

November 2017

The Concept of Intrinsic Goodness: Essays in Moorean Moral Philosophy

Miles Tucker
University of Massachusetts Amherst

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umass.edu/dissertations_2



Part of the [Ethics and Political Philosophy Commons](#), and the [Metaphysics Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Tucker, Miles, "The Concept of Intrinsic Goodness: Essays in Moorean Moral Philosophy" (2017). *Doctoral Dissertations*. 1133.

<https://doi.org/10.7275/10178737.0> https://scholarworks.umass.edu/dissertations_2/1133

This Campus-Only Access for Five (5) Years is brought to you for free and open access by the Dissertations and Theses at ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctoral Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. For more information, please contact scholarworks@library.umass.edu.

THE CONCEPT OF INTRINSIC GOODNESS: ESSAYS IN MOOREAN
MORAL PHILOSOPHY

A Dissertation Presented

by

MILES TUCKER

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
Of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

September 2017

Philosophy

© Copyright by Miles Tucker 2017

All Rights Reserved

THE CONCEPT OF INTRINSIC GOODNESS: ESSAYS IN MOOREAN
MORAL PHILOSOPHY

A Dissertation Presented

By

MILES TUCKER

Approved as to style and content by:

Fred Feldman, Chair

Phillip Bricker, Member

Peter Graham, Member

Bradford Skow, Member

Seth Cable, Member

Joseph Levine, Department Head
Philosophy

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to thank my friends Bob Gruber, Jordan Kroll, Luis Oliveira, Crystal Plahuta, and Kim Soland. I am so grateful for your time, your patience, your ideas, and your encouragement. I want to thank my teachers Phillip Bricker, Maya Eddon, Peter Graham, Bradford Skow, and Jean-Paul Vessel. Your insight and dedication made this work possible. I want to thank my mother, Lisa Tucker. Without your kindness, wisdom, and faith, I could never have come this far. And, perhaps most importantly, I want to thank my dissertation director, Fred Feldman. I am so grateful for everything you have done for me, Fred—and it has been my honor to work on these essays with you.

ABSTRACT

THE CONCEPT OF INTRINSIC GOODNESS: ESSAYS IN MOOREAN
MORAL PHILOSOPHY

SEPTEMBER 2017

MILES TUCKER

B.A., NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY

Ph.D., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Directed by: Professor Fred Feldman

I defend and explicate a Moorean program in value theory. I claim that intrinsic goodness is the fundamental concept of axiology, and argue that the notion should be understood as G.E. Moore suggested in the *Principia Ethica*. In the first half of my manuscript, I address popular challenges to the Moorean project, including objections raised by Judith Jarvis Thomson, Shelly Kagan, and Christine Korsgaard. After, I turn to explication: I attend to the connection between goodness and other normative notions, and present what I take to be the most attractive version of the Moorean view. Finally, I address a perennial puzzle in Moorean axiology: the nature and existence of value pluralism.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iv
ABSTRACT.....	v
CHAPTER	
I: INTRODUCTION.....	1
II: SIMPLY GOOD: A DEFENSE OF THE PRINCIPIA.....	5
III: THE PEN, THE DRESS, AND THE COAT: A CONFUSION IN GOODNESS.....	24
IV: ENDS AND VALUE AS AN END.....	39
V: REASONS AND GOODNESS: MOORE, BRENTANO, AND SCANLON.....	55
VI: A MOOREAN ACCOUNT OF INTRINSIC VALUE.....	75
VII: TWO KINDS OF VALUE PLURALISM.....	90
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	106

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

My dissertation consists of six self-contained essays. In conjunction, they defend and explicate a Moorean program in value theory. I take this program to consist of two claims:

- (i): Intrinsic value is the fundamental concept of axiology.
- (ii): The intrinsic value of a thing depends only on its intrinsic features. Further, such value is essential to its bearers, persists in isolation, and attaches only to finely-grained entities, such as states of affairs.

These claims fix the subject matter of axiology. We may say that the axiologist's fundamental task is to assign intrinsic values to states of affairs—or, equivalently, to rank states of affairs according to the *intrinsically better than* relation.

This conception of value theory has been nearly universally accepted since the publication of Moore's work. But it is increasingly challenged, or even rejected outright. The first half of my manuscript is dedicated strictly to defense: I aim to show that the most powerful objections to the orthodox Moorean program do not succeed. After, I turn to explication: I attend to the relations between intrinsic goodness and other normative concepts; I attempt to formulate the most plausible form of Moore's original principles; and I examine puzzles about the bearers of intrinsic value.

Below I summarize my six essays, and explain how they advance these goals.

Chapter 2: Simply Good: A Defense of the *Principia*

Some philosophers reject the Moorean program because they believe that nothing is intrinsically good. Most point to Judith Jarvis Thomson; she says that Moorean axiology (and

Moorean moral philosophy more broadly) goes wrong because “there is no such thing as goodness.” I argue that her objection does not succeed: while Thomson is correct that the kind of generic goodness she targets is incoherent, it is not, I believe, the kind of goodness central to the Moorean project. I then address other motivations for such nihilism about intrinsic goodness; I claim they are unfounded.

Chapter 3: The Pen, the Dress, and the Coat: A Confusion in Goodness

Some accept the existence of intrinsic goodness, but deny its normative significance. *Conditionalists* claim that the final value of a thing—the value it has *for its own sake* or *as an end*—may be conditional on its extrinsic features. It must therefore be distinguished from the value a thing has intrinsically. Further, they claim that once these concepts are separated, it is final value—not intrinsic value—that is critical to axiology.

To divide final and intrinsic goodness, philosophers provide examples of non-intrinsic final goods. Kagan points to Abraham Lincoln’s pen, Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen to Lady Diana’s dress, and Korsgaard to a mink coat. I believe these examples are unconvincing: they are, surprisingly, ruled out by the conditionalist’s own accounts of final value.

Chapter 4: Ends and Value as an End

I continue my reply to the conditionalist. For the sake of argument, I ignore the concerns raised in the previous chapter, and instead consider other ways that the Moorean might defend his position. I settle upon a dilemma. I argue that “final value” is ambiguous; it may denote the value a thing has as an end or it may denote the value a thing has ultimately (i.e. non-derivatively). In the first case, we may, in fact, reject the division of final and

intrinsic value; in the second case, we may claim that intrinsic value is the most important kind of final value. I argue that under either condition, the Moorean position may be maintained.

Chapter 5: Reasons and Goodness: Moore, Brentano, and Scanlon

Having defended the Moorean view to the best of my ability, I turn to explication. One immediate question concerns the relation between intrinsic goodness and other normative notions. Many contemporary philosophers believe that goodness is analyzable in terms of *reasons*: they say that for a thing to be valuable is for there to be reasons to value it.

I agree that value is connected with reasons but reject such reductive accounts. Unsurprisingly, I side instead with Moore; I say that intrinsic goodness is a conceptual primitive. I thus dedicate myself to the influential arguments marshaled against Moore's claims, including those advanced by Scanlon, Jacobson, and Hooker and Stratton-Lake; I argue that they do not succeed.

Chapter 6: A Moorean Account of Intrinsic Value

Though I believe that none of the objections presented so far give us reason to abandon the Moorean program in axiology, I think it worth considering how to make Moore's view as plausible as we can. I am particularly eager to accommodate the kind of internal objections raised by those friendly to the Moorean project. I thus present the original versions of Moore's supervenience, necessity, isolation, and obligation principles and then suggest revisions. I close by arguing (as I assume in the previous chapter) that the Moorean should also connect intrinsic value with our reasons for action. This may help us

defend the claims of Zimmerman and others that intrinsic goodness is a kind of ethical goodness.

Chapter 7: Two Kinds of Value Pluralism

I complete my explication of the Moorean conception of axiology by presenting some of its fundamental puzzles. I turn to the bearers of intrinsic value; I ask about the truth of value pluralism. But though this question has been discussed extensively, I fear it is not well understood. I argue that there are two distinct views that we call 'value pluralism,' but that these views have not been properly stated or distinguished. I separate and elucidate these two kinds of pluralism; I show that a number of contemporary arguments in favor of value pluralism rely upon a kind confusion between these two views.

CHAPTER II

SIMPLY GOOD: A DEFENSE OF THE *PRINCIPIA*

G.E. Moore's *Principia Ethica* is an ambitious work. Moore hopes to understand normative ethics through axiology; he identifies one fundamental value concept—intrinsic goodness—and provides accounts of rightness of action and excellence of character in terms of it.¹ Moore's view is well known: he says we act *rightly* when we make the world as good as we can, and that we are *virtuous* when we are disposed to perform right actions. There is, then, a structure to normative ethics: axiology first, deontology second, and virtue theory third.

As even its most ardent opponents admit, there is something attractive about Moore's project.² But its popularity is fading. Most critics attempt to halt the project after it gets started: they accept Moore's conception of goodness, but reject the significance he gives it.³ However, increasingly, philosophers hope to stop the project at its beginning. In her influential (1997) and elsewhere, Judith Jarvis Thomson claims that Moore's account goes wrong because “there is no such thing as goodness.” Her arguments build upon Geach's work: she says that facts about the adjective ‘good’ give us reason to reject the concept at the heart of Moore's system.

I am a Moorean—I think there is still promise in the project of the *Principia*. I hope to defend my position; I want to show that, despite its popularity, Thomson's objection does not undermine the Moorean program. This is because Thomson's target is not Moore's

¹ See Moore (1993: 192, 196-197, 219-220).

² In her (1985), Foot says: “It is remarkable how [Moorean] utilitarianism tends to haunt even those of us who will not believe in it. It is as if we for ever feel that it must be right, although we insist that it is wrong.” In her (1997) Thomson also says that she finds Moore's project powerful and attractive—shortly before arguing that it is incoherent.

³ Most attention has been paid to Moore's ideal utilitarian account of right action and its allegedly unacceptable consequences. For discussion of perhaps the most powerful objections to the theory and an attractive Moorean reply, see Feldman (1995).

intrinsic goodness but rather *generic goodness*. And this concept is not needed, I believe, to construct Moore's system.

Still, Moore's critics are unlikely to accept defeat. Some note that most accounts of intrinsic goodness seem to appeal to a generic notion of goodness—including Moore's own account. And if this is true, then some version of Thomson's argument may make contact with the Moorean project after all. Others claim that though Moore does not require the concept of generic goodness, he does require the similar concept of absolute goodness or goodness *simpliciter*. And this notion, they claim, is just as objectionable.

I hope to defuse these concerns. I first show how we may dispense with generic goodness without losing intrinsic goodness. And while I accept that Moorean intrinsic goodness is a kind of absolute goodness, I argue that the objections marshaled against the concept are unsound.

§1: Thomson's Attack

Thomson claims that Moore's system is built upon a naïve concept of goodness. She writes:

Moore's story begins with the good. Some things are good, Moore said, and some things are not good; so there is such a property as goodness—all good things have it and all things that are not good lack it ... The second part of the story flows from the first: there being such a property as goodness, there is also such a relation as being better than, or *betterness*... Moore's story then concludes: the right is analyzable in terms of the relation betterness. Thus for it to be the case that Alfred ought to do a thing at a time is for it to be the case that the world will be better if he does the thing than it will be if he does any of the other things it is open to him to do at the time. (1997: 274).

Since the kind of goodness Thomson speaks of is undifferentiated or generic, let us call it *generic goodness*. She characterizes this notion by appealing to three principles, each of which she claims Moore endorsed. First, as Thomson says above, generic goodness is the property

all good things have in common.⁴ Thus any good thing, whether it be a good act, a good dryer, or a good lesson, is generically good. Second, generic goodness is the property we attribute to a thing when we say ‘that’s good,’ without a qualifier like ‘to eat’ or ‘as an example’—it is the property of being “just plain good.”⁵

Third and finally, on Thomson’s interpretation, Moore is a kind of axiological monist: he denies that there are many kinds of goodness. Rather, everything that is good in any respect is good because it possesses this property of generic goodness. Thomson writes:

[According to Moore] for a thing to be a good person is for it to possess the properties being good and being a person, for a thing to be a good tennis player is for it to possess the properties being good and being a tennis player, and for a thing to be a good toaster is for it to possess the properties being good and being a toaster. More generally, for a thing to be good in a respect is for it to possess the properties being good and being the relevant kind. (2008: 3)⁶

But, Thomson says, there is an immediate problem: there is no such thing as generic goodness; the concept is, she claims, unintelligible. Thus Moore’s project is “incoherent from the outset.”⁷

I do not want to examine Thomson’s case against generic goodness now. For the sake of argument, I am willing to simply agree—I admit that there is no such thing as generic goodness; nothing that all and only good things have in common. But I want to show that, even given this, Thomson’s argument against the Moorean position does not succeed.

⁴ This is stated also in her (1994: 8), (2003a: 17) and (2008: 2).

⁵ She writes in her (2003a: 17): “[Goodness] is the property that we would be ascribing to a thing—whether an event or anything else—if we said of it ‘That’s good’; and that is the property such that we are asking whether a thing possesses it when we ask about the thing ‘Is it good?’” See also her (2003b: 72) and (2008: 7).

⁶ This is suggested also in her (1994: 8). It is worth noting that Thomson takes the principle to have broader application than may be apparent here; she assumes that, for Moore, whenever a thing is good in *any respect*—whether it is a good *as a* toaster, or good *at* heating the room, or good *for* your diet—this is because it possesses the property of generic goodness. See her (2008: 3-6).

⁷ See also Thomson (1994: 8), (1997: 275), (2003b: 72), and (2008: 3-7).

§2: A Distinction: Intrinsic Value and Generic Value

Generic goodness is a strange property. Thomson's third principle guarantees that it attaches to anything that is good *in any respect*. It therefore necessarily attaches to everything that exists. Assume for *reductio* that there is something that fails to be good in any respect. Then this thing would be a good counterexample to the thesis that everything is generically good. It would thus be good in some respect, and would therefore be generically good.⁸ For similar reasons, everything is generically bad.

However, if this is so, then it is unclear how generic goodness could be maximized—and thus unclear how the concept could possibly do what Moore hoped. If, as Thomson claims, this was the notion Moore was concerned with, then he has made a profound mistake.

But does Moore's system truly depend upon the concept of generic goodness? Thomson's interpretation is grounded in just one passage, which she cites each time she discusses Moore's program:⁹

Ethics is undoubtedly concerned with the question what good conduct is; but, being concerned with this, it obviously does not start at the beginning, unless it is prepared to tell us what is good as well as what is conduct. For 'good conduct' is a complex notion: all conduct is not good; for some is certainly bad and some may be indifferent. And on the other hand, other things, beside conduct, may be good; and if they are so, then, 'good' denotes some property, that is common to them and to conduct... (1993: 54)

I agree with Thomson: this passage *does* suggest that Moore was interested in some generic kind of goodness. But granting this does not justify Thomson's interpretation of the Moorean project. She needs to show that generic goodness is the notion of importance for Moore; that it is the concept the *Principia* is dedicated to understanding; that it is the concept

⁸ I suspect Thomson would accept this argument: she reasons similarly in her (2008: 10).

⁹ See her (1994: 8), (1997: 273), and (2008: 2). She paraphrases this same passage in her (2003a) and (2003b) but does not provide a citation.

he invokes in his accounts of right action and virtuous character. But she does not provide evidence for these claims. And they are, I believe, mistaken.

Consider the second preface to the *Principia*. Moore writes:

[I]t cannot be too emphatically insisted that the predicate which...I call 'good,' and which I declare to be indefinable, is only *one* of the predicates for which the word 'good' is commonly used to stand... (1993: 3)

He then declares:

[T]he predicate I am concerned with is *that* sense of the word 'good' which has to do with the conceptions of 'right' and 'wrong,' a relation, which makes it *the* sense which is of the most fundamental importance for Ethics. Let us call that predicate G. (1993: 5)

Finally, Moore states what he thinks is most important about G:

It now only remains to try to say, as clearly as I can, what it is that I am really anxious to say about G...*G is a property which depends only on the intrinsic nature of the things which possess it.* (1993: 21-22)

This, I believe, makes it clear that Moore was sensitive to the fact that there are many kinds of goodness; he was not a monist in the way Thomson suggests. Rather, he wanted to pick out a particular kind of goodness, a kind of goodness he was eager to characterize. And this is the kind of goodness that depends only on the intrinsic properties of a thing—*intrinsic* goodness. When he uses 'good' without a qualifier it is this kind of value—not generic value—that he hopes to express.¹⁰

Indeed, Moore repeatedly makes plain that it is intrinsic goodness that is fundamental to his moral program. In the first chapter of the *Principia*, Moore states what he takes to be the dual concerns of ethics: first, the nature and bearers of instrumental value, or value as a means, and second, the nature and bearers of intrinsic value, or value as an end.

He writes, boldly:

¹⁰ See also Moore (1993: 68): "Every one does in fact understand the question 'Is this good?'...It has a distinct meaning for him, even though he may not recognise in what respect it is distinct. Whenever he thinks of 'intrinsic value,' or 'intrinsic worth,' or says that a thing 'ought to exist,' he has before his mind the unique object—the unique property of things—which I mean by 'good.'"

The primary and peculiar business of Ethics, the determination what things have intrinsic value and in what degrees, has received no adequate treatment at all.
(1993:78)

This is, of course, *too* bold. But we are concerned only with the subject of Moorean moral philosophy. And as this and other passages make clear, the subject of Moorean moral philosophy is intrinsic goodness.¹¹ This is why Moore speaks so often, and so carefully, about the nature of intrinsic value; this is why he tries to understand the relations between the intrinsic value of a whole and the intrinsic values of its parts; this is why he spends chapter after chapter examining—and dismissing—views about what things are intrinsically good.

Further, *pace* Thomson, I do not believe that Moore invokes the notion of generic goodness in his account of right action.¹² Rather, his account appeals only to the notion of intrinsic goodness.¹³ “An action is right,” he says, “only if no action, which the agent could have done instead, would have had intrinsically better results: while an action is wrong, only if the agent *could* have done some other action instead whose total results would have been intrinsically better.”¹⁴

Of course, those attracted to Thomson’s position may reply that Moore equated intrinsic and generic value. But there is no textual evidence to support this claim. And there is significant evidence against it. Recall that something is generically good if it is good in *any*

¹¹ See Zimmerman (2001: 18-19) for a brief argument to the same effect.

¹² Of course if we understand generic goodness differently from Thomson, it may be plausible to think that, according to Moore, we should maximize the generic goodness of the world. Suppose that generic goodness is *relative to kinds*. That is, suppose that something is generically good just in case it is a good member of its kind—good relative to the standards appropriate to that kind. We might then say that a world is generically good just in case it is good *as a world*—that is, good according to the standards appropriate to worlds. And we might imagine that Moore believed a world is good according to these standards just in case it is intrinsically good. Under this understanding it would, I think, be plausible to claim that Moore believed we should maximize the generic value of the world. But of course, this is not Thomson’s conception of generic goodness: she insists that generic goodness is *just plain goodness*; it is not relative to kinds. In fact, that is much of the reason she finds generic value so objectionable.

¹³ This is, I believe, the orthodox interpretation. See e.g. Feldman (1986: 3), Driver (2014), Shafer-Landau (2010: 117-121), Shaw (2005: xvi-xvii) and Zimmerman (2008: 2-3), among many others.

¹⁴ See his (2005: 30).

way. But consider one of the other types of value Moore speaks of: extrinsic goodness, the kind of goodness something has in virtue of its extrinsic properties. When things are good in this way, they are, *a fortiori*, good in some way. So extrinsic goods are generically good. But we cannot, on pain of contradiction, maintain that this is because of their intrinsic features. Thus, to claim that Moore conflated intrinsic and generic value would be to accuse of him of contradicting himself. Without textual evidence, we should, I believe, avoid such accusations.

I therefore reject Thomson's argument. I think that the fundamental notion of Moorean moral philosophy is intrinsic goodness, not generic goodness. And I think that Moore did not conflate these notions.

§3: Intrinsic Goodness without Generic Goodness

I suspect Thomson is aware of this objection. But she does not address it until her (2008) and restricts her response to a footnote:

I am sure that some readers will say that there is another, and better, alternative at the bottom of the barrel, namely that the property [Moore] takes "good" to stand for is...intrinsic goodness. We might well suppose [this kind of goodness] to be nonderivative goodness... *This does seem to be what Moore had in mind when he used the term in Principia*. So understood, however there is no such property as intrinsic goodness if there is no such property as [generic] goodness. (2008: 16).¹⁵

This is a surprising admission: Thomson has argued in her (1994), (1997), (2003a), (2003b), and in her (2008)¹⁶—up to this point—that Moore's project fails because his fundamental notion, generic goodness, is illegitimate. But if the Moorean project does not make use of this notion, as Thomson seems to suggest, then it is unclear how her objection may succeed.

However, Thomson clearly believes that there is some tie between intrinsic goodness and generic goodness—without the latter, the former cannot exist. But we are not given an

¹⁵ Emphasis mine.

¹⁶ Admittedly, Thomson does provide a very brief discussion of this objection in an appendix to her (2003b). However it is unclear that she accepts the concern, as she does here.

argument for this claim. Still, we might be able to fill in this lacuna. Consider Thomson's suggestion:

Non-Derivation: Something is intrinsically good just in case its goodness is non-derivative.

What kind of goodness is being invoked on the right hand side of this biconditional? No qualifier appears. It cannot be intrinsic goodness: this would render the principle circular. Nor can it be instrumental goodness, or goodness as a means: such value is always derivative. So, we might think, this mysterious kind of goodness must be generic goodness. What else could it be?

This problem may appear unique to Thomson's non-derivation account. But it is not: Nearly all accounts of intrinsic goodness seem to invoke some unexplained kind of goodness. In the *Ethics* we read:

By saying that a thing is intrinsically good it means that it would be a good thing that the thing in question should exist, even if it existed *quite alone*. (2005: 32)

Let us understand this principle as a biconditional. Then we will say:

Isolation: Something is intrinsically good just in case it would still be good, even if it were the only thing that existed.

The kind of goodness on the right hand side of this biconditional is not specified. But it is not qualified in any way, either. So, even friends of Moore admit that it may be generic goodness.¹⁷

But if this is true of Moore's isolation principle, then it is likely true of the rest of the Moorean principles about intrinsic value, all of which invoke this unexplained concept of goodness. So it seems that Thomson's strategy may succeed: by attacking generic goodness, she has attacked intrinsic goodness too.

¹⁷ See Zimmerman (2001: 19).

However, I believe that we should not understand Moore's principles in terms of generic goodness; such interpretations render the principles absurd. Begin with Moore's isolation principle. If we understand it in terms of generic goodness, we will say:

Generic Isolation: Something is intrinsically good just in case it would still be generically good, even if it were the only thing that existed.

But this principle is indefensible.¹⁸ Everything is such that, if it were the only thing that existed, then it would be generically good. This is because generic goodness is the property that *all things that are good in any way* have in common. Thus to be generically good, a thing must simply be good *in some way or another*. So imagine anything, and then imagine it existing all alone. Such a thing would then be a good example of a thing that exists all alone. It would therefore be good in some way, and thus generically good. So this thing, whatever it is, will be intrinsically good.

Similar problems will infect Moore's other principles. Consider the necessity principle: it says that something is intrinsically good just in case it is necessarily good.¹⁹ If we formulate this claim in terms of generic goodness, we obtain:

Generic Necessity: Something is intrinsically good just in case it is necessarily generically good.

But, as I have argued, a thing cannot fail to be generically good, since a thing cannot fail to be good *in some way*.

We should not accept an interpretation of the Moorean principles that makes them absurd. So we should not understand these principles in terms of Thomson's notion of

¹⁸ In his illuminating (1998), Feldman makes a similar point with regard to an understanding of these principles that appeals to *overall value*. And, indeed, my solution here mirrors Feldman's.

¹⁹ This principle is perhaps most clearly stated in Moore's (1922: 260-261).

generic goodness. Rather, we can endorse a different version of the Moorean claims; we use the principles to differentiate between *kinds of goodness*. We say:

Intrinsic Isolation: If something is intrinsically good, then it would continue to be intrinsically good, even if it were the only thing that existed. But this is not true of other kinds of goodness.

And:

Intrinsic Necessity: If something is intrinsically good, then it is necessarily intrinsically good. But this is not true of other kinds of goodness.²⁰

These principles are defensible and attractive; they show us how intrinsic goodness differs from other sorts of goodness. And they make no appeal to Thomson's notion of generic value.^{21 22} Given this, the Moorean may employ the principles of the *Principia* without appealing to the notion of generic goodness—and may, therefore, avoid this second version of Thomson's objection.

§4: A New Challenge: Absolute Goodness and the Moorean System

Thomson's challenge appeals to a particular interpretation of the *Principia*. I have claimed that we should reject this interpretation—generic goodness is not the fundamental notion of Moorean moral philosophy, nor is it required to understand Moore's primary concept, intrinsic goodness. And yet many have been attracted to Thomson's conclusions;

²⁰ Feldman provides similar modifications for Moore's supervenience principle in his (1998).

²¹ In saying these principles are defensible, I do not mean that they are true in this form. But I believe that they are close to the truth and provide an excellent place to begin formulating a powerful Moorean view about the concept of intrinsic goodness.

²² It is important to note that these principles are not supposed to be *definitions*: for the Moorean, intrinsic value is a conceptual primitive. Rather, they are only supposed to help us grasp the primitive Moore employs, and to show how it differs from other concepts. I explain this further in §4.

they believe there is something deeply wrong with Moore’s system.²³ What grounds their conviction?

I believe their worry is not truly about generic goodness, as Thomson has described it. Rather, I think their concern is about a similar concept: the notion of *absolute goodness* or *goodness simpliciter*.

