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‘God said “Let us make man in our image after our likeness”’ – Mary Shepherd, the *imago-dei*-thesis, and the human mind

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the role that Mary Shepherd’s (1777–1847) acceptance of the so-called *imago-dei* thesis plays for her account of the human mind. That is, it analyses Shepherd’s commitment to the doctrine that humans are created in the image of God, (see Gen. 1, 26–7) parts of which Shepherd quotes in *Essays on the Perception of an External Universe* (EPEU), 157, and the ways it informs her understanding of the human mind. In particular, it demonstrates how this thesis informs her understanding of the cognitive and moral capacities of the human mind. In other words, I argue that her commitment to this thesis explains why she believes that human beings are capable of reaching the “higher acquirement of intelligence” and the “completion of virtuous habits” (EPEU 381). Thus, this paper highlights the relevance of Shepherd’s theological assumptions to (the ever-growing number of) scholars interested in her understanding of the mind.

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1. Introduction

This paper explores the role that Mary Shepherd’s (1777–1847)¹ acceptance of the so-called *imago-dei* thesis plays for her account of the human mind. That is, it analyses Shepherd’s commitment to the doctrine that humans are created in the image of God, (see Gen. 1, 26–7) parts of which Shepherd quotes in *Essays on the Perception of an External Universe* (hereafter EPEU) 157, and the ways it informs her understanding of the human mind. In particular, it demonstrates how this thesis informs her understanding of the cognitive and moral capacities of the human mind. In other words, I argue that her

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¹I use the following abbreviations: ERCE for Shepherd’s first book *An Essay upon the Relation of Effect* (1824), EPEU for her second book *Essays on the Perception of an External Universe* (1827), and LMSM for her paper *Lady Mary Shepherd’s Metaphysics* (1832). All page numbers refer to the original pagination of these works.

commitment to this thesis explains why she believes that human beings are capable of reaching the “higher acquirement of intelligence” and the “completion of virtuous habits” (EPEU 381). Thus, this paper highlights the relevance of Shepherd’s theological assumptions to (the ever-growing number of) scholars interested in her understanding of the mind.²

I defend this interpretation in five steps. In the first section, I lay out what I take to be the basics of Shepherd’s notion of (finite) minds. In the next sections, I turn to Shepherd’s commitment to and interpretation of the *imago-dei* thesis. I argue that Shepherd believes that human minds have the cognitive and moral capacities they have because they are created in the image of God. In other words, human minds are created so that they can mirror or imitate divine wisdom and goodness in thought and in action. This interpretation is further substantiated in sections 4 and 5 where the cognitive and moral capacities of the human mind respectively are discussed in more detail. It will also become evident there that education plays an important role in maximizing the cognitive and moral abilities of human beings. In the final section, I discuss two ramifications of this interpretation for Shepherd’s account of (finite) minds: First, Shepherd believes that non-human animals have similar cognitive capacities compared to human children and (some) adults. Second, given that Shepherd never explicitly commits herself to the view that *only* human beings are created in the image of God – which would entail that (certain) cognitive and moral capacities are categorically beyond the reach of non-human animals – her view seemingly entails that non-human animals can be moral agents as well – albeit not on the same level as (some) human beings.

2. Shepherd’s notions of mind, sensation, and perception

Shepherd recognizes a significant degree of overlap among finite minds – including humans and non-human animals. Accordingly, my first aim is to lay out the basics of Shepherd’s understanding of the minds of finite minds. For instance, Shepherd says that the “meanest worm must *feel and think* as well as man” (ERCE 174) and suggests that human beings as well as non-human animals have an “eternal power of feeling [i.e. mind]” that is “immortal for the future” (EPEU 376–77).³ She also repeatedly assimilates

²In this sense, this paper adds to a growing body of literature interested in Shepherd’s account of the mind (see e.g. various chapters in Fields’ forthcoming volume on Shepherd; Boyle, “Mind, Soul, and Self”; Fasko, “Threefold ‘Variety of Intellect’”; Landy, “Bundle Theorist”; LoLordo, “Powers”, §9.7). More particularly, the paper also ties in with recent work that connects Shepherd’s theological commitments with her views on the mind (see Boyle, *A Guide*, chapter 8–9; LoLordo, *Mary Shepherd*, §§4–5).

³This does not imply, however, that non-human animals and humans enjoy the same kind of immortality (see LoLordo, *Mary Shepherd*, §4.4, “Shepherd’s Account of the Mind”, §8). LoLordo also draws attention to the connections of the issue of immortality and Shepherd’s understanding of the mind, thereby

the level of understanding exhibited by “brutes” (i.e. non-human animals) to that displayed by human children or “peasants” (e.g. EPEU 171, 189, 287, 291, 324). With the latter term she refers to human adults that make poor use of their senses (ECE 128), do not have a very good memory and knowledge of what others have done (ERCE 113) or more generally the ability to engage in “quick, steady, accurate observation” (ERCE 100). In the following (see § 4 onwards) I will refer to this group of non-human animals, human children and “peasants” as ‘inferior understandings’ and assume they have similar cognitive capacities.⁴ All of this provides good prima facie reasons to assume that the basic framework of her notion of mind applies equally to non-human animals and human beings. Next, I will clarify her technical vocabulary.

Shepherd repeatedly characterizes the mind as “the capacity or cause, for *sensation in general*” (EPEU 155) or as “a capacity fitted to be excited to any sensation in particular” (EPEU 242; see also EPEU 15, 56–7, 163–4, 217, 242, 310–11, 375, etc.). She is adamant that this *capacity for* sensation ought to be distinguished from *particular* sensations (EPEU 13, 84, 163, *Essay X*, etc.). Their difference becomes especially evident, she argues, if we consider that “each sensation in particular successively ceases to exist” (EPEU 183), while the mind is a “continuous existence” and “an eternal power in nature” (EPEU 377). In Shepherd’s terms, there is a difference between sensations, which are continuously vanishing and changing, and the “continually existing power” (EPEU 163) which is capable of producing these sensations – i.e. there is a difference between changing and “the subject matter of change” (EPEU 56).

For the purposes of this paper, it is important to note four things regarding Shepherd’s understanding of sensation and the mind. First, Shepherd distinguishes sensations from perceptions. Considering the importance of Reid to her work (e.g. EPEU 246–70), it may seem at first sight as if she is adopting a Reidian terminology and mirroring the latter’s distinction (EIP 2.16). Yet Shepherd does not, for instance, distinguish between sensations, desires, and appetites (EAP 3.1). She also believes that Reid’s position mistakenly implies that a perception is merely the result of sensation (EIP 2.17) and

highlighting the importance of another set of theological assumptions for Shepherd’s account of the mind.

