RECENT WORK ON INTRINSIC VALUE

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RECENT WORK ON INTRINSIC VALUE

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INTRODUCTION

Intrinsic value has traditionally been thought to lie at the heart of ethics. Philosophers use a number of terms to refer to such value. The intrinsic value of something is said to be the value that that thing has "in itself," or "for its own sake," or "as such," or "in its own right." Extrinsic value is value that is not intrinsic.

Many philosophers take intrinsic value to be crucial to a variety of moral judgments. For example, according to a fundamental form of so-called consequentialism, whether an action is *morally right or wrong* has exclusively to do with whether its consequences are intrinsically better than those of any other action one can perform under the circumstances.[1] Many other theories also hold that what it is right or wrong to do has at least in part to do with the intrinsic value of the consequences of the actions one can perform. Moreover, if, as is commonly believed, what one is *morally responsible* (praiseworthy or blameworthy) for doing is some function of the rightness or wrongness of what one does, then intrinsic value would seem relevant to judgments about responsibility, too. Intrinsic value is also often taken to be pertinent to judgments about *moral justice* (whether having to do with moral rights or moral desert), insofar as it is good that justice is done and bad that justice is denied, in ways that appear intimately tied to intrinsic value. Finally, it is typically thought that judgments about *moral virtue and vice* also turn on questions of intrinsic value, inasmuch as virtues are good, and vices bad, in ways that appear closely connected to such value.

All four types of moral judgments have been the subject of discussion since the dawn of western philosophy in ancient Greece. The Greeks themselves were especially concerned with questions about virtue and vice, and the concept of intrinsic value may be found at work in their writings and in the writings of moral philosophers ever since. Despite this fact, and rather surprisingly, it is only within the last one hundred years or so that this concept has itself been the subject of sustained scrutiny, and even within this relatively brief period the scrutiny has waxed and waned. At the moment it is intensifying considerably. With this anthology we hope to provide a comprehensive and balanced picture of current

[1] See, e.g., G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903 [revised edition 1993]), and *Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1912). Moore's view is discussed by Judith Thomson in her contribution to Part II of this volume.

thinking about intrinsic value, one that will provide a backdrop against which future contributions to the subject may be assessed.

We have divided the anthology into five parts that together cover all the traditional areas of inquiry concerning the concept of intrinsic value. The first part deals with the most fundamental question of all – how exactly the concept is to be understood – while the second discusses a number of doubts that have been raised about the concept. The third part is concerned with what sort or sorts of things could sensibly be said to have intrinsic value, the fourth with questions about the logic of intrinsic value, and the fifth with problems in the computation of intrinsic value.

In this introduction we will set the stage for what follows by providing a background for and brief summaries of the contributions to this volume.

1. IDENTIFYING THE CONCEPT OF INTRINSIC VALUE

As we have said, the concept of intrinsic value features prominently in some of the earliest writings on ethics. For example, in his dialogue *Protagoras*, Plato [430-347 B.C.E.] maintains (through the character of Socrates, modeled after the real Socrates [470-399 B.C.E.], who was Plato's teacher) that, when people condemn pleasure, they do so, not because they take pleasure to be bad as such, but because of the bad consequences they find pleasure often to have. As Socrates says to Protagoras:

> [T]he only reason why these pleasures [of food and drink and sex] seem to you to be evil is...that they result in pain and deprive us of future pleasures.[2]

Socrates concludes that pleasure is in fact good as such and pain bad, regardless of what their consequences may on occasion be.[3] In the *Timaeus*, Plato seems quite pessimistic about these consequences, for he has Timaeus declare pleasure to be "the greatest incitement to evil" and pain to be something that "deters from good."[4] Despite this, he does not appear to relinquish the view that pleasure is good as such and pain bad. (Plato does not think of pleasure as the "highest" good, however. In the *Republic*, Socrates states that there can be no "communion" between "extravagant" pleasure and virtue;[5] and in the *Philebus*, where Philebus argues that pleasure is the highest good, Socrates argues against this, claiming that pleasure is better when accompanied by intelligence.[6])

Many philosophers have followed Plato's lead in declaring pleasure intrinsically good and pain intrinsically bad. Aristotle [384-322 B.C.E.], for example, himself a student of Plato's, says this:

> [I]t is agreed that pain is bad and to be avoided; for some pain is without qualification bad, and other pain is bad because it is in some respect an impediment to us. Now the contrary of that which is to be avoided, *qua*

[2] Plato, *Protagoras*, 353e.
[3] *Ibid.*, 358a.
[4] Plato, *Timaeus*, 69d.
[5] Plato, *Republic*, 402e.
[6] Plato, *Philebus*, 60e.

> something to be avoided and bad, is good. Pleasure, then, is necessarily a good.[7]

Over the course of the more than two thousand years since this was written, this view has been frequently endorsed. Like Plato, Aristotle did not take pleasure and pain to be the only things that are intrinsically good and bad, although some have maintained that this is indeed the case. Jeremy Bentham [1748-1832], for example, makes a very clear statement to this effect:

> Strictly speaking, nothing can be said to be good or bad, but either in itself; which is the case only with pain or pleasure: or on account of its effects; which is the case only with things that are the causes or preventives of pain and pleasure.[8]

This view, often called hedonism, of which Bentham was by no means the first proponent (Epicurus [341-271 B.C.E.] had endorsed a version of the doctrine long before), is still the subject of intense debate today.[9]

It is evident, then, that for a great many years philosophers have unhesitatingly and routinely put the concept of intrinsic value to use. Let us now say something more about this concept in order to give you a better idea of just what it involves. In the opening paragraph, we used several terms to characterize the concept; we said that the intrinsic value of something is the value that it has "in itself," or "for its own sake," or "as such," or "in its own right." The custom has been not to distinguish between the meanings of these terms, but we will see that there is reason to think that there may in fact be more than one concept at issue here. For the moment, though, let us ignore this complication and focus on what it means to say that something is valuable *for its own sake* as opposed to being valuable *for the sake of something else* to which it is related in some way. Perhaps it is easiest to grasp this distinction by way of illustration.

Suppose that someone were to ask you whether it is good to help others in time of need. Unless you suspected some sort of trick, you would answer, "Yes, of course." If this person were to go on to ask you why acting in this way is good, you might say that it is good to help others in time of need simply because it is good that their needs be satisfied. If you were then asked why it is good that people's needs be satisfied, you might be puzzled. You might be inclined to say, "It just is." Or you might accept the legitimacy of the question and say that it is good that people's needs be satisfied because this brings them pleasure. But then, of course, your interlocutor could ask once again, "What's good about that?" Perhaps at this point you would answer, "It just is good that people be pleased," and thus put an end to this line of questioning. Or perhaps you would again seek to explain the fact that it is good that people be pleased in terms of something else that you take to be good. At

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[7] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1153b.

