

# Kantian axiology and the dualism of practical reason

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## I Introduction

Whereas consequentialists rank states of affairs in terms of their axiological properties and then invoke maximising, optimising, or satisficing functions applied to the resulting evaluative orderings to provide an analysis or reduction of deontic notions, deontologists are not, in the first place, concerned with the states of affairs that are brought about but with the nature of the actions that agents perform, identifying various conditions that actions must satisfy as well as principles to which they must conform. The Kantian approach is a paradigm case of deontological ethics, providing a criterion of permissibility that actions (or, more precisely, maxims) must satisfy insofar as they must be in agreement with reason and hence be universalisable.

The deontological nature of the supreme principle of Kantian ethics has led many people to focus almost exclusively on issues about duty, universalisation, autonomy, and dignity when engaging with Kantian ethics, resulting in the unfortunate situation that value-based considerations have been largely ignored and that Kant has been criticised for supposedly failing to appreciate the importance of happiness. All of this has happened despite the fact that Kant's ethical theory does not restrict itself to duty but contains a well-developed account of value that plays a central role in the overall theory and that recognises the significance of happiness. After all, the *Groundwork* starts with the axiological claim that the only thing that is unconditionally good is the good will. Likewise, the highest good, which is meant to represent the culmination of Kant's ethical system, is an axiological notion that includes happiness.

This paper provides an account of the Kantian theory of value, showing how the fundamentally heterogeneous values of morality and prudence can be integrated into a complete ordering by appealing to the conditionality of the value

of happiness, which allows us to explain how the claims of prudence can be silenced by the claims of morality, thereby solving the Sidgwickian problem of the dualism of practical reason.<sup>1</sup>

## 2 Kantian axiology

The key commitments of Kant's value theory are twofold: (1) it is a dualistic theory, and (2) it is a conditional value theory. These two commitments ensure that the axiology has the form of a multi-dimensional conditional value structure.

### VALUE DUALISM

The Kantian account is a dualistic account that recognises two distinct types of value, namely (i) moral value, and (ii) prudential value. These types of value are fundamentally heterogeneous and derive from different sources. This axiological dualism is tied up with the general duality between reason and sensibility that underlies all of Kantian philosophy. The Kantian system is predicated on the idea that we are finite rational creatures that have both a rational and a sensible side. In the practical realm, this dualism gives rise to two types of values, two types of normativity, and two types of imperatives. While each side of our nature has its own type of good, these different values are not on an equal footing. In particular, moral value is the supreme good, whereas prudential value is only a conditioned good.<sup>2</sup>

### CONDITIONAL VALUE

Kant is committed to the conditionality of the value of happiness. Happiness is something that is good and that is to be brought about.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, it is something that is intrinsically good, since the source of the value of happiness is intrinsic, i.e. happiness is valuable in virtue of its intrinsic non-evaluative features. Yet, it is also something that is only conditionally good, since the value of happiness is subject to an extrinsic condition,

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<sup>1</sup>The discussion will focus on systematic issues, leaving aside exegetical questions. Supporting textual evidence, as well as critiques of alternative interpretations, can be found in Bader: forthcoming, Bader: manuscript-a, and Bader: manuscript-b.

<sup>2</sup>A further important difference concerns the direction of determination. Although in each case there is a commitment to a biconditional connecting values and reasons, in the case of morality the principle precedes the good (= autonomy), since the principle is a formal principle that is not based on value but on the form of the maxim, in particular on its universalisability. By contrast, in the case of prudence the good precedes the principle (= heteronomy), since the principle is a material principle that is based on the value of the end that is to be achieved.

<sup>3</sup>The goodness of happiness is restricted to the agent, in the sense that it only generates reasons for the person whose happiness it is (when that person has a good will). As such, it only generates prudential reasons, but not reasons of beneficence (which are instead based entirely on formal, rather than material, considerations, resulting from the non-universalisability of a maxim of non-beneficence).

thereby making it conditionally intrinsically valuable. This condition consists in having a good will, which is a matter of adopting the correct priority ordering by subordinating the pursuit of happiness to the requirements of morality. The fact that the source of value is intrinsic explains why happiness is to be valued for its own sake, whereas the fact that it is subject to an extrinsic condition explains why happiness is to be valued only when it is had by someone who has a good will. The conditionality of the value of happiness plays a crucial role in the Kantian system, since it allows us to make sense of the idea that prudence can be silenced when it conflicts with duty. Because of this conditioning relationship, morality ends up not merely outweighing or trumping the claims of happiness, but ensuring that happiness does not have any (intrinsic) value at all and hence does not even constitute a *pro tanto* reason when it conflicts with morality. That is, when it conflicts with duty, happiness counts for nothing.<sup>4</sup>

By combining the supreme good and the conditioned good, to the extent that the condition of its value is satisfied, one ends up with the highest good, i.e. with happiness in accordance with virtue. The degree to which one is virtuous, i.e. has a good will, determines the degree to which one's happiness is good and to which one deserves being happy.<sup>5</sup>

Something that might seem puzzling is that Kant holds both that the good will is the only thing that is unconditionally good, and that humanity is something that is of infinite worth. Since one cannot identify the good will with humanity, and since one cannot hold that both are unconditionally good, one needs to find a way to make room for the significance of humanity. The solution to this puzzle consists in recognising that the claim about the good will is an axiological claim, whereas the claim about humanity is not concerned with what is good and to be valued, but with what has a special type of moral status. In particular, to say that rational agents have dignity and infinite worth is to say that they have a certain status that needs to be respected, in the first place that they are not to be treated as mere means. Thus, although humanity plays an important role in Kantian ethics, it does not have a place in Kantian axiology. Discussions of the 'value of humanity' are, accordingly, misleading and will be set aside for

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<sup>4</sup>The notion of conditional intrinsic value is not to be confused with contextual final value (which construes the source of value as being extrinsic rather than intrinsic, and which does not recognise the hyperintensional distinction between sources and conditions), nor with the idea that the intrinsic value of a thing can be defeated by being part of a disvaluable organic unity (which only generates the result that the value of happiness is outweighed, but not that it is silenced).

<sup>5</sup>The highest good is in this way a combination of two separate goods, whereby one is conditional on the other, and as such is not to be understood as an organic unity, i.e. the value of the highest good is entirely reducible to the value of its components and no value resides in the combination.

the purposes of this paper.<sup>6</sup>

### 3 The dualism of practical reason

The bifurcation of goodness into moral and prudential goodness, that lies at the core of the Kantian theory of value, seems to generate a problem, in that it leads to what Sidgwick described as the ‘dualism of practical reason’. The problem is that the radical heterogeneity of these two types of value implies that they cannot be ordered or weighed up against each other. As a result, morality and prudence can generate conflicting requirements, without there being anything to settle the conflict between them and to privilege one over the other. This fragmentation of value thus seems to leave practical reason in an irresolvable conflict whenever prudence and morality require different actions, thereby threatening to undermine the coherence of practical reason and to reduce the cosmos of duty to chaos (cf. Sidgwick: 1874, p. 473).<sup>7</sup>

Within a monistic framework, the notion of an overall evaluation can be understood straightforwardly, since it simply corresponds to an all-things-considered evaluation. There is one type of value and one can evaluate how things stand with respect to that value when all things, i.e. all relevant facts, are considered. When the evaluation is not restricted in any way, one arrives at an assessment that integrates all the relevant facts.

By contrast, problems arise in the case of pluralism. As soon as a plurality of different types of values is at issue, the question arises as to how they can be integrated into an overall assessment that is not restricted to a particular type of value, but that considers all the different values there are. As long as the different types of value point in the same direction and order alternatives in the same way, there are no problems. Yet, once they pull in opposing directions, one needs the values to be commensurable in order to make sense either of trade-offs or of lexical orderings and thereby arrive at a determinate ordering of the alternatives. The problem then is that, since values of different types are incommensurable,<sup>8</sup> the

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<sup>6</sup>If one were to insist on talking about humanity having value, then this would have to be understood in terms of value that is to be respected, rather than in terms of value that is to be promoted, and as such would not belong to axiology proper.

<sup>7</sup>The Sidgwickian predicament is here construed as a conflict between two different types of normativity, namely the conflict between the requirements of morality and the requirements of prudence (cf. McLeod: 2000).

