Non-Requiring Reasons

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1. Introduction

Reasons for action, it is often said, are considerations that normatively speak in favor of an action (Scanlon 1998, p. 19; 2014, p. 30). So put, reasons can sound rather friendly. They offer "normative support;" they "rationalize an action;" they render it "rationally (morally, prudentially) eligible." On a classical approach, though, the way practical reasons do all of this is by way of issuing a deontic directive. Simply put, when we say that a reason speaks in favor of an option, we are saying it would be wrong not to follow the lead of that reason unless there were some countervailing justification not to. Depending on the type of reason, the wrong in question may be the wrong of immorality, or imprudence, or just the generic wrong of practical reason. And of course, countervailing justification there may well be. Still, on this view, practical reasons necessarily put one in danger of going wrong. Reasons for actions are normative entities inherently on their way toward being all things considered deontic oughts.

Defended explicitly by theorists as diverse as Robert Audi (1997) and Shelley Kagan (1989), the view is also sufficiently orthodox as to be tacitly assumed in many discussions.[1] Indeed, as Jonathan Dancy puts it, for many, this picture of how practical reasons function is often built into the very definition of a practical reason, with reasons defined as considerations it is "wrong not to act on in the absence of any opposition" (Dancy 2004, p. 92).

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[1] As Gert says in a footnote (p. 19), "This view is so widespread that many theorists do not seem to recognize that there is a position opposed to it. As a result, it is not often clearly stated. Nevertheless, for relatively clear endorsements, see Darwall (1983), pp. 19, 54; Korsgaard (1996a), pp. 225–26; Audi (1997), pp. 146–47; Scanlon (1998), pp. 18–23; Copp (1995), p. 42; Velleman(1996), pp. 705ff; Edgley (1965), pp. 182–88.) We would add Sergio Tannenbaum and Shelley Kagan.

Against this view, an increasing number of theorists have argued that reasons are not always in the requiring business. Endorsing rich and meaningful latitude in the lives of agents, they defend the existence of non-requiring or optional reasons. Thus Joshua Gert argues for the existence of "purely justifying reasons," "...which can be very strong rational justifiers but which do not rationally require at all" (2004, p. 23). T.M. Scanlon defends the existence of "strongly optional" reasons, which "render an action rationally eligible without making it rationally required in the absence of some countervailing reason" (2014, p. 107). In the moral realm, Terrence Horgan and Michael Timmons defend "merit-conferring reasons," whose normativity involves "favoring but not requiring" (2010, p. 49). In the non-moral realm, Jonathan Dancy defends the existence of "enticing" reasons, which serve to make "an option attractive rather than demanded, required, or right" (2004, p. 99). Patricia Greenspan defends the existence of "purely positive reasons," which "do not compel, but instead are optional, rendering an option eligible for choice, or justifying it, without requiring it" (2005, p. 389). The list continues.[2]

We ourselves are enthusiastic members of this movement (Little 2013; Little and Macnamara forthcoming). That said, discussions here can be confusing, for in fact there are two very different types of reasons -- with very different ways of underwriting or securing latitude -- that have been advanced under the rubric of non-requiring reasons. One camp, led most prominently by Joshua Gert but including, for instance, Patricia Greenspan and Douglas Portmore (2012), defends the existence of reasons that play what we will call a permissibility-conferring role. These are reasons that function to defuse or neutralize, by a certain degree, the force of requiring reasons. Another camp, led most prominently by Jonathan Dancy, but including, for instance, Horgans and Timmons and Fiona Woollard (2016), defends the existence of reasons that play what we will call a commendatory role. These are reasons that function to normatively endorse an action without placing one in need of justification to decline. Compatible claims, they are also conceptually distinct. While one could endorse both kinds of

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[2] See for instance Kauppinen's "evaluative reasons" (2015) and Kolodny's "non-insistent reasons" (2003).

reasons, one need not; and the arguments for one are not arguments for the other. Both represent important, distinct challenges to the standard view of practical reasons as universally and exclusively requiring.

In this article, we lay out the two camps -- their core claims, animating motivations, and, in final section, why they are sometimes confused for one another. We begin by describing the standard view which both aim to challenge.

