

The Value of Autonomy and Autonomy of the Will*

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It is a commonplace that ‘autonomy’ has several different senses in contemporary moral and political discussion. The term’s original meaning was political: a right assumed by states to administer their own affairs. It was not until the nineteenth century that ‘autonomy’ came (in English) to refer also to the conduct of individuals, and even then there were, as now, different meanings.¹ Odd as it may seem from our perspective, one that was in play from the beginning was Kant’s notion of “autonomy of the will,”² as Kant defined it, “the property of the will by which it is a law to itself independently of any property of the objects of volition” (4:440).³ That’s a mouthful, to say the least. And interpreting

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1. The *Oxford English Dictionary (OED Online)* lists two relevant earliest uses: “b. Liberty to follow one’s will, personal freedom (1803 W. TAYLOR in *Ann. Rev.* I. 384 The customers of a banker can desert to a rival at will, and thus retain an autonomy of conduct); c. *Metaph.* Freedom (of the will); the Kantian doctrine of the Will giving itself its own law, apart from any object willed; opposed to *heteronomy* (1817 COLERIDGE *Biog. Lit.* 70 Kant . . . was permitted to assume a higher ground (the autonomy of the will) as a postulate deducible from the unconditional command . . . of the conscience; a1871 GROTE *Eth. Fragm.* ii. (1876) 45 Kant . . . means by Autonomy, that there are in this case no considerations of pleasure or pain influencing the will).”

2. To which Coleridge referred in his early use of ‘autonomy’ in *Biographia Literaria* (see n. 1).

3. Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, in Immanuel Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, trans. and ed. Mary J. Gregor, introduction by Allen Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 89. References placed parenthetically in the text will be to this translation and will be to page numbers of the canonical Preussische Akademie

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what Kant meant, or should have meant, by it is a complex exegetical and philosophical task. On any reasonable interpretation, however, it can be hard to see how Kantian autonomy of the will is related to any kind of autonomy that is at issue in current debate. What can the value of someone's making her own choices and leading her own life, or her right to do so, have to do with autonomy of the will as Kant understood it?

In what follows, I shall argue that there is, indeed, a deep connection between these. More specifically, I shall maintain that the idea of a right or claim to autonomy actually presupposes autonomy of the will, at least that it does so when the latter is given the interpretation I shall propose. (I shall call the former idea autonomy as claim or demand.)⁴ To make a claim to anything, hence to autonomy, is to take up a second-person standpoint. It is to address a claim or demand to someone as a free and rational agent. It is a presupposition of this standpoint, I shall argue, that addresser and addressee alike can accept and act on reasons that are grounded, not in the value of anything that might be an object of their desire or volition (i.e., neither in any outcome nor in any act considered in itself), but in an authority they have to make claims on each other simply as free and rational wills. In that sense, I shall claim, the perspective presupposes autonomy of the will. It assumes a capacity persons have to impose demands that are rooted in the authority of free and rational wills as such and thus in no value outside the will. And because that is so, laying claim to our autonomy commits us to assuming autonomy of the will also.

Before we begin, it will be useful to distinguish briefly other senses of 'autonomy' that are in use in contemporary ethical theory. All are kinds of self-rule, an agent's determining his own conduct for himself. Heteronomy, by contrast, is interference with self-determination, either by others more or less successfully substituting their will for the agent's, making his choices for him, or by internal psychic barriers interfering so that he does not, or perhaps cannot, properly decide for himself. Here we might distinguish the following:

edition. References below to the *Critique of Practical Reason* and to *Metaphysics of Morals* will also be to the translations in *Practical Philosophy* and to Akademie page numbers.

4. Here I draw on Joel Feinberg's thesis that the "moral significance" of rights depends on the possibility of claiming them, or, as I shall put it, the second-personal authority to address claims and demands. "Having rights, of course, makes claiming possible; but it is claiming that gives rights their special moral significance. This feature of rights is connected in a way with the customary rhetoric about what it is to be a human being. Having rights enables us to 'stand up like men,' to look others in the eye, and to feel in some fundamental way the equal of anyone" (Joel Feinberg, "The Nature and Value of Rights," in *Rights, Justice, and the Bounds of Liberty* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980]).

Personal autonomy. The agent's determining his conduct by his own most highly cherished values.

Moral autonomy. The agent's choosing in accord with his own moral convictions or principles.⁵

Rational autonomy. The agent's acting on the basis of what he believes to be the weightiest reasons.

Agential autonomy. The agent's behavior being a genuine action and so attributable to him as an agent.

In each of these cases, moreover, we can distinguish between an agent's having the capacity to determine his conduct in any of these ways and his successfully exercising this capacity.

AUTONOMY AS BENEFIT AND AUTONOMY AS DEMAND

In this section and the next, I shall explore how autonomy as claim or demand contrasts with other ways in which autonomy (of various kinds) may be valued, specifically, as a benefit or part of well-being, as a personal value, or as a moral value of the sort that, say, Kant, Butler, or Richard Price upheld as a paradigm of morally good action—an agent's determining her conduct by her own conscientious judgments.

Consider, for example, how personal autonomy can enter as a value within a utilitarian moral theory. For a Benthamite utilitarian, autonomy of any sort has only instrumental value. If the only thing making for intrinsically valuable outcomes is well-being or happiness and the only thing making for happiness is pleasant feeling, then neither the capacity nor the exercise of any of the kinds of autonomy just mentioned (personal, moral, or rational) nor the social recognition of a claim or right to autonomy will have any value considered in itself. Of course, any or all of these may have significant instrumental value. As Mill argues in *On Liberty*, individuals may be the best judges of what will really bring them pleasure; so a right to autonomy and the exercise of the capacity for personal autonomy may both have substantial instrumental hedonic benefits. It is consistent also with a Benthamite approach that exercising autonomy is itself enjoyable and so a direct source of pleasurable feeling. In any of these instances, however, the value comes from the benefit and the benefit from the pleasure. Neither the value nor the benefit depends upon the fact that the pleasure results from autonomy in any way.

