

The Pen, the Dress, and the Coat: A Confusion in Goodness

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Abstract: Conditionalists say that the value something has as an end—its final value—may be conditional on its extrinsic features. They support this claim by appealing to examples: Kagan points to Abraham Lincoln’s pen, Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen to Lady Diana’s dress, and Korsgaard to a mink coat. They contend that these things may have final value in virtue of their historical or societal roles. These three examples have become familiar: many now merely mention them to establish the conditionalist position. But the widespread faith in such cases is, I believe, unjustified. This is because, surprisingly, the pen, the dress, and the coat cannot have final value. I argue that the problem is internal: these cases are ruled out by every conditionalist account of final value. Further, the problem with these well-known cases applies to most other supposed examples of extrinsic, final goods. Thus nearly all cases given to support the conditionalist view cannot succeed. I suggest a kind of diagnosis: I claim that these examples are best seen as instances of sentimental value, rather than final value. I close by providing a brief account of sentimental value and explain how it relates to instrumental, intrinsic, and final goodness.

Keywords: axiology, final value, intrinsic value, sentimental value

The final value of a thing is the value it has *for its own sake*, or *as an end*. The intrinsic value of a thing is the value it has *in itself* or *in virtue of its intrinsic features*.¹ Conditionalists hope to separate these two kinds of value. They claim that the goodness a thing has as an end may be conditional on its extrinsic features, such as its historical or societal role. But the intrinsic goodness of a thing cannot be conditional in this way. So, they conclude, we must separate intrinsic and final value.

Consequently, axiology must be reformed: we cannot follow Moore and identify the intrinsic value of a thing with the value it has as an end. Nor can we accept Moore’s suggestion that intrinsic value is the fundamental concept of value theory. We care about

¹ Philosophers speak of this issue in different ways: Bradley (2002), Dorsey (2012), Hurka (1998), and Kagan (1998) use “intrinsic value” to refer to the value something has as an end, or for its own sake, and some other term, like “intrinsic value proper” to refer to the value something has in virtue of its intrinsic features. Korsgaard (1983), Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen (2000), Fletcher (2009) and Zimmerman (2001), (2010) use “intrinsic value” to refer to the value a thing has intrinsically, and some other term, like “final value” to refer to the value a thing has as an end, or for its own sake. I will follow Korsgaard’s usage in what follows and will translate other authors to speak in this way. This will not alter the propositions expressed; as these philosophers admit, these are simply different ways of speaking. For more on terminology see Dorsey (2012), Rønnow-Rasmussen and Zimmerman (2005), and Zimmerman (2010).

what is good as an end, the conditionalist says, not what is good intrinsically.² Indeed, intrinsic goods are simply an unremarkable subset of final goods.³ Thus, the conditionalist concludes, final value should *replace* intrinsic value as the central concept of axiology.

Conditionalist motivate the distinction between final and intrinsic value by providing examples. Kagan's is, I think, the most powerful and well known. He asks us to consider the pen Abraham Lincoln used to sign the Emancipation Proclamation:

Clearly, this pen has considerable instrumental value – it was the actual means by which a great deal of [final] good was brought into the world. But it seems to me that we might want to say something more than this. It seems to me that we might want to suggest...that the continued existence of this pen has value as an end. Of course, the pen's defining instrumental moment is now long since over. But by virtue of that history, we might say, it now possesses [final] value: it is something we could reasonably value for its own sake. The world is richer for the existence of the pen; its destruction would diminish the value of the world as such. (1998: 285)

The pen's final value, Kagan says, cannot be explained by appealing to its intrinsic features. Rather if the pen is good as an end this is because of its relation to Lincoln.⁴ So, the intrinsic and final values of the pen must differ.

Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen also rely on examples. In the most discussed, they point to Lady Diana's dress:

Princess Diana's dress may be another case in point. The dress is valuable just because it has belonged to Diana. This is what we value it for. But, one might object, is it really a case of a non-instrumental value? Diana's dress is perhaps valuable merely as a means: merely because it allows us to establish an indirect connection to a person we admire or find important in one way or another. Having such a connection may be something that we set a final value on. Couldn't this be what is

² Kagan (1998: 290) writes "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?" Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen ask "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: 127)

³ See e.g. Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen (2000: 115-116, 127).

⁴ In general, I will say that a thing has value *because of* some feature *F* just in case *F* explains—in part or in whole—the value of that thing; we may say that *F* is a part (proper or otherwise) of what *makes that thing good*.

going on here? Not necessarily... if we idolize Diana, we do not simply find the dress useful for some purpose; we ascribe an independent value to it. (2000: 41)

So, while the dress can be reasonably thought to have “non-instrumental” or final value, this value cannot be explained by pointing to its intrinsic features. Rather the dress is good “just because it has belonged to Diana.”

Korsgaard provides a different set of cases. Her discussion of the value of a mink coat is well known:

Is [a mink coat] valuable as a means or as an end? One hardly wants to say that it is valuable only as a means, to keep the cold out. The people who want mink coats are not willing to exchange them for plastic parkas, if those are better protection against the elements. A mink coat can be valued the way we value things for their own sakes: a person might put it on a list of the things he always wanted, or aspires to have some day, right alongside adventure, travel, or peace of mind. (1983: 185)

People who care about mink coats do not care about them only as a means to an end, Korsgaard says. And yet the value of a mink coat can only be partially explained by pointing to its materials, construction, and other intrinsic features:

A coat is essentially instrumental: were it not for the ways in which human beings respond to cold, we would not care about them or ever think about them. To say that the coat is intrinsically or unconditionally valuable is absurd: its value is dependent upon an enormously complicated set of conditions, physiological, economic, and symbolic. (1983: 185)

These three examples have become familiar: many now merely mention them to establish the distinction between final and intrinsic value.⁵ But the conditionalist’s faith in such cases is, I believe, unjustified. This is because, surprisingly, the pen, the dress, and the coat *cannot have final value*. I argue that the problem is internal: these cases are ruled out by every conditionalist account of final value, including those suggested in Kagan (1998), Hurka (1998), Olson (2004), and Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen (2000). (Korsgaard does not

⁵ See e.g. Stecker (2002), Green (1996), Fletcher (2009), Bradford (2013), and Dussault (2014).

provide a substantive account of the concept.⁶) Further, the problem with these well-known cases applies to many other supposed examples of non-intrinsic, final goods. Thus nearly all cases given to support the conditionalist view cannot succeed.⁷ I suggest a kind of diagnosis: I claim that these examples are best seen as instances of sentimental value, rather than final value. I close by providing a brief account of sentimental value and explain how it relates to instrumental, intrinsic, and final goodness.

§1: Conditionalist Accounts of Final Value

There are three major conditionalist accounts of final value. The first appeals to *derivation*: it says that final value is non-derivative. The second appeals to *fitting attitudes*: it says that something has final value if it fitting to hold a pro-attitude towards it for its own sake. And the third points to *contributory value*: it says that something has final value if it directly contributes to the overall value of the world.

I want to show that these accounts are inconsistent with the claims of Kagan, Korsgaard, and Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen.

§1.1: The Non-Derivation Account

First let us examine the non-derivation account, as advanced by philosophers such as Bykvist (2015), Olson (2004), and Zimmerman (2001).⁸ Imagine we ask why it's good to be healthy. One reply is that it's good to be healthy because being healthy leads to being happy.⁹ This reply suggests that health has a *derivative* kind of value: it has value because of the value

⁶ Korsgaard does, however, attempt to specify the bearers and source of this kind of value. On the Kantian theory she advances in her (1983) and (1986), there is one unconditional final good: the good, or rational, will. All conditional final goods have their value conferred upon them by the good will. Thus, the good will is the "source" of conditional final value. However, she has since modified her view: she claims now that nothing has final value unconditionally. See her (1996: 407).

