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ARTICLE

A Reconstruction of Korsgaard on Autonomy's Objective Value in Light of Sangiovanni, Guyer, and Langton

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Abstract
Christine Korsgaard avers that the value we place on specific personal choices — understood as goals or ends — involves committing to them, or forming a care, which is itself conditioned by the value-conferring ability of the valuer. In other words, personal autonomy implies the objective value of the agent's autonomous choosing and their coeval cares projects. Commentators like Andrea Sangiovanni, Paul Guyer, and Rae Langton criticize Korsgaard's commitment-based conception of autonomous choosing. This article reviews these objections and then proposes a modified Korsgaardian framework concerning the objective value of autonomous choosing, which, I propose, avoids these critical objections.

Résumé
Christine Korsgaard affirme que la valeur que nous accordons à des choix personnels spécifiques — compris comme des objectifs ou des fins — implique de s'y engager ou de se soucier de ceux-ci, ce qui est en soi conditionné par la capacité du valorisateur à conférer de la valeur. En d'autres termes, l'autonomie personnelle implique la valeur objective du choix autonome de l'agent et de ses projets de soins contemporains. Des commentateurs tels que Andrea Sangiovanni, Paul Guyer et Rae Langton critiquent cette conception du choix autonome fondée sur l'engagement. Cet article examine ces objections, puis propose un cadre korsgaardien modifié concernant la valeur objective du choix autonome, qui, selon moi, évite ces objections critiques

Keywords: objective value; autonomy; Korsgaard; Kant; moral philosophy; social philosophy

> But the law-making which determines all value must for this reason have a dignity — that is, an unconditioned and incomparable worth — for the appreciation of which, as necessarily given by a rational being, the word

> "reverence" is the only becoming expression. Autonomy is therefore the ground of the dignity of human nature and of every rational nature.
> (Kant, G, 4:436)[1]

1. Introduction

Determining the objective value of autonomy is a prerequisite for demonstrating why paternalistic intervention, understood as the usurping of the paternalized party's decision-making capacities — where this usurping is justified for the paternalized's own good[2] — contains a wrong-making feature. Although there subsist myriad, conflicting positions on the status of autonomy, there is agreement that: i) "autonomy is the good that paternalism fails to respect" (Oshana, 1998, p. 82); ii) autonomy delimits "anti-paternalism in principles of justice" (Christman, 2004, p. 147); iii) one of the functions "of the concept of autonomy is to mark out the parameters within which a person is immune from paternalistic intervention" (Christman, 2004, p. 157). Clarifying the value of autonomous deliberating and choosing clarifies what, precisely, makes usurping an agent's (viz., the paternalized party's) autonomous decision-making process objectionable insofar as this paternalistic act commits an act of devaluation.

Understanding the value of autonomous deliberating and choosing clarifies what it is that paternalism devalues. At first gloss, this issue might strike us as independent from how autonomy is constituted or ought to be understood as such. Regardless of whether autonomy is *constitutively relational, externalist, and perfectionist*[3] or *procedural, internally constitutive, and causally affected*,[4] the shared thorough-going assumption is that autonomous choices, no matter how socially or causally diffuse, are valuable. What is unique about Christine Korsgaard's Kantian formulation is that it takes the personal good of autonomous choosing — i.e., the content that makes autonomous choosing a good — as of a piece with the constitution of such choices. Korsgaard's substantive view argues that there is a particular content to our beliefs, i.e., a relationship to the world, from which they enjoy their value-laden status. Following Korsgaard, when agents act, they constitute or affirm a practical identity

[1] Kant's works are cited by volume and page number in the Akademie edition, with the exception of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, which is cited in the customary fashion: the page number in the 1781 edition (A) followed by the page number in the 1787 edition (B). English translations follow translations from the Cambridge Editions. I abbreviate Kant's works as follows:

KrV: *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781/1787)
V-Mo/Collins: *Moral Philosophy: Collins's Lecture Notes* (1784–1785)
V-NR/Feyerabend: *Natural Right Course Lectures Notes by Feyerabend* (1784)
G: *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785)
KpU: *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788)
MM: *The Metaphysics of Morals* (1797)

[2] Dworkin underscores that paternalistic interference is "justified by reasons referring exclusively to the welfare, good, happiness, needs, interests or values of the person being coerced" (Dworkin, 1972, p. 65).

[3] For an overview of this set of concepts concerning autonomy, which are generally associated with one another, see O'Neil (2002, pp. 73–95); Westlund (2009).

[4] For an overview of this set of concepts concerning autonomy, which are generally associated with one another, see Christman (2014); Mackenzie (2008).

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while also creating it in the acting. In locating the value of autonomy and autonomous choosing, Immanuel Kant famously tethers it to our inherent status as free, rational animals. Freedom, for Kant, is objectively valuable, serving as the nexus of his moral philosophy and his theory of autonomy. Rendering autonomy along a Kantian register, Korsgaard's essays in the *Sources of Normativity* (Korsgaard, 1996b) collectively argue that an agent's value-conferring status is coeval to their being a rational animal, such that rationality begets, or confers, value on the cares projects that we take up. According to Korsgaard's broader conception of our valuing activity, it is not freedom in itself that we universally value but the practical identity of being a potential citizen in a kingdom of ends that generates obligations. For Korsgaard, the (subjective) value that we place on specific personal choices — taken as goals or ends — involves *committing* to them, or forming a care, which itself depends on the value-conferring status of the valuer or agent. In other words, personal autonomy implies the inherent value of the agent's autonomous choices.

Commentators like Andrea Sangiovanni, Paul Guyer, and Rae Langton highlight possible issues in Korsgaard's commitment-based conception of autonomous choosing. According to Sangiovanni's criticism, the reasons we have for affirming that which is good are distinct from our metaethical commitments concerning what our valuing consists in. Following Sangiovanni's rejoinder, we ought not run together the grounds for valuation with the complicit endorsement *expressed* by acts of value-based judging and acting. In short, Sangiovanni argues that Korsgaard's conception of autonomy begs the question of *why* rationality is valuable (Sangiovanni, 2017, pp. 36–41). Guyer (2000) offers an alternative reading of Kantian autonomy, poised contra Korsgaard. Guyer does not advert to reflective endorsement to identify the value of autonomy; providing textual evidence that Kant more or less always sustained a version of this view (from his pre-Critical through to his Critical period), Guyer argues that freedom functions as a primitive (Guyer, 2007, p. 41, p. 164).[5] He argues that, *pace* Korsgaard, we cannot arrive at an objective value from a commitment; according to Guyer, if we follow Korsgaard, we will onboard positions the likes of *one should do this x because one has to do this x to be an agent/rational*, which raises the question of why one should care about being an agent/rational. Accordingly, at pains of an infinite regress, the Korsgaardian will have to appeal to the objective value of rationality, the objective value of being an agent, or the objective value of not performing contradictions; all of these options retrofit objective value as an (ontological) primitive, Guyer argues. Relatedly, Langton's intervention draws on a latent tension in Korsgaard's notion of the "good will" and its putatively independent value, where the possibility of instrumental value does not rely on the subsistence of a valu*er* (Langton, 2007).

