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Setting Ends for Oneself through Reason

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I

Kantians often talk about the capacity to set ends for oneself through reason and those who do assume that Kant regarded the capacity to set ends as a rational power or a component of practical reason. 'Natural perfection', Kant says, 'is the *cultivation* of any *capacities* whatever for furthering ends set forth by reason', and he refers to 'humanity' as the 'capacity to set oneself any end at all' or 'the capacity to realize all sorts of possible ends'.[1] 'Humanity' comprises the full range of human rational capacities, one of which is the capacity to adopt a wide variety of ends, including ends that are not morally required by pure practical reason.[2] Likewise Kant refers to 'culture' as 'the aptitude and skill for all sorts of ends for which he can use nature (internal and external)', or as 'the production of the aptitude of a rational being for any ends in general (thus those of his freedom).'[3] Christine Korsgaard characterizes 'humanity' as follows:

> the distinctive feature of humanity, *as such*, is simply the capacity to take
> a rational interest in something: to decide, under the influence of reason,

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[1] Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, in Kant 1996: 6: 391–2. (Citations to Kant's works will be given by volume and page number in the Royal Prussian (later German) Academy edition, which are found in the margins of most English translations.) The two characterizations of humanity translate, respectively, *das Vermögen, sich überhaupt irgend einen Zweck zu setzten* and *das Vermögen zu Ausführung allerlei möglicher Zwecke*.

[2] For discussion of the different rational capacities that fall under 'humanity', see Thomas E. Hill (1992: 38–41).

[3] Kant 2000: 5:430, 431. The two characterizations of 'culture' [*Kultur*] translate *die Tauglichkeit und Geschicklichkeit zu allerlei Zwecken* and *die Hervorbringung der Tauglichkeit eines vernünftigen Wesens zu beliebigen Zwecken überhaupt*. I take it that in the latter '*beliebigen*' has the connotation of 'arbitrary' or 'discretionary'. I think that it is clear that *Kultur* includes the capacity to set all kinds of ends, not

that something is desirable, that it is worthy of pursuit or realization, that it is to be deemed important or valuable, not because it contributes to survival or instinctual satisfaction, but as an end—for its own sake. It is this capacity that the Formula of Humanity commands us to treat … as an end in itself.[4]   (1996: 114)

Although some of Kant's discussions may suggest that the adoption of non-moral ends does not fall under the purview of practical reason, I think that on balance the texts indicate that it does, though I will not argue for that claim here.[5] Moreover, there are philosophical reasons for holding that the capacity to set ends is an aspect of practical reason, especially within a Kantian framework.

In this paper I try to say something about what it is to set non-moral or discretionary ends for oneself through reason. Specifically, what role does

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just those that are morally required, and that Kant regards it as a rational capacity. (See, e.g., 5:431 (¶2), where Kant associates possession of reason with a 'capacity to set voluntary ends for oneself' (*sich selbst willkürliche Zwecke zu setzen*).) In this section of the *Critique of Judgement*, Kant distinguishes human happiness from the 'culture of the human being', then subdivides the latter into the 'culture of skill', which is concerned with the ability to achieve one's ends, and the 'culture of training' (*Kultur der Zucht*) or 'discipline'. The culture of training is directed at the willing of ends ('promoting the will in the determination and choice of its ends, which however is essential for an aptitude for ends'). Specifically, it involves 'liberation of the will from the despotism of desires, by which we are made … incapable of choosing for ourselves', and makes us receptive to ends that go beyond those given by inclination, under which Kant seems to include 'beautiful arts and sciences' (5:432, 433). Kant describes the culture of training as 'negative' and he articulates no positive principle or standard for evaluating ends, by which this capacity is guided. However the idea that cultivation of the capacity to will ends involves *discipline* fits well with the procedural account of practical reason developed in section II.

[4] Likewise Allen Wood recognizes that humanity includes the full range of rational capacities, but stresses the centrality of the capacity to set ends through reason. See Wood 1999: 118–20.

[5] Jens Timmermann (2006: 69–93) has recently argued against the prevailing reading of 'humanity' as a rational capacity to set ends in general. He takes Kant's view to be that non-moral ends are determined by inclination, that practical reason plays only an instrumental role in their pursuit, and that non-moral ends are set freely only in the derivative sense that we are free to reject on moral grounds any end proposed by inclination. On his view humanity is the capacity to set morally obligatory ends (2006: 80–5). He suggests that the reading of humanity as a capacity to set ends in general is encouraged by Mary Gregor's misleading translation of *das Vermögen, sich überhaupt irgend einen Zweck zu setzten* (*Metaphysics of Morals* 6: 391–2) in a key sentence that he renders as: 'The capacity at all to set oneself an end is what characterizes humanity' (p. 91, note 37). Though there is some textual evidence to support the narrower interpretation of 'humanity' (and the view that practical reason plays no role in setting non-moral ends), I am not persuaded by Timmermann's reading; in particular I do not see how the sentence just cited indicates this narrower reading on its own. It seems to me that Kant's remarks about 'culture' from the *Critique of Judgement* (discussed in note 3 above), in conjunction with the remarks about 'humanity' in the *Metaphysics of Morals*, provide fairly conclusive grounds for thinking that practical reason plays some role in setting non-moral ends and that it is this capacity that Kant refers to as 'humanity'. However, I do not try to resolve the interpretive issue in this paper. I am interested in outlining a Kantian account of the role that practical reason plays in setting non-moral ends, Kant's actual views aside.

practical reason play in an agent's adoption, commitment to, or endorsement of such ends and values? In pursuing this question, I have in mind final ends and values that are adopted for their own sake (but which may be a part of an agent's conception of happiness), and that are in some way significant to the agent. They include more or less serious activities that require some undertaking or degree of commitment, for example, planning a trip (a trip down the Amazon, or walking the *campostella*) or a decision to devote more of one's available time to some activity (playing the piano, hiking with friends, reading literature). They include taking on a project or some ongoing activity (learning to bake bread, improving one's Italian, involvement in one's neighbourhood association, writing a book). They include ends with a lasting impact on the shape of one's life that provide the material of life-defining projects (the decision to have children, to get serious about a relationship or to end one, to embark on a significant change in one's career). Among the common features of such ends are that we regard them as in some way worthwhile and can articulate the reasons for their appeal; they are to differing degrees important to the individuals who undertake them, and, as one's ends, they provide one with reasons for structuring choice and action in certain ways over some period of time. Ends of this sort are also chosen out of one's interest in them—say, because one finds the end satisfying or enjoyable, it enhances the quality of one's life, or it answers to a personal need. What is important for my purposes is that the ends are discretionary or, from the point of view of reason, optional.