[8] Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (London: Athlone Press, 1970), p. 11.

[9] This account of hedonism is rough, since hedonists often allow for the intrinsic goodness and badness of things *other* than, but containing, pleasure and pain (things such as lives and worlds, for example).

some point, though, you would have to put an end to the questions, not because you would have grown tired of them (though that is a distinct possibility), but because you would be forced to recognize that, if one thing derives its goodness from some other thing, which derives its goodness from yet a third thing, and so on, there must come a point at which you reach something whose goodness is not derivative in this way, something that "just is" good in its own right, something whose goodness is the source of, and thus explains, the goodness to be found in all the other things that precede it on the list. It is at this point that you will have arrived at intrinsic goodness.[10] That which is intrinsically good is nonderivatively good; it is good for its *own* sake. That which is extrinsically good is derivatively good; it is good, not (insofar as its extrinsic value is concerned) for its own sake, but for the sake of something else that is good and to which it is related in some way. Intrinsic value thus has a certain priority over extrinsic value. The latter is derivative from or reflective of the former and is to be explained in terms of the former. It is for this reason that philosophers have tended to focus on intrinsic value in particular.

The account just given of the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic value is rough, but it should do as a start. Certain complications must be immediately acknowledged, though. First, there is the possibility, mentioned above, that the terms traditionally used to refer to intrinsic value in fact refer to more than one concept; again, this will be addressed later (in this section and the next). In fact, there are other complications, too. (Sorry!) First, it may not in fact be accurate to say that whatever is intrinsically good is nonderivatively good; some intrinsic value may be derivative. This is a matter we'll discuss in Section 5; again, though, you may safely ignore it for now. Another complication is this. It is almost universally acknowledged among philosophers that all value is "supervenient" on certain nonevaluative features of the thing that has value. Roughly, what this means is that, if something has value, it will have this value in virtue of certain nonevaluative features that it has; its value can be attributed to these features. For example, the value of helping others in time of need might be attributed to the fact that such behavior has the feature of being causally related to certain pleasant experiences induced in those who receive the help. Suppose we accept this and accept also that the experiences in question are intrinsically good. In saying this, we are (barring the complication to be discussed in Section 5) taking the value of the experiences to be nonderivative. Nonetheless, we may well take this value, like all value, to be supervenient on something. In this case, we would probably simply attribute the value of the experiences to their having the feature of being pleasant. This brings out the subtle but important point that the question whether some value is derivative is distinct from the question whether it is supervenient. Even nonderivative value (value that something has in its own right; value that is, in some way, not attributable *to the value* of anything else) is usually understood to be supervenient on certain nonevaluative features of the thing that has value (and thus to be attributable, in a different way, *to these features*).

[10] Cf. Aristotle, *op. cit.*, 1094a.

To repeat: whatever is intrinsically good is (barring the complication to be discussed in Section 5) nonderivatively good. It would be a mistake, however, to affirm the converse of this and say that whatever is nonderivatively good is intrinsically good. As "intrinsic value" is traditionally understood, it refers to a *particular way* of being nonderivatively good; there are other ways in which something might be nonderivatively good. For example, suppose that your interlocutor were to ask you whether it is good to eat and drink in moderation and to exercise regularly. Again, you would say, "Yes, of course." If asked why, you would say that this is because such behavior promotes health. If asked what is good about being healthy, you might cite something else whose goodness would explain the value of health, or you might simply say, "Being healthy just is a good way to be." If the latter were your response, you would be indicating that you took health to be nonderivatively good in some way. In what way, though? Well, perhaps you would be thinking of health as intrinsically good. But perhaps not. Suppose that what you meant was that being healthy just is "good for" the person who is healthy (in the sense that it is in each person's interest to be healthy), so that John's being healthy is good for John, Jane's being healthy is good for Jane, and so on. You would thereby be attributing a type of nonderivative interest-value to John's being healthy, and yet it would be perfectly consistent for you to deny that John's being healthy is *intrinsically* good. If John were a villain, you might well deny this. Indeed, you might want to insist that, in light of his villainy, his being healthy is intrinsically *bad*, even though you recognize that his being healthy is good *for him*. If you did say this, you would be indicating that you subscribe to the common view that intrinsic value is nonderivative value of some peculiarly *moral* sort.[11]

Let us now see whether this still rough account of intrinsic value can be made more precise. One of the first writers to concern himself with the question of what exactly is at issue when we ascribe intrinsic value to something was G. E. Moore [1873-1958]. In his book *Principia Ethica*, Moore asks whether the concept of intrinsic value (or, more particularly, the concept of intrinsic goodness, upon which he tended to focus) is analyzable. In raising this question, he has a particular type of analysis in mind, one which consists in "breaking down" a concept into simpler component concepts. (One example of an analysis of this sort is the analysis of the concept of being a vixen in terms of the concepts of being a fox and being female.) His own answer to the question is that the concept of intrinsic goodness is *not* amenable to such analysis.[12] In place of analysis, Moore proposes a certain kind of thought-experiment in order both to come to understand the concept better and to reach a decision about what is intrinsically good. He advises us to consider what things are such that, if they existed by themselves "in absolute isolation," we would judge their existence to be good; in this way, we will be better able to see what

[11] Although this is how the term "intrinsic value" is often understood, it has been understood in other ways, too. Sometimes it appears to be used simply as a synonym of "nonderivative value" after all. Also, at one point Moore uses it to refer to any kind of value that supervenes solely on the intrinsic nature of the value-bearer. See G. E. Moore, *Philosophical Studies* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1922), p. 260.

[12] Moore, *Principia Ethica*, ch. 1.

really accounts for the value that there is in our world. For example, if such a thought-experiment led you to conclude that all and only pleasure would be good in isolation, and all and only pain bad, you would be a hedonist.[13] Moore himself deems it incredible that anyone, thinking clearly, would reach this conclusion. He says that it involves our saying that a world in which only pleasure existed – a world without any knowledge, love, enjoyment of beauty, or moral qualities – is better than a world that contained all these things but in which there existed slightly less pleasure.[14] Such a view he finds absurd.

