

Does valuing ice cream sandwiches make one a true gourmand and connoisseur of them?

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This is the uncorrected proof of a paper forthcoming in Inquiry.

Please cite the published version.

Abstract

Valuing something is complicated. Philosophers have offered different stories about what we do when we value something. However, we have not paid enough attention to the thought that, sometimes, valuing something is what makes us the kind of practical agents we are. In this paper, I offer a novel account of valuing, which I call thick valuing, to capture this special phenomenon in which our valuing makes us who we are. This requires us to recognize that the cognitive, motivational, and affective components of thick valuing do not merely co-occur. More importantly, it is key to focusing on how thickly valuing something partially constitutes, and indeed crucially expresses, our practical identities. Beyond that, the account sheds new light on how we can better understand *inauthenticity*—to act without authenticity is to act from what one thickly values but where that which one thickly values are not values of one's own.

Keywords

Authenticity, Practical Identity, Values, Valuing

Introduction

Valuing something is complicated. Philosophers have told different stories about what we do when we value something. Some suggest that valuing is a particular kind of desiring; for instance, that to value something is to desire to desire it (Lewis, 1989; cf. Frankfurt, 1971; Harman, 1993). Others suggest that valuing something is essentially judging it to be good (Smith, 1992), or that it must be understood

in terms of how we and others judge it to be valuable (Anderson, 1995; Scanlon, 2000). Some have argued against such views, and suggest that valuing and judging good are not the same (Watson, 1987), or that valuing does not require judging valuable at all (Kubala, 2017). Still others suggest, more plausibly, that valuing something should involve both a cognitive state of judging it to be good, positive motivational attitudes towards obtaining it (Mele, 1995; Svavarsdóttir, 2014; Callard, 2018), and a range of emotions that are responsive to it (Copp, 1993; Hyun, 2001; Roughley, 2002; Seidman, 2009; Scheffler, 2010; Raibley, 2013; Tiberius, 2018; Theunissen, 2019). Beyond this, some have suggested further that valuing something is critical to capturing aspects of our practical agency (Watson, 1975, 1987; Bratman, 2000, 2004; Korsgaard, 2009; Seidman, 2009; Varga, 2015; McCormack, forthcoming), and related to that, critical to understanding welfare (Raibley, 2013; Dorsey, 2017; Tiberius, 2018, Theunissen, 2019). I take up the task of more fully developing and defending these last two ideas.

In this paper, I develop a novel account of *thick* valuing, to capture a special kind of valuing in which one's valuing partially constitutes and crucially expresses the kind of practical agent one is. Drawing upon resources from familiar accounts of valuing, thick valuing involves a cognitive state of judging the valued item to be good—correctly so or not, consciously so or not—and a positive motivational attitude towards obtaining it primarily for those reasons for which one judges it to be good, accompanied by a range of emotions responsive to it. But more importantly, thick valuing partially constitute and crucially express the kind of practical agents we are because they crucially, albeit partially, constitute and express our practical identities in important realms of human life. In addition, these different dimensions of thick valuing relate to each other in a non-additive way.

A proper understanding of thick valuing brings new life to how we understand authenticity and inauthenticity. Sometimes people acquire values in a corrupted or disrupted way that prevents either the development or exercise of certain of their abilities: abilities to evaluate the acquired values and how

they are acquired. When this happens, it is argued that one does not have values *of one's own*, and to act from those values would be acting without authenticity (Mele, 1995; Haji, 1998; Oshana, 2005; MacKay, 2020). Thick valuing helps us better identify these cases of authenticity and inauthenticity than alternative accounts of valuing.

In what follows, I will first present three vignettes that show three different ways of understanding valuing, and propose that only one of them, which I call thick valuing, constitutes and expresses one's practical identity. The differences between these three kinds of valuing will, in turn, help further elucidate the concept of practical identity that is central to my discussion. Lastly, I will offer a sketch of how thick valuing sheds new light on understanding authenticity and inauthenticity.

1. A Visit to an Ice Cream Shop

Suppose you walk into an ice cream shop on a Sunday afternoon, and you see three people each eating an ice cream sandwich. Let me first share with you some background stories about each of them.

Peta Surrounded by her friends, Peta is eating an ice cream sandwich with a spark of excitement in her eyes. Just a few moments before you walked in, her friends were betting that she would eat one. She desired to eat one because she really wanted to win the bet. And now she is eating one and desires to finish it. Independently, she also judges ice cream sandwiches to be good for those reasons that make ice cream good, good at least in an uncontroversial sense. For instance, she thinks that they are delicious, they help stimulate her brain, and they are a good source of vitamins, surprisingly. If you ask her, she would say that an ice cream sandwich is a way better source of vitamins than any fruit. To be clear, her judgment about what is good needs not align with what is objectively or uncontroversially good,¹ although in this particular case it does.

¹ I take this claim to be friendly to both those who believe and those who don't believe that there are objective values in the world, either objectively good or objectively objectionable. For those who believe in objective values, some of the

Moreover, she may hold her judgment either consciously or subconsciously.² However, were her friends not to bet that she would eat one, she would rarely, if ever, be motivated to go out and get one for herself.

