

Daniel Eggers, Moral motivation in early-18th century moral rationalism

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Abstract: In the modern debate in metaethics and moral psychology, moral rationalism is often presented as a view that cannot account for the intimate relation between moral behaviour on the one hand and feelings, emotions or desires on the other. While there is no lack of references to the classic rationalists of the 18th century in the relevant discussions, the works of these writers are rarely ever examined in detail. Yet, as the debate in Kant scholarship between ‘intellectualists’ and ‘affectivists’ impressively shows, a more thorough analysis of what the classic rationalists actually have to say about moral motivation is suited to cast serious doubts on the idea that moral rationalism must crucially neglect the affective-conative side of human psychology. The aim of this paper is to analyse the conceptions of moral motivation that were embraced by Kant’s rationalist predecessors – Clarke, Wolff, Burnet, Balguy and Price –, which have not attracted a similar amount of attention by specialists so far. The claim I will defend is that none of those early rationalists actually embraces the motivational thesis that is often taken to be characteristic of moral rationalism, a thesis I shall refer to as *strong rationalism about (moral) motivation*.

The modern discussion of motivation for action in metaethics and the philosophy of action stands in a clear but somewhat twisted relation to the discussion of motivational issues in the sentimentalism/rationalism debate of the 18th century. On the one hand, the contributors to the modern debate obviously, and often explicitly, draw upon the positions of the classic sentimentalists and rationalists and re-use their material. The fact that Hume, for example, is a constant point of reference can already be seen from the terminology employed in the modern debate, the terms ‘Humean theory of motivation’ and ‘Humeanism’ representing key phrases used to refer to the systematic options that are being discussed. On the other hand, even where

such explicit references to the classic sentimentalists and rationalists are made, the works of these writers are rarely discussed in detail.

A common way of making up for this deficiency is to add a caveat to the effect that, say, the proposed ‘Humean’ or ‘Kantian’ account does not involve the claim that the historical Hume or Kant actually embraced the account in question. Yet, not only are such qualified references somewhat unsatisfactory because they raise the question of why to mention the historical author in the first place. The caveats also often prove less powerful than the appeal to the historical authors, which is why even qualified references frequently cause unwanted confusion. Furthermore, in many cases, the references are not qualified in the first place, which makes the unwillingness to engage with the historical texts even more problematic. As a result of all this, the views about the classic sentimentalists and rationalists we find in the modern literature on motivation for action are often unsubstantiated and controversial and sometimes just caricatures of the positions the contributors to the debate of the 18th century actually held.

This is especially true when it comes to the moral rationalists. For instance, it is still quite common to present Kant as a philosopher who allows human feelings and desires no positive contribution to moral behaviour whatsoever,¹ and we find similar suggestions with regard to other rationalists. Once we look at the way in which Kant is being discussed among specialists, however, we see that this radical view on Kant is highly controversial and, in fact, rejected in the majority of more recent publications on the subject (see, for example, Timmons, 1985; McCarty, 1993; Herrera, 2000; Nauckhoff, 2003; Timmermann, 2003; and Frierson, 2014). Yet, while in the case of Kant, there is now a lively debate among specialists about the role he assigns to feelings and desires in moral behaviour, the motivational claims of the earlier rationalists have not attracted a similar amount of attention.

That the previous discussion of early-18th century moral rationalism has very much focused on other issues can be seen, for example, from Beiser’s 1996 study on the early

English Enlightenment. Beiser conceives of the sentimentalism/rationalism as a debate about the nature of values and hence as primarily concerned with non-psychological questions (see Beiser, 1996, p. 313). As a result, Beiser does not pay much attention to the motivational claims of writers such as Clarke, Burnet, Balguy or Price, remarking only that the rationalists thought that reason could determine the will “without the assistance of supernatural grace or sensible rewards” (Beiser, 1996, p. 267). Also, in addressing the objections raised by the moral sentimentalists, Beiser virtually restricts his discussion to Hutcheson and shows little interest in Hume’s famous argument from motivation. We find a similar disregard for motivational issues in other recent publications on early moral rationalism.² Moreover, even where these issues are addressed, as in Terence Irwin’s comprehensive discussion of 18th century ethical thought, the relevant systematic claims are not distinguished with the sufficient degree of clarity, and deviations from previous interpretations are rarely highlighted, let alone discussed in detail.

The aim of this paper is to help to fill this gap in the literature on early-18th century rationalism by thoroughly analysing the conceptions of moral motivation embraced by Samuel Clarke, Christian Wolff, Gilbert Burnet, John Balguy and Richard Price against the background of the systematic distinctions we find in modern metaethics and moral psychology. The claim I am going to defend is that none of these early rationalists actually embraces the motivational thesis that is often taken to be characteristic of moral rationalism, a thesis I shall refer to as *strong rationalism about (moral) motivation*. As a result, early-18th century moral rationalists are in a much better position to plausibly explain the practical nature of morality and the characteristic link between moral judgement and human behaviour than sentimentalist 18th century critics such as Hutcheson and Hume as well as many modern sentimentalist endorsers of motivational internalism seem to think.

My reasons for focusing on the five writers mentioned above is that they can count as the key representatives of early- (or pre-Kantian-) 18th century moral rationalism: not only is

there wide agreement that they all defend rationalist positions; they are also the ‘usual suspects’ most often referred to in discussions concerned with the development of moral rationalism in the 18th century and the classic sentimentalism/rationalism debate.³ There are two minor qualifications to be made here, though. First, I shall not discuss William Wollaston although he is clearly an important and much-addressed representative of early-18th century moral rationalism as well – being one of the main targets of Hutcheson’s and Hume’s critique of rationalist conceptions of moral judgements. The reason for not including Wollaston is that his relevant writings, most notably his book *The Religion of Nature delineated*, do not contain enough statements on moral motivation to allow us to even attempt to determine Wollaston’s systematic position on this issue.

Secondly, and conversely, I shall devote an entire section to Christian Wolff although he may not figure as largely in discussions of 18th century moral rationalism as the other four writers. My reason for doing so is that Wolff’s views on morality as well as on rational and empirical psychology had an important formative influence on Kant’s philosophy. Being able to determine Wolff’s position among the early-18th century moral rationalists, therefore, should allow us to better understand the development leading up to what is widely considered to be the major articulation of 18th century moral rationalism, Kant’s critical moral theory.

I.

The best place to start our discussion is with the position that has come to be known under the name ‘Humean theory of motivation’ and to which I will refer as the *simple belief-desire theory*. What makes this position a good starting point is that the modern systematic debate very much revolves around it and that alternative views are typically developed in explicit contrast to it. Those modern writers most closely associated with the theory are Donald Davidson and Michael Smith. While both writers explicitly appeal to the notion of a reason

for action, their psychological conceptions of such reasons can in principle be reformulated as claims about the nature of motivation for action, or as claims about the nature of motivational states. If we interpret them in this manner, we can describe their position as the view that, at least where motivation for *action* is concerned, motivational states are constituted by both a desire and a suitably related means-end belief. Alternatively, we can describe it as the claim that neither beliefs nor desires are by themselves sufficient to account for motivation for action.

There are obviously two general ways of going beyond the simply belief-desire theory. One would be to deny that either the presence of a belief or the presence of a desire is necessary for motivation. Another would be to postulate some kind of asymmetry between the two mental states. The second idea is the one entertained by commentators who deny that Hume defends the simple belief-desire theory. According to these commentators, Hume may be said to have generally conceived of motivational states as being constituted by both a belief and a desire. However, the additional and distinct claim that Hume is most interested in is the claim that the belief only plays a subordinate role and that the ultimate motivational impulse is exerted by the desire,⁴ a claim that is distilled in Hume's famous dictum that "Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions" (Hume, 1740/2000, p. 266).

Although most authors seem to think that the above radicalisation of the simple belief-desire theory captures Hume's view of human motivation, few of those authors would claim that we should embrace this view for ourselves. Hume's orthodox take on motivation is often considered to be too extreme and unable to do justice to the ways in which our desires are responsive to rational considerations. The same applies to the even more radical view that beliefs are not required for motivation at all and that a desire represents a full motivational state all by itself. As far as I can see, this view has not explicitly been defended in the modern debate so far, and the fact that Hutcheson, Hume and Adam Smith assign an important role to reason or its products even in moral judgements suggests that none of the classic

sentimentalists embraces this position, either (see, for instance, Hutcheson, 1726/2008, p. 133; Hutcheson, 1728/2002, pp. 31 and 76; Hutcheson, 1755, p. 38; Hume, 1740/2000, p. 298; Hume, 1751/1975, pp. 289f. and 294; and Smith, 1790/1982, p. 320).

On the other side of the spectrum, we find two positions that mirror the ones just described. A third modification of the simple belief-desire theory would be to admit that there is some kind of asymmetry between the two mental states that constitute motivation for action, but to claim that this asymmetry is entirely in favour of the belief-element. The fourth and, again, more radical option would be to argue that desire has no separate role to play in motivation for action at all and that a belief, or perhaps a combination of beliefs, represents a motivational state in its own right.

In addition to the simple belief-desire theory, then, we can distinguish four systematic positions concerning the nature of motivation for action, two of which emphasise the role of desire over the role over belief and two of which do just the opposite. It is not uncommon to describe these positions, or at least some of them, as examples of ‘motivational rationalism’ or ‘motivational sentimentalism’ (see, for example, Radcliffe, 1996, p. 103; and Irwin, 2008, p. 442). In what follows, I shall proceed upon the assumption that we should conceive of the simple belief-desire theory as neither sentimentalist nor rationalist but as the neutral point in the spectrum of possible theories. My proposal, therefore, is to distinguish the following five motivational claims:

Strong rationalism about (moral) motivation: Motivation for (moral) action is exclusively constituted by beliefs.