Regardless of the merits of this isolation test, it remains unclear exactly why Moore finds the concept of intrinsic goodness to be unanalyzable. At one point he attacks the view that it can be analyzed wholly in terms of "natural" concepts – the view, that is, that we can break down the concept of being intrinsically good into the simpler concepts of being *A*, being *B*, being *C*..., where these component concepts are all purely descriptive rather than evaluative. (One candidate that Moore discusses is this: for something to be intrinsically good is for it to be something that we desire to desire.) He argues that any such analysis is to be rejected, since it will always be intelligible to ask whether (and, presumably, to deny that) it is good that something be *A*, *B*, *C*..., which would not be the case if the analysis were accurate.[15] Even if this argument is successful (a complicated matter about which there is considerable disagreement), it of course does not establish the more general claim that the concept of intrinsic goodness is not analyzable at all, since it leaves open the possibility that this concept is analyzable in terms of other concepts, some or all of which are not "natural" but evaluative. Moore apparently thinks that his objection works just as well where one or more of the component concepts *A*, *B*, *C*... is evaluative; but, again, many dispute the cogency of his argument. Indeed, several philosophers have proposed analyses of just this sort. For example, Roderick Chisholm [1916-1999] argues in Chapter 1 of this volume that Moore's own isolation test in fact provides the basis for an analysis of the concept of intrinsic value. He formulates a view according to which (to put matters roughly) a state of affairs has intrinsic value just in case it is possible that it contain all the value that there is in the world.

Despite the care that Chisholm takes in developing his view, Eva Bodanszky and Earl Conee argue in Chapter 2 that the view is defective; they go on to venture the opinion that the project of analyzing the concept of intrinsic value in terms of the isolation approach is doomed to fail. In Chapter 3 Chisholm responds by accepting that Bodanszky and Conee have shown his particular proposal to be unacceptable, but he denies that the isolation approach is to be abandoned. On the contrary, he proffers a new analysis, one that constitutes a shift from the "ontological isolationism" of his first proposal to a form of "intentional isolationism."[16] Instead

[13] Again, this is to put matters only roughly. See n. 9 above.
[14] Moore, *Ethics*, p. 102.
[15] Moore, *Principia Ethica*, pp. 15-16.
[16] Chisholm does not himself use these terms. Noah M. Lemos introduces them in *Intrinsic Value* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 10-11.

of thinking of intrinsic value in terms of the value that something would have if it *existed* in isolation (an "ontological" matter), Chisholm now proposes to think of it in terms of the kind of attitude it would be appropriate to have if one were to *contemplate* the valuable thing as such, without reference to circumstances or consequences (an "intentional" matter). In Chapter 4 Noah Lemos pursues this proposal, although he doubts whether it is acceptable.

Since both Chisholm and Lemos present their proposals in a clear and straightforward way, there is no need here to go into the details of what they have to say. However, it should be noted that the general idea underlying their proposals is one that has a rich history. Franz Brentano [1838-1917], C. D. Broad [1887-1971], W. D. Ross [1877-1971], and A. C. Ewing [1899-1973], among others, have claimed, in a more or less qualified way, that the concept of intrinsic goodness is analyzable in terms of the worthiness of some attitude.[17] Such an analysis is supported by the mundane observation that, instead of "good," we often use the term "valuable," which itself just means: worthy of being valued. It would thus seem very natural to suppose that for something to be intrinsically good is simply for it to be worthy of being valued for its own sake. ("Worthy" here is usually understood to signify a particular kind of moral worthiness, in keeping with the idea that intrinsic value is a particular kind of moral value. The underlying point is that those who value for its own sake that which is intrinsically good thereby evince a kind of *moral* sensitivity.)

Though undoubtedly attractive, this analysis can be and has been challenged. Brand Blanshard [1892-1987], for example, has claimed that, even if it is necessarily true that whatever is intrinsically good is worthy of being valued for its own sake, and *vice versa*, the proposed analysis of the concept of intrinsic goodness in these terms must be rejected because, if we ask *why* something is worthy of being valued for its own sake, the answer is that this is the case precisely *because* the thing in question is intrinsically good; this answer indicates that the concept of intrinsic goodness is more fundamental than that of the worthiness of being valued, which is inconsistent with analyzing the former in terms of the latter.[18] Ewing and others have resisted this type of argument.[19] In Chapter 4 Lemos entertains both this argument and others for rejecting any attempt to analyze the concept of intrinsic value in the spirit of intentional isolationism. In Chapter 5 Jonathan Dancy gives still further reasons to be skeptical of any such attempt. We will not try to settle the issue here. Whatever the final verdict about such an attempt should be, it is worth noting the following point (one that is stressed by both Lemos and Dancy). Even if all attempts at such an analysis do and must fail, it may nonetheless be necessarily true that whatever is intrinsically good is worthy of being valued for its own sake, and

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[17] Franz Brentano, *The Origin of Our Knowledge of Right and Wrong* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), p. 18; C. D. Broad, *Five Types of Ethical Theory* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1930), p. 283; W. D. Ross, *Foundations of Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939), pp. 275-76; A. C. Ewing, *The Definition of Good* (New York: Macmillan, 1948), p. 152.

[18] Brand Blanshard, *Reason and Goodness* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1961), pp. 284-86.

[19] Ewing, *op. cit.*, pp. 157 and 172; cf. Lemos, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

vice versa. If such were the case, it would reveal an important feature of intrinsic value, although there would admittedly remain pressing questions as to just how the concept of intrinsic value is to be understood. In Chapter 6 Fred Feldman pursues some of these questions. He focuses in particular on four "guiding intuitions" about intrinsic value to which many philosophers have subscribed. He finds that two of them are mistaken and that the other two fail to apply uniquely to intrinsic value. The upshot, according to Feldman, is that the concept of intrinsic value unfortunately remains somewhat obscure, so that those (such as himself) who believe that this concept lies at the heart of ethics must continue to search for ways to identify the concept in order to win over those (such as some of the philosophers mentioned in the next section) who have doubts about its usefulness or coherence.

One final cautionary note: it is apparent that some philosophers use the term "intrinsic value" and similar terms to express a concept that is in some ways similar to, but in other ways quite different from, the one that we have just been discussing. Immanuel Kant [1724-1804], for example, is famous for saying:

> It is impossible to conceive anything at all in the world, or even out of it, which can be taken as good without qualification, except a *good will*.[20]

He adds:

> A good will is not good because of what it effects or accomplishes – because of its fitness for attaining some proposed end; it is good through its willing alone – that is, good in itself.[21]

These remarks may seem to suggest that Kant ascribes (positive) intrinsic value only to a good will, declaring the value that anything else may possess merely extrinsic, in the senses of "intrinsic value" and "extrinsic value" discussed above. This suggestion is, if anything, reinforced by what Kant immediately goes on to say:

> Considered in itself [a good will] is to be esteemed beyond comparison as far higher than anything it could ever bring about… Even if…this will [were] entirely lacking in power to carry out its intentions…it would still shine like a jewel for its own sake as something which has full value in itself. Its usefulness…can neither add to, nor subtract from, this value.[22]

Here Kant may seem not only to be invoking the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic value but also to be in agreement with Brentano *et al.* regarding the characterization of the former in terms of the worthiness of some attitude, namely, esteem. (The term "respect" is often used in place of "esteem" in such contexts.) Nonetheless, it becomes clear on further inspection that in these passages Kant is in fact discussing a concept distinct from that with which this anthology is concerned. A little later on he says that all rational beings, even those that lack a good will, have

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[20] Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), p. 61 (Ak. 1).
[21] *Ibid*., p. 62 (Ak. 3).
[22] *Idem*.