The concept is understood negatively. Many goods are valuable in relation to some particular, or universal: they are good *for* a particular person or purpose, or good *as* a member of a kind. We attribute relational value to a thing when we say, for example, that it is good *for Jones*, or good *for cutting the lawn*, or a good *as an umbrella*. But the value of some goods is not relative to a person, purpose, or kind. Such things are valuable *absolutely*; they are good *simpliciter*. Aristotle said such goods are valuable “without qualification”²⁴, Ross that they are good “*sans phrase*”²⁵ Sidgwick that they are valuable “from the point of view of the universe.”²⁶

The concepts of absolute and generic value are similar. Indeed, Arneson (2010), Klocksien (2011), and Rowland (2016) (among many others) simply identify Thomson’s notion with the concept of absolute value. But this is a mistake. Generic goodness is supposed to be (i) the property all good things have in common; (ii) the property of being “just plain good”, and (iii) the property that makes a thing good in any respect. The tension between these three principles renders the concept incoherent: because everything is good in some respect, everything is both generically good and generically bad—and thus everything is “just plain good” and “just plain bad.” But this is absurd.

²³ Kraut (2011) and Foot (1985), (2001) are perhaps most prominent. But see also Nussbaum (2003), Brännmark (2009), and Freiman (2014), among many others.

²⁴ See Aristotle (2002: 137, 1152b).

²⁵ See Ross (2002: 102).

²⁶ See Sidgwick (1981: 382). We might claim that, though these philosophers all use similar language, they are not targeting the same property; see Kraut (2011: 10-11, 209-212) for discussion. This is perhaps true—but even if these philosophers have subtly distinct concepts in mind, these differences will not be relevant here.

Absolute goodness is what remains of the concept of generic goodness if we remove this incoherence. It answers only to Thomson's second principle: to be good absolutely is to be (simply) good. But the other claims do not hold: goodness *simpliciter* is not the property all things that are in any way good have in common—to be a good prison is not to be good without qualification. And thus *a fortiori* a good prison cannot be good *because* it is good absolutely. So the third principle fails as well.

Once we separate these two notions, we gain access to a third version of Thomson's challenge. We join Foot (1985) and Kraut (2011); we claim that Moore's system cannot be generated without the notion of absolute goodness. But we insist that the notion be rejected; we say that nothing is (simply) good—a thing can only be good relationally.

This challenge should be taken seriously. I believe it grounds many philosophers' suspicion of the Moorean project. And it is more plausible than the objections we have considered so far. While we can eliminate the connection between generic and intrinsic value, we cannot eliminate the connection between absolute and intrinsic value. This is because Moorean intrinsic goodness is a *kind* of absolute value—to say that something is intrinsically good in Moore's sense is not to say that it is good in relation to a particular kind, or that it is good *for* someone or something.²⁷ Moore seems to recognize this: in his arguments against the egoist, he notes that many believe that things can be intrinsically good

²⁷ Indeed, some claim further that absolute goodness simply *is* intrinsic goodness. In his important (2012: 14), Kraut reasons that a thing can be good absolutely only if it is good non-relationally—that is, good in virtue of its non-relational properties. But a thing is good in virtue of its non-relational properties just in case it is good intrinsically. Thus intrinsic and absolute goodness are identical. I reject this argument; I think it relies on a kind of equivocation. To say that a thing is good non-relationally may mean (i) that it is good, but is not merely a good member of a kind, or good for a particular person or purpose—i.e. that it is good, but is not merely good *for a K* or (ii) that it is good in virtue of its non-relational (i.e. intrinsic) properties. These interpretations may come apart—to say that something is instrumentally good is not to say that it is good relative to some person or purpose, but instrumental goods do not have their value in virtue of their intrinsic features. Thus I think Kraut's argument unsound. However little will hang on this. Regardless of whether intrinsic goodness *is* absolute goodness as Kraut and others such as Arneson (2010) maintain, or is simply a *kind* of absolute goodness, as I believe, it is still true that, if there is reason to reject the concept of absolute goodness, then there is reason to reject the concept of intrinsic goodness.

for a person. But this is impossible, he claims: if a thing is intrinsically good in his sense, then it cannot be good relative to a person; it must be good “universally” or “absolutely.”²⁸

What, however, might be wrong with the notion of absolute value? Many refer to Thomson’s own argument—and to Geach’s (1956), which inspires it.²⁹ However, as I have stressed, Thomson’s concern is generic goodness. But this should not worry us now—for, as we shall see, Thomson’s argument applies easily to absolute goodness as well. (And indeed, in her most recent work, Thomson turns her previous arguments against the concept of goodness *simpliciter*.³⁰) Further, Geach attacks absolute goodness directly in his (1956). So both may, I think, be understood as challenging the concept of goodness *simpliciter*. And, given the influence of their arguments, their claims are worth examining carefully.

Both philosophers proceed linguistically. We first note that there is a distinction between logically predicative and logically attributive adjective types. Geach writes:

I shall say that in a phrase ‘an A B’ (‘A’ being an adjective and ‘B’ being a noun) ‘A’ is a (logically) predicative adjective if the predication ‘is an A B’ splits up logically into a pair of predications ‘is a B’ and ‘is A’; otherwise I shall say that ‘A’ is a (logically) attributive adjective. (1956: 33)

²⁸ Of course we might try to deny that intrinsic goodness is a kind of absolute goodness; we might say that to be intrinsically good is simply to be good relative to the kind *state of affairs*. (While Moore never made such claims we may think them consistent with his views—after all, in saying that intrinsic value is a kind of absolute value, he seems to mean only that it not the kind of value that can be relative to persons.) Thomson anticipates this reply; she responds that if something is a good member of its kind, this must be because the relevant kind somehow determines, or grounds, a set of standards. It is clear how this might happen with e.g. umbrellas. But, as Thomson (2008: 25-26) says, it is not at all clear how this might happen with states of affairs. Yet Thomson’s reply seems unpersuasive: a particular rainbow may be a good one, but it’s not clear how the class *rainbow* in any way grounds, or determines this standard (I am thankful to Fred Feldman for making this concern clear to me). Still, I am hesitant to claim that to be intrinsically good is to be good relative to the kind *states of affairs*. Consider Moorean instrumental value: this is also a feature only of states of affairs, but (since intrinsic and instrumental value are obviously distinct) we cannot claim also that to be instrumentally good is to be good relative to the kind *state of affairs*. But perhaps this difficulty may be overcome. If so, this is simply another way in which we may resist the critics of the Moorean program.

²⁹ There are, of course, other concerns about the notion of absolute goodness—for summary and discussion, see Klockslem (2011b) and Rowland (2016). However, the Thomson/Geach objection is, I believe, the most powerful and influential; it will therefore be my primary concern in what follows.

³⁰ See her (2008: 14-15).

Thus an adjective is logically predicative if its attributions can be split; it is logically attributive if they cannot. So ‘red’, Geach says, is logically predicative: ‘this is a red book’ splits into ‘this is a book’ and ‘this is red.’ But ‘big’ is logically attributive: ‘this is a big flea’ does not mean ‘this is a flea’ and ‘this is big.’³¹ This shows, Geach says, that there is no property of being just plain big. Similarly with ‘heavy’, ‘fast’, and ‘strong,’ as well as many other adjectives.

We next argue that ‘good’ is a logically attributive adjective. Geach asks us to consider sentences like ‘this is a good car’: this cannot be split, he says, into ‘this is a car’ and ‘this is good.’³² Thomson gives different examples; she asks us to consider sentences like ‘he is a good tennis player,’ ‘she is a good chess player,’ and ‘it is a good toaster.’³³ In each case, she claims, these sentences cannot be divided. And we can provide more forceful examples: consider ‘he is a good criminal’ or ‘it is a good prison.’

We conclude that nothing is (simply) good; that, as Geach says, “even when ‘good’...stands by itself as a predicate, and is thus *grammatically* predicative, some substantive has to be understood; there is no such thing as being just good or bad, there is only being a good or bad so-and-so. (1956: 34).”³⁴

But, though the major premise and conclusion are clear, the inference is not: how does the proposition that ‘good’ is logically attributive entail the proposition that there is no such thing as goodness *simpliciter*? Perhaps the idea is this: if there is such a property as absolute goodness, then it must be expressible in English. And if absolute goodness is

³¹ In fact, there is a worry, even here. Consider ‘big.’ Geach claims that it is logically attributive because ‘this is a big flea’ does not entail ‘this is big.’ But if ‘big’ expresses the same property in ‘this is a big flea’ and ‘this is big,’ then it seems the entailment holds. Alternatively, if ‘big’ means something different in each occurrence, then entailment fails only because of equivocation. The same seems true of the other examples given—including ‘good.’ However, for the sake of argument, I will ignore these concerns.

³² See Geach (1956: 33-34).

³³ See her (2008: 4-6).

³⁴ Emphasis mine. Thomson claims that this is slightly too strong; see her (1997: 277-278). However, the difference between the conclusion Thomson prefers and what Geach suggests here will not be relevant.

expressible in English, then it must be expressed by sentences like ‘S is good.’ In such sentences ‘good’ stands alone and is thus grammatically predicative. But, as Geach notes above, when a logically attributive adjective is used predicatively, it must be understood as a disguised attributive. Thus sentences like ‘S is good’ are incomplete; to fill them in, “some substantive has to be understood.” We conclude that ‘good’ cannot be used to express the property of being (simply) good; it can only express the property of being good in relation to something else.

Though I accept much of this argument, I believe it fails at a critical juncture. Let us say that a grammatically predicative use of an adjective is *genuinely predicative* when it is not simply a disguised attributive construction. Geach assumes that if an adjective type is logically attributive, then it cannot be employed in a way that is genuinely predicative; its predicative uses must be understood attributively.³⁵ But nothing in the argument given guarantees this. To say that an adjective is logically attributive is to claim only that *some* of its attributions cannot be split.³⁶ But this does not entail that *no* attributions of that adjective can be split, nor does it require that every grammatically predicative use of the adjective be understood as a disguised attributive.

³⁵ Though Geach provides no support for this assumption, a standard rationale is available. The argument is analogical: it first claims that when an adjective is logically predicative (like ‘red’), the truth conditions of its *grammatically* attributive uses (like ‘A is a red car’) should be understood in predicative terms; thus ‘A is a red car’ is true just in case A is red and A is a car. Similarly, if some adjective is *logically* attributive, then the truth conditions for its *grammatically* predicative uses should be understood attributively. Thus ‘B is good’ is true just in case B is good relative to the referent of the contextually supplied substantive. (I am thankful to Bradford Skow for making this clear to me.) However, ultimately, I think this rationale should be rejected. Consider ‘red’: some things are simply red, as Thomson and Geach claim. Others are not (simply) red, but are red-for-hair, red-for-a-face, red-for-an-apple and so on (see Zimmerman (2001: 22)). If we accept the rationale given, we must conclude that ‘red’ cannot be used both predicatively and attributively; it thus cannot express both the property of being (simply) red *and* the properties of being red-for-hair, and so on. If we agree with Thomson and Geach also that a property exists only if it can be expressed, then we must say that either there is no such thing as being (simply) red or no such thing as being red-for-hair, etc. Neither is plausible. The concern is, of course, general: Thomson’s argument about ‘famous’ below shows much the same problem.

³⁶ Note that if we say instead that ‘good’ is logically attributive only if *every* sentence of the form ‘X is a good K’ does not entail that ‘X is good’ and ‘X is a K,’ then simply providing a few examples where entailment fails, as Geach and Thomson do, would be insufficient to establish the premise.

Further, Geach's assumption is independently implausible—as Thomson admits in her most recent work.³⁷ Consider 'famous,' she asks. To say that someone is a famous philosopher is not to say that they are famous, and a philosopher. Thus 'famous' is logically attributive; some of its attributions cannot be split. But not every grammatically predicative use of 'famous' must be understood as a disguised attributive. After all, some people, like President Obama, *are* famous *simpliciter*: to say that Obama is famous is not to say that he is famous relative to some kind; he is (simply) famous. Thus, though it is logically attributive, 'famous' can be used in a way that is genuinely predicative; when so employed, it expresses the property of being (simply) famous.

If this is correct, then we may claim the battle won. We join Ross (2002: 65); we claim that 'good' is like 'famous': it has both genuinely predicative and genuinely attributive uses.³⁸ Geach's argument fails.

But though Thomson accepts that some logically attributive adjectives may have genuinely predicative uses, she urges us to resist the analogy between 'good' and 'famous':

What assures us that "famous" does have this second [i.e. genuinely predicative] use is that we know what the property of being (simply) famous *is*—it is the property of being (simply) well known. (2008: 14)

But, she claims, we do not know what the property of being (simply) good is. She examines three options: goodness *simpliciter* might be (i) the property of being "*prima facie* ought making"; (ii) the property of being "good in some respect or other" or (iii) "our old friend, the property [generic] goodness."³⁹ She rejects all three—correctly, I believe—and concludes that there is no such thing as being (simply) good.

³⁷ See her (2008: 14).

³⁸ See his (2003: 65).

³⁹ See her (2008: 15-17).

I think, however, that we should not be persuaded by Thomson's reply. Her defense abandons the argument given: Geach and Thomson (up to this point) have told us that there is no such thing as absolute goodness because 'good' cannot be used in a way that is genuinely predicative. Thomson now tells us that 'good' cannot be used in a way that is genuinely predicative, because there is no such property as absolute goodness. We cannot accept both possibilities.

Further, I believe we have already answered Thomson's charge—to be absolutely good is simply to possess non-relational value. If there are many kinds of non-relational value, as I believe, then we may think of absolute goodness as a general concept that particular notions like intrinsic goodness and instrumental goodness fall under.

Thomson may object; she may demand that we define the species of value that fall under the concept we have described—or, at least, that we define the fundamental concept that falls under it, intrinsic goodness (as she does in her (2003b: 79) and (2008: 16)). But this demand is unacceptable: Moorean intrinsic goodness is a primitive.⁴⁰ Thus to insist it be defined is simply to reject Moore's project at the outset.

Of course some may claim that they cannot grasp Moore's concept. But for those of us who do not already agree with Thomson, this objection is likely to ring hollow. We use the concept frequently: we ask about the intrinsic values of our lives; about the intrinsic values of our actions; about the intrinsic value of the world.⁴¹ We think that certain events—

⁴⁰ Moore makes this plain repeatedly; he writes in his (1993: 58): "If I am asked 'What is good?' my answer is that good is good, and that is the end of the matter. Or if I am asked 'How is good to be defined?' my answer is that it cannot be defined, and that is all I have to say about it." See also his (1993: 61, 69, 72, 89, 111).

⁴¹ Of course, we do not use the term 'intrinsic value' much outside of axiology. Moore's critics may thus respond that it is a technical term with no pre-theoretical application. But the fact that we do not use the word 'intrinsic value' does not mean that we do not employ the concept. When we ask e.g. whether the world is a good place, we are not wondering whether the world is good for some purpose, or good for ourselves. Rather, I think we are wondering whether it is good in itself. And we may ask similar questions about our lives, and our actions. Thus we do, I think, make use of the concept of intrinsic value outside of philosophy—even if we do not employ the term.

like the suffering brought on by natural disasters—are bad in themselves and that others—like innocent pleasures—are good. Such claims are hardly unintelligible.

Further, not only is Moore's primitive familiar, but he has taken great pains to describe it. Schaffer writes:

Everyone needs their primitives. Anytime one introduces a primitive one has to say what work it does. This means introducing axioms. These axioms characterize the inferential connection between the primitive and nearby notions. Some axioms characterize *internal connections* between the primitive and itself, such as when one stipulates that a proposed primitive binary relation is transitive. And some axioms characterize *external connections* to surrounding concepts (without these the proposed primitive would be an idle wheel). This much should be uncontroversial.⁴²

Moore does as he is asked: he states a number of principles that govern the nature of intrinsic value—he explains that it supervenes upon intrinsic non-moral features, that it persists in isolation, and that it attaches necessarily to its bearers. He also shows how intrinsic goodness is related to other moral concepts—and (in giving his supervenience claim) how it is related to non-moral concepts as well. He thus satisfies the basic constraints on introducing a primitive.

As Schaffer suggests, we should accept—or reject—Moore's primitive based on the work it can do. This, in turn, involves an evaluation of the overall Moorean program. Thomson's strategy is therefore backwards: we should not reject Moore's system because we are skeptical of the notion of intrinsic value. Rather, we should be skeptical of the notion of intrinsic value only if we have reason to reject Moore's system.⁴³ And Thomson has given us no such reason.

⁴² See his (Unpublished: 2).

⁴³ Note however that this is a necessary—but not sufficient—reason to reject the concept. Even if Moore's system fails, the concept of intrinsic value may still be significant. Every great treatise in moral philosophy—including the works of Plato, Aristotle, and Kant—features discussion of what things are valuable intrinsically, and the notion of intrinsic value is still widely considered fundamental in axiology. Thus more work would need to be done to reject Moore's concept.

I conclude that the Moorean project survives all three versions of Thomson's challenge. His moral system may yet fail—but it does not fail in the way Thomson claims.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Thomson sometimes advances a seemingly independent concern: she claims that it is not possible to answer questions about what things are intrinsically good (see e.g. her (2003b: 13)). And, admittedly, questions about what things are intrinsically good are more difficult to answer than questions about what things are good toasters, or umbrellas. But most questions in philosophy are difficult to answer; this does not make them bad questions (compare: what is knowledge? Or what are the fundamental ontological categories?).

CHAPTER III

THE PEN, THE DRESS, AND THE COAT: A CONFUSION IN GOODNESS

The final value of a thing is the value it has *for its own sake*, or *as an end*. The intrinsic value of a thing is the value it has *in itself* or *in virtue of its intrinsic features*.¹ *Conditionalists* hope to separate these two kinds of value. They claim that the goodness a thing has as an end may be conditional on its extrinsic features, such as its historical or societal role. But the intrinsic goodness of a thing cannot be conditional in this way. So, they conclude, we must separate intrinsic and final value.

Consequently, axiology must be reformed: we cannot follow Moore (1993) and identify the intrinsic value of a thing with the value it has as an end. Nor can we accept Moore's suggestion that intrinsic value is the fundamental concept of value theory. We care about what is good as an end, the conditionalist says, not what is good intrinsically.² Indeed, intrinsic goods are simply an unremarkable subset of final goods.³ Thus, the conditionalist concludes, final value should *replace* intrinsic value as the central concept of axiology.

¹ Philosophers speak of this issue in different ways: Bradley (2002), Dorsey (2012), Hurka (1998), and Kagan (1998) use "intrinsic value" to refer to the value something has as an end, or for its own sake, and some other term, like "intrinsic value proper" to refer to the value something has in virtue of its intrinsic features. Korsgaard (1983), Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen (2000), Fletcher (2009) and Zimmerman (2001), (2010) use "intrinsic value" to refer to the value a thing has intrinsically, and some other term, like "final value" to refer to the value a thing has as an end, or for its own sake. I will follow Korsgaard's usage in what follows and will translate other authors to speak in this way. This will not alter the propositions expressed; as these philosophers admit, these are simply different ways of speaking. For more on terminology see Dorsey (2012), Rønnow-Rasmussen and Zimmerman (2005), and Zimmerman (2010).

² Kagan (1998: 290) writes "Why should this type of value [i.e. intrinsic value] be of any more interest to us as value theorists than it would be to pick out the value that an object has on the basis of its relational properties alone? Or the value that an object has on the basis of its 17-place properties alone?" Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen ask "what is so special about value that supervenes on the object's internal rather than relational properties...? One can easily see the normative relevance of the notion of a final value...but the concept of an intrinsic value seems to lack a special normative interest." (2000: 127)

³ See e.g. Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen (2000: 115-116, 127).

Conditionalists motivate the distinction between final and intrinsic value by providing examples. Kagan's is, I think, the most powerful and well known. He asks us to consider the pen Abraham Lincoln used to sign the Emancipation Proclamation:

Clearly, this pen has considerable instrumental value – it was the actual means by which a great deal of [final] good was brought into the world. But it seems to me that we might want to say something more than this. It seems to me that we might want to suggest...that the continued existence of this pen has value as an end. Of course, the pen's defining instrumental moment is now long since over. But by virtue of that history, we might say, it now possesses [final] value: it is something we could reasonably value for its own sake. The world is richer for the existence of the pen; its destruction would diminish the value of the world as such. (1998: 285)

The pen's final value, Kagan says, cannot be explained by appealing to its intrinsic features. Rather if the pen is good as an end this is because of its relation to Lincoln.⁴ So, the intrinsic and final values of the pen must differ.

Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen also rely on examples. In the most discussed, they point to Lady Diana's dress:

Princess Diana's dress may be another case in point. The dress is valuable just because it has belonged to Diana. This is what we value it for. But, one might object, is it really a case of a non-instrumental value? Diana's dress is perhaps valuable merely as a means: merely because it allows us to establish an indirect connection to a person we admire or find important in one way or another. Having such a connection may be something that we set a final value on. Couldn't this be what is going on here? Not necessarily... if we idolize Diana, we do not simply find the dress useful for some purpose; we ascribe an independent value to it. (2000: 41)

So, while the dress can be reasonably thought to have “non-instrumental” or final value, this value cannot be explained by pointing to its intrinsic features. Rather the dress is good “just because it has belonged to Diana.”

Korsgaard provides a different set of cases. Her discussion of the value of a mink coat is well known:

⁴ In general, I will say that a thing has value *because of* some feature *F* just in case *F* explains—in part or in whole—the value of that thing; we may say that *F* is a part (proper or otherwise) of what *makes that thing good*.

Is [a mink coat] valuable as a means or as an end? One hardly wants to say that it is valuable only as a means, to keep the cold out. The people who want mink coats are not willing to exchange them for plastic parkas, if those are better protection against the elements. A mink coat can be valued the way we value things for their own sakes: a person might put it on a list of the things he always wanted, or aspires to have some day, right alongside adventure, travel, or peace of mind. (1983: 185)

People who care about mink coats do not care about them only as a means to an end, Korsgaard says. And yet the value of a mink coat can only be partially explained by pointing to its materials, construction, and other intrinsic features:

A coat is essentially instrumental: were it not for the ways in which human beings respond to cold, we would not care about them or ever think about them. To say that the coat is intrinsically or unconditionally valuable is absurd: its value is dependent upon an enormously complicated set of conditions, physiological, economic, and symbolic. (1983: 185)

These three examples have become familiar: many now merely mention them to establish the distinction between final and intrinsic value.⁵ But the conditionalist's faith in such cases is, I believe, unjustified. This is because, surprisingly, the pen, the dress, and the coat *cannot have final value*. I argue that the problem is internal: these cases are ruled out by every conditionalist account of final value, including those suggested in Kagan (1998), Hurka (1998), Olson (2004), and Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen (2000). (Korsgaard does not provide a substantive account of the concept.)⁶ Further, the problem with these well-known cases applies to many other supposed examples of non-intrinsic, final goods. Thus nearly all cases given to support the conditionalist view cannot succeed.⁷ I suggest a kind of diagnosis: I claim that these examples are best seen as instances of sentimental value, rather than final

⁵ See e.g. Stecker (2002), Green (1996), Fletcher (2009), Bradford (2013), and Dussault (2014).

⁶ Korsgaard does, however, attempt to specify the bearers and source of this kind of value. On the Kantian theory she advances in her (1983) and (1986), there is one unconditional final good: the good, or rational, will. All conditional final goods have their value conferred upon them by the good will. Thus, the good will is the "source" of conditional final value. However, she has since modified her view: she claims now that nothing has final value unconditionally. See her (1996: 407).

⁷ There are other ways to support the conditionalist program; see e.g. Dorsey's (2012). I will not engage with such arguments here. My aim is to undermine the popular *examples* that have been given to support the conditionalist position; arguments like Dorsey's appeal not to particular cases, but to claims about the concept of final value.

value. I close by providing a brief account of sentimental value and explain how it relates to instrumental, intrinsic, and final goodness.

§1: Conditionalist Accounts of Final Value

There are three major conditionalist accounts of final value. The first appeals to *derivation*: it says that final value is non-derivative. The second appeals to *fitting attitudes*: it says that something has final value if it fitting to hold a pro-attitude towards it for its own sake. And the third points to *contributory value*: it says that something has final value if it directly contributes to the overall value of the world.

I want to show that these accounts are inconsistent with the claims of Kagan, Korsgaard, and Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen.

§2: The Non-Derivation Account

First let us examine the non-derivation account, as advanced by philosophers such as Bykvist (2015), Olson (2004), and Zimmerman (2001).⁸ Imagine we ask why it's good to be healthy. One reply is that it's good to be healthy because being healthy leads to being happy.⁹ This reply suggests that health has a *derivative* kind of value: it has value because of the value of happiness. Now, if we ask why it is good to be happy we may not be able to provide an interesting answer. Happiness is not good because of something else; its value is non-derivative.

⁸ Zimmerman later restricts his view; he claims that only the *atoms* of final value have non-derivative value. We should note also that Zimmerman is a *Moorean*; he defends a non-derivation view as a dialectically neutral account of final value before arguing that the final and intrinsic values of a thing must always coincide. However all Mooreans should accept the non-derivation thesis. This is because the Moorean position entails the non-derivation view: if the final value of a thing depends only on its intrinsic properties, then the final value of a thing cannot also depend on the value of something else.

⁹ I borrow this example from Zimmerman. See his (2010).

In general, let us say that a thing has derivative value just in case it has value because something else has value.^{10 11} We can then say:¹²

Non-Derivation: A thing has final value only if its value is not derivative.¹³

This account is intuitive: it does seem that if a thing has value for its own sake, or as an end, then its value cannot depend upon the value of something else. In this sense final value is a kind of *ultimate* value, which may ground and explain other kinds of value. The non-derivation view is also robust: it gives us the power to distinguish final value from other kinds of value. This is because other kinds of value, like value as a means, and value as a sign, are derivative kinds of value—we cannot explain why a thing has those kinds of value without appealing to the value of something else.