Weak rationalism about (moral) motivation: Motivation for (moral) action is constituted by both a belief and a desire, with the belief representing the major source of motivation.

The simple belief-desire theory: Motivation for (moral) action is constituted by a belief and a desire.

Weak sentimentalism about (moral) motivation: Motivation for (moral) action is constituted both by a belief and a desire, with the desire representing the major source of motivation.

Strong sentimentalism about (moral) motivation: Motivation for (moral) action is exclusively constituted by desires.

As indicated above, the orthodox view has Hume embracing *weak sentimentalism about (moral) motivation*, and nothing in the works of the classic sentimentalists suggests that any of them would want to defend *strong sentimentalism about (moral) motivation*, which is included here solely for the sake of completeness. To examine which of the two rationalist positions on moral motivation, i.e. *strong rationalism* or *weak rationalism*, we may legitimately attribute to Clarke, Wolff, Burnet, Balguy and Price is the purpose of the subsequent discussion, so I will refrain from assigning the positions to these authors at this point. However, in order to see that, when it comes to interpreting 18th century rationalist views on morality, both *strong rationalism about (moral) motivation* and *weak rationalism about (moral) motivation* are live options, we can draw upon the debate over Kant's conception of moral motivation that has already been mentioned. In the wake of Richard McCarty's 1993 paper *Kantian motivation and the feeling of respect*, it has become customary to describe the two opposing camps to this debate as "affectivists" and "intellectualists" (McCarty, 1993, p. 423; see also Herrera, 2000, p. 396; and Frierson, 2014, p. 117). While affectivists hold that non-cognitive states of mind play an essential role in Kantian moral motivation (see Timmons, 1985, p. 385f.; McCarty, 1993, pp. 422 and 428f.; Herrera, 2000, p. 396; Nauckhoff, 2003, pp. 43f. and 48; Timmermann, 2003, p. 198; and Frierson, 2014, pp. 54, 121f., 127 and 150), intellectualists such as Paul Guyer or Andrews Reath suggest that the

rational insight into the moral law is by itself sufficient to give rise to moral behaviour (see Reath, 1989, p. 289f.; and Guyer, 1993, p. 360f.). One way of reformulating the point at issue, then, is by saying that affectivists see Kant as endorsing *weak rationalism about (moral) motivation* whereas intellectualists see him as endorsing *strong rationalism about (moral) motivation*. My aim in what follows is to apply the distinction in question to the conceptions of early rationalists such as Clarke, Wolff, Burnet, Balguy and Price and to show that, in contrast to suggestions we find in many contributions to the modern debate in metaethics and moral psychology, there is strong textual evidence that all these writers embrace *weak rationalism about (moral) motivation*.

One final note: the characterisations of *weak sentimentalism about (moral) motivation* and *weak rationalism about (moral) motivation* provided above have deliberately been left somewhat vague. Obviously, in order for either of the two views to amount to a serious systematic conception of moral motivation, the idea of a mental state's being the 'major source' of motivation, which is mostly a metaphor, needs to be cashed out in systematic terms. The reason why I have nevertheless stuck to this description is that characterisations of this kind predominate in the relevant literature⁵ and that it can be quite difficult to more precisely pin down the exact position held by, for example, classic endorsers of *weak sentimentalism about (moral) motivation* such as Hume (who largely confines himself to the use of metaphors himself). Moreover, the purpose of my discussion is not to build a substantial case in favour of either conception. It is merely to show that the early moral rationalists do not endorse *strong rationalism about (moral) motivation* and that their ideas are much better captured by the view, or the family of views, described as *weak rationalism about (moral) motivation*. In order to achieve this goal, the somewhat broader characterisation used above seems sufficient. That being said, the systematic interpretation of the asymmetry between desire and belief that is suggested or positively employed most often in debates over Hume or Kant and in debates in modern metaethics and moral psychology is a *causal*

interpretation. According to this interpretation, what makes one of the two types of mental state the ‘major source’ of motivation is that it produces the other or serves as its ultimate cause. In discussing the views of the early moral rationalists, I will therefore specifically keep an eye to this idea.

II.

I will begin my discussion with Samuel Clarke whose relevant statements can be found in the *Discourse concerning the Unchangeable Obligations of Natural Religion, and the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Revelation* as well as in many of his sermons. It is only after Hutcheson took up the issue of moral rationalism in his *Illustrations upon the Moral Sense* published in 1728 and put much emphasis on the practical nature of morality that the motivational explanation of moral behaviour becomes an issue in its own right. Clarke, therefore, does not address the nature of motivation for action in the systematic way we find in later contributions on the subject. However, Clarke explicitly engages with the traditional and much-discussed questions of how to explain sinful behaviour and how to make sense of the idea of free will. While the relevant statements are not actually intended as answers to the systematic questions that are implicit in Hutcheson’s criticism of moral rationalism and explicitly being raised by modern metaethicists and philosophers of action, they provide a basis from which we can infer Clarke’s views on the matter.

The reason why Clarke is easily read as somebody who allows the affective or conative side of human psychology no positive contribution to moral behaviour whatsoever is that he adopts the biblical distinction between the spirit and the flesh and suggests that our affections and appetites put us in conflict with the demands of reason and morality. Take, for example, the subsequent passage from the sermon *Of the Nature of Temptation*:

But Man, being endued with rational Faculties, and knowing well the Difference between Good and Evil, [...] is still placed in such a Situation, as to be frequently Tempted to depart from Reason, and to act contrary to what he knows is Right. [...]

And hence arises the Struggle in a man's own Mind, between what the Scripture calls the Flesh, and the Spirit; between the Desires and Inclinations of Sense, Appetite, or Passion, on the one hand; and the Dictates of Reason and true Religion on the other hand. (Clarke, 1738b/1978, p. 103)

In a similar vein, in the sermon *Of the Liberty of Moral Agents*, Clarke seems to assign to human reason the office of helping men to entirely overcome their desires and passions, suggesting that this latter ability is what makes human beings free and distinguishes them from brute beasts (see Clarke, 1738a/1978, p. 217). The affective side of human psychology appears here as a power or faculty principally opposed to the faculty of reason, and something similar is suggested by a series of further passages in which Clarke stresses that reason (or the understanding) is the directing principle of human behaviour and will lead men to act in accordance with the demands of morality unless its influence is disrupted by “corrupt Inclinations” (Clarke, 1738a/1978, p. 220), “vicious Appetites and Passions” (Clarke, 1738a/1978, p. 243) or “some unreasonable and prevailing Lust” (Clarke, 1738b/1978, p. 571; see also Clarke, 1738a/1978, p. 243f.; and Clarke, 1738b/1978, p. 429f.).

What is important to recognise about these passages, however, is that Clarke rarely, if ever, presents affective or appetitive states of mind *per se* as obstacles to the exercise of reason and virtue, but meticulously adds specifying adjective attributes. This holds not only for the examples just given (“corrupt”, “vicious”, “unreasonable”), but for virtually all statements of a similar sort (see Clarke, 1738a/1978, pp. 100, 698 and 702; and Clarke, 1738b/1978, pp. 102, 612 and 613). While it is certainly possible that these adjective

attributes serve only a rhetorical function and that Clarke conceives of the above phrases as tautologies, we must also allow for the possibility that Clarke's intention in the relevant passages is to only refer to a particular *sub*-set of affective or appetitive states. In this case, Clarke's theory might have a place for desires, inclinations or feelings of pleasure that are not in contradiction with reason and virtue but either neutral with regard to moral behaviour or even supportive of it.

As a matter of fact, there is considerable evidence that this is exactly Clarke's view. There are some indications that for Clarke 'passions' could indeed be contrary to reason by definition (see, for example, Clarke, 1738b/1978, p. 430), and pretty much the same seems to hold for 'lust' narrowly construed (see Clarke, 1738b/1978, p. 101). Yet, with regard to the other types of mental states, Clarke explicitly distinguishes between their evil or corrupt variants on the one hand and their good or incorrupt variants on the other. In fact, in the sermon *The Great Duty of Universal Love and Charity*, Clarke praises what he refers to as the "natural Inclinations" and "uncorrupted Affections" (Clarke, 1738b/1978, p. 387) of the human mind and suggests that vicious individuals act contrary to these natural inclinations as much as they act contrary to reason. Far from necessarily diverting them from the course of virtue, then, some of men's desires and affections seem to serve as non-rational springs of virtuous action, thereby supporting the workings of reason and the understanding.

Moreover, there are several passages which suggest that, for Clarke, at least some of those non-rational springs of virtuous action directly result from the cognitive insight into what is good or virtuous. Thus, in the sermon *Of Loving God*, Clarke claims that the perfection we witness in virtuous individuals and attribute to God in its highest degree gives rise to particular feelings of love and amity in us (see Clarke, 1738a/1978, p. 136). In accordance with this, Clarke ascribes to virtue an "Intrinsick Beauty and Excellency" (Clarke, 1738b/1978, p. 37), thereby suggesting that our perception of virtue may generate affective responses similarly to the ones generated by our perception of works of art. Finally, in the

sermon *The Difference betwixt living after the Flesh and after the Spirit*, Clarke postulates a “Native Amiableness of Truth and Right” (Clarke, 1738b/1978, p. 49) and suggests that this amiableness helps to create in us an inclination to act virtuously and that, when we fail to actually do so, this is only because this inclination is counterbalanced by competing inclinations to do evil.