"absolute value"; such beings are "ends in themselves" that have a "dignity" or "intrinsic value" that is "above all price."[23] Such talk indicates that Kant believes that the sort of value that good wills in particular, or rational beings in general, possess is infinitely great. But then, if this were understood as a thesis about intrinsic value as we have been understanding this concept, the implication would seem to be that this world is as good as it could be.[24] Yet this is something that Kant explicitly rejects elsewhere. He says:

> What does the highest good consist in? The most perfect world is the highest created good. But the most perfect world involves the happiness of rational creatures and the worthiness of those creatures for such happiness... If the world were full of...rational creatures, who were all well-behaved, and thus worthy of happiness, and they were in the neediest of circumstances, surrounded with sorrow and trouble, they would then have no happiness, and there would thus be no highest good there.[25]

It seems best to understand Kant, and other philosophers who have since written in the same vein,[26] as being concerned not with the question of what intrinsic value rational beings have – in the sense of "intrinsic value" identified above – but with the quite different question of how we ought to behave toward such creatures.

2. DOUBTS ABOUT THE CONCEPT OF INTRINSIC VALUE

In the history of philosophy, relatively few seem to have entertained doubts about the concept of intrinsic value. Much of the debate about intrinsic value has tended to be about what things actually do have such value. However, once questions about the concept itself were raised, doubts about its metaphysical implications, its moral significance, and even its very coherence began to appear.

Consider, first, the metaphysics underlying ascriptions of intrinsic value. It seems safe to say that, before the twentieth century, most moral philosophers presupposed that the intrinsic goodness of something is a genuine property of that thing, one that is no less real than the properties (of being pleasant, of satisfying a need, or whatever) in virtue of which the thing in question is good. (Several dissented from this view, however. Especially well known for their dissent are Thomas Hobbes [1588-1679], who believed the goodness or badness of something to be constituted by the desire or aversion that one may have regarding it, and David Hume [1711-1776], who similarly took all ascriptions of value to involve

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[23] *Ibid*., pp. 95 (Ak. 64) and 102 (Ak. 77).

[24] Kant could avoid this implication only by positing the existence of something infinitely bad whose value would counterbalance that of persons, or by denying that the world's value is proportional to that of its contents. He nowhere indicates that he is prepared to make either move.

[25] Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 44.

[26] E.g., Elizabeth Anderson, *Value in Ethics and Economics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993).

projections of one's own sentiments onto whatever is said to have value.[27]) It was not until Moore argued that this view implies that intrinsic goodness, as a supervening property, is a very different sort of property (one that he called "nonnatural") from those (which he called "natural") upon which it supervenes, that doubts about the view proliferated.

One of the first to raise such doubts and to press for a view quite different from the prevailing view was Axel Hägerström [1868-1939], who developed an account according to which ascriptions of value are neither true nor false.[28] This view has come to be called "noncognitivism." The particular brand of noncognitivism proposed by Hägerström is usually called "emotivism," since it holds (in a manner reminiscent of Hume) that ascriptions of value are in essence expressions of emotion. (For example, an emotivist might claim that to say "*A* is good" is not to make a statement about *A* but to say something like "Hooray for *A*!") This view was taken up by several philosophers, including most notably A. J. Ayer [1910-1989] and Charles L. Stevenson [1908-1979].[29] Other philosophers have since embraced other forms of noncognitivism. R. M. Hare [1919-2002], for example, advocated the theory of "prescriptivism" (according to which moral judgments, including judgments about goodness and badness, are not descriptive statements about the world but rather constitute a kind of command as to how we are to act),[30] and Simon Blackburn and Allan Gibbard have since proposed yet other versions of noncognitivism.[31]

Hägerström characterized his own view as a type of "value-nihilism," and many have followed suit in taking noncognitivism of all kinds to constitute a rejection of the very idea of intrinsic value. But this seems to be a mistake. We should distinguish questions about *value* from questions about *evaluation*. Questions about value fall into two main groups: *conceptual* questions (of the sorts discussed in the contributions to this volume), and *substantive* questions (concerning which see Section 6 below). Questions about evaluation have to do with what precisely is going on when *we ascribe* value to something. Cognitivists claim that our ascriptions of value constitute statements that are either true or false; noncognitivists deny this. But even noncognitivists must recognize that our ascriptions of value fall into two fundamental classes – ascriptions of intrinsic value, and ascriptions of extrinsic value – and so they too must concern themselves with the very same conceptual and substantive questions about value (What is it for something to be valuable for its own sake rather than for the sake of something else to which it is

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[27] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 1651 (of which there are many editions); David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, 1739 (of which there are also many editions).

[28] Axel Hägerström, *Inquiries into the Nature of Law and Morals* (Uppsala: Uppsala University Press, 1953).

[29] A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1946); Charles L. Stevenson, *Ethics and Language* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944).

[30] Richard M. Hare, *The Language of Morals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952).

[31] Simon Blackburn, *Spreading the Word* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984); Allan Gibbard, *Wise Choices, Apt Feelings* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990).

related? To what sort or sorts of thing can intrinsic value be sensibly ascribed? To what thing or things can intrinsic value be accurately ascribed? And so on) as cognitivists address. It may be that noncognitivism dictates or rules out certain answers to these questions that cognitivism does not, but that is of course quite a different matter from rejecting the very idea of intrinsic value on metaphysical grounds.