2. The standard view

On one classic conception, reasons for action are deontic directives. If one faces a reason in favor of an action, then one would be wrong not to follow its lead absent sufficient countervailing justification. Depending on the type of reason, the wrong in question may be the wrong of immorality, or imprudence, or just the generic wrong of practical reason. And of course, countervailing justification one may well have. Still, to understand something as a practical reason necessarily brings with it a kind of deontic vulnerability: one who faces such a reason now stands in need of adequate justification to do other than it directs, on pain of going wrong.

On this view, the normative force of a practical reason can be described as a kind of requiring. Like a demand, reasons place us in need of a certain amount and type of justification not to follow their direction. They favor an action, in essence, by saying it would be pro tanto (insofar as this consideration goes) wrong *not* to do it. If reasons for action sound friendly, then, in fact they are something of a normative stick. Reasons for actions are normative entities inherently on their way toward being all-things-considered deontic oughts.

In addition to those who explicitly defend the claim, it is also implied by certain claims that many put forward as supposedly neutral depictions of reasons for action. For instance, it is often said that practical reasons are, by their very nature, governed by a principle of "motivational internalism." According to this principle, to believe that p is an undefeated reason

to phi necessarily entails that one will be motivated to do as it directs in the absence of weak will or deliberative error.[3] This, note, just *is* to state that all reasons carry requiring force. An undefeated requirement is wrong not to follow, and wrong is a marker of what a fully functioning agent -- one devoid of weak will or confusion -- does not do.

Core to this standard view is what we might call a "monistic theory" about how reasons contribute to the rational or moral status of actions. On this view, the normative function of practical reason to phi is to issue a pro tanto requirement to phi, displacing by some measure of strength the permissibility of not phi'ing; and this is the *only* normative function reasons for action can play. When determining whether a given action is supported by reasons, what we are doing is balancing, comparing, or otherwise adjudicating the strength, direction, and specificity with which the relevant reasons variously require. To assess reasons' contribution to the status of an action is to adjudicate the deontic push that each brings.

As many have pointed out, this raises questions about the possibility for meaningful latitude. Since many who endorse the standard view do regard latitude as an important aspect of our lives as agents, various strategies have been advanced for recovering latitude within its strictures. Raz defends the existence of widepread latitude in everyday life by positing the existence of widespread incommensurability -- considerations that are neither better than, less than, nor equal to one another.[4] The idea is as follows. When requiring reasons compete with and oppose one another, they provide a counter-balance to each other's deontic challenge: their presence provides a measure of countervailing justification for not following the others' direction. When a dominant reason emerges from the competition -- when one is stronger than the rest -- there is obviously no latitude, for one must obey the winner's command. However, latitude is possible when the reasons in question are incommensurable. Each member of the set suffices

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[3] For an example of motivational internalism applied to moral reasons, see Smith 1994.

[4] Raz 2000: chapters 3 and 5; see also 1989: chapter 13. Raz's account of *moral* latitude is different (1975). It appeals to a concept of exclusionary permissions, which can be seen as an early precursor of permissibility-conferring reasons. For Gert's discussion of Raz's exclusionary permissions, see pp.106 - 109.

to justify not following the other; but since none is defeated, it is acceptable to act on any in the set.

Others have defended the existence of latitude in the moral realm by positing normative insulation between personal and moral reasons. For instance, Sergio Tannenbaum accounts for the possibility of supererogatory actions (actions that are morally good but not required) by arguing that moral and prudential reasons form dual perspectives that cannot be judged against one another from any unified perspective. Others defend specific accounts of vagueness to expand the cases in which competing reasons do not dominate one another. What all such strategies have in common is the idea that latitude is enjoyed only where the sets of competing requirements we face have no victor.

While there is a lively literature challenging the specifics of these strategies,[5] another set of theorists argues that the problem goes deeper than details. The source of the problem, they argue, in effect, is with the functional monism advanced by the standard view. Rich and meaningful latitude exists, they believe, not just because competing requirements sometimes admit of no winner, but because requiring is not all that practical reasons do.

