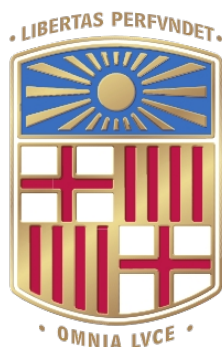


INTENTIONAL IS NOT VOLUNTARY: AN EPISTEMIC APPROACH

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Introduction

While concepts such as intentional action, action done for reasons, or expressive action have been the focus of much contemporary work in the philosophy of action, the concept of voluntary action has not received as much attention in the last century. So much so that the current bibliography about voluntariness is rather scarce. An interesting exception can be found in the recent work of John Hyman (2013, 2015, 2016), whose account of voluntariness is remarkably aimed at rejecting what I will call the Intentional-Voluntary Sufficiency Thesis (IVST henceforth):

IVST. For any act-description A and any agent S, if S A-s intentionally then S also A-s voluntarily.

Hyman's main argument against IVST concerns cases of action done under compulsion that falls short of total control over the agent. The argument goes as follows. If S consents to A-ing because she is compelled to do it by a sufficiently grave threat, then S does not A voluntarily although she A-s

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‘knowingly and intentionally’ (2015: 76). Now, according to Hyman, for an action to be voluntary it has to be due to choice as opposed to compulsion and ignorance (2015: 7, 11, *passim*). So one may ask –is there any type of ignorance that can similarly vitiate voluntariness without vitiating intentionality? While Hyman decides to remain neutral about this question, I will take a shot and argue for a positive answer in this paper.

I will contend that, when certain misinformation is used to manipulate an agent into doing something, an agent may act intentionally but not voluntarily under the same act-description. This thesis may beg the question for at least one reason, namely, that certain epistemic deficiencies do also prevent agents from acting intentionally under an act-description. So, perhaps, it might be the case that the type of misinformation I have in mind is precisely the one that undermines intentionality as well, such that there might be no type of ignorance that exclusively undermines voluntariness. I introduce this challenge and identify an epistemic requirement for intentional action in Section 1. In Section 2, I develop my epistemic argument against IVST and fully meet the challenge by showing that, although the type of ignorance that vitiates intentionality also vitiates voluntariness, the type of ignorance that I claim to exclusively vitiate the latter is not the one that vitiates the former. This is because, given the relationship between autonomy and voluntariness, voluntary action requires the agent to be well-informed in a way intentionality does not.

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Practical Knowledge and Intentional Action

Many philosophers have either explicitly defended or implicitly assumed some version of the idea that practical knowledge or belief –very roughly, knowledge or belief of what one does intentionally¹– is required for intentional action. Some others have, however, offered reasons to reject, revise, or at least suspect that idea.

In this section, I examine some proposals from both sides to determine what type of practical ignorance, if any, is incompatible with intentional action. This will allow us to identify the terms and conditions of the challenge delineated above, to which I now turn.

1.1 A Potential Challenge

I want to defend that, in circumstances of cognitive manipulation by deception, when an agent S is ignorant about whether p, it can be the case that S A-s intentionally but not voluntarily due to her ignorance. The problem is that certain type of ignorance seems to also prevent agents from acting intentionally under an act-description. So, what if this type of ignorance is the one I take to exclusively undermine voluntariness? That would be fatal for my purposes, as in that case, an epistemic approach against IVST would not be available be-

1. Practical knowledge/belief usually concerns what one is doing intentionally, though it is also taken to concern what one has done, what one will do, and even what one is intending or trying to do. I will limit the scope to the imperfective aspect of action (i.e., to what one is doing), and won't address the problem of whether it is acquired non-observationally or inferentially. For a nice overview of different ways of characterising and acquiring practical knowledge, see Paul (2021: chap. 6).

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cause every time that ignorance was in play S would not A voluntarily *nor* intentionally. To see the reasonability of this challenge, consider the following scenario:

[S1] Elizabeth is donating money to a charity association. Since the association is using part of the money to finance child exploitation, Elizabeth is indirectly financing child exploitation too. Elizabeth does, however, ignore the hidden purposes of the association.

Is Elizabeth intentionally financing child exploitation? Well, even if she is intentionally donating the money, I doubt she is intentionally contributing to child exploitation. And the reason, intuitions suggest, is partly that she ignores that her donation has that consequences. So [S1] shows that a certain type of ignorance prevents Elizabeth from intentionally financing child exploitation. Notice, however, that it also shows that Elizabeth does not finance child exploitation voluntarily either. This coincidence is what seems to motivate the challenge.

In effect, if when such ignorance is in play Elizabeth does not contribute to child exploitation either intentionally or voluntarily, then perhaps the type of ignorance that I take to exclusively undermine voluntariness does also undermine intentionality. Perhaps the coincidence might be more than a mere coincidence after all. Now, though reasonable, this thought simply gets ahead of itself. For an alternative explanation is still available, namely, that all voluntary action is intentional but not all intentional action is voluntary, such that whenever ignorance prevents an agent S from acting intentionally under an act-description A it will also prevent S from A-ing voluntarily –hence the coin-

vidence— but not necessarily the other way round. This means, for instance, that attribution [A1] can perfectly be true in circumstances of cognitive manipulation by deception:

[A1] Elizabeth donates the money intentionally but not voluntarily.

