rational thought.

The next step is to acknowledge that moral agents often make choices, and often defend the choices through their rationality. Rationality could thus be said to relate to choices in the sense that it could recommend or discourage choices (give reasons for and against). Since rationality is universal to all humans, the reasons it gives are all necessary universalizable. When rationality gives us a good reason to act in *this* way, we say that that action is right (and vice versa).

Now we can ask: What makes an action right? Answering this question is the job of rationality. Rationality must be careful here: in giving a reason for action, it necessarily commits itself to recommending that reason to everyone faced with the same situation. Put differently, rationality must settle for a criterion for right action (i.e. in virtue of what facts is an action

right?) that is satisfactory as a universal moral principle. The fact that Cavalieri selects for her right making criteria is, as we've seen, the capacity to have interests. Her approach

> far from embodying the traditional, metaphysically oriented notion of intrinsic value, achieves both the reweaving of the connection between intrinsic value and subjectivity and the development of a radically egalitarian framework. On the one hand, it sees intrinsic value only in something as subjective as the satisfaction of the fundamental interests – in freedom, in welfare, and in life as a precondition for them – of intentional beings. And on the other hand, it grants equal intrinsic value to the satisfaction of these interests, as it recognizes that they are equally vital from the subjective perspective of their holders. (Cavalieri 2009, 39)

By settling on interests, Cavalieri tries to make a case for why that concept is better than any other at capturing the logic of morality, *without* committing the naturalistic fallacy. The reason why the satisfaction of interests is valuable (morally speaking) is because, "from the subjective perspective of their holders," the satisfaction of interests is valuable (factually speaking). I'm inclined to think that even by her own logic Cavalieri *doesn't* manage to bypass the naturalistic fallacy. However, since her logic doesn't interest me, I won't pursue that point here.

Choosing this as the criterion for right action is deemed rational because it coheres and is consistent with a lot of judgements we already commonly make (we don't discriminate on the basis of any *other* biological fact, like race, sex, etc.). Just as we would in the sciences, we can test the viability of a hypothesized explanation for the phenomenon of morality by observing how well it explains our everyday moral judgements. And, indeed, upon inspection it does seem that 'entities with interests' and 'entities which deserve moral consideration' usually do overlap. That is, it appears to be the case that the capacity to have interests is the biological characteristic which coincides most frequently with the beings which we designate as worthy of moral consideration. Thus, the capacity to have interests is deemed the most rational criterion for a moral agent to choose when attempting to justify their actions.

Since Cavalieri's criterion for right action is ultimately grounded in an appeal to rationality, her argument for animal rights functions by exposing an apparent contradiction in the behavior of those who mistreat animals while simultaneously recognizing the rights of other sentient beings. The reason we grant moral consideration to blacks, women, and disabled people is (or ought to be) because we recognize that they have interests. Animals, since they also have interests, should be given the same consideration we give blacks, women, and disabled people. Thus, if one grants moral consideration to blacks and not to animals, they are discriminating on the basis of something which is morally irrelevant (species membership). We can call this speciesism. Speciesism (like racism) is bad because we are being inconsistent in our behavior. It does not, in other words, make sense to approve of speciesism and disapprove of racism, since doing so would be to adhere to two conflicting and contradictory accounts of morality at the same time.

This single-minded focus on rationality troubles me because it implies that any human activity that is *not* the exercise of rationality is not an activity from which we can derive moral knowledge or moral guidance. Cavalieri's core argument, as we saw, was that we ought to grant moral consideration to animal's interests otherwise we'd be inconsistent and thus irrational. But why should an ability to think according to a particular pattern of thought – that of impersonal rationality – be the most morally relevant aspect of our personality? Why should that be the most *inviolable* aspect of our identity? Indeed, there other things we do which are much more integral to who we are (morally), and which are much more fundamental to the shaping of our moral consciousness. Not just rationally consistent beings, we are more importantly beings that fall in love, that care for each other, that attend to the needs of others, that attempt to see the realities of other individuals in a selfless manner. We are also creative beings: we tell, share and create

stories that end up defining us, end up shaping the world around us. What worries me is the possibility that this approach, by saying that only rationality is necessary to determine how we ought to morally engage with animals, dismisses the moral relevance of *other* human activities (such as attention, contemplation, love, care, etc.).

So far we've seen how Cavalieri narrows what could be called the field of study. She constrains moral activity to behavior on the one hand, and rationality on the other. She seems to hold that our moral nature is a product of the choices we make. In turn, these choices express a commitment to an (evaluative) criterion for right action. If we are to justify these choices we must formulate an argument which make appeals to facts. These arguments, as we've just seen, are merely appeals to rationality: they attempt to show why it is more rational to choose *this* criterion as opposed to *that* criterion. In this picture, then, disagreement is construed as a difference in choice, a difference in the evaluative principle which justifies that choice, and as something to be resolved through a process of rational deliberation. As I've already mentioned, this approach troubles me because it sets counter-intuitive limits to what can count as moral activity. Indeed, I want to say that moral activity ought to be construed as much more than just the ability to make choices and to back those choices up with rational arguments and empirical facts. By extension, this approach paints a picture of moral disagreement that is shallow and impoverished: we disagree only insofar as we choose differently, insofar as we rationalize our choices differently. In the next section I will try to articulate an alternative account of moral disagreement which is not as constraining and impoverished as Cavalieri's.