<sup>8</sup>Incommensurability, which applies to values themselves, is to be distinguished from non-comparability, which applies to alternatives that are being ordered and evaluated, i.e. to value bearers. Values are incommensurable if there is no common standard of evaluation, i.e. no value subsuming them. This means that they involve different betterness relations and that the values come in different units (where this notion of ‘unit’ is not restricted to cardinal scales but also applies to ordinal scales, in which case units are to be understood in terms of levels/ranks in the ordering), such that there is no way of trading off or ordering the values. If alternatives involve different incommensurable values, then it is not possible to compare these alternatives in

possibility of such assessments risks being undermined. This means that one can only say that one should  $\phi$  on the basis of the evaluation in terms of value  $V_1$ , and that one should not- $\phi$  on the basis of value  $V_2$ . But one cannot say what one should do considering both types of value. In this way, one can be guided by one of the values at a time, but not by both of them at the same time. Moreover, there will be nothing to choose between these values, nothing to privilege one over the other. One cannot appeal to  $V_1$  to establish that one should be guided by  $V_1$  as that would be question-begging, and likewise for  $V_2$ . Nor does there seem to be anything that could integrate these values into an overall evaluation, thereby leaving the agent with conflicting requirements and the existential choice whether to follow value  $V_1$  or  $V_2$ .

To avoid this predicament, it would seem that one needs an external standard that encompasses both of the values and orders them with respect to each other. In other words, it would seem that one needs another value, a super-value subsuming the conflicting values. One could then evaluate alternatives with respect to this super-value to arrive at an overall assessment that would integrate the component values and adjudicate the conflicts between them.

It might be suggested that instead of bringing in a super-value, one can simply appeal to lexical orderings and hold that morality is overriding, in the sense that it has lexical priority over prudence, that it trumps prudence.<sup>9</sup> This suggestion, however, is confused. A lexical ordering arises in a situation in which the betterness ordering is such that different goods are ordered in such a way that any quantity of one good outweighs any quantity of the other good. For there to be a lexical ordering, there must accordingly be some betterness relation that orders the different goods. This, however, implies that moral value and prudential value cannot be lexically ordered, unless there is a betterness relation encompassing both of them. This means that a further type of value subsuming both moral and prudential value, i.e. a super-value, is required if they are to be lexically ordered. The lexical ordering view is hence not an alternative to the super-value proposal. Instead, it is simply an instance of the super-value view. That is, it is simply a particular way of ordering different goods with respect to the super-value, namely one whereby moral value cannot be traded off against prudential value since any amount of moral good is better than any amount of prudential good, where this betterness claim has to be understood in terms of super-betterness, i.e. better with respect to the super-value.

Likewise, the idea that this problem can simply be settled by appealing to

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a way that integrates the different values, rendering them non-comparable. Non-comparability, however, does not imply that the alternatives involve incommensurable values.

<sup>9</sup>A number of people have interpreted Kant as holding that morality is lexically prior to prudence. For instance, Cummiskey: 1989, p. 121. Similarly, Timmermann, though correctly interpreting Kant as defending a view on which morality silences prudence, mistakenly considers this as amounting to morality and prudence being lexically ordered (cf. Timmermann: 2007, pp. 169-170).

the notion of all-things-considered value is confused. The locution ‘all-things-considered’ modifies a given type of value but is not itself a type of value. With respect to some value *V* we can either evaluate all things taken together and thereby arrive at a complete evaluation, or we can restrict the evaluation by only evaluating certain things and thereby arrive at a partial evaluation.<sup>10</sup> That is, we can either have an all-things-considered evaluation with respect to *V*, or a partial evaluation with respect to *V* that is restricted to particular dimensions and that only assesses something with respect to certain good-making features. However, there is no such thing as a special type of value: all-things-considered value.<sup>11</sup>

### 3.1 Formal values

Thus, it looks like one needs a further value in order to adjudicate the conflict between prudence and morality, where this would have to be a super-value subsuming the conflicting values. This view has been criticised by Griffin, who has claimed that we do not need substantive values to deal with pluralism, that “we do not need a super-value to have a scale. It is enough to have the quantitative attribute ‘value’.” (Griffin: 1986, p. 89, also cf. p. 32, pp. 90-92)<sup>12</sup>

Griffin’s suggestion, however, is problematic. Value pluralism implies that values come in different types and that ‘quantities’ of value will consequently be in different units. These units need to be converted if different values are to be traded off against each other. As soon as one allows for the possibility of conflicts, there will have to be a relative ordering or weighting of the different values. The merely formal attribute ‘value’, however, does not give us a relative weighting of the different types of value and does not enable us to convert the different units. Although it is possible to construct various formal values with stipulated trade-off ratios, for instance by means of a 0-1 normalisation that can be used to bring about proportional satisfaction, any such merely formal value will not have any intrinsic significance but will only matter extrinsically, if at all. While it can be used for certain purposes, e.g. for the purpose of adjudicating competitions and suchlike, insofar as such formal values can be introduced and employed in a stipulative manner, this only ensures that conventional, but not

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<sup>10</sup>For instance, someone who takes the value of distributions to be a function both of how equal they are and of how much utility they contain, can restrict the evaluation and only assess distributions in terms of how good they are on the basis of the degree of equality they exhibit.

<sup>11</sup>One can, of course, give the phrase ‘all-things-considered value’ a stipulative meaning and use it as a placeholder to refer to a covering value that subsumes the different values being considered, cf. Chang: 2004a, p. 2, in which case ‘all-things-considered value’ is an alternative label for ‘super-value’. Whereas construing all-things-considered evaluations as unrestricted assessments is innocuous, the placeholder reading has substantive presuppositions, given that it requires the existence of the relevant covering values.

<sup>12</sup>Likewise, it has been suggested that the notion of ‘reason’ can do the requisite work, i.e. that prudential and moral reasons can be compared in terms of their strength and that one simply has to evaluate as to which reason is stronger.

intrinsic, significance can attach to them.

There are two tasks that cannot be performed by merely formal values and for which substantive values need to be brought in. First, there is a need to specify which values count. Formal values can be constructed out of all kinds of ‘values’, out of all dimensions along which things can be ranked. Yet, not all ranking-dimensions are significant and to be used. Accordingly, it needs to be determined which candidates are ruled in, and which ones are ruled out – which dimensions matter, and which ones do not. Second, it needs to be specified how to construct the metric along which the values are to be traded off against each other. There is an infinite number of possible ways of combining the values that count and something needs to single out a determinate relative weighting, a particular way of combining them. One needs to give an account why one is to normalise the values in one way rather than another, why one is to assign one set of relative weightings rather than some other weightings. There is thus an urgent need for something that privileges one of the infinitely many candidate weightings and that makes one way of combining these values the right way. In short, what needs to be determined is (i) which values count, and (ii) how much each value counts. It would seem that a substantive value is what settles these questions. Without it, one can only construct a merely stipulative metric that lacks any intrinsic significance.

Whilst a natural way of normalising consists in treating the minima of the different values as equivalent and likewise for their maxima, i.e. a 0-1 normalisation, there are also other ways of normalising. For instance, one can treat the mid-point of one value as equivalent to the maximum of the other value. Both ways of normalising and aggregating the values agree on all judgements that can be established by means of dominance reasoning, which means that both methods can claim to be responsive to the normative significance of the different values. Yet, these methods diverge when trade-offs are at issue. The first normalisation treats the values as counting equally (i.e. the complete (non-)satisfaction of one value is as important as the complete (non-)satisfaction of the other value), whereas the second normalisation is such that one value counts twice as much as the other value.<sup>13</sup>

It might be thought that the 0-1 normalisation is privileged over alternative normalisations since it is permutation-invariant, treating the component values impartially. This commitment to impartiality, however, amounts to a value judgement to the effect that the components are equally significant. Since the relative importance of the different values is precisely what is to be established, one cannot simply start out with the idea that morality and prudence count equally.

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<sup>13</sup>The need for substantive values is particularly clear when there are no minima and maxima, i.e. when one is dealing with unbounded value-functions. In order to normalise, one needs to pick reference points on the different scales and treat them as being equivalent. Given the absence of minima/maxima, no ‘natural’ reference points are available, which highlights the substantive nature of their selection.

