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ARTICLE

On 'Hybrid' Theories of Personal Good

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'Hybrid' theories of personal good, defended by e.g. Parfit, Wolf, and Kagan, equate it, not with a subjective state such as pleasure on its own, nor with an objective state such as knowledge on its own, but with a whole that supposedly combines the two. These theories apply Moore's principle of organic unities, which says the value of a whole needn't equal the sum of the values its parts would have by themselves. This allows them, defenders say, to combine the attractions of purely subjective and purely objective views. This common understanding of the theories is, however, mistaken. At the most fundamental level they don't combine a subjective and an objective element but two objective ones. Once this is understood, their attraction as hybrid theories diminishes: the value in their wholes may be just the sum of the values in their parts.

Introduction

Subjective theories of your personal good claim that it depends on your attitudes or feelings. One such theory is the desire-fulfilment theory, which says it's good for you if you desire a state of affairs – on most views it must be a state of you – and that state obtains. Some versions of hedonism, which says that only pleasure is good, aren't subjective, because they say pleasure is good whatever your attitude to it. But versions that identify pleasures as those sensations we want to have for their qualities as sensations are subjective, and hedonism is commonly counted among subjective views. In contrast, objective theories say some states of you are good regardless of whether you desire or get pleasure from them; these states can include knowledge, achievement, moral virtue and aesthetic appreciation.

Both types of theory have met with objections, at least if they claim to give a complete account of your good. Purely subjective theories imply that your life can be highly and even ideally good even though it contains only intense mindless pleasures like those of eating chocolate or rolling in the mud, or if it fulfils intense desires for these pleasures. Many find this unacceptable. Purely objective theories imply that your life can be extremely good despite containing no pleasure or desire-fulfilment, its emotional flatness irrelevant if it contains enough knowledge, achievement or virtue. This too has been denied.

One response to these objections is to adopt a pluralist theory that affirms both subjective and objective goods, so a life with only one of the two lacks something of worth. It's not clear, however, that this simple pluralism fully meets the objections. Couldn't a life of only mindless pleasures still come out as ideal if the pleasures were sufficiently

intense that their value made up for its lack of objective goods? And couldn't sufficiently impressive knowledge or achievement make up for the absence of pleasure or fulfilment? A pluralist theory may do better if it has a 'balancing' structure that makes the relative value of good *A* compared to *B* depend on the relative amounts of them already present in your life, so, more specifically, the relative value of *A* is greater when you've had have less of it than of *B*.[1] Then if you've had much more pleasure than knowledge, a little additional knowledge will do more to improve your life than a large increase in pleasure, and conversely if you've had more knowledge. This balancing structure may not entirely meet the objections, since it's still theoretically possible for a life with an immense amount of pleasure and no objective goods to be ideal, and conversely for one with vast amounts of knowledge. But it does suggest that for most people in most circumstances, the best available life will contain a mix of subjective and objective goods.

Whatever these theories' merits, several philosophers have proposed a different response to the objections. They've said that what's necessary for significant or even any value in your life is a compound state that combines subjective and objective elements, or that joins them in a single whole. Derek Parfit's may be the best-known such proposal. Having discussed hedonism and desire-fulfilment theories on the one hand, and 'objective list' theories on the other, he suggests that what is good may be

> neither just what Hedonists claim, nor just what is claimed by Objective List Theorists. We might believe that if we had *either* of these, *without the other*, what we had would have little or no value. We might claim, for example, that what is good or bad for someone is to have knowledge, to be engaged in rational activity, to experience mutual love, and to be aware of beauty, while strongly wanting just these things. On this view, each side in this disagreement saw only half of the truth. Pleasure with many other kinds of object has no value. And, if they are entirely devoid of pleasure, there is no value in knowledge, rational activity, love, or the awareness of beauty. What is of value, or is good for someone, is to have both; to be engaged in these activities, and to be strongly wanting to be so engaged.[2]

As Parfit implicitly acknowledges, this proposal invokes G. E. Moore's principle of organic unities, which says the value of a whole needn't equal the sum of the values its parts would have on their own but can, for example, be greater.[3] According to the theory Parfit describes, a subjective state such as pleasure or desire-fulfilment has little or no value on its own, as does an objective state such as knowledge. But if the two are combined in a whole, so that the same person has both at the same time, the result can be significant value.

(In what follows I use 'subjective state' for those states that, if good, are said to be so by subjective theories, and 'objective state' for those that, if good, are valued by objective ones. This is to allow the view, which is one of Parfit's possibilities, that both types of state have no value on their own. An objective state as so defined can have a subjective property, for example if it's knowledge and knowledge happens to be something you desire, and a subjective state can have an objective property, if what fulfils a desire

[1]Brian Barry, *Political Argument* (London, 1965), pp. 3–8; Thomas Hurka, *Perfectionism* (New York, 1993), ch. 7.