To show that the challenge can be met thus, we need to identify what type of ignorance undermines intentionality, what type exclusively undermines voluntariness in circumstances of deceptive manipulation, and why they are different types of ignorance such that [A1] can be true for epistemic reasons. I turn to address the first item now and address the last two in Section 2.

1.2 Can Ignorance Make an Action Unintentional?

[S1] suggested that some sort of ignorance can make an action unintentional under an act-description. Since ignorance might mean lack of knowledge, lack of true belief, or lack of belief, scenarios like [S1] have motivated different proposals necessarily relating knowledge, true belief, and belief, to intentional action. Let us consider the Strong Knowledge Requirement (SKR henceforth):

SKR. For any act-description A and any agent S, if S is A-ing intentionally at t then S knows that she is A-ing at t.²

[S1] is the kind of scenario that intuitively tells in favour of SKR. If we imagine, for instance, that Elizabeth has the false causal belief ‘the donation

2. See Anscombe (2000), Gorr & Horgan (1982), Hampshire (1982), Moya (1990), Olsen (1969), Stroud (2013), or Thompson (2011).

won't contribute to child exploitation', we can explain our intuition that she does not finance exploitation intentionally by appealing to her false causal belief. In short, we can explain our intuition by saying that her ignorance is sufficient for impeding her intentional contribution to exploitation, which in turn seems to show that a necessary condition for her acting intentionally under that act-description is that she knows 'the donation will contribute to child exploitation'. Therefore, intuition seems to lead us to endorse SKR. But does it really follow from this initial intuition about [S1] that in every instance of intentional action agents need to know what they are doing? Carter & Shepherd (forthcoming), Mele et. al. (2021: 1234), and Schwenkler (2019: 183–4) offer some examples that favour a negative answer. Here is one scenario based on their examples:

[S2] Maria is spinning with her skateboard in the air to make a 900 – i.e., a 900° spin in the air. While in the air, she truly believes she is doing a 900. Now, although she is an expert skateboarder, her success rate at making a 900 fluctuates between 33% and 40%.

What this example is meant to show is that, even if Maria truly believes that she is making a 900 while she is spinning, it seems implausible to say that her true belief amounts to knowledge. This is because, given an arguably plausible safety condition for knowledge along the lines that 'a subject, *S*, knows that *p* only if the agent couldn't easily have been incorrect about whether *p*, given how *p* was formed' (Carter & Shepherd forthcoming), it seems Maria's true belief is not sufficiently safe as to count as knowledge because its truth is too accidental. Basically, Maria finds herself in such an unfa-

vourable situation that the likelihood of success is too low that she could have easily been incorrect about whether she is doing a 900. Therefore, the point goes, she does have a belief, a true one, but lacks knowledge.

One may wonder, however –if her success is that accidental and if accidentality is often considered a defeater of intentionality, why consider Maria’s doing of a 900 intentional? Following Carter & Shepherd (forthcoming), Mele & Moser (1994: 63), and Shepherd (2021: 64–5), I would say Maria’s action should count as intentional mainly for two reasons. First, because Maria has an intention-embedded good plan to make a 900. And, second, because she exercises an almost perfect control over her behaviour in a way that allows her to properly approximate that plan. The point being that when these two features are present in an agent’s behaviour, it sounds too odd to attribute her success to the kind of luck that defeats intentionality.

After all, Maria is an expert skateboarder and the endeavour she is committed to is of great difficulty even for a skilled skateboarder. That her success rating at making a 900 is that low simply comes with the job, a job that has certain rigid probabilities no skateboarder is sufficiently able to change beyond a certain point. We should just admit that ‘most intentional action includes aspects that have rigid probabilities... that do not permit intervention’ (Shepherd 2021: 61), and that intentional action ‘frequently occurs in the face of nearby failure’ (Carter & Shepherd forthcoming).

So, for these reasons, we should say that Maria acts intentionally but unknowingly.³ And, more importantly, that [S2] shows that SKR cannot identify the type of ignorance that undermines intentionality. Let us now consider the Strong Belief Requirement (SBR henceforth):

3. Although see Gorr & Horgan (1982: 256–7).

SBR. For any act-description A and any agent S, if S is A-ing intentionally at t then S truly believes that she is A-ing at t.