Instead, it is a substantive matter how much the values count, how they are to be ordered and weighed up, and an impartial normalisation needs to be justified and shown to be privileged over alternative normalisations. Impartiality, accordingly, cannot be presupposed, but has to be argued for.

Since the components themselves do not determine how they are to be put together, something further is required to end up with a particular relative weighting. Whatever fills this role and provides the weighting cannot purely derive its significance from the components but, instead, needs to have its own significance. It must have independent significance, and must hence be something substantive rather than merely formal. Otherwise, it would not be privileged since all the other possible ways of putting together the components (or, at least, all those satisfying a positive responsiveness condition) would be equally significant, given that they would derive their significance in the same way from the components. That is, every way of normalising has the same derivative significance, because the components from which this significance is derived are the same. This means that these normalisations need to be differentiated in terms of something else, and that one method can be privileged over the others only if it has non-derivative significance. If no weighting were privileged, then there would be no reason to put the components together in one way rather than any other way, and the selection of a normalisation would then be an arbitrary matter.

### 3.2 Substantive values

In order to avoid the dualism of practical reason, it is necessary to find a way of integrating prudence and morality into a combined ordering. As we have seen, conflicts between different values cannot be resolved by means of a merely formal value. As a result, it looks like it is necessary to bring in a further standpoint and appeal to a substantive value that adjudicates conflicts by determining either an ordering of the component values or a relative weighting of them that allows for trade-offs. This line of thought has been defended by Chang, who has argued that the usual way of adjudicating conflicts between different values involves an appeal to a further value (a ‘covering value’) that subsumes the conflicting values.

Covering values allow us to resolve certain conflicts. In particular, they can deal with conflicts that involve restrictions to different dimensions of one and the same value. Such comparisons involve a unique value  $V$  with respect to which different things are evaluated along different dimensions. The covering value allows us to integrate the partial evaluations that are restricted to particular good-making features. In this way, one can combine two evaluative dimensions  $V|_{d_1}(x)$  and  $V|_{d_2}(x)$  by appealing to value  $V$  of which they are both restrictions. Comparisons across different dimensions are thus unproblematic from the point of view of commensurability.<sup>14</sup> Values, reasons, and oughts that are recognised or gen-

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<sup>14</sup>At any rate, they are unproblematic from a theoretical point of view – numerous difficulties



erated from one and the same normative standpoint are commensurable and can be put together by means of a covering value corresponding to this standpoint.

For instance, one can accept an attenuated form of pluralism by holding that both equality and utility are good, in the sense that these are two different types of good-making features of a distribution, two different dimensions along which distributions can be good. This means that utility and equality are ranking-dimensions that are such that the value of the distribution is positively responsive to increases in these features. That is, if  $D_1$  is more equal than  $D_2$  (other things being equal), then  $D_1$  is better than  $D_2$ . Likewise, if  $D_1$  contains more utility than  $D_2$  (other things being equal), then  $D_1$  is better than  $D_2$ . When evaluating distributions, one can restrict the evaluation to these different dimensions, ordering distributions in terms of how good they are in virtue of their level of equality, or in terms of how good they are in virtue of their level of aggregate utility. That is, one can restrict the evaluation to a certain dimension, i.e. assess how good  $x$  is with respect to value  $V$  in virtue of its good-making features along dimension  $d$ , i.e.  $V|_d(x)$ . The two restricted evaluations can be combined to yield an overall evaluation, i.e.  $V(D) = f(V|_E(D), V|_U(D))$ . It is in this context that it makes sense to speak of an all-things-considered evaluation, since one can have an evaluation with respect to value  $V$  that is not restricted to a particular dimension, but that considers all dimensions.

Whilst equality and utility are distinct types of things, the notion of betterness is the same in each case, namely moral betterness. In this way, unlike in the case of morality and prudence, the different dimensions do not correspond to different normative standpoints, but instead represent different dimensions along which something can be morally good. Accordingly, such a pluralist can hold that equality and utility both have the same type of value, namely moral value, and that they are hence commensurable. Trading off the different dimensions of moral value, for instance by trading off equality against utility, is thus analogous to trading off the different dimensions of hedonic value, for instance by trading off intensity of pleasure against duration of pleasure.

By contrast, covering values are inadequate when it comes to conflicts between different types of values that are incommensurable, such as the values of prudence and morality, and are hence unable to overcome the conflict involved in the dualism of practical reason.<sup>15</sup> Unlike in the case of attenuated versions of pluralism that merely involve different good-making features, a robust version of pluralism that is committed to there being different types of values has to deal

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may arise when it comes to making comparisons in practice.

<sup>15</sup>The type of incommensurability that is due to differences in types of value is global, in the sense that no comparisons can be made between these values, which implies that the relation of comparability is an equivalence relation. As such, it is to be distinguished from the notion of incommensurability that involves local gaps that are due to there being different ways of integrating different dimensions, leaving one with an incomplete intersection quasi-ordering and a non-transitive relation of comparability.

with the problem of incommensurability. Pluralists of the robust variety recognise fundamentally different values because they countenance different evaluative standpoints from which things can be assessed and compared. These different values are not merely restrictions of one and the same value, but are independent and self-standing. Values, reasons, and oughts issuing from different standpoints are incommensurable and cannot be subsumed under a covering value. That is, one cannot combine values  $V_a(x)$  and  $V_b(x)$  by appealing to a further value  $V_c$  that has the others as parts.<sup>16</sup>

The suggestion that a covering value (which Chang has baptised ‘prumorality’) can subsume moral and prudential values, that are fundamentally heterogeneous and that have independent significance, is problematic on a number of counts.

1. To begin with, if they were subsumable under a common covering value, then this would imply that their normative significance would be derivative. As Chang notes, “[i]f a moral value in conflict with a prudential one is a component of some more comprehensive nameless value, then the normativity of morality in the face of conflict with prudence derives from the normativity of that nameless value. . . . It is in virtue of that nameless value that, in a particular case, a moral value has whatever normativity it does in the face of conflict with a prudential one” (Chang: 2004b, p. 148). This type of derivativeness, however, would contradict both the independence and heterogeneity of the standpoints of morality and prudence.

On the one hand, if they were derivative, then they would not be independent. Instead, the values would derive their normative force from the covering value that would subsume them, thereby making them dependent on that from which they would derive their significance. Values and oughts that are internally generated by a standpoint derive their normativity from this standpoint. A standpoint is thus independent if it gives rise to its own values and oughts. These values/oughts will be internal to the standpoint. They will not be derivative but will instead be generated and imbued with normativity in accordance with the standards of the particular standpoint. By contrast, independence does not hold in cases in which they are externally validated by another standpoint. When there is an external standard that validates the verdicts passed by different standpoints and makes it the case that they are binding and have normative significance, then the latter are dependent on the former. In such a scenario, normativity is not internal to the particular standpoints but derives from the external perspective,

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<sup>16</sup>At best, they can be combined in a purely stipulative manner. This, however, does not respect the independence and intrinsic significance of the values, and any resulting verdict will only have conventional but not intrinsic normativity, which implies that stipulative trade-off ratios cannot be brought in to adjudicate conflicts when it comes to substantive values that are independently significant.

which makes it the case that these standpoints only have derivative significance.

On the other hand, if they were derivative, then they would not be heterogeneous. Instead, they would involve the same type of normativity as the covering value from which they would derive their significance and would hence be homogeneous. Internally generated values, however, are ordered in terms of the standards pertaining to the particular standpoint from which they issue. This means that different types of values involve different types of normativity that are not reducible to each other. Different types of values that correspond to different points of view in this way involve different betterness relations and come in different units of value and hence cannot be ordered or traded-off against each other.<sup>17</sup>

The independence and heterogeneity of the standpoints thus precludes any axiological comparability.

