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Making a Good Psychopath: Teaching Virtue to Those Without a Conscience

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Abstract: A psychopath lives in a fundamentally different world than most people - in a world where there is no empathy, love, or guilt. To a psychopath, such emotions, which are especially relevant to morality, are like colors they cannot see; they may know of them and learn about them, but they are incapable of ever really seeing or feeling them. Given these maladaptive features of a psychopath, it is only natural that they have a hard time finding a way to live well in a world where there exist standards that they cannot even comprehend. But this does not have to mean that psychopaths are a lost cause. Even though their set of possible ways of living are constrained by their moral deficits, within these limitations, there are better or worse ways to live. In this paper, I use virtue ethics to hone on the possibilities within the circumstance of psychopathy and determine what being good as a psychopath entails. Using Julia Annas' holistic, eudaimonistic account of virtue, I examine potential ways of teaching virtue to a psychopath, focussing especially on reasons that appeal to them. Subsequently, I address the question of whether or not the virtues of a psychopath can be considered as virtues at all, given their morally devious internal states. Using Julia Driver's consequentialist view of virtue, I demonstrate that good internal states are inessential to virtue, and that someone like a psychopath can be said to have virtue as long as they possess traits which systematically produce good. Although a psychopath may be incapable of fully flourishing (due to their inability to have good internal states and the lack of a desire to live well), they can reach a state that is very close to flourishing through the cultivation of virtue. This cultivation of virtue in a psychopath consists of three important aspects: reinforcement of virtuous actions through rewards, learning from a virtuous psychopathic teacher and the presence of a community of virtuous psychopaths who can learn from one another.

I. Introduction:

Oftentimes when we judge people, we draw distinctions between the circumstances of life and the living of life. The circumstances of one's life, although in some ways dependent on one's actions, seem to be contingent upon so many factors out of one's control. While one cannot control these external factors, what one *can* control is the way one lives within the circumstances that one finds themselves in. We are wary of judging people based on their job, genetic disposition, upbringing, etc. but we do see it fair to judge them based on how they do their job, how they use their inherited strengths and weaknesses, and make peace with any family problems they have been through. For example, we admire a lower class individual who makes an honest living and finds means to be happy within their ability, but we condemn a lower class individual who steals to make an extra buck. Hence, given this distinction between the circumstances of a life and the way those circumstances are dealt with, it can be said that in every circumstance, there are better or worse ways to live. And the way an agent chooses to live within their circumstances makes them either virtuous or vicious¹.

One rather puzzling case of unfortunate circumstances is that of the psychopath, who has no conscience, with no guilt or empathy for others. The psychopath is seen as the epitome of evil, as one who is capable of the unthinkable. And unlike other mentally disabled people, psychopaths are usually blamed entirely for their crimes, in some cases even yielding the highest possible sentence *because* they are psychopaths (whereas considerations of other mental disorders would usually call for a lesser sentence). There are two reasons why they are deemed responsible for their crimes. Firstly, even though they fail to grasp moral emotions like empathy,

¹ The introduction to this paper has been inspired by Chapter 6 of Julia Annas' *Intelligent Virtue*.

that does not excuse them from their behavior, for even autistic individuals, who have similar deficits as a psychopath, do not commit antisocial acts. Secondly, due to their normal or above normal IQ, they are usually deemed mentally competent enough to be responsible for their decisions. Since psychopaths are intelligent and deemed competent, unlike people with other mental disorders, they are often unjustly blamed for their psychopathic traits (Sifferd and Hirstein 129, 130). However, given that psychopathy is partly attributed to genetics and partly to one's environment (Reidy et al. 970), it is essentially a circumstance. Because it is a circumstance, it must follow that we cannot judge a psychopath solely based on their psychopathy, although we can acknowledge that the circumstance of psychopathy is bad. Within these bad circumstances of a psychopath, there must be better or worse ways to live.

In this paper, I aim to use virtue ethics to determine what a good or an excellent psychopath looks like. I use virtue theory because other moral theories, like deontology and utilitarianism, immediately disqualify a psychopath from morality due to their morally negative internal states and their tendency to produce negative consequences. But virtue theory helps us hone in on the possible ways in which a psychopath could live, some of which are indeed better than others, and determine what the best way for a psychopath to orient themselves to the world would be. Hence, instead of deeming them as a lost cause, virtue theory can let us explore what an excellent way of being looks like when confined to a set of possibilities that are less than ideal. In this paper, I will first discuss seven deficits in a psychopath that are especially relevant to morality after which I provide an overview of Julia Annas' holistic, eudaimonistic account of virtue. I then discuss why a psychopath cannot be said to be virtuous on a view as such which places emphasis on an agent's internal states and intentions. I then introduce Julia Driver's

consequentialist account of virtue to explicate why an emphasis on an agent's internal states may be inessential to virtue. After that, I examine whether a psychopath can be virtuous on a consequentialist account of virtue by determining whether they are even capable of producing good consequences in the first place. After establishing that a psychopath is capable of producing good consequences (given that they do not suffer from extreme psychopathy), I illustrate two possible ways in which a psychopath could be taught to act virtuously by giving reasons that appeal to them. Then, given my findings, I provide a sketch of what a virtuous psychopath looks like. Finally, I consider the question of whether or not a good psychopath can be said to have a good life and flourish, and reconcile the picture of the good psychopath with an eudaimonistic account of virtue. With that, I conclude my paper.

I. Characteristics of a Psychopath:

A psychopath's ability to be virtuous is hindered due to their broken moral compass. They do understand morality, but only in a technical sense in that they know how it works and its function in society, but fail to value it in itself (Elliot 205). There are eight characteristics in a psychopath that are particularly relevant to morality which are responsible for their deviant behavior².

- (i) Psychopaths lack the ability to distinguish between moral rules and conventional rules, often treating them identically. For example, in listing behaviors he knew to be wrong, serial killer Ted Bundy jumbled violations like jaywalking, or not paying one's parking tickets with more serious moral violations like robbing a

² This is not an exhaustive list of psychopathic traits. I have mentioned only the traits relevant to my paper.

bank or breaking into people's home in a strange and arbitrary way as if they were comparable to one another (Marsh 142). Further, in justifying why a moral violation is wrong, psychopaths often refer to conventional rules, indicating that moral violations, for them, are wrong only insofar as they are violations of said rules (Marsh 143). In their view, robbing a bank would be wrong only because our legal system does not allow it, not because there is something inherently wrong about robbing a bank; if there were no rules against it, according to a psychopath, it would be permissible to rob a bank (Marsh 145). This inability to distinguish between serious moral violations and mere conventional violations makes moral rules seem trivial to the psychopath, causing them to break them without much hesitation. This explains their willingness to commit heinous crimes, for they treat violence as if it were in the same vein as something like jaywalking.