Chapter 2: *The Death of the Moth*

In the last chapter I argued for why we need to include more than just acts and choices if we're to get a better picture of *how* we disagree. If we're to understand the *profundity* that disagreements often seem to have, an adequate account should, in addition to acts and choices, make room for the phenomena of the inner life. It should, in other words, allow thoughts (which "do not obviously take the form of choice-guiding arguments") to play a greater role in determining the moral nature of a person, as well as the moral nature of their world (Murdoch 1998c, 80). Disagreement, in this light, might begin to seem more *fundamental* – that is, tied up with things like one's identity, one's thoughts and styles of thinking, one's ongoing inner monologue, and ultimately with the way one *sees* things. To acknowledge this is to understand disagreements as coming about *not just* because we choose differently, or because we select as important different facts from the same world, but because we *inhabit* different worlds in the first place. Moreover, even what presents itself as a choice, and what factors into how we end up choosing, might themselves be predicated on how we *see* things. As Murdoch notes, "I can only choose within the world I can *see*" (Murdoch 1998b, 329).

According to this picture, the differences that ultimately underlie moral disagreements are often deeply rooted in a person's inner life. For instance, the meaning behind the words that one uses to describe their life and their moral reality contain a depth and dimension that is often *private* – i.e., contextual to the individual language user, and irreducible to a universally agreed upon system of meaning. These introspective, cognitive, and linguistic differences between individuals manifest themselves in differences in the way we *view* the world – the way the world *appears* to us. To capture this aspect of moral life, I want to borrow the metaphor of 'vision' from Iris Murdoch's essay "Vision and Choice."

Using the metaphor 'vision' to explain the crucial differences between people who are caught in a moral disagreement has its perks. For one, it already coheres with the way we commonly talk and think about disagreement. For instance, it isn't uncommon to say things like, "We won't ever agree on this issue. We simply *see* things differently." Or, "They seem to believe that they were being courageous. But they are still young; someday they'll come to *see* how that was brash."

Another perk to the metaphor of 'vision' is that it construes disagreements as actually about real things in the world; it implies that we can have a *false* view of things as well as a *true* one (e.g. someone can be "young" and" brash" and can thus be said to have an immature or impoverished vision). Additionally, this metaphor also provides us with a compelling account of the process of moral growth. One could be said to engage in moral growth insofar as their vision becomes more accurate and more just, insofar as they're coming to see reality more clearly. Thus, if we were to rely on this picture in order to conceptualize the process whereby a person (X) comes to see eating meat as wrong, we would say that X, in *attending* to their reality, came to a vision which was more *refined,* more *accurate*. In attending to their reality patiently, justly, and lovingly, they *saw* something which made it *clear* to them that eating meat was wrong. Note how the process of coming to a just and accurate vision is construed here as a *moral activity*. We could refer to this activity as one of *contemplation*, as well as *attention* to reality (Murdoch 1998b).

In contrast, for Cavalieri, "moral differences are essentially differences in choice, given a discussable background of [empirical] facts." Moreover, if we're to construe these choices as *moral* choices, we must imagine these choices simultaneously expressing a commitment to a certain criterion for right action. In this picture, "moral argument will be possible where people

have similar criteria… (share descriptive meanings of moral terms) and differ about what exactly the facts are" (e.g., if we were to agree that actions are right if they respect the interests of those capable of having interests, but we disagree over who has interests) (Murdoch 1998c, 81). If the difference between two people is a difference of criteria, one's only recourse in trying to persuade another of the superiority of one's criteria is to rationally argue for it – that is, to demonstrate that one's criteria has the greatest potential for universalizability, and is thus more consistent, and thus better captures the underlying logic of morality (assuming there *is* a logic). For instance, one might say that the capacity to have interests is a better criterion for determining right action than 'intelligence' since the latter criterion would make permissible discrimination against the mentally handicapped.

Next, I argued that Cavalieri's (behaviorist) approach to disagreement excluded all but the most impoverished and boring concepts from playing a role in moral life (and left us with a scientistic picture of our moral reality). I also argued that if we allowed for a more expansive, varied, and complex moral vocabulary, we could come to a richer and more accurate account of disagreement. This vocabulary should be modeled after the moral language that we commonly use in our day-to-day lives: a "moral language which relates to a reality infinitely more complex and various than that of science" (Murdoch 1998b, 326). More specifically, when we use moral concepts in order to describe our moral landscape, we should allow them to derive their meaning in other ways than just according to the scientific model (where one need only group the right things under it alongside a straightforward recommendation). Indeed, not all concepts fit that model; some, like the concept of a human being (as we've seen) are morally loaded, and knowing how to *use* that concept entails a knowledge of what it's like to *live* with that concept (how it affects the way you think and see; how it affects your 'vision'). Put differently, we

should allow concepts to play a larger role in determining *what* the relevant facts are and *how* to interpret them. 'Moral facts' in this case could be thought of as "moral interpretations of situations where the moral concept in question determines what the situation is, and if the concept is withdrawn we are not left with the same situation nor the same facts" (Murdoch 1998c, 95).

By acknowledging that the facts available to us are often *preconditioned* by the moral concepts we make use of, we're also able to appreciate the apparent complexity and difficulty often involved in *addressing* and attempting to *resolve* disagreements. Indeed, "communication of a new moral concept cannot necessarily be achieved by specification of factual criteria open to any observer… but may involve the communication of a completely new, possibly far-reaching and coherent vision… differences are in this sense 'conceptual'" (82). Picturing disagreements as irreducibly and fundamentally conceptual in this way better equips us to articulate the reasons behind a person's inability to see certain aspects of reality – an inability to see them at all, or simply in the way you want them to see them. Indeed, we might have different concepts at our disposal; or perhaps we have the same concepts but use them differently, according to our different experiences and personal histories.