Peter Sitting alone close to Peta and her friends, Peter is also eating an ice cream sandwich. Similar to Peta, he judges ice cream sandwiches to be good for all the same reasons. He thinks that they are delicious, they help stimulate his brain, and they are a better source of vitamins than any fruit. But unlike Peta, he desires to eat them primarily for those reasons for which he judges them to be good. And that is why he is here; he comes here to eat an ice cream sandwich every Sunday afternoon. He feels satisfied every time he eats one, and he would feel upset, disappointed, and even frustrated if for health reasons say, he cannot eat ice cream sandwiches any more.

Petra Not looking too different from Peta and Peter, Petra is the third person in the ice cream shop eating an ice cream sandwich. Like Peta and Peter, she judges ice cream sandwiches to be good for all the same reasons that they judge them to be good. But different from both of them, Petra appreciates ice cream sandwiches on a different, or perhaps one might think, deeper level. She is interested in the art of dessert and the culture behind them, and invests her time in learning about and exploring the world of ice cream. Indeed, she considers herself a true gourmand and connoisseur of ice cream sandwiches. Anyone who knows her well would say the same. Her eating and appreciating ice cream sandwiches shows aspects of her practical identity

positive examples are political values like justice and equality, interpersonal values like responsibility and respect, personal values like integrity and wellness, and aesthetic values like beauty, and so on. But, of course, this assumption about objective values is not required to make the point at issue.

² For relevant discussion on qualifying an agent's judgments in relation to her practical identity in these ways, see Strabbing (2016: 744-745). Throughout this paper, I use value judgments with these qualifications in mind. For simplicity, I will drop the qualifications for the rest of the paper.

in relation to aesthetics of food and cuisine culture. Besides feeling satisfied, she experiences intellectual pleasure and fulfills her values every time she learns about and tries out a new ice cream, or revisits an old favorite. Moreover, she would feel long-lasting frustration, a sense of great loss, or even anger if for health reasons say, she never gets to taste or travel around for ice cream ever again.

Do all three of them value ice cream sandwiches? If so, does their valuing speak for *who they are* in relation to food and culture in the same way?

2. *A Notion of Who We Are: A Prelude*

Answering the above questions requires a proper understanding of a notion of *who one is*, for each of the three agents. I will use *practical identity* as a placeholder concept for who we are as practical agents, and I intend to use the three vignettes to elucidate the concept of practical identity by discussing different kinds of valuing that these show. As the paper proceeds, it will become clear that only one kind of valuing makes us the kind of practical agents we are, and thus only one kind of valuing express our practical identities.

Many philosophers have appealed to the idea of practical identity in order to characterize human experiences of self-shaping and self-constitution in terms of an agent's evaluation of her own motivation, her future-directed value-pursuit, and her end-setting (Frankfurt, 1971; Taylor, 1976; Schmitz, 1994; Kane, 1996: ch. 5 ; Korsgaard, 2009; Callard, 2018: chs. 5, 6). These discussions, in turn, help us theorize about moral responsibility (Frankfurt, 1971; Watson, 1975, 1987; Kane, 1996: ch.5), and welfare (Raibley, 2013; Dorsey, 2017; Tiberius, 2018; Theunissen, 2019: ch. 4). Before I dive into the relevant dialectic directly and fully (section 4), let me first offer some pretheoretical ideas about practical identity.

An agent's practical identity is constituted by the practical stances she takes towards herself, others, her life projects, and other things that matter to her. Typically, an agent takes a practical stance towards something by making plans towards obtaining that thing, and acting on her plans. Her planning can be explained by a set of practical attitudes. That is, in planning to achieve something that matters to her, she must judge it to be good, hold a positive motivational attitude towards it, and be disposed to feel certain emotions about it. As a result, when she obtains what matters to her, something relevant about who she is changes, and she becomes a slightly or even drastically different version of herself. By taking certain practical stances in life, an agent shapes her practical identity.

But this is not to say that an agent's practical identity is exhausted by all the practical stances she takes in life. Indeed, there may be other psychological elements that are not expressive of her practical stances towards things that she deems important to her, but are implicitly constitutive of her practical identity. Nonetheless, it is helpful to see an agent's practical identity as being crucially, albeit partially, constituted by certain practical attitudes of hers towards taking practical stances in life. The central goal of this paper is to further explore what those attitudes are, and especially, the ways in which they come together to constitute and express our practical identities.

3. Three Shades of Valuing

Return to our three ice cream sandwich-eaters. Do they all value ice cream sandwiches? Let us start with a parsimonious formulation of valuing proposed by Alfred Mele. When one values something, he says, it involves a positive motivational component of desiring to obtain it, and a positive evaluative component of judging it to be good. Mele calls it *valuing in a thin sense* (Mele, 1995: 116). With this account in mind, it seems that all three of them value ice cream sandwiches. But intuitively, one may wonder if there is something different about each of their valuing ice cream sandwiches.