⁴I have introduced this terminology in Fasko, “The ‘Threefold Variety’”, §3. In this paper I set ‘inferior understandings’ apart from ‘sound understandings’ and argue that education plays an important role for the development of the human mind into beings with a ‘sound understanding’ (“The Threefold Variety”, §§4–5). However, I was unable to explain why there are ‘sound understandings’ or why the latter have the capacities they have in the first place. In this paper, I argue such questions can be answered if Shepherd’s commitment to the *imago-dei* thesis is considered. Also note that this carving up of minds fits well with the more general (Early) Modern approach of discussing the mind and “standing of animals [...] in relation to other ‘inferiors’” (Garrett, “Animals and Ethics”, 65). I will say more about Shepherd’s understanding of ‘peasants’ and the role of education in §3 and come back to non-human animals and the question whether they are ‘inferior understandings’ in the same sense as human children and ‘peasants’ in §5.

“itself is not a sensation of the mind” (EPEU 24). In contradistinction to this Reidian understanding of the difference between perception and sensation, she stipulates that a perception *is a special kind of sensation*: “a sensation taken notice of by the mind” (EPEU 9) – that is, a perception is a sensation of which one becomes *explicitly aware*. Shepherd’s perceptions are thus best understood as “second-order sensations” (Boyle, “Mind, Soul, and Self”, 97).⁵

Second, Shepherd has a broad understanding of ‘sensation’, as it encompasses “every consciousness whatever” (EPEU 6). Unlike Locke (*Essay* II.i.3) or Berkeley (PHK § 9), Shepherd does not restrict ‘sensation’ to sensible qualities such as colours or sounds, which are perceived by our organs of sense. Rather, she uses the term to denote *any* conscious mental state (EPEU 6–9). For her, ‘sensation’ is a “generic term” (EPEU 5, 135) encompassing different types of mental states: “sensations of present sensible qualities, sensations of the ideas of memory, sensations of the ideas of imagination, sensations of the ideas of reason, &c.” (EPEU 135–6).

Third, Shepherd suggests that these types of mental states can be divided into two classes. I will call the first class ‘feelings’ because she explicitly uses the term to refer to the sensation of (present) sensible qualities, which “are felt” – i.e. we have a “consciousness of their [i.e. the sensible qualities] immediate presence” (EPEU 142). Next to sensations of sensible qualities such as colours, etc. (EPEU 311), this class also includes sensations of passions such as pleasure and pain (EPEU 66). The second class will be called ‘reasonings’ because they are sensations of various ideas, which she conceives to be “a distinct class of sensations, being the result of that reasoning or observation which shows that under certain conditions, there must needs be an existence when we cannot perceive it” (EPEU 134). According to Shepherd, a sensation is only an idea *if* it is the result of a particular process of reasoning, which involves the notion of “existences, which *have existed, may exist, will exist, must needs exist*, but whose qualities are not presently determined upon the mind” (EPEU 136). That is, ‘reasonings’ – in distinction to ‘feelings’ – result from thinking about things which will, may, or must have existed.

Fourth, Shepherd’s distinction of sensations into “objects of the understanding and the senses” (EPEU 82) corresponds to the two main cognitive faculties she identifies as belonging to the mind. These I call “understanding and sense”, following Bolton (“Mary Shepherd”, §3.1). However, it is important to note that Shepherd believes the mind to be a “*simple power*” (EPEU 48,

⁵Does Shepherd’s notion of perception owe anything to Leibniz’s ‘apperception’? For instance, Leibniz writes: “*apperception* [...] is *consciousness*, or the reflective knowledge of this internal state, [is] something not given to all souls, nor at all times to a given soul” (AG 208; G VI, 600). There is certainly a likeness there, in terms of the higher-order awareness and the proposition that minds do not perceive all the time which would merit a more thorough investigation. Thanks to Clara Carus for pointing out this similarity to me.

239): these two faculties ought not to be considered different parts of the mind; rather, they are different ways in which “the general power of sensation” (i.e. the mind) (EPEU 372) can be actualized. This becomes evident when she refers to these faculties as “the *power of thought and feeling*” (EPEU 40).⁶

In sum, Shepherd conceives of the mind as a capacity for sensation. *Perception*, in turn, involves the mind becoming explicitly aware of sensations. Moreover, there are two main classes of sensations: feelings and reasonings. With this outline of Shepherd’s account of the (finite) mind in the background, it is possible to turn to her interpretation of the *imago-dei* thesis, which ultimately explains why humans have the cognitive and moral capacities they do.

3. Shepherd and the *imago-dei* thesis

The *imago-dei* thesis is based on Gen. 1, 26–7: “God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God he created him; male and female created he them” (Gen. 1, 27). This thesis was accepted by virtually all the (Christian) Scholastics ranging from Augustine (Conf. I, 1, 1) to Aquinas (SG I c. 29). It was also still widely held in the Early Modern period by (Christian) philosophers such as Descartes (AT VII 51) and Berkeley (*Works* VII, 95). Shepherd, for her part, clearly commits to this thesis when she quotes from Gen. 1, 26 (EPEU 157), paraphrases Gen. 2,7 (EPEU 190), and characterizes humans as “beings analogous” to God (ERCE 98).

Shepherd’s discussion of the *imago-dei* thesis, in “On the union of mind with organization” (EPEU 393–402), is embedded within a discussion about “essential, and dependent being”, – i.e. about the “difference between God and man” (EPEU 398). Shepherd argues that God is the only being “which began not to be” (EPEU 399). In distinction to creatures such as human beings, God is “*no change, no effect*” but “SELF-EXISTENT” (EPEU 397). She believes that God is a metaphysically unique being and the creator of all finite beings (as well as of the universe they inhabit). As she says, the “Eternal Essence” (i.e. God) holds “within itself the principle of change, itself no change from a former being, and thus essentially holding [...] such qualities as are fitted to give forth those changes *which form the creatures* (my emphasis)” (EPEU 399–400). Yet, there is one particular creation that Shepherd considers in more detail: human beings, whom, as she

⁶For more on the simplicity of the mind as well as its other key aspects, see Boyle, “Mind, Soul, and Self”, 101–4. Also note that Shepherd is not consistent in her usage of the term ‘power of feeling’. There are some instances (e.g. EPEU 376–7, 398) where she uses the expression as synonymous with the mind as a whole, rather than just a faculty. In these instances, the ‘power of feeling’ is synonymous with the previously mentioned “animal power to feel” (EPEU 396). For the purposes of this paper, I will adopt the usage whereby the ‘power of feeling’ refers to a faculty of the mind and thus designates something more specific than the ‘animal power to feel’.

writes, God “perceived that it was possible to *make* [...] *in his own image* (my emphasis)” (EPEU 400).⁷ Shepherd goes on to explain how God went about this creation:

[H]e perceived that by uniting a finite portion of mental power with the arrangement of that which was material, under an inward motion which preserved their union, and placing it amidst the conditions of air, earth, water, and food, there would thence arise a definite portion of perpetuated combined sensations.