3. Permissibility-Conferring Reasons

The first group posits what we'll call permissibility-conferring reasons. If requiring reasons place one in need of a certain degree and kind of justification not to act as they direct, permissibility-conferring reasons function purely to provide said justification. Such reasons contribute to determinations of rational or moral eligibility, that is, not by issuing a requirement, but by defusing or answering the deontic charge of those that do.

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[5] Famous objections to widespread incommensurablility, for instance, can be found in Chang 1997 and Gert 2004, pp. 102-105.

Joshua Gert's is the most well known such theory. Though he endorses an analogous theory for morality, his primary interest is in practical rationality. As he argues, one intuitive way of thinking about the principles of practical rationality is to see them as principles that outline classes of action that are irrational absent adequate justification, and classes of considerations that can serve *as* that justification. For instance, according to one plausible substantive principle of practical rationality, it is irrational to incur serious risk to self absent sufficient compensating benefits to oneself or others. The adventurousness of sky diving, say, can justify the increment of risk to limb which would be irrational absent any meaningful benefit. To say that the adventure can rationalize the risk of skydiving does not mean it is rationally impermissible *not* to skydive. Instead, the role that consideration plays is to justify the cost rather than requiring the benefit. The considerations that provide justification, that is, can be different from those that place in need of justification.

More technically, for Gert, the foundational notion of practical rationality is the objective, wholesale rational status of action as rationally permissible or impermissible. His central claim is that there are two determinants of such status, which correspond to two normative functions: a "requiring" function, which works toward establishing the rational impermissibility of what would otherwise be rationally permissible, and a "justifying" function, which works toward establishing the rational permissibility of what would otherwise be rationally impermissible.[6] The strength of reasons' requiring force is measured by the scope of actions it could succeed in moving from permissible to impermissible; the strength of reasons' justifying force is measured by the scope

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[6] While this is the definition Gert gives, note that competing requirers would also count as justifiers under this definition. After all, the requiring force of a reason to phi also pushes against competing requirements not to phi; if strong enough, the former will render phi-ing permissible where it would not otherwise have been: as Raz (1975) and others have pointed out, "permissible," after all, is technically consistent being permissible *and* required. But other things Gert says indicates that he does not mean to count competing requirers as playing a justifying role. The analogy to consent helps to clarify that, in fact, Gert means to reserve "justifying" for the function of working to remove a ground of prohibition without introducing one of its own. A better definition of the justifying function for Gert, then, is that it works to render *merely* permissible an act that would otherwise be impermissible. The broader sense of justification, inclusive of competing requirements, is what below we call "defensive justification"; see section 5.

of actions it could succeed in moving from impermissible to permissible. A consideration may be low in strength as a requirer and high in strength as a justifier, or vice versa. And some reasons are purely justifying -- the *only* normative role they play is helping to secure the rational permissibility of certain actions.

Patricia Greenspan independently advances a similar view. Rather than "requiring" and "justifying," she uses the locution of "negative" and "positive" reasons. For Greenspan, the foundational grounding notion of practical rationality (or again morality) is whether or not an action is subject to the grounds of *significant criticism,* that is, forms of criticism, such as "irrational," that rational agents are constitutionally committed to avoiding.[7] Negative reasons are those that subject us to criticism if we fail to do as they direct: that it would be time consuming and irritating, for instance, is a negative reason against joining a faculty committee (amen). Such reasons push to "disqualify" the option in question, namely, serving on the committee; in the absence of countervailing considerations, joining the committee would irrational. Positive reasons are considerations that dissipate criticism without introducing any such grounds of their own. That the committee would be helpful to improving one's standing at the University, for instance, is a positive reason. The consideration can rationalize the decision to serve, removing the grounds for criticism it would otherwise merit. But unless the positive reason contains a hidden negative one (one actually needs improved standing to avoid harm, and could thus be criticized for passing up the opportunity), such reasons do not open one to criticism if one decides nonetheless not to serve. One *might* be motivated by the potential benefit and decide to join the committee, but one is not (thank goodness) rationally compelled to, for the normative function of the positive reason is simply to remove potential grounds of criticism for the action it

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[7] Greenspan explicitly declines to unpack "serious criticism." That said, it is worth pointing out that she endorses the central equivalence of her functions to Gert's. As his functions are clearly about the deontic status of actions, her "serious" criticisms may be ones that track deontic judgments.

concerns.[8] For Greenspan, then, the normative forces of reasons are found in their capability to serve as grounds for offering or for answering criticism of a given option; purely positive reasons provide the latter without constituting the former.