- (ii) Psychopaths lack the ability to feel fear or distress (at least to some extent.) Hence, they fail to respond to fear or distress in their victims for it is something that they themselves do not feel (Marsh 147). In an experiment where psychopathic and non-psychopathic participants were given a choice between immediate shock and delayed shock, most non-psychopathic participants chose to get shocked immediately to avoid the anticipation of the shock. In contrast, the psychopathic participants were indifferent between the two options and said that waiting for the delayed shock bothered them very little (Marsh 148). A psychopath's muted reaction to anticipated aversive outcomes indicates their lack

of fear. Since they fail to experience fear, they do not understand it and fail to recognize it in others. While a victim's visible fear and pain might deter a non-psychopathic individual from harming them, it does not stop a psychopath. This lack of shared emotions causes the psychopath to lack empathy (Marsh 151).

- (iii) The psychopath tends to overvalue themselves and devalue others. They have a dominant idealization of themselves and believe that others are to be perfectly willing to serve their interests. The motives of a psychopath which primarily aim at glorification of the self make them go to extreme lengths to assert their dominance (Meloy and Shiva 340). Hence, they stand as a dangerous combination of dominance and disregard for others that makes them capable of causing excessive harm for seemingly mundane reasons.
- (iv) Psychopaths are driven by envy and shame and their emotional life centers largely around managing these emotions (Meloy and Shiva 342). In fact, feelings of envy and shame precede their violent acts. A psychopath cannot stand to feel envious of someone or ashamed of themselves, which is why they strive to destroy any object (the object being a person or an animal) that causes these emotions. The destruction of the object diminishes envy since the object no longer has admirable characteristics, and it diminishes shame because the destroyed object can no longer cause shame to the psychopath (Meloy and Shiva 343).
- (v) Psychopaths portray a lack of remorse for their violent and aggressive behavior. They do not regret even their most gruesome crimes, and are unconcerned with

how their lifestyle impacts others. They do not apologize or express guilt over any of their past actions (Kiehl 60).

- (vi) Psychopaths tend to be impulsive and irresponsible with their actions, often portraying unpremeditated and unplanned behavior without thinking of the long term consequences of their actions. They tend to go from job to job, or house to house without much thought and fail to have any close personal relationships. Furthermore, they tend to be irresponsible, and fail to have loyalty towards anything in their life, be it their family, career, or partner. They do not care about the consequences of their actions and try to get away with as much as they possibly can (Kiehl 70). Hence, psychopaths tend to be reckless in their actions, doing whatever they feel like doing without taking the appropriate considerations.
- (vii) Psychopaths are also prone to boredom. They need constant change and excitement in their life. They have a high need for stimulation which often leads to poor work and personal life outcomes. They do not like sticking to a job, or settling down with a partner. They want an exciting life filled with travel, a good status, and fame but fail to work for it. They have no interest in a stable life that most people find reassuring, so they go on many short-term exciting adventures without necessarily committing to anything in the long run (Kiehl 56).
- (viii) Psychopaths are selfish and manipulative. They manipulate people for their personal gain without hesitation. They make friends so they can use them, and let their partner or spouse take the fall for their actions. They often manipulate their way into careers they are not qualified for as imposters, causing a lot of damage

(Kiehl 58). They are always willing to compromise the well-being of others in order to progress their own agenda.

It must be noted that not all psychopaths have every single characteristic mentioned above. Psychopathy occurs along a spectrum; different psychopaths may exhibit different combinations of the characteristics mentioned above to varying degrees (Crush). Furthermore, psychopathic traits are not found only in institutionalized psychopaths, but in the general population as well.

III. An Eudaimonistic Account of Virtue:

In her book *Intelligent Virtue*, Julia Annas gives a holistic, eudaimonistic view of virtue using an analogy between virtue and practical skill. In her view, virtue involves developing a disposition to act virtuously through habituation and experience (Annas 12). But this habituation, however, is not one that develops into a mere routine. The cultivation of virtue, like skill, requires consistent, active, and intelligent engagement with the virtue eliciting situation. Using the skill analogy, she illustrates that virtue, unlike a routine action like mindlessly driving to one's job every day, requires conscious effort. It is like learning to play the piano; as one improves in playing the piano, one can pick out the right notes more easily. An expert piano player, for instance, displays better skill in transitioning between notes and interpreting the music compared to an amateur (Annas 14). Additionally, as one continues to play the piano, one becomes a better or worse pianist based on how one plays (Annas 15). Therefore, there has to be a conscious effort to improve while playing the piano, and just because one has progressed does

not mean one cannot regress and become a worse pianist at a later point. Similarly, in order to be virtuous, a person must practice being brave, or courageous, or compassionate by actively trying to become braver, more courageous, and more compassionate.

Further, we don't become virtuous by simply learning about virtue, but by *being* virtuous. Employing the skill analogy once again, we become just by doing just actions much like we become builders by building (Annas 17). Initially, in order to learn and cultivate virtue (or skill), one must start by imitating one's teacher. For instance, when we first start to learn Italian we might just repeat the sounds that our teacher makes, and slowly progress to speaking Italian by ourselves without the help of the teacher. This progression of mere imitation to the practice of a skill requires an understanding of why the teacher does what they do (Annas 17). Hence, on the part of the teacher, this requires the giving of reasons. In order to go from merely repeating what the teacher said to actually speaking Italian, the student must not only know what sounds to make, but also *why* the teacher makes one sound as opposed to another. Additionally, on the part of the student, the need for reasons comes from a *drive to aspire* which is crucial in Annas' view in order to learn virtues (Annas 20). For example, one must want to speak fluent Italian in order to care about the reasons why the teacher used one word rather than another in describing something, and to use that information to get better at speaking Italian.

This learning that starts with the teacher then expands to our peers and our culture at large. For example, we learn to be brave not just from our teachers, but our peers, historical figures or even fictional characters (Annas 54). Hence, people who are learning to be brave will share certain feelings and reasons that set them apart from others, thus forming a "community of the brave" (Annas 55). This community is not the usual kind of community we think of,

consisting of family and friends, but one that surpasses physical space and shares common ideals and concerns. This community can come into contention with one's natural community, and one may even have to pick between the community of the brave and one's natural community of friends and family. And depending on one's level of commitment to bravery, the community of the brave may become more important to one than one's own family. To illustrate this point, Annas uses the skill analogy again; a brave person chooses the community of the brave over their family and friends the way an expert tennis player chooses the tennis community (with whom they have more in common) over their natural community (Annas 55). A person becomes braver by being a part of the community of the brave much like the way the tennis player becomes a better tennis player by being a part of the tennis community.