(EPEU 400)

At first sight, Shepherd’s point in the quoted passage seems straightforward: when God created humans, he united a mind (i.e. “a finite portion of mental power”) with a material arrangement (i.e. a body; see EPEU 349). This “union of mind with organization” (EPEU 393) was constructed in such a manner that it may causally interact with environmental factors, and sensations would continually arise. On this surface reading, Shepherd would be committed to the view that what likens human beings to God is the union of mind and body along with the corresponding environmental interaction. But this cannot be the case, because she argues that the “universal mind” of God is “not united to any small defined body” (EPEU 390). Rather, Shepherd’s point is more subtle: in the case of humans, the body is a means to an end. As Shepherd puts it in her discussion of the *imago-dei* thesis, God “created [bodily] *organs*” as a “*means* of transfusing those qualities [referring to sensations] into minor portions of minds, by whose junction finite perception might take place” (EPEU 401).

In other words, God created the human body because (for whatever reason), in the world that we know, a body is a necessary means for human beings to have sensations (i.e. to have consciousness).⁸ Elsewhere Shepherd argues that, as far as living humans are concerned, the body “seems so much *a part* of the *whole* causes *necessary* for sensation in general, that under the form and action of the brain, it only seems capable of being elicited” (EPEU 156). Of course, this does not entail that she believes sensations could *only* arise when there is a brain. On the contrary, she points

⁷I will address the question whether Shepherd believes that *only* human beings are created in the image of God or whether other finite minds such as non-human animals are created similarly in the last section of this paper.

⁸I argue elsewhere in more detail, drawing from EPEU 265, that the body or the physiological structure also plays an important role in accounting for differences in cognitive levels in non-human animals (as well as between the latter and human beings) (Fasko, “Meanest Worm”, §4). Note that this does not constitute a different explanation of why humans (or other beings) have the mental capacities they have. This is still explained by the *imago-dei* thesis, which articulates the (divine) end of creating some beings (i.e. humans) with certain cognitive and moral capacities, and in which is noted that the body (or its structure) is the mean to attain this end. This also helps to explain why beyond education (see §3, n. 17), food etc. can also have an impact on the development of the mind or why some people are ‘naturally’ more able to do a “quick, steady, [and] accurate observation” (ERCE 100) compared to others.

out that other beings may have sensations without a brain (EPEU 156) – notably God, who “stands in need for no organs” to have sensations (EPEU 401). She even argues that the brain may not be required for humans to have sensations in the afterlife (EPEU 156–58, 376–81). But as far as *living* human beings are concerned, the body is necessary for having sensations – i.e. for giving rise to consciousness.⁹

What seems to liken humans to God, then, are the *capacities* for continually having sensations and for combining them. That is, what likens them is that both have a mind or what Shepherd calls “perpetuated combined sensations” in EPEU 400. While Shepherd does not explicitly explain why the combining of sensation is so important in EPEU 400, her rationale becomes evident when she writes elsewhere that the first two chapters of EPEU have shown that “in the sum of our *combined* sensations [...] there is contained *knowledge* and proof of the existence of ‘body’ and of the external universe [my emphasis]” (EPEU 85–6). Here, Shepherd is drawing a connection between combining sensations and knowledge. She also writes in the beginning of EPEU that we need to reason about and compare among our “whole combined sensations” to gain knowledge of the relations they include or of the existence outside world, for instance (EPEU 10). Shepherd even characterizes the perception of outwardly existing objects as a combining together “in select masses” (EPEU 67). All this suggests that one needs to go beyond what Shepherd elsewhere calls “mere sensations” (EPEU 10) and actively do something with them if one wishes to accumulate knowledge.

At first sight then Shepherd’s contention in EPEU 399–400 seems to be that God and human beings are alike in that both have a mind and can accumulate knowledge via the sensations the mind gives rise to. On closer examination, however, her remarks suggest that the likeness between divine and human minds is more specific. Indeed, Shepherd identifies several types of sensations or consciousness that are “amongst the most important” in the context of the *imago-dei* thesis: the “knowledge of ends, selection of means, perceptions of moral relations, [and] direction of motion” (EPEU 400).¹⁰ Before I address these in more detail, it is important to note that the following argumentation will, for the sake of brevity and clarity, forgo to discuss the ‘direction of motion’. For Shepherd’s notion of

⁹Moreover, this is consistent with the beginning of “Essay 12” (EPEU 393–402) where Shepherd speaks about the relation of bodily organization to “life” and “sentiency” (EPEU 393–5), which suggests that in this passage she is primarily concerned with sentient *life* and the way it arises. For a detailed account of Shepherd’s notion of life and of how mind and body are united, as well as the role of motion for this union (see Boyle, “Meaning of ‘Life’”, esp. §4).

¹⁰Note that Shepherd is not thereby committed to the view that the sensations of living human beings are like those of God. This seems already precluded by the fact that she thinks human sensations result from a mind-body interaction, whereas God does not have a body. Also, only God has “the capacity of perceiving all ideas executed in his own mind by eternal, necessary, and essential union of such qualities as are fitted to the consciousness of all future knowledge” (EPEU 381).

motion – which she understands as a “sixth sense” (EPEU 230) – is very complex. A discussion of this notion would for instance require an in-depth analysis of her distinction between perceived and unperceived motion (EPEU 406) as well as a clarification of her views on the connection between the capacity to direct one’s motion and issues pertaining to the freedom of the (human) will. However, all of these are issues that go beyond the scope of this paper.¹¹

With this in mind we can now shift our attention to the “knowledge of ends, selection of means, [and] perceptions of moral relations” and the question *why* they are “amongst the most important” in the context of the *imago-dei* thesis (EPEU 400).¹² While Shepherd does not explicitly spell out the reasons for her emphasis, an important reason why she is singling them out in the context of the *imago-dei* thesis seems to be the following: these types of sensations play a particularly important role because they are what allows humans to be(come) “analogous” to God (ERCE 98) – i.e. to become God-like creatures that can imitate or mirror the divine original in thought and in action. In other words, they are crucial because they allow human beings to reach the “higher acquirement of intelligence” and the “completion of virtuous habits” (EPEU 381).¹³