In using concepts to illuminate our moral universe, we inevitably begin to modify them – deepen their meaning – in response to our unique and partly private experiences. In this picture, moral concepts can be thought of as tools – initially modeled after a shallow public definition (the sort we might learn from a dictionary) – which are gradually refined and tailored to our particular needs and circumstances, and in relation to our overall vision. In other words, in the process of developing our moral outlook, concepts might begin to take on a meaning which

becomes increasingly more private – that is, a meaning more contextual to a person's individual history, and to their particular vision of life (Murdoch 1998b).

Moreover, what it means to *share* a concept, in this picture, involves more than just telling someone else the *rules* that go along with that concept, rules which would make it perfectly clear, for any rational agent with a full grasp of the facts, how to group the right things under it. To acknowledge this is to acknowledge that the concepts we rely on to describe our world are "often unavoidably idiosyncratic and inaccessible" (Murdoch 1998b, 326). Indeed, description (moral or otherwise) is not "something that can be pulled out of the context of human life and interests within which descriptions have their normal place." Rather, "the capacity to use a descriptive term is a capacity to participate in the life from which that word comes." If we see moral concepts in this way, we see them as having "a place in a network of evaluative thought" (Diamond 1988, 267). In light of that, sharing a concept might entail trying to show how that concept fits into the larger network of concepts that go into configuring one's own moral vision; it might entail showing what life is like with that concept. In turn, persuading someone of the *value* of a concept might entail showing them that there's something *good* about life with that concept. Certain forms of literature can achieve this.

Cavalieri, by contrast, considered the idea that non-scientific concepts could *determine* and *configure* the nature of our moral universe an illicit appeal to metaphysics. For her, it would have been impossible to think of moral differences as being in any way *conceptual* (much less as *fundamentally* and *irreducibly* so).

Here I'd like to quickly address a possible concern someone might have with this picture of ethics. Given that an individual's understanding of a situation is wholly determined by the concepts they make use of, and given that the concepts they make use of often have a dimension

of meaning that is private and particular to that individual, does that mean that objectivity in ethics is unattainable? In other words, instead of saying that there's a way of understanding a situation that is more objective than other understandings, should we simply say that the truth of every understanding is relative to an individual's vision?

I think the fact that we can (and often do) modify, refine, and rearrange our conceptual scheme in response to our experiences itself seems to suggest that coming to a more objective understanding of our reality is simply a matter of finding the right concepts for a given situation, and developing and deepening them in the right ways. To the extent that elaborating, deepening, modifying, replacing, and refining a concept leads to greater clarification of a situation, we could say that a greater degree of objectivity has been attained. However, there's a caveat: what *counts* as 'objectivity' in matters of morality should be distinguished with what counts as objectivity in scientific matters. In ethics, there may be multiple 'correct' ways of conceptualizing the same situation. Each conceptualization might be 'true' for each person and their respective vision of life. The sort of objectivity we can strive for in ethics is less totalitarian than the sort of objectivity science strives for. A person could have their own personal truth, for instance. That truth could be something like that they have a special destiny in store for them. Objectivity here can thus be construed as something more contextual and less universal than scientific objectivity. To use another example, it is not uncommon to think that, as one ages, one comes to greater moral clarity. My sense of what's right or wrong, my conception of the good life, rests on firmer ground than it did ten years ago. We can say, in that case, that my moral vision has become more objective.

None of this, I should note, is to say that morality is totally subjective. There may be better and worse ways to conceptualize a given situation. We can determine which

conceptualization is better and which is worse by (for instance) comparing them side by side. We can ask: What is life like with *this* set of concepts and how does it differ to a life with *that* set of concepts? In turn, one can judge the respective merit of each conceptual framework by appealing to other (perhaps more cherished) concepts. Life is 'richer' and more 'complex' with this set of concepts, one might say. Conceptualizing it this way might 'cohere' better with my identity (as an 'American', say).

So far, I've tried to better articulate the sort of phenomena I want to include into what's taken to be the field of study for moral philosophers. More specifically, following Murdoch and Diamond, I have said that disagreements can be thought of as arising from conflicting visions of life, and as being irreducibly and fundamentally conceptual in nature. I have said that disagreements arise not only because we choose differently and/or because our choices express commitments to different criteria for what constitutes right action; disagreements also arise because our understanding of reality differs – we differ in vision, in the concepts which configure the world we *see*. In what follows I want to (1) illustrate what it might mean for someone's moral understanding of reality (one's moral vision) to be fundamentally configured by one's concepts. I also want to (2) illustrate the process whereby one undergoes a *change* of vision. As I've already suggested, the metaphor of 'vision' can help us explain and understand the phenomenon of moral growth. For instance, the metaphor of vision allows us to say things like our understanding of our moral reality becomes more accurate as a result of a patient and loving attention. Thus, what I want to illustrate is *how* such a process can be carried out.