This article considers Sangiovanni, Guyer, and Langton's objections to Korsgaard's conception of the objective value of autonomy; in light of these objections, it proffers a

[5] Guyer makes a related argument in *Kant's Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*:

> [. . .] what Kant means by autonomy is nothing less than that condition in which human beings both individually and collectively can preserve and promote their freedom of choice and action to the greatest extent possible, that this is in his view the most fundamental value of human beings, and that adherence to the norms expressed by these formulas is in fact the means of realizing the goal of autonomy so understood. (Guyer, 2007, p. 11)

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Korsgaardian framework concerning the value of autonomous choosing that remains insulated from these critical rejoinders. Section 2 of this article reconstructs Korsgaard's view. Section 3 then outlines Sangiovanni's response and Guyer's argument of freedom as a primitive. Section 4 then adverts to Langton's criticisms and reconstructs Korsgaard's framework while avoiding these objections, amending Korsgaard's conception of autonomy such that it amounts to a weak substantive, relational view.

2. Korsgaard's Theory of Autonomous Action

One of the ways that the wrong-making features of paternalism has been understood is as an intercession that disrupts one's ability to rationally reason and will their reasons into action — i.e., to choose. As Sarah Conly puts it, paternalism "comes between me and my plans for myself" (Conly, 2013, p. 77). This comports with the Kantian argument that the possibility of the moral law rests on the coeval possibility of our self-determining ends that are "given by reason alone" and "must be equally valid for all rational beings" (Kant, G, 4:427–428). Such self-determined ends, and in turn the basis for the moral law, are opposed to ends that are grounded in "matter," i.e., in our sensible, empirical, contingent nature (Kant, KrV, A823/B851). Kant's description of self-determined ends is in keeping with his pursuit in the *Groundwork* of searching for what is good in itself, or unconditionally good, as opposed to what is situationally good; if something is to ground our morality and exhibit a normative quality, it cannot be contingent but must be unconditionally valuable and intrinsically good. It must hold for all rational beings. For Kant, that which is good in itself is the good will, which is what motivates our ends-directed actions/decisions and grounds the intentions of such actions/decisions.

In Kant's pursuit to identify an end that is valuable in itself with that which is "unconditioned" — meaning non-etiologically conceptualized — he arrives at a grounding in a law that we give to ourselves, which is the source of normativity: the "supreme principle of pure practical reason" (Kant, KrV, A308/B365).[6] This source of normativity's existence "has in itself an absolute worth" and is autonomous, conferred from within (rather than from without, i.e., heteronomously) and licenses the good will; Kant argues that this alone is "the ground of a possible categorical imperative" (Kant, G, 4:428). For Kant, what we discover to be such an objectively valid end, with unconditioned worth in itself — i.e., with absolute worth — is in keeping with our

[6] In the second *Critique*, Kant writes that:

> But instead of the deduction of the supreme principle of pure practical reason — that is, the explanation of the possibility of such a cognition a priori — nothing more could be adduced than that, if one had insight into the possibility of freedom of an efficient cause, one would also have insight into not merely the possibility but even the necessity of the moral law as the supreme practical law of rational beings, to whom one attributes freedom of the causality of their will; for, the two concepts are so inseparably connected that one could even define practical freedom through independence of the will from anything other than the moral law alone. (Kant, KpU, 5:93–94)

For a further discussion of the unconditioned as it relates to the supreme principle, see Willaschek (2018, pp. 18–19). Also see Kant (KrV, A308/B365-A309/B366, A399/B527).

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rational nature and good will. Following Kant, such a conception of autonomy grounds claims about the fundamental status of systems that enable people to make choices based on their own ends. We possess a capacity for self-legislating maxims of action qua reasoning; this is, for Kant, part and parcel of our characteristic "humanity," which he describes as the:

> [. . .] principle of innate freedom [that] already involves the following authorizations, which are not really distinct from it [. . .]: innate equality, that is, independence from being bound by others to more than one can in turn bind them; hence a man's quality of being *his own master* (*sui iuris*), as well as being a man *beyond reproach* (*iusti*), since before he performs any act affecting rights he has done no wrong to anyone; and finally, his being authorized to do to others anything that does not in itself diminish what is theirs, so long as they do not want to accept it. (Kant, MM, 6:238)

Kant highlights this "[r]ight of humanity in our own person" which underlies "any rights to things and any rights against persons" (Kant, MM, 6:276). This notion of humanity relates to autonomy in the same sense as dignity, i.e., as a grounding relation.[7]

Following one reading of Kant, most prominently outlined by Korsgaard, autonomy speaks to identity qua rational agency, or rational willing. According to Korsgaard, "[p]ractical reasons that can only be found in the perspective of rational agents as such or human beings as such are 'objective' if we have no choice but to occupy those perspectives" (Korsgaard, 1996b, p. 246). In Korsgaard's formulation, our autonomy is the source of obligations, meaning that we are free agents who create moral laws for ourselves (viz., we are self-legislating). Furthermore, we have moral obligations, meaning we have obligations to humanity and have to respect humanity as ends in themselves.