[2]Derek Parfit, *Reasons and Persons* (Oxford, 1984), pp. 501–2.

[3]G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge, 1903), pp. 27–36.

you have happens to be knowledge. Something identified as an objective state can therefore be given value by a subjective property, and vice versa.)

Susan Wolf proposes a similar theory about what she calls 'meaning', which to her is an important but not the only element in a good life. On this theory meaning results from 'active engagement in projects or activities of worth',[4] where the engagement is a subjective element, as in being excited by an activity, and the worth is objective and found, for example, in moral and intellectual accomplishments. If an activity is objectively worthless, she says, not even intense engagement in it is meaningful, nor is a worthy activity meaningful if you're bored by or alienated from it. Meaning is an organic whole that arises, in her summary statement, when 'subjective attraction meets objective attractiveness'.[5]

Shelly Kagan explores a similar theory that equates 'well-being' with the enjoyment of objective goods, where those goods on their own do nothing to make you well off, and enjoyment that's not enjoyment of objective goods at best does just a little.[6] This theory's exact bearing on questions of value is a little unclear, since, unlike most theorists, Kagan distinguishes claims about your well-being from ones about the goodness of your life, and allows that objective goods on their own *can* make your life better; thus knowledge on its own can improve your life.[7] But his theory, too, involves an organic unity, since it finds more well-being in the combination of an objective good and enjoyment of it than in the sum of the well-being those elements would have on their own. Like the others, he motivates this theory by reviewing the objections to purely subjective and purely objective ones.[8]

Similar theories have been defended by other philosophers.[9] In a recent survey article Christopher Woodard calls theories of this type 'hybrid theories' and, more specifically, 'subjective-objective hybrids', because, like most of their defenders, he takes them to combine subjective and objective elements.[10] This label certainly fits the most commonly given motivation for the theories, which is to combine the attractions of subjective and objective views. But I will argue that this common understanding of them is mistaken. Their supposedly subjective element isn't, at the most fundamental or explanatory level, really just subjective but involves a crucial objective element. It's therefore at least partly objective and, in the simplest and to me most plausible versions of the theories, is entirely objective; these versions aren't at all subjective-objective hybrids but instead are entirely objective-objective ones. Moreover, once the theories'

[4]Susan Wolf, 'Happiness and Meaning: Two Aspects of the Good Life', *Social Philosophy and Policy* 14 (1997), pp. 207–25, at 209.

[5]Wolf, 'Happiness and Meaning', p. 211.

[6]Shelly Kagan, 'Well-Being as Enjoying the Good', *Philosophical Perspectives* 23 (2009), pp. 253–72, at 255. Kagan is open to, and attracted by, the idea that the objective goods your well-being consists in enjoying can include states not of you, such as other people's knowledge (pp. 256, 262). But this idea is in some tension with the topic of personal good and also with his own claim, in earlier writings (e.g. 'Me and My Life', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 94 (1994), pp. 309–24), that your well-being can depend only on your intrinsic, and not your relational, properties. I therefore set it aside.

[7]Kagan, 'Well-Being', p. 257.

[8]Kagan, 'Well-Being', pp. 253–5.

[9]E.g. Joseph Raz, *The Morality of Freedom* (Oxford, 1986), ch. 12; Raz, 'Duties of Well-Being', in his *Ethics in the Public Domain* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 3–28; Robert Merrihew Adams, *Finite and Infinite Goods* (New York, 1999), ch. 3.

[10]Christopher Woodard, 'Hybrid Theories', *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Well-Being*, ed. Guy Fletcher (London, 2016), pp. 161–74.

elements are properly understood, their plausibility as hybrid theories, or as ones that involve an organic unity, is diminished. Although they can still be defended, the intuitions that had seemed to support them, as against simpler pluralisms that just add the values of independent goods, don't so clearly do so.

Two relations

We should begin by distinguishing some different forms these hybrid theories can take. One difference is reflected in Parfit's claim that the elements of his compound have 'little or no value' on their own. What I'll call radical hybrid theories say that subjective and objective states both have no value on their own, so their combination is necessary for any value whatever. In contrast, moderate theories say there's some value – perhaps just a little, perhaps more – in these states on their own, but additional organic value when they're combined. Whereas Parfit's statements leave the choice between radical and moderate versions open, Wolf's theory is moderate. She thinks subjective attraction and objective worthiness each have some value on their own, but since meaning is an additional element in a good life, there's further value when the two are combined.