Another type of metaphysical challenge to intrinsic value stems from the theory of "pragmatism," especially in the form advanced by John Dewey [1859-1952].[32] The pragmatist sees the world as ever-changing; the solution to one problem becomes the source of another, what is an end in one context is a means in another, and it is therefore a mistake to seek or offer a timeless list of intrinsic goods and evils, of ends to be achieved or avoided for their own sakes. This is a theme taken up by Monroe Beardsley [1915-1985] in Chapter 7, which opens Part II of this volume. Taking his cue from Dewey, Beardsley attacks the notion of intrinsic value, arguing that all value is extrinsic, and denying that the existence of something with extrinsic value presupposes the existence of something else with intrinsic value. (In the course of his argument, Beardsley rejects the sort of "dialectical demonstration" of intrinsic value that we tried to provide in the last section when seeking an explanation of the derivative value of helping others in time of need in terms of some nonderivative value.) A quick response to Dewey's and Beardsley's misgivings about intrinsic value would be to admit that it may well be that, the world being as complex as it is, nothing is such that its value is wholly intrinsic; perhaps whatever has intrinsic value also has extrinsic value, and of course many things that have extrinsic value will have no (or, at least, neutral) intrinsic value. Far from repudiating the notion of intrinsic value, though, this admission would confirm its legitimacy. But both Dewey and Beardsley would presumably insist that this quick response misses the point of their attack, and that it really is the case, not just that whatever has value has extrinsic value, but also that nothing has intrinsic value. We leave it to you to judge whether Beardsley's argument for this claim is successful. It should be noted that, even if it is successful, the argument leaves untouched the question whether something *could* have intrinsic value. If the answer to this question is "yes," then the legitimacy of the concept of intrinsic value is once again confirmed, even if the concept has no application to anything that in fact exists.

As we have noted, some philosophers do indeed doubt the legitimacy, the very coherence, of the concept of intrinsic value. Before we turn to a discussion of this issue, however, let us for the moment presume that the concept is coherent and address a different sort of doubt: the doubt that the concept has any great moral significance. Recall the suggestion, mentioned in the last section, that discussions of intrinsic value have been compromised by a failure to distinguish certain concepts. This suggestion is at the heart of Chapter 8, written by Christine Korsgaard. She notes that intrinsic value has traditionally been contrasted with "instrumental value"

[32] John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct* (New York: H. Holt, 1922).

(the value that something has in virtue of being a means to an end) and claims that this approach is misleading. Instrumental value, she says, is to be contrasted with "final value," that is, the value that something has as an end or for its own sake; however, intrinsic value (the value that something has in itself, that is, in virtue of its intrinsic, nonrelational properties) is to be contrasted with extrinsic value (the value that something has in virtue of its extrinsic, relational properties). (An example of a nonrelational property is the property of being round; an example of a relational property is the property of being loved.) Given these two distinctions, Korsgaard maintains, it is possible that something be valuable for its own sake but not in itself; indeed, this is often actually the case. Once this fact is recognized, the moral significance of intrinsic value is put into question, since (as is apparent from our discussion so far) it is with the notion of something's being valuable for its own sake that philosophers have traditionally been, and continue to be, primarily concerned. This shift of emphasis from intrinsic to final value is also the main theme both in Chapter 9, written by Shelly Kagan, and Chapter 10, written by Wlodek Rabinowicz and Toni Rønnow-Rasmussen.

There is an important corollary to drawing a distinction between intrinsic value and final value (and between extrinsic value and nonfinal value), and that is that, contrary to what Korsgaard herself initially says, it may be a mistake to contrast final value with instrumental value. If it is possible, as Korsgaard claims, that final value sometimes supervenes on extrinsic properties, then it might be possible that it sometimes supervenes in particular on the property of being a means to some end. Indeed, Korsgaard herself suggests this when she says that "certain kinds of things, such as luxurious instruments,…are valued for their own sakes under the condition of their usefulness."[33] Kagan also tentatively endorses this idea. If the idea is coherent, then we should in principle distinguish two kinds of instrumental value, one final and the other nonfinal.[34] If something *A* is a means to something else *B* and has instrumental value in virtue of this fact, such value will be nonfinal if it is merely derivative from or reflective of *B*'s value, whereas it will be final if it is nonderivative, that is, if it is a value that *A* has in its *own* right (due to the fact that it is a means to *B*), irrespective of any value that *B* may or may not have in *its* own right.

Even if it is agreed that it is final value that is central to the concerns of moral philosophers, we should be careful in drawing the conclusion that intrinsic value is not central to their concerns. First, as Kagan notes, there is no necessity that the term "intrinsic value" be reserved for the value that something has in virtue of its intrinsic properties; presumably it has been used by many writers simply to refer to what Korsgaard calls final value, in which case the moral significance of (what is thus called) intrinsic value has of course not been thrown into doubt. Nonetheless, it should probably be conceded that "final value" is a more suitable term than

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[33] See p. 89 below.

[34] In "Instrumental Values – Strong and Weak" (*Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, 5 (2002): 23-43), Toni Rønnow-Rasmussen pursues the implications of this distinction in detail.

"intrinsic value" to refer to the sort of value in question, since the latter term certainly does suggest value that supervenes on intrinsic properties. But here a second point can be made, and that is that, even if use of the term "intrinsic value" is restricted accordingly, it is arguable that, contrary to Korsgaard's contention, all final value does after all supervene on intrinsic properties alone; if that were the case, then, even if there is a conceptual distinction between final and intrinsic value, and even if it is conceded that it is final value that is of central concern, still there would be little harm in continuing to use the traditional term "intrinsic value" to refer to such value. Both Kagan and Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen explicitly discuss, and reject, the suggestion that final and intrinsic value coincide in this way; this is an issue taken up in several of the contributions to Part III of this volume.

In light of the matter just discussed, we must now decide what terminology to employ. We believe that it is clear that the main concern of moral philosophers since ancient times has been with the distinction between the value that something has for its own sake (the sort of nonderivative value that Korsgaard calls "final value") and the value that something has for the sake of something else to which it is related in some way. However, given the weight of tradition, we will continue to use the terms "intrinsic value" and "extrinsic value" to refer to these two types of value, despite Korsgaard's misgivings, and without intending thereby to endorse, or reject, the view that final value supervenes on intrinsic properties alone.

Let us now turn to doubts about the very coherence of the concept of intrinsic value, so understood. In *Principia Ethica* and elsewhere, Moore embraces the consequentialist view (mentioned above) that whether an action is morally right or wrong turns exclusively on whether its consequences are intrinsically better than those of its alternatives. Some have argued that ascribing intrinsic value to consequences in this way is fundamentally misconceived. For example, Philippa Foot maintains that talk of the goodness or badness of a state of affairs makes sense only in the context of a moral theory (of right and wrong, or of virtue and vice) that is already in place and in terms of which ascriptions of value can be understood. Goodness and badness, she contends, are therefore not free-standing concepts, contrary to the traditional presupposition that would appear to characterize the work of a great many philosophers (not just consequentialists) since ancient times.[35] In Chapter 11 Judith Thomson takes up this thesis and elaborates on it considerably. Setting out from Peter Geach's idea (echoed in Foot's paper) that nothing is just plain good or bad,[36] Thomson argues that all goodness is "goodness in a way," and that this shows that appeals to intrinsic value (of the sort made by Moore but also by many nonconsequentialists) are conceptually confused. In Chapter 12 Michael Zimmerman rebuts Thomson's attack, arguing that it misidentifies its target and thus misses its mark.