⁷ There may be other ways to support the conditionalist program; see e.g. Dorsey's (2012). I will not engage with such arguments here. My aim is to undermine the popular *examples* that have been given to support the conditionalist position; arguments like Dorsey's make no appeal to particular cases.

⁸ Zimmerman later restricts his view; he claims that only the *atoms* of final value have non-derivative value. We should note also that Zimmerman is a *Moorean*; he defends a non-derivation view as a dialectically neutral account of final value before arguing that the final and intrinsic values of a thing must always coincide. However all Mooreans should accept the non-derivation thesis. This is because the Moorean position entails the non-derivation view: if the final value of a thing depends only on its intrinsic properties, then the final value of a thing cannot also depend on the value of something else.

⁹ I borrow this example from Zimmerman. See his (2010).

of happiness. Now, if we ask why it is good to be happy we may not be able to provide an interesting answer. Happiness is not good because of something else; its value is non-derivative.

In general, let us say that a thing has derivative value just in case it has value because something else has value.^{10 11} We can then say:¹²

Non-Derivation: A thing has final value only if its value is non-derivative.

This account is intuitive: it does seem that if a thing has value for its own sake, or as an end, then its value cannot depend upon the value of something else. In this sense final value is a kind of *ultimate* value, which may ground and explain other kinds of value. The non-derivation view is also robust: it gives us the power to distinguish final value from other kinds of value. This is because other kinds of value, like value as a means, and value as a sign, are derivative kinds of value—we cannot explain why a thing has those kinds of value without appealing to the value of something else.

However the non-derivation account entails that our three examples cannot have final value. Begin with the pen. It has final value because of its instrumental value. Kagan is explicit:

It seems plausible to suggest that if this pen does indeed have any [final] value, most or all of it is due to this instrumental role. Stripped of its instrumental history, the pen probably has no [final] value at all. Thus, in this case, it might be suggested, the [final] value of an object depends *completely* upon its instrumental value. (1998: 286)

But instrumental value is a derivative kind of value: a thing has instrumental value because of the value of what it brings about. And if this is true, then our conclusion looms: the transitivity of the *because of* relation will declare that the pen's allegedly final value is derivative. To summarize:

- (1) If the pen is finally valuable, this is because it is instrumentally valuable.

¹⁰ I use 'because of' as indicated in fn. 4.

¹¹ We may wish to make an exception for *complex goods*: those things that have final value because of the values of their parts. We can then say that a thing has non-derivative value just in case it does not have its value in virtue of the value of anything *outside of it*—i.e. in virtue of anything that is not a part of it. This decision will not affect what follows: neither version of the non-derivation account is compatible with the claim that the pen, the dress, and the coat have final value.

¹² Olson adds a clause to the view: he says that final value is a kind of non-derivative, *non-contributory* kind of value. I am skeptical that this addition is desirable; its omission will not be relevant here.

(2) If the pen is instrumentally valuable, this is because something else has value.

But since the *because of* relation is transitive, we can infer

(3) If the pen is finally valuable, this is because something else has value.

Thus the non-derivation account rules out the possibility that the pen has final value.

The same reasoning eliminates the coat. As we have seen, Korsgaard is clear that the coat's final value cannot be explained without appealing to its value in keeping out the cold: it is "essentially instrumental." So the coat will have final value because—among other reasons—it has instrumental value. Thus its allegedly final value is also derivative.

These concerns may seem to apply straightforwardly to the dress as well. But unlike Kagan and Korsgaard, Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen do not say that the dress is finally valuable because it is instrumentally valuable. They say instead that the dress is valuable just because Diana owned it. But this is not plausible: the value of the dress must depend on the value of Diana's life and actions.¹³ Suppose Diana had lived an entirely different life—imagine that she had been a villain, rather than a princess. This would affect the value of the dress. But this is inconsistent with the non-derivation account, since a thing cannot have non-derivative value because of the value of something else.¹⁴

§1.2: Fitting Attitudes

The non-derivation account entails that the pen, the dress, and the coat cannot have final value. The conditionalist may reply that this result is unique to this account. But the two other views that conditionalists endorse have the same consequence, and for much the same reason.

