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HUTCHESONIAN INSPIRED AGENT-BASED VIRTUE ETHICS

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ABSTRACT: Francis Hutcheson's moral sense theory is the inspiration for both act utilitarianism and a contemporary virtue ethics approach that Michael Slote calls agent-based virtue ethics. In this essay, I look at other possibilities for ethical theory that spring from Hutcheson's writings and conclude that the landscape of sentimentalist inspired ethics is richer than many realize. I begin this article with a short explanation of Hutcheson's moral sense theory. I explain that Hutcheson proposes and embraces three distinct criteria of moral evaluation, one of which is concerned with the evaluation of motives and two of which are concerned with the evaluation of acts. Act utilitarianism adopts one of the criteria of act evaluation, and Slote's agent-based virtue ethics adopts the remaining criterion of act evaluation and the criterion of motive evaluation. Then, after pointing out what I believe are shortcomings of Slote's agent-based virtue ethics, I propose two Hutchesonian inspired theories, each of which is a compromise between act utilitarianism and agent-based virtue ethics. The first, which I call hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics, adopts two of Hutcheson's three criteria and is similar structurally to a virtue ethics theory articulated by Rosalind Hursthouse and Linda Zabzebski. The second, which, for lack of a better name, I call Hutchesonian hybridism, adopts all three of Hutcheson's criteria and is a hybrid combination of Slote's actualist agent-based virtue ethics and hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics. I argue that both hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics and Hutchesonian hybridism overcome the shortcomings (pointed out earlier in this essay) of Slote's actualist agent-based virtue ethics, and that both of these theories are, therefore, worthy of further consideration.

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1

Francis Hutcheson's moral sense theory is the inspiration for a formulation of virtue ethics that Michael Slote calls *agent-based virtue ethics*. According to agent-based virtue ethics, an action's moral evaluation is determined *entirely* by the motives of the agent performing the action.[1] Put simply, an action that flows from or expresses virtuous or morally admirable motives is morally right, and an action that flows from or expresses vicious or morally deplorable motives is morally wrong. Although agent-based virtue ethics captures some of our important intuitions concerning moral evaluations, several objections to this theory lead many to reject it.

In this essay, I look at other formulations of virtue ethics (agent-based theories) that spring from Hutcheson's writings, and I conclude that the landscape of sentimentalist inspired virtue ethics is richer than many realize. In the following section, I provide a short explanation of Hutcheson's moral sense theory. I explain that Hutcheson proposes and embraces three distinct criteria of moral evaluation, one of which is concerned with the evaluation of motives and two of which are concerned with the evaluation of actions. In section 3, I explain that Slote's agent-based virtue ethics adopts one of Hutcheson's two criteria of act evaluation and his criterion of motive evaluation.[2] In section 4, I provide a discussion of three of the most pressing or powerful objections to Slote's agent-based virtue ethics. In sections 5 and 6, I propose two Hutchesonian inspired virtue ethics theories that are alternatives to Slote's agent-based virtue ethics. The first, which I call *hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics*, adopts two of Hutcheson's three criteria and is structurally similar to a virtue ethics theory articulated by Rosalind Hursthouse and Linda Zabzebski. The second, which, for lack of a better name, I call *Hutchesonian hybridism*, adopts all three of Hutcheson's criteria of evaluation and is a hybrid combination of Slote's actualist agent-based virtue ethics and hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics. I argue that both hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics and Hutchesonian hybridism overcome the aforementioned objections to Slote's actualist agent-based virtue ethics, and that both of these theories are, therefore, worthy of further consideration.

Before proceeding, I would like to address an issue pertaining to the scope of this essay. I limit my discussion to impartialist virtue ethics

[1] Michael Slote, *Morals from Motives*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 7, states that an agent-based approach is: "one that treats the moral or ethical status of actions as entirely *derivative* from *fundamental* ethical/aretaic facts (or claims) about the motives, dispositions, or inner life of moral individuals."

[2] Act utilitarianism, as I explain later, adopts the remaining criterion of act evaluation.

approaches.[3] Accordingly, I do not compare hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics or Hutchesonian hybridism to deontology, act utilitarianism, or Aristotelian virtue ethics. Nor do I claim that hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics or Hutchesonian hybridism is superior to other impartialist approaches, like act utilitarianism or Slote's agent-based virtue ethics. Rather, I claim that hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics and Hutchesonian hybridism are not open to three objections frequently leveled against standard agent-based virtue ethics and are, therefore, worthy of consideration.

2

Francis Hutcheson, the first English-speaking philosopher to articulate the greatest happiness principle, is not a utilitarian.[4,5] In *An Inquiry Concerning the Original of Our Ideas of Virtue or Moral Good*, Hutcheson claims that we possess a moral sense that is actuated when we observe certain actions.[6,7] More accurately, Hutcheson believes our moral sense is actuated when we contemplate actions and the affections or motives behind these actions. The result is a distinctively moral (nonnatural) ideas:

> We are not to imagine, that this moral Sense, more than the other Senses, supposes any innate Ideas, Knowledge, or practical Proposition: We mean by it only a Determination of our Minds to receive amiable or disagreeable Ideas of Actions, when they occur to our Observation, antecedent to any Opinions of Advantage or Loss to redound to our selves from them. (*Inquiry*, 1,8)

Hutcheson states that we feel a sense of approbation, approval, or joy when we contemplate actions that flow from morally good motives—love,

[3] When I say an approach is "impartialist," I mean that morally speaking, an agent's own well-being is counted the same as anyone else's well-being. That is, everyone's well-being is weighted the same.

[4] Joachim Hruschka claims that Leibniz was the first philosopher to articulate the greatest happiness principle. See Hruschka, 'The Greatest Happiness Principle and Other Early German Anticipations of Utilitarian Theory,' *Utilitas* 3, no. 2 (1991): 165–77.

[5] In this section I provide a plausible reading of Hutcheson. It is not my goal to provide a thorough examination of Hutcheson's ethics or to demonstrate that my reading is the only plausible reading. Rather, I use this reading as a "jumping off point" in order to demonstrate that Hutcheson's ethics motivate at least two attractive alternatives to Slote's virtue ethics (which he also claims are motivated by Hutcheson).

[6] My quotations from the *Inquiry* will reflect the text from the second edition (with italics removed) (1726).

