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## From an Axiological Standpoint

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**Abstract:** I maintain that intrinsic value is the fundamental concept of axiology. Many contemporary philosophers disagree; they say the proper object of value theory is *final value*. I examine three accounts of the nature of final value: the first claims that final value is non-instrumental value; the second claims that final value is the value a thing has as an end; the third claims that final value is ultimate or non-derivative value. In each case, I argue that the concept of final value described is either identical with the classical notion of intrinsic value or is not a plausible candidate for the primary concept of axiology.

**Keywords:** axiology, final value, intrinsic value

I believe that intrinsic goodness is the primary concept of axiology. I understand the notion as suggested in the *Principia Ethica*: the intrinsic value of a thing depends only on its intrinsic, non-moral features. Further, such goodness is essential to its bearers, persists in isolation, and attaches only to finely grained entities such as facts or states of affairs.<sup>1</sup>

*Conditionalists* hope to reform value theory; they argue that final goodness is fundamental.<sup>2</sup> The final value of a thing is the value it has as an end, or for its own sake; when a thing has final value it has value ‘ultimately’ or ‘non-instrumentally.’<sup>3</sup> The Moorean tradition identifies these two kinds of value: something is intrinsically good just when it is good as an end. But this identification is mistaken, the conditionalist contends. While the final value of a thing may be conditional on its context, the intrinsic value of a thing is

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<sup>1</sup> See Moore (1922, pp. 260-261), (1993/1903, pp. 21-22, 171, 236, 286-286), (2005/1912, p. 32). Some philosophers do not believe in states of affairs, but accept facts, tropes, propositions, or events. In general, these things may be substituted for states of affairs without significantly changing the dialectic. However, we should pick just one of these categories. It would be unwise to attribute value e.g. to the state of affairs <*Jones is pleased*>, the proposition *that Jones is pleased* and the fact that <*Jones is pleased*>.

<sup>2</sup> The conditionalist view has greatly increased in popularity in the last thirty years, led by Korsgaard (1983), Kagan (1998), and Rabinowicz & Rønnow-Rasmussen (2000), (2003). They will be my focus in what follows.

<sup>3</sup> Terminology varies: some philosophers instead use ‘intrinsic value’ to refer to the value a thing has as an end, and another term like ‘intrinsic value proper’ to refer to the Moorean concept of intrinsic goodness (see e.g. Kagan (1998)). For ease of understanding, I will translate these authors to speak as Korsgaard (1983) suggests: I will reserve ‘intrinsic value’ for the Moorean notion and ‘final value’ for the value something has ultimately, as an end, or for its own sake. For more on terminology see Rønnow-Rasmussen & Zimmerman (2005), and Zimmerman (2010).

unconditional. Further, once we separate intrinsic and final goodness, the notion of intrinsic value loses significance.

The conditionalist argument begins in the ontology of value: they argue that particular things, in addition to states of affairs, may have final value. Elizabeth Anderson writes:

Persons are the immediate objects of our respect, benevolence, and love; beautiful paintings of our admiring contemplation; pets of our affection; and so forth. These are the things we rationally value [as ends]. (1993, p. 19)<sup>4</sup>

But the final value of a concrete particular may depend on its extrinsic properties. The examples are familiar: the value of a beautiful painting may be conditional on whether it is seen or appreciated; the goodness of a mink coat may depend on its being wanted or desired; the final value of an artifact—like Lincoln’s Pen, or Lady Diana’s dress—may supervene on its historical role.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, intrinsic and final goodness cannot be equated. Intrinsic goods are simply a subset of final goods, the conditionalist claims: a state of affairs is intrinsically good just in case it is finally good in virtue of its intrinsic properties.<sup>6</sup> But this subset of final goods is uninteresting—the difference between intrinsic and non-intrinsic final goods is only metaphysical; it has no ethical significance. Thus Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen write:

What is so special about value that supervenes on the object’s internal rather than relational properties...? One can easily see the normative relevance of the notion of a final value...but the concept of an intrinsic value seems to lack a special normative interest. (2000, pp. 48-49)

And Kagan asks:

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<sup>4</sup> Anderson speaks most often of intrinsic value. But she does not take intrinsic value to be intrinsic—it is, for her, merely the value a thing has as an end. See her (1993, p. 3). Thus I will translate her comments here; see fn. 3.