However the non-derivation account entails that our three examples cannot have final value. Begin with the pen. It has final value because of its instrumental value. Kagan is explicit:

It seems plausible to suggest that if this pen does indeed have any [final] value, most or all of it is due to this instrumental role. Stripped of its instrumental history, the pen probably has no [final] value at all. Thus, in this case, it might be suggested, the [final] value of an object depends *completely* upon its instrumental value. (1998: 286)

But instrumental value is a derivative kind of value: a thing has instrumental value because of the value of what it brings about. And if this is true, then our conclusion looms: the

¹⁰ I use ‘because of’ as indicated in fn. 4.

¹¹ We may wish to make an exception for *complex goods*: those things that have final value because of the values of their parts. We can then say that a thing has non-derivative value just in case it does not have its value in virtue of the value of anything *outside of it*—i.e. in virtue of anything that is not a part of it. This decision will not affect what follows: neither version of the non-derivation account is compatible with the claim that the pen, the dress, and the coat have final value.

¹² Olson adds a clause to the view: he says that final value is a kind of non-derivative, *non-contributory* kind of value. I am skeptical that this addition is desirable; its omission will not be relevant here.

¹³ We might worry that this principle is too strong. Suppose e.g. that some state has value as a means and value as an end. Since value as a means is derivative, this state has value because something else has value. Thus, we claim, it cannot have value as an end, according to the non-derivation principle. However, I believe this objection misunderstands the claim presented. The non-derivation principle says only that *final value* is non-derivative; it declares that, if a thing has final value, then it cannot have that value (i.e. its final value) because something else has value.

transitivity of the *because of* relation will declare that the pen's allegedly final value is derivative. To summarize:

- (1) If the pen is finally valuable, this is because it is instrumentally valuable.
- (2) If the pen is instrumentally valuable, this is because something else has value.

But since the *because of* relation is transitive, we can infer:¹⁴

- (3) If the pen is finally valuable, this is because something else has value.

Thus the non-derivation account rules out the possibility that the pen has final value.

The same reasoning eliminates the coat. As we have seen, Korsgaard is clear that the coat's final value cannot be explained without appealing to its value in keeping out the cold: it is "essentially instrumental." So the coat will have final value because—among other reasons—it has instrumental value. Thus its allegedly final value is also derivative.

These concerns may seem to apply straightforwardly to the dress as well. But unlike Kagan and Korsgaard, Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen do not say that the dress is finally valuable because it is instrumentally valuable. They say instead that the dress is valuable just because Diana owned it. But this is not plausible: the value of the dress must depend on the value of Diana's life and actions.¹⁵ Suppose Diana had lived an entirely different life—imagine that she had been a villain, rather than a princess. This would affect the value of the dress. But this is inconsistent with the non-derivation account, since a thing cannot have non-derivative value because of the value of something else.¹⁶

¹⁴ This view is held nearly universally: transitivity is both intuitively appealing and theoretically useful. Still, some have attempted to provide cause to abandon it; see e.g. Schaffer (2014). I will say briefly that I find the counterexamples advanced against transitivity unpersuasive—but further discussion of such issues is beyond the scope of this essay.

¹⁵ This is not *ad hoc*: these examples must be plausible. After all, the conditionalist cannot support his view by claiming that there is some case in which we could, *implausibly*, claim that a thing has final value because of its extrinsic features.

¹⁶ Some may say that we should be more liberal; we should say that something has non-derivative value just in case it does not have value *only because* something else has value. If final value is non-derivative in only this weaker sense, then our three examples are not excluded: their value depends on the value of

§3: Fitting Attitudes

The non-derivation account entails that the pen, the dress, and the coat cannot have final value. The conditionalist may reply that this result is unique to this account. But the two other views that conditionalists endorse have the same consequence, and for much the same reason.

Consider fitting attitude accounts. These positions are inspired by Brentano's (2009); they focus on our responses to goods. According to such views:

Fitting Attitudes: A thing has final value only if it is fitting to care about it for its own sake.¹⁷

After rejecting the Moorean position in his (1998), Hurka endorses this kind of view; he says that if something is finally good then "it is something we should care about and pursue *for its own sake* because of its value." In their (2000), Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen concur, writing that "to be valuable, for its own sake, is to be a fitting object of a positive response (a pro-attitude or a pro-behavior) that is directed to the value bearer *for its own sake*." And Kagan suggests a similar account, in his (1998).

To evaluate such views we must say what it means for a thing to be fitting to care about "for its own sake." Let us say that a thing is fitting to care about in this way just in

other things but does not depend *entirely* upon the value of these things. But this defense cannot succeed, even if we admit that our three examples do not have value only because of the values of others things. This is because the proposed weakening of the non-derivation view renders it trivial: nearly every kind of value is non-derivative in this liberal sense. Instrumental goods, for example, will now have non-derivative value: the instrumental value of a knife, for example, depends not only on the *value* of certain outcomes, but also on the fact that the knife can bring about those outcomes. And what the knife can bring about depends upon the shape, curve, and other physical properties of the knife, as well as facts about the laws of nature. The proposed understanding of the non-derivation views therefore renders it toothless; it should be rejected.

¹⁷ I speak in terms of *care* here, but other philosophers have suggested other pro-attitudes. Some also speak not of the pro-attitudes that would be *fitting* but those that would be *required*, *apt*, or *correct*. These differences will not be relevant here.

case (i) it's fitting to care about it and (ii) it's not fitting to care about it because it is fitting to care about something else.

But now the same problem arises. Consider Lincoln's pen. Since we have connected final value with what it is fitting to care about, we should say that the properties that make a thing finally good are the properties that make it fitting to care about. Kagan has told us that the pen has final value because it has instrumental value. So the pen must be fitting to care about because it has instrumental value.

However, a thing has instrumental value because something else has value. So if it is fitting to care about the pen *because of its instrumental value* then it is fitting to care about the pen *because of the value of something else*—i.e. because it is fitting to care about something distinct from the pen. We can argue:

- (1) If it is fitting to care about the pen for its own sake, then this is because of its instrumental value.
- (2) If it is fitting to care about the pen because of its instrumental value, then this is because it is fitting to care about something else.

But the *because of* relation is transitive. So we can conclude:

- (3) If it fitting to care about the pen for its own sake, then this is because it is fitting to care about something else.

But this is impossible. So the pen cannot be worth caring about for its own sake and thus cannot have final value, according to fitting attitude views. The same reasoning will eliminate the coat.

As before, we may need to approach the dress differently. If we should care about the dress for its own sake, then we should care about the dress in virtue of the features that its goodness depends upon. According to Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen there is just

one such feature, *having been owned by Diana*. But, as I have argued, the value of the dress must also depend upon the value of Diana's life and actions. Thus if it is fitting to care about Diana's dress for its own sake, this is because it is fitting to care about Diana's life. But this is impossible. So the fitting attitude account entails that Diana's dress cannot have final value either.¹⁸

§4: The Contributory Account

This same problem applies to the last group of views. These accounts connect final value with contributory value. We can say that, according to such views:

Contribution: A thing is finally good only if it directly contributes to the value of the world.

In his (1998) Hurka suggests such an account. Kagan endorses something similar in his (1998). And Bradley attributes this kind of view to the conditionalist in his (2002).

It is important to note that, according to the contributory view, something has final value only if it *directly* contributes to the value of the world. If we remove this feature of the theory, then it cannot succeed. This is because things with instrumental value also contribute to the value of the world. But their contribution is indirect—they contribute by bringing about other things.

However, if we wish to make use of the notion of direct contribution, we must explain it. Bradley's account is perhaps the most developed. He first explains *indirect* contribution:

When we consider something that has merely instrumental value, it contributes value to the world in virtue of bringing something else of value into the world. We can fully

¹⁸ Again, one could object that a thing is fitting to care about for its own sake just in case it is not fitting to care about *only because* it is fitting to care about something else (see fn. 16). But, as before, this would render the view we are considering untenable: things with instrumental value are not fitting to care about *only* because of the value of something else but also because they are connected to these other goods in the right way: it would be absurd to care about *a* because of the value of *b* if *a* and *b* are unrelated.

explain its value by appealing to the value of the other thing, and telling a story about how the two things are related. Thus, its contribution to the value of the world is mediated by the other valuable thing; it is indirect. (2002: 31)¹⁹

Of course, a thing *directly* contributes to the world just in case its contribution is not *indirect*.

Thus we may say that a thing directly contributes to the world just in case (i) it contributes to the value of the world and (ii) it does not contribute through some intermediary—that is, it does not contribute to the world because something else contributes to the world.²⁰

But if this is correct, then the argument should be obvious. Since we have connected final value with what directly contributes to the value of the world, we must agree that the properties that make a thing finally good are the properties that make it contribute to the value of the world. But our three examples are finally good because of the values of other things. So they will, similarly, contribute because of other contributions. They will therefore not contribute directly, and will be ruled out by this account.

§5: A Confusion in Goodness

There are three kinds of conditionalist views about final value. I have argued that they all entail that the well-known examples given by Kagan, Korsgaard, and Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen cannot have final value. This is true of other examples as well: Kagan points to a “capable racecar” and culinary skills; Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen to “Napoleon’s hat” and a gun that was used at the battle of Verdun; Korsgaard to “handsome

¹⁹ Bradley refines his account later, to deal with some possible counterexamples. But these modifications will not affect our argument.

²⁰ Of course, the conditionalist could appeal to some other account of contribution. Suppose we say that a thing, x , directly contributes to the value of the world only if (i) x contributes to the value of the world but (ii) it is not the case that there is something y such that x causes y and y completely accounts for x ’s contribution. (I am thankful to Peter Graham for raising this objection.) The resulting view is permissive; it allows that the pen, the dress, and the coat may have final value. But this comes at a significant cost. Particular things do not cause anything; it is only events (or states of affairs) that stand in the causation relation. Condition (ii) of the principle is therefore satisfied vacuously. Thus according to the revised contribution view, any object that contributes to the value of the world *in any way* may have value as an end.

china” and “gorgeously enameled frying pans.” But the values of these things cannot be explained without appealing to the values of other things. So they cannot have final value according to the accounts examined. Similar reasoning will show that most other examples given in the literature cannot have value as an end.²¹ Thus, surprisingly, the most common form of argument in favor of the conditionalist position provides it with no support at all.

Of course the conditionalist could retreat to some other account of final value. But it is hard to see how such an account could succeed. To accommodate the counterexamples given, this new account must say that a thing can have value for its own sake, or as an end, even if (i) its value is derivative (ii) it is not fitting to care about for its own sake and (iii) it does not contribute directly to the value of the world.

We have reason, then, to believe that the pen, the dress, and the coat cannot have final value. Where did the conditionalist go wrong? Return to the rationales given.

Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen write that:

Diana’s dress is perhaps valuable merely as a means: merely because it allows us to establish an indirect connection to a person we admire or find important in one way or another. Having such a connection may be something that we set a final value on. Couldn’t this be what is going on here? Not necessarily... if we idolize Diana, we do not simply find the dress useful for some purpose; we ascribe an independent value to it. (2000: 41)

This is the standard argument; as we have seen, Korsgaard reasons similarly.²² In such arguments, the conditionalist assumes that if a thing has value, but does not have value as a mere means, then it must have value as an end. This is, I think, the beginning of the problem, for this is not a legitimate inference—the distinction between value as an end and

²¹ Still, some examples may escape from this argument. E.g. O’Neil (1992) points to a forest “untouched by human hands.” It is not clear how we could apply our argument to such a case. And some of Kagan’s examples may be similarly immune. These cases will therefore have to be handled differently—and though I am confident that this is possible, I will not aim to address them here. I am content merely to show that the vast majority of examples given—and the examples most often discussed—do not give us any reason to separate final and intrinsic value.

²² See also Fletcher (2009).

value as a means is not exhaustive. Signatory value, for example, is neither a kind of instrumental value nor a kind of final value. The same is true of aesthetic value, expected value, moral value, and attributive kinds of value, like *being a good toaster* or *being a good umbrella*. So we cannot infer that the dress (or the pen, or the coat) has value as an end just because it does not have value as a mere means.²³

But there is something else telling in these passages: All of our authors seem to endorse a kind of subjectivism about what is valuable. Throughout their papers, Korsgaard, Kagan, and Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen use “valuable” and “valued” as synonyms. This is critical: it allows them to move from claims about how we value Diana’s dress, for instance, to claims about its value. But this is, I think, their second mistake—for such subjectivism is not plausible.²⁴

We can appeal to an old argument.²⁵ First, remember that Kagan, Korsgaard, and Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen seem to believe that something is good as an end if it is valued as an end—otherwise they would not use “valued” and “valuable” as synonyms. They should say also, then, that something is bad as an end if it *dis*valued as an end. But there are some things that are valued by some, and hated by others. By the two principles the

²³ Some conditionalists use the term “non-instrumental value” as a synonym for “final value.” (See e.g. Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen (2000)). They might then insist that the distinction is exhaustive. But if the conditionalist wanted to talk only about non-instrumental value in this sense, then his thesis is neither controversial nor inconsistent with Mooreanism. Moore never claimed that all non-instrumental value is intrinsic, nor should any Moorean maintain such a view. There are simply too many kinds of non-instrumental values; it would be absurd to assume that, for example, *being a good toaster* is an intrinsic kind of goodness. Since I do not believe that the conditionalist is radically mistaken about his own position and what it is in conflict with, I will assume that when conditionalists speak of non-instrumental value this is merely a somewhat confusing way of specifying a *particular kind* of non-instrumental value, rather than the many kinds of value that fall under this label.

²⁴ I do not mean to claim that no subjectivist program in meta-ethics can succeed. I mean to claim only that the very simple kind of subjectivism advanced here is not plausible when applied to final value.

²⁵ See e.g. Brentano (2009: 18-19): “How are we to *know* that a thing is good? Should we say that whatever is loved or is capable of being loved is something that is worthy of love and therefore good? Obviously this would not be right, and it is almost impossible to comprehend how it could be that some have fallen in to such an error. One person loves what another hates.”

conditionalist has accepted, it would then follow that some things are both finally good and finally bad. But this is impossible.

This, I believe, reveals that the arguments given by the conditionalist can show only that these three objects have a kind of relative value—a kind of value *for a person*. However it is uncontroversial that final value is a kind of impartial value, a kind of value a thing has “from the perspective of the universe.”^{26 27}

§6: Sentimental Value

The standard conditionalist rationale says that (i) the pen, the dress, and the coat each have a kind of value that is not merely instrumental and (ii) we can tell whether a thing has this kind of value by examining how it makes a person feel. I think both (i) and (ii) are plausible. However this is not because these things have final value. Rather it is because they have *sentimental value*.

It is somewhat difficult to target sentimental value, but I hope that the concept is relatively clear. Roughly, to be sentimentally valuable is to have the capacity to invoke our sentiments. Sentimental value is thus primarily a property of particular things—an old trophy, a letter from a friend, a photograph of a loved one—rather than states of affairs, or

²⁶ This phrase comes, of course, from Sidgwick, who used it in a slightly different context. See his (1981: 382).

²⁷ Some may object that I have misunderstood the conditionalist: perhaps she *did* mean to speak of a kind of relative value. This cannot be, I think, for two reasons. First, consider the views provided. It would, I think, be absurd to claim e.g. that something is good *for a person* when it directly contributes to the overall value of the world. Second, and most significantly, consider the dialectic. Final value is nearly always introduced in opposition to the Moorean notion of intrinsic value: the conditionalist points to Moore’s concept, and explains that final value differs, in that it need not depend upon the intrinsic features of a thing (see e.g. Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen (2000: 115-116), Kagan (1998: 278-279)). But Moorean intrinsic value is impartial; indeed, Moore (infamously) rejected the notion of partial value entirely. So if final value can be understood in relation to the Moorean concept of intrinsic value, as the conditionalist claims, then it must be impartial. Further the conditionalist position has nearly always been presented in *opposition* to the Moorean view (see e.g. Korsgaard (1983: 173), Rønnow-Rasmussen (2011: 8)). But if final value is supposed to be a relative kind of value, then the conditionalist position is entirely consistent with Moore’s.

universals.²⁸ Metaphysically, sentimental value is a kind of *extrinsic* value: it arises because of a certain relationship between a person and a thing. Finally, because persons may feel different sentiments towards the same thing, sentimental value is *relative*: something is sentimentally valuable *for a person*, not *simpliciter*.

By calling this kind of value “sentimental value,” I do not mean to suggest that it is unimportant. Nor do I mean to suggest that a person who cares about things with sentimental value is being mawkish, or ‘sentimental’ in the pejorative sense. Rather, I mean this quite literally: “sentimental value” picks out a kind of value that exists because of our sentiments.

As I hope is clear, sentimental value is not a kind of final value. Unlike sentimental value, final value is impartial and cannot be discovered by noting how things make us feel. But sentimental value is not instrumental value, either: a thing may have sentimental value, even if it brings about nothing else worth having.²⁹ ³⁰ This is not to deny that many things with sentimental value will, in fact, possess instrumental value as well. But this is true of almost all kinds of value—including final value, moral value, aesthetic value, and the like.

I believe that the examples the conditionalist has given are examples of sentimental value, rather than final value.³¹ Let us examine how the explanation would go in each case.

²⁸ It may sometimes be a property of events, also—as in the case of anniversaries.

²⁹ In this I agree with Hatzimoysis (2003).

³⁰ The distinction between sentimental and instrumental value can be given additional support in two ways. First *conceptually*: if, as some philosophers do, we dispense with final value, we cannot speak of instrumental value—if nothing has value as an end, then nothing has value as a means. But we can still speak of sentimental value: this kind of value depends only on the existence of our sentiments. Second, we may justify the distinction *epistemically*: We cannot know the instrumental value of a thing unless we know the final value of what it brings about. But to know that a thing has sentimental value, for a person, we just need to know how it affects him.

³¹ Fletcher (2009) argues that sentimental value is a kind of final value. I believe this is because Fletcher assumes that sentimental value is either a kind of value as a means or a kind of value as an end. I think this is a mistake: the distinction between value as an end and value as a means is not exhaustive. And without this premise, I do not see how Fletcher’s argument can succeed.

Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen say that if we idolize Diana, we may value her dress as more than a mere means. This is true—we may value it sentimentally. Indeed, because Diana is so closely associated with the dress, it will arouse the sentiments of any person who cares about her, or her life. We can tell a similar story about the coat: the person Korsgaard imagines has “put [the coat] on a list of the things he always wanted, or aspires to have some day, right alongside adventure, travel, or peace of mind.” Thus given the coat’s link to his hopes, and life plans, it will have the capacity to evoke his sentiments.

Kagan’s example may seem more like a case of impartial value. But this is only because Lincoln’s pen has a pull on the emotions of so many. We feel strongly about Lincoln, and the tremendous changes in history that he initiated. Because the pen is so closely associated with him, and his most important actions, it will naturally arouse our sentiments.

So the conditionalist has pointed us to an interesting kind of value, a kind of value widely ignored in moral philosophy. But this kind of value is not final value—it is a partial, relative value, created by persons and their sentiments.

CHAPTER IV
ENDS AND VALUE AS AN END

Mooreans say that intrinsic goodness is the primary concept of value theory. The notion is understood as suggested in the *Principia*: the intrinsic value of a thing depends only on its intrinsic, non-moral features. Further, such value is essential to its bearers, persists in isolation, and attaches only to finely grained entities, such as states of affairs.¹

Conditionalists hope to reform axiology; they argue that final value is fundamental.^{2 3} Moore conflated final and intrinsic value; he claimed that something is intrinsically good just in case it is good as an end. But this identification is mistaken, they claim.

The conditionalist's argument begins in the ontology of value: they dismiss the Moorean presumption that axiology concerns only states of affairs; particular things may be good as ends too. Elizabeth Anderson writes:

Persons are the immediate objects of our respect, benevolence, and love; beautiful paintings of our admiring contemplation; pets of our affection; and so forth. These are the things we rationally value [as ends].⁴ (1993: 19)

Next, the conditionalist argues that the final value of a particular may be conditional on its extrinsic properties. The value of a beautiful painting may be conditional on whether it is

¹ See Moore (1922: 260, 261), (1993: 21-22, 150, 171, 236), (2005: 32). Some philosophers do not believe in states of affairs, but accept facts, tropes, propositions, or events. In general, these things may be substituted for states of affairs without significantly changing the dialectic. However, we should pick just one of these categories. It would be objectionable to attribute value e.g. to the state of affairs <*Jones is pleased*>, the proposition *that Jones is pleased* and the fact that <*Jones is pleased*>.

² Terminology varies: some philosophers use "intrinsic value" to refer to the value a thing has for its own sake, and some other term like "intrinsic value proper" to refer to the value a thing has in virtue of its intrinsic features (see e.g. Kagan (1998)). For ease of understanding, I will translate these authors to speak as Korsgaard (1983) suggests: I will reserve "intrinsic value" for the Moorean concept and "final value" for the value something has ultimately, as an end, or for its own sake. For more on terminology see Rønnow-Rasmussen and Zimmerman (2005), and Zimmerman (2010).

³ These views have increased greatly in popularity in the last thirty years. See Korsgaard (1983), O'Neil (1992), Green (1996), Kagan (1998), Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen (2000), Olson (2004), and Dorsey (2012), among others.

⁴ Anderson speaks most often of intrinsic value. But she does not take intrinsic value to be intrinsic—it is, for her, merely the value a thing has as an end. See her (1993:3). Thus I will translate her comments here; see fn. 2.

seen or appreciated; the goodness of a mink coat may depend on its being wanted or desired; the final value of an artifact—like Lincoln’s Pen, or Lady Diana’s dress—may supervene on its historical role.⁵

Thus intrinsic and final goodness cannot be equated, as Moore assumed—some things have value as ends but do not have this value in virtue of their intrinsic features.

Further, once these concepts are separated, intrinsic value seems to lose significance.

Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen write:

What is so special about value that supervenes on the object’s internal rather than relational properties...? One can easily see the normative relevance of the notion of a final value...but the concept of an intrinsic value seems to lack a special normative interest. (2000: 48-49)

And Kagan asks:

Why should this type of value [i.e. intrinsic value] be of any more interest to us *as value theorists* than it would be to pick out the value that an object has on the basis of its relational properties alone? Or the value that an object has on the basis of its 17-place properties alone? (1998: 290)⁶

According to these philosophers, intrinsic goods are simply a subset of final goods:

something is intrinsically good just in case it is finally good in virtue of its intrinsic properties.⁷ Further, this subset is normatively uninteresting—the difference between intrinsic and non-intrinsic final goods is only metaphysical; it has no ethical significance.

Thus the orthodox Moorean account of value theory must be rejected: final value should replace intrinsic value as the fundamental concept of axiology.

⁵ These examples of extrinsic, final goods (from Korsgaard (1983), Kagan (1998), and Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen (2000) respectively) are the most discussed—although I am unsure that they are, in fact, examples of final goods (see my “The Pen, the Dress, and the Coat: A Confusion is Goodness”). But I will ignore these concerns here. For general criticism of the conditionalist’s argument, as well as further discussion and support of the Moorean view, see Bradley (2002).

⁶ Emphasis mine.

⁷ Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen (2000: 34) write that this view “has nearly never been questioned, as far as we know: it seems to be a general if not a universal view that all intrinsic values are final.”

The Moorean may think this objection misguided. Conditionalists say that the intrinsic value of a thing is simply the value it has intrinsically. But as I have stressed, Moore believed also that intrinsic value is essential, persists in isolation, and attaches only to states of affairs. Further, under Moore's conception, intrinsic goods *are* importantly different from other final goods: because Moorean goods have their value essentially, they are valuable *unconditionally*.⁸

But though I am eager to defend the orthodoxy, I fear this brief defense cannot succeed. The difference between conditional and unconditional goods is merely metaphysical. And the bare difference between conditional and unconditional goods seems no more significant than the bare difference between those things that are valuable in virtue of their 1-place properties and those that are valuable in virtue of their 2-place properties. The conditionalist's objection remains.

Further defense is needed. Two options are available: first, we may stop the conditionalist's argument at its beginning and reject the division of final and intrinsic value. Call this the *identity defense*. Alternatively, we may agree with the conditionalist that final and intrinsic value differ, take up the challenge Kagan et al. advance, and show that intrinsic goodness remains a significant concept. Call this the *axiological defense*.

My approach is unconventional; I employ both replies. This is because "final value" is ambiguous; it may denote the value a thing has as an end or for its own sake, or it may denote the value a thing has ultimately (i.e. non-derivatively). In the first case, the identity defense may succeed—the value a thing has as an end is simply its intrinsic value. In the second case, the axiological defense may succeed: though not all ultimate value is intrinsic

⁸ In fact, Korsgaard stresses this feature of Moorean goods in her (1983).

value, the intrinsic value of a state of affairs is simply its ultimate value. Further, it is the ultimate value of states that is most important to axiology.

Thus under either condition, the Moorean view may be preserved. I close by examining ways to translate the conditionalist's claims about the values of non-intrinsic goods into the resulting program.

§1: The Identity Defense

If final value is distinct from intrinsic value, then the notion must somehow be explained. Moore was careful to describe his concept; much of the *Principia* is dedicated to its nature. In contrast, conditionalists often say very little: they simply insist that final value differs from intrinsic value and reiterate that it is the value a thing has “as an end” or “for its own sake.”⁹ But if this is what final value is, then the conditionalist is mistaken: final and intrinsic value are identical.

Begin with the claim that the final value of a thing is the value it has as an end. If we take this idea seriously, then we must insist that something cannot have final value unless it can *be* an end—that is, a goal or objective. But only states of affairs can be goals or objectives.¹⁰ Thus only states of affairs can have final value.

Indeed, consider the most powerful example in favor of the conditionalist ontology: persons. Can a person be an end or goal? Kant writes:

Beings whose existence depends not on our will but on nature have, nevertheless, if they are not rational beings, only a relative value as means and are therefore called

⁹This silence is widespread. Indeed though Korsgaard (1983), Stecker (2002), Green (1996), and Fletcher (2009) all make extensive use of the concept of final value, they say only that it differs from intrinsic value and employ these synonyms, without giving any substantive account of the concept.