The idea of 'setting' an end for oneself is admittedly artificial in so far as it implies a discrete act of choice or commitment. Sometimes we do take on new ends through conscious choice: wanting to do something new, you decide to embark on a new career path or take up an entirely different line of research. Perhaps it is more common to 'fall into' having certain ends. You become drawn to some activity out of interest and, over time, you find that it is important to you and has become one of your ends. An intermediate case (along the spectrum of self-consciousness) is that you realize at some point that a certain activity is important to you and you decide to take it more seriously, thereby endorsing and affirming it. I'll use the phrase 'setting oneself an end' to cover consciously adopting an end, as well as endorsing or affirming an end in which one finds that one has an interest, and which may already have a role in structuring one's actions and choices over time.[6]

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[6] Thomas E. Hill, Jr, addresses the worry that the talk of adopting ends through deliberate choice is too rationalistic, therefore psychologically implausible; see 'Personal Values and Setting Oneself Ends', in Hill 2002: 268–72.

In this context, ends that are discretionary and rationally optional raise questions that do not arise with ends that are rationally required (such as prudence) or morally required. If the capacity to set ends is a rational power, then presumably practical reason is involved both in deliberation about the choiceworthiness of ends and in their adoption. If there are ends that are required by practical reason (on moral or other grounds), to adopt such an end through reason is to make it one's own end for the reasons why it is required. In such cases, practical reason in some way prescribes an end, so that failure to take an interest in it is contrary to reason. One rationally adopts the end by taking the considerations that explain why it is required as one's reasons for freely making it one's end.

But there is consensus that Kant did not think that there are any non-moral final ends that are required by reason, and most Kantians follow him on this point. Thomas E. Hill, Jr, has argued persuasively for this thesis in a number of papers. According to Hill, Kant, like Hume, denies that there are 'substantive (or "material") principles of practical reason', where a substantive principle of practical reason 'requires the adoption of certain specific ends or values such as pleasure, the avoidance of pain, power, peace of mind, satisfaction of desire and the like' or declares such ends 'intrinsically worth pursuing.'[7] Likewise, he stresses that Kant does not recognize intrinsic values as non-natural properties that are intuited or rationally grasped as inherently reason giving, independently of their relation to human interests.[8] But if an end that one sets for oneself is not specified by reason in some substantive fashion, what role does practical reason, as opposed to desire or subjective interest, play in its adoption? Kant thinks that ends are always adopted through free choice,[9] and that choice is guided by reasons. In the case of discretionary final ends, the incentives that we take to be reason-giving are features of objects or activities that interest us in various ways, and the normative pull of these incentives would appear to be due to our nature—as Christine Korsgaard says, there is 'a basic suitableness to us that is a matter of nature and not of reason'.[10] We adopt discretionary final ends and values because they answer to our interests in different ways.[11] But if practical reason does not prescribe an end, one might think that desire or subjective interest for

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[7] 'Pains and Projects: Justifying to Oneself', in Hill 1991: 178, and 'Kant's Theory of Practical Reason', in Hill 1992: 128 ff. See also 'Personal Values and Setting Oneself Ends', in Hill 2002: 268–74.

[8] See 'Happiness and Human Flourishing', in Hill 2002: 170–1.

[9] *The Metaphysics of Morals*, 6:384–5.

[10] Christine M. Korsgaard 2009: 6.3.1. See also Korsgaard, 1996: 226, 264–8.

[11] Cf. 'Personal Values and Setting Oneself Ends', Hill 2002: 248.

the most part 'sets the end' or that it is set through free and discretionary choice in response to reasons based in an agent's subjective interests. Practical reason, in addition to selecting means, has the charge of constructing a consistent system of ends given in this way by subjective interests, but (beyond checking ends for mutual consistency) what is its contribution to the adoption of ends? Can the Kantian assign practical reason a role in the adoption of ends that goes beyond any that might be allowed by a contemporary Humean (i.e., a Humean who is less globally sceptical of reason than the historical Hume)?

The response to this question that I shall consider is that practical reason contributes formal or procedural constraints on deliberation about and choice of discretionary ends. Hill develops a view of this sort in an essay, 'Pains and Projects: Justifying to Oneself', and it seems implicit in some of the work of Christine Korsgaard, Allen Wood and others. The idea is that to set an end for oneself through reason is to adopt, commit oneself to, or affirm an end through a reflective deliberative process that satisfies various constraints supplied by practical reason. These constraints are 'supplied by' practical reason in the sense that they are internal to or given by the constitutive aims of rational deliberation about ends. Furthermore, I shall argue that in committing oneself to an end through a rational process, one gives the end a distinct normative status that it does not have independently of one's commitment. In other words, through a procedure of rational choice in which one judges an end to be worthwhile and subsequently commits oneself to it, one confers a new normative status on one's end.

The process of setting ends for oneself through reason has two moments that are at least analytically distinct. The first we might call the 'evaluative moment'; it involves assessing the reasons that support adoption of an end. The second can be thought of as the 'moment of commitment'—endorsing or adopting an end that one judges there is good reason to pursue. If setting oneself an end is to qualify as a rational process, practical reason should contribute to each moment. The 'evaluative moment' is needed because setting oneself an end through reason will involve adopting ends for reasons that make them worthy of choice. Though practical reason does not pick out specific substantive ends or values, it can be the source of procedural constraints that the evaluation of discretionary ends must satisfy. Some of these constraints could be fairly thin—they might, for example, include such requirements as that one critically assess the merits of a given end, that one articulate the reasons that seem to support adopting it (or not adopting it), that one's evaluative judgements (about reasons or about the value of ends) be stable over time,

that one check one's evaluative judgements against the judgements of others, and so on.[12] In section II, I discuss a thicker cluster of procedural constraints that Hill has explored in 'Pains and Projects'. A set of procedural constraints of this sort could be justified because satisfying them reliably leads to true judgements about an independent order of reasons and values. However, the view I shall propose is that such procedural constraints are constitutive of correct judgement about reasons and value. Correct or sound judgements of value are those that result from deliberative procedures that incorporate and satisfy various formal constraints, and good reasons are considerations that are treated as reasons in judgements issuing from these reflective procedures.