These passages strongly suggest that Clarke recognises such a thing as specifically moral feelings or desires.⁶ What is yet unclear is only whether Clarke thinks of these feelings and desires as a necessary element in moral motivation or whether he allows for moral motivation that is purely rational in nature. There are a couple of passages in Clarke’s works which strongly suggest that he holds the former of those two views. One is the following in which Clarke assigns complementary offices to appetites and passions on the one hand and reason and understanding on the other:

Man being by Nature compounded of Body and Mind, the one of these is naturally the Seat of Appetite, the other of Reason. And Each of these Faculties, are essentially Good and Useful in their Kind: Appetites and Passions, to excite and move men to act; and Reason, to direct and regulate those Actions; to direct Appetites and Passions to their proper Objects, and to restrain them within their just and due Bounds. (Clarke, 1738b/1978, p. 50)

What Clarke appears to suggest in this passage is that, to some extent at least, all human behaviour, including moral behaviour, is driven by some kind of appetite or passion, and one way to make sense of this, and of the role simultaneously assigned to reason, is to think that the rational perception of what is good or right gives rise to an affective or conative state of mind (or at least ratifies and reaffirms such a state) which then provides part of the motivational impulse from which the actual action emerges. A passage suggesting the same reading can be found in Clarke’s sermon *The Government of Passion*:

Men, [...] are of a middle Nature between these two States, between perfect Reason and mere irrational Appetites: Being indued with Appetites and Passions, to excite and stir them up to Action, where their bare abstract Understanding would leave them too remiss; and at the same Time indued with Reason also, to govern and restrain themselves, where mere Appetite and Passions would hurry them on to Things exorbitant and unreasonable. (Clarke, 1738b/1978, p. 430)

The claim that the “bare abstract Understanding” would leave human beings “too remiss” might be taken to only mean that appetites and passions come to the support of what would in principle be a sufficient motivation. The overall impression emerging from the passage, however, is rather that both appetites and reason are required for moral action. In fact, when assigning to reason the role of guidance or governance, Clarke rarely leaves desires or affections out of the picture. Rather than describing reason as immediately governing or directing our actions, he describes it as governing or directing *our appetites and passions to their proper objects*, thereby suggesting again that the latter have a constructive part to play in moral behaviour as well (see Clarke, 1738b/1978, pp. 50 and 102).

The upshot of these passages is that even moral behaviour is to some extent dependent on desires or sensual incentives and that the office of reason is not to provide motivation for action all by itself, but to either produce the uncorrupt desires on which we act or to help us elect those uncorrupt desires, by making us understand their nature and perhaps by additionally silencing those inclinations that draw us into the opposite direction. There is strong evidence, then, that Clarke embraces *weak rationalism about (moral) motivation* rather than *strong rationalism about (moral) motivation*.⁷ To be sure, we also find some passages in Clarke’s works that suggest that reason is capable all by itself to generate actions, without any intermediate link provided by feelings or desires at all.⁸ Clarke not only frequently describes

the *behaviour* of rational and virtuous individuals (rather than their appetites or passions) as being directed or governed or guided by reason. He also refers to “Right and Reason” as “the natural Motive of Action, where nothing irregular interposes” (Clarke, 1738a/1978, p. 100; see also Clarke, 1738b/1978, p. 219). In a similar manner, he claims that the “True liberty of a Rational and Moral Agent, consists in his being able to follow right Reason *only*” (Clarke, 1738a/1978: 219 [my emphasis]), which might be taken to mean that the rational perception of what is right is itself a motivational state.⁹

We need to keep in mind, however, that the term ‘motive’ is ambiguous and that it can equally be used to refer to normative reasons and to motivational mental states. The way in which Clarke attempts to reconcile his statements concerning human behaviour with the idea of free will suggests that he conceives of motives in terms of the former. In order to make sense of the idea of free will, Clarke employs a distinction between moral motives and physical efficient causes. Clarke claims that “the Wills [...] of all Intelligent Beings are constantly Directed” by the rational insight into what is right, “and must needs be determined to act accordingly” (Clarke, 1738b/1978, p. 612; see also Clarke, 1738b/1978, p. 575). At the same time, he tries to reconcile this idea with the idea of free will by claiming that “the Act of Volition [...], consequent upon the last Judgment of the Understanding, is not determined or caused by the last Judgment, as by the physical Efficient, but only as the Moral Motive” (Clarke, 1738b/1978, p. 565). Moreover, Clarke provides an explicit characterisation of the “true, proper, immediate, physical Efficient Cause of Action”, by describing it as the “Power of Self-Motion in Men” (Clarke, 1738b/1978, p. 565).

This way of opposing the judgement of the understanding as the moral motive from the act of volition indicates that, by referring to reason as “the Natural Motive of Action”, Clarke does not mean to claim that the motivational mental state issuing in moral or immoral behaviour is instantiated by reason or by a belief reason produces. It is much more sympathetic to Clarke’s statements to think that reason is a moral motive in so far as it

provides *normative reasons* to act in one way rather than the other. Further support for this view can be found in Clarke's correspondence with Leibniz and in his *Remarks upon a Book, entitled, A philosophical Enquiry concerning Human Liberty*. In his fifth reply to Leibniz, Clarke emphasises that a motive is something "extrinsic to the mind" (Leibniz/Clarke, 2000, p. 66), and in his *Remarks*, Clarke not only puts "Motives" into one group with "Reasons" and "Arguments" but explicitly points out that all these terms refer to "abstract Notions" (Clarke, 1717, p. 10) rather than physical causes.

Yet, Clarke's discussion of "motives" and "causes" might be taken to create problems for reading Clarke as endorsing *weak rationalism about (moral) motivation* in its own right. According to Vailati, the relevant passages suggest that for Clarke, evaluative judgements, passions or other mental states "do not have any causal role at all" (Vailati, 1997, p. 84) because the sole cause of volition and action is the agent who exerts his power of self-motion. A similar view is already suggested by Le Rossignol who ascribes to Clarke a strict distinction between the active and the passive side of the soul and assigns the power of willing to the former side and mental states such as perceptions and feelings to the latter. However, Le Rossignol's claim that, for Clarke, "there is no connection" (Le Rossignol, 1892, p. 65) between the active and the passive side whatsoever just seems to be an overstatement. The claim Clarke is adamant about is that the passive side of the soul cannot necessitate the active side and that, despite of our beliefs, feelings or desires, we remain free to act as we choose. Yet, that there is a connection in the opposite direction, namely from the power of self-motion as the active side of the soul to certain feelings or desires as the effects of our free choice, is not ruled out by Clarke in the same way.

By claiming that the power of self-motion "exerts itself freely in consequence of the last Judgment of the Understanding" (Clarke, 1738b/1978, p. 565), Clarke indeed suggests that the physical efficient cause of action consists neither in a rational apprehension or belief about what is right or good, nor in a mental state which is causally produced by this belief,

such as a specifically moral emotion, feeling or desire. Rather, Clarke seems to think that the physical efficient, though morally responsive to the judgement about what is right, acts causally independent of it and starts an entirely new causal chain that results in the action. Yet, it is natural to think that this causal chain is at least partly made up by further mental states or events and that non-cognitive states of mind have an essential role to play here. In fact, it is not clear how Clarke could consistently deny this and still claim, as we have seen, that appetites and passions “excite and move men to act” or “stir them up to Action”. It seems that there are only two senses in which these latter claims can be true: either because our appetites and passions prompt us to *choose* one course of action rather than another; or because, once we have *made* our choice, they serve as an intermediate causal link between our power of self-motion and our actual behaviour. Since the whole point of Clarke’s discussion is to reject the first of these views, we should conclude that he embraces the second. While Vailati’s claim that there is no causal link “between *previous* nonvolitional mental states and any volition” (Vailati, 1997, p. 84 [my emphasis]) seems correct, then, the significantly stronger claim that mental states do not play any causal role at all in Clarke’s account, must be rejected. On closer inspection, therefore, the statements that seem to indicate that Clarke embraces *strong rationalism about (moral) motivation* are fully compatible with the view that he conceives of desires as constitutive elements of motivation for action and hence endorses *weak rationalism about (moral) motivation* only.

III.

A similar conclusion is suggested by the relevant passages in the works of Christian Wolff. One fundamental feature of Wolff’s psychology is that the various faculties (*Vermögen*) of the soul which he recognises, and which include the cognitive faculty (*facultas cognoscitiva*) and the appetitive faculty (*facultas appetitiva*), are conceived of as different effects of the

same fundamental power (*Kraft*), namely the power to have perceptions (*Vorstellungen*) (see Wolff, 1751/1983, pp. 465f and 468f.; see also Wolff, 1740/1983, pp. 137f. and 433-436). What distinguishes understanding and reason from the conative and affective faculties of the human soul is that the former generate perceptions that are both clear (*klar*) and distinct (*deutlich*), while the latter can at best give rise to perceptions that are clear and confused (*verworren*) (see Wolff, 1751/1983, pp. 153f., 266 and 270; Wolff, 1740/1983, p. 162f.; and Wolff, 1752/1976, pp. 7, 50 and 164f.; see also Wolff, 1751/1983, pp. 112-116.).