¹⁰Ross (2002: 113) writes: “Most of our adjectives, I suppose, refer to qualities that belong to substances; ‘good’ is the name of a quality which attaches, quite directly, only to ‘objectives,’ and since an objective is an entity more complex than a substance, standing as it does for a substance’s having a certain quality or being in a certain relation, ‘good’ may be called a quality of a different type from those that attach to substances.”

things. On the other hand, *rational beings are called persons inasmuch as their nature already marks them out as ends in themselves.* (1993: 36)¹¹

But Kant is mistaken: persons cannot be ends or goals. Goals are the kinds of things we can intend to bring about, or make the case. But I cannot bring about a person, or make her the case. Indeed, it appears unintelligible to claim that e.g. Lucy is my goal but deny that, by this, I mean that I intend to stand in some relation to Lucy or see to it that she instantiates some feature.¹² My goal may be to listen to Lucy, to speak with her, to learn from her—but my goal cannot be Lucy herself.

Some point not to Kant, but to Aristotle. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* we read: Since there are many actions, skills, and sciences, it happens that there are many ends as well: the end of medicine is health, that of shipbuilding, a ship, that of military science, victory, and those of domestic economy, wealth. (2000: 3, 1094a)

However, again, these claims cannot be literally true. The end of medicine is not simply the universal, *health*—the doctor's goal is for her patient *to be* healthy, to *instantiate* the property of health. And the instantiation of a property is a state of affairs. Similarly for victory and wealth. Nor does the ship builder aim at a ship, *per se*—a ship is not the kind of thing that we can intend to bring about, or see to. Rather the ship builder's aim is to *create a ship*. He might also hope for the ship to be a certain way—for it to be sturdy, elegant, and so forth. But these are states of affairs, not particulars or universals.

The same holds for the conditionalist's examples: Lincoln's pen, Diana's dress, the mink coat, and so on. We can only aim at states that *involve* such things; they cannot be goals or ends.

¹¹ Emphasis mine. Though Kant's claims are often taken literally, this is perhaps a mistake. In the passage quoted, Kant seem to mean only that persons are ends in so much as they are "something which is not to be used merely as means and hence there is imposed thereby a limit on all arbitrary use of such beings, which are thus objects of respect" (1993: 36).

¹² See also Lemos (1994: 29).

If we instead focus on the claim that what is finally good is what is *good for its own sake*, we achieve the same result. According to a common platitude, what is good for its own sake is what is desirable for its own sake. But a thing cannot be desirable unless it can be desired. And we cannot desire particular things: we can only be close to them, own them, and so on. The same is true of universals: though we may claim that we desire love, or respect, what we truly want is *to be loved* or *to be respected*—we want these relations to be instantiated. And the instantiation of a relation is a state of affairs.

I conclude that if we take either locution seriously we must say that only states of affairs can possess final value. Thus the first step of the conditionalist's argument against the orthodoxy fails: particulars cannot possess final value and thus *a fortiori* cannot be examples of non-intrinsic final goods.

Of course, the conditionalist might still insist that the final and intrinsic values of states can differ. But this is not plausible. For the Moorean, the intrinsic value of a state is intrinsic and essential; in particular, it depends only on its having the constituents it does.¹³ Thus <Charlie is happy> is good because it is an instance of happiness, <Sally loves Linus> is good because it is an instance of love, and so forth. But for any state, *S*, that appears to

¹³ I assume that it is intrinsic and essential to a state of affairs that it has the constituents it does. In the debate between the Moorean and the conditionalist this is, to my knowledge, accepted universally (see e.g. Kagan (1998), Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen (2000), Zimmerman (2001)). Still, some argument can be mustered if needed. My conception of states of affairs is inspired by Armstrong (1997); I say that states of affairs are concrete entities that make propositions true. E.g. the state of affairs <Charlie is happy> makes it the case that Charlie is happy, and so on. The constituents of a state of affairs are simply the particulars and universals that make it up—in this case, the particular, Charlie, and the universal *happiness*. However in the same way that the parts of a thing are intrinsic to it, so too are its constituents. (There are possible exceptions: e.g. some may say that though the property *being the only person* is a constituent of the state of affairs <Charlie is the only person> it is not intrinsic to that state, as it depends on what other states obtain. I am unsure that this argument is sound. But, if it is, then I would be inclined to say that, despite appearances, the state in question does not exist. Rather (when true) the proposition that Charlie is the only person holds because of some much more complicated totality state of the form <<Charlie is a person> & <Charlie totals the universal of personhood>>. See Armstrong (1997: 196-201).) Further, because states of affairs are truth-makers, they must have their constituents necessarily; if they did not then <Charlie is happy> would not make it the case that Charlie is happy. Rather, in some worlds, the very same state might have different constituents, and thus might fail to make anything true about Charlie or might, instead, make him sad, or confused, or tall. For further argument see M. Zimmerman (2001: 64), D. Zimmerman (1997).

have its final value in virtue of some extrinsic or contingent feature, *F*, there will be some wider state that includes this feature as a constituent—in the simple case, this will be a state of the form $\langle S \text{ is } F \rangle$. This wider state contains everything necessary to give it value; it has its final value intrinsically and essentially.

Thus for every conditionally valuable state, there will be an unconditionally valuable state that contains its external good-making feature. Are both states good as ends? No, this would be double counting: every conditional good would give rise to an unconditional good. So we must choose. And we should, I believe, choose the wider state. These states afford a complete explanation of their value—we do not need to appeal to anything outside of them. Given that we are speaking of what is valuable *for its own sake* and *as an end*, I believe this desirable.

Consider examples. Begin with some alleged conditional good: a friendship between Linus and Sally. Suppose we think this state finally valuable only under the condition that it makes Linus and Sally happy. We must then choose: should we attribute value to the narrow state that consists of Linus and Sally being friends, or to the wider state that consists of Linus and Sally being friends, and their friendship making them happy? As I have said, we should not attribute value to both; this would be a kind of double counting. But it seems to me that it would also be implausible to claim that though their friendship is good under the condition that it is happy, their happy friendship is not good. The second option is thus preferable: we should attribute final value to the wider state, their happy friendship. It is this state that is valuable *as an end*; it is this goal that is desirable *for its own sake*.

Thus if “final value” refers to the value a thing has as an end or for its own sake, then it attaches only to states of affairs. Further, we have reason to insist that the final value of a state of affairs cannot differ from its intrinsic value. I conclude that the conditionalist

has given no reason to divorce intrinsic and final value—and thus no reason to abandon the Moorean orthodoxy.

§2: The Axiological Defense

However “final value” is not only used to refer to the value a thing has as an end; it also may be used to refer to the value a thing has *ultimately*. Consider Rabinowicz and

Rønnow-Rasmussen (2000: 126):

One might still insist that value as an *end* can only accrue to proposition-like entities such as states of affairs or facts. After all, ends are never things. Nor are they ever persons, *pace* Kant... This means, however, that the term “value as an end” may not be quite suitable for the kind of value we have in mind... Still, whereas “value as an end” is for this reason misleading, the relevant values can be said to be “end-point values,” insofar as they are not simply conducive to or necessary for something else that is of value. They are “final,” then, in this sense of being “ultimate.”

Bykvist (2015) and Olson (2004) advance a similar conception. Final goods are, on this account, those goods “at the end of the chain”: they ground and explain the value of other, derivative goods.¹⁴ Let us say that something has derivative value just in case it has value because something else does.¹⁵ We can then declare that something has final value just in case its value is not derivative.¹⁶

Of course, some Mooreans insist that, even according to this conception, final value attaches only to states of affairs.¹⁷ They thus hope to preserve the identity defense. However, according to a widely held view, non-derivative goods are the fitting, ultimate objects of pro-

¹⁴ We might think that Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen mean only that we should understand final value in opposition to the value a thing has as a means; final value is *non-instrumental* value. But this understanding makes the conditionalist thesis trivial. Consider the value a thing has sentimentally, as a sign, as a person, as an automobile, or as a toaster. These are all distinct from the value a thing has as a means. But it would be absurd to claim that these kinds of value attach only to states of affairs, or that they are all intrinsic kinds of value.

¹⁵ I say that a thing has value *because of* some feature *F* if and only if *F* explains—partially or fully—the value of that thing; *F* is a part of what *makes that thing good*.

¹⁶ Such accounts may need to be modified to handle *complex goods*: those things that have final value because of the values of their parts. To accommodate these goods, we may say that a thing has non-derivative value just in case it does not have its value because of the value of anything that is not a part of it.

¹⁷ See e.g. Zimmerman (2001: 37).

attitudes.¹⁸ Some pro-attitudes take states of affairs as their objects—attitudes like desire or hope. But others, like love and respect, take particulars as their objects.¹⁹ Thus, if the fitting attitude view is true, then particulars may have non-derivative value.

I am skeptical that we should endorse a fitting attitude account of ultimate value.²⁰ But, for the sake of argument, I will not object. I thus concede that if final value is non-derivative value, then the identity defense fails. However, this does not doom the orthodoxy. The Moorean's task now is to show that the concept of intrinsic value is significant, even when divorced from final value. But this is less difficult than it seems: though we cannot identify final and intrinsic value, the separation is not complete.

First, note that *all intrinsic value is ultimate value*. If a state of affairs has its value in virtue of its intrinsic features, it cannot have that value in virtue of the value of something else. Thus the intrinsic value of a thing is non-derivative. Further, *all ultimate value (of states) is intrinsic value*. The arguments run the same way: For any state, *S*, that appears to have its ultimate value in virtue of some external or contingent feature, *F*, we simply include this feature as a constituent; in so doing, we select a wider state of affairs, a state that contains everything necessary to give it value. Such goods will have their value intrinsically and necessarily; they will therefore be good unconditionally.

¹⁸ Such views originate with Brentano (2009: 18). See also Ewing (2012: 146-150), Lemos (1994: 6-16), Anderson (1993: 19-20), Baron (1997:22), Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen (2000: 125) and Zimmerman (2001: 84-97), among many others.

¹⁹ Zimmerman (2001: 40-44) resists these claims; he argues that something has non-derivative value only if it's the fitting object of a *rational* pro-attitude—and that love is not rational. I accept his restriction, but I cannot agree that love is irrational. Further, I cannot endorse Zimmerman's claim that the ultimate objects of uncontroversially rational attitudes such as respect are states of affairs. But I may be mistaken about this—and I would welcome such a result: If Zimmerman is correct, then no further argumentation is needed in defense of the Moorean orthodoxy.

²⁰ I worry about the "wrong kind of reason" problem, and its ilk. For summary see Rønnow-Rasmussen (2011: 33-45). Interestingly, the problem does not apply if we believe that ultimate value is intrinsic. But of course no such defense is available to the conditionalist.

Thus the concept of ultimate value may be naturally divided. *First*, there is intrinsic value—the kind of ultimate value that attaches to states of affairs. This kind of value is characterized by the Moorean principles and may call for typically utilitarian responses such as promotion and maximization. *Second*, there is non-intrinsic ultimate value—the kind of final value that attaches to particulars. None of the Moorean principles hold for this kind of value. Further, different attitudes are required: goods with this kind of final value may call instead for care, respect, or maintenance.

Which kind of ultimate value is most important? Begin with rational choice. As Aristotle suggests, whenever we act intentionally, we aim to bring about some end or goal.²¹ Thus what we have most reason to do must depend, at least in part, on the values of the ends or goals that we can bring about. Brentano (2009: 12) writes:

This, therefore, is certain: there is a variety of ultimate ends. We must choose among them. And since the ultimate end that we adopt is the determining principle of everything else, the choice of ultimate ends is the most important choice of all... Which end is the correct one?... Choose *the best* among the ends that are attainable: this is the only adequate answer.

However, even if we do not accept such maximizing views, it is, I think, impossible to provide a satisfactory account of rational choice that does not appeal to the value of the objectives that we can bring about. Thus intrinsic value seems essential to any successful account of rationality. But this is not true of non-intrinsic ultimate value. Nor is it clear that such value has any direct bearing on rational choice.

Turn next to axiology. The traditional objects of study in value theory are lives, outcomes, and possible worlds. This is for good reason: it makes sense to care about our lives and the lives of those close to us; to care about the outcomes of our actions and the actions of others; to care about the world, and the ways it could be. Because of this, it seems

²¹ (2000: 3, 1094a-1094b.)

to me that questions about the values of these things have clear and immediate importance—they deserve the attention that axiologists have devoted to them. But lives, outcomes, and possible worlds are not particulars; they are states of affairs.²² And when we ask about the values of such things, we are asking about their non-derivative or intrinsic value: we are thinking about how good these things would be as ends, not as means; how *choice-worthy* they are, in themselves.

Given this, intrinsic value is also critical to deontology. Many accounts of right action, like Moore's ideal utilitarianism, appeal to claims about the value of the world. We cannot formulate or defend such theories without appealing to intrinsic value, nor can we understand moderate views, like Ross's, that tell us that we have a *prima facie* obligation to make the world as good as it can be.

Of course the conditionalist may object that the goods they point to are equally important. But this is not plausible. The conditionalist's goods—things like coats, pens, dresses, etc.—are clearly of lesser importance than the goods traditional value theory targets. Perhaps Lincoln's pen does have ultimate value, as conditionalists often claim. But it is unclear what this kind of value is supposed to *do*, or why we ought to be concerned with it.

The conditionalist may here side with Kagan and reply that things like Lincoln's pen make the world a better place.²³ Perhaps this gives us reason to be concerned with the value of the pen, and other such goods. I must admit I do not find such claims convincing—but perhaps they are more plausible when we consider other conditionalist goods, such as beautiful artworks. However, even if Kagan's thesis were true, this would make the

²² We can say that (i) the outcome of an action is the conjunction of the states of affairs that would obtain if it were performed; (ii) the life of an individual is the conjunction of the states of affairs directly about that person (that is, those atomic states that have that person as their subject) and (iii) that a possible world is a maximal, consistent state of affairs. We can say that a state of affairs, *w*, is maximal and consistent just in case *w* is possible and for any state of affairs *s* if *s* is not a part of *w* then it is impossible that $\langle w \& s \rangle$ should obtain.

²³ See his (1998).

conditionalist's goods significant only by association: I care about the world and its value; in so much as this concerns me, I may be concerned with the ultimate value of particulars. But if this is correct, it is still the value of the world that is primary.

Alternatively, the conditionalist may turn back to Kant: what, they ask, of the ultimate value of persons? After all, persons are particulars, not states of affairs, and we have clear reason to care about their value. I admit this; I think that we should be concerned with the values of persons. But I am skeptical that we should be concerned with the *ultimate* values of persons. Rather, I think we are concerned with their *moral* value—we want to know whether they are good *qua* persons. However, ultimate value and moral value are distinct: the ultimate value of a thing cannot depend on the values of other things; it is non-derivative. But the moral value of a person may depend on the values of that person's actions, virtues, and history. (Further moral value is not, I think, the axiologist's concern—these questions belong to deontology.)

We may also be concerned with the values of a person's life, or the values of their actions, relationships, and so on. But these are all states of affairs. It is unclear to me that, in addition to these things, we should be interested in the *ultimate* values of persons.²⁴

Thus I believe that the orthodoxy is correct: the proper objects of study in axiology are lives, outcomes, and possible worlds. And thus the fundamental kind of value we are concerned with in axiology is the ultimate value of these things—or, equivalently, their intrinsic value, or value as ends.

I conclude that the conditionalist is mistaken. It is likely true that intrinsic value is simply a species of ultimate (i.e. final) value, as they claim. But intrinsic goods *are* importantly

²⁴ This seems especially true, if, as most Kantians claim, the ultimate value of persons does not add to the value of the world. See Anderson (1993: 97).

different from other goods with ultimate value—they possess the kind of ultimate value that is most important to axiology, rationality, and moral philosophy more broadly.

§3: A Translation Program

I have presented a dilemma. If the final value of a thing is its value as an end, then final value may be identified with intrinsic value. If the final value of a thing is its ultimate value, then we may say that intrinsic value is the most important kind of ultimate value. Under either condition, the conditionalist's argument fails.

But our defense can be further strengthened. The conditionalist intuition that entities other than states of affairs may possess the kind of value most important to axiology is powerful and widely shared. We cannot deliver this result—we can say only that such goods can possess an inferior kind of ultimate value. Perhaps this is good enough. But I believe it would be better if we could show that claims about the final value of particulars (and perhaps even universals) can be translated into claims about the final values of states that involve these goods. In this way, though we cannot attribute the most important kind of value to conditionalist goods, we might attribute such value to states that are intimately related to these goods.

Begin with particulars. Moore (1993: 171) inspires the most popular approach; he writes: “when we assert that a thing is good, what we mean is that its existence or reality is good.” Thus we might claim that:

Existence Reduction. When we say that some particular *c* is valuable intrinsically, or as an end, we often mean only that the state $\langle c \text{ exists} \rangle$ is valuable.

Moore's claims are attractive and intuitive. But they have been widely rejected. Parfit writes:

[Moore's] claims are mistakes. Something's existence can be good though this thing itself is not good, and vice versa. There are many bad people, for example, whose

continued existence would be good as an end. When some good person is dying a slow and painful death, the continued existence of this person may be bad as an end. And there would be nothing good in the continued existence of good works of art if no one could ever see them. (2011: 237)

Are such examples persuasive?

Begin with Parfit's first case. It is certainly true that, in some sense, it may be good for bad persons to exist. But in general, when we say that someone is a *bad person* we are speaking of his character, or moral value, not his intrinsic value. And moral value and intrinsic value are distinct. But perhaps Parfit means that it may be good as an end for a person who is bad as an end to exist. It is hard to understand this claim, however, and harder still to see why it might be true. I am inclined to think that if we accept that a person is intrinsically bad, then we must be willing to accept that their existence is intrinsically bad too.

What about Parfit's second example—the good man, dying painfully? Here again there seems to be confusion between moral value and intrinsic value: the natural interpretation is to imagine a *good person* whose existence is bad. But this is consistent with the existence reduction scheme.

However, Parfit's third case will, I fear, undermine Moore's claims. Suppose we believe that the value of some work of art, *A*, is conditional on its being seen and appreciated. If this is correct, then the Moorean cannot understand the claim *A has value as an end* as a claim about the value of the state $\langle A \text{ exists} \rangle$. This state would have intrinsic value only under the condition that *A* is seen—and *A*'s being seen is not intrinsic to $\langle A \text{ exists} \rangle$. Thus the value of $\langle A \text{ exists} \rangle$ would be extrinsic. And this is inconsistent with the program advanced.

There are other worries. Suppose we say that some particular, *B*, is intrinsically valuable. Our translation asks us to understand this assertion in terms of a claim about the state $\langle B \text{ exists} \rangle$. But what is it about a state like $\langle B \text{ exists} \rangle$ that makes it good? Consider

again a state like *<Charlie is happy>*. This state is good *because of its constituents*—because it is an instance of happiness. But this cannot be our explanation for the value of a state like *<B exists >*—unless we wish to claim that every existential state of affairs, or every state about *B*, is good as an end.²⁵

So Moore’s translation scheme must be rejected. However, as I have argued, in any case where the value of a state appears to depend upon something external, the Moorean can attribute value to some wider state that includes those features. Thus we attribute value not to the state *<A exists>* but to *<A is seen and appreciated>*. When we do, we include one of *A*’s *alleged good-making properties*—one of the features that makes us say that *A* is intrinsically good. This will solve the problem Parfit raised. Further, if we include *all* such features, we can solve the second problem as well; we can explain the value of a state by appealing to its constituents. More generally:

Good-Making Reduction. When we attribute intrinsic value to a concrete particular *c* that is supposed to be made good by some features $F_1 \dots F_n$, we often mean only that the state *<c is $F_1 \dots F_n$ >* is valuable.^{26 27}

I believe we should accept such accounts.

If we wish, we may also extend our strategy to universals. Again, it is true that we often attribute value to properties like wisdom or bravery, or relations like love. But it is easy enough to translate these claims. Chisholm proposes that:

In saying, for example, that *knowledge* is intrinsically good we mean, more exactly, that that state of affairs which is someone knowing something is intrinsically good. And in saying that pain is intrinsically bad, we mean that that state of affairs which is someone being in pain (“someone experiencing painfully”) is one that is intrinsically bad.

²⁵ Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen (2000) present an argument in a similar spirit.

²⁶ Zimmerman suggests a similar scheme; see his (2001: 40).

²⁷ Of course translation may not always be possible (see fn. 14). But it seems to me that the translation can succeed for nearly all of the most common examples of extrinsic final goods.

If we accept Chisholm's proposal, we may say:

Existential Instantiation: When we say that some universal *U* is valuable intrinsically, or as an end, we often mean only that the state of affairs *<Something is U>* is valuable.

Chisholm's proposal is attractive. But I am skeptical of the notion of existentially quantified states of affairs. Further, I believe that when we claim that a universal is valuable, we are not trying to attribute value to just one state of affairs, but to a whole family.

I admit that these concerns may not be decisive. But for those who share my intuitions, I suggest we endorse:

Atomic Instantiation: When we say that a universal is valuable intrinsically, or as an end, we often mean only that any atomic instantiation of that universal would have value.²⁸

I am inclined to think that such schemes may succeed. Often, when we appear to attribute value to romantic love, for example, we are not praising the relation—we are declaring that we value states of the world in which two persons love each other. And similarly for other universals, such as bravery or wisdom.

Thus we need not reject all claims about the intrinsic values of things other than states of affairs. Such claims cannot be literally true—but they may often be used to say something that is.

²⁸ The restriction to atomic states of affairs is necessary since, by saying that we value bravery as an end, we do not mean to commit ourselves to the claim that we value any molecular state that has, as a part, an instantiation of bravery—e.g. *<Jones is brave & Jones is suffering greatly>*.

CHAPTER V

REASONS AND GOODNESS: MOORE, BRENTANO, AND SCANLON

G.E. Moore's *Principia Ethica* was revolutionary. But it was not entirely without precedent. Moore writes:

When this book had been already completed, I found, in Brentano's 'Origin of the Knowledge of Right and Wrong,' opinions far more closely resembling my own, than those of any other ethical writer with whom I am acquainted. (1993: 36)

Both Moore and Brentano were metaethical non-naturalists;¹ both believed that intrinsic value is the fundamental concept of axiology;² both said that the right may be defined in terms of the good.³ But their systems differ ontologically: Moore claimed that intrinsic goodness is fundamental, and cannot be analyzed. Brentano argued that correctness is primary: to be intrinsically good is to be correct to intrinsically love.

The *Principia* is still widely read and discussed; the *Origin* is mostly forgotten. Yet Brentano seems to have quietly defeated Moore: while few endorse Moore's claims about the indefinability of goodness, the analysis presented in the *Origin* inspired an army of allies, including Broad (1930), Brandt (1946), Ewing (1948), Chisholm (1986), Scanlon (1998), Zimmerman (2001), Rønnow-Rasmussen (2011), and Parfit (2011)—among others. All are now called fitting-attitude theorists, though not all claim that the good is that which it is fitting to favor—some say instead that a thing is valuable when we are required to respect it, or when we have reason to care about it. But all say that the deontic concept they employ—whether it is correctness, fittingness, requirement, or reason—is fundamental, and that

¹ See e.g. Moore (1993: 58-59), Brentano (2009: 17-18).

² Moore (1993: 78); Brentano (2009: 18).

³ Moore (1993: 196-197); Brentano (2009: 13, 32).

goodness is derivative. Thus, as Chisholm claimed, such views reduce axiology to deontology.⁴

In general, fitting-attitude theorists advance few arguments; they are content to present their reduction and rely upon its intuitive appeal.⁵ But some of Brentano's contemporary successors hope for more: they wish to justify their position over the Moorean alternative. Thus Scanlon (1998) claims the Moorean view fails because it suggests that the goodness of a thing gives us additional reason to value it; Jacobson (2011) claims that it does not adequately explain what plural goods have in common; Stratton-Lake and Hooker (2006) say that it cannot account for the supervenience of the moral upon the non-moral.

I defend the Moorean view; I reject such claims. I first present and explicate what I take to be the most powerful form of the fitting-attitude view. After, I examine the arguments of Scanlon et al.; I claim that, in each case, the objection to the Moorean program is either unsound, or applies equally to the fitting-attitude theory. I conclude that, if there are good reasons to prefer Brentano's program, they have not yet been advanced.

§1: Brentano and Scanlon

Brentano hoped to discover the foundation of our obligations. Like Moore, he claimed that the moral status of our actions is determined by facts about the intrinsic values of our ends. But Brentano was not content to take goodness as primitive; rather, he claimed that:

We call a thing *good* when the love relating to it is correct. In the broadest sense of the term, the good is that which is worthy of love, that which can be loved with a love that is correct.

⁴ See his (1986: 53).

⁵ See e.g. Ewing (1948), Chisholm (1986), Zimmerman (2001), and Rønnow-Rasmussen (2011), among others.

But while Brentano's view is historically significant, I believe it is unattractive. If goodness is to be defined in terms of correctness, then correctness must be more fundamental than goodness. But this is difficult to maintain: the notion of correctness is obscure and Brentano says little about its nature.⁶ The Moorean is rightly cautious; he claims that we should not trade a notion we understand, like goodness, for one that we do not.

Most of Brentano's followers encounter the same problem in a milder guise: they suggest that we analyze goodness in terms of fittingness, or requirement. But outside of the very analyses they provide, the normative significance of these concepts is unclear.