Alternatively, a utilitarian can take the position that Mill seems to

5. Autonomy of the will is also a kind of moral autonomy, according to Kant, who believed that it is both necessary and sufficient for the moral law. For my claim that this Kantian thesis can be defended when autonomy of the will is given the interpretation I advance here (second-personal competence), see *The Second-Person Standpoint: Morality, Respect, and Accountability* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, forthcoming).

take, that personal autonomy is intrinsically beneficial to a person, that it is a constituent part of her well-being or happiness.⁶ This makes autonomy intrinsic to that which is intrinsically morally desirable, happiness or welfare, but not yet intrinsically morally worth promoting in itself. What makes an outcome intrinsically worth promoting from the moral point of view is still happiness or well-being; it is just that Mill believes that autonomy is an intrinsic part of that.

Since there is an obvious sense in which personal autonomy gives a kind of priority to the agent's own preferences, something like Mill's idea may lie behind some preference-based versions of utilitarianism. However, as important as autonomy is to human happiness and welfare, it nevertheless seems clear that what someone wants, or even what she would want were she to exercise her capacity for autonomy (personal, rational, or moral), can diverge from her happiness or well-being. Elsewhere I have argued that there is an important difference between what someone takes an interest in, even what she would take an interest in were she fully to exercise her capacity for personal or rational autonomy, on the one hand, and what is in someone's interest, in the sense of what benefits her or increases her welfare, on the other hand (unless, of course, the former is defined with substantive welfare criteria that guarantee a coincidence).⁷ People can care, indeed care rationally and autonomously, about a wide range of things, including the future of the planet long after they are dead, where it is hard to see how the realization of what they care about can benefit them to the degree of their concern (or rational concern) for it, or maybe even at all. What is for someone's well-being or good, I have argued, is not necessarily what the person herself wants, actually or rationally, but what it would be rational for someone to want for her for her sake, that is, out of sympathetic concern for her. Here I will simply assume that, even if autonomy is intrinsic to the welfare and happiness of mature human beings, preference-based accounts are implausible as theories of happiness or well-being.

If it is implausible to think that happiness or welfare varies with preference, it is worth asking why the idea that moral and political choice should respond in some way to people's preferences nonetheless retains an appeal (and why, also, preference-based versions of utilitarianism are so common). I believe that this idea does appeal but that what makes it appealing is not the notion of autonomy as benefit but that of autonomy as claim or demand. I conjecture that what lay behind the

6. Thus Mill evidently holds that autonomy is a constituent of a distinctive kind of pleasure. I have in mind here Mill's doctrine of *quality* of pleasure and his remarks about the "sense of dignity" in chaps. 2 and 4 of *Utilitarianism* (see esp. par. 6 of chap. 2) and about "the interests of man as a progressive being" in chap. 1 (par. 11) of *On Liberty*.

7. See my *Welfare and Rational Care* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002).

increasing shift from pleasure- or experience-based to preference-based utilitarian and consequentialist moral and political theories during the last century and continuing today (e.g., within the theory of social choice or in cost/benefit analyses of public policy) has been less a change in view about what really makes people happy or benefits them, or positivist scruples about evidence of our inner lives, than the idea that people have a claim to decide for themselves or to exercise a kind of “vote” in matters that concern them. If so, it would be truer to this idea to speak in terms, not of autonomy’s role in welfare, but of a warranted claim or demand for autonomy. What is in question seems less what we should want for people insofar as we care for them (benevolently, with sympathetic concern) than how to respect one another in light of the authority we take ourselves to have to make claims or demands of each other and, in particular, to claim a space of autonomous choice.⁸

To see the difference, consider the relations between parents and children. Although parents appropriately relate to their children with love and sympathetic concern throughout their lives, their children come to have a standing to make claims on them of a very different kind as they mature. For example, parents may legitimately give relatively little, perhaps no, intrinsic weight to a sufficiently young child’s protest against eating a healthful food, although they should, of course, take account of its bearing on the child’s welfare, for example, the likelihood that eating it will be unpleasant, the long-term effects of insisting that she eat it, and so on. At this stage, parents may be properly guided by the child’s welfare alone.⁹ When, however, their daughter returns to her parents’ home in middle age, to take an extreme case, the situation is obviously much changed. For parents not to take a middle-aged daughter’s preferences and will as having intrinsic weight in such a case, indeed, as governing, would clearly be disrespectful: paternalism in the pejorative sense.¹⁰ Even to urge her over her protests to “eat her broccoli” at this point would clearly be objectionable.

The point is not just that, once a person has reached maturity, autonomy plays a role in her well-being that it simply didn’t at a very young age. That, of course, is true. Even out of concern for their daughter and her welfare alone, her parents should want to give her the space to make her own decisions. But suppose that they take all this into account and come to the conclusion that however important autonomy

8. For the psychology of sympathetic concern, see *ibid.*, chap. 3.

9. Except, of course, to the extent that giving second-personal standing proleptically to children who don’t yet have it can help them to acquire it.

10. For a very insightful account of paternalism that is especially illuminating in this connection, see Seanna Shiffrin, “Paternalism, Unconscionability Doctrine, and Accommodation,” *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 29 (2000): 205–50.

is to her well-being, so also is diet, and that she will be better off in the long run if she eats her green vegetables. Out of concern for their daughter and her welfare, they therefore judge that it is actually better for her, likelier to improve her welfare, for her to eat the broccoli even if as a result of their importuning. It goes without saying that they would almost certainly be mistaken about that. My point is that whether they would be mistaken or not, their practical reasoning would already involve one or two thoughts too many. The objectionable character of paternalism of this sort is not primarily that those who seek to benefit us against our wishes are likely to be wrong about what really benefits us. It is not simply misdirected care or even negligently misdirected care. It is, rather, primarily a failure of respect, a failure to recognize the authority that persons have to demand, within certain limits, that they be allowed to make their own choices for themselves.

I shall take it, therefore, that an important dimension of autonomy's value (using 'value' now in the broad sense that is compatible with what Kantians call the inviolable dignity of persons being a kind of value) involves the right, claim, or authority that persons have to demand that they be allowed to make their own choices and lead their own lives.¹¹ As Kantians think of it, indeed, the authority to demand respect for autonomy in this sense is itself part of the dignity of persons.¹² As Seanna Shiffrin has pointed out, the most problematic feature of paternalism is not that it aims to restrict freedom in the person's own interest but that it seeks to substitute a would-be trustee's judgment or practical reason for the other's and so fails to value and respect the other as an equal person or rational agent.¹³

OTHER DIMENSIONS OF THE VALUE OF AUTONOMY

In the next section, I shall begin my argument that any such claim to autonomy must presuppose autonomy of the will. In this section, I canvass the differences between the kind of value or dignity Kantians believe that persons have as ends in themselves, which dignity includes the authority to demand respect for their autonomy, and other kinds of value with which autonomy, in its various guises, may be involved.