As a result, the cognitive and the affective-conative side of human psychology appear to some extent assimilated in Wolff's theory. This assimilation is further amplified by the fact that Wolff acknowledges an intimate relation between our rational perceptions of the good on the one hand and our will and feelings on the other. Following Leibniz, Wolff claims that our judgements about what is good or, which is basically the same thing in Wolff's theory, what is perfect (*vollkommen*), determine our will, which faculty is accordingly characterised as the capacity of leaning or being inclined towards an object that has been perceived as good (see Wolff, 1751/1983, p. 301). Thus, Wolff emphasises that the perception of goodness is a motive (*Bewegungsgrund*) to the will and explicitly subscribes to the ancient and scholastic idea that we cannot act but under the conception of the good (*sub ratione boni*) (see Wolff, 1751/1983, p. 308). Accordingly, Wolff claims that a person who wants to perform an evil action only does so out of error, being misled by an appearance of goodness she perceives in the action in question (see Wolff, 1752/1976, p. 252). However, Wolff not only claims that whenever we want something we must have some perception of goodness. He also makes the reverse claim that whenever we have a perception of something as good, or at least whenever we have a *distinct* perception of something as good, we must desire it, thereby designating it *impossible* not to want to perform an action we conceive of as good (see Wolff, 1752/1976, p. 7f.; see also Wolff, 1740/1983, pp. 539 and 588).¹⁰

That Wolff not only recognises this intimate relation between the rational and the conative side of our soul, but also one between the rational and the affective side, appears from numerous passages in which he emphasises that our perceptions of goodness or perfection produce feelings of pleasure (*Lust*) in us. While Wolff reserves the term ‘passions’ (*Affekte*) for feelings which derive from confused perceptions and hence from the non-rational side of human psychology (see, for instance, Wolff, 1751/1983, pp. 266 and 269f.), he recognises that the distinct perceptions provided by the understanding generate feelings of pleasure as well (see also Thomas, 2004, p. 177). Thus, Wolff emphasises that we experience pleasure when we conceive of something as perfect or good (see, for example, Wolff, 1751/1983, pp. 247f., 260f. and 659; Wolff, 1740/1983, p. 222f.; and Wolff, 1752/1976, pp. 34 and 545). In fact, he even goes as far as to claim that the experience of pleasure and the perception (or appearance) of perfection are one and the same thing (see Wolff, 1751/1983, p. 247).

According to Wolff, then, we cannot have distinct perceptions of an object as good without wanting the object. Moreover, judgements about goodness produce feelings of pleasure of us. Exactly how these two aspects relate to one another remains somewhat unclear in Wolff’s discussion. Yet, there is evidence for the view that our perceptions of goodness determine our will *via* the feelings of pleasure they cause. For instance, in the following example meant to illustrate the connection between our perceptions of goodness and our will, Wolff suggests that the will to pursue a good object, in this case a book, is consequent upon a feeling of pleasure:

Z. B. Es siehet einer ein Buch im Buchladen liegen, blättert es ein wenig durch und vermeinet Sachen darinnen zu finden, die ihm zu wissen nützlich sind, das ist, er stellet sich das Buch als gut vor (...). Indem dieses geschiehet, bekommt er Lust das Buch zu kaufen. Diese Neigung,

die er alsdenn gegen das Buch bekommet, weil er es für gut hält, wird der Wille genennet.
(Wolff, 1751/1983, p. 299)

Moreover, in a further passage which directly addresses the relationship between pleasure and the will, Wolff claims that our will remains indifferent as long as we experience no feeling of either pleasure or pain and that, when we come to desire it, it is in virtue of a feeling of the former kind (see Wolff, 1740/1983, p. 218).

Wolff's overall account, therefore, does seem very sympathetic to the idea which I have introduced as *strong rationalism about (moral) motivation*: the idea that the faculty of reason, with belief as its characteristic product, is by itself sufficient to provide instantiations of motivation for action and excite human behaviour. In order to avoid the conclusion that Wolff embraces *weak rationalism about (moral) motivation*, one would have to argue for one of two claims. The first claim would be that, despite his general distinction between the cognitive faculty and the appetitive faculty, which is vehemently defended by him (see Wolff, 1740/1983, p. 533), Wolff conceives of judging and willing as one unitary cognitive state of mind. The second claim would be to concede that the mental state instantiating the will to do a particular thing is a distinct state that is only being caused by our perception of the good, but to argue that this distinct state of mind is a cognitive state or belief as well.

There are three main pieces of evidence to which one might want to appeal in order to support the first of the above claims: a) the fact that Wolff sometimes refers to the perception of goodness as a motive (*Bewegungs-Grund* or *motivum*), b) the fact that Wolff recognises only one power (*Kraft*) in the soul, namely the power to have perceptions, and c) that Wolff at one point describes the perception of perfection and the feeling of pleasure, which are obviously the work of two different faculties as well, as being one and the same thing. With regard to the first piece of evidence, it is important to emphasise that, unlike Clarke, Wolff fails to systematically distinguish between reasons on the one hand and motivating mental

states on the other. His use of the Latin *motivum* and the fact that he refers to distinct perceptions of goodness as ‘*Bewegungs-Gründe*’, i.e. as *moving* or *motivating* reasons, might be taken to suggest that these perceptions belong into the latter category. Yet, the fact that he refers to them as ‘*Bewegungs-Gründe*’, i.e. as *reasons*, rather suggests that they belong into the former.

Without any additional evidence, therefore, Wolff’s description of perceptions of goodness as motives does not really support the view that he understands them as motivational states, and very much the same is true of his claim that the cognitive faculty and the appetitive faculty are the upshot of one single power of the soul, namely the power to have perceptions. While it may not be obvious how to ultimately make sense of this idea, it seems quite natural to think that the power of having perceptions creates different kinds of perceptions and that Wolff’s distinction between different faculties of the soul is meant to account for this fact (see also Dyck, 2014, pp. 30 and 33). On this reading, the cognitive and the appetitive faculty give rise to different perceptions, that is, to different states of mind, even if in both cases, the same general power is at work. The fact that the soul has only one single power, then, does not by itself force us to conclude that perceiving something as good and willing it must be instantiated by one single state of mind. The first two pieces of evidence, therefore, only support the interpretation in question if they are coupled with evidence indicating that the states of mind to which Wolff refers as the result of different faculties are in fact identical, which evidence seems to be provided by the claim that perceiving something as good and experiencing a feeling of pleasure is one and the same thing.

Yet, this latter claim is most definitely an overstatement on Wolff’s behalf. In the example of aesthetic judgement used to illustrate the claim, Wolff defends only the weaker claim that the perception of perfection *brings into existence* a feeling of pleasure or *gives rise* to it:

Wenn ich ein Gemälde sehe, das der Sache, die es vorstellen soll, ähnlich ist, und betrachte seine Aehnlichkeit; so habe ich Lust daran. Nun besteht die Vollkommenheit eines Gemäldes in der Aehnlichkeit [...], und da die Lust aus dem Anschauen der Aehnlichkeit *entstehet*; so *entstehet* sie aus dem Anschauen der Vollkommenheit. (Wolff, 1751/1983, p. 247 [my emphasis])

The claim that the feeling of pleasure actually *consists in* the perception of perfection, which claim is subsequently repeated by Wolff, therefore, appears to be the result of a certain laxness on Wolff's part and hence something on which we should not place too much weight.

In fact, we find statements to a similar effect with regard to the question of how the perception of goodness relates to the *will*. While there are no passages in which Wolff would explicitly claim that perceiving something as good and wanting to pursue it are just the same thing, there are several passages in which he claims that the will to pursue an object arises (*entstehet*), follows (*erfolget*), accrues (*erwächst*) or springs (*entspringet*) from the perception of goodness (see Wolff, 1751/1983, pp. 307f. and 504; Wolff, 1752/1976, p. 164; and Wolff, 1740/1983, p. 534). The same picture emerges from the manner in which Wolff specifically describes the relationship of *motives* and the will: Though Wolff sometimes refers to motives as motives *to actions* (see, for instance, Wolff, 1752/1976, p. 28), he most frequently refers to them as motives *to the will*, and he also remarks that the will arises (*entstehet*) from motives – which is hardly compatible with the idea that, for him, motives just are states of willing (see Wolff, 1752/1976, pp. 7f., 102, 117 and 246; and Wolff, 1751/1983, p. 308).

It is misleading, therefore, to claim, as several commentators have done, that for Wolff, perceiving something as good and feeling pleasure or willing it are identical, or that the cognitive faculty and the affective faculty or the appetitive faculty are one and the same faculty.¹¹ What is true is that feeling and will, though both faculties in their own right, are

somehow bound by the pronouncements of reason and understanding and hence not independent in a stronger sense of that word.¹² If there is any way to successfully defend the view that Wolff is a strong rationalist about (moral) motivation, then, it must be by way of the claim that he conceives of the state of mind that instantiates willing as a *separate* cognitive state of mind or belief.

Yet, the way in which Wolff describes the will poses quite a challenge to this interpretation, too. Wolff generally characterises the will as an inclination (*Neigung*) towards a certain action (see Wolff, 1752/1976, p. 249; see also Wolff, 1751/1983, p. 299; and Wolff, 1740/1983, p. 587). Moreover, Wolff frequently describes it in terms that have an even stronger non-cognitive connotation, such as when he refers to the will, including the constant moral will to do the right thing, as a desire (*Begierde*) or as an appetite (*Appetit*) (see Wolff, 1752/1976, pp. 98, 114 and 116; Wolff, 1751/1983, p. 504f.; and Wolff, 1740/1983, pp. 244f., 534f. and 539). That Wolff refers to our acts of willing by means of these terms suggests that, for him, motivational states are not cognitive states or beliefs themselves, but at best caused by those states.

To be sure, Wolff explicitly distinguishes between sensual desires and rational desires and suggests that, in the strict philosophical sense of the word, the term ‘will’ (*Wille*) refers to the latter (see Wolff, 1740/1983, pp. 227f. and 244f.). However, given that even a rational desire or appetite is still a desire or appetite, this distinction does not force us to attribute to Wolff a dual account of motivation for action which conceives of motivation for rational action in terms of a cognitive state of mind and motivation for irrational action in terms of a non-cognitive one. Wolff’s distinction is sufficiently explained by the fact that the former kind of motivation is the result of distinct and hence appropriate perceptions of the good while the latter kind of motivation is the result of confused and inappropriate ones. That this is the systematic point behind Wolff’s distinction is also suggested by Kant who arguably has

Wolff in mind when he forwards the following critique of how previous philosophers have conceived of the higher and the lower faculty of desire:

Man muß sich wundern, wie sonst scharfsinnige Männer einen Unterschied zwischen dem *unteren* und dem *oberen Begehrungsvermögen* darin zu finden glauben können, ob die **Vorstellungen**, die mit dem Gefühl der Lust verbunden sind, in den *Sinnen* oder dem *Verstande* ihren Ursprung haben. (Kant 1788/1913: 22f. [AA 5:22f.])