2. A covering value that could resolve the dualism of practical reason would have to correspond to some further standpoint above and beyond the standpoints of morality and prudence. It is, however, not at all clear what this further standpoint could be, how it would operate, and on what basis it would order the components. What is this further value meant to be? And what is its source of normativity? The radical heterogeneity of morality and prudence makes it difficult to see how they could be combined, without them being integrated in a merely disjunctive manner. Moreover, it is unclear how the further standpoint could combine them without threatening to undermine the idea that the categorical imperative is the supreme principle of practical reason, since this standpoint would seem to ‘dethrone morality’ (cf. Haji: 1998), something that is completely anathema from a Kantian perspective.<sup>18</sup>
3. Even if there were a further standpoint and a further type of value, it would not be possible to subsume such heterogeneous and independent values thereunder without regenerating the original problem. All cases of conflicts that are adjudicated by subsuming the conflicting values under a covering

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<sup>17</sup>Chang has suggested that the focus on there being different points of views can be seen to be a red herring once one distinguishes “between a value ‘per se’ and a value qua instance of a *type* of value” (Chang: 2004b, p. 123). This appeal to the notion of a ‘value per se’, however, seems to mirror the confusion that we diagnosed in the case of Griffin’s suggestion that the quantitative attribute ‘value’ suffices.

<sup>18</sup>That there is no room for any further value in the Kantian system becomes particularly clear when one considers the relation between the good and the principle of volition. Either the principle precedes the good, in which case one is dealing with the one and only formal principle, namely the categorical imperative, or the good precedes the principle, in which case one is dealing with the one and only material principle, namely the pragmatic imperative.

value either involve not independent values but only restrictions of one and the same value, or they involve a stipulative combination that merely has conventional significance. Neither type of case provides insight as to how conflicts can be resolved when one is concerned with independent values that have intrinsic significance. In such conflict cases, a further value would not resolve but rather exacerbate the original problem. This is because one would then need an explanation as to why the further value is to take precedence over the component values, something that cannot be established by reference to this further standpoint, given that its authority is precisely what is in question.

It might be thought that by subsuming the other values, one can explain why the super-value is to be taken as being authoritative since any claims made by its components will already be accounted for, on the basis that they will be integrated into the claim of the super-value. Yet, as we saw in the discussion of different normalisations, this explanation does not work. This is because the relative strength of the components is a substantive matter that needs to be settled and that is not derivative from the contributions of the components. When there is a conflict between one of the component values and the super-value, i.e. when comparing two situations whereby the latter involves a loss in the component value but a gain in the combined value, then the question arises as to why the latter is to be preferred over the former. This question cannot be answered by arguing that the claim of the component value is already included in that of the combined value, because the degree to which it is included therein is a function of the combined value and, as such, presupposes the authoritativeness of that value (with respect to the component value), yet this is precisely what is to be established. This means that the super-value proposal only works where the significance of the component values is entirely derivative, but that it is not applicable to independent values that are intrinsically significant. As a result, we can see that there does not seem to be a way for a super-value to incorporate the disparate values of prudence and morality in a way that does not simply raise the original problem again.

This means that substantive values can only integrate different evaluative dimensions into an overall evaluation, but they cannot integrate the different values of morality and prudence. There are no problems in subsuming different dimensions of evaluation under a covering value, since what are subsumed in that case are ranking-dimensions that are restrictions of one and the same value. It is, however, not possible to subsume morality and prudence, given that they are separate evaluative standpoints. These heterogeneous standpoints are independent, which precludes subsumption under a common covering value.

Chang has criticised robust pluralism by invoking nominal-notable comparisons. “In general, a notable moral act is better with respect to both morality and prudence than a nominal prudential one. There must therefore be a covering value in terms of which comparisons of moral and prudential merit proceed, one that has both moral and prudential values as components. . . . We cannot make a judgement about the relative importance of these considerations without there being some value, however indefinite, in terms of which the judgment proceeds” (Chang: 1997, p. 32). The argument is thus that nominal-notable comparisons between moral and prudential values are possible. From this it follows that there are normative relations that hold amongst them, which is meant to imply the existence of a covering value and hence the falsity of robust pluralism

This argument, however, does not succeed since it is possible for there to be normative relations between different values, without these values being subsumable under a common covering value. That is, not all normative relations presuppose the existence of a covering value. Although the heterogeneity and independence of the different standpoints precludes axiological relations between them, they do not rule out all normative relations. In particular, there is the normative relation of silencing, which does not presuppose comparability and does not proceed via a covering value, but can instead be established by appealing to conditional values.<sup>19</sup> In this way, it is possible to have normative relations without having a covering value and without having axiological comparability.

Silencing can thus account for the cases that show that there are normative relations between morality and prudence, in that it implies that we should go with morality rather than with prudence. In order to generate problems for the silencing account and undermine robust pluralism, one would require nominal-notable comparisons going in both directions. That is, one would also have to have cases in which the verdict would go in the other direction, such that one would have to give precedence to prudence over morality. If there were normative priority relations in both directions, such that morality would sometimes take precedence and prudence would take precedence on other occasions, then the normative relation between morality and prudence could not be one of silencing but could only be explained by a covering value. The existence of such cases, however, is far from clear, given the intuitiveness of some version or other of the overridingness thesis, and is incompatible with the Kantian commitment to the categorical imperative being the supreme principle of practical reason.

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<sup>19</sup>It should be noted that there is no conflict between silencing and independence. This is because independence regards the source of normativity, which is compatible with there being external conditions, i.e. non-derivativeness does not imply unconditionality. On the Kantian account, prudence is independent in that it does not derive its normativity from any other source. Prudential value has its own source of normativity that is separate from that of morality.

### 3.3 Conditional values

Neither formal nor substantive values allow us to address conflicts between morality and prudence, and hence are insufficient by themselves to resolve the dualism of practical reason. Instead, the way out of this predicament deriving from value dualism lies in the other Kantian commitment, namely in the conditionality of the value of happiness. The commitment to conditionality allows us to avoid conflicts between morality and prudence, thereby avoiding situations in which practical reason is faced with incompatible requirements. It does so by making the claims of prudence conditional upon being compatible with having a good will, which implies that they are conditional upon being permissible, thereby allowing morality to silence prudence. That is, the claims corresponding to moral value, namely the claims of duty, silence those of prudence.<sup>20</sup>

When the action that makes one happy is impermissible, the condition of the value of happiness would be undermined by performing this action. Though happiness results from the action, no value is thereby realised. Since the action does not produce anything of prudential value, there is no prudential reason to perform it. That is, given that the normative force attaching to hypothetical imperatives derives from the value of the end that is to be realised, it follows that if the condition of the value of the end fails to be satisfied, then no value will result from the realisation of the end, which implies that one does not have any reason to take the means. Because the value of happiness is conditional, the claims of prudence that are based on this value will also be conditional. In this way, the claims of prudence can be silenced by the requirements of duty.<sup>21</sup>

Since the account of silencing ensures that there are no conflicts amongst the different values, a complete ordering can be generated without bringing in any relative orderings or weightings. There is hence no need to bring in a further substantive value to adjudicate conflicts. Nor is there a need to normalise the different values in order to integrate them into a coherent ordering. Instead, given that one has a conditional value structure in place that precludes the possibility of conflicts between the different types of values, appealing to a formal value turns out to be sufficient, since, as we will see in the next section, the absence of conflicts ensures that the different values do not need to be normalised but can rather be integrated in a disjunctive manner. Substantive values only need

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<sup>20</sup>The notion of silencing in fact presupposes the dualism. This is because values of the same type can only outweigh each other, in which case any difference between them will only be a matter of degree and not a matter of unconditional silencing. For silencing, one needs heterogeneous values that are connected via a conditioning relation.

<sup>21</sup>If one is to trace silencing to its ultimate source, then this explanation of silencing in terms of conditional value needs to be supplemented with an account of the mechanism underlying the conditionality of the value of happiness. The fact that the value of happiness is conditional on having a good will can be explained by appealing to the idea that for something to be good is for it to be an object of practical reason, together with the idea that a bad will is a will that is involved in a practical contradiction and as such cannot have any objects (cf. Bader: manuscript-a).

to be brought in to determine which values count. Since the significance of the formal value is derived entirely from the significance of its component values, one has to be working with ranking-dimensions that matter intrinsically. Unless the components are substantive values that have intrinsic significance, the formal value will be a mere construct that will lack significance. Once these intrinsically significant components are in place, one can disjunctively integrate them into a complete overall ordering, as long as there are no conflicts amongst the substantive values. The absence of conflicts thus allows us to use a formal value to combine a plurality of substantive values, without any need to bring in a further substantive value subsuming them.