However, the most recent versions of the fitting-attitude theory are, in this way, a significant advance. The analysis presented in Scanlon's influential (1998), and the nearly identical views defended by Stratton-Lake and Hooker (2006), Parfit (2011), and Rønnow-Rasmussen (2011), explain value not in terms of fittingness or correctness, but in terms of *reasons*. The Moorean concern is thus undermined: talk of reasons is ubiquitous in moral philosophy, and the concept has clear normative significance. Further, Scanlon's view is, at present, the most popular and most discussed form of the fitting-attitude analysis. It is, I think, an appropriate standard bearer. (I show in a note how our arguments may apply if we prefer some alternative.)

Scanlon's analysis begins with an account of what it is to value goods:

To value something is to take oneself to have reasons for holding certain positive attitudes toward it... (1998: 95)^{7 8}

However, to believe something is valuable is not merely to value it. Rather:

⁶ Further, I fear some of Brentano's most important beliefs about correctness are implausible; see, for example, his claim at (2009: 22) that there is a phenomenological quality to experiences of correctness.

⁷ Scanlon also appeals to certain types of 'pro-actions,' such as maintenance and preservation. For ease of exposition, I will not mention pro-actions, but this omission is not meant to be philosophically significant.

⁸ For the sake of variety, I will sometimes speak of 'favor' or 'care' instead. I do not take these to be particular attitudes; as I use these terms, to care about a thing, or favor it, is simply to hold some pro-attitude towards it.

...To claim that something is *valuable* (or that it is “of value”) is to claim that others also have reason to value it, as you do. (*Ibid.*)

Thus we may say that, according to Scanlon:

x is good = df. we all have sufficient reason to hold a pro-attitude towards x .⁹

The list of pro-attitudes is left open-ended: Scanlon mentions protection, promotion, and preservation; Parfit (2011) appeals to desire, choice, and production—but we may add different attitudes depending on what we believe to be good. The appropriate response will be determined by the ontological category of the value bearer: states of affairs may call for desire and promotion, persons for care and love, historical artifacts for maintenance, and so on.

The account is therefore attractive: it explains goodness in terms of reasons, a critical normative notion, and is neutral about what kinds of things may be good (and thus consistent with nearly all substantive views in axiology.) But it is incomplete. Scanlon—and most of his allies—simply define ‘good’ without explaining what kind of goodness they target, or how it relates to the traditional objects of axiology. This will not suffice; if Scanlon’s view is to compete with the Moorean account, it must provide an analysis of *intrinsic* goodness.

So we should complete our explication of Scanlon’s account by restricting it. Parfit suggests that, when analyzing intrinsic value, we should appeal only to reasons that are generated by the intrinsic properties of goods.¹⁰ Thus:

⁹ The universal quantifier here not only enables us to distinguish between what we care about and what we believe is valuable, but also allows for partial, or agent relative, reasons. For example, Scanlon claims that we may have most reason to care about our own children. But, he suggests, few wish to say that their children are better than all others. Scanlon’s program allows for this partiality. If goodness is linked to reasons, then so, presumably, is the *better than* relation. If we assume that the strength of our reasons to value a thing will determine its value, we can say:

x is better than y = df. everyone has stronger reason to value x than to value y .

If this account is correct, then we may each have most reason to care about our children, even if they are not better than all others.

x is intrinsically good =df. the intrinsic properties of x give everyone sufficient reason to value it.^{11 12}

§2: Fundamentality and Double Counting

In some ways, the Moorean program is not so different from Scanlon's. Both will agree that the intrinsic value of a thing supervenes on its intrinsic features. And, if we claim with Moore that only states of affairs may be intrinsically valuable, then (given that the intrinsic features of states of affairs are metaphysically necessary) both systems will entail that the intrinsic value of a thing is essential and persists in isolation. Finally, since the Moorean will likely think that we have reason to value what is valuable, he may accept the biconditional this account entails: he may say that things are intrinsically good just when their intrinsic properties give us reason to value them.

However, the systems disagree about what is fundamental. Both accounts are forms of monistic non-naturalism—but for Moore, the sole unanalyzed normative concept is the property *intrinsic goodness*; for Scanlon, it is the relation *provides an intrinsic reason to value*. Thus if we accept the fitting-attitude theory, we will say that reasons are fundamental and goodness is derivative: *things are valuable because we have reason to value them*. The Moorean reverses the

¹⁰ See his (2011: 52).

¹¹ Note also that this will enable us to avoid the wrong kind of reason problem and its ilk. The argument usually appeals to an example; we imagine that if we do not favor a saucer of mud, a demon will punish us. Thus we have reason to favor the mud, but it is not good. (For further discussion see Jacobson (2011) and Rønnow-Rasmussen (2011: 33-42)). No such objection applies to our account; the fact that a demon will punish us is, of course, extrinsic to the mud.

¹² We may wish to claim that we can have reason to hold some attitude only if we *can*. If so, then we should say instead that:

x is intrinsically good =df. the intrinsic properties of x give us all sufficient reason to care about it, if we can.

order of explanation. He thinks goodness is fundamental and reasons derivative; he says that *we have reason to value things because they are valuable*.¹³

Thus on the Moorean account, we may have reason to care about a thing because it is good. But on Scanlon's account, this is not possible: according to the fitting-attitude analysis, to say that we have reason to care about something because it is good is to say that we have reason to care about it because we have reason to care about it. And this cannot be: the *because of or in virtue of* relation is irreflexive. Thus on Scanlon's account it is only the natural properties of things—like their pleasantness—that can give us reason.

This difference grounds perhaps the most popular argument against the Moorean system. Scanlon writes:

[W]hen I consider particular cases it seems that these reasons [i.e. reasons to value goods] are provided by the natural properties that make a thing good or valuable. So, for example, the fact that a resort is pleasant is a reason to visit it or to recommend it to a friend, and the fact that a discovery casts light on the causes of cancer is a reason to applaud it and to support further research of that kind. These natural properties provide a complete explanation of the reasons we have for reacting in these ways to things that are good or valuable. *It is not clear what further work could be done by special reason-providing properties of goodness and value, and even less clear how these properties could provide reasons.* (1998: 97).¹⁴

Indeed, to claim that the goodness of a thing can give us reason to value a thing, as the Moorean must, seems to commit us to a kind of double counting; we would have to say that when some resort is pleasant and therefore good, we have two separate reasons to

¹³ Scanlon writes, “[The Moorean believes] that when something has the right natural properties it has the further property of being valuable, and that property gives us reason to behave or react in certain ways with regard to it...The alternative, which I believe to be correct, is to hold that being good, or valuable, is not a property that itself provides a reason to respond to a thing in certain ways. Rather, to be good or valuable is to have other properties that constitute such reasons” (1998: 97). Of course, we could, in principle, reject Scanlon's description of the Moorean position; we might say that our reasons to value things are independent of their values. But this would be implausible. The indefinability of goodness is merely a part of the overall Moorean system in moral philosophy. If that system is to be complete, it must give some account of all the moral concepts of significant concern, as Moore attempted in the *Principia*. Thus the Moorean must provide some account of what we have reason to value, and given the nature of his system, I believe he should attempt to explain our reasons to value things in terms of their values.

¹⁴ Emphasis mine. Though I will make use of his examples in what follows, I am admittedly hesitant about the cases Scanlon gives; it is, I think, unclear whether resorts or research projects can have *intrinsic* value.

recommend it. Indeed, whenever something is made good by some natural property, we will have two reasons—one provided by these natural properties, and another provided by its goodness.

The argument then, is simple enough: If the Moorean account were true, then the goodness of a thing would provide reason to value it. But the goodness of a thing does not provide reason to value it. So, the Moorean view is not true.

But though this argument may be initially appealing, it is unsound. Scanlon's concern is grounded in questions about how the goodness of a thing can give us *additional* reason to value it. The objection thus assumes the Moorean will agree with Scanlon et al. that the natural properties of a thing give us some reason to value it. But we should deny this.¹⁵

Rather, the Moorean should insist that we have reason to recommend some resort, applaud some line or research, or desire some outcome, *only because* it is good. The natural properties of a thing matter, we argue, only in that they make things good. Thus when we say that we should recommend some resort because it is pleasant, we may speak truly by speaking elliptically: because being pleasant makes things good, and because the goodness of a thing gives us reason to value it, we can appeal to the pleasantness of a thing to justify claims about our reasons to favor it. But there is only one reason in such cases: the reason provided by that thing's goodness.

Of course, the fitting-attitude theorist may stubbornly note that, according to the defense suggested, the claim that we have reason to recommend some resort because it is pleasant is still false, if understood literally. This is admittedly counterintuitive. But the fitting-attitude theorist must pay a similar price; as we have seen, he must deny that we have

¹⁵ Indeed, though they ultimately reject the Moorean position, this is roughly the defense that Stratton-Lake and Hooker (2006) suggest.

reason to value things because they are valuable. And this is unfortunate also: it is at best strange to deny that we may have reason to care about something because it is good.

Thus Scanlon's argument is unpersuasive. Both views face intuitive costs—the Moorean must deny that we have reason to value things because (for example) they are pleasant; Scanlon must deny that we have reason to value things because they are valuable. We approach a draw.

§3: The Grounding Argument

But I fear this draw is illusory. Though I am hesitant to damage the account I prefer, we must note that a powerful objection is now available to Scanlon. Let *S* be some state of affairs. The *because of* or *in virtue of* relation is transitive. Thus I think the following inference legitimate:

- (1) *S* is intrinsically good because it is pleasant.
- (2) We have reason to value *S* because it is intrinsically good.
- (3) So, we have reason to value *S* because it is pleasant.

The Moorean position advanced holds that claims like (1) and (2) may be true: it admits that things may be good because they are pleasant and that the values of things give us reason to value them. But it insists that claims like (3) must be false; the natural properties of things cannot give us reason to value them. If this transitivity argument is legitimate, as it appears, then this position cannot be sustained.

We might claim this argument invalid because of equivocation. We say that (1) appeals to a fact about metaphysical explanation: it specifies the good-making features of *S*—the properties that ground and explain its value. But (2) appeals to a fact about reasons;

it says that the fact that *S* is intrinsically good provides a reason to value it. Thus the argument is, in fact:

(1*) The fact that *S* is pleasant grounds the fact that *S* is intrinsically good.

(2*) The fact that *S* is intrinsically good gives us reason to value *S*.

(3*) So, the fact that *S* is pleasant gives us reason to value *S*.

And this inference, we say, is illegitimate.

However, this defense cannot succeed. If some fact gives us a reason, then this fact grounds the further fact that we have this reason. Thus (2*) entails:

(2**): The fact that *S* is intrinsically good grounds the fact that we have reason to value *S*.

But the grounding relation is transitive. Thus (2**) and (1*) entail that:

(3**) The fact that *S* is pleasant grounds the fact that we have reason to value *S*.

However, if some fact grounds our reason to have some attitude, then this fact gives us reason to have that attitude.¹⁶ Thus (3**) entails (3*).

I cannot see a way out. The standard Moorean defense must be rejected: we cannot deny that the natural properties of things can give us reason to value them. But I refuse to abandon the Moorean program. Rather, I hope to advance a new defense. And, surprisingly, it is a defense we may take from the opposition.

Return to the fitting-attitude view. Scanlon says it entails that we cannot have reason to favor things because they are good. In an important passage, Parfit demurs. We read:

Scanlon claims... [that a] thing's goodness could not give us reasons. Such goodness is the property of having *other* properties that might give us certain reasons, and the second-order fact that we had these reasons would not itself give us any reason[s]... This view needs, I think, one small revision. If some medicine or book is

¹⁶ We might deny this, and end the argument here. But though I recognize this as a conceptual possibility, I cannot convince myself that this principle is false. If, however, I am mistaken, then this is simply another way to resist the objection stated.

the best, these facts could be truly claimed to give us reason to take this medicine, or to read this book. But these would not be *further, independent* reasons. These reasons would be *derivative*, since their normative force would derive entirely from the fact that made this medicine or book the best. That is why it would be odd to claim that we had three reasons to take some medicine: reasons that are given by the facts that this medicine is the safest, the most effective, *and* the best. (2011: 38)

Parfit's claim, then, is that the fitting-attitude theorist should maintain (i) that the values of things may give us derivative reasons to favor them but (ii) only the natural properties of things generate non-derivative reasons. This approach preserves our intuitions: we may claim, as we do pretheoretically, that both the values of things and their natural properties give us reason to value them. But we do not need to worry about double counting, Parfit claims: when we consider the strength of our reasons in favor of holding some attitude, we consider only the non-derivative reasons. This is because derivative reasons are not independent, and thus do not provide additional support.¹⁷

The position Parfit suggests is therefore attractive. But—though this has not been recognized—Parfit's position is not actually available to him, or to Scanlon. We cannot have reason to value things because we have reason to value them: as I have stressed, the *because of* relation is irreflexive. And thus, on the accounts they advance, we cannot have reason to value things because they are good—regardless of whether this reason is derivative or non-derivative.

However the position Parfit suggests *is* available to the Moorean; the reflexivity argument does not apply to his program.¹⁸ Further Parfit's suggestion may, I believe, help us

¹⁷ In fact, I am somewhat unconvinced by this claim: I do not think that Parfit's account of derivative reasons shows why they are not independent, nor why they should not count when we consider our reasons to value goods. The simple fact that some reason gets its power from some other source does not show that it cannot provide additional reason. (I am thankful to Bradford Skow for raising this concern.) However, I believe that the account of derivative reasons I suggest below for the Moorean may overcome this worry.

¹⁸ We might worry about a kind of parody argument:

(4) *S* is intrinsically good because it is pleasant.

(5) We have non-derivative reason to value *S* because it is intrinsically good.

(6) So, we have non-derivative reason to value *S* because it is pleasant.

escape the objection posed. Let us say that some fact gives us *derivative* reason to have some attitude just in case it grounds some further fact and *this* fact gives us reason on its own to have that attitude. And let us say, similarly, that some fact provides *non-derivative* reason just in case it gives us reason to have some attitude, regardless of what other facts it grounds, or makes true.

When combined with the Moorean account, it then follows that (i) the natural properties of things generate derivative reasons but (ii) only the values of things can generate non-derivative reasons. Thus for example, the pleasantness of some state gives us derivative reason to value it: its pleasantness makes it good, and this goodness gives us non-derivative reason to value it. Further, the double counting concern is avoided: derivative reasons only count inasmuch as they make it true that some non-derivative reason obtains. Thus in counting the non-derivative reasons, we have, in a sense, already accounted for the force of the derivative reasons; these non-derivative reasons *contain* the force of the derivative

But this argument truly *is* invalid. Suppose we expand the argument, as before. Then we will claim:

(4*) The fact that *S* is pleasant grounds the fact that *S* is intrinsically good.

(5*) The fact that *S* is intrinsically good gives us non-derivative reason to value *S*.

(6*) So, the fact that *S* is pleasant gives us non-derivative reason to value *S*.

Now, by invoking the principles I used before, we infer from (4*) and (5*) that:

(6**) The fact that *S* is pleasant grounds the fact that we have non-derivative reason to value *S*.

But here the arguments diverge, for our (6*) does not follow from (6**). This is because though the conditional:

(C) If *F* grounds the fact that we have reason to value *S* then *F* gives us reason to value *S*

is true, the conditional:

(C*) If *F* grounds the fact that we have non-derivative reason to value *S* then *F* gives us non-derivative reason to value *S*

is false. To provide a non-derivative reason to value something, a fact must, as it were, be at the ‘top of the reason chain.’ But to simply provide reason (whether derivative or otherwise), a fact may sit anywhere in the chain. Similarly, a fact may ground some further fact by simply being anywhere in the ‘grounding chain.’ Thus (C) is true, for the respective notions of reason and ground ‘match up’; (C*) is false because they do not. Of course the conditional:

(C**) If *F* is the *immediate* ground of the fact that we have non-derivative reason to value *S* then *F* gives us non-derivative reason to value *S*

is true. But this will not save the argument, because the fact that *S* is pleasant is *not* the immediate ground of the fact that we have non-derivative reason to value *S*.

reasons. We thus need only consider our non-derivative reasons in determining what we should value. The double counting concern dissolves.

The resulting position thus enables the Moorean to overcome the objection stated and preserve our intuitions about the sources of our reasons—something Scanlon’s view cannot do. The draw is thus illusory, after all: the Moorean view comes out ahead.

§4: The Pluralism Argument

Scanlon’s concern—and the grounding objection it inspires—is unsound. Those who prefer the fitting-attitude account must provide further argument.

Some appeal to pluralism about intrinsic value. If there are, as the pluralist claims, many fundamentally distinct kinds of intrinsic goods, then there is a further challenge: what unifies these goods? What do e.g. pleasure and beauty have in common that makes them both intrinsically valuable? Those who follow Scanlon may explain that these goods are all alike in that we have reason to value them. Jacobson (2011) writes:

The motivation for adopting an FA [fitting-attitude] theory becomes clearer when one moves from a single case, especially the paradigmatic good of pleasure, to other good things. Consider a plausible list of intrinsic values: pleasure, beauty, friendship, and knowledge...Someone might wonder what these things have in common, in virtue of which they are good. Of course there may be no answer, if it is just a brute fact that there are four intrinsic goods, which resemble each other simply in having the property of goodness...[But] perhaps what unifies these goods is something about human attitudes. Maybe pleasure, knowledge, beauty, and friendship are all desirable or admirable things, where this means not that we can desire or admire them but that we should (ought, have reason to) do so.¹⁹

Thus the fitting-attitude theorist can say that pleasure and beauty are alike in that we have reason to value them. But the Moorean has no account of what plural goods have in common; because intrinsic goodness is a primitive, we have no recourse for further

¹⁹ See also Scanlon (1998: 97-98)—though Scanlon’s argument also contains elements of the concern I raise in fn. 20. For further discussion see Stratton-Lake and Hooker (2006).

explanation.²⁰ Thus, again, we have reason to reject the Moorean view, and accept Scanlon's alternative.

I believe this argument is, at best, inconclusive. Remember that, according to the fitting-attitude theorist:

x is intrinsically good =df. the intrinsic properties of x give everyone sufficient reason to value it.

Thus to claim that pleasure and beauty are alike in that we have reason to value them is simply to say that they are alike in that they are good. It is thus unclear that the fitting-attitude theorist has any explanation of the feature that all and only intrinsic goods share (besides, of course, goodness).

Further, even if we accept that the fitting-attitude theorist *can* explain what plural goods have in common, this would not be decisive. This is because the fitting-attitude theorist cannot explain what plural goods have in common that makes them reasonable to value. But this need not be a brute fact on the Moorean account: if we connect reasons and value in the way I have suggested, then we may say that we have reason to value these things because they are good.

Thus we are faced not with an argument, but a choice: we may explain why things are good, or explain why we have reason to value them. We cannot do both.²¹

²⁰ In fact, I think this argument is somewhat poorly stated. Value pluralism cannot be understood as the view that there are many different kinds of intrinsic goods, as I argue in my "Two Kinds of Value Pluralism." But for the sake of argument, I will not object here.

²¹ There is another argument about pluralism lurking—but this concerns not value pluralism but pluralism about reasons. It seems on the Moorean view we are committed to a kind of monism about intrinsic reasons; we must claim that we have intrinsic reason to value things only because they are valuable. But it seems that e.g. our reasons to recommend a resort are very different from our reasons to praise some line of research. (I am thankful to Peter Graham for making this objection clear to me.) However, this concern can, I believe, be ameliorated in three ways. *First*, it is not clear that either of these things are in fact examples of *intrinsic* goods, and our reasons to value clear examples of intrinsic goods (like different instances of pleasure) appear more homogenous. *Second*, the Moorean view is committed only to monism about non-derivative reasons. Thus our derivative reasons to recommend a resort *may* be very different from our reasons to value some line of research. *Third*, though fundamentally we have reason to value things only because they are good, things may

§5: The Supervenience Argument

As I have stressed, both Moore and Brentano embrace non-naturalism: their systems declare that goodness is unanalyzable in terms of natural properties. Given this, they must explain the relation between the moral and the non-moral. Of course, the moral facts supervene upon non-moral (or natural) facts—but why?²²

The explanation is immediate for the naturalist: he thinks moral facts *are* natural facts. And it is unnecessary for the anti-realist: he denies there are such facts. It is thus a special problem for non-naturalists like Moore, Brentano, and Scanlon. And since the publication of Blackburn's (1971), critics have claimed it is a challenge they cannot meet.²³

Stratton-Lake and Hooker argue that, in this way, the two programs are not alike. Scanlon can easily explain the supervenience of the moral upon the non-moral; Moore cannot. They write:

[O]n Scanlon's view, goodness is not a simple indefinable property, but is the property of having other properties that give us reason to care....[G]iven this account of goodness, there is no mystery why it must supervene upon other properties. It must supervene on other properties, because it is the property those properties have of providing reasons. For Scanlon, reasons just are such properties of things as that they produce pleasure or might lead to an improvement in our understanding of cancer. The reasons to care about things are properties that can be described without use of the concept of 'practical reasons.' Goodness, in turn, is the non-natural property those properties have of providing reasons. (2006: 163-164).

be good for very different reasons. Thus there is still a kind of pluralism here—it is simply a little bit deeper in our explanatory chain.

²² The fundamental concept of moral supervenience is simple enough: we claim that there cannot be a difference in the moral facts without a difference in the non-moral (i.e. natural) facts. This slogan is perhaps best understood as a claim of *strong* supervenience, i.e.:

Necessarily, if a thing x has some moral property F , then there is some non-moral property G (which may be disjunctive, conjunctive, negative, etc.) such that, necessarily, anything that has G has F .

For an exhaustive survey of the various interpretations of moral supervenience, see McPherson (2015).

²³ In fact, it is unclear just what Blackburn's concern was—and there is still significant debate. But I am interested only in the supervenience argument as Stratton-Lake and Hooker present it; I believe this is the only version of the supervenience argument that has been advanced in the debate between the Moorean and the fitting-attitude theorist. Thus if I can undermine their concern, then I will have defended the Moorean view adequately for my purposes. But I do not pretend that this is the only version of the supervenience argument, nor do I insist that Stratton-Lake and Hooker's argument is related to Blackburn's concern in the way they claim.

Thus, if we accept Scanlon's view, then the supervenience of the reason facts upon the non-moral facts is analytic; it is a "conceptual truth that if you have a reason to care about A, then there must be something that provides that reason. This something is what the reason supervenes on." And given that the facts about goodness *just are* facts about reasons, this explanation holds for the axiological facts as well.

However, we should not accept these claims too quickly. As stated, the argument is unpersuasive. Suppose the fact that Linus is kind gives me reason to care about him. It does not follow, from this mere fact, that our reason to care about him *supervenes* upon his kindness. Indeed, supervenience might fail: even if Linus's kindness gives us reason to value him in the actual world, could there not be some possible world where Linus's kindness does not provide this reason?²⁴

Further, it is not clear that it is analytic that we cannot have a reason without a ground. Consider our reason to act rightly. We may ask: what grounds this? What fact gives us this reason? It does not seem to me incoherent to say that there is no such fact.

Still, I think these objections can likely be overcome. And besides, there is a more serious problem lurking. Stratton-Lake and Hooker's argument can succeed only if the Moorean cannot find an equally satisfying explanation of supervenience. But a *general* (and quite simple) explanation of supervenience is available to the non-naturalist, regardless of whether he accepts the Moorean position or Scanlon's alternative. Given this, I believe that the special explanation postulated is unnecessary and the claimed advantage of Scanlon's position is illusory.

²⁴ I am thankful to Phillip Bricker for raising this objection.

We should separate our tasks. Moral facts divide into two categories: moral principles and derived truths.²⁵ I first show that the supervenience of moral principles is trivial, and therefore does not require explanation. Next, I argue that the supervenience of the derived truths is entailed by the truth of moral principles.

Moral principles differ in subject matter, but are alike in form. Begin with right action. It is now standard to say that all such theories assert that:

An act is right if and only if (and because) it is *A*.

Such principles thus (i) specify necessary and sufficient conditions for right action and (ii) tell us what makes right actions right. Thus, for example, the utilitarian theory claims:

An act is right if and only if (and because) it maximizes utility.

And the Kantian theory, the Rossian theory, and so on, may be formulated in the same way.

Something similar is true in axiology. Though the form of such theories has been neglected,²⁶ any program in axiology must at least specify necessary and sufficient conditions for intrinsic value. Further, if they are to explain the sources of this value, they must specify the properties that make things good. Thus a complete axiological theory will claim that:

A thing is intrinsically good if and only if (and because) it is *B*.²⁷

Similarly, I think the correct theory of virtue will claim that:

A state of character is a virtue if and only if (and because) it is *C*.

And so on.

It is widely accepted that if any moral principle is true, it is true necessarily. Moral principles make no appeal to contingencies; they do not depend on any matters that are

²⁵ In fact, my strategy echoes Scanlon (2014). Though Scanlon identifies only certain facts about reasons as being necessary, we both agree that (i) we should divide moral facts into a pure or privileged class and an impure class and that (ii) the pure claims may, in some sense, explain the supervenience of the impure moral facts.

²⁶ I expand on this theme in my “Two Kinds of Value Pluralism.”

²⁷ In fact, this will hold only of unmixed goods—those things that are good but do not have parts that are bad. For mixed goods, things become more complicated; again I expand on this in “Two Kinds of Value Pluralism.”

accidental. In addition, as Shafer-Landau has stressed, they are *philosophical* theories.²⁸ And like other philosophical theories, they appear to be both necessary and *a priori*.²⁹

Thus the question *why do moral principles supervene upon non-moral facts?* is answered immediately: supervenience is vacuous over necessary facts and thus moral principles supervene on everything. There is nothing to explain.

What of other moral claims?³⁰ The reason they supervene upon the non-moral facts is, again, immediate: they are connected in exactly the way these principles specify and the connection holds *because* these principles are true. Thus, for example, let T be the true theory of right action and let $F_1 \dots F_n$ be the right making features according to T . Then the deontic facts must supervene upon the $F_1 \dots F_n$ facts. Why? Because T is true and T specifies that these are the features that the rightness of acts depends upon. Thus both the supervenience of moral principles and derived truths is explained.³¹

Of course, we may ask: what makes the true moral theory true? I expect that for the non-naturalist there is no answer. But this is a burden that the fitting-attitude theorist and the Moorean must share. For Scanlon, there will be many conditional truths that assert that, when certain facts obtain, we have reason to have certain attitudes or perform certain

²⁸ See his (2005).