We have already seen how autonomy as demand differs from autonomy as benefit. It differs also from the idea that autonomy is a

11. In my view, what underlies this right is second-personal authority: the authority, as a person, to make claims and demands of one another as rational and free. I argue for this and for the proposition that the relevant sense of 'free' must be understood as second-personal competence in *The Second-Person Standpoint*.

12. For the idea that respect and dignity must themselves be understood in fundamentally second-personal terms, see my "Respect and the Second-Person Standpoint," *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 78 (2004): 43–60.

13. See n. 9.

constituent of intrinsically good outcomes, valuable possible states of the world, as this might enter into a consequentialist moral theory that is not utilitarian or welfarist and so does not restrict good outcomes to happiness or welfare. Here the thought might be that someone's realizing autonomy of some kind is a good outcome in itself, regardless of its relation to welfare. A crucial difference between this notion and autonomy as demand is that the former value gives rise to "agent-neutral reasons" for anyone to realize the relevant outcomes and the latter to "agent-relative reasons" embodied in a "deontological constraint" requiring us to respect people's claim to autonomy.¹⁴ To take a kind of case that is frequently used to make this distinction, suppose that you are in a position in which the shocking spectacle of your interfering with A's autonomy would lead B to forgo interfering with C's autonomy in an exactly similar way. So far as the intrinsic value of autonomy, or disvalue of interference, goes, there would be no reason for you, on balance, to respect rather than to disrespect, and so interfere with, A's autonomy yourself. Whether you interfere or not there would still be exactly one disvaluable interference and one valuable instance of autonomy. A warranted demand for autonomy, in contrast, entails a reason for an agent not to interfere with, that is, not to violate, others' autonomy himself. It would therefore give you a reason not to violate A's autonomy yourself even if this would lead to B violating C's in an exactly similar way. Authoritative claims or demands entail deontological constraints that can be stated only in an agent-centered or agent-relative way: "Do not do X if X would involve your (the agent's) interfering with someone's autonomy." In this way, they contrast with the agent-neutral "Do not do X if X would bring about a greater balance of disvaluable interferences with autonomy."¹⁵

14. I mean agent neutral in a "positional" sense, i.e., that the reason does not derive, most fundamentally, from a normative fact concerning the agent's position in relation to others. A reason for acting is agent relative rather than agent neutral if it cannot be formulated without essential reference to the agent, as such, e.g., that it would be in his (the agent's) interest, that it would relieve his pain, that it would relieve someone else's (someone other than the agent's) pain, that it would relieve pain he caused, or that it would keep his promise. The following would thus be agent-neutral reasons: that it would relieve pain or that it would promote relief of pain by someone who caused pain. On the distinction between agent-relative (or agent-centered) and agent-neutral reasons, principles, values, etc., see Samuel Scheffler, *The Rejection of Consequentialism* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982); Derek Parfit, *Reasons and Persons* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984); Thomas Nagel, *The View from Nowhere* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); and Piers Rawling and David McNaughton, "Agent-Relativity and the Doing-Happening Distinction," *Philosophical Studies* 63 (1991): 167–85.

15. These can both be read as *pro tanto* injunctions. Note that 'agent relative' in this positional sense can differ from other senses of 'agent relative' according to which a principle, norm, or value is agent relative if it depends on the agent's own values or

Yet another kind of value that autonomy can have is personal value, that is, value to someone of a kind that can diverge from what benefits him or is part of his well-being. (This was implicit above, when we noted that preference satisfaction and welfare can come apart.) We devote ourselves to all sorts of aims and projects that thereby acquire value and significance to us. When we do, of course, the success of our hopes and desires bears substantially on our well-being. But personal value and well-being are nonetheless distinct concepts. Many environmentalists, for example, act tirelessly to produce hoped-for effects that may not occur until long after they are dead. And even if they can be benefited after their death, it is hard to believe that they can be to the extent of the value their pursuits had to them while they were alive.

More important than the fact that autonomy can have personal value is autonomy's relation to the significance of the very category of personal value. The reason we have this category at all is to signal that the fact that someone values, wants, cares about, or is devoted to something can be a source of reasons that add weight to that of whatever reasons there might be for him to value it in these ways, that is, to the object's value independently of his valuing it, whether this be in terms of well-being or values of other kinds. In being devoted to my children, of course, I naturally take them and their welfare to have a value that is independent of their value to me.¹⁶ This former value is agent neutral, and it gives rise to an agent-neutral reason for anyone to promote my children's welfare, myself included. There are also, of course, agent-relative reasons of moral duty for me to do so, owing to the obligation that parents have to provide for their children. In addition to these, however, it seems clear that I have additional reasons to promote my children's welfare, adding further weight, that come from the personal value my children have for me, my devotion to them, and my children's role in central aims and projects that give meaning to my life. These latter reasons are agent relative.¹⁷ Although other people have the same agent-neutral reason to promote my children's welfare as I do, I have agent-relative reasons to do so deriving from my agent-relative obligations and from their personal value to me. And this affects the reasons that other people have also. Others plainly don't have the same agent-relative reasons to promote my children's welfare coming from my children's value to me. (Of course, if my children have personal value to them also, then they have additional reasons to promote their welfare

preferences, or on the intensity of these. Throughout this essay, I mean to be referring to agent relativity in the former, positional senses. I am grateful to John Deigh for pressing me to clarify this point.