According to the silencing account, it is not the case that the moral ought trumps the prudential ought (or that moral value is lexically prior to prudential value). Rather, the prudential ought is conditional on being morally permissible. That is, instead of its being the case that one ought to do what morality tells one rather than what prudence does, prudence only commands that one take the means required for realising one's ends on condition of its being the case that doing so is compatible with morality. Otherwise, if one were to accept an account on which morality trumps prudence, one would face the problem of explaining what type of 'ought' is implicated in the claim that one ought to comply with the moral ought rather than with the prudential ought (in the same way that one would need to explain the problematic idea that there could be a 'super-value' with respect to which moral and prudential value could be ordered). This ought cannot be a moral ought since what is at issue is precisely establishing that the moral ought is the one that is to be complied with. Hence saying that there is a moral ought to the effect that one ought to comply with the moral ought, rather than the prudential ought, just presupposes what is to be established. For obvious reasons, it cannot be a prudential ought either. But this leaves the proponent of the trumping interpretation in a difficult situation since there does not seem to be any third type of ought, any third type of normativity. There is only morality and prudence, and neither of them underwrites the requisite ought statement. Moreover, even if there were some further ought, one would end up with the problem of explaining why one ought to comply with this third ought rather than with one of the others. The original problem would in this way simply be replicated rather than resolved. Accordingly, it is preferable to adopt the silencing rather than the trumping interpretation and hold that there is no need for an ought to the effect that one comply with the moral ought. The first-order moral ought is sufficient by itself since there cannot be any competing ought claim, given that the prudential ought is conditional upon its compatibility with morality. In this way, one can avoid conflicts amongst the different oughts/values and ensure a coherent overall ordering, without having to make trade-offs and without having to bring in a further standpoint or a further value. This is possible since the way in which moral and prudential oughts/values are normatively related and integrated

into an overall evaluation is internal and not imposed by some external standard that stands above them.

## 4 Unindexed oughts

The question as to what one ought to do, where this is not restricted to a particular normative standpoint or a particular type of value, but where this is construed in an unrestricted manner, is not to be understood in terms of some further independent ought, such as the ‘just plain ought’ (cf. McLeod: 2001), or the ‘ought simpliciter’, or suchlike. Instead, this unindexed ought is a disjunctive ought that is constructed out of the moral and prudential oughts. More precisely,  $\text{ought}(\phi) =_{df} \text{m-ought}(\phi) \vee \text{p-ought}(\phi)$ . This construction provides us with a deflationary construal of unindexed ought claims, such that there are no substantive ought-facts above and beyond the moral and prudential oughts.

For this constructed notion to be coherent, there cannot be any conflicts amongst the constituent oughts. If a situation were to arise in which it was both the case that  $\text{m-ought}(\phi)$  and that  $\text{p-ought}(\text{not-}\phi)$ ,<sup>22</sup> then the constructed ought would yield both  $\text{ought}(\phi)$  and  $\text{ought}(\text{not-}\phi)$ . The deflationary construal of the unindexed ought thus only generates a coherent ordering in circumstances in which there are no conflicts. The conditional value structure precludes the possibility of precisely such conflicts. Insofar as the prudential ought is conditional on not violating the moral requirements, there can never be conflicting moral and prudential oughts. This ensures that there is no need for a further substantive ought. Given that there is no need to appeal to a relative ordering or weighting of prudence and morality, there is no need for the disjunctive ought to have any normativity or significance above and beyond the normativity of the component oughts. All normative force derives from the components, such that the disjunctive ought merely summarises these normative facts without having any normative force of its own. In this way, it will not be a substantive ought but will rather be a merely formal construction that can be construed in a deflationary manner.

It might be objected that the account of conditionality is not sufficient to avoid conflicts. In particular, one might be concerned that it is possible for two options,  $\phi$  and  $\psi$ , to be both morally permissible, yet that  $\phi$  is prudentially better whereas  $\psi$  is morally better, such that  $\text{p-ought}(\phi)$  but  $\text{m-ought}(\psi)$ , where  $\phi$ -ing and  $\psi$ -ing are incompatible. Since the condition on the value of happiness consists in having a good will, not in being maximally morally good, it would appear that one situation can be morally better than another, without the condition failing to be satisfied in the latter case. If the prudential ordering of these two situations is the reverse, then a conflict between the two heteroge-

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<sup>22</sup>Or  $\text{p-ought}(\psi)$ , where  $\phi$ -ing and  $\psi$ -ing are incompatible.



neous values would seem to arise that could not be resolved by appealing to the conditionality thesis, since, *ex hypothesi*, the condition is satisfied in each case. In other words, it would appear that there can be conflicts between morality and prudence within the realm of the permissible.<sup>23</sup>

In response, we can note that this apparent possibility is ruled out by the Kantian commitment to rigorism, which holds that the maxim of an action is either universalisable, in which case it is permissible and the agent has a good will, or that it fails to be universalisable, in which case it is impermissible and the agent has a bad will. There is no room for supererogation, no room for a moral ordering of permissible actions, and it is not possible for one good will to be better than another. Given these rigoristic commitments, it follows that whatever is morally good is equally good (from the point of view of morality) as anything else that is morally good, and that these alternatives can accordingly be ordered from a prudential point of view in a way that does not allow for any conflicts between prudence and morality.<sup>24</sup>

In the same way that we can make sense of an unindexed ought, an unindexed betterness relation can be constructed disjunctively out of moral and prudential value, without presupposing any substantive notion of overall betterness.

$$x > y =_{df} x >_m y \vee x >_p y$$

$$x = y =_{df} (x =_m y \vee x =_p y) \wedge \neg(x >_m y \vee x <_m y \vee x >_p y \vee x <_p y)$$

In this way, one can accept a deflationary reading of unindexed betterness claims. This can be done as long as there are no conflicting betterness judgements, since the disjunctive notion of betterness would fail to be asymmetric if there were to be conflicts and would hence not give us a coherent ordering. In other words, this notion is only coherent if there is never a situation in which both  $x >_m y$  and  $x <_p y$ , or in which both  $x <_m y$  and  $x >_p y$ .

This deflationary disjunctive account is not to be confused with a dominance principle, such as the Pareto principle, whereby  $x > y$  iff  $x \geq_m y \wedge x \geq_p y \wedge (x >_m y \vee x >_p y)$ .<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup>For instance, one might think that an imperfect duty, such as beneficence, allows for cases in which both the option of helping and the option of not helping are permissible, but where helping is morally better yet prudentially worse.

<sup>24</sup>One question that naturally arises is how it is possible to make sense of the idea of degrees of virtue/moral goodness, which seems to be required for the idea that happiness is proportional to virtue in the highest good, i.e. that moral good and prudential good are proportionally distributed. Here, the answer is that, whilst rigorism implies that moral goodness is a binary matter within each choice context, one can aggregate the different contexts to determine the proportion of morally good choices the agent has made throughout his or her whole life and thereby arrive at a notion of virtue that construes it as an extensive magnitude that allows for degrees (cf. Bader: forthcoming).

<sup>25</sup>This kind of principle can be weakened in two ways: 1. it can be specified merely as a

First, dominance principles are best understood as being concerned with substantive values, not with formal values that are construed in a deflationary manner. In this sense, they are substantive bridge-principles that specify how one is to order value vectors in terms of their components (whereby these can either represent different types of values, or different locations of one and the same value).

Second, there is the important difference that dominance principles presuppose comparability. In particular,  $x$  and  $y$  must be comparable with respect to each value, if they are to be ordered on the basis of the dominance principle. If  $x$  is better than  $y$  with respect to one value, but not comparable with respect to another, then the dominance principle will not be applicable. In that case,  $x$  and  $y$  will be non-comparable with respect to the unindexed betterness relation based on the dominance principle. This is crucial since conditionality brings about non-comparability. If  $x$  is such that the condition of the value of happiness fails to be satisfied, then it will not have prudential value.<sup>26</sup> Accordingly, it will not be comparable with respect to an alternative that does have prudential value. This means that  $y$  will not be better than  $x$ , even though it is both the case that  $y$  is morally better than  $x$  and that  $y$  is not prudentially worse than  $x$ , on the basis that they are not comparable with respect to prudential value. What is required for the applicability of the dominance principle is not just that  $y$  not be prudentially worse than  $x$ , but that it be at least as prudentially good as  $x$ , which presupposes comparability. Dominance principles are thus inapplicable to conditional value structures and cannot be employed to arrive at a complete ordering. Whenever morality and prudence conflict, these principles make the options at issue non-comparable. This kind of incomplete ordering would not allow us to overcome the dualism of practical reason.