One important aspect of virtue on Annas' account is that it is valued for its own sake (Annas 75). A virtuous person may also find instrumental value in being virtuous, but that ought not to be the reason why they act virtuously. This makes sense intuitively as we are not inclined to call someone brave if they perform an act of bravery but proceed to regret acting bravely due to the undesired consequences of their actions. A brave person finds value in doing the brave thing, even though they may fail in their efforts. In other words, the value of acting bravely, for a virtuous person, is in being brave and not only in the ends one could achieve by acting bravely. Further, another important characteristic of virtue in this view is that it is a commitment to goodness (Annas 101). In other words, virtuous people are virtuous due to their commitment to goodness. But, vice, she says, is not a positive commitment to badness. A coward does not aim to become a better coward, they simply fail to be brave (Annas 102). Hence, vice is simply

alienation from goodness (Annas 104). On this account of virtue, virtue is something that gives a positive direction in life, the aim to live well, while vice is simply a failure to do so (Annas 117).

Annas also argues that real virtues can only occur in unity because, in order to have virtue, one must have practical wisdom (or intellect). Only natural virtues (which are more like innate talents than virtues) can occur separately from other virtues since they are not guided by the intellect (Annas 85, 86). On this view, one must have all virtues to fully have any virtue at all. For instance, a naturally compassionate person without practical wisdom may show compassion to a bigot and enable them, leading to more discrimination and oppression because they fail to take into account that being compassionate to a bigot enables them. But someone with the real virtue of compassion understands that they ought not to be compassionate to a bigot, and need to be brave in challenging them. It follows that on this view, the cultivation and practice of virtue occurs in the unity and integration of our ways of dealing with all relevant aspects of a situation. For instance, a pianist cannot learn fingering the keys separately from finding the tempo, rather, she learns them both at the same time. And it is only when all of her piano playing skills are integrated that she becomes a good pianist (Annas 87). Similarly, the situations in our life too call for such integration of our virtues; a compassionate person also needs courage to stand up to a bully and without the courage to do so, one might say their compassion is flawed as well for in that situation, the person needs to be both compassionate and brave in order to be fully compassionate or fully brave (Annas 88). Because real virtue is guided by generally applicable practical wisdom, it occurs in unity with other virtues.

However, one might think that such a view of virtue, which requires a person to cultivate all virtues to fully have any virtue at all, requires one to live a fragmented life that elicits

different virtues. Each of us lives a different kind of life that calls for different virtues; a soldier's life may have a completely different set of virtues than a caregiver for the elderly. But that does not necessarily mean that one has to be both a soldier and a caregiver in order to be fully virtuous. According to Annas, the circumstances in one's life (like employment, genetic disposition, gender, culture, upbringing, etc) that are not in one's control are not what determine virtue, rather, it is the way one lives in those circumstances that does. A soldier does not need to become a caregiver to learn compassion, they can be compassionate even as a soldier by caring for fellow soldiers and citizens. To better explain this point, Annas quotes an ancient metaphor in ethical philosophy that says "the circumstances of your life are the material you have to work on, and living your life is working on these materials to make a product" (Annas 93). Therefore one can learn to be fully virtuous in the life one has; one need not lead multiple lives to cultivate all virtues.

It must be noted that Annas' view allows for flexibility by defining virtue across different developmental stages and allowing for the content of the virtue to be different in different circumstances. The developmental stages start with the stage of the beginner who merely imitates the teacher (Annas 17), and end with the *phronimos* or the fully virtuous agent who has cultivated all virtues through practical wisdom. Between these extremes, there is a spectrum of developmental stages of virtue that one can progress through over the course of one's life (Annas 85, 86). Hence, this allows for a holistic view of virtue where both the beginner and the expert of virtues can be considered as virtuous agents with respect to their developmental stages. And what is virtuous for a beginner to do (to imitate the teacher) is different from what is virtuous for an expert to do (to have the ability to be virtuous on their own). In addition, Annas' view also

allows for flexibility for the content of any given virtue with respect to an agent's circumstances. Being a "brave soldier" might look different from being a "brave caregiver." Bravery might entail different actions in both cases; for instance, a brave soldier is one who willingly risks their life to protect the country, while a brave caregiver continues to serve a terminally ill patient despite having the onus of their survival on them. Hence, such a flexible view of virtue makes it more accessible for people in different stages and all facets of life.

Annas holds a eudaimonistic view of happiness as flourishing. According to her, happiness is the activity of moving towards the overall end we want to achieve in our life by living well (Annas 147, 156). To support her account, she appeals to the idea that we usually find ourselves reflecting on our lives, and based on our reflection, we build and modify ourselves to be able to progress in life (Annas 150). This reflection indicates that we all have a certain idea of a good life in mind that we are working towards, although we may not be able to pinpoint exactly what we are moving towards. We make progress towards our goal in life through the cultivation of virtues, for to live well is to live virtuously. But even though happiness lies in living a life well (living virtuously), one cannot get happiness by treating virtue as an instrument to obtain happiness, because happiness is not a predetermined end. Happiness is our overall unspecified end in life, our idea of which gets clearer as we develop our character (Annas 156). In her view, happiness is achieved precisely by not aiming at it, and instead, by being virtuous for goodness sake (Annas 155). Happiness lies in the actualization of our vague idea of a life well lived.

Hence, happiness too, like virtue, is not in our circumstances, but in the way we live our life (Annas 150). For it is not a specified object like money, fame or beauty. Rather, it lies in the

activity of living better. However, one might argue that happiness does depend on circumstances. For example, a person may lose their happiness when they suddenly lose all of their money (Annas 147). Bad enough circumstances can affect happiness. Yet Annas makes clear that she argues that virtue is necessary, not sufficient for happiness such that in any given circumstances, one will be happier when one is virtuous (Annas 147). It is not the material things independent of our activities that make us happy, but the activities themselves (Annas 151). To illustrate this point more clearly, Annas quotes a shop flyer she once saw that said “Money doesn’t make you happy - shopping does.” Therefore happiness, in her view, is at least in part an activity and not a mere end; it does not lie merely in what we have, but in what we do with what we have.