For Korsgaard, our taking up intentional, autonomous actions implicitly endorses "the motives incorporated into our purposes as *reasons* for future actions in similar circumstances," wherein this "Kantian Principle of Action" amounts to the edict that "voluntary action entails 'commitment' to a practical reason" (Davenport, 2007,

[7] Caranti explicitly responds to Sangiovanni, who argues that dignity is missing from Kant's "Doctrine of Right" and the entirety of Kant's political and legal philosophy precisely because Kant realized that dignity limits how we can treat ourselves and others only in the interests of morality and not in the interests of right:

> As an example, Sangiovanni cites the familiar example of lying. Kant thinks that lying "annihilates his [a human being's] dignity" (*MS* 6: 429) but entails no infringement of right. It would appear to follow that dignity concerns how we should treat each other morally, not the way right prescribes that we treat our external relations [. . . .]
>
> [T]he example of lying does not show that dignity is relevant only in the realm of ethics. *Pace* Sangiovanni, it merely shows that it is relevant in circumstances that are not the business of right. This is perfectly compatible with the possibility that dignity is relevant for both right and ethics. Human dignity may be the ground of all ethical precepts *and* of all juridical precepts, even if the two sets do not coincide. In fact, on our reading dignity rests on autonomy which is the ground of both all moral duties and of our innate right to external freedom. (Caranti, 2017, pp. 38–39)

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p. 256). Although such motives are understood to be committed to values that exist and can be justified or evaluated independently from the act,[8] our personal autonomy (asserted via cares and ground projects) is *expressed* by our intentions, which are informed by a set of consistent reasons. Korsgaard, following Kant, takes our capacity for reasons-responsiveness to be subtended by a reflective *a priori* nature in keeping with our autonomous status. Our related capacity for consciousness allows us to distance ourselves from *what* we are occurently believing or thinking and reflect on them, scrutinizing our behaviour in view of reasons; according to Korsgaard, this is what it means to have a reflective mind. A free will or free mind is that which reflectively scrutinizes the criteria it sets itself. This self-legislating amounts to being autonomous, contradistinguished to heteronomous constraint, or the imposition of laws from outside of ourselves. In determining ourselves, we become our own authority, self-legislating standards of successes for what it means for a reason to count as a *good* reason for seeking out and executing an act.

Korsgaard herself describes her approach as "*procedural* moral realism" — the view that "there are answers to moral questions [. . . .] that there are right and wrong ways to answer them" — and contrasts this to "*substantive* moral realism"; she writes that, in keeping with Rawlsian constructivism:

> [. . .] procedural realism does not require the existence of intrinsically normative entities, either for morality or for any other kind of normative claim. It is consistent with the view that moral conclusions are the dictates of practical reason, or the projections of human sentiments, or the results of some constructive procedure like the argument from John Rawls's original position. As long as there is some correct or best procedure for answering moral questions, there is some way of applying the concepts of the right and the good. And as long as there is some way of applying the concepts of the right and the good, we will have moral and more generally normative truth. Statements implying moral concepts will be true when those concepts are applied correctly. (Korsgaard, 1996b, p. 35)[9]

The basic thesis of Korsgaard's approach is that the binding nature of practical and thus moral principles can be explained by the structure of action. Specifically, she argues that moral principles are constitutive for the well-ordered unity of the actor and therefore enable accountable action. Korsgaard assumes that every action implies the unconditional ability to appreciate one's own capacity to act (i.e., one's own rational nature), and that all actors are obliged to appreciate the capacity to act in all other actors because they share or have in common this rational nature. Korsgaard draws on the ideal image of the rational actor where an action that is carried out is a result of a rationally determined capacity to act and taken to be fully accountable. It is a relational view of the value of autonomy insofar as,

[8] This argument is arguably implicit in Korsgaard (2009, p. 101).

[9] Also see Korsgaard (2003). The term "constitutive" is similarly used in Enoch (2006). In addition, Korsgaard is sometimes referred to as a representative of "autonomist internalism"; see Silverstein (2008, p. 131).

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> [. . .] if we regard our actions as rational, we must regard our ends as good; if so, we accord to ourselves a power of conferring goodness on the objects of our choice, and we must accord the same power — and so the same intrinsic worth — to others. (Langton, 2007, p. 175)

Korsgaard's theory seeks to avoid a number of problems that have historically freighted moral realism. One of these is that moral realism cannot explain the phenomenon of moral motivation since it does not follow from the mere assumption of the existence of moral facts that these facts have any binding force on actors (Korsgaard, 1996b, p. 39). Her framework thus attempts to explain the binding nature of practical principles (i.e., the *normative question*) wherein any pursued action or purpose implies the unconditional ability to evaluate one's own capacity to act.[10] Insofar as she is an internalist, for Korsgaard, the reasons for action have to "be capable of motivating rational persons" (Korsgaard, 1986, p. 11). However, Korsgaard's internalism is not a thorough-going constitutive internalism where the influence of reasons are endowed with objective content; as Matthew Silverstein notes, in Korsgaard's framework, "rational" modifies "persons," such that "it is not merely the *influence* reasons exert that must be rational in nature; it is also the *agents* themselves" (Silverstein, 2008, p. 29).[11] While reasons need not always motivate us, "rational considerations succeed in motivating us insofar as we are rational" (Korsgaard, 1986, p. 15).

Of central importance in Korsgaard's theory of practical obligation is the undergirding teleological structure of action. According to Korsgaard, the description of a rational action is teleological and "found in the basic form of a Kantian maxim," i.e., "I will do act-A in order to promote end-E" (Korsgaard, 2009, p. 11).[12] This conception of action as the pursuit of the realization of a valued purpose is widespread in everyday life, according to Korsgaard. We act by first setting out a purpose for ourselves and then striving to pursue it because we associate a value with this purpose and, insofar as we wish for it to transpire, we value its realization. As far as the teleological explanation of action is concerned, the objective value of our purposes is unimportant; what matters is that actors value the purposes that they pursue, for whatever reason. Although in her earlier work, Korsgaard agrees with Kant that human action is primarily characterized by the tendency to understand one's own needs as a superior motivation for action or as reasons for action, the teleological model of action that she expounds in *Self-Constitution* and *The Sources of Normativity* does not require the definition of the concept of action. Instead, in these texts, Korsgaard homes in on how, when acting, our choices are grounded in purposive reasoning. Like Kant, Korsgaard attributes free rational action to the autonomy of actors.

Korsgaard's framework makes a number of assumptions, each related to what actions are possible, characterizing them in predominantly structural terms. She assumes that we are autonomous actors and that rational actions exist, that actions

[10] See Korsgaard (2009, p. 7). C.f. Cohen (1996); Geuss (1996); Nagel (1996); Williams (1996).
[11] C.f. Williams (1981, p. 107).
[12] C.f. Seeman (2016).