I shall suggest that the contribution of practical reason to the 'moment of commitment' is to confer a distinct normative status on the object of one's reasoned choice that it does not have independently of one's choosing it. By adopting an end on the basis of a rational process in which one judges that the end is choiceworthy, one creates an additional reason or requirement to pursue the end, over and above the reasons that lead one to think it worth adopting. Evaluation uncovers reasons for thinking that an end is worth adopting, but when one commits oneself to the end, one's relation to the end changes. Once it is one's end, one has additional reason (or is under some requirement) to pursue it. One has a reason to, as it were, keep the end on one's deliberative agenda that analytically contains reasons to take some effective means, and that reason remains in force until one rescinds one's decision to adopt the end. Alternatively, by rationally adopting the end, one gives oneself the normative requirement of pursuing the end and keeping it on one's deliberative agenda—a requirement that, again, analytically contains the requirement to take some effective means and that remains in force until one rescinds one's commitment to the end.

The idea that practical reason supplies formal or procedural constraints on the evaluation of ends will seem unpersuasive to theorists of practical reason in certain familiar quarters. Humean instrumentalists deny that reason plays any substantive role in the assessment of ends: since there are no rational standards of value governing final ends, there is no rational deliberation about ends. Final ends, and any standards for assessing or reasons for choosing them, are

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[12] Here, see T. M. Scanlon 1998: 64–9. I accept these constraints, and include them in the richer conception developed in section II. I believe that Scanlon understands them as, as it were, epistemological constraints on the evaluation of ends. I want to argue in addition that they determine what makes ends valuable. That is, ultimately there is no distinction to be drawn between the process by which we judge that a consideration is a good reason supporting an end and what makes the consideration a good reason, or between our 'epistemological access' to, and the 'truth conditions' of claims about, reasons.

given by desire and the workings of our psychology. Or, if reason plays a non-instrumental role in the selection of ends, it is to ascertain the facts about one's alternatives and one's interests; for example, it may direct accurate imaginative presentation of the features of prospective ends and the consequences of their adoption that is aimed at determining the relative strengths of one's interests. The adoption of ends may be reflective, but since it is not a matter of practical reason, there is no call for practical reason to supply formal constraints, and no philosophical issue to be resolved by supposing that it does.

The rational intuitionist, by contrast, claims that there are objective, desire-independent standards for assessing ends that are discoverable by reflection, but, contra the Kantian view just sketched, insists that these standards are substantive, not procedural. Some ends are objectively choiceworthy or valuable, and rational reflection uncovers reason to take an interest in or appreciate them—a reason that does not depend on an individual's actual responses and dispositions. The job of practical reason is to recognize and weigh these reasons, determine the balance of reasons, and choose accordingly. Granted, an intrinsically worthwhile end may leave one cold, either due to one's temperament and aptitudes or because of some appreciative deficit, and it may well be that it only makes sense to adopt an end if it engages you.[13] In that sense, the ends one has reason to adopt may depend on how one is moved by various possibilities. But the reasons in virtue of which an end has value are independent normative facts that it is the business of reason to discern and respond to.[14]

Despite these concerns, there are reasons to explore what a Kantian view about the evaluation of non-moral ends would look like—in particular, to see whether it provides a genuine alternative to a Humean approach, once one rejects self-evident principles of intrinsic value or brands of value realism associated with rational intuitionism. Beyond that, it will be a point in favour of the Kantian alternative if it can capture portions of what is plausible in both the Humean and intuitionist approaches. The idea that practical reason supplies procedural constraints on the evaluation of ends shares certain starting assumptions with the Humean—that arguments for material or substantive principles of practical reason are problematic, and that the pull of non-moral ends and activities deemed intrinsically valuable is rooted in desire and interest. But it will end up being able to say most of what the intuitionist wants to say—for example, that various features of an end can be reasons to take an interest in it, that rational reflection can ground shared judgements

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[13] Cf. Scanlon 1998: 48–9

[14] By 'independent normative facts', I mean facts about reasons or value that are independent of our responses or dispositions to respond and of the operation of our cognitive faculties.

about reasons and value, and that some ends and activities are objectively choiceworthy while others are not. It thus preserves the idea, rejected by the Humean, that non-instrumental forms of practical reasoning go into the evaluation of ends. The Kantian approach goes beyond intuitionism, however, by telling a story about how features of ends and activities initially picked out by human interests can take on the status of reasons that support the judgement that an end has value or is worth choosing. Roughly (as I argue in section II), procedural constraints on the evaluation of ends establish a normative standpoint that fixes the normative force of considerations presenting themselves as reasons for interest in an end and that makes possible shared judgements of value.

The thesis that commitment to an end can create an additional reason (or normative requirement) to pursue the end will likewise face some resistance, but I attempt to develop this thesis in a way that connects it to basic features of rational agency (section III).

The idea that rational choice confers a new normative status on its object is found in many Kantian accounts of practical reason and value. A well-known example is Christine Korsgaard's view that rational choice 'makes its object good' and thus has a 'value conferring status'.[15] In much of her work she supports (as a reading of Kant) the strong thesis that an agent's rational adoption of an end gives it a normative status for others by creating reasons for any rational agent to bring it about.[16] But she has also suggested that commitment to an end gives it a normative status for the agent: 'your willing an end gives it a normative status for you … your willing the end in a sense makes it good' (Korsgaard 1997: 246).[17] Although Hill rejects

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[15] 'Kant's Formula of Humanity', Korsgaard 1996: 122. See also Korsgaard 2009: 6.3.1.