[7] Rafe McGregor, in "Making Sense of Moral Perception," *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 18, no. 4 (2015): 745–58, offers a compelling defense of Hutcheson's moral sense theory by recourse to Charles Darwin's evolutionary perspective.

benevolence, and compassion—and a sense of condemnation, disapprobation, or aversion when we contemplate actions that flow from morally evil motives—hatred or delight in the misery of others:

> And yet as soon as any Action is represented to us as flowing from Love, Humanity, Gratitude, Compassion, a Study of the good of others, and a Delight in their Happiness, altho it were in the most distant Part of the World, or in some past Age, we feel Joy within us, admire the lovely Action, and praise its Author. And on the contrary, every Action represented as flowing from Hatred, Delight in the Misery of others, or Ingratitude, raises Abhorrence and Aversion. (*Inquiry*, 1,2)

> Approbation is plainly a Perception arising without previous Volition, or Choice of it, because of any concomitant Pleasure. The Occasion of it is the Perception of benevolent Affections in our selves, or the discovering the like in others, even when we are incapable of any Action or Election. (*An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, with Illustrations on the Moral Sense*, 3rd edition, 1742, Section I)

It is important to remember that for Hutcheson, our moral sense really is a sense.[8] As Luigi Turco explains: "It is independent of our will, is common to mankind and, above all, it is immediate, that is to say its deliverances are not conclusions mediated by premises."[9]

After explaining how our moral sense works, Hutcheson claims that the only morally good motives are different forms of benevolence:

> If we examine all the Actions which are counted amiable any where, and enquire into the Grounds upon which they are approv'd, we shall find, that in the Opinion of the Person who approves them, they always appear as Benevolent, or flowing from Love of others. (*Inquiry*, 3,1)[10]
> And it must be owned, that the most perfect Virtue consists in the calm, unpassionate Benevolence, rather than in particular Affections. (*An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, with Illustrations on the Moral Sense*, 3rd edition, 1742, Section I)

[8] As the previous passages demonstrate, Hutcheson claims that we react with approbation in those instances in which we observe or contemplate agents performing actions that flow from or express morally good motives (benevolence, love, and compassion). Just to be clear, this approbation is present when we observe or contemplate morally good motives and/or actions that flow from or express these motives.

[9] Luigi Turco, "Moral Sense and the Foundations of Morals," in *Cambridge Companion to the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. Alexander Broadie, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 136–56, esp. 138.

[10] See also, McGregor, who, when discussing benevolence, states: "Benevolence is the sole ground for approbation. . . . [T]he moral sense is a faculty for the approval of benevolence in oneself and others. The moral sense both approves of benevolence and disapproves of its absence in oneself and others . . . so it is more accurately characterized as a faculty for judging benevolence" (McGregor, ""Making Sense of Moral Perception," 751).

Finally, Hutcheson concludes that universal benevolence is the most praiseworthy or best motive:

> From the two last Observations, we may see what Actions our moral Sense would most recommend to our Election, as the most perfectly Virtuous: viz. such as appear to have the most universal unlimited Tendency to the greatest and most extensive Happiness of all the rational Agents, to whom our Influence can reach. (*Inquiry*, 3,10)[11]

I want to stress that (in some places) Hutcheson claims that good consequences are not sufficient to make an act morally good; moral goodness requires the right motivation, benevolence:

> [I]n like manner, no good effect, which I did not actually foresee and intend, makes my action morally good. . . .(*Inquiry*, 3,12)

> Nor is a direct Intention of publick Evil necessary to make an Action Evil, it is enough that it flows from Self-Love, with a plain Neglect of the Good of others. . . . (*Inquiry, 3,12)*

> Nor shall we find any thing amiable in any Action whatsoever, where there is no Benevolence imagin'd; nor in any Disposition, or Capacity, which is not suppos'd applicable to, and design'd for benevolent Purposes. (*Inquiry*, 3,1)

Up to this point, Hutcheson can be seen as a theorist who embraces two distinct criteria of moral evaluation, both of which can be discovered through our moral sense:[12] (1) benevolence is the only morally good or praiseworthy motive; and (2) actions that flow from or express benevolence are the only morally good actions (or the morally best actions).

Elsewhere in the *Inquiry*, however, Hutcheson explains that there is a derivative sense in which an action can be evaluated in a consequentialist manner, that is, without regard to the motive behind the action. Specifically,

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[11] In an interesting essay, John Bishop explains that Hutcheson believes that benevolence is a natural part of the human character. He then attempts to explain how Hutcheson can successfully claim that our moral sense, which approves of benevolence, can motivate moral action. See, John Bishop, "Moral Motivation and the Development of Francis Hutcheson's Philosophy," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 57, no. 2 (April 1996): 277–95. See also, Robert M. Steward, "John Clarke and Francis Hutcheson on Self-Love and Moral Motivation," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 20, no. 3 (1982): 261–77, and Elizabeth S. Radcliffe, "Love and Benevolence in Hutcheson's and Hume's theories of the Passions," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 12, no. 4 (2004): 631–53.

[12] As I explain at the end of this section, when I discuss foundational and factoral levels of normative ethical theory, Hutcheson's ethics can be understood as being deontological at the foundational level (the level concerned with general claims about morality) and consequentialist/utilitarian at the factoral level (the level at which we make ethical evaluations). For the sake of convenience, I will use the term "criterion" when discussing both of these levels.

Hutcheson believes that actions that realize that at which good motives are aimed are morally choiceworthy or good.[13] And since Hutcheson believes that the only morally good motives are forms of benevolence and universal benevolence is the best motive, it follows that the only good actions are those that would be aimed at by one motivated by benevolence and the best actions are those that would be aimed at by one motivated by universal benevolence:

> In comparing the moral Qualitys of Actions, in order to regulate our Election among various Actions propos'd, or to find which of them has the greatest moral Excellency, we are led by our moral Sense of Virtue to judge thus; that in equal Degrees of Happiness, expected to proceed from the Action, the Virtue is in proportion to the Number of Persons to whom the Happiness shall extend; (and here the Dignity, or moral Importance of Persons, may compensate Numbers) and in equal Numbers, the Virtue is as the Quantity of the Happiness, or natural Good; or that the Virtue is in a compound Ratio of the Quantity of Good, and Number of Enjoyers. In the same manner, the moral Evil, or Vice, is as the Degree of Misery, and Number of Sufferers; so that, that Action is best, which procures the greatest Happiness for the greatest Numbers; and that worst, which, in like manner, occasions Misery. (*Inquiry*, 3,8)