Consider first Peta. She values ice cream sandwiches in a thin sense in the way Mele identifies it, because she desires to eat one at the moment, and she judges ice cream to be good. Nevertheless, if we look closer into it, her desire for it derives from her desire to win a bet with her friends. Despite judging ice cream sandwiches to be good for those reasons that make them valuable, or appear valuable to her, she is disposed to desire them primarily for reasons *other than* the former reasons—indeed, were reasons like winning a bet, keeping a reputation of always being the most daring among her friends and simply having a good time with them not to be present, she would rarely, if ever, desire to go and get herself an ice cream sandwich. In valuing it, Peta’s desire for it, and her judgment that it is good for those reasons that make it good or appear good to her, merely co-occur. Valuing in this way amounts to adding the motivational and the evaluative components together.

Or consider another one of those rare situations in which we might find her eating an ice cream sandwich. Suppose she is at the office and craves snacks. But the vending machine in the hallway has been broken for a while, and she really does not want to be bothered to step into the midsummer heatwave and get something from the nearby CVS. Thus, she finds herself staring into the office’s freezer, in which there is only an ice cream sandwich. She grabs it without reluctance, eats it, and enjoys it.³ If she did not find herself in a situation like this, which she rarely or never does, she would not be moved to go and have one on her own. And when she is moved to eat one, those reasons for which she judges them to be good may play a small role, or may sometimes even remain inert. But when they do play a role, it is because those other reasons (e.g., quenching a crave for snack, not having other options accessible at the moment, etc.) are present and she is sensitive to them at the time. Again, this suggests that Peta’s desire for an ice cream sandwich and her judgment that it is good for reasons that make it good or appear good co-occur, and are merely additive, in her valuing it.⁴

³ I thank Tim Kearl for pointing out this case to me.

⁴ Must Peta judge ice cream sandwiches to be good for reasons independent of those for which she desires ice cream sandwiches when she is moved to eat one? One may want to say that those reasons for which she judges it to be good *in the moment*, can indeed be the same reasons for which she desires it *in the moment*. But once we think about this in this

What does that say about Peta? It says that her valuing ice cream sandwiches is one-off. Here, let me introduce my first shade of valuing: one-off valuing.

One-off Valuing An agent values something one-off when she judges it to be good, and desires it dispositionally primarily for reasons other than those for which she judges it to be good generally. And when she does desire it, the reasons for which she judges it to be good at the moment necessarily involve those other reasons.

When an agent values something one-off, her valuing it does not reveal much about her practical identity in the relevant regard. From Peta's one-off valuing ice cream sandwiches, we can see that ice cream sandwiches do not matter much *to* her, nor does it say much about who she is or stands for in the aesthetics of food and cuisine culture. Rather, what is shown in the vignette is that bet-winning, or quenching a crave for snacks, matters to her more than ice cream sandwiches do.⁵ When something towards which an agent holds a positive motivational attitude does not matter to her, we may deem it too much to even say she values it (cf. Scheffler, 2010: 17). Although Peta's attitude towards ice cream sandwiches involves both motivational and evaluative components, these two components are merely additive in her psychological constitution, and so this case too may not seem like *bona fide* valuing. I

way, it would be trivially true that whenever an agent is moved to do something, the reasons for which she is moved to do it are those for which she judges doing it to be good (consciously or not, correctly or not), *under the circumstances*. And this would be true for all three accounts of valuing that I discuss in this paper. So, here, I want to stress that it is characteristic of the way in which Peta values ice cream sandwiches that there is a gap between the reasons for which she judges them to be good, and the reasons for which she judges eating one to be good *when she is moved to eat it*. I thank Kael McCormack for raising this issue.

⁵ An alternative way of expressing whether something matters to an agent in the way shown in the examples is what Jeffrey Seidman calls "seeing something as important" (Seidman, 2009: 284-288). According to Seidman, when an agent sees something as important, she is disposed to believe that relevant considerations regarding it are practical reasons *for* her. To be sure, there are other ways in which something can matter to an agent without an agent's seeing it as important. But the way I understand ice cream sandwiches not mattering to Peta, and winning a bet mattering to her more, can be expressed in terms of Peta not seeing ice cream sandwiches as important to her, but seeing winning a bet as important to her.

propose that we see such cases as involving, if not valuing, then other valuing-*like* attitudes.⁶ My topic is actual valuing, but I discuss these other valuing-like attitudes because the reasons for which one-off valuing may fall short of how we normally think of valuing will help elucidate the non-additive nature of the more interesting valuing-like attitudes.

Some may reason that valuing something in an one-off manner characteristically involves an *unstable* conative state (cf. Roughley, 2002: 181).⁷ If we think valuing something involves a stable conative state (Copp, 1993; Roughley, 2002; Raibley, 2013; Svavarsdóttir, 2014; Varga, 2015; Tiberius, 2018: ch. 2; Theunissen, 2019: ch. 4), then one-off valuing does not count as a standard form of valuing.