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consists in reflective choice and the pursuit of valued ends, and that our actions are primarily concerned with our own well-being (Bambauer, 2018, pp. 214–215). According to Korsgaard, although, at first gloss, we might appear to act based on (and, in fact, prioritize) our prudential impulses — self-interestedly maximizing our desire-satisfaction and happiness[13] — our rational nature also implicates such impulses in reflective assessment. Every action is thus the result of a coeval practical act of affirmation. Actions cannot be explained without a "reflective endorsement" expressed by the person acting (Korsgaard, 1996b, p. 65). Insofar as actors are autonomous, Korsgaard assumes that the laws that actors give themselves can only be self-binding if they recognize themselves as authoritative — i.e., as the foundation of the establishment of the maxims that they carry out. Otherwise, the concept of self-legislation would be practically ineffective as the legislative acts could have no actual binding force for the addressee of the respective laws.[14]

Korsgaard draws out the implicit dependence of the teleology of action, prudential or otherwise, on the ability for an actor to appreciate their capacity to act. If the hypothetical imperative implies that I must take means-M in order to pursue end-E, then this imperative can only have direct practical relevance for me insofar as my purposes are normative for me. My purposes are only normative for me if I regard my decisions or the practical norms I have chosen as authoritative for me, because these norms underlie my choice of purpose. Korsgaard's conception of the categorical imperative denotes precisely this self-referential authority and, she argues, the binding force of every hypothetical imperative depends on the authority of such purpose-setting; in turn, the hypothetical imperative can only function as an imperative if it can be reconstructed from the perspective of the categorical imperative, i.e., the self-determining and self-affirming actor (Korsgaard, 1996b, p. 39, pp. 98–100).

Korsgaard appeals to the criteria of explanatory and normative adequacy as a measure for assessing a moral theory. For Korsgaard, normative adequacy ought to consist in an explanation of the function of moral principles that will not undermine the motivational force of morality. Rather, this explanation reinforces it. Korsgaard's interpretation of the formula of humanity begins with a first-person perspective where an action that takes appropriate account of one's own rational nature is not about something metaphysically or logically true, but about something being practically good, without which actions and thus ultimately the actor themselves would not be possible — at least not in the autonomous sense, where one chooses properly for themselves. Korsgaard's interpretation of the "formula of humanity" is about something being practically good (Korsgaard, 1996b, pp. 122–125). It serves as one of Korsgaard's preconditions for answering the *normative question* where the actor not only wants to act rationally (consistently) but will affirm their own status as an actor and therefore also affirm and strive for that which makes their being an actor possible. For Korsgaard, Kant's "formula of humanity" does not function as a truth *about* human beings but is as an expression of what characterizes us as human beings; as she writes:

[13] See Korsgaard (2009, pp. 52–53).

[14] On the problem of self-referential practical authority, see Cohen (1996, p. 169).

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> [. . .] human consciousness has a reflective structure that sets us normative problems. It is because of this that we require reasons for action, a conception of the right and the good. To act from such a conception is in turn to have a practical conception of your identity, a conception under which you value yourself and find your life to be worth living and your actions to be worth undertaking. That conception is normative for you and in certain cases it can obligate you, for if you do not allow yourself to be governed by any conception of your identity then you will have no reason to act and to live. So a human being is an animal who needs a practical conception of her own identity, a conception of who she is which is normative for her.
>
> [. . . .] [Y]our need to have a normative conception of yourself comes from your human identity, you can query the importance of that identity. Your humanity requires you to conform to some of your practical identities, and you can question this requirement as you do any other. Does it really matter whether we act as our humanity requires, whether we find some ways of identifying ourselves and stand by them? But in this case you have no option but to say yes. Since you are human you *must* take something to be normative, that is, some conception of practical identity must be normative for you. If you had no normative conception of your identity, you could have no reasons for action, and because your consciousness is reflective, you could then not act at all. Since you cannot act without reasons and your humanity is the source of your reasons, you must value your own humanity if you are to act at all. (Korsgaard, 1996b, pp. 122–123)

Korsgaard's conception of autonomous teleological action amounts to an action-theoretical reformulation of the hypothetical and categorical imperatives. From the perspective of the actor, it demonstrates how applying principles to ourselves amounts to a kind of instrumental rationality based on an ends-directed relationship. Korsgaard underscores the teleological-first-person starting point and its associated implications concerning the relationship between purpose-setting, purpose-pursuing, and appreciating one's ability to act autonomously.

As this teleological conception should now make clear, Korsgaard takes autonomy to require certain psychological properties. However, these psychological implications do not entail that one must consciously and explicitly ascribe absolute value to oneself as an actor in order to be able to act autonomously. Rather, following Korsgaard, if actors do not conceive of their own agency as necessarily authoritative, their pursuit of purpose-realization via autonomous actions will remain inexplicable. Korsgaard refers to the logical form inherent in purposeful action and not to an individual's particular mental conscious concerning specific purposes and values. Accordingly, agents are autonomous when they are, in addition to being rational, acting voluntarily and authentically. Acting authentically involves their reasoning in a way that is adequately informed and self-ascribes action-plans, meaning one's purposes and choices are ascribed to themselves. In addition to not being unduly influenced by outside agents/forces (i.e., forced), one must have the capacity to endorse their choices and aims in a self-reflective mode. One makes the choices they want to make based on aims they self-ascribe. But the question of how these autonomous choices become value-laden is an altogether distinct matter.

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3. Sangiovanni's and Guyer's Objections

Sangiovanni objects to Korsgaard's model, highlighting this very issue of how autonomous choices become value-laden. Sangiovanni formulates an argument poised against the strategy pursued by what he calls "Regress" (i.e., unrestricted) Kantians like Korsgaard and Alan Gewirth (Sangiovanni, 2017, p. 36).[15] First, however, Sangiovanni outlines two strands of neo-Kantian thought:

> The Regress reading holds that rational beings are essentially evaluative beings, and our capacity for valuing things necessarily presupposes that we, *qua* valuers, must possess a different kind of value from everything else in the world [. . .] The Address reading, on the other hand, eschews the appeal to a special kind of value presupposed by our rational choice. Instead, it holds that our valuing, justifying, moralizing activity necessarily presupposes the equal and reciprocal *authority* of those whom we address through that activity. (Sangiovanni, 2017, p. 36)

For Sangiovanni, the "Address" Kantians highlight the normative warrant of giving and asking for (practical) reasons in communicative interpersonal scenarios, i.e., "mutual address or mutual justification" (Sangiovanni, 2017, p. 15). The "Regress" Kantian, however, erroneously presupposes the value of humanity insofar as we value anything at all (Sangiovanni, 2017, p. 36). In his argument against Korsgaard, Sangiovanni homes in on Korsgaard's conferral of value on acts, proposals, or plans that we reflectively endorse. According to Sangiovanni, Korsgaard argues that these intentional acts grant value as a "nonrelational, intrinsic property" where "all valuing expresses an attitude of reflective endorsement from a particular perspective" such that its "value must be a *product* of our reflective endorsement" (Sangiovanni, 2017, p. 40). Here, Sangiovanni argues that Korsgaard's argument does not succeed, for "[f]rom 'valuing consists in an expression of reflective endorsement,' we cannot get: 'therefore, we must presuppose that reflective endorsement (let alone the capacity for such reflective endorsement) is valuable'" (Sangiovanni, 2017, p. 41).