Essentially, Hutcheson claims that when comparing the value of different actions, our moral sense teaches us or makes us aware that bringing about more happiness or acting in a way that increases the happiness of more people increases the moral goodness of an action. He furthermore concludes that those motivated by universal benevolence aim at bringing about the greatest happiness to the greatest number; hence, the best actions are those that bring about the greatest good to the greatest number.[14]

We should keep in mind that although Hutcheson embraces the greatest happiness principle, his justification for the principle is different from the justification for Benthamite or philosophical utilitarianism. Act utilitarianism claims that acts that maximize happiness are morally right, and they are right just because they maximize happiness (which is the only intrinsic good). According to Hutcheson, acts that maximize happiness are right because they are the sorts of acts that virtuous agents—agents motivated by

[13] Stephen Darwall provides an excellent discussion Hutcheson's "consequentialism" in "Hume and the Invention of Utilitarianism," in *Hume and Hume's Connexions*, ed. M. A. Stewart and John Wright, 58–82 (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), see esp. 61–64.

[14] See footnote 13.

universal benevolence—would perform.[15] That is, there is a derivative sense in which acts can be evaluated in a consequentialist manner.[16] For utilitarianism, the fact that happiness is the only intrinsic good is sufficient to explain why acts that maximize happiness are right. For Hutcheson, even if happiness were the only intrinsic good, it does not necessarily or directly follow that acts that maximize happiness are right. Rather, such acts are right because agents motivated by universal benevolence would aim for states of affairs with maximal happiness. In addition, utilitarianism treats motives differently from the way in which Hutcheson treats them. For utilitarianism, motive evaluations, like act evaluations, are strictly a function of consequences.

According to direct utilitarianism,[17] if an agent acts from (pretheoretically) vicious motives that maximize the good, her motives are morally good. Thus, if an agent acts from selfishness and hatred, and to her own consternation her act maximizes the good, the occurrent motives of hatred and selfishness are morally good. Hutcheson, unlike utilitarians, would claim that these motives are never good.[18]

From the preceding, we see that Hutcheson advocates a moral theory consisting of three distinct criteria of moral evaluation. The first and dominant criterion of evaluation—Criterion 1—is concerned with motives. According to this nonconsequentialist criterion of motive evaluation, certain motives are fundamentally morally good, and we know they are morally

[15] I am not overlooking the distinction between acts that aim at maximizing happiness and acts that maximize happiness. I believe that Hutcheson does claim that agents motivated by universal benevolence perform acts that actually maximize happiness. In footnote 32 I briefly discuss a formulation of Hutchesonian inspired ethics grounded in the claim that agents motivated by universal benevolence aim to maximize the good.

[16] See Darwall, "Hume and the Invention of Utilitarianism."

[17] Direct utilitarianism dictates that the object of evaluation, whether it is a motive or an act, is evaluated in terms of its consequences. That is, a motive or an act is morally good if it maximizes (or brings about enough of) the good or happiness. Since act utilitarianism, which is one (limited) form of direct utilitarianism, is not concerned with the evaluation of motives, when I talk about utilitarianism's treatment of motives, I focus on direct utilitarianism.

[18] Bentham states: "There is no such thing as any sort of motive that is in itself a bad one." He continues: "With respect to goodness and badness, as it is with everything else that is not itself either pain or pleasure, so is it with motives. If they are good or bad, it is only on account of their effects: good, on account of their *tendency* to produce pleasure, or avert pain: bad, on account of their *tendency* to produce pain, or avert pleasure." Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, ch. 10, sec. 2, privately printed in 1780 and first published in 1789. Mill's approach to motives is somewhat more complex than Bentham's in that he seems to evaluate motives as types. Nevertheless, he asserts that motive evaluations are based entirely on consequences. See, J. S. Mill, *Utilitarianism*, ed. Oskar Piest (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1957), ch. IV, 45–47.

good because of our moral sense. More specifically, when we contemplate actions motivated by benevolence, we feel a sense of joy or approbation. We conclude, therefore, that benevolence is a morally good motive (and that universal benevolence is the best motive).

The second criterion of evaluation—Criterion 2—treats actions in a nonconsequentialist manner. Actions that flow from or express good motives (benevolence) are morally good. The third criterion of evaluation—Criterion 3—offers a strong *consequentialist* treatment of actions. Actions that bring about the consequences that would be aimed at by an agent acting out of good motives are morally good. And since Hutcheson believes that universal benevolence is the best motive and that one motivated by universal benevolence aims at maximizing happiness, Criterion 3 dictates that actions that bring about maximal happiness are morally best. Combining these three criteria yields what it seems natural to call a hybrid approach.

Before proceeding, I would like to discuss an alternative hybrid account of Hutcheson's ethics that was proposed by Jeffrey Edwards. Edwards, using Shelly Kagan's distinction between foundational and factoral levels of normative theory, argues that Hutcheson's theory can be understood as a deontological-utilitarian hybrid. Kagan states that normative ethical theories should be understand as having two levels. The foundational level is concerned with general claims concerning morality, such as, moral evaluations should be grounded in claims concerning the consequences of actions (for act utilitarianism or egoism). The factoral level is concerned with what we usually think of as the ethical theory. For example, at the factoral level, act consequentialism dictates that an act is morally right if and only if there are no other actions available to the agent that would bring about more good. Kagan explains that a theories' commitments at the foundational level may be deontological, while the same theory may be consequentialist at the factoral level, or vice versa. For example, at the foundational level, a theory may be consequentialist; it may dictate that consequences should determine whether an act is morally right. However, if we discover that common sense morality would bring about the best consequences, at the factoral level this theory would be deontological.

Edwards suggests that Hutcheson's ethics can be understood as being deontological at the foundational level and consequentialist/utilitarian at the factoral level. That is, at the foundational level Hutcheson can be understood as claiming that moral rightness is determined directly by the motives of the agent performing an act AND that universal benevolence is the highest or best motive. At the factoral level, Hutcheson can be

understood as claiming that the action that is best is the action that brings about the greatest happiness.

Edwards essay is a plausible reading of Hutcheson (and a very interesting reading at that), but I am not convinced that it is the only or best way to understand Hutcheson. Furthermore, I am not claiming that the theory I advance is an interpretation of Hutcheson; rather, it is inspired by Hutcheson or has its roots in Hutcheson's ethics. I will have more to say about this topic later in this article.