[16] See 'Kant's Formula of Humanity', Korsgaard 1996: 116–19. On the reading that Korsgaard gives of the claim that humanity is an end in itself in this essay (and in other essays in *Creating the Kingdom of Ends*), Kant's argument relies on the assumption that in acting for some end, we 'suppose that our end is, in his sense, objectively good' (1996: 116). What sense of 'objectively good' is that? As she indicates a few pages later, if an end is objectively good 'it is fully justified and the reasons for it are sufficient. Every rational being has a reason to bring it about' (1996: 119). Her view that rational nature has value-conferring status, then, is the claim that rational choice of some end confers a strong notion of objective value that makes it good from anyone's point of view that one achieve one's end, and in a way that grounds demands on others. Allen Wood agrees with Korsgaard on these points; see Wood 1999: 127–30. In my view, the thesis that rational nature has value-conferring status combines several different elements worth distinguishing, but space does not permit further discussion here.

[17] It is worth noting that in this same paragraph, Korsgaard also claims that in willing an end, you give yourself a law—the law of pursuing that end. It seems to me that here she fails to distinguish between the idea that willing an end makes it good and the idea that in willing an end, one gives oneself the law of pursuing that end. I think that she ought to make the latter claim, and in section III I offer a way to unpack the idea that in willing an end, one gives oneself a law. For further discussion of Korsgaard's views along these lines, see David Sussman 2003: 357–61, esp. note 28.

Korsgaard's strong thesis, he takes Kant to accept some version of the thesis that rational choice confers value on its objects: 'Kant's view [about the value of ends], as I understand it, is that things are good or valuable by virtue of being the objects of rational willing, and what it is rational to will is not a question that can be settled entirely by empirical means—or by intuition.'[18]

Many people are drawn to some form of this view, but it can be put in a way that is open to obvious objections. For example, it is hard to see how rational choice could make its object good in a standard sense of 'good', since for a choice to be rational, it must be responsive to features or desirability characteristics of an object that are reasons for judging it to be good. Understood in a certain way, the idea that rational choice confers value threatens to make choice arbitrary, or to make the idea of rational choice incoherent.[19] I shall defend the idea that rationally adopting an end gives it a distinct normative status for oneself, but my claim is not that rational choice 'makes its object good'—i.e., that individual acts of rational choice confer *value* on their objects. I accept a relational account of value, according to which objects have value in relation to human interests and the functioning of our cognitive and practical faculties—e.g., that features of objects take on the status of reasons that make them worth choosing in relation to human interests and patterns of response, and through the way in which responses of interest are taken up into practical consciousness. But that is not to say that value is conferred by individual acts of choice. However, I argue further that, in adopting or committing yourself to an end, you give yourself an additional reason, or impose on yourself the requirement, to pursue the end and keep it on your deliberative agenda. In this way, acts of rational choice do confer normative status, though not by making their objects good.

I shall now outline a view about the contribution of practical reason to the adoption of discretionary ends, first to the 'evaluative moment' (section II) and then to the 'moment of commitment' (section III).

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[18] Hill, 'Happiness and Human Flourishing', in Hill 2002: 171. For his critical discussion of the thesis that agents are committed to the objective value of their personal ends, see 'Personal Values and Setting Oneself Ends', in Hill 2002: 251−68.

[19] Donald H. Regan raises these objections forcefully in Regan 2002. See especially pp. 273−4, 288−9, where he suggests that the ideas of rational choice and agency make no sense unless they are guided by external standards that are independent of, or not created by, the agent's choices. He suggests that such standards presuppose objective values of the sort assumed by rational intuitionism or perfectionism. Korsgaard, by the way, recognizes that rational choice must be responsive to features of its objects, though I think that she has expressed her views in ways that have invited misunderstanding.

II

Hill's essay 'Pains and Projects: Justifying to Oneself'[20] sketches a project of 'deep deliberation' about personal or non-moral final ends that provides an entrée into a role that practical reason can play in the evaluation of ends, once one abandons the idea of substantive principles of practical reason or intrinsic values understood as independent normative facts in the intuitionist sense. In this section I present and then extend Hill's Kantian account of deliberation about non-moral ends. The thought that I draw from his essay is that the task, or constitutive aim, of rationally assessing final ends yields a set of procedural constraints on deliberation that are the contribution of practical reason to the 'evaluative moment' of setting oneself an end. I will be using (and extending) Hill's account of 'deep deliberation' about final ends to illustrate the idea that practical reason supplies procedural constraints on the evaluation of ends. However, what is important for my purposes is the overall shape of such a view, not whether the view put forward here is correct in all its details.

The aim of what Hill calls 'deep deliberation' about final ends is to determine of some proposed end whether it is really worth pursuing, or what priority it is sensibly assigned in one's system of ends, by assessing the reasons that support its adoption or endorsement. Since the task is the rational assessment of ends, the search for reasons is not just a matter of discovering facts about the relative strengths of one's desires and enduring preferences. The presumption is that, even if reasons for ends have a basis in one's interests, their proper weight is not fixed by one's interests independently of one's judgement.[21] More importantly, good reasons for adopting an end will stand up to certain kinds of critical reflection over time, and by agents generally. Deep deliberation about ends does not simply seek reasons that explain the choice of some end—e.g., reasons that make one's choice of an end intelligible to some third party who might then reject it as lacking any value. Rather it calls for reasons that justify the end as a sensible human pursuit worth devoting one's energies to.

Hill specifies the aim of this form of deliberation further by listing two aspects of justification that answer to different features of rational assessment.

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[20] Ch. 12 of Hill 1991, hereafter PP, with page references given in the text.

[21] One might think that this claim simply begs the question against the Humean, who insists that reasons for ends can only be based on the relative strengths of desires and enduring preferences. The Kantian response is that since, as common sense agrees, there are many examples of desires that have no weight as reasons, desires per se have no inherent reason-giving force. If *corrected* desires always have some rational weight, that is because they have been subject to a process of reflective scrutiny that is *authoritative* in the sense that it confers rational weight on them. But this is the seed of the view under development here, namely that reasons are considerations that are treated as reasons in an authoritative procedure of judgement.