Douglas Portmore endorses and applies Gert's theory in the moral realm. Picking up on comments by Gert, Portmore argues that the requiring/justifiying distinction provides a coherent explanation of heroic supererogatory actions, such as running into a burning building to save another. Intuitively, we are both morally and rationally allowed to sacrifice in these instances while being both morally and rationally permitted not to do so. Rather than defending this intuition by positing, say, normative insulation between moral and personal reasons, Portmore argues that it plausibly follows from reasonable assumptions about when benefits and burdens to ourselves and to others issue requiring force, and when justifying force, in the moral and rational realms. Intuitively, morality faces limits on how much it can demand you to sacrifice; in particular, its requirements should be sensitive to the importance of not demanding an equivalent sacrifice of your own utility, impartially construed. Costs to you thus carry morally justificatory weight to decline altruistic actions that would otherwise be morally required of you.[9] At the same time, those costs to self do not carry moral requiring force to avoid them, for morality, intuitively, is more centrally about requirements to help and avoid harm to others rather than oneself. Relevantly, one does face a pro tanto prudential requirement to avoid the sacrifice -- it would be irrational to sacrifice one's life for no adequate compensating good. But here, the benefit that would accrue to others carries clear rational justifying strength: it renders it

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[8] Of course, stronger negative reasons can also serve as rejoinders to criticism. Like Gert, Greenspan means to reserve "positive reasons" for reasons that function to dissipate criticism without introducing grounds for criticism. "Negative reasons have force of O~A [rationally or morally obligated not to A], ... in normative terms, a purely positive reason merely denies this. A positive reason, however strong, at most serves to block a negative reason from binding, unless it really conceals or implies a competing negative reason that is strong enough to defeat it" (p. 363).

[9] Gert and Portmore endorse weightings that are quite robustly context-independent, while Greenspan is sceptical of attempts to formalize the weights of reasons, whether positive or negative, across contexts. Gert thinks this a critical aspect of why admission of "justifying" reasons offers a better account of latitude than either exclusionary permissions or incommensurability, since the latter two, as originally defended by Raz, are not graduated concepts (see Gert, p. 108).

rationally permissible for you to sustain a loss that would otherwise be irrational. Supererogation is thus both morally and rationally coherent, for it is morally and rationally permissible to make the sacrifice without it being morally or rationally required.

On all of these views, there are two distinct normative roles, not just one, that reasons play in determining the fundamental deontic status of an action -- in determining, that is, whether it is irrational (Gert), criticizable (Greenspan), or immoral (Portmore). Requiring or negative reasons function to push certain options -- namely, *not* doing as they say -- towards the outlaw status in question. Justifying or positive reasons, on the other hand, work to remove that status -- by a degree determined by its justifying or positive strength -- but without substituting any counter-requirement. In contrast to stronger competing requirements, which render their acts permissible only because now required, justifying or negative reasons serve simply to clear away what would otherwise be a prohibition against it. The permissibility-conferring function, as we might put it, is deontically subtractive.

Core to all of these views is the idea that value does not always ground requiring force. Only selected actions are pro tanto irrational or immoral to do. Practical rationality, for instance, is more about avoiding burdens and losses rather than maximizing personal benefits; morality is more about helping others rather than helping oneself. Further, and critically, when value does not ground a requirement, it is not normatively inert. Instead, it functions to ground justification, or potential rejoinder, to the deontic impress of those requirements. One way value does this, as we have seen, is by outlining *compensating benefits* -- benefits that are not required but that rationalize a cost and make a tradeoff reasonable. Another way value does this, as we have seen, is by outlining *burdens that set limits* on what it is reasonable to ask an agent to sacrifice on behalf of potential requirers. In both cases, reasons can provide precisely the sort of countervailing considerations the requirement in question is meant to be sensitive to without themselves issuing any deontic push.