Notice that regardless of what reasons to which an one-off valuer is most sensitive when they desire something, or to which they are most sensitive more generally, the way in which I talk about desires and reasons is ambivalent about which view of understanding reasons in relation to desires is right—specifically, between one that argues that reasons for bringing about something are explanatorily prior to the occurrences of desires for it, and a rival view that suggests that, instead, an agent’s desires for something gives rise to and constitute reasons for her to bring it about.⁸ I mean to leave it open whether one of these two views is right. Although, if the reader thinks that the features of my proposals on valuing are plausible, then my proposals could be seen as providing a further reason to endorse one view over the other. To explain, if we agree that one-off valuing does not involve a stable conative state towards that which one values, and that more standard forms of valuing involve a more stable conative state towards obtaining that which one values, then this difference can be easily explained by the

⁶ I thank Sean Whitton for helpful discussion.

⁷ An alternative way to understand the unstable conative state that is involved in one-off valuing is that our one-off valuer can be disposed to desire that which she values one-off, and such a motivational disposition is a stable state. Nevertheless, the activation of that disposition by those reasons for which she judges it to be good (generally, not contextually) is unstable. This is because the activation relies on exceptional circumstances that generate other reasons to which she is sensitive when she is moved to obtain that which she one-off values. I thank Tim Kearn and Kael McCormack their helpful suggestions on this point.

⁸ See Kael McCormack (forthcoming) for a comprehensive and informative survey of these two families of views.

former view. That is, because the reasons to which a one-off valuer is most sensitive when they desire something do not map onto those other reasons for which they judge it to be good more generally, an easy way to explain the discrepancy between these two kinds of reasons is to say that their desire for that which they value one-off represents those reasons to which they are most sensitive, but not those other reasons for which they judge it to be good more generally.⁹ Similarly, more standard forms of valuing involve a more stable conative state, and this can be explained by the thought that the reasons the valuer's desires for something represent tend to be (even if not always completely) those reasons for which they judge it to be good.

If this is right, then we can push it further and say that valuing something one-off is not so distant from merely holding a judgment that it is good or objectionable for those reasons that make it good or objectionable, or those that appear to the one-off valuer to do so,¹⁰ because when an one-off valuer desires it, they desire it primarily for other reasons generated by exceptional circumstances. When those other reasons are not present, they do not desire it, and what is left is their judgment merely that it is good for those reasons to which they are rarely sensitive.

But does valuing something merely amount to the judgment that it is good? Philosophers have challenged this idea and argued for a distinction between valuing something and judging it to be good (Watson, 1987; Copp, 1993; Scheffler, 2010; Callard, 2018; Kubala, 2022; contra., Smith, 1992).¹¹ Consider a counterexample to equating valuing something with judging it to be good. Suppose a music lover judges death metal to be good. Perhaps she judges it to be good because it is well-acknowledged that death metal has distinctive musical value, or because she was once enrolled in a class on music history in college and came to recognize that death metal is good as a musical subgenre. She may have

⁹ To be sure, this is not to say the rival view cannot offer a proper explanation of the discrepancy at issue.

¹⁰ Here, again, my view is particularly sympathetic to McCormack's recent revision of guise of the good views, in which he argues that focusing on an agent's capacity to discriminate value and the exercise of it can help explain cases in which an agent's desires do not track what is valuable.

¹¹ Note that they argue for this distinction in different ways, which lead them to have different views on valuing. But this is beside the point.

even gone to several death metal concerts to deepen her understanding of it, or to better work on class assignments. But in the end, she thought to herself, “no matter what they say, it’s just not for me: the headaches are not worth it.” And so she decided never to go to a death metal concert or listen to death metal again. In this case, we can say that even though she does hold a judgment about death metal that it is good, because her judgment is merely based on others’ testimony—however authoritative or widely-shared—she is not sensitive to the reasons that make death metal valuable in the way that those who do value death metal are. Therefore, she does not value it properly.¹²

But why is a sensitivity to reasons that make something valuable mediated through the trusted testimony of others not enough for properly valuing it? Here, Dale Dorsey’s discussion about a *harmony* or *kinship* between a valuer and the valued item is helpful (Dorsey, 2013: 701-705). Dorsey argues that for something to be *good for* the valuer (and thus promotes their welfare), and for it to *matter to* her, there must be a harmony or kinship between the agent and what she values, *mediated* and *constructed* by the valuing attitudes that *she* holds towards it. The difference between our death metal non-lover and a true death metal fanatic can be described using the lens of this idea of kinship: there is a kinship between death metal and the fanatic, but no kinship between death metal and our agent. This is because our agent’s sensitivity to the presented evaluative properties of death metal are merely mediated by valuing attitudes that others, (indeed likely the aforementioned fanatics) hold. So, if the valuing attitude that one has towards something is a mere judgment that it is good or valuable, and one’s sensitivity to those reasons that make it valuable is not mediated and constructed by attitudes of one’s own, one does not in fact value it properly.¹³

This counterexample to equating valuing something with judging it to be good tells us that if one-off valuing boils down to merely holding a value judgment, then one-off valuing falls short of

¹² I thank Tim Kearl for suggestions here.

¹³ Thank you to an anonymous reviewer for directing me to these discussions of values and welfare.

standard valuing. In that case, Peta's valuing ice cream sandwiches in an one-off manner means that she does not in fact value them.

What, then, about Peter and Petra?