First, since the concern is with the worth of *personal* ends, moral considerations apart, one need not answer to others for one's choices. Thus the aim (or value) inherent in deliberation about ends is to find reasons that justify the adoption of an end to oneself. Since the concern to justify choices to a person manifests respect for that person, this aspect of deliberation may be understood as the principle of adopting ends on grounds that respect oneself as an agent (PP 185). Second, agents 'will not affirm a prospective choice … unless they are reflectively satisfied with *what the choice reveals (or makes) of themselves* as agents' (PP 176). Rational assessment requires cognizance of the fact that one is choosing long-term ends, projects, and values that shape the kind of person one is and the life that one leads. The rational deliberator will view himself both as the author of a part of his life, and, since he is the one who leads that life, as the person with standing to serve as its reflective critic. Assessment of prospective ends should thus proceed in light of the fact that one answers to oneself for what one makes of oneself. In this way, justification to oneself is specified by taking into account one's responsibility for and to oneself for making oneself the person that one is. This aspect of deliberation introduces the concern to make certain kinds of discriminations among ends, to consider the relative worth of prospective ends, and to give due weight to ends and values that one will regard as humanly worthwhile (PP 184, 187).

Hill concludes:

> The alleged 'end' or 'value' I presume deep deliberators to have, as implicit in the questions they raise, is just the procedural second-order concern that one's choices, whatever their content, are capable of surviving a kind of deeply reflective critical scrutiny of and by oneself. Kant, I take it, would not call a person a fully 'rational' agent if that person utterly lacked this concern; and though the term 'rational' has its various uses, I suspect that there is some sense in which most of us would endorse Kant's assessment.   (PP 178)

Once we factor in the identity of the person over time, justification to oneself takes the form of considering whether reasons that support the adoption of an end now 'can withstand one's own critical self-scrutiny not merely now but at later times as well' (PP 186). In other words, one must at the time of choice consider whether one will at various points in time be reflectively satisfied with what commitment to an end makes of oneself.[22]

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[22] See PP 184, 187. Cf. also Rawls's account of 'deliberative rationality'. He ties the different elements of deliberative rationality together in what he terms a principle of responsibility to self—Rawls 1999: 370–1.

As I understand it, Hill's proposal is that if the considerations that one takes to support an end stand up to critical self-scrutiny, and one is, and at different points in time will be, reflectively satisfied with one's choice, then the considerations that appear to favour the end are indeed good reasons to value or to adopt the end. (That means that one can reasonably judge that there are good reasons to adopt an end if one is justified in thinking that one will be reflectively satisfied with one's choice.) Good reasons for an end are considerations that are judged to be good reasons in critical reflection that satisfies certain formal or procedural constraints. One constraint introduced by reflective satisfaction is that commitment to an end should give adequate weight to future needs and interests, including one's interest in exercising the capacity to evaluate and adopt ends, so that one will not later reproach oneself for that commitment.[23] The more substantial condition is that one be reflectively satisfied over time with what commitment to an end makes (or reveals) of oneself. This condition leads (among other things) to a focus on the qualities of the end. One has reason to be satisfied with what commitment to an end makes of oneself if it is a worthwhile end—for example, if it makes good use of one's human capacities or has features that elicit the appreciation and admiration of others.[24] Even though the constraint on deliberation is that one will be reflectively satisfied with *oneself* at different points in time, concern with the worth of an end in this way takes us into intersubjective territory. If an end is worthwhile, it can be appreciated by other reflective agents, even those who do not have reason to adopt it given various facts about their interests, aptitudes, and so on. So this constraint requires the deliberating agent to give some weight to the

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[23] Cf. Rawls 1999: 370.

[24] Hill writes: 'one reviews potential choices not only as choices that will produce certain experiences and external results, but also as choices that will be *hers* and will partly constitute the sort of agent she will be. Thus to withstand reflective self–scrutiny one must consider not only what outcomes one prefers, apart from how they came about, but also *who* brought it about, and why, and what one thinks of oneself for having done so … [W]hat is chosen must be an option that, all considered, the agent can accept without self-disapproval and in full awareness that the choice itself … [is] the agent's own' (PP 177). Although considering what commitment to an end makes of oneself leads to a focus on the qualities of an end, it is not just a heuristic for assessing a set of independent normative facts. Hill's view, I take it, is that whether one has reason to be satisfied with oneself depends on the qualities of an end, but considering what an end makes of oneself gives one a handle on and generates criteria for assessing the qualities of an end.

Reflective satisfaction with oneself turns on other factors beyond the worth of an end, for example, whether the end is a good fit given one's aptitudes, resources, opportunities, or whether one assigns it the right priority, etc. You might be dissatisfied with what an end makes of you because, though a worthy human end, it was not a good fit for you, or because it demanded more commitment than you could manage. To simplify, I set aside such factors and limit my attention to the connections between reflective satisfaction and the worth of ends.

judgements of others about the value of an end and to consider whether the end is supported by reasons or has features that can lead others to endorse or appreciate it.[25]

These points should make it clear that the question of reflective satisfaction with oneself is a normative question. The issue is whether you have reason to be satisfied with yourself, and that is determined by considering whether you are and will be satisfied with yourself after critical reflection on the end from different points of view. *Reflective* satisfaction with one's choice is a stable attitude that results from critical scrutiny of the merits of an end, and of what commitment to an end makes of oneself, from the point of view of oneself at different times and from the point of view of others.[26]

The thesis, then, is that practical reason supplies a set of procedural constraints on the evaluation of ends. Considerations that appear to support the value of an end are good reasons to value or adopt an end if they stand up to critical self-scrutiny (are sufficient to justify adoption of an end to oneself). An end is worthwhile if one is and will be reflectively satisfied with one's choice—one will not reproach oneself for one's commitment and will be satisfied with what it makes of oneself. The judgement of reflective satisfaction is to be stable, and, among other things, gives weight to the evaluative judgements of others. Practical reason 'supplies' these constraints in the sense that they unfold out of the constitutive aim of the rational assessment of ends.