As Gert points out, the permissibility-conferring role is thus functionally like consent. Absent your consent, it is impermissible for another to access your body or property; your valid consent removes that prohibition. It does not issue a requirement *that* the person engage in the activity; rather, it simply removes a deontic constraint against doing so. Of course, consent is an authority-based concept: it involves a person deciding to grant permission. Here, the idea is that certain value-based considerations involving burdens, benefits, and the like can impersonally achieve what the activity of validly consenting does personally. They serve to defuse a certain amount of deontic push, without issuing any of their own. Such considerations constitute reasons for action, note, in a way that the fact of consent does not, since they are also considerations (getting benefits and avoiding burdens) that can motivate creatures like us, while the mere fact that someone gives one permission to phi is, in the usual course of events, not something that itself moves us to phi. But again, in their normative work, such considerations function simply to remove a deontic impediment to the action they concern.

As such, purely justifying (or positive) reasons to phi are not governed by the principle of motivational internalism. One who apprehends a purely justifying (or positive) reason to phi can be fully rational and moral and be entirely unmotivated to phi. While one *might* be moved to act to get the benefit (sky diving) or avoid the burden (staying out of the burning building), that is, it is perfectly consistent with being a fully rational or moral agent that one is entirely unmotivated to do so. Such a response is compatible with full pragmatic uptake of the normative force of the reason, for the normative force of the reason is merely defensive.

4. Commendatory Reasons

A second group challenges the functional monism of the standard view in a very different way. They posit the existence of what we will call a purely commendatory function. Unlike permissibility-conferring, which serves simply, if importantly, to clear away an action's deontic

disqualification, commending provides a normative ground *for* choosing an action, just one that carries no deontic charge. While requiring reasons place one in need of justification not to do as they bid, and permissibility-conferring reasons provide that justification, commendatory reasons normatively speak in favor of an action without placing one in need of justification to decline in the first place.

Dancy is perhaps the most well known member of the group. Dancy argues that there are two modes or styles of favoring, which he calls "peremptory" and "enticing."[10] Peremptory favoring is deontic: one stands in need of justification to decline acting as it directs. Enticing favoring, in contrast, "makes its option worth doing," but "...what there is overall enticing reason to do will not amount to a reason that it is wrong to act in breach of" (95-6). For instance, that something would be fun to do, he argues, provides normative support for pursuing it, but it would not be irrational, even in the absence of any competing reasons, to decline. Dancy is clear that this is quite different from the function of rendering an action permissible. As Dancy puts it, all such a function does is to establish "the absence of reason against" an action (106). In contrast, enticing reasons are normative grounds for choosing an action; but normative grounds that do not carry with them the grounds of irrationality should one not follow their lead.

For Dancy, this second mode of favoring provides a more straightforward explanation than Raz's appeal to widespread incommensurability for cases of everyday latitude, such as the optionality of foregoing an edifying night at the opera in favor of fun. For Raz, as we noted, all reasons carry a deontic charge. Latitude in such cases must be achieved by the courtesy of finding an opposing but incommensurable requiring reason, which extinguishes the original reason's deontic threat without introducing its own dominant command. Optionality is achieved only by first successfully meeting the deontic charge that every favoring reason brings with it. In

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[10] Dancy eschews the term "requiring" in favor of ""peremptory," because he believes, for somewhat idiosyncratic reasons, that requiring applies only at the all-things-considered level. He therefore needs a different term to refer to the sort of pro tanto deontic force that applies at the level of individual reasons.

contrast, Dancy argues that the explanation of many such cases is more simple: many reasons for action favor without carrying any deontic charge to begin with. They render their own option pro tanto choiceworthy to pursue, but one doesn't need the excuse of another to decline: one simply has the option, with respect to each, or both, to walk on by.