16. On this point, see my *Welfare and Rational Care*, 69–72.

17. They are agent relative in the same positional sense described above in nn. 14 and 15.

deriving from that as well.) But others do have, in addition to any agent-neutral reasons bearing on the situation that come from the agent-neutral value of my children's welfare, agent-relative reasons not to interfere with my acting for my children's sake because of my children's personal value to me.¹⁸ What makes these latter reasons agent relative, again, is that they can be stated only in an agent-centered or agent-relative way: "Don't interfere with others' pursuit of personal value (and in this way with their autonomy)."¹⁹

Since our normal way of valuing things involves seeing them as valuable in themselves, that is, as having features that warrant our valuing them (irrespective of whether we do in fact value them), there is a puzzle about how the fact that something has personal value (that one actually values it) can acquire independent weight as a reason. I have argued elsewhere that the reason it does derives from the equal dignity of persons (and, I here add, from the authority we have as persons to demand respect for our autonomy).²⁰ This is perhaps clearest when we are considering our conduct toward others. In the case of the broccoli-pushing parents we considered earlier, it seems clear that their daughter's values, preferences, and wishes give her parents reasons that are additional to (and partly independent of) any reasons that might exist for their daughter to want to avoid or to eat broccoli. For them to fail to heed these reasons grounded in her preferences and personal values just is for them to fail to respect her autonomy and her dignity as an equal person. Moreover, we can fail to respect ourselves in these ways no less than we can others. Giving little weight to one's own wishes and values, by being inappropriately deferential to those of others, can be no less a failure to respect oneself.²¹

If this is right, autonomy's role in the equal dignity of persons, that is, as claim or demand, is central to the significance of personal value. It partly reflects this fact, I believe, that personal autonomy (the agent's

18. Thanks to John Deigh for asking me to clarify these points.

19. See nn. 14 and 15 above.

20. Stephen Darwall, "Because I Want It," *Social Philosophy and Policy* 18 (2001): 129–53; reprinted in *Moral Knowledge*, ed. Ellen F. Paul (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). This claim is too crude as it stands, since we certainly think we owe respect, including of their wishes, to beings who lack the full capacities necessary for autonomy of the will (or what I shall call "second-personal competence" later in this essay), including humans with mental disabilities, children, and other animals. I say more about this issue in *The Second-Person Standpoint*. Christie Hartley has argued that the claims of the disabled can be accounted for within a broadly contractualist moral theory that is congenial to the present framework in "Justice for All: Constructing an Inclusive Contractualism" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2005). I am grateful to her for discussion on these points and to Martha Nussbaum for pushing me to clarify them.

21. Think, e.g., of the deferential wife in Thomas E. Hill Jr.'s "Servility and Self-Respect," *Monist* 57 (1973): 87–104.

determining herself by her own values) is a kind of autonomy frequently under discussion in contemporary moral philosophy. Of course, someone might identify autonomy of this kind with rational autonomy, acting on what one believes to be the weightiest reasons. But I doubt that those who champion personal autonomy have anything this formal in mind. For personal autonomy to be linked in the ways it frequently is to self-actualization, identity, and the expression of oneself as an individual, it must be understood in relation to personal values, that is, to valuings that can be a source of reasons additional to any reasons that warrant those valuings. It follows, I believe, that if we give weight to personal value, then autonomy must itself have personal value for us also and we must credit autonomy as demand.

Finally, we can distinguish autonomy as claim or demand from any role that moral autonomy might play in an ideal of moral character or morally good action. For example, it is important to the accounts of moral virtue we find in Butler, Price, and Kant that there is a distinctive moral goodness that can be achieved only by a morally autonomous agent, one who self-reflectively governs herself as a moral agent by her own moral convictions. This is an important element of their views, which distinguishes them not just from nonmoral virtue ethics like Aristotle's but also from other moral virtue ethics, like Francis Hutcheson's (and to some extent, Hume's), which see moral goodness as residing primarily in motivations, like benevolence, whose content is not explicitly moral.²² I cannot pursue the point here, but I believe there to be deep affinities between the idea that morally good character involves moral autonomy and the thought that autonomy as claim or demand is inherent in the dignity of persons. These are, however, different ideas. Although Butler, Kant, and Price all can be interpreted as having versions of both, the two ideas can clearly diverge.

AUTONOMY AS DEMAND AND THE SECOND-PERSON STANDPOINT

In this section, I want to bring out the way in which authority as demand involves the addressing of a distinctive kind of reason for acting from a second-person standpoint. To see the contrast between second personal reasons and reasons for acting of other kinds, consider two different ways a middle-aged daughter might try to convince her parents to stop urging her to eat broccoli. One would be to persuade them that

22. I discuss the difference between moral and nonmoral virtue ethics in the introduction to my *Virtue Ethics* ([Oxford: Blackwell, 2003], 2–3) and this difference between Hutcheson and Butler in *The British Moralists and the Internal 'Ought', 1640–1740* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

that would best promote her welfare. In caring for their daughter, her parents want her well-being. If they could be convinced that it would actually be better for her in welfare terms to be free to make her own dietary choices, then they would see themselves as having a reason to bring that about. This reason, we should note again, would present itself as agent neutral.²³ From the perspective of their benevolent concern for her, their daughter's welfare, including her autonomy in a case like this, would seem to them to have a value that creates a reason for any agent who can to bring it about.²⁴

Alternatively, the daughter might lay a claim to her autonomy. She might say something that expresses or implies a demand that they back off and let her make her choices for herself. She might demand this as the person whose autonomy they would otherwise violate, or as a member of the moral community whose members understand themselves as demanding that people not interfere with one another's autonomy,²⁵ or as both. In either case, she would be presupposing an authority to make the demand and, consequently, that her parents have reason to comply with it, indeed, that they are responsible for doing so. In addressing this claim, moreover, the reason she would be giving them would not be agent neutral, like one that comes simply from her well-being itself. Rather, she would be giving them an agent-relative reason grounded in her authority to demand respect for herself as a person and, hence, for her claim to autonomy.²⁶ The reason would be for them to respect her autonomy themselves, not for them to bring about an agent-neutrally valuable respecting of autonomy as individuals who are especially well circumstanced to do so. But neither would she just be pointing to an agent-relative constraint. In claiming or demanding her autonomy second-personally, she would be presupposing the authority to claim or demand it, including the authority to hold her parents accountable (if only to complain) if they fail to

23. Again, this is agent neutral in a "positional" sense. That Sarah, let us say, would be better off will seem to them to be a reason having some force, at any rate, for anyone. In this way, it would differ from the fact that Sarah is their daughter, etc.

24. It would be "a" reason or "some" reason. Such a reason might, of course, be overridden.

25. As Strawson points out, the making of this second demand (as a member of the moral community) might consist simply in a disposition to reactive attitudes like indignation or blame that implicitly address demands: "The making of the demand is the proneness to such attitudes" (P. F. Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment," in *Studies in the Philosophy of Thought and Action* [London: Oxford University Press, 1968], 92–93).