In order to illustrate the value of the aforementioned philosophical techniques (the notion that our reality is configured by our concepts, that disagreements are fundamentally conceptual

in nature, and that vision can help us understand the phenomenon of moral growth), I rely on a very short essay of Virginia Woolf's, "The Death of the Moth." We can think of this essay as an example of what it might look like to share a vision, as well as the concepts that correspond to it. It's my hope that by understanding the process involved in sharing a vision, we can also come to understand what's at stake in *resolving* disagreements. Additionally, in understanding the process involved in sharing a vision we might also come to a greater appreciation of the difficulty and profundity of many forms of disagreement.

On its surface "The Death of the Moth" reads as the scattered annotations of a narrator (whom I will henceforth simply refer to as "Woolf"), as she provides us with various descriptions of a moth as he nears death and ultimately dies. However, more fundamentally, the essay chronicles the scarcely perceptible inner movements of a woman as she struggles to arrive at a clearer impression of the moth, and, ultimately, at a clearer impression of life and death itself. Woolf at points struggles to attend to the being of the moth; only when her attention is focused on him – justly and lovingly, as Murdoch would say – does she begin to see him more clearly, does she begin to see herself as similarly implicated in the very struggles which beset him – the very struggles, indeed, which we hold in common with all of life.

Woolf starts off with the following passage, directed to the moth she finds in her room:

> Moths that fly by day are not properly to be called moths; they do not excite that pleasant sense of dark autumn nights and ivy-blossom which the commonest yellow-underwing asleep in the shadow of the curtain never fails to rouse in us. They are hybrid creatures, neither gay like butterflies nor somber like their own species. (Woolf 1974, 3)

What interests me here is primarily stylistic. First notice how she starts off with a strong and (perhaps) unfair declaration. Notice specifically how it seeks to make distinctions, and impose categories – a hierarchy one might say. Woolf draws a line between day moths and night moths,

and day moths and butterflies, then declares that day moths are not "properly" moths, since they "fly by day." When I first read that passage I marveled at how much she sounded like a philosopher: cold and analytic; coming onto the scene with ready-made distinctions; making claims, and trying to rationally back them up. I think it's fair to say that here in this passage, Woolf is not yet *attending* to what Murdoch might call the "individual reality" of that particular moth (Murdoch 1998b, 327). In a sense she cannot, at this point, see *beyond* the human constructs she projects onto the world.

The moth himself doesn't make it into the essay until the next sentence: "Nevertheless the present specimen, with his narrow hay-colored wings, fringed with a tassel of the same color, seemed to be content with life" (Woolf 1974, 3). Here the moth makes his first move, a bold resistance to the shallow picture of moth life that Woolf had, for a brief moment, tried to confine him in. Note, however, that while she acknowledges that the moth was "content," she nevertheless only goes as far as saying that it "seemed" that way. In other words, she is not yet fully clear as to the nature nor the significance of the contentedness, nor of the situation as a whole.

The scene outside her window then catches her attention. "It was a pleasant morning… the earth… gleamed with moisture… [and] such vigor came rolling in from the fields... that it was difficult to keep the eyes strictly turned upon the book" (3). She describes, in thrall, how the

> rooks too were keeping with their annual festivities; soaring round the tree tops until it looked as if a vast net with thousands of black knots in it had been cast up into the air; which, after a few moments sank slowly down upon the trees until every twig seemed to have a knot at the end of it. Then, suddenly, the net would be thrown into the air again in a wider circle this time, with the utmost clamor and vociferation, as though to be thrown into the air and settle slowly down upon the tree tops were a tremendously exciting experience. (3)

What strikes me about this passage is the energy that seems to grip her: the energy which makes it difficult to keep "the eyes strictly turned upon the book," and which materializes itself in the texture of her prose: "vigor" comes "rolling" in from the fields, the rooks are "soaring round the tree tops," as if "cast up into the air." As she follows the movements of the rooks, her description undulates, as if held in rapture by the pulsating energy. Her attention is *fixed* on them, in other words, as they are cast up into the air, and as they settle back down, and (once more) as they are cast up in the air, and as they settle back down. Here we see a style that is much different than that of the previous scene. She allows reality to grip her; she allows it to manifest itself in her prose. In the scene we began with, reality was oppressed and obscured by the judgements of the narrator: she described what she *believed* at the expense of what she *saw*.

In the next passage, Woolf stumbles upon a first revelation. By simply allowing the world to *be*, and recording only what she *saw*, she glimpsed a tiny truth:

> The same energy which inspired the rooks, the ploughmen, the horses, and even, it seemed, the lean bare-backed downs, sent the moth fluttering from side to side of his square of the window-pane. (4)

In turn, she allows the acquisition of this tiny truth to inspire and alter her prose:

> One could not help watching him. One was, indeed, conscious of a queer feeling of pity for him. The possibilities of pleasure seemed that morning so enormous and so various that to have only a moth's part in life, and a day moth's at that, appeared a hard fate, and his zest in enjoying his meagre opportunities to the full, pathetic. (4)

I'm interested here in the sudden transition Woolf makes from speaking in the personal "I," to the impersonal "one." The transition marks a moment of contemplation: Woolf takes a step back in order to reflect on the significance of the tiny truth she had earlier witnessed. Additionally, the transition to 'one' might also be intended as a way of *connecting* the reader to this tiny truth. In other words, Woolf might be attempting to draw us in as participants in order to share with us a

pure and unadulterated impression of reality. More specifically, she might be attempting to get us to follow her along as she thinks about what she sees, and as her thoughts transform her reality. Perhaps her hope is that, in drawing us in as participants to her particular thought processes, we might begin to see the world as she does – and maybe then the truth that revealed itself to her might begin to reveal itself to us as well. After all, if the moral universe we see is determined by the configurations of our thoughts, then coming to share and understand the intricacies and nuances of another's thoughts is, to an extent, to understand and to share their world.