Sure enough, SBR can epistemically explain why Elizabeth acts unintentionally under the act-description ‘financing child exploitation’ and why Maria acts intentionally under the description ‘making a 900’, as the former lacks a true belief but the latter does not. Unfortunately, SBR falls prey to Davidson’s carbon copier case (Davidson 2001: 50, 92). Here is a strengthened version of the case:

[S3] Don is typing on a carbon sheet to make 10 carbon copies. While typing, he falsely believes that he is not making the copies. Although he is an expert carbon copier, he is also an obsessively unconfident man.⁴

If Maria’s making of a 900 is intentional, so must be Don’s making of the 10 copies, as the agentic planning and control executed in both scenarios are relevantly the same. What differs from one scenario to the other rather concerns Maria’s and Don’s credence concerning what is going on. While Maria truly believes that she is making a 900, Don does not even believe that he is making 10 carbon copies. Therefore, if this is correct, it seems that [S3] shows that SBR cannot either identify what type of ignorance vitiates intentionality.

Some philosophers have made a last desperate attempt to accommodate all the scenarios so far considered. For instance, here is Setiya’s (2007: 26) Weak Belief Requirement (WBR henceforth):

4. To avoid Thompson’s suggestion (2011: 210) that the carbon copier is not acting intentionally at all because his success is too lucky, I decided to make the carbon copier an expert, but obsessively unconfident clerk.

WBR. For any act-description A and any agent S, if S is A-ing intentionally at t then there is some act-description B such that S is B-ing intentionally and believes that she is B-ing.

I ignore whether there are any counter-examples to this requirement in the bibliography, and I honestly doubt there could be any. For the fact that in every instance of intentionally A-ing there is some act-description B under which the agent believes she is acting (e.g., Maria believes she is spinning while she is doing a 900 and Don believes he is typing on a carbon sheet while he is making 10 carbon copies) is so plausible that it is even granted by Davidson himself (2001: 50). Now, further scrutiny evinces two main explanatory disadvantages of WBR that show why it cannot identify what type of ignorance vitiates intentionality either.

First, while it is true that whenever an agent A-s intentionally she believes that she is acting under some act-description B, this condition cannot explain epistemically why A-ing can count as intentional, since it fails at requiring the proper connection between A-ing and B-ing. Let us imagine, for instance, that Maria is intentionally singing in [S2]. She is intentionally making a 900 and believes that she is singing. So what? If, as we will see shortly, our cognitive states are meant to warrant our acting intentionally under descriptions, how does the belief that she is singing epistemically warrant that she is intentionally making a 900? What is the connection between singing and making a 900 that makes believing that she is singing warrant her intentional making of a 900? WBR does not say.

And, second, although WBR seems to be trivially met in every instance of intentional action, it is also trivially met in every instance of unintentional

action, which evinces that it cannot either explain epistemically why A-ing can count as unintentional. To see this, let us think back to [S1] and focus on the fact that, although Elizabeth ignores the hidden purposes of the charity association, she does believe that she is donating the money. So, why does Elizabeth indirectly contribute to child exploitation unintentionally? Arguably not because she does not believe that she is acting under some act-description B, as she has one such belief –e.g., she believes that she is donating money to a charity association. So the possession or lack thereof of that type of belief does not seem to alter the intentional character of A-ing.

1.3 The Modal Belief Requirement

All in all, we are left with no requirement able to identify what type of ignorance undermines intentionality. We should not give up, though. For I think there is room for hope if instead of focusing on what the agent knows or believes she *is* doing, we focus on what she believes she *can* be doing by doing something she is doing. Let me defend the Modal Belief Requirement (MBR henceforth):

MBR. For any act-description A and any agent S, if S is A-ing intentionally at t then there is some act-description B such that S is B-ing and believes that it is possible at t that she A-s by B-ing.⁵

Unlike SKR and SBR, my requirement is weak enough to encompass

5. This requirement should not be mistaken for a requirement akin to Pavese's (2020: 353), according to which S has to believe that it is likely that she A-s by B-ing. When I say 'possible' I strictly mean 'possible', not 'probable', which as a condition for intending might be contentious: see Thalberg (1962).

cases of intentional action without knowledge or true belief. And, unlike WBR, my requirement demands that A-ing and B-ing be properly connected causally. As a result, contrary to the requirements so far presented the Modal Belief Requirement can explain why, on the one hand, Elizabeth contributes to child exploitation unintentionally due to her ignorance and why, on the other, Maria makes a 900 and Don makes 10 copies both intentionally despite their ignorance. This is because of its relation to certain plausible theses about intentional action. In particular, to the causalist thesis that an action is intentional only if it is the result of an agent's non-deviant fulfilment of her intention or plan to so act.⁶

When an agent S acts intentionally under an act-description A, the point goes, S has an intention or a plan to A. In intending or having a plan to A, S has a mental representation of herself A-ing in a specific way B, a representation she is motivated to match by controlling her behaviour in a way that makes the world fit her representation. If in exercising this control S gets to A by B-ing, then S gets to non-deviantly fulfil her intention or plan to so act. She gets, then and only then, to act intentionally under the act-description A. Therefore, if S A-s by B-ing but has no intention or plan to A by B-ing, then S's A-ing cannot be intentional because it cannot be the result of S's non-deviant fulfilment of her intention or plan to so act.