In the end, therefore, there remains no basis for claiming that Wolff embraced *strong rationalism about (moral) motivation* while there is ample evidence that his take on moral motivation is captured by the claim described as *weak rationalism about (moral) motivation*.

IV.

The first rationalist in whom we can witness the influence of Hutcheson's critique of moral rationalism is Gilbert Burnet. Burnet responded to Hutcheson's *Inquiry* with a series of letters, published in the *London Journal* between April and December 1725, to which Hutcheson then responded in turn. Burnet's main criticism, which has become one of the standard objections to sentimentalist theories of moral judgement and simple emotivist theories of moral language, is that, in order for an action to be right or a character to be good, we do not normally consider it sufficient if the action or character *actually* cause pleasure or other positive feelings in us. Rather, the point is whether the action or character *merit* or *deserve* this kind of affective response. What is lacking in Hutcheson, then, on Burnet's view, is "some more certain Rule" (Burnet, 1735, p. 10), antecedent to any feelings of pleasure or delight, by which we can decide whether or not these feelings are justified or reasonable, that is, whether the 'good' that causes them is a "real Good" (Burnet, 1735, p. 11).

However, Burnet has no interest whatsoever in denying that our moral judgements may cause certain feelings or desires in us, and may do so necessarily. As a matter of fact, Burnet even adopts Hutcheson's phrase of the 'moral sense' in order to refer to the "Pleasure and Delight" that is being caused by our insight into the "Truth of Things" (Burnet, 1735, p. 10). The only thing Burnet is keen to emphasise, *pace* Hutcheson, is that there must be a *second* moral sense, seated in reason or the understanding, which provides us with our knowledge of right and wrong in the first place, and that this second moral sense ought not to be confused with the first:

Reason and Pleasure may both of them be properly enough stiled *Internal Senses*; and, with relation to *Moral Actions, Moral Senses*. But still they must be conceived as different *Senses*: *Reason*, as the *Sense* of the *Agreement or Disagreement* of our *Simple Ideas*, or of the *Combinations* of them, resulting from their *Comparison*: *Pleasure*, as the *Sense* of Joy which any *Ideas* afford us. (Burnet, 1735, p. 11; see also Burnet, 1735, p. 12f.)

Burnet, then, embraces the idea we have already found in Clarke and Wolff: the idea that moral judgements, though not themselves constituted by affective or conative states of mind, *cause* such states of mind and that moral judgement is therefore at least partially a non-cognitive phenomenon. Moreover, Burnet not only concedes that our insight into what is good and reasonable may give rise to particular feelings. He also suggests that these feelings play an important role in moral action.

The Constitution of all the Rational Agents that we know of is *such* indeed, that *Pleasure* is inseparably annexed to the Pursuit of what is *Reasonable*. And *Pleasure* ought never to be considered as something independent on *Reason*; no more than *Reason* ought to be reckon'd unproductive of *Pleasure*. But still the Ideas of *Reason* and *Right* are different from those of *Pleasure*, and must always in Reasoning be considered distinctly: *Reason* as the Ground of

Inward *Pleasure*, and that *Pleasure* as an Encouragement to follow *Reason*. (Burnet, 1735, p. 11)

While it is not clear whether Burnet wants to claim that we must necessarily respond to our rational perceptions of “Reason and Right” with feelings of pleasure,¹³ he seems to think that such feelings must at least be present whenever we *act* in accordance with these perceptions. To be sure, the claim that pleasure acts as an “Encouragement to follow Reason” might be interpreted as merely saying that feelings of pleasure and pain sometimes come to the aid of reason when it is too weak to overcome evil inclinations all by itself. However, we would then have to provide an interpretation of the claim that “*Pleasure* is inseparably annexed to the Pursuit of what is *Reasonable*” that is compatible with this reading. The only obvious way to do so would be to interpret it as saying that the pursuit itself necessarily *gives* us pleasure. However, given how much effort and renouncement may be involved in doing the morally right thing, this seems an unduly optimistic claim to make. In comparison, the claim that we will not actually pursue what is reasonable unless we have some feeling of pleasure towards it to begin with seems much more plausible. Yet, once we read Burnet’s claim in this way, we have good reason to view his general take on motivation in a different light and to see him as only embracing *weak rationalism about (moral) motivation*. Moreover, even if one were to reject this latter interpretation because the evidence is inconclusive, the conclusion ought to be, not that Burnet must be a *strong rationalist about (moral) motivation*, but that *both* of these interpretations are compatible with the account he provides.

V.

Let us turn, then, to the discussion in John Balguy’s *The Foundation of Moral Goodness*, published in two volumes in 1728 and 1729. Although Balguy emphasises that the affective

responses adhering to moral judgements are not his primary concern (see Balguy, 1728, p. 24), he explicitly concedes that there *are* such responses and even suggests that they are psychologically necessary. Like Burnet, however, he is keen to emphasise that the feelings in question do not precede moral judgements or constitute them, but are themselves brought into being by an antecedent rational judgement, claiming that “*Approbation* does not constitute *Merit*, but is produced by it: is not the Cause of it, but the Effect” (Balguy, 1728, p. 22). Now it might perhaps be thought that this evidence is inconclusive because the term ‘approbation’ might simply refer to a cognitive state of mind, such as the moral judgement itself. However, there are further passages in which Balguy refers to pleasure as the “Consequence or Appendage of Virtue” (Balguy, 1728, p. 49) and claims that moral agents “have and must have an Affection for Virtue” (Balguy, 1728, p. 57).

The question, then, is, again, what role Balguy assigns to these affective responses when it comes to moral action. Early on in his book, Balguy concedes that our acting in accordance with duty is the upshot of certain instincts and inclinations. However, he also suggests that, in principle, virtue would be practicable without such further incentives.

Considering the Frailties and Thoughtlessness of Mankind, it is but too manifest that we stand in need of Instincts and Inclinations to prompt us to what is good, and stimulate us to our Duty: and good Reason there was, why we should not be trusted to ourselves, and the Dictates of our Reason, without them. But still such Virtues would surely have been practicable, tho’ they might have been more rarely practised. (Balguy, 1728, p. 13)

In other passages in which he explicitly responds to Hutcheson and strives to provide a rationalist account of the “Motives, Inducements, or exciting Reasons for the Choice of Virtue” (Balguy, 1728, p. 45), Balguy consistently defends the view that the choice of our ends and the resulting actions are at least partially the work of desires or affections. For

example, in the following passage, Balguy not only emphasises that the exciting reason explaining our choice of virtuous actions consists in our “Approbation” of virtue. He also makes it clear that affections play a crucial role in the way our actions arise from our judgements:

What is the Reason exciting a Man to the Choice of a Virtuous Action? I answer, his very Approbation of it is itself a sufficient Reason, where-ever it is not over-ruled by another more powerful. What can be more just, what more natural, than choosing of a Thing that we approve; and even choosing it for that very Reason?

If it be needful to enlarge upon this Matter [...]; we need only call to mind [...] that Virtue being intrinsically worthy and excellent, fails not to produce a real Affection for itself in all Minds that attentively consider it. It not only makes itself approved, but admired; not only admired, but loved, by those that contemplate it in a proper manner. And the better any one is acquainted with it by Contemplation and Practice, the more amiable it becomes, and the higher his Affection rises. Is it then to be wonder'd, that Rational Beings should choose what they love; or in other Words, embrace an Object of their Affections? (Balguy, 1728, p. 45f.)

That Balguy takes motivation for action to be partially constituted by non-cognitive mental states, even where moral action is concerned, is also suggested by another passage in which he again emphasises that, in order to identify what excites our election of the moral course of action, we need not look any further than to the specific affection that is produced by our insight into what is virtuous (see Balguy, 1728, p. 46). In accordance with this, Balguy not only claims that a worthy object “necessarily produces Approbation and Affection in the Mind of the Perceiver” (Balguy, 1729, p. 54), but adds that the perceiver is “*thereby* continually prompted to pursue it” (Balguy, 1729, p. 54 [my emphasis]). Taking up Hutcheson’s claim “that in every calm Rational action, some END is desired or intended”,

Balguy also maintains that the end of the moral person is rectitude or virtue itself, while simultaneously conceding that what prompts the moral person to actually pursue this end is his affection for it:

The End of the Speculatist is Truth; whether it redound to his Advantage, or his Disadvantage. The End of the Moralist is Rectitude; whether it conduce to his Interest or no. Considered as Moral, this is precisely the Mark that he aims at; his Judgment directing, and his Affection prompting to this Object as, in a peculiar Sense, Self-worthy, and Self-eligible. (Balguy, 1728, p. 49)

Finally, Balguy emphasises that moral behaviour could even be explained if virtue were no such an end in itself, and the reason he gives it that our approbation of virtue and affection for it sufficiently accounts for moral behaviour in its own right (see Balguy, 1728, p. 47).

There is, therefore, a plethora of evidence that Balguy embraces *weak rationalism about (moral) motivation* rather than *strong rationalism about (moral) motivation*. In view of this evidence, Irwin's claim that, for Balguy, rational assent is normally sufficient for action (see Irwin, 2008, p. 445) appears misleading.¹⁴ Moreover, the evidence strongly suggests that the early passage concerned with the "Frailties and Thoughtlessness of Mankind" must be read differently, too. In fact, there are at least two interpretations that are compatible with the view that Balguy takes non-cognitive states to be co-constitutive of motivation for action. The first is to argue that, when he talks of the "Instincts and Inclinations" that help us to act in accordance with duty, Balguy only means to refer to a sub-group of affective or conative states, namely to those that relate to our own advantage, such as the desire to avoid punishment. Balguy's suggestion that virtue would in principle be practicable without the "Instincts and Inclinations" in question, then, would not entail that virtuous action is possible without any affections prompting it, but only amount to the same claim we find in Balguy's

discussion of Hutcheson, namely that the moral person can act virtuously out of her specific affection towards virtue without any further considerations of self-interest.