26. This is the case in the same positional sense. There is a difference between the agent-neutral "Bring it about that the autonomy of people is respected" and the agent-relative "Respect the autonomy (of others)."

comply. Again, she might make this claim on her own behalf or simply as a member of the moral community with the standing to hold one another accountable for complying with moral demands, or both.²⁷ Whichever, the reason she would thereby address would be second-personal in the sense that it presupposes an authority for second-personal address.

Unlike non-second-personal reasons, such as those deriving directly from someone's welfare, a second-personal reason depends for its very existence upon an authority to address the reason second-personally and on the reason's conceptual connection to (second-personal) practices of responsibility or accountability, that is, to holding people responsible. Reasons of agent-neutral value or well-being exist whether or not anyone can address them second-personally.²⁸ Even if it were impossible for anyone to claim or hold anyone to account for promoting someone's well-being (and their autonomy insofar as it is a part of that), there would still be a reason for people to promote it. Moreover, it is possible for one person to give another such a non-second-personal reason, as in advice, without making any direct claim on his conduct and so, in that sense, without addressing him directly as an agent. The claim would rather be on him as a cognizer of, and on his beliefs about, reasons for acting.²⁹ Although they pertain to conduct, any claims addressed in advice are, in a broad sense, epistemic.

But this is not true with reasons that derive from warranted claims and demands on our wills or conduct. Whatever reasons stand behind or justify her authority, the fact that their daughter has the authority to demand that her parents not interfere with her choices in this kind of case, or that others can make this demand and hold the parents responsible as members of the moral community, is an additional reason that simply would not exist but for the possibility of addressing the reason person to person. Acknowledging such a reason, moreover, is acknowledging someone's standing to address it. If consequently her parents acknowledge that their daughter has a warranted claim to autonomy, they implicitly acknowledge her authority to address this claim to them (second-personally) and to hold them to account.

27. In *The Second-Person Standpoint*, I argue that moral obligation is conceptually related to moral responsibility (accountability), which must itself be understood in terms of members of the moral community's authority to address moral demands to one another and hold one another responsible.

28. So also do reasons grounded in agent-relative norms that are not, unlike those of moral obligation, tied to second-personal responsibility (e.g., dictates of prudence).

29. Compare: "I'm not telling you to do anything; I'm simply giving advice." This is Hobbes's distinction between "command" and "counsel" (Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Edwin Curley [Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994], chap. 15, par. 1, 165).

Second-personal reasons are invariably tied to respect (in the sense of recognition or acknowledgment)³⁰ of a distinctive kind of practical authority: the authority to make a demand or claim. Making a claim or putting forward a demand as valid always presupposes the authority to make it and that the duly authorized claim creates a distinctive reason for compliance (a second-personal reason). The relevant authority consists in the standing to claim or demand, which creates a reason of this distinctive kind. And a second-personal reason just is one that derives from an authoritative claim or demand.

These three notions—practical authority of this kind, the claims or demands it enables one to make, and second-personal reasons—bring a fourth in their wake: the idea of responsibility or accountability to others. The authority to demand implies not just a reason for the addressee to comply (of whatever weight or priority) but also his being accountable for doing so. Conversely, accountability implies the authority to hold accountable, which implies the authority to claim or demand, which is the standing to address second-personal reasons. These four interdefinable notions thus form a cluster: practical authority of this distinctive kind, claim or demand, second-personal reason, and accountability. Each of the four notions implies the other three.

The very idea of a claim to autonomy thus implies the authority to make the claim second-personally. And if we see this claim as inherent in the equal dignity of persons, we are consequently committed to accepting that dignity includes a second-personal authority, specifically, that it includes the authority to demand respect for autonomy and to hold one another accountable for complying with this demand. We must see ourselves as accountable to one another as members of the moral community for respecting others' autonomy and as distinctively accountable to those whose autonomy we threaten or violate.

Thus Rawls's famous remark that persons are "self-originating sources of valid claims" can be seen to involve two distinct elements.³¹ Partly, Rawls is saying that persons, by their nature, have a claim on our deliberative attention in the sense that they are morally considerable or, more strongly, that their nature sets constraints on permissible actions with respect to them, including interfering with their autonomy.

30. On this sense of 'respect' in general (recognition respect) and the distinction between it and a kind of esteem that we also call respect (appraisal respect), see my "Two Kinds of Respect," *Ethics* 88 (1977): 36–49. More recently, I have argued that respect for persons has an irreducibly second-personal element ("Respect and the Second-Person Standpoint," *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 78 [2004]: 43–59).

31. John Rawls, "Kantian Constructivism in Moral Theory," *Journal of Philosophy* 77 (1980): 515–72, 546.

But I interpret Rawls as saying something more, namely, that persons have, by their nature, the authority or standing to claim or demand that these constraints be complied with, and hence, to demand that their autonomy not be subject to interference. The idea is not simply the conceptual truth that any being capable of claiming (or of being subject to a claim) must be a person. That would be true even if no one had the authority validly to claim anything. It is the normative thesis that persons, as such, do have standing to claim certain treatment and to demand respect for this second-personal standing. The dignity of persons, our being self-originating sources of claims in this sense, is our having the authority to demand compliance with the mandatory norms that express respect for one another as equal free and rational persons. And if we accept that persons have, as such, a claim to autonomy, we must think that the dignity of persons includes the authority to demand respect for this claim, hence, that we are accountable to one another for allowing each other to make his own choices.