Parfit's statements also treat the two elements of his whole symmetrically, so either both have no or both have some value. But there can also be asymmetrical hybrid theories. One type holds that objective states like knowledge and achievement have some value on their own, that pleasure and desire-fulfilment have no value, and that the combination of an objective state plus the relevant subjective one has more value than the objective one on its own. A contrary type, which Kagan at times suggests, says that subjective states have some value on their own, objective states have no value, and combinations of the two have more value than the subjective state alone. John Stuart Mill's theory of 'higher pleasures' can be in read this way. If any good must be a 'pleasure', then an objective state such as reading poetry has no value if it's not accompanied by pleasure. At the same time, all pleasures, even lower ones, have some value just as pleasures. But the greatest value, that of the higher pleasures, comes when pleasure is combined with an objective state such as reading poetry; though valueless in itself, the objective state adds to the value of a whole that also involves pleasure.

Mill's theory, though, brings out an important point. Imagine that you read poetry and, while taking no pleasure in that activity as such, have a simultaneous pleasure of eating chocolate or getting a massage. Do you then enjoy a higher pleasure, with the additional organic value that comes from combining subjective and objective elements? Surely not. That additional value requires a specific pleasure, one directed *at* the objective state it's joined with, or in this case a pleasure *in* reading poetry. Parfit recognizes this point when he says his organic whole requires your engaging in certain activities while 'strongly wanting' to be so engaged. But other remarks of his seem to ignore it. He says hedonists 'saw half of the truth', implying that they correctly identified one element in the whole while merely failing to acknowledge the other. But hedonists didn't say just that pleasures have value; they said they have value *as* pleasures, or for the felt qualities that make them pleasures. And if what was relevant about a pleasure in poetry, or made it contribute to an organic whole, was just its being a pleasure, a pleasure in eating chocolate would do so as well. That it doesn't contribute means the hedonists didn't correctly identify one element that makes for organic value; they didn't, at the level of properties, see any of the truth. And while Parfit's claim that '[p]leasure with many other kinds of object has no value' recognizes the point, the accompanying suggestion that this pleasure is the same item as figures in the whole,

just in the wrong context, is misleading. A pleasure in chocolate doesn't have the property that, when combined with reading poetry, makes for organic value; it isn't at all the same thing.

There are, in short, two ways a subjective state like pleasure or desire can relate to an objective state such as reading poetry. It can be intentionally directed at that state, so it's a pleasure in or desire to be reading poetry, or it can be combined with that state, so both are present in the same person at the same time. A hybrid theory requires both relations: it requires a subjective state that's intentionally directed at an objective state that actually exists, so the subjective state is conjoined with the objective one. Just as Parfit sometimes recognizes the difference between the two relations but sometimes blurs it, so does Wolf. The word 'meets' in her 'subjective attraction meets objective attractiveness' can refer either to a subjective state's being directed at an objective one or to its being conjoined with it. Her 'meaning' requires both relations, but her summary statement doesn't distinguish them. Woodard, too, conflates the two when, in describing a moderate hybrid theory, he takes enjoyment with a valueless object to be the same thing as contributes to the compound the theory values, so enjoyment as such is an element of the compound.[11] Kagan, in contrast, does distinguish the relations, requiring the pleasure that accompanies an objective good both to be a pleasure in it, or directed at it, and to be 'properly connected' to it, where that involves its being conjoined with the objective good and, in a plausible addition, being causally dependent on it, so the objective good's existence causes, or is responsible for, the pleasure.[12]

Fittingness: an objective property

If its just being a pleasure or a fulfilled desire doesn't make an attitude contribute to an organic whole, which of its properties does so? We've just seen that the attitude must be directed at the state it's conjoined with, so both relations are present, but this, too, isn't sufficient. The conjoined state must also be of a certain kind: it must be an objective good, in a moderate hybrid theory, or a state that, though not good, is on a list parallel to that of objective goods, in a radical one. If you take pleasure in an activity that's objectively trivial, such as counting blades of grass or playing pushpin, the combination of your pleasure with that activity has no additional value. Only attraction to attractiveness makes for organic value.

All this suggests, as Wolf herself does,[13] that the relevant property includes your attitude's being fitting to, or suitable to, its object, so the organic whole combines an objective state with a subjective one that's specifically appropriate to it. When an attitude isn't fitting to its object, as pleasure isn't to counting blades of grass, there's no such whole and no additional worth.