Now, if we look back to MBR, notice that this situation is provoked when an agent lacks the type of belief the requirement contains. In effect, when an agent S ignores that it is possible that she A-s by B-ing, then S cannot have the intention or plan to A by B-ing. For, if having such an intention or plan requires that S has a mental representation of herself A-ing in a specific

6. See Brand (1984), Mele & Moser (1994), Moya (1990), or Shepherd (2021).

way B, and if having such a representation requires that S conceives B-ing as a means to A-ing, then S cannot have an intention or plan to A by B-ing unless she believes that it is possible that she A-s by B-ing. Consequently, it seems that, *inter alia*, endorsing this type of belief is what warrants S's acting intentionally under the act-description A in the way just sketched, which implies that S cannot A intentionally by B-ing unless she endorses a token of it. And, more importantly, that the Modal Belief Requirement seems to have identified the type of ignorance that undermines intentionality. For, unlike SKR, SBR, and WBR, my requirement can suitably explain the cases of Elizabeth, Maria, and Don.

So, why does Elizabeth finance child exploitation unintentionally? Not necessarily because she does not know or does not truly believe that she is financing child exploitation, and neither necessarily because she does not believe that she is doing something else whatsoever. Rather, she is financing child exploitation unintentionally because, since she ignores that it is possible that she finances child exploitation by donating the money to the charity association, she cannot have an intention or plan to finance child exploitation by donating the money to the charity association. And why does Maria make a 900 intentionally? *Inter alia*, because we can imagine that she has the intention or plan to make a 900 by spinning in the air in a such-and-such way, as we can easily grant that she believes that it is possible that she makes a 900 if she spins in the air in a such-and-such way. Similarly, Don makes the 10 copies intentionally, *inter alia*, because we can imagine that he has the intention or plan to make the 10 copies by typing the carbon-copier in a such-and-such way, as we can grant that he does at least believe that it is possible that he makes the 10 copies if he types the carbon-copier in a such-and-such way.

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Compulsion, Deception, and Voluntary Action

Having identified what type of ignorance prevents agents from acting intentionally under an act-description A –i.e., ignorance that it is possible that one A-s by B-ing–, we are a step closer to meeting the challenge. What we need to do now is to identify what type exclusively prevents agents from acting voluntarily under an act-description A in circumstances of deceptive manipulation and see why they are different types of ignorance such that it can be the case that [A1] is true for epistemic reasons. I do all of this in this section while I develop my approach against IVST.

2.1 Hyman’s Argument From Compulsion

In both philosophical and ordinary talk, we use ‘voluntary action’ to mean at least three things: (1) activity the agent is not unable to control (as in reflex or somnambulistic actions), (2) activity the agent does not reluctantly engage in (as when students read Hegel unwillingly), or (3) activity the agent is not coerced or manipulated into (as when one hands over the wallet to avoid the consequences of a threat).⁷ My argument against IVST concerns voluntary action as intended in (3), and so does Hyman’s. Since his argument also appeals to manipulation, specifically to manipulation by compulsion, I propose considering his argument.

According to Hyman, that IVST is false when ‘voluntary’ is intended as in (3) can be easily demonstrated if we focus on cases involving compulsion

7. See, e.g., Anscombe (2000: 90), Drummond (2022: 134), Gordon (1966), Hyman (2015: 8, 12, 83–4), Kenny (1976: 13, 53; 1986: 31–2), Wall (2001: 130).

that falls short of total control over an agent. To illustrate this idea, he appeals to cases where an agent S acts intentionally but non-consensually under an act-description A because she is threatened to so act.⁸ Consider:

[ST1] Charity Worker asks Elizabeth to donate. Before Elizabeth says anything, Charity Worker threatens to kill her master Ludwig if she does not comply. Elizabeth eventually consents to donate the money.

This scenario shows that IVST is false because Elizabeth is acting intentionally but not voluntarily under the act-description ‘donating the money to a charity association’. She is donating the money intentionally because, arguably, she has an intention or plan to donate the money by handing over some money, which she fulfils non-deviantly as a result of a sufficient exercise of control, as she gets to adjust her behaviour so as to donate it in the way envisioned. Now, why does she not donate it voluntarily?

If I understood Hyman properly, I think he would say that Elizabeth does not donate voluntarily because, although ‘most voluntary activity does not involve consent’ (2016: 698), Elizabeth’s commanded action does require consent. Therefore, since ‘sufficiently grave threat vitiates consent’ (2015: 89), we can say that Elizabeth does not donate voluntarily because she does not donate consensually. And this, to my mind, sounds quite plausible. That when agents are manipulated to consent via compulsion they do not consent validly, and so they do not act voluntarily either, strikes me as basically correct. So, if we deepen into this idea, I think we will discover some features that are essential to voluntariness.