Horgan and Timmons defend the existence of non-deontic favorers in the moral realm. They focus on the supererogatory nature of small kindnesses, such as offering to take a recently widowed neighbor to a ballgame because you know it would mean so much to her. Exploring the phenomenology of encountering such a reason, they note that it does not bring with it any felt need to offer an excuse not to issue the invitation, and brings with it "no sense that guilt, shame, or blame would be appropriate" should one decline -- the phenomenological marks of requiring force (48-49). That said, the experience does bring with it a sense of helping as *worth* doing, as a *meritorious* end -- the phenomenological marks of normative favoring. Having argued for the importance of taking phenomenology seriously, they argue that it mirrors a distinction in the types of favoring that reasons can bring. Some reasons provide normative grounds that favor in a requiring mode, but some favor without issuing any, even pro tanto, requiring force.

Like Dancy, Horgan and Timmons are explicit that this function is not the same as "justifying" in Gert's sense of the term. In the example at hand, the moral reason to issue the invitation is not functioning to help secure the moral permissibility of doing so -- after all, there was no competing requirement against doing so. Instead, such reasons serve to provide normative grounds for pursuing an action, but grounds that build in the optionality of declining. Citing the goods that can come from acting in worthy ways that are not required, these "moral merit conferring reasons" speak in favor of an action, but with a normative force that is is evaluative rather than deontic.

Fiona Woollard (2016) also defends the existence of non-deontic reasons in the moral realm. Her central concern is with a problematic social reasoning around maternal obligations,

namely, that mothers must justify declining each instance of benefiting their children. In challenging the view, she argues that one assumption that often lies behind it is the idea that a moral reason to do something must imply a "defeasible duty" to do so. Citing and extending Dancy's concept of enticing reasons, she argues that moral reasons need not always place one in a position of needing justification not to act in their service. To think so is to get wrong the structure of the reasons. They endorse and provide a normatively worthy basis -- indeed, a moral basis -- on which one can act, but one does not need to gather justification or assemble permission not to take each instance. One does not need to earn one's way out of every opportunity to advance the interests of one's children, even as those interests provide a moral reason that can serve as a normative basis to which one can respond.

On all of these views, there are two, not just one, modes in which reasons for action can serve to normatively favor or endorse an action. Requiring (peremptory, obligating) force does so by making it pro tanto wrong not to perform the action. In the absence of countervailing factors, the action is endorsed by the very good fact that it would have been wrong not to do. Commendatory (enticing, merit-conferring, evaluative) force does so by making the action pro tanto *worth* doing. Commendatory reasons serve to expand the set of worthwhile options without expanding what is required of us. Commendatory reasons favor actions in a way that internally maintains the optionality of declining. If requiring is a normative stick, commending is a normative carrot.

If requiring functions like a demand, and permissibility-conferring like consent, commending thus functions structurally like a request. Like a demand, to issue a request is to exercise a form of standing to interpersonally insert oneself into the other's normative considerations: where felicitous, such speech acts provide one a normative, second-personally sourced ground for doing the act in question (see Enoch, 2011, Darwall, 2013). That said, requests have a fundamentally different structure than demands. While demands place a requirement that their recipient acts as directed, absent specific justification, requests do not

presume to give their recipients an assignment, even a pro tanto one. In the standard case, one needs to provide a response, but 'yes' and 'no' are both fully acceptable answers (Raz, 1999). While other things may contingently make it wrong to decline, the request itself does not place one in need of exculpatory justification to decline, even as it gives one a normatively adequate basis for acceding.

Core to the defense of commendatory reasons is the claim that certain value-based considerations can impersonally achieve what the activity of validly requesting does personally. The good we can do is not always our job to attain, placing us in need of exculpation if we decline to act in its service, but the choiceworthiness remains.[11] Such reasons set out the worthiness of the end and the values set forth, but place us in no need of assembling permission to decline acting on their behalf. As such, purely commendatory reasons to phi are not governed by the principle of motivational internalism. However strong a commendatory reason, so long as it is merely commendatory, a fully rational agent can gaze upon it in full appreciation and simply stay on the sidelines, declining its request. Reasons can favor actions without any requiring force at all, for there are evaluative, not just deontic, modes of favoring.[12]

5. Conclusion

The above has outlined two very different claims about non-requiring functions that practical reasons may play. The first serves to render permissible; the second serves to commend.