I started the discussion about Peta by borrowing Mele's understanding of *valuing in a thin sense*, a parsimonious formulation of valuing that involves a minimal coherence between motivational and evaluative components. So far, I have shown that in one-off valuing, this minimal coherence is obtained by those two components merely co-occurring, and thus one-off valuing fails to capture the valuing we are most interested in. It is unclear whether Mele means to include one-off valuing in his understanding of thin valuing. Regardless, I propose that we go beyond the parsimonious formulation, and reformulate thin valuing in a more refined way. Let me introduce the second shade of valuing: thin valuing.

Thin Valuing An agent values something thinly when she judges it to be good, and desires it primarily for those reasons for which she judges it to be good. In addition, in valuing it in this way, she is subject to a range of emotions responsive to it.

To illustrate, consider Peter. Peter differs from Peta in that he does not need things such as external enticements to desire an ice cream sandwich. He desires it either intrinsically or instrumentally primarily for those reasons for which he judges it to be good.¹⁴ In addition, upon obtaining it, or in the prospect of not obtaining it, he finds himself attached to ice cream sandwiches, and is susceptible to a range of emotions towards them.¹⁵ If his friends challenge him to eat one, or if he finds himself craving

¹⁴ In the case of Peter, his desire for ice cream sandwiches is an intrinsic desire, in that he desires them for features of their own. A case of the instrumental desire involved in *Thin Valuing* could be someone's instrumental desire for money, which is involved in their thinly valuing money. They value money thinly for what it brings to them. I thank Kael McCormack for his suggestion to mention this point.

¹⁵ For discussions of emotions playing an important role in valuing or expression of what an agent truly is, see Copp (1993), Jaworska, (2007), Seidman (2009), Scheffler (2010), and Kubala (2017).

for snacks and only an ice cream sandwich is left in the freezer, he would happily grab and eat it without feeling that he is solely meeting a challenge, or doing so only as a result of having no other opinion. When he does so, those reasons for which he judges ice cream sandwiches to be good are not merely present in his motivational set in the peripheral sense, as they are for Peta. Indeed, Peter's valuing ice cream sandwiches manifests a more stable conative state than Peta's one-off valuing of them. According to the account of thin valuing I offer, to explain this stability in Peter's case is to point out that there is an internal constraint between Peter's desiring ice cream sandwiches, his judging that they are good, and his susceptibility to a range of emotions in response to them. Specifically, the reasons for which he judges them to be good are the reasons that he desires them and the reasons for his relevant emotions in response to them (cf. Varga, 2015: 309).¹⁶ Such an internal constraint between the motivational, the evaluative, and the affective is absent in one-off valuing. This internal constraint manifests the non-additive nature of *Thin Valuing*.

What does that say about Peter? It says that ice cream sandwiches matter to him more than they do to Peta. Everyone who knows Peter well knows that he likes ice cream sandwiches, and he calls himself an ice cream sandwich lover.

Does it say more about Peter than that? With that question in mind, imagine you approached Peter in the ice cream shop, and asked him his own opinion on his relationship with ice cream sandwiches. "A positive one," he said. Not a surprise, as we have figured out that Peter values ice cream sandwiches thinly. "Would you say that your appreciation of ice cream sandwiches partially

¹⁶ In particular, Somogy Varga presses on the idea that what he calls "core-identification" has an agent's motivational and evaluative elements integrated into a single structure, in which the mere co-occurrence of these elements does not settle whether an agent's identification captures who she truly is. Moreover, the integration between these elements gives rise to two further features that settle just what speaks to who an agent truly is: a sense of self-betrayal if one were not to act on one's desire, the object of which is that with which one identifies, and a readiness to ensure that one's identification persists (Varga, 2015: 309). But note that Varga's goal is for core-identification to capture what an agent truly is, a goal that converges with what I want to do with thick valuing, and not thin valuing. With regard to thin valuing, I suggest that it has this internally integrated structure, just like thick valuing does. But borrowing Varga's characterization, I claim that in the case of thin valuing, the internally integrated structure does not give rise to a sense of betrayal if a thin valuer of ice cream sandwiches like Peter fails to motivate himself to go and get one for himself, or a readiness to ensure that he keeps his passion for ice cream sandwiches.

constitutes what you are?” you further inquired. “No,” he replied, “That’d be ridiculous.” As it turns out, despite valuing ice cream sandwiches thinly, food in general does not matter to Peter that much. He does not consider himself a foodie in any sense. Moreover, he thinks that there is not much value in food. As controversial a perspective on food as this is, a lot of us are not that different from Peter when it comes to valuing things in life. Thin valuing is perhaps the most common phenomenon of valuing. For many people, they value reality shows,¹⁷ pop music, fashion, a nice meal at a fancy restaurant, traveling, and so on, in this way.¹⁸

Still, one might think, the fact that ice cream sandwiches do not matter to Peter that much makes him not that different from Peta after all. Even though the different dimensions in his valuing attitudes towards ice cream cohere in a non-additive way, they do not come together so as to partially determine *who he is* in relevant regards. This, in turn, makes his desire for ice cream sandwiches more trivial than it would have been if they mattered to him (cf. Scheffler, 2010: 17). Therefore, it may still be too strange to call him a valuer of it.