<sup>5</sup> These examples of extrinsic, final goods (from Parfit (2011, p. 237), Korsgaard (1983), Kagan (1998), and Rabinowicz & Rønnow-Rasmussen (2000) respectively) are some of the most discussed—although I am unsure that they in fact establish that something may have extrinsic, final value. But I will ignore these concerns here. For general criticism of these and similar examples, as well as further discussion and argument against the conditionalist view, see Bradley (2002) and Tucker (2016).

<sup>6</sup> Rabinowicz & Rønnow-Rasmussen (2000, p. 34) write that this view ‘has nearly never been questioned, as far as we know: it seems to be a general if not a universal view that all intrinsic values are final.’

Why should this type of value [i.e. intrinsic value] be of any more interest to us *as value theorists* than it would be to pick out the value that an object has on the basis of its relational properties alone? Or the value that an object has on the basis of its 17-place properties alone? (1998, p. 290)<sup>7</sup>

I think this objection unpersuasive as stated. The conditionalist challenges us to a fight in the dark: we are asked to show the importance of intrinsic goodness over its competitor, but the concept of final value has barely been explained. Intrinsic goodness is well understood; much of twentieth-century axiology is dedicated to its nature. In contrast, the notion of final value is opaque. Conditionalists only give hints: some say that final value is ‘non-instrumental’ value; some say that final value is the value a thing has ‘as an end’; some say that final value is the value a thing has ultimately or ‘for its own sake.’

In what follows, I develop and evaluate these guiding intuitions about final value. In §1 I argue that if final value is the value a thing has non-instrumentally, then final value is indeed distinct from intrinsic value, but of little normative interest. In §2 I show that if final value is the value a thing has as an end, then it is, perhaps surprisingly, identical with intrinsic value. Finally, in §3 I argue that if final value is the value a thing has ultimately, then the conditionalist may be correct that intrinsic goods are only a subset of final goods. But, as I explain, intrinsic goods are the most important subset; the difference between intrinsic and non-intrinsic ultimate goods is not merely metaphysical. In §4, I examine a Kantian objection to the argument proposed; I claim that it cannot help the conditionalist. I conclude that, regardless of the nature of final value, we should insist that it is intrinsic value that is fundamental.

### §1: Final Value as Non-instrumental Value

Final value is often contrasted with instrumental value. When something has instrumental value, it is good because of what it brings about. When something has final

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<sup>7</sup> Emphasis mine. We may think this objection misguided. Kagan and Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen say the intrinsic value of a thing is the value it has intrinsically. But, as I understand it, intrinsic value is also essential, persists in isolation, and attaches only to states of affairs. Under this conception, intrinsic goods *are* importantly different from other final goods: because intrinsic goods have their value essentially, they are valuable *unconditionally*. But I fear this misses the point. The difference between conditional and unconditional goods is still *merely metaphysical*. And the mere difference between conditional and unconditional goods seems no more significant than the mere difference between those things that are valuable in virtue of their 1-place properties and those that are valuable in virtue of their 2-place properties.

value, it is good regardless of what it brings about.<sup>8</sup> Others add additional constraints; in their (2003, p. 215) Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen write, ‘we interpret final value...in the standard way, by contrasting it with value as a means (instrumental value) and value as a part (contributive value).’ Thus, for example, suppose that Linus takes pleasure in snuggling up with his blanket on a cold day. On the non-instrumentality view, to attribute final value to this little bit of happiness is simply to say it has value but does not have value only because of what it brings about or contributes to.

However, if final value is simply non-instrumental, non-contributory value, then it cannot be the primary concept of axiology. I take it that if some concept is to be fundamental to value theory, it must (i) make itself useful in defining other kinds of value, and (ii) have intrinsic moral and axiological significance. But we cannot define instrumental value in terms of non-instrumental value on pain of circularity. And the same goes for contributory value.

Further, the concept of non-instrumental, non-contributory value is not of ethical significance. The concept admits all it does not explicitly disallow—it includes signatory value, sentimental value, moral value, and all ‘attributive’ sorts of value, such as *being a good tennis player*, *being a good automobile*, *being a good painting* and the like. The resulting concept is thus uninteresting; it is too unnatural.

We might hope to remedy this. We say now that final value is non-instrumental, non-signatory, non-sentimental, etc. value. But such a defence is, at best, *ad hoc*. And it only makes our metaphysical quandary worse: we cannot define *any* kind of value in terms of final value. Rather, final value must be understood in terms of *every other* kind of value.