The idea that persons have, as such, a right or claim to autonomy brings in a second-person standpoint, then, in two different ways. First, the notions of moral obligation and moral wrong are themselves conceptually related to that of moral responsibility, and this implies a second-personal authority to address claims and demands in holding people responsible. As Mill put it, “we do not call anything wrong, unless we mean to imply that a person ought to be punished in some way or other for doing it; if not by law, by the opinion of his fellow-creatures; if not by opinion, by the reproaches of his own conscience.”³² “Punishment” no doubt seems too heavy-handed in many cases, but Mill’s central idea is nonetheless sound. Our moral obligations are what we are appropriately held, and hold ourselves, responsible for doing. In supposing, therefore, that the dignity of persons makes it wrong to interfere with autonomy, we are committed to thinking also that we are responsible to one another as members of the moral community not to interfere. In this sense, anyone, and not just their daughter, has the standing to hold the parents responsible, if only through Strawsonian “reactive attitudes” such as blame, moral disapproval, and indignation, that, as Strawson pointed out, implicitly make a demand, if only in imagina-

32. John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, chap. 5, par. 14. I argue for this claim in *The Second-Person Standpoint*. Other philosophers who agree with this Millian thesis are Robert Adams, *Finite and Infinite Goods* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 238; Kurt Baier, “Moral Obligation,” *American Philosophical Quarterly* 3 (1966): 210–26; R. B. Brandt, *A Theory of the Good and the Right* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 163–76; Allan Gibbard, *Wise Choices, Apt Feelings* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 42; and John Skorupski, *Ethical Explorations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 142.

tion.³³ If we blame the parents for their paternalism, we implicitly address a demand to them to stop, if only in imagination. And if their daughter blames them, she does so also not as the specific person they disrespect but as a member of the moral community to whom all are accountable.

If, however, she invokes a claim or right to autonomy that she herself has, then she addresses a demand that she has an additional, individual authority to address to them (or that others might have to do so on her behalf). Her parents might recognize this second authority by an apology to her for their disrespect. The difference between these two different authorities echoes that between the right of punishment and the right of compensation in the state of nature as Locke describes these in the *Second Treatise*.³⁴ Everyone has the authority to punish violations of the “law of nature,” but only victims and their representatives can exact compensation. Both punishment and compensation involve second-person reasons, since both presuppose the authority to claim or demand and that involves the address of a second-person reason.

SECOND-PERSONAL REASONS AND FREE AGENCY

In this section, I shall illustrate how the second-person standpoint reveals a fundamental difference between theoretical and practical reason.³⁵ When we address or acknowledge a claim or (purportedly valid) demand on someone’s will, we presuppose a kind of freedom in the practical realm that has no analogue in theoretical reasoning. In the next section, I shall connect this species of practical freedom to Kant’s doctrine of autonomy of the will.

When we reason about what to believe, you and I aim to construct representations of an independent world, and our respective perspectives are simply the way that world is, according to each of us, respectively. Fitting the world is belief’s internal aim, so a belief is mistaken or incorrect, and not just inaccurate or false in the way a counterfactual hypothesis is, when the world is not as the belief represents it.³⁶ Granted, we presuppose a kind of freedom in theoretical reasoning—we must

33. P. F. Strawson, “Freedom and Resentment,” 92–93. See also Gary Watson, “Responsibility and the Limits of Evil: Variations on a Strawsonian Theme,” in *Responsibility, Character, and the Emotions: New Essays in Moral Psychology*, ed. F. D. Schoeman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 256–86, 263–64; and R. Jay Wallace, *Responsibility and the Moral Sentiments* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 19.

34. John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 273–74.

35. I argue for this at greater length in chaps. 10 and 11 of *The Second-Person Standpoint*.

36. On this point, see J. David Velleman, “The Possibility of Practical Reason,” in *The Possibility of Practical Reason* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); and Nishi Shah, “How Truth Governs Belief,” *Philosophical Review* 112 (2003): 447–82.

assume that our reasoning is free of various alien influences—but reasons on the basis of which it is possible to form beliefs ultimately are responsible to and defeasible by their relations to this independent order so far as we can discern it.

It is a consequence of this that, although there can be second-personal reasons for belief, as when one person gives testimony or makes some other sort of epistemic claim on another, these reasons ultimately depend upon or are, at least, defeasible by third-personal considerations, for example, by the person's reliability as a witness. No reasons for belief are second-personal all the way down.

Consider now what practical reasoning would be like if it were structurally analogous to theoretical reasoning in these ways. A good analogy is the picture we find in Moore's *Principia Ethica*, according to which reasoning about what to do is simply figuring out the relative value of all possible outcomes or states of the world, along with the feasibility and costs of realizing these, in order to determine which act, of those one can do, would bring about the most valuable states.³⁷ We might think of an agent's ranking of possible states as given in his preferences or desires. The idea wouldn't be that the agent thinks these states good because, that is, for the reason that, he desires or prefers them. Rather in preferring them, he thinks them good (to whatever degree, in whatever order).

On this picture, action, like belief, would be governed by its relation to a (putatively) independent order. Just as it is part of the very idea of belief that we appropriately aim to believe only what is true, so also would it be intrinsic to action, on this picture, that it aims to realize valuable (or the most valuable) feasible outcomes or possible states of the world. In other words, just as theoretical reasoning is regulated by the truth of the world as it is, so also would practical reasoning, on this picture, be governed by the world as it ought to be (the value of possible outcomes) and can be made in light of how it is. Moreover, our freedom of choice would be constrained similarly to the way in which our freedom is restricted in forming beliefs. It is only possible to believe something on the basis of, that is, for reasons that are appropriately related to, the world as it is, so far as we can discern these. For example, it is simply psychically impossible, in reasoning about what to believe, to come to believe *p* on the grounds that it would be desirable to believe *p*. What is required are epistemic reasons appropriately related to whether *p* is true. Similarly, on the Moorean picture, the only reasons on the basis

37. G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica*, rev. ed. with the preface to the (projected) 2nd ed. and other papers, ed. with an introduction by Thomas Baldwin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). For discussion of this point, see my "Moore, Normativity, and Intrinsic Value," *Ethics* 113 (2003): 468–89.

of which it would be possible freely to choose to act would be those that are responsive to and defeasible by their relation to actual world states and to the value of possible world states (the world as it should be and can be made in light of how it is) so far as the agent can discern these. If this picture were true, it would simply be psychically impossible to decide to do something for reasons other than that action would bring about valuable, or the best, outcomes or states of the world.

When we make claims and demands on one another from a second-person standpoint, however, we see that this picture cannot be right. When you make a claim or demand on me, you must presuppose that I can act on the demand simply by accepting your authority and, consequently, the second-personal reason you address, which reason is itself, again, irreducible to the value of any outcome. This possibility is simply a presupposition of the intelligibility of your addressing the claim and putative second-personal reason to me (and implicitly holding me responsible for acting on it).³⁸ And if I consider such a claim from you, I must likewise presuppose the possibility of my finding it valid and acting on it, again, independently of the value of outcomes. Indeed, in even considering your claim I am already acknowledging that you have a kind of authority, namely, to present a claim for my consideration. So in considering the claim, I am already acting on a second-personal reason grounded in this authority.