This fittingness is straightforwardly present in moderate hybrid theories. The attitude they require is directed at an objective good, which means its positive orientation, as a pleasure in or desire for its object, matches the positive value of its object, where this positive-to-positive matching makes for or is the fittingness. But it's also present in radical theories if the objective attractiveness of certain states means that, though not good, they call for positive attitudes or make them fitting, just as objective goods do; on one view their attractiveness just consists in their making positive attitudes fitting.

[11]Woodard, 'Hybrid Theories', p. 168.
[12]Kagan, 'Well-Being', pp. 257–8.
[13]Wolf, 'Happiness and Meaning', pp. 217–18.

What hybrid theories value, on this interpretation, is the combination of an objective state with a subjective one that's appropriate or fitting to it, and relevant to the combination's value because it's fitting.

But fittingness, even when had by a subjective state such as pleasure or desire, isn't a subjective property, one whose presence depends on your having some attitude to it. If you take pleasure in reading poetry, your pleasure's being fitting to its object doesn't require you to take a further pleasure in, or want to have, a pleasure with that type of object; your pleasure is fitting regardless of whether you have any higher-order attitude to it. The appropriateness, as in a positive-to-positive match, is just there. And if an attitude's being fitting either makes it good or allows it to contribute value to organic wholes, that too doesn't depend on its being the object of some further attitude. It just needs to be, say, a pleasure in reading poetry. The property of being fitting to an object, even when had by a subjective state, isn't a subjective property; it's objective.

This is confirmed by the fact that this property can be had by attitudes that, according to subjective theories, are evil rather than good. If an innocent person is in pain and you feel compassionate pain at her pain, your pain is fitting to its object even if, as a feeling, it's evil. If her pain, too, is evil, your pain is negatively oriented to a negative value, which gives it the same kind of matching as made for fittingness in positive attitudes to positive values. And even if her pain weren't evil but just unattractive, your pain would be fitting if a negative attitude is what pain calls for. The same holds if you desire or wish she weren't feeling pain; that too is fitting but, as a frustrated desire, is by subjective standards evil.

These examples involve objects outside your life, which on most theories can't bear on your personal good, but there can be similar ones inside your life. You can be pained by or regret that you had false beliefs or failed in some important project, and you can feel shame at a malicious desire you have. In all these cases your attitude is fitting to its object but, by subjective standards, is evil. And, no less than positive attitudes, these negative ones can in principle figure in organic unities. A hybrid theory can say that when, for example, your shame at a malicious desire is combined with the actual existence of that desire, there's an additional organic good in the combination of the two over and above any values in its parts. This organic good may be outweighed by the evil in your malicious desire, if that is indeed evil, and therefore harder to see. But organic unities are possible for fitting attitudes that are subjectively evil no less than for ones that are subjectively good. These negative unities, as I'll call them, have parallel elements to those in the more familiar positive unities: an objective state, though now one that is evil or the opposite of attractive; an attitude that is fitting to it, though now one that is negative; and an organic value that results from their combination. The same two relations, of fittingness and conjunction, can make for an organic good even though the attitude that is fitting involves pain or frustrated desire.

Fittingness, then, is an objective property, and it is, moreover, an objective property with a more general role in ethics. If you benevolently desire another's happiness or feel compassionate pain at her pain, your attitude is fitting to its object and therefore, on an attractive account of virtue, morally virtuous. Likewise for your desire for knowledge as an end in itself or your shame at your malice; they too are virtuous, because attitudes that are fitting to their objects are in general virtuous.[14] What the supposedly subjective side of the organic whole includes, then, is, more specifically, a virtuous attitude to the

[14]See Thomas Hurka, *Virtue, Vice, and Value* (New York, 2001).

state on its objective side. Kagan, for one, recognizes this, calling the pleasure in an objective good that his theory of well-being requires 'a form of virtue', since virtue just is, in at least one form, a matter of loving the good.[15] (In another form it involves hating the evil, as in compassion for pain.) But moral virtue is a common item on lists of objective goods, where it appears alongside states such as knowledge, achievement and aesthetic appreciation. Like them, it's held to be good regardless of your attitude to it; thus a lack of virtue is thought a failing even if you don't regret the lack. So what hybrid theories value, on this understanding of virtue, is the combination of an initial objective state with a subjective state that has the objective property of being a fitting and therefore virtuous attitude to its object. In the theories' main applications the required attitude is positive and therefore, by hedonic or desire-fulfilment standards, subjectively good. But its meeting these standards is at least not sufficient for it to contribute to an organic unity; it must meet an objective standard of fittingness or virtue.

What kind of hybrid?