[35] Philippa Foot, "Utilitarianism and the Virtues." *Mind*, 94 (1985): 196-209.
[36] Peter Geach, "Good and Evil." *Analysis*, 17 (1956): 33-42.

3. THE BEARERS OF INTRINSIC VALUE

Among those who do not doubt the coherence of the concept of intrinsic value there is considerable difference of opinion about what sort or sorts of entity can have such value. Moore does not explicitly address this issue, but his writings show him to have a liberal view on the matter. There are times when he talks of individual objects (e.g., books) as having intrinsic value,[37] others when he talks of the consciousness of individual objects (or of their qualities) as having intrinsic value,[38] others when he talks of the existence of individual objects as having intrinsic value,[39] others when he talks of types of individual objects as having intrinsic value,[40] and still others when he talks of states of individual objects as having intrinsic value.[41]

Moore would thus appear to be a "pluralist" concerning the bearers of intrinsic value. Others take a more conservative, "monistic" approach, according to which there is just one kind of value bearer. Ross, for example, maintains that it is at bottom what he calls objectives or facts, and only such entities, that can have intrinsic value.[42] Facts are the sort of thing to which we refer by certain "that"-clauses, such as "It is good that John is pleased" (or "That John is pleased is good"). According to Ross, the apparent attribution of intrinsic value to things other than facts can be reduced to, or "translated into," the attribution of such value to facts. For example, the claim that a particular rare stamp has intrinsic value might be recast as the claim that it is intrinsically good that the stamp is rare.[43] Whether such reductions are acceptable has been a matter of considerable debate. Proponents maintain that it introduces some much-needed order into the discussion of intrinsic value; opponents charge that it results in distortion and oversimplification. The papers in Part III of this volume all deal with this issue.

In Chapter 13 Chisholm adopts and elaborates on the view (espoused by Ross but embraced even earlier by Alexius Meinong [1853-1920], whose ideas Chisholm discusses at some length) that it is objectives that are the bearers of intrinsic value. (In the course of his discussion, Chisholm also touches on many related issues, having to do with the logic and the computation of intrinsic value, which are the focus of his contributions to Parts IV and V of this volume and which we will address in the next two sections.) In Chapter 14 Lemos likewise adopts, at least tentatively, the monistic view that facts are the only things that can have intrinsic value. However, in so doing, he introduces a subtle twist to Chisholm's position. Whereas Chisholm takes objectives to be abstract states of affairs (such as the state of affairs of everyone being happy) that may or may not obtain, Lemos insists that

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[37] Moore, *Principia Ethica*, p. 3.
[38] *Ibid*., p. 195.
[39] *Ibid*., p. 196.
[40] Moore, *Philosophical Studies*, p. 260.
[41] Moore, *Principia Ethica*, p. 195.
[42] W. D. Ross, *The Right and the Good* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. 112-13.
[43] The example is borrowed from Monroe Beardsley, "Intrinsic Value," pp. 61-62 below.

the bearers of intrinsic value are states of affairs that *do* obtain. His reason for doing so is that it is only in virtue of a state of affairs' obtaining that there is anything of value in the world. (For example, he would say that there is nothing good about the state of affairs of everyone being happy, since unfortunately it does not obtain.) Like Chisholm, though, Lemos takes the bearers of value to be abstract rather than concrete.

This raises a difficult issue: how to distinguish abstract from concrete entities. There is no consensus on the matter. Although everyone agrees that individual objects, such as tables and chairs, are concrete and that the sort of states of affairs that Chisholm discusses are abstract, how to characterize in these terms other things such as actual events, states, processes, lives, or the sort of facts that Lemos discusses, is controversial. In Chapter 15 Zimmerman remains silent on this issue while arguing for the monistic view that it is not individual objects, but only states of individual objects, that can have intrinsic value. He contends, furthermore, that on this view the value that something has for its own sake will always supervene on its intrinsic properties alone, so that the traditional term "intrinsic value" is perfectly appropriate in this context. In Chapter 16 Torbjörn Tännsjö also argues for a monistic view, according to which it is only states or processes that can have intrinsic value; but he is adamant that these entities are to be understood as concrete, claiming that this allows for a straightforward application of Moore's isolation test to the question of what things have value and in what degrees they have it.

In contrast to the monism that characterizes the four chapters just discussed, Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen advocate a pluralistic approach in Chapter 10, their first contribution to this volume. There they discuss, and reject, a number of attempts to reduce ascriptions of value to various types of entities to ascriptions to just one type of entity. In Chapter 17, their second contribution, they return to this issue, addressing a new reductionist proposal according to which the ultimate bearers of value are "tropes" (particularized properties such as the rectangularity and the whiteness of this page). They claim that this proposal has greater merit than the ones they addressed in their earlier paper but that, in the final analysis, it too is to be rejected. They thus remain committed to pluralism about the bearers of intrinsic value.

4. THE LOGIC OF INTRINSIC VALUE

Whether we are monists or pluralists regarding the bearers of intrinsic value, we will surely all agree that something that is intrinsically good is intrinsically better than something that is intrinsically neutral, which in turn is intrinsically better than something that is intrinsically bad. Comparisons of intrinsic value often require that we reach beyond this platitude, however, and it is here that a thorough understanding of the logic of intrinsic value can be especially useful.

It was not until the twentieth century that philosophers began to investigate this logic in earnest. At that time great strides were being made in the study of logic generally. Gottlob Frege [1848-1925], often called the founder of modern logic,

broke with the Aristotelian tradition that still prevailed in his day when he introduced the quantifier-variable notation for expressing generality. This has fueled the work of logicians ever since, driving the development of both propositional and predicate logic as well as giving rise to some more specialized offshoots, such as the logics of necessity and possibility ("modal logic"), of obligation and permission ("deontic logic"), of past, present, and future ("temporal logic"), of knowledge and belief ("epistemic logic"), and others – including the logic of intrinsic value.