[25] As the previous note suggests, one can distinguish between the reasons for judging an end to be a worthy human end and the reasons for making it one's own end. Given that distinction, I am inclined to hold that that if an end is worthwhile, it has features that are reasons for any reflective agent to appreciate its value, even agents for whom it is not a sensible end. This assumption about value introduces the constraint that one gives some weight to the judgements of others about the value of an end. In part, this is a way of gaining critical distance on your initial assessment of an end, and thus bears on whether your judgement that you will be reflectively satisfied with your choice is reasonable. But if judgements of value are inherently sharable, checking one's judgements against those of others is part of determining whether an end has value, and thus whether one has reason to be reflectively satisfied with one's choice.

Of course, to say that value is inherently sharable is not to claim that sound judgements of value will in fact be shared by others in practice. An agent who found that those around him did not share his judgements of value could reasonably conclude, after giving due weight to their judgements, that he sees qualities in an end which they are missing. Furthermore, since the aim of the form of deliberation under discussion is to determine whether the considerations that support an end justify it to yourself, you need not *answer* to others for your commitment to an end.

[26] Thanks to John Skorupski for pressing me to clarify this point. He also asks whether a criminal could be reflectively satisfied with what his criminal commitments have made of himself, so that his ends satisfy the criterion of reflective satisfaction. I don't see that this is ruled out as long as his choices are intelligible to others in certain ways and are supported by considerations that others can recognize as reasons. (For example, his criminal pursuits might display otherwise admirable traits such as cunning, skill, courage, single-mindedness, and so on.) This is not a problem for a Kantian view since ends and activities are not fully good unless they satisfy certain moral criteria. But that is not an issue I pursue here.

In so far as one is rationally assessing an end, one aims to determine whether it is worth pursuing by assessing the reasons that support its adoption. Specifying this aim—in conjunction with a conception of the self as identical over time and responsible to and for itself—leads to the above procedural constraints, which serve as guiding norms for this form of assessment. In this way the constitutive aim of the rational assessment of ends is the source of its own internal norms.[27]

By supplying these procedural constraints, practical reason establishes a normative standpoint that imposes form on a deliberator's assessment of the reason-giving force of various incentives and makes it a rational process—understanding 'incentives' here (in the current Kantian usage) as features of ends and activities that, because they elicit interest in these ends given our nature, present themselves as reasons in their favour. The standard of reflective satisfaction with one's choice enables one to gain critical distance on one's initial take on the appeal of an end or the force of certain reasons. It thus introduces the possibility of correcting one's assessments and, since it requires giving weight to the evaluative judgements of others, the possibility of shared or intersubjective judgements about reasons and value. As one might say, it creates the possibility of normalized responses. In sum, the various procedural constraints introduce standards of judgement that transform what might otherwise be the registering of one's (possibly changing) interest-based responses into a process of rational assessment.

At this point one might question whether this account of rational assessment appeals only to procedural standards. We have assumed that one has reason to be satisfied with what commitment to an end makes of oneself if the end is worthwhile. Indeed, reflective satisfaction with oneself would appear arbitrary unless based in some judgement about the qualities or merits of an end. For this reason the rational intuitionist will object that concern with the worth of ends is incoherent without the kinds of substantive standards of value that the

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[27] As I understand it here, the constitutive aim of an activity is an aim that one has in so far as one engages in that activity, or that one must have if what one does is to count as an instance of that activity. So if one is rationally assessing prospective ends, or engaged in 'deep deliberation' about ends in Hill's sense, one aims to determine their worth. My point here is that the constitutive aim of rational assessment yields procedural standards that serve as (internal) norms guiding deliberation about the worth of ends. In that case, one is committed to following these norms in so far as one thinks of oneself as rationally assessing ends. This line of thought has not established that a concern with the worth of ends is a necessary component of practical reason (a concern that any rational agent must have), but as Hill notes in the passage cited above (from PP 178), it is natural to think that rational agents have this concern.

One further thought here: if the capacity to assess final ends is the source of its own guiding norms, the capacity is a law to itself and in that respect is an autonomous capacity. For discussion of this idea in relation to Kant's moral principle, see ch. 4 in Reath 2006, esp. section IV.

Kantian wishes to avoid. Rational assessment of the worth of ends presupposes independent standards of value, and the role of rational procedures is merely to focus our thought on the independent normative facts.

The Kantian can deflect this objection by claiming that good reasons for ends and standards of value are *constituted* by a procedure of assessment that satisfies these formal constraints. The procedural constraints establish a normative standpoint that determines what count as good reasons for ends and fixes their reason-giving weight, and in so doing they establish standards of value. Roughly, good reasons for adopting (or appreciating) an end are considerations that are judged to be good reasons in critical reflection that satisfies the procedural constraints supplied by practical reason, and the weight of such reasons is the weight that they are assigned through such reflection.

Developing an argument for this thesis is a tall order, but consider the following story about how interest-based responses are transformed into judgements that can be assessed as correct or incorrect, reasonable or unreasonable. Interest in an end is initiated on the ground when some feature of an end attracts or exerts some pull because it answers to an agent's antecedent (and subjective) desires and dispositions. In rational agents, incentives are experienced in a certain way: they present themselves as apparent reasons in favour of some end. [Stage 1] Here one might say that the normative relation of 'being a reason for' is a structure imposed on practical experience and the field of interest, through which items are taken up and connected in practical consciousness. The practical experience of rational agents is structured by a tendency to see various features of objects as reasons. An item's presenting itself as an apparent reason, or the tendency to see a feature of an end as a reason in its favour, is not yet a judgement of value. It is rather a pre-judgemental response whose 'material', if you will, is in a form that lends itself to being made the basis of a judgement. The judgement that a consideration is a good reason for an end, or endorsing it as a reason, requires some standards and a more elaborate normative standpoint. At this point the procedural standards of practical reason come into play. [Stage 2] A reflective procedure incorporating these formal constraints establishes a normative standpoint that introduces standards of judgement and the possibility of judgements that are correct or incorrect, on or off the mark.[28]