This interpretation can be further corroborated when considering that Shepherd, during her “demonstration of his [i.e. God’s] essence” calls God “the director of motion, the *perceiver of ends*” (EPEU 389). This (implicitly) equates the types of sensations she explicitly highlights in the context of the *imago-dei* thesis with ones that are essential to God. Consider also the connection that can be drawn between the ‘knowledge of ends’ etc. and (some of) the most important divine attributes. Shepherd argues that the

¹¹Of course, this is not to say that the ‘direction of motion’ and hence the likeness between human and divine freedom is undeserving of further scholarly attention. On the contrary, it is an interesting question whether and to what degree Shepherd is a compatibilist. For while her overall understanding of causation and the role she attributes to God seem to commit her to some form of determinism, she elsewhere stresses our ability to act of our own accord (e.g. EPEU 265). A better understanding of Shepherd’s notion of the will would, moreover, shed light on her conception of divine freedom and explain how it, in turn, relates to (the possibility of) human action. I thank Deborah Boyle for highlighting these points.

¹²This does not entail that these types of sensations are only important in that context. As an anonymous referee noted one can easily imagine that they are also particularly important inasmuch as these types of sensations are e.g. crucial in securing the survival of human beings. Rather, my point here and in the following is that we should take the fact seriously that Shepherd draws our attention to these types of sensations *in the context* of her interpretation of the *imago-dei* thesis, which ultimately explains why Shepherd thinks that humans have the cognitive and moral capacities they do.

¹³It is an interesting question whether Shepherd believes that God and humans are merely gradually different or categorically distinct. While she certainly deems God a unique being with a unique essence (e.g. ERCE 96–8; EPEU 398–9), she also says that the “qualities” which are necessary for “finite perception” to take place are “like in kind, but not in degree” to God’s (EPEU 400–1). The latter position sounds similar to Berkeley’s, who also argues that the human mind is made in the image of God (*Works* VII, 86) and differs only gradually from God’s (DHP 3.231–2; Alc. 4.21–2). For Berkeley, this entails that “Man alone of all animals hath understanding to know his God” (Alc. 5.28), though it is less clear that Shepherd would agree with that (see §5).

world is full of “sensible impressions” of divine “goodness, wisdom, and power” (EPEU 152), which is to say that God *is* a good, wise, and powerful being and that God chooses to display these attributes in the world (see § 5). Consider that God must be able to determine ends and to select the means for achieving them (hence, the “knowledge of ends” and “selections of means”) to be a wise creator. Furthermore, if God is to be good (i.e. moral), there needs to be divine “perceptions of moral relations”. Shepherd also draws attention to the “union of *wisdom* and benevolence” in God and stresses the importance of this “*junction* of wisdom and benevolence” in the divine “*formation of inferior beings*” (ERCE 97). All of this suggests that “higher acquirement of intelligence” and the “completion of virtuous habits” (EPEU 381) that humans may attain ought to be understood as that which links them to what Shepherd elsewhere calls our “celestial origin” (EPEU 402).

In a nutshell, in her interpretation of the *imago-dei* thesis, Shepherd first draws an implicit distinction between the mind’s capacities for continually giving rise to sensation and for combining these to acquire knowledge etc.. Second, Shepherd highlights certain types of sensations or consciousness as particularly relevant in this context. On my interpretation, the underlying rationale for Shepherd’s emphasis on the “knowledge of ends, selection of means, perceptions of moral relations” (EPEU 400) in the context of the *imago-dei* thesis is that they ultimately allow human beings to be “analogous” to God (ERCE 98). That is, they allow us to mirror the divine original – not only in thinking but also in acting wisely and morally.

With this outline of Shepherd’s commitment to and interpretation of the *imago-dei* thesis in place, we can turn to the question of how this position informs her understanding of the cognitive and moral capacities of human beings. The cognitive capacities will be the focus of §4 which discusses the “selections of means” and “knowledge of ends” and their role for imitating divine wisdom, while §5 focuses on the moral capacities by analysing the “perception of moral relations” and the human capacity to mirror divine goodness.

4. The God-like mind of human beings: wisdom

In this section, I will argue for the likeness between the divine and human mind in the latter’s capacity to mirror divine wisdom in thought and action. I focus on the capacity to reach the ‘higher acquirement of intelligence’ by becoming proficient in the knowledge of ends and their selection of means. For the sake of clarity, I will illustrate this point by focussing on particular types of causal reasoning. This first requires a brief clarification of Shepherd’s idiosyncratic notion of causation.

Both of Shepherd’s books are dedicated to developing aspects of a theory of causation in detail (EPEU xi–xv). EPEU is dedicated to an analysis of the

“operations of our mind” with the goal of showing “how it operates ‘when acting as a cause’” (EPEU xv). Yet, as Shepherd points out (EPEU xi–xiii), this analysis rests on crucial insights from her first book ERCE. In ERCE, Shepherd’s main aim is to refute Hume’s “doctrine of the relation of Cause and Effect” (ERCE 9) by showing that the two *are* necessarily connected (ERCE 27–8). She argues against a conception of causality as a bipartite relation whereby the effect (necessarily) *follows* the cause. Rather, Shepherd contends that causality is *at least* a tripartite relation. This is already suggested when she defines a “cause” as “such an action of an object, as shall enable it, in conjunction with another, to form a new nature, capable of exhibiting qualities varying from those of either of the objects cojoined” (ERCE 63). According to Shepherd, something is a cause if it is conjoined with something else to form a “new nature” – i.e. an effect. While she admits that it is almost impossible for us not to think of this relation in terms of a “before and after”, she in fact denies that the effect *follows* the conjunction, holding instead that the effect is “synchronous” and “included in it” (ERCE 50).¹⁴

Shepherd believes that any human being has causal knowledge, but not everyone is a proficient causal reasoner or of “sound understanding”.¹⁵ She argues that “every child under the faintest and most indistinct form of latent conception” can come to realize that everything needs a cause (EPEU xiii)¹⁶ and that children “can perceive the relation of cause and effect” (EPEU 314). However, while children and other inferior understandings such as “peasants” (see § 2) can perceive (i.e. become consciously aware of) relations such as causation, they “cannot analyse them” (EPEU 171) beyond a certain point. For instance, they are comparatively limited in their ability to distinguish between their sensations and the exterior objects which cause them. For instance, Shepherd writes that “inferior understandings” such as children are “too simple” to realize this difference (EPEU 315) and

¹⁴For a more detailed treatment of this aspect of Shepherd’s notion, see Landy, “A Defense”. Shepherd’s theory of causation is also considered in more depth by Bolton, “Cause and Effect” and Paoletti, “Restoring Necessary Connections”.