Sangiovanni raises two specific concerns regarding Korsgaard's project. The first is that Korsgaard runs together a higher-order, "*metaethical*" conception about the ontological commitment supplied by value judgements with "*first-order ethical* statement[s] about what makes something good" (Sangiovanni, 2017, p. 40). Sangiovanni argues that Korsgaard's conception of our capacity for rational choice,

[15] For his full argument against "Regress" Kants, see Sangiovanni (2017, pp. 36–37, pp. 42–50). In addition to Korsgaard and Gewirth, one might also place Mulholland in this camp of Regress Kantians; consider Mulholland on the problem of value:

> [. . .] a rational being is related to moral values of any sort (good and evil) [. . .] not as a means but as the subject that produces those values by its relation to the law of its willing. [. . . .] the rational being is the ground of the categorical imperative, not through its being an end of moral (or nonmoral) value, but through its autonomously producing the moral law. (Mulholland, 1990, pp. 108–110)

Consideration of rebuttals against Sangiovanni's arguments contra what he calls "Address" (i.e., restricted) Kantians, such as those proffered by Forst (2023) and Vatter (2022, pp. 237–238), are beyond the scope of this article.

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which in Korsgaard's formulation serves as the source of value when formulating ends-directed intentional actions, inherits the aforementioned equivocation; that is, Korsgaard runs together valuing as an activity that "*consists in* rational choice (i.e., rationally governed reflective endorsement)" with the *justification* of rational activity (Sangiovanni, 2017, p. 41). Second, Sangiovanni argues that our taking valuing to consist in rationally choosing something good by way of reflectively endorsing that activity does not establish "that we must take rational choice to *make* any particular end good" (Sangiovanni, 2017, p. 41). The crux of Sangiovanni's argument is that Korsgaard's formulation foregoes "what makes things valuable" (Sangiovanni, 2017, p. 41).[16]

Sangiovanni argues that the reasons we have for affirming that which is good are distinct from our metaethical commitments to what our valuing consists in. Accordingly, we ought not run together the grounds for valuation with the complicit endorsement *expressed* by acts of value-based judging and acting. According to Sangiovanni, as it concerns the value of autonomous agents, we ought not look towards that which is inherent and reflexively endorsed when we take up specific "cares and concerns" (Sangiovanni, 2017, p. 45). Although the full breadth of Sangiovanni's alternative is beyond the scope of this article, his response indicates why we might want to consider the objective value of what *conditions* an autonomous action independently of the action if we wish to argue that the autonomous action is value-laden (and hence ought not to be paternalistically interceded).

Others, like Guyer, have also espied this equivocation in Korsgaard. While Korsgaard conceives of our practical identity, which is affirmed in our taking something to be normative for us, as intrinsically good/valuable (thereby bridging moral identity with value), Guyer adverts to the idea that freedom in itself has a universal, primitive value. This is distinct from Korsgaard, for whom it is not freedom in itself that we all value but the practical identity of being a potential citizen (in a kingdom of ends) that generates obligations, which can be identified with via authoritative self-ascription. It might be argued that Korsgaard, herself, is aware of this issue and locates "the source of all conditional values in the rational agent's capacity to *create values*" (Guyer, 2000, p. 150). This then halts the possible infinite regress that consists in objects and cares that are merely of conditional value by supposing that rational choosing *itself* is what confers value on the objects/cares chosen. However, for Guyer there is an error here insofar as:

> The problem with this proposal, however, is that although it may put a stop to the alleged infinite regress of merely conditional value, it does not appear to place any

[16] Langton also points this out, citing the Euthyphro problem in light of Korsgaard's dilemma:

> It is as if the gods were to congratulate themselves: we are *ourselves* good because our saying so, our loving so, is what makes things good. How plausible would that sort of self-congratulation be? Not very. We have no more antecedent reason to expect the creators of goodness to be good than to expect painters of the blue to be blue, or the creators of babies to be babies. In general we don't think the source of something valuable must itself be valuable. War can produce good poets, chicken manure can produce good roses, and in general the sources of good things can be bad. (Langton, 2007, pp. 175–176)

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> particular *constraint* on the creative value setting of the agent, that is, to explain why any such agent should set values only in a way that is compatible with other agents' creation of values, unless it does so by begging the question, that is, precisely by using an already *moral* conception of rational agency and thus simply assuming that a rational agent is one who adheres to the moral law of universalizability and so will not create any nonuniversalizable assignment of values. Without that assumption, it is not clear why any agent should respect the ends of any other agent in creating his own values *ex nihilo*. But that restriction is what the idea of rational agency as an end in itself is supposed to explain, not assume. (Guyer 2000, p. 151)

This issue, concerning the restriction of values, is again related to the conflation of metaethical commitments with first-order judgements about the importance about a particular act or kind of action. Guyer's solution is to read Kant as conceiving of our capacity to set and pursue autonomous ends as a "fundamental manifestation of our freedom," where this manifestation itself "sees freedom itself as possessing absolute value" (Guyer 2000, p. 151).[17] Adhering to the categorical imperative is, for Guyer, but a preservation of freedom's exercise and existence. Insofar as nothing that is value-neutral can evince or produce value *ex nihilo,* one must locate intrinsic value, or the unconditional, primitive good, as a necessary end in itself.

However, much like the artist painting a canvas blue need not, themselves, be blue, it is not the case that what objectively conditions value-conferring activity need, itself, be valuable. Accordingly, in navigating the problem of equivocation, we should take note of the following: something might be valuable *in itself* or something *about the kind of activity* at hand might be valuable. In the latter case, this kind of activity would be *condition-conferring* (as in the example of the painter, with painting being the kind of activity that confers a condition; this is opposed to, for instance, stretching, tanning, fixing a car, or myriad other activities that might very well be valuable in themselves but are not condition-conferring).[18]

It appears that pursuing an alternate model — one that does not fall into the equivocation that Sangiovanni has set up but also does not result in an infinite regress — will require discerning the relation of fit between an intentional, autonomous, value-laden action and the structures that countenance fully embraced autonomous motives and *expresses* them. Let us call this the dual hunt for: i) the *source-conditions of autonomy*; and ii) the *structural aspect of autonomy*. Contra Sangiovanni, one can reconstruct Korsgaard's framework and delineate an interacting set of autonomous abilities by attending to the socialization of autonomous cares projects and

[17] Guyer (2000, p. 240) draws our attention to passages such as the following:

> That something must exist as an end in itself and that not everything can exist merely as means is as necessary in the system of ends as *ens a se* {a being in itself} is in the series of efficient causes. A thing that is an end in itself is *bonum a se* {a good in itself}. What can be considered merely as a means has value merely as a means when it is used as such. Now for this there must be a being that is an end in itself. One thing in nature is a means for another; that continues on and on and it is necessary in the end to think of a thing that is itself an end, otherwise the series would have no end. (Kant, V-NR/Feyerabend, 27:1321)

[18] Cf. Korsgaard (2009, pp. 122–123), which more generally discusses how value is relational.