If we want to use Kagan's distinction between the foundational and factoral levels of normative ethic theory, we can claim that at the foundational level, Hutcheson's theory is, as Edwards points out, deontological. That is, at the foundational level the theory claims that: (1) morality is primarily concerned with actions; (2) act evaluations are strongly related to the motives of the agent performing the act; and (3) the highest or best motive is universal benevolence. At the factoral level, we will claim that there are two different ways to evaluate actions (or two criteria of act evaluation) and one way to evaluate motives (or one criterion of motive evaluation). First, acts that flow from or express universal benevolence are morally right (in virtue of the foundational claims that act evaluations should be grounded in evaluations of motives and universal benevolence is the best motive). Second, acts that maximize happiness are morally right or best (in virtue of the foundational claim that agents motivated by universal benevolence will attempt to maximize happiness). Finally, the criterion of motive assessment dictates that a motive is morally good if an act's motive is universal benevolence, or a motive not too far from universal benevolence (in virtue of the foundational claim that universal benevolence is the best motive).

Notice that this is a different sort of hybrid from the one proposed by Edwards. Edwards claims the Hutcheson's ethics can be conceived of as a hybrid because at the foundational level it is deontological and at the factoral level it is consequentialist. My approach is more radical in that it is a hybrid at the factoral level—it contains both a deontological and consequentialist criterion of right action.

The current landscape of normative ethical theory contains moral conceptions that adopt different criteria from Hutcheson's theory. Slote's agent-based virtue ethics (and an approach proposed by Jorge Garcia[19]) adopts Criterion 1 and Criterion 2 (the first concerned with motives and the second with actions). Act utilitarianism adopts Criterion 3 (solely concerned with actions).

[19] See, J. L. A. Garcia, "The Right and the Good," *Philosophia* 21, nos. 3–4 (April 1992): 235–56.

3

In this section, I will briefly describe Slote's agent-based virtue ethics, and then in the following section, I discuss several objections to this theory.

In *Morals From Motives* (2001), Slote explains that agent-based virtue ethics is an approach that treats the evaluation of motives as being ethically basic or fundamental. A motive is morally good or praiseworthy just because it is fundamentally or intrinsically morally good or praiseworthy. In one of his early formulations of agent-based virtue ethics, which he calls "Morality as Universal Benevolence," Slote explores an agent-based approach grounded in the claim that universal benevolence is the best motive (it is morally good without regard to the presumptive contingent fact that it tends to bring about good consequences).[20,21]

Agent-based virtue ethics treats the evaluation of actions as being "entirely derivative" from the evaluation of motives.[22] A morally right or good action is an action that flows from or expresses a virtuous or praiseworthy motive (or motives). Thus, according to morality as universal benevolence, an action is morally right or good if and only if it flows from or expresses universal benevolence (or a motive not too far from universal benevolence). Consider two similarly situated professors who told an above-average student that her essay was excellent. Both professors believed that telling the student (whose essay was good, but not excellent) that her essay was excellent would increase the student's confidence and thereby increase the likelihood that the student would become an excellent student and eventually a successful novelist. They furthermore believed that the student's long-term well-being would be increased if she became a novelist and society would benefit from the publication of her novels. The first professor was motivated by universal benevolence. He told the student her essay was excellent because he wanted to increase the well-being of his student and the well-being of society at large. The second professor was motivated by selfishness. Although he believed that telling the student that her essay was excellent would increase her well-being, this played no role in his choice to compliment her work. Rather, he was motivated by a desire to increase the likelihood that he would get

[20] In "Virtue Ethics," 220–25, Slote explores the possibilities of an agent-based approach grounded in universal benevolence, but later in this same essay, 225–29, Slote explores a partialistic agent-based virtue ethics grounded in caring. Slote's more recent work is focused almost exclusively on the ethics of care. See, Michael Slote, "The Justice of Caring," *Social Philosophy and Policy* 15, no. 1 (Winter, 1998): 171–95 and *Morals From Motives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

[21] Unlike Hutcheson, Slote does not claim that we have a moral sense.

[22] Slote, *Morals from Motives*, 5.

tenure the following year, and he believed that if students liked him and gave him good evaluations, tenure was more likely. According to Slote's morality as universal benevolence, the first agent performed a right action or did the right thing, while the second agent did the wrong thing. Although, as I explain below, there are several potent objections to Slote's agent-based virtue ethics, one of its strong points is that it captures the intuition that sometimes two agents, whose motives are quite different, can perform the same act type, yet in some sense their actions are not morally equivalent.

As previously stated, Slote's agent-based virtue ethics is inspired by Hutcheson's virtue ethics.[23] The criterion for right action for morality as universal benevolence is: an action is morally right if and only if it flows from, expresses, or reflects universal benevolence. This nonconsequentialist criterion of act evaluation is roughly the same as Hutcheson's Criterion 2.[24,25] Morality as universal benevolence also utilizes Hutcheson's criterion of motive evaluation—Hutcheson's Criterion 1. Like Hutcheson, Slote claims that universal benevolence is morally praiseworthy or good, and its moral goodness is fundamental or foundational. Its moral goodness is in no way determined by the presumptive contingent fact that actions that flow from universal benevolence tend to bring about good consequences.

4

In this section, I discuss several objections to Slote's agent-based virtue ethics. First, it does not conceptually allow for or make sense of the locution "an agent did the right thing for the wrong reasons." Second, and related, it violates "ought implies can." Third, it completely discounts the role of consequences in act evaluations.

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[23] In the Preface to *Morals from Motives*, p. viii, Slote asserts: "Rather than follow, or try to update, Aristotle or the Stoics, virtue ethics can look for inspiration to eighteenth-century British moral sentimentalism. For both Hume and Hutcheson speak about and defend generalized forms of benevolence, and Hutcheson in particular does so by reference to a motive, universal benevolence, conceived as admirable and morally ideal independently of its consequences."

[24] Slote actually states that for morality as universal benevolence, an agent performs a right act if and only if her act expresses or reflects universal benevolence (*or a motive not too far from universal benevolence*). Notice the similarity between this criterion of act evaluation and that for satisficing utilitarianism, which states that an act is morally right if and only if it yields enough good or happiness. See Michael Slote, *Common-Sense Morality and Consequentialism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), 37–50. For the sake of simplicity, in this essay I utilize the formulation provided in the main text.