If the attitudinal side of an organic whole involves an objective property of fittingness, it's at least somewhat misleading to call the theories that value this whole 'subjective-objective' hybrids. It's true that the attitude they require involves a subjective state of pleasure or desire-fulfilment. But at a more fundamental level, which explains why states have or contribute the value they do by identifying the properties that make that so, this state is at least partly objective, since its contribution depends on its being objectively fitting. At this level the theories are at least partly objective-objective hybrids, and they may, more strongly, be entirely objective-objective. The crucial question here is whether the property of fittingness that is necessary for a subjective state to contribute to an organic whole is also sufficient, so it's all that's required. This question in turn connects with one hybrid theorists haven't discussed, about the negative case where something objectively evil or unattractive is combined with a fitting negative attitude to it such as pain or regret. Is there additional organic value in this case?

Imagine, first, that there is. Then any combination of an objective state, whether good or evil, attractive or unattractive, with a fitting attitude to it has additional value as a combination, regardless of whether the attitude is subjectively good or evil. In both cases the fittingness suffices for the value. If you take pleasure in an objective good such as reading poetry, your fitting attitude happens to involve the subjective good of pleasure, but its doing so is irrelevant to its making for an organic whole, since an equally fitting pain at an objective evil would do the same. A hybrid theory that finds organic value in both the negative and positive cases therefore attaches no significance to subjective states as such, or as having subjective properties. It cares only about their fittingness, or values any combination of an objective state with an attitude that is appropriate to it. At the explanatory level it isn't at all subjective-objective but is entirely objective-objective.

It doesn't follow that, given this type of theory, subjective properties have no significance whatever. One objection to radical hybrid theories, as well as to purely objective theories, is that they see no value whatever in Mill's lower pleasures. If someone whose life contains some of the compound states that hybrid theories value – maybe a few, maybe many – is given some additional physical pleasures, say of eating chocolate,

[15]Kagan, 'Well-Being', p. 261.

hasn't his life been made at least a little better?[16] If it has, then pleasure just qua pleasure must be to some degree good. But to think this isn't to find an element of the compound that hybrid theories value good on its own, as moderate hybrid theories do. Pleasure qua pleasure isn't an element; eating chocolate while reading poetry doesn't make for an organic whole. Only fitting pleasure is an element, and in the theories we're now considering it's an element only because it's fitting. To think the lower pleasures are to some degree good is instead to add pleasure qua pleasure as a distinct item to the list of goods in a (simply) pluralist theory, as pain qua pain can be added as an evil. There's nothing problematic about this, unless a hybrid view must capture the whole truth about value. (Though it's often presented as if it does, it needn't be.) The addition merely recognizes a plausible intrinsic good that isn't identical either to a hybrid view's whole or to an element in it but is independent of both.

If pleasure qua pleasure is an independent good, however, then a fitting pleasure, while perhaps contributing value as fitting, is also good as a pleasure, or as having that further good-making property. It follows that a fitting pleasure in something good or attractive is better, all things considered, than an equally fitting pain at some evil. It's preferable, just on subjective grounds, to be fittingly pleased by an objective good in your life than to be fittingly pained by an evil. It may also of course be better to have the objective good in your life than to have the evil, but it's also preferable to have the fitting attitude to the one than to the other, not because of anything about fittingness or unity but just because the first involves, as an addition, the separate good of pleasure rather than the evil of pain. All this can make the nature of the hybrid view, as a hybrid view, harder to see. That a whole involving fitting pleasure is on balance better than one involving an equally fitting pain can make it look as if the subjective good of pleasure is relevant to the whole's organic value. But that's not the case if the same organic value is present in the negative as in the positive case, with the difference between the two resting on their non-organic hedonic values. The hybrid view, as hybrid, remains entirely objective-objective.

What if a hybrid theory takes the opposite line and denies that there's organic value in the negative case? Then it *can* say its attitudinal side involves, at the explanatory level, a subjective property. Whereas the combination of an objective state with a fitting pain or frustrated desire has no additional value, the combination of an objective state with a fitting pleasure or fulfilled desire does. The resulting theory is not purely subjective-objective, since it still requires its subjective state to be objectively fitting. But it's also not entirely objective-objective, since it also requires a subjective property. It's (subjective + objective)-objective.