Thus if final value is non-instrumental value, then the conditionalist is correct: final goodness is distinct from intrinsic goodness. But it is also morally uninteresting, and unfit to serve as the fundamental notion of axiology.

## §2: Final Value as Value as an End

Perhaps the most common method of introducing the concept of final value is to say that it is the value a thing has as an end.<sup>9</sup> Thus, we might say that the pleasure Linus takes

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<sup>8</sup> See e.g. Korsgaard (1983).

<sup>9</sup> See e.g. Korsgaard (1983), Kagan (1998), Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen (2000), (2003).

from his blanket is finally valuable because it is good as an end; such happiness is valuable as a goal or objective.

However if the final value of a thing is the value it has as an end, then a thing cannot have final value unless it can *be* an end—that is, a goal or objective. And only states of affairs can be goals or objectives. Thus consider perhaps the most powerful example in favor of the conditionalist ontology: persons. Can a person be an end or goal? Kant writes:

Beings whose existence depends not on our will but on nature have, nevertheless, if they are not rational beings, only a relative value as means and are therefore called things. On the other hand, *rational beings are called persons inasmuch as their nature already marks them out as ends in themselves.* (1993/1785, p. 36)<sup>10</sup>

But Kant is mistaken: persons cannot be ends or goals. Goals are the kinds of things we can intend to bring about or make the case. But I cannot bring about a person or make her the case. Indeed, it appears unintelligible to claim that e.g. Lucy is my goal but deny that, by this, I mean that I intend to stand in some relation to Lucy or see to it that she instantiates some feature.<sup>11</sup> My goal may be to listen to Lucy, to speak with her, to learn from her—but my goal cannot be Lucy herself.

The same holds for the contemporary examples provided by philosophers such as Korsgaard, Kagan, Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen and others. Lincoln's pen, Diana's dress, the mink coat, and the other famous cases given to support the conditionalist cause cannot have final value on this account. We can only aim at states that *involve* such things; they cannot be ends or goals.

Thus if the final value of a thing is the value it has as an end, then only states of affairs can have final value.<sup>12</sup> Further, the Moorean may justifiably claim that the final value

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<sup>10</sup> Emphasis mine. Though Kant's claims are often taken literally, this is perhaps a mistake. In the passage quoted, Kant seem to mean only that persons are ends in so much as they are 'something which is not to be used merely as means and hence there is imposed thereby a limit on all arbitrary use of such beings, which are thus objects of respect' (1993/1785, p. 36).

<sup>11</sup> See also Lemos (1994, p. 29).

<sup>12</sup> I assume that if particulars cannot have final value, then it is only states of affairs that may possess such value. But what about universals? In the *Nicomachean Ethics* we read: 'Since there are many actions, skills, and sciences, it happens that there are many ends as well: the end of medicine is health, that of shipbuilding, a ship, that of military science, victory, and those of domestic economy, wealth.' (3, 1094a.) However, again, these claims cannot be literally true. The end of medicine is not the universal, *health*—the doctor's goal is for her patient *to be* healthy, to *instantiate* the property of health. And the instantiation of a property is a state of affairs. Similarly for victory and wealth.

of a state of affairs is both intrinsic and essential. Suppose otherwise. Then there must be some state, *S*, that has final value in virtue of some extrinsic or contingent feature, *F*. But then there must also be some wider state that includes this extrinsic good making feature as a constituent—a state of the form  $\langle S \text{ is } F \rangle$ . This wider state will be good in virtue of its constituents and it is intrinsic and essential to a state that it has the constituents it does.<sup>13</sup>

Are both the narrow and wide states good as ends? No, this would be double counting: every conditional good would give rise to an unconditional good. So we must choose. And we should, I believe, choose the wider state. These states afford a complete explanation of their value; we do not need to appeal to some further thing. Given that we are speaking of what is valuable *as an end*, this is desirable.

This choice may be bolstered by examples. Begin with some alleged conditional good: a friendship between Linus and Sally. Suppose we think this state finally valuable only under the condition that it makes Linus and Sally happy. We must then choose: should we attribute value to the narrow state that consists of Linus and Sally being friends, or to the wider state that consists of Linus and Sally being friends and their friendship making them happy? As I have said, we should not attribute value to both; this would be a kind of double counting. But it would also be implausible to claim that though their friendship is good under the condition that it is happy, their happy friendship is not good. The second option is thus preferable: we should attribute final value to the wider state, their happy friendship. It is this state that is valuable as an end.