[25] In his more recent work, Slote rejects universal benevolence as the best motive and adopts in its place caring.

Elsewhere, I explain that an unfortunate consequence of deriving act evaluations from the occurrent motives of the agent performing an act is that Slote's treatment of actions does not conceptually allow for an agent to do the right thing for the wrong reasons.[26] Consider an agent, sitting in a café in Manhattan, who overhears two terrorists talking about an imminent dirty bomb attack. The terrorists, who stole radioactive waste material, have already built a dirty bomb, and they intend to detonate it in Times Square, thereby killing many innocent people and rendering much of Manhattan uninhabitable for many years. Shortly after hearing about these plans, the agent contacts the mayor of New York City and the governor of New York and shares all the relevant details (e.g., times and places). Presumably, the agent had an obligation to share this information with the authorities, and sharing it with the mayor and governor was the right thing to do.

According to Slote's agent-based virtue ethics, whether the agent did the right thing depends on her motives. If the agent acted out of universal benevolence (or a motive close to universal benevolence, like care), she did the right thing. If, however, the agent acted out of a motive quite different or far from universal benevolence, informing the authorities was wrong. For example, we must conclude that the act was wrong if we learn that the agent said to her best friend: "I thought about keeping the information to myself, because I love the idea of a bomb going off and killing all those Jewish bankers, gays, and East Coast commies, but when I thought about all the fame and money I could earn if I turned them in, I began to think that I should turn them in. And when I realized that turning them in would unleash pent up anger and hostility toward Muslims, even though I didn't think the terrorists were Muslims, I knew I had to turn them in." I suggest, and common sense morality is on my side, that it makes more sense to say that sharing the information was the right thing to do, but depending on the agent's motives, she did it for the right reason or the wrong reason.

Not only does agent-based virtue ethics not conceptually allow for an agent to do the right thing for the wrong reason (or the wrong thing for the right reason), but, as Michael Brady points out, if Slote's agent-based virtue ethics cannot make sense of an agent doing the right thing for the wrong reason, agent-based virtue ethics cannot dictate that an agent motivated by

[26] Scott Gelfand, "Hypothetical Agent-Based Virtue Ethics," *Southwest Philosophy Review* 17, no. 1 (January 2000): 85–94. Several others discuss this same objection. See: Ramon Das, "Virtue Ethics and Right Action," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 81, no. 3 (2003): 324–39; Michael Brady, "Against Agent-Based Virtue Ethics," *Philosophical Papers* 33, no. 1 (2004): 1–10; and Liezl van Zyl, "In Defence of Agent-Based Virtue Ethics," *Philosophical Papers* 32, no. 2 (2005): 273–88.

vicious or nongood motives has an obligation to perform action X, a (pretheoretically) morally right action.[27] Essentially, Brady claims that if (as agent-based virtue ethics dictates) an action's moral evaluation is determined by the motives behind the action, then whether one has an obligation to do action X depends on one's motives. If, for example, the motives behind X are morally good, then performing X is right and the agent has an obligation to do X. If, however, the motives behind X are bad, then performing X is necessarily wrong. And if an action is wrong, an agent cannot have a duty to perform it. Hence, an agent with bad motives cannot have a duty to perform actions that pretheoretically seem to be correct, like alerting the authorities to an upcoming dirty bomb attack.

A second objection to Slote's agent-based virtue ethics, which is related to the first objection, is that it violates "ought implies can."[28] Daniel Doviak, when discussing this objection, asks the reader to imagine a wicked agent who believes he is incapable of acting out of care or benevolence.[29] This agent must decide whether to harm or not harm an innocent bystander. If this agent harms the bystander, he will be acting out of malevolence, and if he does not harm the bystander he will be acting out of fear of being caught and imprisoned. Doviak asserts that "it should be obvious that the agent's obligation is to avoid harming the innocent person."[30] Slote's morality as universal benevolence dictates that in order to do the right thing, which the agent has an obligation to do, the agent must avoid harming the bystander and must do so acting out of universal benevolence (or at the very least, a nonbad or neutral motive). However, this agent is incapable of acting out of universal benevolence (or a neutral motive). Hence, he cannot do the right thing. If "ought implies can" holds, the agent who is obligated to do the right thing must be able to do the right thing. In this case, however, the agent cannot do the right thing. Hence, we have a violation of "ought implies can."

The third and final objection I would like to discuss is that Slote's agent-based virtue ethics does not take consequences into account when evaluating actions. Joseph Walsh claims that this aspect of Slote's theory is the "most significant reason" that theorists have not been persuaded to embrace

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[27] Brady, "Against Agent-Based Virtue Ethics," 5–6.

[28] David Doviak, "A New Form of Agent-Based Virtue Ethics," *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, Vol. 14, No. 3, (2011), 259–72. See also: Scott Gelfand, "Hypothetical Agent-Based Virtue Ethics" and Daniel Jacobson, "An Unsolved Problem for Slote's Agent-Based Virtue Ethics," *Philosophical Studies*, Vol. 111, No. 2, (2002), 53–67.

[29] Doviak, after discussing several objections to Slote's agent-based virtue ethics, proposes his own formulation agent-based virtue ethics. Doviak, at 260, asserts that an action is morally right if it expresses "an optimal balance of virtue over vice."

[30] Doviak, *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, 262.

his formulation of agent-based virtue ethics.[31] Those who pose this objection claim that agent-based virtue ethics is flawed in that it dictates that an action that flows from or expresses good motives is morally right even if the action has horrendous consequences.

Slote, who anticipates this objection, admits that consequences do not directly affect act evaluations, but he claims that an agent who is truly motivated by universal benevolence would be concerned about the consequences of her actions in that she is concerned about how her actions might affect others.[32] Hence, in only the rarest cases would an agent perform an act that she believes will bring about horrendous consequences. But, as Walsh points out, it is possible that an agent motivated by universal benevolence could get it wrong (and she could get it wrong much of the time). That is, she may believe that her actions will contribute to the well-being of others, but because she is misinformed or a bad deliberator, her actions actually harm others on a regular basis.

I am not suggesting that agent-based virtue ethics ought to be rejected. Rather, I am pointing out some objections to *Slote's* agent-based virtue ethics. In each of the two following sections, I will explore a formulation of agent-based virtue ethics in the Hutchesonian tradition that is not open to these objections.