²⁹ Of course, I do not expect the naturalist or anti-realist to be moved by such concerns. But this should be enough, I think, for the non-naturalist—regardless of whether he subscribes to the Moorean view or Scanlon's alternative.

³⁰ In fact, there is a kind of gap in this argument, for there may be moral claims that are not principles but are not contingent (for example, the disjunction of the true theory of right action and the claim that some particular action is wrong). But if such claims hold necessarily then, again, it is not clear that there is anything to explain, since their supervenience on the natural facts is also vacuous. Thus the gap is, I hope, easily bridged.

³¹ I admit this explanation will be unpalatable to Humeans: it assumes that there are necessary connections between distinct entities (namely natural properties like pleasantness and moral properties like goodness.) But the Humean cannot, I think be a non-naturalist; the non-naturalist is not a reductionist and thus must take moral principles as they appear to be—i.e. as necessary connections between moral and non-moral properties. Thus this concern, however pressing it may be, should not affect the competition between our two systems.

actions. And because Scanlon's program takes reasons to be fundamental, these conditional truths will not hold in virtue of other truths.³²

It appears to me that the general explanation of supervenience given above is at least as strong as the special explanation postulated by Stratton-Lake and Hooker. I conclude that their objection is unsound.

§6: Conclusion

I believe that the arguments given to prefer Scanlon's view do not succeed. In each case, the competitors are on equal ground or, as in the case of the double counting argument, the Moorean position comes out just ahead. Ultimately, I find this unsurprising: the view Scanlon has advanced is, in many ways, like the Moorean account: both construct moral philosophy out of a single normative notion,³³ both deny that this notion may be explicated in natural terms. The choice between the two will thus be determined by an overall evaluation of the resulting programs: we must decide whether we wish to build moral philosophy upon goodness or upon reason.

§7: A Note: Alternatives to Scanlon's View

There are many fitting-attitude views. I have attended to Scanlon's: it is the most popular, and, I think, the most attractive. But some may prefer views like Brentano's, which appeal to correctness, or views like Ewing's, which appeal to fittingness.

Begin with the former. According to Brentano:

x is intrinsically good =df. it is correct to intrinsically love x .

³² See Scanlon (2014: 2).

³³ *Ibid.*

The double counting argument may thus be recast as follows: according to Brentano, the natural properties of things make them correct to love; this makes such things good.

According to the Moorean, the natural properties of things make them good, and this makes them correct to love.

But again, this short description belies the options available to the Moorean: in fact, he may accept that both the natural and evaluative properties of things make them correct to love. He may do so by claiming that the goodness of things makes them non-derivatively correct to love, and that the natural properties of things make them derivatively correct to love. Thus our verdict of this argument should, I think, mirror our verdict of Scanlon's argument. (The argument runs similarly for the accounts advanced by philosophers like Ewing: we simply replace "correct to love" with "fitting to favor.")

Our reply to the concern about pluralism is also familiar: Brentano can claim that plural goods are alike in that they are all correct to love. It is unclear that this is a true explanation, however, as it appears tautological. If it is an explanation, then we must admit that the Moorean cannot give such an answer—but he can explain what plural goods have in common that makes them correct to love. The result is, at worst, a draw. (And *mutatis mutandis* for other fitting-attitude views.)

Finally, supervenience. It is perhaps analytic that, if we have a reason to do something, then there is something that provides that reason; reasons are, in this way, relational. But fittingness and correctness are not relational. Thus, the claim that,

(i) if something is correct to intrinsically love, then there must be something that makes this so

is no stronger than the claim that

(ii) if something is intrinsically good, there must be something that makes this so.

I conclude the supervenience argument cannot be advanced if we do not accept Scanlon's program. It is, in this way, different from the other concerns examined.

CHAPTER VI

A MOOREAN ACCOUNT OF INTRINSIC VALUE

The moral system of the *Principia* is austere: Moore claims that normative ethics requires just one fundamental concept, *intrinsic goodness*.¹ Right actions, he says, are those that maximize the good.² The virtues are dispositions to perform right actions.³ And other moral concepts, like praise and blame, can be understood similarly.⁴

Moore was anxious to explain his fundamental notion. At the center of his view is a dependence claim: the intrinsic value of a thing is the value it has because of its intrinsic features.⁵ ⁶ This principle supports two others: first, that intrinsic goodness is an essential feature of its bearers;⁷ and second, that intrinsic goods retain their value, even in isolation.⁸ Moore completes his account with a seemingly independent claim: if something is intrinsically good, then it ought to exist, or obtain.⁹

Some philosophers remain impressed by Moore's account of intrinsic goodness: it is endorsed—at least in part—by Chisholm (1981), Feldman (1986), Lemos (1994), Zimmerman (2001) and Parfit (2011), among others. But, in general, Moore's view is poorly understood,¹⁰ and frequently criticized: few believe that all his principles are true; an

¹ See Moore (1993: 55, 78, 192).

² (1993: 196-197), (2005: 30, 118).

³ (1993: 220-221),

⁴ (2005: 97-98, 100).

⁵ (1922: 260), (1993: 21-22).

⁶ Note, however, that these principles are not supposed to be *definitions*: Moore repeatedly makes plain that intrinsic value is a conceptual primitive; see his (1993: 58, 61, 69, 72, 89, 111). Rather, these principles are only supposed to help us grasp the primitive Moore employs, and to show how it differs from other concepts. I expand upon this in my "Simply Good: A Defense of the *Principia*."

⁷ (1922: 261)

⁸ (1993: 236), (2005: 32)

⁹ (1993: 68).

¹⁰ Most cite only one of the principles Moore employed; further they seem to interpret these principles in ways that do not render them plausible. See e.g. Korsgaard (1983), Kagan (1998), Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen (2000), among many others. I do not mean to suggest that these critics are at fault; Moore himself

increasing number reject all four.¹¹

I hope to explicate and defend Moore's position. I take each principle in turn—I explain the motivation for Moore's claim, formulate what I take to be the most attractive version of his principle, and attempt to accommodate extant objections. After, I argue that Moore's account should be supplemented. I follow Audi (1997); I suggest a connection between intrinsic value and reasons for action. This link is independently plausible, consistent with Moore's intent and, in conjunction with the principles already stated, generates a robust criterion of intrinsic value. I conclude by arguing that this link also allows a new defense of Moore's claims about the relation between intrinsic value and moral obligation.

§1: Dependence

The intrinsic value of a thing is the value it has 'in itself,' 'for its own sake,' or 'as an end.'¹² These locutions suggest self-dependence. Moore (1922: 260) writes:

was often unclear about the nature, and status, of these principles. But this only makes it more important to make Moore's commitments clear, and to provide the best version we can of his claims.

¹¹ In fact, I think some of these philosophers are not speaking of intrinsic value, but of final value—the value a thing has as an end. They believe that these concepts may come apart; a thing may be good as an end without being good intrinsically, they claim. I will assume with the orthodoxy that final and intrinsic values coincide. (See my "The Pen, the Dress, and the Coat: A Confusion in Goodness" and "Ends and Value as an End" for argument to this effect.) If I am mistaken in this, then my remarks in what follows should be understood to apply only to the Moorean concept of intrinsic value. (However note that, regardless, we may maintain that if something is intrinsically good then it has value as an end: even those who wish to separate the concepts admit intrinsic goods are a subset of final goods. See e.g. Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen (2000).)

¹² I assume that intrinsic value has a number of formal features. *First*, intrinsic value is *non-relational*: the value a thing has intrinsically is not the value it has *for a person* or *from a particular perspective*—but the value a thing has impartially or *simpliciter*. *Second*, intrinsic value is divisible into three concepts: intrinsic goodness, intrinsic badness and intrinsic neutrality. These categories are exclusive: a thing falls under at most one. *Third*, intrinsic goodness and badness are determinables: they come in amounts or degrees. We may define the relations of *being intrinsically better than* and *being intrinsically worse than* in terms of these degrees: *a* is better than *b* just in case (i) *a* is intrinsically good, and *b* is intrinsically bad or neutral or (ii) *a* and *b* are intrinsically good and *a* is intrinsically good to a higher degree than *b* or (iii) *a* and *b* are intrinsically bad and *b* is intrinsically bad to a higher degree than *a*. We reverse the definitions for *intrinsically worse than*. These relations are transitive, irreflexive, and anti-symmetric. *Fourth*, intrinsic goods may be divided into *atoms* and *complexes*. A good is *atomic* if it is good (bad) but is not good (bad) because of the values of its parts. Much of axiology concerns these atoms: when hedonists say that pleasure is the only intrinsic good, they mean, presumably, that the only atoms of intrinsic goodness are episodes of pleasure. But axiology is concerned also with *complex* goods—things like

To say that a kind of value is ‘intrinsic’ means merely that the question whether a thing possesses it, and in what degree it possesses it, *depends solely on the intrinsic nature of the thing in question*.¹³

Thus intrinsic value is, quite literally, value that is intrinsic.

Most claim that Moore’s commitments about dependence can be captured modally; they say that:

Supervenience: The intrinsic value of a thing supervenes upon its intrinsic features.^{14 15}

The supervenience principle is likely true—but it is too weak to capture Moore’s intent. The immediate problem is that, since intrinsic value is intrinsic, and since everything supervenes upon itself, the principle is trivial. We might declare instead that:

*Supervenience**: The intrinsic value of a thing supervenes upon its intrinsic properties, other than its intrinsic value.

But this principle is *ad hoc* and unsatisfying. (Further, as we shall see, Moore maintains that the intrinsic values of things are metaphysically essential. Thus the principle is also vacuous: supervenience is trivial over necessary facts.)

A better interpretation is available. Consider deontology: as Ross (2002) reminds us, we wish to know not only *which* acts are right, but *why* they are right—we want an account of

lives, outcomes, and possible worlds—that have their values *because of* the values of their parts.

¹³ See also Moore (1993: 21-22). Moore’s comments here are not stipulative. Nor, however, are they to be understood as remarks only about how we use the phrase “intrinsic value” in natural language. Rather, I believe that, like most philosophical accounts of some concept, such as personhood, knowledge, possibility, etc., they lie somewhere in between: Moore is telling us about a concept we have some intuitive understanding of, and articulating a view about its nature that lines up with some, but not all, of our pre-theoretical intuitions about it.

¹⁴ The idea of supervenience is easy enough: to say that the intrinsic value of a thing supervenes upon its intrinsic features is to say that there can be no difference in the intrinsic value of a thing without a difference in its intrinsic properties. But this slogan has been interpreted in many ways. The claim here is commonly understood to be a claim of strong supervenience—i.e. necessarily, if a thing x is intrinsically valuable to some degree, n , then there is some intrinsic property G (which may be disjunctive, conjunctive, negative, etc.) such that, necessarily, anything that is G is good to degree n . See Rønnow-Rasmussen (2011: 10-11).

¹⁵ We should note that Moore’s claim is a necessary condition, not a sufficient one: Moore accepts that other kinds of value, like beauty, may be intrinsic. We will require additional claims if we hope to find a criterion for intrinsic goodness. Still, some have rejected Moore’s principle even as a merely necessary condition. But it is, I believe, analytic. Those who reject it are understandable, of course; they seek to claim that the *final value* of a thing may depend on its extrinsic properties. See fn. 11.

the right-making features of acts. The same is true in axiology: a complete axiological theory cannot merely specify what is intrinsically good; it must also provide an account of the good-making features of things—the features that ground and explain the values of goods.¹⁶

What features can make a thing intrinsically good? I think the Moorean should claim that the ultimate explanation of a thing's intrinsic value must end with some intrinsic property of that thing. But supervenience is not, I believe, an explanatory relation.¹⁷ As Schaffer (2009) notes, it has the wrong formal features: it is reflexive and non-asymmetric. But we cannot explain a thing in terms of itself, nor can we explain two things in terms of each other.

I suggest we appeal instead to the *in virtue of* relation—the same relation we invoke when we state theories of right action. We claim that:

Explanation: The intrinsic value of a thing is the value it has *in virtue of* its intrinsic features; if something has intrinsic value, then it is good *because of* these features.

Further, since the *in virtue of* relation is irreflexive, we do not need to add an exception to this principle, or invoke the concept we hope to explain.

Moore's claims about dependence entail another principle that Moore accepted but did not stress. If the intrinsic value of a thing cannot depend on its extrinsic features, then the intrinsic value of a thing cannot depend on the values of other things. Thus intrinsic value is *non-derivative*—or, as Moore says, *ultimate*—value.¹⁸

However, we must formulate our claims carefully. If we say that:

Strong Non-derivation: If something has intrinsic value, then it cannot have that value

¹⁶ I claim elsewhere that a good-making property is a member of the minimal set *S* such that for anything that is intrinsically good either (i) that thing is an *atomic good* and has its value because it is *S* or (ii) that thing is a complex good and has its value because it has a *part* that is *S*. See my "Two Kinds of Value Pluralism."

¹⁷ See Kim (1993).

¹⁸ See his (1993: 151) and elsewhere.

because something else has value

then we will exclude molecular intrinsic goods—those things that have their values in virtue of the values of their parts.¹⁹ Further, this strong claim does not, in fact, follow from Moore’s commitments about dependence: *having an intrinsically valuable part* is an intrinsic feature of a whole; it should not be rejected as a good-making feature. Instead, we should say only that:

Weak Non-derivation: If something has intrinsic value, then it cannot have that value because something outside of it (i.e. something that is not a part of it) has value.

This principle is entailed by the dependence claim Moore suggests. It also explains how intrinsic goods may ground and explain the value of derivative goods—and thus helps vindicate Moore’s claim that it is intrinsic value that is fundamental to axiology.

§2: Necessity

Shortly after describing the relation between intrinsic value and intrinsic features, Moore writes:

It is *impossible* for what is strictly *one and the same thing* to possess [intrinsic] value at one time, or in one set of circumstances, and *not* to possess it at another; and equally *impossible* for it to possess it in one degree at one time, or in one set of circumstances, and to possess it in a different degree at another, or in a different set. (1922: 261)²⁰

Thus, for Moore:

Necessity: Intrinsic value is essential: if something has intrinsic value, then it has this

¹⁹ Bradley (2013) claims, “we must distinguish intrinsic value from nonderivative value. To illustrate the distinction, consider that an individual’s life might consist of many instances of happiness; the value of the life might be derived from the values of the instances of happiness; yet the life itself is intrinsically valuable just as its parts are.” See also Zimmerman (2010). I think this reply too severe. There is an important connection between non-derivation and intrinsic value; it is simply captured by the weak principle, rather than the strong one.

²⁰ We might think that Moore’s commitments are merely temporal: he believes that the intrinsic value of a thing can never change through time. I think it is true that Moore thought this also—but his claims are clearly modal as well (thus his quantification here and elsewhere over “circumstances”). Further this is the orthodox interpretation of Moore’s claims. See Lemos (1994: 11), Bradley (2002), (2006).

value necessarily.

Intrinsic goodness can therefore be characterized not only in terms of the features it depends upon but also by its modal nature.

However, the necessity claim is not independent; rather, Moore says, it is entailed by our commitments about dependence:

[I]f x and y have different intrinsic natures, it follows that x cannot be quite strictly one and the same thing as y ; and hence if x and y can have a different intrinsic value, only where their intrinsic natures are different, it follows that one and the same thing must always have the same intrinsic value. (1922: 261)

But Moore's argument proves too much; if sound, it would show that all intrinsic properties are essential. And this cannot be: some of my intrinsic features—such as my mass, or shape—may differ from world to world.

Still, though we should reject Moore's argument, contemporary Mooreans enjoin us to accept his conclusion. They argue that (i) it is only states of affairs that may be intrinsically valuable but that (ii) the intrinsic features of a state are essential to it. In this way, Moore's claims might be maintained.

Begin with the ontology of value. The Moorean restriction to states of affairs is familiar, but can—and should—be justified.²¹ *First*, note that the intrinsic value of a thing is the value it has 'as an end.' But a thing cannot have value *as an end* unless it *can be* an end or goal. Further, ends or goals are the kinds of things we can intend to bring about, or make the case. But it is only states of affairs that we *can* bring about, or make the case. Thus only states of affairs can have value as ends—and thus only states of affairs can have intrinsic value.

Second, it seems most (if not all) claims about the intrinsic values of particulars and universals can be "recast" as claims about the intrinsic values of states of affairs: instead of

²¹ This familiar Moorean ontology of value is endorsed by Chisholm (1981), Feldman (1986: 26), Zimmerman (2001: 33-73) and Bradley (2006), among others.

attributing value to Charlie, we may attribute value to states in which he is a constituent; instead of attributing value to virtue, we may attribute value to instantiations of virtue.²² Thus, as Feldman (1986) writes, the restriction to states of affairs affords a gain in “uniformity and coherence.”²³

Third (and finally), note that the fundamental objects of axiology—lives, outcomes, and possible worlds—are states of affairs. Even if we claim that intrinsic value may attach to other sorts of things, we must admit that states of affairs are the primary concern of axiology—and since the intrinsic values of states of affairs are essential, Moore’s account would, at the least, describe this most important kind of value.

Turn next to the intrinsic nature of states of affairs. Most Mooreans claim that atomic states have few intrinsic features: their intrinsic nature can be explained by merely noting their constituents—the particulars and universals they contain—and the order of these constituents.²⁴ But a state of affairs contains the same constituents, in the same order, in every possible world. And the same is true of those entities created from atomic states.

Further, even if we deny that the constituents of a state exhaust its intrinsic nature (as perhaps we should), it seems that we may insist that the intrinsic value of a thing depends only on its constituents. Thus <Charlie is pleased> is good because it is an instance of happiness, <Sally loves Linus> is good because it is an instance of love, and so forth. But the constituents of a state are intrinsic and essential to it.²⁵ Further, for any state, *S*, that appears to have its intrinsic value in virtue of some external or contingent feature, *F*, there will be some wider state that includes this feature as a constituent—in the simple case, this

²² I develop these ideas further in my “Ends and Value as an End.”

²³ See Feldman (1986: 26).

²⁴ See e.g. Bradley (2002), (2006).

²⁵ See my “Ends and Value as an End” for defense of this claim.

will be a state of the form $\langle S \text{ is } F \rangle$. This wider state contains everything necessary to give it value; it has its value unconditionally.

Thus though Moore's argument fails, I believe his conclusion was correct: the intrinsic value of a thing is not only intrinsic, but metaphysically necessary as well.

§3: Isolation

Moore's best-known commitments are not about dependence or necessity; rather, they concern *isolation*. In the *Principia* we read:

The method which must be employed in order to decide the question 'What things have intrinsic value and in what degrees?' has already been explained... In order to arrive at a correct decision on the first part of this question, it is necessary to consider what things are such that, if they existed *by themselves*, in absolute isolation, we should yet judge their existence to be good; and, in order to decide upon the relative *degrees* of value of different things, we must similarly consider what comparative value seems to attach to the isolated existence of each. (1993: 236)²⁶

We can say that a thing exists *alone* or *in isolation* if it exists without accompaniment—that is, without anything that is not a part of it. Thus, according to Moore:

Isolation: If something has intrinsic value, then, even if it were to exist in isolation, it would maintain that value.^{27 28}

Again, the isolation principle is not independent; it follows from Moore's other commitments. The necessity principle guarantees that a thing cannot lose its intrinsic value; thus *a fortiori* an intrinsic good cannot lose its value if it is the only thing that exists.

Despite this, many Mooreans reject the principle; they think it incoherent.

²⁶ See also his (2005: 32)

²⁷ Many philosophers maintain that the only bearers of intrinsic value are finely grained abstract states of affairs that necessarily exist. See e.g. Chisholm (1981), Feldman (1986), (2000). While I accept that only states of affairs may have intrinsic value, I do not conceive of states as abstract, or necessarily existing. Still, if we endorse such views, the isolation principle is easy enough to modify: we will say that, if some state is intrinsically valuable, then it would maintain its value, even if it were the only state that obtained.

²⁸ Davison presents a sort of inverse of this principle. His test requires us to imagine that everything except the entity exists. If the world would be judged worse under this condition by a "fully-informed, properly functioning valuer", then the entity in question has intrinsic value. See his (2012: 12-13, 35).

Zimmerman focuses on Moore's claim that, for example, pleasure is intrinsically good only if it would maintain its value in a world that contains "nothing except pleasure":

What's incoherent about this is that it is simply *impossible* that there should be "a world in which absolutely nothing except pleasure existed." There are two reasons for this. First, if there is anything that exists necessarily...then, wherever there is pleasure, there must also exist these entities. But secondly, even if nothing exists necessarily, it's clear that there cannot be (an instance of) pleasure without someone who experiences it. (2001: 132)

Lemos (1994: 10) and Feldman (1986: 27) express similar concerns.

Note however that Zimmerman's argument does not, in fact, show that the isolation principle is false—it shows that it is true but trivial. Moore's principle is a conditional with a counterfactual as its consequent, namely:

ISO-C: If a thing were to exist in isolation, then it would maintain its intrinsic value.

If, as these philosophers say, no state of affairs can exist in isolation, then this counterfactual has a necessarily false antecedent. And a counterfactual with a necessarily false antecedent holds vacuously. Thus it's true of everything that, if it were to exist by itself, it would be intrinsically good. The isolation principle as a whole is therefore toothless: it specifies a necessary condition that everything meets.

Of course, we might reject the claim that counterfactuals with impossible antecedents (i.e. counterpossibles) are vacuous and therefore necessarily true.²⁹ And thus we might claim optimistically that *ISO-C* is not vacuous or trivial—even if it is impossible for a thing to exist in isolation.

This position is not, I think, implausible.³⁰ But ultimately I fear it may not be enough.

²⁹ See Nolan (1997) and Brogaard and Salerno (2013) for a relatively modest revision to the standard Lewis-Stalnaker semantics, which allows counterpossibles to be non-vacuously true.

³⁰ Indeed, we have independent reason to accept that some counterpossibles are not vacuous. For example, it is implausible to claim that if act utilitarianism is necessarily false (as it very likely is) then both "if act utilitarianism were true, then it would be obligatory to maximize utility" and "if act utilitarianism were true, then it would be obligatory to minimize utility" are true. But this is a necessary consequence of the standard semantics.

For it is not only metaphysically impossible for a state like <Charlie is pleased> to exist alone, but conceptually incoherent: we must imagine that this state obtains, even without Charlie.

We might reply that to exist in isolation is not to exist without one's parts—and though not all are willing to call the constituents of a state its parts, an analogous rationale might hold. But even if we accept this response, we will still have to contend with the necessary connection between states; we will have to imagine a world in which Charlie is pleased, though no other state of affairs obtains. Thus Charlie cannot instantiate any other properties. And I must admit that I find this not only impossible but unimaginable.

Of course there might still be a way out. *Humeans* insist that there are no necessary connections between entirely distinct entities; they declare that every state can exist without accompaniment (see Armstrong (1997: 139-147)). Thus we say that either (i) <Charlie is pleased> can obtain, though no other states obtain or (ii) any state that must obtain with <Charlie is pleased> is not truly distinct from it. If such a view could succeed, then we could maintain the isolation principle as formulated.

The Humean reply is therefore attractive. But it is controversial, and I am hesitant to rely entirely upon it. So let us assume for the sake of argument that, as formulated, Moore's principle is truly incoherent. Still, I think we should not abandon Moore's insight. Though we cannot accept the ontological version of his principle we can endorse an *intentional* version instead; we focus not on worlds where some valuable state exists alone, but on mental states in which we attend only to the value bearer. When we consider a state of affairs in this way, we consider only its intrinsic features. But the intrinsic features of a thing ground—and give rise to—its intrinsic value. Thus when we attend just to the intrinsic features of a thing, this generates a kind of requirement in us, a requirement to value that

state for its own sake. That is:

Intentional Isolation: If something is intrinsically good, then the contemplation of it on its own, apart from anything distinct from it, requires that we value it for its own sake.

This principle avoids the objections raised: we can consider a thing on its own, even if it could not exist without accompaniment. In this way, even if we cannot accept Moore's claims, we can accommodate the insight that gave rise to them.

§4: Reason, Obligation, and Goodness

The principles examined have a kind of structure: Moore's claims about good-making features support his view about the relation between value, necessity, and isolation. We might argue that, in conjunction, these principles allow a criterion of intrinsic goodness. But I worry. Our account says nothing about why intrinsic goodness is a kind of *ethical* goodness—and therefore nothing about why intrinsic value is an important concept for moral philosophy.³¹ Consider, for example, *logical* value: the kind of value we attribute to an argument when we say that it is good, or valid.³² This kind of value is intrinsic, essential, and persists in isolation (both ontological and intentional).

Of course it is not clear that states of affairs may bear logical value—and so we may hope to escape this objection on a technicality.³³ But the problem remains: Moorean intrinsic value is supposed to be central to moral philosophy. But nothing in our account guarantees this. Consider Moore's remarks:

It cannot be too emphatically insisted that the predicate which...I call 'good,' and which I declare to be indefinable, is only one of the predicates for which the word

³¹ See Zimmerman (2001: 24-26) for more on just why this is critical.

³² I borrow this example from Feldman (1998).

³³ Some, however, conceive of propositions as kinds of states of affairs; see e.g. Chisholm (1976).

‘good’ is commonly used to stand... [T]he predicate I am concerned with is that sense of the word ‘good’ which has to do with the conceptions of ‘right’ and ‘wrong,’ a relation, which makes it the sense which is of the most fundamental importance for Ethics. (1993: 3)

How might we support these claims? Of course, they might simply be brute facts—but I hope for a better answer.