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[28] I follow Scanlon's (in my judgement very Kantian) view that desiring an object involves a tendency to see something good or desirable about the object. See Scanlon 1998: 37–41 ff. Scanlon distinguishes four different stages in the 'consideration of a reason' (1998: 65). I am concerned here with how one gets from the first stage at which a consideration seems to be a reason for a judgement sensitive attitude to the second stage (or 'first critical stage') at which one decides whether it really is a reason. Scanlon also addresses just the right question about changes in our judgements about reasons that follow from

A key feature of this view is that the normative standpoint does not simply shape a careful deliberator's actual assessment of considerations that present themselves as reasons, though it certainly does this much. In the absence of substantive principles of practical reason and intrinsic values, the normative standpoint established by the procedural constraints fixes the reason-giving weight of these considerations. Hill accepts this view in 'Pains and Projects'. In a critical discussion of Nagel's claim that physical pains are bad in themselves, he asks whether 'they are inherently reasons for choice rather than reasons by choice' and he concludes the latter: claims about 'intrinsic badness or objective reason-giving force', he suggests, are ways of saying that reflective agents '*do* count severe physical pains as justifying reasons apart from other considerations'. This claim 'does not identify the reason-giving force of severe physical pain as something prior to and independent of the procedural conditions on rational deliberation; it merely asserts that severe pain *is* always counted by us as a justifying reason when we satisfy those constraints' (PP 182, 183). The issue here is whether physical pain is a reason against certain choices, but the point can be extended to any consideration that supports a candidate final end.

The thesis, then, is that the 'objective reason-giving force' of considerations that support the adoption of various ends is the normative force that they would be assigned in a deliberative process that satisfies the procedural constraints supplied by practical reason. The normative force of a (potential) reason is what it is judged to have from this normative standpoint. Good reasons for an end are considerations that are judged to be good reasons in critical reflection that satisfies the formal or procedural constraints supplied by practical reason.

To conclude this discussion of the contribution of practical reason to the 'evaluative moment' of deliberation: I have suggested that it is a structural feature of practical consciousness that incentives are experienced as apparent reasons for taking an interest in potential ends. When critical reflection that incorporates the procedural constraints of practical reason is applied to the tendency to see incentives as reasons, interest-based responses are transformed into a rational process that can issue correct or incorrect judgements. Further, the procedural constraints fix the normative force of the considerations that present themselves as reasons for or against the adoption of various final ends, and thus establish standards of value.

critical reflection: 'Why regard this as a correction of your initial reaction rather than just as a different reaction?' (1998: 66). My suggestion is that the procedural constraints on the evaluation of ends, when applied to considerations that are already presented as apparent reasons, establish a normative standpoint that underwrites confidence in the claim that changes in one's initial reaction are (or at least can be) corrections, and not just different reactions.

III

Let's now turn to what practical reason contributes to the 'moment of commitment' in setting oneself an end. The thought that I wish to explore is that in committing yourself to an end that you have good reason to adopt, you give yourself an additional reason or normative requirement to pursue the end over and above the reasons that make it worth adopting. Committing yourself to an end as a result of a deliberative process in which you judge that it is worth adopting gives that end a new normative status by calling into play the normative requirement that one act on one's intentions and commitments.[29] If this is right, the capacity to set oneself an end may be understood as a kind of normative power. One appealing feature of this idea, if it can be made to work, is that it suggests parallels between the power to set ends and Kantian moral autonomy—Kant's idea that the rational will has the capacity to give itself practical laws—though I won't pursue that point now.

Let me briefly introduce the idea of a normative power, then explain how the power to set oneself an end can be understood as a kind of rational normative power.

A normative power is the power to create reasons and to change the normative situation of oneself and others through one's will. Standard examples are legislative authority and the power of promising. When a legislature exercises its authority to enact a law, it creates 'reasons of authority' for citizens to act in certain ways that do not exist prior to its legislative act. Joseph Raz has drawn attention to two features of such reasons: they are *content-independent reasons* that *exclude the force* of certain kinds of reasons not to perform these actions.[30] Citizens may have good reasons to get yearly safety inspections for their cars (e.g., to protect themselves and others). But once the legislature requires it by law, they have a different kind of reason to have their cars inspected that is independent of the merits of doing so—a content-independent reason. Furthermore, these reasons exclude or pre-empt

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[29] For the concept of a normative requirement see John Broome 2001 and 2004. I vacillate between saying that commitment to an end creates an 'additional reason' to pursue the end and saying that it creates a 'normative requirement' to pursue the end (which remains in force until one rescinds the commitment). So I should explain that what I am calling 'reasons of commitment' are close to normative requirements in Broome's sense (or perhaps a species of them). Certainly they are not *pro tanto* reasons—i.e., substantive considerations that weigh in favour of adopting some end. And since they do not provide this kind of support for pursuing an end (i.e., support that contributes to the 'merits' of an end), I do not believe that the view I sketch here is vulnerable to Michael Bratman's bootstrapping objection. I intend the notion of a reason of commitment to get at structural features of proper rational functioning, as explained at the end of this section.

[30] See Raz 1972 and 1978. See also Raz 1999.

the force of various reasons not to have their cars inspected—e.g., that it is costly, or even that one has found a better way to serve the same social goal. Roughly, reasons of authority settle the question and preclude the need for further deliberation about whether to get an inspection. Likewise, promises create content-independent reasons for the promisor to act as promised that exclude the force of certain kinds of reasons not to perform. The fact that I promised to write a paper for a volume of essays is a 'reason of promissory obligation' to write the paper that is independent of other reasons that I may have, for instance that working on the paper will increase my understanding of the topic. Furthermore, the reasons of promissory obligation exclude the force of certain reasons not to work on the paper, such as the fact that the topic is less interesting to me than I initially thought or that I now prefer to work on a different paper. Again, reasons of promissory obligation, within certain limits, preclude the need for further deliberation on the merits.