¹³ This is not *ad hoc*: these examples must be plausible. After all, the conditionalist cannot support his view by claiming that there is some case in which we could, *implausibly*, claim that a thing has final value because of its extrinsic features.

¹⁴ Some may say that we should be more liberal; we should say that something has non-derivative value just in case it does not have value *only because* something else has value. If final value is non-derivative in only this weaker sense, then our three examples are not excluded: their value depends on the value of other things but does not depend *entirely* upon the value of these things. But this defense cannot succeed, even if we admit that our three examples do not have value only because of the values of others things. This is because the proposed weakening of the non-derivation view renders it trivial: nearly every kind of value is non-derivative in this liberal sense. Instrumental goods, for example, will now have non-derivative value: the instrumental value of a knife, for example, depends not only on the *value* of certain outcomes, but also on the fact that the knife can bring about those outcomes. And what the knife can bring about depends upon the shape, curve, and other physical properties of the knife, as well as facts about the laws of nature. The proposed understanding of the non-derivation views therefore renders it toothless; it should be rejected.

Consider fitting attitude accounts. These positions are inspired by Brentano's [1889]; they focus on our responses to goods. According to such views:

Fitting Attitudes: A thing has final value only if it is fitting to care about it for its own sake.¹⁵

After rejecting the Moorean position in his (1998), Hurka endorses this kind of view; he says that if something is finally good then "it is something we should care about and pursue *for its own sake* because of its value." In their (2000), Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen concur, writing that "to be valuable, for its own sake, is to be a fitting object of a positive response (a pro-attitude or a pro-behavior) that is directed to the value bearer *for its own sake*." And Kagan suggests a similar account, in his (1998).

To evaluate such views we must say what it means to care about a thing "for its own sake." Let us say that a thing is fitting to care about in this way just in case (i) it's fitting to care about it and (ii) it's not fitting to care about it because it is fitting to care about something else.

But now the same problem arises. Consider Lincoln's pen. Since we have connected final value with what it is fitting to care about, we should say that the properties that make a thing finally good are the properties that make it fitting to care about. Kagan has told us that the pen has final value because it has instrumental value. So the pen must be fitting to care about because it has instrumental value.

However, a thing has instrumental value because something else has value. So if it is fitting to care about the pen *because of its instrumental value* then it is fitting to care about the pen *because of the value of something else*—i.e. because it is fitting to care about something distinct from the pen. We can argue:

- (1) If it is fitting to care about the pen for its own sake, then this is because of its instrumental value.
- (2) If it is fitting to care about the pen because of its instrumental value, then this is because it is fitting to care about something else.

But the *because of* relation is transitive. So we can conclude:

¹⁵ I speak in terms of *care* here, but other philosophers have suggested other pro-attitudes. Some also speak not of the pro-attitudes that would be *fitting* but those that would be *required*, *apt*, or *correct*. These differences will not be relevant here.

- (3) If it fitting to care about the pen for its own sake, then this is because it is fitting to care about something else.

But this is impossible. So the pen cannot be worth caring about for its own sake and thus cannot have final value, according to fitting attitude views. The same reasoning will eliminate the coat.

As before, we may need to approach the dress differently. If we should care about the dress for its own sake, then we should care about the dress in virtue of the features that its goodness depends upon. According to Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen there is just one such feature, *having been owned by Diana*. But, as I have argued, the value of the dress must also depend upon the value of Diana's life and actions. Thus if it is fitting to care about Diana's dress for its own sake, this is because it is fitting to care about Diana's life. But this is impossible. So the fitting attitude account entails that Diana's dress cannot have final value either.¹⁶

§1.3: The Contributory Account

This same problem applies to the last group of views. These accounts connect final value with contributory value. We can say that, according to such views:

Contribution: A thing is finally good only if it directly contributes to the value of the world.