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<sup>13</sup> I assume that it is intrinsic and essential to a state of affairs that it has the constituents it does. In the present debate this is, to my knowledge, accepted universally (see e.g. Kagan (1998), Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen (2000), Zimmerman (2001)). Still, some argument can be mustered if needed. My conception of states of affairs is inspired by Armstrong (1997); I say that states of affairs are concrete entities that make propositions true. E.g. the state of affairs  $\langle \text{Charlie is happy} \rangle$  makes it the case that Charlie is happy, and so on. The constituents of a state of affairs are the particulars and universals that make it up—in this case, the particular, Charlie, and the universal *happiness*. However in the same way that the parts of a thing are intrinsic to it, so too are its constituents. (There are possible exceptions: e.g. some may say that though the property *being the only person* is a constituent of the state of affairs  $\langle \text{Charlie is the only person} \rangle$  it is not intrinsic to that state, as it depends on what other states obtain. I am unsure that this argument is sound. But, if it is, then I would be inclined to say that, despite appearances, the state in question does not exist. Rather (when true) the proposition that Charlie is the only person holds because of some much more complicated totality state of the form  $\langle \langle \text{Charlie is a person} \rangle \ \& \ \langle \text{Charlie totals the universal of personhood} \rangle \rangle$ . See Armstrong (1997, p. 196-201).) Further, because states of affairs are truth-makers, they must have their constituents necessarily; if they did not then  $\langle \text{Charlie is happy} \rangle$  would not make it the case that Charlie is happy. Rather, in some worlds, the very same state might have different constituents, and thus might fail to make anything true about Charlie or might, instead, make him sad, or confused, or tall. For further argument see M. Zimmerman (2001, p. 64), D. Zimmerman (1997).

Thus if ‘final value’ refers to the value a thing has as an end, then it attaches only to states of affairs. But we may justifiably insist that the final value of a state of affairs is essential and intrinsic. However, intrinsic goodness just is the intrinsic, essential value of a state of affairs. Thus the final and intrinsic values of a state cannot differ.

### §3: Final Value as Ultimate Value

The conditionalist may think all this unfair; I have taken his language too literally. Consider Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen’s (2000, p. 126):

One might still insist that value as an *end* can only accrue to proposition-like entities such as states of affairs or facts. After all, ends are never things. Nor are they ever persons, *pace* Kant... This means, however, that the term ‘value as an end’ may not be quite suitable for the kind of value we have in mind... Still, whereas ‘value as an end’ is for this reason misleading, the relevant values can be said to be ‘end-point values’... They are ‘final,’ then, in this sense of being ‘ultimate.’<sup>14</sup>

Bykvist (2015), Olson (2004) and Zimmerman (2001) advance a similar conception. Final goods are, on this account, those goods that have value ‘for their own sake’; they stand ‘at the end of the chain’ and thus ground and explain the value of other, non-fundamental or derivative goods.

Let us say that something has derivative value just in case it has value because something else does, and that something has ultimate value just in case its value is not derivative.<sup>15</sup> We may then identify final and ultimate (or non-derivative) value.<sup>16</sup> Thus, to say that the joy Linus derives from his blanket is finally good is to insist that such pleasures have ultimate value—we can explain their goodness without appealing to the value of anything else.

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<sup>14</sup> In their (2003) Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen seem to reject an account of this type in favour of the previously examined non-instrumentality view. However, regardless of whether they still endorse this account of final value as ultimate or non-derivative value, I think this view worthy of our examination—especially since it appears more robust than its alternatives.

<sup>15</sup> I say that a thing has value *because of* some feature *F* if and only if *F* explains—partially or fully—the value of that thing; *F* is a part of what *makes that thing good*.

<sup>16</sup> This account may need to be modified to handle *complex goods*: those things that have final value because of the values of their parts. To accommodate these goods, we may say that a thing has non-derivative value just in case it does not have its value because of the value of anything that is not a part of it.