This theory may not on its own capture all the attraction of purely subjective theories, as defenders of hybrid theories often say they do, because even in its moderate versions it finds no value in the pleasures of chocolate or pushpin. It too, therefore, may need to be supplemented by the claim that pleasure qua pleasure is good and pain qua pain evil. The theory is also more complex than hybrid theorists have recognized, because it involves two organic unities, one embedded within the other. The larger unity is the one we've been discussing, between an objectively good or attractive state and a positive attitude to it. The second unity is within that attitude, which to

[16]Brad Hooker, 'The Elements of Well-Being', *Journal of Practical Ethics* 3 (2015), pp. 15–35, at 30. Though Hooker directs this objection only at radical hybrid theories, it applies equally to moderate ones once we see that pleasure qua pleasure, as in the pleasure of chocolate, isn't an element in the whole that moderate theories value.

contribute to the larger one must be both fitting and a subjective good. Its merely being fitting doesn't suffice, because a fitting pain at an objective evil makes for no additional value. Nor is its merely being a subjective good enough; pleasure from chocolate, too, makes for no such value. Only the combination of two properties, neither of which alone generates organic value, can do so.

This complexity isn't an objection to the theory; sometimes organic unities do multiply. But to me the theory's larger unity claim lacks a persuasive rationale. Organic-unity claims can in principle be made about any states; thus any two can be said to have more value together than they do apart. But these claims are most plausible, and even are plausible only, when the states in question stand in some significant relation, one that can justify there being additional value in their combination. This condition is satisfied when an objective state is joined with a fitting attitude to it. That the first calls for the second and the second responds is a sufficiently close tie to explain why together they amount to more. But I don't see how the condition is satisfied when an objective state is combined with the subjective property of being, say, a pleasure, a property that is shared by pleasures in chocolate or pushpin. How, more specifically, does pleasure qua pleasure relate more significantly to an objectively good or attractive state than pain qua pain does to an evil or unattractive one? Why should fittingness with one kind of feeling make for an organic unity while fittingness with the other doesn't? The hedonic quality in the positive case seems only accidentally related to what it's joined with. It might be said that the pleasure's positive value qua pleasure matches the positive value or attractiveness of its object, and that's what grounds the unity. But this is again a matter of fittingness and is paralleled in the match between the negative value of pain at your failure and the negative value or unattractiveness of the failure. It's no reason to think there's additional organic value in the one case but not in the other. To me the most credible hybrid theories are the simpler ones that value any combination of an objective state with a fitting attitude, whether positive or negative, to it, and at the level of properties these theories are entirely objective-objective. What they value, in the positive case, is just the joining of something objectively good or attractive with the further, higher-order objective good of a fitting or virtuous attitude to it.

A similar point applies to a more specific claim of Kagan's. What his theory requires for well-being is the combination of an objective good with, not just some virtuous attitude to it, but pleasure in it in particular. If you read poetry and have a fulfilled desire to be doing so, that doesn't yet, he says, involve any organic value. For that your attitude must take the specific form of pleasure in or enjoyment of the reading.[17]

Again, however, we can ask what the rationale for this claim is. What significant relation does pleasure in the reading stand in to the reading that a fulfilled desire for it does not, and how does this relation explain why only the pleasure makes for organic value? Both attitudes are equally fitting to the reading and equally connected to it in that way. One can hold, as hedonists do, that pleasure is intrinsically good while desire-fulfilment isn't, but that's a reason to add pleasure qua pleasure as an independent good rather than to change the conditions for the organic good. The more plausible hybrid theory is again the simpler one that finds additional value in any combination of an objective good with a positive attitude to it, and to me the most plausible of all such theories find additional value in any combination of an objective state, whether good or evil, with a fitting attitude, whether positive or negative, to it. In these theories the properties that make for the organic whole are on both sides entirely objective, and so, for that matter,

[17]Kagan, 'Well-Being', pp. 261–2.

is the resulting organic value. If there's additional value in the combination of reading poetry and taking pleasure in it, that value doesn't depend on your taking a further pleasure in the combination as a combination or on your desiring the combination; that value, too, is independent of your attitudes. What the objective-objective pairing generates, or the organic value it makes for, is likewise objective.

Is the organic value really there?

Having discussed the best understanding of hybrid theories, I now turn to assessing their central claim: that when an objectively good or attractive state is combined with a fitting positive attitude to it, there's additional value in the combination as a combination. Is this organic-unity claim true? Does the whole that hybrid theories value really have more value than the sum of the values its parts would have on their own? To answer, we need to examine these parts on their own; I start with the objective states, such as knowledge and reading poetry.

Purely subjective theories, which say only pleasure or desire-fulfilment is good, deny that objective states have any value, and radical hybrid theories agree. But hybrid theories are never purely subjective; they all affirm at least one objective good, namely their organic one. They therefore have no general or principled reason to deny value, even substantial value, to objective states on their own.