I also want to draw attention to Woolf's description of the moth's life as "pathetic." It's not clear whether, or to what extent, she means for us to read into that word the sort of negative connotations which we commonly give it today (pathetic either as evoking pity, or pathetic as evoking pity as well as being lesser, or comically insignificant). Given the time of writing, I think the former is more likely. At any rate, what interests me here is the way that 'pity' can be thought of as functioning as a moral concept (in 'Murdochian' sense). We could say that Woolf *introduced* the notion of pity into her essay for its ability to better *reflect* the moral reality that had *revealed* itself to her. In other words, it is in light of a clearer impression of the individual reality of a day moth that it made sense for Woolf to describe him as pathetic. In this essay, moral concepts are *not just* shaping and constructing the world Woolf sees, we also see them *responding to the demands* of an ever more refined impression of her moral reality. To think of reality in this way is to think that our understanding of it is infinitely perfectible. It is also to think of *our concepts* as infinitely perfectible. It is to think that concepts will, as a result of an attention to reality, become increasingly more complex, more nuanced. It is to think that some concepts are better suited than others to describing certain aspects of our reality. It is to think that

we can determine what concepts to use and the best ways to use them through experience, attention, and contemplation.

Concepts here appear to us as flexible, living, and organic; not as static and confined to a certain pre-determined criterion. If pathetic were only allowed to function according to the scientific picture of concepts, it would be unlikely that the moth's struggles would count as one of the things that could be grouped under it. It would be unlikely simply because we have no *empirical proof* that a moth has the psychological capacity to experience the sort of suffering and misfortune that is (according to the agreed upon definition) taken as a requisite for someone's experience to be labeled as pathetic. Indeed, for Woolf, it first seems "*queer*" to describe her feelings towards the moth as pity; it had probably never before *occurred to her* to use it in such a circumstance. The meaning of pity can thus be thought of as being itself refined alongside the moral reality it seeks to describe.

Also notice *how* this process whereby a concept becomes more 'refined' (or elaborated upon, or broadened) is achieved. To start, Woolf does not limit herself to the public use of pity – a criterion which might hold that pity is a feeling of sorrow in response to the suffering or misfortune of another. Nor does she appeal to scientific research in order to prove that the moth's experiences – described in neutral and scientific language – do in fact merit classification as instances of 'suffering' or 'misfortune'. Nor does she try and make an argument for why, given the scientific research on moths and the way pity is commonly used, all rational agents ought to feel pity for moths in this or that situation. Rather, for Woolf, pity acquires its meaning in a more discursive process, in reference to her own particular experiences and to what we could call her 'inner monologue' or her 'stream of consciousness'. Pity could thus be said to acquire a meaning (in response to her particular thought processes, and to her particular experiences as their

understood according her particular way of seeing) that *diverges* from the way pity is commonly used. More specifically, we see Woolf justify her (divergent) use of pity by elaborating on the situation, contextualizing that pity in relation to the particulars of that situation, and ultimately by embedding it within a larger web of concepts. The moth endured a "hard fate" in light of "the possibilities of pleasure" that seemed "enormous and various," and yet he displayed "zest" in enjoying his "meager opportunities": *that* is what Woolf means when she says she feels pity for him.

In turn, what Woolf means by a hard fate, zest, meager opportunities, the possibilities of pleasure, etc. is *also* not obvious, nor something we can immediately discern by appealing to the public uses of these words. If anything, to understand what she means when she uses these concepts, one must go back to the description of the rooks outside, and the 'vigor' rolling in from the fields (it is partly in contrast to her description of *those* events that *these* concepts derive their meaning). One might also want to look back at the initial description of the moth as a 'hybrid creature' (i.e., his opportunities were meager partly because he was a day moth, and thus he endured a hard fate).

The point I want to make is (to reiterate) that "description itself [cannot be] thought of as something that can be pulled out of the context of human life and interests within which descriptions have their normal place… the capacity to use a descriptive term is a capacity to participate in the life from which that word comes" (Diamond 1988, 267). Thus, to understand Woolf's descriptions we must, essentially, attempt to participate in her life, and in her thoughts and observations.

Here we might begin to better understand why disagreements are often so difficult to overcome. For one, disagreements might be more far-reaching than they initially seem. If two

people disagree about, say, the value of animal life, one might be inclined to think that the difference between them is simply a difference in how they think about animals. However, if one is try to discern *why* each person think about animals in the way they do, one might begin to realize that the difference in much more fundamental: it might be involve things like how one thinks about themselves, what they fear, what they love, what they find praiseworthy, etc.

Despite the progress Woolf has made in her attempt to view the moth more accurately – to attend lovingly and justly to his individual reality – we can still detect a bit of self-centeredness in her 'view' of him. Her pity partly stems from a belief that to have "only a moth's part in life" is something inherently tragic. While a significant effort has been made to imaginatively *inhabit* the world of the moth, Woolf still keeps a firm grip on the distinctions she started off with at the beginning of the piece. The moth is classified as a day moth, which, for Woolf, are "hybrid creatures" (Wolf 1974, 3). Here she comes to understand, and look down upon, his existence according to and because of a classification: the fate of being overlooked by the categories and distinctions humans rely on to appropriate the world is somehow taken to be a shortcoming on his part, as a sort of fault. However, in the very next section we begin to see a move away from that sort of thinking/seeing (more specifically, seeing *as* a form of thinking).