8. Although one usually consents in the role of patient (i.e., agree to undergo something), one can also consent in the role of agent (i.e., agree to do something). See Hyman (2015: 87– 8, 2016: 698).

The main feature we find is that voluntariness is essentially a psychomoral aspect of human agency because it is deeply related to a certain conception of autonomy. This is the intuitive idea that agents that consent and act under coercion do not consent or act voluntarily because, since they submit their agency to another person's will, they end up consenting and acting against their will.⁹

Now, although intuitive, I concede that this is a bit obscure. After all, what counts as acting according or against to one's will is a tricky question. I think, however, that we can get a clearer sense of why consenting and acting under compulsion is consenting and acting against one's will if we focus on one's reasons for consenting and acting in such circumstances. We could say, for instance, that consent elicited by coercion is invalid and the resulting action not voluntary as long as the overriding reason for which the victim consents and acts is to avoid the penalties attached to refusal. To put it in other words, as long as a threat has a primary causal role in motivating the agent's consent and action.¹⁰ Let us say, then, that if the victim ultimately consents and acts for reasons that are not 'her own' in that they are 'forced upon' her by the threat, that the victim consents and acts against her will, not autonomously, not voluntarily.

What this shows is that, while manipulation hinders voluntariness, it need not hinder intentionality. Voluntariness, unlike intentionality, demands some stronger connection between the agent's will and the agent's actions, as an agent seems to be able to intentionally do things she does not identify herself with. This is why when an agent acts ultimately for reasons that are not 'her own', she can still act intentionally but not voluntarily. For instance, even

9. See Hyman (2015: 89), Tadros (2021: 299), Wall (2001: 134).

10. See Dougherty (2021: 323), Hyman (2015: 97, 2016: 702), Wall (2001: 134).

if Elizabeth in [ST1] has her own reason to donate (e.g., to help people in need), when Charity Worker threatens to kill her master Ludwig, the threat provides Elizabeth with another, overriding reason for which to consent and act (e.g., to save her master), and she ends up acting as told ultimately for that reason. The motivating role of compulsion is thus ensured and the voluntariness of Elizabeth's donation is, unlike its intentional character, vitiated.

If this is correct, then, we can conclude with Hyman that IVST is false because intentional actions need not be voluntary, as 'the scope of compulsion encompasses cases in which a person is compelled to do, not do, or undergo something by a threat' (2015: 97). I turn now to elaborate on the idea that ignorance can also vitiate the voluntary character of actions by invalidating consent without detriment to their intentional character.

2.2 An Argument From Deception

Another way in which voluntariness can be exclusively vitiated is when an agent is deceived about what she consents to do. This claim needs qualification, though. The reason is that, when an agent is deceived about what she consents to do, it can be deceived either about foreground or background aspects of the action. And my contention is specifically that only when an agent S is manipulated into consenting to A via deception about background aspects of A-ing can her A-ing be intentional but not voluntary. Let us call this type of ignorance 'background modal ignorance' and let us oppose it to 'foreground modal ignorance'. While the former is the one that exclusively vitiates voluntariness in circumstances of deceptive manipulation, the latter is the one that generally vitiates intentionality. Consequently, when the latter is in play the

agent will not be able to A intentionally nor voluntarily in any circumstances, though when the former is in play in circumstances of deceptive manipulation the agent will be able to A intentionally but not voluntarily. If I show that this is correct, I will have identified the type of ignorance that exclusively vitiates voluntariness and will have shown that the type that vitiates intentionality is not the one that exclusively vitiates voluntariness in circumstances of deceptive manipulation, thus meeting the challenge. Let me give it a shot then.

As we saw in subsection 1.3, by foreground modal ignorance I mean ignorance that, given any agent S and any act-description A there is some act-description B such that, it is possible that S A-s by B-ing. Now, by background modal ignorance I mean ignorance that, given any agent S and any act-description C different to A there is some act-description B different to A such that, it is possible that S C-s by B-ing. To see that the latter is not the former, we can simply check that the latter does not have the same effects the former has on intentionality –that is, that while the latter prevents S from A-ing intentionally, the former does not. Let us take A to mean the act-description ‘donating the money’, B to mean ‘handing over some money’, and C to mean ‘indirectly financing child exploitation’. While ignoring that it is possible that she donates the money by handing over some money would prevent Elizabeth from intentionally donating the money, ignoring that it is possible that she indirectly finances child exploitation by handing over some money would not prevent Elizabeth from intentionally donating the money. This is because, when Elizabeth has the intention or plan to donate the money by handing over some money, she does not need to represent herself as financing child exploitation by handing over some money. Consequently, she can non-deviantly fulfil that intention or plan of hers regardless of whether she ignores that.