A claim or demand for autonomy addresses a second-personal reason. And second-personal reasons consist of, or are grounded, not in the value of outcomes or possible states of the world, but in authority relations we assume to obtain between us when we address them.³⁹ Unlike reasons for belief of any sort, second-personal reasons for action are second-personal all the way down. So when you and I presuppose that I can act on the second-personal reason you address in your claim, we both assume that I have a freedom of choice that finds no analogue in theoretical reasoning or in practical reasoning on the Moorean picture. Similarly, when a middle-aged daughter asks her parents to stop treating her like a child, she addresses a second-personal reason to them that is grounded in her claim to autonomy, that is, in her authority to demand it, not in the value of a hoped-for outcome considered as a

38. The capacity to act on the proffered reasons is thus a presupposition not just of moral address, as Gary Watson has noted in connection with moral responsibility, but of the address of any demand or claim. See Watson, "Responsibility and the Limits of Evil."

39. Of course, any such assumption of authority might be mistaken. In *The Second-Person Standpoint*, however, I argue that to take up the second-person perspective at all is to be committed to an equal second-personal authority that free and rational agents have to make claims and demands of one another. And I attempt also to show how second-personal reasons grounded in this authority can be fit within an overall theory of practical reason.

possible state of the world. The latter could only give her parents a reason to bring about a valuable state, not a reason to respect the autonomy of someone who is addressing an authoritative demand to them.

“There is,” as Dewey put it, “an intrinsic difference, in both origin and mode of operation between objects which present themselves as satisfactory to desire and hence good, and objects which come to one as making demands upon his conduct which should be recognized. Neither can be reduced to the other.”⁴⁰ The value of a hoped-for outcome considered as a possible state of the world is a reason to desire that state. In caring for their daughter, her parents take themselves to have a reason to bring her welfare about owing to the value of that possible state (as it seems to them from the perspective of their concern for her). That their daughter has a valid claim to her autonomy, however, is a reason for them, not, in the first instance, to desire any state,⁴¹ but to respect her claim and so act as she warrantedly demands and for her to hold them accountable if they don’t. Consequently, the daughter must assume as a condition of the intelligibility of her addressing the claim to them that her parents can act on a reason that is irreducibly second-personal and, consequently, that they and she have a kind of freedom to act on reasons that are rooted, not in the objects of any desire (the value of a possible state of the world), but in claims she has the authority to make as a free and rational will.

When we make practical, rather than epistemic, claims on one another (including within the latter, an advisor’s claims on her advisee’s beliefs about choice-worthy actions), we presuppose the freedom to act on reasons that are grounded, not in our respective relations to something independent of us, but in irreducibly second-personal authority relations that hold between us. It follows that, in practical reason, our respective perspectives are not simply standpoints on an independent something, say, a ranking of the value of possible states of the world, together with facts of the actual world. So practical claims are not discountable when they reflect any such evaluative order poorly. This is why paternalism and other violations of autonomy can be objectionable even if they realize more valuable states. Even when your ends are badly supported by independent reasons, I have some reason not to interfere with, and perhaps to further, your pursuit of them. The fact that your

40. By “demands” here, Dewey means something second-personal: “Men who live together inevitably make demands on one another” (John Dewey, “Three Independent Factors in Morals,” in *The Essential Dewey*, vol. 2, *Ethics, Logic, Psychology*, ed. Larry A. Hickman and Thomas M. Alexander [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998], 319). I am indebted to Elizabeth Anderson for this reference.

41. It is, of course, a reason to desire the state of their respecting her autonomy as a consequence of the reason to respect her autonomy.

ends have value to you or that mine have value to me is itself a source of reasons for both of us. The perspectives from which we make practical claims on one another are the standpoints from which we lead our lives as free and independent rational agents and relate to one another on terms that presuppose and respect this very status. It is our ability to take a second-personal standpoint that enables us to respect one another's dignity and to hold one another responsible for doing so.

AUTONOMY OF THE WILL

We are now in a position to see why autonomy as demand presupposes autonomy of the will.⁴² Kant defines autonomy, again, as “the property of the will by which it is a law to itself independently of any property of the objects of volition” (4:440). But what does Kant mean by an “object of volition”? “Desire,” he tells us, “is the faculty to be, by means of one's representations, the cause of the objects of these representations” (6:211; see also 5:9). Both desire and belief involve a representation of a possible state of the world. Belief is the “faculty” to be, by means of the world, the cause of one's representations' fitting the world. And desire is the faculty to be, by means of one's representations, the cause of the world's fitting one's representations.⁴³ The object of desire is the represented outcome, the possible state of the world that the faculty of desire enables us to make actual.

But not all behavior that results from beliefs and desires involves the will, which Kant defines as “the capacity to act in accordance with the representation of laws” or “principles” (4:412). However, neither does an act's resulting from a desire preclude it from being an instance of autonomy. When, in nonrational beings, desire is “determined only by inclination” or “sensible impulse,” it involves “animal choice [*arbitrium brutum*]” (6:213). Rational human agents are subject to inclinations also, but although “affected,” they are not “determined” by them (6:213). To will an action to which she is inclined, an agent must incorporate or “take up” her inclination into some normative representation or principle that gives her reason for acting.⁴⁴ If, however, the principle is itself “preceded” by a desire that furnishes “the condition of its becoming a principle,”

42. Note that nothing in the argument of this section requires that autonomy of the will is, as Kant believed, incompatible with determinism or that it entails transcendental freedom in his sense.

43. On “direction of fit” see, e.g., Michael Smith, *The Moral Problem* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1995), 111–19. Smith cites Mark Platts (*Ways of Meaning* [London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979], 256–57), who attributes the idea to G. E. M. Anscombe, *Intention* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1957).

44. Immanuel Kant, *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, ed. Allen W. Wood and George Di Giovanni, foreword by Robert Merrihew Adams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 24.

then the principle is “empirical.” It is “unable to furnish a practical law,” and the will is heteronomous (5:21, 33). Autonomy of the will, pure reason’s being “of itself practical,” occurs only insofar as “reason can determine the faculty of desire as such” (6:213).