To contest the view that these states have no value, Alexander F. Sarch asks us to imagine a person who, through some genetic fluke, cannot experience pleasure or pain but nonetheless pursues and achieves many remarkable goals. Surely, Sarch says, this person's life of objective achievement is better than if, in the same joyless way, he watched paint dry.[18] To me this is a persuasive objection, but there's a more realistic one to both the radical view that objective states have no value on their own and the more moderate one that they have just a little value, based on a more careful specification of what the attitude in an organic whole must be.

To be fitting to an objective state, an attitude must be not only directed at it but directed at it for its own sake, or for the property that makes it good or attractive. It must, for example, be a pleasure in or desire to be reading poetry as a reading of poetry rather than for some other property. If you're pleased to be reading poetry only because this will impress a potential sexual partner, your pleasure doesn't fit its object and doesn't make for an organic whole. More generally, if you enjoy or desire something intrinsically good or attractive just as a means to some further end, your attitude isn't fitting and can't make for additional value. For that, you must enjoy or desire the object either for its goodness or for the properties that make it good or attractive.[19]

Imagine, then, that someone engages in an objectively worthy activity only as a means to an external end, for example, that Picasso paints or Tiger Woods plays golf only in order to make money, with no interest in the activity for itself. If either could earn more by doing something else, even something trivial like counting blades of grass, he would; if he was just given money and had no need to work, he'd be content and would just eat chocolate. As things are, though, painting or golf is his best means to money. Here a radical hybrid theory says that Picasso's painting and Woods's golfing have no value, whereas a moderate one may say they have a little value. But the painting

[18]Alexander F. Sarch, 'Multi-Component Theories of Well-Being and Their Structure', *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 93 (2012), pp. 439–71, at 444–5. See also Hooker, 'The Elements', pp. 31–3.

[19]Compare Kagan, 'Well-Being', pp. 258–9.

and golf are still objectively excellent and to me still have significant worth; the two men's lives are considerably better than if, with the same motive, they earned the same money counting blades of grass. This isn't to say nothing is lacking in their lives. They would be more admirable if they took pleasure in and wanted their activities for their own sakes, and their lives could also be better. Their lives would then contain the possible objective good of a virtuous attitude to their activity as well as the possible organic one in the joining of that attitude with its object. But the claim that outside this combination their activity has little or no value is to me too high-minded. Even when unaccompanied by a fitting attitude, objective states can have substantial worth.

Those who deny this may be imagining that the excellent activity and even the whole life containing it are completely joyless, like the life Sarch describes. This will be troubling if we think pleasure qua pleasure is an independent good and especially if we accept the balancing view described above, where the relative value of a good depends on the relative amount of it already present in your life. On this view none of the individual achievements in the life Sarch describes give it as much value as even a tiny amount of pleasure would, so its lack of pleasure is extremely significant. But we can neutralize these possibilities by adding that Picasso's and Woods's lives are full of pleasure: they enjoy many physical pleasures as well as many pleasures of, say, personal love, and fulfil many desires. They can even feel pleasure while engaged in their excellent activities. Woods can be pleased that he's so effectively earning money; he can also intensely enjoy walking down green fairways in the sunshine, though he would enjoy it just as much if he were counting the blades of grass they contain. He just doesn't take any pleasure in his golf or its objective excellence as such. Radical hybrid theories still say his now pleasure-filled life is no better than if, with the same attitudes, he did something utterly trivial, and some moderate theories say it's only a little better. I find both claims hard to accept; to me his life is significantly better.

That the objective element in a compound has significant value on its own doesn't mean there isn't room for additional organic value. This will especially be so if the other, subjective element has little or no value, and an asymmetrical hybrid theory can say this if it finds much more value in objective states on their own than in subjective ones. How good, then, is the subjective element by itself?

This element has to be an attitude that is fitting to its intentional object, so it has the required objective property, but not accompanied by that object's existence. Here one example is a pleasure in what you falsely believe is an existing objective state of yourself. Consider a scientist of the past whose explanatory beliefs about the world were largely false, for example Aristotle in his career as a physicist. If Aristotle took pleasure in what he falsely believed was his knowledge of the laws of motion, his pleasure was fitting to an object that didn't exist. A radical hybrid theory will then say his pleasure had no value and some moderate theories will say it had just a little value, but those claims again aren't to me persuasive. His pleasure wasn't one of Parfit's with 'other kinds of object'; it was a pleasure with the same intentional object as if he did have knowledge. It also was, as a fitting attitude to its object, an instance of moral virtue, a frequently listed objective good. So why not see it as significantly good? Certainly other instances of virtue seem significantly good when their objects don't exist. If you take pleasure in what you reasonably but falsely believe is another person's happiness or success, your pleasure is benevolent and seems significantly good even though its object isn't real. If you're pained by what you falsely believe is another's pain – if you think she's been hurt but she hasn't – your pain is compassionate and again seems significantly good despite its object's non-existence. In both cases the mere fittingness to an intentional object

suffices for significant worth. There again may be additional value if a virtuous attitude's object does exist, as in pleasure in knowledge you actually have, either because the object itself is good or because of an organic unity. But even without those accompaniments, the subjective element on its own seems significantly good.