We might think that Moore himself can fill in the lacuna. Moore repeatedly insists that something is intrinsically good only if it ought to exist, or obtain:

Whenever [one] thinks of ‘intrinsic value,’ or ‘intrinsic worth,’ or says that a thing ‘ought to exist,’ he has before his mind the unique object—the unique property of things—which I mean by ‘good.’ (1993: 68)

Of course, some things ought to exist for the sake of other things, as when a good has merely instrumental value. So, like Moore’s other claims, the principle is most plausible if read as a merely necessary condition. We may say:

Ought to be: If something is intrinsically good, then it ought to exist, or obtain.

But I think this principle is false; some things that are intrinsically good ought not to be. Consider all those states that are good as ends, but bad as means.³⁴ Suppose, for example, that Lucy can be happy only if others are miserable. Her happiness may be intrinsically good but it ought not to obtain.

Further, consider states that are good, but are worse than those that obtain presently. Imagine that Lucy is presently overjoyed. Now consider the state <Lucy is only moderately pleased>. This state is good but it would be a mistake to claim that it now ought to obtain.

Still the principle might be salvaged if we weaken the notion of obligation attached. Ross enjoined us to distinguish between our all-things-considered obligations and our *prima facie* duties.³⁵ If we think there is a parallel distinction between what all-things-considered

³⁴ See Feldman (1986: 27-29), (1998).

³⁵ See his (2002: 19-20).

ought to be and what *prima facie* ought to be, then we might claim:

Prima Facie Ought to be: If something is intrinsically good, then it *prima facie* ought to exist, or obtain.

Perhaps this, then, explains why intrinsic goodness is a kind of ethical value—it is connected to the deontic concept of what, *prima facie*, morally ought to be.

Adopting this principle does seem to solve the problem encountered; it excludes e.g. logical value. But I remain unsatisfied. The concept of what *prima facie* ought to be is obscure. Further it does not seem to provide the connection Moore desired; Moore's program requires a connection between intrinsic value and what we ought to *do*. But there is, I think, no immediate connection between what we ought *to do* and what ought *to be*. As Feldman (1986: 179-184) notes, there are many things, like world peace, that ought to be but that none of us can achieve. And, further, it may be true that I ought to see to some state of affairs that ought not to be—as may happen when the best state I can bring about is still undesirable.

Thus I fear that the connection between intrinsic value and what ought to be is insufficient to support Moore's claims about the relation between axiology and deontology. But Moore did not rely only upon such claims; rather he provided a direct argument:

That the assertion 'I am morally bound to perform this action' is identical with the assertion 'This action will produce the greatest possible amount of good in the Universe'...is demonstrably certain. This may, perhaps, be best made evident in the following way. It is plain that when we assert that a certain action is our absolute duty, we are asserting that the performance of that action at that time is unique in respect of value. But no dutiful action can possibly have unique value in the sense that it is the sole thing of value in the world; since, in that case, *every* such action would be the *sole* good, which is a manifest contradiction. And for the same reason its value cannot be unique in the sense that it has more intrinsic value than anything else in the world; since every act of duty would then be the *best* thing in the world, which is also a contradiction. It can, therefore, be unique only in the sense that the whole world would be better, if it be performed, than if any possible alternative were taken. (1993: 197).

However, this route to a connection between axiology and deontology is even less promising. Moore is perhaps correct that if an action is obligatory, then it is, in some sense, “unique in respect of value.” But why must our duties be unique with respect to *intrinsic* value? This is simply assumed—and once it is, the conclusion quickly follows. But while it is plausible to believe that obligatory actions must be *in some sense* best, as Zimmerman (2011) and others have stressed, we cannot simply assume they must be best in Moore’s sense—especially given the powerful extant objections to Moorean ideal utilitarianism.

Thus though I am eager to support the Moorean system, I conclude that Moore did not give us sufficient reason to accept the connection he drew between axiology and deontology. But I hope this link might be established in a different way.

My argument appeals to a kind of rationalism: when something is intrinsically good, we have some reason to bring it about. Further there is an important connection between what we have reason to do and our moral obligations. I thus hope to (i) show that intrinsic value is an *ethical* kind of value and (ii) advance the broader Moorean program in moral philosophy.

Begin with the connection between values and reasons. Audi (1997) writes:

[I]f there is anything intrinsically valuable (whether good or bad), then it provides one kind of basic reason for action, even if not the only kind. Consider pleasure, for example, and suppose that it is intrinsically good. To grant that it is and then deny that there is any reason to seek or promote it would be at best inexplicable.

I share Audi’s intuitions; it seems almost unintelligible to claim that some state of affairs is good in itself but deny that I have any reason to bring it about, if I can. Further Audi’s claims follow from more general principles about the nature of goods. There is a connection between what is valuable and what we have reason to value: when something is good, this gives us a reason to respond to it positively—to value it. Thus, in particular, if something is *intrinsically* valuable, then we have *intrinsic* reason to value it. But to value a thing is not only

to have a certain attitude towards it; as Scanlon (1998: 95) and Parfit (2011: 38) note, valuable things require not only positive attitudes but positive actions.

What kind of actions might intrinsic goods require? As I have said, it is only states of affairs that can be intrinsically good. But states of affairs are the kinds of things we bring about, see to, or make the case. Thus the pro-actions that intrinsically valuable states of affairs require must be actions that aim at *bringing about* these states of affairs.

We arrive, then, at the desired connection: when something is intrinsically good, we have intrinsic reason to make it the case, if we can.³⁶ And this, I believe, gives us a *pro tanto* obligation to do so. We may have other reasons for action, of course—and thus we cannot establish the full Moorean theory of right action on this basis. But we may still justify Moore's claim that there is an important connection between axiology and deontology.

I conclude that all of Moore's fundamental commitments are defensible: we may accept that intrinsic value depends only on intrinsic features; that it is essential to its bearers; that it persists in isolation; and that it is closely linked to right action. Moore's account is thus hardly the relic some claim; if we formulate it carefully it is, I think, still plausible—and still, in many ways, good.

³⁶ We might object that, when some state of affairs is good, but worse than what obtains presently, we do not have *any* reason to bring it about. But I think this mistaken; though we may not have *most* reason to bring this state about, we do have *intrinsic* reason to bring it about. The critic may reply that, if this is so, the same approach might be used to defend the link Moore drew between what is intrinsically good and what ought to be: we claim that when some state of affairs is intrinsically good it *intrinsically prima facie* ought to be. Further, when some state intrinsically *prima facie* ought to be, and we can bring it about, then we have a *prima facie* obligation to do so. I think this defense plausible enough, but it seems to me to afford little understanding: I find the notion of what *prima facie* ought to be obscure, and the notion of what intrinsically *prima facie* ought to be only more mysterious. But I find no difficulty in understanding the notion of an intrinsic reason. Thus I prefer the connection I draw here. But for those who do not share my concerns, we may replace the notion of what we have intrinsic reason to bring about with the notion of what intrinsically ought to be.

CHAPTER VII

TWO KINDS OF VALUE PLURALISM

Some philosophers say value pluralism is the view that there are many things that are valuable. Others say value pluralism is the view that there are many values.¹ I think these two descriptions point to two different kinds of pluralism, both of which are present in contemporary value theory. But these views have not been properly stated, or distinguished.

In what follows, I present and explain these two concepts of value pluralism. I then defend an account of the distinction between them. I close by showing how this distinction affects contemporary arguments about pluralism.

§1: Weak Pluralism

Let's start with the description of value pluralism that is better known.² According to this description, value pluralism is the view that there are many things that are intrinsically valuable. Conversely, value monism is the view that just one thing is intrinsically valuable. Thus many philosophers say that hedonism is a form of monism because it implies that "nothing is good but pleasure."³ But these philosophers would say that if we believe that pleasure, justice, and beauty are intrinsically good, then we are value pluralists. Let's call this position *weak intrinsic value pluralism*.

¹ For the former description see e.g. Chisholm (1986: 4) and Lemos (1994: 99); Zimmerman (2001:173) and Olson (2004) present a modified version. For the latter description see e.g. Stocker (1990: 167-168), Kekes (1993: 17), Crowder (2004), Hardy (1995), and Nussbaum (2001: xxix).

² My interest in this paper is pluralism about *value*. But even within value theory there are many kinds of pluralism. So I want to restrict what we mean by "value." In particular I want to discuss pluralism about *intrinsic* value, rather than pluralism about extrinsic value, prudential value, legal value, or some other kind of value. Some philosophers believe that the concept of intrinsic value should be replaced with some other concept, such as final value. I take no stance on this issue here: the term "final value" may be freely substituted for the term "intrinsic value."

³ See e.g. Moore (1993: 111).

There are many historical examples of such views: Moore (1993), Brentano (2009), and Ross (2002) come to mind. But we can find contemporary cases too: Hurka's perfectionist theory implies that knowledge, pleasure, and virtue are intrinsically good.⁴ Lemos's theory from his (1994) is another example: it entails that pleasure, knowledge, beauty, and the flourishing of non-sentient life are intrinsically valuable.

However, trouble arises when we think carefully about why these theories are supposed to be pluralistic. Philosophers often appeal to the standard description.⁵ They say that:

Plural Bearers: An axiology is a form of weak pluralism just in case it entails that more than one thing is intrinsically good.

But such accounts cannot succeed. One purpose of an axiology is to determine the intrinsic values of lives, outcomes, and possible worlds. But there are many lives. Even a pessimist must admit that more than one is intrinsically good. The same problem arises with outcomes, and possible worlds. Surely, more than one has intrinsic value. But that means that every axiology is a form of value pluralism.⁶

Plural Bearers therefore describes an uninteresting, vacuous view. Philosophers must be talking about something else when they talk about value pluralism.

Some have recognized this problem. They say that views like Moore's are not forms of pluralism because they imply that more than one thing is good. Rather, they are forms of pluralism because they imply that more than one *kind* of thing is good. Thus Zimmerman writes in his (2001: 173) that "pluralism with respect to intrinsic value" is the view that "there are irreducibly many different types of states that have intrinsic value." And in his

⁴ See e.g. his (1998).

⁵ Mason (2011) is perhaps the clearest contemporary example.

⁶ Fred Feldman makes a similar point. See his (2000).

(2004: 49) Olson says “pluralism about value is the view that more than one kind of thing are finally valuable.”⁷ ⁸ According to such views:

Plural Kinds: An axiology is a form of weak value pluralism just in case it entails that there is more than one kind of thing that is intrinsically good.⁹

However this revision is also unacceptable. As I’ve said, I believe that an axiology should determine the intrinsic values of lives, outcomes, and possible worlds. I assume that every plausible theory will attribute intrinsic value to at least one entity in each of these categories. But lives, outcomes, and possible worlds are different kinds of things. So this revised account still implies that every plausible axiology is a form of value pluralism.

I think we must conclude that neither the standard view nor its revision describes the position philosophers have in mind when they talk about value pluralism. We need a different account.

§2: Good-making Properties

A complete axiology should be able not only to identify the things that are intrinsically good but also to explain *why* those things are good.¹⁰ To do so, the theory must select a set of good-making properties. Intuitively, these are the properties that provide the ultimate explanation of the goodness of things. More rigorously, we may say that to be a good-making property is to be a member of the minimal set S such that for anything that is intrinsically good either (i) that thing is intrinsically good because it instantiates one of the

⁷ Olson’s view is about final value, but we can translate. See fn. 2.

⁸ See also Darwall (2003), and Lemos (1994: 67, 99).

⁹ Of course to say that a kind of thing is intrinsically good is not to attribute intrinsic value to the kind itself, but rather to some member(s) of that kind.

¹⁰ There is an important parallel here between axiology and the normative ethics of behavior. As Ross (2002) reminds us, we do not want to know merely *which* actions are morally right—we also want to know *why*. Thus a theory of right action that gives only necessary and sufficient conditions for the moral rightness of actions is necessarily incomplete. Such theories need to be supplemented with some claim about what *makes* right actions right—some account of the *right making features* of actions. I believe that something similar is true in axiology.

properties in S or (ii) that thing is intrinsically good because it has a *part* that instantiates one of the properties in S .^{11 12}

Let me give an example. Imagine that a hedonist makes a list of all the things that he thinks are intrinsically good. Imagine we ask him about each item on the list: why did you list this thing? It seems that he would say in each case either (i) it goes on the list because it is an episode of pleasure or (ii) it goes on the list because it is a complex good, like a life, or outcome, and it contains episodes of pleasure. When he gets to the end of the list, he will have explained the goodness of each thing in terms of just one property, *being an episode of pleasure*. This is the only property he needs to explain the goodness of things. It is therefore the only property he takes to be good making.

I believe that the question of value pluralism is not “how many good things are there?” nor “how many kinds of good things are there?” Those questions are not substantive. Rather, the question is “how many good-making properties are there?” If we say there is just one, we are monists. If we say there is more than one, we are pluralists.¹³ That is:

¹¹ It may be necessary to insist that no disjunctive or otherwise gerrymandered value properties appear in the set, depending on how we understand the *because of or in virtue of* relation. I do not believe that this restriction is *ad hoc*. The good-making properties of a thing should provide the ultimate explanation of its goodness. But the explanation of a thing’s goodness cannot end with a disjunctive property—a thing instantiates a disjunctive property only because it instantiates one or more of its disjuncts. For this reason, I do not believe that disjunctive properties can be good making.

¹² We may wish to make an exception for *mixed goods*, i.e., those things that are intrinsically good but have parts that are intrinsically bad. We may wish to say that such things are not good because of their good-making properties, but because their good-making properties defeat their bad-making properties. Thus, on the account I prefer, hedonism does not entail that *containing more pleasure than pain* is a good-making property. Rather hedonism entails that *containing more pleasure than pain* is the property something has when its good-making properties outweigh its bad-making properties.

¹³ Suppose a philosopher puts some things on his list because they are episodes of pleasure containing 10 hedons, others because they are episodes of pleasure containing 11 hedons, and so forth. Is such a person a value pluralist? No. While our philosopher cites many good-making properties, they are all degrees of the generic property *being an episode of pleasure (containing n hedons)*. When I speak of good-making properties above, I mean to speak of these generic properties. We can say then that our philosopher’s theory is a form of monism because it entails that there is just one generic good-making property, such that all the specific, degreed good-making properties cited are degrees of this generic property.

Plural Good Makers: An axiology is a form of weak intrinsic value pluralism just in case it entails that there is more than one good-making property.^{14 15}

This view gets our test cases right. We have seen that it provides the right verdict about hedonism. And it provides the right judgments about classic examples, like Moore's axiology: it is a form of pluralism, as it should be. Some things would be on Moore's list because they are instances of pleasure, some because they are instances of beauty, some because they are instances of certain kinds of relationships. And we can say something similar about other examples of weak value pluralism, such as Brentano's theory, and Hurka's view.

§3: Strong Pluralism and Irreducibility

There is another view called "value pluralism." This is the view philosophers advance when they say there are irreducibly many values, or kinds of value. And it is the kind of pluralism Berlin (1969), Kekes (1993), Stocker (1990), and Nussbaum (2001) have defended.¹⁶ I'll call it *strong intrinsic value pluralism*.

Strong pluralism is not the view that there are many things that are intrinsically good. Nor is it the view that there are many reasons why things are intrinsically good. Rather, it is the view that there are many kinds of intrinsic goodness.

¹⁴ This account is similar to the elegant solution offered by Feldman in his (2000). Indeed, in most cases Feldman's account provides the same judgments as the view I describe. But Feldman's theory is, I think, more complex. It is also apparently incompatible with a number of increasingly popular theories about intrinsic value, such as particularism about intrinsic value (i.e. the view that only concrete particulars bear intrinsic value). Further, it delivers counter-intuitive verdicts when combined with the thesis of organic unities. I therefore believe that the simpler view I state here is preferable for our purposes.

¹⁵ See Hurka (1996) for a similar, though much less detailed, proposal.

¹⁶ See also Crowder (2004), Hardy (1995), Galston (2005), Taylor (1982), and Williams (1981).

Strong value pluralists say they find inspiration in Aristotle. Stocker and Kekes point to Book I of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.¹⁷

Let us separate, then, things good in themselves from things useful, and consider whether the former are called good by reference to a single Idea... [If this is true] the account of the good will have to appear as something identical in them all as that of whiteness is identical in snow and in white lead. But of honour, wisdom, and pleasure, just in respect of their goodness, the accounts are distinct and diverse. The good, therefore, is not some common element answering to one Idea. (1096b18-26)

Strong pluralists interpret this passage as follows. Imagine two very different intrinsic goods. Perhaps one is an instance of pleasure and the other is an instance of wisdom. We say both are intrinsically good. But they are good in different ways; there is a kind of goodness the one has that the other does not.

Strong pluralists therefore claim that there are irreducibly many kinds of intrinsic goodness.¹⁸ Each kind of intrinsic goodness is importantly different from the rest and has its own unique force. “Intrinsic goodness” is therefore an umbrella term; it picks out a family of different types of ethical value. Thus we may say that:

Irreducible Values: An axiology is a form of strong value pluralism just in case it entails that there are at least two irreducible kinds of intrinsic value.

But what does it mean for a kind of intrinsic value to be irreducible? Mason (2015: 9-11) suggests that a kind of value is irreducible just in case it is *unanalyzable*—i.e. that it cannot be broken into more fundamental concepts. Thus, she says, a person will be a *strong pluralist* if she believes in many unanalyzable kinds of intrinsic value; she will be a *strong monist* if she believes in just one.

¹⁷ See Kekes (1993: 38) and Stocker (1990: 168). Nussbaum’s pluralism is also clearly inspired by Aristotle. See her (2001: xxix, 294). Others point to the works of Isaiah Berlin. See e.g. Crowder (2004), Hardy (1995), and Williams (1981).

¹⁸ See Stocker, (1990: 169, 184-194), Nussbaum (2001: xxix).

But such accounts are unacceptable; they confuse meta-ethics with axiology. Consider philosophers like Brentano (2009) and Zimmerman (2001): they accept only one kind of intrinsic goodness but hope to analyze this kind of goodness in terms of what it is intrinsically fitting to favor, or love. All such philosophers will fail to be either monists or pluralists on Mason's account, as their conceptions of intrinsic goodness are amenable to analysis. The same will be true of those who hope to analyze intrinsic goodness in terms of some natural property or relation.

We should, then, restrict Mason's view; we should say that a kind of goodness is irreducible only if it cannot be analyzed *in terms of some other kind of goodness*. This is the kind of irreducibility that is critical to axiology. After all, if the monist's one kind of goodness were constructed out of others, he would be a pluralist: his one kind of goodness would contain many.

Thus we may say that a person is a strong monist just in case he believes in just one kind of intrinsic goodness, and this kind of intrinsic goodness cannot be analyzed in terms of other kinds of goodness. Conversely, a person is a strong pluralist just in case he believes in more than one kind of intrinsic goodness, and these kinds of goodness cannot be analyzed in terms of each other, or in terms of some "super-value."

§4: Strong Pluralism and Incommensurability

However, strong pluralists do not claim only that there are irreducibly many kinds of value. These different kinds of value are also supposed to be *incommensurable*.

To say that two quantities are incommensurable is to say that, in principle, they cannot be correctly measured on a common scale. For example, heat and intelligence are incommensurable: there is no way to compare some amount of heat with some amount of

intelligence.^{19 20} The issue is not epistemic: we could know everything about heat and intelligence but we would still not know how to compare these quantities.

Similarly, to say that *values* are incommensurable is to say that, in principle, they cannot be measured on a common scale. Again, the issue is not epistemic: even omniscient agents could not compare the values of incommensurable goods.

Why do strong pluralists accept value incommensurability? Kekes writes:

The reasons why pluralists suppose that values are incommensurable are, first, that it does not seem to them that there is a highest value...to which all other values could always be reasonably subordinated and with reference to which all other values could be authoritatively ranked. Second, they are also dubious about there being some medium... in terms of which all the different values could be expressed, quantified, and compared. (1993: 21)

Galston, another prominent pluralist, suggests that incommensurability is a sufficient condition for pluralism:

I distinguish value pluralism from various forms of nonpluralist accounts of morality. A theory is nonpluralist, I say, if it either (a) reduces goods to a single measure of value or (b) creates a comprehensive hierarchy or ordering among goods. (Theories that do (a) are usually called monistic.) A moral theory is pluralistic if it does neither (a) nor (b).

And Stocker goes further, suggesting that to say that values are plural *just is* to say that they are incommensurable.²¹

¹⁹ I borrow this example from Kelly. See his (2008) for more on incommensurability and value pluralism.

²⁰ I here follow Kekes (1993), Kelly (2008), and Klocksien (2011); I assume that value *incommensurability* entails, or is equivalent with, value *incomparability*. To say that the values of two things are *incommensurable* is to say that their values cannot be correctly represented on a common scale. To say that the values of two things are *incomparable* is to say that these things do not stand in any axiological relation to each other (e.g. *better than*, *worse than*, etc.). I believe that incommensurability and incomparability cannot come apart—at least if we are talking about *intrinsic* value. But a defense of this position would take us too far afield. However if we *do* believe that these concepts can come apart, then I believe we should link strong pluralism to incomparability, as these commenters, and others, have done. See Mason (2011) for a review of the use of the term in connection with this kind of pluralism.

²¹ Stocker writes in his (1997: 203), “I agree that if values are plural, they must be incommensurable, since I understand ‘plural values’ to mean pretty much the same as ‘incommensurable values.’” Hardy writes similarly that, “pluralism means...that ultimate human values are irreducibly many; that they cannot be translated into a single super-value; and that they are sometimes (or often) incommensurable” (1995: 283).

Thus according to many strong pluralists, value incommensurability is closely tied to pluralism. And for some, incommensurability seems to be a necessary and sufficient condition for their view.

Begin with the necessity claim. I believe the strong pluralist reasons as follows: Suppose there are many kinds of intrinsic goodness and that these many kinds of goodness cannot be analyzed in terms of each other. Then how could there be some scale that measures these different kinds of value? Such a scale would have to measure at least two distinct qualities. But this is impossible.²² Indeed, if any comparison between these kinds of intrinsic goodness *were* possible then there would have to be some kind of value to compare them in terms *of*, some super-value. And this is exactly what the strong pluralist denies.

Now in the other direction: Assume value pluralism is false. Then there is only one kind of intrinsic goodness and, for any thing that is intrinsically good, it must possess some determinate amount of this kind of goodness. But two amounts of the same quality can be compared. Thus if strong value pluralism is false, so is incommensurability. If we take the contrapositive, we get our result.^{23 24}

We might then conclude that incommensurability and strong value pluralism are simply different sides of the same coin. We would claim:

²² Some might object. They might agree that it is impossible to create a scale that measures more than one quality but claim that we can always merely sum the quantities in question. E.g. suppose there are two irreducibly distinct kinds of intrinsic goodness, G1 and G2. Surely, for anything that is intrinsically good, we can calculate the amount of G1+G2 it has. However a scale of G1+G2 is not a value scale. It is simply a scale of G1+G2. Likewise, we could construct a scale that measures the sum of a person's temperature in Fahrenheit and their I.Q. But such a scale would not measure their temperature, or intelligence. Of course, one could insist that our G1+G2 scale measures some new kind of value. But this will not help to compare G1 and G2 unless both kinds of value can be correctly analyzed as mere components of G1+G2. And this is not possible: it would conflict with our assumption that strong value pluralism is true; G1 and G2 would not be fundamental kinds of goodness, but simply many components of one "super-value."

²³ It's for this reason that theorists like Galston (2005: 14) explicitly reject a singular conception of intrinsic value.

²⁴ Kelly presents a similar argument. See his (2008).

Incommensurable Values: An axiology is a form of strong value pluralism just in case it entails that there are at least two kinds of intrinsic value that are incommensurable.

§5: An Objection: Incommensurability in a Monist System

Still, we should be careful before endorsing such views. Some might object to the sufficiency claim: must intrinsic goodness come in determinate amounts? Consider again views like Brentano (2009). Brentano believes in just one kind of intrinsic goodness. But he suggests that while both “acts of insight” and “high-minded love” possess the same kind of intrinsic goodness, there is “no criterion [of judgment] available to us” and thus there may be “no way of comparing the intrinsic value of acts of insight...with acts of high-minded love.”²⁵

Of course, Brentano’s point might be merely about what is possible *in practice*: he might be claiming only that, while there are facts about how to compare the values of insight and love, we rarely, if ever, have epistemic access to these facts and so cannot hope to compare these goods.²⁶

But suppose that Brentano’s claim is not merely epistemic: suppose instead that he believes that the values of insight and love cannot be compared *in principle*—that while both goods possess intrinsic value, they do not possess any determinate amount of value. We might think this impossible, but we should not be too hasty. Consider classical cases of vagueness: it may be vague, or indeterminate, whether a person is bald or hirsute, or whether it is day or twilight. Similarly, we might argue, it could be vague or indeterminate whether insight is better than love.²⁷

²⁵ See his (2009: 29-30, 33).

²⁶ This is the reading of Brentano I prefer. See (2009: 30), especially the end of §32.

²⁷ I am grateful to an anonymous referee for advancing this powerful objection.

If this is possible, then goods need not possess determinate amounts of goodness. This will undermine our argument for the sufficiency claim. But, more worryingly, it also shows that the sufficiency claim is *false*: if it is indeterminate whether insight is better than love, then we cannot compare these goods—it is neither true nor false that one is better than another. Thus, *pace* Incommensurable Values, incommensurability may arise within a monistic system.

Could it be vague or indeterminate whether insight is better than love? Most claim that vagueness is merely *linguistic*.²⁸ The superevaluationist model is pervasive, and attractive; Lewis (1986: 212) writes:

The only intelligible account of vagueness locates it in our thought and language. The reason it's vague where the outback begins is not that there's this thing, the outback, with imprecise borders; rather there are many things, with different borders, and nobody has been fool enough to try to enforce a choice of one of them as the official referent of the word 'outback'. Vagueness is semantic indecision.