This should suffice to prove that the type of ignorance that I take to exclusively undermine voluntariness is not the one I take to undermine intentionality. They are simply different types of ignorance. However, while I provided in the last section the reasons why I think foreground modal ignorance is the type of ignorance that undermines intentionality generally, I still need to prove that background modal ignorance is the type that exclusively vitiates voluntariness. To do this, consider:

[SD1] After discovering the hidden purposes of a charity association in [S1] and after being threatened in [ST1], Elizabeth does not fully trust charities anymore. However, she is approached one day by Charity Worker 2, who asks her to donate. Wary of charities, Elizabeth makes it explicit that she will not donate unless Charity Worker 2 assures her that the money will not be used to finance child exploitation. Charity Worker 2 tells her exactly that, but the truth is she has lied, as this charity association also uses part of the donations to finance child exploitation. Elizabeth believes the lie and eventually consents to donate the money.

As I see it, this scenario shows that Elizabeth does not donate the money to a charity association voluntarily, although she does it intentionally. In effect, she donates intentionally because she has an intention or plan to donate the money to the charity association and she fulfils this intention or plan non-deviantly, as she gets to donate the money by handing over the money to Charity Worker 2, which we can grant she deemed possible. That she is deceived into believing that it is not possible that she finances child exploitation by handing

the money simply does not prevent her from donating the money intentionally. Now, this background modal ignorance caused by the worker's deception does prevent her from donating voluntarily. The point being that she does not donate voluntarily because the worker's deception is purposefully used to impede her see that her donation involves doing things that go against her will. Not only is her will not sufficiently implicated, as the deception in play incorporates decisive false premises in the deliberation that precedes her decision to consent, but it is also negated, as the deception makes her do things with explicitly communicated unwanted effects. Consequently, I contend, since her consent is purposefully being not well-informed, it cannot be valid nor can the resulting donation be consensual, autonomous, voluntary. Dougherty (2013, 2018) and Tadros (2016, 2021) develop this idea in similar but different ways.

While Dougherty claims that for deception to invalidate consent it has to concern a deal-breaker –i.e., a feature of an action the agent is all things considered opposed to bringing about (2018: 171)– and the consent has to counterfactually depend on that deception such that had the agent been well-informed she would have not consented to so act (2013: 719), Tadros claims that counterfactual dependence is not necessary and that we should rather consider whether deception caused the agent to consent (2016: 245, 2021: 296–7). Although similar, both proposals are different because, while counterfactual dependence necessitates causation, causation does not necessitate counterfactual dependence. So, for instance, Tadros would say that if in a different scenario Elizabeth's consent to donate would not have counterfactually depended upon the worker's deception (say, she would have agreed to donate even had she been well-informed about the hidden purposes of the charity association) but just caused by it, her deliberation would still have been too affected by the de-

ception as to make her consent valid and the resulting donation consensual, autonomous, voluntary.

I am on Tadros' side. For, just like happens in [ST1], what matters to assess the voluntariness of Elizabeth's donation in [SD1] is whether the ultimate reason for which she donates the money has been caused by the deception of Charity Worker 2. The point being that, if Elizabeth consents because she has been deceived, this means that a false premise has played a decisive role in the deliberation leading to her consent, which implies that Elizabeth was not sufficiently well-informed and could not properly assess whether she was about to consent to an action that she valued.

For instance, what happens in [SD1] is that when Elizabeth weighs her reasons to donate she is not able to notice that she has in fact an overriding reason not to donate, as she has been deceived into believing that her donation will not contribute to child exploitation. As a result, Elizabeth's will is not sufficiently implicated in her deliberation as to regard her consent valid and the issuing donation voluntary. And, following Tadros, I think this is true even if Elizabeth would have consented to something that does not go against her will, even if her consent did not counterfactually depend on the worker's deception.

This is, in short, why and how background modal ignorance is the type of ignorance that exclusively vitiates voluntariness in circumstances of manipulation. It is now easy to see how the challenge with which I began this paper can be met. First, we can explain the coincidence that motivates it by simply saying that every voluntary action is intentional, such that when foreground modal ignorance is in play an agent cannot A intentionally nor voluntarily. For instance, Elizabeth in [SD1] cannot intentionally nor voluntarily finance child exploitation. Second, we can see that the type of ignorance that vitiates inten-

tionality and the one that exclusively vitiates voluntariness when it is used to misinform and manipulate an agent into acting are not the same types of ignorance, as foreground modal ignorance is not background modal ignorance. And, finally, we can also see that when background modal ignorance is used to manipulate an agent S into A-ing via deception, then it can be the case that S A-s intentionally but not voluntarily.

For instance, Elizabeth in [SD1] donates the money intentionally but not voluntarily because she has been motivated to donate by being deceived about the consequences of her donation, which shows that [A1] can be true in circumstances of deceptive manipulation for epistemic reasons. And, more importantly, that an epistemic approach against IVST is in fact available if we focus on particular instances of action caused by deception as the one illustrated in [SD1].