But this does not seem to be the case for Petra. Recall that Petra considers herself a true gourmand and connoisseur of ice cream. Eating and appreciating ice cream sandwiches means a lot more to her than to Peter, let alone Peta. Not only does she eat and appreciate ice cream, but for Petra, doing so is a way to engage with her pursuit of values in the world of the aesthetics of food and cuisine culture. So, she values ice cream sandwiches more than thinly.¹⁹ Let us call her way of valuing ice cream sandwiches the third shade of valuing: thick valuing.

¹⁷ See Kubala’s discussion on the relation between guilty pleasures, such as watching “trashy television shows,” and valuing (esp., 2017: 61). According to Kubala, watching trashy television to satisfy one’s guilty pleasure is a prime example to demonstrate that valuing something does not require believing it to be valuable. Indeed, a valuer of trashy television shows needs not hold the belief that those shows are valuable. I take my account of thin valuing to be a variation of Kubala’s model of valuing discussed in his paper. Here, it is helpful to point out that on my view, one needs not believe something to have impersonal value in order to judge it to be good.

¹⁸ This is not to say one cannot value those things in a different way than valuing them in a thin sense.

¹⁹ Compare Petra and her valuing ice cream sandwiches with Varga’s agent with her button-collecting (2015: 311). In a similar fashion, Varga’s button collector may indeed have button-collecting incorporated into her core-identification if it is for the sake of pursuit of “the cultural history of fashion.”

Thick Valuing An agent values something thickly when she judges it to be good, and desires it primarily for those reasons for which she judges it to be good. In valuing it in this way, she is subject to a broader range of emotions responsive to it. More importantly, that which she values in this way partly constitutes and crucially expresses her practical identity as a moral, social, aesthetic, physically and mentally well being, albeit, possibly, in a disparate manner.²⁰

Petra values ice cream sandwiches thickly. She values them thickly because her relevant appreciation and explorations constitute and express her practical identity in the realms of the aesthetics of food and cuisine culture. Her pleasure in sustaining her pursuit, and the potential pain experienced in the prospect of not sustaining it, come with a broader range of emotions than Peter. Not only does she experience satisfaction when she explores the world of ice cream as Peter does when he eats one, she also experiences intellectual pleasure, and fulfills her values, in a way that Peter does not. Not only would she be upset, disappointed, and frustrated in the prospect of not having access to ice cream and being able to learn about them, she would also experience deeper and more intense feelings of sorrow, a sense of loss, and long-lasting frustration in the face of it. If she was deprived of opportunities to do these things, her practical identity in the relevant regard would be threatened, and its further development would be inhibited.

4. Practical Identity, Thick Valuing, and Change

So far, I have shown that different from one-off valuing, thin and thick valuing involve motivational, evaluative, and affective components that do not merely co-occur, or, are not merely additive. In addition, what distinguishes thick valuing from thin valuing is that these three kinds of component

²⁰ It is a vexing matter and so, I mean to leave it as an unfinished philosophical project to fully state all the elements that bear on the constitution of one's practical identity. I thank Michael McKenna's suggestion to make this clarification.

come together in a way that constitutes and expresses our practical identities. But does this mean that in thickly valuing ice cream, Petra simply values it more strongly than Peter? No. What sets Petra apart from Peter is not the degree to which she values ice cream sandwiches; rather, thin and thick valuing are two kinds of valuing.²¹ For instance, growing stronger and stronger desires for ice cream sandwiches would not in and of itself turn Peter into a thick valuer of them—it might just mean that he is really, really dehydrated. Nor would learning about the invention of ice cream by watching a documentary about it necessarily turn him into a thick valuer—his deepened understanding of it might simply add to his set of things he knows about in life, without any evaluative change. In comparison, in thickly valuing ice cream, Petra became a different person in relation to aesthetics of food and cuisine culture, whereas in thinly valuing ice cream, one of the possible changes for Peter is that his blood sugar level might go up if he lets his desires run wild.²²

To further explain the distinction between thin and thick valuing, more needs to be said about the constitution and expression relation between thick valuing and practical identity, absent for thin valuing. The thought, I suggest, is that our thick valuing guide us to make changes to ourselves and the world around us, and then we take our lives in different directions. As a result of bringing about these changes, we shape who we are.

Understanding practical agents as constituting themselves through their valuing is not a new idea. Christine Korsgaard argues that we self-constitute by pursuing actions that we deem worthwhile, in accordance with conceptions of particular practical identities. In this way, we make ourselves the authors of our actions and makers of our own identities (Korsgaard, 2009: 20, 22, 24, 42). The constitution of our own identities thus involves both evaluative and conative states—that is, valuing.

This is further developed by value-based welfare theorists. Jason R. Raibley argues that valuing is

²¹ This is compatible with the idea that the constitutions of our practical identities through different kinds of valuing can come in degrees. For instance, someone like Petra can be a thicker valuer of ice cream than she is, and someone like Peter might be a thinner valuer of it than he is.