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long-term commitments. We are, after all, not a simple, static bundle of cares and commitments. This interacting set of abilities and powers, it can be argued, is distinctive in kind, presupposing the process of setting ends, forming long-term projects, and altering cares in response to the valuable features of the world, certain activities, or other agents. But before doing so, one must understand how value enters the picture at the level of the individual and their *source-conditions*, which prefigures the socialization of value.

4. A Korsgaardian Reconstruction in Light of Langton on Valuing

Langton, in her "Objective and Unconditioned Value" (Langton, 2007), amends Korsgaard's conception of valuing in a way that helpfully brings out the *source-conditions of autonomy*. In this section, I will follow Langton's amendment and then utilize it to reconstruct Korsgaard's theory of autonomy by delineating the *structural aspects of autonomy*.

There is an important distinction between intrinsic value, the value that something has in itself, and extrinsic value, or the value something has from another source. As Langton notes:

> something might be extrinsically good, yet valued as an end; indeed its (extrinsic) goodness may have its source in the very fact that it is valued as an end. Such goodness would be objective, valued as an end, but not [. . .] intrinsic. (Langton, 2007, p. 161)

When we value something for the effects it has, we are beholden to instrumental value. One can also value something due to its associations, such as when a fiancée values their engagement ring. This is not due to an end (as one might value the ring well after they are married), nor does it amount to valuing the ring intrinsically (for what one values about the ring is, presumably, not simply due to its material worth). Langton also highlights that although Korsgaard "says that the notion of instrumental goodness does not concern the way things have value, but only the way we value things," there are

> [s]omething[s] [that] might have instrumental value without anyone ever valuing it instrumentally: [e.g.,] penicillin, in the millennia before the discovery of its powers [. . .] There is room for instrumental goodness not only in the way we value things, but also in the way things have value. (Langton, 2007, p. 163)

Langton carves a "two-way distinction" between:

1) The way that "things have value," which includes:
   a. "*intrinsic value*" ("[the] value a thing has in itself"),
   b. "*extrinsic value*" ("[the] value a thing has from another source"), and
   c. "*instrumental value*" ("[the] value a thing has from its effects").

2) The "ways that we value things," which includes
   a. "*intrinsically* [*valuing*]" (valuing for something's "own sake");
   b. "*extrinsically* [*valuing*]" (valuing "for the sake of something else");

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> c. "[*valuing*] *instrumentally*" (valuing "for the sake of [. . .] [something's] effects"). (Langton, 2007, p. 164 emphases added)

In the *Groundwork*, for instance, Kant takes the "good will" to have unconditioned, or intrinsic, value; and, relatedly, Kant writes that autonomy has "an unconditional, incomparable worth" (Kant, G, 4:436). This comports with the rational being, understood as an end in itself. The conditioned, extrinsic value of, for example, "happiness," Langton remarks, "bears on the unconditioned, intrinsic value of the good will" as "[t]he ability of choosers to confer value on their choices — the ability of agents to be value-conferrers — is, according to Korsgaard's Kant, the very source of the intrinsic value of the good will, and accordingly of persons" (Langton, 2007, p. 168). Our intrinsic value, according to this picture, is due to our valuing things as ends, which means bestowing them with extrinsic value. Korsgaard makes this facet of her Kantian framework apparent in passages like the following:

> If we regard our actions as rational, we must regard our ends as good; if so, we accord to ourselves a power of conferring goodness on the objects of our choice, and we must accord the same power — and so the same intrinsic worth — to others. (Korsgaard, 1983, p. 183)

> Kant saw that we take things to be important because they are important to us — and he concluded that we must therefore take ourselves to be important. (Korsgaard, 1996b, p. 122)

Accordingly, we are intrinsic valuers because we choose ends for ourselves. This is how we confer value, making autonomous choices that bequeath extrinsic value on those objects of choice. The autonomous chooser's value is in their ability/power to confer extrinsic value.

However, from the unconditioned and intrinsic value of the good will, how does one get to its objectivity? What is the direction of fit, so to speak? According to Guyer, as recounted, the correct relation is one where what is extrinsically valuable is ultimately objectively valuable and intrinsic, unconditioned goodness therein independent of our valuing activity. Ultimately, for Guyer, we do not confer objective values but discover them.[19]

For Korsgaard, however, that which is extrinsically valuable is conferred values: it is through the exercise of our powers of conferring that such goods become objectively valuable. Goods that have value are such because they are valued as ends (i.e., chosen by a good will). Unlike Guyer, it is not the case that the good will chooses such values as ends

[19] And indeed, it seems that this is Kant's answer, too, at least in passages such as the following:

> [. . .] it is not *because the* [moral] *law interests* us that it has validity for us [. . .] instead, the law interests [us] because it is valid for us as human beings, since it arose from our will as intelligence and so from our proper self. (Kant, G, 4:461)

> It is true that any moral law is an order, and they may be commands of the divine will, but they do not flow from such a command. God has commanded it because it is a moral law, and His will coincides with the moral law. (Kant, V-Mo/Collins, 27:277)

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because they are good in themselves. Guyer's position, at pains to avoid an infinite regress, hews closer to the position that Korsgaard ascribes to W. D. Ross and G. E. Moore, where some goods have value "independent of the interest that people take in them or the desires that people have for them" (Korsgaard, 1983, p. 173). For Korsgaard, however, "the idea of extrinsically valuable ends whose value comes from the interest that people take in them" (Korsgaard, 1983, p. 173) means that goods are conferred with extrinsic value due to our cares projects taking them up as (teleological) ends.