2.3 Three Objections

At this point, however, some may be willing to raise at least three objections to my argument from deception as applied to [SD1]. First, some might want to say that Elizabeth's being purposefully misinformed is not sufficient to invalidate her consent and make her donation not voluntary. Second, some may want to say that granting that Elizabeth does not donate voluntarily is a slippery slope to saying that she does not act voluntarily under any act-description, which contradicts certain metaphysical principle of action. And, third, some might want to say that since Elizabeth literally chooses to donate the money then her donation should count as voluntary.

2.3.1 The Insufficiency Of Being Purposefully Misinformed

The first objection might be developed in two different ways. In a first way, it can be said that being purposefully misinformed is not a problem as long as what one unknowingly consents to do is something that one has her own reasons to do. As I see it, this criticism will not do because, as I said in the last subsection, even if an agent is consenting to do something she has her own reason to do, such that her consent does not counterfactually depend on deception, her will can still be manipulated and not properly implicated in the decision to consent. Consequently, even if the agent realizes that she consented to something she in fact valued, she would realize that she was not given the opportunity to properly deliberate about it, which evinces the lack of voluntariness involved in that happening. This can be easily seen, for instance, in cases of paternalistic manipulation where an agent might feel that, although she was motivated to do something she valued, her autonomy was not properly respected. In these cases, I claim, the agent did not act voluntarily, regardless of whether she got to do something she wanted to do.

And, on the second way, it can be said that being purposefully misinformed is not a problem as long as what one unknowingly consents to do is something one has no right to be well-informed about.¹¹ This objection relies on the idea that since socially-situated agents cannot enjoy unlimited autonomy, their autonomy is shaped by the moral rights they are subjected to. Therefore, the point goes, perhaps not all kinds of motivation caused by deception can count as manipulation and undermine voluntariness, as sometimes it can be morally legitimate that deception is used to motivate consent and action in a way that does not violate an agent's rights of discretion. Now, although in-
11. See Liberto (2017: S134) and Jubb (2017: 227).

teresting for legal and moral assessments, I think this objection cannot show that deception is not sufficient to vitiate voluntariness either. While I concede that, perhaps, an agent that is motivated to do something because she has been deceived about a fact she has no right to know (say, an agent who is motivated to have sex with someone because she has been deceived about their political affiliation) may have no legitimate complaint against the deceiver, let me venture to insist that this type of deception still vitiates the voluntariness of the action because it is affecting the deliberation of the agent. Perhaps we should simply accept that sometimes it is morally legitimate that agents do not act voluntarily. That, strictly speaking, lack of voluntariness does not always have the moral repercussions we normally associate with it. Once we get rid of these misleading moral assumptions surrounding the notion of voluntariness, I think we will see that even if being purposefully misinformed can on occasion be morally legitimate, being purposefully misinformed will necessarily vitiate voluntariness.

Be it as it were, we should not overlook one thing. Namely, that even if we granted that both versions of this objection are true, they would still not affect my argument in any case, as in [SD1] Elizabeth does not want to do part of what she consents to do and she has the right to know what her donation is going to finance. So, since only one case suffices to reject IVST, this objection, if true, would actually pose no problem to my epistemic approach.

2.3.2 The Metaphysical Incongruence Of The Argument

According to some metaphysical principle of action, if we conceive actions as particular spatio-temporal events that can be described in several ways,¹² then

12. See Anscombe (1979) and Davidson (1969).

it is necessarily the case that for every act-event that takes place there will always be at least one description of it under which the agent acts intentionally and at least one under which the agent acts unintentionally. For instance, when Elizabeth donates the money in [SD1], the act-event of donating the money can be described as ‘reaching out the right arm in a such-and-such way’, ‘handing over some money’, ‘donating money to a charity association’, ‘indirectly financing child exploitation’, ‘perpetuating charities’ corruption’, and so on. So, just like the principle predicts, there is at least one act-description under which Elizabeth acts intentionally (e.g., she donates money to the charity association intentionally) and at least one under which she acts unintentionally (e.g., she indirectly finances child exploitation unintentionally).

Now, according to this objection, the problem is that if my argument is correct, then it seems that the principle as applied to voluntariness would not hold. For my argument seems to have the consequence that it is possible that there is some act-event of which there is no description under which the agent acts voluntarily. For instance, it follows from my argument that if ‘voluntary’ is intended as in (3) then Elizabeth does not donate voluntarily, but it also follows that she does not reach out her right arm in a such-and-such way, hand over some money, indirectly finance child exploitation, nor perpetuate charities’ corruption voluntarily. However, I do not think that this should worry us. After all, why does the fact that intentionality is necessarily present at least under one act-description whenever an act-event takes place imply that voluntariness is also present in that way? If Hyman’s argument or mine is correct, I think we rather have reasons to think otherwise.

While I concede that it is true that, for instance, voluntariness as intended in (1) is always present whenever there is an expression of agency, prob-

ably because a certain degree of control is the hallmark of both agency and intentionality, what tells apart actions from mere happenings and intentional actions from unintentional actions, I doubt that voluntariness as intended in (3) is present in at least one act-description whenever there is an expression of agency. Again, although I concede that there are many act-descriptions under which Elizabeth acts voluntarily as intended in (1) when the donation takes place, I doubt that she acts voluntarily as intended in (3) under any act-description when the donation takes place. Now, this claim might find resistance for reasons that motivate the next objection.