> He flew vigorously to one corner of his compartment, and, after waiting there a second, flew across to the other. What remained for him but to fly to a third corner and then to a fourth? That was all he could do, in spite of the size of the downs, the width of the sky, the far-off smoke of houses, and the romantic voice, now and then, of a steamer out at sea. What he could do, he did. (4)

I'm interested in this passage to the extent that it could allow us to say that in it, Woolf, as a result of a loving attention, began to see her earlier prejudice – the aspect of her pity which arose merely from a belief in the insignificance of moths, and day moths in particular – as unfair, or unjust. It would not be fair to think of him in that way, I see her saying, because nothing else

"remained for him" to do, and because, indeed, "that was all he *could* do" (emphasis mine). Then she repeats, "What he could do, he did" – a short, slow sentence, punctuated with hard "d's," which seem to urge the reader to slow down with her (4). Hold still, it seems to say, there's something here to see. Sure enough, this patient attention then leads her to an even greater truth in the next passage.

> Watching him, it seemed as if a fiber, very thin but pure, of the enormous energy of the world had been thrust into his frail and diminutive body. As often as he crossed the pane, I could fancy that a thread of vital light became visible. He was little or nothing but life. (4)

This passage is perhaps the most significant of the piece. In it, we see an echo to an earlier passage, where the moth is seen "fluttering from side to side of his square of the window-pane," "inspired" by "the same energy which inspired" the scene outside. In that passage, I had said that Woolf, by attending to the world, and specifically to the individual reality of that particular moth, came to acquire a tiny truth. Here we see Woolf plunge even deeper into that reality, and coming to grasp an even bigger truth: the moth, rather than appearing to her only as "inspired" by the same "energy" that lay outside her window, now appears to her as a manifestation of *life itself*, as literally *embodying* the energy of the world (3). In her words,

> It was as if someone had taken a tiny bead of pure life and decking it as lightly as possible with down and feathers, had set it dancing and zigzagging to show us the true nature of life. (4)

In light of this sudden transformation, this clearer perception of reality, Woolf once again steps back to analyze what had transpired:

> Yet, because he was so small, and so simple a form of the energy that was rolling in at the open window and driving its way through so many narrow and intricate corridors in my own brain and in those of other human beings, there was something marvelous as well as pathetic about him. (4)

First notice how this change in what she *sees* in turn affects what moral concepts she decides to *use*. Instead of appearing simply as "pathetic," he is now "*marvelous* as well as pathetic" (emphasis mine). It's significant that Woolf only begins to describe the moth as marvelous when he reveals himself to her as being "little or nothing but life" – and not just any 'life', but the *very same* life that was "driving its way through so many narrow and intricate corridors in my own brain." In attending to the moth's individual reality, Woolf came to see a fundamental *sameness* between her reality and the moth's. Before, the moth had appeared to Woolf only as a "hybrid creature," whom she referred to as "the present specimen" (3). And while she identified with him enough to feel pity, this pity perplexed her. Now, we see the differences that had once separated them become overshadowed by the discovery of something which unites them: a truth which allowed her to understand him better. She understands him in the sense that (and insofar as) she understands what it's like to be alive. Ultimately, it is in reference to that similarity, and that deeper understanding of him, that she can sensibly say that he was "marvelous."

However, note how Woolf still refers to the moth as being "so *simple* a form of the energy" found outside and in her herself (4; emphasis mine). And later, "the thought of all that life might have been had he been born in any other shape caused one to view his simple activities with a kind of pity" (5). The moth, despite being "little or nothing but life," still, when considered in relation to the other forms that life can take, appears as small and simple, and maybe even of lesser significance (4). I want to say that even here, the process in which Woolf seems involved – of coming to a more accurate and just view of the moth – is still unfinished. We see the last stage of the process in the following passage, where she witnesses him in the throes of death.

I forgot about him. Then, looking up, my eye was caught by him. He was trying to resume his dancing, but seemed either so stiff or so awkward that he could only flutter to the bottom of the window-pane; and when he tried to fly across it he failed. Being intent on other matters I watched these futile attempts for a time without thinking, unconsciously waiting for him to resume his flight, as one waits for a machine, that has stopped momentarily, to start again without considering the reason of its failure. After perhaps a seventh attempt he slipped from the wooden ledge and fell, fluttering his wings, on to his back on the window sill. The helplessness of his attitude roused me. It flashed upon me that he was in difficulties; he could no longer raise himself; his legs struggled vainly. But, as I stretched out a pencil, meaning to help him to right himself, it came over me that the failure and awkwardness were the approach of death. (5)

What most intrigues me about this passage is the insistent use of the passive voice: "my eye was caught by him," "roused me," "it flashed upon me," "it came over me." The authority of the narrator is subsumed by that of the moth's: she is not *assuming* these things, she is being *told* of them. It's as if the reality of this moth's very being takes a hold of Woolf as well as her prose.