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In this section I discuss a formulation of agent-based virtue ethics that I call hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics. It borrows Hutcheson's Criterion 1 and Criterion 3. In the following section, I will discuss a formulation of agent-based virtue ethics that utilizes all three of Hutcheson's criteria of moral evaluation, which I call *Hutchesonian hybridism*.

Rosalind Hursthouse, who is not proponent of agent-based virtue ethics, states that virtue ethics can be formulated at follows:

> **V1** An action is right if and only if it is what a virtuous agent would characteristically (i.e., acting in character) do in the circumstances.
>
> **V1a** A virtuous agent is one who acts virtuously, that is, one who has and exercises the virtues.
>
> **V2** A virtue is a character trait that . . .[33]

[31] Joseph Walsh, "Agent-Basing, Consequences and Realized Motives," *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*," Vol. 19, No. 3, (2016), 649–61, 650. After discussing this objection to Slote's agent-based virtue ethics, Walsh proposes a formulation of agent-based virtue ethics that is sensitive to consequences. Essentially, Walsh claims that an action is right if and only if it realizes an agent's morally praiseworthy or virtuous motive.

[32] Slote, *Morals from Motives*, 17–18.

[33] Rosalind Hursthouse, "Normative Virtue Ethics," *How Should One Live?*, ed. Roger Crisp (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 22–23.

Hursthouse states that V2 might be completed in a number of different ways. Its completion might consist of a list of virtues, or, à la Hume, it might state that a virtue is a character trait that is useful or agreeable to the agent or others, or it might state that a virtue is a character trait that is necessary for *eudaimonia*.[34]

Notice that when Hursthouse asserts that "an action is right if and only if it is what an agent would characteristically do in the circumstances," she says nothing about the actual motives (or character traits) of an actual agent. Rather, she says that an action is right if a virtuous agent (acting out of virtue) *would* perform the action. Hence, if a nonvirtuous or vicious agent performs the same action that a virtuous agent *would* perform, her action is right. Put differently, an action is right if it is the type of action that a *hypothetical* virtuous agent would perform. If, like Hutcheson, we claim that a hypothetical virtuous agent (an agent motivated by universal benevolence) would maximize happiness, it follows that an action is right if and only if it would maximize happiness. This last is the same as Hutcheson's Criterion 3. And if we claim that universal benevolence is a morally good motive just because it is morally good (its rightness is foundational), our treatment of motives is the same as Slote's treatment of motives and Hutcheson's Criterion 1.

If we combine Criterion 1 with Criterion 3, we have a hybrid moral theory that I call hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics. Criterion 1, which is the dominant or foundational criterion, evaluates motives in a nonconsequentialist manner. Like Slote's agent-based virtue ethics, it dictates that universal benevolence is a morally good motive, the best motive. Importantly, its goodness is not a function of the contingent fact that universal benevolence tends to bring about happiness. Criterion 3, as stated previously, is consequentialist.[35] A theory that combines Criterion 1 and Criterion 3 is agent-prior, as it grounds act evaluations in independent aretaic evaluations of character. That said, it is nevertheless a form of agent-basing, because it dictates that character evaluations are fundamental or foundational (not grounded in something else, for example, *eudaimonia*), and act evaluations are derived entirely from these evaluations of character.[36] As I explain

[34] Hursthouse, "Normative Virtue Ethics," 23.

[35] To say that an agent, through her action, is aiming to maximize happiness is not to say that this agent will perform an action that does, in fact, maximize happiness. I will say more about this later.

[36] In *Morals from Motives*, Slote explicitly recognizes the possibility of a hypothetical agent-based account: "agent-basing allows the possibility of ultimately grounding act-assessments in claims about *hypothetical* virtuous agents," see p. 6, note 1.

below, hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics is not open to the three objections discussed above.

Before I explain why I believe that hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics is not open to the three objections discussed above, I would like to discuss a variation on the formulation discussed above. I have been assuming, as does Hutcheson, that an agent motivated by universal benevolence would perform actions that maximize the good. Of course, this assumption is false, in that agents motivated by universal benevolence and lacking complete knowledge may attempt to maximize the good yet fail to do so.

In order to account for this possibility, I would like to distinguish between two different possible criteria of right action for hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics. The first, which is true to Hutcheson, dictates that an act is right if and only if it is the type of act that would be performed by a hypothetical virtuous agent that has all relevant knowledge. Such an agent would maximize the good, and I call this formulation *strong* hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics. The second dictates that an act is right if and only if it is the type of act that would be performed by a hypothetical virtuous agent who possesses the same knowledge as the actual agent. The criterion of right action for this formulation, which I call *weak* hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics, is equivalent to expectablist utilitarianism.[37]

Weak hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics may be appealing to those attracted to agent-based theories, because it recognizes and excuses lack of knowledge and moral luck in the same way that actualist agent-based theories do so. In order to stay true to Hutcheson, throughout the remained of this essay I will be working with the strong formulation (Criterion 3 is the greatest happiness principle).[38] That said, the responses I provide in the

[37] I am, for simplicity's sake, ignoring the distinction between acts that one expects will maximize the good or happiness and acts that maximize expectable good or happiness. Compare an act that has a sixty percent chance of bringing about a little good and a forty percent chance of extinguishing the human race. I expect that this act would maximize the good or happiness, but this act will not maximize expectable good or happiness.

[38] Just to reiterate, the criteria of right action for each of these formulations corresponds to the criteria of right action for different formulations of utilitarianism, but both formulations treat motives differently from the way in which utilitarianism treats motives. Recall that for direct utilitarianism, motives are evaluated in terms of their consequences; that is, a motive is morally good because it (expectably) brings, or tends to bring, about good consequences. However, for hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics, a motive is good without regard to its consequences; evaluations of motives are made at ground level. Thus, even if selfishness brings about good consequences and is therefore morally good according to utilitarianism, for hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics selfishness is not a morally good motive. This is the case because hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics dictates that evaluations of motives are made at ground level and intuitively, without regard to whether the motives actually tend to maximize the good.

following discussion would be no different if I were utilizing the weak formulation.