²² Thank you to an anonymous reviewer for suggesting I clarify this difference between Petra and Peter.

action-guiding, with a world-to-mind direction of fit. When we value something, we tend to make changes in the world to make it match our ideal (Raibley, 2013: 194). This necessarily involves the exercise of our agency (Raibley, 2013: 205-6). Dale Dorsey argues that exercising valuing capacities leads us to form meaningful relationships with certain values in the world, so that we can call them *our* values (Dorsey, 2017: 702). To claim ownership over these things is thus another way to express self-constitution by means of valuing. In a similar vein, L. Nandi Theunissen proposes that the value of humans lies in the possession and exercise of the capacity to have values. She understands having values as having ends, and we realize our values by organizing a hierarchy of ends so that our life is guided by long-range deliberation, followed by our actions to obtain objects in our deliberation over time (Theunissen, 2019: 94). The value of humans, according to her, is realized by the exercise of practical agency in relation to diachronic value-fulfillment.

These discussions help explain the constitution and expression relation between thick valuing and practical identity, and my formulation of thick valuing, in turn, helps make explicit that the kind of valuing these discussions involve is neither one-off valuing nor thin valuing, but thick valuing.

Distinguishing thick valuing from thin and one-off valuing in terms of its relation to practical identity has the further implication that one's valuing experiences can progress or shift between these different kinds of valuing. This is true especially when we look at thick valuing in relation to our *diachronic* practical identities, and at our lives as a progression of changes. The valued items' importance to who we are as practical agents may develop or change over time, and as a result, our valuing experiences may develop or change over time. For instance, after talking to that woman he met at the ice cream shop, who happened to have a similar name to his ("what are the odds!"), Peter thought to himself, "I want to develop a more sophisticated palate for ice cream." He got in touch with Petra, and followed her advice to broaden his choice beyond ice cream sandwiches. He spent more and more time on learning about regional varieties of particular kinds of ice cream, made sure that he visited

local ice cream shops whenever he traveled, and his social life was also expanded as a result. As time went by, he became a thick valuer of ice cream.

Given how closely our thick valuing and values are connected to our practical identities over time, it is intuitive to think that if we successfully acquired thick values, and thus shaped our practical identities by means of our value-pursuits and fulfillment, then we are authentic just when we act from our values, and when we express who we are through our actions. But this intuitive thought is in tension with another thought that, at least sometimes, even when an agent acts from her values and thus expresses her practical identities, we might still deem her inauthentic. I will now explain how my formulation of thick valuing offers a good tool for explaining authenticity and inauthenticity in these latter cases.

5. *Must a Thick Valuer be Authentic?*

A standard way of understanding authenticity in relation to values is that authenticity involves an ability to evaluate one's values independently of constraints from within one's own psychological constitution, in which only a subset of psychological elements are sources of that independence (cf. Frankfurt, 1971, 1987, Dworkin, 1988). Philosophers have labeled this understanding of authenticity as involving a *procedural independence* condition in terms of one's internal, critical reflection. According to this understanding, one has values *of one's own* only if they are subject to critical reflection that is licensed by psychological elements with which one identifies. However, there is a well-known challenge that procedural independence is not sufficient for authenticity. In addition, whether one is afforded opportunity to develop and exercise an ability to evaluate the ways in which one acquires one's values requires *substantial independence*, which latter matters to our assessment of an agent's authenticity as well. When one is not afforded such opportunity, one does not have values *of one's own* (Taylor, 1992; Mele, 1995; Haji, 1998; Oshana, 2005; MacKay, 2020).

My discussion about thick valuing is particularly relevant to this challenge from a substantive independence requirement to a proceduralist requirement of authenticity. That is because even though characterizing our diachronic practical identities in terms of thick valuing captures one historical dimension—that our practical identities are acquired and developed over time—it does not capture another important historical dimension that substantive independence requirement for authenticity implies: that an agent must have a personal history in which she was afforded opportunity to develop and exercise the ability to evaluate the ways in which she acquires and endorses her values. Inauthenticity due to a lack of substantive independence can thus be captured by the gap between what an inauthentic agent thickly values, and values of her own.²³

To illustrate, consider Susan Wolf's well-known Jojo (Wolf, 1987). Jojo grows up with his dictator father, and he looks up to him. He acquires values that his father holds and becomes an evildoer just like him. Jojo desires evildoing wholeheartedly for those reasons for which he judges it to be good—ones that, in this case, make it objectionable, and he is subject to a range of emotions in response to evildoing and its obstacles. In addition, evildoing is constitutive and expressive of his practical identity in the realms of morality and society. Given my account of thick valuing, Jojo thickly values evildoing, by means of which he obtains his evildoing self. But when he acts from what he thickly values, and continues his father's endeavor to evildoing, does he act with authenticity?

To answer this question, let us look more into Jojo's story. Suppose that Jojo did not acquire his values from only his evildoer father, but also by his indoctrination in an oppressive and isolating environment. This severe miseducation prevented him from gaining access to opportunities to develop or employ a sensitivity to and an awareness of both his father's values, and values different from them.²⁴ The sensitivity I mean is a sensitivity to the internal coherence, or lack thereof, among the

²³ Thank you to an anonymous reviewer for suggestion to discuss this.