¹⁵This term is introduced in Fasko, “Threefold ‘Variety of Intellect’”, §4. There I use it to designate the group of minds with the highest (possible) cognitive abilities. In this paper I also discuss in more detail (“Threefold ‘Variety of Intellect’”, §2) that for Shepherd there is one group of neuro-atypical human minds that do not have access to any kind of (causal) knowledge. These are humans that have what Shepherd calls “idiocy” (EPEU 314). Such individuals are incapable of “further perception than what resides in the immediate impressions created by the use of the five organs of sense, and the power of motion” (EPEU 314). Someone who suffers from ‘idiocy’ will hardly be able to imitate either divine wisdom or goodness in thought and in actions. This, in turn, raises interesting theological questions (which go beyond the scope of the present investigation) as to why God would create human beings that cannot live up to their God-like potential in the first place.

¹⁶This insight is referred to as Shepherd’s ‘causal-principle’ (CP) (e.g. Boyle, “The Meaning of ‘Life’”, 8). Alongside her so-called causal-likeness principle (CLP) (LoLordo, *Mary Shepherd*, §2.3) or causal principle of induction (Bolton, “Mary Shepherd”, §2.1), it is one of two claims she wants to establish (see ERCE 10–11). Folescu convincingly argues that Shepherd “should have said” that CP and CLP are “foundational principles”, instead of treating them as demonstrable points (Folescu, “The Role of Proofs”, 15). For more on this problem in Shepherd’s approach, see Fantl, “Causal Necessity”, 97–101.

that they “generally conceive the external causes and the sensible effects to be existing externally and permanently together” (LMSM 705). In other words, ‘inferior understandings’ are bad at distinguishing their experiences (i.e. the effects) from the external world that (partially) causes them. “Young children” or “very ignorant persons”, for instance, will even think that external objects are similar to the “conscious sensible *qualities*” they have of them (EPEU 97) and thus do not realize that external objects are “independent of our senses” and hence “*unknown powers or qualities*” (ERCE 46).

Deficiencies such as these, in turn, have ramifications for how ‘inferior understandings’ interact with the world, notably in the means they select and the ends they can come to know about. This is nicely illustrated by an example Shepherd provides to show how a proficient causal reasoner or ‘sound understanding’ deals with a situation where “two objects are presented of precisely similar appearance” (ERCE 103). She writes,

If an ignorant person, for instance, whom we perceived could not read, were about to serve us in a chymist’s shop with *Epsom salts*; we, being aware that *oxalic acid* had the same *apparent* qualities, [...] would cautiously enquire for some mark [...] as to what mass of qualities [...] had. been combined by the hand of nature, or, art, in the object before us.

(ERCE 104)

Here Shepherd describes a situation where a proficient causal reasoner enters a shop to buy Epsom salts – e.g. in order relax their muscles – but becomes hesitant because the seller cannot read and is “ignorant” (i.e. belongs to the class of ‘inferior understandings’). The proficient causal reasoner also knows that the shop also sells oxalic acid which looks like Epsom salt but would not relax her muscles. Rather, taking this acid could lead to anything ranging from a headache to nausea or even death. Thus, this reasoner will inquire about the causal history of the product on the counter, to make sure that the seller knows what they are selling.

What remains implicit in this passage is that Shepherd believes that this line of inquiry is particularly helpful because ‘inferior understandings’, according to her, consider objects “too readily as similar” (EPEU 291–2). That is, they lack what she elsewhere calls “good sense” (ERCE 102) when they draw causal inferences. The reason for this, Shepherd explains, is that children (or by extension an ignorant shopkeeper) base their judgement on “insufficient data”: whenever “things *appear* like (my emphasis)” to them and the circumstances “*seem* also to be similar”, they will believe that they *are* alike (EPEU 323). Yet in so doing, they fail to consider “a possible variety”, as they do not take into account that there could be “some unperceived reason” which leads to a different outcome (EPEU 323). For instance, the ignorant shopkeeper would not be mindful of the fact that taking the similarly looking oxalic acid could have deadly consequences but just think of any

white powder they are selling as the muscle relaxing Epsom salts (for in fact this person may not even be aware that not all the white powders in the shop are Epsom salts in the first place).

Crucially for the present purpose of understanding the God-like cognitive capacities of human beings, Shepherd's description of the shopkeeper as 'ignorant' *and* illiterate implicitly highlights what humans need to fully live up to their divine potential: education. As the description of the shopkeeper already suggests 'education' needs to be understood in a broad sense including, but not limited to, formal school education. I argue elsewhere ("The Threefold Variety", 186) that education for Shepherd may concern the health, opinion, and practice and that the educators include "moralist", "divines", "physicians", "physiologist", and "parents" (see EPEU 264). It is, thus, unsurprising that Shepherd suggests, the "habits of education" have an important influence on the actions of individuals (EPEU 265) and it makes sense that education in this broad sense would help children become proficient causal reasoners, or what Shepherd elsewhere calls the "soundest understandings" capable of the "wisest determinations" (EPEU 116).¹⁷ In the case of the shopkeeper for instance it is easy to see how even formal school education, received as an adult, would improve their proficiency as a causal reasoner. After all, being able to read and write could help a lot in determining and processing the causal history of any given object or in assessing whether circumstances really are alike or whether they only appear to be alike. Reading and writing would also be useful in improving the ability to remember things because one can make notes that e.g. concern the causal history of a given object.