According to Lewis's proposal, we have not decided e.g. what we mean by 'bald'; it is "hyper-ambiguous"—we might mean having less than 1000 hairs, less than 999, and so on. We have no reason to be specific, to demand an "official referent." This hyper-ambiguity engenders indeterminacy: claims about baldness are neither true nor false when they hold for only some candidate meanings (or "precisifications") of 'bald'. Similarly, then, the claim that insight is intrinsically better than love could be indeterminate if it holds only according to some precisifications of 'intrinsically better than'.

But this is not plausible. While we have no reason to pick a particular candidate for the meaning of 'bald' or 'twilight,' we must demand a single referent for 'intrinsically better

²⁸ The other popular approach is *epistemic*: according to such views, in cases of vagueness it is not our language or the world that is vague or indeterminate—it is rather that we are, in a sense, necessarily ignorant. See Williamson (1994) for a powerful explication and defense of such views; Sorensen (2012) provides a brief summary. This approach to vagueness roughly corresponds to the practical, epistemic reading of Brentano given above. Such views are therefore inapplicable to the critic of Incommensurable Values—incommensurability, as we have understood it, is not epistemic.

than’—it plays a critical role in axiology, practical reasoning, and deontology; hyper-ambiguity here would shake the foundations of these fields. Further, while it is easy to specify the different candidate meanings for ‘bald’ or ‘twilight’ this is not true in our case; what are the relevant candidates for ‘intrinsically better than’?²⁹

So the orthodox linguistic accounts of vagueness will not allow us to claim that it is vague or indeterminate whether insight is better than love. The alternative is *metaphysical*—we may say that it is indeterminate whether insight is better than love because the relation *intrinsically better than* is itself vague. But what would it mean for a universal like *better than* to be vague, or indeterminate? Williamson (1994: 251) suggests that a relation might be vague if the relata can stand in the relation *to a degree*.³⁰ This is not to say that the relata *entirely* instantiates some determinate of the relation—like *being intrinsically better by degree n*—but that the relata may only instantiate the determinable *intrinsically better than* relation to some degree.

I am inclined, however, to side with the orthodoxy: I think this kind of vagueness is unintelligible.³¹ Russell (1923) writes, “nothing is more or less than what it is, or to a certain extent possessed of the properties which it possesses.” The same, I believe, holds of

²⁹ Though I have long believed these concerns to be decisive, I now recognize that a powerful objection is available. A good *a* may be better than another, *b* just in case (i) *a* is intrinsically good, and *b* is intrinsically bad or neutral or (ii) *a* and *b* are intrinsically good and *a* is intrinsically good to a higher degree than *b* or (iii) *a* and *b* are intrinsically bad and *b* is intrinsically bad to a higher degree than *a*. Thus, sometimes, claims that employ “better than” hold in virtue of claims about the particular degrees to which things are good. But *these* claims may be vague: though, in a formal language, we can employ predicates such as “being intrinsically good to degree 1” and so on, in natural language we must muddle through with more imprecise locutions such as “pretty good” and the like. The critic may rightly insist that these terms are hyper-ambiguous. In this way, we may argue that a linguistic explanation for the vagueness of “better than” may still hold. (I am thankful to Phillip Bricker for raising this objection.) Of course, these concerns might be ameliorated by introducing more precise predicates—as we do for other quantities, such as mass and the like. However if this is not enough to undermine this concern—and I am not sure that it is—then I recommend that we accept the weaker view I suggest at the end of this section: we must admit that incommensurability is a necessary, but not sufficient, criterion for strong pluralism.

³⁰ To be clear, Williamson does not believe in vagueness of this kind—he is only trying to make sense of it.

³¹ Dummett (1975), for example, writes, “the notion that things might actually *be* vague, as well as being vaguely described, is not properly intelligible.” This view is widely held—see e.g. Lewis (1993) and Sainsbury (1994).

relations.³² I therefore accept Incommensurable Values, and our argument in favor of it: I claim that if a thing is intrinsically good, it must possess some determinate amount of goodness.

But of course some philosophers are willing to accept this kind of ontological vagueness.³³ I cannot hope to dissuade those who endorse such views here. For such readers, I suggest that we depart from the claims of Stocker and other like-minded pluralists and reject the sufficiency condition: we will say only that if someone is a strong pluralist, then she must believe in value incommensurability. This will not affect our first criterion: we can still say that a person is a strong pluralist just in case she believes there are irreducibly many kinds of intrinsic goodness. And in conjunction with the necessity claim of Incommensurable Values, this will be enough: we will have a rich understanding of the strong pluralist view, and we will be able to explain why it has been so closely connected with value incommensurability.

§6: Weak and Strong Pluralism

I have presented two different kinds of value pluralism. One view says that there are at least two properties that can make a thing intrinsically good; the other says that there are at least two irreducible kinds of intrinsic goodness. It is critical to keep these theories apart; they have radically different entailments.

For example, as we have said, strong pluralism necessitates value incommensurability. This requires a non-standard model of rational choice: if this kind of pluralism is true then we can no longer weigh or even compare the values of many of our

³² This worry seems especially acute in our case. Suppose that it is indeterminate whether insight is better than love because the *better than* relation is vague. To what degree, then, do these two goods stand in the *better than* relation? .5? .6? How could we ever answer such questions, even in principle?

³³ See e.g. Colyvan (2001) and Barnes and Williams (2011).

ends. Of course sometimes our goals may be compatible, or they may possess only one kind of value. But problems will necessarily reappear: our ends will sometimes be inconsistent, and their values incommensurable. In such cases, it is unclear how we could act rationally.

Strong pluralists argue that such problems need not defeat their theory; Isaiah Berlin (1969) is here foundational. He writes:

Where ultimate values are irreconcilable, clear solutions cannot, in principle, be found. To decide rationally in such situations is to decide in the light of general ideals, the over-all pattern of life pursued by a group or society.

Galston (2005: 15) and Kekes (1993: 76) make similar comments—although they appeal not to the life patterns of groups but to “shared human experience” or the “traditions and conceptions” we regard as acceptable. According to all such views, it is these shared standards that will, somehow, help us rank our ends. But there is nothing normative in such theories: they appeal only to the standards *we in fact have*.³⁴ Further they ask these standards to do the impossible: to reasonably compare our ends without comparing their values.

Strong pluralism is also inconsistent with many standard accounts of right action. Any view that enjoins us to maximize the good, like Moore’s ideal utilitarianism, is incoherent if strong pluralism is true. This is because it is not possible to maximize incommensurable values. Thus nearly all consequentialist views will be eliminated. A similar argument will eliminate moderate views, like Ross’s.

Strong pluralism is therefore a revolutionary—and costly—position. But weak pluralism has none of these costs: it is consistent with a standard account of rational choice, and with all traditional accounts of right action.

³⁴ Kekes (1993: 78) nearly admit this; he says that such rankings will be “relative but not arbitrary.” They are not arbitrary because these conceptions are open to rational criticism “at least on one ground; namely, on how they compare with respect to the realization of primary [i.e. intrinsic] values.” But such criticism would itself be groundless unless we can compare the values of the things these conceptions rank.

These two views are, then, very different. But they have nonetheless been confused—and this confusion has influenced the contemporary dialectic about pluralism. For example, in his (1993) Kekes hopes to show that strong pluralism is superior to its competitors.³⁵ He begins by focusing on hedonistic theories. He is moved by Millian concerns: he thinks pleasures of the same intensity and duration may differ in value, due to their quality. But Kekes rejects Mill's theory too.³⁶ He moves to preferentism but cannot accept this either: persons can have “perverse, trivial, foolish, and self-destructive preferences” and the satisfaction of such preferences is not intrinsically good.³⁷ So, Kekes says, preferentism fails as well.

But from the failure of these two theories, Kekes concludes that we have good reason to accept “the incompatibility and incommensurability of conflicting values”—that is, good reason to accept *strong pluralism*.³⁸ However we can see now that such arguments cannot succeed. Classical hedonism and preferentism are not the only alternatives to strong pluralism. These views are monistic in both senses: they postulate one kind of intrinsic goodness and one property that gives a thing that kind of goodness. But we need not endorse such a theory to reject strong pluralism.³⁹ We could accept a view like Moore's—a view that is a form of *weak pluralism* but not *strong pluralism*. Further, as we have discussed, views like Moore's can be combined with a thesis of *practical* (or *epistemic*) incommensurability. According to such theses, while there are always facts about how the

³⁵ See Kekes (1993: 67-74). Kekes does consider other forms of “monism” before coming to this conclusion, but these views are drastically different from the kind of views that philosophers like Moore, Hurka, and Lemos endorse.

³⁶ Kekes (1993: 67-68).

³⁷ Kekes (1993: 69).

³⁸ Kekes (1993: 73).

³⁹ Of course, I do not mean to assent to the idea that by merely giving reason to reject classical hedonism and preferentism, Kekes has thereby shown that no theory that is monistic in both senses may succeed. Novel forms of hedonism and preferentism have been developed, and these theories are much more difficult to defeat. See e.g. the hedonistic views developed in Feldman's (2004).

values of goods compare, we do not have reliable epistemic access to these facts. This will allow us to simulate much of the pluralist view, without committing ourselves to the heavyweight kind of incommensurability that the strong pluralist accepts. We may therefore help ourselves to the rich view of the moral life that the pluralist desires, without many of the costs.

Kekes, like most strong pluralists, never addresses such views. Further, those pluralists who *do* discuss views like Moore's seem to misunderstand them. Stocker writes in the introduction to his (1990) that he was "convinced by G.E. Moore...of the plurality and incommensurability of moral considerations." But Moore never accepts the kind of pluralism Stocker is interested in. In fact, he explicitly rejects it in his (1942: 583). And rightly so: the kind of pluralism Stocker has in mind would rule out Moore's own signature view about moral obligation.⁴⁰

There are other places where the distinction drawn here may be useful. But I hope this is sufficient to show just how important it is to distinguish these two kinds of views.

⁴⁰ It is also critical to state these views carefully; doing so may help dissolve contemporary disputes. Feldman's (2004) is a good example. While Feldman's views are clearly not forms of strong pluralism, he claims that they are not forms of weak pluralism either. But Mason (2011) alleges "Feldman's view is not a monist one." And Olsaretti (2007) provides a similar argument. If we apply our account of weak value pluralism we may hope to obtain a clear verdict. The same is true of historical debates: at least part of Moore's famous attack on qualified hedonism is his claim that Mill's theory is, in fact, a kind of pluralism and therefore cannot be a pure form of hedonism. Our theory can help us decide if we want to agree with Moore, or reject his complaint.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anderson, Elizabeth. (1993) *Value in Ethics and Economics*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA.
- Aristotle. (2000) *Nicomachean Ethics*. Trans. Crisp, Roger. Cambridge University Press: New York.
- Arneson, Richard. (2010) "Good, Period." *Analysis*: 70, 4: 731-744.
- Barnes, Elizabeth and Williams, J.R.G. (2011) "A Theory of Metaphysical Indeterminacy." *Oxford Studies in Metaphysics*, Volume VI. Oxford University Press: Oxford: 103-148.
- Baron, Marcia W. (1997) "Kantian Ethics." *Three Methods of Ethics*. Eds. Baron, Marcia W., Pettit, Philip and Michael Slote. Blackwell: Oxford.
- Berlin, Isaiah. (1958) "Two Concepts of Liberty." *Liberty*. [2002] Ed. Hardy, Henry. Oxford University Press: New York: 166-217.
- . (1969) "Introduction." *Four Essays on Liberty*. Oxford University Press: Oxford: ix-lxiii.
- Blackburn, S. (1971) "Moral Realism." In *Morality and Moral Reasoning*. Ed. Casey, J. Methuen: London.
- Bradford, Gwen. (2013) "The Value of Achievements." *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*. 94: 204-224.
- Bradley, Ben. (2002) "Is Intrinsic Value Conditional?" *Philosophical Studies*: 107 (1): 23-44.
- . (2006) "Two Concepts of Intrinsic Value." *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*: 9: 111-130.
- . (2013) "Intrinsic Value." *The International Encyclopedia of Ethics*.
- Brandt, Richard. (1946) "Moral Valuation." *Ethics*: 56: 106-121.
- Brännmark, Johan. (2009) "Goodness, Value, Reasons." *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*: 12: 329-343.
- Brentano, Franz. (2009) [1889] *The Origin of our Knowledge of Right and Wrong*. Trans. Chisholm, Roderick and Schneewind, Elizabeth. Routledge: New York.
- Broad, C.D. (1930) *Five Types of Ethical Theory*. Routledge & Kegan Paul: London.
- Brogaard, B., & Salerno, J. (2013) "Remarks on Counterpossibles." *Synthese* 190: 639–660.

- Bykvist, Krister. (2015) "Value and Time." *The Oxford Handbook of Value Theory*. Eds. Hirose, Iwao and Olson, Jonas. Oxford University Press: New York: 117-135.
- Chang, R. (1997) *Incommensurability, Incomparability and Practical Reason*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA.
- Chisholm, Roderick M. (1976) *Person and Object*. Open Court Press: Chicago.
- . (1978) "Intrinsic Value." *Values and Morals*. Eds. Kim, Jaegwon and Goldman, Alvin. D. Reidel: Dordrecht, Holland.
- . (1981) "Defining Intrinsic Value." *Analysis*: 41: 99-100.
- . (1986) *Brentano and Intrinsic Value*. Cambridge University Press: New York.
- Colyvan, Mark. (2001) "Russell on Metaphysical Vagueness." *Principia*: 5, 1: 87-98.
- Crowder, George. (2004) *Isaiah Berlin: Liberty and Pluralism*. Polity Press: Malden, MA.
- Dancy, Jonathan. (2000) "Should we Pass the Buck?" *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement*: 47: 159-173.
- Darwall, Stephen. (2003) "How Should Ethics Relate to Philosophy?" *Metaethics after Moore*. Ed. Horgan, Terry and Timmons, Mark. [2006] Oxford University Press: New York: 17-38.
- Davison, Scott A. (2012) *On the Intrinsic Value of Everything*. Continuum International Publishing: New York.
- Donnelly, John. (1971) "Some Remarks on Geach's Predicative and Attributive Adjectives." *Notre Dame Journal of Formal Logic*: XII, 1: 125-128.
- Dorsey, Dale. (2012) "Intrinsic Value and the Supervenience Principle." *Philosophical Studies*: 157 (2): 267-285.
- Dussault, Antoine C. (2014) "Fitting-Attitude Analyses and the Relation between Final and Intrinsic Value." *The Ethics Forum*: 9, 2: 166-189.
- Driver, Julia. (2014) "The History of Utilitarianism." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2014 Edition) Ed. Zalta, Edward N. <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2014/entries/utilitarianism-history/>
- Dummett, Michael. (1975) "Wang's Paradox." *Synthese*: 30: 301-324.
- Ewing, A.C. (2012) *The Definition of Good*. Routledge & Kegan Paul: Oxon.
- Feldman, Fred. (1986) *Doing the Best We Can*. Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company.

- . (1995) “Adjusting Utility for Justice: A Consequentialist Reply to the Objection from Justice.” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*: LV, 3: 567-585
- . (1998) “Hyperventilating about Intrinsic Value.” *The Journal of Ethics*: 2: 339-354.
- . (2000) “Basic Intrinsic Value.” *Philosophical Studies*, 99: 319-346.
- . (2004) *Pleasure and the Good Life*. Oxford University Press: New York.
- . (2007) “Replies.” *Philosophical Studies* 136, 3: 439-450.
- Fletcher, Guy. (2009) “Sentimental Value.” *The Journal of Value Inquiry*: 43: 45-55.
- Foot, Philippa. (1985) “Utilitarianism and the Virtues.” *Mind*: 94: 196–209.
- Freiman, Christopher. (2014) “Goodness and Moral Twin Earth.” *Erkenntnis*: 79: 445-460.
- Galston, William A. (2005) *The Practice of Liberal Pluralism*. Cambridge University Press: New York.
- Geach, P.T. (1956) “Good and Evil.” *Analysis*: 17, 2: 33-42.
- Green, Karen. (1996) “Two Distinctions in Environmental Goodness.” *Environmental Values*: 5, 1: pp. 31-46.
- Hardy, Henry. (1995) “Taking Value Pluralism Seriously.” *The One and The Many: Reading Isaiah Berlin*. Ed. Hardy, Henry and Crowder, George. [2007] Prometheus Book: Amherst, NY: 279-292.
- Hatzimoysis, Anthony. (2003) “Sentimental Value.” *The Philosophical Quarterly*: 53, 2: 373-379.
- Hooker, Brad and Stratton-Lake, Phillip. (2006) “Scanlon versus Moore on Goodness.” In *Metaethics after Moore*. Eds. Horgan, Terry and Timmons, Mark. Oxford University Press: New York: 149-168.
- Hurka, Thomas. (1996) “Monism, Pluralism and Rational Regret.” *Ethics*: 106: 555-575.
- . (1998) “Two Kinds of Organic Unity.” *The Journal of Ethics*: 2: 299–320.
- . (1998) “How Great a Good is Virtue?” *The Journal of Philosophy*: 95, 4: 181-203.
- Jacobson, Daniel. (2011) “Fitting Attitude Theories of Value.” In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2011 Edition) Ed. Zalta, Edward N.
<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2011/entries/fitting-attitude-theories/>
- Kagan, Shelly. (1998) “Rethinking Intrinsic Value.” *Journal of Ethics*: 2: 277-97.

- Kant, Immanuel. (1993) *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*. Trans. Ellington, James W. Hackett: Indianapolis.
- Kekes, J. (1993) *The Morality of Pluralism*. Princeton University Press: Princeton.
- Kelly, Chris. (2008) "The Impossibility of Incommensurable Values." *Philosophical Studies*, 137: 369-382.
- Kim, Jaegwon. (1993) "Postscripts on Supervenience." In *Supervenience and Mind: Selected Philosophical Essays*. Cambridge University Press: New York: 161-174.
- Klocksien, J. (2011a) "Moorean Pluralism as a Solution to the Incommensurability Problem." *Philosophical Studies* 153, 3: 335-350.
- . (2011b) "Perspective Neutral Intrinsic Value." *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*: 92: pp. 323-337.
- Korsgaard, Christine. (1983) "Two Distinctions in Goodness." *The Philosophical Review*, 92, 2: 169-195.
- . (1986) "Aristotle and Kant on the Source of Value." *Ethics*: 96, 3: 486-505.
- . (1996) *Creating the Kingdom of Ends*. Cambridge University Press: New York.
- Kraut, Richard. (2011) *Against Absolute Goodness*. Oxford University Press: New York.
- Lemos, Noah. (1994) *Intrinsic Value: Concept and Warrant*. Cambridge University Press: New York.
- Lewis, David. (1968) "Counterpart Theory and Quantified Modal Logic." *Journal of Philosophy* 65: 113-126.
- . (1973) *Counterfactuals*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA.
- . (1986) *On the Plurality of Worlds*. Blackwell Publishing: Oxford.
- . (1993) "Many, but Almost One." *Ontology, Causality, and Mind: Essays on the Philosophy of D.M. Armstrong*. Eds. Campbell, Keith, Bacon, John & Reinhardt, Lloyd. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- MacKay, Alfred. (1970) "Attributive-Predicative." *Analysis*: 30, 4: 113-120.
- Mackie, Penelope and Jago, Mark. (2013) "Transworld Identity." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2013 Edition) Ed. Zalta, Edward N.
<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2013/entries/identity-transworld/>

- Mason, Elinor. (2015) "Value Pluralism." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Summer 2015 Edition. Ed. Zalta, Edward N. <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2015/entries/value-pluralism/>
- McPherson, Tristram. (2015) "Supervenience in Ethics." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2015 Edition) Ed. Zalta, Edward N. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/supervenience-ethics/>
- Moore, G.E. (1922) "The Conception of Intrinsic Value." Reprinted in *Philosophical Studies*. [1951] Routledge & Kegan Paul: London: 253-275.
- . (1942) "A Reply to my Critics." *Philosophy of G.E. Moore*, 3rd edition. Ed. Schlipp, Paul Arthur. [1968] Open Court: La Salle, IL: 533-677.
- . (1993) *Principia Ethica*. Ed. Baldwin, Thomas. Cambridge University Press: New York.
- . (2005) *Ethics*. Ed. Shaw, William H. Oxford University Press: New York.
- Nolan, D. (1997). "Impossible worlds: A modest approach." *Notre Dame Journal for Formal Logic* 38: 325–527.
- Nussbaum, Martha. (2001) *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy*. Cambridge University Press: New York.
- . (2003) "Comment." In *Goodness and Advice*. Ed. Gutman, Amy. Princeton University Press: Princeton, New Jersey: 97-125.
- Olsaretti, Serena. (2007) "The Limits of Hedonism: Feldman on the Value of Attitudinal Pleasure." *Philosophical Studies* 136, 3: 439-450.
- Olson, Jonas. (2004) "Intrinsicalism and Conditionalism about Final Value." *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*: 7: 31-52.
- O'Neil, John. (1992) "The Varieties of Intrinsic Value." *The Monist*: 75: 119-137.
- Parfit, Derek. (2011) *On What Matters*. Oxford University Press: New York.
- Rabinowicz, Wlodek and Rønnow-Rasmussen, Toni. (2000) "A Distinction in Value: Intrinsic and For its Own Sake." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*: 100: 33-51.
- (2003) "Tropic of Value." Reprinted in *Recent Work on Intrinsic Value*. [2005] Eds. Zimmerman, Michael and Toni, Rønnow-Rasmussen. Springer: The Netherlands: pp. 213-226.
- Rønnow-Rasmussen, Toni. (2011) *Personal Value*. Oxford University Press: New York.

- Rønnow-Rasmussen, Toni and Zimmerman, Michael. (2005) "Introduction." *Recent Work on Intrinsic Value*. Eds. Zimmerman, Michael and Toni, Rønnow-Rasmussen. Springer: The Netherlands: xiii-xxxv.
- Ross, W.D. (2002) *The Right and the Good*. Ed. Stratton-Lake, Phillip. Oxford University Press: New York.
- Rowland, Richard. (2016) "In Defence of Good *Simpliciter*." *Philosophical Studies*: 173, 5: 1371-1391.
- Russell, Bertrand. (1923) "Vagueness." *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*: 1: 84-92.
- Sainsbury, Mark. (1994) "Why the World Cannot be Vague." *Southern Journal of Philosophy*: 33: 63–82.
- Scanlon, T.M. (1998) *What We Owe to Each Other*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA.
- . (2014) *Being Realistic about Reasons*. Oxford University Press: New York.
- Schaffer, Jonathan. (2009) "On What Grounds What." In *Metametaphysics*. Eds. Chalmers, David J., Manley, David and Wasserman, Ryan. Oxford University Press: New York.
- . (2014) "Grounding, Transitivity, and Contrastivity." In *Metaphysical Grounding: Understanding the Structure of Reality*. Eds. Correia, Fabrice and Schnieder, Benjamin. Cambridge University Press: New York.
- . (Unpublished) "It is the Business of Laws to Govern."
- Shafer-Landau, Russ. (2010) *The Fundamentals of Ethics*. Oxford University Press: New York.
- Shaw, William H. (2005) "Editor's Introduction." In G.E. Moore's *Ethics*. Ed. Shaw, William. Ed. Shaw, William H. Oxford University Press: New York: vii-xxxix.
- Sidgwick, Henry. (1981) [1907] *The Methods of Ethics*. Hackett Publishing Company: Indianapolis, Indiana.
- Sorensen, Roy. (2012) "Vagueness." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Winter 2013 Edition. Ed. Zalta, Edward N.
<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2013/entries/vagueness/>
- Stalnaker, Robert. (1968) "A Theory of Conditionals." In *Studies in Logical Theory, American Philosophical Quarterly Monograph* 2: 98–112. Blackwell: Oxford.
- Stecker, Robert. (2002) "Value in Art." *The Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics*. Ed. Levinson, Jerrold. Oxford University Press: New York: 307-324.
- Stocker, Michael. (1990) *Plural and Conflicting Values*. Oxford University Press: New York.

- . (1997) “Abstract and Concrete Value.” *Incommensurability, Incomparability, and Practical Reason*. Ed. Chang, Ruth. [1997] Harvard University Press: Cambridge: 196-214.
- Sturgeon, Nicholas. (2010) “Normativity.” *Analysis*: 70, 4: 744-753.
- Taylor, Charles. (1982) “The Diversity of Goods.” *Utilitarianism and Beyond* Eds. Amartya, Sen and Williams, Bernard. [1982] Cambridge University Press: New York: 129-144.
- Thomson, J. J. (1994) “Goodness and Utilitarianism.” *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association*: 67, 4: 7-21.
- . (1997) “The Right and the Good.” *Journal of Philosophy* 94: 273–98.
- . (2003a) *Goodness and Advice*. Ed. Gutman, Amy. Princeton University Press: Princeton, New Jersey.
- . (2003b) “The Legacy of *Principia*.” *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*: XLI: 62-82.
- . (2008) *Normativity*. Open Court Press: Chicago, Illinois.
- Williams, Bernard. (1981) *Moral Luck*. Cambridge University Press: New York.
- Williamson, Timothy. (1994) *Vagueness*. Routledge: London.
- Zimmerman, Dean. (1997) “Chisholm and the Essences of Events.” *The Philosophy of Roderick M. Chisholm*. Ed. Hahn, L.E. Open Court: Chicago.
- Zimmerman, Michael. (2001) *The Nature of Intrinsic Value*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers: Lanham, Maryland.
- . (2008) *Living with Uncertainty: The Moral Significance of Ignorance*. Cambridge University Press: New York.
- . (2010) “Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic Value.” In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2010 Edition) Ed. Zalta, Edward N.
<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2010/entries/value-intrinsic-extrinsic/>