IV. Goodness, Happiness, and Psychopathy:

Since virtue lies in the living of life rather than the circumstances of a life (Annas 150), there seems to be scope for a psychopath to be virtuous on this account. In so far as Annas regards things like one’s genetic makeup and upbringing as circumstances, a psychopath who is either born a psychopath or turns into a psychopath due to a rough childhood can still be virtuous, for psychopathy can be regarded as a circumstance. However, since a psychopath does not care about the good, they cannot be committed to virtue for goodness’ sake. Because of their inherently selfish nature, they may only value virtue instrumentally, as means to an end which may render them incapable of virtue on this account (even if all of their actions are virtuous.)

On a similar note, psychopaths also don't seem to portray any desire to live well; they despise having a secure and stable life (one we usually regard as a good life), often causing them to find excitement in criminal activity (Kiehl 56). Furthermore, the kind of life a psychopath

wants to live may not have any significant life goals at all. Their view of a good life may just be one in which they can best satisfy their desires. Due to the lack of any big life commitments, they don't have a need for unity in their life; when they are doing whatever it is that they do, they are not motivated by a long term goal in mind. Their life seems to occur in bits and pieces of adventure and instant gratification. If there is anything that may potentially unite the characteristics and actions of a psychopath, it is egocentrism. Hence the unity of virtues is fundamentally antithetical to the psychopath unless we allow for virtue to be united in egocentrism rather than in practical wisdom and commitment to the good.

Consequently, because the psychopath does not have a broad unspecified goal in life that they work towards, it also seems impossible to ever attain happiness on an eudaimonistic account (understood as flourishing). But just because psychopaths fail to grasp the good, or maintain a goal in life that they work toward through a life well lived does not have to mean that their virtues are not virtues at all. In the next section, I will explain Julia Driver's consequentialist account of virtue which challenges the intellectual and emotional requirements of virtue theories like that of Annas'.

V. A Consequentialist Account of Virtue:

In her book *Uneasy Virtue*, Julia Driver argues that practical wisdom, feelings, and other internal states of the agent are given too much importance in accounts of virtue like Annas', which she labels "intellectualist." She makes many arguments against such accounts, three of which I shall now explicate. Firstly, she explains that a view of virtue like Aristotle's which places a lot of emphasis on practical wisdom is essentially a threat to egalitarianism. In case of a

dispute with the *phronimos* (a virtuous person with practical wisdom), the only way for one to settle the conflict would be to coerce the conflicting party to agree with the *phronimos*, for the *phronimos* is by definition right and indisputable. This threatens equality as the *phronimos* would be privileged due to their superiority as a fully virtuous agent with practical wisdom.

Additionally, such a highly intellectualist account of virtue will offer no common ground for discussion, and common people would be coerced to agree with whoever is ‘more virtuous’ and hence has the most practical wisdom (Driver 12). Such a view of virtue may cause the oppression of those who are not fully virtuous, or alternatively, not capable of being fully virtuous.

Secondly, Driver illustrates how divorced practical wisdom is from virtues using the examples of virtues of ignorance, which essentially require one to *not* have practical wisdom. For example, a virtue like modesty requires one to be ignorant of one’s worth. The phrase “I am modest” sounds odd because modesty requires an attitude of ignorance towards oneself (Driver 19). For this reason, someone with practical wisdom will be incapable of this virtue since they are not (and perhaps, cannot be) ignorant. Driver gives similar examples of other virtues of ignorance like blind charity, impulsive bravery, trust, and forgiveness (Driver 28-35). She uses these to illustrate that not only is it the case that practical wisdom is not necessary for virtue, but that in some cases, practical wisdom needs to be absent or incomplete for one to have virtue. Hence, in order to count as a virtue, an act need not be motivated by practical wisdom as stated in many intellectualist accounts of virtue (like that of Annas’).

Thirdly, she points out the redundancy of the reconstruction of a deliberative process after performing the virtuous action. According to many intellectualist accounts of virtue, a

virtuous person is habituated to acting virtuously without much thought, but is capable of explaining why their act is virtuous after they have already acted³. But if a virtuous person does not actually deliberate before acting virtuously, the fact that they can later reconstruct a deliberation that never took place only shows how articulate or inarticulate a person is, which is arguably irrelevant to virtue (Driver 35). Hence, it may be the case that practical wisdom may not even be what drives people to act virtuously, although it may help them justify their actions. Given this objection, it could be the case that a virtuous person with practical wisdom and someone without practical wisdom could potentially be disposed to do the same action (regardless of their reasons for acting a certain way), but the latter's virtuous action is disregarded simply because they cannot articulate a deliberative process of the right kind (they might appeal to emotions or inclinations and not to the well being of others in explaining why they did what they did.)

Therefore, there are many flaws with holding practical wisdom and good internal states as a requirement for virtue. But the reason why Aristotle introduces such a condition, Driver says, is to make the account of virtue *reliable*. Practical wisdom makes a virtuous person more reliable since the virtuous person can be trusted to do the virtuous thing despite their inclinations (Driver 47). But an agent can be virtuous without any such qualifications on intentions or motives (Driver 50). This is because agents who lack good intentions are also capable of good actions, and hence capable of possessing the respective good states of character (Driver 51). To illustrate this, she uses the example of Huckleberry Finn from Mark Twain's famous novel of life

³ One example of such an account is that of Annas', according to which an expert in virtue will commit the virtuous action without actively thinking about it, but when asked why they did what they did they will be able to give reasons (Annas 28).

on the Mississippi. Huckleberry Finn, who grew up in pre-civil war Missouri, does not believe that slavery is immoral. But when one of his best friends, Jim, escapes from his owner, he does not turn him in despite having many opportunities to do so. In turn, he views himself as immoral, as “a party to theft” (Driver 52). In this case, even though Huckleberry lacked an accurate conception of the good, he acted in accordance with it. He helped his friend escape slavery despite being oblivious to the fact that by doing so, he was contributing to the good. Hence, “in order to be virtuous... one need not know that what one is doing is good or right.” (Driver 52). As long as one is disposed to producing good actions, they are virtuous. Huckleberry letting his friend escape was no accident, it was rooted in his sympathy and if he had the chance, he would do the same thing over and over again; *it's a disposition* (Driver 53). Being virtuous does not require the agent to do something they think is morally good (as demonstrated in Huckleberry's case). There is no need for a virtuous person to follow a conception of the good as long as their disposition causes good (Driver 58). This, however, does not mean that psychological states of an agent do not matter altogether, but that they matter only in relation to the states of affairs they produce (Driver 60).