In sum, the case of causal reasonings and knowledge clearly illustrates what the divine-like potential of the human mind looks like considered as proficient causal reasoners, why not all human beings live up to this potential, and what is needed for them to do so. In other words, while each human being has God-like cognitive capacities and thus the potential to imitate divine wisdom in thought and action as a proficient causal reasoner, not all of them actually become such reasoners. Children (or other inferior understandings) for instance need education (ranging from issues concerning

¹⁷This is not to say that education, even understood in this broad sense, is the only factor in this. As we have seen some individuals have a better memory or make better use of their senses and therefore do better than others in causal reasoning no matter the level of their education (see §2). Also, one can easily imagine that e.g. literacy alone, or more generally a formal education at school, does not guarantee proficiency when it comes to causal reasonings; especially considering that Shepherd says some philosophers (i.e. "Ideologists") "betray a still greater want of philosophy than do the vulgar" (LMSM 705). Also note that that "food, medicine, and climate" (EPEU 265) could also have an (indirect) influence on the cognitive abilities of a given individual. In any case, Shepherd is clearly committed to a developmental understanding of the mind. Her remarks suggest that cognitive abilities can be further developed well into adult life (EPEU 264) and potentially even in the afterlife (EPEU 379–82). For more on this see Folescu, "The Role of Proofs", 3 and 9–10 and Fasko, "Threefold Variety of Intellect", §5.

their health, to opinion, and to practice, see EPEU 264) as not to become ‘peasants’ or adults with an inferior understanding. In order to avoid the latter, or more generally to reach the “higher acquirements of intelligence” (EPEU 381), children need proper training (and food, medicine, etc.); *that* they can reach these intellectual heights, however, is still owed to the fact that their mind is created in the image of God’s.

5. The God-like mind of human beings: goodness

In this section my focus shifts to the moral aspect of the *imago-dei* thesis: the “moral capacities and improvements” of humans and their capacity to reach the “completion of virtuous habits” (EPEU 381). In other words, I discuss the human mind’s ability to mirror divine goodness in thought and action,¹⁸ which depends on their capacity to “perceive *moral* relations” (my emphasis) (EPEU 400).

To recap, Shepherd introduces a technical understanding of ‘perception’ in the beginning of EPEU. There she stipulates that perceptions are sensations of which the mind becomes explicitly or consciously aware (EPEU 9). When Shepherd says that human beings can perceive moral relations (EPEU 400), this is to say that they can become explicitly aware of these relations. This interpretation is consistent with her more general claim that even human children and adults with little or no education (i.e. “peasants”) can “know and perceive [...] relations” (EPEU 171). Similarly, she says that children (and by extension also adults with little or no education) “take notice of [...] certain simple relations” which are “determined to their minds by the organs of sense” (EPEU 315–16). The latter passage is also of interest because it provides some insight into workings of how humans can become explicitly aware of (moral) relations.

In EPEU 316 (see also EPEU 189) Shepherd approvingly quotes the French philosopher Destutt de Tracy as saying that children “*apperçoit*” relations the same way they do colours. While ‘*apperçoit*’ can be translated as ‘perceive’ or ‘catch sight’, the connection she draws to colours suggests that she thinks Destutt de Tracy’s view is that even a child can see relations.¹⁹ On this

¹⁸The distinction was already used in the previous sections but becomes particularly important here. For as will become particularly evident in this section Shepherd seems open to the idea that people can act morally even if they do not think about it. That is, they can imitate moral actions and in that sense be (limited) moral agents even if they do not have thoughts about the moral value or relevance of their action. This distinction is meant to capture this difference.

¹⁹See also EPEU 189. For more on Shepherd’s understanding of how we see colours see also EPEU Essay IV; Boyle, *Shepherd*, chapter 10. Unfortunately, I have not been able to locate this exact quotation in de Tracy’s *Éléments* (1801) which are its most likely source (LoLordo, *Essays*, 106 n. 13) and could help with deciding for its best translation. Shepherd writes that Destutt de Tracy believes children can perceive relations between ideas “as of their original perception” (EPEU 171, note). LoLordo (*Essays*, 100 n.2) points out that Destutt de Tracy writes that one can sense (*sentir*) relations (*Éléments* I, 60) which raises the question whether Shepherd uses ‘perceive’ to translate *sentir*. This would make sense given that de Tracy also says that sensing (*sentir*) relations is an act of judgement which fits better

interpretation, a child (or by extension adults with little or no education) perceive relations in Shepherd's technical sense, i.e. become explicitly aware of them, because they can see them. This entails that the sensations of relations belong to the class of "feelings" (EPEU 142), alongside colours and other sensible qualities as well as passions (see § 2). This point can be further substantiated when considering Shepherd's remark in ERCE that she believes there are "*sensible manifestations of regard*" (ERCE 126) one friend may give to another. Also note that she is equating the "appearances" of sensible qualities such as colour, taste, or sound with those of "*beauty, and deformity*" as well as those "*of vice, and virtue*" as being "*effects produced on the mind, through the senses* (my emphasis)" (EPEU 47).

All of this suggests that Shepherd (implicitly) aligns herself with a long-standing tradition in Scottish philosophy: moral sentimentalism.²⁰ Simply put, moral sentimentalists claim that "[the] moral depends on 'sentiment' or feeling" (Raphael and Macfie, "Introduction", 14). Hume, for instance, claims that morality is "more properly felt than judged" (T 3.2.1). While Shepherd can agree with this statement because (moral) relations are ultimately "effects produced on the mind, through the senses", there is also clearly a cognitive component to morality or moral behaviour. Consider that she holds that "inferior understandings" can not only perceive "certain relations, included in the impressions made upon them", but draw on these "as occasions requires into practical results" (EPEU 189). This suggests that once relations are explicitly registered (after being produced as effect on the mind through the senses) these 'inferior understandings' can draw inferences from this conscious awareness which concern their behaviour. This general reading fits nicely with the case of moral relations because Shepherd says that the world is full of "*sensible impressions*" of divine "goodness" (EPEU 152). This can be read as suggesting that the senses give these impressions or displays of divine goodness forth to the mind where one can perceive them, i.e. become explicitly aware of them. As these divine displays at least include moral relations, as for instance when God gives "his only Son" (John 3:16), the capacity to become consciously aware of them is very important for the human capacity to imitate divine goodness. After all, becoming explicitly aware of these displays of divine goodness allows even an 'inferior understanding' draw 'practical results'. That is, even they can draw inferences for

with Shepherd's technical understanding of perceiving. If this is the case, there is another reason to assume that *apperçoit* is best translated by 'seeing'. I thank Antonia LoLorodo for providing me access to the first edition of the *Éléments*.

²⁰In contrast to the likes of Smith (e.g. TMS, 266) or Hutcheson (e.g. *Essay*, 17), Shepherd never uses the term 'moral sense'. Moreover, it remains unknown whether she read Smith or Hutcheson. The former seems plausible, though, as she seems to have known David Ricardo (Brandreth, *Recollections*, 119). Concerning her potential knowledge of Hutcheson, it is interesting to note that the alignment of beauty and virtue in terms of their perceivability (EPEU 47) is also found in Hutcheson (*System*, 54), who expands on this at length in his *Inquiry*.

their moral behaviour which, in these instances will be modelled on the divine original. But it stands to reason that this line of thought can be expanded to human beings as well. In other words, Shepherd would probably agree that the world is also full of sensible impressions of human goodness and so humans can also observe and learn from the virtuous behaviour of others and use this to form virtuous habits (see EPEU 381).