The second way to read the passage would be to think that Balguy describes virtue as being practicable without any “Instincts of Inclinations” whatsoever because this is the best way to conceive of the actions of God. This reading would allow us to reconcile the passage with Balguy’s responses to Hutcheson, which are more specifically concerned with the explanation of *human* moral behaviour and the question of how to explain this behaviour against the background of human nature. Moreover, it finds some support in the passage immediately following the one under consideration, where Balguy distinguishes quite generally between reasonable and affectionate creatures and describes the actions of the former as particularly noble and sublime (see Balguy, 1728, p. 13). No matter how we ultimately interpret the passage, however, the evidence provided by it can clearly not outweigh the evidence provided by the many passages in which Balguy explicitly reduces human moral behaviour to affections which result from having rationally grasped the demands of morality, which means that the only plausible way to classify Balguy is as an endorser of *weak rationalism about (moral) motivation*.

VI.

The view that moral judgements produce specific moral feelings or other affective responses is also embraced, with much clarity, by Richard Price in his book *A Review of the Principal Questions and Difficulties in Morals*, originally published in 1758. Like Burnet and Balguy, Price claims that making moral judgements is the office of our intellectual faculty (see Price, 1769, p. 95). However, he simultaneously emphasises that our cognitive moral judgement causes certain feelings or desires in us, claiming that “in contemplating the actions of moral agents, we have both a perception of the understanding, and a feeling of the heart” (Price,

1769, p. 97). Echoing passages in Balguy (see Balguy, 1728, p. 23f.), Price, criticises moral sentimentalists such as Hutcheson for having confused the *honestum* with the *pulchrum*, the cause with its effect (see Price, 1769, p. 98f.). Moreover, like his predecessors, Price goes as far as to suggest that particular feelings arise with necessity from our moral judgements, arguing that “some degree of pleasure is inseparable from the observation of virtuous action” (Price, 1769, p. 99).

Price’s general take on moral judgement, therefore, is fully compatible with the idea that moral behaviour is the upshot of both beliefs and desires. Yet, the way in which Price sets up the issue when inquiring into the ‘exciting reasons’ of actions in chapter VIII, namely by setting out to show “that the perception of right and wrong does excite to action, and is alone a sufficient principle of action” (Price, 1769, p. 308), might be taken to suggest that reason can prompt our actions all by itself. However, the examples to which Price appeals in defending his claim are not really concerned with the chain of psychological states or events that precede moral actions. Rather, they are meant to show that some of our actions *initially* start from our moral judgements and that we sometimes act in the way we do in virtue of the moral judgements we make. In order to show that “excitement belongs to the very ideas of moral right and wrong, and is inseparable from the apprehension of it” (Price, 1769, p. 310), Price then claims that “When we are conscious that an action is *fit* to be done, or that it *ought* to be done, it is not conceivable that we can remain *uninfluenced*, or want a *motive* to action” (Price, 1769, p. 310).

In the previous sections, I have suggested that some early rationalists, such as Wolff, lack a clear conception of the difference between normative reasons and motivational states of mind and that those who make this distinction, such as Clarke, uses the term ‘motive’ to refer to the former rather than to the latter. In Price, in contrast, we find evidence that he conceives of motives as mental states and, in fact, as non-cognitive ones. Thus, in chapter VI where he discusses the definition of ‘obligation’ forwarded by Balguy, Price criticises Balguy for

having confused obligation and the perception of obligation with the motive that results from it:

An ingenious and able writer before taken notice of, defines obligation to be a state of the mind into which it is brought by perceiving a reason for action.

Let this definition be substituted wherever the words duty, should, obliged, occur; and it will soon be seen, how improper and defective it is. The meaning of it is plainly, that obligation denotes that attraction or excitement, which the mind feels upon perceiving right and wrong. But this is the effect of obligation perceived, rather than obligation itself. [...]

What, in these instances, produces confusion, is the not distinguishing between perception and the effect of it; between obligation and a motive. (Price, 1769, p. 187f.)

The claim that the motive consists in the effect of perceiving an obligation, namely in “that attraction or excitement, which the mind **feels** upon perceiving right and wrong”, not only shows that Price conceives of motives as mental states rather than propositions or other abstract entities. It also shows that he conceives of them as *non-cognitive* states of mind.¹⁵ Moreover, given that the discussion of chapter VIII explicitly refers back to the discussion of obligation in chapter VI, there is reason to assume that the same should apply to that ‘motive to action’ about which Price is talking in the passage quoted above. Price’s answer to Hutcheson’s question of how reason can excite moral behaviour, then, is that reason does so by producing an affection or inclination in the person who judges about right and wrong, and in virtue of this answer, we can conclude that Price embraces *weak rationalism about (moral) motivation*.¹⁶

VII.

The upshot of the above examination of early-18th century rationalist thought is that there is no reason to ascribe to any of the early moral rationalists the position I have referred to as *strong rationalism about (moral) motivation*. Quite to the contrary, there is ample evidence that they all embrace some form of *weak rationalism about (moral) motivation* and assign to non-cognitive states such as feelings or desires an indispensable role in moral behaviour. What we may conclude from the preceding analysis, therefore, is not only that we should be wary of histories of early rationalism that suggest that all the early rationalists take moral motivation to be entirely independent of affective or conative states of mind. It is also that we should be wary of histories according to which Richard Price fundamentally changes the game by conceiving of moral behaviour as the joint effect of reason and affection, thereby achieving a reconciliation of rationalist and sentimentalist ideas.¹⁷ The idea that moral behaviour is the upshot of both a rational insight into what is good and evil and a resulting feeling or desire is not something that can only be found in Price's writings and that would therefore attest to some kind of corrective influence of Hutcheson's and Hume's anti-rationalist arguments. It is something that characterises 18th century moral rationalism from the very beginning. The corrective influence of Hutcheson's and Hume's arguments, then, rather lies in the fact that later moral rationalists, such as Burnet and Price, pay due attention to the crucial issue of moral motivation and address it much more explicitly and systematically than their rationalist predecessors Clarke and Wolff.

One important further conclusion to be drawn from the analysis is that Hutcheson's and Hume's critiques of the motivational conceptions of Clarke and other early rationalists frequently miss their target because they are based on misleading characterisations of their opponents' views. The core element of the critique developed in Hutcheson's *Illustrations upon the moral sense* are the distinctions between "approbation" and "election" (Hutcheson, 1728/2002, p. 137) and between "justifying" and "exciting Reasons" (Hutcheson, 1728/2002,

p. 138), which distinctions Hutcheson takes the moral rationalists to have hopelessly confused:

We have indeed many confused Harangues on this Subject, telling us, “We have two Principles of Action, Reason, and Affection, or Passion (i.e. strong Affection): the former in common with Angels, the latter with Brutes: No Action is wise, or good, or reasonable, to which we are not excited by Reason, as distinct from all Affections; or, if any such Actions as flow from Affections be good, ’tis only by chance, or materially and not formally.” As if indeed Reason, or Knowledge of the Relations of things, could excite to Action when we proposed no End, or as if Ends could be intended without Desire or Affection. (Hutcheson, 1728/2002, p. 139)

It should be clear from our previous discussion that the above sketch at best provides a caricature of the views of Clarke’s or Burnet’s rationalist positions: neither do Clarke or Burnet commit themselves to the idea that we can act on our rational judgements alone, without any affection or desire being in play, nor do they explicitly embrace the view that the affections or desires that may prompt virtuous actions are related to morality only contingently. To the contrary, their concession that there are specifically moral feelings or desires allows for the possibility of actions done from a feeling of duty, even if they may not explicitly draw this conclusion. Hutcheson’s point that we can only be excited to an action insofar as we intend a particular end and that we only intend such an end if we have a affection or desire for it, then, seems to be one that both the early and the later rationalists can happily accept. The same holds for many of Hutcheson’s other statements as well, such as the claim that “all exciting Reasons presuppose Instincts and Affections” (Hutcheson, 1728/2002, p. 138), that “there can be [...] no exciting Reason previous to Affection” (Hutcheson, 1728/2002, p. 139), that “the reasons moving to Election are such as shew the Tendency of an

Action to gratify some Affection in the Agent” (Hutcheson, 1728/2002, p. 155) and that there is no fundamental way to “set rational Actions in Opposition to those from Instinct, Desire, or Affection” (Hutcheson, 1728/2002, p. 175).

Something similar can be said about the anti-rationalist discussion we find in book III, section 1, of Hume’s *Treatise of human nature*, entitled “Moral distinctions not deriv’d from reason”. Starting from the idea that moral judgements are action-guiding and exert an undeniable influence on our behaviour, Hume repeatedly emphasises that moral judgements cannot be the upshot of reason because “reason alone” (Hume, 1740/2000, pp. 294 and 297) or “[r]eason itself” (Hume, 1740/2000, p. 294) has no such influence. Yet, as we have seen, the idea that reason cannot give rise to actions on its own account but needs to be supplemented or supported by feelings or desires is one that all his rationalist opponents are willing to accept.

The impression that Hume fails to fully do justice to the position of the moral rationalists is reinforced by further passages in which Hume addresses and rejects their position more explicitly. Thus, in paragraph 22 of section 1, Hume attributes to the rationalists the view that the virtuous actions of human beings are to be explained in exactly the same manner as the actions of God and criticises them for not having recognised that it is “one thing to know virtue, and another to conform the will to it” (Hume, 1740/2000, p. 299). Though, as we have seen, rationalists such as Clarke or Wolff tend to describe the rational and moral side of human beings in analogy to God, they also emphasise the similarities between human beings and animals and ultimately ascribe to the former a mixed or dual nature. Moreover, it is exactly when it comes to the causal explanation of behaviour and action that this latter aspect is brought to the fore. Finally, though quite a few rationalists conceive of the understanding and the will as intimately related, none of them fails to acknowledge that the insight into the demands of morality and the will to comply with them may come apart. If anything, the challenge to explain how this is possible lies with the sentimentalist who

conceives of moral judgements themselves as being constituted by motivationally efficacious states of mind.