This account is the best of the three. But there are still worries for the conditionalist. I appeal again to concerns about double counting. Suppose that some concrete particular *a* has value because it possesses some feature *G*. We must therefore choose between attributing value directly to *a* or attributing value to the state of affairs  $\langle a \text{ is } G \rangle$ ; to attribute value to both is to double the worth of every finally valuable particular. Thus suppose we think Charlie finally valuable because he is kind and diligent. We may either attribute value to Charlie, or to the state of affairs that consists in his exemplifying these virtues. The latter wears its value on its sleeve; the former does not. Given that we are seeking the ultimate source of value, the state of affairs therefore seems a better choice.<sup>17</sup>

Still, I recognise these concerns may not be decisive. So let us accept that ultimate value may attach to particular things, as the conditionalist maintains. Even so, I believe the centrality of intrinsic value can be maintained.

If ultimate value attaches to both states and concrete objects, then the concept can be naturally divided along metaphysical lines. First, there is the ultimate value of states of affairs. This kind of value is identical with the traditional concept of intrinsic value. We may argue as follows: if a state of affairs has intrinsic value, it has that value in virtue of its intrinsic features. So, *a fortiori*, it cannot have that value in virtue of the value of something else. Thus if a state has intrinsic value, then it has non-derivative value. But the reverse also holds: if a state of affairs has non-derivative value, then it has intrinsic value. The argument is familiar: For any state that appears to be a counterexample—i.e. a state that has its ultimate value in virtue of some external or contingent feature—we include this feature as a constituent; in so doing, we select a wider state of affairs, a state that contains everything necessary to give it value. Such goods will have their value intrinsically and necessarily; they will therefore be good unconditionally.

Thus the ultimate value of a state of affairs just is its intrinsic value. But there is also a non-intrinsic kind of ultimate value—the kind of ultimate value that attaches to particulars. As the conditionalist insists, none of the traditional principles hold of this kind of value: the examples of the painting, the pen, etc. show that such value need not be intrinsic or essential. Further, new attitudes are required. While intrinsic goods may call for desire, promotion, or maximisation, goods with this second kind of final value may call instead for love and respect or care and maintenance.

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<sup>17</sup> See Zimmerman's excellent (2001, pp. 37-44) for further explication of this argument.

Thus, if we grant ultimate value to particulars, the concept of ultimate value will bifurcate along metaphysical and normative lines; we have two concepts, not one. Which is most important?

The traditional objects of study in value theory are lives, outcomes, and worlds.<sup>18</sup> Our fundamental project as value theorists has been to rank such things—and, in the process, to determine what makes them good. This focus is justifiable: it makes sense to care about our lives and the lives of those close to us; to care about the outcomes of our actions and the actions of others; to care about the world and the ways it could be. Questions about the values of these things have clear and immediate importance; they deserve the attention that axiologists have devoted to them. But lives, outcomes, and worlds are not particulars. Rather, they are conjunctions of states of affairs.<sup>19</sup>

The conditionalist's most popular examples—things like paintings, coats, pens, dresses, etc.—are clearly of lesser importance than the goods traditional value theory targets. Perhaps e.g. Lincoln's pen does have ultimate value, as conditionalists often claim. But it is unclear what this kind of value is supposed to *do* or what we are to do *with it*. Are we to rank pens or coats or artworks as we do lives and worlds? If not, what is the axiological importance of this non-intrinsic kind of ultimate value? In the literature, such value is usually postulated to ground our obligation to respect the things that have it.<sup>20</sup> But if this is the only importance of the concept, then it seems to be primarily a deontic notion—and thus of little significance from an axiological standpoint.

Of course, the conditionalist may side with Kagan and reply that things like Lincoln's pen make the world a better place.<sup>21</sup> Perhaps this gives us reason to be concerned with the value of the pen and other such goods. However, this would make the conditionalist's goods significant only by association: it is still the value of the world that is most important.

The same problem arises when we turn away from the axiological importance of these concepts, and instead attend to their use as a metaphysical base. The concept of

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<sup>18</sup> Kantians may insist that *persons* are also fundamental objects of value theory. This is an important objection; I attend to it in the next section.

<sup>19</sup> We can say that (i) the outcome of an action is the conjunction of the states of affairs that would obtain if it were performed; (ii) the life of an individual is the conjunction of the states of affairs directly about that person (that is, those atomic states that have that person as their subject) and (iii) that a possible world is a maximal, consistent state of affairs. We can say that a state of affairs, *w*, is maximal and consistent just in case *w* is possible and for any state of affairs *s* if *s* is not a part of *w*, then it is impossible that  $\langle w \& s \rangle$  should obtain.