In short, 'inferior understandings' can come to mirror divine goodness in action primarily by imitating God and other human beings – without putting much thought into their behaviour beyond the inferences they draw from their observations, which are used to form certain habits. Yet given that humans are also able to imitate divine goodness in thought it does not come as a surprise that education, again, plays an important role in setting some (adult) humans apart. This importance of education is already implied when Shepherd names "moralists and divines" among the people that could profit from understanding her views in that it may help them to improve the "*opinions* and the practices of those under their care [my emphasis]" (EPEU 264). The important point here is that Shepherd e.g. a divine like priest whose task is also to tell what the (morally) good life consists in can improve the "opinion" and not solely the "practice" of their congregation. To put it differently, they can induce theoretical (moral) reflections which potentially go beyond the purposes of particular situations of ordinary daily life but also include thinking more generally about moral duties for instance. Also consider that Shepherd holds that education factors into the imitation of divine goodness; in her discussion of the example of an absent friend to illustrate moral feelings (see ERCE 125–6), Shepherd draws a close connection between these moral feelings and the capacity to understand causation (ERCE 126–8) which can be improved via education (see § 4). It seems then that a proper education would allow human beings not just to imitate good actions but also to consciously assess whether something they did or wanted to do is morally permissible. This, in turn, would allow them to become more successful in manifesting their moral capacities and in improving them (see EPEU 381).

It seems then that humans from a very early age onwards are at least capable of mirroring divine goodness in action because moral relations are "effects produced on the mind, through the senses" which in turn allows them to become consciously aware of (i.e. perceive) them. This awareness permits them to draw 'practical results' for their moral behaviour. With the right education they can even manage to mirror divine goodness in thought and given that there are humans that do metaethics, we also know this ability can reach a very complex level. Again, this is not surprising given that Shepherd is committed to the *imago-dei* thesis which entails that the human mind is created so it has the moral capacities it has in the first place.

6. The human mind as a mind like no other? The case of non-human animals

The previous two sections have spelled out the God-like potential of the human mind when it comes to its cognitive and moral capacities as well as highlighted the importance of education for the manifestation of these. In closing this paper, I want to address the question whether for Shepherd *only* the human mind has such a divine potential. In other words, is the human mind one like no other?

In Shepherd's case this question arises because it is unclear from Shepherd's interpretation of the *imago-dei* thesis whether she holds that *humans and only humans* are created in the image of God. Genesis strongly suggests that human beings are not only God's final creation, but that they are also *the only beings* God created after his image (Gen. 1, 20–31). If Shepherd were to take this seriously, it would mean that she endorses a *strict or categorical* anthropological difference concerning the human mind – i.e. endorses “human exceptionalism” rather than “continuity across species” (Jamieson, “Animal language and Thought”, 263). This would entail that a non-human animal could never reach those intellectual or moral heights even if the best education imaginable was to be provided to them. This position would put Shepherd in a similar camp with Descartes who famously argued that only human beings have reason and a soul, while non-human animals are merely mindless machines (AT VI, 56–9). But given that she never explicitly comments on this uniqueness aspect in the creation of the human mind and much less explicitly commits to it, it cannot be ruled out that she would endorse a *gradual* anthropological difference in the vein of Montaigne (NE §12) or Hume (EHU 9.1; T 1.3.16). The latter supposition gains further traction if it is considered that her account of (finite) minds seems equally applicable to humans *and* non-human animals. What is more, she explicitly puts “brutes” into the group of ‘inferior understandings’. That is, she equates the cognition of non-human animals with that of human children and ‘peasants’ (see § 2). As she says in ERCE, even the “meanest worm must *feel and think* as well as man” (ERCE 174).²¹

This last point has important ramifications: First it would entail that non-human animals are causal reasoners on a similar level to human children and even to (some) adults. This means non-human animals are capable of

²¹It has been pointed out (LoLordo, *Mary Shepherd*, 22; Fasko, “Meanest Worm”) that Shepherd does not distinguish between different species of non-human animals when she is making these comparisons to human children or ‘peasants’. While it seems plausible that a cephalopod or a raven has similar cognitive capacities to those of a human child, such an equivalence seems like a stretch in the case of the worm (ERCE 174). This difficulty can be set aside for the present purpose, however, as my aim is merely to establish that Shepherd ultimately denies that any non-human animal can reach the cognitive level of (a well-educated) adult human being. However, Shepherd is open to the possibility that some non-human animals are on a similar cognitive level as some adults with little or no education.

imitating divine wisdom in thought and action (see § 4). This interpretation is, moreover, in line with her rejection of the claim (e.g. found in Locke, *Essay* II.xxi.11 or Hume, “Of the Dignity or Meanness of Human Nature”) that non-human animals cannot improve their cognitive capacities by abstracting. As she puts it, “children and brutes [...] readily abstract” (EPEU 292). That is, non-human animals “can consider qualities in isolation of others with which they are usually united, in order to notice what inferences may be drawn from its nature” (EPEU 291). This entails that they can analyse their sensations (EPEU 304), consciously scrutinize them (EPEU xv, 122, 313), and break down their complexity (EPEU 263–5). This suggests that non-human animals, like humans with ‘inferior understandings’, can learn from the past and “predicate of the future” (LMSM 704; see also ERCE 92–4, EPEU 320–1) and it raises the question of how far a non-human animal’s mind can develop its cognitive capacities. After all, Shepherd suggests that the “*faculty of abstraction*” is “truly the origin of all science” (EPEU 291) and thus it seems that, in principle at least, it would be possible for (some) non-human animals to develop their intellect to a point necessary for doing science.

While Shepherd’s writings do not allow us to straightforwardly discount this possibility, they clearly suggest that she believes that *at least as a matter of contingent empirical fact*, there are no scientists among non-human animals. Consider that all her comparisons between the cognition of humans and non-human animals are confined to the level of ‘inferior understandings’. For instance, she insists that non-human animals can perceive relations such as change, but, like humans with inferior understandings, they “cannot analyse them” (EPEU 171) beyond a certain point nor can they “argue formally on the subject” (see EPEU 315) or “express” the result of their analyses (see EPEU 105).²² This can be taken to suggest that non-human animals, like humans with an inferior understanding, are primarily focused on and concerned with the affairs of ordinary daily life. So there is an interesting question as to whether e.g. octopuses could reach the intellectual heights of certain human beings if they were given a proper education. Yet given that, at least in Shepherd’s time, this has hardly been tried, it is no wonder that she never offers an example of any non-human animal that has reached what she refers to as “the higher acquirements of intelligence” (EPEU 381).