In his (1998) Hurka suggests such an account. Kagan endorses something similar in his (1998). And Bradley attributes this kind of view to the conditionalist in his (2002).

It is important to note that, according to the contributory view, something has final value only if it *directly* contributes to the value of the world. If we remove this feature of the theory, then it cannot succeed. This is because things with instrumental value also contribute to the value of the world. But their contribution is indirect—they contribute by bringing about other things.

¹⁶ Again, one could object that a thing is fitting to care about for its own sake just in case it is not fitting to care about *only because* it is fitting to care about something else (see fn. 14). But, as before, this would render the view we are considering untenable: things with instrumental value are not fitting to care about *only* because of the value of something else but also because they are connected to these other goods in the right way: it would be absurd to care about *a* because of the value of *b* if *a* and *b* are unrelated.

However, if we wish to make use of the notion of direct contribution, we must explain it. Bradley's account is perhaps the most developed. He first explains *indirect* contribution:

When we consider something that has merely instrumental value, it contributes value to the world in virtue of bringing something else of value into the world. We can fully explain its value by appealing to the value of the other thing, and telling a story about how the two things are related. Thus, its contribution to the value of the world is mediated by the other valuable thing; it is indirect. (2002: 31)¹⁷

Of course, a thing *directly* contributes to the world just in case its contribution is not *indirect*. Thus we may say that a thing directly contributes to the world just in case (i) it contributes to the value of the world and (ii) it does not contribute through some intermediary—that is, it does not contribute to the world because something else contributes to the world.

But if this is correct, then the argument should be obvious. Since we have connected final value with what directly contributes to the value of the world, we must agree that the properties that make a thing finally good are the properties that make it contribute to the value of the world. But our three examples are finally good because of the values of other things. So they will, similarly, contribute because of other contributions. They will therefore not contribute directly, and will be ruled out by this account.

§2.1: A Confusion in Goodness

There are three kinds of conditionalist views about final value. I have argued that they all entail that the well-known examples given by Kagan, Korsgaard, and Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen cannot have final value. This is true of other examples as well: Kagan points to a “capable racecar” and culinary skills; Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen to “Napoleon’s hat” and a gun that was used at the battle of Verdun; Korsgaard to “handsome china” and “gorgeously enameled frying pans.” But the values of these things cannot be explained without appealing to the values of other things. So they cannot have final value according to the accounts examined. Similar reasoning will show that most other examples

¹⁷ Bradley refines his account later, to deal with some possible counterexamples. But these modifications will not affect our argument.

given in the literature cannot have value as an end.¹⁸ Thus, surprisingly, the most common form of argument in favor of the conditionalist position provides it with no support at all.

Of course the conditionalist could retreat to some other account of final value. But it is hard to see how such an account could succeed. To accommodate the counterexamples given, this new account must say that a thing can have value for its own sake, or as an end, even if (i) its value is derivative (ii) it is not fitting to care about for its own sake and (iii) it does not contribute directly to the value of the world.

We have reason, then, to believe that the pen, the dress, and the coat cannot have final value. Where did the conditionalist go wrong? Return to the rationales given.

Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen write that:

Diana's dress is perhaps valuable merely as a means: merely because it allows us to establish an indirect connection to a person we admire or find important in one way or another. Having such a connection may be something that we set a final value on. Couldn't this be what is going on here? Not necessarily... if we idolize Diana, we do not simply find the dress useful for some purpose; we ascribe an independent value to it. (2000: 41)

This is the standard argument; as we have seen, Korsgaard reasons similarly.¹⁹ In such arguments, the conditionalist assumes that if a thing has value, but does not have value as a mere means, then it must have value as an end. This is, I think, the beginning of the problem, for this is not a legitimate inference—the distinction between value as an end and value as a means is not exhaustive. Signatory value, for example, is neither a kind of instrumental value nor a kind of final value. The same is true of aesthetic value, expected value, moral value, and attributive kinds of value, like *being a good toaster* or *being a good umbrella*. So we cannot infer that the dress (or the pen, or the coat) has value as an end just because it does not have value as a mere means.²⁰