Important work on the logic of intrinsic value was accomplished by several philosophers, including perhaps most notably Sören Halldén and Georg Henrik von Wright [1916-2003].[44] However, a turning point came with the publication in 1966 of a ground-breaking paper by Chisholm and Ernest Sosa.[45] In this paper, the authors succinctly demonstrated that a number of principles that featured in the accounts of previous writers were in fact unacceptable. (Among these principles are the following: that a state of affairs is intrinsically good if and only if it is intrinsically better than its negation, and that one state of affairs is better than another if the negation of the latter is intrinsically better than the negation of the former.) In order to improve on these accounts, Chisholm and Sosa presented a rigorous treatment of the logic of intrinsic value that built on standard propositional logic. Taking the notion of intrinsic betterness as primitive, they provided definitions of certain key concepts (sameness in intrinsic value, intrinsic indifference, intrinsic neutrality, intrinsic goodness, and intrinsic badness), supplemented these definitions with five axioms concerning intrinsic betterness, stipulated certain rules of inference, and then derived forty-three theorems about intrinsic value, each of which they claimed to be intuitively plausible. Their work provoked a number of responses. Chisholm himself sought in later papers to improve upon and extend the account that he and Sosa had given. Two such papers are Chapters 1 and 13, his contributions to Parts I and III of this volume, respectively. Another such paper is Chapter 18, his contribution to Part IV. In all these papers, Chisholm provides a clear summary of the main points made in the original paper written by himself and Sosa,[46] and so there is no need to reproduce these points here. In Chapter 18 Chisholm tackles an issue that he and Sosa did not address but which has preoccupied philosophers considerably since, that of the intrinsic value to be attributed to disjunctive states of affairs. An example of such a state of affairs is its being the case that *either* Jones is pleased *or* Smith is displeased. If we assume that it is (or would be) intrinsically good that Jones is pleased and intrinsically bad that Smith is displeased, what value should we attribute to the disjunction of these two states? Neutrality? What if it should happen that the extent of pleasure that is at stake is greater than the extent of displeasure? Should that incline us to think that the disjunction is intrinsically good? It is with such questions that Chisholm's paper deals.

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[44] See Sören Halldén, *On the Logic of 'Better'* (Lund and Copenhagen: Library of *Theoria* 2, 1957); Georg Henrik von Wright, *The Logic of Preference* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1963).

[45] Roderick Chisholm and Ernest Sosa, "On the Logic of 'Intrinsically Better'." *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 3 (1966): 244-49.

[46] See pp. 6-7, 174-75, and 232 below.

In Chapter 19 Philip Quinn [1940-2004] proposes an adjustment to Chisholm's account. Chisholm assumes that all states of affairs are comparable in intrinsic value, that is, that, for any two states, either one is intrinsically better than the other or both have the same intrinsic value. Quinn claims that this is to assume too much, since it is at least arguable that some states of affairs are incomparable in intrinsic value. (He asks us to contrast two comparisons. Consider comparing the enjoyment of the taste of apples with that of the taste of pears. Now consider comparing the former with the enjoyment of the sound of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Whereas the first comparison seems straightforward, the latter does not and might be thought to involve two items that are in fact strictly incomparable.) Quinn proposes an account of intrinsic value that is akin to Chisholm's but whose axioms do not assume comparability. Quinn's account does, however, have comparability as a theorem; that is, given his axioms, it can be proven (rather than simply assumed) that no two states of affairs are incomparable in intrinsic value. Whether this is an acceptable result is controversial. We will see in the next section that some philosophers reject it.

Almost all writers on intrinsic value (including both Chisholm and Quinn) presuppose that the relation of intrinsic betterness is transitive, that is, that if one state is intrinsically better than another which is itself intrinsically better than a third, then the first is intrinsically better than the third. This very natural assumption has recently been called into question. In Chapter 20 Stuart Rachels argues that there are cases in which one state is better than a second which is itself better than a third, but in which the first is not better than the third. He puts his thesis in terms of "all things considered better than," but he would also apply it to "intrinsically better than."[47] In Chapter 21 Ken Binmore and Alex Voorhoeve maintain that Rachels's argument fails for the same sort of reason that Zeno's argument that Achilles could not overtake the tortoise fails. However, in Chapter 22 Erik Carlson points up a limitation to this criticism of Rachels, thus leaving the door open to opponents of transitivity.

5. THE COMPUTATION OF INTRINSIC VALUE

In our assessments of intrinsic value, we are often and understandably concerned not only with *whether* something is good or bad but with *how* good or bad it is. Arriving at an answer to the latter question is not straightforward. At least three problems threaten to undermine the computation of intrinsic value.

First, there is the possibility, just mentioned, that the relation of intrinsic betterness is not transitive. Should this be the case, it would seriously complicate comparisons, and hence assessments, of intrinsic value.

Second, there is the possibility (raised by Quinn in Chapter 19) that certain values are incommensurate. Ross, for example, has this to say on the subject:

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[47] See Stuart Rachels, "Intransitivity," in *Encyclopedia of Ethics*, second edition, edited by L. C. Becker and C. B. Becker (New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 877-79.

> [W]e are quite incapable of equating, in respect of goodness, any amount of pleasure with any amount of morally good action. I suggested in *The Right and the Good* that while both virtue and pleasure have places on the same scale of goodness, virtue begins at a higher point than that at which pleasure leaves off, so that any, even the smallest, amount of virtue is better, and more worth bringing into existence, than any, even the greatest, amount of pleasure. But I now see this...to be impossible. If virtue really were on the same scale of goodness as pleasure, then pleasure of a certain intensity, if enjoyed by a sufficiently large number of persons or for a sufficient time, would counterbalance virtue possessed or manifested only by a small number or only for a short time. But I find myself quite unable to think this to be the case; and if I am right in this, it follows that pleasures, if ever good, must be good in a different sense from that in which good activities are so.[48]