The second, even more intriguing, ramification concerning the potential uniqueness of the human mind pertains to the latter’s capacity to imitate divine goodness in action and in thought. For if non-human animals are on

²²It is interesting to note that Shepherd, similarly to Hume (see EHU 9.1; T 1.3.16) never invokes language use as a distinguishing feature between humans and non-human animals. This sets her apart from the likes of Descartes (AT VI, 56–8), Locke (*Essay* 2.11.10–11), and Berkeley (Alc. 2.14, 4.12). For more on this debate in general and Hume’s views in particular see, Boyle, “Hume on Animal Reason”; Wild *Die Anthropologische Differenz*, chapter 1.

the same (cognitive) level as humans with an ‘inferior understanding’, it stands to reason that non-human animals also have moral capacities. In other words, Shepherd potentially endorses the idea that non-human animals are moral agents. Consider that Shepherd explicitly mentions non-human animals (i.e. ‘brutes’) in the passages in which she ascribes the capacity to perceive relations (EPEU 171) and to draw practical results from these perceptions (EPEU 189) to human children and adults with ‘inferior understandings’. Moreover, there are no passages that would explicitly reject the idea that non-human animals can also perceive moral relations or the display of divine goodness. Unless the human mind is unique in being created in the image of God which would entail that *only* humans can perceive moral relations (see EPEU 400), it seems that everything that has been said about the moral capacities of humans with an ‘inferior understanding’ (see §5) can be applied to non-human animals as well.²³ That is, the latter would at least be capable of imitating divine goodness (as well as the moral behaviour of humans or other non-human animals) in action. Non-human animals may not be able to have “moral discussions” (ERCE vi) given that they cannot “express” results of their relational analyses (see EPEU 105) but that does not entail that they do not have (rudimentary) moral thoughts. After all, human children and (some) adults have such thoughts even if they do not engage in such discussions. However, the level of these thoughts remains confined because reaching a more complex level requires the kind of abstraction that goes beyond the needs of ordinary daily life.

In short, Shepherd’s writings allow that she might be committed to the claim that non-human animals can become explicitly aware of moral relations and draw inferences from this awareness which in turn may shape their (moral) behaviour. In other words, they can act morally and have (rudimentary) moral thoughts.²⁴ This further highlights the importance of establishing whether Shepherd thinks the human mind is unique in being created after

²³Shepherd’s potential adherence to moral sentimentalism is also of limited use in answering this question. While someone like Hutcheson (*Inquiry*, 258) suggests that non-human animals do have morality, there is a debate about whether Hume excludes them from the realm of morality (see Boyle, “Hume on Animal Reason”, 4 n. 3). In other words, even if Shepherd is a moral sentimentalist, that would not clearly suggest one alternative over the other from a contextual point of view.

²⁴There are hardly any passages that can be taken as endorsing moral agency in non-human animals. Most notably Shepherd discusses the possibility of a “state of moral amelioration” in the afterlife which, as the context suggests, could even be attained by the mind of a “crawling insect” or a clam (EPEU 377–8). On other hand, she claims in the worm passage in ERCE 174 that the former may “think and feel” and “yet may not be immortal”. If a worm or by extension other non-human animals are not immortal this raises the question of what would be the point if they are moral agents because there will be no reward or punishment in their life after death. However, as LoLordo (*Mary Shepherd*, 29) has pointed out there is reason to assume that Shepherd changes her views on the immortality of non-human animals between ERCE and EPEU and so we may need to give more emphasis to the EPEU passage. For a more detailed discussion on Shepherd’s view of the afterlife see Boyle, *A Guide*, chapter 9.

the image of the divine, which, if strictly understood, would entail that only the human mind as moral capacities in the first place. If this were the case then no education could ever produce a raven meta-ethicist. While answering this question is beyond the limits of this paper, we for now can content ourselves with having shown that Shepherd, again, at least as a matter of contingent empirical fact believes that only (some) human beings have a certain level of complexity when it comes to their moral capacities and, what she refers to elsewhere as, the “completion of virtuous habits” (EPEU 381).

7. Conclusion

My aims in this paper were to analyse Shepherd’s commitment to and interpretation of the *imago-dei* thesis as well as to demonstrate the important role played by this thesis in her understanding the human mind and its cognitive and moral capacities. The first section established the basics of Shepherd’s notion of the (finite) mind as a capacity for sensations, which can manifest itself as a “power of thought” or of “feeling”. The second section established Shepherd’s commitment to the *imago-dei* thesis and expounded upon her interpretation of it: she thinks human minds are images of the divine original in the sense that they can have “knowledge of ends”, “selection of means”, and “perception of moral relations”, which, ultimately, allow them to mirror divine wisdom and goodness in thought and in action. The following two sections applied this interpretation of the *imago-dei* thesis to Shepherd’s understanding of the human mind. In section 4, I argued that the human mind is God-like in its cognitive potential. I have illustrated this point by focussing on certain types of causal reasonings which highlighted what a proficient causal reasoner is capable of and how humans with an inferior understanding fall short. In this section, I also addressed the important role that education plays in allowing human beings to get the maximum out of their capacity to imitate divine wisdom (particularly in thought). As has become evident in section 5 education also has a role to play for the moral capacities of the human mind. While Shepherd believes that all humans are capable of imitating divine goodness in action in virtue of their ability to perceive (i.e. become consciously aware of) moral relations, only some (adult) humans will reach moral proficiency in thought as well. In the last section, I discussed the ramifications of Shepherd’s interpretation of the *imago-dei* thesis for her views of the mind of non-human animals (and the way it differs from the human mind). Given that Shepherd never explicitly commits herself to the interpretation that *only* humans are created in the image of God, which would set the human mind and its capacities *categorically* apart from non-human animals. Thus, her writings allow for the possibility that non-human animals have similar cognitive and moral capacities compared to humans with ‘inferior understandings’. Crucially, this entails

that non-human animals are moral agents according to Shepherd, even though at least as a matter of contingent empirical facts there are neither proficient causal nor moral reasoners amongst non-human animals. Thus, the issue of non-human animal minds further highlights the relevance of Shepherd's theological assumptions to her account of the mind; the importance of which has been established in this paper by demonstrating how her commitment to and interpretation of the *imago-dei* thesis grounds her views concerning the cognitive and moral capacities of the human mind.

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