Additionally, we see a tension here between the moth's individual reality and Woolf's momentary state of inattention. Woolf describes herself as "being intent on other matters," and watching "without thinking;" she even describes herself as "unconscious." I don't think it's a coincidence that during this period of inattention, Woolf waits for the moth "as one waits for a machine" – a description which seems to imply that, in her eyes at least, he has ceased to be a being with subjectivity and individuality. What interests me here is the connection that is implied between inattentiveness and being blind to the reality of another individual. This is a topic on which Murdoch has a lot to say. Specifically, Murdoch thought that there was a very particular *type* of attention that was capable of revealing the individual reality of another: a *loving* attention. She thought that what blinded us (in the first place) to the reality of another are the attachments and fantasies propagated by the ego. In turn, only a loving gaze directed at an individual's reality could break us free from those attachments and fantasies. Love and reality are intimately connected for Murdoch: to attend to someone lovingly is to see them as they really

are (that is, selflessly). Love and the ego are thus construed as opposites: to love is to be selfless, to attend to someone without projecting self-serving fantasies onto them, and to attend to them disinterestedly (Murdoch 1998b).

Also worth noting is how Woolf attempts to help the moth "right himself" with her pencil. It's possible that Woolf meant that phrase to do more than just the obvious: perhaps it isn't a coincidence that "right" sounds exactly like 'write', or that right could be interpreted according to its other meaning – right as in righting a wrong. Indeed, it could be said that in writing about the life of the moth, she's "stretching out her pencil" (Wolf 1974, 5) to help him in a less literal yet much more significant way: that is, by helping him write himself, and thus right himself against "an oncoming doom" (6). Writing, for Woolf, might be a means of capturing an impression of reality, and more specifically of *another's* reality, in a way that is right, in a way that does that reality justice.

For Woolf, a just account of the moth's reality ends up taking the following form:

> Somehow it [death] was opposed to the little hay-colored moth. It was useless to try to do anything. One could only watch the extraordinary efforts made by those tiny legs against an oncoming doom which could, had it chosen, have submerged an entire city, not merely a city, but masses of human beings; nothing, I knew, had any chance against death. Nevertheless after a pause of exhaustion the legs fluttered again. It was superb this last protest, and so frantic that he succeeded at last in righting himself. One's sympathies, of course, were all on the side of life. Also, when there was nobody to care or to know, this gigantic effort on the part of an insignificant little moth, against a power of such magnitude, to retain what no one else valued or desired to keep, moved one strangely. Again, somehow, one saw life, a pure bead. I lifted the pencil again, useless though I knew it to be. But even as I did so, the unmistakable tokens of death showed themselves. The body relaxed, and instantly grew stiff. The struggle was over. The insignificant little creature now knew death. As I looked at the dead moth, this minute wayside triumph of so great a force over so mean an antagonist filled me with wonder. Just as life had been strange a few minutes before, so death was now as strange. The moth having righted himself now lay most decently and uncomplainingly composed. O yes, he seemed to say, death is stronger than I am. (6)

What's most significant about this is that the moth's life is now being viewed for the first time, *not* in relation to other *forms* that life can take (and thus as being comparatively simple and pathetic), but in relation to death itself. In framing his existence in these terms, Woolf succeeds, at last, in capturing the *significance* of his individual reality. The tension between life and death, and more specifically, the "extraordinary efforts" which all life-forms display in their struggle against death: this is something both universal, yet deeply personal; something which we all hold in common, yet experience alone. In his "gigantic effort" to stave off death, the moth is no different than any other life form that seeks to survive; yet, at the same time, his struggle is unlike any other, since no one else can experience it in the same way. Indeed, for the moth, nothing matters more than this struggle. His whole being is at stake; he fights off death with everything he has.

In order to allow the moth to reveal himself to her in this way, on his terms, free from bias and prejudice, Woolf had to *remove* herself, in a sense, from the picture – a process which Murdoch refers to as "unselfing" (Murdoch 1998a, 369). Here we see the final stage of what I had earlier referred to as a patient and loving attention to an individual reality. Before, Woolf took in what she saw according to *her* terms, at the expense of *his*: for instance, in referring to him as a "day moth," she denied his individuality at the expense of a pseudo-scientific classification; day moths, she implies, are pathetic since they do not "fly by day" (Woolf 1974, 3). In contrast, she now records his life without ever measuring him up against any external standards; she does not, in other words, determine his significance by comparing him or his experiences to anything or anyone *other*. Instead, she takes his individual reality at face value, assigns it the significance that he himself might assign it: The moth's "legs fluttered" in a "gigantic" and "extraordinary" effort to resist an "oncoming doom." He was up against a force

"which could have submerged an entire city, not merely a city, but masses of human beings." And even though it was "useless," and even though his individual life was one which "no one else valued or desired to keep," he nevertheless 'protested frantically' on its behalf. Seeing this "moved one strangely," and "filled me with wonder." It is "superb," she says (6). In shifting the weight of her attention from her own thoughts and experiences to those of the moth, Woolf can be said to become the narrator for *his* life. With this in mind, we could also give an additional dimension of meaning to the transition she makes between writing from the personal 'I' to the impersonal 'one' – perhaps she means to deemphasize her own subjectivity in order to come at a clearer sense of the moth's. Perhaps we could also say that, in these moments, Woolf opens herself up to the world and allows some truth, unadulterated by what Murdoch called 'the fantasies of the ego', to freely impress itself on her.