Further, there can be tensions between a virtue trait and individual act evaluation. To illustrate this, Driver gives the example of Bill, a compassionate man who comes across a pigeon that has been badly injured. He knows that it will suffer in pain until it eventually dies, and that killing it would put it out of its misery. At the same time, his compassion makes it difficult for him to kill it. However, if he does not kill it, it seems like he failed to be compassionate by letting the pigeon suffer for a long time. It must be noted that his circumstance is not one that is normal. “If one is disposed to do x, then under normal operating conditions one will do x.”

(Driver 73). Since we form our character traits in normal circumstances, we can't expect these character traits to play out in abnormal circumstances. With respect to the above case, Bill may as well show compassion by visiting an orphanage and spending time with the kids, or by caring for the elderly on a regular basis. But the fact that he cannot kill the injured bird does not make him uncompassionate (Driver 73). In Driver's view, virtues are like seatbelts; a seatbelt's function is to prevent death, but sometimes they also kill people in cases in which it would have been better to be thrown out of the car in an accident (Driver 74). Similarly, virtues are traits that usually produce good, but in some rare cases, it might be the case that it would have been better to not have the trait.

Driver's account of virtue challenges claims that virtue cannot be anything short of perfection (Driver 73). Virtue need not be maximally good, as long as it contributes to the overall social good. For instance, wit creates some social good, but generosity creates more social good than wit. This does not imply that wit is not a virtue, but only that generosity is a greater virtue than wit. In other words, all traits which create social good and contribute to human flourishing are virtues, although some may be greater virtues than others (Driver 74). Ultimately, Driver defines virtue as "a character trait that produces more good⁴ (in the actual world) than not systematically" where the world "systematically" helps us rule out flukes and account for moral luck problems (Driver 82).

An account of virtue like Driver's which removes the emphasis from having the right internal states and motives, and simply focuses on one's ability to produce good consequences

⁴ In the evaluation of consequences, it is not only the short term consequences that count but also the long term consequences (Driver 84).

makes it a lot more accessible to people with mental disorders. Therefore, on this view, as long as a psychopath could potentially be trained to produce good consistently, there is hope for a virtuous life (despite the fact that they lack certain internal states that virtue on an account like that of Annas' requires).

VI. Can a Psychopath Produce Good Consequences?

In Driver's view, it is not the case that psychological states do not matter altogether. They matter insofar as they have a tendency to produce good outcomes. But one might argue that psychopathy itself is a psychological state that fails to have a tendency to produce good. To illustrate this worry, I shall use the example of a corporate psychopath - psychopaths who exist successfully within society and work for corporations, often occupying the senior levels of employment as CEOs or managers (Boddy 143). These psychopaths, as 'successful' as they may seem, are often very bad at their job of supervising and leading the junior employees (Boddy 142). In a comparative case study of a charity organization, it was found that the company and its employees suffered a lot under the leadership of the psychopathic CEO. Although his psychopathic traits (like charm, deceit, manipulation, ruthlessness, and lying) helped him rise to the top of the company, the truth remains that as a leader, he was incompetent and underqualified, causing an array of trouble in the company. The psychopathic CEO denied his employees any real voice, only appointing junior level managers in organizational meetings to ensure that he remains unchallenged while still maintaining that he is taking other's suggestions into account (Boddy 144). Given this, although he was a good public speaker, he had a dysfunctional leadership team, and all the senior-level managers who were capable of

contributing were left out. Any voices against his plan were not tolerated, he often bullied anyone who challenged him. The employees were simply forced to comply with him (Boddy 145). He was obsessed with the smallest details of the day to day decisions in the office, while completely ignoring important long term decisions (Boddy 146).

His behavior in the office of bullying, manipulating and exploiting had a significant impact on the employees' motivation and work ethic. Due to his poor leadership, a lot of experienced managers at the senior levels of the company were frustrated and left, and many employees were leaving even without having future jobs lined up (Boddy 141). In fact, within 10 years of his leadership, 100% of the company's original staff had either left or planned to leave (Boddy 151). Due to the poor leadership, the company ran into a lot of financial problems (Boddy 147) and the performance of the company declined significantly (Boddy 150). And as it turns out, it was revealed that the psychopathic CEO was only using his position as a CEO of a charity instrumentally to get into UK politics (Boddy 151).

This case of the corporate psychopath shows that characteristics like charm, manipulation, and ruthlessness (that some argue make the psychopath better at certain careers,) in reality, do not produce any good. From their jobs and career positions, it may seem like they are very successful, but the truth remains that psychopaths only charm themselves into these positions while they remain unqualified for them, as seen in the case of the corporate psychopath. This is a valid worry that poses a huge threat to a psychopath's capabilities of ever attaining virtue, even on a consequentialist view like Driver's that disregards their morally destructive internal states. However, the answer to this worry may lie in the consideration of the level of psychopathy in a particular psychopathic agent. The corporate psychopath mentioned in

Boddy's case study scored a perfect ten out of ten on the PM-MRV2 psychopathy scale (on which the previous non-psychopathic CEO scored only two) (Boddy 144). Extreme psychopathy is a maladaptive condition and may be a lost cause, given the extent to which the person's psyche differs from the vast majority of humans. Hence, it might be extremely difficult, or even impossible to alter the traits of someone like the psychopathic CEO. Given that the CEO portrayed extreme psychopathy, it is still possible for a lesser extreme psychopath (who perhaps scores a six or eight out of ten on the PM-MRV2) to attain virtue.

According to psychologist and writer Kevin Dutton, a psychopath's focus and charm go a long way in helping them get things done (Dutton 41). Their charm helps them persuade and manipulate people into being conducive to their end while their focus keeps them set on the job until it is done. Further, they are indifferent to setbacks and take failure with a light-hearted approach, something that most people have trouble dealing with (Dutton 42). They can maintain calmness under pressure as they have no anxiety about the future (Dutton 43). Further, psychopaths do not always resort to violence, and are capable of thinking of non-violent ways of achieving their ends (Dutton 40). All of these traits are generally desired by most people, and are good when they are in moderation. Dutton uses the example of a recording studio deck to illustrate this; psychopathy is like dials on a recording studio deck, if one turns up all the dials, it overloads the circuit, but if some are high and some are low, depending on the context or profession, it could be a success (Crawford). Hence, there is hope for psychopaths to attain virtue as long as they are not on the end of extreme psychopathy like the corporate psychopath in the case study of the CEO.