The first objection to Slote's agent-based virtue ethics is that an agent cannot do the right thing for the wrong reasons. By separating the evaluation of an agent's occurrent motives from the evaluation of that act that flows from an agent's occurrent motives, hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics conceptually allows for an agent to do the right thing for the wrong reasons. Consider the hypothetical case in which the selfish, hateful agent learns about an impending dirty-bomb attack and decides to alert the authorities. Slote's actualist agent-based virtue ethics dictates that this act is wrong; it flowed from deplorable motives. Hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics dictates that informing the authorities is right, because it is the type of act that a benevolent agent would perform. Importantly, it is right regardless of the motives of the actual agent (Criterion 3). However, because hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics combines Criterion 3 with Criterion 1, the latter of which is directed toward the evaluation of motives, the theory dictates that even though the agent did the right thing, his motives were wrong (he was not motivated by universal benevolence). Put differently, he performed the right action for the wrong reason.[39,40]

The second objection is that Slote's agent-based virtue ethics violates "ought implies can." In short, the objection claims that regardless of our motives, we have the obligation to do the right thing. Yet, according to Slote's agent-based virtue ethics, agents who cannot act out of universal benevolence cannot do the right thing. Claiming that an agent has the obligation to do the right thing even if she cannot do so violates "ought implies can." In the example provided by Doviak, an agent is faced with the choice between harming or not harming an innocent bystander. If he

[39] This formulation of hypothetical agent-basing is not an ideal observer theory. Ideal observer theories typically do not evaluate the observer's character, and they say nothing about the relationship between an agent's character and what is morally right. That is, ideal observer theories do not make the claim that the ideal observer has good character and because s/he has good character the act that s/he chooses is right. In fact, an ideal observer might realize that her/his own character is morally bad. So, such views are not agent-based in any way. See Roderick Firth, "Ethical Absolutism and the Ideal Observer," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 12, no. 3 (March, 1952): 317–45.

[40] Hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics also avoids Brady's objection to Slote's agent-based virtue ethics. Recall that Brady claims that agents with bad motives cannot do the right thing (according to agent-based virtue ethics) and that these agents, therefore, cannot have an obligation to do the right thing. If, however, we separate actual motives from right action and claim that the criterion of right action is "an action is right if it is the type of action that a hypothetical virtuous agent would perform," a poorly motivated agent can do the right thing. And if a poorly motivated agent can do the right thing, it makes sense to say that this agent has an obligation to do the right thing.

harms the bystander he will be motivated by malevolence, and if he does not harm the bystander he will be motivated by a fear of getting caught and punished (self-concern or self-love). If, as seems obvious, the agent has the obligation to do the right thing in this situation, Slote's agent-based virtue ethics dictates that he has the obligation to not harm the bystander and his motive must be universal benevolence (or some motive close to universal benevolence). Since this agent cannot act out of universal benevolence in this situation, the agent has the obligation to do the right thing even though he cannot in fact do so. This last is a violation of "ought implies can."

Hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics is not open to this objection. According to hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics, the agent's occurrent motives do not affect act evaluations. If an agent performs the type of act that a hypothetical virtuous agent would perform, her act is right (regardless of her motives). In the case being discussed, a hypothetical virtuous agent would not harm the bystander. Hence, the actual agent has an obligation not to harm the bystander. Importantly, he does not have an obligation to act out of universal benevolence. Since the actual agent can avoid harming the bystander (even though his act will be motivated by self-love), there is not violation of "ought implies can." Of course, if the agent could somehow act out of universal benevolence, he will do the right thing, and his motive will receive a positive evaluation as well.

By now it should be obvious that hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics is not open to the third objection, which claims that Slote's agent-based virtue ethics is criticizable because consequences play no direct role in act evaluations. Criterion 3 is a consequentialist criterion of right action. The best actions are those that maximize happiness.[41]

6

I conclude this essay by looking at another Hutchesonian inspired formulation of agent-based virtue ethics, which I call *Hutchesonian hybrid agent*-based *virtue ethics* (or *Hutchesonian hybridism* for short). Although I do believe that a weakness of Slote's actualist agent-based virtue ethics is that it does not conceptually allow for an agent to do the right thing for the wrong reasons

[41] Of course, as discussed earlier in this essay, whether an agent motivated by universal benevolence would actually perform acts that maximize the good depends on how much knowledge the agent possesses. An agent with partial knowledge of the potential consequences of the actions available to her might try to maximize the good but fail. A weak formulation of hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics would allow for situations in which agents who do not maximize the good can do the right thing.

(a weakness not shared by hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics), there may be a sense in which his approach does a better job of evaluating acts than does hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics. If we examine the way in which people speak when morally evaluating acts, we discover that many of us speak as if there are two different ways to do so. Sometimes we assert that an agent "acted rightly," whereas other times we assert that the agent "performed an act that is morally right" or "did the right thing." I submit that in the first instance we are concerned with evaluating *how* the agent acts, and in the second instance with *what* the agent does in acting. (More needs to be said about this intuitive distinction, but for the sake of this essay I shall use it to clarify other ideas.)

The criterion of act evaluation for hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics—Criterion 3—more closely relates to *what* the agent does in acting than *how* she acts, and the criterion of act evaluation for actualist agent-based virtue ethics—Criterion 2—relates more closely to how the agent acts (and her/his inner life) than to what she does. That is, when discussing what the agent did or what type of act she performed, it makes more sense to say that the agent performed a right act than it does to say that the agent acted rightly, and the act that a hypothetical virtuous (benevolent) agent would perform is relevant to this. On the other hand, when discussing the morality of an agent's act from the standpoint of *how* she acted, it makes more sense to say that only the agent who acts out of good motives acts rightly.

In order to more clearly illustrate this distinction, let us take a look at another example. Consider an agent who, like his spouse, abhors the beneficiaries of the charity Oxfam. After learning that his spouse intends to divorce him, the agent donated all of his and his spouse's joint savings to Oxfam. He tells all of his friends that it causes him immense pain to think that his behavior contributed to the well-being of the beneficiaries of the charity, but this pain is outweighed by the joy he feels when he thinks about how his behavior will hurt his spouse. In one sense, the act of donating a large sum of money to Oxfam ought to receive a positive evaluation; one who makes such a donation performs the same type of act that a virtuous agent would perform. When we contemplate the charitable act itself, without taking into account the inner states of the agent, it makes sense to assert that the agent "performed a right act" or "did the right thing." But many of us are not satisfied with merely saying that the agent "did the right thing" or "performed a right act." We think something is missing. What is missing is an evaluation of the agent's act in terms of his motives. That is, the agent acted out of malevolence, and many of us believe that acts that flow from malevolence are in some way morally criticizable. Thus, although in one

sense the agent's act is to be positively evaluated because he did the right thing or performed a morally right act, his behavior is also criticizable and we intuitively want to say that he acted *wrongly*. Hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics does not take into account this second way of evaluating acts. Therefore, although hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics is promising, it does have a weakness.