The consequence of Korsgaard's framework is that it permits cases such as the following: a despondent woman, suffering from persistent depression disorder, values nothing. She regards her life as having no value nor does she regard anything in life as valuable. Because her good will does not confer value on anything, including herself, there is nothing that strikes her as subjectively valuable. In turn, there is nothing objectively valuable for her. If it were the case that all of society were made up of such beings who did not exercise their value-conferring abilities, there would be truly no objective values in the world. Although an unlikely scenario, this speaks to how, following Korsgaard's framework, objective value grows out of subjective value-conferring of a socialized, relational sort.[20] Were it the case that all members of a society were made up of such despondent beings, there would genuinely be neither norms nor value in the world as, without valuing things, there are no values/norms. Korsgaard admits as much when she confronts the aforementioned requisite of a "direction of fit," remarking that: "there is a continuity between the value of humanity and the value of other things: they are all the result of our own acts of conferring value" (Korsgaard, 1998, p. 63).

Langton points out a difficulty here, as Korsgaard's view also implies that:

> It is because we value human beings as ends in themselves that they are ends in themselves. It is because human beings have conditioned, that is, conferred, value that they have unconditioned value. It is because human beings have extrinsic value that they have intrinsic value.
>
> Now this really *is* beginning to sound paradoxical. How can it be that I have intrinsic value, that I have extrinsic value? How could I have value that *doesn't* depend on something else, by having value that *does* depend on something else? (Langton, 2007, pp. 177–178)

In drawing our attention to a relational reframing (although she does not use the verbiage of relational autonomy), Langton suggests that the value conferred on autonomous selves will demonstrate itself to be an intrinsic value that depends on the relation of conferring/choosing something as an end. The relation is not extrinsic to the self since it develops out of the self and towards the self; its *result* is hence intrinsic and conditioned, not, as Korsgaard's formula implies, extrinsic. Value is taken to be simultaneously intrinsic and

[20] Relatedly, see Kant's discussion on G, 4:398–399, concerning the moral import of actions as consisting in duty. Here, Kant explicates the principle of moral import with his example of the sorrowful and self-absorbed philanthropist who distances themselves from their "insensibility" and acts from duty despite having no inclination to do so; Kant underscores the "genuine moral worth" and beneficence brought out from duty, of the philanthropist's action. This demonstrates how agent, such as the philanthropist, confers value through valuing and also illuminates that the ability to so value is independent from prudential desire-satisfaction. The relevance of Kant's example was kindly brought to my attention by an anonymous reviewer.

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relational due to its "involving relations *interior* to the thing," meaning that it is "conferred and intrinsic" (Langton, 2007, p. 179, p. 180). This amended framework evinces a hybrid sense of autonomy that is at once relational but internal; the despondent person does not violate a value in which they still believe, and thus does not violate their autonomy, if they feel themselves to be worthless and thus take their life.

Having, *vide* Langton, identified the *source-conditions of autonomy*, we can now construct the *structural aspect of autonomy* in this Korsgaard-inspired but Langton-amended relational framework. Turning now to the socialization of values, consider how, in *Self-Constitution*, Korsgaard identifies the necessity for act-ascriptions when she describes our unified constitution of ourselves as autonomous agents via deliberative action:

> When you deliberate in accordance with these principles, you pull yourself together and place yourself, so to speak, behind your movement, rendering it an action that can be ascribed to you as a whole.
>
> In fact, deliberative action by its very nature imposes unity on the soul. When you deliberate about what to do and then do it, what you are doing is organizing your appetite, reason, and spirit, into a unified system that yields an action that can be attributed to you as a person. Whatever else you are doing when you choose a deliberative action, you are also unifying yourself into a person. (Korsgaard, 2009, pp. 179–180)

Insofar as we are reflective creatures, we require reasons for acting. These reasons are not entirely determined by inclinations to act, this disparity reflecting the distinction between motivational strength and justification. Korsgaard, again on autonomous deliberation, makes this point when she writes:

> From a third-person point of view, outside of the deliberative standpoint, it may look as if what happens when someone makes a choice is that the strongest of his conflicting desires wins. But that isn't the way it is for you when you deliberate. When you deliberate, it is as if there were something over and above all of your desires, something which is you, and which chooses which desire to act on. This means that the principle or law by which you determine your actions is one that you regard as being expressive of yourself. (Korsgaard, 2009, p. 100)

This psychological premise speaks to our superintending our choices, bringing them into the domain of autonomous action. A human action is fully autonomously an intention under a description of its purpose only if the agent accepts the motives and beliefs that explain the ends and means of the action. This, as a psychological corollary, involves regarding the autonomous motives and autonomous beliefs as reasons for an action. Where Korsgaard dovetails i) personal autonomy via cares and grounds projects with ii) intentions informed by a consistent set of reasons — arguing that we at least *tacitly* endorse our motives when we act on them[21] — we can parse

[21] See Korsgaard (2009, pp. 93–94) for a description of an how an "intelligent" agent's (including an animal's) concept- and representation-formation of their environment, where their concurrent action is to some degree motivated or "guided" by this concept.

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them apart. In a given circumstance, a practical reason can serve as an autonomous choice if it refers to the intelligible values at stake in all similar circumstances; in turn, this strategy involves treating such reasons in light of previous autonomous reasons, coalescing them into universals/types even when reasons are specific in their content.[22] Accordingly, we can view our autonomous actions as thoroughly intentional only if we recognize the same reasons for them, in terms of values, in light of resembling circumstances. This facet of the process will resemble a hypothetical syllogism met with a generalization.[23] Those autonomous abilities that are taken to be authoritative — i.e., based on reasons — understand the same practical reasons/ethical goods/values to carry across circumstances that are similar to one another.[24] Acting autonomously and authoritatively is here taken to be a regulative, second-order good, that supervenes over a primary status-value — a right to self-rule that is non-derivative, original, or enjoys primitive authority. Thus, an autonomous action is entirely authoritatively governed only if the abilities through which we ultimately control (or rule) actions have original authority. This concedes that such *abilities* have inherent status-value.

Insofar as a life with first-personal meaning for an agent involves autonomously forming, acting, maintaining, and changing cares projects and commitments, it includes personal investments in social relationships and roles. Korsgaard delineates this substantive, relational conception of practical identity when she describes the notion of practical identity as universal and embedded in a community.[25] What makes

[22] Davenport (2007, pp. 90–102) indicates such a "concept of reasons" where intentional actions implicitly involve maxims and resemble a category.