It must be noted again, that even some ‘bad’ traits could potentially be virtues in a psychopath, given that they are capable of systematically producing good. Therefore, the psychopath may even be better at some virtues than non-psychopaths. For example, the psychopath’s natural ability to deceive others can make them good defense lawyers, who are often obligated to withhold information and lead the jury astray and cause doubt. This might entail leading the jury to consider or believe an alternative scenario that the lawyer themselves knows is contrary to fact (Anton 120). In this way, a psychopath’s ability to lie and manipulate may be put to good use in professions like law. And although manipulation can be used to achieve their personal goals in an unjust way (in which case it is not a virtue), it can still be considered a virtue in contexts where it systemically does produce social good.

Further, a psychopath’s ability to kill without hesitation may also be a good quality for a job like that of a soldier, where it is necessary to keep oneself alive, part of which entails killing the enemy before they kill you. A non-psychopathic soldier may wait till the very last moment to harm or kill the enemy, but a psychopathic soldier would kill as soon as they perceive a threat, with no hesitation or regard for the enemy’s life. In so far as the “courage to kill” is used to serve as a soldier and protect one’s country, thus consistently promoting social good in at least some circumstances, it is a virtue⁵. But in cases in which a psychopath kills for mere pleasure or to progress their own agenda, it is not a virtue since it produces more bad outcomes than good outcomes (Anton 122).

Hence, although some agents with extreme psychopathy may be incapable of virtue, individuals with lower levels of psychopathy can still be virtuous. Given that Driver’s view also

⁵ There are arguments about whether or not violence in war and military is justified or not, I merely aim to use an example where combat or violence without hesitation may be beneficial to a community of people.

allows seemingly bad characteristics to count as virtue as long as they produce good outcomes, there is hope for psychopaths to live a good life (or in the least a better life) given their unusual circumstances and disagreeable motives. A psychopath, similar to Huck Finn, could act in a way that produces a good outcome without necessarily knowing that their actions are good. Given that it is plausible for psychopaths to have traits that produce good in normal circumstances, on this view a psychopath is still capable of virtue, despite not being able to act in accordance with morality in unusual circumstances, given that they fundamentally fail to grasp emotions like fear and distress that are central to morality.

VII. How a Psychopath Can Learn to be Virtuous:

Although psychopaths are notoriously thought to be incapable of something like virtue, Annas' emphasis on the role of the teacher in her account of virtue allows two possible ways in which a psychopath could potentially learn to be virtuous. The first alternative is that the psychopath simply cannot have the drive to aspire. A psychopath fails to have any long term goals, often acting impulsively and gaining instant gratification from their adventures. Although they do aspire to be great, they never genuinely work towards it. They tend to be selfish and have no remorse over their past harmful actions, indicating that they do not even feel the need to better themselves in any way. Therefore, a psychopath does not (and more precisely, *cannot*) care about morality, or living well, or the good, and are incapable of acting virtuously by themselves. Hence they would be stuck at the level of imitating the virtues. Consequently, the closest that a psychopath may ever get to being virtuous is simply to imitate the teacher for their entire life in order to be virtuous, at least at the beginner's level. But this may not be enjoyable for the

psychopath because imitation of virtue and virtue at the beginner's level is inherently frustrating (Annas 69). It is like being stuck at the repetition level while learning Italian; if one simply repeats what their teacher says in Italian with no understanding of it, not only does one have no enjoyment in simply repeating, but they also find it frustrating when they don't understand why it is that they are saying what they are saying. Therefore, even if we prescribe the psychopath to imitate a virtuous teacher their whole life, the likelihood of the psychopath actually imitating them is very low.

The second alternative is that we instill an artificial drive to aspire through the giving of reasons. In being taught how to be virtuous, a psychopath must be given reasons that appeal to them, not reasons that are applicable to non-psychopathic individuals. In this paper, I will explore two strains of reasons that could potentially motivate a psychopath: reward processing and dominance rooted in narcissism.

a. Reward Processing:

A psychopath's indifference to morality can be traced back to their inability to feel fear or sadness, causing them to also be indifferent to threat or punishment (Reidy et. al 971). The psychopath can neither be deterred from crime or violence by appealing to the victim's distress nor by a threat of their own distress. Therefore, any reasons given to a psychopath by their teacher to perform a virtuous action that is rooted in punishment or distress to others has no significance to a psychopath. Such reasons cannot motivate them or instill a drive to aspire. However, on the flip side, research shows that psychopaths do tend to respond positively to

rewards. Hence, rewards can be used to artificially induce a drive to aspire which can help the psychopath learn to be virtuous.

In a psychopath's day-to-day life, aggression and violence can be effective in getting them subjective rewards like food, sex, money and drugs. Therefore, the successful attainment of these rewards through violence further reinforces violent behavior, cementing and strengthening their aggressive behavior (Reidy et. al 973). In order to prevent positive reinforcement of such violent behavior, we must ensure that the traits reinforced by rewards are virtues and not vices, which calls for an intervention at a young age before these violent behaviors are cemented in the psychopath. Therefore, in teaching virtue to a psychopath, the teacher must provide reasons rooted in rewards. To study this, a program in the Mendota Juvenile Treatment Center (MJTC) implemented a token-economy like system that reinforced pro-social behaviors. In contrast to a comparison group which committed sixteen homicides during a multiple-year follow up, juveniles treated in the program at MJTC had committed a staggering *zero* homicides⁶. The research also suggests that a treatment as such through positive reinforcement can not only diminish violence, but also the psychopathic traits themselves (Reidy 976). Locking in prosocial behaviors in psychopathic youth through positive reinforcement would help diminish psychopathic traits and prevent positive reinforcement from violence and aggression. Since psychopaths do not derive much pleasure from social rewards, they need to be motivated by alternative material rewards.

Given the efficacy of positive reinforcement, a psychopathic child can learn to distinguish between 'good' actions and 'bad' actions, by being rewarded for choosing to do the

⁶ Reward processing is only shown to be effective on psychopathic youth, but the results on psychopathic adult men are inconclusive (Reidy 973).

good⁷ action. Hence, essentially, the *why* to their virtuous actions (in other words, their reasons) are essentially rooted in the reward they get in return for performing the right actions. Consider the example of a parent trying to teach their psychopathic child that the reason why they should not steal from a friend at school is because it will make their friend sad. This may be a valid reason for most children to stop stealing from their friend, for most children would not want their friend to be sad. But the same reason given to a psychopathic child is invalid because it is rooted in empathy and caring about others' sadness, something that a psychopath is incapable of feeling. Since the psychopathic child hasn't been given a reason that is valid or significant to them, they will continue to steal from their friend at school. In stealing, they will get great joy in acquiring the "rewards" (pencils, books, toys, etc.) which will positively reinforce their act of stealing. But alternatively, the psychopathic child needs to be taught that they should not steal because every time they get home from school without anyone else's belongings in their backpack, they will get \$1 from their parent that they can spend on anything they want. The reward of \$1 will then motivate the child to refrain from stealing, hence positively reinforcing that habit. Once the child is habituated to not stealing, given that such reward focused training alters traits (or in the least alters tendencies), the child will continue to refrain from stealing even when the parent stops giving them money for it. Therefore, while teaching a psychopathic child to be virtuous, one needs to keep in mind that they need different reasons to act virtuously in the developmental stages of virtue.

b. Reasons Rooted in Dominance and Narcissism:

⁷ I am using the word "good" as synonymous to virtuous.