As with Hutcheson, then, there are several passages in Hume's writings which suggest that he misinterprets or even purposefully misrepresents the position of the moral rationalists and that some of the arguments moved up against them have no real force. In order to really make a point against the moral rationalists, Hutcheson and Hume need to defend a claim that is more specific than the ones cited above: they must argue that that the understanding can neither give rise to an action by itself nor to a motivationally efficacious feeling or desire. Hutcheson does not systematically address the issue, but he admits that our reasoning, and the opinions we form in virtue of it, can give rise to new desires – which seems to imply that his own conception of motivation is actually compatible with *weak rationalism about (moral) motivation* (see Hutcheson, 1728/2002, pp. 19 and 66). However, Hutcheson explicitly distinguishes between primary or ultimate desires (which are directed at our own happiness or the happiness of others in general) and secondary or derived desires (which are directed at particular objects). One way to attribute to Hutcheson the claim he needs for his rejection of moral rationalism to work, therefore, is to interpret him as saying that the understanding can only ever raise secondary or derived desires and that the original impetus is always provided by an ultimate desire whose authority the understanding cannot question. In fact, there is some textual evidence that Hutcheson not only thinks of the relationship between reason and desires in exactly this way, but that he wants to positively appeal to this idea in his critique of moral rationalism. Thus, Hutcheson's rejection of the rationalists' talk of 'conformity to reason' in chapter IV of the *System of moral philosophy*, published posthumously in 1755, appeals to the idea that all exciting reasons can be reduced to "some *original* affection or instinct of will" (Hutcheson, 1755, p. 57 [my emphasis]), not to the weaker idea that all exciting reasons relate, in one way or the other, to an affection or instinct.

What we find in Hutcheson's work, then, are *both* anti-rationalist claims that ignore or distort the actual motivational conceptions defended by the early moral rationalists *and* anti-rationalist ideas that are indeed in contradiction with those conceptions, namely the idea I have referred to as *weak sentimentalism about (moral) motivation*. The same is true of Hume. Though the points made in book III, section 1, of the *Treatise* are notoriously ambiguous and tend to miss their target, there is also – in the famous section “Of the influencing motives of the will” in book II – an exposition of the exact claim that is required in order for the rejection of moral rationalism to make sense (see Hume, 1740/2000, pp. 265–68).

Given the problems with the way in which Hume articulates his views on moral motivation, it may not come as a surprise that there is some controversy in recent Hume scholarship about the true character and argumentative role of Hume's motivational claims. According to the interpretation forwarded by Rachel Cohon, Hume does *not* embrace *weak sentimentalism about (moral) motivation* but actually accepts the view that beliefs may give rise to motivation in their own right. Cohon therefore rejects the view that the debate over motivation for action conducted by sentimentalists and rationalists is primarily about how motivationally efficacious feeling or desires are *produced* (see Cohon, 2008, p. 30; cf. Radcliffe, 1999). Cohon's reading is based on the claim that orthodox Hume interpreters have failed to sufficiently distinguish between the claim that *beliefs* are motivationally inert and the claim that *reason* is motivationally inert: while Cohon admits that Hume held the latter view, to which she refers to as the ‘inertia of reason thesis’, she denies that he also held the former, the ‘inertia of belief thesis’ (see Cohon, 2008, pp. 12f. and 18; for a similar idea, see also Kail, 2007, pp. 176f. and 192).

Now one obvious question to ask with regard to Cohon's interpretation is whether it still allows us to make sense of Hume's critique of moral rationalism. Cohon not only concedes that Hume “vehemently rejects moral rationalism” (Cohon, 2008, p. 12), but also agrees that the argument from motivation developed in book III, section 1, of the *Treatise*

plays a crucial part in this rejection. According to her, Hume's rejection of moral rationalism is achieved with the help of the 'inertia of reason thesis' alone, with no contribution from the 'inertia of belief thesis' whatsoever. However, while Cohon is certainly right that the 'inertia of reason thesis' has the potential to damage the views of the early rationalists by itself, it is not clear that the two claims can be disentangled in the way Cohon suggests.

Cohon's explanation for why most Hume scholars fail to make the distinction between the two claims is that they take the 'inertia of reason thesis' to actually presuppose the 'inertia of belief thesis': since beliefs are the product of reason, Hume cannot allow for beliefs that cause motivationally efficacious feelings or desires because this would commit him to the view that reason is the ultimate cause of such feelings or desires – and hence not motivationally inert (see Cohon, 2008, pp. 64 and 73). Cohon's response to this assumption consists in two interconnected claims: the claim that 'reason' in Hume does not refer to an "independently identifiable item" (Cohon, 2008, p. 74), but to an activity, namely to the "process of reasoning" (Cohon, 2008, p. 76), and the claim that such an activity or process cannot occupy a "node in the causal chain" (Cohon, 2008, p. 74). Moreover, according to Cohon's re-interpretation of the motivation argument, the premise that our moral distinctions influence or excite our affections and actions needs to be interpreted as saying that the process of moral discrimination, i.e. the mental activity of "discerning or discriminating good from evil" (Cohon, 2008, p. 82) results in passions and sometimes in actions – something the reasoning process cannot achieve.

However, there are various problems with Cohon's argument. First, the idea that processes cannot figure in causal explanations is controversial at best. Not only are there some causality theorists, most notably Wesley C. Salmon and Phil Dowe, who have influentially made use of the idea of causal processes (see Salmon, 1984; and Dowe, 2000). An even more widespread view among causality theorists seems to be that causal relations generally hold between events (see, for instance, Davidson, 1967; Kim, 1973; and Lewis,

1973). Yet, it is not easy to see how the reasoning process Cohon refers to could be anything other than a mental event (or a chain of events). If anything, therefore, the idea of a process of reasoning serving as the cause of a belief or other mental state seems more natural than the idea of a belief serving as such a cause. The view expressed by *sentimentalism* and *rationalism about (moral) motivation*, namely that beliefs are or are not the major source of motivation for action, should therefore always be interpreted as the view that particular *manifestations* of beliefs, something to which we may perhaps refer as ‘belief events’, are or are not the major source of motivation for action (see also Davidson, 1993, p. 288). Under this reading, however, it becomes less and less plausible to think that the ‘inertia of reason thesis’ and the ‘inertia of belief thesis’ can be separated as strictly as Cohon argues.

Secondly, Cohon’s treatment suggests that the reasoning process generates beliefs without causing them. Yet, it is by no means obvious how to conceive of the generation of beliefs or other mental states in non-causal terms. Thirdly, if the process of reasoning cannot cause beliefs, passions or actions *simply because it is a process*, why can the process of moral discrimination do so? Contrary to what Cohon argues, then, the overall impression is that the ‘inertia of reason thesis’ would plausibly commit Hume to the ‘inertia of belief thesis’: once we attribute to him the former (as Cohon does), we may also legitimately view him as an endorser of *weak sentimentalism about (moral) motivation*.

Though both Hutcheson and Hume can be credited then with the idea referred to as *weak sentimentalism about (moral) motivation*, which is indeed in contradiction with the views of the early moral rationalists, the inconsistent and at times inaccurate ways in which both writers expound the claims of their rationalist opponents and their own sentimentalist alternatives has undoubtedly helped to obscure the true nature of early-18th century rationalist conceptions of moral motivation. It should be obvious that the differences between the claims that Hutcheson and Hume, and quite a few of their commentators,¹⁸ tend to confuse or conflate crucially bear on how we are to assess Hutcheson’s and Hume’s critique of the early

rationalists – and on how we are to assess the prospects of moral rationalism in its own right. Moral rationalists who assign to feelings or desires a crucial causal role in moral motivation (or in motivation in general) are undoubtedly in a much stronger position than rationalists who do not, and for at least the three following reasons. First, even radical cognitivists such as Jonathan Dancy admit that the phenomenology of being motivated is the phenomenology of being in a state of desire: being motivated has, at least sometimes, a distinctive feel to it, and this distinctive feel is one we typically associate with affective or conative states of mind, not with cognitive ones (see Dancy, 2000, p. 14). While rationalists who endorse *weak rationalism about (moral) motivation* can straightforwardly account for this aspect of our self-experience, those who endorse *strong rationalism about (moral) motivation* will have a difficult time explaining it. Secondly, as not only Hutcheson and Hume but also modern motivational internalists such as Charles Stevenson, Richard Hare or Simon Blackburn argue, moral judgements stand in a characteristic and intimate relation to action. This is at least suggested by our ordinary moral practice, most importantly by the fact that we tend to doubt the sincerity of a person's moral utterances if she does not herself act in accordance with those utterances.¹⁹ Again, endorsers of rationalism of *strong rationalism about (moral) motivation* will have some difficulty in accounting for the practicality of rational moral judgement and are naturally led to some version of motivational externalism. Endorsers of *weak rationalism about (moral) motivation*, however, gain additional resources for explaining the internal connection between moral judgement and human action, by being able to posit an internal connection between rational moral judgement and motivationally efficacious moral feelings or desires.²⁰ Thirdly, strong rationalists about (moral) motivation face challenges raised by empirical findings in neuroscience and behavioural psychology which suggest that the inability to experience certain emotions might seriously affect people's ability to act in accordance with moral and other social norms (see, for example, Damasio, 1994). Weak rationalists about (moral) motivation cannot only account for these findings; they can even

use them as positive evidence for their idea that motivation for action crucially relies on affective or conative states of mind.