¹⁸ Still, some examples may escape from this argument. E.g. O'Neil (1992) points to a forest "untouched by human hands." It is not clear how we could apply our argument to such a case. And some of Kagan's examples may be similarly immune. These cases will therefore have to be handled differently—and though I am confident that this is possible, I will not aim to address them here. I am content merely to show that the vast majority of examples given—and the examples most often discussed—do not give us any reason to separate final and intrinsic value.

¹⁹ See also Fletcher (2009).

²⁰ Some conditionalists use the term "non-instrumental value" as a synonym for "final value." (See e.g. Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen (2000)). They might then insist that the distinction is exhaustive. But if the conditionalist wanted to talk only about non-instrumental value in this sense, then his thesis is neither

But there is something else telling in these passages: All of our authors seem to endorse a kind of subjectivism about what is valuable. Throughout their papers, Korsgaard, Kagan, and Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen use “valuable” and “valued” as synonyms. This is critical: it allows them to move from claims about how we value Diana’s dress, for instance, to claims about its value. But this is, I think, their second mistake—for such subjectivism is not plausible.²¹

We can appeal to an old argument.²² First, remember that Kagan, Korsgaard, and Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen seem to believe that something is good as an end if it is valued as an end—otherwise they would not use “valued” and “valuable” as synonyms. They should say also, then, that something is bad as an end if it *dis*valued as an end. But there are some things that are valued by some, and hated by others. By the two principles the conditionalist has accepted, it would then follow that some things are both finally good and finally bad. But this is impossible.

This, I believe, reveals that the arguments given by the conditionalist can show only that these three objects have a kind of relative value—a kind of value *for a person*. However it is uncontroversial that final value is a kind of impartial value, a kind of value a thing has “from the perspective of the universe.”^{23 24}

controversial nor inconsistent with Mooreanism. Moore never claimed that all non-instrumental value is intrinsic, nor should any Moorean maintain such a view. There are simply too many kinds of non-instrumental values; it would be absurd to assume that, for example, *being a good toaster* is an intrinsic kind of goodness. Since I do not believe that the conditionalist is radically mistaken about his own position and what it is in conflict with, I will assume that when conditionalists speak of non-instrumental value this is merely a somewhat confusing way of specifying a *particular kind* of non-instrumental value, rather than the many kinds of value that fall under this label.

²¹ I do not mean to claim that no subjectivist program in meta-ethics can succeed. I mean to claim only that the very simple kind of subjectivism advanced here is not plausible when applied to final value.

²² See e.g. Brentano (2009: 18-19): “How are we to *know* that a thing is good? Should we say that whatever is loved or is capable of being loved is something that is worthy of love and therefore good? Obviously this would not be right, and it is almost impossible to comprehend how it could be that some have fallen in to such an error. One person loves what another hates.”

²³ This phrase comes, of course, from Sidgwick, who used it in a slightly different context. See his (1981: 382).

²⁴ Some may object that I have misunderstood the conditionalist: perhaps she *did* mean to speak of a kind of relative value. This cannot be, I think, for two reasons. First, consider the views provided. It would, I think, be absurd to claim e.g. that something is good *for a person* when it directly contributes to the overall value of the world. Second, and most significantly, consider the dialectic. Final value is nearly always introduced in opposition to the Moorean notion of intrinsic value: the conditionalist points to Moore’s concept, and explains that final value differs, in that it need not depend upon the intrinsic features of a thing (see e.g. Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen (2000: 115-116), Kagan (1998: 278-279)). But Moorean intrinsic value is impartial; indeed, Moore (infamously) rejected the notion of partial value entirely. So if final value can be understood in relation to the Moorean concept of intrinsic value, as the conditionalist claims, then it must be impartial. Further the conditionalist position has nearly always been presented in *opposition* to the Moorean view (see e.g. Korsgaard

§2.2: Sentimental Value

The standard conditionalist rationale says that (i) the pen, the dress, and the coat each have a kind of value that is not merely instrumental and (ii) we can tell whether a thing has this kind of value by examining how it makes a person feel. I think both (i) and (ii) are plausible. However this is not because these things have final value. Rather it is because they have *sentimental value*.