If hybrid theorists have denied this, it may be in part because they've blurred the distinction between intentional directedness and conjunction. They may have thought the subjective element in their compounds is typified by physical pleasures such as those of eating chocolate or pleasures with trivial objects such as counting blades of grass, and these pleasures may indeed have little value. But they aren't the pleasures that figure in the relevant compounds. The ones that do figure have non-trivial objects such as knowledge or the reading of poetry, and these pleasures arguably do have significant value on their own or when their objects don't exist, not so much as pleasures but because they're fitting and virtuous.

It may seem harder to imagine the other subjective element, desire-fulfilment, occurring on its own, since a fulfilled desire for an object requires the object's existence. But what makes a fulfilled desire contribute to an organic whole is at least in part its fittingness, and that can be present when its object isn't. Just as you can take pleasure in what you falsely believe is your knowledge, so you can desire knowledge you know you don't have, and that desire can again be virtuous and significantly good. A desire for another's happiness can be virtuous and of substantial value when she's not now happy, and the same arguably holds for desires about yourself. Their fittingness can give them significant worth even when they're not fulfilled.

I've argued that both elements of the proposed compounds have significant value on their own, but that again doesn't mean there isn't additional organic value when they're combined. Instead of items with little or no value on their own having significant value together, as in Parfit's theories, items with significant value on their own can have even more value together. This would be the claim of a very moderate hybrid theory. But though this type of theory is possible, the intuitive case for it is at the least diminished. If someone has knowledge but no pleasure in or desire for it, his overall state is, as hybrid theories say, less good than if he had those attitudes. But we can explain at least a large part of the shortfall in value by pointing to his lack of the significant non-organic good of a fitting or virtuous attitude to knowledge, as well perhaps of the further non-organic goods of pleasure qua pleasure and desire-fulfilment. And if he takes pleasure in what he falsely believes is his knowledge or desires knowledge he doesn't have, his state is again less good than if he also had the knowledge. But we can explain at least a good part of that by pointing to his lack of the significant non-organic good of knowledge. There may in both cases be an additional shortfall, from the absence of the combination of an attitude to knowledge with the knowledge, but it's much harder to judge whether that is so. How can we tell if the shortfall in value from having just one part of the compound isn't entirely due to the absence of the value the other has on its own?

Compare a case where the object of a virtuous attitude isn't a state of you. If you take pleasure in another's happiness, her happiness is good, as is your pleasure in what you believe is her happiness. Is there additional value when your belief is true, so your virtuous attitude is accompanied by the existence of its object? That isn't obvious and even seems dubious. I find it more plausible that the overall value in the situation is just the sum of the values of her happiness and of your pleasure in what you believe is her happiness, so your belief's truth makes no evaluative difference. Likewise, if you take malicious pleasure in what you falsely believe is another's pain – you think you've hurt him but you haven't – the overall situation is less bad than if his pain were real. But is it also

less bad because your malicious pleasure doesn't have an existing object, so an additional organic evil is missing? I again find that dubious. To me the overall evil, were his pain real, would be just the sum of the evils in his pain and in your malicious pleasure in what you believe is his pain. There would be no additional evil, and so no such evil is missing when his pain is imaginary. Others may or may not share my intuitions about these cases, and even if they do, they needn't agree that there's no additional value when the object of your attitude is a state of you; cases of purely personal good, they may argue, are different. But the cases involving states of others are at least suggestive. If there's no strong reason to posit an organic value when your attitude is to a state of someone else, why do so when it's to a state of you? If there's no extra worth in the one case, why in the other?

My main aim in this article hasn't been to reject hybrid theories of personal good; one of them may be true. It's been to show that a common understanding of these theories is mistaken. The combination these theories value isn't, at the fundamental or explanatory level, of a subjective feature with an objective one, it's at least in part, and most plausibly entirely, of two objective features, so the combination is better seen as objective-objective than as subjective-objective. And once the elements of this combination are properly identified, it's harder to claim, as Parfit and others do, that either element has little or no value on its own; each now seems of significant worth. This in turn weakens the case for a hybrid theory, since when only one of the two elements is present, more of the shortfall in value can be attributed to the absence of the value the other has on its own. At the least, the intuitions that have been thought to support hybrid theories don't so clearly do so.[20]

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