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[11] Dancy himself believes that mild (non-deontic) criticism is apt when one chooses a weaker for a stronger enticing reason. 92-93, 103-104. For a contrasting view, see Little and Macnamara (forthcoming), where we provide of comparative commendatory dominance that implies no criticism at all.
[12] As Horgan and Timmons say, "...to identify the kind of role one needs, one must look to non-deontic forms of moral evaluation. It will not work to focus only on deontic evaluation and the roles that reasons play as they bear on the deontic status of actions" (p. 53-54).

Yet some in the literature have struggled to keep clear the difference between these functions. For instance, in a discussion that is meant to explain and endorse Gert's view, Chris Tucker (2017) in fact toggles between examples of permissibility-conferring and commending as though they were equivalent. Or again, in his defence of "optional reasons," Scanlon (2014) registers his concurrence with Gert, but his own discussion looks far more like a defense of commending than anything about permitting.

Why the confusion? One reason, we suspect, has to do with the term "justifying." As we've seen, Gert (and Portmore following him) uses the term "justifying" to describe the non-requiring function he endorses. But justification is a concept that contains an inherent ambiguity. When Gert and Portmore use the term, they mean justifying in what we might call the defensive or exculpatory use of the term -- defending against or disabling a negative charge that would otherwise obtain. This is indeed an important concept of justification. To justify an action in this sense is to move the action off the "No Fly List" of rationally or morally forbidden actions. When Gert and company say that reasons can justify without any requiring force, they mean that reasons can recover the permissibility of an action by means other than issuing a stronger competing demand.

But justification is also widely used in a very different sense, to refer to establishing an action as something that pro tanto ought *to* be done, is pro tanto *worthy* in some respect, or participates in a form of *good*. To say an action is justified in this sense is to say more than that it is not forbidden; it is to say that pursuit of it can be grounded in more than inclination; it is endorsed by something that normatively speaks in favor of doing it. This is the sense of justification -- what we might call justification in the endorsing sense -- that commendatory theorists are interested in. When they say that reasons can justify without issuing requiring force, they mean that reasons can normatively endorse deciding to take an action in a non-deontic manner.

To be clear, then, while both sides claim, for instance, that goods or benefits can "justify" more than they require, they mean very different things by "justify."[13] The first camp means that goods or benefits can provide more defensive justification for enduring a risk or burden than they ground requirements to attain the goods themselves. The second camp means that goods or benefits can commend a broader scope of actions than they require. The first claim remains staunchly within the deontic life of reasons -- the realm of what is permissible versus forbidden. It works to expand the ways in which reasons contribute to determining which status an action has, adding a deontically defusing function to the familiar requiring one. The second claim leaves the deontic realm altogether. It is interested in the normatively endorsing role of reasons -- the ways in which reasons underwrite a normative grounds for choosing an action. Their interest is in expanding the ways in which reasons can favor an action as one worthy of choice, from one that is deontic to one that is evaluative.

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[13] The distinction between the two senses of justification can also get obscured because Gert categorizes his "purely justifying" reasons -- that is, reasons whose only normative function is to help render an action permissible -- as *favoring* that action. This, it should be said, is an idiosyncratic use of the term "favorer." When most people use the term -- certainly when Dancy or Horgan and Timmons use the term, they precisely mean a consideration that justifies an action in the normative endorsement sense of the term. For Gert, in contrast, it is enough for a consideration to count as a favorer that it be something that can in fact motivate creatures like us, so long as it plays some role -- even a role in removing a deontic impediment -- in adjudicating the objective status of actions as impermissible or criticizable. Such a consideration might better be thought of less as a traditional favorer and more of as a motive that also happens to serve as a truth condition of permissibility.)

      Greenspan's locution of "positive reason" to refer to a permissibility-conferring reason carries similar potential to mislead. The two senses of justification outlined in this section are sometimes referred to as negative and positive justification. Her invocation of "positive reasons" can carry a connotation of positive justification -- that is, of a normative basis to take the action it concerns, when, as she emphasizes, "positive reasons" simply signal removal of a reason against doing its action.