It is somewhat difficult to target sentimental value, but I hope that the concept is relatively clear. Roughly, to be sentimentally valuable is to have the capacity to invoke our sentiments. Sentimental value is thus primarily a property of particular things—an old trophy, a letter from a friend, a photograph of a loved one—rather than states of affairs, or universals.²⁵ Metaphysically, sentimental value is a kind of *extrinsic* value: it arises because of a certain relationship between a person and a thing. Finally, because persons may feel different sentiments towards the same thing, sentimental value is *relative*: something is sentimentally valuable *for a person*, not *simpliciter*.

By calling this kind of value “sentimental value,” I do not mean to suggest that it is unimportant. Nor do I mean to suggest that a person who cares about things with sentimental value is being mawkish, or ‘sentimental’ in the pejorative sense. Rather, I mean this quite literally: “sentimental value” picks out a kind of value that exists because of our sentiments.

As I hope is clear, sentimental value is not a kind of final value. Unlike sentimental value, final value is impartial and cannot be discovered by noting how things make us feel. But sentimental value is not instrumental value, either: a thing may have sentimental value, even if it brings about nothing else worth having.²⁶ ²⁷ This is not to deny that many things

(1983: 173), Rønnow-Rasmussen (2011: 8)). But if final value is supposed to be a relative kind of value, then the conditionalist position is entirely consistent with Moore’s.

²⁵ It may sometimes be a property of events, also—as in the case of anniversaries.

²⁶ In this I agree with Hatzimoysis (2003).

²⁷ The distinction between sentimental and instrumental value can be given additional support in two ways. First *conceptually*: if, as some philosophers do, we dispense with final value, we cannot speak of instrumental value—if nothing has value as an end, then nothing has value as a means. But we can still speak of sentimental value: this kind of value depends only on the existence of our sentiments. Second, we may justify the distinction *epistemically*: We cannot know the instrumental value of a thing unless we know the final value of what it brings about. But to know that a thing has sentimental value, for a person, we just need to know how it affects him.

with sentimental value will, in fact, possess instrumental value as well. But this is true of almost all kinds of value—including final value, moral value, aesthetic value, and the like.

I believe that the examples the conditionalist has given are examples of sentimental value, rather than final value.²⁸ Let us examine how the explanation would go in each case.

Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen say that if we idolize Diana, we may value her dress as more than a mere means. This is true—we may value it sentimentally. Indeed, because Diana is so closely associated with the dress, it will arouse the sentiments of any person who cares about her, or her life. We can tell a similar story about the coat: the person Korsgaard imagines has “put [the coat] on a list of the things he always wanted, or aspires to have some day, right alongside adventure, travel, or peace of mind.” Thus given the coat’s link to his hopes, and life plans, it will have the capacity to evoke his sentiments.

Kagan’s example may seem more like a case of impartial value. But this is only because Lincoln’s pen has a pull on the emotions of so many. We feel strongly about Lincoln, and the tremendous changes in history that he initiated. Because the pen is so closely associated with him, and his most important actions, it will naturally arouse our sentiments.

So the conditionalist has pointed us to an interesting kind of value, a kind of value widely ignored in moral philosophy. But this kind of value is not final value—it is a partial, relative value, created by persons and their sentiments.

²⁸ Fletcher (2009) argues that sentimental value is a kind of final value. I believe this is because Fletcher assumes that sentimental value is either a kind of value as a means or a kind of value as an end. I think this is a mistake: the distinction between value as an end and value as a means is not exhaustive. And without this premise, I do not see how Fletcher’s argument can succeed.

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