In accordance with this, theorists who want to appeal to the issue of moral motivation in order to defend moral sentimentalism and refute moral rationalism cannot simply rest their case with having systematically refuted or ridiculed *strong sentimentalism about (moral) motivation* and presented the simple belief-desire as the more plausible alternative. Given that most if not all classic moral rationalists accept the simple belief-desire theory, defenders of moral sentimentalism need to provide an independent positive argument that supports *weak sentimentalism about (moral) motivation* as opposed to *weak rationalism about (moral) motivation*. That such an independent argument is not easily to be had is suggested by the fact there is yet no standard defense of *weak sentimentalism about (moral) motivation* and that the argument developed by Hume in the section “Of the influencing motives of the will” is usually met with some scepticism.²¹ There are good reasons, therefore, to question the view that the disagreement over moral motivation, as it pertains to the sentimentalism/rationalism debate, has effectively been settled through the contributions made by Hutcheson or Hume. In fact, the picture emerging from the above discussion is rather that the appeal to motivation provides no substantial leverage against actual moral rationalists at all and that moral sentimentalists should better look for their ammunition elsewhere, by pressing, for example, the rationalist to provide a plausible account of the supposed cognitive content of rational moral judgement.

One final thing to be pointed out in this respect is that the above examination suggests certain conclusions with regard to the way in which Kant’s critical moral theory relates to earlier versions of moral rationalism and possibly improves on them. Though I have not addressed the question of whether Kant embraces *weak rationalism about (moral) motivation* or *strong rationalism about (moral) motivation*, there is one view we may nevertheless rule out as a result of the preceding analysis: the view that Kant re-invents moral rationalism, or

even German moral rationalism, by explaining moral action in terms of motivationally efficacious moral feelings or desires.

We may certainly interpret Kant's conception of the feeling of 'respect for the law' in the way proposed by 'affectivists' such as Timmons, McCarty, Herrera, Timmermann, Nauckhoff or Frierson. If anything, the predominance of weak rationalist views of moral motivation among early-18th century moral rationalists makes it less plausible that Kant should have opted for a conception of *strong rationalism about (moral) motivation*. However, there is no basis for claiming that, by itself, this 'affectivist' conception of moral motivation marks one of Kant's original contributions to the sentimentalism/rationalism debate. If the preceding analysis of the works of Clarke, Wolff, Burnet, Balguy and Price is basically correct, then Kant's main contribution to the development of moral rationalism and the issue of rational moral motivation must lie somewhere beyond merely recognising that feelings or desires need to play a causal role in moral behaviour. In my view, there are three candidate contributions: first, that Kant provides a detailed systematic treatment of the specific feeling or desire that is supposedly involved in moral behaviour (with his conception of 'respect for the law' developed in the *Triebfedern* chapter of the *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*); secondly, that he brings the noumenon/phenomenon distinction to bear on the problem of free yet affectively driven moral action (with which problem both Clarke and Wolff struggled so hard); and thirdly, that he provides an account of the basic cognitive content of moral judgements (with his theory of the categorical imperative), thereby setting the stage for much of later rationalist philosophising in ethics.

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¹ One example is Blackburn who suggests that Kant thinks of moral action as being completely independent of inclinations and desires and worries that Kant thereby moves morality beyond the world of human concerns (see Blackburn, 1998, pp. 214 and 246). See also Dancy’s claim that, for Kant, purely cognitive states can constitute a complete motivating state (Dancy, 1993, p. 7f.).

² For instance, Martha Zebrowski’s papers on Clarke and Price are devoted to the Platonic roots of Clarke’s and Price’s rationalist thought and virtually ignore psychological issues more narrowly construed (Zebrowski, 1994; and Zebrowski, 1997). Even publications that do focus on psychological issues, such as Blackwell’s and Dyck’s discussions of Christian Wolff, typically neglect the issue of motivation, focusing instead on Wolff’s methodological distinction between empirical and rational psychology and his theory of consciousness (see Blackwell, 1961; Dyck, 2011; and Dyck, 2014).

³ For references to these five writers as key proponents of moral rationalism, see Kydd, 1946, pp. 20 and 31; Frankena, 1955, pp. 357 and 359; Blackstone, 1965, pp. 1 and 41; Jensen, 1971, p. 25f.; Raphael, 1974, pp. 14 and 24; Norton, 1977, p. 194; Timmons, 1985, p. 379; Beiser, 1996, pp. 266f. and 313; Korsgaard, 1996, pp. 37 and 51; Radcliffe, 1999, p. 118f.; Botros, 2006, p. 61; Irwin, 2008, pp. 396, 439 and 732; Schadow, 2013, pp. 32–34; and Frierson, 2014, p. 53.

⁴ For recent defences of this interpretation, see Bricke, 1996, p. 10f.; and Radcliffe, 1999, pp. 111 and 117f.

⁵ For instance, many commentators discussing Hume's view of motivation seem quite content with relying on abstract or metaphorical terms, referring to the desire or non-cognitive state as the 'major' constituent and the belief as the 'minor' constituent of the motivational state (see Bricke, 1996, p. 10f.), describing the desire as 'dominating' and the belief as being 'subordinate' to it (see Mackie, 1980, p. 2), emphasising that the desire is 'active' whereas the belief is 'passive' (see Dancy, 1993, p. 13f.) or merely postulating an 'asymmetry' between the two types of mental state in favour of the desire (see Dancy, 1993, p. 13f.; and Halbig, 2007, p. 47).

⁶ For a similar claim, see Le Rossignol, 1892, p. 54. However, Le Rossignol does not sufficiently acknowledge the possibility that these feelings or desires might be either the cause or the effect of moral judgement and that Clarke might conceive of them in the latter way. As a result, Le Rossignol claims, falsely, that the concession that moral perceptions are accompanied by feelings or emotions is inconsistent with Clarke's rationalist account of moral judgement.

⁷ This reading of Clarke is also suggested, if not in these terms, by Le Rossignol who very much interprets Clarke's views on moral motivation as an anticipation of Kant's account of respect for the law (see Le Rossignol, 1892, p. 73). It is not clear, however, whether the relevant statements are compatible with Le Rossignol's own claims concerning Clarke's conception of the active and passive side of the human soul, which I address below.

⁸ That this is Clarke's view is suggested by Irwin who claims that Clarke takes the bare awareness of moral principles to be able to motivate us and that, for him, no non-cognitive element such as a desire is required in order to explain moral behaviour (see Irwin, 2008, p. 387).

⁹ Note, however, that in the subsequent sentence, the capacity of judging what is right and the "Power of acting conformably thereunto" appear as separate faculties or powers.

¹⁰ That these are two different claims gets sometimes obscured in discussions of Wolff's account. See, for instance, Thomas, 2004, p. 180.

¹¹ See, for instance, Beck, 1969, p. 269; McCarty, 1993, p. 13; and Schadow, 2013, p. 301f. See also Frierson, 2014, p. 54. That these views are especially forwarded by scholars who approach Wolff's theory from the discussion of Kant may be due to the fact that Kant himself tends to read Wolff in this way: In one of his lectures on metaphysics, Kant not only rejects Wolff's idea that the different faculties of the soul can be reduced to one single power but claims, falsely, that Wolff conceives of both pleasure and pain and desire as acts of the cognitive faculty (see Kant, 1970, p. 674f.).

¹² For this somewhat weaker claim, see Thomas, 2004, p. 180. See also Schadow who subscribes both to the stronger and the weaker claim and apparently considers them to be equivalent (Schadow, 2013, p. 38f.).

¹³ This interpretation is suggested by Irwin. In Irwin's view, Burnet defends an externalist version of rationalism according to which "we can conceive someone making the right moral judgements while lacking the affections that would cause a favourable feeling towards these judgements" (Irwin, 2008, p. 442). It needs to be emphasised, however, that in the passage Irwin cites as support of this interpretation, Burnet only suggests that there could in principle be beings of whom this is true. Burnet's point, therefore, is a metaphysical one, not one about human psychology.

¹⁴ The general problem with Irwin's interpretation, however, is that he does not explicitly distinguish the above claim from the (true) claim that Balguy takes moral judgement and moral behaviour to be independent of a "prior non-rational instinct" (Irwin, 2008, p. 440) or "antecedent desire" (Irwin, 2008, p. 443).

¹⁵ That Price conceives of motives in this way is not sufficiently acknowledged in the existing literature. Thus, Barnes first describes the "perception" (Barnes, 1942, p. 159) of moral distinctions as a motive and then refers to "duty" as a motive (Barnes, 1942, p. 170), thereby directly contradicting Price's own statements. Similarly, the definition proposed by Hudson, according to which a motive is "the thought of some end which the agent desires" (Hudson, 1970, p. 163), fails to do justice to the fact that Price describes motives as something that is felt.

¹⁶ This interpretation is suggested by Thomas (see Thomas, 1977, p. 104) and, if somewhat more cautiously, by Hudson (see Hudson, 1970, p. 168f.).

¹⁷ For suggestions to this effect, see Le Rossignol 1892: 89f.; and Irwin 2008: 744.

¹⁸ See, for example, Harrison, Stroud, Mackie and Baier who all fail to sufficiently distinguish the simple belief-desire theory from the stronger motivational claim I refer to as *weak sentimentalism about (moral) motivation* (Harrison, 1976, p. 5f.; Stroud, 1977, pp. 157, 162 and 167; Mackie, 1980, p. 1f.; and Baier, 1991, pp. 164 and 279).

¹⁹ For a more detailed exposition of this 'argument from social practice', see Eggers, 2015. See also Schroeder, 2010, p. 9f.

²⁰ For an attempt to defend the 'practicality requirement' within the framework of *weak rationalism about (moral) motivation*, see Smith, 1994.

²¹ See, however, Lenman, 1996 and Sinhababu, 2017 for attempts to defend the orthodox version of the Humean theory of motivation.

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