The problem is thus that if there are two types of value and one is conditional on the other, then one risks losing completeness due to non-comparability with respect to the conditional value when comparing a situation in which the condition is satisfied with one in which it fails to be satisfied. Since dominance principles require that a situation be at least as good as its alternatives with respect to each type of value, they thereby presuppose comparability along all dimensions of value, which is incompatible with the conditionality of value.

The disjunctive construal of the unindexed betterness relation, by contrast, does not have any difficulties in dealing with the non-comparability resulting from conditional values. This is because prudential considerations are completely side-stepped in conflict cases, ensuring that moral considerations by themselves determine how the unindexed betterness relation orders such conflicting alternatives. Prudence is silenced in the sense that prudential reasoning does not issue

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sufficient and not also a necessary condition for  $x > y$ , and 2. one can require strict rather than only weak dominance, i.e.  $x >_m y \wedge x >_p y$ .

<sup>26</sup>It is important to note that when the condition fails to be satisfied, happiness lacks value rather than having value to degree zero, i.e. its value will be undefined and as such not comparable.

any verdict. When there are two alternatives, whereby one leads to greater happiness but is impermissible, then one has moral reason not to do it and there are no prudential reasons in its favour (i.e. there are no prudential reasons to commit an impermissible action that would have to be outweighed or trumped by the moral reasons speaking against committing that action). The permissible action, by contrast, has something speaking in its favour, namely being morally better. Accordingly, the only thing that can guide us in ordering these alternatives is morality.<sup>27</sup> When the condition fails to be satisfied, only the moral betterness relation will be defined, and it will consequently determine the disjunctive betterness relation.

The disjunctive account thus coincides with the dominance principle when the condition is satisfied and the alternatives are comparable with respect to all the values that are at issue, but diverges in the context of non-comparability with respect to the conditional component value. Whereas the dominance principle results in an incomplete ordering due to rendering such options non-comparable, the disjunctive account generates a complete ordering by ranking them in accordance with their moral ordering.

## 5 Incompleteness and transitivity

An important objection to the proposed account is that the disjunctive notion of betterness might turn out to be non-transitive, in particular that it might fail to be acyclic and allow for situations in which  $x > y_1 > \dots > y_n > x$ . More precisely, the problem is that one might be able to put together incomplete component orderings in such a way that the unindexed betterness relation violates transitivity and allows for there to be betterness cycles. While it is in principle possible for failures of transitivity to arise in this manner, this can only occur under special conditions that cannot arise within the Kantian system.

Before specifying the conditions under which this can occur, it is necessary to clarify the notion of incompleteness. A value  $V$  is incomplete with respect to domain  $D$  if it is not the case that  $\forall x, y \in D (x \geq_V y \vee x \leq_V y)$ . We can distinguish two ways in which a value can be incomplete.

### EXTERNAL INCOMPLETENESS

$V$  can fail to order  $x$  and  $y$  on the basis that  $V$  is not applicable to  $x$  (and/or to  $y$ ), i.e.  $x$  stands in no  $V$ -betterness relations ( $x$  is not even equally  $V$ -good as itself). Here we are dealing with  $V$  having restricted applicability relative to  $D$ , rather than with the non-comparability of two bearers of  $V$ . That is, we are not dealing with an incomplete ordering of elements within

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<sup>27</sup>If there are multiple permissible actions, then these actions can be ordered with respect to each other in terms of prudential value.

V's betterness field, but with a situation in which V's field is a proper subset of D.

#### INTERNAL INCOMPLETENESS

V can fail to order  $x$  and  $y$  on the basis that, even though  $V$  is applicable to both  $x$  and  $y$ , no  $V$ -betterness relation holds between them, i.e. these items are not  $V$ -ranked against certain alternatives. The items are value-apt and are both within  $V$ 's betterness field, but they are not comparable. This happens, for instance, in the case of quasi-orderings generated by dominance principles. Here we are dealing either with incomparability that is due to a substantive failure of comparison, or with non-comparability that is due not to the inapplicability of value  $V$ , but due to a formal failure of the betterness relation.

Thus, we can distinguish cases in which  $x$  and  $y$  fail to be comparable with respect to value  $V$ , whereby (i) this failure is external to  $V$ 's betterness field in that at least one of the items is not  $V$ -apt, and whereby (ii) this failure is internal to  $V$ 's betterness field in that each of the items is  $V$ -apt.

The notion of incompleteness that is relevant in the case of conditionality and silencing is the external one. This is because the failure of the satisfaction of the condition ensures that prudential value is not applicable and that the item in question consequently does not belong to the betterness field of prudential value. The conditionality of prudential value ensures that there will be items that stand in moral betterness relations, without standing in prudential betterness relations, i.e. items that are not prudential-value-apt but that are moral-value-apt. In particular, impermissible options are not ordered by the prudential betterness relation since the condition is not satisfied, yet they are ordered by the moral betterness relation, insofar as they are all equally morally bad. As a result, the prudential betterness relation turns out to be incomplete with respect to the field of the disjunctive notion of betterness, where  $D_V = \{x : \exists y xR_V y\}$  and where  $xR_V y =_{\text{df}} x \geq_V y \vee x \leq_V y$ , i.e.  $D_V = D_m \cup D_p$ . Put differently, the unindexed betterness field will be incompletely ordered by the prudential betterness relation, i.e.  $\exists x, y \in D_V$ , such that (i)  $\neg(x >_p y)$ , (ii)  $\neg(x =_p y)$ , and (iii)  $\neg(x <_p y)$ .

Externally incomplete orderings can be combined in a way that leads to violations of transitivity only if there are multiple incomplete values that have partially overlapping betterness fields.

1. Cycles can arise only if there are at least three incomplete values that have partially overlapping fields. The values need to be incomplete in different ways, allowing one to switch between different values that fail to be comparable as one goes through the cycle, and none of the values can have a field that is a subset of the other two fields, i.e.  $D_{V_1} \setminus D_{V_2} \neq \emptyset$ , and  $D_{V_1} \setminus D_{V_3} \neq \emptyset$ , and likewise for  $V_2$  and  $V_3$ . In that case there can be alternatives such that  $x \in D_{V_1}, D_{V_2}, \notin D_{V_3}$ ,  $y \in D_{V_2}, D_{V_3}, \notin D_{V_1}$ ,

and  $z \in D_{V_3}, D_{V_1}, \notin D_{V_2}$ , which makes it possible for  $x >_{V_2} y, y >_{V_3} z$ , and  $z >_{V_1} x$ .

2. Transitivity can fail due to non-comparability, rather than due to acyclicity, i.e.  $x > y, y > z$  but  $\neg(x > z)$  because  $x$  is non-comparable with  $z$ . This type of failure of transitivity arises when the disjunctive betterness relation is non-trichotomous, which requires there to be at least two partially overlapping incomplete values, i.e.  $D_{V_1} \setminus D_{V_2} \neq \emptyset$  and  $D_{V_2} \setminus D_{V_1} \neq \emptyset$ . This makes it possible that  $x \in D_{V_1}, \notin D_{V_2}, y \in D_{V_1}, D_{V_2}$ , and  $z \in D_{V_2}, \notin D_{V_1}$ , such that  $x >_{V_1} y$ , and  $y >_{V_2} z$ , without there being a value that contains both  $x$  and  $z$  in its betterness field, thereby rendering them non-comparable with respect to the unindexed betterness relation.