[23] We find this in the following passage, where Korsgaard describes how:

> When I follow a hypothetical imperative, one part of me — say my will at one moment — governs another part of me — say at another moment — the part that is capable of being sidetracked or derailed by difficulty or dread or dullness. The reason I must follow hypothetical imperatives in general is that if I don't follow them, if I *always* allow myself to be derailed by difficulty or dread or dullness, then I never really *will* an end. The *desire* to pursue the end and the desires that draw me away from it each hold sway in their turn, but *my will* is never active. [. . .] It follows from this that when I will an end, I must *ipso facto* will that even on another occasion, even when I am tempted not to, I will stay on the track of that end. Otherwise it's like promising your lover you'll be faithful until someone else catches your eye: no real action has been taken. So when you will an end, the form of the act of your will is general: you will a kind of law for yourself, a law that applies not only now, but on other possible occasions. (Korsgaard, 1996b, pp. 230–231)

[24] How such kinds would be constructed is beyond the scope of this article but, presumably, the categories would serve as extensions that coordinate act-ascriptions under value-categories like *charitability*, *empathy*, *justice*, etc., by way of justification or motivation.

[25] See the following description, for example, where Korsgaard writes that:

> Once the communitarian sees himself this way, his particular ties and commitments will remain normative for him only if this more fundamental conception of his identity is one which he can see as normative as well. A further stretch of reflection requires a further stretch of endorsement. So he must endorse this new view of his identity. He is an animal that needs to live in community, and he now takes this to be a normative identity. He treats it as a source of reasons, for he argues that it matters that he gets what he needs. And this further stretch of endorsement is exactly what happens. Someone who is moved to urge the value of having particular ties and commitments has discovered that part of their normativity comes from the fact that human beings need to have them. He urges that our lives are meaningless without them. (Korsgaard, 1996b, p. 119)

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her view substantive is that there is particular content to beliefs, a relationship to the world (i.e., a *knowing that* vs. *knowing how*). The relational facet grows out of the fact that all human beings enjoy the need to develop a coherent conception of their practical identity, one that is relatively stable over time. It is worth quoting Korsgaard at length when she writes that:

> What is not contingent is that you must be governed by some conception of your practical identity. For unless you are committed to some conception of your practical identity, you will lose your grip on yourself as having any reason to do one thing rather than another — and with it, your grip on yourself as having any reason to live and act at all. But this reason for conforming to your particular practical identities is not a reason that springs from one of those particular practical identities. It is a reason that springs from your humanity itself, from your identity simply as a human being, a reflective animal who needs reasons to act and to live. And so it is a reason you have only if you treat your humanity as a practical, normative, form of identity, that is, if you value yourself as a human being.
>
> [. . .] our identity as moral beings — as people who value themselves as human beings — stands behind our more particular practical identities. It is because we are human that we must act in the light of practical conceptions of our identity, and this means that their importance is partly derived from the importance of being human. We must conform to them not merely for the reasons that caused us to adopt them in the first place, but because being human requires it. (Korsgaard, 1996b, p. 121)

In turn, all identify-defining autonomous cares projects and commitments are but (shared) reasons for acting. These reasons apply across different context across time. Endorsing reasons for acting across contexts and time reaffirms or evinces facets of my practical identity as authoritative.[26] Korsgaard treats "humanity itself," out of which one's identity as a human being "springs," as of a piece with agentive abilities to autonomously evaluate, reflect, and form intentions and plans, alongside more innate capacities for dispositions that shape one's practical identity over time. Endorsing reasons for autonomously choosing/acting are, in turn, based at least partially on one's practical identity. Valuing one's self as an original authoritative source of their practical identity thus becomes that which conditions endorsing practical reasons. In endorsing practical reasons that refer back to aspects of one's practical identity, one implicitly recognizes one's humanity as yielding some inherent status-value. Given Korsgaard's relational conception of humanity as a set of abilities that are shared in persons who require and have the potential to form distinctive practical identities, endorsing reasons for actions is consistent with recognition that the inherent status-value/authority of one's acts is in keeping with the humanity of all others, too.

[26] Naturally, not all endorsements will make or reaffirm facets of practical identity as authoritative insofar as some internalized reasons are subject to change one's practical identity. Hence, not all of them can refer to existing autonomous commitments and cares projects.

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What makes for objective values that are sustained across time and geography is the likeness in value experiences that agents autonomously undergo, which, per this amended Korsgaardian reconstruction, become shared at the level of intent-guided actions. Such intent-guided actions are mutually recognized by social, communal agents. That value experiences, alongside empirical beliefs, value judgements, natural desires, and emotions carry over to deliberation provides for intention-formation via decisions that, themselves, allow voluntary, intention-guided acts to count as properly autonomous. Such valuing experiences, which are but one of the basic capacities for agency and part of self-development over time — where the self/agent develops, engages, and uses their capacities by forming intentions, long-term commitments, and cares projects that result in specific acts in interaction with others — endow us with a psychological-teleological conception of relational autonomy. This is an autonomy that invokes the socialized recognition of objective value shared by agents in the world and can make descriptive sense out of instances of exclusionary value or actors who espouse no values at all, such as the despondent agent who takes their life without trespassing their values. That such a framework heralds all means-end rational, adult agents as autonomous — where values can be countenanced as objective in a society that shares values but similarly treat values as objective in light of exclusionary instances — is not at odds with the existence of forms of domination, disparity, and bigotry in the world; the latter would be understood as autonomy-compromising if they prevent the exercise of socially shared values.

5. Conclusion

This amended reconstruction of Korsgaard's account of autonomy suggests that we arrive at the value of autonomy through properly relative, interpersonal relationships.[27] To hold one another as autonomous and responsible places them in relationships of mutual reciprocity.[28] However, given that Korsgaard's account is committed to the value of the process of rational reflection (understood as a teleological, mental-psychological process), her view is also substantive, albeit in a weak sense. The substantive aspect of autonomy, which points to the internal cognitive-psychological processes of rational reflection, halts the infinite regress that Guyer highlights as a worry. The relational, social facet means that the valuing activity involved in autonomy grows out of value experiences in view of how practical identities and choices can become universal social categories within polities.[29]

[27] My reading can be readily compared to the weak substantive relational view for which Mackenzie (2008) argues.

[28] As Korsgaard observes:

> It may be perfectly reasonable for me to hold someone responsible for an attitude or an action, while at the same time acknowledging that it is just as reasonable for someone else not to hold the same person responsible for the very same attitude or action. (Korsgaard, 1996a, p. 199)

[29] In a discussion of Rawls' *A Theory of Justice*, Korsgaard herself approaches such a solution, outlining a framework of "[p]ure procedural justice [. . .] where the desirability of the outcome depends entirely on the carrying out of the procedures," wherein we can only arrive at an understanding of some substantive notion, such as justice, by applying a procedure — and, in particular, "the most ideal procedure" (Korsgaard, 2009, pp. 150–151). I owe this point of emphasis to an anonymous reviewer who kindly highlighted this parallel.

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