All actions result from desire. But not all desires are, in Rawls’s helpful terms, “object-dependent”; some are “principle-dependent.”⁴⁵ If a motivating desire is object dependent (i.e., if it depends ultimately on properties of the object of desire), then the action it motivates is heteronomous. Autonomy is realized only if the motivating desire is principle dependent rather than object dependent.⁴⁶ So autonomy of the will requires an agent’s accepting and acting on normative principles and reasons independently of her regard for any object or possible state of the world, that is, on principles and reasons whose validity she regards as independent of the value of possible states.⁴⁷ Most obviously, she must be able to act independently of her inclinations toward object states (object-dependent desires). Less obviously, but no less importantly, she must be able to act on principles and reasons that are independent also of any putative evaluation of some state (like a Moorean intuition that it is intrinsically good).

Although the capacity to accept and act on norms, including agent-relative deontological constraints, is necessary for autonomy of the will, it is not, however, sufficient. We can see why by comparing a deontological intuitionist picture of the sort associated with W. D. Ross and Richard Price with Kant’s. According to deontological intuitionists, acts are morally obligatory, right or wrong, at least *prima facie* or *pro tanto*,⁴⁸ in virtue of their intrinsic nature, their being the kind of act they are. There is an obvious sense, then, in which, although deontological intuitionism does not suppose moral obligations to depend on the objects of desire, if we take these to be possible states of the world or outcomes,⁴⁹ it does nonetheless take them to depend on “features of the objects of volition.” What we choose or intend directly are acts, not outcomes, and deontological intuitionists do believe that the moral law depends on features that are intrinsic to these.

Kant’s picture, by contrast, is that the moral law comes from what

45. John Rawls, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, ed. Barbara Herman (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 150–51.

46. Nota bene: this is not “if and only if.” Being principle dependent is necessary for a motivating desire to be consistent with autonomy of the will. I will discuss why it is not sufficient in the next paragraph.

47. For an insightful analysis of the psychology of norm acceptance, see Gibbard, *Wise Choices, Apt Feelings*, 68–82.

48. For the idea of “*prima facie* duties,” see W. D. Ross, *The Right and the Good* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1930).

49. Recall that this seems to be Kant’s view also.

Kant calls the “form” of the will rather than from its content or objects. What Allison calls Kant’s “reciprocity thesis” is Kant’s claim that the moral law, and its fundamental formula, the Categorical Imperative (CI), are equivalent to autonomy of the will.⁵⁰ It follows from this thesis that there can be a moral law only if its fundamental principle is a formal one (like the CI) that entails autonomy of the will and that the will can be a “law to itself” only if the CI, and hence the moral law, is valid. But what reason, other than the CI’s independent plausibility as a moral principle, is there for thinking that what most deeply underlies moral obligations must be a formal principle like the CI (“Act in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law” [4:421]). What is it that links the very idea of moral obligation to a formal principle of the will (and thus to autonomy of the will)? No deontological intuitionist, it seems, should accept that, and nothing has yet been said that undermines their position.

In my view, the deep idea underlying the thought that moral obligation must bottom out in a formal principle of the will like the CI is that otherwise we cannot adequately account for moral obligation’s conceptual tie to responsibility. If persons are subject to moral obligations by virtue of being free and rational agents, then these capacities for determining their wills must include whatever it takes to hold themselves responsible for complying with them. In holding her parents responsible for not violating their daughter’s autonomy, we (and their daughter) must assume not just that there are weighty or even conclusive reasons for her parents not to do so. That could be true even if they didn’t know of these reasons, were in no position to know them, or knew of them but were unable, for whatever reason, to act on them. When we make demands of people and hold them responsible, we are subject to what Gary Watson calls “constraints of moral address.”⁵¹ The very intelligibility of addressing a demand to someone depends upon the addresser’s assuming that the addressee has what it takes to accept the addresser’s authority and demand and act on it. To hold someone morally responsible for something, we must think that he is in a position to hold himself responsible also. When, consequently, we hold people responsible for not violating others’ autonomy even when no one is demanding this of them explicitly and directly, we are committed to assuming that they have, in being subject to this obligation, a way of determining this for themselves and acting on this determination. The CI is Kant’s proposal for the requisite reasoning process—in effect, the form that moral reasoning would have to take if it is to lead us to

50. Henry Allison, “Morality and Freedom: Kant’s Reciprocity Thesis,” *Philosophical Review* 95 (1988): 393–425.

51. Watson, “Responsibility and the Limits of Evil,” 263–64.

conclusions that we can intelligibly be held responsible for reaching. And autonomy of the will follows as a corollary. If, as autonomy as claim or demand supposes, we are responsible to one another for not violating each other's autonomy as a matter of moral obligation and moral right, then it must be the case that, in being subject to this obligation and constrained by this right, we have what it takes to hold ourselves responsible and comply with them for the requisite second-personal reasons, as we must assume when we hold one another responsible for doing so. Consequently, if being a free and rational will is what makes us subject to the moral law and to the demand for autonomy, then this law and demand must be grounded in what makes us thus subject. Being free and rational wills must enable us simultaneously to determine demands to which we are subject as such, including the demand not to violate one another's autonomy, and to determine ourselves to comply with these demands.

In my view, it is our capacity to take up a second-person standpoint and address and acknowledge claims and demands to and from one another at all that makes us morally accountable beings, hence subject to the moral law and to the valid demand for autonomy. Indeed, as I see it, being "second-personally competent" in this sense is ultimately how 'free' in the formula "free and rational" should be understood. Only because we can assume that we each can take up the standpoint of one among others, determine what demands it makes sense to hold one another to from this perspective, and then address these demands to one another and to ourselves can we sensibly actually hold each other to these demands.⁵²

When you and I make a claim to autonomy that we take to be rooted in the dignity of persons, we presuppose that we are bound by practical laws and reasons that are valid, not by virtue of any "object" of volition, whether the value of any outcome or of any act considered in itself. We must assume that we are thus bound by virtue of an authority we have to make demands of one another as free and rational wills, a second-personal authority that we can recognize only from a second-person standpoint. Whatever value autonomy has as part of well-being or as a constituent of valuable outcomes, we also claim or demand autonomy as part of respect for the dignity of persons. So when we do, we must assume autonomy of the will also.

52. I argue for these claims in *The Second-Person Standpoint*.