2.3.3 The Voluntariness Of Choosing

Some may retort that, since Elizabeth literally chooses to donate the money instead of keeping it, since she literally chooses to reach out the right arm instead of reaching the left one, and so on, Elizabeth must be doing something voluntarily in [SD1]. For instance, and more importantly, she must be donating the money to the charity association voluntarily. Alvarez (2016) is a proponent of this objection and has labelled the thesis behind it the Literal Choice View.

According to the Literal Choice View, ‘the fact that an act is due to choice (in the literal sense) is sufficient to make it voluntary’ (Alvarez 2016: 669), which means that as long as the agent could have not acted as she did and as long as whether she acted or not was literally within her control, then the agent did act voluntarily (Alvarez 2016: 672). This objection will not do because it overlooks some key moral aspects of voluntariness as intended in my argument. I think Hyman perfectly elucidates these aspects when he differentiates between the theoretical idea of choice and the practical idea of choice.

While the former is the idea of an alternative the agent is literally able to choose, the latter is the idea of an alternative that meets certain standards of eligibility (Hyman 2015: 92, 2016: 703). The point being that an act needs to be due to practical choice to be considered voluntary as intended in (3). Having this difference in mind, we could say that there is nothing Elizabeth does voluntarily in [SD1] because there is nothing she chooses to do that meets an appropriate standard of eligibility. Neither her choice to donate the money instead of keeping it, or the choice of reaching out the right arm instead of the left one, and so on, is in these circumstances of deceptive manipulation an option that appropriately respects her autonomy. Consequently, even if Elizabeth can literally choose to donate or to use her right arm in those circumstances, and so on, the fact that her choice is the causal result of a morally deficient situation makes the resulting action not voluntary as intended in (3).

I concede, however, that determining what are these standards of eligibility is not easy to do. But I think we can grant with not many difficulties that choosing while being purposefully misinformed about what one is choosing is a clear case of choosing under inappropriate circumstances. Circumstances that, of course, do not impede that Elizabeth chooses and acts voluntarily if we intend ‘voluntary’ as in (1). So, returning to the objection from the last subsection, I think my argument is not metaphysically inconsistent simply because, while the principle seems to apply only to voluntariness as intended in (1), my argument intends voluntariness as in (3). And, given Hyman’s two notions of choice, I think I have arguably shown that Elizabeth does not do anything voluntarily as in (3), but does many things voluntarily as in (1) because she is literally able to control her behaviour so as to choose many courses of action, albeit in morally defective circumstances.

3

Concluding Remarks

Throughout this paper, I have tried to show that we also have epistemic reasons to conclude that what I called the Intentional-Voluntary Sufficiency Thesis is not true. While philosophers like Hyman have already argued against this thesis by appealing to cases of action motivated by compulsion, I have tried to argue against it by appealing to cases of action motivated by deception. The main argument being that there is a type of ignorance that can vitiate voluntariness but not intentionality when used to manipulate agents into acting by deceiving them about background aspects of the action.

To justify the argument I tried to do three things. First, I tried to identify what type of ignorance vitiates intentionality in Section 1, where I defended the Modal Belief Requirement, according to which the type of ignorance that vitiates intentionality is what I called foreground modal ignorance. Second, I tried to identify what type of ignorance exclusively vitiates voluntariness in Section 2, where I defended that what I called background modal ignorance is the type of ignorance that exclusively prevents an agent from acting voluntarily in circumstances of deceptive manipulation. And, third, I also tried to show in Section 2 why foreground and background modal ignorance are different types of ignorance such that it is possible that an agent S acts intentionally but not voluntarily under an act-description A when the latter but not the former is used to manipulate S into A-ing by purposefully misinforming her about background aspects of A-ing.

After doing this, I have also defended my argument against three potential objections at the end of Section 2. First, I concluded that being purpose-

fully misinformed is sufficient to vitiate voluntariness regardless of whether one ends up consenting to something one values or regardless of whether one unknowingly consents to something one is not entitled to be well-informed about. Second, that although for every act-event that takes place there has to be at least one act-description under which the agent acts intentionally, scenarios [ST1] and [SD1] rather show that this principle does not apply to voluntariness as intended in (3). And, finally, that being literally able to choose whether to A is not enough for S to A voluntarily, as some standards of eligibility have to be met for S to A voluntarily by choosing to A.

All in all, what I have tried to show in this paper is that voluntariness cannot be fully accounted for in the same terms we understand intentionality. While concepts such as intention, action plan, control, and non-deviance are enough to explain intentionality, these concepts alone cannot capture voluntariness. This is because voluntary action as intended in (3) is closely related to a certain notion of autonomy that is opposed to moral concepts such as compulsion and deception.¹³

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