Accordingly, we can see that neither type of intransitivity can arise in the case of the Kantian axiological theory since there is only one incomplete value (whereby incompleteness is understood with respect to the field of the disjunctive betterness relation, rather than in terms of its own field). The completeness of the moral betterness relation ensures that there cannot be failures of transitivity resulting from non-comparability, since the unindexed notion is non-trichotomous only if each component ordering fails to rank the options in question. Even if the theory were not dualistic but would include further types of value, no intransitivities could be generated because conditionality is understood in terms of non-moral values being conditional on moral value, which precludes the possibility of combining the incomparabilities in the manner requisite for there being intransitivities. More precisely, the transitivity of the moral betterness relation ensures that betterness cycles could only arise in a situation in which all the options were ranked as equally good in terms of moral value, such that a cycle could then be generated in terms of the incomplete non-moral values. However, since these other values are incomplete due to being conditional on moral value and since, as we have seen, the options have to be morally equivalent, it follows that all the other values would either be such that in a given situation the condition was satisfied in the case of each value, or that it would fail to be satisfied in the case of each value, thereby precluding the possibility of cycles.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>In the case of internal incompleteness, it is possible to generate cycles involving only two values. For instance, a cycle will result if  $x >_{V_1} y, y >_{V_2} z, z >_{V_1} w, w >_{V_2} x$ , whereby  $V_1$  does not rank  $x, y$  with respect to  $z, w$ , and  $V_2$  does not rank  $y, z$  with respect to  $w, x$ . Similarly, a non-transitive ordering due to non-comparability can arise in the context of internally incomplete component orderings even if they have the same betterness fields. For instance, transitivity will be violated insofar as  $x$  and  $z$  will not be ranked by the unindexed relation if  $x >_{V_1} y, y >_{V_2} z$ , whereby  $V_1$  does not rank  $x, y$  with respect to  $z$ , and  $V_2$  does not rank  $y, z$  with respect to  $x$ . However, neither the moral nor the prudential betterness ordering admits of internal incompleteness.

## 6 Silencing v. bracketing v. cancelling

The Kantian conditional value structure allows us to make sense of the idea that morality silences the claims of prudence. This section will compare the Kantian account with other ways in which prudence can be set aside and can fail to contribute to the balance of reasons, in particular with (i) the idea of bracketing (and the associated notion of an exclusionary reason) employed by Scanlon and Raz, (ii) the phenomenon of cancelling discussed by Nozick and Raz, as well as with (iii) another (related) notion of silencing developed by McDowell.

### BRACKETING

When a reason is bracketed, there is some consideration that constitutes a reason. This reason, however, is excluded from deliberation and does not contribute towards the balance of reasons. Exclusionary reasons (i.e. reasons for bracketing) make it the case that a certain value or reason is, in Chang's terminology, not at stake in the choice situation or the context of evaluation. The reason or value is then not relevant within the choice context and is accordingly to be excluded from deliberation. In this way, it has no effect on which reasons the agent is to comply with, or on how things are to be evaluated for the purpose of deliberation.<sup>29</sup>

By contrast, in the case of silencing, there is no reason. Instead of an existing reason being excluded, the relevant consideration fails to constitute a reason, on the basis that a certain condition fails to be satisfied, even though that very same consideration would have constituted a reason within a different context in which the condition was satisfied. The relevant consideration, accordingly, has no effect on what is to be done, not because its goodness is excluded and because the reason that it constitutes is bracketed, but because it has no goodness, because it does not constitute a reason.

### CANCELLING

The phenomenon of cancelling (cf. Nozick: 1968, section 7; Raz: 1999, section 1.1) is similarly distinct from conditionality/silencing.<sup>30</sup> We can understand the mechanism underlying cancelling as consisting in the removal of the ground. That is, when a reason or value is cancelled, what happens is that the ground of the reason is removed. For instance, in the case of promises, releasing someone from a promise makes it the case that the reason is cancelled, i.e. the promisor no longer has reason to phi (nor

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<sup>29</sup>For Raz, excluded reasons can affect non-deliberative evaluations. Cf. "In fact it is better that the excluded reasons be conformed to. They are reasons for performing certain actions, and, other things being equal, the fact that they are excluded by an exclusionary reason merely means that they should not be complied with, not that they should not be conformed to. The best course is if they are indirectly obeyed, i.e. if the action they indicate is performed for some other, independent, reason" (Raz: 1999, p. 185).

<sup>30</sup>Nozick also discusses related notions of nullifying, destroying, dissolving, and invalidating.

does he have reason to not- $\phi$ ). This phenomenon involves a modification of the supervenience base, i.e. cancelling makes it the case that the ground of the reason is no longer present.

As such, it is distinct from the idea that one needs to distinguish the source or ground of a reason from the conditions that must be satisfied for the consideration in question to constitute a reason. In the case of conditionality, it is possible for there to be no reason or value, even though the ground is present, since the condition fails to be satisfied. That is, a reason can be removed, without the ground being removed, by making it the case that the condition is no longer satisfied such that the ground no longer constitutes a reason, whereas cancelling requires the ground to be removed if the reason is to be removed.

This difference can be illustrated by the fact that cancelling, unlike silencing, is essentially a temporal phenomenon. Cancelling involves a situation where at  $t_1$  one has reason to  $\phi$ , but then at  $t_2$  the base is changed such that one no longer has reason to  $\phi$ . Conditions, by contrast, can be simultaneous with the grounds. This ensures that silencing does not necessarily take the form of there being a reason at  $t_1$  that is then silenced at  $t_2$ , since the conditions need to be satisfied for the relevant consideration to constitute a reason in the first place.

A further difference that distinguishes conditionality from cancelling is that conditions come in two distinct forms, namely there can be both enablers (i.e. things the presence of which is required for something to be valuable) and disablers (i.e. things the absence of which is required for something to be valuable), whereas there does not seem to be an analogous distinction when it comes to cancelling.

#### SILENCING

McDowell has made use of the notion of silencing in the context of virtue ethics. Whilst there are some similarities between the view developed by McDowell and the Kantian theory, there are important differences separating these accounts. In particular, the Kantian understanding of silencing is entirely normative and does not have any impact on motivational questions. When the condition fails to be satisfied, happiness lacks value. Given that there is no value in becoming happy in such a situation, that is, in realising the ends of prudence, it follows that the claims of prudence do not have any normative force and do not generate any reasons for action. Prudence, however, retains its motivational force when its commands are silenced, given that happiness is agreeable even when it is not valuable. This means that, even though there is no normative conflict (and hence no threat to the coherence of reason) when the claims of prudence are silenced, there is still a struggle between morality and prudence at the level of mo-

tivation. By contrast, according to McDowell, the fully virtuous person, unlike the merely continent person, is not in any way inclined to act on the basis of self-interest when doing so conflicts with virtue. In this sense, the motivational force of happiness is silenced on the McDowellian account alongside with its reason-giving force.

On the Kantian account, silencing is explained in terms of the conditionality of the value of happiness (which, in turn, is explained in terms of what it is for something to have value). McDowell, by contrast, lacks a theory of conditional value, which makes it difficult to see how he can provide a mechanism that explains silencing and by means of which prudential considerations fail to constitute reasons when they conflict with morality. Providing such a mechanism is a complicated matter since it has to resolve the tension in the idea that prudence is independent, yet can be silenced by morality. That is, it needs to reconcile a commitment to pluralism, which amounts to recognising different standpoints that are meant to be independent of one another, with a commitment to silencing, which requires the standpoints to interact.

In particular, the problem is that, unless one has a theory of conditional value, one lacks the distinction between the ground of value and the condition of value. This distinction allows one to hold that prudence is independent, in the sense that it has its own source, its own ground, yet can be silenced on the basis that it is subject to extrinsic conditions. One can then make sense of a situation in which the ground is present but in which there is no value, due to the fact that the condition fails to be satisfied. In this way, one can separate out normative silencing from changing the non-normative/non-evaluative grounds.

If this distinction is missing, one will instead have to make it the case that the ground is absent if the value is to be absent. This, however, is not really a form of silencing but is instead analogous to cancelling, in that it operates at the level of the ground, rather than just operating at the level of value by making it the case that the condition fails to be satisfied.<sup>31</sup> Insofar as the notion of silencing presupposes that there is something that is present but that is prevented from constituting a reason, one needs the distinction between grounds and conditions, since it is only with reference to this distinction that one can make sense of the ground being present but silenced, on the basis of its being prevented from being valuable due to its condition being undermined.