²⁴ The opportunities that could help Jojo to develop or employ a sensitivity and an awareness include, for example, the opportunity to have a stable, safe, and healthy upbringing, a proper education, access to people outside of his father's "tribe", and so on.

values he acquires, and the awareness is an awareness to values external and different from his father's. But if he did not get to develop or exercise these two things, then when there is an inconsistency among the values he acquires, or a conflict between those values and different values, he may not understand it, or even recognize it. In that case, Jojo is left with no capability to evaluate the ways in which he acquires and endorses his values.²⁵ In other words, indoctrination can prevent agents like Jojo from accessing what Susan Wolf calls *the True and the Good* (Wolf, 1990). Under this interpretation of Jojo, without having developed or exercised either an internal sensitivity to or an external awareness of his values and those that are different from his, he cannot evaluate his values and those different from his in ways that express a substantive independence. As a result, he does not have values *of his own*. When he acts from those values, he acts without authenticity.

With Jojo's case in mind, we can find an important gap in his experiences with valuing—what he *thickly values* are not *values of his own*. This gap is key to capturing cases of inauthenticity due to a lack of substantive independence.

In comparison, the alternative forms of valuing that I have discussed in this paper cannot properly identify this kind of inauthenticity in a principled way. With one-off valuing, that which one values one-off is divorced from one's values. This is because we do not think that our values are things that we merely judge to be good, and independently, desire dispositionally to bring about primarily and principally on occasions where we are enticed to do so, or are left with no other options not to do so. For example, we do not think having justice as one of our values is like the following: to judge it to be good, and only desire to do something about it if someone bets us would do it, or forces us to do it. If one-off valuing fails to identify values that one has in a principled way, then it will also fail to identify values *of one's own*. If one-off valuing cannot provide resources to identify cases where one does not

²⁵ To be sure, this interpretation of Jojo does not exhaust the plausible explanation of someone like Jojo. Even with severe and thorough indoctrination, it is possible that an indoctrinated agent is left with some control to develop or employ her sensitivity and awareness to evaluate her values, and values different from hers.

possess values of one's own, it cannot identify cases where one acts from values that are not of one's own—that is, cases of inauthenticity. To illustrate, consider again Peta with her ice cream sandwich. Indeed, there is a gap between what Peta values one-off, and what she thickly values in the relevant realm. She may not possess any values in the realms of the aesthetics of food and cuisine culture, like Peter, or she may in fact thickly value spicy food across culture because she, like Petra, is another a true gourmand and connoisseur, just not of ice cream. Nevertheless, in either case, eating an ice cream sandwich, and thus acting from what she values one-off, does not show that Peta is acting without authenticity. In doing so, she is neither authentic nor inauthentic.

Similarly, with thin valuing as I identify it, that which we value thinly is also divorced from our values (cf. Mele, 1995: 116).²⁶ For instance, consider again Peter, who thinly values ice cream sandwiches, but does not have his appreciation of them among his values. Similar to the case with Peta and ice cream sandwiches, there is a gap between what Peter thinly values and values of his own. But this gap does not show that by eating ice cream sandwiches every week, and thus acting from what he thinly values, he is acting inauthentically. Just like in Peta's case, he is neither acting authentically nor inauthentically. So, neither one-off valuing nor thin valuing help identify cases of authenticity and inauthenticity due to lack of substantive independence in a principled way, as thick valuing does.

To conclude, in this paper, I have presented three different ways of understanding valuing, and proposed a novel account of thick valuing to capture a special kind of valuing where what we thickly

²⁶ Mele further distinguishes between thinly valuing something that is of importance to an agent, and her personal values, as follows:

“We can say that *S* at least *thinly values X* at a time if and only if at that time *S* both has a positive motivational attitude toward *X* and believes *X* to be good. Unfortunately, accepting this analysis does not settle what it is for something to be *among one's values*...Can we properly say that *X* is among a person's values if *X* is both valued by the person and of special importance to the person? No...[T]he range of personal values under consideration can be limited to things that are *valued by* valuers and are clear cases of the valuers' values” (Mele, 1995: 116).

Note, again, that Mele's characterization of thin valuing differs from mine, in that instances of thin valuing as I identify it are only a subset of instances of thin valuing as he identifies it. However the distinction he proposes, quoted above, nevertheless applies to my discussion.

value makes us the kind of practical agents we are. This was achieved by focusing on how that which we thickly value is partially constitutive and crucially expressive of our practical identities, and the non-additive relation between the different elements of thick valuing. Beyond that, I have shown what we can learn about an important sense of authenticity and inauthenticity by drawing upon resources from my account of thick valuing. This last topic deserves further development and defense, but I have suggested a direction in which we might head.

Acknowledgment

I am grateful to Nick Benson, Jacob Blitz, Rhys Borchert, Luke Goleman, Andrew Lichter, Michael McKenna, Travis Quigley and Carolina Sartorio for suggestions and comments on the early versions of this paper. Special thanks go to Tim Kearl, Kael McCormack, Sean Whitton and two anonymous referees for their suggestions and comments that help transform this paper to its current version.

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