Legislative authority and promising are powers that are constituted by various social practices and norms. May we understand the power to set oneself an end as a kind of normative power that is constituted instead by structural norms that are fundamental to rational agency? Here is the idea. In assessing an end, you consider the reasons that favour its adoption and subject them to the reflective scrutiny discussed earlier. Now, judging that it is worth adopting—that is, judging that it is a good end for you and that you will be reflectively satisfied with yourself if you commit to the end—you make it your end. By committing yourself to the end (I claim) you create an additional reason (or requirement) to pursue the end over and above the reasons that make it worth adopting, one that I'll call a 'reason of commitment'. Your adoption of the end is a reason of commitment to pursue the end that analytically contains reasons to take relevant necessary means. In setting yourself the end, you assign it a role or a priority in your overall system of ends, and the fact that you have assigned it this role is a reason for you to pursue it in a way called for by this role. (It is a reason to keep the end in the appropriate place on your volitional agenda.) These claims make sense if, intuitively, the fact that a certain activity is one of our ends (or an end with a particular level of importance) is a reason to engage in or devote time to it—e.g., for creating space for it among other activities when there are obstacles to doing so, or when interest lags.

Reasons of commitment are structurally similar to reasons of authority and reasons of obligation. First, they appear to be content-independent reasons. The idea is that in committing yourself to an end that you judge worthwhile you create a further reason for yourself to pursue the end over and above the reasons based on its merits. The fact that you have made it your end is a reason to give it the role in action that you have assigned it in your overall

system of ends, a reason that analytically contains reasons to take the necessary means. Second, reasons of commitment exclude the force of certain kinds of reasons not to pursue an end. For example, one's commitment to an end is a reason to pursue the end that rules out considerations such as present lack of interest, the effort required by the end, distraction or the press of other interests as legitimate reasons for inaction.[31] In this respect, reasons of commitment are desire-independent: their normative force is not tied to your present level of enthusiasm, even if your initial interest in an end is desire or interest-based.

Several clarifications are needed here. First, I am not claiming that setting oneself an end creates an obligation to yourself, but rather that there are structural similarities between reasons of commitment and reasons of obligation. Second, reasons of commitment pre-empt the force of some reasons not to act towards the end, but not others. For example, reasons to pursue one end can be limited or overridden by reasons stemming from ends, values, and obligations to which you assign higher priority. (If exercise is more important to you than music, you can put music on the back burner when you cannot find time for both.) Further, commitments are subject to revision and do not preclude reassessment of the end. Loss of interest in the end—or a change in your judgement about its value, a clearer picture of its costs and so on—may be reasons to abandon the end, and if you abandon the end, you suspend the reasons for (or requirement of) pursuing it that you created through your commitment. But until the commitment is rescinded, it gives you a reason to act towards the end that remains in force independently of changes in your attitudes, and rules out considerations such as current lack of interest as a sufficient reason for inaction. This is the case even for a straightforwardly desire-based end that interests you because it gives you enjoyment. If the fact that you enjoy it is your reason for making it your end, the fading of enjoyment is a reason to abandon the end, but is still excluded as a legitimate reason for inaction while the commitment is in place.

In what sense are reasons of commitment *reasons to pursue* an end (or to put it on the volitional agenda)? They are not reasons for adopting an end since they only come into play when, having judged that the balance of substantive reasons favours adoption, one sets oneself the end. More to the point, since they do not speak to the merits of an end, they are not reasons to pursue an end by virtue of contributing to the balance of substantive reasons in its favour. Their practical role is different, and saying what that is will explain why they are contributions of practical reason to the process of setting ends.

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[31] Here compare Korsgaard 1997, on whom I draw—especially pp. 236–8 and 246–7.

Reasons of commitment appear to be deep-seated structural features of rational agency. Here I draw on some of Christine Korsgaard's work on 'self-constitution', in which she makes the case that Kant's principles of practical reason are constitutive or internal standards of volition. The argument (much simplified) is that it is by following these principles that you bring it about that there is a self over and above the motivational states operating in or on the self, and that this self (as a whole) is the cause of your actions; in this way you constitute yourself as an agent. Reasons of commitment play a role in self-constitution so understood. By giving yourself reasons of commitment to pursue an end, you (in part) constitute yourself as a centre of normative guidance over and above the various motives in you that make claims on your attention. The structural features of reasons of commitment do some work here. By setting yourself an end you give yourself a reason to pursue the end that excludes the normative force of motives and incentives that undercut action towards the end, or hinder its realization. The content-independence and the exclusionary force of these reasons introduce elements of self-direction and normative guidance. As self-given directive reasons that exclude competing incentives from having rational weight, reasons of commitment mirror the conception of the self as a centre of normative direction and guidance. The capacity to give yourself and act from these kinds of reasons seems an essential component of effective agency. In Korsgaard's terms, by giving yourself this kind of reason, you bring it about that there is a self over and above the various incentives that operate in the self and you constitute yourself as an agent.

To conclude this section, here is a first try at articulating the contribution of practical reason to the moment of commitment in setting oneself an end: practical rationality includes a rationally constituted normative power that is fundamental to agency. It is the power to give yourself reasons for action by committing yourself to an end, reasons whose structural features are what is needed to make you a centre of normative direction and guidance.

In this paper, I have tried to make sense of the idea, accepted by many Kantians, that rational agency includes a capacity to set non-moral ends for oneself through reason by outlining the contribution of practical reason to the adoption of discretionary final ends. The procedural account developed here tries to find a path between, on the one hand, a Humean account that denies any role to practical reason in the adoption of ends and, on the other hand, a rational intuitionist account that is committed to objective standards of intrinsic value that are independent of our volitional capacities—the sort of standards that most Kantians wish to reject. I have suggested that practical reason supplies procedural constraints that establish a normative standpoint that

determines what count as good reasons for an end. But the decision to adopt an end will be underdetermined by the merits of an end and requires some act of commitment on the part of an agent. Accordingly I have suggested, further, that commitment to an end creates an additional reason to pursue an end, and thereby gives it a normative status that it does not have independently of one's choice. Rational choice of an end does not make the end good—the choice is not rational unless the end has features that make it worth choosing, in virtue of which it is judged to be good—but in committing oneself to an end as a result of a judgement about its value, agents create for themselves an additional reason, or the normative requirement, of pursuing the end.[32]

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