We can account for both of these intuitions or both of these ways of evaluating actions by *combining* morality as universal benevolence (which is an actualist agent-based virtue ethics) and hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics. Such an approach adopts all three of Hutcheson's criteria of evaluation; hence, the name Hutchesonian hybridism. Both morality as universal benevolence (and other actualist agent-based approaches) and hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics adopt two of Hutcheson's three criteria. Both of these approaches evaluate motives in the same way. Evaluations of motives are made at the ground level in a nonconsequentialist manner (Criterion 1). A motive is morally praiseworthy or good just because it is inherently good. But each of these theories adopts a different criterion of act evaluation. If, as I suggested above, we see morality as universal benevolence, which adopts Hutcheson's second criterion, as relevant to acting rightly (given its emphasis on motives and inner life), then we can limit its use to this sort of evaluation. And when we are evaluating an act in terms of *what* the agent does or has done, which is primarily concerned with whether the agent did what a virtuous agent would do, we can use the criterion of act assessment from hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics.

If we combine the two theories, the result is a theory that adopts all three of Hutcheson's criteria of evaluation. The first criterion of evaluation is concerned with evaluations of motives and the second and third criteria of evaluation are concerned with two different ways in which we can evaluate acts. The second criterion is the criterion of act evaluation utilized by morality as universal benevolence. It dictates that an agent acts rightly if and only if the agent's act expresses, reflects, or flows from universal benevolence. The third criterion is the criterion of act evaluation utilized by hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics. It dictates that an act is morally right if and only if it maximizes the good (or is of the type of act that would be performed by a hypothetical benevolent agent).[42]

[42] We can conceive of strong and weak formulations of Hutchesonian hybridism in the same way that we can conceive of strong and weak formulations of hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics.

Of course, if we combine these approaches and adopt all three of Hutcheson's criteria of evaluation, there will be times when the act evaluation yielded by the second criterion will be different, along the positive-negative axis, from that yielded by the third criterion. Although at first blush this may be problematic, I suggest that this may, in fact, be a virtue of this approach.

To sum up, I am suggesting that we consider a hybrid moral theory that utilizes three distinct criteria of evaluation. According to the first criterion, a motive's moral evaluation is determined in a nonconsequentialist manner; a motive is good just because it is fundamentally and inherently good. The second criterion, which is also nonconsequentialist and is concerned with *how* an agent acts, dictates that whether an agent acts rightly is determined by the motives of the actual agent. The third criterion, which is consequentialist and dictates that an act is right if and only if it maximizes happiness, is concerned with the evaluation of *what* the agent *does*.

Let us take a final look at the agent's act in the Oxfam example. According to Hutchesonian hybridism, the agent's motives (hatred and anger) were not morally good. As for the evaluation of the agent's act, we look at the second and third criteria. The second criterion dictates that an agent acts rightly if and only if his act flows from or expresses good or nonbad motives, as defined by Criterion 1. Since the agent's act in this case does not flow from or reflect benevolence (or any motive close to benevolence), the agent does not act rightly. However, the third criterion of evaluation evaluates acts by focusing on consequences. Did the act maximize the good (Criterion 3)? If the answer to this question is yes, we can assert that the agent in this case performed an act that is morally right. Thus, we can say that the agent in this case did not act out of good motives and did not act rightly. However, he did perform a morally right act (he did the right thing), since his act maximized happiness.

This complex and somewhat cumbersome evaluation of acts and motives is in accord with our moral intuitions. Most of us intuitively believe that malevolence is a morally bad motive. Focusing on the action itself, we believe that it is both good and bad. According to the second criterion, the agent's act is criticizable because it flows from bad motives, and we want to say this negatively affects the act's moral evaluation. At the same time, however, we believe that his act is in some way morally right, and Hutchesonian hybridism dictates that it is morally right insofar as it maximizes the good (or would be performed by a hypothetical virtuous agent). I suggest, therefore, that the cumbersome nature of this approach is justified by its ability

to capture the complex nature of act evaluations—we frequently conceive of actions as being both right and wrong (good and bad) at the same time.

Is Hutchesonian hybridism different from and better than Hutcheson's original theory? I think so. First, Hutchesonian hybridism is not committed to what many believe is a metaphysically suspect moral sense. In addition, Hutchesonian hybridism clearly distinguishes Hutcheson's second and third criteria of evaluation.

Throughout this essay, I have claimed Hutcheson embraces two different criteria of act evaluation—one that grounds act evaluations in the motives of the agent performing the act and one that evaluates acts in a consequentialist manner. Often, these two criteria yield different act evaluations. However, I am not aware of any place in which Hutcheson addresses the difference between the two criteria or attempts to reconcile the two. In fact, it appears that Hutcheson was unaware of these two different ways in which acts can be evaluated. In 1901, James Martineau recognized this and stated:

> So that all these are mixed up together as moral phenomena, and sharers in epithets of the same praise and blame. Accordingly, if you ask him whether virtue is a quality of the action or of the agent, you gain no steady reply. At one time he is so occupied with the *objective product*, that the measure of goodness lies entirely in it: thus he commits himself, *totidem verbis*, to the Utilitarian principle. . . . Yet, at other times, unfortunately more rare, he tells us that the moral quality is perceived by us *in the affections*, and only on that account in actions consequent upon them. . . . So that he measures the morality, now by the action's spring, and now by its effects.[43]

By clearing up this confusion (by explicitly differentiating these two types of act evaluation) and rejecting (or at least not embracing) the existence of a moral sense, Hutchesonian hybridism is an improvement over Hutcheson's original theory.

I hope I have demonstrated that the landscape of sentimentalist inspired moral theory is richer than many of us realize, and that hypothetical agent-based virtue ethics and Hutchesonian hybridism are worthy of more consideration than they have heretofore received.[44]

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[43] James Martineau, *Types of Ethical Theory*, Vol. 2, 3rd Edition (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1901), 538–39.

[44] This essay is an outgrowth of a presentation I made at the annual Southwest Philosophical Society meeting, the proceedings of which appear in *Southwest Philosophy Review*, January 2000.