      Disambiguating the two senses of justification can help give technical definitions of the three normative forces. The function of requiring is to provide endorsing justification by way of placing one in need of defensive justification not to do as it acts. The function of permissibility-conferring is to provide defensive justification against a competing requirement, and does not itself provide any endorsing justification for the action it concerns. The function of commending is to provide a kind of endorsing justification that does not place one in need of defensive justification.

Of course, underscoring the difference between the two non-requiring functions does not mean one can't believe in both. It is also possible to belong to *both* camps, and many do. Horgan and Timmons, for instance, explicitly endorse the legitimacy of both non-requiring functions. While Portmore concentrates his efforts on defending the existence of a permissibility-defending function,he also declares himself open to a commendatory function. Indeed, one can believe that one and the same consideration can carry all three forces -- requiring, permitting, and commending. For instance, one view of heroic supererogation (as opposed to its quotidian cousin) is to say precisely that. That one could save another's life carries morally deontic force; absence sufficient countervailing justification, one would be wrong not to act. The risk to one's life provides said justification, and declining is permissible. That said, the good that can come of saving the life serves not only to justify, in the Gertian sense, what would otherwise be an irrational danger to one's well-being, it is very much in view as a morally commendatory reason *to* do so.

Still and all, it would be a mistake to say that everyone is bipartisan. For instance, it is easy to believe in the permissibility-conferring function of reasons and not believe in the commendatory function. In fact, two of the three theorists we pointed to as endorsers of permissibility-conferring, Gert and Greenspan, are sceptics about commendatory force. They are what we might call deontic reductivists about normative support. There is nothing normative to the concept of 'merit' or 'worthy' other than grounds for requiring or for permitting. If one is moved to act on the basis of a purely permitting reason, it is a matter of plain inclination, not anything normative. (As Greenspan puts it, the "pull" of purely positive or justifying reasons is only motivational, not normative (390-91).) They see the normative economy of reasons, that is, as thoroughly and exhaustively deontic.

In contrast, the core claim of those defending purely commendatory reasons is that there is more to the normative realm than the deontic. The normativity of practical reasons can speak in favor of an action beyond either requiring it or clearing away a prohibition against it. For the

normative is not solely about the deontic, it is also about what is good, merited, or choiceworthy. The normative lives of reasons are not just about imposing or answering deontic vulnerability, for the deontic does not exhaust the normative.

Those who defend commendatory force are less likely to be sceptics writ large about the ability of non-requiring reasons to play a permissibility-conferring function. After all, if one believes a consideration renders an action worthy to pursue, it is likely one will believe it capable of rationalizing at least some risks or burdens, at least in assessments of garden variety rationality. Even if a benefit is not deontically required, if one thinks it renders an end worthy, it would be odd not to think that worthiness could justify some risk or burden.

That said, it is important here, too, to keep the distinction between the functions clear, for they are unlikely to be fully co-extensive. Certainly, the fact that a consideration acts as a commendatory reason to phi in some circumstance does not mean it is serving there to help render it permissible to phi: as we saw with Horgan and Timmons' example, to say the reason to issue the invitation to the ballgame is commendatory does not mean it is also helping to render the invitation morally permissible, for there may not be any threatened counter-requirement standing in way of the invitation (say, a standing obligation for your time) to begin with. More generally, one might have considerations on one's list of commendatory goods that one does not think are the kind of things that could push back on one's favored list of pro tanto rational prohibitions: one might believe that fun is an important good capable of conferring merit and commending action, but not regard it as the right sort of good to rationalize, say, a risk to life and limb. In morality, too: one can certainly think a something a moral good yet not think it capable of getting one out of a given moral duty.[14]

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[14] This, in essence, is the topic of Frances Kamm's famous article on supererogation. One can believe in non-required moral goods' commendatory force but believe they are never able to push back against pro tanto moral requirements. Kamm's article defends the opposite.

But the central point, at any rate, is that these are distinct functions and distinct claims. Both are important challenges to the functional monism of the standard view of reasons. Debates between members of the camps can be as important as debates between any camp and the standard view -- and each deserve their own discussion.

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