One way of understanding McDowell's suggestion that prudence is si-

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<sup>31</sup>It will differ from cancelling by not being essentially diachronic, i.e. not the removal of a ground that is present at one point and then absent at some later time, but preventing the ground from being present in the first place.



lenced takes precisely the form of operating at the level of grounds and is based on the idea that for the fully virtuous person there is no pleasure in actions that conflict with the requirements of virtue, even though such a person would derive enjoyment from these very same actions were they not to conflict with virtue. The 'situational appreciation' of a virtuous person "is such as to insulate the attractions of competing courses of action from generating actual urges to pursue them" (McDowell: 1996, p. 102; also cf. McDowell: 1978, p. 27). There is no temptation because the agent does not have the relevant desires and hence would not derive any enjoyment from these actions. There is thus nothing that could motivate (= motivational silencing) and nothing that could be good (= normative silencing). On this account, the difference is not restricted to the evaluative level, but also affects the non-evaluative level. Motivational and non-motivational silencing accordingly go hand-in-hand.

This means that for the fully virtuous person, it is not the case that prudence makes claims that are silenced and that fail to constitute reasons. Rather, prudence is prevented from making claims in the first place, insofar as considerations that would otherwise be attractive and on which claims of prudence would be based are set aside. In other words, rather than there being claims of prudence that lack normative force, prudence simply does not make claims. Silencing, on this account, does not amount to the claims of prudence failing to constitute reasons, but instead consists in prudence being prevented from making claims.

The two accounts thus provide different explanations as to why there is no reason to perform actions that conflict with the requirements of virtue/duty. The silencing account based on conditional value holds that, though the actions would make one happy (in the Kantian sense, not the eudaimonistic sense), this would have no value and hence no normative force. The McDowellian account of silencing holds that performing such actions would not make one happy, which means that, for the fully virtuous person, there will be harmony between desire and virtue, between prudence and morality. Whilst the former involves merely the absence of value, the latter also involves the absence of the ground.

This type of harmony between prudence and morality would solve the dualism of practical reason for fully virtuous agents. What is unclear though is what happens in the case of persons that fail to be fully virtuous. Whilst it is clear that there is no motivational silencing, i.e. there is temptation and struggle, it is not clear whether there is meant to be normative silencing. On the one hand, if there is normative silencing, then it becomes rather difficult to see by what mechanism this could be explained. Silencing could neither be explained by holding that the ground is absent, since only in the

case of the fully virtuous person (but not the merely continent person) is the desire absent, nor by holding that there is a condition on happiness being valuable that fails to be satisfied, since this presupposes a theory of conditional value. On the other hand, if there is no normative silencing, then the solution to the dualism of practical reason would be limited, in that it would only work if everyone were fully virtuous.<sup>32</sup>

The difference in mechanism leads to a difference in terms of how these accounts can make sense of the idea that morality can require us to make sacrifices and that doing what is commanded by morality may involve a genuine loss. It would seem that giving up happiness in order to comply with morality should classify as a sacrifice, and that it would be in some sense reasonable for the agent to regret having to set considerations of happiness aside. The problem is that if prudence is silenced and there is no reason to perform actions conflicting with virtue, then there is no loss. However, the idea that there is something to be regretted can be rendered intelligible on the conditional value account. In particular, one can hold that, rather than regretting having failed to take the impermissible option, which would be problematic since any resulting happiness would have lacked value and hence would have failed to constitute a genuine gain, what is to be regretted is not being able to realise the end in a permissible manner. That is, even though realising the end would not be good if it were achieved impermissibly, it would constitute a genuine gain if it were achieved in a permissible manner. In this way, the agent can regret being required by the moral constraints to refrain from realising an end that is such that its permissible realisation would classify as a genuine gain. The agent has to give up something that is agreeable and that would be good were the condition of its value satisfied. Insofar as there is something that is agreeable, the non-evaluative ground is present, and it simply happens to be the case that the condition is not satisfied, as a result of which it fails to be good. The McDowellian account, however, cannot use this explanation since the removal of the ground ensures that there is nothing agreeable, nothing that is desired, and hence nothing that would be good.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>This situation would be analogous to that considered by Sidgwick, whereby the dualism is overcome as a result of a divinely induced harmony.

<sup>33</sup>It might be suggested that, although the virtuous person does not have to give up something that is agreeable, he has to give up something that would be agreeable, namely having a certain desire. That is, rather than regretting that the desire cannot be satisfied in a permissible manner, he would be regretting that the situation was such that one could not (in a manner compatible with the requirements of virtue) have this desire. However, the desire in question should not be salient in any way to the fully virtuous person since its attractions are 'isolated'. There is hence no reason to regret not having this particular desire. There is nothing that would occasion this regret and that would single out this desire in particular. Moreover, purely counterfactual facts as to what the person would have desired had he not been morally constrained in this way are too

One further difference between the accounts regards the precise nature of the conditions under which prudence is silenced. The Kantian account has broader scope as a result of explaining normative silencing in terms of conditional values. More precisely, it involves silencing not just of the commands of prudence, but also silencing of prudential evaluations. This is due to the fact that the condition is not, in the first place, concerned with how happiness is acquired. This means that the condition is not characterised in terms of features of the action leading to happiness, in particular whether the action is permissible or impermissible. Instead, it is characterised in terms of features of the agent, in particular whether the agent has a good will or a bad will.<sup>34</sup> There is thus a difference between characterising the condition in terms of, on the one hand, happiness not being impermissibly acquired, and, on the other, happiness being had by someone who has a good will. This is important since the Kantian can in this way also avoid conflicts between morality and prudence in evaluating states of affairs, and not only avoid conflicts in deliberating about how to act. In other words, conflicts are not just avoided when it comes to oughts, but also to betterness judgements involving states of the person. For instance, when a person compares, not from a deliberative but rather from a purely evaluative perspective, a situation in which he or she is happy but has a bad will with a situation characterised by being unhappy but having a good will, the latter will be judged to be morally better. Given the Kantian account, the two situations will not be comparable from the point of view of prudential value, since the condition on happiness being valuable fails to be satisfied in the former case. Accordingly, conflicts are avoided and the unindexed betterness relation will rank the latter situation above the former. By contrast, an account that is specified in terms of features of actions, and that is based, not on a theory of conditional value, but on how a virtuous person deliberates, may well judge the former to be prudentially better than the latter (since one is not adopting a deliberative standpoint, and since, moreover, the happiness may have been acquired in a permissible manner, insofar as it might simply be the result of luck, or due to the actions of other people, rather than due to impermissible behaviour on the part of the agent), thereby resulting in conflicting evaluations that cannot be integrated into a coherent ordering. If silencing is restricted to reasons for action, but does not apply to axiological evaluations, then it will only remove the conflict between prudential and moral oughts, but not the conflict between prudential and moral betterness orderings.

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remote and do not underwrite any actual regret but, at best, a disposition to regret.

<sup>34</sup>The account takes features of the action into consideration in a derivative manner, insofar as acting impermissibly entails that the person has a bad will and that the condition on the value of happiness consequently fails to be satisfied.

## 7 Conclusion

Thus, we have seen that the Kantian commitment to value dualism seems to invite the Sidgwickian problem of the dualism of practical reason, but that this predicament can be avoided by means of the Kantian conditionality thesis. Despite there not being any way of ordering or trading-off moral and prudential value, due to the absence of a further standpoint that subsumes these fundamentally heterogeneous types of values and of which they could be understood as being mere restrictions, it is possible to have a complete ordering by employing a deflationary construal of the unindexed betterness relation. This is possible since the conditionality of the value of happiness ensures that there cannot be conflicts between prudence and morality and that, consequently, no trade-offs need to be made across the different types of values. Given that no conflicts can arise (whether at the level of deliberation or evaluation), a disjunctive construal of the unindexed betterness relation allows us to order all states of affairs in a coherent manner. In this way, it is possible to address the Sidgwickian dualism of practical reason by means of a Kantian dualist conditional value structure. Moreover, since the question as to what one ought to do, considering all the normative demands to which one is subject, requires either that these demands be commensurable, which presupposes monism, or that these demands never conflict, which can only be ensured in principle by means of conditional value structures, we can see that the Kantian understanding of silencing is the only way of rendering dualism coherent.<sup>35</sup>

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