Interestingly, giving good reasons to act virtuously may call for the psychopath to have a psychopathic teacher who best understands what does and does not appeal to the psychopath. There may be reasons rooted in dominance and narcissism to act virtuously that might appeal to the psychopath (besides motivation by rewards). For instance, in the above example, it is plausible the psychopathic kid may consider refraining from stealing if the teacher appealed to their overvalued sense of self. The teacher might point out that stealing from others implies that they were inferior to begin with, and stealing would commit them to that sense of inferiority with respect to the person they stole from. Such a reason might be valid to a psychopath, and help alter their behavior. Such reasons to act virtuously don't come naturally to most people, for in teaching children about virtue, we usually appeal to goodness, justice, compassion, etc - features that don't exist in a psychopath's world. Therefore, a psychopathic teacher who has already developed virtue⁸ would be better at determining what kinds of reasons could motivate a psychopath to act virtuously. Further, there may even be reasons that are not strictly egocentric or strictly moral which appeal to a psychopath that only a psychopath can think of. Hence, the presence of a virtuous psychopathic teacher from a young age may help cultivate virtue in a psychopathic child to some extent. It may even be the case that the context in which a psychopath learns to act virtuously may also be different⁹. It could be that a psychopath needs to learn to be virtuous from considerations that are more egocentric and proceed to apply them to lesser egocentric considerations. For instance, a psychopath may be capable of learning to be generous by helping a friend, but they may not learn generosity by joining a charity organization.

⁸ I shall define what a virtuous psychopath looks like later in this paper.

⁹ It must also be noted that in Annas' view we always learn virtue in an embedded context, not in the abstract. For instance, one might learn to be generous in buying a present for a friend or in building a home for the homeless (Annas 21).

Moreover, on Annas' view, cultivation of virtue takes place not only through the teacher but through a community of the virtuous. Given their egoistic tendencies and disregard for others, a psychopath would not be able to fit into a community of the virtuous. Therefore, they need a community of their own, a community of the virtuous psychopaths where psychopaths at different developmental stages can learn from one another and form a community they can identify with. Forming a community of psychopaths is especially important because as inhumane as they may seem, psychopaths suffer emotionally due to separation from their beloved¹⁰ and dissatisfaction with their deviant behavior. They are faced with the choice between adapting and living a life that isn't real to them, or living authentically and isolating themselves from the social community. Furthermore, in many cases, the feelings of loneliness precede acts of violence and there is found to be a correlation between the level of loneliness and degree of violence in a psychopath. In fact, the famous serial killers, Jefferey Dahmer and Dennis Nilson, stated that they killed simply for company. Nilson watched television with and talked to the dead bodies of his victims for hours, and perhaps only killed to have a friend in a twisted sense that he came to view his relationship to humans (Martens).

But if psychopaths didn't have to suffer from such debilitating loneliness, it could plausibly, at least to some extent, mitigate the need for violence. A psychopath fails to have close relationships with friends and family because of their shallow emotions and inability to have empathy. Their expectations in a friendship, family, or a romantic relationship are different from what non-psychopathic people expect in these relationships. Due to this, they get isolated and fail

¹⁰ Psychopaths do see themselves as having good relationships with others and getting along well, despite the fact that others may not feel the same about them (Ray and Ray 137, 138). This might be due to their incompetence in judging others' negative reaction, they may perceive others' reaction to them as being positive.

to have a social circle where they can feel accepted. But if a psychopath were to have a psychopathic community, among themselves they have similar expectations from relationships with each other. Hence, they can have a healthy sense of community where they all feel like they fit in and are accepted, preventing them from feeling lonely and rejected. Further, the formation of these psychopathic help groups would have to be destigmatized¹¹ so that the stigma does not bring additional shame and a source of aggressive tendencies in the psychopath. Instead, they ought to be viewed just as a different kind of a human.

It is also important to notice that at least some traits of a psychopath are not inherently bad; it is the way these traits are used that are bad. In Aristotelian terms, these traits of a psychopath can be thought of as natural virtues, which when uninformed can cause a lot of harm. And through teaching and giving of appropriate reasons, they can be turned into real virtues (Annas 85, 86). For example, a psychopath who is capable of being objective and disregard feelings in making hard decisions, could be virtuous if they were a CEO of a failing company and need to lay off workers to cut costs and save the company. It may even be the case that the psychopath can be better at remaining objective and unhindered by emotions than most people, given their lack of empathy for the employees and their drive to devalue others. But the same disregard for the employees' well-being can also make them cause harm for they might partake in illegal trading, threatening, or stealing to keep the company running at the cost of others. Annas gives a similar example of a naturally assertive child who may become a bully if not

¹¹ For instance, using the word psychopath as an insult, or calling them 'freaks' would be very aggravating for psychopaths since they would be a cause of shame and envy (Meloy and Shiva 342), driving their desire to destroy the object that is causing them to have these unpleasant feelings - the non-psychopathic individuals who often end up being their victims.

guided by their parents (Annas 27), but when guided their assertiveness could help them become a good leader.

Although genetics play a huge role in the extent to which the psychopathic traits can diminish, studies show that heritability only explains about 50% of the variation in expression of psychopathic traits. Hence, through the right kind of training in the developmental stages, there is hope that we can bring about a significant change in psychopathic youth (Reidy et. al 976).