Woolf actually writes about this ability to receive an immediate impression of reality, and says of it that, indeed, "the shock-receiving capacity is what makes me a writer" (Woolf 1985, 72). She describes these moments as such that "I am hardly aware of myself, but only of the sensation. I am only the container of the feeling of ecstasy, of the feeling of rapture" (67). On these rare occasions – these "moments of being" (70), as she calls them – "a token of some real thing behind appearances" is revealed to one (72). To better understand this idea of a "moment of being," we can contrast it to what Woolf calls "moments of non-being," in which reality seems to us "embedded" in a "kind of nondescript cotton wool." To live in a state of 'non-being' is to *not* live "consciously," it is to let life rush past you. She associates "non-being" with the sort of mundane, humdrum experiences of everyday life that seem to quietly wash away with the passage of time (70). However, Woolf nevertheless feels "that behind the cotton wool is hidden a pattern; that we… are connected with this; that the whole world is a work of art; that we are part

of the work of art." This "pattern," in turn, is what one is *exposed* to in a 'moment of being'. Moreover, the task of the writer, as Woolf conceives it, is to "make it [this pattern] real by putting it into words. It is only by putting into words that I can make it whole" (72).

I'd also like to explore how 'life' and 'death', for Woolf, function as moral concepts. Note how she relies on these concepts to reframe her understanding of the moth: it is because of *how* these concepts configured her understanding of his individual reality that she was able to see him justly, and accurately. However, these concepts, throughout her essay, underwent a radical transformation. She goes from thinking of life and death as being "opposed to each other" (which, indeed, accords with what we could call their 'public use') to an understanding of them where the relationship between them is much more complicated. Specifically, we see a tension in how she *describes* life and death, and the process of dying, and how she says of all of it "just as life had been strange a few minutes before, so death was now as strange." The tension is this: despite that fact that she conceives of death as opposed to the moth, and the struggle between them as between "so great a force over so mean an antagonist," she nevertheless imagines him, after the moment of dying, as "most decently and uncomplainingly composed." Indeed, we see this decency and composition once again in the next (and last) sentence: "O yes, he seemed to say, death is stronger than I am." Certainly Woolf meant these words *not* as a note of resignation on the moth's part, but as a testament perhaps to the dignity with which he carried himself – the dignity, indeed, that we see in all of life, even when it stands in tension with the forces of death. (This dignity is the very thing which allows him to right himself in the end). She imagines him, ultimately, at peace. However, that such peace could come about as a result of such a "frantic" struggle is perhaps what makes her say that "death was… strange." Perhaps for Woolf, life and

death, seen in this new light, don't seem as "opposed" to each other as they once were, and as they're usually understood to be. I see her saying: Even when life is overcome by the forces of death in a "frantic" struggle, there can still be peace; and even the tension in which life and death seem perpetually locked, can, in a certain light, appear to us as "moving" and "wonderful," and maybe even as dignifying (Wolf 1974, 6).

This fundamental truth about the nature of life and death is one which, as I already mentioned, stands at odds with the ways these phenomena are traditionally understood. Death is defined as the absence of life, and vice versa. According to this logic, then, life and death *are* opposites, and thus they *do* in fact oppose each other. Woolf however came to see *through* this simple dichotomy, and did so through patient attention to reality. And while the observations of this reality which she relays to us may not always cohere with a rational and scientific presupposition of what the world ought to look like (and the sort of things we can justifiably claim as experience and knowledge) it *is* faithful to an immediate impression of reality (or a 'primary apprehension', as Murdoch would call it). And, for an artist at least, that faithfulness to reality is the most important thing.

In these last few pages I have tried to give an account of the process in which one can come to a more accurate and just understanding of reality. In order to illustrate the nature of this process, I have relied on the concepts of 'vision', 'attention', 'love', 'moments of being', and the idea that one's reality is conceptually configured. I have argued that these concepts are not just valuable to understanding the phenomenon of moral growth, but also that of moral disagreement. Additionally, I've argued that the approach that I've advanced has several advantages over an

approach like Cavalieri's in explaining the phenomenon of moral disagreement. Here I'd like to summarize what some of those advantages are.

First, in making room for the phenomena of the inner life, this approach gives us a much richer account of what's actually at stake in moral disagreements. In other words, it gives us a better picture of *how* people actually disagree. Instead of construing disagreement as a difference in the criteria by which we choose to justify our actions according to, I've argued that the differences go much deeper and encompass things like our inner monologue, our style of thought, our manner of speaking, the things we find praiseworthy – in short, nothing less than our total vision of life.

Second, I've argued that in order to understand *what* our disagreements are actually about, we need a more expansive, more diverse, and richer moral vocabulary – a vocabulary moreover that doesn't limit itself to a strict scientific model. In other words, I've argued that we need to move beyond arguments over simple concepts like right, and acknowledge that many (if not all) of the concepts we routinely rely on to understand our reality have a moral dimension to them. For instance, concepts like animal, and human being are themselves morally loaded (i.e., to understand them is to understand what it's like to *live* with those concepts, is to understand how those concepts might affect our moral universe). Indeed, concepts such as those likely play a larger role in determining our attitudes towards animals than concepts like right action. Even concepts like pity, life, and death are (as we saw with Woolf) capable of influencing and playing a role in shaping our attitudes towards animals. Ultimately, we must acknowledge that moral disagreements arise because we differ in the innumerable concepts that we live our life by.

Third, in contrast to Cavalieri's approach (which holds that rational argument or an appeal to scientific research are the only two means of resolving disputes), I've suggested that

the capacity to change, morally, first requires a change in one's *concepts*. In other words, I've suggested that moral change can only occur through a process of modifying, refining, reorganizing, elaborating, and deepening the concepts which configure one's moral reality in the first place. In turn, I've argued that this process whereby one's concepts change can be attained not just through rational deliberation, but also (and more importantly) through a loving attention to reality.

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