There is some confusion here. In claiming that virtue and pleasure are incommensurate for the reason given, Ross presumably means that they cannot be measured on the same *ratio* scale. (A ratio scale is one with an arbitrary unit but a fixed zero point. Mass and length are standardly measured on ratio scales.) But incommensurability on a ratio scale does not imply incommensurability on *every* scale – an ordinal scale, for instance. (An ordinal scale is simply one that supplies an ordering for the quantity in question, such as the measurement of arm-strength that is provided by an arm-wrestling competition.) Ross's remarks indicate that he in fact believes that virtue and pleasure *are* commensurate on an ordinal scale, since he appears to subscribe to the arch-puritanical view that any amount of virtue is intrinsically better than any amount of pleasure. This view is just one example of the thesis that some goods are "higher" than others, in the sense that the former "begin" (as Ross puts it) at a "higher point" than that at which the latter "leave off." This thesis can be traced to the ancient Greeks,[49] and it has been endorsed by many philosophers since, perhaps most famously by John Stuart Mill [1806-1873].[50] Interest in the thesis has recently been revived by a set of intricate and intriguing puzzles, posed by Derek Parfit, concerning the relative values of low-quantity/high-quality goods and high-quantity/low-quality goods.[51] One response to these puzzles is to adopt Rachels's thesis of nontransitivity. (Parfit himself eschews this response.[52]) Another response is to insist on the thesis that some goods are higher than others. (This is not to say that subscription to this thesis by itself solves the puzzles that Parfit raises.) In Chapter 23 Neil Feit proposes a way of reconciling this thesis about higher goods with a summative approach to the computation of intrinsic value, an approach with which it might at first seem to be at odds. In Chapter 24 Gustaf Arrhenius argues that the thesis has the surprising implication that, if there are two types of goods *A* and *B* such that any amount of *A* is better than any amount

[48] Ross, *Foundations of Ethics*, p. 275.
[49] See Plato, *Philebus*, 21a-e; Aristotle, *op. cit.*, 1174a.
[50] See paras. 4 ff. of his *Utilitarianism*, 1863 (of which there are many editions).
[51] Derek Parfit, *Reasons and Persons* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), Part IV.
[52] *Ibid.*, p. 441.

of *B*, then there must be two types of goods *C* and *D* such that some amount of *C* is better than any amount of *D*, even though goods of type *C* are only marginally better than goods of type *D*.

To repeat: contrary to what Ross says, the thesis that some goods are higher than others implies that such goods are commensurate, and not that they are incommensurate. Some people do hold, however, that certain values really are incommensurate, in that they cannot be compared on any meaningful scale. (Isaiah Berlin [1909-1997], for example, is often thought to have said this about the values of liberty and equality. Whether he is best interpreted in this way is debatable.[53]) This view constitutes a more radical threat to the computation of intrinsic value than does the view that intrinsic betterness is not transitive. The latter view presupposes at least some measure of commensurability. If *A* is better than *B* and *B* is better than *C*, then *A* is commensurate with *B* and *B* is commensurate with *C*; and even if it should turn out that *A* is not better than *C*, it may still be that *A* is commensurate with *C* (either because it is as good as *C* or because it is worse than *C*). But if *A* is incommensurate with *B*, then *A* is neither better than nor as good as nor worse than *B*. If such a case can arise, there is an obvious limit to the extent to which we can meaningfully say how good a certain complex whole is (here, "whole" is used to refer to whatever kind of entity may have intrinsic value); for, if such a whole comprises incommensurate goods *A* and *B*, then there will be no way of establishing how good it is overall, even if there is a way of establishing how good it is with respect to each of *A* and *B*.

There is a third, still more radical threat to the computation of intrinsic value. Quite apart from any concern with the commensurability of values, Moore famously claims that there is no easy formula for the determination of the intrinsic value of complex wholes because of the truth of what he calls the "principle of organic unities."[54] According to this principle, the intrinsic value of a whole must not be assumed to be the same as the sum of the intrinsic values of its parts.[55] As an example of an organic unity, Moore gives the case of the consciousness of a beautiful object; he says that this has great intrinsic value, even though the consciousness as such and the beautiful object each have comparatively little, if any, intrinsic value. If the principle of organic unities is true, then there is scant hope of a systematic approach to the computation of intrinsic value. Although the principle explicitly rules out only summation as a method of computation, Moore's remarks strongly suggest that there is no relation between the parts of a whole and the whole itself that holds in general and in terms of which the value of the latter can be computed by aggregating (whether by summation or by some other means) the values of the former. Moore's position has been endorsed by many other philosophers. For example, Ross says that it is better that one person be good and happy and another bad and unhappy than that the former be good and unhappy and

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[53] Isaiah Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969).
[54] Moore, *Principia Ethica*, p. 96.
[55] *Ibid.*, p. 28.

the latter bad and happy, and he takes this to be confirmation of Moore's principle.[56] Broad takes organic unities of the sort that Moore discusses to be just one instance of a more general phenomenon that he believes to be at work in many other situations, as when, for example, two tunes, each pleasing in its own right, make for a cacophonous combination.[57] Others have furnished still further examples of organic unities.

Was Moore the first to call attention to the phenomenon of organic unities in the context of intrinsic value? This is debatable. Despite the fact that he explicitly invoked what he called a "principle of summation" that would appear to be inconsistent with the principle of organic unities,[58] Brentano appears nonetheless to have anticipated Moore's principle in his discussion of *Schadenfreude*, that is, of malicious pleasure; he condemns such an attitude, even though he claims that pleasure as such is intrinsically good.[59] Certainly Chisholm takes Brentano to be an advocate of organic unities. In Chapter 25 Chisholm ascribes to Brentano the view that there are many kinds of organic unity and builds on what he takes to be Brentano's insights (and, going further back in the history of philosophy, the insights of St. Thomas Aquinas [1225-1274] and Arthur Schopenhauer [1788-1860]). He ends by providing a list of ten different ways in which an organic unity may be constituted. In Chapter 26 Lemos finds fault with some of the details of Chisholm's view, although he is very much taken with Chisholm's general approach and is himself an advocate of organic unities.[60]

Another fan of the principle of organic unities is Dancy, who puts a special spin on it. In Chapter 27 he outlines a radical approach to the assessment of value according to which the intrinsic value of something may vary from context to context; indeed, the variation may be so great that the thing's value changes "polarity" from good to bad, or *vice versa*. In keeping with Korsgaard and others mentioned in Section 2 above, Dancy holds that something's intrinsic value need not supervene on its intrinsic properties alone; in fact, the supervenience-base may be so open-ended that it resists generalization. This "particularist" approach to value (an approach that Dancy also applies to reasons) constitutes an endorsement of the principle of organic unities that is even more subversive of the computation of intrinsic value than Moore's. Moore holds that the intrinsic value of something is and must be constant, even if its contribution to the value of wholes of which it forms a part is not. Dancy holds that something's intrinsic value may itself be inconstant.

Not everyone has accepted the principle of organic unities; some have held out hope for a more systematic approach to the computation of intrinsic value. However, even someone who is inclined to measure intrinsic value in terms of summation must acknowledge that there is a sense in which the principle of organic unities is

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[56] Ross, *The Right and the Good*, p. 72.
[57] C. D. Broad, *Ethics* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1985), p. 256.
[58] Brentano, *op. cit.*, p. 23n.
[59] *Ibid.*, p. 90.
[60] Lemos, *op. cit.*, ch. 3.