<sup>20</sup> See e.g. Anderson (1997).

<sup>21</sup> See his (1998).

intrinsic value may afford a definition of the traditional secondary concern of axiology: instrumental value. The account is familiar: we say that the instrumental value of a thing is equal to the intrinsic value of what it causes or prevents. Thus the possession of money may be good because of the happiness it may bring; the discovery of a new medicine may be valuable because of the suffering it prevents. Non-intrinsic ultimate value cannot play this role; such value attaches only to particulars. But particulars do not stand in the causation relation, and so cannot cause anything.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, it is unclear that any significant kind of value can be defined or understood in terms of non-intrinsic ultimate value.

I conclude that the conditionalist is mistaken. Even if intrinsic value is only a species of ultimate (i.e. final) value, it is the most important kind of ultimate value. It is still the most attractive candidate for the fundamental concept of axiology.

#### §4: An Objection: Kantian Value

In reply, the conditionalist might turn back to Kant. The Kantian tradition attributes non-derivative value to persons, and persons are just as important as lives, outcomes, and the like. Further, persons do not possess intrinsic value, at least in the traditional Moorean sense; they are not states of affairs. So, the ultimate value of particulars is more important than I have allowed.

This is an important reply. But we should be clear on just what the charge is. We might agree that we should be concerned with the value of persons—but this does not mean we need be concerned with the *ultimate* value of persons. Often, when we speak of the value of persons, we speak of their *moral* value—we want to know whether they are good *qua* persons. However, ultimate value and moral value are distinct. The moral value of a person may depend on the values of that person's actions, virtues, and history. But the ultimate value of a person cannot depend on the values of such things; it is non-derivative.

We might also be concerned with the value of a person's life, or the values of their actions, relationships, and so on. But these are all states of affairs. Rather, for the objection to stand, it must be true that we should be concerned with the *ultimate* value of persons.

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<sup>22</sup> Those who believe in agent causation may reject this claim; they think that persons may cause some states or events. This might show that the final value of persons has significance. I address this position in the next section.

Perhaps we should be. In the Kantian tradition, such concern predominates. However, if we are to take our lead from the Kantian tradition, we must note that it is not clear that the kind of value they attribute to persons is a kind of value at all—it does not come in degrees or amounts.<sup>23</sup> Elizabeth Anderson's (1997, pp. 96-97) view is paradigmatic:

[D]o objects have [final] value in different degrees? This idea could play a practical role only if it made sense to govern our attitudes by a principle that told us to adjust the intensity of our attitudes in response to the degree of [final] value in the object. In a Kantian scheme, such a principle makes no sense, because the attitude of Kantian respect cannot vary by degrees. There is only one way to express it: by obeying the categorical imperative...So there are no differences in degrees of [final] value.<sup>24</sup>

This Kantian value of persons thus has little relation to axiology, and its notions of intrinsic, instrumental, contributory, and signatory value—all of which come in degrees. Rather, Kantian value is closer to obligation, moral standing, and other binary deontic notions.

Further, I think this Kantian value is not, in fact, the kind of value most conditionalists have in mind. If there truly is a kind of ultimate value that does not come in amounts, then this kind of value must be different from the kind of final value attributed to e.g. the pen, the dress, and the coat. (If this were not so, then persons would seem to have the same value as these artifacts, since such value does not come in degrees). Thus this proposed defence seems to divide ultimate value into *three* categories: the ultimate value of states, the degreed ultimate value of particulars, and the non-degreed ultimate value of particulars. This does little for the conditionalist: neither of these non-intrinsic kinds of ultimate value have much to do with the field—namely axiology—that they wish to explain.

The conditionalist could claim instead that they dismiss this Kantian notion; they believe only in degreed ultimate value, and they mean to attribute *this* kind of value to persons. But again, what *axiological* question is there about the value of persons? We might, for example, wish to ask what makes some persons more valuable than others. But it is difficult to see how we could proceed with this task without collapsing into talk of the moral

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<sup>23</sup> Bradley's important (2006) develops and expands upon the difference between this Kantian value and the Moorean sort.

<sup>24</sup> See fn. 3.

worth of persons, or their virtues and vices. And, in so doing, we would have moved away from asking about the ultimate value of persons.

Thus even if we admit that the value of persons is an important moral concern, this is insufficient to save the conditionalist argument. The value of persons must be important from an axiological point of view. And this latter claim is, I believe, false.

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