VIII. A Good Psychopath:

A ‘good’ psychopath is one whose behavior, through positive reinforcement, is trained to be in accordance with virtue through the giving of appropriate reasons. The giving of these reasons comprise of two components: firstly, these reasons take the form of rewards that help motivate the young psychopathic individual to act virtuously (in anticipation of the reward.) Unlike punishments, these rewards sufficiently appeal to the psychopathic youth, reinforcing prosocial behavior. The next component of these reasons comes from the psychopathic teacher, who motivates the young psychopath to act virtuously by appealing to their dominance and narcissism. This psychopathic teacher is capable of thinking of reasons that will not occur to a non-psychopathic individual, and can teach the young psychopath to be virtuous by giving reasons that actually matter to them. Further, the psychopathic teacher is a more realistic role model for a psychopath than a non-psychopathic fully virtuous individual.

A ‘good’ psychopath also has a community of psychopaths who are good or aiming to be good. This community of the virtuous psychopaths broadens the psychopath’s resources to cultivate virtue since they can potentially learn from one another, in addition to their teacher. The

sense of community formed between psychopaths also helps them fight loneliness and rejection that they usually face in their day-to-day life, and help mitigate violence caused by such debilitating loneliness. Hence, within a community of psychopaths, they have a space to remain authentic while still feeling accepted and ‘normal’ within that community.

Finally, the good psychopath would likely not have extreme psychopathy. It is, in theory, possible that extreme psychopathy could diminish through the reward processing treatment and appropriate teaching; but the example of the psychopathic CEO illustrates that even when such psychopaths seem to be successful, they are mere imposters and cause significantly more harm than good. Even though there might be hope even for an extreme psychopath to live a virtuous life through intervention from an early age, it seems more plausible that such learning could only have a significant impact on psychopaths who do not have all psychopathic traits to the highest degree. Hence, in recognizing that psychopathy is a spectrum, the good psychopath is likely one who is not cursed with extreme psychopathy, which may be a lost cause.

IX. Flourishing as a Psychopath:

A good psychopath, who primarily learns to be virtuous in exchange for a reward or for reasons rooted in narcissism, can be virtuous on a consequentialist view like Driver’s as long as they consistently produce good outcomes. But on a holistic, eudaimonistic account of virtue like that of Annas’ which emphasizes the importance of internal states and good intentions, a psychopath fails to be virtuous because they fundamentally lack the ability to have good internal states. One might say that the psychopath may attain virtue only in a trivial and superficial sense. It may be the case that the psychopath can only *pretend* to be virtuous, and can never be said to

be flourishing, even at their most virtuous state. However, as superficial as motivating virtuous actions through narcissism and anticipation of rewards may seem, it is a treatment that is bound to end at some point. If the treatment is successful, it would mean that the psychopath would continue to portray prosocial behaviors despite not getting anything in return. Then one must wonder, what exactly is the reason why the psychopath continues to be prosocial after their treatment? If it is not in anticipation of a reward¹² or to progress their egocentric goals that they remain prosocial, it seems like the psychopath is prosocial for no instrumental reasons and for its own sake. If the psychopath is prosocial with no intention of personal gain, it would have to follow that the psychopath has cultivated an internal quality of doing virtuous (or prosocial) actions for their own sake (although still lacking good intentions due to their lack of empathy.) At this stage, the virtuous psychopath seems to embody a state that is very close to an eudaimonistic form of virtue, in which virtuous agents are not motivated by their emotions or personal gain, but use their practical wisdom to choose to do the virtuous actions even in situations where it is tempting to act viciously. The good psychopath, like the virtuous agent, does good things only for the sake of it, despite knowing that they can get rewards like money, drugs and sex much more easily through aggression and violence. Such virtuous actions, done merely for the sake of being virtuous, bring the psychopath closer to a life well-lived, despite their incapacities. Hence, they may even be said to flourish, although in a weak sense¹³.

¹² Although some prosocial behaviors could be advantageous to a psychopath, not all prosocial behaviors are rewarding to a psychopath since they disregard social rewards.

¹³ The virtue that the young psychopath displays at an early stage in the cultivation of virtue, where they do virtuous actions solely in exchange for rewards, may be called a *burdened virtue* - a trait which although is not conducive to anyone's flourishing at the moment, it aims to make the flourishing of lives more plausible overall (Tessman 165). The initial training of the young psychopath may not be conducive to the psychopath's flourishing. Put in other words, doing something in exchange for rewards is not a life well lived (at least on a holistic eudaimonistic account of happiness). But the young psychopath's initial acts of virtue in return for rewards *aim* to make their flourishing more plausible by changing their behaviors and traits. Hence the good psychopath displays an imperfect burdened virtue in hopes of one day getting closer to real virtue and living a good life.

X. Conclusion:

Psychopathy is one of the most dangerous mental disorders, which often costs the lives and wellbeing of many. Psychopaths stand as a threat to society, committing gruesome crimes with seemingly no hesitation or remorse. While the primary solution to the problem the psychopath poses has been heavy sentencing and imprisonment to physically contain the psychopath, it is ineffective for three reasons:

- (i) it is implemented after harm has already been done.
- (ii) it is an ineffective disincentive for the psychopath, and cannot deter them from committing harm (due to their muted reaction to anticipated negative stimuli.)
- (iii) Many psychopaths go unnoticed by the law but still cause harm (like corporate psychopaths)(Boddy 143).

Instead of focussing on incarceration alone (which may be necessary in extreme cases), we ought to address the root cause of a psychopath's violent behaviors - the psychopathy itself - and try to mould it to make it as harmless of a condition as possible. A psychopath will always be a psychopath; they cannot learn to have empathy and will remain selfish and egocentric despite our best efforts in treating them. But their destructive motives and internal states need not immediately disqualify them from virtue, for even in the circumstance of psychopathy, there are better and worse ways to live. Using Driver's consequentialist view, I have established that

despite their moral deficits, it is possible for psychopaths to have virtues if they use their internal states to promote good consequences. Further, in applying Annas' view on the cultivation of virtue, I have emphasized the role of teaching by appealing to reasons significant to a psychopath in diminishing their violent behavior.

Finally, in regards to the question of whether a good psychopath can be said to have a good life or merely be capable of good consequences, it may be the case that psychopaths are fundamentally incapable of a good life due to their morally dangerous internal states (lack of empathy, drive to dominate, envy, etc.). However, through successful teaching of virtue, psychopaths can be taught to live a better life, a life in which they do not pursue their violent and harmful desires, or harness these desires in a way that can promote social good. Although flourishing and living a good life as a psychopath is impossible, if the psychopath, through treatment, ever reaches a point of doing virtuous actions simply for the sake of doing them, they can live a life that is very close to a good life¹⁴. With this, I conclude my paper.

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¹⁴ Where a good life or "flourishing" is understood as a life lived well, with a positive directionality towards the good (as discussed in Annas' view).

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